

Golden LEAF Grant Proposal - Narrative NBAF Education for Granville and Surrounding Counties

Purpose

Funds are requested to provide educational information to the citizens of Granville and surrounding counties regarding the proposed National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF). The NBAF will be a research and diagnostic facility that will serve the nation's agriculture and public health. The project has the potential to significantly impact the economy of Granville County, the Research Triangle Region and the State of North Carolina. On behalf of North Carolina, an Expression of Interest was submitted by the NCSU-College of Veterinary Medicine (NCSU-CVM) to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in March of 2006. The Umstead research farm, owned and operated by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture (NCDA), near Butner is one of 6 sites in 6 states under consideration by the DHS for siting the facility. The educational effort described here will provide the citizens of Granville County with accurate information allowing an informed decision about the siting of the proposed NBAF facility in their community. In addition, the activities proposed will serve to correct misinformation that has been spread about the purpose and the safety of the NBAF. As community acceptance is one of the criteria used to determine which site will be selected, a public education campaign to provide facts about the facility is critical. The overall project is time limited and expected to be completed in 2008. DHS will release draft environmental impact statement (EIS) in May or early June. DHS will hold a public meeting soliciting comments on the draft EIS in June or July. The final EIS will be released late September or early October. A record of decision (that is, site selection) is expected by November or December 2008. This project is designed to provide the community with on-going and updated educational information from June through the end of the calendar year coinciding with the announcement of the selected site by the DHS. Whether or not North Carolina is selected as the site for the NBAF, we propose to provide Granville County citizens with information and education about the NBAF and the importance of animal and public health research through the end of the calendar year.

From the DHS WEB site:

The proposed National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) would research high-consequence biological threats involving zoonotic (i.e., transmitted from animals to humans) and foreign animal diseases. It would allow basic research; diagnostic development, testing and validation; advanced countermeasure development; and training for high-consequence livestock diseases. The new and unique government biocontainment infrastructure would:

- integrate those aspects of public and animal health research that have been determined to be central to national security;
- assess and research evolving bioterrorism threats over the next five decades; and
- enable the Departments of Homeland Security and Agriculture to fulfill their related homeland defense research, development, testing, and evaluation (RDT&E)

The North Carolina Consortium for the NBAF (NCC-NBAF)

The NCC-NBAF is a public-private partnership of academia, agriculture, government, and the private sector. Its mission is to provide responsive guidance to the private sector and government on biological, public health, and agricultural security countermeasures, to gain the siting for, and collaboration with, the DHS NBAF program, and to research, evaluate, and prioritize resources to protect the U.S. public and agriculture from threats of biological agents and emerging diseases. The Consortium has depth in animal and public health, academia, government, agriculture, biotechnology, and biomanufacturing.

- **Academic** - members include two agriculture colleges, a veterinary college, three medical institutions (two with public health schools), and the Community College System's biotechnology worker training programs.
- **Government** - participants include federal, state and local officials, plus the North Carolina departments of Agriculture, Health, Commerce, Environment and Natural Resources, and Crime Control.
- **Agriculture** - is represented by the state's four major livestock associations-beef, dairy, poultry, and swine, the NC Farm Bureau and the NC Agribusiness Council. These groups bring technical resources, R&D capabilities, and a true public-private science partnership to the Consortium.
- **Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing** - are represented by non-profit corporations and associations promoting biotechnology research, business, and education statewide, and by private sector members in biological R&D, vaccine manufacturing, diagnostics, and similar fields.

NCC-NBAF Leadership

The NCC-NBAF leadership is comprised the individuals from NCSU-CVM [Dean Warwick Arden, Barrett Slenning, Dave Green, Kevin Howell, Matt Peterson, Susan Carroll]; UNC General Administration (UNCGA) [Andy Willis, Kimrey Rhinehardt]; Granville County [Leon Turner]; NCDA (Debbie Robertson); NC Department of Commerce (NCDOC) [Vivan Powell] and the NC Biotechnology Center (NCBC) [Ken Tindall, Mike Wilkins]. The leadership team holds weekly conference calls and meets monthly to discuss activities and strategy. In addition to the educational activities proposed here, the NCC-NBAF leadership serves as the primary contact for the DHS regarding NBAF. The NBAF leadership also works through the UNCGA and NCSU federal and state legislative liaisons to report and inform elected officials about NCC-NBAF activities.

Grant Management

This grant request is submitted by the NCBC on behalf of the NCC-NBAF. The NCBC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide long-term economic and societal benefits to North Carolina by supporting biotechnology research, business and education statewide. NCBC will provide overall project direction and all funds will be administered by the NCBC. The NCSU-CVM is the applicant on the Expression of Interest to DHS. Therefore, the NCBC will

work closely with the NCSU-CVM to direct and implement the proposed activities. The North Carolina Association for Biomedical Research (NCABR) is a statewide, nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote public understanding and support for bioscience research and careers. NCABR will serve as the project managers and will provide day-to-day oversight for the proposed activities. French West Vaughan (FWV) is a Raleigh-based public relations firm that is currently under contract to NCSU for media relations and the development of community educational materials for the NCC-NBAF. The FWV contract with NCSU ends June 30th. This grant will extend and expand the services provided to the NCC-NBAF by FWV. A detailed task list is attached.

Educational Activities and Implementation

Media Outreach

Advertisements that provide educational and informational content will be purchased in *The Daily Dispatch* (Henderson), *The Oxford Public Ledger* and *The Butner-Creedmoor News*. These papers primarily serve the citizens of Granville County. Paid advertisements in these papers continue a practice already established by the NCC-NBAF to provide Granville County citizens with accurate and timely information about the NBAF, laboratory safety, animal and zoonotic diseases that are targeted for study at the NBAF. We plan to run 2 full-page ads in each paper each month from June through October and 1 full-page ad in each of the papers in November and December.

The coordination of **opinion commentaries and articles (op-eds)** that provide informational content or reflect the opinions of individuals with specific expertise will be developed to provide North Carolinians with a better understanding of the NBAF and its purpose. Op-eds coordinated by the NCC-NBAF will be strictly educational and developed to inform rather than persuade. Significant effort is required to identify individuals who may be interested in writing an op-ed article and coordinate with local newspapers. Targeted newspapers include the Granville County papers mentioned above as well as *The Durham Herald Sun* and *The News and Observer* in Raleigh. We plan for the development of 1 to 2 op-eds per month from May to December.

Editorial Boards will be requested with local media and representatives of the NCC-NBAF will attend to answer questions. Boards have already been held with editors from Henderson, Butner-Creedmoor and *The Durham Herald Sun*. There may be an opportunity for a 2nd Board with some of these papers over the course of the next 6 months. We anticipate a Board with the Raleigh News and Observer in the next 6 months as well.

Radio talk shows serving Granville County will be contacted to offer experts to participate in select radio interviews and call-in programs. These talk shows are often heard on AM frequencies and serve the local public by providing in-depth discussion of local issues. The NCC-NBAF (notably, Dr. Barrett Slenning) has already participated in several of these talk shows. We expect to continue the participation throughout the summer and fall.

A **Media monitoring** service will be contracted to provide the NCC-NBAF with current information and news clippings that address public interest or concern at all of the sites under consideration for the NBAF. By monitoring the national media, the NCC-NBAF can monitor public interest and concern and prepare proactive information pieces to benefit the citizens of North Carolina.

Community Engagement

Message development and coordination is critical as the NCC-NBAF is serving the people of North Carolina by providing educational and informational materials. Advertisement and web site text, informational post cards, speech and slide preparation will all receive input from NCSU-CVM, NCBC, NCABR and FWV.

Establishment of a speaker's bureau provides the community with a rich resource of individuals available to address business and civic groups regarding the animal and public health purpose as well as the economic development opportunities of the NBAF. NCABR and FWV will work together to recruit speakers, develop presentation materials, coordinate and schedule presentations. FWV under its contract with NCSU is also providing media training for selected speakers. We anticipate speakers making 4 to 10 presentations per month in Granville and surrounding counties.

A Web page and **WEB design** is central to easily reaching a large number of people in North Carolina interested in information about the NBAF. For the past year, the NCC-NBAF has maintained a web site [<http://www.ncc-nbaf.org/index.cfm>] designed to address questions about the NBAF. With increased public demand for information, the WEB site must be redesigned and updated. Updates will i) provide for ease of navigation, ii) generate new informational text, and iii) simplify monitoring and answering submitted questions. WEB design will be provided by FWV working in close collaboration with the NCSU-CVM where the current site is housed. Ongoing monthly maintenance costs will be provided by the NCSU-CVM.

Informational postcards will be designed and content will be developed for two mailings between June and December 2008. These postcards will be used to provide educational information about the NBAF. The postcards will be sent to approximately 4000 households in Granville County. Informational post cards provide a means of communicating a targeted informational message to individuals that do not regularly receive the local newspaper and allow an easy distribution of the web address where more information can be obtained.

Community Leadership Education

A NCC-NBAF **Consortium member update** has not taken place since the fall of 2007. The NCC-NBAF is planning member updates in June and in October. These provide Consortium members with current information about the DHS section process and serve to answer questions that Consortium members may have regarding the purpose, safety, and community acceptance of the NBAF. Two Consortium member updates are planned in June and October. Golden LEAF funds will not be used for meeting expenses but are required for the organizational and support activities provided by NCABR and FWV.

A presentation of the NBAF was made to the North Carolina business community in October of 2007. The NCC-NBAF will **update the business community** in either July or September. Similar to the consortium member update, this meeting will provide the business community with current information and answer questions about the NBAF. In addition, we anticipate bringing a senior representative from the Canadian Science Centre for Human and Animal Health in Winnipeg, Manitoba to address the community. This facility is quite similar in design and purpose to the proposed NBAF. Again, Golden LEAF funds will not be used for meeting expenses, but are required for the organizational and support activities provided by NCABR and FWV.

We are planning for a select group of community leaders to **tour the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta**. The CDC performs research in BioSafety Level (BSL) 4 laboratories in its facility located in downtown Atlanta. Offering community leaders with an opportunity to see the construction, the operations, how the facility is managed in an urban environment and to have their questions answered by CDC experts will provide them with supplemental information about complicated facilities such as the NBAF and will serve to help them make an informed decision about the possible siting of the NBAF in their community. This tour is included here for informational purposes only. No Golden LEAF funds will be used for this effort.

Community Impact Monitoring

It is important to the Consortium that all members of the community have equal access to educational information. A **comprehensive polling** of the population will assess the effectiveness of the public information campaign. We will poll the community regarding their perspective of the purpose, safety and benefits of the NBAF. Two polls will be performed, one in June and one in October. The June poll should reflect the current community perspective. The poll in October will reveal the impact of the proposed education effort. Both polls will provide insight regarding public misunderstanding or distrust, thereby allowing for the development of targeted informational materials. In addition, the NCC-NBAF will evaluate the community perspective through the assessment of letters to the editor, comments in public meetings and discussions with elected officials.