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Contact: Ryan Richards, Marketing Manager
Midland Tomorrow, (989) 839-0340

MIDLAND'S FOUR "50 COMPANIES TO WATCH" AWARD WINNERS COMMENDED

*Mayor of Midland and President of the Edward Lowe Foundation to Recognize Award Winners
Who Champion the Entrepreneurial Spirit*

MIDLAND — Four of Midland's rising star businesses were each honored today for being one of Michigan's "50 Companies to Watch." Leaders from the award-winning organizations **ÆGIS Environments, The Apothecary Shoppe Pharmacies, Dendritech, Inc.** and **Pilgrim Technology** were present to detail their successes and share their future plans in Midland's continued economic growth. Midland Mayor Bruce Johnson and Daniel Wyant, president of The Edward Lowe Foundation, were also on hand to commend the award winners.

"We're very proud of our four Companies to Watch and look forward to their continued success," said Bruce Johnson, City of Midland Mayor. "One of Midland's pioneering businesses, The Dow Chemical Company, started with the vision of one man. Today we're continuing to develop a vision for the future with the help of these entrepreneurs and their contributions toward expanding and diversifying Midland's economy in new and exciting ways."

"50 Companies to Watch" is a unique awards program designed to shine the spotlight on Michigan's second-stage companies. According to The Edward Lowe Foundation, these companies generate the bulk of new, sustainable jobs and are a powerful economic force underpinning the high quality of life most Americans enjoy. To be considered a second-stage company, an enterprise must be privately held; be past the start-up stage; be facing issues of growth, not survival; employ six to 99 full-time equivalent employees, including the owner; and have between \$750,000 and \$50 million in annual revenue or working capital in place from investors or grants. In addition, they must be headquartered in Michigan and demonstrate the intent and capacity to grow based on employee or sales growth, exceptional entrepreneurial leadership, sustainable competitive advantage, or other notable factors that showcase the company's success.

"We're very excited to celebrate Midland County's 'Four Companies to Watch'," said Dan Wyant, President and COO of the Edward Lowe Foundation. "This is an important award that signifies that these companies are worth watching: they've created rapid employee and sales growth while demonstrating sustainable competitive advantage and exceptional entrepreneurial leadership. One of the rewards of this program will be to watch these companies grow and succeed in the coming years."

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In addition to media exposure and recognition, recipients of 50 Companies to Watch status are invited to participate in the PeerSpectives Roundtable System, presented in Michigan through the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center and the Edward Lowe Foundation. They are also invited to a leader retreat specifically designed for 50 Companies to Watch CEOs, presidents and owners. Their relationship with the program continues through similar invitations in the following years.

The winning companies have worked with Midland Tomorrow, Midland County’s economic development corporation, to help them grow their business. “Each of these companies is part of what we consider our strategic company portfolio,” said Scott Walker, Executive Director. “We work closely with these four companies, and with the rest of the economic base businesses in our portfolio as well, to eliminate the barriers to enterprise that could keep them from fully capitalizing on their business opportunities.” Midland Tomorrow is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation dedicated to removing barriers to enterprise to help diversify Midland County’s economic base and assist local companies in creating and retaining quality jobs.

ÆGIS Environments is the world leader in antimicrobial technologies with support centers in every region of the globe. ÆGIS Microbe Shield™ licenses Dow Corning technology to contain an antimicrobial agent within a silane coating. ÆGIS Environments invested almost \$2 million in a new 14,000 square-foot facility that houses offices for 24 employees and new state-of-the-art laboratory space. Eight new employees are expected to join ÆGIS over the next two years.

The Apothecary Shoppe, LLC, is an independently owned and operated pharmacy headquartered in Midland. The Apothecary Shoppe began operations in 2000 under its proprietors, Kevin and Amy Roeder and began with a staff of six employees. It now employs nearly 75 full- and part-time employees, offering prescription medications, medical supplies, over-the-counter products and compounded pharmaceuticals. In addition, from 2003 to 2005, the Apothecary Shoppe’s payroll increased from \$240,000 to \$2 million and sales increased from \$3.6 million to \$25 million.

Dendritech, Inc. is a specialty polymer company focused on the development of dendritic, hyperbranched and tailor-made polymer products. Dendritech is one of Michigan’s few thriving nanotechnology companies. Dendritech operates a multimillion-dollar manufacturing plant on a 10-acre site. Dendritech is staffed with seven full- and part-time experienced personnel from the chemical industry in research, manufacturing and business development. Their 2004 sales were in excess of \$1 million.

Pilgrim Technology, LLC, was founded in 2002 as a technology consulting company. Pilgrim is one of the few new U.S. Department of Defense suppliers in Michigan, involved in advanced research and development for the United States Army. In addition to their work with wireless communications for the Army, Pilgrim does wireless engineering across a variety of platforms. Pilgrim has engineering expertise in standards management, information security, systems engineering, application development and architecture and design planning.

Winners were selected by representatives of the Small Business and Technology Development Center, the Small Business Administration of Michigan, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the U.S. Small Business Administration – Michigan, the Michigan Certified Development Corporation and The Edward Lowe Foundation.