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Gov. Perry Breaks Ground for Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine

COLLEGE STATION – Gov. Rick Perry today helped break ground for the Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine at Texas A&M University (TIGM), which will make Texas an international focal point for research and job growth in life sciences. TIGM is a collaboration of the state, Texas A&M University System and Lexicon Genetics, a world leader in genome mapping. In July 2005, Perry announced a \$50 million Texas Enterprise Fund grant to establish the institute.

“This facility was made possible because of the groundbreaking work of Lexicon Genetics, because of the vision of our higher education leaders, and because the state of Texas committed \$50 million from the Texas Enterprise Fund recognizing that genetics research will lead to life-saving medical treatments and therapies,” Perry said. “The purpose of this institute is not to study mice, but to cure man.”

A primary goal of the institute is to create a “knockout mouse” with a specific gene turned off, so that scientists can learn the function of that gene and later develop treatments for human diseases and conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, birth defects and cancer. To meet that goal, Lexicon will use \$35 million of the Enterprise Fund grant to create two copies of its knockout mouse cell line library, including one housed at Texas A&M. TIGM’s resources will be available to researchers from across Texas; they will also be open to members of the private sector who will use the knowledge gained at the Institute to develop new technologies.

“TIGM will not only be a great source of hope and healing for the sick and injured, but a tremendous source of opportunity and jobs for Texas families,” Perry said. Over the next decade, TIGM will create 5,000 new high paying jobs in Texas with an average salary of \$60,000. The project is expected to attract scores of biotech firms that want to be near the world’s premiere genetic research facility.

“One of the most critical goals of research at institutions of higher education must be to move innovations from the lab to the marketplace: the process known as commercialization,” Perry said. “There is no greater example of the potential of commercialization than the mouse genome project.”

TIGM will also help Texas draw down millions more in federal and private research dollars. The National Institute of Health has identified this type of mouse genome research as one of the most promising for creating the next generation of medical treatments.

“By investing taxpayer dollars in high-tech research and development projects like TIGM, Texas stands to reap economic and scientific benefits far greater than the money spent up front. History shows that when government, industry and academia join forces to solve great challenges, the possibilities for revolutionary developments are limitless,” Perry said. “With the breaking of ground on the Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine at Texas A&M University, we have taken a critical step towards that future.”

In 2003, the legislature, at Perry's request, created the TEF with \$295 million to allow the state to provide grants to help “close deals” and bring jobs and employers to Texas. The TEF was reauthorized in 2005, and allocated an additional \$180 million. Since its creation, the TEF has been used to close deals that will create more than 40,000 new jobs for Texans. More than 600,000 new jobs have been created in Texas since July 2003.

Perry was joined at the groundbreaking by Congressman Kevin Brady, Texas A&M University Chancellor Dr. Bob McTeer, Chairman John White and other members of the Board of Regents, and the leader of Lexicon Genetics, Dr. Arthur Sands.