

Center to help support projects, bring in research and create new jobs

By Beth Brown beth.brown@theeagle.com | Posted: Saturday, October 19, 2013 12:00 am

Representatives of the Research Valley Partnership and the state's Emerging Technology Fund on Friday launched the new Regional Center for Innovation and Commercialization.

The new Texas Triangle RCIC covers approximately 20 counties, spanning the Bryan-College Station area, Waco and Temple to help support projects, bring in research and create new jobs in the Central Texas area. The Research Valley Partnership entered into a two-year contract with the state to receive funds from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund at the end of August.

Todd McDaniel, president and CEO of the RVP, will serve as executive director of the Texas Triangle RCIC. McDaniel said the RVP will be the host organization and will be doing business as the Texas Triangle RCIC.

The RVP has served as the primary broker in luring companies and promoting economic development in the Research Valley. The Texas Triangle RCIC received \$180,000 from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund and can receive up to another \$320,000 in grants based on performance, including commercialization awards, research award matching and acquisition of research superiority.

Chris Peterson will serve as the chairman of the Texas Triangle RCIC.

"The job of the Texas Triangle RCIC and the other RCICs ... is to create this infrastructure of innovation across the state where we take the knowledge, the talent and the money at our university systems and turn them into viable businesses and jobs across the state," Peterson said.

Laurie Rich, deputy director and special adviser on higher education for the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, was at Texas A&M for the launch.

"I'm really delighted that this is including the Waco and Temple areas. We oftentimes have folks overshadowed by the big guys, and there's an awful lot of talent in other places that we want to harness and we want to launch and so ... this RCIC is particularly exciting for us," Rich said.

The Texas Triangle RCIC Advisory Board will consist of representatives from Bryan-College Station, Waco and Temple. Local representatives are Ivan Olson, chairman of the board of directors for the RVP; Blake Petty, assistant vice president for Innovation and Business Development for A&M; Chris Peterson, chair of the Texas Triangle RCIC; Will Botts, chief commercialization officer at Lynntech Inc. and Jeff McDougal, an entrepreneur involved in IT solutions.

Temple's advisory board members include Charlette Stallworth, who works in the Office of Research Business Development at Scott & White; Gregg Strasburger, who is on the board of directors for the Temple Health and Bio Science district; and Wendall Williams, chairman of the Central National Bank-Temple and on the Temple Health and Bio-Science district.

Waco's representatives are Terry Stevens, a representative from the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, and Kevin Castello, executive director of the Baylor Angel Network. The third representative position, which is earmarked for someone affiliated with Baylor University, is currently vacant.

McDaniel said the existing infrastructure of the RVP was instrumental in landing the new regional center.

"One of the things we brought to the table when we were being considered by the state of Texas as an RCIC is existing infrastructure and existing support from our community," McDaniel said. "That was absolutely critical to it. And I think because of that, it helped us to get the decision by the state to be approved as a regional center and ultimately have the approval from state leadership."