



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES ALMOST \$740,000 IN *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* GRANTS FOR CRUCIAL EAST CENTRAL REGION INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced almost **\$740,000** in funding for new water access and drainage improvement projects throughout the East Central region. These key initiatives will improve the health and quality of life of East Central residents, as well as provide the necessary infrastructure for economic growth. This aggressive effort to improve the quality of infrastructure and public facilities will be a major theme of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative for the East Central region, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the area, when the region's plan is announced.

“The public facilities projects we are announcing for the East Central region are meant to make a real difference,” said Governor Blagojevich. “By improving drainage and increasing access to water, we are improving the every day lives of the people of the East Central region. At the same time, we are enhancing the region's infrastructure, which will make it a more attractive place for businesses to expand and relocate.”

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 assist 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 administers the program.

These CDAP initiatives address a crucial need for the region. Communities with established infrastructure are under constant pressure to upgrade and rehabilitate their systems to keep up with changing Environmental Protection Agency regulations, changing populations and changing needs. As more rural water wells are becoming undrinkable, rural water providers assume even greater importance.

Adequate sewer and water service is also vital to community and economic development. Without basic infrastructure, communities cannot compete for company relocation and expansion, but with a healthy infrastructure in place, communities can create jobs and prosper.

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The East Central region's public facilities improvements are as follows:

LOCATION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	COST
Urbana Township Champaign	Public Facilities	Improve storm water drainage system	\$350,000
Camargo, Village of Douglas	Public Facilities	Construct elevated water storage tank	\$350,000
Garrett, Village of Douglas	Design Engineering	Design drainage system to alleviate drainage problems	\$36,846
			Total: \$736,846

“The goal of *Opportunity Returns* is to eliminate the old approach of making decisions at the state level and hoping they benefit people locally. This top-down system just didn’t work. Instead, the Governor is focusing locally: training workers, attracting new companies and creating jobs one at a time. By responding to what communities really need, we will make a real, tangible difference,” said Jack Lavin, Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

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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