



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR AWARDS \$440,000 TRAINING GRANT TO MCHENRY COUNTY COLLEGE

Grant is Largest Ever Awarded to an Illinois Community College

CRYSTAL LAKE – Governor Rod Blagojevich today awarded a \$440,000 *Opportunity Returns* workforce training grant to McHenry County College's Center for Commerce and Economic Development (CCED). The grant is the largest of its kind ever awarded to an Illinois community college. *Opportunity Returns* is Governor Blagojevich's pro-active, comprehensive plan to restoring economic opportunity throughout Illinois. Developed largely from the input of local business, labor and public sector leaders, *Opportunity Returns* delivers services on a regional basis and contains tangible, specific actions to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses. McHenry County College is part of the Northeast region and more grants like these will be part of the Northeast plan when it is announced later this spring.

"The Illinois Community College system is a tremendous resource in our efforts to provide Illinois workers with the skill sets they will need to be successful in today's advanced and technically driven economy," Governor Blagojevich said. "My administration is working hard not only to create and retain jobs, but to ensure that our workers are up-to-speed on the cutting edge technologies they'll need for those jobs."

The grants are being awarded through the Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) and will be used to upgrade the skills of more than 2,200 employees. ETIP is a new generation of employer-focused, customized training grants created through the "21st Century Jobs" Training Initiative. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the ETIP grants, which reimburse companies and organizations for up to 50 percent of the costs of training their employees.

"I want to thank McHenry County College and Dr. Walter Packard for joining with us in this partnership to upgrade the skills of our workforce," said DCEO Director Jack Lavin. "The efforts of the college's Center for Commerce and Economic Development, along with the McHenry County Area Training Network, are going to make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of local workers."

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The \$440,000 ETIP grant will be used to upgrade the skills of 2,208 employees at 35 participating McHenry County Area Training Network companies. The Training Network was formed in 2003 to meet McHenry County's needs for a well-trained labor force. Its members account for over 20% of the county's total workforce.

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. The Governor has already unveiled plans for six of the ten regions – Northern Stateline, Northwest, Southern, North Central, Southwest and West Central regions. He will announce the plans for the East Central, Southeast, Central and Northeast regions in the coming months.

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