



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22, 2003

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH NAMES *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR NORTHERN STATELINE REGION

Governor Selects Local Business Leader Steven Bois to Lead Unprecedented Economic Stimulus Plan in Four-County Area

Rockford - Governor Blagojevich today named Steven Bois as the regional director for the Northern Stateline region for *Opportunity Returns*, his historic, regional economic development plan. Bois will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Governor's new economic initiative designed to spur growth in the Rock River Valley region. The plan was first rolled-out by Governor Blagojevich in October in Rockford and has already yielded positive early results. The Northern Stateline region encompasses Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone and Ogle counties.

Governor Blagojevich said that Bois' experience and economic savvy make him an ideal fit to help accomplish the objectives of this plan. "Steven Bois has an intimate knowledge of the economic forces driving this region and a strong record of achievement. In a region where manufacturing is still the primary industry, Steven brings over 25 years of industrial experience to this job. His on the ground leadership will be a great resource to this community and will certainly strengthen our efforts to revitalize the local economy," Governor Blagojevich said.

Bois is a graduate of Northern Illinois University in De Kalb, with a BS in Industrial Technology Education. He's spent his career working in a wide variety of jobs in the industrial sector, including consulting, sales and marketing for the manufacturing, utility and service industries. Formally a Vice President with the Furst Group of Rockford, Bois has successfully developed relationships across the region in the industrial field and provided manufacturing and human resource solutions to companies ranging from small, privately owned businesses to multi-billion dollar, publicly traded corporations.

Local leaders lauded the announcement. "We are very excited that Steven will be leading the *Opportunity Returns* team in the Northern Stateline region. He's got a great background working in the private sector and knows the intricacies of the entire region, which will be very helpful to all of us," Rockford Mayor Doug Scott said.

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"The Governor's selection of Steven Bois, an innovative and creative business leader with deep roots in the community, is another important step in the right direction for the Northern Stateline region," State Rep. Charles Jefferson said.

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Director Jack Lavin said the Stateline regional director needed to possess a distinctive set of skills. "Due to its geographic borders, the Northern Stateline region has unique economic challenges; it must constantly work hard to retain its businesses and stave off the threat of relocation to neighboring areas," Director Lavin said. "Steven Bois has a thorough understanding of the challenges facing the region, and knows how to leverage its strengths. He'll be a great asset in our efforts to grow the local economy and create jobs."

The Governor's *Opportunity Returns* plan in the Northern Stateline region targets resources to key areas such as technology investment, entrepreneurship, access to capital, job training and education, and local infrastructure projects, including the completion of the US 20-Freeport Bypass and the widening of IL 173. A promise Governor Blagojevich made in October will be fulfilled in the coming weeks: removing of the Cherry Valley Toll. The Governor recently returned to Rockford to announce the elimination of the southbound exit toll on the Northwest Tollway (I-90) by year's end. This is a great holiday present for local citizens frustrated with the traffic and congestion the toll had become notorious for causing.

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 is a product of significant outreach over several months throughout each region, with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. These economic initiatives 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.

Bois is excited to embark on the new challenge and is confident he can hit the ground running. "I want to thank Governor Blagojevich for giving me a fantastic chance to help make a difference in a region where I've spent my entire life. My experience flows from the classroom to the shop floor to the executive office. I am proud of the fact that I can relate to all kinds of jobs - I can button my cuffs or roll up my sleeves comfortably. Working together, I know we can create more jobs throughout the region," Bois said.

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