



RAYMOND J. WOJTOWICZ

Wayne County Treasurer

TERRANCE A. KEITH
Chief Deputy

ROBERT J. GRDEN
Deputy / Financial Services

JAMES W. BICKLEY
Deputy / Land Management

PRESS RELEASE

Date: May 14, 2008

Media Contact:
Keith A. Owens, Director of Communications
(313) 224-5408

Wayne County Treasurer/Urban Farming partnership takes the next step

Wayne County Treasurer to do groundbreaking at first “farm”

In November 2007, the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office entered into a unique and creative partnership with Urban Farming designed to put fallow land to good use by allowing Urban Farming to utilize 20 tax-foreclosed vacant properties to grow produce that will be available for free to neighborhood residents as well as to local food banks.

On May 15 at 11 a.m., in celebration of the first Spring Planting, Wayne County Treasurer Raymond J. Wojtowicz will be putting the first plant into the ground at 11657 Cascade. This is the same vacant parcel where the program was officially launched publicly last year and is a groundbreaking for the first of the 20 lots to be planted throughout the spring.

Founded in Detroit in 2005 by Executive Director Taja Sevelle, Urban Farming has been making headlines around the country telling the remarkable story of how their community-based operation has taken vacant lots in cities throughout the country and transformed them into small urban “farms” with the help of volunteer labor from the surrounding community. Food grown on the “farms” is free to neighborhood residents and food banks. The partnership between the Office of the Wayne County Treasurer and Urban Farming is unlike any other public/private partnership anywhere in the nation.

Kapnick Insurance and the Somerset Mall branch of Aveda have both “adopted” this particular parcel and given financial support, and Flagstar Bank has also given support to the project as well.

“Since many of the parcels in our property inventory are located in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, it seems reasonable to put this land to good use for the community rather than allow it to remain fallow,” said Wojtowicz. “Urban Farming is a good fit.”