



**Media Contact:**  
Joyce Barrett  
T: 614.258.6200  
JBarrett@heritageohio.org

## Downtown Kent Revitalization Project wins “Best Public/Private Partnership” Award at Heritage Ohio’s Annual Awards Ceremony

Kent, Ohio—Heritage Ohio awarded the “**Best Public/Private Partnership**” to an extensive collaboration of partners involved in the Downtown Kent Revitalization. The coalition of public and private recipients accepted the award Tuesday, September 23 at Heritage Ohio’s Annual Preservation and Revitalization Awards Ceremony held at the Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center. The Awards Ceremony is held in conjunction with Heritage Ohio’s Statewide Conference.

### **Best Public/Private Partnership -Downtown Kent Revitalization Project**

**This award is presented to an organization and/or municipality that has partnered and leveraged resources to complete a project with a positive lasting impact in the community, with a priority given to preservation –based projects.**

*The Downtown Kent Revitalization Project, taken as a whole, is a collaboration that truly represents a partnering and leveraging of resources to complete a project with a positive, lasting impact in the community. With \$106 million, and growing, in public and private investment, the project has transformed the downtown into a pedestrian friendly, dynamic, economically viable city center.*

*On the public side, the City of Kent, in addition to creating the vision for a revitalized downtown, was crucial in the process of land acquisition, developer identification, project design concepts and overall project oversight. Kent State University, under the leadership of President Lester Lefton, was the driver of the idea of creating a more complete college town. They worked alongside the city to promote the Kent State Hotel and Conference Center, owned by the Kent State Foundation an anchor project for the downtown development. They also extended the University Esplanade, a physical connector, joining the campus of the downtown.*

*Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority has long advocated for the value of public transportation to build community support the downtown. They secured federal grant money to build the multipurpose facility that includes a bus terminal, public parking and commercial space. Main Street Kent was an important advocate for the Main Street development. Along with the Burbick Foundation and the City of Kent, they developed the Downtown Kent Design Guidelines.*

*On the private side, developer Rob Burbick has been the leader of the transformation. His first downtown project, Acorn Alley 1, served as a catalyst for much of the ongoing development. As developer of Acorn Alley 2 and the renovation of the Historic Franklin Hotel his projects have served as anchors in the downtown. Fairmont Properties, the selected developer of the city owned property, has invested in significant new office and residential properties in the downtown. Ed Dunlop made a major financial commitment to the Fairmont Properties project. Ron Pizzuti, born and raised in Kent, Ohio, was a major financial contributor. Davey Tree, Ametek and Smithers Oasis are three international companies that originated in Kent, Ohio. They each committed to lease space for their corporate offices in the downtown. This commitment assured the construction of additional commercial space and spurred further development.*

“All the communities, projects, and individuals receiving awards today have demonstrated a local commitment to sustaining and growing the preservation and revitalization movement. Ohioans are concerned about the future of their heritage,” stated W. Kevin Pape, Board Chair of Heritage Ohio. Added Pape, “The inspiration these award winners provide to other communities will pay dividends far into the future.”

More than 20 communities, organizations and individuals submitted nominations for consideration. The awards recognize the numerous preservation and revitalization accomplishments of downtowns and neighborhoods across the state. The Selection Committee reported an increased level of quality in nominations, awarding 12 categories at this year’s event.

Heritage Ohio is the statewide, not-for-profit preservation organization, dedicated to encouraging and assisting people and organizations to protect, preserve and revitalize Ohio’s heritage. Formed in 1989, Heritage Ohio has more than 500 members ranging from individuals and households to organizations and local governments. In 2002, Heritage Ohio was designated as the statewide partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Heritage Ohio encourages the development, redevelopment and improvement of downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. Heritage Ohio works as a catalyst for downtown development by bringing together downtown organizations, conducting statewide seminars and conferences and providing a network to share knowledge, common experiences and challenges concerning downtowns. Learn more at [www.heritageohio.org](http://www.heritageohio.org).

Heritage Ohio has received support from the Ohio Development Services Agency Office of Community Development, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and several Ohio corporations.

###