



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$100,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* FUNDING TO SUPPORT RECYCLING EFFORTS AND JOB CREATION IN DEWITT AND MCLEAN COUNTY

CHICAGO – Gov. Rod Blagojevich today announced that nearly **\$100,000** in *Opportunity Returns* funding has been awarded to two North Central region organizations to support recycling initiatives that will help advance recycling collection and processing efforts throughout the region. The DeWitt County Human Resource Center in Clinton will receive nearly **\$50,000** to expand its recycling collection efforts by adding and servicing additional drop-off sites throughout the county. In Normal, Midwest Fiber, Inc. will receive **\$50,000** to expand its recycling collection efforts by servicing new customers.

“This a great example of how responsible environmental policy can also act as effective economic policy. In addition to diverting greater amounts of recyclable content from Illinois landfills, these recycling projects will also add new jobs to the local economy. Working together, we’re creating a more vibrant future for the North Central region,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

The recycling grants are administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and come as part of *Opportunity Returns*, Gov. Blagojevich’s pro-active, regional economic development plan designed to create jobs and spur growth in the North Central region and throughout the state.

“The funding the Governor is providing to these two organizations will allow them to expand the great work they already do. Investments like this one have a significant impact on our environment, as well as our economy, and help make our communities more vibrant places to live and work,” State Representative Dan Brady (R-Bloomington) said.

DCEO finances the program through monies received from the tipping fee surcharge levied at Illinois landfills. Grant awards are determined on a competitive basis, and the grantee is required to provide an applicant investment of at least 50 percent of the funding required for the project.

“Over the past 15 years, the recycling industry has grown tremendously in Illinois and become a real force of job creation and economic growth. Today, there are more than 1,300 Illinois collection and processing entities, generating an annual payroll of \$703 million, and employing approximately 23,000 individuals. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is proud to support Gov. Blagojevich’s efforts to continue fostering the growth of this important industry,” said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

(more)

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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