



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 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 MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN OPPORTUNITY RETURNS GRANTS FOR CRITICAL NORTHERN STATELINE REGION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced more than **\$1 million** in funding for new sanitation and water drainage improvement projects in the Northern Stateline region. These key initiatives will improve the health and quality of life of Northern Stateline residents, as well as provide the necessary infrastructure for economic growth. This aggressive effort to improve the quality of infrastructure and public facilities is a major theme of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative for the Northern Stateline region, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the area, which he announced last October.

“These *Opportunity Returns* grants will make a major difference for the Northern Stateline region,” said Governor Blagojevich. “With good water and sanitation, this region has a tremendous opportunity to create new jobs and to build a more prosperous economy. One project at a time, one job at a time, we will continue bringing back opportunity throughout the Rock River Valley.”

The funds for this initiative are part of the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP), a federally-funded grant program that assists Illinois communities by providing grants to local governments to help them in financing economic development, public facilities and housing rehabilitation projects. The program is targeted to assist low-to-moderate income people by creating job opportunities and improving the quality of their living environment. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity administers the program.

These CDAP grants address a crucial need for the region. Communities with established infrastructure are under constant pressure to upgrade and rehabilitate their systems to keep up with changing U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations, changing populations and changing needs. As more rural water wells are becoming undrinkable, rural water providers assume even greater importance.

Adequate sewer and water service is also vital to community and economic development. Without basic infrastructure, communities cannot compete for company relocation and expansion, but with a healthy infrastructure in place, communities can create jobs and prosper.

(more)

The Northern Stateline region's public facilities improvements are as follows:

LOCATION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	COST
Freeport, City of Stephenson	Public Facilities	Replace sanitary and storm sewers	350,000
Seward Township Winnebago	Public Facilities	Rehabilitate existing sanitary sewer services	350,000
Winnebago County Winnebago	Public Facilities	New water lines	350,000

Total: \$1,050,000

“Governor Blagojevich believes that the best way to figure out what people and companies need on the local level is to ask them. That’s exactly what *Opportunity Returns* is all about. Instead of making decisions from the top down, we have our ears to the ground in every region of our state. Initiatives like these CDAP grants show that this new approach works. By responding to local needs, we’re already making a tangible difference for the Northern Stateline region,” said Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

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 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. This plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from.

#####