



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 BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$75,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* FUNDING TO HELP AMERICAN RED CROSS OPEN ENERGY EFFICIENT BUILDING WITH GREEN ROOF

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced that **\$75,000** in *Opportunity Returns* funding was recently awarded to the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago for the design and construction of a green roof atop its new Disaster Operations Center on Chicago's near West Side. The project's completion will be celebrated today during a dedication ceremony of the new facility at **1:30pm at 2200 West Harrison Street**. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) provided the grant through *Opportunity Returns*, Governor Blagojevich's pro-active, regional economic development plan designed to create jobs and spur growth in the Northeast region.

“The American Red Cross performs courageous work on the frontlines each day helping people prepare for and cope with all sorts of emergencies. When building a new Disaster Operations Center, the Red Cross wanted to design an extremely energy efficient facility so that the money it raises goes towards health and safety education programs and not utility bills. This *Opportunity Returns* funding is helping to make that vision come true with the completion of this innovative new building, which will strengthen the Red Cross’ ability to continue providing invaluable assistance to the people of Illinois,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The new Disaster Operations Center will serve 8 million people in seven counties in Northeastern Illinois. The green roof is expected to reduce heating and cooling requirements by as much as 25 to 50% for the floor directly below the roof, and overall utility savings are estimated at 15 to 25% for this three-story facility. Moreover, it will help reduce peak demand on power plants, lessen the impact of rainfall runoff, and reduce the heat island effect. The roof’s life expectancy itself will be increased by two to three times. The Red Cross invested \$100,000 to ensure that the facility can structurally accommodate the weight and drainage required by a green roof.

“Green roofs make great economic sense, and significantly reduce the negative impact a building has on its environment. Through this critical grant, Governor Blagojevich is demonstrating that responsible environmental policy can be effective economic policy,” State Senator Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago) said.

“Green architecture and design has gained great momentum in recent years and rightfully so. I’m thrilled to see Governor Blagojevich supporting this green roof atop such an important building that will promote and enhance the appeal of this effective technology. Illinois continues to be a model of innovative ideas in action,” State Representative Arthur Turner (D-Chicago) said.

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The hot air that hovers over cities due to heat reflective material and the lack of vegetation can result in cities being seven to ten degrees warmer than their suburbs. Scientists predict roof gardens and other widespread heat reduction measures could lower a city's temperature by five degrees.

The entire Disaster Operations Center facility was designed to be energy efficient. The main lobby atrium and a third floor conference room take advantage of natural sunlight to reduce energy costs. All building components, from exterior bricks to window glazing and the curtain wall system, use materials that retain temperature to minimize heat or air conditioning losses. An enhanced energy management system controls temperature and lighting and monitors energy usage.

“Governor Blagojevich understands that one of the most effective ways to help businesses increase their bottom line and create new jobs is to help them reduce their operating expenses. By providing key support for this marvelous new facility, we are helping the Red Cross cut energy expenses and free up money to spend on the things it does best – responding to disasters and saving lives,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

For nearly 90 years, the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago has helped people prepare for and cope with emergencies. Within weeks of being chartered in 1915, the chapter responded to Chicago's worst disaster in terms of lives lost – the sinking of the Eastland on the Chicago River. Today, the Chicago chapter responds to disasters and makes our community a healthier and safer place to live and work.

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. Each plan is tailored to deliver real results that local businesses will see, feel, and, hopefully, profit from. Governor Blagojevich will announce the Northeast region plan in the coming months.

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