



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 23, 2007

**CONTACTS:**

Conan Smith  
(248) 546-2380  
conan@suburbsalliance.org

**CITIES FIND WAYS TO ATTRACT DEVELOPERS, BUSINESSES**

*Redevelopment summit addresses strategies for marketing communities, region*

DEARBORN – Faced with the challenge of attracting new business and residents, one hundred leaders from southeast Michigan learned strategies for marketing their cities today at the Regional Redevelopment Summit hosted by the Michigan Suburbs Alliance.

“Built-out cities in particular are finding they need new and innovative ways to communicate to not only developers, but potential businesses and residents,” said Conan Smith, Executive Director of the Michigan Suburbs Alliance. “This region is chock full of assets, and we’ve to get better at selling them.”

The event focused on ways to create demand for cities and included presentations on regional marketing strategies and what developers look for in potential redevelopment projects. It drew attendees from the development, real estate, building, consulting and marketing industries in addition to state and local government. Presenters included

- Paul Schutt of Issue Media Group,
- Jim Townsend of the Tourism Economic Development Council,
- Michael Finney of Ann Arbor Spark,
- Bill Milliken, Jr. of Milliken Realty Company, and
- Doug Brown of ASTI Environmental.

The 2007 Regional Redevelopment Summit was the second such event organized by the Michigan Suburbs Alliance. The first occurred in 2005. Both aimed to address the increasingly dangerous trend of disinvestment occurring in southeast Michigan.

While the entire region is struggling to attract businesses and residents, built-out, core cities face additional challenges. Because of the complexities associated with redeveloping existing properties, many developers are choosing to invest in fast-growing exurbs and greenfield areas. The consequences reverberate throughout the entire region. Blighted, vacant buildings are becoming more common in inner suburbs; limited tax dollars are being used to build infrastructure to support new development; and the overall vibrancy of southeast Michigan is compromised.



michigan suburbs alliance

“It’s definitely challenging,” said Steve Horstman, Economic Development Director for the City of Eastpointe, of attracting developers. “Articulating your community’s vision for the future, establishing efficient, open processes, and clearly communicating with the development community is essential.” Horstman has pushed the City of Eastpointe to more proactively pursue redevelopment through participation in the Suburbs Alliance’s Redevelopment Ready Communities program and others.

The Michigan Suburbs Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that works to create solutions to the redevelopment and policy challenges facing southeast Michigan’s built-out suburbs. With the help of local and national experts on redevelopment, it created a set of best practices for redevelopment, located at [www.suburbsalliance.org](http://www.suburbsalliance.org).

“Marketing ourselves creatively and proactively is an essential part of the solution to our redevelopment challenge,” said Smith. “Our cities are wonderful places, with urban landscapes, walkable streets, mixed-use development, and diverse populations. They really are the future of this region. Making them vibrant – creating the communities that young people and innovative businesses desire – and communicating that outward is what will attract creative class companies to the region and secure our economic prosperity and quality of life.”

Visit [www.suburbsalliance.org](http://www.suburbsalliance.org) for more information on redevelopment in southeast Michigan.

###