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Firm Founder To Head Business Development Agency

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Longtime intellectual property lawyer Michael Cantor built his law firm from the ground up. Since the mid-1990s, Cantor Colburn has grown from a handful of IP lawyers to a 110-lawyer firm that recently ranked seventh on the *Law Tribune's* list of the top-grossing law firms in the state.

Because of that kind of entrepreneurial growth, and the business connections he's made along the way, Cantor has been chosen by Governor Dannel Malloy to chair Connecticut Innovations. The quasi-public agency is charged with growing Connecticut's economy by making loans to, and strategic investments in, emerging businesses in high-tech industries, including energy, biotechnology, and information technology.

"Jobs to me is the number one focus," said Cantor. "We need our young people to stay in this state and not leave for other places. The only way it'll happen is to create jobs in high-tech areas that they want to work at, companies that are innovation based — social networking, software, biotech, pharmaceuticals, alternative energy. We need companies that do that work here."

Cantor currently serves as co-managing partner of Hartford-based Cantor Colburn, which has grown to become one of the largest IP firms in the nation. Cantor combines his technical training in chemical and materials engineering with more than 30 years of experience as an intellectual property attorney.

His firm's clients include Fortune 50 corporations, universities, high-tech start-ups, and mid-sized companies.

"Michael Cantor has years of experience working with high-tech companies, serving

as an advisor to help their operations grow and push boundaries," Malloy said in a statement. "He is an energetic, hands-on leader whose proficiencies, particularly within the engineering field, will serve as a benefit to both CI and the people of Connecticut."

Previously, Cantor was appointed by former Governor M. Jodi Rell to the board of the Connecticut Development Authority. In May, he was selected by Malloy to serve on the board of Connecticut Innovations, which merged with the development authority in 2012. The programs of both entities continue in the combined organization.

While state law previously designated the commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development as chairperson of Connecticut Innovations, a new law requires the governor to appoint the chairperson. That provided the opening for Cantor, who believes his experience and connections will benefit the organization. "Certainly, a lot of what [Connecticut Innovations] do is the kind of work I do for my clients," said Cantor.

Cantor said start-up companies are always concerned about IP issues and getting sued for patent infringement. He said new companies must research whether their products or services are something different than what's been done before, whether they need licenses from other companies to make their product, and whether any existing patents might result in their getting sued.

"There's a lot to it," said Cantor. "We know how to grow a business and what it takes. We did it here in Hartford. That skillset is something else I can bring to the table at Connecticut Innovations."



Michael Cantor says his experience running an intellectual property law firm will help him lead Connecticut Innovations, a quasi-public agency that provides funding for high-tech businesses.

Cantor said it's an exciting time to get the governor's appointment thanks to the Jackson Laboratory's genetic research project on the campus of the University of Connecticut Health Center. The project is supposed to create more than 6,800 jobs over the next 20 years. The 20-year capital and research budget for the institute is projected to be \$1.1 billion.

Because of Jackson Labs, Cantor expects more businesses to want to come into Connecticut, including those that move to Greater Hartford specifically to take advantage of the research being done in the labs. "It's such an exciting time," said Cantor.