



## Backers get Cape tech push in gear

March 27, 2008 Thursday

Mar. 27--Green energy and regenerative biology could soon join clam shacks and beachside motels as pillars of the Cape's economy, at least if area technology leaders and legislators have anything to say about it. Cape-area lawmakers and technology boosters are pushing the Legislature to dedicate millions of dollars to projects that supporters say could help the region develop a more robust and sustainable economy. "The best way to do that is by emphasizing the innovation sector of the economy -- technology, green energy, marine sciences," said Dan Gallagher, the president of the OpenCape Corp., a nonprofit group working to improve the region's broadband access. "In order to have those kinds of companies come here, one of the elements they need is a good telecommunications or Internet infrastructure," he said. The OpenCape project plans to build a network that will blanket much of southeastern Massachusetts with wireless access.

The corporation has already installed the three sets of antennas and radios to demonstrate that the concept is feasible. Now it is seeking \$5 million to construct the complete network, which would ultimately include 16 communication relay points spread across Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, Plymouth and Dartmouth. "There's really been a great grass-roots effort to get this thing into a position where it's clearly known to be feasible," said Rep. Cleon Turner, one of the legislators who supports the OpenCape request. "Now we're pushing the state to at least help us to get it going." The money would be added to the Broadband Bill, an existing \$25 million bond proposal aimed at improving Internet infrastructure in western Massachusetts.

The bill is currently under consideration by the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets. Turner and Rep. Jeffrey Perry have drafted a letter of support for the OpenCape request, which they hope to have signed by all of the Cape's state lawmakers and submitted to the committee by today. The Regional Technology Development Corp. in Woods Hole, a group that identifies promising new technologies and helps their creators build businesses around these innovations, is also seeking funding for its efforts. The organization is working with state Sen. Robert O'Leary to request \$10 million as part of the governor's \$1 billion life sciences initiative. "Most of the focus in that bill is in Worcester and Boston," O'Leary said. "We've got a real resource down here that I don't think has had much state support, but I think it could be an engine for economic growth in this part of the state."

The \$10 million would fund collaborative efforts between the Regional Technology Development Corp., the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole and the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth to establish a center for regenerative biology and to

explore commercial marine technologies. "There's a lot of interest in not just Cape Cod, but the whole southeastern region in terms of technology development," said Robert Curtis, the CEO of the technology corporation. O'Leary is also requesting that the bill's definition of "life sciences" be expanded to include marine biology, a change that could make other technology corporation projects eligible for funding from the initiative. O'Leary said that his fellow legislators may not have previously considered the Cape as a breeding ground for technology business, but since he has raised the idea, his proposals have been well-received.

#### TECH PROJECTS SEEKING FUNDING

-- OpenCape Corp. ([www.opencape.com](http://www.opencape.com)): Aims to build wireless broadband infrastructure \* Seeks \$5 million in funding via the Broadband Bill to fund construction of the network

-- Regional Technology Development Corp. ([www.regionaltechcenter.org](http://www.regionaltechcenter.org)): Identifies promising technologies and helps bring them to market \* Seeks \$10 million in funding via the life sciences initiative to fund a collaboration with the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole and the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth

To see more of the Cape Cod Times, or to subscribe to the newspaper, go to <http://www.capecodonline.com>. Copyright (c) 2008, Cape Cod Times, Hyannis, Mass. Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services. For reprints, email [tmsreprints@permissionsgroup.com](mailto:tmsreprints@permissionsgroup.com), call 800-374-7985 or 847-635-6550, send a fax to 847-635-6968, or write to The Permissions Group Inc., 1247 Milwaukee Ave., Suite 303, Glenview, IL 60025, USA.