Startup ready to go global

EternoGen plans for next phase.

By Karyn Spory

Tuesday, July 2, 2013 at 2:00 pm

One of the first companies to receive startup capital from the University of Missouri System's Enterprise Investment Program announced Tuesday morning it has reached a funding milestone and will enter into a commercialization phase.

In February 2012, EternoGen LLC, a medical company that focuses on designing and manufacturing collagen replenishment therapies for soft-tissue therapeutic applications, received $200,000 from UM's Enterprise Investment Program. Today, the Columbia-based company has attracted nearly $1.5 million from additional investors and plans to step into the commercial arena in Europe.

Anna Tenstam Lundvall, chairwoman of the board and chief commercialization officer for EternoGen, said there is a market for collagen in the aesthetic medicine industry. Lundvall hopes to bring EternoGen and collagen to the market, targeting individuals who want to look younger without going under the knife.

Lundvall said the first human study will start after the summer in London, with the hopes of being able to market the brand by 2014 in Europe and Asia. She added that it would probably take the brand another four or five years before it is seen in the U.S. market. EternoGen also will have an office in Stockholm, Sweden, and it is opening an office in St. Louis as well as a result of receiving funding through a program there called Arch Grants.

Sheila Grant, chief technology officer at EternoGen and a professor of biological engineering at MU, said although EternoGen is making strides toward the aesthetic market in Europe, the company will keep its lab space in the MU Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place on South Providence Road to continue research.

Grant and her husband, Dave, the company's director of analytical development and a senior research design engineer in biological engineering, have been working with collagen for nearly two decades in efforts to extend the life of the material, thus allowing it to regenerate or produce new collagen. Grant said it will be those facets that will allow the protein to be used as regenerative tissue.
Luis Jimenez, chief executive officer of EternoGen, said collagen provides the structure and integrity of the body.

"If you didn't have collagen in the body, our bodies would be a puddle," he said.

Jimenez said his company has the ability to transform collagen, and he hopes one day it can use the protein to help people with burns, wound healing or "even troops to help them stop bleeding faster."

"That's the vision of the company and the thrust," he said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia's EternoGen prepares to sell longer-lasting collagen in Europe, Asia

By Scott Delhommer
July 2, 2013 | 4:41 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — EternoGen LLC, a Columbia startup, will begin commercialization and production of its new injectable cosmetic collagen with nanotechnology to sell in Asia and Europe. This technology, developed by researchers at MU, is said to increase the life of a collagen injection from about two months to two years.

The company developed the injectable collagen with nanotechnology, which prevents the collagen from degrading quickly. Anna Lundvall, chief commercialization officer, said at a news conference Tuesday that there isn't any collagen with nanotechnology on the market now, which gives EternoGen a chance to break into the market.

The company plans to start selling the new collagen and other products in Asia and Europe in late 2014, she said at the announcement in the MU Life Science Business Incubator.

Lundvall, who was introduced as the Steve Jobs of injectable cosmetics, said the barriers to commercialization are much lower in Europe and Asia than in the United States. She said she expects to see the product hit the market in the United States in four or five years because it first has to undergo studies with the Federal Drug Administration.

Adding nanotechnology to collagen, the most abundant protein in the human body, was developed in part by Sheila Grant, a biological engineering professor at MU and co-founder and chief technology officer at EternoGen. She said the invention has many other uses that they are also exploring such as cardiovascular and orthopedic repair. It might be developed for the military to help heal battlefield wounds, she said.

Different nanotechnology particles have different properties, Grant said. MU graduate students are researching how silver particles can be used in dressing wounds because silver has anti-microbial properties.

Lundvall said EternoGen is using gold particles for its cosmetic products.
"Gold particles prevent the degradation of the collagen," she said. "Bringing gold into the collagen has never been done before in injectable aesthetic medicine. It also has antioxidative and anti-inflammatory properties, which are good when injected into the face."

EternoGen exists in part because of MU, CEO Luis Jimenez said. The company received a $200,000 investment from the university’s Enterprise Investment Program, which is meant to invest in new technology companies in Columbia. Jimenez, a graduate of MU’s Trulaske College of Business, learned about the new collagen technology in a class about entrepreneurship.

Jimenez called the initial investment "extremely important" because it validated that the technology could be commercialized and sold. He said the initial investment allowed EternoGen to receive other funds from Missouri Technology Corp., a quasi-governmental body, and Centennial Investors, an angel investment fund.

Even though EternoGen is an independent company, the university remains linked with it because MU owns the intellectual property of using collagen with nanotechnology.

"This is one way for the university to generate funds, through these businesses," Grant said. "Any success the business has generates success for the university."

Jimenez said that pharmaceutical companies are looking into buying EternoGen but that there are no plans to sell right now.

Although it is opening offices in St. Louis and Stockholm, EternoGen will keep its incubation space at MU for research and development, according to information presented at the news conference. Lundvall said the Sweden office will be used for commercialization purposes.

Dave Grant, a senior design engineer at MU and Sheila Grant’s husband, said that they hope EternoGen will continue to grow in Columbia and bring economic development to the community but that there is the possibility of being bought out by a large pharmaceutical company if they’re offered enough money. Dave Grant also is co-founder and director of analytical development at EternoGen and helped invent the collagen nanotechnology.

"We’ll just keep going until it’s time to leave," he said.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
UM System to launch accelerated search for Deaton's successor

By Claire Boston
July 2, 2013 | 6:17 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri System is beginning an accelerated search for Chancellor Brady Deaton’s successor and aims to fill the position before Deaton steps down Nov. 15.

The Faculty Council Executive Committee met with UM System President Tim Wolfe on Monday to review a timeline for the search process, Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said.

UM is accelerating its search to compete with several other universities that are looking for new leaders. Other Association of American Universities members with vacancies to fill include California Institute of Technology, University of Michigan and The Ohio State University.

“A reason for this rapid search is to try and get an edge on these other institutions,” Tyrer said. “It’s better for us to act fast than to act slowly if we’re going to get a really top-notch individual.”

An accelerated search would also eliminate the need for an interim chancellor, Tyrer said.

Stephen Montgomery-Smith, chairman of the Faculty Affairs Committee, said eliminating an interim chancellor period would allow a new chancellor to immediately influence change at MU.

“An interim chancellor might not feel as if they have the mandate to bring MU to the place it needs to be in terms of quality,” Montgomery-Smith said. “A high-quality chancellor coming in soon will be really good for MU.”

Tyrer said UM officials will hold a series of town hall meetings in late July to identify the traits faculty, students, staff, alumni and other stakeholders seek in a new chancellor. Exact
dates for the meetings have not yet been confirmed, though Tyrer said Wolfe and the Faculty Council Executive Committee were considering the week of July 22.

The search will be closed in part because many candidates do not want to be considered if their names are released to the public, Tyrer said.

“Everyone wants this to be transparent,” Tyrer said. “The entire search process will be open, it’s just that the candidates will not be named.”

Student Affairs chairman Craig Roberts, who will lead Faculty Council beginning July 25, said the closed search process should not significantly affect stakeholders’ input in the search.

“It’s not so disturbing, so long as they listen to us and place a value on some of the things that we considered,” Roberts said.

In September and October, a private search firm will create a list of possible candidates, which a UM search committee will narrow further. Tyrer said the committee would aim to narrow the field to about three finalists who would interview with the search committee and Wolfe.

Tyrer said the new chancellor would represent only MU. To avoid conflict of interest with other UM schools, the UM System will not combine the chancellor role with the UM System president or executive vice-president roles.

“In the 40 or so years that the system has been in place, the independence of the chancellors is really important,” Tyrer said. “How can (a chancellor who also works for the UM System) issue a competition for funds if he’s also one of the competitors? That’s just not going to work.”

During the meeting, some Faculty Council members gave Wolfe the traits they hope to see in a new chancellor and agreed that a chancellor should demonstrate quality. Roberts said he hoped the new chancellor would focus on MU’s status as a land-grant university, Extension, AAU member and home of medical and law schools.

“In addition to being a quality person, we want someone who places a value on Mizzou,” Roberts said. “We’re one of four universities in the system, so the chancellor has to advocate for Mizzou.”

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
COLUMBIA CITY COUNCIL, Deaton discuss keeping museum's move temporary

By Greta Weber
July 2, 2013 | 4:07 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Visions for bringing the Museum of Art and Archaeology back to the main MU campus are becoming clearer after correspondence between the Columbia City Council and Chancellor Brady Deaton.

Moving the Museum of Art and Archaeology and the Museum of Anthropology to the former Ellis Fischel building on Business Loop 70 and Garth Avenue raised concerns about the collections' accessibility and safety. Museum supporters also feared the move might be permanent.

Scott Southwick, president of the Board of Museum Associates, a nonprofit support organization for the Museum of Art and Archaeology, thanked council members during their meeting Monday night for recommending that MU bring the museum back to campus.

"The Museum's first and best home should be the main University campus, either in a safe and renovated Pickard Hall or in a new facility," the council's letter stated. "Please assure the continuing presence of the Museum in the center of Columbia by starting capital planning and development as soon as possible."

Deaton responded positively to the council's recommendation for a new facility, stating that MU "would be very interested in exploring a fundraising partnership that could involve our working together to attract private donors as well as possibly using city financing and/or resources."

Southwick said he was encouraged by the exchange and said his main focus is developing plans for a more modern facility on campus.

"That letter appears to be the beginning of what could prove to be an extremely productive dialogue," Southwick said at the meeting.
He also was reassured that Deaton used the word "temporary" in describing the museum's relocation to the former Ellis Fischel, which MU now calls Mizzou North.

"The phrase 'the foreseeable future' agitated so many people," Southwick said. "This use of the word 'temporary' is very significant. It's exciting."

Museum Associates is forming a committee to explore a fundraising model for a new museum facility, Southwick said.

"We'll be inviting leaders from the city, the university and all parts of the community," he said at the council meeting.
Gov. Nixon vetoes 2 Missouri agricultural measures

12 hours ago • Associated Press

Gov. Jay Nixon on Tuesday vetoed agriculture legislation that would have ended a decades-old state ban on foreign ownership of Missouri farmland.

The provision lifting the ban was included in two broad agricultural bills. The Democratic governor said the provision was added to the legislation relatively late in the process. It would have capped foreign ownership at 1 percent.

"Whether, or to what degree, Missouri agricultural land should be foreign owned is an important policy choice for the people of Missouri, a decision that should be made through their elected representatives only after the specific proposal has been sufficiently vetted and openly considered," Nixon said in a veto message.

Missouri is one of several Midwestern states with laws passed during the 1970s amid concerns over Japanese investment that prohibit or restrict foreign farmland ownership.

Rep. Casey Guernsey, who was involved with the issue this session, has said the current law does not work and that there are loopholes allowing foreign owners to obscure their assets behind domestic-based groups.

State lawmakers approved the agricultural measures shortly before the announcement of plans for Shuanghui International Holdings Ltd., of China, to buy Smithfield Foods Inc., in a deal that would require shareholder approval and a federal regulatory review. A spokeswoman for Smithfield Foods said last month the two sides identified land policies during their discussions and that it presents no obstacles to "closing the proposed combination."

Guernsey, R-Bethany, said he did not learn about the Smithfield deal until after Missouri lawmakers ended their legislative session in mid-May.

A Columbia-based organization that opposes corporate consolidation of agriculture said the broader agricultural bills had been tainted by the foreign ownership issue.
Nixon also cited objections to a provision dealing with animal trespassing. He said the measure would not have required demonstrating that an animal had actually wandered onto another’s land and could have been applied to livestock and other animals such as dogs and cats. The governor also objected to a portion that he said would have exempted Cape Girardeau County from a statewide standard prohibiting the Land Reclamation Commission and the Department of Natural Resources from permitting mining operations within 1,000 feet of a school that has existed for at least five years.

Nixon on Tuesday signed into a law another broad agricultural bill that includes sections on farm loans, University of Missouri extension districts and urban agricultural zones.

Extension councils will be allowed to form single or multi-county district that then would be allowed to put a property tax on the ballot in that district of no more than 30 cents for every $100 of assessed valuation. Extension councils exist in each county and are charged with bringing education and research to all parts of the state.

Vetoed agricultural bills are SB9 and SB342.

Signed agricultural bill is HB542.

Online:
Legislature: http://www.moga.mo.gov
Gov. Nixon vetoes bills on jobless benefits, workers compensation claims and farm ownership

Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY • Gov. Jay Nixon has vetoed bills that could have made it harder for some people to receive jobless benefits by broadening what constitutes “misconduct” on the job.

The governor also vetoed measures that would have created a database of workers’ compensation claims and that would have allowed limited foreign ownership of farmland in the state.

The governor said the jobless bills would have greatly expanded the types of misconduct that disqualify people for jobless benefits to include activities outside the workplace and outside normal working hours.

Proponents of the legislation said the broader definition would help protect the integrity of the state’s unemployment system.

Nixon pointed to privacy concerns Tuesday in vetoing an online database that businesses could use to check a prospective employee’s workers’ compensation claims.

Nixon said in a message explaining the veto that such a database is “an affront to the privacy of our citizens and does not receive my approval.” The Democratic governor added in a written statement that there is a “stark contrast” between lawmakers’ action and statements on privacy issues, alluding to the recent dispute between the Republican-led Legislature and his administration over the practice of making electronic copies of birth certificates and other personal documents from people applying for drivers licenses.

Earlier this week, Nixon signed a law that reverses his administration’s six-month-old policy of making electronic copies of personal documents from drivers license applicants. State lawmakers had convened several investigatory committees looking into the process.
On the farm issue, Missouri's existing laws generally prohibit foreign businesses from owning or having an interest in agricultural land.

The two measures vetoed Tuesday would have allowed foreign ownership of up to 1 percent.

Nixon said the decision of whether and how much foreign ownership of farmland Missouri should permit needs more study by the Legislature.

While vetoing those measures, Nixon also signed an agriculture bill with provisions on several topics, including farm loans, University of Missouri extension districts and urban agriculture zones.