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## **Regional Economic Development Names Interim Board**

Regional Economic Development for Greene, Jersey, Macoupin and Montgomery counties is moving closer to reality with the formation of an interim board of directors that is currently laying the foundation of the group.

Meeting before Christmas, the 16-member board elected Macoupin County member Lea Hudson as the interim board chair and quickly set goals, and a timeline for the board.

“This is a group of business people and elected officials who realize that regional economic development is an imperative for our four-counties, certainly underscored by the hundreds of lost jobs in the past year which impacts all of us,” said Hudson.

“It has become apparent that to be more economically viable as a region we must work together. As a four-county organization, we have 116,000 voices in the legislature and the ability to pool resources to create jobs and ultimately improve our overall quality of life. This is certainly the most important initiative I believe we can work towards for the future of our communities.”

At the December 19 meeting, several subcommittees were formed and the group agreed to have a final document outlining a plan for each area to the full steering committee by May 1. The subcommittees each target issues vital to the formation of a successful regional economic development group.

The subcommittees are: organizational structure; vision, mission and goals; funding; by-laws and a permanent board of directors; branding, Marketing/organizational name; and staffing.

Serving on the interim board are:

Greene County-Ron Coultas, Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative; William Rees, Farmers State Bank; Liz Killion, Killion Wireless; Carl Moran, White Hall National Bank.

Jersey County-Allen Lash, AgriSolutions; Dean Heneghan, Heneghan and Associates; Pam Heitzig, Jersey County Board; Jerry McIntyre, McIntyre Contracting.

Macoupin County-Brian Ury, First National Bank; Lea Hudson, H&H Construction; Andrew Manar, Macoupin County Board; Scott Behn, Frontier Communications.

Montgomery County-Tony Harris, Hillsboro Energy; Susan Griffin, Lincoln Land Community College; Mike Plunkett, Montgomery County Board; Ken Nimmons, Schutt Sports.

The four counties have been working for several months with the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs (IIRA) MAPPING the Future of Your Community group to identify challenges and opportunities, and to create a structure that will help the counties benefit from the regional approach of economic development. A series of meetings produced a list of goals that the group will pursue.

The four-county region is comprised of 116,000 people and stretches from Montgomery County in the east to Greene county in the west and would include every form of transportation, including major highways, two airports and the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

Questions about the MAPPING project can be directed to MAPPING Coordinator Shari Albrecht at 217-825-3812 or [Shari.Albrecht@illinois.gov](mailto:Shari.Albrecht@illinois.gov).