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**\$4.5 Million in Federal Funding In Hand:
The Midwest BioLink Center Is Ready to Roll**

Wisconsin Department of Commerce Pledges \$200,000 of Additional Support

Madison, Wis.—May 11, 2010—A new \$4.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) completes a major milestone of Wisconsin’s BioAg Gateway, a center for cutting-edge, sustainable plant science research and commercialization, with the construction of the Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center.

“How well we move ideas out of the research lab and into the marketplace is vital to our economic competitiveness,” said U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development John Fernandez. “The Midwest BioLink Commercialization and Business Center will provide bio and ag entrepreneurs the catalyst to take their technology to the next level and beyond, and exemplifies President Obama’s commitment to advancing high-growth industries like biotechnology to benefit the America economy and workers.”

The BioAg Gateway will lead to a significant impact on the area’s economy. It’s planned to include space and equipment on the forefront of crop science research and commercialization—a great benefit in attracting new businesses to the city, region and state. Construction on BioLink is set to create 50 jobs, and as further development leads to additional growth, it will create an estimated 100 more positions indirectly within the first three to five years.

“My administration is committed to helping businesses with their efforts to support new economic development opportunities,” Governor Jim Doyle said. “BioLink will be built on a foundation of innovative technology and strong leadership. I am very excited to support an organization that represents the future of Wisconsin’s economy.”

“Madison is a perfect environment for growing bioagricultural and sustainable industries,” Mayor Dave Cieslewicz said. “This funding will accelerate our efforts to create jobs, leverage local assets, and create an environment for entrepreneurship at the BioAg Gateway.”

A secure, state-of-the art facility, BioLink will be a research catalyst, offering the flexibility needed to make cutting-edge breakthroughs and bring them to market efficiently. The space will include controlled environment agriculture manufacturing growth chambers and a plant science BSL II greenhouse as well as pilot processing biotechnology lab capabilities.

“BioLink will give researchers the perfect storm of resources—from its physical space to the business services and financial assistance to the area’s superior intellectual capital focused on biology, agronomy and plant science that companies can tap,” said Madison Development Corporation President Frank Staniszewski. “Construction will really serve as the tipping point for the BioAg Gateway, propelling the Madison area to status as a top choice for this type of industry.”

“BioAg Gateway is a catalyst to help diversify Wisconsin’s agricultural economy into new realms of bioag development,” said Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. “This exciting project fits with the work we have been doing under Governor Doyle to strengthen our agricultural economy by making it more modern, innovative and diverse.”

Guiding the development of the Wisconsin BioAg Gateway campus in Southeast Madison, as well as forging relationships with prospective tenants, is the Board of Advisors, a 17-member committee consisting of local and state officials, business leaders and University of Wisconsin directors. Advisors include:

Todd Abraham, VP Global Research, Strategy & Nutrition, Kraft Foods

John Biondi, President, C5-6 Technologies

John Blaska, President, Landmark Services Cooperative

Mark Bugher, Director, University Research Park

G. Steven Burrill, CEO, Burrill & Co.

Doug Cameron, Managing Director & Chief Science Advisor, Piper Jaffray

Dave Cieslewicz, Mayor, City of Madison

Carl Gulbrandsen, Managing Director, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation

Eric Hohol, Global Manager of Purchasing-Culture Division, Danisco

Mickey Judkins, Division Administrator Investment & Export, Wisconsin Department of Commerce

Susan LeVan-Green, Program Manager Technology Marketing, Forest Products Laboratory

Tom Lyon, CEO (Ret.), Cooperative Resources International

Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary, Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

Bryan Renk, Managing Director, BioForward

Troy Runge, Director, Wisconsin Bioenergy Initiative

John Wiley, Interim Director, Wisconsin Institute for Discovery

Phyllis Wilhelm, Director of Economic Development, MG&E

Local architecture and engineering firm Strang will lead the project.

“We are honored to collaborate in an initiative that offers positive economic impact and will lead to an enhanced quality of life for so many people,” said Wayne Whiting, principal of Strang’s Science + Technology Practice group. “The Midwest BioLink project and BioAg Gateway are an ideal fit with Strang’s sustainable design solutions and science and technology expertise.”

Learn more at BioAgGateway.com.

About the BioAg Gateway

The mission of the BioAg Gateway is to promote the growth, quality and success of the bioag industry in Madison and throughout the region. The BioAg Gateway continually seeks ways to help businesses and collaborative partners achieve and promote their full scientific, economic and social potential.

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