



# THE PLAIN DEALER

## **A Medical Mart would strengthen Cleveland**

### **Why here?**

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When Merchandise Mart Properties Inc. was approached in early 2006 with the idea of a Medical Mart, our initial reaction was enthusiastic and supportive. Cleveland has long enjoyed an outstanding leadership position in the field of medicine simply by being the home of the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, MetroHealth Hospital System and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Thousands of supporting companies have grown up around these institutions. In many ways, Cleveland is the medical capital of the United States.

We believe, however, that a Medical Mart is just the tip of the iceberg. Cleveland should set a much higher goal: becoming the medical trade show capital of the world.

What we would like to build is a Medical Mart alongside a trade show facility that would accommodate 250,000 square feet of exhibitor space. A facility of this size would accommodate most of the medical trade shows currently produced in the United States and would allow us to co-locate similar events and run them simultaneously. Co-locating the Medical Mart with a trade-show hall would allow major health care manufacturers to secure permanent space and still participate in each of these trade shows, and dozens more. Having all of these exhibiting companies in the same place would create a critical mass that would attract attendees from all around the country - and eventually internationally.

This is the business that we pioneered. It is a successful formula that we have proved time and again in a variety of industries.

More than a decade ago, MMPI pioneered the concept of an integrated market center facility, which incorporates both permanent year-round showrooms and temporary exhibit space, where a traditional merchandise mart is combined with a traditional trade-show facility.

We believe that, by combining the new trade-show facility with a Medical Mart, we can create in Cleveland a much more efficient way for manufacturers to show their products to their customers because, by taking a single showroom, a manufacturer can exhibit in dozens of events per year. Once the Medical Mart is anchored with major tenants, recruiting new shows to round out a full calendar will be easier and easier, as smaller shows will be attracted to rotating through Cleveland so that their attendees will have a chance to see the industry's superstars in their state-of-the-art showrooms.

The goal for Cleveland should be to create a destination that supports 50 trade shows a year - and it's an attainable goal.

The U.S. medical industry produces 571 trade shows a year, and most change venues each year. If Cleveland pursued each of these 571 shows to come to Cleveland just once a decade, the result would be 57 medical trade shows a year in Cleveland - approximately one each week. That would be an unprecedented success for a new trade-show facility.

That could create the kind of economic engine that could revitalize Cleveland, rebrand its image, support its rebirth and ultimately attract and retain the intellectual capital, the minds of the great researchers and medical leaders who will be proud to call Cleveland home.

Most important, the Cleveland Medical Mart and trade-show facility would foster a whole new self-sustaining industry of entrepreneurs who benefit from new ideas and innovative products conceived by doctors, scientists, researchers and clinicians.

The medical trade-show market is right in Cleveland's sweet spot.

The city's medical community would be a tremendous attraction for both manufacturers and attendees. It is a medical community known for creating leading-edge technology, and many manufacturers would want to host an event in Cleveland to show prospective clients their latest and greatest products.

As hall managers, we at MMPI believe we could play an important role in bringing together Cleveland's major assets and the leadership of the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, MetroHealth Hospital System and the CWRU School of Medicine, along with major restaurants, hotels and entertainment venues, to influence where these associations host their events.

We understand the economic benefits of the trade-show industry. We know that trade shows can become great economic engines to fuel a city's growth and define its future. That future can - and will be - Cleveland's.

Kennedy is the president of Merchandise Mart Properties. He is son of the late Sen. Robert Kennedy.

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