



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 27, 2016

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Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc. Receives Excellence in Economic Development Award from the International Economic Development Council

WASHINGTON, DC (Sept. 27, 2016) – The Columbia Empowerment Zone Inc. of Columbia, SC, received a Bronze Excellence in Economic Development Award for its 2016 project in the category of Economic Development Week from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

The honor was presented at an awards ceremony on Tuesday, Sept. 27, during the IEDC Annual Conference, which was held Sept. 25-28, in Cleveland, OH.

“On behalf of the IEDC board of directors and Excellence in Economic Development Awards Advisory Committee, congratulations to Columbia Empowerment Zone. Not only did they work to provide a necessary service to their community; but also, their participation in the awards program sheds light on their stellar projects which other communities can now use a benchmark.” - Barry Matherly, CEcD, FM, IEDC 2016 Board Chair, President & CEO of the Greater Richmond Partnership.

The Columbia Empowerment Zone, Inc. partnered with the City of Columbia to celebrate Economic Development Week. The City of Columbia Public Relations heavily promoted the week and activities via print media, e-mail, website, social media and City TV. Public Relations created a buzz about economic development by using Tumblr, Facebook, YouTube, press releases and Pinterest. There was local media coverage via, TV, newspaper and magazine articles.

Mayor Benjamin and State Senator Scott read proclamations recognizing, May 8-14, 2016 as “Economic Development Week”, and 2016 as “The Year of the Economic Developer” and honoring the 90th anniversary of IEDC. In conjunction with the week of celebration, CEZ, Inc. launched the Vacant/Abandoned Building Incentive Program (VABIP) to encourage building reuse, promote revitalization and economic development. The VABIP was used as a tool to help create and retain jobs in the City and improve the appearance.

IEDC's Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the world's best economic development programs and partnerships, marketing materials, and the year's most influential leaders. These awards honor organizations and individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

“The awards process is a thorough, non-biased and multi-layered process. These are extraordinary accomplishments for all winners, and an overall great effort by all participants. We look forward to next year's awards competition,” Matherly said.

About the International Economic Development Council

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization serving economic developers. With more than 4,700 members, IEDC is the largest organization of its kind. Economic developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities, by creating, retaining and expanding jobs that facilitate growth, enhance wealth and provide a stable tax base. From public to private, rural to urban, and local to international, IEDC's members are engaged in the full range of economic development experience. Given the breadth of economic development work, our members are employed in a wide variety of settings including local, state, provincial and federal governments, public-private partnerships, chambers of commerce, universities and a variety of other institutions. IEDC's members create high-quality jobs, develop vibrant communities and improve the quality of life in their regions. www.iedcONLINE.org.

About Columbia Empowerment Zone Inc.

CEZ, Inc. is a nonprofit economic development corporation whose mission is to efficiently, effectively and enthusiastically create and support economic development opportunities in the City of Columbia. They achieve this mission by ensuring activities create, retain and reinvest wealth in our community. The guiding principles and values are: accountability, integrity, inclusion, outcomes and stewardship.

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