



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

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Governor Awards \$5 Million for Brownfield Rehabilitation Project

Abundant Sediment from Lake Peoria will be Removed and Shipped to Brownfield Site

Comprehensive Redevelopment of Land to Create Jobs and Expand Recreational Activities for South Shore Communities

CHICAGO – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today announced \$5 million in funding to the City of Chicago, Department of Planning and Development for infrastructure improvements in conjunction with the redevelopment of the former US Steel South Works facility. Funds will be used for two components of a large, comprehensive rehabilitation of one of the largest Brownfields in the United States.

The larger strategy for this project will incorporate improvements to the Brownfield site, create and retain manufacturing jobs, provide 100 acres of new open green space along the lakefront, and leverage private investment in new residential and commercial and industrial facilities.

Another segment of the funding will be used to obtain and ship sediments from the bottom of Lake Peoria to the Brownfield land and apply it to the site as part of this redevelopment process. The abundant sediment in Lake Peoria has been a long-standing problem causing navigational hazards to residents using the lake.

“I’m pleased these funds will help both Peoria and the City of Chicago proceed with a tremendously worthy project,” said Governor Blagojevich. “The restoration of Brownfield sites in Illinois has been a focus of my administration as a way of successfully returning abandoned land to viability for businesses and communities. Now sediments from the bottom of Lake Peoria, which posed a problem for boaters in the community, will be used to help develop hundreds of acres on the lakefront, create economic activity and reinvigorate the nearby communities.”

The redevelopment project of the US Steel Works facility is located at 87th Street and the Lakefront in South Chicago. It is the site of an abandoned steel mill, which covers approximately 570 acres, where the City of Chicago envisions converting into a mix of industrial, residential, and commercial development plus the inclusion of both a community park and a lakefront park.

Approximately 36,000 tons of silt from Lake Peoria and the Illinois River will be dredged, loaded onto barges and shipped directly to the site and applied to the Brownfield. Sediment relocation will be monitored and facilitated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"I am deeply appreciative to the Governor for his decision to continue the progress of this project, which is a model of intergovernmental cooperation," said State Rep. Ricca Sloane (D-92). "It represents a creative and innovative start to solving a large problem facing Peoria Lake -- the increase in silt in the Lake that both poses hazards to navigation and diminishes the usefulness of this important recreational resource to our community. The director of DNR, Joel Brunsvold, and his excellent professional staff, especially John Marlin, deserve our thanks as well for their vision in making this project a reality."

"I'm pleased Governor Blagojevich has released these funds that will greatly help the residents of Peoria," said State Senator George Shadid (D-46). "By removing silt from Lake Peoria and turning it into something useful, everyone benefits."

Attempts to revitalize this area began in 1988 and as of October 2002 a groundbreaking was held for the first industry to locate on the old steel plant site. This new manufacturing plant will eventually employ approximately 1,000 people and will utilize approximately 20 percent of the available area.

"The redevelopment of this land will have a tremendous impact to the City of Chicago," said Denise Casalino, City of Chicago Planning Commissioner. "This comprehensive land rehabilitation will positively affect the South Shore and neighboring communities through an increase in jobs and expanded recreational activities. I want to thank Governor Blagojevich for making these funds available."

"The renovation of the US Steel Works facility will be a huge benefit to the community and mean a revitalization of hundreds of acres along the waterfront," said Chicago Park District Supt. Tim Mitchell. "The entire area will benefit for years to come."

Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, as Chair of the Illinois River Coordinating Council, took a leadership role in making this vision a reality. He was instrumental in coordinating all government agencies, including United States Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.