



*opportunity*returns

Southwest Region

Rod R. Blagojevich, *Governor*

STATE OF ILLINOIS



**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
SPRINGFIELD 62706**

**ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH
GOVERNOR**

To the People of the Southwest Region:

If you ask anyone in the Southwest region what they most want to see happen here over the next few years, the answer is simple: create more jobs.

While the experts will tell you that this is a task for the economists in Washington, I don't think we should just sit back and wait for someone else to solve our problems. It's time we address them head-on. It's time we start taking steps here in Illinois to create jobs and spur growth.

We recently divided the state into 10 regions, and created plans for each that contain tangible, specific actions we can take to make each region more accessible, more marketable, more entrepreneurial and more attractive to businesses.

The following is our plan to create jobs in the Southwest region, which includes Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties. The details of this plan are the result of working with local legislators, civic leaders, business and labor leaders – all of whom want to see this region prosper.

Our plan addresses a wide array of the region's needs, including supporting and modernizing local businesses, expanding regional infrastructure, investing in education, job training and technology, increasing the use of coal and renewable energy and promoting tourism and heritage.

Our work begins today with the unveiling of this plan. It will continue over the next several years, as we make each idea a reality. To coordinate the work of more than a dozen different state agencies and ensure that each idea is implemented, I am sending a team of people to work and live in the Southwest region, and focus solely on making sure that every part of this plan takes effect.

That plan starts today. It will continue every day throughout my administration. And, if we all work together, we can make great things happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rod R. Blagojevich". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" at the beginning.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor

table of contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
The Southwest Region	4
■ Demographics	
■ Labor Force and Employment	
■ Income and Wages	
■ Number of Businesses	
■ Major Industries	
■ Largest Employers	
<i>Opportunity Returns</i> to Southwest Illinois	9
■ Support and Modernize Local Businesses	
■ Expand Regional Infrastructure	
■ Invest in Education, Job Training and Technology	
■ Increase Use of Coal and Renewable Energy	
■ Promote Tourism and Heritage	
Conclusion	24
Appendices	25
■ Themes, Initiatives and Partners	
■ Governor’s Economic Development Regions Map	

executive summary

Opportunity Returns is Governor Blagojevich's comprehensive plan for restoring economic opportunity to Illinois – an approach designed to create jobs and spur growth. This is a new approach to economic development in Illinois that focuses the state's resources on the specific strengths and needs of each region – recognizing that local communities understand their needs the best.

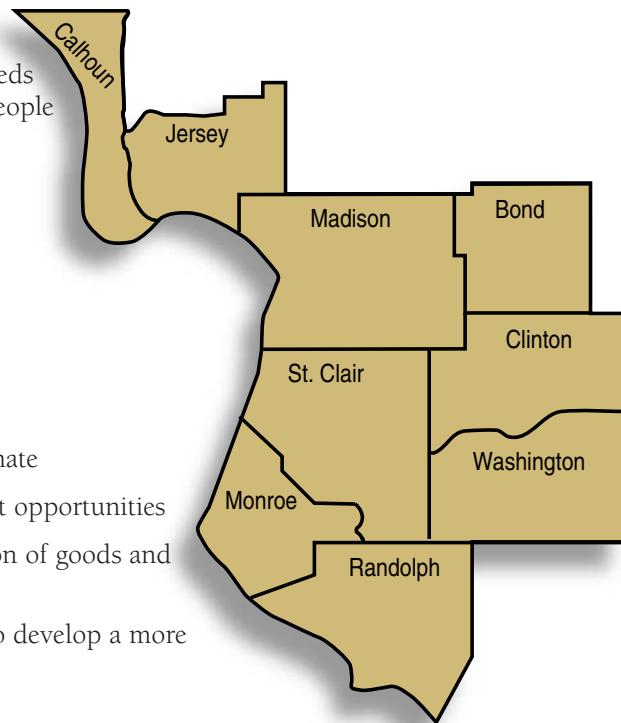
Ten regional plans will be developed to fit each of the regions. This plan outlines economic and workforce goals for the Southwest region, which consists of Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties.

Opportunity Returns is the result of extensive community input obtained through a series of economic summits, business round tables and meetings with local leaders and civic groups.

The Governor's Office and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity met with regional business and labor leaders, local elected officials and economic development professionals who identified specific needs and priorities. The state is targeting projects that people in the region have identified as priorities.

Opportunity Returns has the following objectives:

- Attract new investments
- Upgrade employee skills
- Create well-paying jobs
- Help existing businesses thrive
- Foster an innovative, attractive business climate
- Maximize international trade and investment opportunities
- Build infrastructure to improve transportation of goods and people
- Promote the growth of multiple industries to develop a more stable economy



The Foundation

Extensive studies of economic and labor force data were reviewed to shape the region's economic and workforce development strategy.

The Southwest region is home to approximately 671,600 residents, making it the second-most populous of the state's Economic Development regions and accounting for 28 percent of the 2.4 million residents who live in the bi-state St. Louis metropolitan area.

Unemployment in the Southwest region is 6.7 percent, slightly higher than the statewide average of 6.6 percent.

Small businesses, defined as establishments with fewer than 100 employees, account for 98.1 percent of all regional business establishments.

Retail trade, health care/social assistance and manufacturing are the top three employment sectors in the Southwest region. However, the largest single employer is Scott Air Force Base in Mascoutah, which has a combined military/civilian employment of more than 12,000. This facility is critical to the region.

The Focus

Five goals have been specifically designed to respond to the economic and workforce development needs of the Southwest region:

1. *Support and Modernize Local Businesses*

- Keep Scott Air Force Base Open
- Strengthen Regional Port Authorities
- Support Commerce Centers
- Strengthen MidAmerica Airport
- Help Small Businesses Retain and Add Jobs
- Reduce the Cost of Doing Business
- Expand “Buy Illinois”
- Create the Illinois Opportunity Fund

2. *Expand Regional Infrastructure*

- Continue Existing Road Projects
- Develop New Road Projects
- Help Communities Upgrade Water and Sewer Systems

3. *Invest in Education, Job Training and Technology*

- Expand Facilities at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville
- Support Community Colleges
- Develop the “21st Century Jobs” Training Initiative

4. *Increase Use of Coal and Renewable Energy*

- Build the Case for FutureGen
- Establish the Coal Competitiveness Grant Program
- Support the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center
- Promote and Assist Ethanol Production

5. *Promote Tourism and Heritage*

- Celebrate the Bicentennial of Lewis and Clark Expedition
- Develop Sporting and Recreational Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

Opportunity Returns is Governor Blagojevich's plan to restore economic opportunity to Illinois. Recognizing that the Illinois economy is actually a collection of regional economies – each with distinct identities, opportunities and challenges – *Opportunity Returns* defines and delivers state services on a regional basis. More than a dozen state agencies, with input from business, labor and public sector leaders, have come together to target resources to help spur the local economies. This is the first time that separate agencies have focused their resources around the single mission of building the economy. The plan designates 10 economic development regions based on concentrations of employment, commuting patterns and other economic relationships.

By focusing on each region, the state is able to closely track economic conditions and trends, rapidly respond to opportunities and challenges, and customize regional development initiatives with greater precision.

The Governor has created regional teams, including a regional director and account managers that act as the state's liaisons to local business and community leaders. The teams work directly with communities to retain existing companies and to attract new jobs and capital.

Opportunity Returns coordinates the vast resources of the state and uses them to create new jobs. The regional teams will issue annual reports that will identify accomplishments and focus on plans for the future.

“I was raised to believe that in life, nothing was ever given to you. All you can expect is an opportunity and a chance.”

Rod R. Blagojevich

August 12, 2001

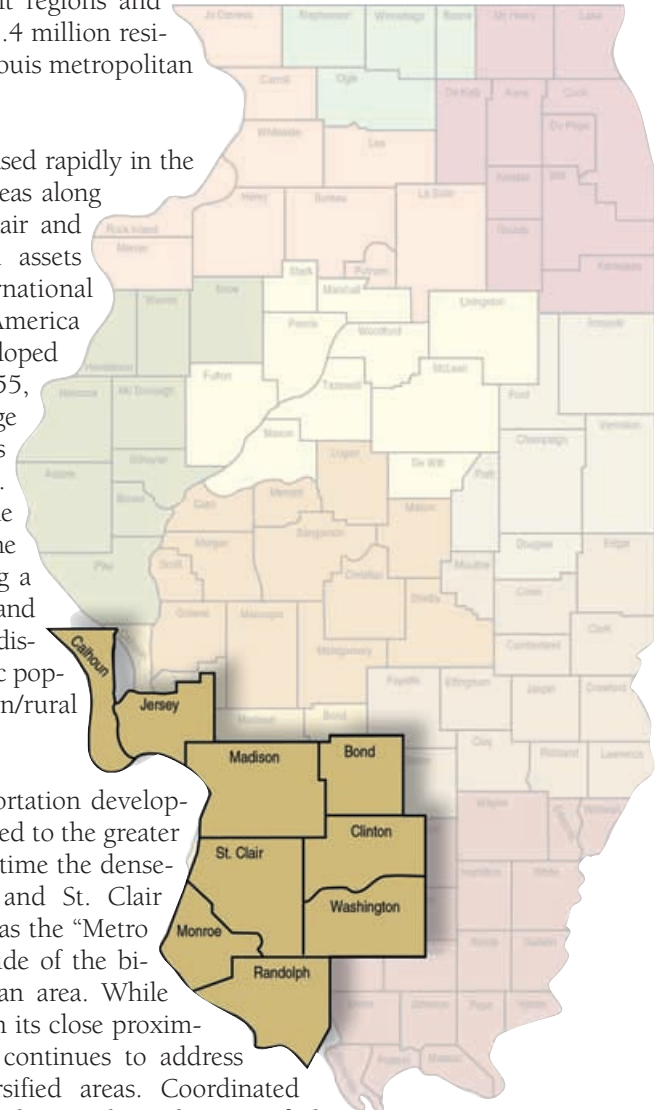
the southwestregion

The nine counties comprising the Southwest region encompass nearly 4,450 square miles, accounting for 7.9 percent of the state's land area. The 2000 Census indicated a population of approximately 671,600, making this the second-most populous of the state's ten Economic Development regions and accounting for 28 percent of the 2.4 million residents who live in the bi-state St. Louis metropolitan area.

Residential development has increased rapidly in the region, particularly in suburban areas along the river bluff in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties. Transportation assets include Lambert-St. Louis International Airport in St. Louis and MidAmerica Airport in Mascoutah; a well-developed interstate system that includes I-55, I-64, I-70, I-255 and I-270; a large railroad complex that includes major switching yards in East St. Louis; and barge shipping via the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. The region is highly diverse, containing a variety of industrial/commercial and residential development, income discrepancies, distinct racial and ethnic populations, and urban/suburban/rural contrasts.

In terms of economic and transportation development, the Southwest region is linked to the greater St. Louis metropolitan area. Over time the densely populated areas of Madison and St. Clair counties have come to be known as the "Metro East" area, meaning the eastern side of the bi-state St. Louis greater metropolitan area. While the Southwest region benefits from its close proximity to St. Louis, the region also continues to address issues typical of growing, diversified areas. Coordinated development efforts across the urban and rural areas of the region remain a challenge. Overall, the Southwest region's wealth of diverse resources, coupled with the relative scarcity of marketable land on the Missouri side, make the region well positioned for large-scale industrial development and the potential for high-wage jobs.

The Metro East area is the second-largest metropolitan area in Illinois and is the core of the Southwest region. Yet, the region contains no municipalities with as many as 50,000 residents. Communities in the region include low-income urban areas, such as East St. Louis; predominantly industrial towns, such as Alton; and fast-growing bedroom communities, such as Edwardsville.



Belleville is the Southwest region's largest city with a population of 41,400 in 2000, down 1,400 from 1990. While Belleville did not share in the rapid growth experienced by many communities on the periphery of the Southwest region during the 1990s, it is the St. Clair County seat and remains a significant employment center. MetroLink, the St. Louis-area light rail system, now extends to Belleville, which is likely to promote growth in the future.

East St. Louis is the region's second-largest city with a population of 31,500, despite losing 9,400 residents during the 1990s. While East St. Louis prospered in the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to its stockyards and as a major producer of aluminum, roofing materials and baking powder, the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s and the resulting decline of its industrial base beginning in the 1950s have proved difficult to overcome. Job losses and the city's difficulty in providing services with a dwindling tax base have led to a drop in population. However, recent economic and community developments, including MetroLink services, the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Youth Center and Parson's Place housing development have provided new optimism for the future of East St. Louis.

Granite City, the region's third-largest city with a population of 31,300, is an industrial town associated with the steel industry, which provides well-paying jobs. In addition, the local port district is one of the busiest in the state, unloading 2,500 barges, 40,000 trucks and 35,000 rail cars annually.¹

Alton, population 30,500, also has a prominent and reviving steel industry, as demonstrated by the recent re-opening of the shuttered Alton Steel manufacturing facility. The economy has grown more diversified over time. Tourism is now a significant local industry, due to the draw of wintering eagles and Lewis and Clark historical sites in nearby Hartford.

Much of the Southwest region's population growth during the 1990s occurred in affluent bedroom communities like Edwardsville, O'Fallon and Shiloh. Edwardsville, the home of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE), experienced a 47 percent increase in population during the 1990s. Many communities outside the primary population centers in the region also experienced significant growth during the 1990s. For example, Monroe County posted the largest percentage increase among Southwest counties (and the seventh highest statewide) with 23 percent growth.

Demographics

According to the 2000 Census, the nine-county Southwest region had 671,600 residents, accounting for 5.4 percent of Illinois' population. Madison and St. Clair counties together account for more than three-quarters of the region's population.

The region's population grew 1.9 percent between 1990 and 2000 – slightly behind the 3 percent growth for the state, excluding the Northeast region.² The sharpest percentage gains occurred in rural Monroe (23.2 percent) and Bond (17.6 percent) counties, though Madison County actually added the most residents with 9,700. Three counties lost population: Calhoun (-4.5 percent), St. Clair (-2.6 percent) and Randolph (-2 percent).

¹ Illinois Business Journal, July 2003.

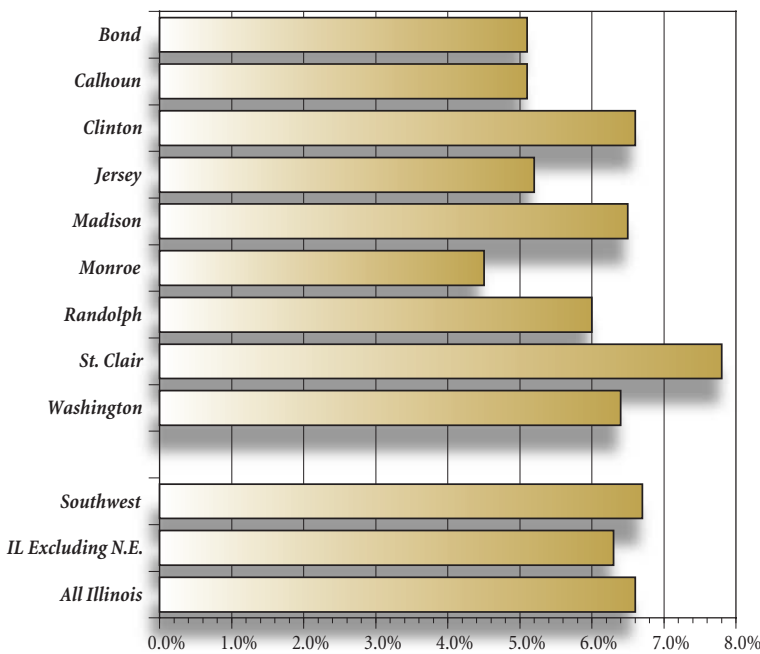
² The Northeast region includes the following counties: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Lake, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, McHenry and Will. Refer to the Governor's Economic Development Regions map.

Educational attainment in the Southwest region is similar to the state overall. Approximately 81.6 percent of its residents 25 years and older have at least a high school diploma, compared to 81.4 percent statewide (and 82.4 percent for the state, excluding the Northeast region). The percentage of Southwest residents without a high school diploma dropped by nearly one-third during the 1990s, outperforming statewide trends and greatly increasing the potential of the regional workforce. At the college level, approximately 17.8 percent of the region's residents have at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 18.3 percent for the rest of the state, excluding the Northeast region.

Within the region, Monroe County residents had the highest educational attainment, with the lowest percentage of residents without a high school diploma (12.8 percent), the highest percentage with at least a bachelor's degree (20.4 percent), and the second-highest percentage with a graduate degree (7 percent). St. Clair and Madison counties rank second and third in the number of residents with college degrees.

Labor Force and Employment

Unemployment Rate, 2003 (3rd Quarter)



The unemployment rate in the Southwest region during the third quarter of 2003 was 6.7 percent, compared to the statewide average of 6.6 percent.³ Unemployment rates within the region ranged from a low of 4.5 percent in Monroe County to a high of 7.8 percent in St. Clair County. Madison County, which has the region's largest labor force, had an unemployment rate of 6.5 percent.

Income and Wages

Households in the Southwest region have an average income of \$50,400, approximately 4.5 percent above the state average of \$48,250 (excluding the Northeast region). Within the region, six counties have average income levels higher the statewide average (excluding the Northeast region). Monroe County has the highest average household income (\$61,200) and Calhoun County has the lowest (\$41,400).⁴ Per capita income statistics tell a similar story.

³ Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security; 3rd Quarter 2003 not seasonally adjusted.

⁴ Sources for Income and Wage statistics: US Census Bureau and Illinois Department of Employment Security.

Number of Businesses

The Southwest region was home to approximately 14,700 business establishments in 2001. Madison and St. Clair counties together accounted for more than 76 percent of the total. Small businesses, defined as establishments with fewer than 100 employees, accounted for 98.1 percent of all regional business establishments, exceeding the statewide average of 97.2 percent. In Calhoun County, 100 percent of all businesses were small businesses.

Major Industries

Retail trade is the largest employment sector in the Southwest region; 33,600 retail jobs account for 13.7 percent of all regional employment⁵. Retail trade is followed closely by health care/social assistance (13.5 percent) and manufacturing (12.8 percent). While retail trade accounts for the most jobs region-wide, it is the top employer in only three of the nine counties: Jersey (18.9 percent), Monroe (16.2 percent) and St. Clair (13.8 percent). Retail trade ranks second in Clinton (15.9 percent), Madison (13.7 percent) and Washington (10.3 percent) counties.

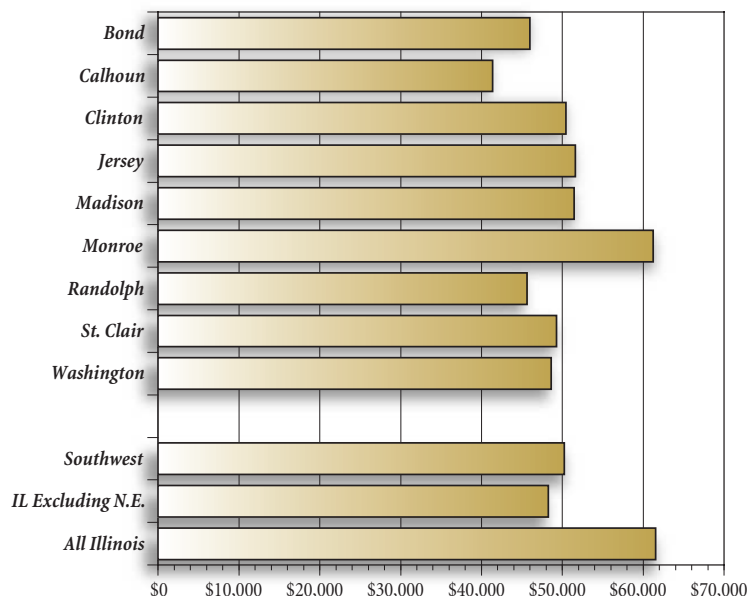
Health care/social assistance ranks a close second in overall regional employment. It is the top employer only in Clinton County with 16.7 percent of all jobs, though Randolph County actually has the highest percentage of workers in the industry at 19.3 percent.

Manufacturing ranks third with 12.8 percent of all employment and is the top employer in four of the region's counties: Washington (27.5 percent), Randolph (25.6 percent), Madison (17.9 percent) and Bond (10.5 percent). In the remaining five counties, manufacturing ranks no higher than fourth (Clinton) and as low as 11th (Calhoun and Jersey). Petroleum, coal products, and primary metal products are prominent sub-sectors that combine high employment levels and "location quotients," meaning these sectors' share of the regional economy substantially exceeds their share of the statewide economy.

Other employment sectors with at least 10,000 employees regionally include: educational services (24,900 employees), accommodation and food services (21,100), transportation and warehousing (17,000), public administration (14,700) and construction (14,200).

⁵Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security's ES202 database, based on companies' unemployment insurance filings for the fourth quarter of 2002. Employers are allocated to 2-digit NAICS (North American Industrial Classification System) codes for this analysis. See www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm for a description of the NAICS system.

Average Household Income – 2000



Largest Employers

The Southwest region's largest employers during the fourth quarter of 2002 were broadly distributed across the region, both by sector and community. The largest single employer by far, however, is Scott Air Force Base in Mascoutah. The base is an economic engine for the region, with a combined military/civilian employment of more than 12,000. There is concern that military realignment may lead to the closure of Scott AFB. It is critical that the value of the military base is appropriately considered during upcoming Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) proceedings.

Wal-Mart, the region's largest retailer and second-largest employer overall, operates about 15 stores in the region. Olin Corporation is the third-largest employer. U.S. Steel - Granite City Division and SIUE are the region's fourth and fifth largest employers, respectively.

opportunityreturns to southwest illinois

Governor Blagojevich's *Opportunity Returns* plan for the Southwest region consists of five primary goals, each with specific projects. The goals are:

1. Support and Modernize Local Businesses
2. Expand Regional Infrastructure
3. Invest in Education, Job Training and Technology
4. Increase Use of Coal and Renewable Energy
5. Promote Tourism and Heritage

1. Support and Modernize Local Businesses

Local leaders from across the Southwest region expressed the need to protect existing jobs and create new jobs as their number one priority. Governor Blagojevich agrees that retaining the region's job base and creating high quality jobs must be the first step in restoring opportunity to Southwest Illinois.

Action Items:

KEEP SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE OPEN

The Defense Base Realignment and Closure Act of 1990 (BRAC) established the initial process by which U.S. Department of Defense installations would be closed and/or realigned. Since then, a total of four BRAC rounds have been conducted that ultimately resulted in the closure of 97 major bases and more than 450 facilities. The next round of closings is scheduled to occur in 2005.

Scott Air Force Base is the Southwest region's single largest employer with more than 12,000 military and civilian jobs. Once a 620-acre training ground for World War I pilots, Scott Air Force Base has grown into a 4,000 acre, state of the art, internationally-renowned military base that pumps more than \$1 billion a year into the regional economy. Governor Blagojevich will continue to lead the fight to keep it open. He traveled to Washington, D.C. earlier this year in his first trip as governor and met with Illinois' congressional leaders to coordinate efforts to protect Scott Air Force Base from the BRAC process. Retention of Scott Air Force Base is one of the Governor's top federal priorities, and he will continue to work with the Illinois Congressional Delegation to ensure that it stays open.

[Defend Scott AFB from Base Realignment and Closure \(BRAC\)](#). Governor Blagojevich's top priority for the region is to work with local leaders and the Illinois Congressional Delegation to retain Scott Air Force Base. In addition to Governor Blagojevich's efforts, the state will hire a top lobbyist specializing in military affairs to represent the Southwest region's interests on Capitol Hill and fight to keep Scott Air Force Base open and operational. In addition, the state will be working very closely with the Leadership Council of Southwestern Illinois to maintain a grass-roots, local effort enhancing the viability of Scott AFB.



- Keep Scott Air Force Base Open*
- Strengthen Regional Port Authorities*
- Support Commerce Centers*
- Strengthen MidAmerica Airport*
- Help Small Businesses Retain and Add Jobs*
- Reduce the Cost of Doing Business*
- Expand "Buy Illinois"*
- Create the Illinois Opportunity Fund*

STRENGTHEN REGIONAL PORT AUTHORITIES

[“River’s Edge” Road Improvements at the Tri-City Port.](#) Since its inception in 1959, the Tri-City Regional Port District (Tri-City Port) has been a catalyst for job creation and economic growth. The port is directly or indirectly responsible for more than 1,000 jobs with an annual economic impact of \$175 million. The port features an incredible range of commercial benefits, including Locks & Dam #27, a foreign trade zone, an industrial park, a business campus, a golf course, an auditorium and military residences. The port is a major national hub for rail, road, barge and air transportation.

In an era of global competitiveness, the Tri-City Port has sustained its role as an economic engine for the region and contributed to the state’s competitive global advantage. The Port’s “River’s Edge” is a 700-plus acre development on what was the former Charles Melvin Price Army Support Center. The property is being developed into an upscale, multi-use complex. To improve access to the River’s Edge, Governor Blagojevich has instructed the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to redevelop the intersections at Illinois Route 3 and Niedringhaus Avenue and Illinois Route 3 and Bissell Avenue near the newly renovated River’s Edge.

[Support the Illinois Port District Revolving Loan Fund.](#) For more than four years, the Illinois Port District Revolving Loan Fund has sat empty. As a result, port districts throughout Illinois have put off critical infrastructure improvements.

Governor Blagojevich will provide much needed assistance to the Tri-City Port, Kaskaskia Port and other ports throughout Illinois by investing in the Illinois Port District Revolving Loan Fund. This commitment will provide much needed capital to Illinois’ port districts to develop infrastructure, operate more efficiently and remain globally competitive – ultimately creating and keeping more jobs in Illinois.

[Upgrade Locks and Dams.](#) The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is currently holding public hearings on whether the locks and dams should be upgraded to facilitate trade and redesigned to address environmental concerns. Governor Blagojevich has asked five state agencies to represent the state’s interests at the hearings and the Governor will partner with the governors of neighboring river states to advocate for federal funding of the lock expansion and the needed environmental improvements.

[Coordinated Marketing of the Region’s Foreign Trade Zone.](#) Located within the Tri-City Port is a 47-acre Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) - one of seven Foreign Trade Zones in Illinois. Recognizing the need to build upon the success of the region’s FTZ, Governor Blagojevich has directed the Illinois Trade Office (ITO) to work with regional leaders to take advantage of new opportunities afforded in the international marketplace.

The ITO will link the Southwest region’s FTZ with trade experts in Illinois’ nine foreign offices and the international business community. By locating in the FTZ, a manufacturer can reduce, delay or eliminate taxes and duties paid on imported goods. The FTZ, which also includes the Gateway Commerce Center and

MidAmerica Airport, will be marketed to foreign countries through the new Reverse Trade Mission Program to serve as an incentive for foreign investment in the Southwest region.

New Sector-Specific, Foreign Trade Missions. The state will lead new, sector-specific foreign trade missions for industries throughout Illinois. The regional staff will work with businesses to understand where they want to market their products and also work with the ITO to coordinate these targeted trade missions.

SUPPORT COMMERCE CENTERS

Interchange Improvements at the Gateway Commerce Center. The Gateway Commerce Center in Granite City is a premier 2,300-acre industrial park and one of the nation's largest developments designed for distribution-intensive companies. The Gateway Commerce Center's combination of size, ideal location, transportation access and broad-ranging economic incentives make it a valuable location for major companies. It is currently home to more than 10 large businesses employing approximately 1,500 workers in the Southwest region.

Earlier this year, Governor Blagojevich instructed the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and IDOT to offer incentives to Hershey Foods that brought it to the Gateway Commerce Center and created more than 200 new jobs. To improve infrastructure in and around the Center, IDOT is currently building an interchange on Interstate 255 and will also reconfigure the Interstate 270 interchange at Illinois Route 111 in Pontoon Beach. This will relieve pressure on the already over-capacity interchanges and improve access to the Gateway Commerce Center.

American Commons. American Commons, a cleaned-up brownfield site, once home to Wood River's former BP/Amoco refinery, has become one of the largest development efforts within the region. It consists of more than 600 acres, including 200 along the Mississippi River. Because the city was built around the site, it is ideally suited for convenient regional access for commercial and industrial growth. DCEO will support local efforts to attract new business and industry to American Commons.

STRENGTHEN MIDAMERICA AIRPORT

Promote and Support MidAmerica Airport. Regional leaders expressed the need to continue development of MidAmerica Airport as a freight and passenger transit hub. Marketing is vital to building and maintaining the airport's customer base. Governor Blagojevich will make assistance available to communities to market airport services to new customers and to plan future use. Grants will require a local match to maximize the impact of state funding.

DCEO will also provide funding for needed infrastructure improvements at MidAmerica Airport. This funding will assist the airport in efforts to increase its number of flights.

HELP SMALL BUSINESSES RETAIN AND ADD JOBS

Assist Jaros Technologies. Jaros Technologies is a promising start-up technology company located in the River's Edge that develops and sells business intelligence software to help manufacturing and distribution companies control costs and increase profitability. Jaros Technologies knows access to capital is vital for new and innovative companies. DCEO has extended a low-interest business expansion loan to Jaros. The loan will be matched by private investors as well as two other partners in this business expansion project – Madison County and Illinois Ventures for Community Action.

Hardwood International. Formed in 1994, Hardwood International is a Jerseyville-based manufacturer of flooring, molding and unique wood ceiling systems. DCEO has awarded a grant to Jersey County through the Community Development Assistance Program so Hardwood International can continue its business expansion efforts. It will use this working capital to purchase new equipment, expand its export markets and retain or create 35 jobs.

Eckert's Country Store and Farms. More than 90 years ago, Eckert's Country Store and Farms consisted of a simple roadside stand. Today, after seven generations of family nurturing, it is the largest pick-your-own orchard operation in the United States, with locations in Belleville, Grafton and Millstadt.

A successful example of entrepreneurship and agri-tourism, Eckert's Country Store and Farms will receive an Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) Specialty Crop Grant to help cultivate its success by developing a multimedia marketing campaign promoting Eckert's homegrown products.

Omni Ventures, Inc. Omni Ventures is an organization consisting of 35 individuals who farm more than 35,000 acres in an eight-county area in Southwest Illinois. Members are currently in their second year of growing kenaf.

Kenaf is a fiber crop related to both cotton and okra used to manufacture a range of products from paper to woven fabrics and industrial absorbents.

Continuing his commitment to Illinois agribusinesses, Governor Blagojevich will provide much needed technical assistance to Omni Ventures of Madison County. IDOA will award an AgriFIRST Grant to help the company develop a strategy for commercialization and support the production of kenaf in Illinois.

Manufacturing Modernization. Too often, manufacturers have been forced to put off making expensive improvements because the cost of capital is too high. Governor Blagojevich has created a revolving loan fund to help manufacturing companies modernize their production capabilities and remain competitive by taking advantage of below market loan rates.

REDUCE THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

[Governor's Manufacturing Energy Efficiency Program](#). This program assists manufacturers by helping them conduct industrial energy performance reviews, identifying areas for improvement and ways to save money. This effort, connected with the Manufacturing Modernization Program, helps businesses lower their energy costs, which can represent up to 15 percent of manufacturers operating costs

[Governor's Small Business Smart Energy Program](#). This program will help small businesses control escalating energy costs by funding energy audits and identifying ways to save. The program also provides training for building architects, designers and construction contractors on how to use more energy efficient technologies in new building construction.

[Reduce Workers' Compensation Costs](#). Quicker resolutions to workers' compensation hearings mean savings for employers. Governor Blagojevich has instructed the Illinois Industrial Commission (IIC), the agency responsible for workers' compensation, to make significant changes to its rules for arbitration in order to shorten resolution times. The IIC is working to reduce its caseload and cut down the case turn-around time from 33 to 21 months. This will result in real savings to Illinois employers.

EXPAND "BUY ILLINOIS"

["Buy Illinois."](#) Each year, Illinois businesses and government agencies spend billions of dollars on goods and services. Even a small shift in buying habits to target more in-state buying would boost the Illinois economy by hundreds of millions of dollars, resulting in the direct and indirect creation of jobs.

Governor Blagojevich has expanded the "Buy Illinois" program to increase opportunities for Illinois small and medium-sized businesses to sell their products and services to government agencies.

One major component of "Buy Illinois" is a series of regional trade fairs and workshops. The purpose of these events will be to educate Illinois businesses on how they can compete for government contracts. Examples include:

- The Department of Central Management Services (CMS), the state agency responsible for the majority of the state's annual \$14.1 billion in procurement, will hold special State Procurement Workshops. These workshops will provide assistance to entrepreneurs who hope to access the state's procurement process, allowing more companies to gain access to the buying power of the state.
- The Department of Transportation (IDOT) will host "Opportunity Fairs." Opportunity Fairs will allow companies and small businesses to understand the opportunities available to become suppliers, contractors and subcontractors with several state agencies including: the Department of Transportation,

the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Capital Development Board, Central Management Services, the Illinois Tollway, and the Department of Revenue.

Regional leaders specified the need for aggressive training and recruitment to increase minority and women-owned business participation in major road construction projects, such as the anticipated new Mississippi River Bridge. IDOT's new Office of Business and Workforce Diversity has set aggressive goals for participation by minority and women owned businesses. Also, DCEO and IDOT are working cooperatively to help small businesses reduce barriers in obtaining required bid, performance and payment bonds for government contracts, commonly called surety bonds.

- The Capital Development Board (CDB) will initiate a new training program for architects. The purpose of this program will be to educate architects on the preferred use and availability of Illinois products on state projects. Architects will be asked to specify Illinois products in their bids, particularly for specialty items and equipment, whenever possible. As a result, the state can proactively increase the use of Illinois goods on state-funded construction projects and keep the associated economic benefits of these purchases within the state and its regions.

CREATE THE ILLINOIS OPPORTUNITY FUND

Illinois Opportunity Fund. As with many other regions of the state, the Southwest region identified lack of venture capital as a significant problem. The proposed \$200 million Illinois Opportunity Fund (IOF) could provide access to equity and venture capital throughout Illinois. Although the IOF was not approved during the 2003 legislative session, the Governor will pursue passage of this critical legislation. The IOF would provide access to venture capital for rural regions and other areas typically under-served by conventional venture capital. Other key conceptual elements and goals of the IOF include:

- Investing in sectors considered to be strategic industries
- Maintaining a consistent private-sector discipline of focusing on rate of return in the investment process
- Creating state credit enhancements that limit risk of private investors in the fund
- Improving the infrastructure through which capital is delivered throughout the state
- Facilitating and enhancing the flow of venture capital

The IOF is based on a successful model piloted in Oklahoma and subsequently implemented in several states, including Iowa. The Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Entrepreneurship Center would be the initial point of contact for

entrepreneurs seeking investments from the IOF. In addition, the entrepreneurship center would sponsor events where entrepreneurs can present their business plans to IOF representatives, or other groups of investors, including angel investor networks and venture capital organizations.

2. Expand Regional Infrastructure

The Southwest region's extensive multi-faceted transportation system is one of its greatest strengths. To support existing business growth and capture valuable new investments, the Southwest region must maintain and advance its regional transportation system. Under *Opportunity Returns*, Governor Blagojevich will continue developing a seamless bi-state transportation network to position the region to capture its true potential for economic growth.



Action Items:

CONTINUE EXISTING ROAD PROJECTS

[Construction of the Mississippi River Bridge.](#) The state has already committed millions in funding to support construction of this bridge. It is vital for the growth of this region's economy, and Illinois will need significant commitments from Missouri and the federal government to build this bridge. Governor Blagojevich will work with the Illinois Congressional Delegation to make this federal funding a reality.

Governor Blagojevich remains committed to other existing projects in the Southwest region, including:

- Rehabilitation and reopening of the McKinley Bridge
- Tri-Level Interchange construction in East St. Louis and relocation of Illinois Route 3
- Widening of Interstate 64 to six lanes from Illinois Route 167 to Greenmount Road
- Interstate 255 extension from Illinois Route 143 to U.S. Route 67 at Jerseyville
- Extend U.S. Route 67 from Godfrey to Jerseyville
- Illinois Route 159 expansion from Fairview Heights to Edwardsville
- Illinois Route 157 expansion from SIUE South Access Road to Schwartz in Edwardsville
- Gateway Connector Corridor Protection Study
- Pontoon Road overpass grade separation in Granite City
- Illinois Route 13/15 expansion from Freeburg to Greenmount Road
- Illinois Route 162 expansion in Troy from west of Formosa Road to U.S. Route 40

Continue Existing Road Projects

Develop New Road Projects

Help Communities Upgrade Water and Sewer Systems

DEVELOP NEW ROAD PROJECTS

Economic Development along Interstate 255 Expansion. Interstate 255 has opened access to new economic development in Monroe, St. Clair and Madison counties and provided greater access to the entire bi-state metropolitan area. Similar opportunities would be afforded to northern Madison County if I-255 was extended further north, eventually to connect to U.S 67, another major four-lane project vital to the region. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has directed a planning grant to plot an action plan for anticipated growth along the corridor.

“Gateway Connector” from Columbia to Troy. The “Gateway Connector” would complete an outer beltway around the entire bi-state metropolitan region. Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties are expected to see population and employment increase 25 percent by 2020. The Gateway Connector will open new areas for future economic development. While completion of this project will take years, under *Opportunity Returns* the state will begin engineering for the project.

U.S Route 67 – Jerseyville Bypass. Expansion of U.S. Route 67 to four lanes is a major initiative that ultimately will connect the Southwest region through west central Illinois to Rock Island. Jerseyville is one of many communities that will experience economic growth as a result. Jersey County leaders cited the need for an eastern bypass to redirect traffic from its downtown area and open a new growth corridor. Governor Blagojevich will commit funds to begin building the bypass.

Illinois Route 159 - Collinsville Corridor. The Collinsville Corridor will complete a north-south corridor linking the two centers of Madison and St. Clair county government (Edwardsville and Belleville) and other large growth communities in the region such as Collinsville and Fairview Heights. The state is upgrading Illinois Route 159 from Fairview Heights to Edwardsville to five lanes, omitting this two-mile section through Collinsville. Under *Opportunity Returns*, the state will now begin engineering for this critical link.

Interstate 55/70 Interchange at Illinois Route 162 in Troy. Interchange improvements and a new overpass are necessary to allow full development of this area. Troy is developing a Tax Increment Financing district with various commercial businesses just to the south. Additional businesses will be encouraged to locate here with improvements to this interchange. Safer interstate commerce will also prevail by raising the height of the new overpass, where semi-trailers have hit the lower overpass. The Department of Transportation (IDOT) will fund these new interchange improvements.

Old Troy Road at Illinois Route 162 in Troy. Old Troy Road is an important access route for Troy, Edwardsville, Glen Carbon and Maryville. The road is expected to become a major thoroughfare as expected development occurs. The state will support the intersection improvements to accommodate new growth.

Governor's Parkway in Edwardsville. A new three-lane roadway is needed from Interstate 55, across Illinois Route 159 to Illinois Route 157 to sustain and expand development in Glen Carbon and Edwardsville. This new east-west corridor will allow for additional development, while reducing travel distances. The state will support the building of the new route.

First Street Connector in Madison. A new two-lane road is needed to connect First Street in East St. Louis to Collinsville Avenue near the Gateway Racetrack in Madison. The raceway holds great economic potential as motor sports continue to grow in popularity. This connector also provides a key link for East St. Louis and future development. IDOT will move forward with the development of this new road.

North Illinois Street in Belleville (Illinois Route 159). North Illinois Street is a major economic development artery in Belleville. Design improvements are needed to sustain growth. The state will commit funds to advance this project.

Belle Valley Industrial Park Intersection Improvements. More than 750 people are employed at 11 businesses in the Belle Valley Industrial Park, providing a significant economic impact for Belleville and St. Clair County. This growth has created a need for intersection improvements to improve truck access in and out of the park and support additional growth. The state will assist future development by initiating the necessary improvements.

Illinois Route 3 at Queeny Drive in Sauget. Improvements are needed at this intersection for access to industrial areas under development. The state will commit funds for the improvement.

Fairview Heights Study Relieving Congestion near Interstate 64. Tremendous growth has occurred along this corridor with a vast amount of retail and business park locations. Further growth will be stunted without additional access routes. The state will lead efforts to improve access in this growth area.

Illinois Route 127 in Nashville. Illinois Route 127 provides access off Interstate 64 into Nashville and is a critical link for economic activity. Twelve motor freight carriers service the Nashville area, seven of which are interstate carriers. Two local terminals are also located in Nashville. Improving access will provide greater growth opportunities. The state will commit engineering funding for these improvements.

Illinois Route 3 in Waterloo. Waterloo has seen tremendous growth with the recent construction of the Illinois Route 3 bypass. Expanding the current two lanes to five lanes from the northern point of the bypass into Waterloo will improve access to existing development and allow for additional business growth. The state will support the road improvements leading into Waterloo.

U.S. Route 50 - Four Lanes from Breese to Carlyle. When U.S. Route 50 was reconstructed in the 1970s, it was designed for four lanes. The state will begin engineering work to add the remaining two lanes. This would complete the original design and open growth opportunities between the two communities. It also improves access to Carlyle Lake from the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Industrial Park Access in Greenville. The Howard M. Wolf Industrial Park has tremendous economic development potential. Needed improvements include construction of a multi-span bridge crossing the CSX railroad and U.S. Route 40. The state will support the infrastructure improvements as business location decisions are confirmed.

Ferry Improvements at Kampsville and Brussels. The Kampsville and Brussels ferries are critical transportation arteries for Calhoun County, which is surrounded by the Illinois and Mississippi rivers on three sides. Commerce is dependent on these ferries to transport goods in and out of the county. Governor Blagojevich has directed improvements to access roads to the ferries and replacement of steel loading ramps to accommodate higher weight limits.

HELP COMMUNITIES UPGRADE WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS

Many Illinois communities are in need of adequate public infrastructure. In response to this critical need, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) will target state loan funds to various communities throughout the Southwest region that desperately need water and sewer system improvements. Governor Blagojevich is committed to working with communities to address this essential infrastructure need. The following are examples of how IEPA is working with localities in the Southwest region:

Make Village of Percy Drinking Water Safe. Plagued by excessive levels of radium in their water, the residents of the Village of Percy in Randolph County will soon have access to safe drinking water.

A low interest loan from IEPA will allow Percy to construct a new water treatment facility that will remove excessive radium from the community's drinking supply.

Improve Sparta Water Supply. Governor Blagojevich has awarded state assistance to the community of Sparta for the construction of a new raw water intake facility on the Kaskaskia River. The project, to be funded through a low interest IEPA loan, will also support a new pumping station and replacement of part of the existing raw water main system.

Upgrade Trenton Waste Treatment System. Trenton's waste treatment facility will be improved as a result of a low interest loan from the state. Waste-handling structures at the city's treatment plant will be replaced allowing for the proper handling and disposal of sewage.

3. Invest in Education, Job Training and Technology

Investing in education is a vital part of any successful economic development plan. As the Southwest region's economic base becomes more technologically advanced, so must its educational resources. Governor Blagojevich's plan addresses this need with important new education and job training investments that reflect a firm commitment to Southwestern Illinois.

Action Items:

EXPAND FACILITIES AT SIUE

Renovate and Expand SIUE Science Laboratory Building. The science lab and classroom building at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (SIUE) was originally built in 1966. It houses all major science and mathematics programs and labs and is an essential part of the campus. Math and science enrollment increased by 569 students this fall from the previous year. However, the current condition of the structure is so poor that the top priority of the campus-wide SIU system is a complete renovation of the building. In response to this acute need, Governor Blagojevich will support funding for design and construction planning to renovate and expand the science building to prevent further deterioration and to accommodate SIUE's fast-growing enrollment.

Advanced Technical Worker Training Center. Regional leaders identified the need to retrain workers with new skills to meet the growing demands of technology in the workplace. In response to this need, Governor Blagojevich will award state matching funds to help construct a facility to house the successful Advanced Technical Worker Training Program, located at the SIUE Research Park.

Construct Biotech and Commercial Research Incubator. Regional leaders have long expressed the need to respond to the shortage of multi-tenant wet lab space needed to capitalize on St. Louis' concentration in the high-tech biosciences.

In order to help the Southwest region take advantage of this opportunity, Governor Blagojevich will provide funding to construct a Biotech and Commercial Research Incubator at the SIUE Research Park. This multi-tenant facility will be a magnet for high-tech commercial research and development activities. Just as important, the incubator will be built adjacent to the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center and will allow companies and government agencies to benefit from its close proximity.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Southwest Illinois is fortunate to have strong community colleges. These highly productive institutions focus on training students for the workforce as well as playing an important role in business development in the region. In order to support the efforts of community colleges, the Capital Development Board (CDB) will begin three important building projects.



Expand Facilities at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville

Support Community Colleges

Develop the "21st Century Jobs" Training Initiative

Complete Lewis and Clark N.O. Nelson Complex in Edwardsville. Governor Blagojevich will award funding to Lewis and Clark Community College to complete its N.O. Nelson Complex in Edwardsville. The project will renovate seven historical buildings where Lewis and Clark will house its Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education Center, a partnership with SIUE's advanced manufacturing program. The program will have a dual mission: to develop high-tech prototype manufacturing equipment for use in today's advanced manufacturing industries; and, in the spirit of its namesake, local 1800s era manufacturer N.O. Nelson, train students for well-paying jobs and a promising future.

Build Fire Science Training Center at Southwestern Illinois College. Governor Blagojevich will provide funds to Southwestern Illinois College in Belleville to develop the Fire Science Training Center, a facility that will serve the specialized fire and rescue training needs of both urban and rural communities throughout the Southwest region. The center will provide advanced training to firefighters, police officers and other emergency responders. The center also will benefit the private sector by providing the region's electrical power plants, water distribution systems and chemical and manufacturing companies with homeland security and anti-terrorism training.

Building Addition at Southwestern Illinois College. To help ease overcrowding at Southwestern Illinois College, CDB will fund a 40,000-square-foot classroom addition at the Belleville campus. The addition will allow the college to expand course offerings to address regional occupation shortages and improve the administration of justice program to expand homeland security and correctional officer training. Also, the addition of "smart classrooms" and other high-tech assets will help the college to design coursework reflecting the region's involvement in biotech industries and enable it to create new entrepreneurial and small business development/management programs.

DEVELOP THE "21ST CENTURY JOBS" TRAINING INITIATIVE

Employer Training Investment Program. Through the "21st Century Jobs" Training Initiative, Governor Blagojevich is creating a new generation of employer-focused, customized training to address the needs of large, medium and small manufacturers. The most important aspect of this is the Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP).

ETIP brings Illinois workers up to speed with new technologies and business practices. Its goal is to increase business productivity, reduce costs, improve quality and boost competitiveness. ETIP grants reimburse Illinois companies for up to 50 percent of the cost of training their employees. The program benefits large companies (250 or more full-time employees) and for the first time, small to mid-sized companies (less than 250 employees). Individual employers or companies can minimize their costs by joining together to apply for ETIP.

Responding to Industry Skill Shortages. Governor Blagojevich's Critical Skills Shortage Initiative provides funding to help workers learn new skills. DCEO will work with Local Workforce Investment Boards, in partnership with business, education, economic development and labor leaders, to respond to critical skill shortages in key industry sectors within the region.

4. Increase Use of Coal and Renewable Energy

The people of the Southwest region understand that advancing technologies and new industry incentives could revive the Illinois coal industry. Governor Blagojevich is committed to this revival of the coal industry and the thousands of new jobs that would result from it. In addition, as the nation explores ways to reduce our reliance on foreign oil, the expansion of ethanol and biodiesel fuels is central to the potential for new job growth in the Southwest region.

Action Items:

BUILD THE CASE FOR FUTUREGEN

FutureGen. Earlier this year the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) announced it would sponsor “FutureGen,” a 10-year, \$1 billion public-private demonstration project to create the world’s first coal-based, zero-emissions power plant. Governor Blagojevich is positioning Illinois for this all-important investment. FutureGen would have a powerful economic impact, bringing national attention to the Illinois coal industry and potentially creating hundreds of jobs. Governor Blagojevich is fighting to land the FutureGen project here in Illinois. He began by working with the Illinois congressional delegation to bring USDOE to Illinois to promote its strengths. He also has directed the State Geological Survey to demonstrate Illinois’ superior geological formations, which are critical to the project. Now, the Governor is supporting new legislation to permit the state to assist private investment, which will be necessary to land the project in Illinois.



Build the Case for FutureGen

Establish the Coal Competitiveness Grant Program

Support the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center

Promote and Assist Ethanol Production

ESTABLISH THE COAL COMPETITIVENESS GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Applications. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is now accepting applications for the Governor’s new Coal Competitiveness Grant Program. The program is intended to keep Illinois coal companies investing in their mines in order to retain and create good-paying jobs. A variety of new coal projects are now eligible for funding, including efforts to improve the efficiency of the Illinois coal industry, enhance the competitive position of Illinois coal in domestic and world markets, and open new markets for Illinois coal and coal byproducts.

In addition to the new Coal Competitiveness Grant Program, Governor Blagojevich signed legislation earlier this year creating the Coal Revival Program, a \$300 million fund for the development of new clean coal power plants. The Governor also will push to amend that legislation next spring to allow smaller plants to take advantage of the \$300 million program, such as the proposed EnviRes coal gasification project currently under initial development that, if successful, will likely locate in the Southwest region.

SUPPORT THE NATIONAL CORN-TO-ETHANOL RESEARCH CENTER

The National Corn-To-Ethanol Research Center (NCERC) was dedicated in September 2003. Its mission is to bridge the gap between pure corn-to-ethanol research and commercial production. NCERC is a 36,000 square-foot facility built with \$14 million from the federal government and \$6 million from the state of Illinois. The NCERC is a major component of the region’s biotech ambitions.

Governor Blagojevich, who will chair the national Governor’s Ethanol Coalition next year, is committed to funding the center’s ongoing efforts, which has tremendous benefit to Illinois farmers. The state will continue its support by pledging matching funds over the next four years.

PROMOTE AND ASSIST ETHANOL PRODUCTION

New Ethanol Production Facility. The DCEO regional team will work with leaders of Common Sense Solutions, Inc. to develop and complete a new ethanol plant near Evansville in Randolph County. Separate Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and DCEO grants will be awarded to the company for planning and design costs.

Earlier this year, Governor Blagojevich approved legislation to establish an innovative Renewable Fuels Development Program to support new, smaller biofuel production facilities such as Common Sense Solutions, Inc. The program now has \$15 million available for these types of projects.

5. Promote Tourism and Heritage



Development of the Southwest region’s wealth of tourism and historical resources is important to its economic future. The region boasts the breathtaking beauty of the Illinois, Mississippi and Missouri rivers, numerous historical sites and extensive recreational opportunities. Governor Blagojevich and local leaders understand the importance of capitalizing upon these resources to create an invigorated tourism industry and become a new source of jobs and economic growth in Southwest Illinois.

Action Items:

CELEBRATE THE BICENTENNIAL OF LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson sent Meriwether Lewis and William Clark’s Corps of Discovery to find a water route to the Pacific Ocean and explore the uncharted West.

The historic and heroic journey of Lewis and Clark is among the most important explorations of unknown territory in United States history. As the place where Lewis and Clark launched their Westward journey, the Southwest region plays a fundamental role in the story of these two celebrated explorers.

Celebrate the Bicentennial of Lewis and Clark Expedition

Develop Sporting and Recreational Opportunities

Regional tourism officials are now able to make the story of Lewis and Clark more alive and appealing as a result of state funding awarded earlier this year, including funds for a Lewis and Clark Mobile Interpretive Center and assistance to the Lewis and Clark Commission.

As part of his *Opportunity Returns* plan, Governor Blagojevich is furthering his commitment to the celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the expedition and to the Southwest region's tourism industry.

Market the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Festival. The Illinois Bureau of Tourism (IBOT) will commit advertising and marketing funding for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Festival in Hartford which is expected to draw more than 30,000 visitors a day and have a significant economic impact on the local economy.

The three-day festival will take place from May 13 –16, 2004. Visitors will enjoy educational programming, heritage displays and historical entertainment.

Construct Lewis and Clark Memorial Tower. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will commit state assistance for the construction of a new 150-foot observation tower that will provide visitors with breathtaking views of the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. The tower will serve as a memorial to the Lewis and Clark Expedition to be constructed at Camp Dubois, and will serve as a focal point for other Lewis and Clark attractions in the area.

DEVELOP SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Build Full-Service Harbor and Marina in Grafton. The Illinois Bureau of Tourism (IBOT) will award state funding for the construction of the Grafton Harbor and Marina. This full-service facility was identified as a top priority by regional leaders and will help strengthen the region's recreational infrastructure along the Mississippi River.

World Shooting Complex. This summer, Governor Blagojevich announced the purchase of land for the future World Shooting Complex in Sparta. This facility will have an incredible economic impact on the Southwest region. It is expected to have more than 100 trap stations over a 3.5-mile course, skeet stations, sporting clays, a pistol range and 3-D archery range. The site also will offer traditional outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hiking and camping. Development of a full-scale camping/parking complex will allow the site to attract major motor home and camping rallies, car shows, conventions and similar activities, attracting thousands of visitors to the area at various times throughout the year.

Development of this facility will help position the state to attract the Ohio-based Amateur Trapshooting Association and its major annual event. In addition, a variety of groups have already expressed interest in using the site, including the National Sporting Clays Association and the National Skeet Shooting Association, which have committed to bring major events to Illinois.

Illinois Route 4 in Sparta. Road improvements will also be necessary to accommodate increased traffic associated with the World Shooting Complex. The Department of Transportation (IDOT) will provide funds for this road access improvement off Illinois Route 4.

CONCLUSION

The Southwest region has world-class assets. *Opportunity Returns* is Governor Blagojevich's plan to build on the region's existing assets and to create jobs. It is the beginning of an ongoing process to build a new partnership between the regional team and local leaders. *Opportunity Returns* will result in a better, stronger economy for all of Illinois.

Themes, Initiatives and Partners

<i>Theme/Initiative</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>	<i>Agency Partners</i>
1. Support and Modernize Local Businesses		
Keep Scott Air Force Base Open	Defend Scott AFB from Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)	Governor's Office; DCEO; Illinois Congressional Delegation
Strengthen Regional Port Authorities	"River's Edge" Road Improvements at the Tri-City Port; Illinois Port District Revolving Loan Fund; Upgrade Locks and Dams; Market Foreign Trade Zone; Conduct new sector, specific foreign trade missions	Governor's Office DCEO; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; IDOT; DNR; IDOA; IDFA; IEPA
Support Commerce Centers	Interchange improvements at Gateway Commerce Center; Support American Commons	DCEO; IDOT
Strengthen MidAmerica Airport	Regional airport marketing and infrastructure investments	DCEO; IDOT
Help Small Businesses Retain and Add Jobs	Jaros Technologies; Hardwood International; Eckert's County Store & Farms; Omni Ventures; Manufacturing Modernization	DCEO; IDOA; IDFA
Reduce the Cost of Doing Business	Governor's Manufacturing Energy Efficiency Program; Governor's Small Business Smart Energy Program; Reduce Workers' Compensation Costs	DCEO; IIC
Expand "Buy Illinois"	Enhanced procurement assistance, vendor and architect training seminars	DCEO; CMS; IDOT; CDB
Create the Illinois Opportunity Fund	The Illinois Opportunity Fund is a venture capital fund of funds	Governor's Office; DCEO

<i>Theme/Initiative</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>	<i>Agency Partners</i>
2. Expand Regional Infrastructure		
Continue Existing Road Projects	12 existing road projects	IDOT
Develop New Road Projects	17 new economic development road projects (plus 3 in other sections)	DCEO; IDOT
Help Communities Upgrade Water and Sewer Systems	Make Village of Percy drinking water safe; Improve Sparta water supply; Upgrade Trenton waste treatment system	IEPA
3. Invest in Education, Job Training and Technology		
Expand Facilities at SIUE	Renovate and expand SIUE science lab building; Advanced Technical Worker Training Center; Biotech & Commercial Research Incubator	DCEO; SIUE; CDB
Support Community Colleges	Lewis & Clark N.O. Nelson Complex in Edwardsville; SWIC Fire Science Training Center; SWIC building addition	Community Colleges; CDB; ICCB
Develop the “21st Century Jobs” Training Initiative	Employer Training Investment Program; Responding to industry skill shortages	DCEO; LWIBs; ISAC; ICCB

<i>Theme/Initiative</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>	<i>Agency Partners</i>
4. Increase Use of Coal and Renewable Energy		
Build the Case for FutureGen	FutureGen	Governor's Office; DCEO; IEPA
Establish the Coal Competitiveness Grant Program	Request for CCGP Applications	DCEO
Support the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center	Continue investments in the NCERC	DCEO; SIUE; USDA
Promote and Assist Ethanol Production	New ethanol production facility	DCEO; IDOA
5. Promote Tourism and Heritage		
Celebrate the Bicentennial of Lewis and Clark Expedition	Market the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Festival; Construct Lewis & Clark Memorial Tower	DCEO; IDOT
Develop Sporting and Recreational Opportunities	Build Grafton Harbor and Marina; World Shooting Complex; IL Rt. 4 improvements in Sparta	DCEO; DNR; IDOT

For additional information, visit www.illinoisbiz.biz or e-mail Governor Blagojevich at opportunityreturns@illinoisbiz.biz. By phone, information can be obtained toll-free, (800) 252-8955. TTY customers can also call toll-free, (800) 785-6055.



*“We will work day and night to put people back
to work – to create opportunity and economic security and
when we do – we will make the great dream of building
a better life as real and vibrant and alive
as it was meant to be.”*

— Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor



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