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Native Sun Owner Attends Natural Products Day on Capitol Hill

(Jacksonville, FL 4.10.09) Aaron Gottlieb, owner Native Sun Natural Foods Market, joined almost 200 natural product industry members on March 24, 2009 as they gathered on Capitol Hill for the 12th Annual Natural Products Day to educate Members of Congress and staff about the importance of natural products in creating a healthier America.

Gottlieb made the trip as a retail board director of the Southeast Natural Products Association to which he was elected last year. Natural Products Day is an annual lobbying event designed to build the natural product industry's base of support through personal meetings with members of Congress. A total of 180 offices, including two-thirds of freshman legislators, were visited by natural product industry delegates.

During his trip, Gottlieb was able to visit with aides from the offices of both Florida Senators Bill Nelson (D) and Mel Martinez (R). "All of our comments were well received by the aides as they had personal interests in our issues," said Gottlieb. "We wanted to remind them that our industry is holding strong through the recession and people depend on our products to keep them healthy. We asked that they remember this when they go over healthcare reform this summer. Supplements that have been proven effective by the FDA can save our country 20 billion dollars in five years. Without them, healthcare costs WILL go up."

Legislators were asked to:

- Support an update to national school nutrition standards for junk foods sold on campus that is consistent with the "Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act" (S.771) and H.R. 1363).
- Protect access to dietary supplements by opposing potential dietary supplement legislation that undermines consumers' health choices and limits access to supplements.
- Support food safety legislation that emphasizes good manufacturing practices, online country-of-origin information, flexible fees and continued regulation of dietary supplements as foods.
- Make dietary supplements and other natural products part of the solution when implementing health care reform.

"The biggest thing I learned was that we do have a voice and it is our responsibility to be heard," said Gottlieb. If you are concerned about an issue that is being dealt with in the Senate or House pertaining to food or supplements, Gottlieb recommends you get involved. "Contact your Senator and local Representative and alert them. Get their e-mail addresses and have you friends send similar messages. Frequency and groups in your Rep's regions will get them to listen. They want to be reelected and need support from their communities to do this," he says.

About the Southeast Natural Products Association

The Southeast Natural Products Association (SENPA) serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. The Association supports the growth of businesses that produce and market natural products and promote optimum health. www.naturalproductsassoc.org

About Native Sun Natural Foods Market

Native Sun Natural Foods Market is the industry leader in all-natural and organic products. The Jacksonville-owned and operated grocer offers fresh organic produce, free range poultry, organic grass-fed beef, wild catch seafood, packaged and frozen foods, health and beauty products, supplements, homeopathic remedies, environmentally-friendly household products, baby items, pet supplies and more. Stores are located at 10000 San Jose Boulevard in Mandarin and 11030 Baymeadows Road on the Southside. www.nativesunjax.com

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