



Office of the Will County Board

Herbert Brooks, Jr., Speaker

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Board establishes legislative priorities for 2013

Illiana Expressway, foreclosure sales, hazardous dumping among agenda items

JOLIET, IL- The Will County Board approved its 2013 federal and state legislative agendas, putting Springfield and Washington, D.C. on notice of its priorities. The legislative proposals address such issues as funding, regulations and infrastructure needs of the county.

“Will County is one of the fastest growing counties in the country, and many of these legislative priorities address the tremendous stress this growth has placed on our local infrastructure and the back log of critical needs it has created,” said Speaker Herb Brooks, Jr. “We call on elected officials at both the state and federal levels to honor their financial obligations to counties and, in turn, the valuable and vital services we provide to residents.”

The board’s legislative committee crafted the agenda that was approved by the full board. The agenda requests legislators oppose all unfunded mandates and fully fund programs required by law. In addition, board members oppose any legislation that reduces its authority and erodes existing revenues. Any attempts to divert dedicated revenues including, but not limited to, sales, gasoline, income and RTA taxes, that should come to the county will be fought by the board.

“We urge the state of Illinois and the federal government to meet its responsibilities, but not on the backs of Will County and other local governments,” said Bob Howard (D-Beecher), chair of the legislative committee. “The board has worked diligently and wisely to manage its finances and provide for our residents, and we look forward to working with our elected officials in Springfield and Washington to do the same. This is why we are providing them with a list of priorities that can serve as a blueprint for their legislative activities.”

One of the priorities on the board’s radar screen for several years now is the Illiana Expressway. First conceived by famed architect Daniel Burnham more than a century ago, the Illiana will link I-65 in Indiana with I-55 in Illinois. The roadway will ease east-west highway congestion, provide relief from truck traffic on local roads, and help move passengers and goods through the heart of the U.S. In June 2010, Gov. Quinn and Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to build the expressway. Since then, the Tier One Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision have been completed. Will County’s legislative agenda supports the completion of the Tier Two EIS and all necessary steps to make the Illiana a reality.

“Will County has become a key logistics hub and inland port with three major intermodal facilities,” said Republican chair Jim Moustis (R-Frankfort). “The Illiana is an important economic development project for Illinois that will spur commerce and provide a significant boost for our entire region. We must continue efforts to get the road built and create the jobs associated with it.”

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Other priorities include opposing legislation that allows foreclosure sales to be conducted by private entities instead of the Will County Sheriff's Office. Such legislation would cost the county more than \$1.2 million in lost revenue every year and jeopardize the fairness of the foreclosure process.

The board also remains concerned about the dumping of construction and demolition debris in the county's quarries without provisions for groundwater monitoring and rules for protecting citizens and the environment. There are 11 quarries in Will County accepting demolition debris, along with 398 private wells and 43 public wells providing drinking water for 350,000 local residents. Under the current law, contaminated soils are restricted as a special waste for disposal only at a sanitary landfill and numerous environmental protections are in place, but quarries do not face these regulations.

The board's complete state and federal legislative agendas are available on its website at www.willcountyboard.com.

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