



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Date: August 6, 2026

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Illinois Awards \$8.9M to Improve Winnebago and Boone County Sites for Future Industrial Development

ROCKFORD, IL – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity awarded Rockford, Belvidere, Four Rivers Sanitation Authority, and Region 1 Planning Council a combined \$8.9 million today to improve sites in Winnebago and Boone Counties for future industrial development.

The Illinois DCEO Regional Site Readiness Grant Awards include:

- City of Belvidere: \$5 million to extend water main infrastructure to a site immediately west of the Stellantis Belvidere Assembly Plant. Recent significant investments nearby include General Mills and Walmart distribution centers.
- City of Rockford: \$3,679,551 to extend water and sewer infrastructure to a 316-acre site near Illinois 2 and U.S. 20. This site is proximate to Chicago/Rockford International Airport and interstate and rail connections, and is expected to bring significant industrial investment to southwest Rockford.
- Four Rivers Sanitation Authority: \$150,000 in planning funds for preliminary engineering that is necessary to extend sanitary sewer infrastructure east to Boone County. Future sewer infrastructure will be critical for development west of the Stellantis Belvidere Assembly Plant.
- Region 1 Planning Council (R1): \$92,509 in planning funds to expand a Winnebago County site readiness database to include Boone and McHenry Counties. The database will consolidate site-specific information on infrastructure capacity and utility access, thus allowing R1 to help Northern Illinois communities better prepare for future private sector investment and business attraction.

“The City of Belvidere is sincerely thankful for Illinois DCEO’s strategic investment,” said Belvidere Mayor Clint Morris. “These funds position the City to continue competing for and securing vital business and economic development projects that will create jobs in Belvidere and throughout the region.”

Site readiness is paramount as Northern Illinois communities aim to create jobs and attract private investment. The Regional Site Readiness Program builds upon the State’s efforts to support communities and landowners in their site readiness planning, assessments, and infrastructure improvements.

"These grant dollars are critical to help turn potential into progress," said Rockford Mayor Tom McNamara. "We saw that firsthand with Hillwood, where a similar investment helped pave the way for a 334,000-square-foot spec building that's now under construction. This project will do the same by creating another shovel-ready site for future employers."

Typically, sites must have water, sewer, transportation, and other infrastructure in place to be deemed ready for development. Communities that demonstrate an ability to assemble "shovel-ready" property have a competitive advantage when vying for private sector development.

"On behalf of our board and staff members, we are grateful to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for its continued investment in our region's top economic development sites," said R1 Executive Director Michael Dunn, Jr. "These four awards represent successful partnerships with our member governments to aggressively invest in infrastructure for our future industrial needs. These investments will help our region invest in our economic growth, and quickly accommodate future private investment."

ABOUT R1 – [Region 1 Planning Council](#) is a special-purpose, regional government agency providing cross-jurisdictional, government-to-government collaborative planning for Northern Illinois. The regional planning model provides an efficient means to promoting a well-informed, comprehensive dialogue that holistically addresses regional issues by fulfilling the needs of government entities for long-range planning, securing funding, and analyzing and providing data in support of regional projects and initiatives.

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