

To: Editors/Directors From: Ron Womble Date: June 9, 2005 Pages: 2

PSU breaks ground on new research building

Pittsburg State University will break ground for a new facility to house its polymer research program at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, June 14. The groundbreaking will take place at 1204 Research Road in Pittsburg's research and development park just south of the Bicknell Sports Complex and is open to the public. A reception and musical prelude will precede the groundbreaking ceremony from 10:30-11 a.m.

The new, 21,000-square-foot building is expected to cost about \$4 million. It will house the Kansas Polymer Research Center (KPRC) laboratories, now in Shirk Hall.

At the KPRC, a research team of 11 scientists, led by Dr. Zoran Petrovic, is working with Cargill, Inc., a leading worldwide food, farm and financial services provider, to create products and materials from bio-based polymers for high-grade plastics.

The groundbreaking ceremony will include remarks by PSU President Tom Bryant; Clay C. Blair III, former chairman of the Kansas Board of Regents and current chairman of the University Research and Development Enhancement Corporation; Pittsburg City Manager Alan Gill; and Robert D. Tyler, president of Winfield Consumer Products. Tyler, a PSU plastics engineering technology graduate and a PSU Foundation trustee, is also a major contributor to the KPRC construction project.

The lead architect for the project will be Thomas A. Tyler, AIA, of Answers, Inc., St. Louis, Mo. Tyler will work with Paul Stewart, director of PSU Facilities Planning; Eric King, director of facilities for the Kansas Board of Regents; and the state Division of Architectural Services on the project.

PSU's research efforts in polymers have been ongoing for more than 10 years. Pittsburg State's KPRC was established in 1994 as a complement to PSU's education program in plastics technology, one of only four nationally accredited undergraduate plastics programs in the country. In addition, the KPRC was founded as part of the university's economic development efforts to serve the region and state. The Kansas Polymer Research Center is a

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Editors/Directors - We would be pleased to have you join us for the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new KPRC research building on June 14. The location is just northeast of the Joplin Street - Centennial intersection near Mt. Carmel Regional Medical Center. Please let me know if I can be of assistance. Ron

GROUNDBREAKING - Pg. 2

Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC) Center of Excellence.

The KPRC's funding organizations, in addition to KTEC, have included the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kansas Soybean Board, United Soybean Board, and the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council. Cargill announced in August 2003 that it was working with the scientists in PSU's Kansas Polymer Research Center to develop soy-based polyols for the urethane industry. PSU holds five patents to convert soybean oil to polyol and it now has a partnership with Cargill to commercialize the product. Other clients have funded a range of non-vegetable oil polyurethane R & D.

PSU's effort to develop polymers from soybeans and other bio-based products is in line with a national priority to replace petrochemicals with bio-based materials, thus reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil. Additionally, it makes use of Kansas and Midwest agricultural products, and it has the potential to bring additional industry to the region.

For more information on the KPRC, please contact Steve Robb, director of the PSU Business and Technology Institute, at 620-235-4920.

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