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CEDAM Awards 2010 Innovator of the Year ***& 2010 CED Advocate of the Year***

Lansing, MI - The Community Economic Development Association (CEDAM) presented their 2010 awards for Community Economic Development (CED) Advocate of the Year and 2010 Innovator of the Year at the Michigan Conference on Affordable Housing on April 27, 2010. The CED Advocate of the Year award was presented to Gary Heidel, Director of Program Policy & Market Research at the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). The Innovator of the Year award was dually awarded to Northern Initiatives in Marquette and Allen Neighborhood Center in Lansing.

The CEDAM **CED Advocate of the Year** award is given annually to the organization or person who has done the most to advance the impact of community economic development in Michigan. During his tenure at MSHDA, Gary Heidel has successfully advocated in the state legislature for Michigan's Housing and Community Development Fund and a critical tax abatement for supportive housing properties. He has also been a champion for the Neighborhood Preservation Program, the Michigan Mortgage Credit Certificate Program, Cool Cities, Michigan Magnet Fund, Vision 2020, Individual Development Accounts, and Centers of Regional Excellence. As chair of the Michigan Political Leadership Program Advisory Board, he supports and mentors younger advocates and public servants to promote strong communities. Through his work, Mr. Heidel has helped countless Michigan residents obtain high-quality, affordable homes in vibrant communities.

The CEDAM **Innovator of the Year** award is presented to a CEDAM member organization that has engaged in creative new programming, has been involved in an exciting new development, or has generally proven to be a leader in advancing new policies, strategies, or best practices in community economic development. This year's honorees are two innovative CEDAM members from very different parts of the state who represent the breadth of the continually evolving community development industry.

Northern Initiatives is being recognized for their award winning work with the Great Waters project, as well as their successful small business Enterprise Center. Through the Great Waters project, Northern Initiatives has

spear-headed a regional strategy to re-invigorate tourism along the Eastern Upper Peninsula coastlines. They did this by securing a three-year rural development grant and formed partnerships among at least 17 chambers of commerce and bureaus of tourism. The Great Waters project has been very successful at uniting neighboring communities, marketing their natural assets to visitors, and collaborating in order to jump start stalled economies. Northern Initiatives is also a small business lender and specializes in loans for small businesses. Northern Initiatives offers its lending services to businesses located in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Lower Peninsula of Michigan, as well as the five Wisconsin counties that border the U.P.

Allen Neighborhood Center is being recognized for the extensive work they have done to improve their community's health, vitality, and connectedness. ANC is a neighborhood-based, comprehensive information and referral service, linking residents to housing, health, and human service providers throughout the area. Within the last few years, ANC has striven to connect its residents to healthy foods, both by increasing access and in introducing people to its production. A "Cool Cities" grant enabled ANC to build a Greenhouse in a local park, allowing residents to cultivate fresh produce year-round, as well to form a community hub in a park that the Center was actively working to redevelop and reinvigorate. ANC's Allen Street Farmer's Market takes place weekly, and was the first in Michigan to accept the EBT card. The Center has a policy of hiring neighborhood residents to work for the organization in order to foster an organic sense of commitment to their programming.

The Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM), a nonprofit organization, represents hundreds of organizations and individuals committed to rebuilding our neighborhoods and revitalizing communities throughout Michigan. CEDAM is a voluntary association of primarily nonprofit community development corporations (CDCs), community action agencies, and other nonprofits that provide affordable and supportive housing to our most vulnerable citizens, encourage downtown and commercial corridor revitalization, provide workforce and entrepreneurship training, and help families develop and maintain financial assets.

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