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### **AG BUSINESS INCUBATOR ESTABLISHED IN CENTRAL WISCONSIN**

Jul. 7, 2010

Source: Central Wisconsin Agribusiness Innovation Center news release

The Central Wisconsin Agribusiness Innovation Center (CWAIC) the group that is establishing an agricultural business incubator near Owen, Wis., has hired its first executive director. Mike Kawleski will lead fundraising, tenant recruitment and marketing for the Center, which is a key component of a 71-acre agribusiness complex, the Clark County Agribusiness Technology Park, located just south of Highway 29.

The Agribusiness Innovation Center will be a multi-purpose facility with 48,586 square feet of business incubator space for agricultural entrepreneurs, large- and small-group classrooms, public meeting and event space, a commercial test/classroom kitchen, laboratory space, offices for lease and a distance learning lab.

"This facility is designed to foster education, training, research and business development in the fields of agribusiness, biotechnology, renewable energy and related industries," explains Kawleski. "I'm pleased to be associated with the Center, because it ultimately will strengthen the regional economy, create new jobs in agriculture and green technologies, and train people for those careers."

In addition, the state-of-the-art building itself will be a learning tool, using sustainable design concepts for both the Innovation Center and the surrounding site. CWAIC will be seeking a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum rating from the U.S. Green Building Council, designating the building as green and environmentally friendly as possible.

The Center facility will cost approximately \$9.8 million to construct, with funding coming from a variety of sources, such as cash and in-kind donations from individuals, companies and foundations local to nationwide as well as grants and loans from municipal, state and federal entities. The federal Economic Development Administration has already awarded a \$4 million grant for the design and construction of the building.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations to CWAIC are tax deductible, says Kawleski. With the support of private and public sponsors, groundbreaking for the center will take place no later than March 2011.

Kawleski was raised on a family-owned dairy farm and sawmill operation near Junction City, Wis., in Portage County. In 1976-77, he served as the Wisconsin FFA president. He and his wife, Jeanne, have been married 25 years and have three children, Dan, Laura and Amy.

Kawleski was the agriculture market leader for Wisconsin Public Service Corporation for the past six years. He began his career as a farm broadcaster and then served as broadcast specialist for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation. He later created and managed the corporate communications department for the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and founded WordCrafters, Inc., a public relations and marketing consulting and training firm.

Kawleski taught Agricultural Journalism classes as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is also an instructor for the Singapore-based Asia Pacific Institute for Management Development. He currently serves as president of the Wisconsin FFA Foundation board of directors and volunteers as the communications director for State Representative Gary Tauchen.

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