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Second Annual 'Hemp History Week' a Success with Over 550 Celebrations Throughout All 50 States

Nationwide Effort Shows Significant Increase in Public Support for Industrial Hemp Farming

WASHINGTON, D.C. – May 2nd – 8th, 2011 marked the **2nd Annual Hemp History Week**, organized by leading hemp advocacy groups, Vote Hemp and the Hemp Industries Association. The goal of the national grassroots education campaign is to renew strong support for hemp farming in the U.S., which was grown here for centuries until farming of the crop was essentially banned in the mid-1900's. More than doubling in size in just its second year, **Hemp History Week** featured over 550 events in all 50 states this year. The multi-faceted campaign included a retail component that featured promotions on hemp products in natural markets across the country; volunteer run grassroots celebrations and educational events; and an online petition drive which generated thousands of signatures encouraging the Obama administration and Congress to change federal policy and allow American farmers to once again grow industrial hemp. A photo gallery from the 2011 campaign is available at: <http://www.hemphistoryweek.com/photos.html>

The campaign was supported on Capitol Hill by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX). In acknowledgement of **Hemp History Week**, Rep. Ron Paul submitted an official Congressional Record statement in support of industrial hemp and the campaign for the second year in a row. Rep. Paul also circulated a 'Dear Colleague' letter, calling on other members of Congress to, as the letter requests, "Let American Farmers Compete in a Booming Global Market". Following Hemp History Week Rep. Paul introduced H.R. 1831, the Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011, in Congress. The bill currently has 25 co-sponsors. The statement can be read in its entirety at: <http://www.HempHistoryWeek.com/RonPaulStatement>.

The 2011 campaign promoted the theme of "Hemp for Health and Sustainability". High profile personalities such as physician Dr. Andrew Weil; actress and author Alicia Silverstone, consumer advocate Phil Lempert, registered dietician Ashley Koff; Ironman triathlete and nutrition expert Brendan Brazier; holistic health counselor Alexandra Jamieson; former NBA Champion John Salley; as well as renowned musicians Ziggy Marley; Dar Williams; and Michael Franti supported the campaign through written endorsements, social media, interviews and public events promoting the campaign. The full list of endorsers of the 2011 campaign is available at: <http://hemphistoryweek.com/endorsements.html>.

"Through **Hemp History Week**, we are continuing to build support for a federal policy change, while celebrating America's rich history with the crop," says Eric Steenstra, President of Vote Hemp. "Allowing American farmers to grow hemp will promote sustainable agriculture in the U.S. by supporting local farming, creating new jobs and ultimately fueling the economy," explains Steenstra.

Across the country grassroots activists and volunteers hosted celebrations of hemp and its many uses. Students, farm communities, healthy lifestyle advocates, natural foods pioneers, and activists around the country organized a variety of events. Over 80 grassroots events occurred across the country including tabling at farmers' markets; educational events in farm communities and on college campuses; as well as hemp fashion shows and house parties celebrating the goodness of hemp. Additionally, **Hemp History Week** was also represented at many festivals throughout the month of May.

In Boston, MA longtime hemp enthusiast John Dvorak hosted a **Hemp History Week** Hemposium at Suffolk University, while in San Diego, CA organizers hosted an "Edible and Wearable Hemp Fashion Show". Other events across the country included presentations on "Hemp Technologies in Asheville" in Asheville, NC; "Industrial Hemp 101: Re-Educating the Country" in Greensboro, NC; a week's schedule of celebrations in Santa Fe and Taos, NM; a celebration entitled "Hemp for Oregon – a sustainable crop for a healthy future" at the BridgePort BrewPub in Portland, OR; a cooking demonstration by endorsers Phil Lempert and Alexandra Jamieson at the Bowery Whole Foods Market culinary center in New York City; a press lunch on the health benefits of hemp foods with Ashley Koff, R.D. and Phil Lempert, also in NYC; and "Rural Vermont Celebrates Hemp" in Richmond, VT. A complete listing of 2011 events, along with links to photos and videos can be found at: <http://www.hemphistoryweek.com/events>.

A renewable resource offering a long list of health and nutritional benefits, hemp is one of the fastest-growing categories in the natural foods industry. Hemp is a rich source of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids (EFAs), providing super omega stearidonic acid (SDA) and gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), highly-digestible protein and naturally-occurring vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin E and iron, while being a good source of dietary fiber. It is a complete protein, containing all 10 essential amino acids, with no enzyme inhibitors, making it more digestible by the human body. Hemp seeds are also gluten-free.

Hemp History Week was made possible by the support of leading natural product brands that are known for manufacturing the highest-quality hemp products. Hemp can be used in a wide variety of products, including food, cosmetics, clothing, building materials, auto parts and many more. Sponsors of **Hemp History Week** include Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, French Meadow Bakery, Living Harvest Foods, Manitoba Harvest, Merry Hempsters, Nature's Path Foods, Nutiva and Sequel Naturals. Sustainable hemp seed, fiber and oil are also used by major companies such as Ford Motors, Patagonia and The Body Shop.

Nearly 500 natural product retail outlets also hosted **Hemp History Week** celebrations by sampling bestselling hemp products in their stores. Thousands of consumers were introduced to hemp foods for the first time through sampling and promotions on items such as: Nature's Path's Hemp Plus™ Granola Cereal, Sunny Hemp™ Granola Bars and Hemp Plus™ Waffles; Living Harvest Foods Tempt™ hemp milk and frozen desserts; Nutiva's organic shelled hemp seed and oil; Manitoba Harvest Hemp Pro™ 70 and Hemp Pro™ 50 protein powders, hemp seeds and oil; as well as bodycare products made with hemp oil from Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps and The Merry Hempsters. Participating stores included most Whole Foods Market stores across the country, Mom's Organic Market in the Washington, D.C. region as well Earth Fare in North Carolina, Mother's Market and Jimbo's Naturally in California, New Seasons Market in Portland, Oregon, in addition to over ninety local co-ops throughout the country.

Planning is underway for the **3rd annual Hemp History Week** to occur June 4th – 10th, 2012.

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For more information on **Hemp History Week**, go to: www.HempHistoryWeek.com.