

Spotify Buy of Parcast Consolidates Podcasting

MEDIA: Valley acquisition adds to streamer's audio library.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Swedish streaming service **Spotify** announced late last month a deal to acquire rising podcast network **Parcast** for an undisclosed amount.

Parcast, based in Woodland Hills, has two studios and about 20 employees. Since its

founding in 2015, the network has gained national popularity with its crime and mystery podcasts.

A series called "Cults," for example, explores the history and psychology behind the world's most notorious cults, from the Freemasons to the Kirtland Cult and its murderous founder, Jeff Lundgren. "Serial Killers" provides a rare and detailed glimpse into the stories of violent enigmas like "The Co-ed



Digital Asset: Parcast's hit series

Please see MEDIA page 36

Valley's Streets Host Scooters

TRANSPORTATION: Last-mile option works with public transit.

By **MARK R. MADLER** Staff Reporter

Those dockless scooters that have adorned sidewalk corners in Venice and Hollywood have started to show up in portions of the San Fernando Valley.

But of the seven scooter companies operating in the city on conditional use permits issued by the Department of Transportation, only **Lime**

Please see TRANSPORTATION page 37



Lab: Clean room with cell isolation equipment at HemaCare in Northridge.

PR Firms Seek Digital Buzz

LIST: Clients ask agencies for video, influencer promotions.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter



The Valley region's public relations firms have expanded their skills to digitally market everything from events to luxury brands to fitness products.

Please see LIST page 12

TOP GROWTH COMPANY

HemaCare's 41 percent revenue gain ranks No. 1 on Valley 50 index

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

For **HemaCare Corp.**, blood is a high-growth market. From its new headquarters in Northridge, the company coordinates the collection and distribution of human bioproducts and blood samples to biotech researchers. With drug development on

the upswing, the company's revenue grew 41 percent last year, making it the top growth public company on the Business Journal's Valley 50 index, as measured by revenue percentage.

"HemaCare is in the right place at the right time, with the right skill sets that are in high demand to profit from the multi-billion-dollar biopharma and bio-

technology companies," Chief Executive **Pete van der Wal** told the Business Journal. "We have decades of experience recruiting donors, managing donor relationships and performing apheresis collections – more than any of our competitors."

Please see BIOTECH, page 5

PHOTO BY DAVID SPRAGUE

PROFILE MARSHALL LAMBERT



After 85 years in business, **Rene's Van & Storage Inc.** maintains its niche of moving L.A.'s famous while adapting to the times. President **Marshall Lambert**, left, notes that his company moved Ronald Reagan into the White House and handled house-changes for Marilyn Monroe and Groucho Marx. But today's celebrities require confidentiality. "That's why, to this day, all of our programs are still in house; we don't put them online," he told the Business Journal.

BEGINNING ON PAGE 6

MAIL TO:

THE LIST

PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS
Ranked by number of Valley-area employees and by 2018 net fee income from Valley-area offices
See page 12



11 Mars Helicopter
Drone maker AeroVironment extends market to another planet.

24 Conventional Cosplay
Valley firms at CinemaCon with stars including Melissa McCarthy, right.



WOMEN'S COUNCIL

JOIN US IN HONORING THE VALLEY AREA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL WOMEN BUSINESS LEADERS.

Wednesday, April 17

For tickets, visit sfvbj.com/bizevents

New Address: HemaCare headquarters at 8500 Balboa Blvd. in Northridge.



Biotech Supplier

With the surge in immunotherapy research, HemaCare is ‘uniquely positioned’ to provide critical blood and tissue samples.

By **AMY STULICK** Staff Reporter

HemaCare Corp., a biotech company specializing in supplying human bioproducts and blood to researchers, has enjoyed rapid growth and expansion during 2018 and into 2019, with a 41 percent increase in revenue last year and a new headquarters in Northridge. It was the top growth company last year on the Business Journal’s Valley 50 index, as measured by revenue percentage.

But this is not another hot startup. HemaCare started in 1978 and recently marked its 40th anniversary.

Chief Executive **Pete van der Wal** attributes the company’s success to quality of products and longevity in the field.

“We have decades of experience recruiting donors, managing donor relationships and performing apheresis collections – more than any of our competitors,” he said.

HemaCare describes itself as more than a blood bank, with the ability to extract and ship blood samples needed for research projects and store samples which can be bought directly. A network of distributors work with HemaCare to deliver product, or customers can buy product directly on the company’s website.

Bioproduct can be customized for each

pants asked to be in good health and feeling well, at least 18 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds, are not pregnant and have valid identification.

The main donor center is in Northridge, but the company also has a relationship with **Clinical Discover Institute** in Miramar, Fla., where human blood products are collected on HemaCare’s behalf.

Stefanie Homann, a scientist at **CSL Behring** in Pasadena, currently receives leukopaks, or a collection of white blood cells, from HemaCare for sickle-cell disease research. White blood cells from healthy donors provided by HemaCare help further gene therapy research for patients with the disease.

Extracting the cells needed for research takes precision and the right equipment, Homann said. HemaCare is able to provide cells by giving donors a “reagent,” or chemical that triggers a certain type of cell to transfer from the bone marrow into the blood stream to allow its collection and returning plasma and blood liquid volume back to the patient; this process is called apheresis.

“They also process some of the blood and leukopaks, and provide cryo-preserved cell samples for research,” Homann explained.

“They have very much evolved over time.

company’s product as “vertically integrated” in its support of specific uses like immunotherapy research. Tailoring bioproduct for customers helps expedite the long road to get a treatment to market.

The Northridge facility allows HemaCare to double its donor collection and on-site cell processing. Four clean rooms, isolation, cryopreservation and biobanking services see to that.

“Our competitors ... are merely commodity sources of raw human biological material,” van der Wal added.

Sourcing for donors goes back to 1978, making for a sizable database today. Outreach across varied demographics and clinical parameters helps bolster donor numbers.

“Most of (HemaCare’s) donors are coming back many times so they are able to maintain their donor pool – that’s a really good sign and not every site is able to keep up with that,” added Homann.

The company’s new headquarters is located at the tech-friendly Mix at Harman campus at 8500 Balboa Blvd. in Northridge. The facility has 39,862 square feet, a significant upgrade from the previous 16,500-square-foot facility in Van Nuys. The company moved in December.

Other tenants at the complex include **Facebook Inc.**, **Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd.**, and other health care companies such as **Pharmavite**, **Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd.** and **Heritage Provider Network**.

According to HemaCare’s annual report, the lease in Northridge costs about \$116,000 per month, or \$2.91 a square foot. HemaCare received \$2.4 million in tenant improvement allowances from the landlord. The lease runs for 11 years with an option for HemaCare to extend it another 10 years.

Expanding market

In addition to **CSL Behring**, customers include **Novartis International** in Switzerland, **Kite Pharma** in El Segundo and **Dendreon Pharmaceuticals** based in Seattle. As these companies develop immunocellular therapies and gene therapies, they use HemaCare bioproducts to reduce the risk of FDA problems when a company is looking to proceed to clinical trials and commercialization.

“HemaCare ... can customize most of the collection protocols if we ask them to do so,” said Homann. “Now that we’re preparing for a clinical trial, we will need all the qualification and documentation, and they are able to provide this as well.”

There has never been a better time for companies like HemaCare, according to **Brian Neman**, chief executive of **Sanguine Bio**, another bioproduct company in Sherman Oaks.

“It’s a combination of all things happening together – policy and reimbursement, science and technology, patient interest and engagement in patient advocacy, data and informatics, structuring and machine learning, algorithms and artificial intelligence – all of those things are coming together,” Neman said. “The time is

certainly right for a patient’s specimens and data to influence research and therapy development.”

While **Sanguine** doesn’t offer specialized bioproduct like HemaCare does, they also further medical research by matching blood samples with the research projects.

“We’re working with patients directly to not only collect blood samples but also medical record data so we can match them up with clinical trials,” Neman said. “It’s a concierge clinical trial matching service and we have tons of medical records from patients that will make it easy for them to participate.”

Whether it’s offering material tailored to specific research or matching patient data with relevant research, the bioproduct industry certainly seems to be making an effort to meet research and development teams halfway and do their part to get needed drugs and therapies to market.

Trust in the quality of HemaCare’s product led to numerous partnerships at the end of 2018, including **Vital River**, a subsidiary of **Charles River Laboratories** in China. In March, the Northridge company announced an extended partnership with **Tissue Solutions** in Glasgow, Scotland, for access to diseased human biosamples.

On the other side of the bioproduct business, companies like **Sanguine** and HemaCare also have to ensure donor recruitment and keeping a robust donor pool are high on the list.

Stock market response

The company has adapted to market shifts. In its 2011 annual report, it listed two business lines: a “blood products segment” and “therapeutic services segment.”

As more research requires biological materials, HemaCare has found ways to supply it.

The company’s stock trades over the counter. HemaCare stock in 2018 jumped from \$6.65 in June to \$13.88 in August, maintaining that high through the summer and fall before heading back down to single digits by the end of the year. It closed on April 10 at \$13.93.

Looking forward, the Northridge company wants to build its team in multiple departments, sourcing talent locally. Van der Wal also expects there to be an increase in operational capabilities, fresh and frozen products for health and disease-state products, and an expanded menu of isolated cells.

Expanding into other international markets is also on the menu, with more collaborations and partnerships sought, van der Wal said.



Donor Friendly: Collection room at HemaCare facility in Northridge.

client since the need for samples can be varied: research and development, a clinical trial, and collection for an FDA-approved therapy are just some examples.

Suppose a biotech start-up is developing a therapy for sickle-cell anemia and needs white blood cells from a specific demographic, or needs cells that are frozen and can last for the duration of a study; HemaCare can provide these types of material.

In another case, a company nearing clinical trials might need samples that are FDA-approved. HemaCare has the necessary documentation to comply with regulatory agencies.

The company also has a separate operation to recruit blood or tissue donors. Compensation for donors varies based on the type of collection performed; usually individuals are quoted on a case-by-case basis, according to the company’s website. Donor requirements are outlined on the website as well, with partici-

They started out I believe as a blood bank-type business and they have developed this in a really good way for their donors, and also for their customers, being that immunotherapy is such a new and forward-moving kind of therapy.”

Van der Wal noted that growth really began in 2014 and the extra push in the past year is directly related to the emerging fields of immunotherapy, cell therapy and regenerative medicine.

“HemaCare is in the right place at the right time, with the right skill sets that are in high demand to profit from the multi-billion-dollar biopharma and biotechnology companies,” van der Wal said. “Biopharma and biotechnology companies are racing to bring their cellular and immunotherapies to market. HemaCare is uniquely positioned to facilitate the research.”

New headquarters

HemaCare’s van der Wal describes the

