



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

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news

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GOVERNOR'S OPPORTUNITY RETURNS GRANT WILL SPARK INNOVATIVE REDEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION IN SOUTHERN REGION

SPRINGFIELD - Delivering on an *Opportunity Returns* pledge to transform Brownfield sites into new business and job opportunities, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that the city of DuQuoin, in Perry County, will be awarded **\$30,000** to conduct site assessment work at a former gas station at 300 South Washington in preparation for redevelopment.

“The essence of *Opportunity Returns* is to take innovative, new approaches to the problems we face and to form creative new partnerships to get things done. By providing this grant, combined with local and private funds, we can convert vacant and potentially hazardous locations into thriving ones. And because a new business is already identified at this site, we are confident that this funding will create jobs and provide a real service to the community,” said Governor Blagojevich.

The funding is being provided through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Municipal Brownfields Redevelopment Grant program as a part of *Opportunity Returns*, the Governor’s comprehensive economic development plan to spur growth and create jobs throughout the Southern region.

“What makes *Opportunity Returns* unique is that it is local and targeted. In the past, state government might not have even been aware of a need like this redevelopment at 300 South Washington. But now, because decisions and policies are made at the local level, right here in DuQuoin, we can make important projects like this one a reality,” DuQuoin Mayor John Rednour said.

The city of DuQuoin will use this grant to conduct investigation on these sites and provide oversight work under the authority of Illinois EPA’s Site Remediation Program. The grants are awarded to Illinois municipalities for environmental assessments of abandoned or underutilized properties in preparation for cleanup and redevelopment. The O’Reilly Automotive Parts Company is providing \$5,000 in match funding to help the city of DuQuoin meet their 30% matching funds requirement for the grant. Upon completion of the cleanup, O’Reilly plans to develop the site into an auto parts retail store.

“Brownfields grants are yet another creative tool Governor Blagojevich is using to build our economy and put people to work. This grant will benefit both the economy and the environment in Southern Illinois,” said Illinois EPA Director Renee Cipriano.

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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 Southern region was the product of significant outreach over several months with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials. *Opportunity Returns* contains tangible actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to business. The more than 40 specific projects that the Governor announced last November for the Southern region 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.

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