

News Release

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:
Jacqueline Johnson, 202/586-5806



Thursday, October 21, 2004

\$1.5 Million Grant Presented to Pinellas Plant Community Reuse Organization

LARGO, FL, WASHINGTON, DC — Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham and House Appropriations Chairman Bill Young today announced an award of a \$1.5 million Department of Energy grant to the Pinellas Plant Community Reuse Organization (CRO) for infrastructure upgrades and to assist in the economic development of a high-tech incubator at the Young – Rainey STAR Center in Pinellas County, Florida.

“Because of Chairman Young’s efforts and the efforts of this active, innovative Community Reuse Organization, more people are employed at this facility today than when it was a DOE facility in the 1990s. That’s good for Largo and America,” said Secretary Abraham. “Today’s grant will help to build upon the progress that has already been made by investing in infrastructure improvements and the creation of a high-tech incubator.”

“The Energy Department is a good neighbor to the communities surrounding our sites,” Secretary Abraham said. “We will continue to provide technical assistance to the Pinellas Plant Community Reuse Organization and other CROs around the country to retain, expand or create jobs for workers affected by restructuring efforts.”

“The Pinellas STAR Center is an example of how federal, state and local governments can work together to create good, long-lasting jobs throughout our nation,” U.S. Rep. C. W. Bill Young (R-FL), Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said. “We would not have succeeded in this project without the continuing support of the U.S. Department of Energy.”

Secretary Abraham was joined at the presentation ceremony by Florida Representative Bill Young, Pinellas County Commissioner Bob Stewart and President of the Pinellas Plant Community Reuse Organization, Chuck Rainey.

The grant will be used to continue the transformation and complete the infrastructure improvements required to transform the former DOE facility into a Department of Energy single occupant defense plant, now known as the Young – Rainey STAR Center, into a high-tech manufacturing center. Currently, the site houses more than 20 to 25 tenants with 1,500 employees. These funds will allow contracts to be signed to replace a chiller unit, replace several air handler units and start an emergency power synchronization project. In addition, \$100,000 of the funds will be used for administrative purposes and for a high-tech incubator project.

The Young – Rainey STAR Center is a national example of the successful transformation of a federal facility into a productive, self-sustaining economic incubator. In the early 1990's as the need for nuclear weapons decreased, the DOE worked with the CRO to fund the facility's transformation and commercialize the space.

The mission of the Pinellas Plant CRO is to mitigate the adverse consequences of closing the former DOE weapons plant and utilize its resources to help maintain the technologies developed at the plant. The Energy Department and the Pinellas Plant CRO have created and retained more than 3,075 new jobs and estimate an additional 700 jobs will be created or retained by the end of 2006.

R-04-338
