

## Drug firm welcomed to West Chester

Ohio and the rest of the Midwest can better compete for biotechnology investment as the industry matures, said the CEO of a high-tech company moving into West Chester.

Possibilities are opening up as companies develop a need for manufacturing and logistics capabilities, said Ginger Graham, who leads San Diego-based [Amylin Pharmaceuticals](#). "It's a big transition," she said. "Biotech for 30 years has basically been research."

On Monday her company was welcomed to Ohio by Lt. Gov. Bruce Johnson in an event at the 150,000-square-foot building Amylin has purchased.

Amylin (NASDAQ: AMLN) is turning the \$9 million structure on 26 acres into a manufacturing facility. The work is expected to cost as much as \$150 million by the time it is completed in 2008. "Amylin is a small company, so this is actually our very first manufacturing plant in the world," Graham said.

The company will make a long-acting release formulation of exenatide, a compound in development for the management of Type 2 diabetes, at the facility on Trade Port Drive. The facility is expected to create more than 50 jobs during its first three years of operation and 200 jobs in five years.

Technology startup capital has been concentrated on the coasts. But now that companies are increasingly looking to develop all of the major elements of a commercial enterprise -- not just research and development -- non-coastal areas will be able to better compete for biotech investment, Graham said.

"Ohio has a very important orientation toward attracting businesses like ours to the economy," she said. In addition to local incentives, the Ohio Department of Development offered more than \$3 million in incentives, including tax credits and exemptions and grants for machinery, equipment and training.

The state was in competition with Kentucky, Massachusetts, California and North Carolina for the project.

Amylin has developed and gained approval for two first-in-class medicines for diabetes: Symlin (pramlintide acetate) injection and Byetta (exenatide) injection.

The company said its new facility is strategically located near its technology partner [Alkermes](#) (NASDAQ: ALKS), a Cambridge, Mass.-based pharmaceutical company that has a facility in Wilmington.

Amylin, Alkermes and [Eli Lilly and Co.](#) (NYSE: LLY) are working together to develop a once-weekly sustained-release injection form of exenatide based on Alkermes' Medisorb drug delivery technology.