WSU will assist innovators with new funding from Small Business Administration

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has awarded Wichita State University $90,000 to strengthen the technological competitiveness of Kansas’ technology-based small businesses in the innovation and commercialization of new technology.

WSU will use the funding to provide outreach, financial support, and technical assistance to technology based small business concerns participating in, or interested in participating in, the SBA’s Small Business Innovation and Research program.

WSU’s Office of Research and Technology Transfer received the award and will utilize the resources of the university’s Kansas Small Business Development Center (KSBDC) and Center for Entrepreneurship to conduct a series of workshops, training, classes and outreach to provide information to businesses that have an interest in submitting applications for SBA funding.

“Our goal is to actively engage businesses developing new technology,” said John Tomblin, WSU vice president for research and technology transfer. “This program will assist local small businesses in securing funding, and soon the Innovation Campus will help them further their ideas and technologies. The pieces of the puzzle are coming together.”

After consultations with interested businesses, the KSBDC will determine which are qualified applicants and provide them with additional assistance.

“They will help identify the high-potential innovators in the state that are ready to move forward or are seriously considering submitting an SBA application,” said Debbie Franklin, director of business development for the research office, and administrator of the grant. “There will be a smaller set of resources available, including testing, prototyping and computer-aided design services, to help them advance to the next level.”

Businesses interested in benefiting from the program can learn more at www.wichita.edu/ciee.

The funding comes from the SBA’s Federal and State Technology Partnership program, which awarded 22 organizations with equal funding. The awards were limited to one organization per state.

The SBA award will complement south Kansas’ recent designation as a “Manufacturing Community” by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

The Wichita State University Kansas Small Business Development Center offers free consultation services and affordable training to grow Kansas entrepreneurs. Through WSU’s W. Frank Barton School of Business, the Center for Entrepreneurship fosters and promotes entrepreneurial thinking through a wide range of academic and community programs.

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