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New Group Advocates Hemp Production for Michigan Farmers

Environmental, other benefits follow new crop into state

HILLMAN, MI -- A group of citizens from across Michigan have formed a non-profit organization to "Expand hemp as a natural resource for industrial and private enterprise." The Michigan Industrial Hemp Education and Marketing Project (MIHEMP) says their mission is to educate the public and state government officials about Industrial Hemp, by trying to clear up myths and teach the facts through meetings, seminars and booths at public events. They will also be working to connect consumers and vendors of hemp products in Michigan and throughout the country.

Over the last two years Executive Director Everett Swift of Hillman has contacted his elected officials at the township, county, state, and federal levels. In 2007 he authored an Industrial Hemp Resolution and submitted it to the Hillman Township board, Montmorency County board, and State Senator and Representative.

The Hillman Township board promised to have a public meeting on the resolution but failed to follow through. The Montmorency County board tabled the resolution stating that it was "too political." His State Representative at the time refused to sponsor the resolution but never gave a reason.

His State Senator told him that Industrial Hemp is "a good idea but it is too controversial."

"My experience with elected officials and the public clearly indicates a lack of education on what Industrial Hemp is and is not," Swift said. "We import automotive parts from Canada made from hemp to build our cars, but yet we cannot grow the crop to do it here," Swift continued. "We need to wake Michigan up to the fact Industrial Hemp can be used in an estimated 30,000 products, including plastics, food, clothing, cosmetics, building materials and bio-fuels."

"Anything made from petrochemicals today can be made from biodegradable hemp," states Paul Pearson, MIHEMP Director of Communications and Webmaster. "This includes paints, varnishes, fuel and everything polluting fossil fuels began replacing in the early 1900s."

One of the main goals of MIHEMP is changing the false impression that marijuana and Industrial Hemp are the same. The sub-varieties of the plant dictate the best types of Hemp for fiber, biomass and oil are useless for recreational value.

Swift continues, "If Michigan is going get out of this economic mess we need to work toward that goal by opening up new revenue possibilities. Industrial Hemp can help us meet that

goal and we need to join the 15 other states that have recognized this fact."

The U.S. is the only industrialized nation in the world without a Hemp program, yet is the biggest importer of Hemp and Hemp products in the world.

Several Michigan residents make up the rest of the MI-HEMP Board of Directors: Christeen Landino of Eastpointe as Treasurer; Richard Clement of Lansing as Director of Minority Affairs; Donald Barnes of Niles as Membership Director; and Detroit attorney Matthew Abel as Legal Counsel.

They have many dues-paying members from across the state of Michigan.

Swift said, "MI-HEMP has a great Board of Directors. They are very dedicated, motivated, and are well educated on Industrial Hemp. Each one of them has a unique talent and has come up with some very creative ideas individually and as a group."

For more information on Industrial Hemp or MIHEMP, they have an informative Web site at <http://www.mi-hemp.org> and a Myspace page at <http://www.myspace.com/hempresolution>.

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