

February 12, 2009

**Statement of County Administrator Jim McCafferty
Concerning Ownership of MedMart / Convention Center**

Once again, due to selective reporting, the Plain Dealer has drawn completely incorrect conclusions and has purposefully inserted itself into the delicate negotiations of finalizing the development agreement for the Medical Mart/Convention Center project

Cuyahoga County in public-private partnership with MMPI, will develop plans and construct a first-class convention facility and Medical Mart. While the development agreement will finalize details of financing, it is clear that the convention center ownership reverts to the citizens of Cuyahoga County at the end of a 20-year lease, and that fact is stated clearly in the Memorandum of Understanding (attached), a fact that was left out of the Plain Dealer story.

As to the benefits of a fully functioning convention center that will accrue to the citizens of our community, they include – to name just a few – new employment (direct construction and hospitality positions as well as ancillary hospitality and entertainment industry jobs), enhanced tax revenues (both City and County) for public services, increased spending by out-of-town convention-goers for local businesses and entertainment venues, to name a few. These benefits have been the rationale for building a new convention center in Cleveland in community discussions for nearly a decade. The Medical Mart addition provided a ready-made population of end users for the convention center as well as innovation and commercialization opportunities for the burgeoning bio-medical and medical technology industry in Northeast Ohio.

Finally, to characterize the meetings today as the first public update since 2005 is just false. Four public hearings took place during the past summer and fall in addition to the hearings held in 2007 when the sales tax was first passed.