

Boulder Innovation Center

Boulder's Entrepreneurial Hub

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Founder of Wild Oats, Sunflower Farmer Markets Speaks to Entrepreneurial Community at the Boulder Innovation Center

BOULDER, Co. (7/8/08) - On June 23, more than 100 members of Boulder's entrepreneurial community, University of Colorado faculty and city representatives, had the opportunity to gain insights from Mike Gilliland, founder of Sunflower Markets and co-founder of Wild Oats. The event was part of a lecture series hosted by the Boulder Innovation Center (BIC) and offered attendees the chance to learn how Mike grew Wild Oats from a single store to over 100 locations, turned Wild Oats into a billion dollar publicly traded company and later founded Sunflower Markets.

In his lecture, Gilliland shared lessons learned over the course of 24 years as one of the driving forces in the Natural and Organic Industry. Gilliland focused on three aspects of his career; his professional history with Wild Oats, how to create a successful entrepreneurial organization and details about his latest venture, Sunflower Markets. He discussed how, when making decisions, every business must properly balance four areas of responsibility: customer, staff, community and bottom line. By working to creating a positive culture through discipline and accountability, Gilliland has created a successful entrepreneurial career that has earned him numerous accolades including the 1992 Esprit Entrepreneur of the Year Award and in 1998 the Rocky Mountain Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

BIC Director, Tim Bour said, "We are excited to have Mike Gilliland share his knowledge and insights with the entrepreneurial community. This is part of our goal at the BIC to at help build high potential businesses in the Boulder area."

The BIC's Boulder Area Business Program is designed to help new and early stage companies overcome the roadblocks and obstacles encountered while growing a business. Each Client is paired with a BIC Program Manager who works with the Client to identify the key challenges they are facing and create a solid plan to overcome these issues while achieving their personal and professional goals. The BIC then provides volunteer teams of experienced advisors to guide the clients towards success. In addition to working with Clients in the Natural & Organic sector, the BIC serves clients working in Software, Renewable Energy/Cleantech, Bioscience, Nanotechnology, Optical and Engineered products.

About the BIC

The Boulder Innovation Center is a 501 c (6) nonprofit focused on economic development through supporting entrepreneurship in the Boulder area. The center's service model provides a "high-touch" approach to helping companies by matching each client with a team of seasoned serial entrepreneurs and business experts who serve as volunteer advisers. The BIC is supported by fees paid by its clients along with support from City of Boulder, Boulder Economic Council,

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