

GRADUATE JOBS DREAM MOVES CLOSER AS CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON MONAGHAN BIOCONNECT RESEARCH FACILITY

Continued from page 1.

The Minister noted that BioConnect would form part of a satellite of enterprise cultivation facilities at various stages of development in the county – including the new Castleblayney Enterprise Centre, the Ballybay Food Hub, the recently completed IDA Advance Technology Building at Knockaconny and the pending C-Tek II development in Carrickmacross – which she firmly believed would play a guiding role in the evolution of the Co Monaghan economy as the 21st century progressed towards maturation.

"These projects take time to come to fruition," she noted. "It has taken three years from concept stage to the turning of the sod for BioConnect this morning, but the benefits of all these initiatives will be reaped in the years to come when we see our highly qualified young people enjoying the opportunity to work in the career of their choice in their home county."

Senator Robbie Gallagher told the Northern Standard that the commencement of construction on the research centre was a very positive development for Co Monaghan.

"I want to commend all the local businesses whose input has shaped the BioConnect concept and will have a key guiding role on the direction of its activities in the years ahead," the Senator stated. "The co-operation and vision of local enterprise leaders has moved this exciting concept forward and made it a reality."

"And the members of the Monaghan Municipal District also deserve commendation for backing the project with a very significant allocation from their LPT funding. The commitment to the project by Monaghan Co Council has also been extremely important."

Municipal District Councillor David Maxwell said that when he first entered politics in 2004 a chief concern of his was the number of young people leaving Co

Monaghan to get university education but who had no jobs to come back to that reflected the qualifications they were obtaining.

"Now, in two-three years, we will have as many as 130 graduate jobs at BioConnect which our young graduates can compete for and avail of, and I hope this is just the start of developments in the local economy that will see a wide range of employment available locally that is commensurate with the qualifications that young Co Monaghan people emerge from third level education with."

"I want to thank my fellow members of the Monaghan MD who voted €375,000 from LPT revenue towards the project, and all the local businesses and food enterprises who have played a pivotal role in bringing this research and innovation facility to its current exciting stage, with construction starting on a state of the art building that will hopefully deliver many top quality graduate jobs going forward."

IMPORTANT PROJECT

Enterprise Ireland Regional Manager for the North East, Aidan McKenna told the Northern Standard that his organisation was proud to back "this important project".

"The BioConnect Innovation Centre draws on the strong agri-food reputation of Co Monaghan and the north-east region," Mr McKenna stated.

"The centre will be a focus for innovation in the rapidly evolving agri-food business and ensure that our producers and entrepreneurs are at the leading edge of sustainable food production into the future."

BioConnect board member and Deputy Chief Executive of the Co Council Paul Clifford stressed the strategic importance of the project.

"Monaghan Co Council is delighted to see works commence on this ground-breaking project, with Monaghan Mushrooms, Enterprise Ireland and all our commercial and academic partners.

"We hope that the BioConnect Innovation and Research Centre will create the platform for regional transformation, supporting biotechnology research and providing opportunities for graduate employment. The centre will help companies throughout the region meet competitive challenges and develop enhanced new products for global markets."

Director Thomas Stronge said his Midland Construction company was delighted to have won the main building contract for what was a very prestigious development.

"We are looking forward to working with local businesses to provide a global centre for cutting-edge research and development," Mr Stronge stated, adding that he hoped to hand over the finished building at the end of 2022.

BioConnect Chief Executive David Macauley said Midland Construction was a progressive and high quality Irish company and he had been delighted to see it win the public tender to construct the facility.

"Midland have shown a real enthusiasm and passion for the project in the face of a very difficult 2021 for the construction industry in Ireland," Mr Macauley remarked.

"They have demonstrated a steadfast focus on getting the project to this critical stage in a spirit of true partnership with the design team."

Mr Macauley took the opportunity to encourage entrepreneurs, investors and existing businesses to make contact with him directly to explore how BioConnect could support their "vision for growth, new product development and novel opportunities."

Mr Macauley can be reached by email at david@bioconnectireland.com or on 087 359 4944.

In addition, BioConnect hosts a Discord communication platform and operates the website www.bioconnectireland.com.