



# opportunityreturns

*Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow*

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

**news**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES IMMEDIATE EFFORT TO TRY AND PREVENT QUEBECOR FROM CLOSING EFFINGHAM PLANT**

SPRINGFIELD – Responding to the disheartening news issued by Quebecor that it plans to close its Effingham printing plant later this year, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced an immediate course of action to try and save the plant and the more than 600 hundred jobs. Governor Blagojevich has directed the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to lead the state's effort to try and prevent the plant's closure and will deploy the state's Rapid Response Team to support these workers in Effingham in the event it does close.

“Unfortunately, major global corporations like Quebecor sometimes make decisions in the interests of spreadsheets and projections rather than families and communities,” said Governor Blagojevich. “Effingham residents have come to rely on Quebecor as a major employer in the Southeast region, and we owe it to them to do everything we can to keep the plant open. But the men and women employed by Quebecor should also know that if the plant does close, we will offer comprehensive assistance to help families get back on their feet and make it through what would be a very difficult time.”

DCEO's Rapid Response Team will be deployed on-site in Effingham to make sure workers are fully prepared for all future possibilities, including the closure of the plant.

“The employees of Quebecor are willing to do whatever it takes to keep the facility open, and they deserve to know why their jobs were lost. If there is anything we can do to keep the plant open, we are going to do it. We want Quebecor employees to know that their jobs – and their families – are much more than statistics to us,” State Representative Bill Grunloh (D-Effingham) said.

“Our focus right now is on keeping the plant open. But whatever the outcome, our effort to bring jobs and prosperity to the Southeast region will continue. We want to make sure that all Southeast residents have the skills and training to not only find the next job, but to find the right job,” said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

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. Developed largely from the input of local business, labor and public sector leaders, *Opportunity Returns* contains tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. While the Southeast region's plan is yet to be announced, the Governor's office and DCEO is currently working closely with regional leaders to identify top local needs and priorities.

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