



Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor / Jack Lavin, Director

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Governor Unveils Major, New Statewide Initiative To Create Jobs And Spur Economic Growth Across Illinois

Ten New, Proactive Regional Growth Plans, Each Including 15-25 Major Economic Development Items, To Be Unveiled This Fall Over 20 Agencies, Boards, And Commissions Involved In New Job Creation Efforts Governor'S Economic Development Plan Different From Any Attempted In Illinois To Date



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

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CHICAGO – Continuing his pledge to increase economic development and create jobs in Illinois, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich unveiled a new comprehensive, regional approach to economic development in Illinois – a job creation approach different from anything attempted in Illinois to date.

The regional approach divides the state into to ten separate economic regions by finding areas with similar economic

strengths and similar economic needs, and then creates a separate regional economic development plan for each of them.

Over twenty different state agencies, boards and commissions will be involved in the creation and implementation of each regional plan. Each plan will contain 15-25 specific, tangible actions that the state can take to help create jobs, and give communities the tools they need to attract businesses.

Items in the plans will range from creating needed infrastructure like roads and industrial parks to providing job training and consulting services through workforce development programs and new entrepreneurship centers to programs to help promote tourism.

"We can't keep relying on the traditional approach our state takes when it comes to economic development – first waiting for a company to say they're thinking of leaving and then finally taking action," Blagojevich said in his remarks. "It's time we stopped being reactive when it comes to economic development. It's time we start being proactive. It's time we stopped looking at economic development as the responsibility of just one state agency, it's time we start realizing that nearly twenty different agencies and boards and commissions – each have something to offer – when it comes to creating jobs and spurring economic growth. It's time we stopped using a one size fits all approach when it comes to economic development, and started looking at each region individually – and it's time we start making plans that play to each region's strengths and address each region's needs. It's time we stopped blaming Washington for our problems, and it's time we start taking steps to make our state – our markets – more accessible, more sophisticated, more marketable, and more attractive to employers than ever before."

"We're going to take every step we can to make our cities and our towns places where businesses can thrive and where people can get jobs," Blagojevich continued. "We're going to build new roads. We're going to build new infrastructure. We're going to provide training, technology, and venture capital. We're going to reduce the cost of doing business in Illinois. We're going to do everything we possibly can to give our communities the ability to compete again."

The Governor's plan will start next month and will continue throughout the next few months, rolled out one region at a time. Since the start of his administration, Governor Blagojevich's administration has reached out, across the state to economic development groups, local chambers of commerce, large and small business leaders and labor to help identify some of the needs in each region.

The Governor made his announcement during a speech to 250 Illinois business, labor and government leaders on the first day of his two-day 2003 Illinois Economic Summit. The Governor will address a group of downstate business leaders on the second day of the Summit, in Metro East on Thursday. The Economic Summits were created to help provide the administration with ideas for the regional plans.

Economic development steps taken by the Blagojevich administration to date include:

- Enacting legislation that provides more than \$300 million dollars in new bond funds to fuel the creation of new clean coal

power plants.

- Paving the way for the expansion of O'Hare Airport – a project that is expected to create 195,000 new jobs and \$18 billion in new economic activity.
- Enacting legislation that is a first step toward luring the movie business back to Illinois.
- Launching six new Entrepreneurship Centers across the state. These Entrepreneurship Centers will help small businesses and new businesses across Illinois grow; and
- Extending tax credits to help producers of ethanol create thousands of new jobs over the next decade.

"We need to come up with ways to be creative about how we approach business development in this state and bring opportunity back to the communities who lost it and bring it back to the people who need it," Blagojevich said

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