

COLUMBUS, OHIO **INCUBATOR**

## **Ohio Voters Extend Third Frontier Program By \$700M**

BY JONATHAN MATSEY

Ohio voters have overwhelmingly voted to extend the Third Frontier Program, which provides research and investment dollars to universities, companies and angel funds, for another five years with \$700 million in bonds.

Third Frontier was originally approved in 2002 with \$1.6 billion in bond funding to boost high-tech research in Ohio over a 10-year period. Initially slated to expire in 2011, the new commitment extends the program to 2016.

According to unofficial results from the Ohio Secretary of State's Web site, 61.7%, or 1.03 million voters, approved the measure, with 38.3%, or 642,000, voting against it in a May 4 ballot question.

"The program was launched to providing funding to invest in emerging technologies in Ohio in health care, advanced energy and materials, and electronics and sensors," said Baiju Shah, chief executive of BioEnterprise, a business formation and acceleration group that helps manage the life science piece of Third Frontier.

Shah said the \$700 million will provide the entire Third Frontier Program with a slightly higher per-year allocation than it previously had.

Third Frontier invests in university technology on the verge of spinning out, early-stage companies, seed and angel funds, and out-of-state companies looking to move to Ohio.

Brian Duncan, the Ohio venture partner for Arboretum Ventures, said the Third Frontier fund is key to leveraging the assets of the state. The referendum shows that voters are interested in funding high-tech jobs even while the state reels from the recession, he said.

"It's a reflection of the people of the state of Ohio, who realized the impact we've had," he said. "It allows us to build in the great health care institutions we have in the region."

Duncan is also a vice president for BioEnterprise, specializing in medical devices.

Shah said the entire Third Frontier program to date has invested in 637 companies and provided Ohio with 55,000 jobs. It also puts the state in a special category - only California, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Texas provide state funding for start-ups and high-tech on such a scale, he said.

"The part I'm still giddy about is over 1 million voters have endorsed Ohio's high-tech future," said Shah.

<http://www.ohiothirdfrontier.com>

<http://www.bioenterprise.com>