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Capital Investment Means Jobs Now

For years, leaders in the transportation industry in Illinois have been warning about the need for continuous investment in the state's transportation infrastructure in order to maintain what we currently have as well as to expand and improve upon it for safety, congestion-relief and economic reasons. This past year, the need for capital investment moved to the forefront of the policymaking debate, as Illinois legislators approved the first comprehensive capital investment program since 1999.

Despite the enactment of that program, Illinois citizens have seen little in the way of results – new state funded projects that improve our highways, transit and rail systems and that put people back to work in the process. That is beginning to change and we are starting to see some results of the legislators' and Governor's actions.

This past month, the Illinois Department of Transportation put out for bids on a number of projects, including a significant project for the Williamson County area. When work begins this spring on this and other projects, it will be a welcome sign. According to figures from the Federal Highway Administration, nearly 28 jobs are supported by every \$1 million of investment in highway construction, and these jobs are sorely needed here and now.

In addition to the immediate benefits of increased wages and the tax payments tied to those wages and projects, investments in transportation infrastructure enhance Illinois' economy by promoting the efficient movement of goods and people – the lifeblood of the economy. In trying times like these, the need to invest in our infrastructure and the people who build it is an obvious, constructive answer to an ailing economy.

We should all celebrate the significance of the coming investment and the positive impact it will have on our communities, that is a start, but much more can and must be done to make good on policymaker promises of a capital investment program that rebuilds Illinois while putting thousands of people to work. The Illinois Department of Transportation January bid letting is certainly a welcome sign.

Sincerely,

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