



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

Debra Pickett, MK Communications  
312-822-0505, [debra@mkcpr.com](mailto:debra@mkcpr.com)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **CONFERENCE ON LAND REFORM CONVENES IN DETROIT** ***Vacant lots, foreclosed homes potential resources for economic recovery***

**DETROIT, MI. (May 25, 2011)** – A diverse group of local officials, private developers and civic leaders will gather next week to discuss how real estate resources – including vacant lots and foreclosed properties – can be used to promote economic development.

**Land Bank Conference 2011**, convened by the Center for Community Progress and being held this year in Detroit, from **June 5 – 7**, brings together delegates from across the country to share strategies for revitalizing their communities. Vacant and abandoned properties, once seen as a problem of only older, post-industrial cities, are now an issue for communities across markets and across the states. With foreclosures sweeping through Sunbelt neighborhoods and other cities, problem properties are now endemic to most any market that has seen a shift in real estate values and trends.

Land banking, taking control of problem properties and then redeveloping and/or disposing of them in a manner consistent with the public's interest, is a key strategy for cities and counties dealing with blight. In the past year, new land banking legislation has taken hold in New York, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Illinois. And, in the states – Michigan and Ohio – where modern land banking laws have been on the books for several years, the number of land banking entities is growing. This increase in interest is evident in the registrations for the conference: last year, folks from 3 states attended this conference, while, this year, it's 18, plus Canada, and the attendees hail from urban, suburban and rural locales.

Land banks, as created by state statutes, can be extremely flexible in their applications and uses. Because they can acquire properties more quickly than other entities, they can spot and prevent potential blight and assemble parcels of land for parks, public works projects and affordable housing initiatives. Land Bank Conference 2011 will explore these and other land banking tactics in a series of workshops and interactive sessions.

Leading urbanist Carol Coletta will speak at the conference to share research on success formulas for cities. Author and former Albuquerque Mayor David Rusk will offer remarks as well.

Other conference highlights include bus tours showcasing greening and redevelopment efforts in Detroit and panel discussions on the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Initiative and how greening and beautification programs can be leveraged as community development tools.

###

The Center for Community Progress is a non-profit group with offices in Flint, MI; Washington, DC and New Orleans, LA dedicated to revitalizing and reinventing American cities. To learn more, please visit [www.communityprogress.net/](http://www.communityprogress.net/) or call (877) 542-4842.

A detailed conference program and schedule can be found [here](#).