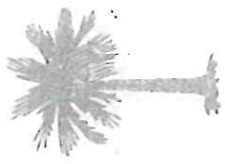


# THE LINN



CFIELD COUNTY ECONOMIC  
PO BOX 192  
CHSTRFLD SC 29709-01

Connecting Chesterfield County, One Week At A Time

50 cents

June 8, 2010

## 'Green' industry locating in Jefferson

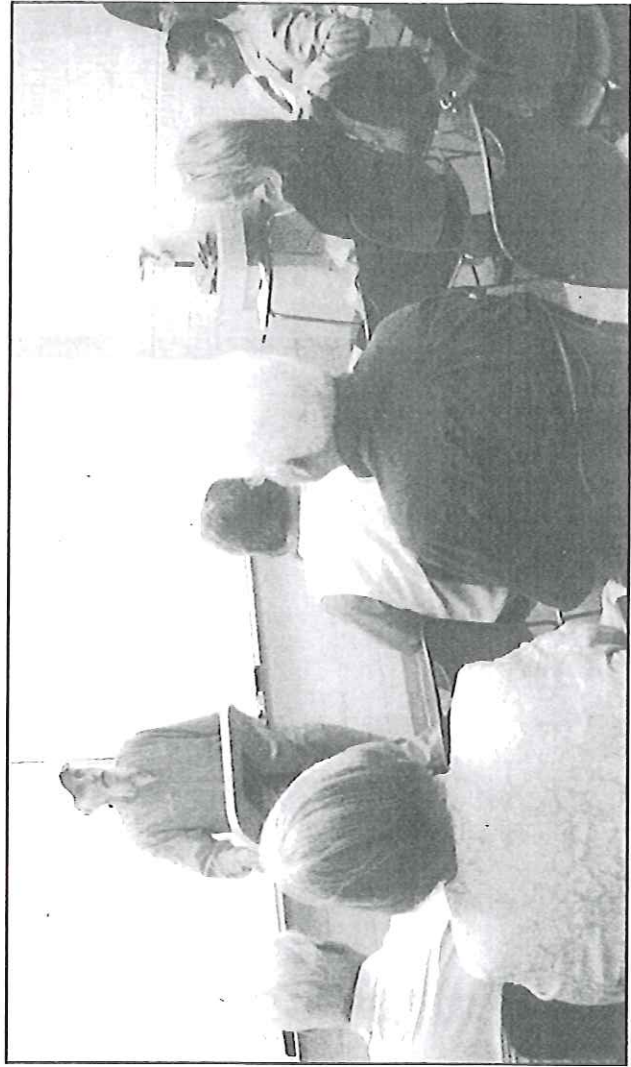
REBECCA CRAIG  
Staff Reporter

Jefferson will become a little more environmentally friendly soon.

Ironwood Farms LLC announced last week that it will be making its home in Jefferson, initially supplying 11 jobs, with large prospects of additional opportunities. Ironwood Farms develops, blends, warehouses, distributes and sells all-organic and eco-friendly fertilizers.

Ron Danise, award-winning founder and president of Ironwood Farms, has worked in arboriculture since 1974.

"Chesterfield County is proud to announce that Ironwood Farms LLC has made the decision to locate in Jefferson, Chesterfield County. With them, they will be



Rebecca Craig/Staff Photographer

Ironwood Farms President Ron Danise, standing, announces the creation of 11 jobs in Jefferson at a press conference last Tuesday. The company, which deals in all-organic and eco-friendly fertilizers, has large prospects of additional opportunities.

bringing 11 new jobs and that's really going to change Economic Development Director Brenda Workman.

over a million in capital investment. This is just the beginning of a partnership said Chesterfield County allow us to turn the Jefferson

son site in Chesterfield County into an 'earth friendly' manufacturing and production facility for worm casting, soil amendments and other natural and organic lawn garden products. This facility will continue the expansion and practice of manufacturing 100 percent organic soil amendments and organic soil fertility products," Danise said.

Danise envisions educating people about using more eco-friendly techniques and what his company is about. He runs his business by his coined mottoes, "Sustainability begins with profitability" and "Do not harm."

"Ron is not just an entrepreneur; he is an 'eco-preneur,'" Workman said.

See IRONWOOD, 15A

# IRONWOOD

Continued from Front

"Manure remediation is going to be enormous," Danise said. "Ninety-six per cent of every bit of fertilizer that hits the soil winds up in the water one way or another. (It) winds up in the drinking water, in the streams. That's on-site contamination whether you want it or not."

Ironwood Farms is different than other industries because it does not manufacture fertilizer; it grows it. The worms used to produce the fertilizer supply over eight tons of worm manure a day. Every-thing that is produced at Ironwood is renewable.

Ironwood is one of the largest aquatic plant growers in the southeast and ships its products to over 11 countries worldwide. The company is involved with schools, residential and larger projects such as Yankee Stadium, Pixar and more large scale companies. Ironwood is partners with numerous companies, and it has a global footprint.

"The location of Ironwood Farms in Chesterfield County at the Jefferson facility will establish us as a base with new jobs, new mindsets and re-search based on green and sustainable technology," said Rep. Ted Vick, who has worked on bringing Ironwood Farms to Chesterfield County for at least six years.

"I met Ron Danise about nine years ago when Union County (N.C.) was trying to run him out of business because, back then, 'green' wasn't cool," Vick said. "I gave him my word six years ago that I'd do everything I could to help him move his company to Chesterfield County, and we're very happy to have him here."

# Ironwood Farms to go green in Jefferson

## Int'l organic fertilizer company to open doors in 2010

By WALLACE McBRIDE  
Progressive-Journal editor.

JEFFERSON — An organic fertilizer company is expected to open later this year in Jefferson.

Ironwood Farms, which develops, produces, warehouses and sells organic soil supplements, has already began development of the \$1.1 million project which will immediately create 11 new jobs. Economic development officials are projecting that Ironwood Farms will also create spin-off projects and additional jobs over the next few years.

"The new location will allow us to turn the Jefferson site ... into an 'earth friendly' manufacturing and production facility for worm castings, soil amendments and other natural and organic law and garden products," said Ron Danise, president of Ironwood Farms and Southern Organics & Supply. "This facility will continue the expansion and practice of manufacturing 100 percent organic soil amendments and organic soil fertility products."

While no firm timetable has been announced for the project's construction, it is expected to open in 2010.

"We're growing the worms right now,

machinery has been purchased and is being built — what we need is very, very unique," said Danise. "We've been working on this for a long, long time."

Eventually, Danise said that four of the company's seven locations will be relocated to Jefferson.

"When we put the building up we want a green building — there are buildings in England that are 550 years old that are made out of wattle and daub and still standing," Danise said. "(Today) houses are falling down in 12 months, they're suing the contractor and it's not working, is it? It's not sustainable."

See GREEN, Page 3A



Chesterfield County Councilman Al Johnson speaks with Ironwood Farms President Ron Danise following last week's new industry announcement at NETC's Pageland campus. (Photo by Wallace McBride)

Northeastern Techni-

cal College will also use the Pagedland campus to create a specialized curriculum and training program with Ready-SC and Danise, who is a certified arborist and trainer.

"Tec is partnering with Ron to offer classes to use the tech system exactly what it was meant for: to train people for particular jobs that we have," said Chesterfield County Councilman Eddie Rivers.

"Economic development is very important to Chesterfield County and we welcome Ironwood Farms to Jefferson," said County Council-

**GREEN JOBS**

County economic developers hope that Ironwood Farms will represent the first step in attracting businesses with modern sensibilities.

"It is a new mind set, it's the mind set of the future," Brenda Workman, executive director of the Chesterfield County Economic Board, said during a public announcement at the NETC campus in Pagedland last Tuesday. "This is the way it is — that's why y'all are here, to help us move it forward."

"Everybody's interested in 'green' now and I think that's the way of the future," Rivers said. "We have to be better stewards of our water and land. This is one of the ways we can move forward in that area."

"My ideas are not different," Danise said. "It's the way the native peoples have lived for thousands of years."

Still, it's going to take some work to convince businesses today of the environmental and economic benefits of sustainable products.

"It's a mind set," Denise

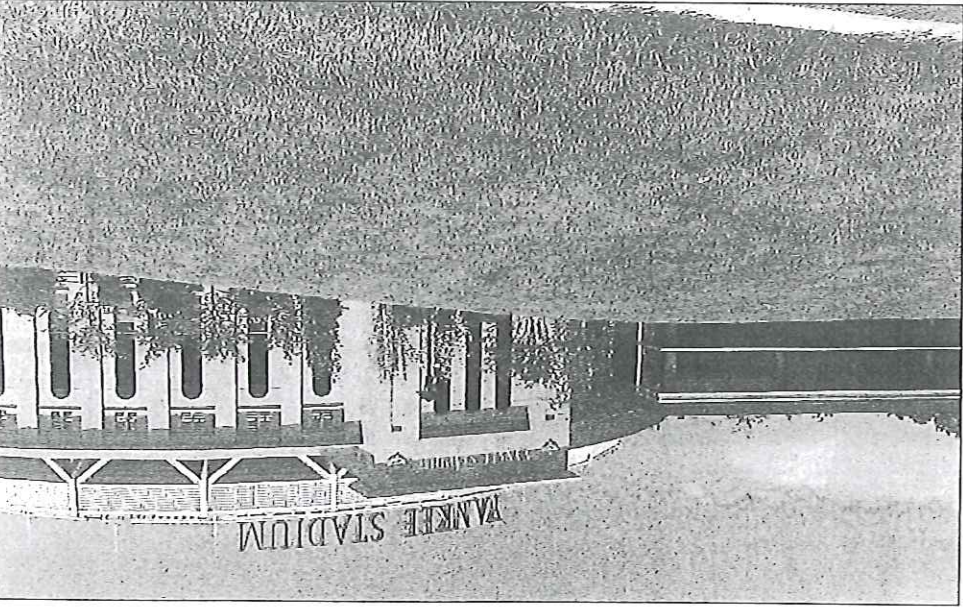
said. "They have to know it's available."

"We intend to get on the road with them and let people know what's going on in Jefferson and Chesterfield County," Workman said.

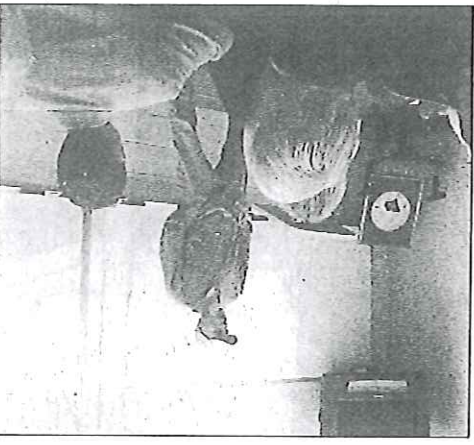
"When we talk about partnership, we're talking about marketing what we have and what this county can do. This is the beginning."

"The location of Ironwood Farms in Chesterfield County at the Jefferson facility will establish us as a base with new jobs, new mindsets and research based on green and sustainable technology," said S.C. Rep. Ted Vick.

"The on-site (research and development program) is an added bonus," Workman said. "I like Mr. Danise's vision — 'sustainability begins



Above, a new roof-top garden at the parking deck next to Yankee Stadium in New York City has been treated with Ironwood Farms' blend of Black Worm Castings from Circle Organics. Ironwood Farms will produce the same worm castings that will be used in lawn and garden applications, and the Jefferson site will likely contribute fertilizer to the World Trade Center Memorial Garden. Right, Ironwood Farms President Ron Danise explains the means and goals of his business to county leaders during last week's announcement in Pagedland that the green business was moving offices to Jefferson in 2010.



Danise began his first company in 1976 and started to focus on reduction of water use, earth friendly soil fertilization and legislative delegation in creating jobs and moving Chesterfield County forward. "Long-term potential is indeed significant as all indicators point to significant growth of 'green' and sustainable industries," Danise said. "The location of Ironwood Farms in Chesterfield County provides an excellent business environment and the Jefferson site will enable Ironwood Farms to ramp up to capitalize on this burgeoning green market."

"Our stuff is all over the place," Danise said. "It's Yankee Stadium (and) Fr-

man University uses it." "I met Ron about 8 or 9 years ago before politics," Vick said. "I've been there, been to his company in Monroe, seen his distribution ... his conference room was standing-room only, full of 110 or 120 MIT graduates. People from all over the country saw Ron holding court and talking about microbes and bacteria and what they're working on globally as far as being green. It's the real deal."

"It's environmentally sustainable, socially sustainable and economically sustainable," said Mark Tyburski, president of Circle Organics, which will handle marketing and sales for Ironwood Farms. "Ron's committed to Chesterfield ... it will create immediate jobs and the way we can create more jobs is by spreading the word and creating more demand. Ron wants to focus on manufacturing and development and Circle Organics is committed to marketing and sales."

**CHANGING CLIMATE**

What attracted Ironwood Farms to Jefferson was "the availability of the property, it was a good fit for what they were looking for," Rivers said. "Hopefully one of the things that drew them to Chesterfield County is the availability of workforce. We have an excellent reputation and can provide the employees they need and help them grow."

"They tried to run him out of Mecklinburg and Union counties when I first met him," Vick said. "I said 'move your business to Chesterfield County. We're pro-business and pro-ag. That was the business climate in North Carolina at the time, before green was cool.'"

"They make the nutrients in the soil more available to the plant. They actually interact in a symbiotic way with the plant," Tyburski said. "They actually pull nitrogen from the air. The greatest source of nitrogen on the planet is the atmosphere. Where do we as consumers get most of our nitrogen? From China. Right now we're buying nitrogen from China, shopping it over here so we can pollute our water. It doesn't make any sense."