

# Adirondack Daily Enterprise

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## Biotech firms get subsidies from state, village

By ED FORBES, Lake Placid News

LAKE PLACID — Upstate Biotech may have left the Olympic Village, but with help from state and local governments, the biological research industry remains.

On Tuesday, two upstart biotech firms — Lake Placid Biologicals (LP Bio) and Multiplex Biosciences — announced that they have received state and village funding to operate in Lake Placid. Officials from both companies joined with state and local leaders to make the announcement at the North Elba Town Hall.

“Today’s announcement paves the way for some new, high paying jobs — 32 jobs here in Lake Placid,” said Charles Gargano, chairman of the Empire State Development Corporation, which provided \$75,000 capital grants to both LP Bio and Multiplex for laboratory equipment and facility renovations. The funding is dependent on the two firms creating new local jobs, Gargano said.

Both companies are already up and running, but their CEOs said Tuesday that the funding will help speed their expansion.

“Just yesterday, we started renovating our facility,” LP Bio Tom Jelinek, a Lake Placid resident and 10-year veteran of Upstate Biotech, said. “We’ve already hired four people, and we’re advertising for another position.

Jelinek said LP Bio is currently operating in the basement of Adirondack Day Spa and Salon on Saranac Avenue and will focus on the manufacture of biochemical reagents, substances that aid scientific researches in a variety of areas. At present, Jelinek said the company employs five people and will soon employ seven. He hopes that will grow to 16 within the next three years.

In addition to funding from ESD, Jelinek said his company has received a \$250,000 line-item grant from state Sen. Betty Little, R-Queensbury. Jelinek said \$600,000 in private capital has been invested in the venture, as has an additional \$800,000 in loans from a consortium of regional banks and a \$416,000 grant from the Governor’s Office of Small Cities, which was administered by the Essex County Industrial Development Agency.

Without the support of state and local grant funding, Jelinek said, LP Bio could not have gotten off the ground.

“It really was essential,” Jelinek said.

Dominic Eisinger of Keene, another 10-year employee of Upstate, is CEO of Multiplex. He shared Jelinek's optimism.

"We have opened our facilities, we have customers already and we've hired a couple of people," Eisinger said, adding that the two firms contribute to a rich North Country biological services business tradition.

Multiplex is located in a building also occupied by iTouris at the Intersection of Mill Pond Drive and Wesvalley Road. The firm will specialize in the manufacture of immunoassays, Eisinger said.

Coupled with the \$75,000 grant from ESD, the firm has also attained a \$150,000 low-interest business development loan from the village of Lake Placid and a \$75,000 state grant from Little, Eisinger said.

Both Jelinek and Eisinger said they hoped to grow their firms — which they say won't compete with one another — to try to compensate for the loss of 125 Upstate Biotech jobs.

When asked if there were enough qualified people living in the Olympic Region to staff the two companies, Jelinek said, "It's regrettable, but there almost too many."

Still, both CEOs said they hoped they would be able to stay and Lake Placid and maybe even expand enough to purchase the former Upstate facility on Old Barn Road. Upstate closed in December 2005. The building is currently for sale for \$5.9 million.

Mayor Jamie Rogers, who presided over Tuesday's press conference, said that as far as he knows, no offers have been made on the property.

"Hopefully, one of these two companies can one day go there," Rogers said.

The mayor added that the formation of both companies was welcome news for a community that has lost hundreds of jobs in the wake of Upstate's closure, the December 2005 Lake Placid Lodge fire and the December 2005 closure of Tops Market.

"I think this is another success story," Rogers said of the two firms. "(They add) to the diversity of our community."

North Elba Supervisor Shirley Seney thanked Jelinek and Eisinger for persevering in Lake Placid.

"We look forward to having you expand," Seney said. "Thank you for having faith in us."

Little, who also attended the press event, said the two firms' commitments to Lake Placid are the result of the community's strong relationship with leaders in Albany.

“This is really a culmination of a lot of people’s work ... of a lot of people working together,” Little said. “We’re going to see both these companies grow.”