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## **Mahoning Valley to Tell Transformation Story Oct. 5-6**

*Ohio CDC Association gathers for annual conference*

YOUNGSTOWN - Under the theme *Rethinking the Way Forward*, more than 200 community development leaders from across Ohio will gather Oct. 5-6 in the Mahoning Valley for the 27<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Ohio CDC Association. Keynote speaker is Will Allen, preeminent voice and practitioner of urban agriculture in America. Mr. Allen is a MacArthur "Genius Award" winner and CEO of Growing Power in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Workshop participants will learn how:

- ◆ Youngstown is developing urban farming, aquaponics, stormwater mitigation, sideyards and other innovative vacant land reuse strategies
- ◆ Patience and focus can lead to significant incremental change in a weak market
- ◆ A food incubator is generating new jobs
- ◆ A new grocery store – the first in decades - came to town

"Today - thanks to leadership from local community development corporations, nonprofit organizations and philanthropic, corporate and government partners - our region is abuzz with signs of a vibrant, diversified economy that works for everyone," said Presley Gillespie, executive director of the Youngtown Neighborhood Development Corporation. "We're excited to share our story – and learn from our partners across the state – during this year's Ohio CDC Association conference."

Meeting at the Holiday Inn Boardman, the conference features workshops on community development topics, such as reclaiming Ohio's food shed, rebuilding cities to be smaller yet stronger, federal budget and policy and building community assets – from individuals to neighborhoods.

In addition, the conference has arranged several neighborhood tours for Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 5. They include:

- ◆ City of Green: Vacant Land Reuse in Youngstown – including the YNDC's *Lots of Green* and *Lien Forward Ohio* programs
- ◆ City of Warren Historic District
- ◆ Youngstown Rising: Idora Neighborhood Transformation
- ◆ Downtown Youngstown – A Ghost of a Chance

"Our attendance at this year's conference is the strongest in years," said Nate Coffman, executive director of the Ohio CDC Association. "We credit that to the leadership of our members in the Mahoning Valley. They have success stories our other members want to learn from as they rethink the way forward in their own communities."

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Conference sponsors include:

Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Ohio Department of Development, PNC Bank, Huntington Bank, the Raymond John Wean Foundation, City of Youngstown, Enterprise Community Partners, Neighborhood Progress Inc., Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), WesBanco, Fifth Third Bank, Finance Fund, The Home Savings and Loan Company, LISC Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky, LISC Toledo, National Equity Fund and NeighborWorks America.

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For more information, visit the Ohio CDC Association: <http://www.ohiocdc.org/>

Read the conference brochure: <http://www.ohiocdc.org/2011RegistrationBrochure.pdf>

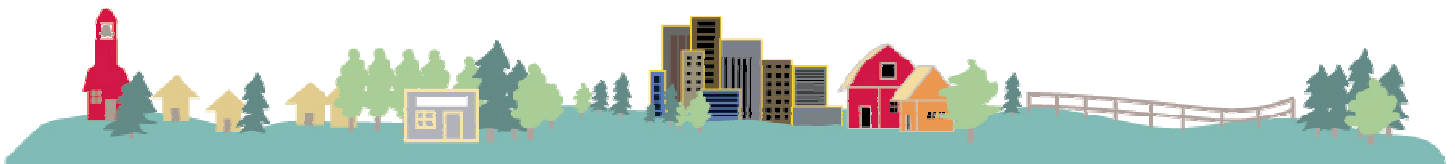
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*The Ohio CDC Association's vision is the creation of a community development environment that comprehensively improves life opportunities for all residents.*



**Ohio CDC Association**

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