

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New medical device company launched in Thunder Bay

'Tornado Medical Systems' results from partnership with Sentinelle Medical Inc.

October 27, 2009 *Thunder Bay* – At a press conference today, the Thunder Bay Regional Research Institute (TBRRI) announced a new research and development partnership with Sentinelle Medical Inc. of Toronto, Ontario. In turn Sentinelle Medical, one of the fastest-growing diagnostic imaging companies in Canada, unveiled plans to form a new medical device research, development, marketing and sales company in Thunder Bay that will be officially launched by the end of 2009.

Sentinelle Medical has recently revolutionized breast cancer imaging with its line of Vanguard Breast MRI Coils and Aegis with BRIGHT software platform. Through industry-leading technology and knowhow, Sentinelle has become the world's largest independent manufacturer of MRI coils.

Sentinelle Medical's new spinoff company, to be known as Tornado Medical Systems, will have its headquarters in Thunder Bay and is expected to employ 50 professionals within the first 18 months of operation and more than 200 by the end of 2013. The company will attract local talent with engineering, accounting, finance, information technology, information management and software design skills and will reach out to the global market for experts in medical imaging research, development and MRI sales.

Tornado Medical Systems will likely take research and development space at the ICR Discoveries facility on Munro Street, with expansion plans expected in 2010 or 2011. The company will focus on three key patient care improvement areas:

- MRI technology development for pelvic cancers,
- Optical imaging technology development for improved cancer management, and
- Advanced MRI technology to drive improved accessibility.

"We chose Thunder Bay as the new home of Tornado Medical Systems because of three key factors: the facilities and vision of TBRRI and the Health Sciences Centre, their recruitment of highly respected scientists and the high level of community support for innovative and promising new ventures," said Cameron Piron, CEO, Sentinelle Medical Inc.

Keith Jobbitt, Chair of the Board for TBRRI, said the research partnership with Sentinelle is instrumental to the Institute's success, and Tornado will draw interest in Thunder Bay from research professionals around the world.

"Assisting Sentinelle, an established and reputable medical imaging company, in establishing their first spin-off company and motivating them to locate the operation right here in Thunder Bay was one of our major five-year strategic priorities. Accomplishing this through a research partnership and doing so in less than two years of operation is a testament to the strength and quality of our leadership and research agenda," he said.

Thunder Bay – Atikokan MPP Bill Mauro was on hand to celebrate the announcement as a good-news story for Northwestern Ontario.

"Each successive announcement from the TBRRI confirms and justifies our decision as a provincial government to fund the original Molecular Medicine Research Centre, now the TBRRI," he said. "It is exciting to hear of this further job creation and continued diversification of our economy and I welcome Tornado Medical Imaging Systems to Thunder Bay."

Representatives from the City of Thunder Bay and the Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission (CEDC) reinforced that a unified and supportive community is an important element in attracting new businesses and investment to the city as the knowledge-based economy continues to grow.

"Thunder Bay is thrilled to congratulate the TBRRI on this unique partnership with Sentinelle Medical and welcomes Sentinelle's first spin-off company, Tornado Medical Systems," said Mayor Lynn Peterson. "Today's announcement marks another milestone in the emergence of Thunder Bay as a centre for excellence in research and innovation. The fact that we have been able to attract these kinds of world-class partnerships and attract new economic investment, along with several impressive medical and research professionals tells us, and the world, that we are doing something very special here in Thunder Bay. "

"Today's announcement is but the most recent tangible example of Thunder Bay's emerging reputation as the location of a powerful cluster in the Biomedical, Medical Research, Health Innovation and Biotechnology sectors," said Steve Demmings, CEO, Thunder Bay CEDC. "This announcement cannot be overstated in terms of the economic impact on investment in this community and for the opportunities created by the attraction and employment of doctors, scientists, physicists, chemists and machinists."

Although unable to attend, Thunder Bay – Superior North MPP Michael Gravelle also sent his congratulations to the TBRRI and Sentinelle teams.

"I am absolutely delighted to welcome Tornado Medical Systems to Thunder Bay," he said. "This partnership between TBRRI and Sentinelle Medical will have a significant and very positive impact on our region's economy and brings not only jobs, but additional knowledge and strength to our thriving health sciences and technology sector. I congratulate everyone involved in this achievement."

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