

LIGHT IT UP -THE MURRAY BAKER BRIDGE

PROJECT REPORT



1,000
Pounds
PROJECT



PEORIA
INNOVATION
ALLIANCE

WWW.LIGHTITUP74.COM

LIGHT IT UP -THE MURRAY BAKER BRIDGE

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WHO WE ARE

1,000 Pounds Project

The 1,000 Pounds Project is an initiative of Senator Chuck Weaver to give back to the community and grow young leaders.

Five diverse leaders are tasked with developing five diverse teams to address five different problems or take advantage of five different opportunities to improve our community.

By applying 1,000 pounds of effort to get 1,000,000 pounds of results.

1,000
Pounds
PROJECT

A team of young professionals led by Ashley Schreck is focusing on re-lighting of the Murray Baker Bridge, this time in full colored- LED lights.

The project launched in April, 2018 and was announced to the public on November 15, 2018 during Chuck Weaver's Developing Tomorrow's Leaders event.

MEET THE TEAM



ASHLEY SCHRECK
Team Leader
EPIC



STEVE GATTON
Cullinan Properties



ELLEN ADAMS
Farnsworth Group



MATT WEBER
Ajinomoto Foods North
America

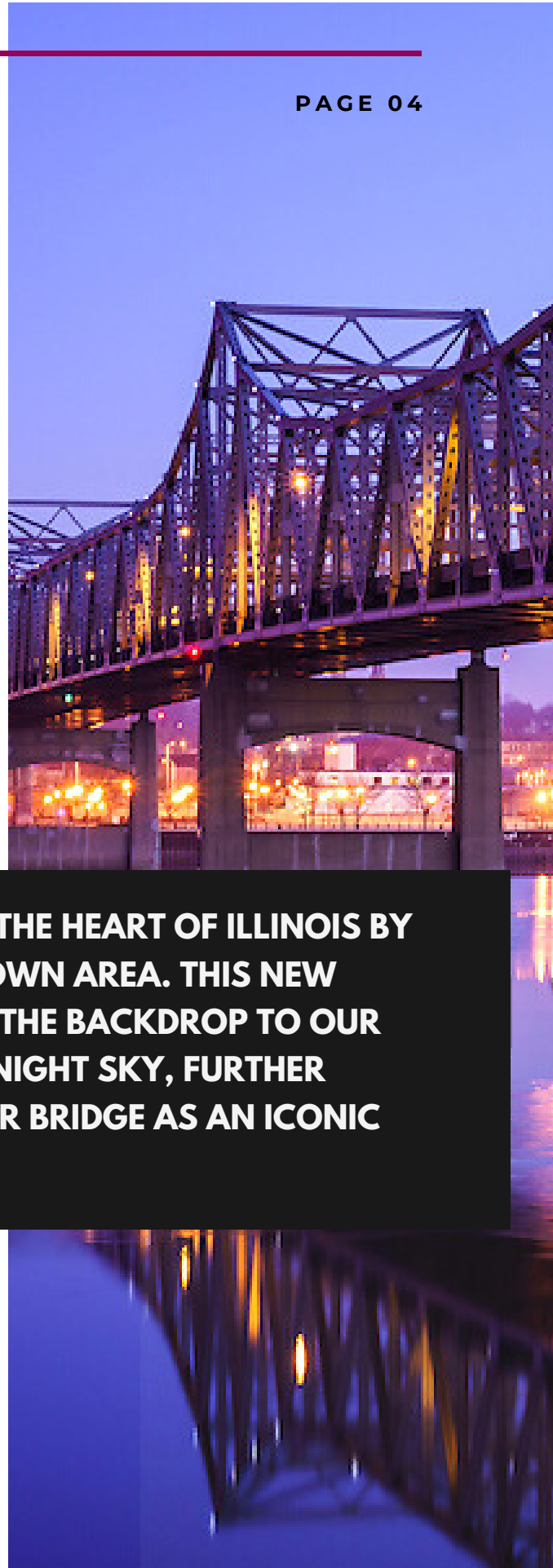
MISSION

To light the Murray Baker (I-74) Bridge spanning from Peoria to East Peoria, IL using state -of-the-art, full spectrum LED lights. And to create a sustainability strategy that ensures the success of the project with establishing a revenue source that addresses the beautification needs of our region.

VISION

TO MAKE GREAT PROGRESS IN THE HEART OF ILLINOIS BY CREATING A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN AREA. THIS NEW VISUAL DISPLAY WILL PLAY AS THE BACKDROP TO OUR CITIES AND STAND OUT IN THE NIGHT SKY, FURTHER CEMENTING THE MURRAY BAKER BRIDGE AS AN ICONIC STRUCTURE IN OUR REGION.

We urge the City of Peoria, City of East Peoria, IDOT, Peoria and Tazewell Counties along with all other stakeholders currently connected with the Murray Baker (I-74) bridge project and the community at large to think proactively and take the lighting system to the next level.



TIMING

DETOURING 20,000 TO 30,000 VEHICLES A DAY

In July of 2018 it was officially announced that the Murray Baker (I-74) Bridge would be closed for improvements. The bridge is not currently up to interstate standards and is in need of a massive \$35 Million dollar overhaul. The project would close all four lanes from April to November of 2020.

This announcement fueled our project as the urgency of timing became a reality as there was now a very small window to ensure the success of the project. In order to save funding and coordinate with the construction timeline conversations and awareness had to happen NOW!

Installing a lighting system while the bridge is already closed just makes sense. It would save money and keep the citizens excited as no one would stand for a single lane closure after the bridge was already out of commission for such a long period of time. Also, re-decking a bridge is not a "sexy" project. After the lanes reopen, someone might question if anything was done. But if it reopens and there is an amazing visual display people might say it was worth their extra commute for something of that scale to be installed.

1958

First opened to traffic on December 12th.

1991

Decorative lights first twinkled on July 4th.

2005

Reconstruction shortens the span and makes way for new entrance ramps on the west side.

2012

Bridge goes dark due to broken and burnt out lights.

2018

Developed as a project for 1,000 Pounds Project. Announced to the public on November 15th.

The Murray Baker Bridge has been an iconic landmark for our region since it first opened to traffic on December 12, 1958. It's named after Murray M. Baker a former Vice President with Caterpillar who is credited with bringing the company to Peoria. Decorative lights first twinkled on the Murray Baker Bridge on July 4, 1991. Much of the credit goes to Mr. Leonard Marshall, a banker. Jim Rochford, an attorney, and D. James Jumer, a business owner, who had big dreams of riverfront development.

With the help of the community and the assistance of the Community Foundation, a \$150,000 fundraising campaign commenced "selling" lights for \$250 each. The Peoria Journal Star reports it was the first decoratively lit interstate bridge in the country. The lighting system consisted of 156 white light bulbs that outlined the bridge's peaks and valleys. As of 2012 the lights have gone dark due to bulbs either breaking, burning out or not having a budget to be fixed.



HISTORY

PERCEPTION

When we first publicly announced our plans for this project in November of 2018 it was met with great excitement. We have been featured on nearly every media outlet and highlighted on several other news and social platforms. The majority of people who we speak with are engaged and want this to come to fruition.

That has energized our team to see the communities just as passionate as we are. We have spent the last year going on a speaker's tour and talking with churches, service organizations and anyone who will listen. From a marketing standpoint we are conscious of how the stakeholders could be perceived taking on a project such as this. When there are roads to fix and people to feed, lighting a bridge is seen as trivial and a waste of money. In addition, with the political climate, a very slim few could believe this will be another tax hike if government funds are involved.

Our group is prepared and has been acting as a "political scapegoat" for the stakeholders, heading off any negative comments by reiterating that we are a small group of young professionals who are volunteering their time to try and accomplish something great for our region.

Just like back in 1991, it's going to take the entire region to get us to this goal. We are also willing to help with any public conversations the stakeholders want to have surrounding the project. Light it up and 1,000 Pounds Project would be willing to host in order to keep the neutrality of the stakeholders in play. We were ready for one that was being discussed for early 2019, but as far as our knowledge that did not conceptualize.

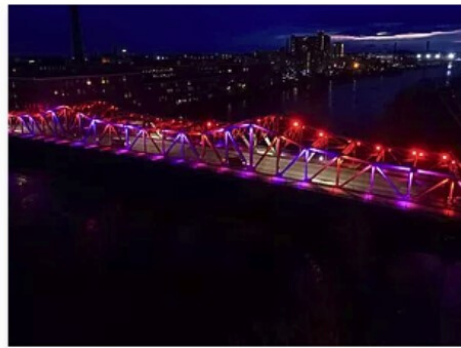
COMPARISON PROJECTS

Lighting a bridge is not a new idea. Technology has improved and there are hundreds of completed projects to study as examples. Many of the major and midsize communities have already jumped on board to install state-of-the-art lighting systems on their bridges.

Thanks to the Peoria Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau, we were able to look at six communities who have done just that.



Big Four Bridge - Louisville, KY



Cox Bridge - Lowell, MA



Bob Kerrey Bridge - Omaha, NE



High Trestle Trail Bridge -
Des Moines, IA



New NY Bridge (Tappan Zee) -
New York, NY



Big River Crossing - Memphis, TN
& West Memphis, AR

Two are strictly pedestrian bridges, some are brand new construction and others span states rather than cities.

Many of the communities we spoke with lit their bridges because they knew the return it would produce, not necessarily in dollars, but in attraction, possible retention, and even accolades for their communities.

If you visit our website you can learn more about these comparison projects, many of which even have their own websites or social media pages to engage with the community.

Kentucky and Indiana combined, allocated \$22 million to complete the Big Four Bridge project.

The Cox Bridge in Lowell Massachusetts has the most resemblance to our Murray Baker Bridge. They planned for 220 lights and budgeted expenditures of \$500,000. Their funding came from donations collected by the Greater Lowell Community Foundation and a partnership including the City of Lowell and the Lowell Heritage Partnership but did have one major donor give over six figures. Their lighting system has six different lighting pattern options and was completed as part of their Waterways Vitality Initiative which “strove to enhance the everyday experience of people in Lowell by making the city’s historic waterways more accessible, active and vibrant”.

**IT'S NOT SO SCARY
WHEN YOU HAVE
FRIENDS TO HELP YOU
ALONG THE WAY.**



COMPARISON PROJECTS

Cox Bridge - Lowell, MA

We understand the Bridge project is not ours in the sense that we are not decision makers other than being citizens of our communities. Our hopes is to help bridge the gap in funding for the project from what stakeholders are already planning. To do so, the Light It Up team has partnered with the Peoria Innovation Alliance in order to procure a 501c3 nonprofit to allow the request for public and private funds.



Once again we are asking the community to help “flip the switch”. This project is a regional quality of life and place initiative. This is no small task. While 1991 was not that long ago and technology has gotten more efficient, the \$150,000 number that the project was completed for has been called laughable considering what it should have cost. This time the project will be in the millions of dollars. While we do not know the exact price point, we do know that it depends on how many aspects of the bridge light up. Doing a basic lighting system may cost X, but for XX more we could be developing a greater vision that has a larger impact on the region.

In one focus group when talking about a light shining on the bridge our group referred to it as nothing more than a Christmas gobo that people put in their yards during the Holidays when they are too lazy to decorate their homes. It's cheap and looks that way.

While our group are volunteers and all have full-time commitments to work and home, we are pledging our support to try and raise as much funding as we can to help offset or boost production costs. Our region is very generous, but also very much in need of other services that are seen as have to's, such as education and hunger, rather than want to's such as beautification efforts. Let it be known that there is no expectation for the Light It Up team to secure funding in order for the project to be completed, nor for anyone on the team to be compensated financially. We are asking for funding in an effort to help, not to complete the funding of the project.



FUNDING

FUNDING

UPDATE

 **150K**COLLECTED IN
1991 **1M**

EST. BENCHMARK

 **3.5M**IDOT SECURED
BUDGET

We never had a true fundraising goal in mind, just to try and raise as much as we could. The first number we were sharing with the community was \$1 Million. It helped them to start to get an understanding of the caliber of the project. While people were excited and aboard the thought of the project, the donations did not come in as hoped. With the 501c3 from Peoria Area Innovation Alliance we applied for grants but they were awarded to non-beautification type projects.

As of October 2019 IDOT announced the lighting of the bridge in its FY 2020-2025 Proposed Highway Improvement Program MYP with a budget of \$3.5 Million being approved for *Illinois Special Bridge Program* funding.



SUSTAINABILITY

Phase 2

To ensure that the lighting system stays fully operational and the bridge does not go dark once more, a sustainability plan should be hashed out and implemented. The main focus of this plan should revolve around Special Lighting Requests. By creating the opportunity for the public to request the lighting of the bridge for special occasions such as festivals, events or local sports team wins it will generate a revenue source to offset the cost of operations and maintenance of the lighting system.

Memphis set aside \$1.5 million from their original \$10 million pledge to be used for maintenance, management and operation of their lighting and expect that to last them more than 15 years. Out of the cities we used as case studies, Louisville had a sustainability plan we can easily duplicate. They have a Special Lighting Request policy and process that is managed by their Waterfront Park, which is operated by the Waterfront Development Corporation. See appendix 1.

SPECIAL LIGHTING REQUESTS

We are suggesting the requests be managed through the Peoria Park District, Festival Management Team under the leadership of Nick Conrad. The Peoria side of the river plays to the majority of the events and this seems to be a logical and welcomed fit. It's notable that the requests are not limited to only Peoria citizens/activities. The requests would be open to anyone and on a first come, first serve basis. Using Louisville as a template, we could then create our own structure for payment to light it for a day, week or weekend.

The Light It Up project has established a website and started to grow a social media presence that would be handed off to the operators. Having an easily identifiable and accessible platform will allow the community at large to easily request the lighting and see why it's lit in a particular color. If the stakeholders don't take this sustainability suggestion into considering we think it will be a major misstep. It's such an easy way to get the region engaged and willing to invest back into the project.

SUSTAINABILITY

Phase 2

The funds collected from the Special Lighting Requests should go towards the maintenance, management and operation of the lighting system. However, we would hope that one day it would be so successful that at the end of the year there could be monies left in the fund. We would suggest these dollars be allocated back out to the community as part of a granting process specifically for other beautification projects that aren't currently being funded. From something as simple as clean, walk-able streets to as big as lighting our other bridges in unison, these "extra" funds would go far in creating a vibrant region. The Community Foundation could be and is willing to be the entity that houses and manages this fund. With a panel of grant reviewers made up of the community and official bridge stakeholders it would ensure the projects selected meet a certain criterion and truly impact the region.

Generated Funds: Breakdown

01

Maintenance

02

Operation

03

Utility Costs

04

Beautification Grants

THANK YOU!

LIGHT IT
UP 74

We would be remiss if we didn't thank people who have been involved over the last year.

Thank you to Senator Chuck Weaver who gave us a platform.

To our employers who allowed us the time and echoed our excitement for this project.

To Sid Ruckriegel, Denis Cyr and Zach Oyler who advocated on the Peoria City Council and in the community.

To Nick Stoffer at the City of Peoria Public Works Department and Nick Conrad at the Peoria Park District for entertaining meetings with us.

To Jake Hamann and the Peoria Innovation Alliance for partnering with us as our 501c3.

To the media outlets who chose to cover and share our story.

To the numerous service organizations and groups who who allowed us to speak to your membership.

To Mark Roberts for giving us incite into past funding history.

To the right people in the right rooms talking about progressive things.

To the donors who gave the project the jump start it needed - thanks for believing in us.

To the community members who were just as excited as we were.

To the stakeholders who decided to act proactively and bring positive, visible change to our region.

1,000
Pounds
PROJECT



Ashley Schreck
1,000# Team Leader - Light It Up