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For Immediate Release

**“COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY”
PRIMED FOR GROWTH**

*Major Public/Private Sector Initiative Connects Region’s Assets
to Boost Economic Development*

BRIDGEPORT, Conn., October 23, 2006 – Bridgeport Regional Business Council President & CEO Paul S. Timpanelli announced today in a press conference that one year after the launch of an innovative regional development initiative for Coastal Fairfield County, supported by a federal grant of nearly \$500,000, the region is demonstrating progress in ramping up for business development, job creation and overall economic growth. As part of the announcement at the CityTrust Complex redevelopment site in Bridgeport to regional business and community leaders, Timpanelli unveiled the new branding/marketing campaign for Coastal Fairfield County including a logo, website portal design and a transit centered housing brochure.

Also at the press conference, Congressman Christopher Shays announced approval of an additional \$493,614 federal grant funding for the second year (Phase II) of the program, in which two new initiatives will be added: a higher education initiative and a new partners initiative focusing on building alliances with minority and women-owned business development organizations.

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The One Coast/One Future program, launched by Bridgeport Regional Business Council and The Business Council of Fairfield County in October 2005, unifies 15 coastal and near-coastal towns in a novel approach to identify collective development opportunities for the region designed to make the Coastal Fairfield County development corridor a highly desirable place to live, work and do business.

“The key to our program’s success is discovering ways to make the most of the region’s shared assets, strengthening weaker links and promoting the benefits of interconnectivity,” said Timpanelli. “We are thrilled to look back today on our first year and report advancements in each area of the program, moving us toward our goal of creating sustainable economic vitality for the region while creating attractive opportunities for developers, employees and residents.”

According to Chris Bruhl, President & CEO of The Business Council of Fairfield County, One Coast/One Future relies on public and private sector partnerships that collaborate to strengthen the interdependency of the three major business centers of Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport and surrounding towns. “The goal is to link Coastal Fairfield County’s three largest population and business centers together in a new and stronger alliance that benefits the entire region. Our separateness is impairing our competitiveness.”

The program’s six first-year initiatives designed to maximize opportunities in the region are:

- ❑ Regional Marketing Strategy Initiative
- ❑ Economic Development Strategy Initiative
- ❑ Culture and Entertainment Initiative
- ❑ Health Care Cluster Initiative
- ❑ Jobs Net Initiative
- ❑ WI-FI Initiative

At the press briefing, Timpanelli and Bruhl provided a progress update of the program’s initiatives. Included was an overview of a recent important economic analysis of the region, which will impact the direction of the program’s economic development strategy for 2007. In addition, Eric Anderson, senior partner, Urban Green Builders – the developer for the CityTrust renovation – profiled his extensive project and welcomed marketing support offered by the One Coast/One Future efforts.

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The following summarizes the Coastal Fairfield County progress update announced at the press conference:

Regional Marketing Strategy

A new branding/marketing campaign for the One Coast/One Future program has been created, featuring a new graphic look and identity for the program, to support marketing of the region and promote interconnectivity within Coastal Fairfield County. The logo depicts a shoreline and cityscape image with the new theme: “Coastal Fairfield County, One Coast/One Future,” and will be included on all marketing-related program materials scheduled for rollout during Q4 2006.

The campaign also includes a new website portal with links to web sites for the participating cities and towns and to sites offering key program information, such as property development sites, WI-FI hotspots, healthcare facilities, higher education resources and job opportunity databanks. The new website homepage was unveiled at the press conference, showcasing the new identity. The new Coastal Fairfield County website is expected to go live by December 1.

An integral part of the marketing strategy is to identify and market commercial/industrial sites and transit centered housing development opportunities in Coastal Fairfield County. Brochures featuring available sites targeted to developers and residents are in development and are expected to be available by December 2006. In addition, a coastal corridor map, showcasing assets from each of the participating towns for use as a supplemental marketing/promotional tool, is also in development and scheduled for Q4 completion. Finally, a comprehensive public relations/marketing plan outlining specific promotional initiatives for 2007 designed to publicize all facets of the program, is in development and will be finalized in Q4.

Economic Development

A network of municipal economic development officials, business executives and regional planning agencies has been assembled to study areas of economic connectivity and opportunities for cooperation. The group commissioned the Connecticut Economic Resource Center to conduct a comprehensive regional economic analysis. The recently completed report is currently being

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reviewed and will become the basis for the development of a Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which is planned for 2007 under second year grant funding.

Culture & Entertainment Activity

To further support regional interconnectivity within Coastal Fairfield County, research has been conducted to profile visitors and tourism and spending patterns. This research will be repeated in fourth quarter and reported in December. An inventory of restaurants is underway with research completed mid-October and a formatted and printed version available by the end of 2006. A consultant has been hired to conduct the first phase of a cultural assessment of the region. Dr. Craig Dreeszen of Dreeszen & Associates, is a national authority on cultural planning. In addition to the development of a database inventory, he will be conducting focus groups and a cultural summit during the next few weeks. Marketing efforts will focus on encouraging residents to patronize restaurants and local businesses and participate in regional events outside their direct areas of residence and employment.

Health Care Cluster

In a first-ever move to examine the economic impact of the health care needs of our region's changing population, the consultant firm of Holt, Wexler and Farnum, has been retained to assess the current state of Fairfield County's health care industry and identify trends and opportunities for economic development. The aging and affluent baby-boomer population in Coastal Fairfield County will create an increased demand for health and fitness related services, resulting in expanded opportunities in the health care field for both the profit and non-profit sectors. The Health Care Cluster Steering Committee has reviewed preliminary data to identify health care needs and the region's ability to meet those needs.

JobsNet

The JobsNet initiative links resources and opportunities to the needs of employers and workers. JobsNet will help employers recruit, train and retain employees in key sectors and will improve information sharing among employers and training providers in order to reduce some of the current labor market inefficiencies. JobsNet is also about connecting job seekers to available jobs throughout Coastal Fairfield County.

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Because the program will stimulate job creation in the region, it’s even more critical to establish tools that link people with employment opportunities and related resources. A web-based Job Search Resources Center (www.businessfairfield.com/JobsNet.htm), a collection of useful information and advice for those seeking employment in Fairfield County, has been recently activated. Additional resources in development include an Employer’s Guide to Labor Force Resources, a Directory of Training Providers published in English and Spanish and a newsletter, “Opportunities,” – also available in English and Spanish – about programs and events related to employment search. All of these materials will soon be available online on the new Coastal Fairfield County website.

WI-FI Initiative

Many WI-FI hotspots already exist throughout Fairfield County. The One Coast/One Future effort seeks to link these hotspots and research opportunities to create new locations to offer more wireless interconnectivity, accessibility and convenience for our region’s employees, residents and visitors. “WI-FI hotspot corridors” are being created in the business centers of Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport, to provide wireless connectivity to users in libraries, public places and train stations. Much of the Stamford area is wired for WI-FI service, and all three “city teams” are currently mapping and linking existing services and expanding the footprint of coverage.

Coastal Fairfield County, One Coast/One Future is a regional redevelopment initiative formed in 2005 by Congressman Christopher Shays, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council (www.brbc.org) and The Business Council of Fairfield County (www.BusinessFairfield.com). Its mission is to spark economic growth and job creation by linking major business centers and interconnecting the region’s infrastructure and assets in a new and stronger alliance for the collective benefit of the Coastal Fairfield County region. Coastal Fairfield County comprises the following 15 cities and towns: Stamford, Norwalk, Bridgeport, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Wilton, Weston, Westport, Fairfield, Easton, Trumbull, Monroe, Shelton and Stratford.

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