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USA, Aaron Oil Co. and IUORI to Collaborate in Unique Educational Partnership

The University of South Alabama announced today an educational partnership that will focus on adding oil reclamation studies to some University classes. The collaboration includes Aaron Oil Co., Inc. of Saraland and the International Used Oil Research Institute of Mobile and Washington, D.C.

Oil reclamation is a growing multi-billion industry as Americans seek new ways to increase recycling and reclamation across a multitude of industries and businesses. Aaron Oil, named as one of the fastest growing private companies in America by Inc. magazine, is a recognized leader in oil reclamation.

Included in the announcement, held in the USA Mitchell Center, was the unveiling of Aaron Oil's latest addition to its fleet of oil reclamation trucks. The \$500,000 vehicle will be made available first to classes in the University's department of chemistry to augment graduate and undergraduate laboratory work with practical experience in the industry. The state-of-the art vehicle, which was designed by Aaron Oil, includes an on-board mobile laboratory to analyze used oil feedstock for the presence of hazardous chemicals, then transmit results from the field to the company's recycling facility.

Dr. Jim Connors, special assistant to the vice president of research, said: "It is a strategic goal of our University to develop strong partnerships with organizations directly involved in regional economic development. Exploring ways to work with organizations such as Aaron Oil and the International Used Oil Research Institute help us achieve this objective."

According to an agreement signed last year, USA and Aaron Oil pledged to work together to pursue research in used oil reclamation, as well as the development of workforce activities and a certificate program to create a higher-skilled labor force in the fields of oil and fuel reclamation.

Dan Cowart, CEO and founder of Aaron Oil, said a primary part of his company's mission is "identifying and developing best available technologies, management practices, and laboratories" for the oil-recycling industry. He also stressed the necessity of serving higher education by combining theory-based instruction with "hands-on training."

"I basically see all of the Aaron Oil facilities as potential real-work laboratories where USA faculty and students can do their research and instructional work, alongside our working professionals," said Cowart. "We have seen hundreds of millions of dollars invested in the used-oil recycling industry over the past few years, and the need for specialized educational to compliment this investment has never been greater."

Dr. Raoul Richardson, IUORI executive director, said the collaboration comes after much study and hard work by the collaborators.

"I am excited to see the relationship between USA, Aaron Oil, and the Institute bearing this important fruit," Richardson said. "We hope this is the beginning of much more to come."