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NEWS RELEASE

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Bell Named Dubuque’s Sustainable Community Coordinator

DUBUQUE, Iowa – Dubuque City Manager Mike Van Milligen has appointed Gina Bell as the City’s sustainable community coordinator. Bell, a Dubuque native, will begin her employment with the City is Monday, Oct 1.

“Gina’s background in sustainability and economic development and her engagement work with diverse communities make her tremendously qualified for this important position,” said Van Milligen. “Her skills and philosophy combined with her understanding of Dubuque’s approach to sustainability and community resiliency – and her familiarity with Dubuque – will enable her to continue our efforts to cultivate community relationships and partnerships to ensure that the Sustainable Dubuque vision remains a community-created and owned initiative.”

As the City’s sustainable community coordinator, Bell will be responsible for implementing and managing Dubuque’s sustainability plan based on environmental and ecological integrity, economic prosperity, and social/cultural vibrancy to create a viable, livable, and equitable community. Her appointment to the position fills the vacancy created when Cori Burbach left the position after eight years to become assistant city manager in 2017.

Bell has served as the ESPERE program administrator for Adelante Mujeres in Forest Grove, Ore., since 2016. Adelante Mujeres means “women rise up” in Spanish. The nonprofit organization works to educate and empower low-income Latina women and families in Oregon. The ESPERE program trains families to manage conflict with compassion and understanding, helps individuals overcome past emotional trauma, and fosters healthy, violent-free relationships. Bell’s responsibilities as ESPERE program administrator include data collection strategies, data analysis and program improvement, and managing facilitators and program volunteers.

From 2011-2016, Bell was senior project/program manager for Prosper Portland (formerly the Portland Development Commission) where she facilitated community engagement efforts as liaison to three districts in the Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative and Main Street Network. She also oversaw contracts with non-profit partners, coordinated the Economic Opportunity Initiative Microenterprise Program and Small Business Development Program, supported community and organizational capacity-building efforts, served as liaison to the Small Business Advisory Council and the Portland Business Alliance, and was involved in the creation and promotion of each district's equity plan.

Before her time with Prosper Portland, Bell was the director of operations and farmers market manager for Adelante Mujeres from 2006-2011. In that role, she managed human resources for a 21-person staff, supported the executive director in all organizational matters, developed and implemented a comprehensive fund development plan, and directed all aspects of the Forest Grove Farmers Market.

Before moving to the Portland area, Bell served on Dubuque's housing commission and worked as the manager on duty at the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque. She also served in the Peace Corps for over two years as an advocate for sustainable agriculture in Paraguay where her work included designing and supervising a road construction project, developing and facilitating leadership courses for young women, and providing technical support on a variety of other sustainability projects.

Bell holds a bachelor's degree in international studies and Spanish from Pacific University in Oregon and is fluent in Spanish. She was named one of "35 Innovators Under 35" by the 1000 Friends of Oregon in 2010 and received the Young Alumni Leadership Award from Pacific University in 2008. She served on the Prosper Portland Equity Council for three years, including one as president, and the Prosper Portland Green Team for three years, with one year as president of that body as well.

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Gina Gell