



THE BEST \$TIMULU\$

By Richard Skillings

Before and after passage of the economic stimulus package, a lot of institutions weighed in on the right way to spend money on infrastructure. There is a surprising unanimity among conservative and liberal think tanks, Federal, state, and local transportation professionals, and most elected officials. The preponderance of evidence shows that the country needs to stop building new roadways – many of which require associated structures like bridges, drainage, and sewer systems – and instead focus on maintaining existing roads and bridges.

The best \$timulu\$ i\$ in repairing the thing\$ we already have.

STOP158 took that position from its beginning. Why? Because common sense demanded it; because not every idea has to be proved by some study to be a reasonable one.

The tragedy for the Metro East region is that the few remaining holdouts, officials who refuse to recognize both the facts and the application of common sense, still run some of our counties and cities.

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TIFs NOT WORKING, SAYS EWGCOG

By Alan J. Ortvals

Over the past 15 years, the St. Louis metro area has invested more than \$2.5 billion in economic development incentives through tax increment financing and other types of development districts. Most of that money has gone to support retail developments which have generated a small number of net new jobs paying low wages.

These are the conclusions of a new report released by the East-West Gateway Council of Governments in January.



The report, *An Assessment of the Effectiveness and Fiscal Impacts of the Use of Local Development Incentives in the St. Louis Region*, took more than a year to compile due to the poor recordkeeping of local and state governments, according to Les Sterman, executive director of the council.

Despite this problem of data collection, Sterman says that it's clear that St. Louis, as a region, has spent a lot of money in the name of economic development with very little to show for it. The report did not look at various tax abatement programs. Adding those in could well double the \$2.5 billion figure, he said.

According to the report, 80 percent of this investment has been focused on projects that include retail developments. Despite this massive investment of economic development funds, a mere 5,400 net new retail jobs have been created. Meanwhile, since 1990 the region generated 200,000 jobs in the service sector while actually losing 35,000 goods-producing jobs. Overall, jobs grew at an anemic annual rate of just 0.8

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Too much spending. Not enough thinking.

The Best Stimulus

The St. Clair county board chairman recently reaffirmed his support for the Gateway Connector – potentially a \$1,000,000,000 (that’s billion) project that has virtually no benefits, but lots of costs beyond the dollars. One might call it the “road to nowhere,” because there are already two roads that connect Columbia to Troy and the cities in between them.

We often wonder how these officials view the future Metro East. Suburban Tulsa, Kansas City, Atlanta, Chicago, etc., all look alike – hectic and crowded; with asphalt, concrete, and vinyl everywhere; little diversity and a questionable quality of life.

When those residents look here, they long for our peace; when most of us look their way, we’re happy we found it and hopeful to keep it. Too bad a few of our influential politicians don’t understand that. ●

**Get
Involved**



Spring is already here and the STOP158 Steering Committee is busy establishing a tactical plan for 2009. Every year the calendar becomes more crowded. It takes a lot of time and effort to get the word out. Activities for 2009 include:

- Contact elected officials
- Publish newsletter
- Paint and post signs
- Fundraising
- Letter writing campaigns
- Web site maintenance
- Distribute educational material
- Coordinate efforts with other groups
- Participate with local universities.

Go to www.Stop158 to *join in today*. ●

**Contributions to support
and this newsletter can be mailed to:**
STOP158
PO Box 330
Troy, Illinois 62294
 Or visit our web site www.stop158.org and
 contribute securely on line. ●



Congratulations to Senator Kyle McCarter

Kyle McCarter was recently appointed Illinois state senator replacing Frank Watson, who resigned due to health reasons. His term runs through 2011.

Kyle (R-Lebanon) represents Illinois Senate District 51. He has served on the St. Clair County Board, and his replacement on the board is O’Fallon Alderman John West.

A long-time friend of Stop158, Kyle is passionate about citizen participation in civic life. He founded the group *OurTaxMoney*, an ally of Stop158. Stop 158 is glad to see this wise appointment, and wish Frank Watson well as he continues to recover. ●

**YOUR CHILDREN DON’T
DESERVE A GATEWAY
CONNECTOR.**



Governor Quinn names Gary Hannig Secretary of Transportation

Gary Hannig has been selected by Governor Pat Quinn as his choice to be Illinois’ Secretary of Transportation, and is serving as acting secretary pending confirmation by the Illinois Senate. Hannig was previously a Democratic member of the Illinois House of Representatives, representing the 98th District from 1979 to 2009.

Hannig, from Litchfield, was the Deputy House Majority Leader in the later years of his legislative career and was one of House Speaker Michael Madigan’s top lieutenants in the negotiation of budget legislation. ●

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

STOP 158 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Place 866 Old Enterprise Farms, Lebanon, IL 62254
Regular meetings of the steering committee generally occur on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month, from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Meetings are open to all interested parties. Please call to confirm meeting time and reserve your seat: 618-632-3158.

SIGN PAINTING

STOP158 has frequent sign painting parties. We are always looking for volunteers to: 1) help with the painting and 2) post a sign in their yard. More visibility would significantly help our efforts. Can you post a sign on your property?

For the calendar of the **East-West Gateway Council of Governments** visit www.ewgateway.org.

TIFs Not Working

percent over that period.

Sterman says the picture is probably even bleaker now, as the council's data collection ended before the current downturn in the economy.

"The bottom line," said Sterman, "is if you have to spend a couple billion dollars on incentives, what would you spend it on? We're not complaining about spending the money. The question is, what do you spend it on? Certainly restoring communities, providing good paying jobs, all of those things are good - but obviously, paying for a Wal-Mart to be built that probably would have been built anyway is probably not a good investment for the public."

Excerpted from March, 2009 *Illinois Business Journal*

Sprawl is old-fashioned!

Who is STOP158:

Citizens for Smart Growth

Stop158: Citizens for Smart Growth is a movement of citizens who share and promote a positive vision for their communities. For many reason, as shown on the website www.Stop158.org we oppose an outer-belt, interstate-type highway from Troy to Columbia, which IDOT calls the **Gateway Connector**.

Allies united with us in opposition to the Gateway Connector include:

- American Bottom Conservancy
- Citizens Against the Sprawlway
- EcoHawk Foundation
- OurTaxMoney
- Sierra Clubs, Illinois Chapter
- United Congregations of Metro East
- 47+ Coalition

Thank you

Stop158 extends a special **THANK YOU** to those who have contributed monetarily to the cause of defeating the ill-conceived Gateway Connector. Your support is sincerely appreciated. We could not continue without this support and hope those who have not yet contributed will be able to do so in the near future. ●

**Roses are red, Violets are blue,
Build this roadway and they're out of view!**

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The national budget must be balanced. The public debt must be reduced; the arrogance of the authorities must be moderated and controlled. Payments to foreign governments must be reduced, if the nation doesn't want to go bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance.

Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC) 55BC

SENATOR LAUZEN ATTEMPTS TO MODIFY CORRIDOR PROTECTION - AGAIN

Illinois State Senator Chris Lauzen (R-Aurora) introduced SB2130 to modify Illinois state statutes with regard to IDOT's corridor protection process. Lauzen introduced a similar bill a few years ago which was unanimously approved by the Senate Transportation Committee but never called for a full Senate vote.

SB2130 amends the Illinois Highway Code to establish new procedures and notice requirements for IDOT to follow before, during, and after a hearing on a proposed protected corridor through which a proposed roadway may be constructed. The new procedures would take effect immediately upon passage.

If adopted, it will provide for an environmental impact study, direct notice to residents affected, and a 10-year "sunset" clause.

Contact your state representative and senators to let them know you support SB2130. Find them here:

<http://www.elections.state.il.us/Districtlocator/SelectSearchType.aspx>. ●

Stop158: **Citizens for Smart Growth**
PO Box 330
Troy, IL 62294

Improvements to Highway 158 Underway

In March, a Belleville contractor submitted the low bid to begin the first phase of work along IL158. Costing almost \$5 million, the work includes four miles of resurfacing, widening shoulders, repairing some storm sewers, and improving intersections between Millstadt and Columbia. Assuming IDOT accepts the low bid, preliminary work should begin soon. Subsurface work is next and the last step is paving. The contract must be finished within 175 working days.

This is the first in a series of IL158 improvements planned that will cost nearly \$32 million over the next five years. The work will push from Millstadt all the way to Belleville, perhaps to Route 15.

This is an example of sensible spending: we believe this effort eliminates the need for the Gateway Connector and ask you to write your state representative and senators to tell them not to waste the \$23.7 million in the capital budget for the Gateway Connector. ●

Apathy is out of style.

PUT STAMP HERE

TIFs: the \$2.5 billion boondoggle!