

*For immediate release:
June 11, 2003*

*Contact: Kimberley Parsons-Whitaker
860-280-2556*

Connecticut Main Street Center announces 2003 National Main Street Communities

(Hartford, CT) – Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) announced today that two local town centers have been designated as 2003 National Main Street Communities by the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center. Portland PRIDE and First Town Downtown (Windsor Center), both non-profit corporations, have been recognized for outstanding accomplishments in their goal of the revitalization of their downtowns.

The National Main Street Programs designation program is a partnership between Connecticut Main Street Center and the National Trust’s National Main Street Center to establish standards of performance for local Main Street programs. The National Communities Program evaluates established commercial district revitalization programs on the basis of ten basic performance standards and provides national recognition to those that meet these standards.

Connecticut Main Street Center follows a national model called The Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization™. Developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the program advances economic development within the context of historic preservation and advocates public-private partnerships to ensure lasting success. Today forty-four states have Main Street programs in a total of more than 1,600 separate communities, ranging from small towns to targeted neighborhoods in big cities.

Current Connecticut Main Street Communities include: Middletown, New London, Niantic, Portland, Rockville, Simsbury, Upper Albany, Windsor, and Winsted. CMSC is sponsored by The Connecticut Light and Power Company and the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development.

-30-

Attached:

- Ten Performance Standards

National Main Street Community Designation Program

The National Main Street Programs designation program is a partnership between Connecticut Main Street Center and the National Trust's National Main Street Center to establish standards of performance for local Main Street programs. The National Communities Program evaluates established commercial district revitalization programs on the basis of ten basic performance standards and provides national recognition to those that meet these standards. These standards provide benchmarks and guidelines on how the organization should be functioning and serve as an incentive for organizations to perform better and be more effective. The National Main Street Community designation program is intended to provide standards of performance for established Main Street organizations and recognition for those that meet those standards. It's like getting a 'gold star' for performance.

The benefits of receiving the recognition of National Main Street Program are meant to reward organizations and provide attention within their community. Designees receive a certificate, and a special press release to be used locally to promote their designation. Those that attend National Town Meeting from the community receive a special ribbon for their name badge. National Main Street Programs are also listed on the National Main Street Center's website. However, the ultimate benefit is a much stronger and better functioning organization.

Ten Performance Standards:

1. Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors.
2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage.
3. Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan
4. Possesses an historic preservation ethic
5. Has an active board of directors and committees
6. Has an adequate operating budget
7. Has a paid professional program manager
8. Conducts a program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers
9. Reports key statistics
10. Is a current member of the National Trust's Main Street Network membership program