



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**North Carolina's  
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### **Biotechnology Education Forum for Teachers**

*Forum held at ECSU and sponsored by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center's Eastern Office*

Edenton, NC – A biotechnology forum was held October 9<sup>th</sup> at the K.E. White Center of Elizabeth City State University. Teachers and school administrators from the Northeastern and Eastern Regions of North Carolina were invited to attend the event and more than seventy signed up to take advantage of the free educational opportunity. In addition to general information sessions, afternoon workshops provided participants with hands-on experience with biotech lab experiments as well as information about grants and other resources available.

The forum featured speakers from the NC Biotechnology Center, The NC BioNetwork, industry representatives, and North Carolina's Northeast Commission. The speakers talked about the need for trained biotechnology technicians and scientists for the future of North Carolina's economy. "These jobs in the biotech industry, such as lab technicians and quality control technicians, pay above average wages," stated Bill Cooper, Manager of the BioNetwork Bioprocessing Center. The Center works with community colleges statewide to prepare students for careers in biotechnology by offering two-year degrees as well as curriculum programs that are transferable to a four-year degree.

John Chaffee, Director of the Eastern Office of the NC Biotechnology Center, facilitates the development of biotechnology resources within the eastern part of the state and assists with the creation and recruitment of bioscience companies. He introduced James Johnson, Director of Process Chemistry at Avoca, Inc, a processor of clary sage for the perfume industry, and Greg Unruh, Vice President and General Manager of Ventria Bioscience. Ventria grows rice in Washington County and then extracts a protein from the rice for the infant formula industry.

Chaffee also described the \$200 annual grants that are available to teachers who attend the summer workshops provided by the NC Biotechnology Center. Through the workshops and educational grants, the Biotechnology Center aims to increase awareness of biotechnology educational and career paths.

Vann Rogerson, President and CEO of North Carolina's Northeast Commission talked about the future of biotechnology in the region. "By working together with industry, economic development, educational resources, and the NC Biotechnology Center, we can continue to diversify the economy and expand the capacity for new jobs." The life science industry is one of the fastest growing sectors of the North Carolina economy.

**About North Carolina's Northeast Commission:**

North Carolina's Northeast Commission is dedicated to increasing the standard of living for citizens in its sixteen-county region through tourism, industrial, and business development. The 16 counties that comprise the regional Commission are: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Washington. For more information about the North Carolina's Northeast Commission, contact us at [www.ncnortheast.com](http://www.ncnortheast.com).



### **About the NC Biotechnology Center**

The Biotechnology Center, with headquarters in Research Triangle Park and five regional offices statewide, is a private, non-profit corporation supported by the N.C. General Assembly. Its mission is to provide long-term economic and societal benefits to North Carolina by supporting biotechnology research, business, education and workforce training statewide. The Eastern Office, located in Greenville, opened in January, 2006.

[http://www.ncbiotech.org/about\\_us/regional\\_offices\\_and\\_directions/eastern/index.html](http://www.ncbiotech.org/about_us/regional_offices_and_directions/eastern/index.html)

### **About plant-made biotechnology:**

Plant-made biotechnology has existed formally since the early part the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but was known primarily to scientists and farmers. Now with advances in technology and genetics research, ideas created in a laboratory can be mass-produced at a fraction of the cost in fertile fields. The future of plant-made biotechnology includes cellulosic biomass, biofuels production, and transgenic plants with pharmaceutical (medical) and nutraceutical (nutritional) implications.

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