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CSU Engines & Energy lab a tremendous asset to Fort Collins

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Written by David L. May

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The Colorado State University Engines and Energy Conversion Lab, or EECL, on North College Avenue is one of our community's great success stories.

EECL is located in the old Fort Collins power plant building on the north edge of downtown. The building was built in 1935 on the south bank of the Poudre River and the community's electricity was generated there until 1972 when it was decommissioned as a power plant.

In 1992, an engineering professor at CSU, Bryan Willson, approached the city about leasing the empty and derelict building for a small engines lab.

It was the beginning of a remarkable story of local government, public university, for-profit companies and non-profit cooperation.

And what is happening in the building is improving the world and positively impacting Fort Collins.

The research taking place in the building falls into four categories: engines emissions and efficiencies, advanced biofuels, safer and cleaner cooking appliances for people in developing countries, and renewable and distributed power. Each is explained on the lab's website <http://eecl.colostate.edu>.

The cumulative result of research in these four areas is EECL's growing national and international reputation for providing solutions for real world problems.

Effectively, an abandoned industrial building has been transformed into a hub of innovation, research, business incubation and



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David L. May is the president and chief executive officer of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce. His column runs occasional Mondays.



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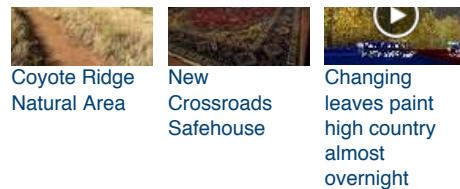
education.

And let's add collaboration. Working together are public partners including the city and CSU, private companies started by the university and existing companies funding contracted research, non-profits that are implementing some of the research findings and others that are financially underwriting the lab.

EECL embodies community values including protecting the river, entrepreneurship, innovation, 'grow our own' based economic development, environmentalism, discovery, historic preservation, education, prudent use of limited resources, collaboration and the land grant university ethos of applied research to solve problems.

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David L. May is president and CEO of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce. Send email to david may@fcchamber.org.



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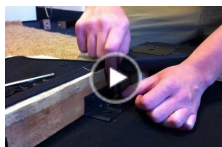
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