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Donovan Rypkema, principal of PlaceEconomics

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Donovan Rypkema is principal of PlaceEconomics, a Washington, DC-based real estate and economic development consulting firm specializing in services to public and nonprofit-sector clients who are dealing with downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization and the reuse of historic structures. In 2004 Rypkema established Heritage Strategies International, a new firm created to provide similar services to worldwide clients. He also teaches a graduate course in preservation economics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Rypkema is recognized as an industry leader in the economics of preserving historic structures. Since 1983 he has provided ongoing consulting services to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its National Main Street Center. He has undertaken assignments in 49 states and the District of Columbia. In 2012, the National Trust for Historic Preservation awarded him the Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award, the organization's highest honor, for his work in the preservation field.

He has performed real estate and economic development consulting services throughout the United States for State and local governments and nonprofit organizations with interests in a broad range of properties, from National Historic Landmark structures to Main Street commercial centers. His specific fields of consultation include training in community-based development, economic revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood commercial centers, feasibility analyses for real estate development, and the rehabilitation of historic structures.

Rypkema was educated at Columbia University, where he received a Masters of Science degree in Historic Preservation. He has lectured widely on economic and preservation issues relating to rehabilitation, community development and commercial revitalization. Mr. Rypkema's short courses and workshops have been delivered to architects, bankers, developers, preservationists, planners, and downtown managers. He is author of several publications including Community Initiated Development, The Economics of Rehabilitation, and the Downtown Real Estate Development Series.

In recent years, Mr. Rypkema has conducted statewide studies of the economic impact of historic preservation in Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Indiana, New York and Maryland and a citywide study in Philadelphia. Rypkema has worked with such groups as the Urban Land Institute, the Mayors' Institute on City Design, the American Planning Association, the International Downtown Association, International Town and City Centre Conference, the World Monuments Fund, the Center for Livable Communities and hundreds of other international, national, statewide and local organizations.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation had this to say about Mr. Rypkema:

"There are few people in the field of preservation who have more fun than Rypkema. His dry sense of humor and clever wit, combined with his intellectual yet straightforward approach to saving historic resources, help him forge connections with decision makers and effectively deliver the message of preservation's economic benefits. Countless neighborhoods, Main Streets, and individual sites are still standing today because he has conveyed the undeniable benefits of saving those places for the future. And countless preservationists are committed to the field today because Rypkema has inspired them. At a time when many battles in the field are won by proving preservation's economic impact, Donovan Rypkema is simply priceless."