



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH BRINGS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND JOBS TO SOUTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

\$4.8 Million Opportunity Returns Grant Announced For Ethanol Production Facility

CHICAGO – Governor Rod Blagojevich announced today that Lincolnland Agri-Energy in Crawford County has received a **\$4.8 million** *Opportunity Returns* grant to build its new ethanol production facility on 130 acres near the town of Palestine. This project is boosting demand for Illinois corn by some 15 million bushels a year, increasing Illinois' energy independence and creating almost 40 new jobs for the Southeast region. This aggressive effort to promote the use of ethanol as a viable and efficient source of fuel in Illinois is part of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the Southeast region. The funding comes through the new Renewable Fuels Development Program of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

"Many people talk about our over reliance on foreign oil, but here in Illinois we are replacing talk with action. Today, we are taking real steps to replace that dependence on foreign oil with Illinois' own crops – corn grown in Illinois by Illinois farmers, processed into biofuels by Illinois refineries, creating Illinois construction and manufacturing jobs. We are replacing foreign oil with Illinois crops and Illinois jobs," said Governor Blagojevich

Lincolnland Agri-Energy has constructed a 40 million gallon per year ethanol production facility near Palestine. The facility will use almost 15 million bushels of corn annually, produce about 128,600 tons of livestock feed (distillers dried grains) each year, and create 40 new permanent jobs at the facility. The total cost of the facility is approximately \$57 million.

"Governor Blagojevich and I understand that there are innovative ways, right here in Illinois, to decrease our dependence on foreign oil, while providing an important boost to our economy. This *Opportunity Returns* grant to Lincolnland Agri-Energy strongly demonstrates our commitment, today and tomorrow, to ethanol as a viable energy alternative," State Representative Roger Eddy (R-Hutsonville) said.

"Illinois leads the nation in corn production, and with Governor Blagojevich's vision, we are now leading the nation with new programs to support biofuels such as ethanol. We need to aggressively support this growing industry to continue growing our economy in a way that is future-thinking and environmentally responsible. Lincolnland Agri-Energy is the first plant to receive funding from our new program, and there will certainly be more to come. We are opening the door on a new era," said Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

(more)

The Renewable Fuels Development Program was established in June 2003 when Governor Blagojevich signed Senate Bill 46 (Public Act 93-0015).

DCEO is also supporting ethanol research through the new National Corn to Ethanol Research Center (NCERC) at Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville. These research efforts will result in the commercialization of new value-added co-products that will eventually be produced at these facilities. New technologies to increase production efficiency and reduce production costs are also being developed at the NCERC.

Eventually, through research and development, a bushel of corn will be able to produce all of the products currently produced from a barrel of oil.

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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