

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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City of Kent Receives Grant to Assess Environmental Risks, Promote Community Development

Kent, OH (6/20/07): Thanks to a \$200,000 Community-wide Petroleum Site Assessment Grant awarded to the City by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the City of Kent can now assess sites possibly contaminated with petroleum or petroleum based products.

In late 2005, with the assistance of Emerald Environmental, Inc., the City of Kent applied to the US EPA for funds to conduct environmental site assessments for properties that may be contaminated by petroleum releases. Through the use of this grant, Kent is seeking to spur economic growth and sustainable development by focusing on neighborhood revitalization, job creation, and industrial growth at these sites. In mid-2006, the City was officially awarded the \$200,000 grant for the Environmental and Economic Enhancement Program (E-3 Program). Approximately four (4) properties are suspected of being polluted by petroleum releases and another 25 former gas stations where contamination is possible have been identified. Contamination uncertainties limit reuse of the properties.

Support for the E-3 Program has been tremendous – Portage County Commissioners, the Kent Area Chamber of Commerce, the Kent Historical Society, the Portage Park District, the Portage Land Association for Conservation and Education (PLACE), the Kent Environmental Council, the Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition, Neighborhood Development Services, Inc., and the Kent Parks and Recreation Department have all written in support of the program.

The E-3 Program will be implemented in steps throughout the next year and a half. These steps include creating a prioritized inventory of potential sites within the City that may be contaminated by petroleum releases. With property owner permission, Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments will be conducted on selected properties, and plans prepared to assist these properties in being returned to an environmentally safe, and economically viable use. Emerald Environmental, Inc. has been contracted to conduct assessments and work with the City on community outreach projects. Throughout the process public involvement will be critical.

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Dependable and detailed communication with the public will be essential to keep affected neighborhoods updated on assessment scheduling, program progress, and to solicit feedback on potential site end-uses. To that end, the community will be encouraged to make comments or suggest sites to be included in the program via the Internet at <http://emerald-environmental.com/cityofkent>. Public meetings are also scheduled for:

July 19th, 2007, 6:30pm at Kent City Hall

July 23rd, 2007, 12-noon at Kent Free Library

July 31st, 2007, 9:30am at Kent City Hall

For more information about the E-3 Program, or to suggest sites to be considered through this program, please visit <http://emerald-environmental.com/cityofkent>, or contact Mike Weddle at the City of Kent (weddle@kent-ohio.org) or Sarah Lane at Emerald Environmental, Inc. (slane@emerald-environmental.com).

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