

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *NewAllen Alliance Makes the First Cut in the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Competition***

*EAST ALLEN COUNTY, IN, April 24, 2018* – Officials with NewAllen Alliance, a coalition of communities in eastern Allen County, recently received word they were selected as one of six regions invited to compete for millions of dollars in state funds through the Indiana Regional Stellar Communities Program. NewAllen Alliance, in cooperation with the Allen County Board of Commissioners, submitted the ***East Allen County Rural Renewal Initiative*** proposal back in March. "We have been planning for several years for an opportunity just like this", expressed Kent Castleman, NewAllen Board Chairman. "So many times, plans lay on a shelf and struggle to be implemented in small communities with little staff and financial resources. This Stellar Designation brings the talent and resources of the small communities, many of whom are volunteers, together with county, state and federal resources for a bigger impact. Without the collaboration, the projects being discussed would just be plans for a long time. We look forward to moving into implementation once we receive this designation."

The Indiana Stellar Program is overseen by a collaboration of state agencies and aims to foster regional collaboration, rural population growth, capacity building, and leveraging of existing assets to increase quality of place. The ***East Allen County Rural Renewal Initiative*** proposed increasing accessibility and walkability through sidewalk and trail improvements, revitalizing downtown spaces, and enhancing park and recreation facilities. In addition, the proposal seeks to enable communities to purchase and develop shovel ready industrial land in East Allen County to bring quality industrial jobs and in-turn boost the per capita income of residents. According to Eric Doden, CEO of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc., "We're building a nationally recognized economy in Allen County. To do that, we need winning strategies for our urban, suburban, and rural communities. NewAllen Alliance's plan will help renew eastern Allen County and strengthen our community momentum. For Allen County to win, everyone—urban, suburban, and rural—must win."

As the largest geographic and third most populous county in the State of Indiana, one of Allen County's greatest assets and challenges is its diversity of place. "As Fort Wayne advances as the economic engine of the region, it is important to recognize that a significant portion of Allen County land remains rural," added Commissioner Therese Brown, "the small towns and unincorporated communities sprinkled across the Eastern Allen County landscape provide a friendly, small-town vibe sought out by many who still want to be close to big city jobs and amenities."

Over the next four months, the NewAllen Alliance communities will be fine-tuning the specific projects in each community. 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 \$40 million in Stellar and complementary projects will be developed.

Full applications are due in September and designations will be made November 27<sup>th</sup>. 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](http://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> .

<https://calendar.in.gov/site/ocra/event/crouch-announces-2018-stellar-communities-program-finalists/>

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**Hoagland Days @ Hoagland Community Park**



**Woodburn Summerfest Corn Hole Tournament**



**New Haven Downtown**



**New Haven Community Center**