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FIRST MIDWEST HAZELNUT PROCESSING FACILITY TO START CRACKING

Gays Mill, WI -- The first processing center for Midwestern, local grown hazelnuts will start production on Friday, April 17th, 2015 at the Kickapoo Culinary Center in Gay's Mill, Wisconsin. The American Hazelnut Company, formed by hazelnut growers in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, will process hazelnuts for local markets by cracking and removing the shells, leaving the hazelnut kernel. Some of the kernels will be sold whole and others pressed to generate hazelnut oil and meal [flour].

The American Hazelnut Company was established in 2014 for the purpose of processing, product development and marketing Midwestern grown hazelnuts. Hazelnuts produce a sweet, tasty nut that can be used in confections, for oils, and in a wide range of food products. They are delicious roasted and eaten plain. Hazelnuts are nutritious and a high protein food. Hazelnut oil is an excellent cooking oil with a long shelf life. They are an excellent source of vitamin E and B6. Meal left over after removing the oil can be used in baking and is gluten free. Hazelnuts and chocolate are the ultimate tasting experience.

The Midwestern hazelnut industry is just beginning to emerge with over 100 acres planted and producing nuts. Questions about the American Hazelnut Company can be directed to Linda Meschke, chairperson at 507-236-0989 or linda@ruraladvantage.org.

The Kickapoo Culinary Center is available for a wide variety of functions, large and small, but its primary mission is to serve as an incubator for serious start-up food businesses. Its principal function is to provide affordable access to a certified food processing facility for those who meet the entrance criteria and complete all required applications, forms and training and who obtain the appropriate license by the State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), or another agency, as appropriate, to process food. Questions about the Kickapoo Culinary Center should be directed to Brad Niemcek, Director at 608-485-3413 or bradniemcek@gmail.com.

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