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**For Immediate Release
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Bridges Project Coalition sets active agenda at first meeting

The Bridges Project Coalition has adopted plans for an active year ahead, focused on securing a faster, less expensive construction schedule for the two new bridges across the Ohio River and the rebuilding of Spaghetti Junction.

Civic leader C. Edward Glasscock, who was named chairman of the coalition, told about 20 coalition representatives at its first meeting on Friday that the project is vital to the economic future of Kentucky and Indiana.

“We can’t afford not to build it,” Glasscock said. “This community has tackled major challenges before. We have merged city and county governments, expanded our airport and we are building the downtown arena. We need the Bridges Project to ensure that our economic future is bright.”

The coalition, with representatives from 17 business, civic, government, professional and union and construction organizations, also named committees to focus on specific

project-related areas. The committees will explore funding options, project construction and project governance, Glasscock said.

Government Strategies, a government relations and public affairs firm with offices in Frankfort, Ky., and Louisville, was hired to direct the coalition effort.

“The fact that so many leaders of regional organizations have stepped up to volunteer in our coalition illustrates the strong support for the Bridges Project and it underscores the need for it and the benefits that will result,” Glasscock said.

Tricia Burke, president of the Louisville chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners and a member of the coalition, said the coalition brings momentum behind the project.

“I’m thrilled to see this effort building,” she said. “We’re a logistics hub and our bridges and connecting highways need to function for us to compete successfully for good jobs.”

Led by business and economic development leaders in Kentucky and Southern Indiana, the coalition formed earlier this month with representatives of 14 organizations. It has since grown to 17 organizations and is expected to continue to grow, said Joe Reagan, president of Greater Louisville Inc., the metro chamber of commerce.

GLI and One Southern Indiana, also a chamber of commerce and regional economic development agency, and two other organizations - the Louisville Downtown Development Corp. and the Regional Leadership Coalition – are leading the coalition effort.

The coalition wants the Kentucky General Assembly to approve a funding approach for the project that would cut years off the current 17-year construction schedule, significantly reducing the \$3.9 billion cost estimate. It also will spread the word about the need for the project and its benefits for the region and both the states of Kentucky and Indiana.

Michael Dalby, president of One Southern Indiana, said the coalition will work with federal and state agencies and elected officials at all levels on possible funding approaches.

Representative of the following organizations are also represented on the coalition board: Greater Louisville Building and Construction Trades Council; Associated Builders and Contractors of Kentuckiana Inc.; the Greater Louisville Logistics Network; the Louisville chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners; the Hispanic-Latino Business Council; the African-American Business Alliance; Young Professional Association of Louisville; the Louisville Urban League; and the Urban League Young Professionals. Representatives of the cities of Bowling Green, Elizabethtown, Jeffersonville, Ind., and Louisville Metro are also participating.

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