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The Employment Journey

PEI's Top Source for Career Planning and Job Seeking

An update on developments in Bioscience on PEI

by *Gloria Welton*



Conceptual drawing of the PEI BioCommons Research Park. Site servicing work is expected to begin in late fall 2009, and construction will begin in the spring of 2010. The official opening is planned for 2011.

On June 19, 2009, the Government of PEI announced that a \$30-million **BioCommons Research Park** will be constructed on the Upton Farm property in Charlottetown. The facility is expected to employ 500 people within five years of completion.

“A key mandate of the BioCommons will be to connect PEI’s primary sectors to the modern tools of biotechnology so Islanders can further benefit from primary resources,” says **Dr. Jason Cleaversmith**, Senior Investment Officer, Bioscience, Innovation PEI.

“The BioCommons will also serve to promote innovation, research and development for the rapidly growing natural products market. Products will be developed for use in pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, and cosmetic applications.

“The new BioCommons will provide a location for companies to expand and grow to maximize their commercial potential. A key focus for the facility will be in providing appropriate expert support and scale up labs which will help companies get products to the marketplace faster,” says Dr. Cleaversmith.

The heart of the BioCommons will be a state-of-the-art biotechnology incubator that will house companies working on new product development. It will also consist of research and development, manufacturing and support service facilities. Members of the PEI BioAlliance and industry representatives are involved in planning the new facility.

“Significant focus and energy is being directed toward the PEI Bioscience sector,” says Dr. Cleaversmith. “A strong partnership between government, industry, the PEI BioAlliance, and academia is leading to a solid foundation for commercial success. As a result, entrepreneurs and businesses from across the globe are identifying the benefits of PEI as a location of choice for emerging sectors.”

Present and future workforce

Over 800 employees and 30 companies are involved in bioscience on PEI. The sector requires a labour force with a wide variety of backgrounds. While some specialists will be recruited from off Island, it is hoped that the majority of positions can be filled locally from graduates of Holland College and UPEI.

Some of the specialized jobs currently in this sector:

- Production Technologist
- Quality Control & Quality Assurance Specialists
- Research Assistants
- Analytical Chemist
- Biochemists
- Molecular and Micro-Biologists
- Research & Development Scientist
- Research & Development Technician

Typical job categories bioscience companies need:

- research and development
- logistics and administrative support
- business development
- financial, legal and intellectual property
- sales and marketing

Dr. Cleaversmith says that the ability to attract and retain a skilled bioscience workforce depends on:

- a highly educated local workforce
- sufficient opportunities and critical mass to allow for career progression and employee mobility
- a healthy and productive R&D platform
- the magnetic effect of having a base of world class researchers and companies in the province
- the excellent quality of life that is available on the Island
- post-secondary educational and training opportunities such as:
 - science, business and financial programs offered at UPEI and the Atlantic Veterinary College,
 - MBA programs specializing in Biotechnology Management and Entrepreneurship at UPEI,
 - Bioscience Technology programs at Holland College and the opportunities associated with the newly announced Holland College Centre for Applied Science and Technology.

Excellence in research institutions and infrastructure

PEI has world class knowledge-based infrastructure and equipment to support the ongoing growth of the bioscience sector. The cluster is supported by the following research institutions:

- University of Prince Edward Island
- NRC Institute for Nutrisciences & Health
- Atlantic Veterinary College
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Crops and Livestock Centre
- Atlantic Swine Research Partnership
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Institute for Human Health Research
- PEI Food Technology Centre
- Atlantic Canada Network on Bioactive Compounds
- Holland College Bioscience Technology Program & Canada’s SMART Kitchen

To explore Bioscience companies and research on PEI, visit www.peibioalliance.com

For more information about business development opportunities in Bioscience, contact **Dr. Jason Cleaversmith** at 569-7742 or e-mail jacleaversmith@gov.pe.ca

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