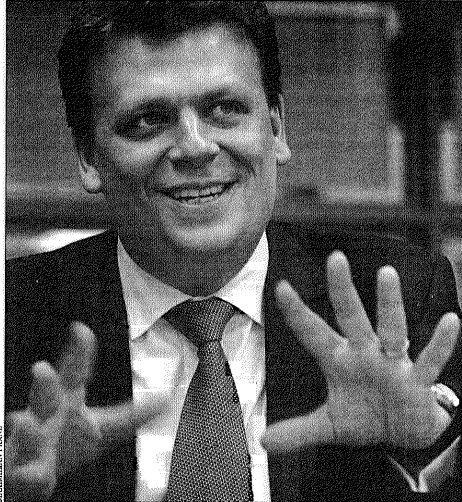


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BIOTECHNOLOGY



Michael Lauk, president of Seleon, talks about his company's expansion into Baltimore's Emerging Technology Centers.

German biotech picks ETC for its first North American home

BY JOE BACCHUS

Daily Record Business Writer

Seleon GMBH, a German biotechnology company, will open its first North American office at the **Emerging Technology Centers** in Baltimore.

Michael Lauk, the company's president, said he is looking forward to taking advantage of the resources of the **National Institutes of Health** in Bethesda and **The Johns Hopkins University** just a few blocks away. Seleon will be located at the ETC facility on 33rd Street.

Lauk said the key to Seleon's growth is working closely with the scientific community. If scientists and doctors can be convinced of the company's credentials, then business will naturally follow.

The medical device industry accounted for \$184 billion in sales in 2004, he said.

It is too early to tell exactly how much Seleon's arrival will benefit the Baltimore area, but the company expects to spend at least \$250,000 over the next few months on research, he said. The company will bring in its own scientists from Germany before hiring locally.

Seleon designs and manufactures medical devices for home and clinical care. One of the company's key products is the trans-nasal insufflation device, which treats respiratory sleep disturbances such as sleep apnea.

Unlike companies that put their financial viability in the hands of outside investors, Seleon began with private funds, so its researchers know how to produce marketable advancements on a budget, Lauk said.

While Seleon is not a large company,

it has worked with industry giants such as **Siemens AG**, a European rival of **General Electric Co.** and **Royal Philips Electronics**, he said.

Although the Emerging Technology Centers' business incubators are traditionally used for fledgling companies, the fact that the more established Seleon is new to the United States makes it perfect for the facility,

said Ann Lansinger, the ETC's executive director. Seleon will be able to take advantage of the ETC's local knowledge and industry contacts, and the nature of the company will also help spur technological advancement in the region, she said.

"It's the small companies who tend to be the innovators," she said. "They're the ones who can take the risks."

Christian S. Johansson, president of the **Economic Alliance of Greater Baltimore**, agreed that it is usually the larger companies that are "risk averse," and said Seleon is exactly the sort of company the Maryland technology industry needs. He cited a recent Milken Institute study which ranked the state second in the nation in the ability to grow and sustain a biopharmaceutical industry.

Nipon Das, the executive vice president of the alliance, added, "We have engineers with all these great ideas, but they need companies like Seleon who can help them take concept to reality."

He added that with the ever-evolving nature of the biotech industry, it is important to always push toward the next breakthrough. Das said the time between one company releasing a biotechnology advancement and a second company releasing a competitive alternative to that advancement is only 18 months. This results in a fast turnover rate for the industry.

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*Ann Lansinger
Emerging Technology Centers*