



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$150,000 GRANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

### *Illinois Homeland Security Market Continues to Earn National Reputation as it Responds with Products to Address Critical Needs in Homeland Security*

**March 15, 2006, Chicago** - Delivering on his commitment to attract and support business engaged in the homeland security industry throughout Illinois, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today announced a \$150,000 Opportunity Returns grant for Evanston-based Ohmx Corporation to develop a low-cost, reusable field deployable biosensor reader that will use a new electrochemical protein detection method to screen for a variety of biological threats, including Anthrax. The funding is being provided to Ohmx through the Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Homeland Security Market Development (HSMD) bureau.

"It is vital for our state to be at the forefront of the homeland security industry and supporting the development of innovations and technology that contribute to improving our national security. We can successfully respond to the security needs of the nation, and continue to contribute to the region's economic growth by creating the high-tech and high paying jobs of today and tomorrow," Gov. Blagojevich said.

Ohmx previously received a \$5,000 Challenge Grant from the Homeland Security Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (HSIEC) at Northwestern University. Ohmx' founder, Dr. Thomas Meade is the Eileen M. Foell Professor in Cancer Research and professor of chemistry, biochemistry, molecular biology and cell biology, neurobiology and physiology and radiology at Northwestern University.

"We are thrilled to be the recipients of this investment from State of Illinois and Gov. Blagojevich. These resources will help in our effort to pioneer new technologies with applications in homeland security as well as other commercial markets. It is programs like the IPG that are helping to position Illinois as an environment focused on being at the leading edge of scientific innovation and technology development," said Meade.

"This funding represents an investment in our local economy that will not only help create jobs, but help spur greater innovation and technology to keep our communities safer," State Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg (D-Evanston) said. "Gov. Blagojevich and I are committed to helping the homeland security industry continue to grow and prosper here in Illinois."

"Illinois businesses have a strong track record at adapting to the changing demands of the global marketplace, and Gov. Blagojevich's support of the thriving local homeland security market is further evidence of our state's ability to operate on the cutting-edge," State Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston) said.

DCEO's Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program was created to accelerate the commercialization, improvement, and production of goods and services with an application in homeland security and other sectors. IPG funds are intended to help create jobs and produce economic activity in Illinois. IPG is the nation's first state-funded grant program focused on developing products to meet homeland security needs.

"Homeland security is not a singular industry; it encompasses multiple industries merging their resources to find solutions to keep our nation safe. Gov. Blagojevich is the catalyst to bringing these companies and their services together. No other state in the country is better equipped than Illinois to be a leader in the homeland security industry. From manufacturing and biotechnology to aerospace and finance, we have an unmatched level of diversity in our state's economy," DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

DCEO's Homeland Security Market Development bureau is focused on supporting businesses engaged in the homeland security industry and the bureau offers a variety of tools designed to help existing Illinois companies expand operations and utilize available state and federal programs and services. **For more information on HSMD, visit [www.hsmd.illinois.gov](http://www.hsmd.illinois.gov).**

Gov. Blagojevich's *Opportunity Returns* regional economic development strategy is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois' history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn't work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – each with a regional team that is empowered and expected to rapidly respond to opportunities and challenges. *Opportunity Returns* is about tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. It is about upgrading the skills of the local workforce, increasing the access to capital, opening new markets, improving infrastructure, and creating and retaining jobs. It's about successfully partnering with companies and communities, large and small, to help Illinois reach its economic potential.