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## **2010 Research Center Partnering in U.S. Department of Defense Blood Bank Safety Research**

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Mike Rounds today announced that South Dakota's efforts to become a leader in research and technology received a \$100,000 boost as the result of a grant awarded to the 2010 Center for Infectious Disease Research and Vaccinology (CIDRV), housed at South Dakota State University (SDSU).

The Phase I Small Business Innovation Research grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Defense. The money will fund a study to focus on blood bank testing for the human form of mad cow disease. The 2010 Center will partner with Chronix Biomedical, Inc of San Jose, California and the American Red Cross, to carry out the research.

"This is an exciting opportunity for South Dakota and SDSU to partner with public and non-profit organizations to accomplish real, tangible progress in scientific research," said Rounds.

The new research is critical because currently all approved tests for mad cow disease can only be used after the animal is dead. The new tests being developed through the 2010 Research Center study will be able to detect mad cow disease as early as 3-5 months after cattle are infected.

While the test would be valuable for early diagnosis of mad cow disease, the demand for a human blood-based test for the disease is perhaps even greater, according to Dr. Alan Young, leader investigator at the CIDRV in Brookings. "At the present time, all that we can do to screen out potentially infected blood donors is to ask if they've spent any significant time in areas where there have been mad cow disease breakouts," said Dr. Young. "This clearly puts limits on the blood supply available to the United States. The preliminary data suggest that the Chronix Biomedical test will make a significant contribution to the increased availability and safety of the blood supply worldwide," he added.

The Chronix Biomedical project will be conducted collaboratively with researchers at the CIDRV, the Avera-McKenna Research Institute, and the American Red Cross. The 2010 Research Center currently has active research programs into diseases of both domestic animals and humans.

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John DiPietro, Senior VP of Finance for Chronix Biomedical, said, “Our management team was very impressed by the state’s 2010 initiative and the resources in place to support the effort. We foresee additional opportunities to collaborate on future biotechnology projects through the 2010 Initiative.”

The Phase I research effort will continue until July 2006, at which time the researchers will proceed to full-scale Phase II validation studies.