



# DELTA REGIONAL AUTHORITY

## ILLINOIS FIVE-YEAR PLAN

### MARCH 2009

State of Illinois  
Pat Quinn, Governor

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity  
Warren Ribley, Acting Director

Larry Woolard, Illinois DRA Designee

Internet Address <http://www.commerce.state.il.us>

620 East Adams Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1615

217/782-7500  
TDD: 800/785-6055

James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 3-400  
Chicago, Illinois 60601-3219  
312/814-7179  
TDD: 800/785-6055

2309 West Main, Suite 118  
Marion, Illinois 62959-1180

618/997-4394  
TDD: 800/785-6055



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JRTC, 100 W. RANDOLPH, SUITE 16  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 60601

Pat Quinn  
GOVERNOR

Pursuant to the adoption of the Delta Regional Authority's new Five-Year Regional Development Plan, I am pleased to submit the 2009 Illinois Delta Region Five-Year Plan.

The Delta Regional Authority serves 252 counties and parishes in eight states that comprise the Mississippi River Delta region of the United States. In Illinois, the DRA serves our sixteen southernmost counties. The new DRA five-year plan process gives us an opportunity to bring a renewed focus to the unique economic strengths and challenges of Southern Illinois.

The DRA's new five year plan shows that its goals for the broader region align closely with my administration's economic development priorities for Southern Illinois. Working closely with the DRA and other state agencies, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity will act as a catalyst in bringing forth our shared vision of the Illinois Delta region's economic future.

I pledge the active participation of my administration in DRA activities and initiatives. Further, I look forward to continued DRA investment in important Southern Illinois projects that advance our shared vision of the region's future.

In accordance with the Delta Regional Authority Act, it is with great pleasure that I present the 2009 Illinois Delta Region Five-Year Plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Quinn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Quinn  
Governor

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Illinois Delta Region Planning Districts.....1

Executive Summary.....2

Overview of the Illinois Delta Region.....4

Developing A New DRA Funding Plan for Illinois.....11

Aligning the DRA and Illinois Plans.....14

## ILLINOIS DELTA REGION PLANNING DISTRICTS

### **Greater Wabash Regional Planning Commission**

10 West Main Street  
P.O. Box 209  
Albion, IL 62806  
ID # 37-0920429  
Phone (618) 445-3612  
Fax (618) 445-3629  
Email: [wtrwmn@hotmail.com](mailto:wtrwmn@hotmail.com), [sarahm8@gmail.com](mailto:sarahm8@gmail.com)  
Executive Director: Sarah Mann  
DRA Counties Served: White  
Website: NONE

### **Southeastern Illinois Regional Planning & Development Commission**

230 W. Poplar  
P.O. Box 606  
Harrisburg, IL 62946  
ID # 370907059  
Phone (618) 252-7463  
Fax (618) 252-7464  
Email: [sirpdc@clearwave.com](mailto:sirpdc@clearwave.com)  
Executive Director: Julie Patera  
DRA Counties Served: Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Pope, and Saline  
Website: <http://www.sirpdc.org/>

### **Southern Five Regional Planning District & Development Commission**

219 Rustic Campus Drive  
Ullin, IL 62992  
ID # 37-1001991  
Phone (618) 634-2284  
Fax (618) 634-2287  
Email: [lthurston@southernfive.org](mailto:lthurston@southernfive.org)  
Executive Director: Lisa D. Thurston  
DRA Counties Served: Alexander, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Union  
Website: <http://www.southernfive.org/>

### **Greater Egypt Regional Planning Commission**

P.O. Box 3160  
Carbondale, IL 62902  
ID # 37-0814105  
Phone (618) 549-3306  
Fax (618) 549-3309  
Email: [gerpdc@midwest.net](mailto:gerpdc@midwest.net)  
Executive Director: Ike Kirkikis  
DRA Counties Served: Franklin, Jackson, Perry, and Williamson  
Website: NONE

### **Southwestern Illinois Planning Commission**

2511 Vandalia  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
ID # 37-0857877  
Phone (618) 344-4250  
Email: [kterveer@simapc.com](mailto:kterveer@simapc.com)  
Executive Director: Kevin Terveer  
DRA Counties Served: Randolph  
Website: NONE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Introduction**

The mission of the Delta Regional Authority is to serve as a regional focal point for resources, planning, and ideas and to be a catalyst for investment in the communities and people of the Mississippi Delta. The DRA has adopted a new Five-Year Regional Development Plan focused on three strategic goals:

Goal 1: To advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.

Goal 2: To strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy.

Goal 3: To create critical mass within the Delta.

These three major DRA goals are linked to specific objectives and strategies to help the DRA carry out its plan. DRA's goals align with the goals of the State of Illinois and its lead economic development agency, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). Below is the DCEO mission statement:

*The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is the lead state agency responsible for improving Illinois' competitiveness in the global economy. Guided by an innovative regional approach, DCEO administers a wide range of economic development programs, services and initiatives designed to create and retain high quality jobs and build strong communities. DCEO leads the Illinois economic development process in partnership with businesses, local governments, workers and families.*

In 2007, DCEO launched a four-year statewide economic development strategic plan. The following six priorities form the foundation of the plan:

Priority 1: Create & Retain Illinois Jobs.

Priority 2: Invest in the Illinois Workforce.

Priority 3: Develop Illinois' Community Infrastructure & Quality of Life.

Priority 4: Build a Statewide Culture of Innovation & Entrepreneurship.

Priority 5: Promote Energy Independence.

Priority 6: Catalyze Growth in the Industries of Tomorrow.

These six strategic priorities provide the framework for the state's economic development investment strategy and policy agenda. Each priority is linked to a set of initiatives and objectives designed to mobilize the plan.

### **State Priorities for DRA Funding**

Applications for DRA funding that correspond to the state's strategic priorities and the unique challenges and opportunities of the Illinois Delta region will receive the highest funding consideration. Eligible projects include but are not limited to: regional broadband proliferation;

tourism industry development; energy independence; workforce development and job training; critical public infrastructure investments; business development and entrepreneurship; poverty reduction; and health care access and affordability.

The strategy outlined within this plan will result in collaborative, regional investments that will utilize limited resources to stimulate capital investment and workforce development. The State of Illinois will work closely with officials throughout the Illinois Delta region, especially the planning and economic development districts, to ensure our region's projects are funded. It is with great pleasure that DCEO presents the Illinois Delta Region Five-Year Plan in accordance with the Delta Regional Authority Act.

-----

## OVERVIEW OF THE ILLINOIS DELTA REGION

### **Geography**

The Illinois portion of the Delta Regional Authority covers the southern-most 16 counties of the state. Although this area is small geographically compared to other member states, it is vital to the entire region as the northern gateway to the Delta.

Two interstate systems pass through Southern Illinois. I-57 passes through the southwestern section of the state. It connects Chicago to the north and provides easy access to the I-55 corridor that goes directly through the Delta to New Orleans. I-24 passes through the southeastern section of the state. I-24 also connects the Chicago market with major southern markets such as Nashville, Birmingham and Atlanta.

Illinois is the location of the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers systems. This is the point separating the upper and lower Mississippi systems and is the widest point of the entire river. As such Southern Illinois is home to numerous barge operations used to ship goods up and down both waterways.

### **Economy**

The Illinois Delta Region is home to about 7,500 business establishments. Williamson, Jackson, and Franklin have over half of all businesses in the area. Businesses with fewer than 100 employees make up 98.2 percent of the region's establishments.<sup>1</sup>

The Illinois Delta Region has a diverse economic base. Companies in the Health Care/Social Assistance sector are the leading employers with 17.1 percent of the region's employees. Educational Services follows closely with 15.4 percent. The area is home to Southern Illinois University and four community colleges. Retail trade is third (12.9), followed by manufacturing (9.7 percent). Mining, once a mainstay of the area's economy, does not rank among the top 10 sectors in employment but is ranked in the top 5 sectors for wages. It remains a vital component of the regional economy.<sup>2</sup>

### **Infrastructure**

As mentioned above, Illinois serves as the northern gateway to the Delta. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers... "Illinois docks shipped commodities by barge to 19 states, and received commodities from 19 states. Illinois' leading barge commodity recipient was Louisiana, with over 38 million tons and a value of almost \$4.7 billion. The leading state

---

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006 County Business Patterns.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2008.

shipping by barge to Illinois was also Louisiana, which shipped almost 11.2 million tons of high-value commodities such as chemicals and iron and steel products that are worth over \$3.6 billion.”<sup>3</sup>

Three rail lines serve the Illinois Delta counties. The CN line enters the delta at Cairo. Both the CN and the BNSF lines exit Illinois at Metropolis and Thebes. A third railway, the EVWR, leaves Illinois through White County.

The Illinois Department of Transportation has identified several interstate road improvements for the immediate future. These improvements are primarily bridge repair or replacement and resurfacing of the roadway.

### **Population**

Between 2000 and 2007 only three counties in the region experienced population growth, Williamson with a growth of 5.3 percent, Johnson with 1.5 percent and Franklin with 1.2 percent. Two counties, Alexander and Pulaski each had population declines of about 12 percent (11.8 and 11.7 percent respectively). Williamson and Jackson are the two most populous counties in the region. Williamson County has become a regional shopping area and is also home to a veteran’s hospital and serves as a regional hub of state government. Jackson County is home to Southern Illinois University.<sup>4</sup>

**Population Changes**

Area	2000	2007	% change 2000-2007
Illinois	12,419,293	12,852,548	3.5%
IL Delta Region	346,566	343,287	-0.9%
Alexander	9,590	8,458	-11.8%
Franklin	39,018	39,491	1.2%
Gallatin	6,445	6,025	-6.5%
Hamilton	8,621	8,245	-4.4%
Hardin	4,800	4,468	-6.9%
Jackson	59,612	58,841	-1.3%
Johnson	12,878	13,065	1.5%
Massac	15,161	15,109	-0.3%
Perry	23,094	22,596	-2.2%
Pope	4,413	4,182	-5.2%
Pulaski	7,348	6,490	-11.7%
Randolph	33,893	32,760	-3.3%
Saline	26,733	26,102	-2.4%
Union	18,293	18,257	-0.2%
White	15,371	14,657	-4.6%
Williamson	61,296	64,541	5.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Navigation Data Information System.  
<http://outreach.lrh.usace.army.mil/States/IL/Default%20UM.htm>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Estimates, <http://www.census.gov/popest/datasets.html>

## Unemployment

Unemployment in the region has consistently been higher than the state as the following table shows:

	Illinois	Illinois Delta Region
2008	6.6%	7.7%
2007	5.0%	6.4%
2006	4.5%	5.3%

In 2008 Jackson County was the only county with an unemployment rate lower than the state with an annual rate of 5.9 percent. Perry County had an unemployment rate of 10 percent and another three counties exceeded 9 percent (Hardin 9.9%, Franklin 9.8% and Pulaski 9.6%).<sup>5</sup>

### **Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2007-2008**

Area	2008 Annual				2007 Annual			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>6,742,125</b>	<b>6,299,480</b>	<b>442,646</b>	<b>6.6%</b>	<b>6,697,382</b>	<b>6,361,750</b>	<b>335,632</b>	<b>5.0%</b>
IL Delta Region	173,178	159,856	13,322	7.7%	174,295	163,146	11,149	6.4%
Alexander	3,637	3,315	322	8.9%	3,565	3,283	282	7.9%
Franklin	18,270	16,478	1,792	9.8%	18,384	16,884	1,500	8.2%
Gallatin	2,716	2,489	227	8.3%	2,697	2,524	173	6.4%
Hamilton	4,274	3,965	309	7.2%	4,376	4,125	251	5.7%
Hardin	1,743	1,571	172	9.9%	1,756	1,610	146	8.3%
Jackson	33,355	31,401	1,954	5.9%	33,454	31,876	1,578	4.7%
Johnson	5,309	4,879	430	8.1%	5,360	5,007	353	6.6%
Massac	7,644	7,082	562	7.4%	7,683	7,232	451	5.9%
Perry	9,897	8,911	987	10.0%	10,177	9,308	869	8.5%
Pope	1,981	1,807	174	8.8%	1,997	1,853	144	7.2%
Pulaski	3,072	2,779	294	9.6%	3,036	2,816	220	7.2%
Randolph	15,750	14,662	1,088	6.9%	15,757	14,901	856	5.4%
Saline	12,747	11,660	1,087	8.5%	12,833	11,981	852	6.6%
Union	8,556	7,792	763	8.9%	8,638	8,036	602	7.0%
White	8,102	7,563	540	6.7%	8,091	7,657	434	5.4%
Williamson	36,126	33,502	2,624	7.3%	36,491	34,053	2,438	6.7%

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

<http://lmi.ides.state.il.us/laus/lausmenu.htm>

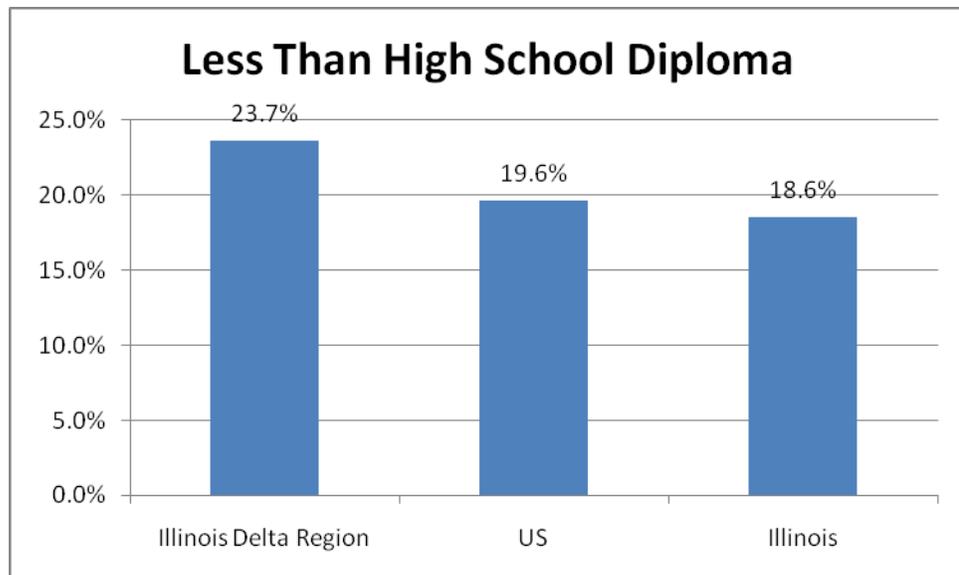
### Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2005-2006

Area	2006 Annual				2005 Annual			
	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Rate
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>6,613,346</b>	<b>6,315,715</b>	<b>297,631</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>6,483,791</b>	<b>6,112,981</b>	<b>370,810</b>	<b>5.7%</b>
IL Delta Region	171,035	161,954	9,081	5.3%	167,719	157,885	9,834	5.9%
Alexander	3,495	3,220	275	7.9%	3,342	3,046	296	8.9%
Franklin	18,265	17,049	1,216	6.7%	17,764	16,480	1,284	7.2%
Gallatin	2,621	2,470	151	5.8%	2,681	2,508	173	6.5%
Hamilton	4,258	4,025	233	5.5%	4,141	3,909	232	5.6%
Hardin	1,718	1,585	133	7.7%	1,780	1,637	143	8.0%
Jackson	32,699	31,353	1,346	4.1%	31,870	30,383	1,487	4.7%
Johnson	5,219	4,938	281	5.4%	5,160	4,841	319	6.2%
Massac	7,621	7,214	407	5.3%	7,480	7,066	414	5.5%
Perry	10,296	9,593	703	6.8%	10,505	9,790	715	6.8%
Pope	1,945	1,818	127	6.5%	1,999	1,870	129	6.5%
Pulaski	2,936	2,735	201	6.8%	2,969	2,728	241	8.1%
Randolph	15,587	14,848	739	4.7%	15,311	14,468	843	5.5%
Saline	12,424	11,743	681	5.5%	12,557	11,801	756	6.0%
Union	8,495	7,987	508	6.0%	8,362	7,786	576	6.9%
White	7,956	7,572	384	4.8%	8,020	7,620	400	5.0%
Williamson	35,500	33,804	1,696	4.8%	33,778	31,952	1,826	5.4%

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

### **Educational Attainment**

Nearly a quarter of the region's residents have less than a high school education. Over 54,000 people 25 or older lack a high school diploma. This compares to a rate of 18.6 percent in the state and 19.6 percent in the US.

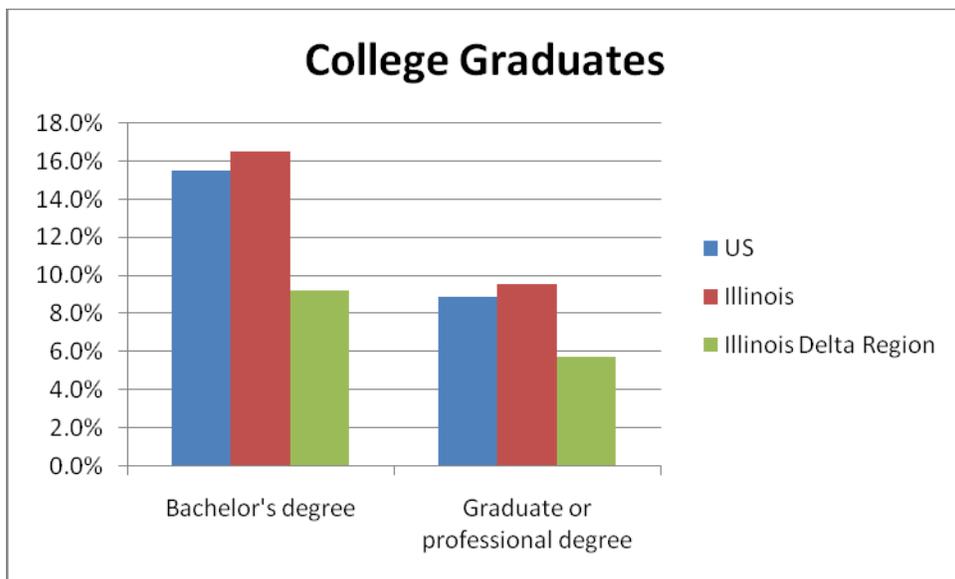


### Educational Attainment

	Total population 25 and older	Less than high school	High school graduate	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
Illinois	7,973,671	18.6%	27.7%	21.6%	6.1%	16.5%	9.5%
IL Delta Region	229,539	23.7%	32.1%	22.0%	7.4%	9.2%	5.7%
Alexander	6,395	33.0%	34.7%	19.0%	6.4%	4.3%	2.5%
Franklin	26,965	23.3%	34.4%	23.3%	7.6%	7.6%	3.7%
Gallatin	4,481	26.4%	36.9%	21.4%	7.6%	4.9%	2.8%
Hamilton	5,866	25.7%	31.9%	23.4%	8.5%	6.7%	3.8%
Hardin	3,442	31.9%	29.1%	23.0%	6.5%	6.6%	3.0%
Jackson	32,659	14.8%	24.9%	21.1%	7.2%	17.2%	14.8%
Johnson	9,057	32.9%	27.8%	20.4%	7.1%	7.4%	4.4%
Massac	10,471	23.5%	34.8%	22.7%	8.3%	7.4%	3.3%
Perry	15,727	27.7%	34.3%	20.6%	7.4%	7.2%	2.8%
Pope	2,989	24.2%	33.1%	25.6%	6.6%	6.0%	4.6%
Pulaski	4,704	29.3%	31.7%	23.6%	8.4%	5.1%	2.0%
Randolph	23,141	28.7%	37.3%	19.9%	5.5%	5.8%	2.8%
Saline	18,111	23.9%	30.2%	24.6%	9.2%	7.6%	4.5%
Union	12,695	25.2%	31.0%	21.2%	6.8%	9.5%	6.3%
White	10,863	25.4%	35.6%	21.1%	7.5%	7.1%	3.4%
Williamson	41,973	20.2%	32.3%	22.7%	7.6%	11.1%	6.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing.

The Illinois Delta region also lags behind the state and nation in the number of college graduates.



Despite the low rate of college graduates and high rate of people without a high school diploma the region, the people in the region surpass the state for people with a high school diploma and an Associates Degree.<sup>6</sup>

**Poverty and Income**

The poverty rate in the region has consistently surpassed the state. In 2000 the state’s poverty rate was 10 percent compared to the region’s poverty rate of 14.4 percent. In 2007 the state’s rate had increased less than 2 points to 11.9 percent while the rate in the region jumped 17.4 percent. Poverty is persistent and pervasive throughout the region. In 2008 no county in the region had a lower poverty rate than the state average. Four counties have a poverty rate greater than 20 percent.

**Changes in Poverty**

Area	Individuals in poverty: 2007	Poverty Rate: 2007	Individuals in poverty: 2000	Poverty Rate: 2000
Illinois	1,496,152	11.9	1,227,886	10
IL Delta Region	100,720	17.4	83,134	14.4
Alexander	2,195	27.7	2,259	25.2
Franklin	6,834	17.6	5,946	15.5
Gallatin	1,187	19.9	1,102	17.6
Hamilton	1,008	12.5	1,124	13.5
Hardin	893	20.9	756	16.4
Jackson	15,375	28.6	10,569	19.8
Johnson	1,519	14.2	1,554	15
Massac	6,015	15.6	5,506	13.6
Perry	3,127	15.6	2,749	13.3
Pope	855	21	628	14.7
Pulaski	1,502	24.2	1,531	22.1
Randolph	3,731	12.8	3,279	11
Saline	40,543	15.8	33,470	13.3
Union	3,748	20.9	2,565	14.4
White	2,004	14.1	1,923	12.9
Williamson	10,184	16.3	8,173	13.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Small Area Poverty Estimates

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Decennial Census, Summary File 3, Table P37

Tied to the high poverty rate throughout the region are per capita incomes that fall below the Illinois per capita income. In 2006 the state's per capita income was \$38,400. White County had the highest per capita income in the region at \$29,200, which is \$9,200 under the state.<sup>7</sup>

### Changes in Per Capita Income

County	2000 Income	2006 Income	% change
Illinois	32,186	38,409	19.3%
IL Delta Region	22,547	27,770	23.2%
Alexander	16,895	19,804	17.2%
Franklin	19,503	23,933	22.7%
Gallatin	20,689	23,789	15.0%
Hamilton	19,620	24,992	27.4%
Hardin	18,728	21,617	15.4%
Jackson	21,264	26,501	24.6%
Johnson	16,666	20,418	22.5%
Massac	22,709	26,962	18.7%
Perry	17,841	21,548	20.8%
Pope	18,399	22,841	24.1%
Pulaski	16,863	22,367	32.6%
Randolph	19,863	24,153	21.6%
Saline	25,154	31,016	23.3%
Union	20,194	24,304	20.4%
White	23,983	29,238	21.9%
Williamson	22,328	27,924	25.1%

Source: Regional Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.

-----

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

<http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/index.html>

## DEVELOPING A NEW DRA FUNDING PLAN FOR ILLINOIS

### **DRA Funding Considerations**

The 2008 Illinois DRA allocation was \$662,800. Between 2002 and 2008 Illinois received over \$5.4 million in DRA funds for 77 projects. These DRA funds were successfully used to leverage another \$43.5 million in other funding. The table below depicts DRA-related funding in Illinois from 2002-2008.<sup>8</sup>

Type of Project	Number of Projects	DRA Funds	Other Funds	Total Funding
Basic Public Infrastructure Grants	25	1,499,795	20,814,450	22,314,245
Business Development	15	993,738	15,465,870	16,459,608
Job Training/Employment-related Education	7	361,521	436,790	798,311
Other	13	869,455	1,648,732	2,518,187
Transportation Infrastructure	17	1,688,870	5,144,709	6,833,579
Totals	77	5,413,379	43,510,551	48,923,930

### **The DRA Economic Development Vision**

After decades of decline, the Delta Regional Authority envisions that the region will achieve a pattern of sustained growth. Increasing *capital investment* and productivity will establish the region as a magnet for *talent and innovation*, and will nurture a *sense of place* within each community. This will be accomplished throughout the region by achieving the three DRA strategic goals:

- Goal 1: Advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.
- Goal 2: Strengthen the Delta’s physical and digital connections to the global economy.
- Goal 3: Create critical mass within Delta communities.

### **The Illinois Economic Development Vision**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's multi-year strategic economic development plan was designed with the following principles as its guiding vision:

- States and regions are the new arenas for global investment competition.

<sup>8</sup> Data compiled from Delta Regional Authority, [Federal Grant Profile](#).

- America's federalist system makes states public policy laboratories, necessitating that states explore policy innovations to sustain the viability of their mature industries and also to catalyze growth in the industries of tomorrow.
- Job training investments are more valuable than ever in today's global economy, and a cohesive statewide job training system that is responsive to economic change is a mission-critical component of today's state economic development policy formula.
- Innovation and entrepreneurship will be critical drivers that allow states to remain competitive and prosperous in the global economy.
- Global climate change is an issue of the highest order of importance for the prospect of livable economic systems. This paramount issue must be addressed by progressive sustainable energy policies and a fully compatible and complimentary overall state economic development strategy.
- We must maintain a firm commitment to improving state economic investment performance through rigorous economic and fiscal impact analysis.
- We must maintain a firm commitment to making state business investments transparent and holding companies accountable that fail to deliver the community benefits they promise in return for state investments.

### **Priorities for DRA Funding**

Applications that address the Illinois Delta region's unique challenges and opportunities will be given highest funding priority, in addition to applications that align with Illinois' statewide long-term economic development goals and priorities. Eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Regional broadband proliferation
- Tourism industry development
- Energy independence and green industry development
- Workforce development and job training
- Critical public infrastructure investments
- Business development and entrepreneurship
- Poverty reduction

- Health care access and affordability

The actions outlined within this plan will result in collaborative, regional projects that will better utilize limited resources to stimulate capital investment and workforce development.

The State of Illinois will work closely with officials throughout the Illinois Delta region, especially the planning and economic development districts, to ensure our region's projects receive funding.

-----

## ALIGNING THE DRA AND ILLINOIS PLANS

The mission of the Delta Regional Authority is to serve as a regional focal point for resources, planning, and ideas, and to be a catalyst for investment in the communities and people of the Mississippi Delta region. The DRA has adopted a new Five-Year Regional Development Plan built on a foundation of three major goals for the region.

Goal 1: To advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.

Goal 2: To strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy.

Goal 3: To create critical mass within the Delta.

DRA's three strategic goals are linked to specific objectives and strategies to help the DRA carry out its plan. DRA's goals align closely with the goals of the State of Illinois. The key elements of the new DRA plan are described below.

### **Goal One: Advance the productivity and economic competitiveness of the Delta workforce.**

*Objective: Improve the health of the region's workforce through the Healthy Delta Initiative.*

- Strategy: Work with employers and other regional partners to develop innovative worksite, retail-site, and school-based programs designed to prevent and reduce the incidence of chronic diseases within the workforce, including such conditions as diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
- Strategy: Continue diabetes prevention, education, and outreach efforts (public relations, website, paid media, grassroots, community health events, minority and faith-based programs, inbound diabetes information call center).
- Strategy: Work with major employers and key public sector officials in the region to organize a Healthy Delta regional summit that addresses new public-private strategies and approaches for improving the health and productivity of the Delta's workforce.

*Objective: Expand access to healthcare professionals.*

- Strategy: Continue bringing new physicians to the region through the Delta Doctors J-1 Visa Waiver program.
- Strategy: Work with major regional employers to establish worksite healthcare clinics and other innovative prevention and wellness programs.
- Strategy: Work with regional partners to expand healthcare services education and training programs in the region. Potential partners include universities, medical schools, hospitals, and community health and education centers.
- Strategy: Support efforts to provide rural health hospitals, clinics, and other primary care providers with broadband Internet access to advance the use of information technology. This strategy is a key component of the *iDelta* initiative described in Goal 2.

*Objective: Establish a Delta Institute.*

- Strategy: In the fourth year of the five-year plan, conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the specific challenges in the region the Institute should address as well as the public and private resources available to support it.
- Strategy: Seek the active support of the private sector. Begin by commissioning a survey of regional employers to gauge their views on the most pressing workforce issues in the region. These findings should then be presented as part of a DRA-organized regional summit on workforce productivity. In addition, launch a capital campaign aimed at major employers, corporate foundations, and private foundations with a two-year goal of raising \$15 million in private funds to support the Institute and its activities.
- Strategy: Determine if the institute will be independent or affiliated with an existing institution. A major research university (or university consortium) may form the basis of a partnership. This decision will affect other considerations such as legal structure and location.
- Strategy: Obtain public sector support at the state and federal levels. Meet with governors and key congressional leaders of the eight states to generate official support for the institute.

*Objective: Work with other regional partners to improve the employability and productivity of Delta residents.*

- Strategy: Continue supporting the Pre-Employment Training Program.
- Strategy: Work with current and future WIRED regions in the Delta to serve as a coordinator and facilitator of workforce transformation grants. Current WIRED designees in the Delta include the Western Alabama, Eastern Mississippi, and Arkansas Delta regions.

*Objective: Strengthen workforce education and professional skills programs.*

- Strategy: Work with regional community colleges and local school districts to align vocational education and professional certification programs with local, regional, and statewide industry cluster development efforts.
- Strategy: Support efforts to link and integrate community colleges with community and regional economic development efforts.
- Strategy: Support employer-based training and education programs that equip people to work in technical and professional occupations.
- Strategy: Support partnerships between industry and workforce training providers that offer skills training programs in emerging technology fields.

**Goal Two: Strengthen the Delta's physical and digital connections to the global economy.**

*Objective: Advance the iDelta initiative.*

- Strategy: Work with all Local Development Districts (LDDs) to use GIS systems. Place emphasis on regional initiatives in health, transportation, economic and community development, homeland security, disaster pre-event planning and recovery.
- Strategy: Augment the expansion of healthcare access to all Delta citizens through the use of information technology. Emphasize *telehealth* applications that include basic and/or specialized clinical services, professional continuing education, and improved medical practice management.
- Strategy: Work to ensure that all citizens in the DRA region will have access to broadband Internet in their community, and the knowledge and training to operate in the Internet environment.
- Strategy: Improve the awareness of all citizens and businesses of the value of technology to their economic future and the resources available to achieve success.
- Strategy: Support the use of distance education capabilities in all schools and the training of personnel to manage the operations.
- Strategy: Enhance workforce development in the Delta by providing all adults access to training in computer literacy, workforce skills, and business practices such as e-commerce and entrepreneurship.
- Strategy: Work with all communities in the region to develop and maintain Internet home pages that provide information and services to their citizens, as well as the public outside the communities.
- Strategy: Create a DRA iDelta Center to address access and awareness issues in the region and to implement the recommendations of the iDelta report.

*Objective: Build the Delta Development Highway System (DDHS).*

- Strategy: Work with federal and state transportation officials to secure long-term funding for the planning and construction of major corridors of the DDHS.
- Strategy: Coordinate with federal and state transportation officials to overcome technical, financial, legal, and political barriers to the development of the DDHS.
- Strategy: Facilitate construction of state-line crossings of DDHS corridors.
- Strategy: Incorporate transportation improvements into the DDHS – such as for a major economic development project in the DRA region.
- Strategy: Advance a development approach for the DDHS that respects local cultural and economic interests and preserves the natural resources of the Delta.

*Objective: Expand intermodal and multimodal transportation nodes and networks.*

- Strategy: Prepare an overall multimodal transportation plan for the region. The plan will assess the transportation assets in the 240 counties and parishes of the DRA – highways, bridges, railroads, airports, river ports, ocean ports and more.
- Strategy: Support the development of intermodal transportation networks that allow for the movement of international shipments via container using water, air and land modes.

*Objective: Expand the region's energy infrastructure and production capacity.*

- Strategy: Fund a next-step feasibility study for new energy refining capacity and facilities in the Delta.
- Strategy: Support planning and policies that increase the Delta's capacity to produce, transport, and refine energy resources.
- Strategy: Create a plan to develop the DRA Center for Biotechnology and Alternate Fuels. The purpose of the center will be to initiate, coordinate and enhance biotech activities within the DRA region, as well as to provide a clearinghouse of information available for biotech projects.

### **Goal Three: Create critical mass within Delta Communities.**

*Objective: Enhance the quality of place within Delta communities.*

- Strategy: Support downtown revitalization efforts in Delta communities.
- Strategy: Support local-level grant research, writing, and administration training.
- Strategy: Enhance the quality, safety, and affordability of the region's housing stock.
- Strategy: Support the construction and expansion of local/regional medical facilities.
- Strategy: Work to protect the region's environmental assets.
- Strategy: Support the development and marketing of local entertainment, recreation, cultural, and tourism assets.
- Strategy: Expand the application of green technologies in the region.

*Objective: Promote innovation and diversification within local and regional economies.*

- Strategy: Support local and regional efforts to recruit and retain companies that employ advanced processes and technologies.
- Strategy: Support local programs that assist existing companies in adopting new technologies and processes.

*Objective: Support growth-oriented entrepreneurship.*

- Strategy: Support entrepreneur education, training, and support programs.

- Strategy: Support mentoring and networking events that bring together entrepreneurs, potential investors, and service providers.
- Strategy: Support local efforts to form angel networks with the goal of linking and educating both investors and entrepreneurs on the risks and rewards of angel and venture capital.

*Objective: Foster local leadership.*

- Strategy: Continue training new leaders in the region through the Delta Leadership Institute (DLI).
- Strategy: Encourage graduates to participate in DLI alumni networks and events.
- Strategy: Support local leadership training initiatives launched by DLI graduates.

*Objective: Build and augment basic infrastructure.*

- Strategy: Support the construction and extension of basic infrastructure and services within exurban communities situated in the path of fast-moving metropolitan growth.
- Strategy: Leverage federal, state, local, and private investments to develop and improve water and wastewater systems in distressed counties in region.
- Strategy: Support the construction of last-mile infrastructure and transportation linkages to local economic development assets.

The goals, objectives and strategies identified by the Delta Regional Authority provide a path to achieving the priorities Illinois has identified and emphasized as the optimal approach to improving the economic well-being of the both the state as a whole and the Illinois Delta region in particular. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will act as a catalyst in bringing forth these visions of the Illinois Delta region's future.

DCEO is the lead state department responsible for improving Illinois' competitiveness in the global economy. Guided by an innovative regional approach, DCEO administers a wide range of economic and workforce development programs, services and initiatives designed to create and retain high quality jobs and build strong communities. DCEO leads the Illinois economic development process in partnership with businesses, local governments, workers and families.

To achieve its mission, DCEO has launched a four-year economic development strategic plan. The plan has as its foundation the following six strategic priorities:

- Priority 1. Create and Retain Illinois Jobs.
- Priority 2. Invest in the Illinois Workforce.
- Priority 3. Develop Illinois' Community Infrastructure and Quality of Life.
- Priority 4. Build a Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.
- Priority 5. Promote Energy Independence.
- Priority 6. Catalyze Growth in the Industries of Tomorrow.

These six strategic priorities provide the framework for the state's economic development investment strategy and policy agenda. These priorities are linked to specific initiatives, and the initiatives are in turn linked to a set of actionable objectives. The main components of the plan are described in below.

**Priority One: Create and Retain Illinois Jobs.**

*Initiative: Make business investments to create and retain jobs.*

- Objective: Tailor investment packages to specific business needs.
- Objective: Continue efforts to strengthen business investments with systematic research and analysis of market conditions.
- Objective: Experiment with community need-based and transit-linked approaches to business development investments.
- Objective: Work with Governor's Cabinet to define unified administration review criteria.

*Initiative: Target investments to key regional industries and clusters.*

- Objective: Support core regional industry sectors.
- Objective: Continue aggressive business site visits by field staff to gather local intelligence of market conditions and anticipate economic changes.
- Objective: Perform cluster analysis of EDRs to help inform investment strategies.

*Initiative: Ensure accountable and cost-effective business investments.*

- Objective: Continue to analyze economic impacts of proposed business investments using econometric projection analysis.
- Objective: Utilize Corporate Accountability Act online public reporting to ensure transparency of business investments.
- Objective: Continue aggressive grant recovery from noncompliant companies.

*Initiative: Work to increase Illinois exports and foreign direct investment.*

- Objective: Open and maintain new market access for Illinois exporter companies.
- Objective: Market the benefits of Illinois' Foreign Trade Zones for direct investment and job creation.
- Objective: Continue foreign trade missions and reverse trade missions and ensure aggressive follow-up in conjunction with participant Illinois companies.

**Priority Two: Invest in the Illinois Workforce.**

*Initiative: Continue developing best practices and policy innovations in Illinois' administration of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program.*

- Objective: Expand the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) for the manufacturing, healthcare, transportation & logistics, information technology and green technology sectors for workforce pipeline alignment.
- Objective: Continue implementation of Illinois WorkNet web portal and Virtual One-Stop program.
- Objective: Continue and expand the Disability Works initiative, recipient of the President's 2006 "New Freedom Award."
- Objective: Increase funding dedicated to actual job training and reduce expenditures for administrative and operational costs.
- Objective: Dedicate 10% of WIA adult, youth and dislocated worker funding to incumbent worker training.
- Objective: Increase access to the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) program for workers laid off due to economic globalization.
- Objective: Meet or exceed performance goals negotiated with the U.S. Department of Labor and Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs).

*Initiative: Provide incumbent worker, college readiness and workplace readiness training.*

- Objective: Increase employer access to funding for Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) worker training to spur business process and market innovations.
- Objective: Increase computer literacy for both entry-level and advancement opportunities for workers in identified need-based populations.
- Objective: Continue ETIP job training investments as part of business investment packages and as competitive stand-alone investments.
- Objective: Increase number of high school students either prepared to enter high-tech science and engineering vocations or to enroll in high-tech science and engineering curriculum at the college level.

*Initiative: Continue multi-agency efforts to develop the Illinois "21st Century Workforce Pipeline."*

- Objective: Restructure the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) to serve as a key policy making body for the Illinois workforce development system.
- Objective: Prepare the Job Training & Economic Development (JTED), Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) and WIA training programs for multi-agency pipeline alignment.
- Objective: Expand on CSSI, using the healthcare/nursing sector as a test case for multi-agency pipeline development.
- Objective: Align the State Board of Education, the Community College Board, the Board of Higher Education, the Department of Employment Security and DCEO to form the pipeline and co-manage critical points of transition.
- Objective: Work to align Labor Market Information (LMI) data with agency program performance data to diagnose trends, establish benchmarks and make data-driven decisions.

### **Priority Three: Develop Illinois' Community Infrastructure and Quality of Life.**

*Initiative: Invest in critical public infrastructure to enable economic growth.*

- Objective: Provide Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) financial assistance to distressed communities for development of water and sewer infrastructure.
- Objective: Improve the housing stock available to low-to-moderate income families by renovating existing structures and administering federal Section 8 subsidized housing assistance.
- Objective: Administer federal funds to support the state's network of emergency shelter programs.
- Objective: Aggressively pursue flexible strategies for more innovative and effective pilot uses of federal CDBG funding.
- Objective: Explore ways and means to proliferate access to broadband infrastructure, especially to impoverished urban and rural areas, across the state.
- Objective: Strengthen the management skills of local government officials through a variety of training and outreach activities.

*Initiative: Improve the economic well-being of disadvantaged communities and households.*

- Objective: Maintain or increase the number of jobs created and retained through Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Program.
- Objective: Maintain or increase the provision of basic needs services to low-income families.
- Objective: Maintain or increase the number of persons receiving quality of life services.
- Objective: Upgrade systems to improve the tracking and reporting of persons receiving basic needs and quality of life services.

*Initiative: Promote tourism development to enhance quality of life and stimulate economic growth.*

- Objective: Coordinate investments to attract visitor segments that make significant contributions to the Illinois economy and quality of life.
- Objective: Increase the number of visitors to Illinois from out-of-state.
- Objective: Develop new, more effective destination drivers and support systems that enable Illinois to increase its share of high-value travel and tourism revenue.

### **Priority 4: Build a Statewide Culture of Innovation and Entrepreneurship.**

*Initiative: Build an entrepreneurial culture in Illinois and help small businesses maintain competitiveness in the global economy.*

- Objective: Enhance Illinois Entrepreneurship Network (IEN) local offices as a seamless entrepreneurial and small business support system.

- Objective: Integrate and enhance IEN management information systems.
- Objective: Explore ways to provide new support to entrepreneurs starting new businesses.
- Objective: Increase the number of jobs created and retained by new business starts and other small businesses receiving DCEO assistance.
- Objective: Partner with private and public institutions to increase capital and equity investment opportunities available to small and mid-size businesses.
- Objective: Increase investments in venture/seed capital instruments available to small and mid-sized businesses.

*Initiative: Help Illinois manufacturers innovate to maintain competitiveness in the global economy.*

- Objective: Continue the InnovateNow! manufacturing innovation initiative.
- Objective: Focus ETIP competitive investments on training programs designed to increase process innovations and global market competitiveness.
- Objective: Help manufacturers export Illinois products to foreign markets, i.e. make global trade liberalization a "two way street."

*Initiative: Establish Illinois as a technology and research commercialization leader.*

- Objective: Leverage federal matching dollars in investments in leading edge technologies through the Innovation Challenge Grant Program.
- Objective: Invest in state-of-the-art technologies with commercialization/job creation potential.
- Objective: Seek increased federal funding for nanotechnology research.
- Objective: Secure the federal Rare Isotope Accelerator project.

#### **Priority 5: Promote Energy Independence.**

*Initiative: Work to secure passage of a comprehensive state energy independence plan.*

- Objective: Support efforts to secure legislative approval of a comprehensive multi-agency state energy policy.
- Objective: Administer economic development programs and funding designed to carry out the policy.
- Objective: Provide investments to encourage the expansion of clean coal technology.
- Objective: Provide investments to increase the market penetration of coal gasification and coal-to-liquid technology.
- Objective: Secure the FutureGen project and guide its implementation in Illinois.
- Objective: Provide investments to increase renewable fuel production.
- Objective: Provide investments to increase wind, solar and biomass energy.
- Objective: Increase focus on "next generation" cellulosic ethanol production commercialization.

*Initiative: Support state global climate change reduction initiatives.*

- Objective: Recognize global climate change as an issue of vital importance to the prospect of livable economic systems.
- Objective: Ensure that DCEO economic policies are fully compatible with the state's progressive state energy and environmental agenda.
- Objective: Work through the Governor's Cabinet to develop unified agency review criteria.

*Initiative: Work to increase renewable and sustainable energy and environmental portfolio standards.*

- Objective: Implement an Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard to reduce energy use, cut utility bills and improve energy grid reliability.
- Objective: Adopt a statewide residential building code to ensure that new single family homes meet modern energy efficiency standards.
- Objective: Work to position Illinois' solid waste diversion rate from 25% to 50% by 2015.
- Objective: Help secure a Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards to increase the amount of renewable energy purchased by Illinois utilities.

**Priority 6: Catalyze Growth in the Industries of Tomorrow.**

*Initiative: Perform labor market, industry trend and cluster analysis to inform investment strategies.*

- Objective: Tailor investment strategies to attract development in industries projected to achieve strong national employment growth.
- Objective: Join the CSSI human capital demand side with supply side efforts to capture growth in the healthcare and transportation/logistics sectors.
- Objective: Perform cluster analysis of EDRs to help define regional investment priorities.

*Initiative: Work to maintain and expand Illinois' dominance in the biotechnology sector.*

- Objective: Work with the iBIO organization to define public/private biotech development strategies.
- Objective: Enhance programs designed to promote continued biotech growth, such as the Innovation Challenge Grant Program, BioTIP program, and the Entrepreneur-In-Residence Program.
- Objective: Lead Illinois' hosting of the BIO 2010 Conference.

*Initiative: Position Illinois as a national leader in the homeland security and film production industries.*

- Objective: Work to increase the number of Illinois companies marketing homeland security products and services.
- Objective: Maximize new homeland security business development and job creation.
- Objective: Increase commercial, industrial and feature film productions in Illinois.
- Objective: Improve analysis and reporting of IFO program and service impacts.

-----