

## Contact Information

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Regional Council  
815-625-3854

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## Upcoming Events

[Click event title for more information.](#)

### Freight Study Kick-Off

December 17, 2015  
10:45 AM  
Best Western Hotel  
3100 Dodge Street  
Dubuque, IA 52003


### Property Tax Freeze Roundtable: An Informal Discussion with Carol Portman

December 18, 2015  
9:30 AM  
Town Square Centre  
101 West Second Street  
Dixon, IL 61021

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# BLACKHAWK HILLS Regional Council



Jo Daviess • Stephenson • Carroll • Ogle • Whiteside • Lee

Thank you for your interest in Blackhawk Hills Regional Council. You are receiving this newsletter because we would like to keep you up-to-date on projects and initiatives in the six-county region of Blackhawk Hills. We serve Carroll, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside Counties in northwestern Illinois.

If you have a project that you would like our assistance with, please contact our office at 815-625-3854 or submit a [Project Proposal Form](#) on our website.

If you have news or upcoming events that you would like us to share in our newsletter, on Facebook, or our website, please contact us at 815-625-3854 or by email at [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com).

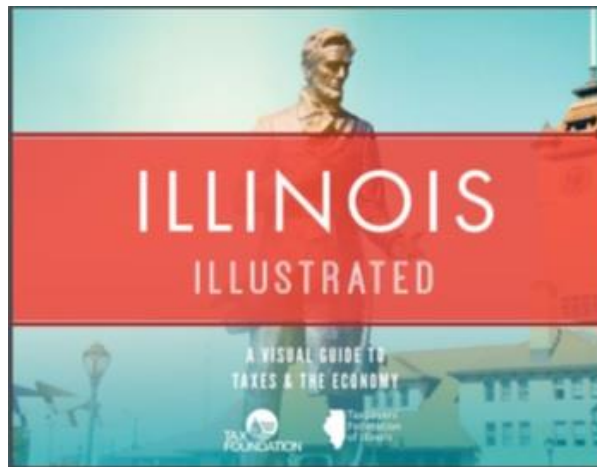
## Property Tax Freeze Roundtable: An Informal Discussion with Carol Portman of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois

*A Free, First-of-its-Kind Event*

Friday, December 18th  
9:30 AM  
Town Square Centre, Dixon, IL  
(lower level of the Dixon Chamber)

- Purpose is to discuss the impact of a proposed statewide property tax freeze
- Event is geared toward county, community, township, and school district officials and staff
- "Illinois Illustrated," the Federation's guide to taxes and the economy, will also be discussed and available to attendees

To guarantee enough room, please RSVP to Blackhawk Hills Regional Council by December 15th to [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com) or by calling 815-625-3854.



## Freight Study Kick-Off: A Multimodal, Intermodal Focus



Join Blackhawk Hills Regional Council, the East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA), and the Illinois and Iowa Departments of Transportation on Thursday, December 17, 2015, at Champps Americana-Best Western Hotel, 3100 Dodge Street, Dubuque, Iowa, to discuss the freight study for the eight county region.

Freight movement is critical to our region's economic vitality and business growth. The purpose of the study is to prepare a plan that enhances the mobility of both people and goods while mitigating the negative impacts on mobility, safety, environment and quality of life. The study will provide key recommendations for existing and future roadways, rail, intermodal and freight facilities in the region.

Registration will begin at 10:45 AM till 11:15 AM and lunch will be served at 11:15 AM (no cost). Speaker Presentation at 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Speakers include:

- Director Paul Trombino, Iowa Department of Transportation
- Secretary Randy Blankenhorn, Illinois Department of Transportation
- Stu Anderson, Director, Iowa Department of Transportation Planning, Programming & Model
- Jeff South, Director, IL Department of Transportation Planning and Programming.

Community participation is critical to the success of the study. We need a strong Illinois presence at the meeting, and we strongly encourage local officials to attend.

To register for the kick-off, please contact Gail Kuhle at 563-690-5710 or [gkuhle@ecia.org](mailto:gkuhle@ecia.org). For more information about the study, contact Theresa Wittenauer, Blackhawk Hills' Executive Director at [theresa.wittenauer@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:theresa.wittenauer@blackhawkhills.com) or 815-625-3854.

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### Funding Opportunities

Visit [blackhawkhills.com/grants](http://blackhawkhills.com/grants) or contact our office for more information on these and other funding opportunities.

#### Books For Children

The Libri Foundation is a nationwide non-profit organization which donates new, quality, hardcover children's books to small, rural public libraries in the United States through its BOOKS FOR CHILDREN program. In 2016 only past grant recipients in good standing are eligible to apply for a Books for Children grant. Visit the Libri Foundation's website, to see if your library is eligible. If your library is listed and you are interested in applying for a grant, please email your name, title, the name of your library, and your mailing address to the foundation at [libri@librifoundation.org](mailto:libri@librifoundation.org). Application deadlines for 2016 are: January 15th, March 15th, and May 15th. Click [here](#) for more information.

### [Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#)

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency award grants to fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service organizations across the U.S. annually. The program offers grants for equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training, and other resources. Application deadline is January 15, 2016 at 5:00 P.M. EST. Click [here](#) for more information.

### [Captain Planet Foundation](#)

The Captain Planet Foundation supports educational programs that enable youth to understand and appreciate our world by getting involved in hands-on projects to improve the environment. The Foundation is interested in funding innovative programs that inspire youth to participate in community service through environmental stewardship activities. An additional priority is to fund programs that encourage environment-based education in schools. Nonprofit organizations and public schools may apply for grants of \$500 to \$2,500. Priority is given to projects with at least matching or in-kind funding for their project. Application deadline is January 31st for fall and winter projects. Click [here](#) for more information.

### [Project Orange Thumb](#)

Project Orange Thumb, sponsored by Fiskars, is dedicated to supporting the community garden movement throughout the U.S. and Canada. Support is provided for local projects that will make differences in their communities through unique community garden initiatives while demonstrating how a small group of people can make changes that affect the entire community. Ten winners will receive \$5,000 in cash and Fiskars garden tools to help support their goals of neighborhood beautification and horticulture education, and one applicant will receive a complete garden makeover. Project Orange Thumb is intended to promote new garden spaces and garden expansions. Nonprofit organizations, public schools, and municipalities are eligible to apply. Application deadline February 1, 2016. Click [here](#) for more information.

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## **Input Needed for Stephenson County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan**

Part of preparing for natural and human-caused disasters is creating a hazard mitigation plan. A hazard mitigation plan is required to remain eligible to receive certain mitigation funds that can be used before or after a disaster. The plan also helps local officials decide what projects and programs will receive priority. If you live or work in Stephenson County, please help the county's planning process by completing this short 12-question survey.

The survey is available [here](#).

For more information, please contact Dan Payette, Blackhawk Hills' Outreach Coordinator by email at [daniel.payette@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:daniel.payette@blackhawkhills.com) or by calling 815-625-3854.

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## **2015 Regional Development Summit Held**

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council held its annual regional development summit on October 30 at the Lake Carroll Clubhouse. Speakers included Carrie Zethmayer (DCEO), Steve Deller (UW-Madison), and Steve Buchtel (Trails for Illinois). Topics included economic development 101, new directions for DCEO, community well-being and prosperity, business support and retention, and the economic benefits of well-designed, well-signed trails. Over seventy people attended.

If you have suggested speakers for 2016, please let our office know by calling 815-625-3854 or emailing [info@blackhawkhills.com](mailto:info@blackhawkhills.com).



Daniel Payette, BHRC Outreach Coordinator, welcomed everyone to the Summit.



Summit participants had an opportunity to visit exhibitors.

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