



# ***THE WORD ON THE STREET***

Office of Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn

SEPTEMBER 2004 UPDATE

## **IN THIS ISSUE... NEW LEGISLATION, AWARDS, UTICA, AND MORE**

### **MAIN STREET SURVEY**

The National Main Street Center recently surveyed each of the 40 state programs. The survey revealed that Illinois Main Street is the 7<sup>th</sup> largest state program with 55 active Main Street communities. The program will soon be expanding after the annual designation of new Main Street communities (see article below).

### **NEW APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED**

Applications are now being accepted from communities wishing to become Associate communities. Communities accepted are entitled to a comprehensive set of benefits including on-site visits, conferences and phone consultations. Applications are due by September 10, 2004 and new communities will be announced at the annual state conference. Current Associate communities must apply to become Designated communities by December 31st. Designated communities may also apply to move up to the new Premier level. For a more complete description of the services available to Illinois Main Street communities visit [www.IllinoisMainStreet.org](http://www.IllinoisMainStreet.org). For an application call Wendy Bell at (217) 782-5990.

### **STATE FAIR**

The Illinois State Fair was held on August 13-22. Illinois Main Street had a strong presence in the Lieutenant Governor's Tent. Visitors to the Tent got information about visiting Main Street communities and met the Illinois Main Street staff. Special thanks to Harry and Shirley Kingery of Pittsfield for their wonderful performance of bluegrass music on August 14th.

### **UTICA**

On April 20, the Village of North Utica was hit by a tornado. Eight people lost their lives and the historic downtown was extensively damaged. The Office of Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn is teaming up with other state agencies to rebuild Utica. A comprehensive rebuilding plan has been developed. To find out how you can help Utica please call Craig Hullinger in the Village of North Utica at (815) 667-4111.

## **NEW LAW TO PROTECT WORKERS**

On August 12, Governor Blagojevich signed the Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act. The new law expands a federal law to require more companies that are planning to lay off employees to provide at least 60 days advance notice and pay. Previously only firms with 500 or more employees are covered. Now employers with 75 or more employees are required to provide the notice. The new law will help communities better plan for plant closing and other mass layoffs.

## **NEW LAW TO EXPAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Governor Blagojevich recently signed HB 4285, which expands the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program. Through this tax credit administered by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), employers planning expansions costing at least \$1 million or involving at least 5 new jobs can receive tax incentives. Manufacturing, warehousing, research and agricultural processing facilities are generally eligible for grants. Service and retailing operations are not usually eligible. For more information about DCEO grant opportunities visit [www.illinoisbiz.biz](http://www.illinoisbiz.biz).

## **NEW BROCHURES**

Illinois Main Street has new informational brochures. A general brochure describes the program and services available to communities. Another brochure focuses on how to make commercial buildings more energy efficient. Finally, a third brochure focuses on Tree City USA, a program to encourage more aesthetic and environmentally friendly landscaping in urban areas. To receive packets of brochures please call (312) 814-5220 or (217) 782-3734.

## **LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

The 2004 Lieutenant Governor's Awards for Excellence will be presented at the annual state conference. Information about the awards was sent to all Illinois Main Street communities. Awards will be presented to recognize the best work in all four points. All designated Main Street communities are eligible to submit nominations. Volunteers and managers with five or more years of service will also be acknowledged. Nominations are due by September 9, 2004. For more information about the awards please call Wendy Bell at (217) 782-5990.

### **ILLINOIS MAIN STREET**

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