



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 13, 2004

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES NEARLY \$150,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* FUNDING TO TRANSFORM BROWNFIELDS IN NORTHWEST REGION

SPRINGFIELD - Delivering on an *Opportunity Returns* pledge to transform brownfields sites into new business and job opportunities, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that the cities of Sterling and Princeton have been awarded brownfields grants to address environmental issues at former business locations so economic redevelopment can begin.

“*Opportunity Returns* is really about making targeted investments at the local level to help stimulate economic growth and create new jobs. These Brownfield grants are a great example of that idea at work. Through these investments in Sterling and Princeton, the cities will be able to transform vacant and unsightly plots of land into vibrant areas that attract new businesses and jobs,” Governor Blagojevich said.

Sterling received a **\$100,000** grant from the U.S. EPA Brownfields Special Projects program, a collaboration between the Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA to leverage funds for brownfields investigation and cleanups.

The grant will be used to further access the former Northwestern Steel and Wire facility that is a key part of the city’s economic development plan for reuse of the 750-acre site. The latest grant complements a \$240,000 state Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant previously awarded to Sterling for the same site at 121 Wallace Street.

Princeton received a Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant for more than **\$48,000** to assess two sites. The first, at 935 N. Main Street, is a former service station at a prominent location at the entrance of the north business district. Princeton plans on redeveloping it into commercial office space. The second site is at 316 S. Main Street, where the Bureau County Republican newspaper printing press was formerly located. The city plans to use the site for additional needed parking for the municipal building and post office.

IEPA Director Renee Cipriano recognized the grants during a ceremonial check presentation Wednesday at the annual Illinois Brownfields Conference, organized by the Illinois EPA. The conference in Springfield was attended by hundreds of local officials, environmental consultants, developers and others who learned about the many tools available from Governor Blagojevich’s administration to cleanup and redevelop brownfields sites---former industrial or commercial sites with potential contamination.

(more)

“The Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Program is one tool under the Governor’s *Opportunity Returns* initiative to assist communities and provide funding needed to cleanup and redevelop these abandoned sites. This grant will allow Sterling and Princeton to study and assess numerous brownfields sites and conduct environmental investigation activities to ensure their safe and effective redevelopment,” said IEPA Director Cipriano.

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 for the Northwest region was the product of significant outreach over several months with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. The more than 30 projects that the Governor announced last October for Northwestern Illinois are designed to be flexible and effective. This plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

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