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## **U.S. Secretary of Commerce Pritzker awards Grant to BioSTL**

ST. LOUIS—March 30, 2015 - U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker today announced that BioSTL is among the first 17 recipients, out of 240 applicants, of a grant from the 2014 Regional Innovation Strategies program. The grant represents the third national, competitive award for BioSTL and St. Louis from the U.S. Department of Commerce since 2010.

BioSTL received a \$500,000 i6 Challenge grant, out of \$8 million awarded nationally, to create the St. Louis Regional Bioscience Proof of Concept Center, which will accelerate the transition of innovative bioscience ideas, especially from the region's research institutions, toward commercial viability in the marketplace. The Center will be developed and operated by BioSTL's subsidiary, BioGenerator.

"This federal grant will help BioSTL create startup businesses built around St. Louis' strengths in medical and plant sciences," said Donn Rubin, president and CEO of BioSTL. "The entire country benefits from startup activity that not only creates jobs and economic vitality, but also helps realize ideas that can help heal, feed, or fuel the world."

The Regional Innovation Strategies (RIS) program, which is being run by the Department's Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship ([OIE](#)), is a new initiative designed to advance innovation and capacity-building activities in regions across the country. Secretary Pritzker announced the recipients of the i6 Challenge grants today.

"As America's "Innovation Agency," the Commerce Department has a key role to play in supporting the innovators and job creators of tomorrow," said Secretary Pritzker. "We want to ensure that all entrepreneurs have access to the tools they need to move their ideas and inventions from idea to market. The Regional Innovation Strategies Program competition is designed to advance this mission across the United States, strengthening our economy and our global competitiveness."

The St. Louis Regional Bioscience Proof of Concept Center will link innovators and entrepreneurs to community resources and corporate partners that will help validate technical proof of concept for very early-stage innovations inside research institutions. The Center will engage industry professionals to support innovation at its earliest stages and to integrate market-focused scientific review into the academic environment, greatly accelerating commercialization. These activities build on the region's previous i6 award from Commerce's inaugural round in 2010, which focused on company creation; as well as the St. Louis region's win in the 2011 inaugural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge that helped build the region's roster of experienced entrepreneurs and launched the BioGenerator's Entrepreneur in Residence program

The [i6 Challenge](#), launched in 2010 as part of the [Startup America Initiative](#), is now in its fourth iteration. i6 is a national competition that makes small, targeted, high-impact investments to support startup creation, innovation, and commercialization. Now that the i6 Challenge is included in the new Regional Innovation Strategies Program, the funding will support more than just Proof-of-Concept Centers. Investments will also go toward the expansion of existing centers and in later-stage Commercialization Centers, which help innovators fine tune and scale their innovations to bring new products and services to the market. For more information about the Regional Innovation Strategies Program, including a full list of the 2014 grant recipients, please visit: <http://www.eda.gov/oie/2014-risp-competition.htm>.

**About BioSTL**

BioSTL advances St. Louis' prosperity by cultivating a thriving bioscience sector. BioSTL builds regional capacity, nurtures a collaborative environment, and focuses community leadership and resources to capitalize on the unique convergence of St. Louis' corporate, university, and entrepreneurial strengths in medical and plant bioscience. Please visit [www.biostl.org](http://www.biostl.org) for additional information. Follow BioSTL on twitter [@BioSTL](https://twitter.com/BioSTL).

**About the U.S. Economic Development Administration ([www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov))**

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation's regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA makes investments in economically distressed communities in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

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