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Measuring Our Progress: The 2008 Bridges for a Just Community Human Relations Indicator Survey

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Leading Human Resources for the world's top producer of jet engines, my goal is to bring the best engineers and other professionals to work at our business. As we "sell" Greater Cincinnati as a great place for people to pursue professional and personal dreams, we recognize that our competition for talent is not only other companies, but also other communities -- Atlanta, Charlotte, and San Diego for example.

We know that communities and businesses depend on each other to succeed: A great place for our employees to live is a great place to work.

That's why GE Aviation has joined other organizations -- the Scripps Howard Foundation and the United Way of Greater Cincinnati -- to support an important project for measuring the progress our region is making in diversity. Conducted by BRIDGES for a Just Community, the 2008 Greater Cincinnati Human Relations Indicator Survey will address two key issues:

- How much progress are we making to achieve inclusion, equity and justice for all who live and work here in Greater Cincinnati?
- Can we build a shared future vision that all social groups will embrace, and that will make our community an attractive and inviting place?

BRIDGES' inaugural Human Relations Indicator Survey in 2006, the first region-wide human relations survey for Greater Cincinnati, established a benchmark for measuring inter-group relations. Beginning this fall, BRIDGES will continue this important research among seven social groups to understand how each is regarded by others, and to uncover emerging issues that policy makers and civic leaders may need to address. The groups will represent the broadest spectrum included in a local study: Whites, Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, Jews, Muslims, and Gays/Lesbians. Asians, an important and growing group in the nation and our region, will be included for the first time.

With new survey results, we will build on the pioneering work that BRIDGES (formerly NCCJ) initiated in 2006, which identified issues the region must address:

- Differences in perceptions and experiences among diverse groups between city and suburban residents, with greater contact and closeness among social groups in the city.
- Continuing Black/White differences in opinion on progress in treatment of African Americans, with African Americans seeing much less progress.
- Relative isolation of the small but growing Hispanic population from the rest of the community.

If we are making progress, these differences in perception, opinions, and experiences will have measurably narrowed when our findings are released in 2008. And the project's real success will be measured in how community leaders use results to improve

opportunities and experiences of everyone who lives in our region. This will also lay the groundwork for those who will live here in the future.

One thing about that future is certain: it will be more diverse. At GE Aviation -- indeed, in communities across the region -- the workforce will continue to be more diverse by race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, and sexual orientation, simply because younger generations now coming out of school are more diverse than older generations of graduates.

At GE Aviation, we recognize that the world's best engineers represent all races and nationalities. They are men and women of different sexual orientation. And we know that if they are the best, we want them here. Recognizing this, GE supports active Affinity Networks, such as The African American Forum, The Asia-Pacific American Forum, The Hispanic Forum and others, to facilitate dialogue and progress in our diversity efforts. These employee-led Affinity Networks play a critical role in attracting, developing, engaging and retaining employees at all levels in the company.

No business can expand diversity alone. Others in our region must also participate. Our employees want to live in a community that is welcoming and inclusive, where their lives outside of work is as rewarding as their careers. The 2008 Human Relations Indicator Survey will help us prepare for a more diverse world and help create a more inclusive environment that benefits the entire region.

The complete 2006 BRIDGES Indicator Survey is available at

www.bridgescincinnati.org. For more information, please contact BRIDGES for Just

Community at 513-381-4660.