



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

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news

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES ALMOST \$450,000 IN OPPORTUNITY RETURNS GRANTS FOR NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS BIKE TRAILS

Funds will Enhance Safety and Functionality of Trails in Jo Daviess, Whiteside, and Rock Island Counties

SPRINGFIELD - Delivering on an *Opportunity Returns* commitment to support the development of bicycle trails in Northwestern Illinois, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced nearly **\$450,000** in construction grants to the City of Galena, Sterling Park District, and the Village of Milan. These three grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will support construction of regional bike trails, which will benefit local residents and increase tourism opportunities.

“The construction of these three trails in the Northwest region will make a long-lasting impact in recreation, tourism, and economic development. The bike trails wind through pristine wilderness, unveiling some of the most beautiful terrain in our state. Their completion ensures that this great natural beauty can be showcased and that it will continue to act as part of the magnificent allure of this region for residents and visitors alike,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The City of Galena (Jo Daviess County) will receive almost **\$185,000** to develop a 3.38 mile trail along the Galena River. The trail begins at the Galena River Boat and Canoe Landing and continues along an abandoned railroad corridor to Galena Junction.

Sterling Park District (Whiteside County) will receive **\$162,200** to construct 1.25 miles of trail that will connect Hoover Park to Sinnissippi Park on the Rock River.

The Village of Milan (Rock Island County) will receive **\$100,300** to construct a 1.3 mile trail segment that will connect the Village’s Recreational Path, the I & M Canal and the Steel Dam Recreation Area to a new bridge over the Rock River.

The completion of the Galena trail is especially noteworthy because it will fill a key gap that now exists in the Great River Trail, a 550 mile-long road running along the mighty Mississippi River, stretching from the northwest tip of Illinois to its southwest border.

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The grant program reimburses local governments for half the cost of trail development, up to a maximum of \$200,000.

“The Mississippi River is a natural jewel that holds great historical and cultural appeal, and, thus, great tourism potential as well. Developing the Galena trail is so important because it provides a vital link to completing a trail that spans the length of the Mississippi in Illinois and can draw visitors from near and far. While the Galena trail is small, it will help make an impact on tourism in this region that is quite large,” State Senator Todd Sieben, Assistant Minority Leader, (R-Genneseo) said.

“I know the Governor’s *Opportunity Returns* plan is designed to utilize partnerships between state and local government to accomplish regional priorities and stimulate economic development; I can’t think of a better example of that vision at work than the partnerships we’re seeing here,” said State Representative Jerry Mitchell (R-Rock Falls).

“I’m extremely pleased that the Governor has approved this grant funding to these three communities in the Northwest region. While local governments certainly appreciate the significance of constructing these trails, having to incur the costs alone could make their completion impossible. These *Opportunity Returns* grants will ensure that the bike trails remain viable for all of these communities,” said State Representative Patrick Verschoore (D-Rock Island).

“Bicycle riding is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in Illinois, enjoyed by young and old alike,” said Department of Natural Resources Director Joel Brunsvold. “From smaller, neighborhood trails to more expansive paths, Illinois has a variety of trails for the public to enjoy. The terrain includes flat prairie land to rolling hills, towering bluffs to breathtaking river and lakefront views.”

The *Opportunity Returns* regional economic development plan is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois’ history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn’t work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – finding areas with common economic strengths and needs, and developing a plan with specific actions for each region. This grassroots effort for the Northwest region was the product of significant outreach over several months with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. The more than 30 projects that the Governor announced last October for Northwestern Illinois are designed to be flexible and effective. This plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

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