

BUSINESS

COMING ZUNE

MICROSOFT UPGRADES PLAYER.



▼ DOW: 14,047.31 (-40.24) ▼ S&P 500: 1,546.63 (-0.41) ▲ NASDAQ: 2,747.11 (+6.12) ▼ OIL: \$80.05/bbl. (-\$0.19) ▼ 10-YR NOTE: 4.53% (-0.03%)

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Biotech firm has Boca plans

BY ARLENE SATCHELL
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Officials with the German company acquiring the South Florida biotech operations of Nabi Biopharmaceuticals visited Tuesday and told employees the company expects to hire up to 100 more workers and Boca Raton will serve as the company's U.S. headquarters.

Biotest AG expects to add to the staff of 175 as it expands blood plasma production in Boca Raton and continues research and development of new products, said Gregor Schulz, the company's CEO.

The German company plans to invest about \$50 million over five years to upgrade vaccine and plasma protein operations to accommodate new products and boost production, said Michael Ramroth, the chief financial officer. Biotest researches and makes pharmaceutical, biotherapeutic and diagnostic products and has more than 1,200 em-

Gregor Schulz, Biotest AG's CEO, said the company has no plans to lay off staff in Boca Raton or in any of the U.S. plasma collection centers included in the deal.

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Biotech firm to expand Boca production

■ BIOTEST

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ployees worldwide.

Schulz said the company has no plans to lay off staff in Boca Raton or in any of the U.S. plasma collection centers included in the \$185 million acquisition announced last month.

In the two-hour meeting with the Biotest executives, employees asked questions and learned more about Biotest's plans in the United States.

The deal Biotest signed with Nabi includes Nabi's biologics business, its Boca headquarters and a plasma protein production plant and nine plasma protein collection centers nationwide. Biotest plans to add four more plasma centers within two years, after the deal is finalized. Pending approval of Nabi shareholders and U.S. regulators, the trans-

action is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Biotest sees Nabi's biologics business as a complement to its successful European plasma protein business and a way to establish a presence in the U.S. plasma protein market. Nabi-HB, a drug that fights hepatitis B, is a top seller in the United States among hepatitis B prevention drugs, with a market share of more than 85 percent.

Other products in Biotest's U.S. pipeline, pending clinical trials and FDA approval, include Civacir, a drug that helps prevent hepatitis C reinfection in liver transplant patients, and IVIG, a drug that fights autoimmune diseases and immune deficiencies.

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