



MEDIA RELEASE

Release Date: June 12, 2009

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**North Carolina's
Northeast Commission**

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Pilot Extraction Facility Becoming a Reality

*Grants from foundations improve opportunities for economic development in
North Carolina's Northeast*

Edenton - Vann Rogerson, President/CEO of North Carolina's Northeast Commission, recently announced the receipt of two separate grants that are being used to pave the way for new jobs and investment in North Carolina's Northeast.

In 2008, RTI in Research Triangle Park, NC completed a study of the northeast region of North Carolina and determined that plant agricultural biotechnology is a good growth strategy for rural Northeastern North Carolina. As part of that growth strategy, RTI recommended that the area build upon the research assets of the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center in Plymouth, expand the opportunities for functional foods and value-added crops in the area, and build a pilot-scale botanical extraction facility for testing and developing specialty crops. This initiative will serve to attract agricultural and food processing companies to locate to the region.

North Carolina's Northeast Commission has been working with the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center, university researchers, industry leaders, the NC Biotechnology Center, economic developers, and others to bring the pilot-scale botanical extraction facility to reality and reach the goal of developing the region into the center for agricultural plant biotechnology. Two recent grants support the next phase of the project.

A Regional Development Grant (RDG) from the NC Biotechnology Center in the amount of \$61,333 and a second grant from the NC Tobacco Trust Foundation in the amount of \$25,000 will pay for the architectural and engineering preliminary designs and location analysis for the extraction facility. This also includes travel to Canada, Texas, and across the state of North Carolina to collect information, and it includes the preparation of design drawings for the facility. Centrepont Architecture combined forces with Penta Engineering and was selected to complete the project.

“Agricultural biotechnology holds tremendous promise for improving the economic health and quality of life for people in rural North Carolina,” said E. Norris Tolson, President and CEO of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. “Value-added, niche-market and specialty crops represent a great opportunity in this sector, and the Northeast extraction facility is key to seizing that opportunity.”

“The Commission is very pleased to award this grant to the NC Northeast Commission,” said William Upchurch, Executive Director of the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. “Our board expects this project to have a great impact for farmers in the northeastern part of the state.”

Vann Rogerson, President/CEO of North Carolina’s Northeast Commission stated, “We are excited about the future of Northeastern North Carolina. It takes time, but we are creating the resources and infrastructure so that new bio-plant technologies can successfully bring their new products to market in NC’s Northeast. This will create new wealth for our farmers and for our citizens as new processing and packaging jobs are created. This is one of our many initiatives as we also are continuing to market the region specifically to aviation, distribution, renewable energy and automotive companies.”

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.

About the North Carolina Biotechnology Center

The Biotechnology Center 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 strategic policy statewide.

About the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission

The NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission was created to assist tobacco farmers, tobacco quota holders, persons engaged in tobacco-related businesses, individuals displaced from tobacco-related employment, and tobacco product component businesses in the State due to the adverse effects of the MSA. The Commission can disburse funds through compensatory programs and qualified agricultural programs.

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