

MEDIA ALERT

From:
The Institute for Open Economic Networks (I-Open)
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EcoCity Cleveland's GreenCityBlueLake Network: The Future of Northeast Ohio

Midtown Wednesday Forum Explores Regional Sustainability Web Portal

Cleveland, Ohio. The Institute for Open Economic Networks (I-Open) and Myers University host this week's **Midtown Wednesdays** forum focusing on new approaches to building sustainable environments and cultures in the Midtown Innovation Zone on the Euclid corridor. This weekly forum will be held at Myers University Chester Campus, Wednesday, March 8, 2006 from 5:00 P.M. to 6:45 P.M., 3921 Chester Avenue. The event is free and open to the public. Visit the Midtown Wednesdays Blog at <http://www.midtownwednesdays.blogspot.com> for more information.

This week's **Midtown Wednesdays** forum is lead by EcoCity Cleveland Founder and Executive Director, David Beach. David Beach will introduce the interactive web portal, GreenCityBlueLake, a national model developed to serve the sustainability community of Northeast Ohio. You can visit GreenCityBlueLake at <http://www.gcbl.org>. EcoCity Cleveland is a nonprofit organization that has been at the center of sustainability activities and creative planning efforts in Northeast Ohio since 1992. EcoCity has facilitated many collaborative projects, and its websites and publications have received national recognition.

Funders supporting the initial development of the site include the Richard Shatten Memorial Fund of the Cleveland Foundation, the Giving Back Gang, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Sears-Swetland Family Foundation and the Burning River Fest 2005.

The **Midtown Wednesdays** forum will provide an overview of the nearly complete GreenCityBlueLake Web Portal championed by EcoCity Cleveland. A special focus of the discussion will be new web-based tools for community knowledge management and networking. The **Midtown Wednesdays** forum will be an opportunity for the community to contribute feedback for the design and function of the web portal.

This one-of-a-kind interactive community journalism site tells the story of sustainability taking place in Northeast Ohio. The GreenCityBlueLake web portal hosts stories about green building,

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regional foods, land and water use, education, economic development, transportation and energy use detailing sustainability practices and the people who create them as they happen in Northeast Ohio.

The GreenCityBlueLake web portal provides a framework for Universities, Colleges and the Northeast Ohio community to connect through story telling. The Drupal powered platform functions as a knowledge management resource capable of servicing a broad spectrum of participants. The web portal includes a regional calendar, job postings and an interactive GreenCityBlueLake Network Map identifying hundreds of organizations promoting sustainability. The map offers a start in understanding resources and relationships between participants in this extensive network.

Northeast Ohio has benefited from another Drupal platform called REALNEO (short for Regional Economic Action Links of Northeast Ohio). REALNEO is a free, secure, open-source virtual community dedicated to optimizing Northeast Ohio (NEO). You can visit REALNEO and participate in this virtual community at <http://realneo.us>. REALNEO has provided virtual workspace for hundreds of entrepreneurs involved in all aspects of economic development while strengthening social networks representing an extensive and growing entrepreneurial demographic across the region.

Midtown Wednesdays forums offer new information about Open Source Economic Development. I-Open fosters simple rules of behavior to encourage building trust and respect toward one another. In addition, I-Open has developed tools and strategy maps to help communities and businesses mobilize the resources needed to strengthen innovation and accelerate entrepreneurship in Northeast Ohio.

Regional innovators and entrepreneurs lead **Midtown Wednesdays** focusing on “strategic doing”, moving ideas to action, rather than strategic planning. Forums engage individuals, students and organizational representatives from civic, business, government and academic entities in new and different ways to accelerate economic development.

Midtown Wednesdays is supported by a City of Cleveland Economic Development Grant to accelerate the creation of innovation zones, urban areas with growing levels of regional collaborations and outreach activities on the Euclid Corridor. Innovation zones represent one of five transformative initiatives identified in the Blue Ribbon Task Force Initiative Action Plan adopted by the Cuyahoga County Commissioners. Download the report at: <http://www.cuyahogacounty.us/home/pdf/blueribbontaskforce.pdf>

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Myers University is accredited by The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Institutions of Higher Education ([NCA](#)) and The International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education ([IACBE](#)). Myers University mission is grounded in the traditions

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of business and provides the opportunity to earn Associates, Bachelor's and Master's degrees in business, technology and select professional fields. Myers University focuses on the learning and teaching process and on the application of knowledge; is committed and responsive to the economic and educational needs of Northeast Ohio; the design of curricula to prepare students for success in their professional lives and also to provide a foundation for lifelong learning; respects the diversity of our students and prepare them to meet the diversity of professional world and offers programs in a variety of modes, times and places, which allow both traditional and non-traditional students to manage their education more effectively.

The Institute for Open Economic Networks (I-Open) is a not-for-profit economic development organization located in the Cleveland Midtown Innovation Building, 4415 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio. I-Open teaches new practices of open source economic development and develops tools for civic, business, and government leaders. More information about I-Open can be found at <http://www.i-open.squarespace.com>. For information about I-Open educational programs, speaker bureau and business workshops contact I-Open directly at (216) 246-2447 or send an email to info@I-Open.org.