

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Joni Cobb, 913.307.0004



PIPELINE ANNOUNCES "INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR" JUDGES JUDGING PANEL TO INCLUDE KRISTINA JOHNSON, FORMER UNDER SECRETARY OF ENERGY

Kansas City, Kan. (Jan. 6, 2011) – The PIPELINE Entrepreneurial Fellowship Program announced today the national panel of experts who will help select PIPELINE's "Innovator of the Year" on January 27 in Overland Park. "Innovator of the Year" caps off the final stage of the PIPELINE fellowship year – the nation's premier technology entrepreneurship fellowship program, founded by the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC).

The judging team for the competition consists of experts in investment, entrepreneurship and innovation from the region and around the nation, including:

- **The Honorable Dr. Kristina Johnson, Former Under Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy**
- **Peter Brown, Chairman and Founder, Grassmere Partners LLC**
- **Bo Fishback, President of Kauffman Labs for Enterprise Creation**
- **Brian Gorbett, Director, Startups Central Region, Microsoft**

The judges will have full participation in the day and evening events, and will share their insights with the crowd during a PIPELINE "**Entrepreneurial and Innovation Trends**" panel at 4:00 p.m., at the close of the competition and before the evening event. All ticket holders for the evening function can attend this session.

During the "Innovator of the Year" dinner program, PIPELINE will recognize the following awards and achievements:

- **Announcement of 2010 PIPELINE Innovator of the Year**
- **Presentation of the 2010 Entrepreneurial Leadership Award to Jon Darbyshire**
- **Announcement of the Alumni Growth and Leadership Awards**
- **Recognition of 2010 PIPELINE Class & Mentors**
- **Unveiling of 2011 PIPELINE Innovators**

"Our country is looking toward innovation and entrepreneurship to strengthen our economy at a pivotal time," said **Kristina Johnson, Former Under Secretary of Energy**. "PIPELINE has captured national attention as a strong ally in this work, so I am excited to join as a judge to meet the Innovators and learn more about how this aggressive program works."

"The energy around PIPELINE is contagious, and for a very good reason. PIPELINE is all about seeding the next generation of high growth companies in this region - and building a network to aggressively support them," said **Peter Brown, Chairman and Founder, Grassmere Partners, LLC**. "As an active investor in this space, we are passionate about this mission and I am personally very excited to be involved with the PIPELINE movement."

This year's event marks the commencement of PIPELINE's 5th year. The evening function is anticipated to be the biggest event in the program's history- already more than 75 percent sold out with weeks to go before ticket sales close.

ABOUT THE "INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR" JUDGES/FULL BIOGRAPHIES

To read the judges' bios, please visit our "Innovator of the Year" website at <http://www.pipelineioty.com/ioty-judges>.

ABOUT PIPELINE

PIPELINE is the nation's premier technology entrepreneur immersion program, founded by the Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation. **PIPELINE** is the program of its kind in the country and continues to stand out as the only statewide fellowship program designed to both equip high-growth entrepreneurs with the training, networks, resources and mentors to assist them over their entire career--while aggressively growing an entrepreneurial ecosystem over a diverse geography. For more information, please visit <http://www.kansaspipeline.org>.

####