



For Immediate Release:
May 8, 2012

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Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative To Receive Award from Connecticut Main Street Center

(Hartford, CT) – The Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) is pleased to announce The Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative has been chosen to receive the 2012 Connecticut Light and Power Company Award. The Collaborative was chosen as a result of their regionally coordinated efforts to engage and support local economic development through their Village Center Vitality initiative. This initiative includes marketing and promotion of local village center businesses, coordinated directional and welcome signage, and providing capacity building support to local business groups.

"We are thrilled to see The Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative be recognized by the Connecticut Main Street Program! It's terrific to see eight communities that are concerned about the vibrancy of their downtowns come together like they have. It's a great example of grassroots interest, professional planning and Connecticut Main Street Program's principles at work. Given the focus and persistence of this region's leaders I expect great things for these communities," said John A. O'Toole, Business Development Manager for CL&P/Yankee Gas.

The Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative was created in 2006 to meet land use planning and management challenges in the small towns of northwest Connecticut, with an emphasis on village center vitality and housing that is affordable to working families and seniors. Member towns of the Collaborative include Canaan, Cornwall, Goshen, Harwinton, Kent, North Canaan, Norfolk, Salisbury and Sharon. "Working together has been critical to our success," said Jocelyn Ayer, Senior Planner for the Collaborative. "Over the last six years we've been able to pool our resources in a way that allows all of us to encourage affordable housing and economic activity, accomplishing more than any one town could do on its own. Our small towns have so many common challenges, we have worked to find and implement common solutions," said Ms. Ayer.

Over the last year the Collaborative's member towns received the benefit of an additional \$141,000 in grant funding for affordable housing and economic development initiatives, bringing the total amount of funding raised by the Collaborative to over \$600,000. The Collaborative has received two CMSC *Preservation of Place* grants for its coordinated village center directional signage and local economic development capacity building projects.

The CL&P Award was established by CMSC in 2001 to recognize individuals and organizations who dedicate themselves to promoting an awareness of the necessity of a comprehensive management approach to the revitalization Connecticut's historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

The CL&P Award will be presented at the Connecticut Main Street 2012 Awards Gala on June 11th at Cheney Hall in Downtown Manchester. Webster Bank is the official sponsor of the 2012 Community Spirit Business Award for Business Retention and the Main Street Property Owner of the Year Award. Fuss & O'Neill is the "Welcome to Main Street" reception sponsor.

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Connecticut Main Street Center

Connecticut Main Street Center is a statewide nonprofit that inspires great Connecticut downtowns, Main Street by Main Street. Its mission is to be the champion and leading resource for vibrant and sustainable Main Streets as foundations for healthy communities.

Since 2005 Connecticut Main Street membership has grown by over 600%, from 10 to 64 communities. Since the Connecticut Main Street program began in 1995, Designated Main Street programs have generated over \$952 million in public and private reinvestment in their downtowns. Over the same time, 421 net new businesses have opened and 2,475 net new jobs have been created. For every \$1 spent on a local Main Street program, \$73.13 has been reinvested in CT Main Street designated downtowns, making the Main Street initiative one of the most successful economic development programs in the country.

CT Main Street Center is supported by Founding Sponsors, the State of Connecticut Department of Economic & Community Development and The Connecticut Light and Power Company, and by Growth Sponsors, The United Illuminating Company and the State Historic Preservation Office. For more information, visit www.ctmainstreet.org.