

NEWS RELEASE

GREATER FREEPORT PARTNERSHIP SELECTED AS NAME FOR NEW ORGANIZATION COMBINING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CHAMBER, MAIN STREET AND TOURISM AGENCIES

*Greater Freeport Partnership to serve as one voice to promote
growth in region*

Freeport, Illinois, May 4, 2018—The board of "NewCo" has selected Greater Freeport Partnership as the name for the new organization, which is designed to promote economic development, tourism and business services to grow the Freeport and Stephenson County region.

Greater Freeport Partnership recently formed when the boards of directors of Northwest Illinois Development Alliance (NIDA), Freeport/Stephenson County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Freeport Downtown Development Foundation (FDDF) and Freeport Area Chamber of Commerce voted to create a new organization that brings together the four organizations and four boards of directors into one organization with one mission, one board and one voice. The Partnership will begin operating in June 2018.

For those wanting to visit or start and grow a business, the Greater Freeport Partnership will provide "one stop shopping" and one main entry point to investing in, and growing roots in, Freeport and Stephenson County. "We will market the area with one clear, consistent voice and a clear call to action," says Gary Quinn, Chairman of the Greater Freeport Partnership.

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"When searching for the ideal name for this new organization, we as a board sought to find something that encompassed Freeport, Stephenson County and the spirit of regionalism that is at the heart of this collaboration," says Terri Musser, board member for the Greater Freeport Partnership. "By naming this new organization the Greater Freeport Partnership, we are highlighting two of our guiding principles: regionalism and collaboration."

According to Mike Marten, owner of Mort's Bar and Grill in downtown Freeport (and a board member), the new organization is coming together to build on a positive vision for Freeport and Stephenson County. "It has been a demanding yet satisfying experience working with this board to help merge these very important organizations. By choosing the name Greater Freeport Partnership, I am confident that it solidifies our platform as being committed to economic development, tourism and overall growth of the entire region."

"We especially liked the use of 'Partnership' in the name," says Mark Wright, board member of the Greater Freeport Partnership. "This is a strong word and embodies our desire to partner with our investors, members and community. We are now one and will partner with Freeport, Stephenson County and our adjoining counties in collaboration to bring services and economic development to the greater region."

Collaborate Freeport, which was formed in 2015, and the All In Freeport brand will be part of the new organization.

Business services and programs provided by the Chamber will remain intact and provide greater value with all the organizations under one roof focused on growth. All current Chamber members will be members of the Greater Freeport Partnership.

The 17-person initial board includes three representatives from each of the four organizations, plus the Freeport City Manager, Stephenson County Board Chair, a representative from Highland Community College and the Freeport School District; and a representative from either another taxing jurisdiction or not-for-profit designated by the Board.

Funding will come from the City of Freeport, NIDA investors, Chamber members and FDDF sponsors and, if approved, from Stephenson County. Revenue will also be generated through co-op advertising programs, grants and from events.

The consolidated organization will enter into three- to five-year Service Agreements with the City of Freeport and Stephenson County to deliver services and attain agreed upon performance metrics. In return, the City and County will compensate the new organization for the agreed upon services. The County Board's and City Council's approval of their respective agreements with the Partnership will represent their endorsement of the consolidation.

A national search for an executive director is underway. Greater Freeport Partnership staff will also include a planning and development director, a member service director, a tourism and marketing director, visitors center manager and administrative staff.

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