

Press Release

Contact: Fletcher R. Hall
Phone: 301-765-0273

Whittington Participates in National Summit on Rebuilding and Revitalizing America

Potomac, MD (June 9, 2010) - Charles "Shorty" Whittington, President of Grammer Industries in Grammer, Indiana, recently attended the Obama Administration's National Summit of Rural America with agricultural leaders, farmers, ranchers and community leaders at Jefferson College in Hillsboro, Mo.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack discussed the many challenges and opportunities facing rural communities throughout the country and encouraged participants to take a bold view in planning for the future.

"A strong American economy depends on a prosperous rural America," said Vilsack. "The Obama administration is committed to ensuring that America's rural communities are vibrant and thriving economically... We continue looking to time-tested programs, as well as new approaches, to maintain a strong farm safety net for America's producers, which includes good-paying jobs..."

"One of the major issues that was addressed in a breakout session was the role that renewable energy will play in rural America and its economy," said Whittington. "As the owner of a biodiesel plant using soybeans as feedstock, I informed the Secretary of the necessity for Congress to act on the long delayed biodiesel tax credit and for the administration to continue strong support of first generation of biofuels."

Vilsack detailed the Obama Administration's commitment to job creation in rural communities and made several announcements to support rural businesses and cooperatives.

- A new Memorandum of Understanding between USDA and the Small Business Administration to outline a collaborative approach to supporting small businesses in rural America.
- USDA is seeking applications to support rural microentrepreneurs and microenterprises, which will provide \$45.1 million to encourage lending to start up business ventures. Funding is available from the Rural Development Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program.

-more-

Whittington Attends National Rural Summit – p. 2

- USDA announced \$22.5 million for recipients in 45 states and Puerto Rico to receive business development assistance and pursue marketing opportunities for agricultural commodities through USDA Rural Development assistance under the Value-Added Producer Grant program;
- USDA announced \$6.7 million grant and loan funding to recipients in 10 states that will promote job creation through USDA Rural Development's Intermediary Relending Program and the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program.

This National Summit culminates the Rural Tour Secretary Vilsack led last year to 22 states where he and other members of the Obama Administration began a conversation with farmers, ranchers, and people who live in rural communities.

F.R. Hall & Associates, LLC is a government relations and public affairs firm specializing in representing agriculture, agricultural transportation, renewable fuels, agriterrorism, and food security companies and organizations worldwide.