

New Army research facility to focus on proteomics, genomics

U.S. Army

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. (Nov. 13, 2012) -- Two Army institutions unveiled an unprecedented shared resource designed to support basic and applied research projects that will apply a broad but integrated biological approach to a wide variety of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosives, or CBRNE, issues.

The U.S. Army Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, or ECBC, and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense, known as MRICD, officially launched the Proteomics Core Facility, Oct. 10, which will be used to support the Defense Threat Reduction Agency/Joint Science and Technology Chemical and Biological Defense Program and MRICD and ECBC Missions to protect the Warfighter from the harmful effects of chemical and biological agents.

ECBC is the nation's principal research and development resource for non-medical chemical and biological defense. MRICD is the nation's leading science and technology laboratory in the area of medical chemical countermeasures research and development. Both are located at Aberdeen Proving Ground.

Together, the organizations will support sponsored research in the areas of whole genomic sequencing and finishing, whole transcriptome analysis, expression analysis and microRNA. With the newly added equipment, ECBC and MRICD can extend their research utilizing mass spectrometry-based proteomics, high content image analysis of cells and tissues and gel-based imaging.

This new facility answers a need for both institutions, with both requiring additional proteomics and genomics tools.

"Rather than duplicate the capabilities, why not build them in one joint facility?" said Jennifer Sekowski, Ph.D., molecular toxicologist and ECBC lead for standing up the Proteomics Core Facility. "Having a combined Genomics and Proteomics Core now allows us to more easily share our resources, provide new training opportunities, and expand the amount and type of research we both can do."

"This revolutionary joint capability is a wonderful illustration of the cooperation and collaboration across the Aberdeen Proving Ground Edgewood campus," said Joseph Wienand, ECBC technical director. "In this time of fiscal awareness, it is a great example of our nation's leading scientists working together to share resources and save funding while working toward the common goal of the protection of our Soldiers and our nation."

Col. Bruce Schoneboom, MRICD commander, said he was excited to see this unique

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facility officially launch.

"The fact that two organizations came together to build a joint capability is a wonderful testament to the true spirit of collaboration in support of common scientific research, and I hope that this serves as a great example for other installations," he said. "I am very excited to see the great strides the talented MRICD and ECBC staff will take in proteomics and genomics research."

ECBC and MRICD scientists have joined forces for more than a year to build the Proteomics Core Facility, which comprises 625 square feet of renovated laboratory space on the third floor of the McNamara Life Sciences Building. Non-agent research operations began in August, with the official launch of the facility in October. Currently, ECBC and MRICD scientists will work on independent projects, though there is potential for collaboration in the future.

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