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Governor Quinn Kicks-Off Illinois Export Week
Reaffirms Commitment to Doubling State’s Exports by 2015; 
Presents 2011 Illinois Export Awards

CHICAGO – June 21, 2011. Governor Pat Quinn today reaffirmed his commitment to doubling Illinois’ exports by 2015 during an address to kick off Illinois Export Week, a five-day event that helps Illinois businesses expand into the global marketplace. The Governor also presented the 2011 Illinois Export Awards.

"More than half a million Illinois jobs are supported by exports, but we cannot stop now. Our state’s continued economic vitality depends on our ability to build key global partnerships," said Governor Quinn. "To continue to grow and lead in the 21st century, we must continue to take every step necessary to increase our exports, ultimately doubling them by 2015."

Expanding global trade partnerships is critical to Illinois’ continued economic recovery. Illinois ranks first in the Midwest for exports and foreign direct investment. The state’s exports totaled nearly $49.8 billion in 2010, a 19.6 percent increase over 2009. In the first quarter of 2011, Illinois exported more than $14.74 billion worth of non-agriculture goods - an increase of 30.43 percent compared to the same period in 2010.

Illinois Export Week, which runs June 20-24, features a series of seminars designed to help educate business owners on export opportunities. The Illinois Export Awards recognize companies that have achieved excellence in exporting and organizations that have provided substantial export assistance to Illinois companies. Governor Quinn presented 17 companies and organizations with awards at a luncheon on Tuesday. A list of 2011 Illinois Export Award winners is attached.

Illinois Export Week events feature top leaders from Illinois’s export business community. Caterpillar Inc. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Doug Oberhelman was the keynote speaker.

"Last year Caterpillar exported more than $13.4 billion in products from the United States—more than a third of that is from Illinois — two figures that would have no doubt been higher had the U.S. fully embraced trade liberalization," Oberhelman said. "Simply put, many of our 47,000 employees in the U.S. and 23,000 employees in Illinois depend on trade."

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is partnering with local Small Business Development Centers this week to provide businesses with insight into export opportunities around the world. Information is available at www2.illinois.gov/gov/exportweek.

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