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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Allegan County Board of Commissioners
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County Continues Investing In Downtown!

ALLEGAN, MICHIGAN - While there has been much discussion regarding the County's chosen location for the new jail and sheriff administration facility, the County has continued to focus on investing in Downtown Allegan. In fact, one of the key benefits of the chosen site at the County Services Complex is enabling the County to continue to expand other more advantageous services at the downtown location. It also creates an opportunity for the County to design a jail that can be easily expanded outward. For additional background decisions made regarding the Jail Project please visit the project website at <http://www.allegancounty.org/jailproject>

As part of the County's original facilities master plan, when it moved the administrative offices out to Dumont Lake, the intent was to construct an administrative building in Downtown Allegan, bringing those offices back to the county seat. This has been complimented by the several actions the Board of Commissioners has taken in the past several years to confirm their dedication to the City of Allegan. In March 2007, \$750,000 was invested in downtown to move the probate court in the courthouse along with the other courts. This was followed by further resolution ensuring that the courthouse will remain in downtown Allegan for at least another 20 years.

As a result of these past decisions, the county board recently authorized County Administrator Rob Sarro to begin finalizing the project plan that will get this initiative underway. On August 7, the County Administrator presented some preliminary goals to be included in this plan to see if the Board felt it "hit the mark." The plan would include construction of an administration building downtown, and also renovation of the courthouse to focus exclusively on court functions. The expected moves could bring up to 50 employees back to the downtown area. The project team will include a representative from the city and the township. The Board has allocated \$40,000 for necessary planning to bring this project plan together.

After hearing the proposed initial plan, Commissioner Spreitzer commented, "I think it's great! It fits a need, and you did a good job." Commissioner Van Eck shared his enthusiasm for the plans that could include a new building that would enhance the downtown area, bring all services under one roof and leave the courthouse a courthouse. He commented, "Now we are on the right track; now we are cooking and can lead economic development right from this body."

In addition to reviewing opportunities in the downtown area, this plan will make county services more available and accessible to the public and will help resolve issues such as courthouse security. "Overall, this just makes sense," states County Administrator Sarro.