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Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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## **GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$300,000 TO THREE CHICAGOLAND SOFTWARE COMPANIES TO HELP SUPPORT DEVELOPING NEW HOMEMLAND SECURITY PRODUCTS**

### ***Innovative Product Grants Will Help Create 32 New Jobs and Advance the Production of Groundbreaking New Technologies Developed in Illinois***

CHICAGO – Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today announced \$300,000 in *Opportunity Returns* funding to three Chicagoland software companies to increase commercialization efforts and enhance homeland security product offerings, while helping to create 32 new jobs over the next two years. This funding is being provided through the Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program administered by Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Homeland Security Market Development (HSMD) bureau. IPG is the nation's first state-funded grant program focused on developing products to meet homeland security needs.

“The key to advancing Illinois in the global economy is to encourage innovation through investment and supporting the development of new and existing technologies that will create a safer, cleaner, healthier and more efficient world. The investments in these three exciting companies demonstrate our continued commitment to helping Illinois businesses meet the ongoing challenges in the homeland security industry and create high-paying, high-tech Illinois jobs,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

The following companies are receiving grants:

**360Facility**, an Evanston-based application service provider for facility management and information technology professionals, will use the \$80,000 IPG award to create a new version of its security software and operational asset management system, 360RiskManagement, for emergency management and homeland security users. The homeland security version of 360RiskManagement will create, store, maintain and distribute disaster recovery and emergency preparedness plans, as well as record, track and manage emergency incidents. The system will allow for rapid assessment, detailed planning, universal access and centralized management before an emergency, and will provide universal access, massive scalability, wireless communication, centralized reporting and project management after an emergency. The system gives large asset and facility managers with the capability to monitor emergency management procedures, inspect and assess conditions and modify procedures accordingly.

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“We want to thank Gov. Blagojevich for helping 360Facility break new ground by advancing this technology that will greatly impact the monitoring of emergency management procedures. We are a proud participant in the IPG Program and look forward to working with the State to meet its growing homeland security needs by developing innovative new products to protect our nation’s security,” said Scott Twyman, COO, 360Facility.

Advance Electronic Instruments (AEI), a Chicago-based management and information technology consultant, will use the \$100,000 IPG award to fully commercialize a mobile Graphic Information System (GIS)/Geographic Positioning System (GPS) system for use in tracking critical homeland security assets before, during and after a disaster. The system works independently of communication devices so that emergency responders can identify key assets in situations where infrastructure has been destroyed or impaired. This software will be integrated into products currently used by the Department of Defense for disaster response, which will allow for interoperable command and control to be embedded in a single piece of equipment that is easy to use. The US Army recognized the need to integrate these technologies after its systems were used in the response to Hurricane Katrina.

“We are pleased to participate in Gov. Blagojevich’s IPG program and look forward to helping the State of Illinois become the top supplier of products for the homeland security market. It is programs like the IPG that are helping to position Illinois as an environment focused on being at the leading edge of scientific innovation and technology development,” said Manuel Rivera, President, AEI.

**Lisle Technology Partners**, a product development firm for early stage ventures based in Lisle, will use the \$120,000 IPG award to fully commercialize AthenaVerify, a risk mitigation program that provides network security intelligence to protect against cyber-security attacks. AthenaVerify can automatically verify that network policy directives have been accurately executed and help correct the errors that may otherwise leave organizations vulnerable to security breaches. The program’s homeland security applications are wide-ranging, including wherever critical infrastructures are networked and vulnerable to cyber attack from hackers and terrorists. Using the product, agencies responsible for emergency preparedness and response, counter terrorism and law enforcement can help ensure that network operations remain functioning when most crucial. AthenaVerify’s first major homeland security user will be Distributed Instruments, headquartered in New York, who will use the program on communications and sensor networks that it creates to help the U.S. National Guard protect against weapons of mass destruction attacks. AthenaVerify will be used on future deployments for major sporting events involving the MLB, NBA, NHL, NCAA, PGA and the U.S. Open.

“We are thrilled to be the recipients of this investment from Gov. Blagojevich and the State of Illinois. These resources will help in our effort to pioneer new technologies with applications in homeland security, as well as other commercial markets,” said Dr. Adarsh K. Arora, President and CEO, Lisle Technology Partners.

DCEO’s Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program was created to accelerate the commercialization, improvement, and production of goods and services with an application in homeland security and other sectors. IPG funds are intended to help create jobs and increase economic activity in Illinois, while strengthening the state’s competitive position as a leader in science and technology innovation.

“We must continue to look for innovative ways to expand our economy and put more people to work. By investing in these emerging companies, Gov. Blagojevich is providing the critical resources that will help it reach new customers, create more jobs and help make our country safer,” State Senator Rickey Hendon (D-Chicago) said.

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“In order to continue boosting the economy, we must help our growing companies identify new markets and opportunities to continue advancing technologies and turning them into successful products in the marketplace. Gov. Blagojevich and I are committed to making investments like these that help make us secure and create more good jobs,” State Senator Jeff Schoenberg (D-Evanston) said.

“Illinois businesses have a strong track record at adapting to the changing demands of the global marketplace, and Gov. Blagojevich’s support of the thriving local homeland security market is further evidence of our state’s ability to operate on the cutting-edge,” State Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston) said

“Illinois continues to extend its leadership position in the homeland security industry, in large part because of Gov. Blagojevich’s commitment to helping companies meet the ongoing challenges and opportunities within this key sector. This investment in these tech-based firms is another example of our efforts to support innovation that will result in more good jobs,” State Rep. Arthur Turner (D-Chicago) said.

“Gov. Blagojevich’s IPG Program has already made an immediate and lasting contribution to the homeland security industry by investing more than \$4 million in working capital in businesses that are accelerating the commercialization of new and innovative technologies and bringing new homeland security products to market. These IPG investments have leveraged nearly \$12 million in additional public and private capital, which will create more than 420 new jobs over the next 24 months. 360Facility, Advance Electronic Instruments and Lisle Technology Partners are great examples of Illinois companies that are supplying the nation with products that contribute to the improvement of our national security, while creating more good jobs here at home,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

DCEO’s Homeland Security Market Development bureau is focused on supporting businesses engaged in the homeland security industry, and the bureau offers a variety of investment tools designed to help existing Illinois companies expand operations and utilize available state and federal programs and services. For more information on HSMD, visit [www.hsmd.illinois.gov](http://www.hsmd.illinois.gov).

Illinois led the nation in monthly job growth this year in both April and July, which has never happened twice before in one year in recorded history. The total number of new jobs created this year is 77,300, which is the best start to a year since 1999 and best in the Midwest. Since January 2004, Illinois has gained more than 152,000 new jobs, which is also best in the Midwest.

Last week, it was announced the Illinois unemployment rate dropped to 4.1 percent, which is its lowest level in recorded history. It has remained at or below the national rate for six consecutive months, which is the first time this has happened in seven years. The state has dropped below the national unemployment rate for the fourth time this year, which is the first time this has occurred in eight years. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Illinois Department of Employment Security compiled these statistics.

*Site Selection Magazine* also ranked the Chicagoland area the top metro region for new and expanded corporate facilities in 2005, while Illinois was ranked third in the nation. *Business Facilities Magazine* named Illinois the top state for biotech growth last year.

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