



MICHIGAN SOYBEAN PROMOTION COMMITTEE

a new release



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NASCAR MEETS AGRICULTURE IN HI-SPEED ACTION

Ever wonder what you get when you cross NASCAR with agriculture? Furniture Row Racing (FRR), one of the Furniture Row Companies, has figured that out with their recent introduction of an initiative that will deliver the message of today's farm and ranch families to over 60 percent of the nation's consumers. Their answer: **Car of the Heartland...Official Car of the American Farmer.**

"We all know and understand that the American public becomes further disconnected with farmers and ranchers every year. They don't understand who American agriculture is, how it works or why it is important to their daily lives," said Pat Driscoll, head of FRR corporate relations. "With the support of Furniture Row Racing and the agriculture industry, we hope to have Car of the Heartland promoting agriculture in 36 different races during the 2010 racing season."

Through a finely-tuned, multi-tiered messaging program tied to the car's weekly race presence, Car of the Heartland will touch one third of America's adult population with a fun, engaging message meant to reinforce the value of individual farmers/ranchers and the importance of domestically produced food. "You're going to see some pretty crazy stuff," says Driscoll. "Our driver will be working on three or four different farms/ranches every week with media presence. Race attendees will be able to purchase locally grown food products and experience rural life right at the track. There are so many elements to this program, we can't begin to mention them all here. Suffice it to say...Agriculture is going Hollywood so consumers can connect in a way they understand."

In addition to a NASCAR presence, FRR's parent, Furniture Row, LLC, has made assets of its national retail furniture chain available to help deliver the message of this program. Appearing at over 330 stores nationwide, in an advertising program that touches 26% of the nation's adult consumers and through a multitude of other touch points only available through a national retail organization, farmers and ranchers will be talking at a personal level with over 184 million consumers.

Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee recently joined Michigan Farm Bureau, Colorado Farm Bureau, and others as being communication partners for this new venture. Gail Frahm, Executive Director of the MSPC says, "It's exciting to get in at the ground floor level on this project and to see commodity groups from across the nation take hold of what is expected to be one of the largest communication campaigns agriculture has embarked on in many years. It's new, it's innovative, and it's a unique twist on the typical company-sponsored NASCAR vehicles, and, most importantly, it will be putting a face on agriculture, something that much of the American public has gradually become removed from over the years."

"The Heartland program represents a fundamental change from NASCAR sponsorship to NASCAR partnership," said Driscoll. "FRR knows that what individual cars need is a focused message, one that fans can follow. With 'Car of the Heartland' we'll give NASCAR fans what they've been asking for...one car, one message...American Agriculture!" Car of the Heartland is planned to kickoff in February 2010, with Speed Weeks and the Daytona 500.

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While the Car of the Heartland program has been built to share every part of American agriculture with the consumer, there's no question some elements of the industry will play a more significant role in that message. Among those elements are soybeans. According to Driscoll, "Team management is currently reviewing the United Soybean Board's 2009 Soybean Products Guide to find soy-based products that can replace petro based products in our daily activities." Among the most obvious soy products are cleaners and degreasers in the garage, and biodiesel in the transporter.

Less obvious products are also being incorporated into the business, though. Remember...the Car of the Heartland program has been built by Furniture Row Racing, which is owned by the Furniture Row organization. Part of Furniture Row, LLC is Denver Mattress Company. Considered one of the most innovative mattress designers and manufacturers in the world, Denver Mattress recently began producing mattresses utilizing a new foam product. "As far as we can tell," says Driscoll, "we are the first, and only, mattress manufacturer in the world to be producing mattresses with the new soy-based foam in mattress tops." Not only will the team and company be utilizing products created by soybean producers, they'll be able to reinforce the green message of these products through multiple communication efforts. Watch for the complete rollout of Car of the Heartland through the winter months! And, keep talking your ag message to your non-farming neighbor.

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Photos are available upon request 989.652.3294 or e-mail to soyinfo@michigansoybean.org.