



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Office of The Mayor Lloyd Winnecke
Ella Johnson-Watson
812.436.4965

Leadership Evansville
Lynn Miller Pease
812.589.3682

Positive Impact of VOICE Being Felt in Evansville Community, Region

Mayor Lloyd Winnecke and Leadership Evansville Executive Director Lynn Miller-Pease celebrate VOICE projects having "transformational impact on our community"

EVANSVILLE, Ind. – Evansville Mayor Lloyd Winnecke and Leadership Evansville (LE) Executive Director Lynn Miller-Pease will update the community on the progress and inspiring impact of their VOICE initiative at this evening's Big Action Meeting (BAM) at The Arts Council of Southwestern Indiana in downtown Evansville at 318 Main St. The meeting is being held to report to the community on the projects and actions that have emerged from VOICE and invite citizens to participate.

"The groundswell of support being generated for VOICE is having a transformational impact on our community," Mayor Winnecke said. "VOICE is inspiring people to take action and help create the kind of future they envision for Evansville. I would like to thank everyone who has volunteered to lead or support the many VOICE-related projects, because their spirit of servant leadership is contagious. It's all part of the positive new energy being felt throughout Evansville and our region."

The Mayor's Office and Leadership Evansville launched VOICE in 2012 as a community-wide process to engage citizens in sharing their hopes and visions for Evansville's preferred future. More than 3,000 people took part in 32 visioning sessions that led VOICE volunteers to launch, organize and support collaborative projects in the three focus areas that emerged from the VOICE visioning results: Healthy Green Space, Experiences and City Core.

During the past year, VOICE engaged another 1,000 people at 15 "Flower Pot" meetings on these three focus areas to transition from vision to change-making action. Participants identified: 1) projects in these focus areas that were underway or pending, 2) resources that participants could contribute to VOICE projects, and 3) stakeholders to include to ensure success.

"Once information was collected at the VOICE Flower Pot meetings, it was time to mobilize our volunteers to implement projects that could happen quickly and plan those that were possible over a six

to 18-month timeframe,” Miller-Pease said. “VOICE has inspired people to action. We invited people to get involved, and they did! Hundreds of volunteers have spent countless hours in VOICE project meetings hosted by Leadership Evansville as people stepped forward to lead, plan and support projects in the three focus areas.”

Among the many projects VOICE has inspired or generated, Miller-Pease cites several that are already making an impact or coming up in the weeks ahead:

- Healthy Green Space – the Franklin Street Bazaar, put on every Saturday by the Franklin Street Events Association June – Sept., and Parks Fest, the free outdoor music and arts festival in Garvin Park on Sept. 13th.
- Experiences – Evansville’s Main Course Challenge restaurant competition and the #SeeEVV free outdoor trivia hunt on Sept. 6, starting and ending at the Franklin Street Bazaar.
- City Core – Creation of the Downtown Alliance to promote growth and revitalization downtown.
- Long-Term – VOICE data used to complete the Sustainable Evansville Area Coalition “The Millennial Plan 2040,” the Comprehensive Plan for Vanderburgh County’s Area Plan Commission, and the Interstate-69 Corridor planning. Healthy Green Space data also was used in creating 2015 Evansville City Budget content, including Roberts Park, as well as the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System Comprehensive Operations Analysis.

“The idea that regular people through their shared visions are actually affecting regional long-range planning is incredibly important to our community’s ability to reach its goals,” Miller-Pease said. “Since its inception, VOICE has helped a diverse cross-section of our community to see that if you passionately care about something and want to make it happen, you can. All it takes is initiative and collaboration. If you want to get involved in our community but haven’t yet, there has never been a better time! By sharing their talents and resources, VOICE participants are turning vision into action. In the process, they’re learning – as our new slogan says – that they can ‘Bee the change’ in our community!”

During today’s VOICE Big Action Meeting, Miller-Pease will invite participants to join in creating a positive buzz and support VOICE by:

- Telling the story of the many positive things going on in our community,
- Volunteering to help out on VOICE projects now underway,
- Attending one of the VOICE Flower Pot meetings scheduled in the next month, and
- Starting a VOICE project of their own.

Get Involved: Upcoming VOICE “Flower Pot” Meeting Dates

Anyone who would like to participate in an active VOICE project or begin one of their own can join Leadership Evansville and other VOICE volunteers at one of the following “Flower Pot” meetings.

- Tuesday, Sept. 23 – EXPERIENCES
4:30 p.m. at City Taco, 2403 Washington Avenue, Evansville
- Tuesday, Sept. 30 – CITY CORE
4:30 p.m. at the Reitz Home Carriage House, 224 Southeast First Street, Evansville
- Tuesday, Oct. 7 – HEALTHY GREEN SPACE
4:30 p.m. at The Pagoda, 401 Southeast Riverside Drive, Evansville

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