



NEWS

from the Illinois Senate
State Senators A.J. Wilhelmi

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2010

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Jillian Dykhoff- (217) 782-0085

Wilhelmi Continues Innovative Approaches to Regional Job Creation

SPRINGFIELD, IL – State Senator A.J. Wilhelmi (D- Joliet) passed legislation out of the Senate Local Government Committee this week expanding the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority (JADA) Board and extending the life of the Authority.

The Joliet Arsenal was built in the early 1940s and was in commission during World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars becoming one of the largest employers in the Chicago area. The Arsenal was decommissioned in 1976 and declared excess property in 1993 by the U.S. Army. In 1995 the Joliet Arsenal Development Authority was created to facilitate land development and job creation on the abandoned land.

Senate Bill 3214 creates a 10-year extension of the board from August 2010 to August 2020. With the extension, the board will have the chance to work with incentives already in place as well as explore new opportunities to create jobs.

"With the help of JADA, Will County has become an inland port and transportation hub in Illinois and the Midwest," Wilhelmi said. "The land is now home to the CenterPoint Intermodal Facility and the BNSF Logistics Park in Elwood, which has created thousands of jobs. In the past 15 years, JADA has proven very successful in economic development and job creation in the region."

"This bill will allow JADA to continue its mission to create jobs and economic development for the State," said Rick Kwaseski, JADA Executive Director. "JADA appreciates Senator Wilhelmi's leadership and assistance with this bill which allows for the continuance with what is already considered a national model for the redevelopment of former military installations."

The measure also creates a new Will County At-Large position on the JADA Board, which currently seats nine members. All members of the Board must be residents of Will County. Four members of the Board are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consideration of the Senate, and five members by the Will County Executive, with the advice and consideration of the County Board, which must include residents of Joliet, Wilmington, Elwood, Manhattan and Symerton.

"By expanding the JADA board, we will have the opportunity to bring more voices into the economic development conversation," Wilhelmi said. "There are still many acres of land available and we need to continue innovative approaches to develop the land and create jobs."

JADA was named the 2009 National award recipient of the Base Redevelopment Community of the Year from the Association of Defense Communities. The former arsenal is also home to The Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.

###