

**Raleigh, N.C.** - Congressman David Price (D-NC) today delivered welcoming remarks to the International Association of Science Parks as the organization gathered at the Raleigh Convention Center for the World Conference on Science and Technology Parks. Price's remarks are copied below.

As the member of the United States Congress who represents Research Triangle Park, I am extremely proud to welcome you to the 26th International Association of Science Parks (IASP) World Conference on Science and Technology Parks. We are delighted to host a conference of this international distinction and to showcase one of the premier assets of our state.

With over 770 delegates from 52 countries in attendance, your conference represents a major highlight of RTP's 50th anniversary year! Research Triangle Park was founded in 1959 by a visionary group of leaders representing government, business and higher education. The Park was designed to be a campus-like setting for high-tech industry right in the midst of the area's internationally-recognized research universities. Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University served as cornerstones of knowledge and innovation in the new "Research Triangle."

In 1959, North Carolina's economy was largely driven by the furniture, textile and tobacco industries. The state was only beginning to confront the social upheavals that would sweep the South during the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s. At the time, the idea to build a research park on a tract of undeveloped pine forest and worn-out farmland in the heart of North Carolina's piedmont was truly visionary. Few would have predicted that our state – referred to earlier in its history as "a vale of humility between two mountains of conceit" (namely South Carolina and Virginia) – would chart the economic course for the New South.

By bringing together business acumen, research capacity, and a pragmatic view of the role of government, North Carolina's leaders hoped to facilitate public-private partnerships that would yield unprecedented advances in scientific innovation and commercialization. They envisioned a research park that would diversify and strengthen the state's economy through knowledge- and technology-based development. Their pioneering work created new vistas of opportunity for citizens of North Carolina and for the thousands of others, like myself, who would be drawn to the state.

Today RTP is a key driver of economic development in North Carolina and has been instrumental in integrating the state into the globalized economy of the 21st century. In the last 50 years, RTP has literally changed the face of America and the world. Innovations ranging from the UPC bar code to life-saving medications like Taxol and AZT got their start in the Research Triangle; and researchers are awarded hundreds of new patents every year. Today, Research Triangle Park is one of the largest research parks in the nation, and it has served as a model for hundreds of other similar endeavors across the globe. This 7,000 acre development is now home to more than 170 companies employing over 40,000 full-time knowledge workers and an estimated 10,000 contract employees.

It is particularly fitting that North Carolina host this year's IASP conference – aptly themed "Future Knowledge Ecosystems" – as North Carolina was one of the earliest leaders in the research park movement. Over the past 50 years, Research Triangle Park has become the vibrant, knowledge-based ecosystem envisioned by the Park's founders.

And we're assured that RTP is celebrating its 50th anniversary in the most appropriate way possible, namely by looking ahead and planning for what the next 50 years will look like. We are confident that microtechnology, biotechnology, and green technology, as well as continuing innovations in our long-established lines of research and development, lie in our future and that they will keep our region's economy relevant and strong in the years ahead.

And now, with the permission of the IASP international president, Mr. Joan Bellavista, I declare the 26th IASP World Conference officially "Open."

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