



MEDIA RELEASE

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NONPROFIT *ELEVATE ILLINOIS* LAUNCHES TO HIGHLIGHT POSITIVE SIDE OF ILLINOIS—FROM BUSINESS, COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS

GENESEO, IL – New non-profit Elevate Illinois (Elevate) launches on social media and blog platforms today. Focused on sharing stories about people, places, communities, nonprofits and events from across the state, Elevate’s mission is to educate and unite Illinoisans around the many positive things which make this state great.

“It’s time we take back our narrative in Illinois,” said Elevate Illinois CEO and President, Janet Mathis. “For too long, we have let negative news weigh us down and define us. Now is the time to remind ourselves and others of all that is good in Illinois and celebrate what unites, and not what divides, us.”

Elevate Illinois’ website (www.elevateillinois.org) allows for grassroots sharing of stories, photos and videos which, upon review, will be shared on the Elevate Illinois blog and through the organization’s social media streams on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter with plans to expand to other platforms. Staff, volunteers, and, eventually, interns, will also build Elevate’s library of stories to share. Additionally, the public is encouraged to use **#elevateillinois** on their own positive news posts about Illinois.

Elevate Illinois recognizes that Illinois is at our best when the whole state is strengthened. Illinois citizens have much more in common than what divides us. With that in mind, Elevate Illinois strives to put a renewed focus on downstate efforts and resources to create a positive synergy - similar to what Cook and the collar counties have nurtured successfully for many years. Elevate will also seek out opportunities to reinforce relationships between downstate and the more urban areas of Illinois.

Illinois Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton encourages the idea of uplifting the positive stories that are happening in communities across the state of Illinois.

“As Lt. Governor, I have traveled the state and have seen first-hand all of the good that is happening in Illinois. I have personally witnessed the innovation, creativity, determination and strength of Illinoisans especially during a global pandemic.” Stratton said. “Amplifying what is good about Illinois uplifts us all. I’m looking forward to seeing the collection of information and shared stories that will be amplified by Elevate Illinois.”

From Illinois State Representative Tim Butler, “I have personally known the leadership of Elevate Illinois for decades. Both Janet and Craig Coil, Elevate’s Executive Vice President/Chief Operations Officer, are longtime Illinoisans who are committed to this state as evidenced by their exemplary careers in both the public and private sectors. I am thrilled they took the initiative to focus on creation of a stronger Illinois for us and future generations.”

Emily Burke, the Senior Vice President, Project Development & Chief Community Engagement Officer for Walker’s Bluff, recognizes that, Illinois is a diverse state and applauds Elevate Illinois’ initiative to embrace this diversity as well as the unifying common goals which make the state great.

“We, in Illinois, have much more that unites us than divides us,” said Burke.

“Recognizing that, as well as what makes each part of Illinois unique, is what Elevate Illinois is all about. I am happy to be part of an effort that celebrates what makes each part of the state special as well as what brings us together.”

The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln (CFLL) has been involved with the formation of Elevate Illinois almost since its inception.

John Stremsterfer, CFLL President/CEO said, “Community foundations have long been cornerstones in supporting cities, towns and counties all over Illinois. Elevate Illinois will give all of us, whether we are nonprofits, businesses, units of government or individuals, a broader voice and will help us to collectively change how Illinois is viewed, both within the state and in other parts of the country and world.”

Elevate Illinois is a 501(c)(3) with a diverse board of directors from various industries, experiences and locations in Illinois. The organization works with individuals, entities and corporations from across the state to educate and remind people about Illinois’ positive attributes while uniting around shared issues that showcase and benefit communities throughout Illinois.

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