

# OPINION

## Editorial

### CMU's research plans will benefit state's economy

Central Michigan University, through the Center for Applied Research and Technology and the CMU Research Corporation, shows early promise to provide exactly what state officials have been looking for: the core of a new economy.

Everyone in mid-Michigan will feel the culmination of that promise through higher-paying jobs, increased tax revenues and local government investment in making the area an attractive place to work and live.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm's plan to restart and reshape Michigan's 21st century economy focuses on investing in four areas: life sciences, alternative energies, advanced automotive manufacturing, and homeland security and defense.

Manufacturing jobs, long the foundation of Michigan's economy, are dwindling at an alarming rate.

Competition with other states and with countries where businesses are allowed to pay workers a mere fraction of what U.S. workers earn is driving business out of Michigan, Granholm said in this year's state of the state address.

The governor's plan calls for investment in high-tech firms, attracting the best research and scientific minds, increasing the amount of research, and bringing more federal research and technology dollars to Michigan.

CMU appears to be on the right track with the recent groundbreaking for a \$5.1 million "wet lab" to house the research activities of companies such as Dendritic NanoTechnologies Inc. and MultiGEN Diagnostic. The new lab will more than double the space available for growing nano- and biotechnology companies to build their businesses before moving to permanent quarters - hopefully in Mt. Pleasant.

High-tech businesses like these are expected to provide hundreds or thousands of high-paying, high-tech jobs for a state locked in a dwindling manufacturing economy. Global nanotechnology growth is expected to rise from \$13 billion in products incorporating nanotechnology in 2005 to as high as \$2.6 trillion by 2014.

One indication of CMU's success is the science journal Nature's recent naming of Mt. Pleasant as one of the country's major biotech hotspots.

But attracting high-tech business is just one part of the plan to revitalize the economy. CMU also has the opportunity to educate the highly trained workforce this new economy will demand.

The new lab will provide research opportunities for faculty and students and be a critical factor in recruitment, CMU President Mike Rao said. CMU students will work and conduct research shoulder-to-shoulder with the giants of these fields, including DNT's president and chief technology officer Donald Tomalia, who invented the original PAMAM dendrimer 25 years ago while working at The Dow Chemical Company.

Multi-million dollar investments in infrastructure such as the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Health Professions Building and the Park Library expansion and renovation will help attract the caliber of students the university requires.

Success builds upon success - and a good foundation. CMU is building that foundation with an emphasis on bringing high-tech business and research to mid-Michigan. The growing success of these businesses, which is evidenced by recently announced breakthroughs by both DNT and MultiGEN, will attract not only federal research dollars but commercial clients and high-paying jobs.

CMU has started the ball rolling. Let's hope university officials have the wisdom to keep that momentum going.

Mid-Michigan can't help but benefit from CMU's success.