

Press Release

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Dr. Richard Florida speaks at the Second Annual General Meeting of the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute

TBRRRI Board Chair lauds exceptional year for the new Research Institute

June 18, 2009 **Thunder Bay, ON** – The Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRRRI) opened its second Annual General Meeting with a keynote address from one of the world's leading public intellectuals.

Dr. Richard Florida, author of *Who's Your City* and Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, told an audience of community leaders that Thunder Bay has the elements in place to support a strong knowledge-based economy rooted in healthcare and health research.

"The Creative Class is the core force of economic prosperity in our future economy. Thunder Bay's economic future success lies in the community's ability to continue to attract and retain the innovative and knowledge-based talent that is driving economic growth," he said.

Recently named one of the 'Best and Brightest' by Esquire Magazine, Florida is the founder of the Creative Class Group, an advisory services firm charting new trends in business and community. An internationally renowned speaker, Florida's ideas are being used globally to change the way regions, nations, and companies compete.

Mr. Keith Jobbitt, Chair of the TBRRRI Board of Directors said Florida's opening address was appropriate and inspiring given the rapid growth and success seen at the new Research Institute in a short 16 months.

"The enthusiasm and genuine passion we have seen from our new scientists, Executive team, Board of Directors, staff, clinical colleagues and partners, is uplifting. It is an enthusiasm for discovery, for collaboration, and for economic growth. Above all, it is a growing passion for patient-centred research as our healthcare and academic partners, and the community of Thunder Bay, see the great promise and potential of this unique Research Institute."

Presentations from the TBRRRI Board Chair, CEO Michael Power and Founding Scientific Director Dr. John Rowlands highlighted significant events and milestones of the past year:

- Appointed 40 new staff members.
- Appointed eight of 24 institutionally supported scientists.
- Appointed leaders in science, business, academia and healthcare to the TBRRRI Board of Directors.

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- Introduced a world-class Scientific Advisory Committee with internationally recognized scientists.
- Developed 70,000 sq. ft. of research space at ICR Discoveries (pre-clinical research) and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (translational research).
- Acquired and installed a Philips 64-slice PET/CT for advanced diagnostics research.
- Became one of only a few health sciences centres in Ontario with a Philips Achieve 3T MRI scanner for clinical research.
- Established three Research Platforms for patient-centred research: Advanced Detection Devices; Imaging Guided Interventions; and Probe Development and Biomarker Exploration.
- Inspired more than \$50 million in funding support from the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the City of Thunder Bay and Philips Healthcare
- Received first-ever \$500,000 Cancer Care Ontario Research Chair award
- TBRRI scientist Dr. Alla Reznik received a \$500,000 Canada Research Chair award in the Physics of Molecular Imaging at Lakehead University
- First clinical trials for MRI-guided High Intensity Focused Ultrasound therapy to begin in November 2009.

Chairman Jobbitt said the TBRRI has laid the groundwork for innovative, patient-centred research in Northwestern Ontario. Over the next year, patients at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre will be among the first to benefit from new molecular imaging technologies as the first clinical trials are established.

“We are confident that technologies developed in Thunder Bay will be made commercially available and used by clinicians around the world. We are extremely proud to say that, truly, we are **Bringing Discovery to Life!**” he said.

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