

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* for East Allen County wins national American Planning Association award

EAST ALLEN COUNTY, IN, March 22, 2017 – A program designed to foster a coordinated effort in community and economic development for East Allen County is receiving national recognition.

The *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* has been awarded the 2017 John Keller Award for Outstanding Planning Initiative by the American Planning Association Small Town and Rural Planning (STaR) Division. According to the STaR Awards Committee, “The committee was particularly impressed with the refreshing and innovative approach to economic development on a regional scale that stays true to the unique identities in the individual communities.”

This planning initiative, rolled out in October 2016, is aimed at developing a collaborative strategy to retain and attract high quality jobs to the communities of Grabill, Harlan, Hoagland, Leo-Cedarville, Monroeville, New Haven and Woodburn. The plan integrates the region’s collaborative values and strategies with the individual goals and objectives of these small and rural communities which are near yet distinctly separate from the urban areas of Allen County. A display of individual community plan priorities is currently in place in the main lobby of Citizens Square.

“This is an awesome example of the power of collaboration,” said Kent Castleman, President of the NewAllen Alliance. “Our communities are very proud of what we have accomplished and how we have come together for our future growth. We hope many rural communities across the country can use our model to plan for their futures.”

Kristi Sturtz with Sturtz Public Management Group, the planning consultant to the initiative, also stated, “Through this unique and collaborative process, we worked on building community capacity to cultivate an environment for sustainable economic growth. The NewAllen communities recognize that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and are now continuing to work on the implementation of this initiative both collectively and individually.”

To complement this initiative, the NewAllen Alliance developed a website – newallenalliance.net – outlining collaborative priorities and programs. The site also contains links to each community’s plan; numerous federal, state, and local grant and loan programs; and to a “toolbox” containing information on community and economic development-related topics such as agribusiness development, broadband access, heritage tourism, farmers’ markets, and tax abatement.

The *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan* was paid for by a grant from the Allen County Capital Improvement Board (CIB). Yogesh Parikh, a member of the CIB, expressed, “The CIB congratulates the NewAllen Alliance for winning the national American Planning Association award and is pleased it was able to contribute towards the Strategic Investment Plan.” The Allen County Board of Commissioners, Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. and various other public and private entities have been strong supporters of the plan’s development. “It has been a pleasure working with the NewAllen Alliance in developing a Strategic Investment Plan for the East Allen County communities,” stated Commissioner Nelson Peters. “The work and current recognition from the American Planning Association are to be commended and will only serve to strengthen those communities in the years to come.”

Representation from the NewAllen Alliance and Sturtz Public Management Group will receive the award at a reception to be held at the American Planning Association National Planning Conference in New York City in May. In addition, the planning initiative will be highlighted in a future webinar being developed by the STaR Division.

Contacts:

Kent Castleman
President, NewAllen Alliance
(260) 348-2973, kentcastleman@gmail.com

Kristi Sturtz, AICP
President, Sturtz Public Management Group, LLC
(260) 693-3316, Kristi@sturtzpmg.com

About the NewAllen Alliance

Founded in 1991, the NewAllen Alliance is an all-volunteer organization that works to bring people to the table that have a passion to see the East Allen County communities of Harlan, Hoagland, Leo-Cedarville, Monroeville, New Haven, and Woodburn thrive and excel. Its mission is to create a unified voice for the communities in East Allen County to foster a coordinated effort in community and economic development, resulting in new investment, job creation, and improved quality of life.

In 2014, the *NewAllen Alliance Organizational Action Plan* was completed. This organizational plan was funded by a grant from the Foellinger Foundation and completed by the IPFW Community Research Institute. This plan identified the following goals for the organization: 1.) Define a unified agenda; 2). Establish communications and stakeholder plans; 3). Become an active partner in regional economic development; 4). Determine appropriate technical assistance opportunities; and 5). Align organizational bylaws and meeting structure around goal achievement.

In 2015, the NewAllen Alliance applied and received funding from the Allen County Capital Improvement Board to complete the *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan*. Sturtz Public Management Group (SturtzPMG) was hired to facilitate the process. The planning initiative concluded in October 2016. Collaborative priorities established include: 1). Cultivate an environment for sustainable economic growth; 2). Foster vitality through quality of place investment; and 3). Build a strong foundation to support livability. The NewAllen Alliance and Allen County signed a contract with SturtzPMG in January 2017 to provide Rural Liaison services toward the continued coordination and implementation of plan priorities.

###