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Hixson Designs Innovation into New Sara Lee Research and Development Center

--Perfect Recipe for Success--

(CINCINNATI; May 1, 2009) – What does it take to make an innovative food Research & Design (R&D) facility? If you are Sara Lee Corporation (NYSE: SLE), the recipe for success involves working with Hixson, a Cincinnati-based architecture, engineering and interior design firm.

Sara Lee has unveiled its new state-of-the-art R&D campus, known as the Kitchens of Sara Lee, at its headquarters in Downer's Grove, Illinois. The 120,000 sq. ft. campus space, comprised of the R&D center, office space and food plants (including bakery, meat, and beverage operations), was designed by Hixson using a variety of innovative approaches to create productive and creative workspaces for more than 100 Sara Lee personnel, including chefs, scientists and engineers and others related to food and beverage R&D product development and production. According to Sara Lee, this marks the first time these professionals have been together under one roof, in a collaborative, creative working environment. The unification of art and science not only fosters innovation but also speeds the company's time-to-market capabilities.

"To be productive in a collaborative, creative R&D environment, it is essential that the workspace supports the people who work in it and the way those people work – both now and in the future," said Chris Harmon, Hixson Senior Vice President and Project Manager. "Hixson designed the test kitchens, meeting spaces and office environments with this in mind."

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Kitchens of Sara Lee, Designed by Hixson, p. 2

Key points and features of the project, which Sara Lee CEO Brenda Barnes noted was completed on-time and on-budget, include:

- The Kitchens of Sara Lee team used this project as the opportunity to capture the excitement of the changes through a significant branding effort, conducted with Hixson. New brand elements, special product displays and more can be seen the minute one enters the front door and lobby for the facility and are designed to let everyone who visits to know they have arrived at the Kitchens of Sara Lee.
- The project involved the coordinated efforts and input of more than 20 groups within Sara Lee, plus a multitude of vendors and consultants in areas such as kitchen, furniture, equipment, labs, specialized utilities and more.
- The new kitchens and pilot labs were designed to accommodate the ability to “plug-and-play” equipment in the configuration that would be required for each project. This allowed the project team to conserve space rather than accommodate, in a fixed installation, every piece of equipment that could be required. Further, this modular innovation allows unused equipment to be stored, eliminating the need to clean and maintain it when not in use.
- The storage space in one area was doubled to accommodate the plug-and-play equipment through the installation of a modular mezzanine system, as well as a lift that provides access to both floors. In addition to providing greater flexibility, the mezzanine system can be classified as equipment, enabling faster depreciation, and be moved/reused elsewhere in the future.
- This project truly took advantage of Hixson’s multi-disciplined capabilities. Throughout the course of the project, 14 of Hixson’s 16 in-house disciplines were called upon to provide their specialized knowledge and experience.

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ABOUT HIXSON

Hixson is an architecture, engineering and interior design firm specializing in projects for corporate office environments, retail projects and industrial processing facilities. Listed as one of the top firms in North America, Hixson delivers insight and advocacy leading to intelligent project execution through 16 integrated technical disciplines. To learn more, visit us on the web at www.hixson-inc.com.

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