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**For Immediate Release**

## **REVITALIZING VOGUE THEATRE AND IRON WORKS IS THE GOAL OF RFQ**

**Manistee, Michigan** - The revitalization of two properties of historic prominence and strategic significance to the City of Manistee is the subject of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) issued today by the Alliance for Economic Success (AES). The RFQ is seeking responses by December 11, 2009 to select a firm to complete feasibility studies for the Vogue Theater and Iron Works building to identify the steps and costs required to return these buildings to the vibrant, job-supporting structures that they once were.

The project is funded under a grant to the AES by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development. The grant and RFQ will be administered by the AES in partnership with the Manistee Main Street Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and public and private interests, including Jeff Seng, member of Iron Works LLC.

“The Vogue and the Iron Works have been icons of Manistee’s landscape that have been weathered by economic storms,” said Cyndy Fuller, Executive Director of the AES. “With the support of USDA, this project should be the jumping off point to restore and revitalize both properties, in keeping with the City’s vision to be a community of choice on the Lake Michigan shoreline.”

The feasibility study will assess the current conditions of both buildings, identify renovation needs and costs and complete an energy audit with recommendations for achieving energy efficiency. The feasibility study will also provide recommendations on the most feasible and desired future uses of the buildings and an implementation plan to achieve those recommendations.

The study will give particular consideration to the feasibility of using the Vogue as a theater and for related arts and cultural purposes. The Iron Works will be evaluated to determine its potential for a variety of community uses and as a facility to support film production. The film-making company 10 West Studios currently uses a portion of the Iron Works Building for offices. While these uses will be areas of focus, the primary purpose of the feasibility study will be to identify long-term future uses of both buildings that are sustainable.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for us to take a market-driven approach in assessing what needs to be done to restore these assets and determine how they can be of greatest benefit to the City of Manistee and the region,” said Travis Alden, Executive Director of the Manistee Main Street DDA.

“Like its physical presence, we hope that the future benefits of the Iron Works building can be massive for our community,” said Jeff Seng, member of the Iron Works LLC. “There are so many features that make the building special, from its 12 inch square wooden beams to the concrete letters on the outside of the building that weigh more than half a ton.”

“Our goal in making this grant is to help the Manistee community convert these buildings into assets that will support jobs, business and revitalization, complimenting the strategic plans of the City of Manistee and the DDA,” said Shelly Fuller, Area Director for USDA Rural Development.

A five-person Review Team has been formed by the AES to review the responses to the RFQ and select a contractor to develop a scope of work that should begin early in 2010. Review Team members include: Travis Alden Executive Director of the Manistee Mainstreet DDA; Steve Brower, Vice President of Northwestern Bank; Cyndy Fuller; Laura Heintzleman, Executive Director, Manistee County Community Foundation and Jeff Seng, member of the Iron Works LLC.

A copy of the RFQ may be viewed by going to [www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com](http://www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com).