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## Dept on Aging Stresses Leadership to Promote Mentoring

### *Community Members Meet to Discuss Civic Engagement*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Illinois Department on Aging director Charles Johnson is leading a statewide initiative to improve the health and lives of older Americans and increase their involvement in service, learning, and work. Illinois was selected to participate in the National Governors Association (NGA) *Policy Academy on Civic Engagement of Older Adults*. As part of the effort, team members are working on a year-long campaign to improve the health and lives of adults, ages 55 years and older. As proclaimed by Governor Pat Quinn, the campaign *2010: Year of the Engaged Older Adult* offers a monthly theme with the purpose of creating stronger connections among the generations. For more information, log on to [www.law.siu.edu/GenServeGen](http://www.law.siu.edu/GenServeGen).

April's theme, "Leadership in Communities and in Business: the Continuum of Mentoring", focuses on the alarming fact that a lot of the workforce will soon retire and that volunteers are not retained for service.

A meeting held April 21 at the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, focused on this month's theme and covered strategies to prime the pipelines, or specifically, to ensure qualified candidates are prepared to assume leadership roles, and to promote mentoring through volunteer efforts.

Director Johnson talked about the year-long campaign and touched on upcoming plans, including the fact that May is Older Americans Month. "Older Americans Month is a wonderful opportunity to promote *2010: The Year of the Engaged Older Adult* initiative. Our efforts complement this year's theme *Age Strong! Live Long!* by celebrating the contributions of older adults and expanding civic engagement for all ages," said Director Johnson.

Participants and guests at the meeting strategized on how to expand opportunities to serve. Speakers shared ideas about connecting with citizens from diverse communities, backgrounds, and perspectives, providing easily accessible service opportunities to fit their needs, and engaging them in a lifetime of service.

John Hosteny, director of the Illinois office, Corporation for National and Community Service, spoke on behalf of the organization's new CEO Patrick Corvington and detailed hopes to strengthen leadership and build capacity as part of a new vision. Hosteny said, "Building enduring capacity includes enabling individuals, organizations and communities to become more effective at addressing pressing challenges and better able to use service as a lasting solution."

The team of dedicated professionals in Illinois working to map out the best strategies to get older adults involved in community, and to encourage more interaction between the generations, includes representatives from the Illinois Department on Aging, Intergenerational Initiative-SIU School of Law, AARP, Serve Illinois Commission, Retirement Research Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, Senate Higher Education Committee, Illinois Community College Council of Presidents, Chinese American Service League, Illinois Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and McCormick Foundation.

The group is beginning plans for the first Illinois Summit on Aging and Education to be held on September 20, in Bloomington.

For information on Older American's Month, log on to the U-S Administration on Aging website at: [aoa.gov/aoaroot/press\\_room/observances/oam/oam.aspx](http://aoa.gov/aoaroot/press_room/observances/oam/oam.aspx).

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the IDoA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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