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CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER ANNOUNCES 2008 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

(Hartford, CT) – Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) has announced its 2008 Awards of Excellence. Recipients include Main Street organizations in Norwich, Simsbury, Waterbury and the Upper Albany Main Street district in Hartford, as well as organizations in Mansfield and Willimantic.

“CMSC has developed this awards program to stimulate, encourage and support our Connecticut Main Street member network”, said CMSC President & CEO John Simone. This program, which includes awards in the areas of public-private partnerships, community consensus-building, adaptive reuse of a building, image enhancement, downtown events, business owner and Main Street executive, was created to recognize outstanding projects, individuals and partnerships in community efforts to bring traditional downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts back to life, socially and economically. The CT Main Street Awards annually celebrate and communicate the most successful and innovative efforts in main street revitalization in Connecticut.

“Common themes that emerged in this year’s award-winning projects included the ability of each recipient to engage the community and encourage public dialogue about the needs of the neighborhood, as well as understanding of target markets for their districts and encouraging entrepreneurs. This year’s winners are catalysts for further investment in Connecticut’s main street districts.” said Simone.

Jurors for the CMSC Awards Program include George Buchanan, AIA, principle of Buchanan Architects LLC; Scott Healy, Executive Director of the Town Green Special Services District in New Haven; and Robert Gregson, Creative Director of the Tourism Division of the Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism. Submissions were judged on criteria which included innovation, replication, representation and partnerships utilized, and outcome. Awards will be presented at the Connecticut Main Street Center 2008 Annual Awards Presentation on June 9th at The Wauregan Ballroom in downtown Norwich.

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2008 AWARD WINNERS

Main Street Partnership - recognizes a Main Street organization that has established a strong partnership with public and/or private-sector entity (or entities) on cooperative efforts to positively impact the quality of life, the economic value, and image and use of its main street district. 2008 Award Recipient:

Upper Albany Main Street – *Community Policing at Work*

For more information, visit: <http://www.upperalbany.com/news/news.html>

Community Consensus-Building - recognizes public outreach, partnership development and efforts to engage the community in issues and initiatives that are intended to improve how the district looks and operates. These projects or initiatives need not be completed, as the emphasis is on facilitating dialogue, how it is being encouraged, and reaching consensus in establishing a vision for the district. 2008 Award Recipient:

Mansfield Downtown Partnership – *Storrs Center Downtown Project*

For more information, visit: <http://www.storrscenter.com/>

Adaptive Re-use of a Building - recognizes a project that utilizes new and/or alternative use of a building(s) in a mixed-use environment. Particular interest will be paid to those entries with a residential component on upper floors. This award honors building improvements that look beyond the outside of a building to include appropriate changes to the interior and upper floors, resulting in a dramatic effect on the quality and value of downtown space.

2008 Award Recipient:

Becker + Becker – *The Wauregan, Downtown Norwich*

Submitted by *Rose City Renaissance, Norwich's Main Street Program*

For more information, visit: <http://www.thewauregan.com/>

Business Owner of the Year - recognizes outstanding commitment, on the part of a downtown business owner, setting high standards for their own business as well as their overall impact on the district and involvement with local “main street” revitalization initiatives. 2008 Award Recipient:

Herman Todd, President of Living Word Imprints

Submitted by *Upper Albany Main Street*

Image Enhancement - recognizes a program(s) that improve the image and vitality of the “main street” district.

Competitive projects include events, plans or strategies that use print, electronic media or multi-media efforts to promote downtown. 2008 Award Recipient:

Main Street Waterbury – Brass City Brew Fest 2007

For more information, visit: <http://www.brasscitybrewfest.com/>

Special Event - recognizes a special event with an original theme that promotes a positive image of the district with consideration given to those events that celebrate local history and culture. The event should be goal-oriented, target an appropriate audience, and demonstrate creativity. 2008 Award Recipient:

Simsbury Main Street Partnership – Preserve America Gala

For more information, visit: <http://www.simsburymainstreet.org/>

Ongoing Event - recognizes an event that occurs at least four times annually, has built traffic, and benefited the district. The event should be goal-oriented, target an appropriate audience, and demonstrate creativity.

2008 Award Recipient:

Willimantic Renaissance, Inc. – 3rd Thursday Street Fests

For more information, visit: <http://www.willimanticstreetfest.com/>

Main Street Executive of the Year - This special award recognizes the work of an outstanding Main Street Executive Director – a professional in the field of downtown revitalization who has distinguished himself/herself locally and regionally, representing exemplary efforts and demonstrated results.

2008 Award Recipient:

Marilyn Risi, Executive Director, Upper Albany Main Street

Connecticut Main Street Center

The mission of Connecticut Main Street Center is to help build economically vibrant, traditional main streets as a foundation for healthy communities by providing training to its network of public and private partners and by advocating for positive change. CMSC, a statewide nonprofit corporation funded by The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development, is dedicated to economic and community development within the context of historic preservation.

Since the Connecticut Main Street program began in 1995, participating communities have generated over \$559 million in public and private reinvestment in their downtowns. Over the same time, 360 net new businesses have opened and 2,051 net new jobs have been created. For every \$1 spent on a local Main Street program, \$65.49 has been reinvested in Connecticut Main Street downtowns, making the Main Street initiative one of the most successful economic development programs in the country. For more information, visit www.ctmainstreet.org.

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