

SBA to foster defense technology cluster in region

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SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Small Business Administration announced Monday that it will provide \$599,978 to help develop an "Advanced Defense" business cluster in the region.

The region was one of 10 selected to receive a portion of \$6 million in funding to develop local technology clusters, said Hayley Matz, an SBA spokesperson.

Funding will be awarded to San Diego businesses that develop autonomous technologies and cyber security solutions.

San Diego State University Research Foundation compiled the region's application to the program and will administer the funding in the San Diego region.

The Foundation plans to work with the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SPAWAR) San Diego to determine what the needs

are, and search for new and innovative technologies that meet them, said Timothy Hushen, associate executive director of the research foundation.

"The research foundation plans to seek proposals from the local business community within the next 30 days," Hushen said.

"It's a great thing for San Diego," Hushen commented. "This will help

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us develop a new industrial sector."

The SBA worked with the Department of Defense to identify regions where innovation clusters can help meet defense technology needs. San Diego was one of three regions selected to receive funding to develop technologies for the defense industry. A total of 173 applications were received.

The influx of funding is certain to benefit defense contractors in the region, said Jim Loiselle, president of the Armed Forces Communications and

Electronics Association San Diego Chapter. The group submitted a letter of endorsement of the San Diego Research Foundation's application to the program.

"It's great news," Loiselle said. "I think it's an opportunity that we will be able to help small businesses."

Establishing a defense technology sector in San Diego will create additional opportunities for existing businesses and potentially draw new ones to the region.

The SBA designed the pilot program to foster innovation and create jobs throughout the country.

"Maximizing a region's economic assets is one of the best ways to create long-term job growth, and that's what SBA's new Innovative Economies pilot initiative is doing," said SBA Administrator Karen Mills. "Today we are announcing funding support for 10 regional economic clusters. SBA's support will help expand the opportunities and the role small businesses play in these regional collaborations, which are the ability to create jobs locally and compete on a national scale."

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