



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES FOREIGN TRADE MISSION TO EUROPE TO HELP ESTABLISH NEW MARKETS FOR ILLINOIS COMPANIES

Ten Chicago and South Suburban Companies Will Benefit from State-Led Trade Mission to Europe

SPRINGFIELD - In an innovative effort to help stimulate more foreign trade opportunities for Illinois businesses, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that the state is escorting ten Northeast region companies on a foreign trade mission to Europe. The Illinois Trade Office (ITO) of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is partnering with the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce to stage the trade mission that begins this Friday and will include visits to England, Germany and Poland. Through the efforts of the ITO offices in Europe, the companies will have various appointments with viable business partners in each country. State Senator Debbie Halvorson (D-Chicago Heights) and State Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Hazelcrest) will also be going on the trade mission.

The Illinois European Trade Mission comes as a part of *Opportunity Returns*, the Governor's soon-to-be-unveiled regional economic development plan designed to create jobs and spur economic growth in the Northeast region and throughout the state.

"Chicago and the south suburbs are home to some of the most sophisticated, innovative businesses in the country today. In many cases, there is a global demand for the goods and services these firms offer. By joining with the Chicago Southland Chamber to sponsor this trade mission, we can introduce these businesses to global markets and help them forge new partnerships that will result in dynamic new levels of growth. When we talk about revitalizing the Illinois economy by expanding economic opportunity, this is what we mean," Governor Blagojevich said.

While a wide variety of industry sectors will be represented on the trip, the trade mission will be especially beneficial to manufacturers and logistics companies. Manufacturers will be able to meet agents, distributors, end-users or joint-venture partners. Logistics firms will have the opportunity to meet shippers who seek distribution in the United States.

The trip will also include visits with three European chambers of commerce. The Chicago Southland Chamber will be signing "sister chamber" agreements with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chambers of Commerce located just outside Birmingham, England; the East German Chamber in Berlin, and the Polish American Chamber in Warsaw.

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“Whether a company currently sells to the European market or has never done so, this trip and the help we will receive from the Illinois Trade Office and U.S. Customs will help companies sell to these markets. We think that many more of our member companies will sell overseas after learning how it is done,” said Jim Bush, Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce.

The companies taking part in the European Trade mission are: American Eagle Steel Company in South Holland, Carlson Wagonlit Travel in Homewood, Commonwealth Edison, the Daily Southtown, Paratech, Inc. in Frankfort, Infinity Structures, Prairie State College in Chicago, Midwest Model Aircraft in Chicago, Holland and Knight in Chicago, and Marketing Support, Inc. in Chicago.

“The one on one consultations each Illinois firm will partake in provide a highly efficient and effective way of reaching new clients and growing their business. Governor Blagojevich understands the importance of opening new markets for Illinois businesses, and this trade mission offers a tremendous opportunity for these companies to build partnerships in three cities at the center of European commerce,” 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. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from. The Governor has already unveiled plans for six of the ten regions – Northern Stateline, Northwest, Southern, North Central, Southwest and West Central regions. He will announce the plans for the East Central, Southeast, Central and Northeast regions in the coming months.

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