

Written by Nafia Khan

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Hundreds More Jobs to Result from Administration's Announcement of \$38 Million in Capital Funding for Phase II of Moline Campus Expansion

MOLINE – January 17, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today joined local officials at Western Illinois University (WIU) to open the \$18.4 million "Building One" at the school's Riverfront Campus in Moline, a facility that will house the university's undergraduate programs in the Quad Cities. In his third visit to the campus since the project was announced, Governor Quinn also announced the release of an additional \$38 million in state capital funds for the next phase of the Moline campus expansion that will create hundreds of jobs and triple university enrollment when complete. The Governor stood alongside WIU President Jack Thomas to open the new building and announce additional funding.

"Investing in higher education is one of the best investments a state can make because jobs follow brainpower," Governor Quinn said. "The Riverfront Campus will help create jobs now and help students and communities by creating economic and job opportunities for generations to come."

The \$18.4 million "Building One" project transformed the former John Deere Technical Center, donated to WIU by the John Deere Corporation, into the new Riverfront Campus. The two-story, 60,300-square-foot energy-efficient and environmentally friendly building will be submitted for a LEED Silver designation and includes new classrooms, instructional and computer laboratories, offices, faculty and student lounges, and a reception and work area. The project was supported by a \$12.5 million investment from Governor Quinn's *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital program and created approximately 125 construction jobs. It was administered by the Capital Development Board, which oversees state-funded, non-road construction projects.

Governor Quinn's announcement today of \$38 million in new construction funding will support

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Phase II of the Riverfront Campus project, which includes a new classroom and administrative building. This expansion is expected to create more than 260 construction jobs. Bidding is scheduled for June 2012 with completion by mid-2014.

Despite having a regional population of more than 350,000 people, WIU-Quad Cities is the only public university in northwestern Illinois. The expansion is expected to generate a construction impact in excess of \$125 million and support more than 100 permanent new jobs at WIU-Quad Cities.

"We are the only public university in the Quad Cities, and today's announcement for Phase II of the Riverfront Campus means expanded public higher education opportunities for the residents of the region," said WIU President Jack Thomas. "We remain committed to providing outstanding educational experience to the Quad Cities and we are excited about the prospect of moving forward with Phase 2 of the Riverfront Campus."

According to the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, the annual economic impact of WIU-Quad Cities with a current enrollment of 1,360 students and 100 faculty and staff is over \$10 million annually. A new 3,000-student, three-building campus will raise that value to more than \$50 million annually and will double the number of college graduates to 500 annually.

Governor Quinn's *Illinois Jobs Now!* program includes \$1.5 billion for higher education, including \$788 million for public universities and \$400 million for community colleges. The overall \$30 billion program is expected to create 439,000 construction jobs.

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