



For immediate release:
May 30, 2007

Contact: Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker
860-280-2556

SIMSBURY DOWNTOWN PROPERTY OWNERS TO BE HONORED AT CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER AWARDS PRESENTATION

(Hartford, CT) – Connecticut Main Street Center has announced it will honor Mike and Arvene Yakemore, owners of Simsmore Square, at the organization's 2007 Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation. The event will be held on Monday, June 11th at 5:30 pm at the Gilson Café ~ Cinema in Downtown Winsted.

Since acquiring the Simsmore Square property, building by building beginning in 1975, the Yakemore family has created a mixed-use development within Simsbury's Main Street district. A spectacular fire in April 2003 resulted in 13 businesses and over 115 employees being temporarily displaced. Mike Yakemore worked with Town and Main Street officials to find temporary facilities for all within 48 hours, while he began work on a new vision for Simsmore Square. In addition to being the new home for over 20 businesses, the mixed-use development features a residential component of eight one-bedroom apartments located on the third floor of 540 Hopmeadow Street, constructed to take advantage of the Rails-to-Trails bike path that runs less than 50 feet from the balconies of each apartment.

Additionally, Yakemore paid for the renovation of The University of Hartford Hartt School Community Division, through a personal investment of \$300,000 and a creative rental agreement based on the volume of sales and extremely low base rent of under \$2 per square foot. The school, recognizing his personal generosity, dedicated the satellite school as "The Yakemore Performing Arts Center". Simsmore Square has also become the temporary home of the Simsbury Public Library, which needed space while its

Connecticut Main Street Center
PO Box 261595
Hartford, CT 06126
860-280-2337
info@ctmainstreet.org
www.ctmainstreet.org

existing building undergoes renovation. Yakemore rented space to the Town at below the retail market value, so the library can provide uninterrupted service for the next 12-18 months.

Connecticut Main Street Center will present Mike and Arvene Yakemore with its first ever "Connecticut Main Street Hero Award", and has announced that, beginning in 2008, the category of Property Owner of the Year will be added to its Annual Awards for Excellence in Downtown Revitalization.

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.*

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 Connecticut Main Street Center's 2007 Annual Meeting & Awards Presentation, call 860-280-2337.

###

Connecticut Main Street Center
PO Box 261595
Hartford, CT 06126
860-280-2337
info@ctmainstreet.org
www.ctmainstreet.org