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Toledo firms form China partnership

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Two Toledo companies have formed a joint partnership with a university in China to commercialize medical research projects in that country.

James P. Kulla, president of Biological & Environmental Control Laboratories, Inc., yesterday announced BEC and Alpha Laboratories of Toledo have formed General Biotech, Inc., which will concentrate on projects involving molecular diagnostics, biopharmaceuticals, and gene therapy.

General Biotech's first joint project is to teach the Chinese how to run an infectious-disease diagnostic laboratory at the Capital Institute of Medicine in Beijing, Mr. Kulla said. The Toledo firm will work with a newly-formed company in China called Sino-American Biomedical Co.

"They were running five to six samples a day and they have the capacity to run 200. But they have no idea how to get from 5 to 200," he said. "They want to learn how to commercialize a laboratory. They want to make money."

In addition to the infectious dis-

ease diagnostic lab, the joint venture will operate a biotechnology research center at the university.

General Biotech, based at 615 Front St. with BEC, will have research and development laboratories and management offices in Toledo and will take care of equipment and raw materials for the joint venture. It will also have the rights to the commercialization products developed by the research center.

Mr. Kulla said the new venture should create 10 to 20 white-collar jobs in Toledo in the next two years. But he expects more business.

General Biotech plans to start a biopharmaceutical plant in China, and already \$12 million has been raised toward it by Chinese investors, Mr. Kulla said. He wants to raise another \$2 million to \$5 million in the United States.

Possible biopharmaceutical projects could include human growth hormones and new cancer therapies, he said.

Another possible venture is getting other Toledo companies which refurbish used medical equipment to sell to his Chinese partners, he said.

"This is a trade opportunity in both directions," Mr. Kulla said.