



opportunity returns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Rod Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 13, 2004

CONTACTS:

Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Gerardo Cardenas	312/814.3158 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/636.1747 (Opp. Returns)
Catherine Foster	630/252.5580 (Argonne)

GOV. BLAGOJEVICH APPOINTS FORMER GOV. THOMPSON AND FORMER U.S. COMMERCE SECRETARY DALEY AS CO-CHAIRS OF TASK FORCE SEEKING \$1 BILLION U.S. NUCLEAR SCIENCE PROJECT FOR ILLINOIS

CHICAGO – Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced today he has appointed former Gov. James R. Thompson and JPMorgan Chase Chairman of the Midwest William M. Daley as co-chairs of a special task force charged with helping Illinois land one of the nation's premier science and technology projects – the \$1 billion Rare Isotope Accelerator (RIA). Gov. Blagojevich announced the appointments at a meeting of the full blue-ribbon task force, made up of leaders from government, business, education, science, health care and labor. The RIA for Illinois Task Force, which was launched in September, is working with the Illinois Congressional delegation to deliver the message to the White House, U.S. Department of Energy and Congress that the Argonne National Laboratory is the right location for the project, expected to be the world's leading facility for research in nuclear science.

“On behalf of the people of Illinois, I'd like to thank both Gov. Thompson and Secretary Daley for taking on this assignment. Their experience with both federal and state government issues, their extraordinary intellectual abilities and deep dedication to the well-being of our state make them the ideal people to take on this challenge,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “The State of Illinois is committed to pursuing this truly unique opportunity to host the RIA facility to help grow our economy, create jobs and solidify our position as one of the nation's leading hubs of science and technology. I look forward to working with Gov. Thompson, Secretary Daley, our Congressional delegation and the entire task force to bring this project to Illinois.”

“In Argonne, we have the long and distinguished record of the nation's first national laboratory. It is one of the great repositories of scientific talent in the world. We have the physical infrastructure to ensure that the project will be brought in on time and on budget. And we have the security systems in place to safeguard this remarkable scientific resource,” Gov. Thompson said.

“Argonne, which is operated for the federal government by the University of Chicago, is ideally suited for the RIA facility because of its leadership role in developing the overall concept for the accelerator and its experience in the design, construction and operation of large-scale U.S. Department of Energy facilities. RIA will change our world in ways we can't even imagine, and we will spread a unified message that Illinois is the only logical location for the birthplace of a once-in-a-lifetime scientific revolution,” Secretary Daley said.

(more)

Thompson recently concluded service on The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, the bipartisan panel established by Congress and President Bush to investigate and report on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. He is chairman of the law firm of Winston & Strawn.

In his role at JPMorgan Chase, Daley represents the firm at the most senior levels to clients and is the senior executive for the Midwest region across businesses. He was President of SBC Communications Inc. from 2001 until earlier this year and served as U.S. Secretary of Commerce under President Clinton from 1997 to 2000, overseeing a department of more than 40,000 people.

The University of Chicago will engage in an open competition for the project with Michigan State University through a federal Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The Department of Energy has said it would issue the RFP by the end of the year.

The state's congressional delegation has been at the forefront of the effort to win RIA, with U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) and U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) leading the way. U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL), in whose district Argonne is located and who chairs a key congressional subcommittee, has also been instrumental in marshalling support for RIA.

“Support from leaders in business, government, education, labor and other fields of endeavor will be critical in our campaign to make the case that Illinois is absolutely the right choice for RIA. We applaud the civic spirit behind this effort and we give these leaders credit for recognizing what a truly monumental benefit this will be to Illinois if Argonne is selected,” U.S. House Speaker Hastert (R-IL) said.

“This is not only the right decision for Illinois – this is the right decision for our country. With this incredibly talented, dedicated and diverse group of people working together, I know we will continue making our compelling case for why RIA belongs at Argonne,” Sen. Durbin (D-IL) said.

“All we seek is a fair, open and transparent competition and a decision based on the merits of the proposals. In that scenario, I don’t think there’s any doubt that Illinois is the only place to locate this highly important national scientific priority,” said U.S. Rep. Biggert (R-IL), who is chairman of House Science Committee’s Energy Subcommittee, which is responsible for authorizing RIA and has jurisdiction over national laboratories.

“The impact on Illinois would be profound. RIA represents a \$1 billion investment that will create 16,000 construction jobs and 1,750 permanent jobs in Illinois, including 400 new jobs at Argonne itself. Spin-off economic activity will be enormous, including \$110 million in annual output into the Illinois economy,” Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said. “Equally important, RIA would provide leading-edge research facilities for our universities and our industries, resulting in development of new products in medicine and biology, electronics, materials and the environment.”

Argonne is located about 25 miles southwest of Chicago’s Loop, surrounded by DuPage County Forest Preserve land. The Rare Isotope Accelerator will be the world’s leading center for the creation and study of “rare isotopes,” radioactive species with such short lifetimes that they no longer exist in nature. Its capabilities, unmatched anywhere in the world, will allow scientists to study the generation of energy in the stars and test new ideas about the fundamental forces of nature that govern the universe. This research will have a multitude of medical and commercial applications.

(more)

“The United States has decided to build a remarkable new machine that will open up a new world of scientific discovery at the heart of matter. In the process, it will jump-start new technologies that will improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and other diseases, create powerful new tools to detect environmental pollutants and toxins, develop new semiconductors and more durable materials, and forge better ways to verify weapons treaties and enhance our national security,” Dr. Hermann Grunder, Director of the Argonne National Laboratory, said.

Log onto www.riaforillinois.com for more information on the RIA project.

#####