

## Remarks to American Industrial Extension Alliance

Welcome to Iowa State University and our sesquicentennial celebrations. One hundred fifty years ago, the Iowa Legislature established the Iowa Agricultural College and Model Farm. After a couple of name changes, today we are officially the Iowa State University of Science and Technology.

Over the past 150 years ISU has garnered an international reputation for excellence and innovation. It has achieved this by remaining true to its founding father's land grant mission of bringing unbiased, research-based information and education to the people of Iowa and beyond. Iowa State University also is proud to be the first land grant institution in the nation.

Today's Iowa State University remains a *convergence of ideas, of hopes, and of dreams for the future of Iowans and for the people of the world*. The 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Iowa State University holds special significance not only because of the great work that has gone before us, but because of *the great things to come*.

Indeed, Iowa State students and faculty are responsible for many research patents and inventions including the first binary computer (the ABC), which paved the way for the laptops we carry with us every day; Maytag blue cheese, which some of you may have had the chance to enjoy; the round hay baler, which helps shape the landscape you can see in rural Iowa; and many others. With world class programs in agriculture, technology, science, and art,<sup>1</sup> ISU now boasts a population of approximately 27,000 students and more than 100 buildings. Iowa State also is the birthplace of Extension. Extension began in Iowa in 1903, 11 years before the national cooperative extension service was established. And Extension has been at the forefront of taking our research to the citizens of our state.

Today we serve the people of Iowa with continuing and distance education and programs in community and economic development, agriculture and natural resources, families, 4-H youth development, and business and industry.

The roots of ISU Extension's role in business and industry trace back to the efforts of Iowa State's first engineering dean, Anson Marston, the man who built the water tower you can see outside this building, and the man for whom this building was named. In 1904, Marston developed the nation's premier Engineering Experiment Station—the first research agency organized in an engineering school. The purpose of the experiment station was to support faculty research in the emerging areas of science and technology, and then transfer the results to the state's industries. The station provided crucial engineering research and played a vital role in modernizing American manufacturing, a goal we're constantly redefining.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lib.iastate.edu/spcl/exhibits/150/index.html>

The goal of modernizing American manufacturing is supported by another one we all share here: to raise the visibility of state industrial/technology programs. Iowa State University helped advance this goal by developing the model for the Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) in 1962. Serving business and industry became part of Iowa State University Extension's mission in 1966. That's when Iowa State made Extension university-wide, pulling together various outreach activities across the university—Cooperative Extension, Engineering Extension, CIRAS, and the Agriculture Short Course Office. After 90 years as a separate extension activity, the Engineering Extension Service was merged into CIRAS in 2002.

Since CIRAS is now part of ISU Extension, Iowa manufacturers have access to education, research, and technical assistance from throughout Iowa State University. CIRAS also links Iowa industry to the state's other public universities and community colleges, government agencies, and professional associations.

Outreach to business and industry is a vital part of ISU Extension. Iowans value healthy economies, as does Extension. ISU Extension is in sync with this value, as well as Iowa's values of healthy people and healthy environments. These values are shared by states across the country, and we feel a strong connection to other Extension programs working to achieve the same things. We build partnerships and provide relevant, research-based learning opportunities, which all lead to one objective: to improve the quality of life in Iowa.

How do we keep Iowa's economy growing for a vibrant future? Extension's work in economic development focuses on applying research, developing community infrastructure, and developing Iowa's workforce. Partnerships with other entities—the colleges and institutes at Iowa State, Iowa's community colleges, government agencies, associations and organizations, and so on—are a large component of these activities. Successful economic development requires cooperation and collaboration. Extension places the needs and goals of the people first and foremost.

A good example of the way ISU Extension collaborates for economic development is the bioeconomy. Iowa is rich in the agricultural and industrial assets needed to grow the bioeconomy and we have the human resources needed to capitalize on this opportunity. Our renewable resources can be used to foster diverse economic development in rural areas, reduce dependence on fossil fuel resources, improve U.S. energy security, and enhance the health and sustainability of Iowa's ecosystems.

We're seeing an incredible rise in the demand for corn-based ethanol, biodiesel, and cellulosic-based biofuels. We're very excited about what the future holds for biorenewables, and the opportunities for these biobased products will change the economic, cultural, and social landscape of Iowa in amazing ways for years to come.

ISU Extension's work in building the bioeconomy in Iowa covers a number of areas including:

- providing educational workshops, conferences, and policy forums
- conducting feasibility studies and reviewing business plans to help Iowans secure funding for startup businesses
- bringing together Iowans involved in the production and manufacturing of biobased products to learn about new discoveries in bioprocessing, business models and capitalization strategies, and new crops and cropping systems
- helping firms become certified in the new national biodiesel industry quality standard, BQ-9000
- working with USDA to implement the Federal Biobased Products Preferred Procurement Program (FB4P) designed to open potential federal markets for biobased products

These areas are a group effort with responsibilities and decision-making shared by many people and organizations from across our state. They depend on cooperation and collaboration from a number of university departments and ISU Extension units—including CIRAS, Value Added Agriculture, and Community and Economic Development. Last spring Extension organized community-level discussions throughout the state to help Iowans consider the agronomic, economic, social, and environmental impacts of developing the state's biorenewable resources. ISU Extension can help them make informed decisions and be engaged in shaping a desirable future. We're pulling together the research from Iowa State so we can provide timely, relevant education and training activities and resource materials for Iowa producers and their service providers. With ISU Extension education, they can make better decisions for increased profitability, enhanced air, soil, and water quality, and new economic development opportunities. And better decisions mean better results, and better results raise the national profile of our industrial and technology programs.

Extension knows the value of collaboration; it's been a big determiner of our success up to this point. For that reason, I strongly encourage you to work with the extension service in your own state. Joining forces with Extension allows you to bring all the resources of the university to bear on the issues facing business and industry in your state.

Thank you for sharing your time with me this morning, and I look forward to hearing about the joint ventures that come out of your work with your own state's extension programs.