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GILSON CAFÉ~CINEMA SITE OF CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER AWARDS PRESENTATION

(Hartford, CT) – Connecticut Main Street Center has announced the selection of the Gilson Café~Cinema in Downtown Winsted as the site of the organization's 2007 Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation. The event will be held on Monday, June 11th at 5:30 pm. A "Welcome to Main Street" reception will be held at Monaco's Ristorante followed by the program and Awards Presentation at the Gilson.

Originally the Strand Theater, the facility opened for business at 354 Main Street in Winsted on August 2, 1926 with 1,000 upholstered seats and a venue of music, vaudeville and movies. Eventually it evolved into a full-time movie house, serving the residents of Winsted and surrounding communities continuously. As with many historic downtown movie theaters, it gradually fell into disrepair. In 1986, Alan Nero purchased the building and opened the GILSON CAFÉ~CINEMA, named after the theater's inspiration and mentor, Warren Gilson. This destination location in Winsted has two screens and serves dinner, snacks, beverages and first run movies six nights a week. The Gilson brings 60,000 people a year to Main Street in Winsted for entertainment and libations.

Connecticut Main Street Center selects outstanding examples of restoration, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use, as well as complementary new construction for its Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation. Previous venues include the East Hartford

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Community Cultural Center (the former Central High School), Aglow Auction House in Windsor Center (a former Esso Gas Station), the Vernon Senior Center in Rockville (a former Methodist Church), The Artists Collective in the Upper Albany Neighborhood of Hartford (new construction and a major anchor in the community), The Palace Theater and Waterbury Arts Magnet School in Downtown Waterbury (newly constructed in 2004), and The Crocker House in Downtown New London (a former hotel).

The Connecticut Main Street Center Awards Presentation has become the highlight of the year for both the state organization and award-winning Connecticut Main Street Communities selected through a competitive process. This year there were over 40 entries in several categories including: *Building Rehabilitation, Business Retention, Expansion or Attraction Project, Merchant Service Award, Special Event, Image Enhancement, Public Relations, Public-Private Partnership, and Main Street Executive Director of the Year*. Winners will be announced in early May as part of National Historic Preservation Month observances. Governor Rell also presents Citations from the State of Connecticut to award winning Main Street projects and individuals.

Part of a national network that has been in place for over 25 years, Connecticut Main Street Center 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 education and training, design and technical assistance, and advocacy.

Connecticut Main Street Center, a nonprofit corporation funded by the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development and The Connecticut Light and Power Company, is committed to bringing Connecticut's commercial districts back to life socially and economically. To learn more about this event, call 860-280-2337.

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