



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2003

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Sear-Brown Hired for New Vineyard Lab Project in Fredonia

FREDONIA, NY -- Thomas G. Davenport, president of the Lake Erie Regional Grape Research and Extension Program, Inc. (LERGREP), today announced the hiring of Sear-Brown, an architectural, engineering, planning and construction firm based in Elmira, NY, to complete Phase I of the 21st Century Vineyard Lab project.

The project includes planning and design to expand and modernize the grape research field testing and laboratory facility and its 30-acre site in Fredonia, NY. The state Department of Agriculture and Markets is funding the Phase I feasibility study through a Specialty Crops grant of \$75,000 awarded last August. Chautauqua County's department of economic development and Cornell University are providing staff support.



Aerial Photograph showing the 30-acre grape research field testing and laboratory facility in Fredonia, NY.

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"The hiring of Sear Brown is an important step in the process that will ultimately lead to a new facility," said Davenport. "A long-term goal of the western New York grape industry has been to have a modern, fully functioning facility to house the Cornell- and Penn State-based regional grape extension and viticulture research programs. It is important for all stakeholders to take the upcoming opportunity to provide input into the design and architecture of the proposed new facility."

A meeting is being held Monday, March 3, at the lab in Fredonia to solicit input from growers, processors, and university personnel. Additional comments from stakeholders and the public

will be solicited in future meetings.

Major components of Phase I include site analysis, needs assessment, and plan conformity to local and state regulations. A concept building and site plan will be created based on input received from area grape growers and processors and university personnel. Grant proposals will be developed and submitted to public and private agencies or foundations to seek funding for Phase II of the project, which is the construction phase. When completed, the new vineyard lab will provide updated facilities for field and laboratory research, grower education, and meetings. Expansion to include additional acreage for buffer zones and field research on heavier soil types is being pursued.

"The 21st Century Lab Project will enhance the ability of Cornell to continue to provide critical research support to our area's grape production and processing industry," stated Chautauqua County Executive Mark W. Thomas. "We look forward to working with the excellent team that's been assembled to help achieve the vision of a new, state-of-the-art grape research lab here in Chautauqua County."

LERGREP, Inc. is a non-profit organization funded by area grape processors through voluntary contributions that are based on grape tonnage grown and processed in the Lake Erie region. LERGREP's mission is to advance the region's grape industry by funding research and extension activities conducted by Cornell and Penn State universities.

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