

NU NEWS RELEASE: New report highlights four Nebraska companies spun off from NU research

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Four Nebraska companies that are spinoffs of [University of Nebraska](#) research are highlighted in a nationwide “success stories” report released today by [The Science Coalition](#).

The report – “Sparking Economic Growth: How federally funded university research creates innovation, new companies and jobs” – identifies 100 companies across the United States that trace their founding to breakthrough research conducted at a university and sponsored by a federal agency. According to The Science Coalition, these 100 companies now collectively employ more than 100,000 people and have annual revenues of nearly \$100 billion.

The report was released one day before the House is expected to debate reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, which will authorize funding over the next five years for key scientific agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy’s Office of Science.

The Nebraska companies included in the report are: [J.A. Woollam Co., Inc.](#), of Lincoln; [LI-COR Biosciences](#) of Lincoln; Virtual Incision Corporation of Lincoln; and [Ximerex, Inc.](#), of Blair.

“These companies – which represent a small sampling of all the businesses spun off from University of Nebraska research – demonstrate that one of the best strategies for ensuring strong economic growth is investment in university research,” said NU President James B. Milliken.

“The University of Nebraska has a long history of leveraging its research successes to help the people of the state – and around the world – lead healthier, higher-quality, more productive lives. Strong federal investment in basic research will allow us to continue our mission of service to Nebraska.”

According to The Science Coalition, universities conduct the majority of basic research – 55 percent in 2008 – in the United States. The federal government is the primary source of funding for basic research, which is key to fundamental scientific discoveries.

The Science Coalition is a nonprofit organization of 45 of the nation’s leading public and private research universities, including the University of Nebraska. The full “Sparking Economic Growth” report is available at www.sciencecoalition.org/successstories/.

More about the Nebraska companies highlighted in the report:

- **[J.A. Woollam Co., Inc.](#)** Founded in 1987 as a spinoff from research done by John Woollam, an electrical engineering professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, J.A. Woollam Co., Inc., has become a world leader in the manufacturing of spectroscopic ellipsometers for non-destructive thin film and bulk material characterization. The company has secured more than 100 patents internationally and employs 40 people, most of whom are scientists and engineers. Woollam's research has been funded by the Department of Defense, NASA and National Science Foundation.
- **[LI-COR Biosciences.](#)** In the 1960s, UNL launched a project to develop sorghum as a food product. William Biggs was hired to develop research instruments for the project, and he helped design one that attracted global attention after it was featured in the journal *Ecology*. In 1971, Biggs founded Lambda Instruments Corporation to manufacture the instruments; the name was changed to LI-COR in 1978. LI-COR now employs nearly 300 people, and more than 30,000 customers in more than 100 countries use LI-COR instruments.
- **Virtual Incision Corporation.** Founded in 2006, Virtual Incision Corporation is the result of a collaboration between University of Nebraska Medical Center surgeon Dmitry Oleynikov, who is interested in improving surgery practices, and UNL mechanical engineer Shane Farritor, who has expertise in designing robots. Through their company, Oleynikov and Farritor will develop and commercialize the first inexpensive, remotely operated, in vivo miniature robotic surgical tools and camera systems that operate within the abdominal cavity. The robots can be inserted through a tiny incision to perform minimally invasive surgeries, significantly reducing pain and recovery times. Oleynikov and Farritor's research has been funded by the Department of Defense, NASA and National Institutes of Health.
- **[Ximerex, Inc.](#)** Founded in 1993, Ximerex, Inc. grew from research conducted by William Beschorner at UNMC and Johns Hopkins University on xenotransplantation – transplanting organs from one species to another. The company is dedicated to the treatment of tissue and organ failure by transplanting cells, tissues and organs from pigs with little or no anti-rejection drugs. This would help address a severe shortage of human organ donors. Ximerex intends to pursue FDA-allowed clinical trials of its proprietary technologies and, if successful, would explore corporate partnerships to distribute its products. Beschorner has received funding for his research from the National Institutes of Health and National Institute of Standards and Technology.