

THE MIDWEST'S REAL ESTATE SOURCE  
**HEARTLAND  
 REAL ESTATE  
 BUSINESS**



MINNESOTA • ILLINOIS • INDIANA • IOWA • KANSAS  
 MISSOURI • MISSOURI • NEBRASKA • OHIO

**REACH  
 MORE**

[HOME](#) [ARCHIVES](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [AD SPECS](#) [ADVERTISE](#) [PAST ISSUES](#) [CONTACT US](#)

*MIDDLE MARKET HIGHLIGHT, SEPTEMBER 2005*

**PORT HURON**

Karen Stone, CCIM

Port Huron, just a 45-minute drive north of the suburbs of Detroit, is re-inventing itself by diversifying economically and taking advantage of its 14 miles of waterfront along Lake Huron and the Black and St. Claire Rivers.

"We recognize the future is in developing mixed-use commercial projects, building inviting, affordable residential communities and attracting white collar office users," says Tomas Hutka, city manager for Port Huron.

The future is beginning to happen now in Port Huron's downtown. Since 2003, the commercial vacancy rate in the central city area has fallen to 6 percent from 40 percent. The city is close to finalizing a deal with Terra Land Group (a part of Detroit-based DeMaria Construction) that will bring the first commercial/residential construction to downtown in 50 years. "Terra Land's development plan anticipates more than 400 new residences, including three-story townhomes and a high-rise residential building that will have retail on its ground floor," Hutka says.



Harbourside Office Center in Port Huron, Michigan.

The development site is located adjacent to downtown's existing shopping area, a pedestrian-friendly, Victorian main street. Most of the facades of the main street shops have already been renovated thanks to grants facilitated by a private organization, Main Street, Inc. The \$50 million Terra Land project will add a second shopping street to accommodate downtown's new residents.

On the south side of downtown, Acheson Ventures, owned by a local entrepreneurial philanthropist who is a driving force in the growth of Port Huron, is redeveloping 72 acres on the St. Claire River. The company has spent \$60 million to date on the purchase, environmental clean-up and renovation of the project, known as the Desmond River Development Project. The multi-use project includes the 20,000-square-foot Seaway Terminal, which serves as a port for Great Lakes cruise ships, a visitor's center and Vantage Point, a 1,000 linear-foot pedestrian-oriented waterfront park. The 100,000-square-foot Harbourside Office Center, the office component of the project, was completed last November. In December, SEMCO Energy relocated its headquarters from Detroit into 60,000 square feet of the \$24 million building. Acheson Ventures also anticipates building a residential component, but plans have not been announced.

Also on the drawing board is a Maritime Center that will feature a museum and an educational facility. Detroit-based Albert Kahn Associates is the master architect of the project and Detroit-based Clark Construction is the contractor.

visit our national real estate web site

**REBUSINESS ONLINE**

- regional news
- market reports
- auctions
- 1031 information
- net leases
- job bank
- industry events

E

Cit

E

Se

Toc

In July, Port Huron was named one of 10 All America cities by the National Civic Association, a testament to its commitment to and utilization of strong partnerships to support growth. "Port Huron is definitely open for business," Hutka says. "We are actively looking for investors to partner with us."

©2005 France Publications, Inc. Duplication or reproduction of this article not permitted without authorization from France Publications, Inc. For information on reprints of this article contact Barbara Sherer at (630) 554-6054.

**FRANCE**  
PUBLICATIONS, INC.  
3500 Piedmont Road  
Suite 415  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305  
TEL: 404-832-8262  
FAX: 404-832-8260