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**Rep. Kaptur Welcomes $190,364 USDA Awards for N. Ohio Food Organizations**

*Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank and Maumee Valley Growers Association to expand efforts in Toledo*

**Toledo, OH** — Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (OH-9) welcomed news today that two Northern Ohio food organizations, the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank and Maumee Valley Growers Association, have been awarded a combined $190,364 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to support local food and nutrition initiatives in Toledo, Ohio.

*“This is great news for the Toledo community and surrounding region, as these awards will help combat hunger, encourage healthy eating, and support our local food producers,”* said **Rep. Kaptur**. *“Northern Ohio produces ample amounts of fresh, healthy, delicious food but 97 percent of what we eat here comes from somewhere else. What a lost opportunity! These awards will help strengthen the connection between the food we grow and the way our community feeds itself. That also means getting food that lasts longer on our shelves and in our refrigerators, and using less fuel to ship that food. Congratulations to Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank and Maumee Valley Growers Association for earning this federal recognition and support.”*

Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank, Inc. will receive $90,364 through USDA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program for an initiative that will “provide information, skills, motivation and access to locally grown fruits and vegetables by implementing a mobile market that provides individuals with healthy guidelines, develops and distributes recipes to use fresh produce, and accepts Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.”

Maumee Valley Growers Association will receive $100,000 to support an initiative to “pursue and develop a new food hub operation entitled “The Toledo Area Food Hub” located in Toledo’s central city adjacent to the Farmers’ Market.” MVGA is made up of more than 70 regional greenhouse growers.

**Joe Perlaky, Executive Director of the Maumee Valley Growers**, added: *“This award is another important step forward for our community, our organization and many others in our region regarding our local foods initiative and our challenges addressing our food deserts in the central city.  It comes at the heels of our successful Food Hub strategic plan and Farmer’s Market promotional grant”*