For Immediate Release – On August 22, 2017, Caterpillar representatives and local leaders announced a partnership that will proactively plan for a future without the Aurora Caterpillar plant.

Congressman Bill Foster and Congressman Randy Hultgren joined Kendall County Board Chairman Scott Gryder, Oswego Village President Gail Johnson, Aurora Mayor Richard C. Irvin, and Montgomery Village President Matt Brolley for a press conference alongside representatives from Caterpillar and Waubonsee Community College today in Oswego to announce the creation of the Kendall County CAT Taskforce.

The taskforce has been formed in response to the upcoming closure of the Caterpillar Aurora Plant, located in unincorporated Kendall County. Caterpillar announced in January that the company was weighing whether to close the plant, and announced in March that it would fully shutter the facility by the end of 2018, leaving vacant approximately 370 acres of industrial space that will need to be sold and redeveloped for a new employer.

The Kendall County Taskforce will bring together a diverse team of public- and private-sector experts to cooperatively develop a plan for the future of the site and its workers. That includes marketing and selling the facility, retraining workers for new jobs in the area, and continuing to build a resilient and business-friendly environment in Kendall County.

The long-standing partnership between Caterpillar and local stakeholders will give the region a competitive advantage in breathing new life into the facility, according to local leaders.

“We are pleased to be able to bring together a group that is so dedicated to reinventing this community and its workforce and to ensuring the continued prosperity in our region,” said Oswego Village President Gail Johnson. “Caterpillar has been an exceptionally good partner and good neighbor for nearly 60 years through both the boom years and the hard times, and their continued commitment to assist in the transition will leave our community stronger than ever.”

The diversity of the taskforce is designed to mitigate the economic impacts of the plant’s closure from several angles. In addition to impacts on workers, the plant’s closure could mean more than $465,000 in lost property tax revenues in addition to lost sales and income taxes, losses to contractors and others businesses that supply the plant, and potential stress on the local housing market caused by relocating workers.

“Without a plan in place, the economic impacts of this closure have the potential to create a ripple effect that would be felt throughout our communities for years to come,” said Montgomery Village President Matt Brolley. “But what we are doing in forming this task force is approaching this challenge holistically and as an opportunity to continue to build a strong, diversified employer base in Kendall County with a nimble, highly skilled workforce so that we are ready for and actively pursuing new users at the Caterpillar site.”
In addition to local and state government partners, Waubonsee Community College will work collaboratively to offer training programs and job fairs, and Caterpillar officials have pledged to work as a part of the taskforce to aggressively market the property to potential new employers.

The facility, which was Caterpillar’s largest when it opened in 1958, manufactures large- and medium-wheel loaders and other heavy machinery, and includes approximately 4 million square feet of office and heavy industrial manufacturing space, plus a rail spur, water tower, on-site waste water treatment, transmission line feeders, and a helipad.

“The people of Kendall County have depended upon this factory a long time and are proud of their work,” said Kendall County Board Chair Scott Gryder. “Now, we’re looking forward to what comes next.”

For more information on this and other Kendall County CAT Taskforce questions, please contact Corinna Cole at (630) 551-2334, or by email at ccole@oswegoil.org.

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