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**REGION IV SPEARHEADS EFFORT TO STUDY IF REGION WOULD BENEFIT
FROM A FOOD INNOVATION CENTER**

TWIN FALLS, ID – November 10, 2020 – Region IV Development Association (RIVDA) will oversee a seven-month regional feasibility study on the viability of a food innovation center and business incubator in south-central Idaho. In partnership with RIVDA’s Magic Valley Food Innovation Center Committee, CSI and University of Idaho, and funding support from several entities, the study will analyze three locations for the center and interview food, ag, and dairy industry leaders in the region.

RIVDA, established to encourage the development and diversification of south-central Idaho’s economy, was able to secure funds to support the study from several local entities including a \$25,000 grant from Chobani’s Community Impact Fund and \$5,000 each from Dairy West, Business Plus and Southern Idaho Economic Development. A Rural Business Development Grant from USDA – Rural Development for \$20,000 was also confirmed.

“Even though south-central Idaho boasts an extensive food, dairy and ag sector, the region is missing opportunities for entrepreneurs and food companies to develop, test and bring new ideas to the marketplace,” Region IV President and CEO Jeff McCurdy said. “We want to know if the region would benefit from a food innovation and business incubator center. The feasibility study is the first step to determine the viability of this opportunity and we’re grateful to our funding partners who have made this effort possible.”

“Business Plus is committed to supporting innovation in the region that brings economic development, growth opportunities, and good jobs to the region,” said Rebecca Wildman, Business Plus Executive Director. We are excited to partner with Region IV and help fund this study.”

"At Chobani, we do more than make yogurt. Each and every day, we try to make a difference. We've donated a half a million dollars in grants over the past three years through our Community Impact Fund, and RIVDA is a terrific organization working hard to establish a new food innovation center in the region," said Jason Rahlan, Director of Social Impact & Philanthropy at Chobani. "Our founder Hamdi is deeply passionate about making Twin Falls the Silicon Valley of food--and if RIVDA's study bears fruit, we will all be one step closer to making that dream a reality."

KRNLS LLC in Pittsburgh will undertake the study. They are slated to report their results to Region IV Development by late May 2021. “Our team is truly honored to have been selected to work on this study. We

see this as an incredible opportunity for a region that is already so rich with entrepreneurial activity and ag tech innovation.” said Olga Pogoda, Principal and Co-Founder, KRNL. “Our goal is to provide unbiased facts, numbers, and solutions that will benefit the local community. We are grateful to the funders, Region IV Development, and Plaka + Associates for their partnership and participation.”

The study will analyze the three locations initially identified for the center – Crossroads Point in Jerome, CSI campus, and downtown Twin Falls – study market conditions, and share results of industry and leader interviews on the potential demand, interest and support of a center.

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