



Media Advisory

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Innovative, Geothermal-Based Predatory Mite Production Facility to Open in Klamath County

New facility, funded by purchase of carbon offsets, will reduce greenhouse gases, expand opportunities for organic agriculture, and bring economic development to the area.

WHAT:

An announcement that a sustainable, predatory mite production facility will open new operations in Klamath County, Oregon. Predatory mites are used to biologically control the populations of spider mites, a common agricultural pest. The new facility, operated by Biotactics, will use geothermal energy to heat its buildings. Funding from The Climate Trust to purchase the carbon offsets that will be produced by the project is enabling Biotactics to move from California to use the geothermal energy. The use of geothermal energy will prevent 25,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere over a 10 year period. Predatory mites also reduce the use of, chemical pesticides, and the facility brings jobs and economic development to the region.

WHEN:

Thursday, August 23rd, 2007 | 7:30am - 9:00am

WHERE:

Elmer's Restaurant Banquet Room
3030 S. 6th St.
Klamath Falls, OR 97603

WHO:

Formal remarks by:
Larry Holzgang, Oregon Economic & Community Development Department
Skip Maltby, Biotactics
Kristi Redd, Vice President of Klamath Community Development Corporation
Betty Riley, Director of Klamath Lake Economic Development District
Darin Rutledge, Vice President of Klamath Chamber of Commerce
Trey Senn, Klamath County Economic Development Association

BACKGROUND:

The spider mite is one of the most ubiquitous pests found on farms and gardens. Spider mites feed on fruit trees, berries, vegetables, and other plants, sometimes devastating farmers' crops.

Coping with spider mites previously required the application of chemical pesticides. But in the 1960's predatory mites began to be used in agriculture to biologically control other mite populations. Predatory mites feed on the spider mites that damage plants, protecting crops and helping to lower the use of chemical pesticides.

Producing predatory mites can take up to five weeks and uses a great deal of heat to maintain ideal conditions. Biotactics is a company that has created a new patented process to produce predatory mites in only eight days. Their new process has increased demand for the predatory mites, and the company is growing rapidly.

To meet the demand for the predatory mites, Biotactics needed to expand from their current 33,000 square foot facility to a 200,000 square foot operation spread over two buildings. At their current location a larger facility would have meant an even bigger investment in propane to heat their buildings.

Funding from The Climate Trust will enable Biotactics to move their operations from California to Southern Oregon to take advantage of the region's geothermal heat. Their new facility, located at the Liskey Farms in Southern Klamath County, will use geothermal hot water fed through radiators to heat two buildings to the proper mite production temperature.

The geothermal water means that Biotactics won't have to rely on expensive fossil fuels, and the facility's heat is created without producing greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

The Climate Trust funding is used to purchase the carbon offsets this project will produce. This cornerstone funding enabled Biotactics to overcome the financial barriers that would have otherwise prevented the project from occurring. Over the ten year life of the project, the geothermal heat will prevent 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere – equivalent to taking almost 5,000 cars off the road for one year.

In addition to the climate change benefits, the operation will promote agricultural practices that do not rely on chemical pesticides, helping farmers to grow more crops organically. The project also brings economic growth to Klamath County. Biotactics employs approximately 15 staff. The predatory mites Biotactics produces are non-invasive species, and include predatory mites that are native to Oregon.

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The Climate Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting climate change solutions by providing high quality greenhouse gas offset projects and advancing sound offset policy.

The Climate Trust has invested approximately \$9 million into projects that are expected to offset the equivalent of more than 2.7 million metric tons of carbon dioxide-equivalent. It is one of the largest and most experienced offset buyers in the U.S. and world markets. The organization provides offsets to power plants, regulators, businesses, other entities, and individuals. The Climate Trust's online tool (www.CarbonCounter.org) helps individuals calculate and offset their global warming footprint.

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The Klamath County Economic Development Association (KCEDA) is a private, non-profit corporation chartered to foster and develop responsible industrial activities in the Klamath Region of South-Central Oregon. Our goal is to ensure economic vitality in this area.

We recruit new manufacturing and industry to the area while retaining and expanding existing business and industry. Our efforts have created and retained primary jobs, diversified the area's economy expanded the County's tax base, developed employment opportunities to retain youth, trained our labor force, and continued economic growth while maintaining our quality of life. Sustainability is at the core of our core goals and objectives.

For more information, visit: <http://www.sustainableklamath.org> | 706 Main Street, Klamath Falls, OR 97601