

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, January 3, 2007

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Business leaders announce new group to promote Greater Portland region

Group introduces top-tier board of directors and \$750,000 in initial funding

Jan. 3, 2006, Portland, Ore. – A group of leading regional businesses announced today that it has secured funding to launch a new economic development corporation to market the Greater Portland region and attract world class businesses.

“This is a key element of our Regional Business Plan, and we’re proud to have reached this significant milestone in less than a year,” said Mark Ganz, President and CEO of Regence. “By bringing together communities to form a powerful, united front to recruit new businesses, this new entity will advance the economic vitality of our region.”

The enterprise is a private-sector effort that will work with existing public agencies and will incorporate the Portland Development Commission’s existing Ambassador Program to stimulate regional job growth and economic development by recruiting new businesses to the region. Funded almost entirely by major Greater Portland area businesses, the enterprise reached its startup funding goal of \$750,000 in December. It will begin operating while securing additional financial support.

Currently known as the Four County Economic Development Corporation, in recognition of its focus on the entire metropolitan area, it will position the region as a hub for business innovation to effectively attract business to, and retain businesses in, the four counties of the greater Portland area.

“In an increasingly global economy, it’s imperative that we position ourselves as a competitive region for business,” said Scott Campbell, publisher of *The Columbian*. “I am excited about this regional partnership because I know the strengths of Clark County combine perfectly with the strengths of Greater Portland to give us the tools we need to attract businesses from around the world.”

The corporation’s board of directors represents a broad spectrum of industries and it will take an active role in managing the organization’s kick-off year. The inaugural board will include:

- Mark Ganz, Regence
- Malia Wasson, U.S. Bank
- Eric Parsons, The Standard
- Peggy Fowler, PGE
- Steve Stadum, OHSU
- Pat Reiten, Pacific Power
- Wally Van Valkenburg, Stoel Rives LLP
- Alan Johnson, Wells Fargo
- Wes Lawrence, Key Bank
- Mark Long, Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt
- Jim Mark, Melvin Mark Companies
- Bob Jesenik, Aequitas Capital Management

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“It is exciting to see so many individuals and companies pull together with the common goal of making our region an even better place to live and work,” said Eric Parsons, Chairman, President and CEO of The Standard. “Retaining our many good corporate citizens while we recruit new employers to the region is critical to the future prosperity of the community.”

Other significant sponsors include Northwest Natural, Port of Portland, City of Portland, Norris & Stevens Inc., and Pacific Benefit Planners.

“As a Portland native, I understand how crucial job growth is for the region,” said Malia Wasson, President of U.S. Bank for Oregon and Southwest Washington. “This region has produced innovators recognized globally in industries ranging from apparel to high-tech to agriculture. By coming together in this effort, we have the opportunity to share with the business world the benefits of our vibrant and unique community.”

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