

Plan Now for BIO 2010 in Chicago!

By David Miller
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Next May 2-5, the BIO International Convention returns to Chicago. On behalf of the iBIO community, our city and state, and our remarkable Midwest neighbors, I urge you to mark the dates and begin planning your trip now. Here's why.

Illinois and the Midwest enjoy as broad a range of biotechnology companies and research organizations as anywhere on the planet. It's all here: ag-bio, industrial applications, biodefense centers, food safety, renewable fuel technologies, biologics, molecular diagnostics and devices. These industrial sectors are served by some of the world's top research centers and numerous global corporations. Our two largest diversified health care companies, Abbott and Baxter, each would be among the world's largest biotechnology enterprises based on their annual sales of biotech-related products.

The Midwest has quietly built a vibrant startup environment around such top research universities as Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Chicago; public universities in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Kansas, and Wisconsin; and world-class medical centers, including the Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic, and the Illinois Medical District. Northwestern University hosts one of the top nanotechnology research centers in the world, perpetually spinning out startups from its growing stable of nanotech research rock stars.

What's more, Chicago's airports and transit infrastructure provide easy jump-off points to the amazing science and business activities conducted by our Midwest partner states. Come early, or stay late, and take the time to visit not only our own but also our neighbors' tech and research parks.

Chicago itself continues its growth as one of the top international biotech centers. Takeda and Astellas – Japan's #1 and #2 bio-pharma companies have broadened their operations here, as has Sumitomo, which owns Valent BioSciences. And the Dutch firm Lundbeck made Chicago its base for expanded U.S. operations through its recent purchase of Ovation Pharmaceuticals.

There's a good reason for that international flavor: There's no place on earth easier to get to and from than Chicago. Chicago's diverse population reflects a 21st century "melting pot" characteristic. Our cultural diversity rewards those who display culinary curiosity. Due in part to the variety of its offerings, Chicago is perennially listed as one of the top restaurant locations in America. The same is true for our breadth of musical offerings. Whether your passion is rock, opera, symphonies, folk, country, jazz or the blues, American music is on living display here. And our ethnic diversity means strains of authentic Latin American, African, and Asian music can be heard in the clubs (and on the streets) as well.

Capitalizing on leisure time in Chicago also means strolling through our parks, including expanded exhibits at the downtown Millennium Park. It means visiting our fabulous museums; the Modern Wing of the Chicago Art Institute will be open in time for your trip, with an upgraded exhibit of Impressionist

masterpieces, the largest outside of France. The Museum of Contemporary Art displays works from the world's avant-garde visual artists. Chicago's theater district is amazing; only New York can top us. And for sports fans, the Cubs, White Sox and Fire will be in action during your visit, as will the Bulls and Blackhawks.

So make your plans now for science, business, and a great time. To learn more about Chicago and BIO 2010, please visit us today at the Illinois Pavilion (booth 3453).