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Proximity to Georgia Tech helps seal deal

Big Deal

Atlanta Business Chronicle - by [Martin Sinderman](#) Contributing Writer

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Having the right kind of specialized facility next to Georgia Tech helped seal a major deal with a global company seeking research and development space in Atlanta.

Kemira, a specialty chemicals company that focuses on applications in paper, water treatment, and oil and mining, in September completed a 15-year, \$20 million-plus lease for 40,000 square feet of office and laboratory space at Technology Enterprise Park (TEP) on Northyards Boulevard to house its new North American research and development center.

Kemira will move into the first building, completed in April 2007, at the master-planned technology and biosciences research park, which is set to eventually include five buildings totaling 650,000 square

feet. The 11-acre park is on the edge of the Tech campus at the corner of North Avenue and Northyards Boulevard.

Kemira plans to open the new R&D center — which will consolidate multiple similar centers in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Georgia — next summer, and will employ 85 at the Midtown location.

The search for a new facility began in July, according to Rob Metcalf, managing director of **Jones Lang LaSalle Inc.** (JLL), who, along with JLL Vice President Brannan Moss and Senior Transaction Manager Nicole Janney, represented the Helsinki, Finland-based company in the deal.

The company quickly reduced its location alternatives to an existing R&D center in Connecticut; a site in Cobb County, near Kemira's North American business headquarters in Kennesaw; and the location next to Georgia Tech. Along with offering a couple of

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locations near the Kennesaw headquarters office, Georgia beat out Connecticut for the Kemira deal based largely on economic development-related factors, according to Metcalf.

“Georgia offered a lower-cost business environment, plus there were available incentives from the state and the **Atlanta Development Authority**,” said Metcalf.

And there were a number of factors at work that resulted in Kemira ultimately opting to take space in the TEP building.

“Kemira was in a bit of a hurry,” said Mack Reese, president of **Gateway Development Services**, which negotiated on behalf of **Georgia Advanced Technology Ventures**, which master-leases the property from **The University Financing Foundation Inc.**, a nonprofit entity that helps facilitate the construction of university academic and research buildings in Georgia.

“They wanted to take occupancy of a new facility in spring 2009, so they didn’t have time to do a build-to-suit,” which most users have to do if they need laboratory space in the Atlanta market, he added.

TEP was the only existing multi-tenant, spec project with space designed for lab use available.

A location adjacent to Georgia Tech also made sense for the company’s R&D facility from the standpoint of developing, introducing and marketing new products, said Scott Rosencrance, senior R&D manager for Kemira.

R&D is an important component of Kemira’s business, Rosencrance noted, “and our success is closely tied to innovation, new technology development, and commercialization.”

Kemira joins **Altea Therapeutics Corp.**, a developer of transdermal patches for medical use; and **CardioMEMS Inc.**, a developer of wireless sensing and communication technology for the human body, as tenants at TEP.

Deals like this have numerous benefits for Georgia Tech and others, according to John Majeroni, executive director for real estate development at the university.

In addition to helping create “a vibrant high-tech community” that makes the neighborhood around the university more attractive as a place to live, work and go to school, these companies offer jobs and internships for students, Majeroni said. They also provide opportunities for company-sponsored research carried out by faculty members, “which is how faculty in research institutions like Tech live,” he added.

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