

**Bangorbiz**

## Seed grant boosts Trillium Diagnostics

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Bruce Davis, president of Trillium Diagnostics, says a seed grant from Maine Technology Institute will open new markets for the biotechnology firm

A statewide economic development grant is helping a small Bangor biotechnology firm bolster its presence here and abroad.

Awarded late last month, the \$12,500 seed grant from the Maine Technology Institute is already germinating for Trillium Diagnostics. The company produces advanced tests for diagnosing

infections and detecting the presence of fetal blood in mothers, a potentially dangerous and life-threatening condition.

"The grant gave us the ability and confidence to not only continue to produce and sell our current products, but develop a new product line as well," says Bruce Davis, president and founder of Trillium.

With the grant, along with matching funds the company was required to put up, Trillium purchased an Abbott Sapphire blood cell counter, sophisticated lab equipment that the company will use to further develop its products and to ensure quality control of the diagnostic devices it designs.

Testing required by the Food and Drug Administration is expected to occur this summer and fall for Trillium's in-vitro hemorrhage detecting device called FMH QuikQuant, with the company eyeing federal approval in the first quarter of next year. Trillium also designed the Leuko64, a tool for diagnosing infections that is already sold in Europe but awaits further testing in this country.

Buoyed by the seed funds, Trillium has hired a director of operations and added an assistant to work on clinical trials, both needed as the company increases the number of tests it brings before the FDA for approval.

The grant sets the stage for the company to more than quadruple its sales to an anticipated \$2 million to \$3 million during the next few years, according to Davis. Last year, the company's sales totaled about \$500,000, roughly split between this country and foreign nations, mostly in Western Europe, although Trillium is making headway in Asia and in Eastern European countries like Russia.

The company is tapping into a growing trend. Last year, the state's biotech exports increased by nearly 20%, according to the Maine International Trade Center, which in 2007 named Trillium its Innovator of the Year.

The company has grown slowly since it was formed in 1996. Davis took the company's name from one of his favorite spring flowers, which takes seven years to fully bloom.

Trillium impressed the board of directors at the Maine Technology Institute, which provides seed grants six times a year amounting to about \$1.1 million, says Joe Migliaccio, manager of MTI's Business Innovations Program. He speaks of Trillium alongside some big hitters in the biotechnology field, such as The Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor and IDEXX Laboratories in Westbrook. "We liked the fact that it was in an area of biotechnology diagnostics," Migliaccio says of Trillium. "It's a sweet spot for some of the larger and smaller businesses."