



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 \$92,000 OPPORTUNITY RETURNS GRANT FOR NORTH CENTRAL BIKE TRAIL

Funds will Enhance Safety and Functionality of Trail in Tazewell County

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced the awarding of a more than **\$92,000** construction grant to a Tazewell County park district through his innovative *Opportunity Returns* program for the North Central region. This grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will support construction of regional bike trails, which will benefit local residents and increase tourism opportunities.

Morton Park District (Tazewell County) will receive more than **\$92,000** to construct a 7/10 of a mile segment of trail connecting the existing Morton Bikeway with Westwood Park.

“Bike trails are often an important component of a thriving local tourism industry. By paving this small segment of trail in the Morton Park District, the city can link a key existing trail with a neighboring park to create a dynamic new stretch of outdoor space that plays host to a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The new design will be welcomed by outdoor enthusiasts and help bolster local tourism,” Governor Blagojevich said.

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

“The construction of this trail is a great accomplishment for bike riders and outdoor enthusiasts. With its completion, the bike trails in Morton Park District will offer an amenity that the community can really be proud of and one which more visitors will want to come experience as well,” said Morton Mayor Donald Roth.

“Funding new trail construction in the North Central 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 this part of the state, and growing the economy,” Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Joel Brunsvold said.

Governor Blagojevich’s *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

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common economic strengths and needs, and developing a plan with specific actions for each region. This grassroots effort for the North Central region is a product of significant outreach over several months throughout each region, with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. The more than 40 specific projects that the Governor announced in December for the North Central region are designed to be flexible and effective. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

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