

## KANSAS POLYMER RESEARCH CENTER PREPARATION FOR CRITICAL REVIEW AND COMMERCIALIZATION

**ABOUT KANSAS POLYMER RESEARCH CENTER.** The Kansas Polymer Research Center (KPRC) is a Presidential Green Chemistry Award winner housed in the Tyler Research Center of Pittsburg State University. Centrally located in the mid-America four-states region, the KPRC has an internationally recognized competence in bio-based polymers research, with a strong emphasis in polyurethanes, holds multiple patents and operates at a fraction of the cost of the most visible institutions.

**THE CHALLENGE.** The KPRC needs a strategic plan to guide them through their challenges, including upcoming retirements of critical personnel, improving and maintaining equipment infrastructure, and technology transfer. One of their primary goals is to establish a tech transfer program that will help turn ideas into commercial opportunities.

**MEP CENTER'S ROLE.** With the help of Kansas Manufacturing Solutions (KMS), part of the MEP National Network™, the KPRC targeted several areas of focus and prepared a plan that can be executed for effective solutions for KPRC's situation, including addressing the upcoming retirements and better positioning their unit with young, driven talent to carve out projects within different areas of research. These targeted areas have implications both in the short-term and long-term viability of the center and its functionality. Discussions regarding equipment challenges within the KPRC identified short-term and long-term goals to help address the situation. Utilizing other funds, such as grants, and partnerships to offset the total cost of replacement and upgrading is one aspect of the solution. Discussions with KMS also highlighted KPRC's strengths in the area of testing; increasing "testing for hire" could offset equipment costs. As part of this plan a proposition was made to for the KPRC to further develop its focus on partnerships and marketing, including with Virginia Tech (VT) and industry partners. VT has agreed to allow KPRC to utilize their equipment and one industry partner has agreed to hire post-docs to work within the KPRC. This will also help expand partnership opportunities and KPRC's network, letting let others know about KPRC's capabilities and flexibility towards research. With the help of KMS, the KPRC decided to establish a booth at major technical conferences and trade shows to better draw attention to the facility and its offerings. To that end, KPRC also joined and is the only academic entity within the Polyurethane Manufacturers Association (PMA).

"Interactions with KMS's manufacturing engagement team have been pivotal in the current turn-around efforts for the Kansas Polymer Research Center (KPRC). With continued support from Darrell Pulliam, and his team, we have now, for the first time, drafted a structured business plan with milestones for equipment updates, talent recruiting and potential client engagement. In addition, development and implementation of a functioning technology transfer process is well underway. With continued engagement, I expect the KPRC to have significant economic impact across the four-states region in the near future."

-Tim Dawsey, PhD, Director – Kansas Polymer Research Center

## RESULTS



20 jobs created



\$70,000 new investment in  
new equipment



\$65,000 in increased revenue

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