



## TECH HUBS SPROUT INNOVATION

Seven centers are catapulting New Jersey into new realms of discovery in several high-tech centers, while creating a nurturing environment for entrepreneurs.

By Lisa Goulian Twiste, Contributing Writer

**N**EW JERSEY, NICK-NAMED THE “MEDICINE CHEST of the World” for its concentration of life sciences companies, is quickly adding a second distinction as “The Innovation Hub,” with seven projects that are bringing together giants in education, medicine, research, and technology in some well-placed areas across the state.

“We are the cradle of the pharmaceutical industry, and we have great academic institutions and more scientists per square mile than any other state in the US,” says Paul Hoffman, president and CEO of the Liberty Science Center in Jersey City, part of the new SciTech Scity hub. “It’s a great basis to work from in trying to grow a startup and innovation early-stage company culture.”

In addition to SciTech Scity, the state’s other innovation hubs include the HELIX and Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, both in New Brunswick, Northeast Science and Technology Center (NEST) in Kenilworth, ON3 in Nutley, Virtua & Rowan Medical School and Research Labs in Glassboro, and a new AI Hub at Princeton University. Each is an integral part of turning the

state into a technology leader on the East Coast, nationally, and even internationally.

### Sci-Tech Scity

In early 2015, the Jersey City Redevelopment Agency (JCRA) designated Liberty Science Center as the master developer in charge of turning 16 acres of adjacent city-owned land into a science and technology hub. Almost 10 years later, SciTech Scity – described as a “curated community of tech entrepreneurs, scientists, students, and other forward-thinking people and organizations working together to create a better future for all” – is getting closer to a launch date.

In addition to Liberty Science Center, the 30-acre innovation campus includes \$450 million in new construction. This includes: Edge Works, an eight-story business-creation center that includes laboratories, R&D spaces, office suites, a tech exhibition gallery, and a state-of-the-art conference center; Scholars Village, with 500 apartments for tech-forward families and individuals; Liberty Science Center High School, a new public magnet STEM high school; and Public Commons, which entails three acres of outdoor space for art installations, food



trucks, and science festivals.

Though SciTech Scity's 100 or so projected tenants won't begin moving in until late 2025 and 2026, the transformative work has already begun, Hoffman says. Ernst & Young (EY), Bristol Myers Squibb, and RWJBarnabas Health are partners of the Healthcare Innovation Engine at SciTech Scity, which will bring health tech into the home, particularly in underserved communities. Another lead partner is Israel's Sheba Medical Center, one of the top 10 hospitals in the world, which is building a medicine-of-the-future simulation center on campus.

### The HELIX and Jack and Sheryl Cancer Center

In December, Nokia Bell Labs (NBL) announced plans to leave its historic headquarters in Murray Hill over the next five years to relocate to the HELIX in New Brunswick, a \$2-billion life science center that aims to be a leader of translational research in New Jersey and throughout the East Coast. In addition to NBL, the list of tenants at the HELIX includes Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, which is expected to bring its first class to the site in the spring of 2026, RWJBarnabas Health,

Hackensack Meridian Health, Rutgers and Princeton universities, a number of international organizations, and pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson.

The HELIX is comprised of three towers and 1.6-million square feet of space. This includes: H1, a 578,000-square-foot structure – almost half of which is sophisticated laboratory space; H2, expected to be delivered in 2028 and where NBL will reside; and H3, a 42-story mixed-use facility that will feature 220 residential units and is tentatively scheduled to open in 2030. About 85% of H1 is accounted for, says Chris Paladino, president of the New Brunswick Development Corporation (DEVCO).

According to Paladino, "What I'm envisioning with the HELIX is an ecosystem of scientists and researchers collaborating in a cross fertilization of different fields – from quantum computing, to the development of medical devices, to pharmaceutical research. If you look across these types of platforms in other parts the country and world, this is how new companies are started and how jobs are created."

About a four-minute walk from the HELIX is the Jack and Sheryl Morris Cancer Center, the state's first and only freestanding



◀ (Top) The 30-acre SciTech Scity innovation campus includes Edge Works, an eight-story business-creation center featuring laboratories, R&D spaces, office suites, a tech exhibition gallery, and a state-of-the-art conference center. ● (Middle) Ground was broken last year on Hackensack Meridian Health's 80,000-square-foot Ambulatory Care Center at ON3. ● (Bottom) The HELIX in New Brunswick, a \$2-billion life science center that aims to be a leader of translational research in New Jersey and throughout the East Coast, comprises three towers and 1.6-million square feet of space.