

YOUNGSTOWN-MAHONING COUNTY VACANT PROPERTY INITIATIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YOUNGSTOWN-MAHONING COUNTY VACANT PROPERTY INITIATIVE ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF NATIONAL VACANT PROPERTY CAMPAIGN REPORT

February 4, 2009 -- Youngstown, OH

The Youngstown-Mahoning County Vacant Property Initiative (VPI) invites all members of the public to attend the launch of the National Vacant Property Campaign (NVPC) report entitled: *Regenerating Youngstown and Mahoning County through Vacant Property Reclamation* on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009** from 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM at St. Patrick's Church Hall on Oak Hill Avenue in Youngstown. Distinguished guests include Joseph Schilling (National Vacant Property Committee, Virginia Tech) and Daniel Kildee (Genesee County MI Treasurer, Genesee Land Bank Chair and CEO). A special conference will be held for members of the press prior to the launch from 11:30 AM to 12:00 noon.

This groundbreaking report is the result of 18 months worth of work by a diverse collection of local leaders who have collectively addressed the vacant property challenges that face both the City of Youngstown and Mahoning County. The main focus of the VPI and this report is to revise existing and create new city and county systems for the prevention and reclamation of vacant property. The report promotes the integration and coordination of policy and practical solutions to more effectively prevent, acquire, and reuse these community assets.

For more information, please contact:

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Youngstown-Mahoning County Vacant Property Initiative

The Youngstown-Mahoning County Vacant Property Initiative (VPI) is a diverse coalition of public officials, nonprofit organizations, business leaders and citizens seeking to collectively address the vacant and abandoned properties challenges facing our city and region. The main focus of the VPI is to create and revise existing city and county systems to reclaim vacant properties. By improving existing city and county policies and programs, the VPI seeks better integration and coordination of vacant property management efforts to more effectively prevent, acquire, and reuse these assets.

Recognizing the broad impact of vacant properties, the VPI steering committee is comprised of members from a number of state, county, and city organizations along with community groups and the private sector. This unprecedented illustration of regional collaboration includes representation from Mahoning County, the City of Youngstown, Wick Neighbors Inc., Austintown Township, Boardman Township, Coldwell Banker/First Place Real Estate, Home Savings & Loan, Lien Forward Ohio, Mahoning Valley Organizing Collaborative, Ohio Department of Development, Ronald Cornell Faniro Architects, Seventh Ward Citizens' Coalition, St. Patrick's Church, and Youngstown State University.

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DANIEL T. KILDEE

Genesee County Treasurer
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Daniel T. Kildee was elected Genesee County Treasurer in November 1996, and took office on January 1, 1997. Mr. Kildee currently serves as Chairman of the Fifth Congressional District Democratic Party. Before his election as Treasurer, Mr. Kildee served for 12 years as a Genesee County Commissioner, including five years as Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. Kildee is also President of the Genesee Institute, a research and training institute focusing on Smart Growth, urban land reform, and land banking. Kildee initiated an effort to use Michigan's new tax foreclosure law as a tool for community development and neighborhood stabilization. He founded the Genesee Land Bank - Michigan's first land bank - and serves as its Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.

In 2003, Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed Kildee to the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council, which made 160 recommendations to deal with urban sprawl and other land use issues. In 2005 Governor Granholm appointed Kildee as one of the initial directors of the Michigan Land Bank Fast Track Authority, the nation's first statewide Land Bank. Kildee is a member of the Michigan Economic and Environmental Roundtable, is Co-chair of the Michigan Redevelopment Readiness Advisory Council, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Land Information Access Association and the Board of Directors of Automation Alley, southeastern Michigan's regional technology cluster designed to attract technology based industry to the region. He is also on the Advisory Board for the National Vacant Properties Campaign. Kildee recently completed a Fannie Mae Foundation Fellowship at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government.

DR. JOSEPH SHILLING

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Professor Joseph Schilling, as a founding member of the National Vacant Properties Campaign, works closely with state and local officials and community development practitioners on designing innovative revitalization strategies in such areas as code enforcement, zoning and housing codes, land use planning, and green infrastructure. Schilling was the team leader for the Campaign's assessment work in Toledo, Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio and served on the New Orleans study team. He directs the Campaign's research and policy activities.

As professor in practice at Virginia Tech's Alexandria Center, Schilling's Green Regions Initiative explores the dimensions of creating environmentally sustainable regions through collaborative planning, better community design, and consensus building strategies. Schilling provides strategic guidance to community organizations, government officials, and business leaders in such areas as the revitalization of vacant properties/abandoned buildings, brownfields redevelopment, smart growth, land use planning and zoning code reforms, active living, and the reuse of former military installations.

Prior to joining the Institute, Schilling directed the community and economic development programs for the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Before coming to Washington, D.C., Schilling served for over ten years as a Deputy City Attorney for the City of San Diego in charge of its code enforcement unit where he drafted land use ordinances and building codes. Mr. Schilling earned a Masters of Environmental Law from George Washington and a J.D. from Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco.

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Alan Mallach is a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program of The Brookings Institution, a visiting scholar in the community affairs department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, and a visiting lecturer in the graduate city planning program at Rutgers University. He has been a consultant, advocate and public official, has taught at a number of colleges and universities, and served as Director of the Department of Housing and Development in Trenton, New Jersey from 1990 to 1999. He is the author of *Bringing Buildings Back: Turning Abandoned Properties into Community Assets* as well as many other works on city planning and housing as well as Italian opera. He is a member of the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners, and holds a B.A. degree from Yale University.