



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 23, 2004

news

CONTACTS:

Cheryle Jackson 217/782.7355 (office)

Abby Ottenhoff 217/782.7355 (office)

Rebecca Rausch 217/782.7355 (office)

Andrew Ross 312/814.7168 (Opp. Returns)

GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH PRAISES SENATOR DURBIN, CONGRESSMEN COSTELLO AND SHIMKUS FOR LANDING \$265.3 MILLION TO EXPAND SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE'S MISSION

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich praised the announcement today by U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL), Congressmen Jerry Costello (D-IL) and John Shimkus (R-IL) that \$265.3 million will be coming to Scott Air Force Base to expand the mission of the 932nd Airlift Wing as part of the Defense Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2005. The funds will be used to purchase three C-40 aircraft and maintain three C-9s currently at Scott. This keeps the 932nd at Scott and the 1,000 reservists and civilians employed by the wing – as well as the \$27 million the wing contributes annually to the local economy. The C-40 is the military version of the 737 and has numerous airlift capabilities.

“This is fantastic news, and I want to thank House Speaker Dennis Hastert, Senator Durbin and Congressmen Costello and Shimkus for all of their hard work in securing this vital funding. Scott Air Force Base plays a crucial role in defending our country and is also a powerful economic engine for the region and the state. This expansion was the by-product of a strong bipartisan effort. I am hopeful that our other bipartisan campaigns, involving the Illinois Congressional delegation and various state and local officials, to keep Scott, the Rock Island Arsenal and the Air National Guard bases in Peoria and Springfield open will be just as successful,” Governor Blagojevich said.

Through *Opportunity Returns*, his comprehensive plan to promote economic growth and create more jobs throughout the state, Governor Blagojevich is leading a coordinated effort with the Illinois Congressional delegation, other elected officials and local leaders to prevent four Illinois bases from ending up on the Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list that will be announced next year. Governor Blagojevich has already made two trips to Capitol Hill in February and May concerning this critical issue.

Under BRAC, an independent commission evaluates the Pentagon’s closure recommendations and then develops a final list of bases to be closed. Congress then has the option to approve or reject the list as submitted without changes. In the past round of closings, 85% of bases that were placed on the list were eventually shut down. The next round of closings is scheduled to be announced in 2005.

In total, Scott Air Force Base, the Rock Island Arsenal, and the Air National Guard bases in Peoria and Springfield contribute more than **\$2.5 billion** to Illinois’ economy and support **70,000 jobs**.

#####

