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June 21, 2023

encourage financial network Announces Executive Management Team

Chicago, IL - The **encourage financial network**, a collaborative effort of four credit unions and three credit union service organizations (CUSOs), is pleased to announce its executive management team.

Michael Abraham has previously been announced as President and CEO of **encourage**. With over 20 years of experience in the financial industry, Abraham brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role. Prior to joining **encourage**, Abraham was the President & CEO of First Financial CU, where he was instrumental in driving growth and innovation.

Stephanie Bertelsen has been named President of First Financial CU, one of the founding credit unions of the **encourage financial network**. Bertelsen brings over 30 years of experience in the financial services industry, having served in senior positions at several financial institutions. Bertelsen will be responsible for overseeing the growth of First Financial, **encourage's** largest network partner, ensuring that it continues to expand its presence in the Northern Chicagoland area.

Bertelsen, previously the Vice President of Membership Development at First Financial says “She is ready to carry on the 85+ year legacy of the CU and work to ensure members are shouting our value from the rooftops...” and that “community members and those living or working within our field of membership understand the true value of being a member owner of First Financial and the **encourage** network.” She adds, “Having the pleasure to help see Michael’s (Abraham) strategy come to fruition, and to be such a key part in it, energizes me for what’s to come!”

William Lump has been named EVP CFO of **encourage**. Lump brings over 25 years of financial management experience to the role, having served in senior positions at Big 4 audit & private equity firms. Lump will be responsible for overseeing the financial operations of the network, ensuring that it operates in a financially sustainable manner.

Susan Beckwith has been named COO of **encourage**. Beckwith brings a wealth of operational, risk and compliance experience to the role, having held senior positions at several credit unions. Beckwith will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations, including branch & remote branch operations, ensuring that the network runs efficiently and effectively to deliver superior service to our members.

Dan Butterworth has been named Chief Marketing and Innovation Officer of **encourage**. Butterworth brings nearly 20 years of financial services experience to the role, having held

senior positions at several financial institutions. Butterworth will be responsible for developing and executing the network's marketing, innovation, and training & development strategies.

Encourage has also announced managers for its other network credit unions: C&NW Proviso CU will be led by Lori Maloney, who has served the members of C &NW Proviso CU for nearly a decade. Ira Silver will lead the Win-Hood Co-Op CU and Jose Ramirez the S & C Electric Employees CU.

“We are thrilled to have such a talented and experienced executive management team leading the **encourage financial network**,” said Michael Abraham, President and CEO of the network. “Their expertise and dedication to excellence will be critical to our success as we work to revolutionize the credit union industry.”

encourage is a collaborative effort of four credit unions and three credit union service organizations (CUSOs) committed to providing innovative financial solutions and shared resources to credit unions across the country. The network seeks to revolutionize the credit union industry by creating a new model of **collaboration, innovation**, and a dedication to **enriching** the communities they call home.

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