

February 2008



eNewsletter

Welcome to a *Special Edition* of the **Maryland Minority Research and Development Initiative (MMRDI) eNewsletter** focusing on the SBIR Conference – “*From Awareness to Awards and Commercialization.*”

The conference will take place on Tuesday March 4th in Adelphi, Maryland at The Inn and Conference Center, University of Maryland University College from 8:00 am to 5:15 pm.

We hope this *Special Edition* will educate you about the Conference, pique your interest in MMRDI activities, and persuade you to attend. (*NOTE: MMRDI Participants pay a [discounted registration fee](#) *Read on to learn more!**)

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CONTENTS:

- I. [SBIR Conference Agenda](#)
 - II. [Announcing Proposal Review Services](#)
 - III. [Spotlight on Success: CREATV MicroTech](#)
 - IV. [SBIR Tip of the Month: Licenses with Universities](#)
 - V. [Pass it on...Upcoming Event!](#)
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I. March 4th SBIR Conference: *From Awareness to Awards and Commercialization*

The MMRDI partners believe this is a must attend event for any minority-owned start-up research & development or service company. The title of the conference was selected to reflect the evolution we hope your company will experience once you take the leap of faith and begin investigating and ultimately taking steps towards winning an SBIR/STTR grant.

FROM AWARENESS:

There is an entire federal complex devoted to the assurance of the United States' economic and technological prowess through investment in American ingenuity. While universities and federal laboratories research for the sake of pushing forwarding the frontier of knowledge, it is small businesses like yours (more so than corporate giants) that have the flexibility to commercialize and transfer new technologies into the marketplace without getting bogged down in the administration of the process.

The Small Business Innovation Research program was designed to encourage small businesses to contribute to solving the nation's pressing needs while relieving those businesses of the need to secure their own funding for the high-risk research that may be required for the task. The SBIR public-private financing tool was signed into law in 1982 when America's technological advantage in the world was being questioned*.

The SBIR program has gone through numerous revisions and is currently up for reauthorization. Take a step towards becoming more aware of this incredible tool of the government by attending the Opening General Panel on **Trends in Technology and Programming**.

Some of the most prominent officials of the program will be there to share their vision of the program and the types of research and technologies they believe will take center stage in upcoming years. If your company is in those particular industry sectors, you may be poised to reap incredible benefits in the future.

Panelists include:

- F. C. Thomas Allnutt, SBIR/STTR Program Director, *National Science Foundation*
- Clara Asmail, SBIR Program Manager, *National Institute of Standards and Technology*
- Michael Caccuitto, SBIR/STTR Manager, *Department of Defense*
- Charles Cleland, National Program Leader, *United States Department of Agriculture*
- Jo Anne Goodnight, SBIR/STTR Program Director, *National Institutes of Health*
- Larry James, Program Director, *Department of Energy*
- *And just added ...* Vincent "Vinny" Schaper, SBIR Director, *Department of Homeland Security*

* Charles W. Wessner, ed. *SBIR Program Diversity and Assessment Challenges* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2004) 6.

TO AWARDS:

The best technical writers and SBIR experts can not coach you through the day-to-day challenges that come with the win. A Phase I SBIR/STTR award may well carry with it an implicit “certification of the science” that tells the world that the best minds working in your particular industry sector have deemed your concept innovative, scientifically sound, and commercializable. However, there is no instruction manual on how to execute your research or manage the project in such a way that commercialization is inevitable.

At the **Funding Transitions: Phase I to Phase II and Beyond** Session you will hear from a group of entrepreneurs who have leveraged their Phase I success and answered the question of “now that I’ve won what do I do?” The panelists along with the poster session presenters will candidly share with you the challenges they faced at each stage of their SBIR award and their reasons for and against proceeding systematically from Phase I to Phase II and Phase III of the SBIR award opportunity.

AND COMMERCIALIZATION:

Any intellectual property that develops from your initial award will be safeguarded by the government according to the guidelines of the SBIR Act. Any technology that develops from the initial award is eligible for competition-free entry into the government contracting arena, should a particular government agency express interest in buying back the technology from you. However, to generate a tangible technology or intellectual property that is worthy of such safeguards or eligible for government buy-back, it is essential to address the regulatory issues that could stall your SBIR project midstream.

During the **Parallel Tracking Panel on SBIR and FDA**, you will learn how the panelists navigated these concerns. The message that will be shared here is applicable to any company that is or will engage in clinical testing, or will require certifications from UL or FDA to reassure the public of its product’s safety. Since expenses can grow rapidly as companies transition their technologies out of the laboratory for public consumption, it is vital to attract additional sources of downstream funding during the Phase III stage of an SBIR award.

At the **Eye of the Investor** Session, early stage investors and venture capitalists will talk about how and why an SBIR award improves the attractiveness of any company being considered for additional downstream funding by outside investors not just venture capitalists.

Finally, the successful SBIR winner who has addressed all of the regulatory challenges and produced a technology that the government needs and is prepared to buy back, must consider how to mass produce, and integrate the technology back into the government.

The companies highlighted at the closing panel **Prime-Subs Relationships and More** will answer a resounding *yes* to the question “Can you integrate your product into the government system ...

...as a subcontractor?" -- Sensics, Inc. and Northrup Grumman
...as a lead/prime contractor?" -- Advanced Powder Solutions, Inc. and Raytheon
...by going it alone and selling directly to government?" -- Techno-Sciences, Inc.
...by licensing to a large corporation?" -- Smiths Detection
...or by selling your company as an acquisition?" -- Smiths Detection

For a full list of participating Federal Agencies listed in the [SBIR Conference Fact Sheet](#) and [Detailed Agenda](#), visit www.marylandtedco.org.

MMRDI Participants are extended a \$25 discount per person. To register using with this discounted rate, contact Mark Glazer, Tech Council of Maryland, at mglazer@techcouncilmd.com or 240-243-4045. Registration ends February 29th!

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

II. Announcing Proposal Review Services

MMRDI proudly announced at last month's Information Session that Dr. Robert Berger has joined the team and will provide complementary SBIR/STTR proposal review services for MMRDI companies who are applying for these federal grants.

Two complementary review services will be provided:

1. "*Feasibility Reviews*" are intended for companies in need of help getting started, organizing their thoughts, and determining the applicability of their research to a particular solicitation(s). Dr. Berger will work in an iterative manner with the principle investigator to outline an approach to the SBIR application and ensure her/his eligibility to participate in the SBIR program. At the conclusion of this review, the investigator will be able to clearly articulate the research aims for her/his project and define the stages of her/his commercialization plan.
2. "*Competitiveness Reviews*" will be performed on completed SBIR/STTR proposals. Dr. Berger will assess the quality of the research goals and technical arguments, check the documentation for compliance, and address whether the specific requirements of the target agency have been met.

Dr. Berger is uniquely qualified to advise companies on their SBIR/STTR applications. From 1995 until 2003, he was the SBIR/STTR Program Manager at the U.S. Department of Energy. He designed and ran the annual SBIR and STTR competitions, and carried the final responsibility of approving eligible awardees.

In addition, Dr. Berger served as the Director of the Technology and Innovation Division at the U.S. Small Business Administration for 10 years prior to joining the Department of Energy. As Director, he had government-wide oversight responsibilities for the technical and commercialization aspects of SBIR and STTR programs. Clearly, Dr. Berger understands the difference between proposals that are accepted for awards and those that are declined.

Dr. Berger also draws on his rich research experiences to inform his reviews. Dr. Berger conducted engineering research and technology assessments at the National Institute for Standards and Technology and the Office of Naval Research. He holds a Ph.D. in Mechanics and Materials Sciences from The Johns Hopkins University and was a post-doctoral Research Associate of the National Research Council. To set up an appointment to discuss your SBIR/STTR proposal with Dr. Berger, please contact Jacqueline Du Bois, Program Manager of Minority Programs at jdubois@marylandtedco.org.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

III. Spotlight on Success: Creatv MicroTech



Creatv MiroTech manufactures both microfabrication and biodetection products for a range of applications including x-ray and gamma-ray imaging, medical diagnostics, environmental testing, and food safety. The firm conducts its own in-house research and development and partners with outside scientific collaborators and strategic partners from government and academia.

Creatv MicroTech is a privately-held company founded in 1996 by Dr. Cha-Mei Tang. The company's business is driven by its cutting-edge research and development. It leverages its founder's expertise in the sciences and engineering to generate its high-aspect-ratio microfabrication and ultra-sensitive bio-detection tools.

Creatv's microfabrication of micro metal and composite structures is unmatched by any one in the world. Creatv's bio-detection instruments are very sensitive yet compact and easy to use. The company has won multiple SBIR award and remains active in the SBIR process, particularly with NIH but also USDA and DARPA. Dr. Tang was a featured speaker at the MMRDI January Information Session. The SBIR funding mechanism is an essential part of Creatv MicroTech's business strategy and has contributed to its sustained growth and capacity for innovation.

See Creatv MicroTech at the SBIR Conference MD SBIR Winners' Poster Session!

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

IV. SBIR Tip of the Month: Licenses with Universities

Although the rules vary slightly among the different agencies, roughly 30-40% of an SBIR grant can be allocated to a university. It is advisable to have a license or at least a contingent license in place with the university before embarking on an SBIR together. A license agreement sets in place the understanding between the university and the small business as to who owns and/or has the right to use, market, sell, or further develop the intellectual property and product(s) being developed. It is preferable to have it in place before the proposal is submitted, but it must be in place before contracts are signed to

keep the small business from being left in the cold when it becomes time to commercialize the research into a product.

[\(Return to Top\)](#)

V. *Pass it On!...Upcoming Events*

2008 Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Conference:

From Awareness to Awards and Commercialization

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

8:00 AM – 5:15 PM

- **SBIR Conference: From Awareness to Awards and Commercialization**
 - Date: March 4, 2008
 - Time: 8:00 a.m. – 5:15 p.m.
 - Location: The Inn and Conference Center, University of Maryland University College; 3501 University Blvd East, Adelphi, Maryland 20783
 - Programmatic Contact: Jacqueline Du Bois, 410-715-4176
 - Registration Contact: Mark Glazer, 240-243-4045
 - Email: jdubois@marylandtedco.org – or – mglazer@techcouncilmd.com
 - RSVP: ** By February 29, 2008 **
 - Cost: \$125, \$100 for MMRDI companies

For a full list of participating Federal Agencies see the [SBIR Conference Fact Sheet](#) and [Detailed Agenda](#), or visit our website at www.marylandtedco.org.

REMEMBER: MMRDI participants pay only \$100 per person (\$25 savings!).
To register using with this discounted rate, contact Mark Glazer, Tech Council of Maryland, at mglazer@techcouncilmd.com or 240-243-4045.

NOTE: You are receiving this eNewsletter because of your interest in either SBIR or STTR programs. Should you choose to not receive future *eNewsletter*, please send an email to cjohnson@marylandtedco.org.

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The MMRDI is a two-year initiative funded by a grant from the US Small Business Administration (SBA) to the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO). Partners in the program include the

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP).

This project is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA's funding should not be construed as an endorsement of any products, opinions, or services. All SBA-funded projects are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis.