



# opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2004

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)
Maggie Carson	217/557.8138 (IEPA)

## GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$425,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* FUNDING TO CLEAN UP BROWNFIELDS AND SPUR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

SPRINGFIELD - Delivering on an *Opportunity Returns* commitment to transform brownfields sites into new business and job opportunities, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that the City of Canton has been awarded a **\$425,000** Brownfields grant to conduct environmental cleanup activities at the former International Harvester factory.

Canton received the funds to conduct environmental remediation activities in accordance with a cleanup plan approved by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA). Canton plans to redevelop the 35-acre site as a commercial area, which will include a multi-screen cineplex. Under terms of the grant, Canton agrees to repay a negotiated portion of the funding once the property is sold or developed.

“The Brownfields program represents what *Opportunity Returns* is all about. By providing targeted funding to Canton, we are creating opportunity for enterprising ideas and business ingenuity to go to work in the North Central region. This parcel of land, which has sat in decay, will soon be transformed into a vibrant symbol of urban renewal and economic revitalization,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The funding is being provided through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency as part of *Opportunity Returns*, the Governor’s comprehensive, economic development plan for the North Central region.

Canton, under Illinois EPA’s Site Remediation Program, will conduct the cleanup in order to receive a No Further Remediation or “clean letter” from the Agency so redevelopment of the now vacant former industrial site can proceed.

“The remediation of environmentally contaminated sites is an important catalyst of economic renewal. I’m so pleased that the Governor has included this important grant under his *Opportunity Returns* plan; he clearly recognizes that once barriers inhibiting new business growth and development are removed, anything is possible,” said State Representative Michael Smith (D-Canton).

IEPA Director Renee Cipriano announced the grant during a ceremonial check presentation today at the annual Illinois Brownfields Conference, organized by the Illinois EPA. The conference in Springfield was attended by hundreds of local officials, environmental consultants and others who learned about the many tools available to clean up and redevelop brownfields sites and former industrial or commercial sites with potential contamination.

(more)

“Brownfield grants are a key tool in the Governor’s *Opportunity Returns* plan to assist communities and provide funding needed to clean up and redevelop these abandoned sites. Now that Canton has thoroughly investigated the site with assistance from Illinois EPA, the grant will allow them to proceed with final cleanup needed for redevelopment,” said IEPA Director Cipriano.

In addition to the grant, the Illinois EPA will provide direct technical support and oversight and continue to assist Canton with environmental issues until redevelopment begins.

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. This grassroots effort for the North Central region is a product of significant outreach over several months throughout each region, with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. The more than 40 specific projects that the Governor announced in December for the North Central region are designed to be flexible and effective. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

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