



# opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

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## **GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$295,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* GRANTS FOR SOUTHEAST REGION HOUSING REHABILITATION PROJECTS**

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced more than **\$295,000** in funding for the rehabilitation of 10 owner occupied homes in the Southeast region. These home improvements in the Village of Ramsey in Fayette County will drastically enhance the living environments and quality of life for low-income and disabled residents, as well as building the capacity for economic growth. This aggressive effort to improve living conditions for the region's most underserved residents is part of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the Southeast region.

“As we strive to make Illinois the most attractive state in the country to do business in, our goal is to make each region more economically competitive from top to bottom, in every category that matters. Quality of life is certainly an important factor for any company deciding where to locate its business. By revitalizing our housing, we’re building stronger and healthier communities. This improves the quality of life for current and future residents of the Southeast region and will ultimately be a catalyst of greater economic prosperity,” Governor Blagojevich said.

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 (DCEO) administers the program.

Governor Blagojevich has developed the following objectives for the CDAP program:

- Strengthen community economic development through the creation of jobs, stimulation of private investment and strengthening the tax base
- Improvement of public infrastructure and elimination of conditions which are detrimental to health, safety and public welfare; and
- Conservation and expansion of the state's housing stock in order to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for persons of low-to-moderate income and the developmentally disabled.

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These CDAP grants being provided to the Southeast region fall under the third objective. They are designed to help provide safe and sanitary living conditions for low-to-moderate income residents of their communities.

“Making communities more livable throughout the region goes hand and hand with creating better economic opportunity. This *Opportunity Returns* grant will fund critical housing improvements in Ramsey, strengthening the foundation of the community, and enhancing its competitiveness in the business world. One community at a time, we’re helping the Southeast region realize its great economic potential,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

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. Developed largely from the input of local business, labor and public sector leaders, *Opportunity Returns* contains tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. While the Southeast region’s plan is yet to be announced, the Governor’s office and DCEO is currently working closely with regional leaders to identify top local needs and priorities.

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