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Innovate Springfield Names Katie Davison Executive Director

SPRINGFIELD — A new downtown business and social innovation incubator has named Katie Davison as its executive director. Innovate Springfield was established through the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln to fuel a culture of entrepreneurialism in Springfield.

As executive director of Innovate Springfield, Davison will also oversee the Sangamon CEO program, an experiential learning program for area high school seniors with entrepreneurial aspirations.

Davison brings with her over 13 years of economic, community and workforce development experience from Northern Illinois University – Center for Governmental Studies (CGS). Prior to CGS she was the assistant to the marketing director at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. A Springfield native, Davison returned in 2012 and has spent the past three years of her tenure with CGS working out of Springfield.

“We are excited to have someone of Katie’s experience and talent to lead this new effort in Springfield,” said John Stremsterfer, president and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. “Katie’s background in serving a diverse range of clients while at Northern Illinois University will serve her well as Innovate Springfield aims to attract creative entrepreneurs from a variety of sectors in our community.”

Innovate Springfield is located on the second floor of 15 South Old State Capitol Plaza, in the space formerly occupied by McGladrey accounting firm. Positioned downtown, Innovate Springfield intends to be a major part of the ongoing revitalization efforts in the city’s core and looks to develop a more robust culture of innovation as a part of its long-term plans.

“Innovate Springfield will help emerging entrepreneurs and innovators by providing education, mentoring and a shared work space,” said Bruce Sommer, chairman of the board of Innovate

Springfield. “We envision Innovate Springfield as a hub for new ideas that can help to create transformational positive change for our local economy and community.”

Throughout her career Davison has led numerous projects working with private businesses, state and local governments and non-profits, and she has developed a portfolio of work that include business attraction and retention strategies, community assessments and regional occupational studies. Davison received her bachelor’s degree in speech communication from Southern Illinois University. She serves as a board member for the MacArthur Boulevard Association, a business and neighborhood association that promotes and supports the enhancement and improvement of the MacArthur Boulevard corridor.

“Springfield is a unique place for innovation. Not only has it fostered many creative minds over history, we have cultural, community and educational resources along with growing healthcare and local food systems at our finger tips. That richness of resources and history fuels my passion for this community,” said Davison. “I am thrilled and inspired to be involved in this bold endeavor of bringing together innovation and entrepreneurship and expanding that tradition.”

Davison begins in her new position on February 15.

Through philanthropic services, strategic grantmaking and community leadership, the [Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln](#) “connects people who care with causes that matter.”

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