



May 16, 2007

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Census shows business is growing and improving downtown**

*Downtown Redevelopment Report also made available*

Portland, Ore...More than half of Portland's Central City businesses and employers said their operations improved over the last two years, according to the sixth annual Downtown Business Census and Survey conducted by the Portland Business Alliance on behalf of Portland Downtown Services, Inc. (PDSI).

During 2006, the number of employees located in the I-5/I-405 loop increased by 1,579 over 2005, for a total of 84,697. While the number is still short of the 2001 total (86,769), this was the biggest annual increase since the economic downturn.

"This year's census shows us that the Central City core continues to be a vital hub of business in Portland," said Sandra McDonough, President and CEO of the Alliance.

The census found that 59 percent of downtown businesses felt that their business improved, while 31 percent said their business stayed the same. Additionally, 31 percent of downtown businesses plan to expand in the next two years.

The census showed that 4,162 businesses, non-profit organizations and government entities were located within the I-5/I-405 loop as of Oct. 1, 2006, a net increase of 41 businesses since 2005, and a net increase of 210 since the first census, in 2001.

The majority of survey respondents – 96 percent – felt that downtown was safe, moderately safe, or very safe. When asked which downtown factors needed the most improvement, the list (in rank order) included panhandlers, transients, construction, cost of parking, and traffic.

"We are making significant progress on the issues raised by respondents to this survey," McDonough said. "The SAFE package, recently passed by City Council, will provide much-needed services to homeless people, while also ensuring that pedestrians can use public sidewalks in high traffic areas without facing obstructions. We want to thank Mayor Potter and the City Council for their leadership on this issue."

According to the census, most downtown employees drive alone (44 percent) or ride the MAX or bus (42 percent) to work, with 5 percent choosing to go by bicycle.

The top 10 downtown employers are the State of Oregon (including PSU), City of Portland, U.S. Federal Government, Standard Insurance Company, Regence Group, Multnomah County, U.S. Post Office, Portland Trail Blazers/Global Spectrum, Oregonian Publishing Company, and U.S. Bank.

The census is conducted by the Alliance research department using mailed questionnaires, with personal follow-up and block-by-block canvassing to obtain a 100 percent response rate. It is funded by downtown property owners through PDSI.

The census and survey provides a sophisticated information resource for prospective downtown tenants and developers, establishes benchmarks and provides year-to-year tracking of leading economic indicators and progress toward downtown development goals. It also provides a better understanding of the needs of existing downtown businesses.

Downtown Redevelopment Report also available  
Alliance researchers and Heritage Consulting Group recently released the annual Central City Development and Redevelopment Projects report. The report provides a comprehensive look at real estate development in the Central City including the area just west of the I-405 Loop, South Waterfront, Lloyd District and the Central Eastside. It includes projects under construction, projects in design, projects in concept and finally projects completed since 2002.

The census and the redevelopment report are funded through the downtown Business Improvement District, which was created in 1988 by downtown businesses to provide enhanced urban services to keep the Central City an attractive place to live, work, shop and play.

Both reports are available on the Portland Business Alliance web site at [www.portlandalliance.com](http://www.portlandalliance.com).

*The Portland Business Alliance is Greater Portland's Chamber of Commerce and represents more than 1,300 businesses in the greater Portland region.*