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**Contact: Mike Brown 614-645-6428
Tina Farley, Continental, 614-883-1063**

Columbus "Cap at Union Station" Earns International Attention Unique Development over I-670 Competing for World Leadership Award

(Columbus) The Mayor's Office has been notified that our nomination of the I-670 Cap on High Street is in the top three for the international World Leadership Awards in 2005. The Cap at Union Station was developed by Continental Real Estate Companies in partnership with the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the City of Columbus and Meleca Architecture.

"We're proud to be getting international attention for unique urban developments, like the Cap, that we are pushing forward in Columbus," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "This partnership of public and private investment and inventiveness is not only reconnecting downtown with the Short North, but is also a model for communities around the globe trying to revitalize neighborhoods split by traffic and highways."

Columbus has been recognized in the "Architecture and Civil Engineering" competition, one of nine categories in which awards are given each year. Projects done in the City of Damascus, Syria, and the City of Port Elizabeth, in South Africa are also in competition.

"Developing the Cap was a labor of love," said Jack Lucks, Chairman, Continental Real Estate Companies. "Literally hundreds of professionals worked in tandem for eight years toward a vision that was difficult to articulate and even harder to execute, but in the end, has obviously made an enormous difference for our community and consequently caught the eye of many others."

From the World Leadership Awards:

THE CAP AT UNION STATION
Reconnecting a town with its neighborhoods

New highways often divide communities, and bridges alone rarely solve the problem. All too frequently the divided neighborhoods develop separately, never to be reunited. The City of Columbus came up with a unique and daring solution to an old problem. Rather than creating new projects on either side of a major freeway, why not build a completely new shopping and entertainment facility right on top of it? The resulting Cap at Union Station is a \$7.8 million retail development designed and built to reconnect downtown Columbus with its burgeoning Short North arts and entertainment district.

The project, which opened in October 2004, effectively heals a 40-year scar created by the construction of an inner-belt highway. The void caused by the highway, called an "engineered gash" by New York Times architecture critic Herbert Muschamp, has been transformed into a seamless urban streetscape.

Composed of three separate bridges - one for through-traffic across the highway, and one on either side for the retail structures - the Cap provides 2,369 square meters of leasable space, with nine retail shops and restaurants. The Cap is the first speculative urban in-fill retail project built on a bridge over a highway. Not only was it a significant engineering and administrative challenge, it was a legal one too with the city having to negotiate unique 'air rights' to build above the ground. There was no model to follow in the construction of the Cap, but the success of this innovative project could easily be replicated in the countless other cities across the world that have been divided by highways.

For more information, go to www.world-leadership-awards.org and click on "Short List"