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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Chamber Endorses Issue 8 – Akron Scholarship Plan for the 21st Century

The Board of Directors of the Greater Akron Chamber unanimously agreed to support Issue 8, the Akron Scholarship Plan for the 21st Century.

The Akron Scholarship Plan would benefit every family in the City of Akron with the necessary funds to advance their children's education. Students who graduate from Akron Public Schools or an accredited private non-profit school in Akron could attend a participating college, university, technical or trade school within the city to pursue post-secondary education. Funding for the Scholarship Plan will be generated by the lease of the city's sanitary sewer system. The lease of the system would include numerous provisions as assurance of consistent service, environmental compliance, cost control measures and operation standards.

In reviewing the plan, the Greater Akron Chamber's Board of Directors agreed that the Greater Akron Region today finds itself in an increasingly challenging global economy where competition is intensifying for talent. This plan will increase our skilled workforce in order for the region to compete and sustain long-term economic growth. The Greater Akron Chamber Board cited the city's distinction as a 2008 All-American City for its innovative programs and valuable assets as well as the Mayor and Council's recognition that the youth of the area are the most valuable asset and resource for the future of this community. Board members also noted that in addition to the benefits our children will receive for many generations to come, all residents will benefit from the strengthening of our community, increased property values and retained ownership of the sewer system. Providing scholarships to high school graduates will allow Akron to continue to be the hub of education innovation in Northeast Ohio.

Robert P. Reffner, Vice President, Legal, of FirstEnergy Corp. stated, "FirstEnergy Corp. is one of the largest employers in the City of Akron and for us to continue to grow and replenish our skilled workforce, we need to ensure our local high school graduates are prepared for the jobs of the future. This plan will provide the funding to achieve this goal for our youth, one of our community's most valuable assets." "As a small business owner and resident of the City of Akron, I care deeply about improving my city, a place where I work and play. I travel around the country and deal with Fortune 100 companies on a daily basis. Akron's Scholarship Plan will set our region apart. Our community has many great assets, and this promises to be another which we will reap the benefits for many years to come," added Elizabeth Z. Bartz, President of State and Federal Communications.

The Greater Akron Chamber encourages members to vote yes on Issue 8. If you have any questions, please contact Megann Eberhart, Manager of Advocacy, at (330) 237-1262 or eberhart@greaterakronchamber.org. For more information on the Akron Scholarship Plan, visit www.akronscholarshipplan.com.

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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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