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**National Rural Summit/Presidential Forum a Success**

*Bi-partisan gathering focused on range of rural issues*

**MINNEAPOLIS (11/06/07)**—By any measure, the 2007 National Summit on Agriculture and Rural Life held October 27th in Ames, Iowa was a success.

Hundreds of individuals came together from across the country to discuss the state of rural America: the digital divide, the emerging bio-economy, and the impact of globalization on immigration and rural communities. They spoke about the connections between food, farms and healthy communities. They talked about the challenges of being a young person of color in rural America, the difficulty finding jobs—and the resulting “tug-of-war” that they have between growing their communities and their futures.

A Presidential forum, drawing a bi-partisan group of candidates for the 2008 nomination, punctuated the afternoon. Democrats Hillary Clinton, John Edwards and Barack Obama and Republican John Cox each showcased their plans for rural America and took questions from the audience.

As part of each presentation and as a nod to the importance of the participation of young people, Washington, D.C.-based Generation Engage, an organization that stresses the importance of young people in politics, included, through Apple iChat technology, young people from satellites in North Carolina and San Jose, California. At the conclusion of each candidate’s presentation, members of the audience from each of the three locations were given the opportunity to ask a question. Questioners were pre-selected from each site in an effort to allow the most questions to be asked of each candidate. To view highlights of the summit, please visit the Generation Engage website at [www.generationengage.com](http://www.generationengage.com).

“The National Rural Summit gave the people the chance to share stories and have discussions about the challenges and opportunities they face, big and small, immediate and long-term,” said Niel Ritchie, executive director of the League of Rural Voters.

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*The League of Rural Voters was founded in 1985 as a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing the representation of rural people in the public policy making process. The League seeks to build awareness of the economic challenges facing rural communities while advocating for federal and state policies that focus government resources on education, health care and local and regional economic development.*

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