

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPROUT! FIRST ANNUAL STALK-HOLDER CELEBRATION**SPRINGFIELD, OREGON**

Springfield, OR, February 6, 2012 – This isn't any ordinary project: NEDCO's (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation) Sprout! Community Food Hub will house Lane County's first regional year-round farmers' market and commercial business incubator kitchen, coupled with anchor tenant space for local, food-based businesses. A kick-off celebration, known as the First Annual Stalk-Holder Celebration, will take place from 1pm to 4pm on Saturday, March 10, 2012 at the Sprout! location at 418 A Street (currently the First Christian Church).

Sprout! grows out of NEDCO's existing Springfield Farmers' Market and Hatch: Business Incubator programs. It is a regional gathering place for producers and consumers of local food, where:

- Farmers and food entrepreneurs can access a certified kitchen reliably and affordably
- Consumers can come together year-round to purchase locally grown and prepared food
- Local food entrepreneurs will have a comprehensive slate of business development services to help their food industry businesses grow and succeed
- The local food industry business cluster in Lane County will have the opportunity to grow

On March 10, 2012, Sprout! will welcome the community for the first time ever. The *First Annual Stalk-Holder Celebration* will serve as the launching point for the Sprout! project that will become a regional destination for local food production and retailing. Sprout! will be a year-round expansion of Springfield Farmers' Market, a market that currently draws more than 1,000 people each week to downtown Springfield. It will also be the home to a public commercial kitchen, event space, and an expansion of the Hatch: Business Incubator. Our goal is to increase county-wide consumption of local food by 1% - enough to keep almost \$12 million circulating in our regional economy each year!

The attendees at the Stalk-holder celebration – between 500-700 Sprout! supporters – will be dazzled by the vision for this ambitious economic development project. The community is welcome to come and enjoy delicious fare from notable Springfield Farmers' Market vendors. Attendees will have the opportunity to pitch in to make this community jewel a reality by purchasing Sprout! "Stalk." In fact, this is the only year supporters can get in on the ground floor to purchase Sprout! Preferred Stalk. It's an opportunity the entire community won't want to miss.

Sponsors: Bean Counter Tax Services, Rexius, Citizens Bank, Arbor South Architecture, Washburn Café, US Bank, Down To Earth, Johnson Brothers Greenhouses, Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, Sports Massage Plus, Springfield Jazzercise Fitness Center, Sweet Life Patisserie, Aunt Mimi's Specialty Cakes, Summit Bank.

NEDCO (Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to collaboratively build human and capital assets to strengthen neighborhoods and broaden participation in community ownership and governance. NEDCO was established in 1979 as Oregon's first Community Development Corporation. Over the past three decades, we have revitalized communities, built affordable homes, and assisted over 20,000 people to manage finances to build assets such as homeownership and small business. NEDCO is working to make Lane County a thriving community. As we say here at Sprout!, "*Let's get growing!*"

For more information, www.SproutFoodHub.org, email Stephanie Scafa at: stephanie@nedcocdc.org or call 541-345-7106.