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## Hark Orchids Breaks Ground October 4 at Midlink Business Park

### **Construction Officially Begins on \$6.5 Million, 35,000-Square-Foot Laboratory and Climactic Chambers for German Company.**

COMSTOCK TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN (October 1, 2012)—High-tech floriculture will be blossoming in Kalamazoo, with construction of Hark Orchids' state-of-the-art, 35,000-square-foot Laboratory and Climactic Chambers at Midlink Business Park. A ceremonial ground-breaking event will be held on October 4 at the five-acre lot purchased by Hark Orchids from Midlink this past August.

The German company, which specializes in the hybridization, cultivation and propagation of orchids, plans to invest \$6.5 million in the facility, its first in the United States, and create up to 80 jobs in the next three to five years. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation, regional development organization, Southwest Michigan First, and Kalamazoo County supported the project with considerable grants.

"We are excited to have Hark Orchids at Midlink," said David Smith. "Their innovative technologies are bound to spark growth in our region's greenhouse community and bring additional high-skilled jobs to Kalamazoo."

According to Smith, Hark is yet another example of how Midlink can offer companies tremendous value by providing a significant savings of time and money. "We've done the hard work. We put the infrastructure in place, years ago. We built the roads. We installed the public and private utilities," said Smith. "Land at Midlink is shovel-ready for development, like Hark's. Add, to that, the best incentives the state can offer, and Midlink is the ideal site."

To celebrate the Hark Orchid development at Midlink Business Park, the October 4 ground-breaking ceremony is featuring a lineup of distinguished speakers, including Virginia Rounds from the German American Chamber of Commerce, Hark Orchid's President, Oliver Borrmann, Southwest Michigan First's Ron Kitchens, Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Mark Kinsler, Comstock Township's Tim Hudson, and Kalamazoo County's Dave Maturen.

The festivities will continue at Midlink with a nod to Hark's German heritage in an appropriately-themed Oktoberfest gala. The party will begin with a Ceremonial Tapping "*Angezapft*" of the Keg; live music and food will follow, and gifts of orchids will conclude the event.

According to Ron Kitchens, CEO of Southwest Michigan First, the event demonstrates the community's excitement and gratitude. "Southwest Michigan First thanks Hark Orchids for selecting our region for location. On behalf of our community partners who were instrumental in our attraction efforts, we welcome Hark and look forward to watching the company grow here in Southwest Michigan," said Kitchens.

### **MORE ABOUT MIDLINK BUSINESS PARK**

Located midway between Chicago and Detroit, at I-94 and Sprinkle Road in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Midlink Business Park is a world-class, 340-acre development that offers a 110-acre Renaissance Zone, two state-of-the-art multi-tenant industrial buildings totaling more than 1.6 million square feet and, under development, 88-acres of industrial land, a 16-acre retail center and 38-acre office campus. The original site was renovated and repurposed after Hackman Capital purchased the property in 1999. **For more information, visit [www.midlink.com](http://www.midlink.com) or call 269.384.1100.**

### **MORE ABOUT SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIRST**

Southwest Michigan First is an organization of privately funded economic development advisors who act as the catalyst for economic growth in Southwest Michigan. Founded in 1999 on the principle that jobs and wealth creation exponentially affect the region's future sustainability, the organization works across all industries throughout the eight counties making up the Southwest Michigan Region. Its goal is this: To create jobs and wealth for the community—and dramatically increase the bottom lines of the companies with which it partners. For more information about Southwest Michigan First, visit **[www.southwestmichiganfirst.com](http://www.southwestmichiganfirst.com) or call 269.553.9588.**

### **MORE ABOUT HARK ORCHIDEEN**

Founded in 1904, Hark Orchideen has grown from a small family gardening business to a specialized orchid laboratory devoted to the cultivation of plants. In its early days though the late 1950s, the company produced vegetables and cut flowers for local markets. It was not until 1949 that Fritz Hark Sr., the father of the current owner, bought his first orchids. His passion and love for these fascinating plants, along with his development of proprietary culture media and propagation methods, laid the foundation for the company's success today. A cultivator of international reputation, Hark Orchideen has developed numerous hybrids that have been registered with the London-based Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and have won numerous commendations and awards. **For more information, visit <http://www.hark-orchideen.de>.**