



PRESS RELEASE

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Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business Incubator Rebrands as ACRE AgTech

West Olive, Mich., February 16, 2017 – The Great Lakes Ag-Tech Business Incubator, which serves entrepreneurs, farmers and emerging small businesses, today announced a new name and visual identity. The incubator, now known as ACRE AgTech, will continue its work to connect, develop and cultivate agriculture technology innovations, either into new businesses or commercializing them in partnership with established entities.

Like an acre of farmland, ACRE AgTech defines a place for production and growth. ACRE connects entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed, furthering the cultivation of emerging technologies for today's agricultural economy, and leveraging West Michigan's legacy as one of the most productive agriculture regions in the United States.

"For the farmers who define our agriculture economy, an acre is a tract of land, an area of opportunity, the foundation upon which to grow a family business," said Paul Sachs, executive director of ACRE AgTech. "We see this ACRE as the connection into a much broader startup ecosystem. Our team brings the experience to help our entrepreneurs navigate barriers, connect with opportunities, and access expertise as they develop their innovation into a business."

ACRE provides customized business services to help clients address their specific challenges as they launch their agriculture technology into the marketplace. ACRE's eight sponsor organizations also use their expertise to assist staff in addressing each client's unique business hurdles. These include: BizStream, Consumers Energy, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, Ottawa County Farm Bureau, Rehmann, Warner Norcross & Judd, Watson Intellectual Property Group and West Michigan Community Bank. Additionally, organizations such as Agri-Tek, Hudsonville Creamery, Stryker Corporation and Zeeland Farm Services provide industry access to startups through their leadership serving on the ACRE board.

"Today's startup founders are developing new information, technologies and methods to increase yields and expand our food system, and they often don't know what is necessary to start a business, manage its growth, and optimize production," said Larry Kooiker, ACRE board member and president of Agritek. "Our mission is to bring our financial and intellectual capital to create a customized program where every entrepreneur can thrive."

Holland-based Burch Partners led the rebranding efforts, a result of a Rural Business Development Grant from the USDA to enhance marketing and outreach efforts. The process included interviewing key stakeholders about their perceptions of the incubator, their involvement with it and how they see it in the future. The agency will continue to roll out the brand this spring and summer through new marketing materials and events.

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About ACRE AgTech

ACRE AgTech is an incubator serving entrepreneurs, farmers, and existing businesses. Based in Ottawa County, Mich., ACRE helps develop an ag-technology idea or invention, either into a business or to license to other entities. ACRE provides hands-on, customized business services to help clients address their specific challenges as they launch their agriculture technology into the marketplace.

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