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## **AgriBusiness Council of Wichita Visioneering Wichita Strategic Alliance Concept**

It is the consensus opinion of the Board of Directors for the Agri-Business Council of Wichita that there is potential for future growth of the agri-business sector within the Wichita Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). It is also our majority opinion that the ag-technology sector holds the greatest growth potential. The MSA currently has a solid agricultural producer base and it is home to several major agriculturally oriented businesses as well as a major state university. Therefore, the expertise and knowledge base of agriculture as well as technology advancements already exists and would provide a solid foundation for such growth. Integration of these components plus coordination of their use by other organizations in Kansas is the focus of the proposed Strategic Alliance.

Innovation and technology will rapidly expand the range of agricultural products and, at the same time, intimately tie agriculture to the manufacturing, food processing and numerous other sectors as an alternative supplier of raw materials. It is in the area of development/advancement of new technologies and end-uses for agricultural products that the Council feels there is an untapped opportunity for Wichita to become a leader. Some of the ideas that come to mind are:

1. Use of grain and or crop residue for production of biofuels.
2. Use of crop proteins for the development of unique plastics, composites and other bio-materials for the aircraft (and other manufacturing) industries.
3. Use of nanotechnology for the development of health-oriented foods, unique, quality-tracking packaging for food and other perishable products.
4. Other?

The AgriBusiness Council proposes partnering with the Greater Wichita Chamber of Commerce, Wichita State University, the Kansas World Trade Center and other interested Visioneering partners to form a Strategic Alliance that would, among other things:

1. Develop a world-class symposium with the goal of determining what agriculture and agricultural technology will “look like” in the next 20 years.
2. Author a business development plan based upon the most promising growth areas as well as the most feasible areas of expertise for Wichita and the surrounding areas.
3. Establish a World-wide Agri-Business Innovation Center as a part of the Kansas World Trade Center.

Successful implementation of such a growth plan would not only bring additional businesses and business revenue into the area, but it would also help stem the “brain drain” out of the region. Our ultimate vision is for Wichita and the Metropolitan Statistical Area to be known as the **Center of Agricultural Business Innovation**.

