Celldex Therapeutics gets $10m milestone payment
October 3, 2008

Celldex Therapeutics Inc., a Needham biopharmaceutical company that until this week was known as Avant Immunotherapeutics Inc., said it has received a $10 million milestone payment from an affiliate of Paul Capital Healthcare. The payment was triggered by the US market launch of Rotarix, a rotavirus vaccine marketed worldwide by GlaxoSmithKline PLC, Celldex said. Rotavirus is a common cause of severe diarrhea and dehydration in infants and children, according to the Avant website. (Chris Reidy)

KB Toys to reduce prices ahead of holiday season

KB Toys became the latest toy retailer to cut prices ahead of a likely slow holiday season. The privately held Pittsfield-based company said more than 200 prices have been cut to $10 or less, including Crayola craft kits, NFL, and MLB action figures, and some Fisher-Price preschool toys. The move follows Wal-Mart Stores Inc.'s disclosure it would cut the price of 10 popular toys to $10. Target Corp., meanwhile, said it will shop at competitors' stores for toys during fall to ensure its prices are competitive, and added it offers popular toys for $10 or less. (AP)

AvalonBay scraps plan for construction in Sudbury

AvalonBay has backed away from plans for a 200-unit residential rental community with 50 units of affordable housing on former farm land in Sudbury that had angered local residents, a town official said. AvalonBay Communities of Alexandria, Va., said Aug. 26 it had a binding agreement to acquire the land adjacent to a house at 189 Landham Road, but the company notified the town this week that it would not carry out its plans, the official said. (John Guilfoil)

Fannie cancels planned mortgage fee increase

Fannie Mae, placed under federal control last month, won't increase its mandatory mortgage processing fee as planned in November, the company said. Fannie planned to double its so-called adverse market delivery charge to 50 basis points on Nov. 1 to help stem record losses from the worst housing market since the Great Depression. Now with a government-appointed chief executive, Fannie will scrap the increase, hoping lenders will pass the savings on to consumers, it said. The fee, first imposed late last year as Fannie's losses from the housing slump began to rise, is usually passed on by mortgage lenders to home buyers. A basis point is 0.01 percentage points. (Bloomberg)
Songwriters royalty rates to remain at 9.1¢ a song
The US Copyright Royalty Board left unchanged the royalty rates paid by record labels to songwriters and music publishers, trade groups said. Royalty rates for permanent digital downloads and compact discs will remain at 9.1 cents a song, the National Music Publishers’ Association said. It said the copyright board for the first time established a rate for mobile phone ringtones, setting it at 24 cents. The Recording Industry Association of America said in a statement it was "pleased" the decision freezes the current rate for CDs and downloads for five years. (Bloomberg)

Sony signs Fox, Paramount to digital technology pact
Sony Corp. signed agreements with Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount Pictures to promote the use of its digital-projection technology in movie theaters. The studios will provide operational and financial help to encourage theaters to use digital-cinema systems featuring Sony's technology, the company said. Sony is trying to sell its own digital systems to smaller US theater chains and cinema companies outside the United States. Yesterday the largest US theater chains, AMC Entertainment Inc., Cinemark Holdings Inc., and Regal Entertainment Group, reached a financial agreement with five Hollywood studios for digital conversion of their studios. (Bloomberg)

THE WORLD
European central bank lets interest rate stay at 4.25%
The European Central Bank left interest rates unchanged, even as bank president Jean-Claude Trichet warned of slowing growth amid high inflation and the spreading financial crisis. "Economic activity in the euro zone is weakening,” he said, adding that the outlook was subject to "increased downside risks.” His comments led analysts to predict a rate cut is on the way. Trichet said the bank's governing council decided unanimously to leave its refinancing rate at 4.25 percent. His comments helped push the euro to a nearly 14-month low versus the US dollar. (AP)