



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Noble Foundation supports Governor's request for the creation of an Oklahoma Bioenergy Center

ARDMORE, Okla. — The need is great. The goal has been set. And Oklahoma has responded with a plan.

Following President George W. Bush's call for the production of 35 billion gallons of ethanol by 2017 during last week's State of the Union address, Gov. Brad Henry announced an initiative to create the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center (OBC). The center is designed to provide Oklahoma with the tools to become a significant contributor to the national ethanol effort.

"The OBC can position our state as the leader in the bioenergy revolution and has the potential to impact future generations of Oklahomans," said Michael Cawley, President and CEO of The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. "We wholly support the Governor's initiative and pledge to assist in this endeavor with our existing biofuels research program."

Joe Bouton, Ph.D., Director of the Forage Improvement Division for the Noble Foundation, said the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center will be successful because it capitalizes on Oklahoma's heritage industries – energy production and agriculture.

"Oklahoma's storied tradition in energy refining has provided the state a unique insight into the production and distribution process, the necessary infrastructure and unmatched experience handling the issues surrounding an energy industry," Bouton said. "Likewise, Oklahoma's farmers and ranchers have generational experience in agriculture production. Combining their wisdom and expertise with new technologies and processes will result in success."

The Oklahoma Bioenergy Center will combine Oklahoma's comprehensive higher education institutions with the world-class plant and agricultural research of the Noble Foundation.

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“The brightest minds from the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University and the Noble Foundation will work in unison to break down barriers and facilitate technologies – from the field to the biorefinery – to create a flourishing bioenergy industry in Oklahoma while also contributing to the national research effort,” Cawley said.

The Oklahoma Bioenergy Center will also launch an educational effort to assist farmers and ranchers in the transition to and the development of energy crops. The OBC will work closely with existing extension services, including the conservation districts, and the Noble Foundation, which has worked hand-in-hand with Oklahoma producers for more than six decades, to promote successful integration.

“The foundational elements already exist within our state and a successful venture into bioenergy only requires that they be brought together at the Oklahoma Bioenergy Center,” Cawley said. “When they are successfully combined, the impact will be substantial, especially for our agricultural producers.”

A bioenergy industry is expected to create jobs directly and indirectly related to the industry across the state, focused mainly in rural communities.

“The bioenergy industry could rejuvenate rural economies and provide an infusion of new life,” Cawley said. “Additionally, Oklahoma’s farmers and ranchers will have a viable growing option that will be beneficial to them and their state.”

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***The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation, Inc.*** ([www.noble.org](http://www.noble.org)), headquartered in Ardmore, Okla., is a nonprofit organization conducting agricultural, forage improvement and plant biology research; assisting farmers and ranchers through educational and consultative agricultural programs; and providing grants to nonprofit charitable, educational and health organizations.