

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



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2016

IEP CATEGORY • INNOVATION
The Research Park

THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PARK

The [Iowa State University Research Park](#) is a 400-acre technology community situated at the southern edge of the Iowa State University campus employing 1,700 individuals, including [more than 350 interns](#), [at 65 technology-based companies and specialized university centers](#). Forty companies that have left ISURP and chosen to remain in Iowa employ an additional 2,500. ISURP is currently experiencing unprecedented growth, with the opening of three new tenant buildings within the last year and the addition of commercial amenities including a café, fitness center, child care center, health clinic and 40-acre park currently under construction. ISURP expects to add an additional 1.0 million square feet and see employment reach more than 6,000 within the next 10-15 years.



ISURP was established in 1987 by a group of forward-thinking individuals from the community, state and university whose primary concern was economic development. However, ISURP never quite fit the traditional model for research parks, given its mostly rural location in Ames, IA, and that ISURP was not centered around one large company.

Instead, ISURP set roots in the middle of the heartland; pulled technology and the entrepreneurially minded from Iowa State University and then added resources to help those startups succeed. It created an infrastructure of services to help fledgling businesses find assistance with everything from business development, to financing, to access to researchers and talent throughout campus.

As ISURP grew, it attracted more startups, particularly in those areas where Iowa State University excels: agriculture, bio-science, animal health and information technology. In addition to the infrastructure and talent they could access at Iowa State University, many companies also found it helpful locating within the immediate vicinity of Federal facilities like the Department of Energy's Ames Laboratory and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Centers for Animal Health.

ISURP boasts an impressive roster of entrepreneur-led companies that achieved liquidity, several through IPOs, with four of the state's last five IPOs being ISURP companies. Other startups that found early success continued to grow at ISURP and were eventually acquired, adding many of the international brands located at ISURP today, including Merck, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Siemens and BASF. Each has capitalized on the growing infrastructure of resources at Iowa State University including the research enterprise, talent pipeline and specialized equipment through the ISURP connection hub.

ISURP is also home to Iowa-based manufacturing companies like [Pella Corporation](#) and [Vermeer Corporation](#), companies traditionally located in rural Iowa. They have opened beachhead offices at ISURP to facilitate the recruitment and retention of high quality technical talent and to access

Iowa State University researchers to create smarter machines and products, thus improving their manufacturing acumen at their home facilities/plants.

In recent years, ISURP has evolved from what traditionally would have appeared to be an industrial park to a thriving technology community that includes the newly opened Iowa State University Economic Development Core Facility. This new 42,000 square foot building is the result of a \$12 million investment by the Iowa State legislature and is home to Iowa State University Economic Development and Industry Relations, providing one-stop shop access to a full range of business support services. The Core Facility also serves as a community “hub” for research park tenants. Frequent events, mixers and “meet ups” occur in the building’s abundant shared spaces, all intended to create “serendipitous” collisions inherent in traditional innovation communities between like-minded professionals. The commercial amenities, park and connected trail system will immediately surround the building and connect the existing research park with the original park.



BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM: GROWTH LEADER

Mike Roof has been working on novel animal health solutions since his days as a doctoral student at Iowa State University's College of Veterinary Medicine ('87 B.S. microbiology, '89 M.S. veterinary microbiology, '91 Ph.D. veterinary microbiology and immunobiology), and he never strayed far from his Iowa State home.

Roof's first job was for Sioux Center, IA based NOBL Laboratories, a start-up company that licensed Iowa State technology in swine health, a product Roof helped develop as a student. At Iowa State, Roof worked in close collaboration with the local animal health infrastructure, so it was not surprising in 1991 when he elected to move the NOBL Labs research and development function from Sioux Center to the ISURP in Ames. At the time, Roof was the lone NOBL employee in the ISURP.

ISURP offered Roof and NOBL Labs legitimacy as a business. They would also come to rely on their ISURP location for networking, proximity and collaboration with the local animal health infrastructure (ISU College of Veterinary Medicine and local USDA office), the ability to recruit and attract top talent, and easy access to Iowa State University.

Each of these resources proved bountiful, as NOBL Labs continued to develop innovative solutions in swine health, hire and collaborate with world-class researchers at Iowa State, and grow with ISURP's flexible space options. In 1996, NOBL was acquired by pharmaceutical [giant Boehringer Ingelheim](#) (BI). In 2009, BI acquired the Fort Dodge, Iowa Animal Health assets from Pfizer. This further improved BI's portfolio of animal health products, moving them into the companion animal markets and expanding their presence in cattle. It also added substantial

manufacturing assets in Fort Dodge.

The Ames location continued to grow its research base. In a recent assessment of BI's global long-term strategy, the ISURP location was determined to be the company's Center of Competence for Biological Research in the USA. Roof's role has also expanded to the Executive Director of Biological Research and Development with emphasis on leveraging technology between the Ames site and other BI institutions in Germany and China.

BI's continued investment in the ISURP location includes the construction of a new 52,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility at ISURP that opened in early January. The company also plans to expand the current Ames employee base of 50 to more than 100 scientists and staff.