



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 6, 2008

CONTACTS:

Lucio Guerrero 312/814.3158

Katie Ridgway (cell) 312/590.1936

Governor Blagojevich Commends President-Elect Obama's Commitment to Infrastructure Funding

Illinois has identified transportation, transit and higher education projects that would put more than 94,000 people to work

CHICAGO – Responding to President-Elect Barack Obama’s pledge to create a massive public works program to stimulate the nation’s economy today in his weekly radio address, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich commended him for his commitment to putting Americans back to work in this national recession.

In anticipation of a federal stimulus package that would invest in infrastructure, Governor Blagojevich’s administration has identified and provided to the Obama Transition Team nearly 300 highway, transit, airport and railway infrastructure projects that are ready to begin immediately. These projects are estimated to cost \$2.37 billion to complete and are estimated to put more than 94,000 Illinoisans to work. In addition, the state has provided over 150 projects at public colleges and universities that could put an additional 14,600 Illinoisans to work and generate almost \$4.8 billion in economic activity at a cost of over \$2 billion.

“The national recession has hurt Illinois workers – in 2008 alone, Illinois has lost over 50,000 jobs. President-Elect Obama understands the need to create an infrastructure program that creates jobs. I commend him for his commitment to revitalizing our economy, and I pledge that as soon as a national infrastructure plan is passed, our state will begin projects and put Illinoisans back to work,” Governor Blagojevich said.

The Governor’s administration has identified projects including such things as additional lanes on roads, resurfacing, bridge repair, CTA slow zone eliminations, Metra station and yard improvements, Pace paratransit vehicles, downstate transit facilities, passenger and rail freight improvements and runway and taxiway extensions at Illinois airports.

Transportation and transit projects include:

- 252 projects to improve the condition of our roads and bridges, add additional lanes to improve Illinois’ transportation infrastructure at an estimated cost of \$783 million

- 22 projects to improve tracks, stations and yards, and purchase vehicles to improve mass transit at an estimated cost of \$1.213 billion
- 14 projects to improve passenger and commercial rail infrastructure at an estimated cost of \$333 million
- 11 runway and taxiway extensions at Illinois airports at a cost of \$42 million

Examples of major transportation and transit projects included are:

- Improve Amtrak service across Illinois including new service to Rockford and the Quad Cities which is estimated to provide 4,700 jobs.
- The elimination of slow zones for CTA trains which is estimated to provide 4,300 jobs.
- The construction of additional lanes on US 45, in Lake County, estimated to provide 2,500 jobs.
- Improvements to I-57 in Williamson, Franklin and Jefferson Counties estimated to provide 1,700 jobs.
- The construction of additional lanes on IL 47 in McHenry County expected to provide 1,600 jobs.
- The bridge replacement on I-55 at IL 162 in Madison County estimated to provide 1,600 jobs.
- Completion of the Alton Bypass in Madison County estimated to provide 1,400 jobs.
- The construction of additional lanes on IL 22 in Lake County estimated to provide 900 jobs.
- Rolling stock for CTA, Metra, Pace, downstate paratransit and Amtrak estimated to create 18,500 jobs.

Earlier this week, Governor Blagojevich traveled to Philadelphia to meet with President-Elect Barack Obama and other governors to discuss how the federal government can assist states in addressing their struggling economies as well as their state budget shortfalls. As part of the Governor's four-pronged plan to manage Illinois' \$2 billion budget deficit, the Governor has requested increased direct federal stimulus aid which would not only help to alleviate the projected revenue shortfall for fiscal year 2009, but also help Illinois stabilize its weakening economy.

Illinois is not alone in facing a FY09 budget shortfall due to lower than projected revenues. At a meeting earlier this week with President-Elect Barack Obama and 48 of the nation's governors, Chairman of the National Governor's Association, Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, said 43 of 50 states currently face budget deficits.

###