



**March 31, 2015**

**For Immediate Release**

**ERIE STREET MARKET FOOD HUB STUDY**

(Toledo): The Maumee Valley Growers Association (MVGA) was awarded a \$25,000 grant to conduct a Feasibility Study to determine whether the Erie Street Market was a variable location to operate a food hub in Toledo's central city.

Funded by the USDA-AMS, the six month study indicates strong interest in participation from both public and private sector organizations and individuals.

By definition, a regional food hub is a business that provides infrastructure or systems that connect local and regional producers with local and regional buyers. Food hubs aggregate, distribute, and/or process local and regional products and sell them to wholesale and retail outlets, such as schools, hospitals, and grocery stores. A food hub focuses on small to medium size farmers and healthy living education within the community.

The study was conducted by Joe Perlaky, Executive Director of the Maumee Valley Growers who stated "I was very pleased with the amount of outreach we were able to accomplish involving community, business and academic leaders. There was no reluctance meeting and discussing the potential food hub with anyone."

Perlaky continues, "We compiled data from several sources that support the need for a food hub in Toledo's central city. Although more elusive, we also received enough industry feedback to believe if a co-op organization can be formed, a food hub operation could be feasible."

Beyond the scope of the grant, MVGA will continue to pursue and flush out details to gain insight as to who or what organization(s) will commit financially to its operation.

"A hub operation would be perfect partners for those already located in and around the Market. The Feasibility Study has created a buzz within the community and that momentum should not be put on the shelf," says Perlaky.

MVGA is an industry-based agriculture producer group made up of more than seventy individual floriculture and greenhouse vegetable growers working together to strengthen the local industry in Northwest Ohio.

# # #

*For further information including a digital color rendering of the Market  
please contact Joe Perlaky at 419-356-4847 or [perlaky@bex.net](mailto:perlaky@bex.net)*