

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 4, 2009

Contact:

Ron Kitchens
Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Michigan First
241 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
269.553.9588
rkitchens@swimfirst.com

Mark Arend
Conway Data, Inc.
Suite 200
6625 The Corners Parkway
Norcross, GA 30092
770.325.3438
mark.arend@conway.com

Southwest Michigan First named by *Site Selection* magazine as 2008 Top Deal maker

ATLANTA, Georgia – The innovative partnership led by Southwest Michigan First resulting in 3,300 jobs and \$330 million in private investment announced by MPI Research was named one of *Site Selection* magazine's 2008 Top Deals in its May 2009 issue. The issue reminds its readership of senior-level corporate executives and plant location decision makers that even in a challenging economy major deals are taking place, creating hundreds and thousands of jobs.

In evaluating the top economic development projects of the year, the editors of *Site Selection* took into account total capital investment; number of jobs created; regional economic impact; value of jobs created; creativity of the deal; role of incentives in the deal; competition for the project to locate elsewhere; and speed to market.

The deal garnered national recognition not only for the end result sale of Pfizer Buildings 126 and 267 to MPI Research for \$10 but for the incentive package put together under the leadership of Southwest Michigan First that included an \$86 million tax credit for jobs created by the Michigan Economic Growth Authority; special legislation establishing the site as a Renaissance Zone by the state of Michigan; a \$2 million 21st Century Jobs Fund grant awarded for sewer improvements; funds for environmental due diligence from the city of Kalamazoo; and funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation and village of Mattawan for necessary highway improvements to accommodate traffic at MPI's Mattawan site.

"Economic development activity remains robust in key pockets of the global economy as our Top Deals coverage makes clear," said Mark Arend, *Site Selection's* Editor in Chief. "There is no shortage of evidence that industrial production in major economies is below previous levels. But that does not mean new projects are not happening. We are happy to tell that story in the pages of *Site Selection*."

-more-

“The good news that the Kalamazoo Region continues to make is great news for economic development in the Region. We are extremely honored to have our past successes receive accolades,” said Ron Kitchens, Chief Executive Officer of Southwest Michigan First. “But what is more important is how we use this to make new projects happen. While the economy’s growth has slowed, we continue to aggressively pursue projects that will create new opportunity in Southwest Michigan.”

The entire Top Groups and Top Deals articles appear in the May 2009 edition of *Site Selection* and at www.sitenet.com.

About *Site Selection* Magazine and Conway Data

Site Selection magazine, published by Conway Data Inc., delivers expansion planning information to 44,000 executives of fast-growing firms. Now in its 55th year, *Site Selection* is also available via *Site Selection Online* (www.siteselection.com). *SiteNet Dispatch*, a weekly e-mail newsletter, goes to more than 28,000 industry professionals. *Site Selection* is the official publication of the Industrial Asset Management Council (www.iamc.org). Conway Data is an international publishing and association management company headquartered in Atlanta. The firm manages the Industrial Asset Management Council, the Development Hall of Fame and the World Development Federation (WDF), offers consulting services and awards the annual Conway Safe Skies Award.

About Southwest Michigan First

Southwest Michigan First is the catalyst stimulating growth across the Kalamazoo Region. Whether you’re a site selector, an investor, an entrepreneur or part of an existing company looking to grow, Southwest Michigan First has the resources and expertise to assist you in identifying and surpassing your goals. For more information, visit www.southwestmichiganfirst.com.

###