

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *NewAllen Alliance bids to participate in the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Program*

EAST ALLEN COUNTY, IN, March 22, 2018 – A coalition of communities in eastern Allen County is hoping to win millions of dollars in state funds that can be used for development and revitalization projects for the area. But the group will have to compete with other communities which have their eyes set on the same prize.

The *NewAllen Alliance* today announced it will bid to participate in the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities (Indiana Stellar) Program. The Indiana Stellar Program is a competition offered by a collaboration of state agencies including the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs, Indiana Department of Transportation, and the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority. The Indiana Stellar Program has been in place since 2011, but this year has been modified to have a regional focus. Goals of the Indiana Stellar program are to foster regional collaborative behaviors and investment, stem the tide of non-metropolitan population loss through talent attraction and retention, build sustainability, build capacity with municipal governance, and leverage quality of places through comprehensive and transformative planning processes building on current assets. Regions can be comprised of 2 to ten communities.

The New Allen Alliance wants to use funds from the Indiana Stellar Program to advance the ***East Allen County Rural Renewal Initiative***. The Alliance will outline multiple projects in each community including downtown revitalization improvements, new and improved sidewalk and trail connectivity in between community assets, park improvements, senior housing, and enhancements of regional industrial assets along the US 30 and 24 (Fort to Port) Routes. Funding available through the Indiana Stellar Program includes \$4.5 million in Community Development Block Grants, \$2 million in rural transportation funds, and \$800,000 in housing tax credits. Local community resources, county-wide funding partners, and private donations and investment will be needed to provide matching and leveraging funding to complete a competitive application. It is estimated that a total package of \$25 - \$30 million in projects will be developed.

According to Kent Castleman, Chairman of the NewAllen Alliance Board, "The Stellar initiative is exactly what NewAllen has been planning for within our communities. The towns, cities, and villages in East Allen all provide characteristics of their own, but together we are stronger and as we move to renew in concert, it will make a statement about the strength of our region as well. Investing in our quality of life assets, downtowns and industry is exactly what is needed to bolster the growth and sustainability of each community."

Finalists for the Indiana Stellar Program will be announced April 19. Full applications are due August 25th and designations will be made November 27. If selected, the region would have four years to complete projects.

About the NewAllen Alliance: Organized in 1991, the NewAllen Alliance is an all-volunteer organization that works to bring people to the table who 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.

The *NewAllen Alliance Strategic Investment Plan*, rolled out by the collaborative in October 2016, was awarded the 2017 John Keller Award for Planning Initiative by the American Planning Association Small Town and Rural Planning Division. The NewAllen Plan, aimed at retaining and attracting high-quality jobs to the East Allen County communities and integrated the region's collaborative values and strategies with the individual goals and objectives of these rural towns so near, but distinctly separate, from the urban areas of Allen County. See www.newallenalliance.net.

More information about the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Program: More information on the opportunity can be found at this link: <http://www.in.gov/ocra/2763.htm>.

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