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STATE OF ALABAMA

ALABAMA RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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Black Belt region kicks-off 2ND World's Widest Yard Sale

Three days of bargain hunting spanning 300+ miles

Montgomery, Alabama – Plans for the 2nd World's Widest Yard Sale scheduled for May 31 – June 2, 2013 are being kicked-off today by Ron Sparks, Director of the Alabama Rural Development Office. In an effort to stimulate this region's economy, the US Highway 80 corridor as well as major arteries in the Black Belt region of Alabama will be featured during the three days of bargain hunting and intriguing side trips.

"It's an entertaining way to showcase this region of Alabama in a positive light, share our cultural heritage, and generate revenues for all the communities along Highway 80 and beyond," announced Director Ron Sparks. "We expect this event to attract the attention of national media and popular, special interest TV productions such as HGTV and American Pickers."

The World's Widest Yard Sale is establishing its origin in Central Alabama spanning over 300 miles across the Black Belt region. The sale will be staged on sites along US Highway 80 and into the Black Belt region beginning with Phenix City near Georgia and traveling westward to Cuba near Mississippi. Other towns directly involved include Tuskegee, Notasulga, Shorter, Pike Road, Pintlala, Greenville, Lowndesboro, Prattville, Selma, Uniontown, Marion Junction, Faunsdale, Demopolis, Livingston and York. Over time, the event has the potential to span across America from coast to coast. It is anticipated that thousands will participate as vendors and a multitude of visitors will travel near and far seeking newfound treasures.

Ron Sparks introduced the idea as a project for the Alabama Black Belt Commission's Marketing and Tourism Committee. "I'm from Northeast Alabama and have witnessed first-hand for many years the enormous impact on lodging, restaurants, retail shops, and fuel stations created by visitors attending the World's Longest Yard Sale."

“The sale is an opportunity for schools, churches, charitable organizations, municipal departments, and individuals to conduct fund-raisers for operations and special projects,” said Emily Law, Executive Director of the Black Belt Commission. “Landowners will benefit through the rental of space to vendors who sell antiques and collectibles, crafts, nursery plants, home-grown vegetables, baked goods, and serve food items. “

In an effort to attract more visitors to the region, sample itineraries featuring suggested travel routes within three separate loops have been created. It's designed to help visitors who are anxious to find bargains navigate the route, choose lodging, plan side trips to the many attractions available in the region, and features festivals and special events taking place during the sale weekend. The itineraries can be found on the website as well as other pertinent information to assist vendors and shoppers, including maps, available sites, Chamber listings, and general facts. For details and periodic updates visit: www.widestyardsale.com

The Black Belt is named for the nutrient-rich, black soil that once grew superior cotton and, today, continues to support an abundance of wildlife. The region's cultural heritage is as rich as its soil and the down-home cooking even better. A few of the attractions of special interest are the Tuskegee Institute, the Edmund Pettus Bridge at Selma, Gee's Bend and the famous quilters, quaint shops in Marion, mansions in Demopolis, hand-made pies at Pie Lab in Greensboro, and candies made by hand at Priester's Pecans. For more information:
<http://alblackbeltheritage.com/>

The Alabama Rural Development Office was created by Governor Robert Bentley to improve the lives of those living in the rural areas of Alabama through advancing education, healthcare, and economic development.

The Alabama Black Belt Commission is a sub-division of the ARDO charged with improving the quality of life in Alabama's Black Belt region by actively working with all citizens of Alabama and any other supportive parties.

For more information regarding the World's Widest Yard Sale please contact the Alabama Rural Development Office, Emily Law at 334- 353-5185 or Pam Swanner at 334-649-3788.

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