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U.S. Conference of Mayors Presents Award to Mayor John Noak and Lewis University For the Innovation Hub in Romeoville

Romeoville Mayor John D. Noak, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) and Wells Fargo joined together to present a 2019 First Place CommunityWINS® (Working/Investing in Neighborhood Stabilization) Grant Award in the amount of \$75,000 to **Lewis University** for its work to support the **Lewis Innovation Hub**. Launched in 2015, the nationwide CommunityWINS® program, recognizes nonprofits and cities that drive neighborhood stabilization, economic development and job creation.



"The Lewis Innovation Hub provides an entrepreneurial opportunity for our community and allows for the creative talent that makes our city special to flourish," says Mayor John Noak. "This innovative collaboration is critical to supporting economic development in Romeoville."

Funded in collaboration with USCM and the Wells Fargo Foundation, the CommunityWINS® grant will be used for an innovative effort to serve as a business incubator for start-up companies and provide support to local economic development.

"The Conference and Wells Fargo share similar values focused on helping communities across the country succeed and the 2019 CommunityWINS® Grant Program is an opportunity to honor productive

neighborhood revitalization efforts that are making a difference,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and executive director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. “We appreciate Wells Fargo and the Wells Fargo Foundation for their support of the CommunityWINS® Program, which also highlights the leadership of mayors and city governments.”

The 2019 CommunityWINS® awards include monetary grants to city-based nonprofit organizations and recognize mayors for exemplary leadership in developing local programs that promote long-term economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents in three categories: neighborhood stabilization, economic development, and job creation. An independent panel of judges, selected by USCM, determined the eight winning cities from a pool of 139 applicants in three population groups - small, medium, large and metropolitan. The Lewis Innovation Hub, managed by Lewis University, was among those chosen for funding.

The partnership among the communities of the Des Plaines River Valley Enterprise Zone (Joliet, Lockport, Romeoville, Rockdale and Will County) and Lewis University serves as a business incubator for start-up companies. With the Lewis Innovation Hub, college students and entrepreneurs receive access to offices, meeting space, mentorships and an array of business support resources and services to support local economic development.

“Wells Fargo is pleased to team with the U.S. Conference of Mayors to support neighborhood economic development efforts,” said Marvin Spear, Business Initiatives Manager for Wholesale Banking. “The work being done by Lewis University to fund the Lewis Innovation Hub, embodies the spirit of what our CommunityWINS® grant program collaboration is all about. We applaud Mayor Noak and Lewis University for their vision and passion to empower entrepreneurs and their communities.”

In June, Wells Fargo announced an evolution of its philanthropic strategy and that it would commit \$1 billion in philanthropy by 2025 to address the U.S. housing affordability crisis by working with community partners, non-profits and policymakers to develop new housing affordability solutions.

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About USCM

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find them on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow them on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors

About Wells Fargo

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