

STUART, FL –Congressman Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) today announced a \$3.8 million competitive grant to assist VGTI Florida, the Florida-funded expansion of Oregon Health & Science University's highly successful Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute, with the completion of construction of its new biomedical research laboratory at the Florida Center for Innovation in Tradition, Fla.

“Federal funding for this research laboratory will allow VGTI to continue leading the way with cutting edge research into new life-saving vaccines and therapies, particularly for seniors,” Rooney said. “The completion of this project will be a boon to the local economy, bringing high skills, high-wage jobs for many Floridians.”

“We are very pleased that this grant will help us complete construction of our state-of-the-art facility in St. Lucie County to be staffed by some of the world’s leading scientists in the fight against disease,” said Mark Williams, Chief Operating Officer of VGTI Florida. “This grant will help speed our search for potentially life-saving vaccine and gene therapies for at-risk populations, and it will help further spur the creation of a dynamic cluster of biomedical innovation in Florida.”

VGTI Florida’s main objective is to conduct groundbreaking research to respond to threats from viral diseases including HIV/AIDS, as well as focus on vaccine development with a special focus on therapies that protect the aging population, which is the most vulnerable to disease. VGTI Florida plans to build a 100,000 square-foot biomedical research facility to house laboratories, scientific staff and a vivarium for small animals. The proposed site is an eight-acre tract at the Florida Center for Innovation Industrial Park at Tradition in the City of Port St. Lucie, adjacent to the Torrey Pines Institute for Molecular Studies.

The highly competitive grant, awarded by the Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration, will allow the facility to complete full construction and allow VGTI Florida to finalize its hire of a projected 189 full-time equivalent employees. The project is expected to generate about 530 temporary construction jobs as well. VGTI Florida applied for the grant with assistance from staff at Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council.

“To learn more about grant related services or to request a letter of support, please contact my

office at (772) 288-4668 or visit <http://Rooney.house.gov>,” Rooney said.

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