

## 9 Protea Biosciences CEO Stephen Turner and MD Biotech founder Christopher Kolanko

# Biotech firms thrive in partnership with WVU

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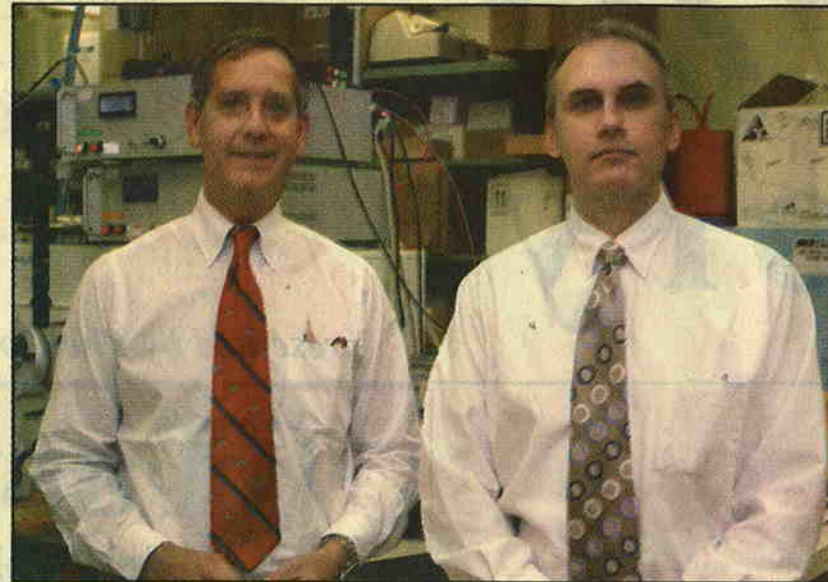
As some of the first businesses to hatch from technology partnerships with WVU, Protea Biosciences and MD Biotech have become models for university-business relationships.

The two companies started by using science from the university and business know-how from outside to create viable companies based on intellectual property. Both companies hope to make a success on the cutting edge of the high-tech life science field.

### Protea Biosciences

Almost four years ago, Stephen Turner, chairman and CEO of Protea Biosciences, came to Morgantown to talk with a few scientists in the chemistry department about their research into protein identification. Researchers Aaron Timperman and Dan Flynn had developed a way to quickly process thousands of proteins to find out how they affect a body's systems.

Turner said the identification of proteins is key to pharmaceutical research,



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Stephen Turner (left) and Christopher Kolanko head two biosciences firms that have become models for university-business relationships.

which relies on figuring out how the proteins can cause disease. The majority of drugs on the market affect only a small fraction of the proteins present

in the body. Protea hopes to speed up research on new compounds.

"Think of it as a protein processing chip," Turner said. "It just

happens to target a critical bottleneck in pharmaceutical research."

Employing seven researchers, Protea has laboratories both in the Clark Chemistry building and at the WVU Health Sciences Center. The company recently leased commercial space on Hartman Run Road for its new headquarters.

Turner said Protea is nearing completion of the first version of its protein processor, and will possibly be first to market a viable product. He expects to be able to sell the chip by the end of this year.

Turner said Protea's success could not have happened without WVU. Licensing technology to Protea was a first for the school, Turner said, and can generate long-term revenue for the university.

"We've raised substantial capital and we employ that capital to accelerate and make ready for commercial prime time technology owned by the university," Turner said. "By doing that, it makes sure the technology owned by the university will see the light of day."

### MD Biotech

MD Biotech combines technology developed by its founder Christopher Kolanko and WVU in a true melding of town and gown.

Kolanko, who received his bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees at WVU, moved back to Morgantown from Washington, D.C., in 2001 to become an entrepreneur.

MD Biotech is developing an eye scanner that can tell if someone has been exposed to chemical agents and identify what and how much they were exposed to, Kolanko said. The scanner would be small enough to carry around on a belt or in a backpack or suitcase.

Kolanko envisions the primary market for the device to be the military or first responders, such as police and firefighters. It could be used as a quick way to triage large numbers of people after a chemical exposure.

MD Biotech's research has been largely funded by the Department of Defense. Kolanko said the company is close to a prototype for the product.

"We have gone through the mar-

ket analysis and have linked up with commercialization partners," he said. "We're looking to establish the size, scope for the technology."

Kolanko said linking up with WVU has been crucial for his company. MD Biotech has offices in the business incubator on Chestnut Ridge Road, and laboratories at the Health Sciences Center.

MD Biotech also works closely with the inventors of part of the technology needed to build the prototype, Kolanko said. Being close by has helped propel the project from concept to prototype in about three years.

Kolanko said Morgantown also offers other benefits for starting a company. He said the city offers low-cost facilities and cost of living. Yet it's close by other major biomedical research cities, such as Washington, D.C.

"You could start a company here in Morgantown and not need the large amount of investment dollars," Kolanko said. "We thought this was a perfect match for this company."