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January 21, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EFFINGHAM BUSINESSMAN EAGER TO TACKLE FUNDING EQUITY, OTHER
CHALLENGES IN SECOND YEAR AS UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE

EFFINGHAM -- The chairman of Koerner Distributor, Inc. knows the public universities in the state will have to work hard this spring to attract the attention of Illinois lawmakers already focused on the hot issue of adequately funding elementary and secondary schools.

Beginning his second year as a trustee for Eastern Illinois University, Carl Koerner, Jr. said he and his fellow trustees are ready for the challenge, after a "building" year that saw the establishment of new working relationships in the revamped higher education system.

"Getting acquainted with the new board and working together to further the futures of students and staff at Eastern has been a challenge," said Koerner. I believe we, as a board, have met that challenge and are now focused on moving the university forward."

Koerner was one of seven new board members appointed to Eastern's board

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by Governor Edgar following the reorganization of Illinois public higher education in 1995. The new board began its term a year ago this month.

At that time, Koerner viewed the adequate funding of Eastern as a top priority. He still does and is delighted that Eastern was recommended for the highest percentage budget increase of all the public universities for next year. As part of that proposed budget, Eastern would receive approximately \$350,000 for deferred maintenance, another priority of Koerner's.

Koerner points to Eastern's continued strong academic reputation and record enrollments as evidence of a smooth transition to a new board. Among board accomplishments this past year, he cites the signing of a three-year contract with Eastern's faculty union that provides pay increases designed to bring EIU salaries in line with those at peer institutions.

Under the new board, Eastern also raised admission standards and supported the passage of legislation that allows universities to retain their tuition revenues in local accounts. The board approved a \$3.8 million energy conservation overhaul that will save at least \$380,000 per year in utility costs, approved purchasing a new telecommunications system that lowered student long-distance charges and upgraded outdated equipment, and supported exploration of a campus-based child care center.

Koerner's ties to Eastern go back many years, and include his extensive involvement with the university's athletic programs. He received the 1984 Glen

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Hesler Award for Outstanding Contribution to Intercollegiate Athletics and has been a member of the President's Club and the Panther Club.

He is eager to continue the board's work in 1997 and increase Eastern's recognition and support throughout the state, while ever mindful of the trustee's dual role.

Our goal is always to move the university forward, but at the same time, it is our job as trustees to protect the interests of the taxpayer and the legislature," said Koerner. "In my view, the two responsibilities can successfully co-exist."