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New AHA! Steering Committee Members to be Appointed at 2nd Annual Meeting

New AHA! officers and Steering Committee members will be welcomed at AHA!'s second Annual Meeting, which will be held from 3-4 p.m. on Thursday, February 12th, at the Corson Maritime Education Center on William Street, New Bedford.

The meeting will also review the year's strategic growth and share plans for 2009. Copies of the Economic Impact Statement just released by the UMASS Dartmouth Center for Policy Analysis will also be available.

The new officers who will be appointed to the Steering Committee include Karie C. Vincent, Executive Director, New Bedford Art Museum, Chair, and Nelson Hockert-Lotz, Owner, Domino's Pizza, Vice-Chair

New Steering Committee members to be welcomed include: Denell Pepin, Marketing and Development Manager, Ocean Explorium, who brings strong experience in marketing, branding and public relations for local non-profits; Chuck Hauck, an artist involved with historic restoration who was a founding member and first president of Gallery X, and is currently president and founding member of O.R.P.H. Inc.; and Jan Nersesian, Superintendent of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park. She will be represented at Thursday's meeting by Frank Barrows, Acting Chief of Visitor Services.

"New leadership continues to energize the AHA! project," said AHA! Program Director Lee Heald. "This project, which started as a grassroots effort by people invested in revitalizing the city's center, has succeeded for more than ten years. We look forward to continued growth with out new Steering Committee members and our ever-increasing network of partners."

AHA! is a collaborative project that presents the city's 2nd Thursday arts and culture nights with over 50 partners in downtown New Bedford. The project began in July 1999 and is presenting its 116th evening this Thursday, February 12th for Lincoln 200, marking a significant track record of continuity and growth. .

Continuing members of the Steering Committee include: Karen Allen, Director of Corporate and Community Development, New Bedford Whaling Museum; Lasse Antonsen, UMASS Dartmouth CVPA Gallery Director; Lee Blake, Director, SouthCoast Educational Compact, UMASS Dartmouth; Irene Buck, Executive Director, ArtWorks! Partners for the Arts and Community; Kathy Dehner, Centre Street Realty and City Councilor, Craig Dutra, President, Community Foundation of Southeastern Mass.; Anne Marie Lopes, Director, Office of Tourism & Marketing; Anne Louro, Community Historic Preservation Planner, City of New Bedford. Claudia Ostiguy a Community Volunteer and Past Chair, First Night; and Dana Ribeiro, a Community Organizer and independent Film-maker.

Members leaving who will be recognized include John Mangan, an artist residing in New Bedford; Nilsa Garcia-Rey, Executive Director, Gallery X; and Katherine Knowles, Executive Director, Zeiterion Performing Arts Center.

About the AHA! Project

AHA! (Art-History-Architecture) was formed in July 1999 as a collaborative non-profit partnership to establish Downtown New Bedford as the regional hub for arts and culture. Drawing on the city's diverse cultural resources, AHA! provides free monthly Second Thursday Night downtown celebrations, and pilots cultural economic development initiatives through private and public partnerships. The project operates with a volunteer Steering Committee and a wealth of in-kind programming provided its partner venues. AHA! is a nonprofit project of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern – improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts. AHA! and Community Foundation offices are at 63 Union Street, New Bedford. Find out more about AHA! at www.ahanewbedford.org