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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod Blagojevich – Governor

news

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CONTACTS:

Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Gerardo Cardenas	312/814.3158 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/814.8193 (Opp. Returns)

GOV. BLAGOJEVICH BRINGS ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM TO QUINCY

Project will address Energy Efficiency as Key Strategy to Improving Local Economy and Business Competitiveness

CHICAGO – Gov. Rod Blagojevich today announced **\$70,000** in *Opportunity Returns* funds for a Regional Energy Program in Quincy. Administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Regional Energy Program seeks to improve the local economy and business competitiveness within Illinois communities through increased energy efficiency. The United States Department of Energy's (USDOE) Rebuild America Program jointly supports the project. The Great River Economic Development Foundation (GREDF) will oversee the Quincy effort. The funding is part of *Opportunity Returns*, Governor Blagojevich's pro-active, regional economic development plan designed to create jobs and spur growth in the West Central region and throughout the state.

"This comprehensive effort to address the potential for energy efficiency improvements in Quincy will result in significant economic benefits for both businesses and consumers," said Gov. Blagojevich. "Energy efficiency improvements are a great way to combat rising utility costs for homeowners and businesses, which will ultimately help us grow the economy. And growing the economy is what *Opportunity Returns* is all about."

The project will focus on several initiatives, including energy efficient building codes, small business education and assistance, residential education, civic involvement, and a community energy profile. Present City of Quincy building codes will be reviewed in relation to energy efficiency. Following an evaluation process, a new code will be drafted for presentation to the City Council.

"This is another innovative effort championed by Governor Blagojevich's *Opportunity Returns* program that will help us introduce energy efficiency improvements for both businesses and homeowners throughout Quincy. With energy prices on the rise, we must continue our efforts to conserve energy and rely upon more renewable energy sources," State Senator John Sullivan (D-Rushville) said.

"The Regional Energy Program brings energy efficiency and renewable energy strategies and solutions to homes, businesses and communities in Illinois. Through our partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy's Rebuild America Program, we are able to highlight successful energy programs from around the state and provide unique networking tools and technical assistance to develop community energy projects for Illinois," DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

(more)

The residential component calls for evaluating and developing an energy efficient residential building code for Quincy, producing a long-term impact on the energy usage of residential inhabitants for many years.

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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