

OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS LT. GOVERNOR, JULIANA STRATTON  
 Illinois Rivers Coordinating Council  
 Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
 November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019

<b>A present majority of currently represented voting member positions shall constitute a quorum: i.e. 13</b>				
<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Chair</b>				
Chair (LG's Office)	Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton	x		
<b>Departmental Rep.</b>				
Dept. of Agriculture	Brian Rennecker	x		
	Kristi Jones			x
Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	Wendy Bell		x	
Environmental Protection Agency	Christine Davis		x	
Dept. of Natural Resources	Steve Altman		x	
Dept. of Transportation	Thomas Brooks		x	
<b>Misc. Rep.</b>				
National Great River Research and Education Center	Ted Kratschmer	x		
Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts	Stephen Fulling			x
<b>Community &amp; Nonprofit Rep.</b>				
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Doug Blodgett		x	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Danielle Anderson			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Matthew Stafford			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Darren Melvin		x	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Allen LaPointe	x		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Nani Bhowmik			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Konstantine Alonistiotis "Dean"		x	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Phil Gonet</b>		x	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Jason McNeill			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Tyrone Coleman			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Gordon Tucker			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Lindsay Keeney		x	
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Brett Stawar	x		
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Reed Wilson</b>			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Wendell Shauman			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	Brett Nissen			x
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Pending</b>			
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Pending</b>			
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Pending</b>			
Community & Nonprofit Mem.	<b>Pending</b>			

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<b>Ex-Officio (non-voting member)</b>				
Ex-Officio (non-member)	Pending			
<b>Guest (non-member)</b>				
Guest	Nicole Saulsberry		x	
Guest	Paul Rhode		x	
Guest	Emily Jenkins			x
Guest	Anna-Lisa Castle		x	
Guest	Robert Sinkler		x	
Guest	Dale Chapman	x		
Guest	Mindy Barnett		x	
Guest	Lauren Lurkins		x	
Guest	Rep. Monica Bristow	x		
Guest	Mayor Mike McCormick	x		
Guest	Mayor Brant Walker	x		
Guest	Patrick McGinnis	x		
<b>Lt. Governor's Staff (non-member)</b>				
N/A	Robert Mannis	x		
N/A	Levi Bain	x		

**1. Lt. Governor Stratton called the meeting to order at 10:07AM**

- Roll call taken and quorum established

**2. Approval of the meeting agenda for December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 and meeting minutes from September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

- Agenda
  - Motion made by Ted Kratschmer
  - Motion seconded by Brett Stawar
  - All in favor
  - None opposed
- Minutes
  - Motion made by Ted Kratschmer
  - Motion seconded by Allen LaPointe
  - All in favor
  - None opposed

**3. Chairperson's remarks**

- **Lt. Governor Stratton**
  - Thanked everyone for attending
    - **Dale Chapman** presents welcoming remarks
      - Briefly discussed the Swarovski Waterschool that is at the National Great rivers Research & Education Center
  - Discussed

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- Work that she does with the other councils she chairs and with the Governor
- The structure of the Illinois Rivers Coordinating Council moving forward
- The development of this Council's strategic report
- The need for each committee to have chairs that help drive the committees' work

#### 4. New business

- **Lt. Gov. Stratton**

- Strategic Report Discussion
  - Each committee should focus on what they want as the priority points for the Council within the next few years
  - At the next council meeting, my office will present a report to the Council for folks to provide substantive feedback; at or before the subsequent meeting, my office will ensure that the report is finalized for the Council to hold a vote on whether to move forward with it and to further discuss implementation strategies
- Committee Content Discussion
  - Conservation & Environmental
    - **Doug Blodgett**
      - Two things of importance are that (I) the committee wants to talk more about ways to address the nutrient problem in Illinois, and (II) the committee wants to think about existing programs for addressing this issue so that we ensure that available resources are being utilized in Illinois
    - **Lauren Lurkins**
      - We discussed the importance of potentially introducing federal-cost bearing from the US EPA to assist the IEPA in off-setting the cost of planning and implementing nutrient loss reduction strategies
    - **Brett Stawar**
      - Tourism is important and I think we should begin looking at ways to address this, potentially through the economic development & infrastructure committee
        - **Lt. Gov. Stratton**
          - Yes. I would like to lift up messages related to the economic development that's taking place throughout the State. I will continue to look for ways to do this
            - Brett Stawar
              - I will look at ways to support this effort
  - Economic Development & Infrastructure
    - **Ted Kratschmer**
      - This committee discussed the Illinois Rivers Integrated Management Plan, which needs to be updated. There's a need to invigorate the plan and talk a bit about what the

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plan is and why it's important to refresh it. However, writing the plan may be outside the scope of the committee and Council

- We also discussed flood protection and infrastructure. With this we wanted to potentially undertake a policy review of options for landowners who have flood damage on their lands on a regular basis. Furthermore, we may want to address policy gaps so that we can potentially help to close them
- We also discussed navigation infrastructure on rivers and the fact that it's fairly outdated; there's a long history of wanting to get some of it updated
- **Steve Altman**
  - We talked about a policy review of floods that we experienced this year. We looked at some of the success we had with addressing these floods, which is mostly due to buy-outs
- **Nicole Saulsberry**
  - The protection of the wetlands and making sure they are secure is important to prevent future flooding
  - There is a 2025 strategy some organizations in the State have set for a 25% reduction and 15% reduction in select bacteria that kills nutrients in the waterways
- **Lt Gov. Stratton**
  - Ted and Steve, you mention flooding and I want you all to know that Illinois is working at the state and federal level to help prevent flooding because of the impact it has on entire communities
- **Nicole Saulsberry**
  - Much of what we so far discussed goes back to the staffing levels at IEPA. "Protecting IEPA's Health so it can Protect Ours" is a report the agency put out which identifies the severe staffing shortage at IEPA -- without staffing it's difficult to monitor or manage any other core responsibilities related to the health of our waterways. We need support for effective rule making, monitoring, and outreach -- everything stems from the funding and foundational support for IEPA
- Asian Carp & Other Invasive Species
  - **Robert Mannis**
    - Among other things, this committee discussed the role of IDRN is fighting invasive species and ways to use the familiarity of the Asian Carp name as a way to lift up the names of other invasive species as part of an awareness campaign
  - **Nicole Saulsberry**
    - There was a symposium several years ago at the University of Chicago. It highlighted that if we're going

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to tackle this topic, we need to tackle something we won't have to redo a few years from now

- **Mindy Barnett**
  - IDNR has the Great Lakes Invasive Species Coordinating Committee, through which the agency does some work with all the other Great Lake States and regional partners to address the issues of invasive species. By working with other states, we are able to not just abide by our own rules but are also able to help protect other states and visa-versa
  - With regards to the Asian Carp, we can't necessarily eradicate it entirely without harming other species and the environment, so our primary goal is to get it to a manageable level
  - We have a strategic plan that we use for addressing different invasive species, from animals to plants. It would be good to share this with the Council, and perhaps this is something the Council can support
- **Lt. Gov. Stratton**
  - We want to know what else is out there, what other resources are already created – we need a document that provides this information so that we can educate others. Also, there are experts that we should pull in to be a part of the work we do on this Council

## 5. Member updates

- **Ted Kratschmer**
  - The National Great Rivers Research & Education Center will soon release an update about the nutrient reduction strategies in Illinois and the science behind the work the Center does. Through this, folks will get to see some of what the State is doing to stop this nutrient reduction
  - The Illinois Nutrient Reduction Strategy Conference is happening on December 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>; folks show attend if possible
  - The Resilience Low Funding Loan Act proposes a couple hundred million dollars to provide funding for natural infrastructure that will mitigate and lower flood heights. Folks should call their representatives to support this bill if possible

## 6. Public comment

- **Rep. Monica Bristow**
  - Brief remarks thanking the Council, and expressing enthusiasm, for their work
- **Mayor Brant Walker**
  - Brief remarks thank the Council for coming to Alton
  - Brief remarks concerning flooding in the area:
    - Alton this year just went through its second largest flood – the economic impact was \$8.2 million. This put a lot of people out of work
    - Mitigation when it comes to Alton needs to be more than lip service; a flood wall would save the City of Alton millions of dollars

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- People need to understand what ‘river infrastructure’ means from an economic and human perspective
- Patrick McGinnis
  - See Appendix I

**7. Meeting adjourned at 11:24AM**

- Motioned made by Brett Stawar
- Motion seconded by Thomas Brooks
- All in favor
- None opposed

# Appendix I

**IL Rivers Coordinating Council Hearing  
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**Subj: Statement on behalf of the Lower IL River – Rural  
Prosperity Initiative**

Experts are telling us that rural America is on the decline. In too many places there is an eroding sense of community.

Jobs, revenue, and infrastructure won't be enough.... talent is looking for a great place to live.

Inward migration of families, retirees, talent, and business will depend more and more on community livability and a new livability economy.

Our Great Rivers Confluence Region and the Lower Illinois River Valley could benefit from a timely public/private strategy that reveals a model for community and regional recovery.

There is an opportunity to leverage and link assets across the confluence region and not only lift the region but reveal a process model to lift the entire downstate.

Prominent local institutions will be central to this effort, serving as capacity builders and conveners.

Its going to take a collective effort to buck the trends for rural America. We think the Confluence Region is a great place in downstate Illinois to begin this journey.

At the center of our cultural and natural resource challenges are understanding the importance of community, how we relate to one another, and the nexus of water, energy, and food security that sustains us.

Regionally, we are at the place where the Illinois River and the Missouri River join the Mississippi. We are a Great Rivers gateway community with the potential to reconnect Americans and international travelers with globally significant water resources. We could also be the hub for place based learning that connects 500,000



k-12 students in the St. Louis region to the water resources that define this place.

Over the last twenty-five years a number of water resource based assets have come on line locally that celebrate our connection to water and our rivers. We now are embarking on an effort to more effectively integrate those assets in a place making manner that can brand and sustain our region.

Earlier this year, the Lower Illinois River Valley- Rural Prosperity Initiative was incorporated as a not-for-profit in the State of Illinois. A initial slate of Directors has been seated and key activation projects are being identified and advanced. The public launch of this effort has been very well received.

The Lower Illinois River Valley – Rural Prosperity Initiative looks forward to working with the Lt. Governor and IRCC, the Governor’s Council on Rural Affairs, and others to reveal a platform for downstate revitalization and rebuilding social capital and optimism about the future here in the Lower IL River Valley and Great Rivers Confluence Region.

**Patrick S. McGinnis**

Executive Director

Lower Illinois River Valley – Rural Prosperity Initiative

[www.lirv-rpi.org](http://www.lirv-rpi.org)

mobile: 618.520.7060



## LOWER ILLINOIS RIVER VALLEY – RURAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE

*“Investing in Rural People and Places”*

### Rebuilding a Resilient Heartland

Rural America must self-determine a way forward that rebuilds social capital, makes rural places and people more resilient, and local institutions more self-reliant. A ‘pessimism of place’ must be replaced with communities of health, hope, and opportunity. Local solutions need to drive regional betterment.

Our planning must be fresh, innovative, and directed at place-making to create a destination where young families want to live, talent can thrive, local businesses may grow, and everyone is able to prosper.

Rural America has a great deal to offer with affordable housing, safe neighborhoods, and a small-town authenticity. Success will require all of us working together around a common effort.

### The Illinois River Valley: Rural Corridor of Opportunity

The Illinois River flows diagonally across the State of Illinois, beginning southeast of Chicago and joining the Mississippi River at Grafton, IL near St. Louis, MO. More than 90 percent of the state’s population lives in this watershed area.

Transformative investment combined with thoughtfully conceived initiatives could spark real and rapid change in Illinois’ rural core. Building local capacity to meet the challenges and opportunities of our 21st century society will be crucial. Local institutions will be central to this effort serving as listeners, conveners, and consensus-builders, empowering individual entrepreneurs, local investment, and collective actions to drive real impact.

### Establishing a Foothold for Prosperity in the Lower Illinois River Valley



Applying local capacity strategically and assembling the right mix of resources – human, institutional, and financial – will be crucial to driving real change. The Lower Illinois River Valley corridor is ready for targeted investment and transformative change. This struggling region could become a corridor of opportunity.

In 2017, Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) and John Wood Community College (JWCC) began an exploratory effort in the rural core of their adjoining service areas, a nine-county corridor along the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River. This effort is seeking ways to better serve rural segments of their adjoining community college districts and improve the livability of Illinois River Valley communities, overall.

Early on, LCCC and JWCC communicated with a number of community leaders and local capacity-building institutions to initially scope a path forward. This ad hoc group included the Illinois Electric Cooperative, the Illinois Farm Bureau, University of Illinois Extension, and the Great Rivers Land Trust.

#### LIRV-RPI AD HOC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Philip Bradshaw, Producer,  
Bradshaw Family Farms\*

Dr. Dale Chapman, President,  
Lewis & Clark Community College

Michael Elbe, President,  
John Wood Community College

Bruce Giffin, Board of Directors,  
Illinois Electric Cooperative

Patrick McGinnis, Interim Executive Director, LIRV-  
RPI; Senior Advisor, THG Advisors\*

Shawn Rennecker, Economic Development Director,  
Illinois Electric Cooperative; Mayor, Barry, IL\*

Alley Ringhausen, Executive Director,  
Great Rivers Land Trust

Blake Roderick, Executive Director,  
Pike-Scott Farm Bureau

Jennifer Russell, Community and Economic Development  
Educator, University of Illinois Extension\*

\*Board of Directors



## White House Takes Aim at Rural Prosperity

In April 2017, the White House announced creation of the Federal Interagency Task Force for Agriculture and Rural Prosperity. In January 2018, the Task Force presented its recommendations, organized around five key indicators of rural prosperity: E-Connectivity, Quality of Life, Rural Workforce, Technological Innovation, and Economic Development. The Task Force called for regional solutions to be set in motion, and the development of implementation metrics to guide the overall effort and measure success.



During the remainder of 2018, the Lower Illinois River Valley ad hoc group discussed and framed regional challenges and opportunities, utilizing the five focus areas put forth by the Task Force. The concept for a rural prosperity initiative, its focus, and geographic coverage were defined, initially directed at the counties along the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River.

## Launch of Lower Illinois River Valley–Rural Prosperity Initiative

Formally incorporated in early 2019, the Lower Illinois River Valley–Rural Prosperity Initiative (LIRV-RPI) seeks to immediately leverage the capacity-building strength of local institutions to assist leaders in unleashing a wave of rural innovation and entrepreneurship across the Lower Illinois River Valley.

### Key 'Impact' Objectives

- Increase local entrepreneurship and jobs.
- Develop catalytic projects that seed future investments.
- Develop supportive environment needed for economic development to thrive.
- Formulate actionable place-making strategies that build community vibrancy and social capital.

### Actionable Strategies

- Support legislation providing opportunities for enhancing the culture and economy of rural areas.
- Build a dynamic agricultural economy, with sustainable conservation business practices.
- Encourage rural small business growth and development of infrastructure in water, sewer, power, broadband, and transportation.
- Support transformative improvements to rural health care.
- Invigorate historic town centers and restore their position as hubs of local commerce and community.
- Celebrate the region's open space and natural assets toward development of a strong outdoor recreation economy.

### Our Partners



For more information about LIRV-RPI, visit [www.lirv-rpi.org](http://www.lirv-rpi.org) | Email: [info@lirv-rpi.org](mailto:info@lirv-rpi.org)



## **Lower Illinois River Valley Regional Prosperity Initiative – Ideation**

Through an initial ideation process, an ad hoc leadership group has identified ongoing programs with promise, as well as new 'big ideas.' Altogether, 65 ideas were generated across five focus areas.

Key Anchoring initiatives considered include:

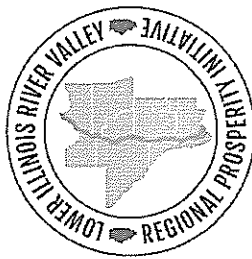
- E-Connectivity/Broadband Initiative
- Ag Innovation Cluster, Farm Profitability, and Best Management Practice Performance Testing Center
- Preserving and Revitalizing Our Rural Culture, County Seat Town Square Revitalization Initiative
- Career Readiness/Workforce Development/Talent Retention
- Building the Valley's Outdoor Rec Economy, Active Living, Adventure and Agro-Tourism
- Health Care, Public Health, and Wellness (includes Telehealth initiative)
- Source Water Retention, Nutrient Management and Soil Health
- Transportation (I-72 Corridor, Hwy 67 Corridor, Jersey Intermodal Hub, IL Waterway Modernization, Historic Rt. 66 Brand Enrichment)

Note: Utilization of The White House Task Force Five Focus Areas affords us a starting point to categorically identify and 'cluster' needs and resource objectives, propose outputs, and consider how those outputs can be most effectively integrated and communicated, and the overall effort rallied around in manner that aligned with current federal grant priorities.



**White House Task Force for Agriculture and Rural Prosperity - Five Point Call to Action**

<p><b>e-Connectivity for Rural America</b></p>	<p>Reliable and affordable high-speed internet e-connectivity will transform rural America as a key catalyst for prosperity.</p>
<p><b>Improving Quality of Life</b></p>	<p>To empower rural communities to thrive, modern utilities, affordable housing, efficient transportation and reliable employment are economic indicators that must be integrated with social indicators, such as access to medical services, public safety, education and community resilience.</p>
<p><b>Supporting a Rural Workforce</b></p>	<p>There are many opportunities for Community Colleges to partner with local businesses and organizations to identify gaps, to provide career training and development, to fine-tune existing training programs, and to grow mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities to develop the workforce necessary to compete and thrive in the 21st Century. Retaining talent in rural areas will require revealing a vibrant future for hometown talent so that it stays or returns.</p>
<p><b>Harnessing Technological Innovation</b></p>	<p>risk management and farm resiliency. Innovations in manufacturing, mining, and other non-agricultural industries can enhance production and worker safety. At the core of these developments that will further grow the rural economy is the expansion of access data and data analytics, continuing education, applied research and enhanced problem solving capacity.</p>
<p><b>Developing the Rural Economy</b></p>	<p>Promoting innovative farm technologies, energy security, recreation, agritourism and sustainable forest management, communities will be empowered to leverage the bounties of rural America. Investing in rural transportation infrastructure is needed for carrying more "Made in America" products to markets at home and abroad, and boosting our country's global competitiveness. Revitalizing rural town centers and attention to place-making will make rural communities an attractive and affordable alternative to suburban living.</p>



# Timeline and Key Milestones

