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### **Michigan Corn Growers Attend First Executive Leadership Conference**

LANSING, MICH. – Two board members from the Michigan Corn Growers Association (MCGA) attended Growth Energy’s first ever Executive Leadership Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. Michigan corn farmers Tom Durand of Croswell, chair of the MCGA board and Jeff Sandborn of Portland, MCGA vice president, represented Michigan and the interests of corn growers at this historic event. The first of its kind, the Executive Leadership Conference was designed to bring ethanol industry leaders together to assess the state of the industry, as well as its future.

“Michigan’s corn-ethanol industry is a significant market for our state’s corn growers, nearly 20 percent of our crop is used to produce ethanol,” said Durand. “It is important for us as corn growers and especially as leaders, to know what the ethanol industry is facing today and in the future.” Sandborn, who also sits on the Ethanol Committee for the National Corn Grower’s Association, also found the conference to be of utmost importance. “Our country’s dependence on foreign oil is a threat to our national security. By increasing the amount of ethanol we produce and use in the United States, we will not only decrease our reliance on fossil fuels which are diminishing in supply and environmentally-degrading, but we will also increase our country’s economic independence, both through reducing imports and by creating U.S. jobs.”

Sandborn’s concerns over national security are shared by many and was the grand-opening forum for the two-day conference in Ariz. Leading the kick-off event’s discussion on the national security implications of continuing America’s dependence on foreign oil was a panel featuring Gen. Wesley Clark, Co-Chairman of Growth Energy, and Dr. Gal Luft, Executive Director for the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. Other topics on the conference agenda included the long term economic implications of not switching to domestic and renewable energy, the role that Growth Energy can play in promoting the benefits of domestically-produced ethanol and navigating policy in Congress during an election year. During this roundtable discussion, Growth Energy CEO Tom Buis moderated a bipartisan panel featuring former Republican Congressman Jim Nussle; Melissa Shannon who served as a legislative advisor to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi; Josh Gottheimer, former advisor to President Bill Clinton; and Karen Hughes, a former advisor to President George W. Bush.

Conference attendees also decided upon the top issues they would like Growth Energy, which was formed just 16 months ago, to focus on in the year ahead. Created to aid in the advancement of the American ethanol industry and to increase the use of ethanol throughout the country, Growth Energy found two key issues outlined as top priorities for 2010 – the joint lawsuit Growth Energy filed with the Renewable Fuels Association in California against the state’s Low Carbon Fuel Standard and expiration of the VEETC and the Brazilian tariff at the end of the year. “These two areas are critical issues for the United State’s ethanol industry,” stated Sandborn. “They’re not going to be easy to get through in an election year, but we’re hoping for the best.”

Headquartered in Lansing, the MCGA is a grassroots-membership association that has represented the state’s corn growers’ political interests since the 1970s. The MCGA works cooperatively with the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan (CMPM) a legislatively-established program that utilizes one-cent per bushel of Michigan corn sold and invests in research, education, new uses and market development. Michigan’s corn industry adds more than one billion dollars to the state’s economy annually and in 2009, Michigan’s corn farmers harvested a record setting crop of nearly 309 million bushels. For more information, visit the website of the MCGA and the CMPM at [www.micorn.org](http://www.micorn.org).