

NEWS RELEASE and MEDIA ADVISORY

Federal, State, and Community Partners to Celebrate Grand Opening of Rutgers Food Innovation Center's New Incubator Facility

More than 300 people expected at October 17 Event for Award-Winning Center

BRIDGETON, N.J. (October 13, 2008)—Rutgers University's New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station (NJAES) will officially open their new 23,000-square-foot Food Innovation Center business incubator and food processing facility here on October 17. The grand opening and ribbon-cutting event will begin at 10 a.m. at the state-of-the-art facility on 450 E. Broad Street in Bridgeton.

The Food Innovation Center (FIC), which began its operations in 2001, is a catalyst for economic development in the state and the surrounding region, and it has been recognized globally, nationally, and throughout New Jersey for the effectiveness of its economic development programs. The Center has been named "Incubator of the Year" by the National Business Incubation Association, which represents an estimated 7,000 business incubator programs that exist worldwide. In addition, the USDA has recognized FIC as a national "Innovative Program Model," for which it received a Partnership Award for "achievement as a model for community and economic development and jobs creation." In addition, the USDA has recognized FIC as a national "Agricultural Innovation Center Demonstration Program." Since 2001, the FIC has operated from rented office space in Bridgeton where it has assisted over 1,000 companies and entrepreneurs, located in every county of New Jersey, with customized assistance and educational programs.

As Richard L. McCormick, president of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, noted, "All of these accomplishments had been achieved before the new state-of-the-art facility was even built. Now, because of the foresight, imagination, hard work, and cooperation of a number of partnering agencies, FIC is poised to expand significantly its client services and processing ability." In May of 2007, the FIC was also the recipient of the Rutgers Presidential Award for Research in Service to New Jersey for "contributions to the health and economic well-being of communities across New Jersey."

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Robert M. Goodman, executive director of the Rutgers NJAES, added, "With the completion of the new 23,000-square-foot food business incubator and processing facility, FIC is well equipped to cultivate new businesses, provide technical and business support, act as a hub for continuing education and promote collaborative research and learning opportunities."

Margaret Brennan, director of economic development for the NJAES and a founder of the center, indicated, "Approximately 90 percent of the construction funding for the FIC incubator facility originated from outside of the university, which illustrates the tremendous support that the FIC has received from our partners." Construction and operations funding for the FIC originated from federal, state and local agencies, and has included Rutgers NJAES, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State of New Jersey, the New Jersey Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, the New Jersey Commission on Science and Technology, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, the Cumberland Empowerment Zone and the City of Bridgeton.

"Our new business incubator facility will greatly expand our capabilities and enable the design, development, marketing, analysis, commercialization and ongoing manufacture of food products for sale to retail and foodservice markets," said Louis Cooperhouse, director of the Rutgers FIC. He added, "This new facility allows the FIC to provide business and technology expertise to small and mid-size food companies in New Jersey, and lets us utilize our outreach capacity to reach food and agribusinesses throughout the nation." Food Innovation Center clients include farmers and rural cooperatives, startup food companies, existing small and mid-sized food establishments and retail and foodservice markets that seek to purchase locally supplied New Jersey products.

The grand opening event will include presentations from federal, state and local dignitaries who have made this momentous occasion possible, and will be followed by a ribbon cutting, light lunch with a tasting of products from Food Innovation Center clients, and guided tours of the new facility.

Speakers at this event will be the following: Louis Cooperhouse; Robert M. Goodman; Richard L. McCormick; Margaret Brennan; Thomas C. Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development, USDA (introduced by Andrew M.G. Law, State Director, USDA Rural Development); Robert Menendez, Senator, State of New Jersey; Frank A. LoBiondo, U.S. Congressman, New Jersey's 2nd District; Charles Kuperus, Secretary, New Jersey Department of Agriculture; Douglas H. Fisher,

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Assemblyman, New Jersey Legislative District 3; Willie Taylor, Director, Philadelphia Regional Office, US Economic Development Administration; Thomas Carver, Executive Director, NJ Casino Reinvestment Development Authority; Peter R. Reczek, Executive Director, NJ Commission on Science and Technology; Louis N. Magazzu, Freeholder Director, Cumberland County; Jeannine MacDonald, Executive Director, Cumberland Empowerment Zone Corporation; James Begley, Mayor, City of Bridgeton; and Tom Sheppard, Partner, Sheppard Farms.

Directions to this event can be found at <http://foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/incubatordirections.html>

For further information regarding the Food Innovation Center and its new facility, please visit <http://www.foodinnovation.rutgers.edu/>

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