

# The Patriot-News

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**GUBERNATORIAL RACE** | Democratic candidate Dan Onorato touts his plan to provide more funding for small-business development during a campaign stop in Hershey.

## Retaining development

BY KARI ANDREN

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In the labs and offices of the Hershey Center for Applied Research, doctors and professors told Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dan Onorato they need ongoing funding for research and development to succeed in Pennsylvania.

Onorato, the elected executive of Allegheny County, toured the life sciences and technology park that sits adjacent to the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center while discussing economic development and job creation at campaign stops Thursday around Hershey.

"The departments and the organizations that got severely cut in the last two budgets are exactly the kind of items we have to find ways to replenish," said Onorato, who is running against Republican state Attorney General Tom Corbett.

"We have to make sure we have enough money so those companies stay in Pennsylvania and we don't lose them to Boston or the West Coast," Onorato said.

The park offers private companies laboratory space and access to research tools and equipment. Many of these companies are spin-offs that grew from research at Penn State and the medical center.

Researchers told Onorato they find a gap in funding between the early support they received from their universities and the venture capitalists who invest later in the business's development.

Mark Kester is one of three co-founders of Keystone Nano, a nanotechnology company working to perfect carriers that will take cancer drugs directly to tumors without harming the cells and organs around them. He said they have received financial help from corporate sponsors and some state and federal government agencies.

"They help, but they don't get you



ANN FOSTER, The Patriot-News

**Democratic gubernatorial candidate Dan Onorato said the state must take steps to keep businesses in Pennsylvania.**

"If we make these shared service facilities a priority, you can still have the capital dollars even in tough economic times."

DAN ONORATO,  
Democratic candidate for governor

to the finish line," Kester said.

In another area of the building, Lynn Maines, vice president of research and business affairs for Apogee Biotechnology Corp., is ready to submit to the Food and Drug Administration an application to try a new drug that could help treat cancer and other inflammatory diseases. He said continued state and federal support would allow him to expand his operations in Hershey to produce the drug if trials with patients are successful.

Onorato said providing "angel fund money," a mix of public and private money to help companies transition from academia to a for-profit business, is critical to keeping start-ups in the state.

"We want the companies here in this facility. This is exactly what we need," Onorato said. "This is exactly the kind of things I've been talking about, the assets we have to take advantage of."

Onorato said ways could be found to fund the projects even if the state continues to face financial problems.

"Even in tough economic times, which we're in right now ... there still is a lot of public money engaged" in brick-and-mortar projects such as the center, Onorato said.

"If we just get a little smarter, maybe ... and target that money; if we make these shared service facilities a priority, you can still have the capital dollars even in tough economic times," he said.