



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Gov. Perdue Celebrates Bent Creek Institute's Role as a Natural Biotechnology Leader in Western North Carolina

ASHEVILLE, NC – Gov. Beverly Perdue and Congressman Heath Shuler visited The North Carolina Arboretum on March 13 and held a press conference to acknowledge Bent Creek Institute's work in natural biotechnology and integrative medicine and to support a grass roots initiative championing the role of the biopharmaceutical industry in North Carolina's health and economy.

The Bent Creek Institute (BCI), part of The North Carolina Arboretum, conducts innovative research to discover, develop and validate natural medicines and integrative strategies for human health and wellness. BCI works to translate research innovations into sustainable models that have a positive economic impact on state revenues and employment. The organization's unique approach to research and production of intellectual property strives to:

- result in pharmaceutical and nutraceutical product development
- provide a foundation for the design of profitable business models for natural product growers and manufacturers statewide
- serve as an international repository and clearing house for the study, protection and careful commercial use of Western North Carolina's native plants
- develop new tools to help understand the health benefits of natural medicine as well as complementary and alternative medicine
- provide validation for alternative and complementary medicine via clinical trial design and development
- create unique research opportunities for post-doctoral researchers as well as graduate, undergraduate and K-12 students
- uncover knowledge to drive informed ecological public policy protecting WNC's unique biodiversity.

Unlocking the secrets of WNC's vast biodiversity through documented, peer-reviewed science will not only provide results for use in alternative and complementary medical treatment of human disease, but will tap into international natural products commerce, a global industry assessed at \$200 billion growing annually at 14 percent.

Science that demonstrates the efficacy of WNC herbal medicines can be used to brand regional growers' products, support higher raw and finished product price points, establish ancillary processing, manufacturing, marketing and distribution businesses and launch WNC as an international location for natural product innovation.

The ground-breaking work of the BCI and its partners, combined with WNC's biodiversity, history and existing culture of natural product and alternative therapies suggests a statewide strategy to position WNC as the location for federal research, regulatory and certification programs.

Gov. Perdue commended Bent Creek Institute's work and cited the organization as an example of the type of innovation that will position North Carolina as the nation's leader in natural biotechnology.

The visit also served as the kick-off for the "We Work for Health," a grassroots initiative that unites health consumers, biopharmaceutical company employees, vendors, suppliers and other business, academic and community partners to demonstrate how these diverse groups are vital to the socioeconomic climate and provide shared benefits and a better quality of life to all.

The event follows a recent report commissioned by the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and prepared by the Battelle Memorial Institute noting that the biotechnology enterprises have a state economic and employment impact of \$45.8 billion and 180,000 jobs.

The North Carolina Arboretum, an affiliate of the University of North Carolina, has worked to cultivate connections between people and plants for nearly 25 years. For more information, visit www.ncarboretum.org.

The North Carolina Arboretum is located next to the Blue Ridge Parkway entrance at Milepost 393. From I-26, take Exit 33 and follow Blue Ridge Parkway signs for two miles to the entrance ramp. Arboretum grounds are open 7 days a week. Property hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., November-March and 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., April-October. The Baker Exhibit Center, Education Center and Bonsai Exhibition Garden are open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. Parking Fees: \$6 per personal motor vehicle, \$25 commercial vans and \$45 tour buses. No parking fee applies for NC Arboretum Society members. All day Tuesday, parking is free for all visitors. For information call 828-665-2492 or visit www.ncarboretum.org

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