



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 27, 2004

CONTACTS:

Cheryle Jackson	312/814.3158 (office)
Angelynne Amores	312/636.6148 (cell)
Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/814.7168 (Opp. Returns)
Carol Knowles	217/785.0907 (IDNR)

GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES MORE THAN \$100,000 IN OPPORTUNITY RETURNS GRANTS FOR NORTHERN STATELINE BIKE TRAILS

Funds will Enhance Safety and Functionality of Trails in Boone and Winnebago Counties

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced more than **\$100,000** in construction grants to Boone County and Roscoe Township through his innovative *Opportunity Returns* program for the Northern Stateline region. These two grants from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will support construction of regional bike trails, which will benefit local residents and increase tourism opportunities.

“Bike trails connect people to the outdoors, foster a sense of community, and enhance an area’s appeal to outside visitors. By constructing these trails, we are strengthening an important community asset and building capacity for a more vibrant local tourism industry in Boone and Winnebago counties,” Governor Blagojevich said.

Boone County Conservation District will receive almost **\$52,000** to construct a 6/10 of a mile multi-purpose trail. The segment connects a 2.5-mile path in Belvidere Park and a 1.4-mile path in Spencer Conservation Area to a short segment of trail adjacent to the Wynwood subdivision and Appleton Road in Belvidere.

Roscoe Township (Winnebago County) will receive almost **\$50,000** to construct a 1.5-mile extension of the Stone Bridge Trail from McCurry Road to Rockton Road.

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

“These grants are vital to the completion of a network of trails that are a tremendous resource to these communities. This *Opportunity Returns* funding allows our region to take advantage of these important assets, which will allow even more of our residents and visitors to enjoy peddling down these beautiful trails. The Governor is proving that, by working together, we can accomplish a great deal,” State Rep. Ronald Wait (R-Belvidere) said.

“When we speak of infrastructure, we generally are talking about our roads, rails, and sewers; but bike trails are an important ingredient to a community’s livability and quality of life. The Governor recognizes that, and we’re proud to be a part of this innovative partnership that will ensure the Northern Stateline region has a great bike trail system for generations to come,” Roscoe Township Supervisor Thomas Hawes said.

(more)

“Funding new trail construction in the Northern Stateline region will make a great asset for residents and tourists even better. The Governor’s *Opportunity Returns* plan is all about finding creative ways to improve quality of life, bringing visitors and revenue into the Rock River Valley, and growing the economy,” Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Joel Brunsvold said.

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 region was the product of significant outreach over several months with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. *Opportunity Returns* contains tangible actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to business. The 30 specific projects that the Governor announced last October for Northern Stateline region 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.

#####