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The Real Estate Exchange holds its Developers Showcase & Conn. Real Estate Awards March 26th

April 02, 2008 - Connecticut

The Real Estate Exchange presented its Developers Showcase and 13th Annual Connecticut Real Estate Awards on Wednesday, March 26th. The program was sponsored by Griffin Land and CERC SiteFider.

Adaptive Reuse Award

The Metropolitan - Stamford

The Metropolitan represents one of the first conversions of a significant, non-performing CBD office building to residential use in Stamford. Its luxurious loft residences introduced a new residential product class in this market. The project's success can be attributed to the developers' vision for major changes to the building exterior in order to create a new and inviting presence on Summer St. Moreover, the interiors are superbly-appointed, dramatic and chic. Cutting-edge sophistication that permeates the ambiance surrounding The Metropolitan has been enthusiastically embraced by Stamford's growing population of young professionals and affluent empty nester's seeking an urban living environment.

Community Impact Award

Oxford High School - Oxford

In September 2007, the town of Oxford opened the doors to the first high school dedicated to the students of their town. Years before, the citizens of the town had a monumental decision to make: build a new high school or continue sending their children to other towns. They eventually chose to build a new school, but not before voting the concept down three times. While getting a project through the referendum process can seem like a Herculean challenge, it was one of many that faced the town. Most significant of these challenges was trying to build a new school during a time of rapidly increasing construction costs while being restricted to a budget approved four years earlier. Making matters worse, the town used a different site and created a design suited to the topography of the new site - very different from the one in the referendum budget. In the end their efforts paid off with a beautiful new high school that provided the town and its children with a renewed sense of community.

Green Building Award

The Burton Family Football Complex & Mark R. Shenkman Training Center - Storrs

The new LEED Silver Certified, 170,000 s/f Burton Family Football Complex & Mark R. Shenkman Training Center recognizes its significant contribution to the UCONN campus overall, its major role as a recruiting tool for the best and brightest student-athletes, and its marketing role as an icon for the University's ambitious Division 1A football program. Conceived to inspire the student-athlete to contribute to the attitude where every recruit could aspire to a major role in the program this

world-class facility presents its own unique character within the campus context, while meeting the very specific technical requirements of its intensive athletics and academic uses. It is UCONN's first LEED certified building and is the first athletic facility in the nation to achieve LEED Silver Certification.

Cooperative Spirit Award

Swift Village - Hartford

Hartford Area Habitat for Humanity completed 13 new Habitat homes for hard-working low-income families in 2007. These homes are part of Swift Village neighborhood project, which comprises 30 new Habitat homes. Over 65 children, mothers, fathers and a few grandparents are now proud owners of their own homes. These 13 families have become an integral part of the Swift Village neighborhood, which includes over 120 people living in a new Habitat home. Each of the 30 Habitat families must provide 150 hours of "sweat equity" in building one of their neighbor's homes, attend 20 hours of homeowner education classes, and repay Habitat a \$95,000 mortgage with 0% interest. Typically their rent was \$850/month, now their mortgage is \$650 including taxes and insurance.

Economic Impact Award

Cabela's - East Hartford

The first component of the \$2 billion Rentschler Field Development was completed in 2007; the construction of New England's first outdoor-themed retail, educational and entertainment superstore.

Together with existing Rentschler Field residents Pratt & Whitney, United Technologies Research Center and the Rentschler Field Stadium, home to the University of Connecticut's 2007 Big East co-champion football team, Cabela's launched the \$2 billion, 18-year, 6 million s/f redevelopment of Rentschler Field. The 186,000 s/f store, costing over \$75 million was built on 19 acres of land in East Hartford. Cabela's is expected to attract 4.5 million visits per year, 69% of such customers will come from out-of-state and employ 435 full-time and part-time persons.

Blue Ribbon Award

Blue Back Square - West Hartford

Blue Back Square is a mixed-use development that combined private and public investments and a pedestrian friendly architectural design in a manner that redefines West Hartford Center. Blue Back Square adds a lively mix of new shopping and dining venues, along with places to live, work and gather. There is professional office space, a health club and wellness center, multi-screen cinema, 2 public parking garages, and infrastructure and streetscape public improvements. Examples of exciting retail, restaurant and entertainment venues include the first Crate & Barrel in Connecticut, Cheesecake Factory, Fleming's Steakhouse, Bow-Tie Theater, National Jean Company, and Homeward Bound. A unique financial structure allowed the construction of public improvements without cost to the general taxpayers by formation of a Special Services District. Preservation of significant architectural elements of the former West Hartford Board of Education building, including the cupola, limestone panels and columns and architectural style and brick work of remaining buildings mirror the existing appearance of the commercial buildings in West Hartford Center. Webster Walk is an inviting entranceway into the heart of Blue Back Square and provides connectivity to South Main St. and the west side of West Hartford Center. Blue Back Square weathered 2 town-wide referenda and 11 lawsuits aimed at frustrating a creative initiative designed to revitalize a large, underutilized section of West Hartford and successfully link that area to create a newer, more vibrant West Hartford Center.