



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Michael Dunn, Executive Director

Email: mdunn@r1planning.org | **Office:** 815-319-4180

Region 1 Planning Council Earns Federal Economic Development District Designation

ROCKFORD, IL —Region 1 Planning Council (R1) has been designated an Economic Development District covering Winnebago, Boone and McHenry Counties by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

R1 staff and board members have worked for 12 years to achieve this critical federal designation, which better positions the three-county region for federal funding to advance its economic development goals and priorities.

“As a hub of agriculture, manufacturing, technology and innovation, Illinois is uniquely prepared for greater investment, including with our international partners, and it’s been one of my top priorities to help share on a global stage why Illinois is ready to help bring our world into the future,” said U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-IL, who hosted a news conference Friday at Collins Aerospace in Rockford to announce the EDD designation.

“I’m so proud to see the years of hard work from Region 1 Planning Council lead to this designation, but now this is just the beginning of a next phase of investing in and growing these communities,” Duckworth said. “I look forward to continuing to work with everyone here to help bring investments to the region and keep growing the local economy for years to come.”

The Economic Development District (EDD) designation creates more funding opportunities for economic development throughout the three-county region and expands R1 programming to support local government, said R1 Board Chairman and Loves Park Mayor Greg Jury.

“R1 has been a great partner to Loves Park as we grow industry and jobs in our community,” Jury said. “I have been proud to serve as R1’s Chairman, building and leading a regional table of elected leaders from both political parties. This federal designation as an Economic Development District would not have happened without our strong track record of regional collaboration.”

R1 is a special-purpose government agency that since 1964 has largely focused its efforts on transportation and infrastructure planning as a federal Metropolitan Planning Organization for the U.S. Department of Transportation. The EDD designation formalizes R1's economic development role, allowing the agency to extend its planning expertise to regional economic development and investment activity in partnership with the EDA. The R1 Board of Directors endorsed the agency's application for Economic Development District designation, as did the County Boards of Winnebago, Boone and McHenry Counties and Gov. JB Pritzker.

As an EDD, R1 will focus its economic development efforts on infrastructure investment and job creation within the region's three traditional industry clusters – aerospace, automotive production and food processing – while growing the emerging logistics and distribution industry cluster. EDD status will help the three-county region compete for private investment and jobs tied to these industries.

Over the last 12 years, R1 has engaged elected and appointed leaders in local government, education and workforce and private industry to establish an economic development blueprint for the region called a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Economic development goals within the CEDS are established by elected leadership in partnership with the private sector, and then communicated directly to federal and state decision makers. R1 works with federal and state leaders to prioritize public investment in regional road and utility infrastructure, which is necessary to attract private sector capital investment and job creation.

"We are very grateful for Senator Duckworth's support for our region, and we are honored that she came in person to announce the federal designation she worked hard for Northern Illinois to secure," said R1 Executive Director Michael Dunn Jr.

"Our region competes for economic development with all areas of North America," Dunn said. "We are competing for private industry against those regions that have had funding support for their infrastructure priorities because of their historical relationship with the EDA. We thank the EDA for its recognition of our track record of economic development planning and welcome a stronger partnership with the federal government to bring private investment and jobs to Winnebago, Boone and McHenry Counties."

ABOUT R1: Region 1 Planning Council (R1) is a special-purpose, regional government agency. Regional councils are public organizations comprised of local elected officials that promote collaboration among local governments, working across the jurisdictional silos of states, counties, and municipalities. A regional council depends on intergovernmental collaboration to foster economic and community growth; through planning, research, federal funding, and data. For more information, visit <http://r1planning.org>.

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