

## Breaking Ground Together

Good evening. We met here almost exactly two years ago for a groundbreaking ceremony. We picked up our shovels and moved some dirt. We dug the footings for this regional facility that will promote rural development, sustainable agricultural practices, and farming systems in northeast Iowa.

It was also a groundbreaking in another sense— a groundbreaking in originality and innovation. We marked a convergence of ideas, of hopes, and of dreams for the future of Iowans and for the people of the world. We imagined then the Borlaug Learning Center — a new phase in the continuing partnership of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU Extension and the Northeast Iowa Agricultural Experimental Association.

Today as we celebrate the center's completion, let us renew our combined commitment to continue to find new groundbreaking opportunities for feeding our people, protecting our natural resources, and strengthening our economy. I am convinced that such commitment must be unshakeable — even in the face of recession, budget cuts, and restructuring. The convergence of research and informal learning methodologies, are at the very heart and soul of the Land Grant mission and will glean long-term benefits for the state's citizens well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Together we will continue to create, share, and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place.

The Borlaug Learning Center is a testament to the strength of commitment and collaboration, and there's no telling what the next achievement will be. May we continue to break ground together.