

i-Gate

Innovation Hub Connects Clean Tech Small Business with Labs and State

Getting connected with government officials, potential partners, investors, and technical resources isn't generally an easy task for startup companies. But for clients of the i-GATE (Innovation for Green Advanced Transportation Excellence) innovation hub, there is a mechanism in place to provide a wide range of business support.

i-GATE (www.igateihub.org) was one of the first of six innovation hubs (iHubs) to be recognized by the California Governor's Office of Economic Development. As part of the iHub program, i-GATE is an example of local and regional government, premier national research laboratories, and the business and local community collaborating to develop the technology sector to create jobs and drive regional economic growth.

The collaborative effort is administered by the City of Livermore in close partnership with Sandia National Laboratories/California (SNL/CA) and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). The public-private partnership extends throughout the region with over 40 government, industry, research organization, venture capital, and academic partners, including two University of California campuses. Chevron is the latest industry partner to join.

In June 2011, the i-GATE National Energy Systems Technology (NEST) incubator opened. It acts as a small business support system to accelerate the commercialization of innovative technologies related to green transportation and clean energy. There are now eight i-GATE clients developing fuel cell, electric vehicle, battery, and ultra-light rail technologies (see CyberTran prototype, right). i-GATE continues accepting applications.

i-GATE programs offer small technology company clients business expertise, entrepreneurial education, collaboration opportunities, and technology transfer assistance. Small businesses that are part of the i-GATE program or are housed in the NEST incubator can receive assistance in contacting appropriate technical personnel, programs, and facilities at the national laboratories.

Some of the Livermore resources, such as the Combustion Research Facility at SNL/CA, and the High Performance Computing Innovation Center at LLNL, can provide major advantages to companies wishing to avail themselves of cutting-edge research tools and ready access to skilled researchers.

The collaborative i-GATE program is not only working on connecting businesses to the national laboratories, but also on helping to move SNL and LLNL technologies out of the labs.

Initiatives such as i-GATE follow a model of successful shared use campuses adjacent to federal laboratories, such as the Sandia Science & Technology Park (SS&TP) in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the NASA-Ames Research Park in Moffett Field, California. The i-GATE program, which allows for increased access and collaboration with business partners, will help accelerate the flow of clean technologies from the labs to the marketplace.



California Energy Commissioner Carla Peterman and James Bartridge (CEC) discuss electric vehicle technologies with Fraser Murison Smith (right) of i-GATE NEST client, ElectraDrive.



The partnership with i-GATE has made it easier for businesses and the state of California to engage with Sandia and its assets, helping to push our economic goals forward.

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