

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*News about the Cotton Research & Promotion Program from the Cotton Board*

### Cotton Incorporated Partners with CCI to Promote Cotton in China

**(MEMPHIS, Tenn.)** – Long recognizing the need to increase the global consumption of cotton and capitalizing on China’s growth in consumer spending, Cotton Incorporated and Cotton Council International have partnered to promote cotton products to the Chinese market through a strategic consumer-targeted public relations campaign called “Cotton – Beyond Your Imagination.”

“At this time, China has the fastest growing economy in the world,” explains Cotton Incorporated’s Executive Vice President, Mark Messura and Cotton Council International’s Executive Director, Allen Terhaar, in a joint statement. “Based on our preliminary research, we believe that a public relations campaign to increase the awareness of and preference for cotton among Chinese consumers is a logical step for us in this market. The Chinese market is too important for cotton to cede to alternative fibers.”

Managed by Fleishman Hillard International Communications in Asia, the center of this multi-faceted awareness program is a student design contest in cooperation with the Beijing Institute of Clothing Technology (BICT). Through a series of presentations, students will submit designs for cotton clothing in the categories of home, work, sports and party – with the four winners selected this month. The judging panel will include representatives from BICT, Cotton Incorporated, Cotton Council International and other key individuals from the Chinese fashion and textile industry.

Continuing in the fall of this year, a specially-designed presentation stage will travel to public venues in Beijing and Shanghai to display the winning designs in which the public will be asked to vote for these designs using a variety of creative categories. The final results of the competition will be announced in late fall. “This contest will educate students about the design benefits of cotton, its fashionability and versatility,” says Terhaar. “By taking Chinese fashion to the public, we are also educating the consumer and creating an opportunity to influence the direction of preference toward cotton products.”

Additionally, a Chinese cotton-centric consumer Web site themed around the campaign idea – “Cotton – Beyond Your Imagination” – is being created, and will be linked to one of China’s premier consumer Web sites – [www.sohu.com](http://www.sohu.com). The two Web sites will be the main vehicle for the student design voting, and will offer information on fabric care for cotton and fashion tips for the family, including home decorating – thus furthering the education of Chinese consumers about the many uses of cotton.

“To better understand the role cotton plays in Chinese consumers’ lives, we worked with N-Dynamic, a market research firm located in Shanghai, and interviewed 7,000 consumers across China,” explains Messura. Almost seven out of 10 people we surveyed said that it’s important that their clothing is made from natural fiber such as cotton, and six out of 10 said that cotton is the best fiber in today’s fashions. “Through this on-going public relations outreach, we will strive to communicate the benefits of cotton to the consumer, and furthermore work to strengthen their shopping preference for cotton products.”

#### **About the Cotton Board:**

The Cotton Board administers and oversees the Cotton Research & Promotion Program conducted by Cotton Incorporated for America’s cotton producers and importers. For more information about the Cotton Board, please visit [www.cottonboard.org](http://www.cottonboard.org).