

GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$400,000 IS AVAILABLE TO ENCOURAGE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY BUILDING

Continuing his commitment to clean energy and environmentally-friendly business practices, Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich September 20th announced \$400,000 in new funding for design assistance grants for “green” commercial buildings. These design assistance grants, available through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, are for businesses using the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building rating system.

LEED is a voluntary rating system promoted by the U.S. Green Building Council to allow building owners and developers to benchmark the environmental performance of their building relative to others. The LEED system considers environmental factors such as the energy efficiency of the building, the use of renewable energy and the use of recycled content building materials, among other factors. For more information on LEED, see <http://usgbc.org>.

Under the new pilot program, businesses with commercial building construction and renovation projects will be eligible to apply for award of up to \$100,000 if they meet the LEED Gold level of performance, achieve an energy performance of at least 20 percent beyond the minimum energy code and incorporate best practices in solid waste management.

“Green buildings are a high growth area, and when Gov. Blagojevich puts his seal of approval on green building practices by announcing this program, it helps make the industry real and moves us another big step forward,” said Lois Vitt Sale of Phoenix Architects and the chair of the Chicago Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council. “This funding will be very helpful to move more green building projects forward.”

Guidelines for the program are available on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s (DCEO) Web site at <http://illinoisenergy.org>. Projects seeking to apply under the new program must submit a preliminary notice of intent to apply by November 15 and final applications are due January 2, 2006.