



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STEM Education and Agriculture Roundtable Discussion on Jan. 19 at Naper Settlement

Naperville, IL — The community is invited to attend a roundtable discussion about the intersection of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) training and education, and agriculture at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19 at Naper Settlement, 523 S. Webster St., Naperville. The focus of the discussion will be on the importance of STEM education in three areas: as an economic driver for the financial wellbeing of the state; understanding the many uses of agricultural products in nonfood production areas, such as biofuels; and to ensure that those in positions of influence ignite the curiosity of talented and driven youth toward professions that support a vibrant future in agriculture.

Special guests in attendance include Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs, a leader on the issue of state agriculture investments; Senator Linda Holmes (42nd District), who has served on the Illinois State Senate Agriculture and Conservation Committee since 2007; State Representative Grant Wehrli; Congressman Bill Foster, a physicist who strongly supports STEM programs; and Naperville Mayor Steve Chirico.

Panel participants include:

- Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs
- U.S. Representative Bill Foster, 11th Congressional District of Illinois
- Naperville Mayor Steve Chirico
- Naper Settlement President and CEO Rena Tamayo-Calabrese
- Illinois State Rep. Grant Wehrli
- Tom Cross, Distinguished Fellow, Institute for Collaboration, Aurora University and the John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School
- Sherry Eagle, Executive Director, Institute for Collaboration, Aurora University and the John C. Dunham STEM Partnership School
- Michael S. Brophy, President, Benedictine University
- Paul Brandt, Professor of Chemistry and Chairperson, Division of Science, North Central College
- Jeffrey Margolis, Vice President of External Engagement, Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
- Josh Ruland, Director, Core Curriculum-High School, Indian Prairie School District 204
- Jennifer Donatelli, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Naperville School District 203
- Tom Miers, President, Naperville Bank & Trust
- Kara Kinney, General Manager, DuPage County Farm Bureau

Seating is limited for the roundtable. If you would like to attend, please RVSP by Jan. 18 to defalcod@naperville.il.us.

Tamayo-Calabrese said, “Whether we as a community, business or individual are actively engaged in the agriculture field is not the question; rather, this is an exercise in gaining a better understanding of how we are all connected to our food, and how that connection impacts our economy, education, lifestyle and progress.”

Treasurer Frerichs said that agriculture is the number one industry in Illinois and his office has taken important steps to support the successful future of this industry. Born in the downstate farming community of Gifford, Illinois, Treasurer Frerichs also served as chairman of the Senate Agriculture and Conservation Committee.

Naper Settlement is embarking on an exciting new endeavor with a proposed Agricultural Interpretive Center that will chronicle the state’s rich history of agriculture through the experiences of Naperville and surrounding area farmers. The Agricultural Interpretive Center will not only showcase farm families and their legacies, but also will serve to show why agriculture continues to be an important part of our lives whether we farm for a living or not and that farming is an innovative field with great potential for our future professionals. The Center will explore life on the farm, innovation in farming and farming as a business.

As farming by its very nature incorporates science, technology, engineering and math principles, inclusion of STEM-based educational strategies will be in interwoven into all aspects of the Agricultural Interpretive Center’s exhibition and programming. By incorporating today’s agricultural practices within the exhibition, as well as inclusion of an ag-based learning lab, the Center will support the development of critical thinking skills among the more than 33,000 students and their teachers who annually visit Naper Settlement from 112 school districts in 12 surrounding counties.

The 4,500-square-foot barn structure and state-of-the-art exhibitions will feature highly-engaging interactives that bring to life a prominent collection of agricultural equipment recently donated to the museum. Amassed by farmers in DuPage and Will Counties, the collection of the Wheatland Plowing Match Association will serve as a catalyst to convey the very real and personal stories of area farmers over a 150-year period.

About Naper Settlement and the Naperville Heritage Society

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 12 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville, where history comes to play and community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.

About the Illinois Treasurer

The Illinois Treasurer is the state’s Chief Investment Officer and Frerichs is a Certified Public Finance Officer. He protects consumers by encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. As the state’s Chief Investment Officer, and Certified Public Finance Officer, he actively manages approximately \$25 billion. Currently, the portfolio includes \$13 billion in state funds, \$7 billion in college savings plans and \$5 billion on behalf of local and state governments. The investment approach is cautious to ensure the preservation of principal and returns \$28 to the state for every \$1 spent in operations. The Treasurer’s office predates Illinois’ incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

About the Illinois State Senator

State Senator Linda Holmes was elected to represent the 42nd legislative district in 2006. As a former small business owner, she brings a business-conscious perspective to the legislature, ensuring state government protects the hard-working people of Illinois. An Aurora resident since 1983, Holmes has been extremely active serving on a number of neighborhood committees and community organizations. Prior to

being elected as state senator, Holmes served for two years on the Kane County Board. Holmes is a dedicated and hard-working public official, currently serving as Chairperson of the Senate Environment committee. She also serves as the Vice-Chair of the Senate Labor and Commerce committee and is an active member of the Senate Local Government, Agriculture and Conservation, and Committee of the Whole committees.