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Downtown Hollywood Conference Addresses Better Health Through Good Urban Design

HOLLYWOOD, FL – August 25, 2008, Nationally renowned public-health advocate Richard J. Jackson, M.D., M.P.H., will address environmental influences on our health and lifestyle at a free conference at 6 p.m. Thursday, September 18 at the Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center, 1770 Monroe St., in Downtown Hollywood.

Dr. Jackson, a respected author and the director of the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute at the University of Michigan, is an advocate of building healthy communities through good urban design and smart growth.

Trained as a pediatrician, Jackson's public-health career has spanned more than 25 years, most notably as the director of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Environmental Health in Atlanta, and as California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's state health officer.

Jackson's research and statistics assert that the prevalence of many chronic diseases – including asthma, diabetes and hypertension – can be at least partially attributed to urban sprawl. The automobile dependency necessitated by isolated residential and commercial zones not only makes healthy walking impractical but also increases air pollution and traffic-related fatalities.

According to *Urban Sprawl and Public Health*, a book Jackson co-authored, "The modern America of obesity, inactivity, depression, and loss of community has not 'happened' to us. We legislated, subsidized, and planned it this way."

The solution, Jackson contends, is an approach to city planning that emphasizes pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods that encourage what he calls "the useful walk," with a central commons surrounded by civic facilities, retail businesses, professional offices, sidewalks, parks and transportation options.

"I think we are at the right moment to reinvent American communities back to what they were at their absolute best," said Jackson.

"I think this is a great event and a provocative subject," said Neil Fritz, Executive Director of the Hollywood CRA Downtown District. "It's open to everyone, and I'm glad we could help it take place in Downtown Hollywood."

The Hollywood Community Redevelopment Agency-Downtown District is a sponsor of the program, which will be presented by the Fort Lauderdale Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 18. The event, which will include a reception at 6 p.m., is open to the public.

The Hollywood Central Performing Arts Center is located at 1770 Monroe St., at U.S. 1 in Downtown Hollywood. Additional parking is available in the church lot next-door. For more information, call (954) 921-3439 ext. 225.

The Hollywood Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was created under the authority of Florida's Community Redevelopment Act of 1969. The CRA's mission is to encourage economic development through the use of tax increment financing by funding development, special projects and enhanced services that address areas of community concern. The Downtown District was established in 1979 to promote Hollywood's central business district including Historic Hollywood Boulevard, Young Circle and nearby residential neighborhoods. The Downtown District is approximately 580 acres and extends from 22nd Avenue on the west to generally 17th Avenue on the east, Johnson Street on the north and Washington Street on the south.