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**PRESS RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Regional Prosperity Initiative Launches Web Site, Advances Collaboration in Northeast Ohio***

March 17, 2009 – The Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI), a collaborative effort jointly funded by the Northeast Ohio Mayors and City Managers Association (NEOM&CMA), the Fund for Our Economic Future and other philanthropic groups, launched a new web site today, <http://www.neo-rpi.org>.

Through the RPI web site, the NEOM&CMA and supporting organizations are providing an open, deliberative process involving elected officials and government leaders from municipal, school, county and state government, and business and civic leaders across the region, to find the best way for governments to collaborate instead of competing against each other for economic growth. Once implemented, the RPI will provide the structure for coordinated, regional land use planning and new growth revenue sharing in the 16-county Northeast Ohio region.

“In short, the RPI will allow our region to plan, share and grow...together,” said Hudson Mayor William A. Currin, who also serves as chairman for the NEOM&CMA. “For more than two years we’ve reached out to municipal, county, regional and state officials to gather input and conduct research on a program that would allow our region to plan and share new revenues together. We are now ready to engage a larger audience as we move to implement our program, and the web site will help us accomplish this task.”

The web site provides background information on the initiative as well as full reports from Phase I, known then as the Regional Economic Revenue Study. During Phase I, the group examined existing revenue sharing programs in other regions of the nation to identify best practices, closely examine the structure of local government, identify local revenues in Northeast Ohio and determine the applicability of examples from other regions to the situation in Northeast Ohio.

While the final components of the program are being researched, discussed and finalized, members of the RPI Steering Committee – including Mayor Currin, Pepper Pike Mayor Bruce H. Akers, Village of Richfield Mayor Michael K. Lyons, Medina County Commissioner Steve Hambley, New Russia Township Trustee Frank Pakish, Garfield Heights City Schools Superintendent Jeanne Sternad, Ph.D. and Cleveland City Councilman Matt Zone – plan to have the program finalized by the end of July and implemented by January 2010.

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**STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

*Mayor Bruce H. Akers, City of Pepper Pike | Mayor William A. Currin, City of Hudson | Mayor Michael K. Lyons, Village of Richfield*

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

*Commissioner Steve Hambley, Medina County | Trustee Frank Pakish, New Russia Township  
Superintendent Jeanne Sternad, Ph.D., Garfield Heights City Schools | Councilman Matt Zone, City of Cleveland*

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