



Expanding horizons for Illinois' ag-based economies

In Focus

In Focus: Welcome!

Welcome to the fourth edition of *In Focus*, Vision for Illinois Agriculture's (VIA) periodic electronic newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to keep you up-to-speed on VIA developments, and help your organization provide input to gain benefit throughout Illinois agriculture. Add our address to your email software to ensure consistent delivery! And please forward this newsletter to colleagues, or add addresses to the mailing list by emailing diplacid@iffb.org.

Unveiling an Illinois Smart Agenda — A "to do" list for an effective Illinois business climate

Combating an ineffective state government and losing an increasing number of business opportunities in the state of Illinois, the VIA Business Climate Task Force was facing an uphill battle in creating achievable goals for its group in 2009. Instead of taking on an insurmountable task, the group, led by David Miller of iBIO and Don Borgman of Deere and Company, created an Illinois Smart Agenda®. The 1-page, 8-item list of items state government must do to create a predictable and user-friendly business climate in Illinois was embraced by both the VIA Planning Committee and the Business Climate Task Force members. The Smart Agenda® was introduced at a press conference held March 26 during Illinois Agriculture Legislative Day in Springfield.

Miller said, "that innovation is the key to prosperity, a key theme of VIA. The task force hopes to find allies in both ag and non-ag sectors that will adopt the principles of the agenda, and will assist in moving some of the tenants forward." First on the agenda is to look at the state's permitting processes and identify ways to streamline the process to make expansion more inviting.

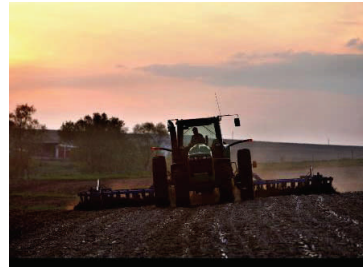
Other items on the Smart Agenda® include: managing the state's fiscal affairs with integrity; upgrading transportation and communication infrastructure; undertaking an economic development effort; improving the state's reading, math and science scores; encouraging inclusion of the African American and Latino populations in science based enterprises; and increasing state research funding for higher education in Illinois.

The committee will discuss ideas on moving forward these tenants of the Smart Agenda during its April 14 meeting.

Illinois WorkNet Launches Illinois Agriculture Portal Task Force

On March 5, a group of more than 30 members of the Illinois agricultural work force leadership met at Joliet Junior College to launch a task force that will establish a portal for Illinois agricul-

April 2009



Upcoming VIA Meetings

For more information, please contact Chris Magnuson at 309- 557- 3144 or cmagnuson@iffb.org.

Learn More!

For more information about the Illinois Agriculture Vision, please visit our website at www.illinoisagriculturevision.org.

Vision Sponsors

Primary Sponsors

tural jobs on the Illinois WorkNet website.

The portal, designed to focus on one of five designated "high growth" areas for Illinois' work force, will not only describe in detail agricultural jobs in Illinois, but also provide information on potential salary ranges for different jobs in the field. The site will also list job opportunities and offer placement assistance.

More than one-third of task force members are part of the Visioning process for Illinois Agriculture; the task force also includes members of such organizations as the Illinois migrant workers association and local food grower associations.

While the agriculture portal has not been unveiled yet, the website and other industry portals can be viewed at www.illinoisworknet.com.

The Workforce Development Committee also was recently involved in presenting information about the Vision Process to members of the 42nd Agriculture Articulation Conference, an annual conference of community college and 4-year universities to ensure seamless transitions for students in agriculture.

Members of the VIA team hosted a plenary session, breakouts and served as members of a panel , all designed to inform this

Predicting Changes to the Illinois Economy

Demographic changes such as an increase of the population in Illinois over age 65 account for major expected changes to our Illinois economy, according to Dr. Geoffrey Hewings, Director of the Regional Economics Applications Laboratory at the University of Illinois. Hewings noted that by the year 2030 more than 20 percent of the Illinois population will be over age 65. The percentage now is at 11-12 percent. This changes economic structure in terms of how that population spends its discretionary income, mobility, and changes to the decreasing labor force available in the state. Hewings also noted that Illinois welcomes 40,000 immigrants to Illinois annually. These mostly low-skilled workers comprise 1/2 million of the 13 million people in Illinois, and affects the availability of workers in Illinois. This influx has reduced our standing of per capita income states from 4th in 1985 to 15th today. In the mean time, Illinois loses more than \$2 billion annually to out-migration. Twenty five percent is due to retirement, and 75 percent is due to the moving of jobs to coasts. Illinois is the second largest loser of retirees out of the state among all states.

Hewings also noted that the international export volume from Illinois stands at \$1.15 billion, an increase of 20 percent in the last five years. He questioned whether this was sustainable, when most of the reason for the increase was the decreasing value of the USD.

Illinois Farm Bureau
Illinois Corn Marketing Board
Archer Daniels Midland

Secondary Sponsors

1st Farm Credit Services
Bunge North America, Inc.
Farm Credit Service of Illinois
GROWMARK, Inc.
iBIO
Illinois Agri-Women
Illinois Department of
Agriculture
Illinois Soybean Association
John Deere
Monsanto
University of Illinois

Donors

Illinois Beef Association
Illinois Pork Producers
Illinois State University
Illinois Council on Food and
Agricultural Research (C-FAR)



To remove your name from our mailing list, please email diplacid@iffb.org.

Questions or comments? E-mail us at CMagnuson@iffb.org or call 309-557-3144.

