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IU medical spinoff hiring 75 in expansion

PPM is blood analysis business moving into ex-Thomson/RCA site

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Entrepreneurs will put a high-tech blood analysis company on the old site that made Indiana famous for television output.

Officials from Predictive Physiology & Medicine, a three-year-old blood analysis business spun off as a private company by Indiana University, said Tuesday they intend to hire 75 employees by 2010 and tap \$1.35 million in state tax incentives.

Once known as the color television capital of the world, this old factory town has turned to medical product entrepreneurs to reclaim almost half the 1,200 industrial jobs lost when the massive Thomson TV works closed a decade ago.

Much of the 200-acre site where Thomson and predecessor Radio Corp. of America assembled TVs for half a century was razed or redeveloped. While the TV workers are gone, a new labor force built around scientific innovation is taking root.

The newest entry on the former site of RCA Plant No. 1 was disclosed when Predictive Physiology said it will lease half of a 30,000-square-foot office building to be developed by First Capital of Bloomington.

Although plants throughout the state have shed more than 130,000 industrial jobs in the last decade, the rise of high-tech medical entrepreneurs has helped cushion Bloomington's lost factory base.

Predictive Physiology would become about the 20th tech company to open in the Bloomington area in recent years, joining long-established medical device designer Cook Group, which employs 2,500.

By opening with 75 employees, the new company would bring the total number of jobs on the old Thomson-RCA site to about 700. The bulk of these are in Cook's new \$70 million Pharmica biotech plant. Also on the site are a large medical clinic, a beer wholesaler and a shelving maker.

Plans call for developing a high-tech office park on the land, with the building to house Predictive Physiology to be the first office built.

"This company was founded by people who wanted to establish a life science business in Indiana," Brian Kleber, chief operating officer of Predictive Physiology, told those on hand for the announcement.

"Businesses like this don't happen because of government," said Gov. Mitch Daniels. He praised the founder of the company, Stephen Naylor, for his ingenuity.

Predictive Physiology, also known as PPM, launched its first product this month. Viveda Cardio, as it is called, provides doctors with a person's cardiovascular profile. Plans call for marketing another product nationwide. Scientists using machines that examine blood samples would look for signs of physical problems in a patient. This would provide an early warning of potential ailments, Kleber said.

Naylor, a former genetics professor, founded the business in part by using a Lilly Foundation grant sent through IU. The clinical lab expert, Kenneth Ryder, is the laboratories director for Indianapolis-based Clarian Health Partners, which includes IU and Methodist hospitals plus Riley Hospital for Children. Investors include Leco Corp. of St. Joseph, Mich., Kleber said.

Plans call for investing \$10.6 million in new equipment for the office. Hiring will begin in 2009 and include lab techs, informatics specialists and managers.
