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July 10, 2008

## Cardin, Mikulski Announce \$150K for Worcester County Economic Development Project

WASHINGTON – **Senators Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) announced today that the Maryland Hawk Corporation, Inc. has been awarded a \$150,588 USDA Rural Development grant to build a demonstration farm for growing organic fruits and vegetables using high tunnel greenhouse technology in Worcester County.

The Maryland Hawk Corp. is a non-profit foundation founded by the University of Maryland – Eastern Shore (UMES) to develop opportunities for UMES faculty, staff, government, and regional businesses. The ½-acre farm will be built in Girdletree next year and used to demonstrate the economic feasibility of organically growing strawberries and lettuce as well as identifying potential major buyers for the crops. High tunnel greenhouses are more cost effective than traditional greenhouses because they allow for year-round growing, thereby greatly increasing crop yields.

“This innovative project will expand economic opportunities for farmers on the Eastern Shore,” said **Senator Cardin**. “We have a responsibility to help ensure that Maryland’s long tradition of agriculture continues to thrive in the face of rising energy prices and an economic downturn.”

“We must do all we can to help rural communities that are struggling to compete amidst rising costs and a sluggish economy,” said **Senator Mikulski**. “I am so proud Maryland Hawk Corporation can use this funding to explore new technologies that could make it easier for farmers to extend the growing season. I will continue to fight in the U.S. Senate for grants like these that support Maryland communities.”

The Rural Development grant program was created to improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. The program helps support essential services and infrastructure improvements, and promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools.

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