

Kansas NSF EPSCoR Wins \$6.75 Million Award for Ecological Forecasting *Program is second largest KTEC grant award*

April 14, 2006

Contact: Kristin Bowman-James, 864-3096

A \$6.75 million award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) will soon enable researchers in Kansas to address one of the Grand Challenge science problems of the 21st century --- forecasting the ecological consequences of environmental changes. In addition to the federal funds, \$2.5 million is awarded by the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC) --- providing a total funding infusion of \$9.25 million.

The three-year award to the Kansas NSF Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR), headquartered at The University of Kansas, will link researchers at KU, Kansas State University, and Fort Hays State University in a study of changes occurring in the climate, land-use, biogeochemistry, hydrology and biodiversity along the Kansas River Basin.

“The award will strengthen the research infrastructure in an area targeted for growth and development in Kansas --- the biosciences,” said Dr. Kristin Bowman-James, director of Kansas NSF EPSCoR.

Dr. Leonard Krishtalka, director of the KU Natural History Museum and Biodiversity Research Center, will lead the research and Dr. Walter Dodds, Professor of Biology at Kansas State University, will be the co-lead.

“The Central Plains grasslands provide Kansans with critical ecosystem services: supplying clean water, recycling essential nutrients, sequestering carbon, preserving biodiversity, and guarding against invasive species and emerging diseases,” Krishtalka explained. “Being able to forecast changes occurring in these ecosystems is vitally important to protect and strengthen the Kansas and regional economy.”

In addition to this being KTEC’s second largest active grant, the project also marks a continuation of its earlier support for the Kansas NSF EPSCoR. KTEC is the state’s designated provider of matching funds to the federal EPSCoR programs.

“KTEC understands that it is important for Kansas NSF EPSCoR to leverage state dollars to secure federal dollars and that such a federal-state partnership enables Kansas to develop its niche strength in bioinformatics and ecology,” said Tracy Taylor, President and CEO of KTEC. “In a year or two, researchers involved in this project will be better able to compete for some of the NSF’s largest bioscience awards, and longer term, we could see some commercial software products and companies spinning off from this work.”

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is a joint program of the NSF and qualifying U.S. states and territories to promote development of the science and technology through partnerships involving universities, industry, and government. EPSCoR's goal is to maximize the potential inherent in a state's S&T resources and use those resources as a foundation for economic growth.

Kansas joined EPSCoR in 1991 and received its first research infrastructure improvement award in 1992.

ABOUT KTEC:

The Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC) is a private/public partnership established by the state of Kansas to promote technology based economic development. Through support of strategic research and development at our Centers of Excellence, through intense hands-on business assistance at our incubators, and through our equity investments in early-stage companies, KTEC serves as an invaluable partner to companies that bring economic growth to Kansas. Learn more at: www.ktec.com