



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2007

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CED PROPOSES MAJOR TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND FUNDING OPTIONS

The Will County Center for Economic Development (CED) today introduced a major transportation blueprint for Will County—and the means to pay for it.

“We’ve called it a crisis before and we’re calling it a crisis now,” said John Greuling, president and CEO of the CED. “Will County’s transportation infrastructure is inadequate to support the growth that is here, much less what’s on the horizon.”

The CED is a not-for-profit foundation funded primarily by the business community to attract and retain jobs and capital investment in Will County. The CED is concerned that the county will forfeit an opportunity to become a global leader in logistics and modern manufacturing for lack of needed improvements, Greuling said.

“The CED is not casting blame anyone for the current situation because none of us envisioned the intensity of the county’s rapid rise,” said Greuling. “We are saying that something needs to be done immediately. We’re offering a transportation plan to accommodate Will County through 2030 and we’re offering hard suggestions for how to pay for it.”

The CED’s transportation blueprint insists on a higher state and federal priority for funding transportation projects in Will County, increasing awareness of the

importance of an adequate and properly funded transportation system; and maximizing the business community's involvement in transportation planning.

The CED urges adoption of a county-wide gas tax to be used as a match for state and federal transportation dollars, but restricted for use on county-owned roads; consideration of user fees including toll roads and special assessments on roads especially impacted by new industrial, commercial and residential growth; and maximizing Will County's allocation from a capital projects bill being considered in the current session of the Illinois General Assembly.

Greuling said the CED intends to convene a transportation summit later this year to bring together all stakeholders in the transportation and logistics industries. The CED will also convene a series of briefings for legislators and transportation officials at all levels of government.

Many of the blueprint's specific recommendations focus on improvements to interstate highways and the county's primary arterials—roads that are critical to the logistics industry but also to the efficient and safe movement of people. Recommendations also include construction of South Suburban Airport and improvements to the rail and waterway infrastructure.

“Will County is providing the ‘new economy’ for the Chicago region, Illinois and the Midwest by positioning the region as a Global Transportation Center in the world marketplace. We need the transportation tools to get the job done,” Greuling said.

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