



opportunityreturns

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES OPENING OF GALESBURG TRAINING CENTER TO CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOUSANDS OF DISPLACED WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

SPRINGFIELD – In an unprecedented, pro-active effort to ensure that quality employment opportunities promptly return to the 2,000 men and women being laid off at the Maytag Galesburg refrigeration plant, Governor Rod Blagojevich today announced the opening of the Galesburg Transition Training Center, which is part of his Opportunity Returns plan for West Central Illinois. The center will provide comprehensive transition assistance to the workers and their families displaced by the upcoming plant closings in the Galesburg area and other workers in the community needing transition assistance.

“Though the news that the Maytag plant would be closing its doors was certainly a disheartening setback to this community, the people of Galesburg have kept their heads held up high. They know, as do I, that the dedicated work ethic on which companies like Maytag built their name, and became so successful, is every bit as strong today as it has ever been. This comprehensive Transition Training Center is designed to be a crucial resource where that steadfast work ethic meets new opportunity. Through extensive assessments, counseling, training services and support for entire families, this center will help parlay the many strengths of this community into new jobs for individuals and renewed vitality for the city of Galesburg as a whole,” Governor Blagojevich said.

While opening a training center to address the needs of unemployed workers is not a new concept, the Galesburg Transition Training Center, which the Governor is supporting with up to \$1.5 million in funding, will house a component that is unprecedented. This center, along with a satellite outreach center in Monmouth, is the first-ever initiative in Illinois to establish a comprehensive and dedicated community-based center to address the transition needs of entire families, not just the workers losing their jobs through plant closings. The formation of **Family Matters**, a Galesburg agency network comprised of 40 organizations in the area, is dedicated to supporting the family focused transition training center, the plan the center will employ to identify and address the needs of families as a whole, as well as that of each and every member individually.

The opening of the Transition Training Center continues to fulfill the Governor’s *Opportunity Returns* promise he made in January to the people of Galesburg that there would be no greater priority than helping get these workers back on their feet. *Opportunity Returns*, designed to create jobs and spur economic growth throughout the West Central region, includes a multi-faceted approach to supporting the town of Galesburg, including the Governor’s directive that every relevant state agency pool its expertise and resources to identify viable new businesses to occupy the plant once its vacated, as well as the sponsoring of a reverse trade mission, which will help develop relationships between local manufacturers and foreign trade representatives to encourage direct investment.

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The local Workforce Investment Board of Western Illinois, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Department of Employment Security are partnering together to provide this comprehensive suite of services, including assessment and counseling, employment and job search assistance, as well as customized education and training programs for displaced workers and their spouses. The center also will work with community-based organizations to provide work support services, such as childcare, as well as individual and family counseling and social services like substance abuse, stress management and financial management. Other key partners in this effort include Carl Sandburg College, Adult Education, the Illinois Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services, Experience Works, and the Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging.

Additional unique services provided by the Transition Training Center include: Family Transition Assessment & Planning, Tutoring for Adults and Youth, Spousal Training, Referral Services, Health & Medical Services, Transportation Services, Center Website, Outreach Services, Elder Services, and Family & Youth Activities. An advisory committee comprised of dislocated workers will also be appointed to ensure that deliverable services are making the maximum possible impact.

“With the opening of the Galesburg Transition Center, the Governor is employing an innovative approach to combating a potentially devastating blow to Galesburg. What is so unique about this center is that it sizes up the impact of the plant closing from a holistic perspective, recognizing that when a worker is laid off, it takes a tremendous toll on the entire family. By providing services such as spousal training, family counseling, even daycare, the Governor has helped put in place a comprehensive support network that lessens the burden on the displaced worker, allowing him or her to focus on not only finding the next job, but the right job. I want to commend Governor Blagojevich for all of his support for Galesburg and Knox County during this difficult time. The Governor not only makes promises - he keeps them,” said State Representative Don Moffitt (R-Galesburg).

“In light of the imminent plant closing and the setback it imposes on the Galesburg economy, the Transition Training Center is the single most important action that can be taken to restore employment opportunity to the displaced workers and their families. Moreover, the critical partnerships the Governor has forged ensure that a highly specialized collection of resources will continually be at work for the people of Galesburg, so we are getting them back to work today and laying the foundation for a more vibrant and prosperous economy tomorrow,” said DCEO Director Jack Lavin.

The Transition Training Center will initially be housed within the Illinois Employment Training Center, while final construction is completed on the facility that will accommodate the new center to be opened in August. The Monmouth satellite center is scheduled to open in September. The opening of both facilities coincides with the next round of layoffs scheduled for the Maytag plant in mid-September. The plant is scheduled to close its doors for good in late November.

Governor Blagojevich’s *Opportunity Returns* regional economic development plan is the most aggressive, comprehensive approach to creating jobs in Illinois’ history. Since a one-size-fits-all approach to economic development just doesn’t work, the Governor has divided the state into 10 regions – finding areas with common economic strengths and needs, and developing a plan with specific actions for each region. This grassroots effort is a product of significant outreach over several months throughout each region, with business, civic and labor leaders, and elected officials.

The Galesburg Transition Training Center is located at 821 W. Main Street. For more information, call Blanche Shoup at **309-344-1575**. Interview will be available at www.state.il.us/iisradio/ori.htm

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