



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan Alexander, manager, downtown initiatives
Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance
Phone: 765-319-0019
Email: salexander@greaterkokomo.com

- OR -

Contact: Caele Pemberton, manager, marketing & communications
Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance
Phone: 765-319-0017
Email: cpemberton@greaterkokomo.com

Contact: Allison Hillis, Health and Human Sciences Extension Educator
Purdue Extension Howard County
Phone: 765-456-2313
Email: amhillis@purdue.edu

Community Encouraged to Join Walking Initiative

KOKOMO, Ind. (APRIL 14, 2020) –

The Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance and Purdue Extension of Howard County have teamed up to get Howard County residents up and moving.

The new joint initiative encourages the public to take regular walks along sidewalks or on the 25 miles of trails in Howard County. The two year program will track mileage through the free mobile app World Walking, and walkers will receive regular emails about the program from Purdue Extension.

“Safe walking is an essential activity listed on Governor Holcomb’s recent executive order that can help each of us navigate our physical, emotional and communal health in these difficult times” said Susan Alexander, Manager, Downtown Initiatives with the Greater Kokomo Economic Development Alliance. “We know that social distancing, isolation and economic disruption are enormously stressful. Supporting each other, taking outdoor walks and interacting with art and nature can go a long way toward improving everyone’s spirits and bolstering immune systems.”

Walkers may join the group immediately by downloading the free “World Walking” application to their phone or computer and joining the Kokomo Howard County Walks group. The app tracks steps and provides themes and milestones for the group to achieve. The group’s first challenge is to walk the distance between Detroit, Michigan and Mobile, Alabama, about 1,145 miles. Walkers add their steps to the group’s count as the group progresses across the United States from north to south inside the app. When the group walks about 184 miles, the first milestone, Columbus, Ohio, will be reached.

Kokomo and Howard County offer many ways to get these miles in, Alexander said.

“The Industrial Heritage Trail, which runs north and south, or the Walk of Excellence, which runs east and west, are excellent trails for individuals to walk regularly. They are wide and easy to walk, and they offer some really nice nature and art scenes along the way,” Alexander said.

A full list of trails in Kokomo can be found at http://www.cityofkokomo.org/departments/walkpaths_and_trails.php.

In addition, walkers are encouraged to join a free, 12 week email support program from Purdue Extension in Howard County called Get WalkIN'. Participants can sign up, walk on their own and receive email support and information. Participants will be asked to complete two short online surveys. Any resident of the county 18 years and older may enroll in the Get WalkIN' email program. Walkers may sign up for the upcoming session of support emails by visiting https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ernYPrus7zIQ3nT.

The Get WalkIN' email program aims to promote increased physical activity by adults through walking. The emails highlight information about the health benefits of walking.

"Regular physical activity can lower risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, and falls in older adults," said Allison Hillis, Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences Educator. "Walking is an excellent way for most people to increase their physical activity. It is an easy way to start and maintain a physically active lifestyle. It is accessible to almost anyone and doesn't require specific skills or fancy workout clothes and equipment."

The app can be downloaded at <https://worldwalking.org/login>
The Kokomo Howard County Walks group can be found at <https://worldwalking.org/group/urn94>.

###

About the Greater Kokomo Downtown Association

The Greater Kokomo Downtown Association is a network of individuals, volunteers, and businesses committed to preserving, promoting, and enhancing the vitality of downtown Kokomo through economic development, design initiatives, and community engagement. The Association's goal is to create a downtown ecosystem where businesses thrive, residents flourish, and visitors explore in a harmonious community atmosphere.

About Purdue Extension

The Cooperative Extension Service is one of the nation's largest providers of scientific research-based information and education. It's a network of colleges, universities, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, serving communities and counties across America. The Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service program areas are: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Health and Human Sciences, Economic and Community Development, and 4-H Youth Development.

Purdue Extension is a service tailored to meet the needs of Indiana, needs we know firsthand. Our educators, specialists, and volunteers live and work in all 92 Indiana counties. We provide the link between Land Grant research and Indiana citizens. In doing that we provide practical solutions to local issues. We provide information and expertise that's available in the form you want, when you want it. That's Purdue Extension, Indiana's home team advantage.