

Real Time Ag, LLC, Rockwell City



Nitrogen and phosphorous run-off from farm fields is a growing problem across the country. In 2010, the EPA proposed water quality standards that a Florida study concluded would cost that state's agricultural community two billion dollars and put 14,000 agricultural workers out of work. The EPA's proposed regulations in Florida were a clarion call for an effective solution to manage and track farm nutrient applications. Being able to manage nutrient levels and thereby prevent runoff increases farming efficiency and helps to reduce or even eliminate high nitrate levels in rural and city drinking water.

Mike Sexton heard the call and worked with the Iowa Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for North Central Iowa to create a computer software application that makes it easier for Iowa livestock producers to monitor and report their nutrient applications and comply with state clean water regulations.

Regional SBDC Director Lisa Shimkat helped Mike with his application to Iowa's Demonstration Fund. The Fund's money permitted Mike to develop phase one of his software, which was specific for the state of Iowa. Once that was completed, Mike adopted the name **Real Time Ag, LLC** for his product and reached out to his first market segment, farm management consultants.

Real Time Ag is currently in discussions with the states of Colorado and California about customizing its software to their respective state clean water regulations. Mike's future plans for his product include using the software's geographic information system capabilities to enhance watershed tracking, to serve as a preventive tool for regulatory agencies, and to help farmers realize maximum yield potential while optimizing nutrient applications.

Using Real Time Ag's software, farmers can make better decisions—and map—nutrient applications and stay in compliance with state and federal regulations. They can access and update their nutrient management plans from anywhere without specialized hardware. Regulatory agencies see better compliance, can complete audits remotely, and can compare digitized data to better track ground water. Agronomists will have an easier and more accurate set of records for nutrient management along with enhanced profit margins. And community and rural water sources will benefit from the more sustainable farming practices that can be employed using Real Time Ag's software.

Mike Sexton praises the assistance he received from the SBDC saying, "The Small Business Development Center helped us with our Demonstration Fund application when we were in development phase of our operation. They were able to critique the project and provide additional insight to what we may need to be successful. They are a great resource for our state and for entrepreneurs wanting to grow their businesses."

To find out more about this forward-thinking entrepreneur and his company, visit www.realtimeag.com. We congratulate Mike for being chosen as our Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award winner for 2013!

Highlights from Mike's Special Award Day!

Rockwell City businessman Mike Sexton received the 2013 Neal Smith Entrepreneur of the Year Award from the Iowa Small Business Development Center because of his continued business success. Mike, the founder and owner of Real Time Ag, LLC, a nutrient management regulation software business, had a full day of excitement and honors on March 4, 2014 at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

At approximately 8:40 a.m., Mike sat in a place of honor inside the House Chambers and listened as the Iowa House read a resolution into law honoring him and another SBDC award winner, and praising the Iowa SBDC for its excellent work across Iowa. He was then **presented with a House Certificate of Achievement** while family and friends watched. In the photo below, from left to right, are: Representative MaryAnn Hanusa, Becky Sexton, Mike Sexton, Representative Tom Shaw, and Representative Kirsten Running Marquardt.



Immediately following the presentation of the certificate, Mike was escorted to the "well" where the Speaker of the House sits to conduct business in the House Chamber. In the picture below **Mike is sitting in the Speaker's chair** and behind him, from left to right, are Representative Roger Thomas, Representative Tom Shaw, Deb Dalziel Woman Entrepreneur Achievement Award Winner Heidi Bell, Representative MaryAnn Hanusa, Representative Kirsten Running-Marquardt, and Representative Joel Fry.



Shortly thereafter, Mike, his family, and others were escorted to the Iowa Senate Gallery where he and the SBDC's other award winner, Heidi Bell, were **recognized and applauded by the Senate**. In the two pictures below, Mike and Heidi smile for the camera just after sitting down in the Gallery, and then they stand for the Senate's applause.

