



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

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GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES OPPORTUNITY RETURNS FUNDING TO SUPPORT RECYCLING EFFORTS AND JOB CREATION IN DECATUR

CHICAGO – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that **\$100,000** in *Opportunity Returns* funding has been awarded to a Central region organization to support recycling initiatives that will help create seven new jobs and advance recycling collection and processing efforts in Decatur. Decatur Recycle Paper Company will receive **\$100,000** for expansion in order to meet the growing needs of its customers.

“This year, 23,000 Illinoisans are employed by the recycling industry, and this number continues to grow,” said Governor Blagojevich. “Recycling has become a big business, and this *Opportunity Returns* grant will help us support our workforce and create new jobs. It will also improve quality of life in the Central region by keeping our natural resources pristine and reducing strain on local landfills.”

The recycling grants are administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and are part of *Opportunity Returns*, Governor’s Blagojevich’s pro-active, regional economic development plan designed to create jobs and spur growth in the Central region and throughout the state.

“I am a strong believer in the notion that we can protect the environment in a way that can create jobs,” said State Representative Bob Flider (D-Decatur). “This project reflects that belief, and I am pleased that it is receiving financial support from *Opportunity Returns*.”

DCEO finances the program through funds received from the tipping fee surcharge levied at Illinois landfills. Grant awards are determined on a competitive basis, and the grantee is required to provide an applicant investment of at least 50 percent of the funding required for the project.

“This *Opportunity Returns* grant makes an enormous amount of sense because it helps create jobs in an environmentally friendly way. Governor Blagojevich looks forward to continuing to support this very important growth industry in the Central region and throughout Illinois,” said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

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 is a 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.

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