



# **Local Business Incubator & Food Hub Launches Website and Celebrates Benefit Luncheon**

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**Alton, Illinois** – One week before the Alton Area Business Development Association (AABDA), a local non-profit organization, officially launches the Great Rivers Market Fresh Network, they are also available online at [www.MarketFreshNetwork.org](http://www.MarketFreshNetwork.org).



# GREAT RIVERS MARKET FRESH

## NETWORK

“Finally, we have an online presence,” explained board V.P. Ron Tanner. “Now people can get a small *taste* of our organization, but more importantly, they can get in touch with us and even register for our upcoming benefit, which deadlines on Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.”

Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 a.m., the North Alton/Godfrey Business Council will host a luncheon benefit launch for AABDA. The event will take place at the Alton VFW Post 1308 at 4445 N. Alby St. in Alton with doors opening at 11:00 a.m. and program beginning at 11:30a.m. The luncheon buffet is \$15.00 per person. Advance registration is required and payment will be expected at the door.

The featured presentation will outline the Great Rivers Market Fresh Network, three interconnected components designed to sustain each other. One is a food hub that connects producers of fresh, locally grown food products to local wholesale buyers, such as restaurants, education and community service institutions and grocers. The center-piece is a business incubator, which will support start-ups and existing companies with a network of business tools, back office support, space for lease, and/or expert advisors, and business plans to meet performance milestones. The third element, commercial kitchen rental space, will generate revenues to run the incubator and serve as a complementary source of income for kitchen owners, all of which are non-profit community service or charitable organizations.

A special buffet menu is being planned and coordinated by Great Rivers Market Fresh Network Partners: Jim Newton of Mississippi Half-Step, Ryan Gentelin of Gentelin's Restaurant, and Michael Dewes, Director of Nutrition at Senior Services, with help from Stacey Harmon, Asst. Director of Catering at LCCC. Desserts will be presented by Marie the Cheesecake Lady, Chez Marilyn, LuciAnna's, ChocolateAir, Rib City, and other local entrepreneurs and clients of the Great Rivers Market Fresh Network. The fund-raiser buffet is \$15.00 per person. Reservations can be made at [MarketFreshNetwork.org](http://MarketFreshNetwork.org).

"This kickoff luncheon is an opportunity to actively participate in an exciting new approach to our community's growth," said David Fingerhut, AABDA Board member. "This event is an ideal way for everyone to advance local business. With that support we will sustain the business investments that are made each day in this community. We like what's possible and know what needs to be done, but we need a lot of help to get there."

Initial leadership and financial support was provided by Lewis & Clark Community College, Liberty Bank, River Bend Growth Association, RiverBender.com, Current Realty, Fingerhut Consulting, Alton Main Street, SCORE, Heavenly Scent Popcorn, Bonnie Fox, Jan DeYoung, and ATCOM.

For more information about AABDA and reservations to the kickoff luncheon, go online to the [www.MarketFreshNetwork.org](http://www.MarketFreshNetwork.org), or call 618-551-5020.

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