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Portland achieves Main Street accreditation

LANSING - Keith Molin, Executive Director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) last week announced that Portland was awarded National Accreditation at the Master Level through the Michigan Main Street Center @ MSHDA.

The Michigan Main Street Center @ MSHDA is part of the Authority's efforts to create vibrant communities across the state. This effort is based on numerous recent studies showing that investing in our downtowns creates vibrant centers where people want to live, work and invest, making our state economically stronger. The underlying premise of the Main Street Center @ MSHDA is to encourage community economic development through:

- **Organization:** getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program.
- **Promotion:** selling a positive image of the commercial district and encouraging consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district.
- **Design:** getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets, such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets, is just part of the story.
- **Economic restructuring:** strengthening a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base.

Communities with traditional downtowns can be selected annually as a Michigan Main Street Community as the result of a multi-step application process based on the key points mentioned above. To achieve Master Level status a community must reach Main Street accreditation and must have successfully completed services provided to Selected Level Communities. To learn more about what is required of a Main Street Community, visit the MSHDA Web site: <http://www.michigan.gov/mshda/>

"The Michigan Main Street Center @ MSHDA provides communities with the tools needed to develop into thriving downtowns," said Molin. "These tools can be used to create jobs, provide enjoyment and build a sense of community for Michigan residents."

Chosen communities are evaluated annually using a year end evaluation process and accreditation criteria intended to assist each community in performing up to national accreditation standards as prescribed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center.

Though it is a critical moment for a Michigan Main Street community to become accredited, it is equally critical for the community to maintain the accreditation status once it has been earned.

MSHDA's vision in the 21st century centers around ideas to improve the quality of life for all Michigan residents by focusing on providing safe, affordable housing through homeownership and rental programs; ending homelessness; and revitalizing neighborhoods and downtowns through urban development initiatives -- creating vibrant communities throughout Michigan. MSHDA's loans and operating expenses are financed through the sale of tax-exempt and taxable bonds and notes to private investors, not from state tax revenues.

For information on this and other MSHDA programs, visit the Web site at www.michigan.gov/mshda

- From MSHDA
