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For immediate release

**HOW PREPARED ARE ARIZONA'S COMMUNITIES
TO HANDLE THE AGING BOOM?**

Arizona Innovators to Hold Discussion on Aging in Place at GateWay Community College

November 8, 2007 - Phoenix, Arizona - As part of the national movement to promote the Aging in Place Initiative, aimed at helping older Americans remain in their communities, the state of Arizona has been selected to host the second of six national workshops sponsored by MetLife Foundation, Partners for Livable Communities (Partners), and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The workshop, *Workforce Development and Nonprofit Capacity Building: Developing a Livable Arizona for All Ages*, will be hosted by the Office of the Governor, the Arizona Community Foundation, and the Area Agency on Aging, Region One, at GateWay Community College on November 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

At the workshop, Arizona community leaders will focus on how to enrich the lives of older adults through meaningful paid and unpaid work opportunities while improving nonprofit effectiveness, which is a growing issue for the region. Participants in the workshop will include key innovators and representatives from across the state. The local discussion will complement the dynamic national conversation taking place on aging and highlight the creative work already occurring in Arizona to make it a first-rate place for all age groups.

“There is a tremendous opportunity with this workshop to inspire nonprofits to think creatively about involving boomers in their organization,” said Patrick McWhortor, workshop panelist and president of the Alliance of Arizona Nonprofits. “There is huge pool of talent in Arizona with older adults looking to be involved in their communities. This topic is very timely with the growing retirement of the boomers, and nonprofits have a great incentive to take action and apply for a ‘JumpStart’ grant.”

Arizona’s senior population will triple within the next 20 years; by 2027, one in four Arizonans are projected to be over the age of 60. Studies have shown that there is a great need in Arizona to expand the capacity of the nonprofit sector to fill labor shortages and skill gaps. This session will explore how older adults can help fulfill this need.

“By starting with workforce development, an issue that is critical to creating livable communities, communities have the opportunity to build on existing older worker programs and discuss new and creative approaches for engaging and valuing unpaid and paid older workers, which can then increase the capacity of nonprofit organizations and the broader community,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO of n4a.

To highlight the work that is happening, in Arizona as well as from across the nation, several experts have been invited to speak, including Jacky Alling, senior program officer at the Arizona Community Foundation; Carol Kratz, program officer at The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; and Melanie Starns,

policy advisor on aging and director of the Office on Aging at the Arizona Office of the Governor. These speakers will address the basic needs that nonprofits have, as well as the opportunities that exist for boomers and older adults to help build capacity within nonprofit organizations.

The workshop will also feature a panel discussion designed to highlight some exemplary work taking place in Arizona. McWhortor will be joined by Rebecca Bond, director of Tempe Connections; Jan Davie, director of career and employment services at GateWay Community College; Mai Gabil, ageWORKS coordinator at the Area Agency on Aging, Region One; and Jim Murphy, interim executive director and corporate relations director of the Pima Council on Aging. Jill Watts, director of Capacity Building Initiatives at ASU Center for Nonprofit Leadership Management will moderate the panel.

“We’re excited to be a part of this new initiative that addresses the needs of older workers and look forward to working in collaboration with our local and national partners,” said Mary Lynn Kasunic, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging, Region One.

Attendees will also learn how to apply for “JumpStart the Conversation” grants, which will be given to groups taking action on the workshop theme at the state and local level. As a result of the workshops and grant opportunities, Arizona officials believe communities will have a renewed sense of urgency to approach community livability for all, as well as an energized group of organizations and individuals collaborating to face the challenges that accompany this time of change.

“For tens of millions of baby boomers, a new phase of life and work is about to begin, and many of them are looking to make a difference in their communities through work in the non-profit sector,” said Sibyl Jacobson, president of MetLife Foundation. “This workshop provides an important resource for communities, and will make it easier for older adults to transition to the purpose-driven jobs so many want.”

MetLife Foundation - Established in 1976 by MetLife for the purpose of supporting education, health, civic and cultural organizations. In aging, MetLife funds programs that support healthy aging and address caregiving issues, intergenerational activities, mental fitness and volunteerism. For more information, visit www.metlife.org.

Partners for Livable Communities (Partners) – A national, nonprofit organization working to renew communities for all ages. For more information, visit www.livable.com.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) – A leading voice on aging issues for Area Agencies on Aging across the country and Title VI Native American aging programs. For more information, visit www.n4a.org.

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