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DHS signs land transfer for NBAF site

Washington, DC – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback and the Kansas Congressional Delegation announced today the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has signed a land transfer agreement with the State of Kansas for the site where the National Bio- and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF) will be built in Manhattan, Kansas.

“While there is much more work to be done, signing of the land transfer agreement is a good step forward in securing the future health, wealth and security of the our nation. It demonstrates DHS’ continued commitment to completing the NBAF in Manhattan. Kansas stands ready to partner with DHS to move this important national security priority forward,” Governor Brownback said.

DHS announced its selection of the Manhattan site in 2009.

“This marks a big day for the state of Kansas as the land transfer is now complete. Last week, I spoke with Secretary Napolitano and she made clear construction of the Central Utilities Plant should be underway without further delay. I look forward to planning a ground breaking in 2013,” U.S. Senator Pat Roberts said.

The approximately 46 acre site is located on the north side of the Kansas State University campus. It provides land acquisition potential; highway access; environmental compatibility; adequate utility infrastructure; an available local work force for skilled labor and academic research; and proximity to agricultural, academic, medical and bioscience resources.

“This land transfer is good news for Kansas and critical to our national security. After years of hard work by Kansans and numerous studies that substantiate the need for NBAF, I’m glad to see that DHS and Secretary Napolitano have signed the land transfer agreement and will work with the state of Kansas to move forward toward construction of the Central Utility Plant,” U.S. Senator Jerry Moran said. “The facts are clear: without the capabilities NBAF provides, our country is at risk from foreign animal disease threats. This is even more significant with the damage Plum Island sustained during Hurricane Sandy and the millions of dollars that are needed to repair it, all of which offers more reason to move quickly on NBAF. Construction should begin immediately.”

The state of Kansas has committed $105 million dollars of matching state funds to the NBAF project and $35 million dollars of research funding for transitioning the NBAF mission to Manhattan.

“Today’s Department of Homeland Security decision to sign the land transfer agreement is another step toward ensuring the NBAF will be built in Manhattan, Kansas. We have worked hard to secure the Congressional commitment to make the NBAF a reality, and this step forward will allow construction to begin early next year,” U.S. Rep. Lynn Jenkins said. “Our nation needs the NBAF—we need it as soon as possible—to continue critical research that will protect the public and our livestock from the threats of devastating diseases.”

The $650 million laboratory will research and develop countermeasures to animal, human, and zoonotic diseases. So far the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has invested more than $125 million into site preparation, engineering, design, and site specific risk-assessments.

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp said, “Today's announcement is a solid next step toward getting NBAF literally off the ground. We are excited that Kansas is going to play an instrumental role in critical research to protect America's farmers and ranchers."

A January 2012 economic impact report found the NBAF will employ approximately 326 permanent workers and support about 757 construction jobs. It is expected to have a $3.5 billion economic impact on the state in the facility’s first 20 years of use.

“This land transfer agreement marks an important milestone for NBAF’s construction in Kansas and the security of our nation’s food supply. Hard work and long hours put in by many Kansans is paying off. I will continue working in Congress to ensure this important national security project is completed,” U.S. Rep. Mike Pompeo said.

U.S. Rep. Kevin Yoder said, “The land grant agreement is great news for national security and the state of Kansas. I'm glad Kansas can continue moving forward with this project and that construction of this extremely important facility can begin in the near future."

Gov. Brownback and the federal delegation said they will continue to strongly pursue federal funding of the facility.

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