

FAPC changes name to Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center

By Ruth Bobbitt

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STILLWATER, Okla. –The Oklahoma Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center on the campus of Oklahoma State University has been renamed the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center.

The name change is in honor of the late senator's role in the conception and development of the FAPC. Sen. Kerr was the legislative champion in the two-decade effort to create the state-of-the-art research and technology center.

“Without the leadership, vision and consistent hard work of the late Sen. Kerr, the Food & Agricultural Products Center would not exist today,” said J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC director. “Sen. Kerr worked tirelessly for two decades to pass legislation for the development of a food-processing center in Oklahoma.”

In 1994, Kerr's efforts were rewarded when his bill to develop the FAPC was unanimously approved by both houses of the legislature and signed by the governor.

The FAPC opened for business in early 1997, and the 96,000-square-foot stand-alone building houses animal harvesting, food manufacturing, grain milling, sensory profiling, food microbiology and analytical laboratory facilities, as well as conference facilities and applications laboratories for demonstration and prototype testing. In 10 years of service to Oklahoma, the FAPC has assisted more than 1,000 Oklahoma clients through 3,000 technical and business projects.

The announcement of the name change was made at the third annual FAPC Media Day, where approximately 85 media representatives and industry personnel helped the FAPC “Celebrate a Decade of Adding Value to Oklahoma.”

“The FAPC Media Day is an opportunity for media professionals to learn about the FAPC's contributions as a research, development, business and technical resource for Oklahoma's food and agricultural industries,” said Mandy Gross, FAPC communications specialist.

Gross said Media Day participants heard from FAPC clients and contributors about projects completed throughout the center's 10 years of existence. Projects and clients represented included Smokaroma, Prairie Gypsies, Daddy Hinkles, Red River Gourmet, Cattle Tracks, the FAPC Basic Training program, the development of PB Slices, a lycopene research project, a liquid smoke research project and an overview of the impact of the FAPC.

In addition, attendees witnessed three demonstrations of projects performed at the FAPC, including the production of biofuels, manufacture of cooked sausage and development of Katy's Pantry salad dressing.

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The center's new name was revealed at a birthday party luncheon complete with punch, cake, hamburger patties sponsored by Cattle Tracks and hamburger buns sponsored by Our Earth Organic Bakery. Keynote speaker Rodger Kerr, son of Sen. Kerr, discussed his father's role in the development of FAPC, his own role as a member of the Industry Advisory Committee and the FAPC's impact on the state.

Jenifer Reynolds, host of "Discover Oklahoma," moderated the event.

"For a decade, the FAPC has strove to discover, develop and deliver technical and business information that will stimulate and support the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma," Escoubas said. "The FAPC Media Day was a great opportunity to share success stories and look forward to many more years of 'Adding Value to Oklahoma.'"

For more information about the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center, call Gross at 405-744-0442, or visit fapc.biz.

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