



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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GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES ALMOST \$800,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* FUNDING TO REVITALIZE JACKSONVILLE COMPANY AND ENSURE THE SAFETY OF 100 JOBS

CHICAGO - Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that AGI Media (AGI), part of the Consumer Packaging Group of MeadWestvaco Corporation, is receiving nearly **\$800,000** to improve manufacturing capabilities at its Jacksonville facility. The grants and incentives will help retain **100** jobs. The important project is part of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* program for the Central region, his pro-active, comprehensive plan to promote economic growth and create more jobs throughout Central Illinois.

“*Opportunity Returns* is about making savvy investments at the community level to accomplish local priorities. Though our resources are limited right now, we will never stop investing in the people and companies of the Central region. This funding to AGI will lend critical support to a valued company at a time when it needs it most, give it the capacity to pursue new opportunities for growth, and secure 100 important jobs in Jacksonville,” Governor Blagojevich said.

AGI, a global provider of printing and packaging for CD and DVD products, will receive the package of grants and credits from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). The company will receive a **\$350,000** Large Business Development Program (LBDP) grant, almost **\$435,000** in Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) tax credits based on job retention over a ten year period, and Enterprise Zone benefits, including sales tax exemptions and tax credits for job retention, valued at over **\$7,000**.

“Throughout Illinois today and especially here in the Central region, manufacturers are facing an uphill battle to stay competitive in the new global economy. Given those challenges, Governor Blagojevich and I understand that it is vitally important to provide our manufacturers with the resources they need to increase their productivity and competitiveness. This funding to AGI is designed to accomplish exactly that and couldn’t come at a more critical time,” State Senator Deanna Demuzio (D-Carlinville) said.

“Governor Blagojevich’s *Opportunity Returns* program has achieved great success in a short period of time by partnering with local governments to accomplish the objectives that are most critical to stimulating growth and job creation. I want to thank the Governor for this wonderful investment in our community - one that will help create a more vibrant local economy,” State Representative Jim Watson (R-Jacksonville) said.

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Opened in 1995, AGI's Jacksonville facility produces standard print products, including booklets, folders and inserts for CD and DVD packaging for the music, home video, games and software markets. The facility also provides value-added specialty packaging products.

MeadWestvaco Corporation, headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, is a leading global producer of packaging, coated and specialty papers, consumer and office products, and specialty chemicals. The company operates in 29 countries and serves customers in nearly 100 nations, and has been recognized for economic, social and environmental sustainability through selection for the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes.

"We are very proud to be the recipient of this generous funding from the state of Illinois' *Opportunity Returns* program and the City of Jacksonville's Economic Development program. It will strengthen our Jacksonville operations and enable AGI Media to continue to supply quality packaging to our major media customers," said Gary Mankoff, chief operating officer of AGI Media.

"This funding to AGI is an important investment in the competitiveness and vitality of the regional economy. *Opportunity Returns* is working to catalyze economic growth by investing in companies and people that matter most to the regional economy, and this project is a fine example of that vision at work," said Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

In conjunction with the *Opportunity Returns* support, the City of Jacksonville has approved a \$200,000 Economic Development grant to assist with AGI's capital investment project at the facility.

"This is a tremendous partnership between state and local government that is working to retain very important jobs in our community. In light of the closing of EMI Manufacturing here, we are extremely grateful for MeadWestvaco's investment at AGI, and for the timely assistance provided by the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* program. By working together, we can overcome tough challenges and give our businesses the very best chance to succeed," said Jacksonville Mayor Ron Tendick.

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 is a 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.

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