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AZBio Announces 2008 Award Winners

Provista Life Sciences is Bioscience Company of the Year

September 19, 2008 (*Phoenix, Arizona*) At its annual dinner last night in Tempe, AZ, attended by more than 400 people, the Arizona BioIndustry Association (AZBio) presented six awards, recognizing the best in Arizona bioscience.

The dinner, hosted in partnership with Arizona CURE, also featured a keynote address by James C. Greenwood, President & CEO of the Biotechnology Industry Organization in Washington, DC. Greenwood reflected on the transformational potential of biotechnology, an industry that he believes truly does have the power to play a major role in healing, fueling and feeding the world.

The AZBio Bioscience Educator of the Year Award went to Margaret Wilch of Tucson High Magnet School in Tucson. She has worked closely with faculty from the University of Arizona, also in Tucson, to develop and implement new biotechnology curricula used in classrooms throughout the state, including the BLAST lab (Biotechnology Laboratory for Arizona Students and Teachers). Participants in this lab identify new microorganisms using genomics and submit their data to national repositories.

The recipient of the AZBio Award for Research Excellence was Rod Wing, Ph.D., Director of the Arizona Genomics Institute at the University of Arizona. A pioneer in the field of structural genomics, Dr. Wing led a group of researchers in developing a genetic “physical” map of the corn genome, which involved taking about 18,000 pieces of corn’s genetic material and assembling them in the proper order. This work has led to the completion of a working draft of the corn genome, which could have an impact on society’s ability to use this important crop in dealing with drought, global warming, population pressures and increasing energy needs.

AZBio’s 2008 Public Service Award was given to Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano, who has often demonstrated her belief that our nation’s ability to innovate will drive economic growth in the United States in the 21st century. As Governor, she has supported a number of legislative initiatives designed to enhance funding opportunities for Arizona’s research institutions and early-stage companies, and she has been a strong supporter of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education programs.

The Jon W. McGarity Leadership Award for 2008 was presented to Michael Cusanovich, Ph.D., Regents Professor of Biochemistry and Director of Arizona Research Labs at the

University of Arizona. He was cited for his many years of volunteer service on behalf of the bioscience industry in southern Arizona and, indeed, throughout the entire state. The founder of the Bioindustry Organization of Southern Arizona (BIOSA), Dr. Cusanovich has been at the forefront of many issues affecting the growth of the bioscience industry in Arizona, and he saw the importance and value of integrating BIOSA into a strong statewide organization. He was a key player in the ultimately successful integration of BIOSA and AZBio in early 2008.

The AZBio Fast Start Award for 2008 went to Dedicated Phase I of Phoenix. The award was accepted by Jason Bonanza, the company's founder and CEO. Since opening its doors in October 2006, the company has grown from 4 employees to a staff of 60, dedicated to overcoming the obstacles to completing Phase I clinical trials successfully, while maintaining data integrity and patient safety. In its short history, Dedicated Phase I has already become a preferred clinical trial site for many major pharmaceutical development companies.

The winner of the AZBio 2008 Bioscience Company of the Year Award was Provista Life Sciences, LLC, in Phoenix. Accepting the award on behalf of Provista was the company's President & CEO, Will Gartner. In March 2008, Provista introduced to the market the BT (Biomarker Translation) test, an innovative diagnostic blood test for the early detection of breast cancer. The BT Test measures the level of key biomarkers associated with breast cancer and, when used in conjunction with a mammogram, is more than 80 percent accurate. This non-invasive detection option offers greater accuracy than a mammogram alone, making it an important advance in women's health care.

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The **Arizona BioIndustry Association** is a not-for-profit trade association that seeks to unify, empower and advance its member organizations, who collectively form Arizona's bioscience community, and to make Arizona a place where bioscience companies can grow and succeed. AZBio is the state affiliate in Arizona for both the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), the preeminent trade association for the biotechnology industry in the United States, and AdvaMed, a national trade association whose members produce nearly 90 percent of the health care technology purchased annually in the United States.

2008 AZBio Award Criteria

Bioscience Educator of the Year Award

The educator who, as a member of the faculty or administration of an educational institution, demonstrated the greatest leadership, creativity and/or actions to inspire students and encourage them in the biosciences. (Cited contributions may extend over several years.)

Public Service Award

The person in Arizona who is currently serving or has served in a publicly-elected capacity at a city, county, state or federal level and has demonstrated leadership that has contributed most significantly to the enhancement of the business climate for bioscience companies in the state. (Cited contributions may extend over several years.)

Award for Research Excellence

The life science researcher in Arizona who has made the most significant contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the understanding of biological processes, as measured by publications and/or professional acknowledgement of their work in either an academic or commercial setting. (Cited contributions may extend over several years.)

Jon W. McGarity Leadership Award

The person in Arizona who provided the most outstanding leadership that contributed significantly to development of the State's bioindustry and/or recognition of the advancement of bioscience in Arizona. (Cited contributions may extend over several years.)

Fast Start Award

The most significant for-profit bioscience company headquartered in Arizona and founded on or after July 1, 2005.

Bioscience Company of the Year Award

The for-profit bioscience company whose Arizona-based operations did the most to transform the world during the last 12 months.

Arizona CURE was formed in 2006 to educate the public about the benefits of research that improves every aspect of our daily lives. The organization is committed to furthering the opportunities for institutions involved in biomedical, biotechnology and bioagricultural issues to communicate with Arizonans about this important work.

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