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## Business Development Manager Named for Sonoma Mountain Business Cluster

Ivo Austin has been named to the position of Business Development Manager for the Sonoma Mountain Business Cluster (SMBC), located in Rohnert Park. Austin, who also maintains a business law practice, joined the staff at the SMBC in March.

The SMBC's mission is to create high-value jobs in the North Bay by enabling and accelerating the success of technology startups within a dynamic, sustainable and synergistic environment. A non-profit business incubator, the SMBC provides facilities, support and mentoring to North Bay entrepreneurs to improve the success rate of start-up businesses focused on sustainable and socially relevant technologies.

Before entering the legal field, Austin worked at biotech start-up Somagenics, Inc., a company that itself began in a business incubator in Mountain View, CA. "The benefits of incubation programs in terms of being able to share facilities and expertise and take advantage of mentoring opportunities became clear to me right away," says Austin, "I chose to join SMBC because I believe this program offers an extraordinary opportunity to entrepreneurs and represents the most effective approach to revitalizing the North Bay's high-tech community."

Austin's primary responsibilities are attracting businesses to the incubator and forming relationships with potential donors and other supporters who share the SMBC's vision of eco-conscious economic development in the region.

"Our immediate goals are to get the message out about the value we offer to companies who want to fast-track their growth in a very supportive, entrepreneurial environment, and to increase the community's awareness of what we have to offer as a hub of business development activity," says Austin.

One of Austin's first projects is the creation of a comprehensive, year-long curriculum of "Business Essentials" classes covering practical topics of critical importance to entrepreneurs. He is also focusing on bringing in nationally known speakers and panelists for the SMBC's monthly "Distinguished Speaker Series." Says Austin, "These are people considered experts in their fields, who are addressing current business topics and issues related to our core mission of social responsibility and technological sustainability."

Austin obtained his law degree from the University of Chicago and holds an undergraduate degree in molecular biology from San Jose State University. Before starting his own law practice, he worked with the firms of Futterman & Dupree LLP in San Francisco and Lanahan & Reilley LLP in Santa Rosa.

**About SMBC**

The Sonoma Mountain Business Cluster (SMBC) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit business incubator specializing in sustainable resources and socially relevant technologies. Its mission is to create high-value jobs in the North Bay by enabling and accelerating the success of technology startups within a dynamic sustainable and synergistic environment.