

Conference to Help Inventors

Innovation Awards Lunch Speaker is U Grad Ed Catmull of Pixar

[Media Contacts](#)

April 30, 2004 -- The annual Edison Conference and Innovation Showcase will be held May 19 and 20 at the University of Utah to help entrepreneurs, researchers and inventors get their products into the marketplace.

“The reason for the Edison Conference is to focus on small high-tech, start-up businesses,” says Terrence Chatwin, director of the university’s Utah Engineering Experiment Station, which helps organize the conference. “We’re bringing together inventors and entrepreneurs and talking to them about what it takes to commercialize a new technology.”

Conference attendees will have an opportunity to meet with venture capitalists, investors and government agencies that offer financial support. Successful Utah entrepreneurs will discuss their experiences in commercializing inventions.

News media representatives are invited to cover the conference. Others must pay a registration fee.

The Innovation Showcase – featuring 50 booths displaying technologies developed in Utah by inventors, companies and Centers of Excellence – opens with an invitation-only VIP sneak preview from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday May 19 in the ballroom of the university’s Olpin Union Building. The showcase opens for conference participants starting at 8 a.m. Thursday May 20, and for public viewing from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. that day.

The Edison Conference formally begins Thursday May 20, with registration at 7:15 a.m. in the ballroom and opening remarks at 8 a.m. in the Olpin Union’s Saltair Room, where all morning sessions will be held.

The keynote address at 8:15 a.m. will be delivered by Rex S. Spendlove, who will receive the Utah Engineering Experiment Station’s annual Pathfinder Award. Spendlove is founder of Logan-based Hyclone, which manufactures a variety of products for growing cells in culture. Spendlove also has helped create several other companies.

Panel discussions will be held in the Saltair Room at 8:45 a.m. on “Identifying the Market” and at 10:20 a.m. on “Developing Alliances and Relationships.”

At noon Thursday May 20, Utah Gov. Olene Walker will open the conference luncheon, during which six companies and/or universities will be announced as winners of the Utah Innovation Awards sponsored by the Stoel Rives LLP business law firm, *Wasatch Digital IQ* magazine and the Utah Engineering Experiment Station.

The luncheon speaker is Ed Catmull, who earned his undergraduate degree (1969) and doctorate (1974) at the University of Utah and went on to become co-founder and president of Pixar Animation Studios – maker of such hit films as “Toy Story,” “Toy Story 2,” “A Bug’s Life,” “Monsters, Inc.” and “Finding

Nemo.”

At 2:15 p.m. and 3:05 p.m., workshops will be held in various rooms in the Olpin Union Ballroom. Workshop topics include “How to Write a Winning Proposal,” “How to Protect Your Ideas,” “How to Develop a Successful Marketing Plan,” “How to Implement an Effective Business Plan” and “How to Win an SBIR” (Small Business Innovation Research grant).

A final panel discussion – “Obtaining Seed Capital and Other Funding” – is scheduled for 4 p.m. Thursday May 20.

Conference participants also may sign up to hold one-on-one meetings Thursday afternoon with representatives of various government funding agencies, including the Department of Energy and National Institutes of Health.

Registration (including the Thursday May 20 luncheon) costs \$95, with a special \$50 rate for students. The cost for the luncheon only is \$40 per person or \$320 for a table of eight. A limited number of Innovation Showcase booths are open and may be rented for \$350 with power or \$300 without. Those costs include one free conference registration, with additional registrations \$50 each.

To register online and pay with a VISA or MasterCard, go to http://www.utah.edu/uees/Edison/Edison_Registration_options.htm. To register by phone, call Janeen Bennion at (801) 581-6348.

Parking is available in the pay visitors’ lot just east of the Olpin Union Building, and limited free parking is available in lots along Central Campus Drive northeast of the Union Building and north of the Alumni House.

The Edison Conference is organized by the university’s Utah Engineering Experiment Station and the nonprofit group Technology to Market (T2M). Major sponsors are the Battelle Science and Technology International, the Utah Energy Office and Stoel Rives LLP Attorneys at Law. Other sponsors include the University of Utah Technology Transfer Office, Salt Lake Community College’s Miller Business Innovation Center, Ceramatec, Utah State University, the Utah Technology Alliance, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory and the Brigham Young University Technology Transfer Office.

Details about the Edison Conference and Innovation Showcase may be found at http://www.utah.edu/uees/Edison/Edison_home.html