



Snohomish County
County Executive's Office

For immediate release – Monday, June 28, 2004

Aaron Reardon
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Reardon hails biotech's decision to build Snohomish County factory

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Berlex chooses County after global search; County Executive urges other corporations to follow German company to County and State

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon today called the decision by a major biotech company to build a manufacturing facility here a coup for the County's on-going economic development efforts.

"This factory could have gone anywhere in the world," Reardon said. "But its managers chose Snohomish County. Their decision is important for both the County and Washington State because our region is already well established as a biotech research and development center.

"Now products coming from local research will be manufactured here, too."

Berlex Laboratories will build a \$60 million manufacturing facility to make biotech drugs in south Snohomish County, near 164th Street SW. At the outset it will employ 70 workers in highly skilled family wage jobs. Berlex Laboratories is part of the German company, Schering AG, which two years ago purchased part of another Northwest company, Immunex.

Berlex is building the factory to manufacture the drug Leukine for current markets in cancer care and a potential new market as a treatment for Crohn's disease – a condition of the intestines.

Berlex already has a presence in the area, with facilities in Bothell and Seattle. Snohomish County is already home to nearly 25 percent of Washington State's biotechnology jobs, with a cluster near Bothell. Company officials say that Berlex could employ as many as 180 workers at its new complex as early as 2009 if demand for its new product grows.

“Berlex’s decision tells the rest of the biotech industry that Snohomish County has a ready pool of talented employees, affordable land on which to build and a desire to see more biotech locate locally,” Reardon said.

Groundbreaking is expected to take place at Opus Northwest’s 90-acre Northpointe Corporate Center later this summer.

Opus Northpointe Corporate Center already has infrastructure with fiber optic and telecommunication capacity to handle engineering, biomedical and high tech companies. Cypress Semiconductor, a global supplier of high-performance integrated circuits, was the first company to locate in the project in 2002. Opus plans to construct an additional 286,000 square feet of office/high tech buildings over the next three years.

Reardon has placed economic development at the forefront during his administration’s first year. His Citizens Cabinet is scheduled to release an economic development plan for the County in late summer that speaks directly to the recruitment of new biotech companies.

As a state legislator, Reardon also worked to bring businesses and jobs to Washington, chairing of the House Committee on Economic Competitiveness in 2002. In the State Senate, he was ranking member on Technology and Communications Committee.

For his efforts, the Washington Biotechnology and Biomedical Association named Reardon its 2002 state Legislator of the Year.

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