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SUMMARY: OHIO'S ECONOMIC FUTURE DISCUSSED AT WAYNE COLLEGE COMMUNITY FORUM

Orrville, Ohio, Feb. 8, 2007 – The Fund for Our Economic Future presents the outcomes of the Voices & Choices initiative at the next Community Forum at The University of Akron Wayne College at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 28. The presentation is titled “Report on the Public’s Priorities for Northeast Ohio’s Future.” This event is free and open to the public.

The Voices & Choices initiative was created by The Fund for Our Economic Future, which is a collaboration among more than 80 philanthropic organizations from across Northeast Ohio whose goal is to encourage and advance an agenda for regional economic transformation. Over the past year and a half, Voices & Choices has involved 21,000 people from across the 16-county region in one-on-one interviews, leadership workshops, regional town meetings and community conversations to identify the most pressing challenges facing Northeast Ohio.

The results from the past 18 months of work will be presented in the Wayne College auditorium and will be followed by a question-and-answer session and a coffee reception.

The Wayne College Community Forum presents a series of speakers throughout the academic year for students and the local community.

“With our Community Forum Series, Wayne College seeks to present students and community members alike the opportunity to hear—and respond to—speakers on a range of issues that are important in our lives,” says Wayne College Dean Jack Kristofco. “The subject of the economic future of Ohio and, in particular, Northeastern Ohio has received a great deal of attention over the past two years. Issues such as ‘brain drain,’ the quality of the workforce, the development of new businesses, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses have all been widely reviewed and discussed.

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“At the same time, the idea of regionalism has also grown in prominence. The connections and interdependence among the communities and counties ‘hubbed’ around metropolitan centers such as Cleveland and Akron have become ever more important to the economic life and vitality of the whole—the region, our region. That is why the Voices & Choices initiative of the past year has been such an important activity. It has brought together people from across the region to explore some of these vital questions and to enhance the growing sense of shared interests among us. This Feb. 28 Community Forum will have something of interest for everyone, for all of us have a stake in the issues that will be addressed.”

The Community Forum is part of the Wayne College Special Events Series, which this spring also includes singer/songwriter Billy Dean on March 31, the Writers’ Workshop on April 14, and Community Forum speaker Dr. Deb Johanyak on April 18.

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