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## Media Request

**All Illinois Media:** Secretary of State Jesse White and Illinois Farm Bureau president Philip Nelson respectfully ask media to mention the declaration of a statewide Rural Driving Alert in conjunction with announcements about the “fall back” Standard Time change on November 1.

### **Secretary of State, Illinois Farm Bureau Warn Motorists About Late Harvest**

The Secretary of State’s office and the Illinois Farm Bureau are alerting motorists in rural areas to the fact that the state’s farmers are running way behind with this year’s harvest because of continuing wet weather.

Secretary of State Jesse White is asking all Illinois media outlets, especially those serving rural areas, to publicize what he calls a “Rural Driving Alert.” This voluntary effort encourages media to mention the delayed harvest and the presence of farm equipment at the same time they remind people to turn back their clocks for Central Standard Time on November 1.

IFB president Philip Nelson said the November 1 time change, from Daylight to Standard, will bring darkness to most of Illinois prior to 5:30 p.m. each evening, just at a time when record numbers of tractors, combines, trucks and wagons are using rural roads, and county and state highways.

“In a normal year, Illinois farmers expect to be more than 80 percent done with corn and soybean harvest by November 1,” said Nelson, “This year’s soggy harvest has slowed progress to the point that 84 percent of our corn and 67 percent of our soybeans still remained in the field on October 27. A lot of farm work is going to be done in the dark this year.” said Nelson.

Many county farm bureaus in Illinois have distributed roadside signs for motorists and caution signs and lighting kits for farm equipment, Nelson noted. Much of this communication has been in place for several years, but it takes on added urgency in 2009, he said.

“In addition to concern about motorist safety, farmers are concerned about themselves and their families, of course,” said Nelson. He cited a COUNTRY Financial annual survey that showed roadway collisions involving farm equipment accounted for 24 percent of Illinois farm deaths from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Roadway collisions ranked as the second leading cause of farm deaths, behind tractor rollovers and ahead of grain bin accidents.

The New England Journal of Medicine recently reported that rural crashes are more frequent and severe than urban crashes. Rural crashes are also more likely to result in death, with nearly 54 percent of crashes resulting in one or more fatalities.