

# GEORGETOWN CITY Reporter



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## Genesis of an Idea

Eight years ago, over lunch at a restaurant on the Square, local businessman Dr. Kerry Oliver had an idea. Oliver, CEO of Georgetown pharmaceutical testing firm Radix BioSolutions, proposed a center where biotech entrepreneurs could share space in a collaborative environment. Others at that lunch table thought Oliver's idea had merit.



A research associate for Molecular Templates at TLCC

The Chamber of Commerce commissioned a feasibility study by Angelou Economics. "We were eager to see if there was a model that would work for us. We wanted a relatively low investment, but a high return," says Mel Pendland, president of the Chamber of Commerce. The study found that Georgetown fit the criteria for attracting biotech firms, including proximity to biomedical researchers at Southwestern University, University of Texas at Austin, Scott and White Healthcare, and Texas A&M University.

From that initial idea, the biotech center began to take shape. Local firm GREX built the 15,000

square-foot building, and along with funding and support from the City of Georgetown, Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, and Southwestern University, the Texas Life-sciences Collaboration Center opened in 2007.

Two of the initial companies at the center, Orthopeutics and Quantum Logic Devices, have "graduated" and have moved out. However, other growing companies have joined TLCC and more are interested in joining. "We vet the companies carefully, and we don't accept everyone," says Pendland, who is currently the chair of the TLCC board of directors.

## Economic Development Life-sciences Center Accelerates

The City of Georgetown's support for the Texas Life-sciences Collaboration Center on Cooperative Way is part of an economic development strategy in biotechnology. The center is an accelerator facility for small biotech firms commercializing new technology.

Biotech companies can have a significant economic impact because they create high wage jobs, make capital investments, and attract research funding. A recent survey of TLCC companies found that the average annual wage was \$138,000.

The City of Georgetown provided \$350,000 for the first five years of operations for the TLCC nonprofit organization, which employs three part-time employees that recruit and support companies at the center. The TLCC nonprofit also runs the wet lab at the facility.

In addition to support from the City, a \$461,340 grant from the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services to Southwestern University in 2009 funded the purchase of laboratory equipment for the TLCC. The educational grant has allowed for student interns from Southwestern University to gain hands-on experience working in the lab.

### Economic Development Corporation

City funding is based on performance agreements through the Georgetown Economic Development Corporation, which is a 4A nonprofit. GEDCO is funded from a designated Georgetown sales tax of one-eighth-of-one-percent. (GEDCO and the 4A sales tax were authorized by Georgetown voters in May 2005.) Performance agreements, based on meeting job creation and capital investment targets, are reviewed by the GEDCO board and each must also be approved by the city council.

## Second Building Planned

The Texas Life-sciences Collaboration Center is currently in a growth mode. "Just in the last six months we've had a great uptick in activity. I expect that will persist into the next year," says Russ Peterman, executive director for TLCC.

As of December, there are six member companies with 50 employees operating at the center. "We are out of space, and we have a large

enough pre-lease client list that we will start another building very soon," says Peterman.

At a meeting in November, TLCC board members and CEOs of member companies looked at potential configurations for the second building that will be constructed next to the first. Peterman hopes to begin construction on the building early next year.





## TLCC is Solar Powered

Jim Briggs, assistant city manager; Russ Peterman, TLCC executive director; Congressman John Carter, and Mayor George Garver in front of the solar array.

## January Events

### The Palace Theater

*I Hate Hamlet*, Jan. 13 – Feb. 5  
Details at [GeorgetownPalace.com](http://GeorgetownPalace.com), or call (512) 869-7469.

### Georgetown Symphony Society Pops Concert

Jan. 29

The Temple Symphony Orchestra presents a jazzy, upbeat pops spectacular with guest violinist Christian Howes. Klett Center for the Performing Arts at Georgetown High School. 4 p.m.  
Adults \$25 / \$20; students \$5.  
Available at the Williamson County Sun, both Georgetown HEB stores, the Sun City CA office (residents only), or at the door the afternoon of the concert. (512) 864-9591, [www.gsstx.org](http://www.gsstx.org).

### Cupid's Chase 5k

The 17th annual Cupid's Chase 5k is on Feb. 2. Register online at [cupid.georgetown.org](http://cupid.georgetown.org).

### New Year's and MLK Day Closings

City offices closed Jan. 2 and Jan. 16  
Regular trash and recycling pickup on Jan. 2 and Jan. 16

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**Reporter**

This summer, a photovoltaic solar array at TLCC became the first commercial grid-tied solar power generation system in Georgetown. The system features 51 solar panels and generates about 10 kilowatts of peak power, which is approximately 15 percent of the power used at

TLCC on an average day.

The total cost of the project was \$224,000, funded by a \$100,000 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, \$70,000 from the Georgetown Utility Systems electric utility, and \$54,000 from the TLCC, Meridian Solar,

and Georgetown Rail Equipment Company. The project serves as a pilot for the utility to conduct performance and survivability tests on a solar generation system. Austin-based Meridian Solar engineered, supplied, and built the comprehensive solar power generation system.

## TLCC companies



### Molecular Templates

Molecular Templates is a biopharmaceutical company that moved to the TLCC in 2009. The company is working on the discovery and development of a new class of drugs to treat cancer and other diseases. "We are genetically engineering [proteins] to recognize and kill cancer cells," says Dr. Eric Poma, CEO for Molecular Templates.

When Molecular Templates moved to TLCC in 2009, they had two employees. They have since expanded three times and now have 16 employees at the center. In November, Molecular Templates was awarded a \$10.6 million grant from Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. Website: [moleculartemplates.com](http://moleculartemplates.com).



### Radix BioSolutions

Radix BioSolutions, founded in 2002, designs and develops diagnostic tests for pharmaceutical companies. The company's CEO, Dr. Kerry Oliver, initially proposed the vision for the TLCC and helped to make it a reality.

As a contract research organization, Radix BioSolutions has agreements with a number of pharmaceutical companies to conduct biochemical testing as part of their drug development process. In 2010, Radix received \$250,000 in a performance

agreement with GEDCO for the purchase of a Gyrolab xP workstation. Oliver says the sample testing machine has helped them expand their business and create jobs. Website: [radixbiosolutions.com](http://radixbiosolutions.com).



### DiFusion Technologies

DiFusion Technologies is a medical device company that joined TLCC this year. DiFusion has developed a patented antimicrobial technology for use in orthopedic implants. Their products have the potential to significantly decrease post-surgical infections, one of the most common complications of implant surgery.

DiFusion Tech launched their first products in September and according to Derrick Johns, CEO and founder of the company, they are seeing strong sales. DiFusion currently has six employees and expects to grow to 20 in the next year. Website: [difusiontech.com](http://difusiontech.com).



### Cleanint

Cleanint is a product development company that joined the TLCC in 2009 with two employees. Their Cleanpen holder, Cleanstylus for credit card terminals, and Cleanstethoscope holder are designed to reduce the spread of germs. Each of their products contains a replaceable sponge with a patented, non-alcohol based sanitiz-

er formulation that is 99.99 percent effective in killing harmful germs.

Tuan Dam, CEO of Cleanint, says the company is in discussions with a number of group purchasing organizations that would make the Cleanstethoscope available to thousands of hospitals and emergency responders. Website: [cleanint.com](http://cleanint.com).



### Microbinc

Microbinc is a supplier of cleanroom systems, components, and supplies used in the biotech, datacenter, and semiconductor industries. The company joined TLCC in 2010. Products include ceiling grid systems, modular wall components, filtration systems, fume hoods, and furniture for custom cleanroom facilities. Website: [microbinc.com](http://microbinc.com).



### Viral Genetics

Viral Genetics is a biotechnology research and development company researching new treatments and methods of detection for HIV/AIDS, Lyme Disease, staph and strep, cancer, and certain autoimmune and infectious diseases. Dr. Newell-Rogers, a professor with appointments at Texas A&M Health Sciences Center and Scott and White Hospital in Temple, is the advisor for Viral Genetics. In 2010, Dr. Newell-Rogers established a research and development lab at TLCC. Website: [viralgenetics.com](http://viralgenetics.com).