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**Conference Devoted to “Healthy Arkansas” is Second in a Series
Concentrated on Economic Growth**
*Developed by the Arkansas Research Alliance, conference builds community
and identifies commercial opportunities*

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., April 22, 2011 – The Winthrop Rockefeller Institute, located in Petit Jean, Ark., welcomed an invitation-only audience for the second Arkansas Research Alliance (ARA) Research Conference, **Healthy Arkansas**.

A series of three pilot research conferences have been developed by the ARA as part of their effort to grow Arkansas’s economy by advancing university research and elevating collaboration between corporate Arkansas and university researchers.

Gov. Mike Beebe delivered a welcome message to invited participants and provided an overview of the ARA Research Conference program via video. Joseph W. Thompson, M.D., MPH, Surgeon General for the State of Arkansas, served as the keynote speaker.

As Surgeon General and CEO of Arkansas Center for Health Improvement, Thompson is an advocate for ending childhood obesity and creating a healthier Arkansas. He works closely with Gov. Beebe’s office, the Arkansas legislature and members of the public and private sectors, in developing health policy and programs that encourage better health and health care in Arkansas.

During the three-day conference, university researchers and business leaders participated in conference tracks that provided opportunities to build affiliations around research competencies and allowed attendees to discover where economic leverage may exist for Arkansas. Conference tracks, **Transforming Healthcare through Innovation** and **Nutritional Food Supply**, were organized by steering committees and led by nationally recognized experts:

1. Transforming Healthcare through Innovation
 - a. Dr. Curtis Lowery, UAMS, Steering Committee Chair
 - b. National Expert: Nick Augustinos, Senior Director, Global Healthcare Solutions, CISCO

- more -

2. Nutritional Food Supply

- a. Dr. Jean Francois Meullenet, UAF, Steering Committee Chair
- b. National Expert: Joe Quinn, Senior Director, Corporate Affairs, Walmart

“The ARA Research Conferences are important because they bring together researchers and business leaders and provide a platform for discussing research that has economic potential for Arkansas,” stated ARA Board Chair Hugh T. McDonald. “There is tremendous collaborative potential among these professionals and our hope is that they find ways that their self-interests intersect. The research conferences are new to Arkansas and over time, we believe that they will play a role in Arkansas’s economic prosperity.”

Leveraging grant funding from the Rockefeller Institute, the Walton Family Foundation and ARA private funds, the pilot research conferences have been initiated to explore university competencies identified in the first independent study* of university-based research competencies in Arkansas.

Competencies include:

1. Enterprise Systems Computing
2. Distributed Energy Network Systems
3. Optics and Photonics
4. Nano-Related Materials and Applications
5. Sustainable Agriculture and Bioenergy Management
6. Food Processing and Safety
7. Personalized Health Research Sciences
8. Behavioral Research for Chronic Disease Management
9. Obesity and Nutrition

Future conferences will also be based on existing research competencies. A third conference is slated for October 2011. Three conference tracks will be Sustainable Agriculture, Bio-Energy Management and Food Safety. * [*Click here to be linked to the study.*](#)

About Winthrop Rockefeller Institute

In 2005, the University of Arkansas System established Winthrop Rockefeller Institute with a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Charitable Trust. By integrating the resources and expertise of a statewide university system with the legacy and ideas of Gov. Winthrop Rockefeller, this educational institute and conference center creates an atmosphere where collaboration and change can thrive. The Rockefeller Institute offers a variety of workshops, seminars, public lectures, conferences and special events. Program areas include agriculture and environment, arts and humanities, economic development, and policy and public affairs. To learn more, call 501-727-5435, visit the website at LiveTheLegacy.org, or stay connected through [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About the Arkansas Research Alliance

The ARA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of trustees comprised of chancellors from Arkansas research universities and CEOs from across the state. In 2007, the Arkansas legislature approved the appropriation of start-up operational funding for the ARA from the state's general improvement fund. Funding was authorized through the Arkansas Science and Technology Authority. Operating as a public-private partnership, the ARA is committed to strengthening the economic competitiveness of Arkansas by maximizing university-based research and innovation in designated strategic focus areas. To learn more, visit: www.aralliance.org.

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