



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**SWING STATE CRANBERRY GROWERS AND AG STUDENTS TO BUILD “GET OUT THE VOTE” MESSAGE FROM 130,000 POUNDS OF WISCONSIN CRANBERRIES BEING HARVESTED**

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***“Pick Your Crandidate” message built with GPS technology used for harvesting cranberries; public viewing available Saturday***

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**Wisconsin responsible for nearly 60 percent of the nation’s cranberry crop**

**WISCONSIN RAPIDS, Wis.** – With the nation’s eyes on swing state Wisconsin for the next month, the [Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association](#) (WSCGA), more than 40 high school agriculture students and GPS mapping experts will launch an effort on Oct. 5 to build a 330 feet by 135 feet “Get Out the Vote” message from 130,000 pounds of cranberries being harvested. Wisconsin produces more of the tart berry than any other state in the nation, and its 2012 expected harvest of approximately 450 million pounds of cranberries will lead up right up to the 2012 presidential election.

The “Pick Your Crandidate” harvesting challenge, to be held at [Wetherby Cranberry Company](#) in Warrens, aims to feature two massive outlines of the state of Wisconsin – one with cranberries on the inside (representing a red state) and the other with cranberries forming the perimeter and the blue water used to harvest the berries on the inside (representing a blue state). The students will then build and piece together a massive “VOTE” message. The non-partisan message will be mapped using GPS tools that today help Wisconsin growers reach maximum efficiencies through renovated marsh designs and guided harvesting equipment.

“We thought putting a twist on our fall harvest was a great way to involve local students and embrace the national attention focused on Wisconsin for the next month,” said

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Tom Lochner, executive director of WSCGA. “This fall, Wisconsin will play an important role in supplying nearly 60 percent of the nation’s cranberry crop and a critical role in determining our country’s leadership for the next four years. We’re helping bring in the berries while residents need to get out and vote.”

Wisconsin has been the leading cranberry producing state in the U.S. for the past 17 years, and the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service projects Wisconsin will harvest 4.5 million barrels in 2012. Cranberries are Wisconsin’s largest fruit industry in both value and size. Currently, cranberries are grown by more than 250 Wisconsin growers, on 21,000 acres in 20 Wisconsin counties.

The challenge is being supported by industry and community partners, including Wetherby Cranberry Company as the host, and Lampert-Lee & Associates Engineering and Tessman Brothers Irrigation with expertise and supplies. The agriculture and media students are from Tomah High School, and the local McDonald’s franchise Courtesy Corporation will fuel the challenge team with its fruit and maple oatmeal. All of the cranberries purchased by McDonald’s nationwide are Wisconsin cranberries.

The “Pick Your Candidate” message, once built, will be on display at [Wetherby](#) for public viewing on Saturday, Oct. 6 from 9 a.m. until noon as part of a free public [Harvest Day](#) event.

WSCGA was founded in 1887 and is committed to developing and implementing programs that will assist growers in doing a better job of growing cranberries and strengthen the public support for the industry in Wisconsin. The Association is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2012. For more information, visit [www.wiscran.org](http://www.wiscran.org). WSCGA is also on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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EDITOR’S NOTE: For coverage options, updates and photos from the challenge contact WSCGA ([knaidl@laughlin.com](mailto:knaidl@laughlin.com) / 414-614-6208), Wisconsin media affiliates, AP bureau Wisconsin, or follow along on WSCGA’s [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) channel.