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News tip for: Lenexa and Olathe

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A FULL HOUSE: FOUR MONTHS AFTER OPENING, K-STATE OLATHE BRIMMING WITH INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS AND EXPERTISE

MANHATTAN -- The Kansas City area will start seeing an increase in purple power.

Leaders at Kansas State University's **Olathe** campus and industry officials from around the world have created partnerships that are filling up the initial 10 laboratory spaces at the campus, which opened April 26.

"It's exciting to see the diverse range of projects and partnerships we have lined up as more companies are realizing the resources that Kansas State University has to offer," said Dan Richardson, chief executive officer of K-State Olathe. "Because of that, the Olathe campus is benefiting not only K-State's programs and the university's faculty members, but is also being used to meet industry's needs."

One such partnership is with Ceva Biomune, a **Lenexa**-based company that develops and produces vaccines for swine and poultry. On Sept. 15 Ceva moved into lab space at K-State Olathe, where it will expand its research and development to swine vaccines and diagnostics. Ceva Biomune is one of several U.S. subsidiaries of Ceva Sante Animale, a global organization that is currently one of the fastest growing animal health companies in the world.

The initial collaboration between Ceva Biomune and K-State Olathe is expected to last between 18 months and two years, and serves as a bridge during Ceva's expansion of its existing research and development facilities in Lenexa, Richardson said. Ceva officials have expressed their interest in working with K-State researchers and graduate candidates on the Olathe campus.

Two of the campus' laboratories will be dedicated to the Urban Water Institute. The institute will focus on connecting more than 30 K-State water-related experts from four colleges with water-related companies and service industry in the Kansas City metro area. According to Richardson, the consortium will identify and create technologies that address issues related to water usage in urban areas.

Also expanding its operations to the K-State Olathe campus is the Advanced Manufacturing Institute. The institute is part of K-State's College of Engineering and a Kansas Department of Commerce Center of Excellence. It will support collaborative product and technology development with its industrial partners and help facilitate collaborations with faculty on the Manhattan campus.

"With AMI here, I envision faculty working with industry to solve a problem, which AMI can then take and develop into viable technology that can then be scaled up for commercial use," Richardson said. "It's a really valuable piece that's being added to the campus, and something that nobody else is offering."

Each laboratory at K-State Olathe is essentially a clean slate for university and industry researchers, Richardson said. The campus provides tables, sinks, fume hoods and other mobile pieces that can be placed anywhere in the lab space.

"It's very flexible so that as researchers decide to use the lab they can help design it the way they want to use it," Richardson said. "That way when an industry starts its project, all it has to do is bring its researchers and their research equipment."

While 10 laboratory spaces have been built, Richardson said some unfinished space in the International Animal Health and Food Safety Institute has been set aside for future use. That space could be converted into more general use laboratories or even into specialized laboratories and work spaces, office space or an interactive teaching space.

Debbie Kirchhoff, director of development at K-State Olathe, said industry leaders who have toured the campus are becoming acquainted with the resources and knowledge the university has to offer. Because of that, officials are excited by the possibilities that could stem from a partnership.

"People have always been aware of Kansas State University, but now having this building and a physical presence in the area has unleashed a new and invigorated interest in K-State," Richardson said. "The question we're hearing from industry is, 'Knowing K-State's core strengths, how can we more readily access these resources and work with you to employ them?' That's exciting to hear K-State Olathe is truly being leveraged to help advance the university's outreach and quality brand even further."