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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Greater Akron Chamber and the Akron Urban League Partner in Minority Business Development

The Greater Akron Chamber and the Akron Urban League are partnering to create the Minority Business Development Organization (MBDO). This initiative will promote and support minority businesses by facilitating training, strategic management, networking and mentoring opportunities with major corporations. In addition, it will work to ensure minority businesses in Ohio have access to the assistance needed to be productive and profitable.

Unlike the Akron Urban League's existing Minority Business Development Center (MBDC), which works primarily with individuals considering starting a business or who actually own a small start-up business, the MBDO will service larger, more established minority businesses in their effort to expand, establish procurement and supplier relationships with major corporations or government contracts and assist with obtaining required certifications. The MBDO will also help majority corporations with their supplier diversity efforts. "This initiative represents a critical element toward the implementation of our new strategic plan," noted Dan Colantone, President and CEO of the Greater Akron Chamber. "We are very pleased to partner with our colleagues at the Urban League in this unique opportunity." The Chamber will also house an Urban League staff member at its facility in support of these outreach services.

Funding for this partnership comes from the Ohio Department of Development's Minority Business Enterprise Division.

The Akron Urban League was one of only two recipients to receive funding for this effort. "The Akron Urban League and the Greater Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce are already outstanding partners with the State of Ohio, helping to expand opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs in the urban core and increasing awareness of many contributions minority businesses make to Ohio," said Lt. Governor Lee Fisher, who also serves as the Director of the Ohio Department of Development. "Their expertise will complement the work of our Minority Business Enterprise Division, and their partnership is critical to the development of direct and inclusive services that will broaden economic opportunities of Ohio's minority business community."

Bernett L. Williams, President and CEO of the Akron Urban League, expressed her view regarding the partnership: "The Greater Akron Chamber offers excellent programs, services, and resources. We look forward to working with the Chamber to assist and encourage more minority businesses to take advantage of these and other opportunities," she said.

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The mission of the Greater Akron Chamber is to drive economic development and prosperity for the people of the Greater Akron Region.

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