NBAF

(Greg Cima – JAVMAnews) Construction of a $1.25 billion foreign animal disease laboratory began May 27 with a groundbreaking in Manhattan, Kansas.

The planned 570,000-square-foot National Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility is expected to be operational in 2022, according to the Department of Homeland Security. It will be used by the DHS and two Department of Agriculture agencies, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and the Agricultural Research Service, for conducting research, training veterinarians in emergency preparedness and response, and developing disease countermeasures.

It is being built to replace the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, which is off the coast of Long Island, New York, and has been used for work on foreign animal diseases since 1954.

The NBAF will give the nation a laboratory meeting the highest biosafety level classification—biosafety level 4—for use in studying foreign animal diseases and emerging diseases affecting livestock and other large animals, DHS information states.

In a statement about the groundbreaking for the laboratory, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said the NBAF's advanced laboratory capabilities will help protect the nation's food supply and public health.

"We will soon be able to ensure availability of vaccines and other rapid response capabilities to curb an outbreak," he said in the statement.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in the DHS announcement that replacing aging laboratory facilities has been a USDA and DHS priority.

"This innovative new facility is capable of producing the research needed to protect our nation's farmers, food supply, public health, and the rural economy," he said.

Avatekh Inc.

A Lawrence-based technology company**, Avatekh Inc.** is working with K-State's Electronics Design Laboratory and Manhattan-based Ultra Electronics ICE and its parent company Ultra Electronics Holdings, to develop and manufacture a series of new devices and technologies for the commercial marketplace and military use. AvaTekh develops algorithms and circuits that are used in wireless communication, power management, GPS, sensors, aerospace and defense, as well as signal and image processing.

"We thought we'd have to go to Silicon Valley or the east coast to find development partners for that next step in the process," said Carrie Nikitin, CEO of AvaTekh. "We don't do manufacturing, which makes it challenging. But we found that Manhattan with Kansas State University has this entire technology development and manufacturing ecosystem that has the resources for everything we can't do. Plus, we'll be driving interests in the businesses in Kansas and creating economic opportunities for the state we live in."

The university's Electronics Design Laboratory will help AvaTekh develop and test prototype devices that use the company's proprietary algorithms. The lab specializes in the design of custom electronic circuitry, embedded software, instrumentation and data acquisition systems. EDL develops engineered prototype systems for the university and industry and can direct the transition to product manufacturing, which in turn help Kansas businesses and the state's economy.

AvaTekh also is collaborating with the Manhattan-based Radiation Detection Technologies Inc. and Steven Bellinger, Kansas State University research associate and CEO of Radiation Detection Technologies Inc., on development of industrial radiation detection instruments using AvaTekh's analog hardware algorithms.

The expanded partnership was facilitated by the Kansas State University Institute for Commercialization and Manhattan's Knowledge Based Economic Development LLC.

MediVet Biologics

A global animal health company is using technology developed at K-State to expand their presence into Manhattan. ***MediVet Biologics***, with locations in Australia and Kentucky, specializes in veterinary regenerative medicine and biological solutions for equine and small animals. They will use lab space in the Kansas Entrepreneurial Center on Hayes Drive.