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## BUSINESS

### Drug delivery system agreement opens doors for Caisson Biotech

BY JIM STAFFORD

For The Oklahoman

**BOSTON** — It was just more than a month ago that Oklahoma City-based Caisson Biotech LLC signed a developmental license agreement with Novo Nordisk of Denmark that ultimately could be worth more than \$100 million.

Founded by University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center researcher and professor Paul DeAngelis, Caisson Biotech developed HEPTune™, a heparosan-based drug delivery system, that can be used as a platform in a wide variety of therapeutic areas. Novo Nordisk is a global health care company and leader in diabetes care.

The Novo Nordisk deal is only the beginning for Caisson Biotech, DeAngelis said Wednesday before he and two company executives began their third straight day of intense partnering discussions at the 2012 BIO International Convention.

“Novo Nordisk recognized this is an interesting technology and is now working toward improving three of their drugs using HEPTune,” DeAngelis said. “Now other companies are beginning to contact us, including a number of top-ranked pharmaceutical companies.”

Tuesday, DeAngelis, along with Breca Tracy, the company’s director of business development who received her Ph.D. from OU under DeAngelis, and new CEO Glenn Nedwin, made a full presentation to a major pharmaceutical company just across the Charles River in Cambridge, Mass.

“After we executed this agreement I knew it would expand Caisson’s horizons,” DeAngelis said. “This platform technology has the potential to be leveraged for a number of existing marketed drugs and new drugs currently in development.”

Caisson Biotech is a portfolio company of Emergent Technologies Inc., an innovation and management firm in Austin, Texas. Emergent also serves as the management firm of three other Oklahoma City-based companies founded upon the scientific research of sugar polymers by DeAngelis.

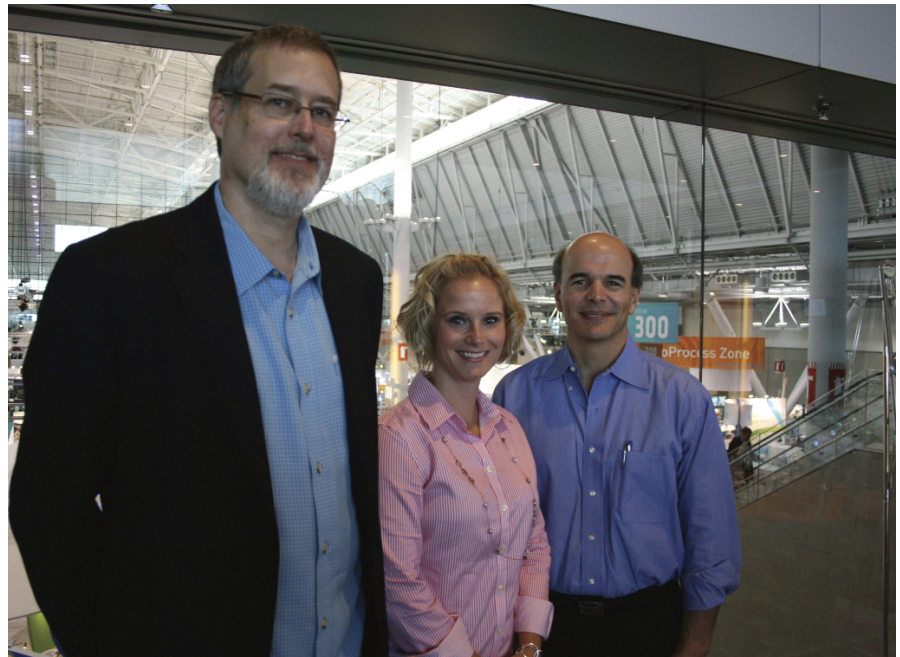


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**From left, Glenn Nedwin, Caisson Biotech CEO, Breca Tracy, director of business development, and Paul DeAngelis, founder and chief scientist, at the BIO International Convention in Boston on Wednesday.**

Emergent management believes Caisson has the potential of becoming a billion-dollar company.

In 2005, Emergent formed a regional fund with a majority of Oklahoma based investors, including the Oklahoma Capital Investment Board. Those funds were raised to support scientists at the University of Oklahoma and their commercially viable platform technologies.

The Caisson deal with Novo Nordisk has not only brought money back into the university but will create additional jobs for the state, DeAngelis said.

Nedwin recently joined the company as CEO and brings 30-plus years of pharmaceutical and industrial biotech experience, including tenure with Novo Nordisk.

“Caisson will aim to reach out to Oklahoma companies increasing collaboration and potential job creation in Oklahoma,” Nedwin said.

In fact, Caisson Biotech already has

partnered with Oklahoma City-based Cytovance Biologics, Analytical Research Labs and Siwa Biotech on drug development deals, DeAngelis said.

So, why the hard charge through the partnering sessions at the BIO show this week?

“The announcement of the recent license agreement with Novo Nordisk has commercially validated Caisson’s drug delivery platform, drawing interest from pharmaceutical companies from around the world who are interested in doing similar type deals in parallel,” Tracy said.

Caisson Biotech anticipates growth as it adds licensing partners utilizing its drug delivery platform, DeAngelis said.

“Once we increase the number of collaborations, you could imagine the need for an increase in resources in Oklahoma,” DeAngelis said. “We have this Oklahoma seed that we planted and have been nurturing, and we’re just starting to see it take off.”