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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Indiana Chamber Names Former Gov. Kernan and Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Shepard Government Leaders of the Year**

**November 6, 2008 (INDIANAPOLIS)** — The duo who led the bipartisan Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform in pushing for a smarter and more effective system have each garnered the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's 2008 Government Leader of the Year award. Former Indiana Gov. Joe Kernan and Indiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Randall Shepard received the honor tonight at the Chamber's 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Dinner before a crowd of more than 1,200 business, civic and political leaders at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

"Under Kernan and Shepard's guidance, the commission produced 27 bold recommendations in areas in which Hoosiers could realize better delivery of services and set the stage for Indiana to restructure local government for the benefit of all citizens," praises Indiana Chamber President Kevin Brinegar.

Among the report's suggestions: eliminate township government, realign county government by reducing the number of elected officials and by creating a single county executive for more accountability, increase countywide coordination of the delivery of emergency response services and encourage joint purchasing among school corporations.

Kernan, who served as South Bend city controller and was elected to three terms as mayor of the city, experienced firsthand the limitations in local government structure.

"I had a chance to work with great people in city and county government, but they were frustrated on more than one occasion by a structure that did not encourage – and in some cases did not permit – creative and common sense solutions," he offers.

Shepard acknowledges that most reports of this nature see a declining likelihood of implementation as time goes on. He sees a difference here as "tax restructuring will force a re-examination at the local level of how services are delivered. The realization is growing that the structure and finance of local government have a direct impact on Indiana's ability to grow its economy."

Also honored at the Chamber's Annual Dinner were Indianapolis Motor Speedway Corporation CEO Tony George as Business Leader of the Year and Noblesville as Community of the Year.

The dinner followed the Chamber's Fall Board of Directors and Annual Membership meetings. Recognized during a luncheon ceremony as Volunteers of the Year for their work with the Chamber were Andre Lacy, Patty Prosser and David Swider, all of Indianapolis.

Jim Merten, investment banker and vice chairman of the board for City Securities Corporation, was elected the Chamber's 2009 chair of the board of directors.

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