



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 29, 2003

news

CONTACTS:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cheryle Jackson | 312/814.3158 (office) |
| Angelynne Amores | 312/636.6148 (cell) |
| Abby Ottenhoff | 312/814.3158 (office) |
| Andrew Ross | 312/814.7168 (Opp. Returns) |

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES KEY *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* JOB TRAINING GRANT FOR SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS

Funding Will Help Freeburg Company Increase Sales By 11%

Freeburg – Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today announced a nearly **\$52,000** *Opportunity Returns* workforce-training grant to Hubbell, Inc, a manufacturer of electrical enclosures, to teach 76 employees a variety of welding skills. Hubbell is based in Freeburg, a town located in the Southwestern region of the Governor's ten-region *Opportunity Returns* initiative - the regional economic development plan that he rolled out in his visit to the Metro East community earlier this month. As a result of this new training program, Hubbell expects to increase productivity and generate an 11% net sales increase.

“This is a great example of how targeting resources can produce immediate results,” Governor Blagojevich said. “Hubbell is a successful company, but it has not been meeting a growing demand for its products. Through this *Opportunity Returns* grant, Hubbell will actually be able to increase its output and grow its sales. This will provide an important lift not only to this company, but to the economic competitiveness of this region.”

The grants are being awarded through the Employer Training Investment Program’s (ETIP) Small/Mid-sized Company component. ETIP is a new generation of employer-focused, customized training grants created through the “*21st Century Jobs*” Training Initiative. ETIP will help keep Illinois workers up to speed with new technologies and business practices, and will in turn help businesses increase productivity and boost competitiveness. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the ETIP grants, which reimburse companies and organizations up to 50% of the costs of training their employees.

“The Southwestern region must become more productive and competitive in manufacturing to compete in the new global economy,” said DCEO Director Jack Lavin. “This initiative will help accomplish that priority by offering key assistance to address the training needs necessary to retain and expand manufacturing companies in the region and across state, especially those businesses that act as suppliers to larger companies.”

###