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$54 Million Fine Arts Complex Will Create 775 Construction Jobs and Strengthen University's Renowned Arts Programs

NORMAL – February 21, 2013. Governor Pat Quinn today announced a $54 million capital investment to build a new fine arts complex that will strengthen Illinois State University's renowned arts programs and create 775 construction jobs. Funded through the governor's Illinois Jobs Now! capital program, the project is part of his commitment to creating jobs and growing the Illinois economy.

"This investment means Illinois State University will be able to build on its excellent reputation in the fine arts while creating hundreds of good jobs in Normal," Governor Quinn said. "Higher education is a powerful force for growth in Illinois. We all benefit when our universities have the facilities to engage and educate our young people, whether the field is art, accounting or engineering."

The Illinois Jobs Now! capital construction program will provide $54.25 million for the Fine Arts Complex, starting with $7.5 million for design and planning. The project includes renovation of existing buildings and construction of new, state-of-the-art space for instruction and performance. It will create more than 775 construction and related jobs, and spending by those workers will support an additional 775 jobs in the community.

"We are extremely grateful to Governor Quinn for his perseverance in bringing this project to Illinois State," ISU President Al Bowman said. "The College of Fine Arts offers first-class programs with outstanding faculty, staff and students who deserve first-class facilities."

The new complex will replace or renovate three buildings: Centennial East, Centennial West (both constructed in 1959) and the Center for Visual Arts (constructed in 1973). The College of Fine Arts includes departments in art, music, theater, dance and arts technology. It serves more than 1,100 students with 160 faculty and staff members, and 40 fields of study.

The next step toward a new complex is hiring an architectural and engineering firm to design it with input from faculty, staff members and students in conjunction with the state's Capital

Development Board.

“This project is a great example of what the Illinois Jobs Now! program can accomplish,” Jim Underwood, the Capital Development Board’s executive director said. “It will create good jobs while strengthening Illinois State University. With the leadership of Governor Quinn and the guidance of ISU administrators, we’re going to build a complex that will benefit students for years to come.”

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 $31 billion program, which began in 2009, is expected to support an estimated 439,000 construction jobs over six years.

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