



opportunityreturns

Creating more jobs for today and tomorrow

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$100,000 *OPPORTUNITY RETURNS* GRANT TO FUND EMERGENCY REPAIRS FOR DEWITT COUNTY SEWER SYSTEM TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

CHICAGO – Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced **\$100,000** in emergency funding for the town of Farmer City in DeWitt County that will allow critical repairs to be made to its sewer system and quash the threat of additional flooding in residents' homes. The aggressive effort to improve the quality of infrastructure and public facilities is a major theme of the Governor's *Opportunity Returns* initiative for the North Central region, his comprehensive, pro-active plan for restoring economic opportunity to the area.

"The current situation facing the Farmer City community is a basic quality of life issue. Sewer systems cannot exist in disrepair and be left to jeopardize human health and safety. The purpose of having emergency funding is to ensure that we are capable of responding at a moment's notice to unforeseen adversity by identifying and delivering the critical resources that are needed to provide for the public good," said Governor Blagojevich.

In late May, after Farmer City received a heavy rainfall, several area homes experienced basement flooding. What was first thought to be sewer blockage turned out to be a sewer collapse. As temporary repairs were being made, examination revealed that many sewers in town were in woefully substandard condition and are in imminent danger of collapse. Further sewer collapse could leave approximately 70 homes without sewer service.

The **\$100,000** emergency CDAP grant will enable a key water main, which must be moved to provide access to the sewer line below, to be relocated, as well as make vital repairs to the sewer lines.

The funds for this initiative are part of the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP), a 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. While the grants are typically only approved and awarded annually, emergency CDAP grants can be issued at any time when a community's public health or safety is at risk, as is the case in Farmer City. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the program.

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“Governor Blagojevich’s *Opportunity Returns* plan employs a regional approach towards economic development. The greatest strength of this approach is that it allows us to focus on the unique needs of individual communities, and target our assistance to specific projects that local leaders have identified as being critical to economic revitalization. Projects don’t get much more critical than this one, and we’re pleased to be able to deliver the resources that will fund the needed infrastructure repairs in Farmer City and solidify the economic foundation of the community,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

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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