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Darien Designated a Connecticut Main Street Community

(Hartford, CT) - Officials from the State of Connecticut will join representatives of Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC), the Town of Darien and Darien Revitalization, Inc. to announce Darien's designation as a Connecticut Main Street Community. A press conference will be held this Thursday, June 16th at 11 AM at the Tilley Pond Pavilion to kick off the program, to discuss what it will mean for the community, and outline what happens next.

Ronald F. Angelo, Deputy Commission of the State of CT Department of Economic & Community Development, and Tim Beeble, Chairman of the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council, will offer their congratulations and remarks on Darien's selection as a Designated Connecticut Main Street Community. In his capacity in administering DECD's Business & Industry Development and Office of Municipal Development, Deputy Commissioner Angelo oversees programs that target retention and expansion of in-state businesses as well as state and federal programs that focus on building stronger neighborhoods and communities. Mr. Beeble is employed by the City of Stamford as its Community Development Director, responsible for rehabilitation of housing and revitalization of Stamford's neighborhoods that surround its downtown. Ten years ago, he was the Vice President of Connecticut Preservation Action, which organized the grassroots movement to bring the Main Street program to Connecticut.

To be accepted into the Connecticut Main Street program, communities must demonstrate that they have broad-based community support for commercial district revitalization, a commitment to Main Street's comprehensive approach to revitalization, and a commitment and resources to hire a professional executive director. "Main Street is a 'self-help' approach to downtown revitalization," said John Simone, Executive Director of CMSC. "We provide training and guidance, technical assistance and resources in order to help the local program and their partners bring downtown back to life. Darien's Main Street program, like all others, must raise their own funds in order to operate their program. CMSC does not provide funding to any designated community. On the contrary, local programs must pay a percentage of the costs of technical assistance provided to them while they are in the Main Street program," said Simone.

Since the CMSC program began in 1995, participating communities have generated over \$400 million in public and private reinvestment in their downtowns. Over the same time, 287 net new businesses have opened and 1,821 net new jobs have been created. This represents \$75.25 of reinvestment for every \$1 spent on a local Main Street program, making the Main Street initiative one of the most successful economic development programs in the country.

Connecticut Main Street Center is the state's leading resource for cities and towns seeking to comprehensively revitalize their "main street" districts. CMSC, a non-profit organization whose major sponsors are the Connecticut Light & Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, is a member of the respected National Main Street network and is committed to bringing Connecticut's commercial districts back to life socially and economically. Darien joins the current Connecticut Main Street communities of: New London, Niantic, Norwich, Portland, Rockville, Simsbury, the Upper Albany neighborhood of Hartford, Waterbury, Windsor and Winsted.