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## **Connecticut Main Street Announces Two New Statewide Programs**

(Hartford, CT) - Connecticut Main Street Center, the only statewide non-profit organization dedicated to restoring and maintaining Connecticut downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, today announced two new statewide programs; the **Downtown Resource Center** and the **Downtown Revitalization Institute**.

The **Downtown Resource Center** (DRC) was developed for people who are working to revitalize their commercial districts, but who may not need or be ready for a fully designated Main Street program. Using the same National Main Street Four Point Approach™ that the current 11 Designated Connecticut Main Street Communities use, DRC members have access to technical assistance and on-site consulting from national experts, trend information and “best practices” tools via a members-only website, access to a network of peers and information sharing events, and statewide alerts and advocacy on downtown issues. The Main Street Approach, a proven method that has worked in over 1,600 communities across the country, focuses on incremental, sustainable progress achieved by following a plan. It uses public-private partnerships and includes four key areas of downtown revitalization: ORGANIZATION – creating civic value, support and capacity to rebuild downtown; ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING – helping existing businesses, and attracting the right mix; DESIGN – restoring the character and physical value of buildings and streetscapes; PROMOTION – bringing people downtown, through image, advertising and events.

DRC members will benefit from discounted registration at **Downtown Revitalization Institute** (DRI) workshops, presented by Connecticut Main Street Center, and made possible by Bank of America, in collaboration with the Office of the State Treasurer. The DRI offers a full day each quarter with

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nationally known experts on capacity building, business and real estate development, promotion, and design as a revitalization tool. Participants will learn to utilize historic and natural assets that already exist, and to build on them. They will discuss business restructuring, niche analysis, real estate development, public spaces, traffic patterns, pedestrians, parking, branding, and special events.

The first DRI workshop, “Building Your Capacity to Revitalize Downtown”, will be held on Friday, January 28, 2005, from 8:30am – 5:00pm, at Northeast Utilities Auditorium in Berlin, CT. Kent J. Burnes, of Burnes Consulting, will lead participants through an interactive workshop which will address development of a leadership team and plan, maintaining partnerships and community involvement, identifying projects to fit mutual objectives and funding revitalization initiatives.

Part of a national network that has been in place for 25 years, Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) brings together public officials, business owners, financial resources, community activists, and the economic development and historic preservation communities under one umbrella organization. CMSC helps communities analyze core issues and set attainable goals. The organization provides training workshops, design and technical assistance, and advocacy. Designated Connecticut Main Street communities include Middletown, New London, Niantic, Norwich, Portland, Rockville, Simsbury, Upper Albany, Waterbury, Windsor and Winsted.

CMSC, a non-profit corporation funded by the *Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development* and *The Connecticut Light and Power Company/Yankee Gas*, is committed to bringing Connecticut’s commercial districts back to life socially and economically. For more information, visit the CMSC website at [www.ctmainstreet.org](http://www.ctmainstreet.org) or call 860-280-2337.