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SEBIO Announces Success of the 11th Annual Investor Forum; Winner of Early-Stage Company Shootout Named

More than 300 people attended the Eleventh Annual Southeastern BIO Investor Forum on December 3-4th in Charleston, South Carolina. The Forum is the Southeast's premier life sciences venture capital conference.

SEBIO's Investor Forum celebrated the growth of the life sciences industry in the Southeast. Investors, entrepreneurs, researchers, and companies interfacing with the industry met to honor the productivity of newly formed and established companies in the region as well as to formulate strategies to foster growth in the coming decade. This year's Forum brought investment banks, seasoned venture capital funds, and large and intermediate pharmaceutical companies together with newly emerging companies and research institutions to discuss the opportunities and prospects for growth over the course of the next few years.

David Day, Director, Office of Technology Licensing, University of Florida, and newly elected Chair of SEBIO confirmed that, "Once again, SEBIO proved to be an outstanding forum for all of the players in the Southeast's biomedical venture industry to come together. With venture capitalists from the eastern seaboard and beyond, established and aspiring entrepreneurs, and savvy service providers representing both life sciences and medical device companies, the atmosphere was rich with interactions and the progress of business deals."

The Investor Forum offered something for everyone: an early-stage event, which profiled the best new initial investment opportunities in the region; a presenting company event, which showcased companies in the region that have already completed at least one round of institutional financing; and the BIO/Plan Competition, which brought forward the most promising new technologies from the region's research organizations.

The early-stage event allowed participants to introduce their companies to selected advisory teams, which then chose the four best to participate in the Early-Stage Shootout. During the Early-Stage Shootout, the companies had the opportunity to present to the entire conference audience. The selected participants of the Early-Stage Shootout were: Abeome Corporation (Athens, GA), Ion Surgical Technologies, Inc. (Mt. Pleasant, SC), KIYATEC, LLC (Pendleton, SC), and Synereca Pharmaceuticals (Chapel Hill, NC).

The winner of the Early-Stage Shootout, among the Forum's most popular events, was Ion Surgical Technologies, Inc. Ion Surgical Technologies has developed devices and arthroscopic surgical methods that maximize healing surfaces and eliminate or reduce the use of implants for ACL reconstruction and rotator cuff repair. The winner was determined by a panel of celebrity venture capitalist judges.

"There was no lack of enthusiasm at the Forum despite a tough economic environment," notes SEBIO 2009 Investor Forum Chair Miriam Wilson, Resource Network Manager, SC Launch. "The conference was successful in connecting emerging life science companies with potential investors and we anticipate a significant increase in deal flow over the next year as a result."

The two day event explored research, market, and financing trends with nationally recognized leaders from the investment and bioscience industries. Participants included biotechnology executives, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, investment bankers, and other industry professionals.

The conference's opening lunch featured a panel of leading, out-of-region venture capitalists, including Gerry Brunk, Lumira Capital; Sherrill Neff, Quaker BioVentures; Dennis Purcell, Aisling Capital; Armen Shanafelt, Lilly Ventures; and Ivor Royston, Forward Ventures, as the Moderator. The panel provided their perspective on such hot topics as how

healthcare reform will impact innovation and investment strategy, differences in the current VC model as compared to the VC model of years past, how syndication strategies have changed, and the current exit environment.

John C. Martin, Chairman and CEO at Gilead Sciences and a conference keynote speaker, closed the Investor Forum with a presentation entitled “Pharmaceutical Company Innovation Has Dramatically Improved the Care of HIV/AIDS Patients over the Past Two Decades.” Dr. Martin presented a synopsis of Gilead Sciences’ therapeutic advances over the past 20 years and their approach to and the challenges associated with expanding access to therapies in the developing world. He also presented two case studies about the pharmaceutical industry’s role in addressing the H1N1 pandemic and the HIV/AIDS global emergency.

The 2010 Southeast BIO Investor Forum will be held November 3-4, 2010, at the Ritz-Carlton, Buckhead in Atlanta, Georgia. Further details will be posted on the SEBIO website.