



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 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)

GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH SENDS TEAM TO WASHINGTON TO PROMOTE ILLINOIS' BID FOR FUTUREGEN

World's First Coal-Based, Zero-Emissions Power Plant Would Protect Environment and Create Jobs

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich is sending a team of coal development experts to Washington, D.C. today to help build momentum for Illinois' bid to land FutureGen, the federal government's ten year, \$1 billion demonstration project to create the world's first coal-based, zero-emissions power plant. U.S. Representatives Jerry Costello (D-Belleville) and John Shimkus (R-Collinsville) are co-hosting this in-depth briefing for the U.S. Department of Energy on why Illinois should be selected as the location of the FutureGen program. There will be a media availability from 3:30 – 3:50 p.m. in room 2325 of the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C.

"Illinois leads the nation in our commitment to expanding and improving markets for America's coal resources," Governor Blagojevich said. "FutureGen represents exactly what we believe in here in Illinois: using cutting edge research to make people healthier, improve our environment, create jobs and expand our economy."

"We have been very pro-active in making the case that Illinois should be the home to FutureGen," U.S. Representative Costello said. "Today's meeting is another part of this process. We believe that our state possesses the necessary qualities to make FutureGen a great success, which will mean jobs, a growing economy and a cleaner environment in Illinois."

"FutureGen, and the President's Clean Coal Power Initiative, could lead to a revitalization of the Illinois coal industry. Southern Illinois has the workers, the research capabilities and the geology to make FutureGen a reality. The whole Illinois delegation, Democrat or Republican, is committed to doing what it takes to bring FutureGen to Illinois," U.S. Representative Shimkus said.

FutureGen is planned as a public-private partnership to build a mid-sized prototype power plant that employs coal gasification technology to create hydrogen fuel as well as electricity. Governor Blagojevich's team includes John Mead, director of the Coal Research Center at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale; Rob Finley of the Illinois State Geological Survey at the University of Illinois; and Bill Hoback, Bureau Chief of the Illinois Office of Coal Development, within the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Joseph Angleton, president of the United Mine Workers of America – District 12, will also be on hand.

(more)

Rob Finley will discuss the state's geological benefits for FutureGen's goal of sequestering carbon dioxide underground. John Mead will talk about the state's leadership in working towards clean coal technology. Bill Hoback will offer various economic incentives that will make Illinois an attractive choice from an economic standpoint.

Among those expected to attend the briefing are members of Illinois' Congressional delegation and Mark R. Maddox, acting assistant secretary in U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Fossil Energy. DOE is the federal agency that will oversee the selection of energy companies that will make decisions on the design, site choice, construction and operation of FutureGen.

"Illinois and FutureGen are a perfect fit," said DCEO Director Jack Lavin. "We already have in place the resources and expertise needed for this important project. We are excited about FutureGen because it will bring jobs to Illinois, and also because it will allow us to make a major contribution to the direction of U.S. energy policy for years to come."

The effort to land FutureGen is part of Governor Blagojevich's *Opportunity Returns* regional economic development plans for both Southern and Southwestern Illinois. 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. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from. The Governor has already unveiled plans for six of the ten regions – Northern Stateline, Northwest, Southern, North Central, Southwest and West Central regions. He will announce the plans for the East Central, Southeast, Central and Northeast regions in the coming months.

####