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Huntsman hails USTAR

He likens the initiative to U.'s Research Park

By [Brice Wallace](#)

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In signing SB75 into law Monday, Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. likened himself to a previous governor.

Huntsman noted that in 1972, Gov. Calvin Rampton launched an "unheard of, risky program" called Research Park at the University of Utah. SB75, providing funding for research infrastructure at the U. and Utah State University, has the opportunity to be just as successful as Research Park has been, he said.

"No doubt this will be a logical Phase II to the dreaming and the vision that was displayed in 1972 by my predecessor," Huntsman said.

"I think that this will have the same impact," said Scott Anderson, president and chief executive officer of Zions Bank and chairman of the Economic Development Corp. of Utah.

SB75 boosts the Utah Science Technology and Research, or USTAR, Initiative through general obligation bonds for the construction of research buildings at the two universities, funding for research teams there and the creation of a technology outreach program for strategic locations in the state.

Supporters said Monday that USTAR ultimately should lead to 422 spin-off companies with 123,000 employees being paid an average of \$81,000; nearly \$5 billion in new federal grant money for Utah; and about \$5 billion in new tax revenue for the state.

Huntsman said SB75 is the "ultimate message bill," letting the world know that Utah is serious about its future, economic development and enhancing its competitive advantages.

"I think this ensures, with some clarity, that we as a state, and by extension we as a nation, will always be able to write the lyrics for the global economy, as opposed to being just another commoditizer out there," Huntsman said.

"We'll write the lyrics that others will want to pursue and read from eventually, but it's developed, it's innovated, it's created here, and that's where the jobs are going to be produced. . . . And it will also mean that we will be a haven for the intellectual leadership and talent from universities all over this nation that will allow USTAR to multiply and build upon itself year after year after year."

Both university presidents spoke about wide-ranging support the USTAR bill received, from the governor to the Legislature, from the business community to academia.

U. President Michael Young noted that the university has long been involved in the commercialization and licensing of technologies. Research Park alone has about 5,000 employees, and the two universities have spun off a total of more than 120 companies, he said.

"So this is not something new, but the capacity to accelerate this, even at very conservative

multipliers, has a wonderful benefit to the state," Young said.

"We really do believe that this positions the state of Utah to be a significant player in a growing world economy with global competition of various types," said USU President Stan Albrecht. "The kind of scientific research and the kind of technological innovation that will come from this will be absolutely essential to position Utah to be in a competitive position."

Both presidents also realize that the pressure will be on to produce the expected results.

"We truly recognize that much is expected of the universities, and we just need to assure everyone that we're prepared and ready to deliver," Albrecht said.

"We appreciate our role in this," Young said. "We're excited to do it. We've done it before. And this will accelerate it, I think, in dramatic ways."

The ceremonial signing occurred at Myriad Genetics at Research Park. The company now has 750 employees working on genetic research ultimately used to prevent or treat disease.

"The reason we are here is to send a message loud and clear that this is the kind of company that we hope will come out of this USTAR effort," Huntsman said.

"All the money aside," Young said, "the good that will be done for the people of this state and indeed the people of the nation through what's being done today is simply incalculable. . . . The benefit to the people of this state and this nation is priceless."

E-mail: bwallace@desnews.com
