

**\*\*\*30 MILLION DOLLARS OF ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

**COMING TO THE 38<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT \*\*\***

This newsletter serves as a mid-session report to include an update of road projects, grants to local arts councils and the recent capital budget hearing at South Suburban College.

**38<sup>th</sup> District Road Projects**

Before we left Springfield on Easter break, I met with Gary Hannig, the new Director of IDOT. I was able to facilitate funding for major road reconstruction and improvements in our area using funding from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act ("Stimulus"). These improvements were a long time coming and met the "shovel ready" criteria of the stimulus package so we moved them into place. Here is a synopsis: three road projects covering a little over three miles in length will be funded at a total of \$25,530,000. \$21.1 million will be allocated to 159<sup>th</sup> Street between I-294 and Halsted. This stretch of road will undergo reconstruction, intersection improvements, lighting improvements and renovation of associated utilities. \$420,000 will go towards resurfacing of 175<sup>th</sup> Street from Governor's Highway to Dixie Highway. \$4.0 million will be allocated to various locations in South Cook County for patching improvements.

In late May, \$5,760,000 will be available for four more projects throughout the district. These monies will probably come from the "Mini Capital Bill" that we passed recently. On the repair docket for general resurfacing is Route 30 from the Will County line to Central Ave. (\$1.6 million), 183rd St. from Oak Park Ave. to Cicero (\$860,000), Western/Harwood from 187<sup>th</sup> to Route 30 (\$1.2 million) and Crawford from 187<sup>th</sup> to Route 30 (\$2.1 million). Business will not relocate to areas that cannot be traversed. Road construction is a needed precursor to both the physical and economic development of our area and my plan for the northern part of the 38<sup>th</sup> District. It is my hope that the full capital construction bill will address some of the critical infrastructure needs of our municipalities. Stay tuned for information about projects and forums regarding weatherization, storm and wastewater management that my office is currently planning. Details will follow shortly.

**FY2009 Illinois Arts Council Grants**

The Illinois Arts Council has provided nearly \$30,000 in grants to the 38<sup>th</sup> District to eight different organizations. A few of the recipients included the Tall Grass Arts Association and the Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra. The arts have always been important to the quality of life of residents in the 38<sup>th</sup> District and the south suburban region as a whole. These organizations have always been at the forefront of providing meaningful artistic and support endeavors in the region. It is a pleasure, but also my responsibility to encourage local organizations to apply for these grants. I will always do what I can, post submittal, to ensure that we get our share of the necessary resources to assist these cultural organizations in their important work.

### **2009 South Suburbs Capital Hearing, April 8<sup>th</sup>, at South Suburban College**

Thank you to all the elected officials, community based organizations, engineering firms, economic development professionals, labor officials, local chambers of commerce and citizens who attended, and provided testimony. The hearing was designed to acquire testimony from statewide and local witnesses on the need for a comprehensive transportation infrastructure program within the capital bill. Speakers emphasized the need for a capital budget to address infrastructure, spoke on the use of stimulus monies, and discussed the means of generating revenues to fund a statewide infrastructure program.

South Suburban House members; Representatives Anthony DeLuca, David Miller, Kevin McCarthy, Bob Rita and myself sponsored the hearing. Special thanks however go out to State Representative John Bradley from Marion who is the Chair of the House Revenue & Finance Committee. Rep. Bradley served as the facilitator and initial presenter for the hearing and provided insightful input on funding proposals, regional and statewide need. Also in attendance were Senator Toi Hutchinson and Rep. Andre Thapedi from Chicago.

### **Road Patching Location Solicitation**

As alluded to earlier, in my "maneuvering" to acquire state and/or federal funding for the District, I've found about resources for road patching. As these monies will be released in May (I believe), I am asking mayors in the 38<sup>th</sup> District to give me a list of state roads in their area that need patching. I am also asking for a list of non-state roads just in case the funding criteria allowed them to be patched, just in case. Non allowable roads would include residential streets. I am asking that this list be submitted these road projects by April 20<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks for your attention. Coming soon will be a follow up on some of the issues in this report, a synopsis of legislation pertinent to the area and a progress report of Jazz in the Park for Charity 2009.