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**VON ESCHENBACH TO ADDRESS SOUTHEASTERN BIO INVESTOR
FORUM**

Charlottesville, VA, September 18, 2006 – Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach, the acting commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, will be the featured speaker at the Southeastern BIO Investor Forum, set for Atlanta in early November. Dr. von Eschenbach, a urological surgeon and a former head of the National Cancer Institute, found himself thrust into controversy last spring as the FDA struggled with the debate over the Plan B contraceptive drug.

The Investor Forum, now in its eighth year, has a distinct political flavor in 2006. Hamilton Jordan, a former chief of staff for President Jimmy Carter, will co-chair the gathering and serve as a major awards presenter.

Von Eschenbach's confirmation to the FDA post became controversial over the summer as debate about Plan B swirled in media and political circles. On August 24, the Food and Drug Administration finally approved an application to make the emergency contraceptive, often called the "morning-after pill," available to women 18 and older.

Southeast BIO (SEBIO) recently announced the 30 companies selected to participate in the Investor Forum, an event that brings together life sciences-based entrepreneurs and the venture capital community.

The event, acknowledged as the Southeast's premier life sciences venture capital conference, will be held November 8-10, 2006, at the InterContinental Buckhead Hotel. Von Eschenbach's address comes on Friday, the conference's closing day.

Jack Spencer, SEBIO conference co-chair, said, "Having Dr. von Eschenbach with us is a great opportunity for our attendees to get an inside perspective on the FDA, which regulates roughly a quarter of the U.S. economy, including food, drugs, medical devices and cosmetics."

The conference is also featuring a keynote, health-related panel entitled "Running Faster in the Race to Cure Cancer: Developing Cancer Drugs More Quickly and Effectively."

Spencer noted, "A large number of the biotech companies we work with regularly are committed to cancer research and the search for a cure. The cancer panel is made up of outstanding practitioners and business people committed to these efforts."

SEBIO is a non-profit, public/private partnership formed in 1999 to promote the growth of the life sciences economy in the Carolinas, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida and Georgia. The group seeks to build and maintain a strong coalition of state, industrial, technological, educational and entrepreneurial organizations with a vested interest in the growth of biotech companies.

The annual conference, designed to stimulate venture investment, offers an "early-stage" event focused on best practices for newly emerging companies and a "presenting companies" event which

showcases a second group of young companies that have already completed one “round” of institutional financing.

The conference will explore research, market, and financing trends with nationally recognized leaders from the investment and biosciences industries. Participants will include biotechnology executives, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, investment bankers, and other industry professionals.

The Southeastern BIO Investor Forum was first held in 1999; SEBIO presenters have raised more than \$1.2 billion in venture capital funding since the inaugural conference.

To learn more about the SEBIO Investor Forum and to register, please visit www.sebio.org/investorforum/2006.

About Southeast BIO

Southeast BIO (SEBIO) is a regional nonprofit organization that fosters the growth of the life sciences industry in the Southeastern U.S. through efforts that promote entrepreneurship and bring together companies, investors, universities, and support organizations active in the development of the industry. Today, the Southeast is recognized as one of the fastest growing life sciences regions in the U.S. and home to more than 220 life sciences companies. A public/private partnership formed in 1999, SEBIO is committed to conducting activities that create regional leverage and facilitate the common interests and goals of constituents in the life sciences industry. The geographic footprint of SEBIO presently includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. For more information on SEBIO, go to www.sebio.org.

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