

(Washington, DC) - U.S. Representatives Jason Altmire (PA-4) and Tim Ryan (OH-17) announced they will hold a forum in an effort to foster greater regional cooperation and integration. The forum will be held on October 1st, 2007 at Youngstown State University and will bring together business, academic and foundation leaders from the Pittsburgh-Youngstown-Akron-Cleveland area to discuss ways to create a "tech belt" that will create jobs and foster economic growth in advanced services and industries.

**"Western Pennsylvania and Northeast Ohio are ready to compete not only regionally and nationally, but in the global marketplace with innovative new technologies,"** said Congressman Altmire. **"We have a highly educated and dedicated workforce and some of our nation's top research facilities right in our own backyard, from Carnegie Mellon in Pittsburgh to Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Our region is primed to become one of the top high tech corridors in the country and to lead the nation and the world with new innovations and high tech job creation."**

**"Our region has been linked for over 100 years, first as the Steel Belt, then as the Rust Belt. This is our chance to emerge as the Tech Belt,"** said Congressman Tim Ryan. **"I believe very strongly in this new direction and believe that a regional model for economic advancement will create a competitive and cohesive unit in the global marketplace."**

In April, two bio-tech consortiums, BioEnterprise out of Cleveland and the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse announced they would be working together in order to attract more venture capital to our region which already has over 700 bioscience companies that employ 25,000 people. Over \$1 billion a year in National Institutes of Health and research and development funding flows through our community each year. Congressman Altmire and Congressman Ryan believe that this model can be used across industries and will facilitate a discussion to figure out how best to harness our resources and create a formal plan of action.

Added Congressman Tim Ryan, **"The Tech Belt forum will bring people together, establish regional connections and lay out an appropriate plan of action. It is my hope that this forum will be the first step towards creating a new, groundbreaking partnership between Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania."**

**"Congressman Ryan and I have made a commitment to coordinate our efforts and promote this strategic regional partnership," said Congressman Altmire. "Next month's forum will bring together people on both sides of the border who have the know-how, vision and record of success to make this partnership a reality."**