

Illinois Science + Technology Park

April, 2003 marked a sad month for the Midwest: pharmaceutical behemoth Pfizer acquired Pharmacia and in the process began dismantling of Pharmacia operations including two once-proud multinational pharma companies G.D. Searle in Chicago and The UpJohn Company in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Both of these well-known Midwest brands started in the late 1800's and had over a century of pharmaceutical tradition across the globe.

G.D. Searle was an early innovator in pharmaceuticals including oral contraceptives, new cardiovascular medicine, Metamucil, NutraSweet, new anti-ulcer therapy, and finally new approaches to chronic pain management: the Cox-2 inhibitors and Celebrex (a blockbuster drug). In one fell swoop, starting in April 2003, some 2,500 Searle jobs disappeared in Chicagoland mostly concentrated in the town of Skokie: 2,000 of those jobs were focused on pharmaceutical R&D. Even worse, was the shuttering of an important Chicago R&D center, which became a ghost town for 2 years.

The challenge for the Illinois bioscience community and state government was how to somehow resuscitate this important legacy of R&D: could a foreign pharma company be attracted to set up operations in Chicago? After much search, in March, 2005, Forest City Science + Technology Group, a division of the Midwestern-based (Cleveland) publicly-traded real estate developer, acquired the former Searle R&D campus (23 acres) in downtown Skokie from Pfizer. Forest City began the process of repurposing a 70 year old single-user enclosed campus into a modern open multi-user bioscience campus to become the Illinois Science + Technology Park, strategically located midway between the academic scientific prowess of Chicago's formidable hospitals and universities downtown and nearby Evanston, and the large pharma companies and life science community of the North Shore – no small task!

Five years later, the promise of the Illinois Science + Technology Park is a reality. Forest City opened up the once-enclosed campus, tearing down some non-historic buildings and renovating the scientifically-relevant remaining buildings, including the original first building built by John G. Searle in 1941 (4901 Searle Parkway, known in the Searle vernacular as "A Bldg.") which was an architectural style of Chicago of the time known as Arte Moderne. The 23 acre campus plan is to add 1.3 million square feet of additional scientific space to the existing 670,000 sf so as to eventually house some 5,000 scientists and life science employees. Today, the Park has brought back just short of 1,000 people and jobs and some 18 life science companies, including Chicago's premier nanotechnology commercial hub (with 5 Northwestern spin-out nanotech companies and the national nanotech trade association, the NanoBusiness Alliance) and two international pharma companies: the Astellas Research Institute (the U.S. R&D branch of the 2nd largest Japanese pharma companies) and its sibling research group Astellas Pharma U.S., and the German company Vetter (a leading global manufacturer of biotech drugs).

Vetter managing director Peter Soelkner noted, "The Illinois Science + Technology Park was our destination of choice. Not only does it offer us excellent infrastructure and

services, it's located in a thriving biopharmaceutical region – a true community of industry and academic colleagues. Its central position in the country also makes it easy for our North American customers to reach us, and us them.”

The goal of the Illinois Science + Technology Park is to create for Chicagoland a significant life science mall, containing all the key product development needs for drugs, diagnostics and medical devices, including the key service companies that support the biotech and pharma industry. Key contract research organizations (CRO's) such as Midwest BioResearch, contract manufacturing organizations (CMO's) such as Vetter, and industry service groups such as ThermoFisher Scientific, World Courier, and Global Pharma Device. Chicago's largest hospital group, North Shore University Health Systems (with 4 hospitals), which recently established a strategic relationship with the University of Chicago, located its IT systems including patient medical information database and patient call center, at the Park.

With the spectacular growth of **nanotechnology** into materials, sensors and drugs, and the proximity of the Illinois Science + Technology Park to Northwestern's nearby Evanston campus and its International Nanotechnology Institute, the Park has become a logical home for the flourishing of such companies as NanoInk (technology to protect against counterfeiting drug raw materials and product), Nanotope (new spinal cord injury therapy), NanoIntegris (carbon nanotubes), NanoSonix (nanoscale imaging), and Polyera (printable electronics). As nanotech branches out into the world of CleanTech (clean technologies), this could well become the next area of nano growth at the ISTP.

As the U.S. represents some 40% of the world's pharma, drug and medical device markets, there are still many international life science companies that are looking for places to establish a base in the U.S. Working closely with the State of Illinois' overseas trade offices (Illinois Office of Trade and Investment) and IBIO's Ambassador program, the Illinois Science +Technology Park offers these companies an optimal location to establish U.S. operations and expand to fit their growth needs. The ISTP is actively involved in recruiting life science companies from Israel, Japan, India, Europe and Canada. The ISTP campus offers:

- State-of-the-art wet lab space for biology and chemistry-based science
- Two pilot plants for drug product (solid dosage forms such as tablets and pills, and sterile fill injectable) with class 10,000 and 100,000 clean rooms.
- Conferencing center with auditorium and video-conferencing capability
- Vivarium
- Nuclear magnetic resonance suites
- Campus café with catering group
- Easy access to Chicago mass-transit (Skokie Swift and nearby Morton Grove Metra station)

Although the Illinois Science + Technology Park is not adjacent to a major Chicago research university, its proximity to Northwestern University's nearby main campus in Evanston provides a logical point for collaboration, and place for Northwestern's new

spinout companies to land, as evidenced by the nanotechnology migration to Skokie and the ISTP.

The Illinois Science + Technology Park is destined to become Chicagoland's premier and largest life science hub, and the once unique campus created by John G. Searle in 1941 has already been restored to its prior vitality and use as a major center of R&D innovation.