



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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OPPORTUNITY RETURNS FUNDS RESEARCH CENTER DESIGNED TO REVITALIZE MANUFACTURING IN NORTHERN STATELINE REGION

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin Attends EIGERlab Kickoff in Rockford

ROCKFORD – Representing Governor Rod Blagojevich’s comprehensive, aggressive economic development plan to spur growth and create jobs on a regional level, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Jack Lavin today joined with Congressman Don Manzullo (R-IL), state and community leaders in attending a kickoff ceremony for the EIGERlab research and development center in Rockford.

“Today represents the dawn of a new era for manufacturing in Rockford and throughout the Northern Stateline region. The EIGERlab will be a pioneer in some of the most advanced manufacturing technologies in the world, breathing new life and new opportunity into an industry that continues to be vitally important to the Rock River Valley region and its people,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The EIGERlab is designed to function as a research center with best-in-the-world research tools to drive Illinois’ manufacturing renewal and future prosperity. Under *Opportunity Returns*, Governor Blagojevich is providing \$1.6 million for the project

“The manufacturing industry still represents the backbone of the economy for this region. But we also realize that it is an industry with the potential to act as a more dynamic force of growth in the local economy. The EIGERlab research center is going to help us do exactly that by modernizing the industry’s technologies and creating a wealth of new business opportunities for manufacturers in the 21st Century economy,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

Partners of the EIGERlab project include Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois, Rock Valley College, the Illinois Coalition, Rockford Area Ventures, Ingersoll Machine Tools, W.A. Whitney, Hamilton Sundstrand, Boeing, Alion Science and Technology, Caterpillar, the Rockford Council of 100, the City of Rockford, and many other Rockford area manufacturers.

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 common economic strengths and needs, and developing a plan with specific actions for each region.

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