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Technology and Innovation Land Lafayette Among the Top 10 Innovative Markets in the South

April 25, 2008, Lafayette, LA -- In part because of access to groundbreaking technology like the Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprise (LITE), *Southern Business and Development Magazine* has named Lafayette, LA one of the *Top 10 Great Innovation Markets in the South* for its efforts in nurturing and attracting innovation-driven industry and businesses to the region.

The magazine points to Lafayette's multicultural and multi-industrial makeup, along with innovative projects like the Lafayette Utilities System (LUS) Fiber Initiative, Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI), and LITE as key contributors to the ranking. Lafayette is the only Louisiana city to make the list.

“We are pleased and proud that *Southern Business and Development Magazine* recognizes just how progressive this city is from a technology and innovation standpoint,” says LITE Executive Director Dr. Carolina Cruz-Neira, one of the nation’s pioneers in virtual reality and 3-D visualization. “LITE is the only facility of its kind in North America open to private industry. All other visualization facilities are reserved for use by government entities and academic researchers. Our facility is a part of a city- and state-wide effort to bring innovative businesses and industry to what we think is fast becoming one of the premier technology centers in the country. State economic development initiatives, coupled with efforts by city-parish government, local economic development leaders and the airport commission are creating exciting synergies in repositioning Lafayette and Louisiana as a high-tech destination for businesses. LITE is a perfect fit for businesses who think globally.”

LITE, which opened its doors in September 2006, is a not-for-profit global technology enterprise facilitating the advancement of today’s business and research communities. LITE offers state-of-the-art 3-D and immersive visualization technologies, high-performance computing and high-speed networking. Redefining how organizations see, think about and use information and data, LITE’s technological infrastructure encourages and enables the development of innovative solutions, expanding the frontiers of today’s public and private leading-edge organizations by transforming the process of innovation and accelerating the time to discovery.

LITE is a \$27 million, 70,000 square foot facility and is located at the Research Park of the University of Louisiana Lafayette. It houses an advanced multi-user six-sided, virtual environment cube, in which all four walls, ceiling and floor display back-projected three-dimensional worlds for a total immersion for the users. LITE also houses a 3-D wide format theatre with a capacity for 175 people and other advanced immersive visualization venues. All these visualization technologies are powered by high-performance graphics and computing systems and can also be remotely accessible through high-speed networking connected to the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI), the state portion of the country’s high-performance computing highway. Through LONI LITE is connected to the National LambdaRail, the nation’s high-performance computing research network that is also connected to StarLight, providing access to other national and international high-performing computing capabilities and fiber-optic networks. LITE is connected locally to the Lafayette Utilities System (LUS) light-speed fiber optics system serving homes and businesses throughout the area.

Lafayette joins other cities like Hampton Roads, VA; Savannah, GA; Oklahoma City, OK; Raleigh/Cary/Durham, NC; Orlando, FL; Austin/Round Rock, TX; Huntsville, AL; Winston-Salem, NC; and Roanoke, VA in the magazine's *Top 10 Great Innovation Markets in the South*.

About LITE: LITE is a cooperative effort between the State of Louisiana, the Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA) and the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. A state-of-the-art advanced supercomputing and data visualization facility, LITE uses 3-D and total immersive data visualization technologies powered by high-performance supercomputing capabilities and transmit via high-speed fiber optics. LITE technologies are available for government and academic research and private sector innovation, offering essential decision-making tools for collaborative research applications; product development, testing and validation; and training.

About Dr. Carolina Cruz-Neira: Dr. Cruz-Neira is known as a worldwide pioneer in the field of virtual reality and her work includes collaboration on the design of the CAVE[®], the first virtual reality projection cube ever built.

LITE, Lafayette Parish Consolidated Government and Lafayette Regional Airport are partners in a concerted technology-centered economic development effort in the Acadiana region of South Louisiana. The Lafayette area has a growing economy with a workforce, incentives and infrastructure designed to attract new businesses and business expansions specializing in technological advancements. For further information, please visit www.lite3d.com, www.lftairport.com and www.lafayettela.gov.