



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2004

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 FUNDING TO FACILITATE NEW PRODUCTION AND JOB CREATION FOR NORTHWEST REGION COMPANY

SPRINGFIELD – Delivering on an *Opportunity Returns* promise to help reduce the cost of doing business and strengthen the competitiveness of Northwest region companies, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced the awarding of a **\$150,000** grant to Schafer's Fisheries, which will allow the Fulton company in Whiteside County to create **10 new jobs**, reduce operating costs, and improve its bottom line. Schafer's, the Midwest's largest processor and wholesale distributor of fresh fish and frozen seafood, is using the state funding to develop a production plant that will recycle fish waste into a new marketable product: organic fish fertilizer.

"Businesses throughout the Northwest region continue to display a wealth of ingenuity and resolve, intangible attributes that put new production and growth within close reach. Through *Opportunity Returns*, we are working hard to make sure the supporting ingredients that transform promise into prosperity are readily available: facilities, financing, technical assistance and job training. By providing this funding to Schafer's Fisheries, the company will be able to launch an exciting new venture that will not only reduce its waste disposal expenses, but create a marketable product that will act as a significant stream of revenue. This is a big win for Schafer's Fisheries and business ingenuity in the Northwest region," Governor Blagojevich said.

The funding is being provided through an innovative program in the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) known as the Recycling Expansion and Modernization Program (REM). The program is designed to promote waste diversion and the economic viability of recycled products by providing funding assistance for production ventures that create a marketable product from recycled waste.

DCEO funds are being used to purchase and install equipment that will grind fish waste from its processing facility and emulsify the waste into fertilizer. The equipment includes a specialized grinder, emulsifier, tanks and fittings. The project will divert more than 300 tons of fish waste annually from the solid waste stream by eliminating fish offal that is currently disposed in landfills.

Schafer's will be holding a grand opening for the new fish fertilizer plant this **Saturday, June 5th from 10:00am until 2:00pm**. While Schafer's Fisheries is located in Fulton, the new fish fertilizer plant is located in Thomson (Carroll County) at **2112 Sand Ridge Road**.

This *Opportunity Returns* partnership offers significant financial benefits for Schafer's Fisheries. Through the improved approach to waste management, the firm expects to reduce operating costs by \$10,000 annually. In addition, Schafer's expects to increase sales revenue through the marketing of the organic fertilizer. The new initiative has already led to the hiring of two full-time positions, with the expectation of creating eight to ten additional jobs. The firm currently employs 35 individuals.

(more)

“Through the Governor’s leadership, we’re finding innovative ways to incentivize business expansion and modernization ventures that propel new growth and create new jobs. For a relatively small company such as Schafer’s Fisheries, launching a new line of production could be a daunting feat. By providing this targeted funding, we’re ensuring that a business idea that is both economically and environmentally efficient can be brought to the marketplace. The byproduct of this kind of innovation is new jobs and a more vibrant regional economy,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

The *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 Northwest region was the product of significant outreach over several months with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. The more than 30 projects that the Governor announced last October for Northwestern Illinois are designed to be flexible and effective. This plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

#####