



# opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

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**news**

**CONTACTS:**

Cheryle Jackson	312/814.3158 (office)
Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/814.7168 (Opp. Returns)

## **GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES A \$65,000 OPPORTUNITY RETURNS PLANNING GRANT TO VILLAGE OF FRANKLIN TO IMPROVE HEALTH, SAFETY AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced a **\$65,000** planning grant for the Village of Franklin in Morgan County that will pave the way for the construction of a badly needed new sanitary sewer/wastewater treatment facility. This aggressive effort to improve the quality of infrastructure and public facilities will be a major theme of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative for the Central region, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the area, which will be announced soon.

"Water and sanitation improvements are essential to the growth and expansion of the Central Illinois economy. While providing this planning grant to the Village of Franklin first and foremost ensures the physical health and well being of its citizens, it will also strengthen and secure the economic health and vitality of this community for years to come," Governor Blagojevich said

"County Commissioner Brad Zeller and Morgan County Regional planner Dusty Douglas met earlier this month with Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity officials to explain that the Village of Franklin is the last unsewered community in Morgan County," said State Senator Deanna Demuzio (D-Carlinville). "Today, we have received the good news that Governor Blagojevich is awarding this crucial Opportunity Returns grant for this necessary public health improvement for the Franklin community."

"I was very happy to work with Senator Demuzio to help the Franklin community secure this grant," said State Representative Jim Watson (R-Jacksonville). "I worked very closely with the late Senator Vince Demuzio on similar projects, and I am very happy to continue that same relationship of bipartisan cooperation with Senator Deanna Demuzio."

Communities with established infrastructure are under constant pressure to upgrade and rehabilitate their systems to keep up with changing Environmental Protection Agency regulations, changing populations and changing needs. As more rural water wells are becoming undrinkable, rural water providers assume an even greater importance. Adequate sewer and water service is also vital to community and economic development. Without basic infrastructure, communities cannot compete for company relocation and expansion, but with a healthy infrastructure in place, communities can create jobs and prosper.

"Improving water supplies and sanitation benefits everyone in the Central region. It improves the quality of life in residential neighborhoods and also benefits business owners and employees in the workplace," said Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

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Funding for the project will come from local, state and federal sources.

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 Central 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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