

# German research center opens 1st US facility

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Germany's leading research institute opened the doors to its first U.S. center Wednesday, bolstered by hope its world-class science could bring cures for neurological diseases and invigorate the economy.

Officials from around the state and across the Atlantic cut the ribbon on the Max Planck Florida Institute for Neuroscience on a patch of Florida Atlantic University campus in Jupiter. Its backers were eager for groundbreaking science to begin after years of work and millions of dollars in investment.

"Research and innovation, as much as education, are essential sources of prosperity and of a good life for all," said Cornelia Quennet-Thielen, Germany's state secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Quennet-Thielen announced \$10 million in annual funding over each of the next four years from the German government and the Max Planck Society for the Florida center.

Max Planck operates more than 80 institutes around the world. It began more than 60 years ago and has produced 17 Nobel laureates. Its new U.S. base will probe fundamental [brain processes](#), with an eye toward cures for diseases from schizophrenia to Alzheimer's. The center includes Bert Sakmann, a German who won the [Nobel Prize in physics](#) in 1991.

David Fitzpatrick, the scientific director and CEO of the new center, said the scientists who have established research groups in Jupiter have boundless potential for discovery. Their projects include work to

determine how [brain circuitry](#) is changed by injury and disorder, how information passes between [nerve cells](#), and functions related to learning and memory.

"We are limited only by the furthest reaches of our mind," Fitzpatrick said.

Speakers at the opening ceremony heaped praise on former Gov. Jeb Bush, who helped coax [Max Planck](#) to the state after a 2005 trade mission to Germany. He appeared in a taped video message. Other politicians who took the stage emphasized the center showed an important transition in the state, proving it holds importance beyond the allure of its weather and coastline.

"We have something more to offer," said Jeff Atwater, the state's chief financial officer.

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