

Contact Information

Blackhawk Hills
Regional Council
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Upcoming Events

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

Office Closed

December 25, 2015
Christmas

Office Closed

January 1, 2016
New Year's Day

2016 Blackhawk Hills Regional Council Meetings

January 25

March 28

May 23

July 25

September 26

November 28

Our bi-monthly meetings are held at 6:00 PM at the Lanark Heritage Center in Lanark, Illinois.

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BLACKHAWK HILLS Regional Council



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



Freight Study Kick-Off Event Held in Dubuque

More than 100 people, including business, planning, and transportation leaders from Illinois and Iowa, gathered in Dubuque, IA, on December 17, 2015, to discuss the importance of freight movement and the region's first comprehensive freight study in over a decade. Secretary Randy Blankenhorn from the Illinois Department of Transportation (DOT) and Director Paul Trombino from the Iowa DOT were on hand to shed light on emerging trends and potential problems concerning freight.

The freight study will examine all modes of freight movement in the eight county region and drive future improvements to our freight system over the next fifty years. Researchers will analyze multi-modal networks, develop a profile for highway, rail, port, intermodal, and air cargo, measure the flow of commodities through the region and seek ways to improve the freight transportation.

A regional, 34-member steering committee will work closely with the project consultant and assist with elements of the study. Committee members will help identify regional freight flow patterns, provide a perspective from businesses that regularly use the freight system, assist with the development of long, medium, and short term goals, and collaborate on an implementation plan.



IL DOT's Secretary Randy Blankenhorn presenting at the Freight Study Kick-Off.

Timeline

The regional freight study is scheduled to kick off early next year, and the final report will be published the summer of 2017.

Lead Agencies

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council and East Central Intergovernmental Association (regional planning commissions in Illinois and Iowa, respectively) are partnering with the Iowa and Illinois DOTs.

Geographic Scope

Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson and Clinton counties in Iowa and Jo Daviess, Carroll, Stephenson and Whiteside counties in Illinois.

Project Support

Investments comes from regional business partners, local governments, and the Iowa and Illinois DOTs.

Carol Portman Property Tax Roundtable Discussion Held

Blackhawk Hills Regional Council hosted a discussion with Carol Portman on December 18, 2015 at the Dixon Chamber of Commerce. Portman is the President of the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois and has a broad understanding of taxes and their impacts on individuals and industries.

During the roundtable, she spoke on local tax topics and the potential impact of state tax legislation on schools and communities. Following her presentation, Portman led a discussion on a proposed property tax freeze and explained what governments might encounter. She fielded a number of questions from attendees, including school superintendents and elected officials. An estimated twenty-five participants attended. Her presentation can be found on [Blackhawk Hills' website](#).

Her group's *Illinois Illustrated - Visual Guide to Taxes & The Economy*, can be found at <http://taxfoundation.org/article/illinois-illustrated-visual-guide-taxes-economy>.



Carol Portman, Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois, presented *Illinois Illustrated - Visual Guide to Taxes & The Economy*.

Funding Opportunities

Visit blackhawkhills.com/grants or contact our office for more information on these and other funding opportunities.

Upcoming Deadlines

[Books For Children](#) - January 15, 2016

[Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program](#) - January 15, 2016 at 5:00 P.M. EST

[Captain Planet Foundation](#) - January 31, 2016

[Project Orange Thumb](#) - February 1, 2016

New Opportunities

National Endowment for the Humanities

The Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations Implementation Grants program provides support for museums, libraries, historic places, and other public programs in the humanities. The grants support exhibitions at public venues, interpretations of historic places, book/film discussion programs, living history presentations, and other face-to-face programs at public venues. Funded activities can include interpretive websites and other digital formats, final scholarly research and consultation, and design development, production, and installation of a project for presentation to the public. Deadline: January 13, 2016. Click [here](#) for more information.

National Endowment for the Arts

The Big Read program supports organizations across the country in developing community-wide reading programs that encourage reading and participation by diverse audiences. Funded programs include activities such as author readings, book discussions, panel discussions, lectures, art exhibits, film series, music or dance events, theatrical performances, and other events and activities related to one of 34 available reading choices. Deadline: January 27, 2016 at 4 PM CST. Click [here](#) for information.

Fund for Teachers

Fund for Teachers (FFT) provides educators, possessing a broad vision of what it means to teach and learn, the resources needed to pursue self-designed professional learning experiences. FFT grants are used for an unlimited variety of projects; all designed to create enhanced learning environments for teachers, their students and their school communities. FFT believes that supporting teachers' active participation in their own professional growth, positively impacts student learning and achievement. Teachers must have a minimum of three years experience and be full-time teachers spending at least 50% of their time in the classroom. Eligible teachers may apply as individuals (funding limit of \$5,000) or as a team (funding limit of \$10,000). Deadline: January 28, 2016 at 5 PM CST. Click [here](#) for more information.

Grants Promote Shakespeare Performances for Middle and High School Students

Shakespeare in American Communities, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in cooperation with Arts Midwest, aims to reach middle and high school students in underserved schools throughout the United States with high quality, professional productions of Shakespeare's plays. This program supports Shakespeare productions of artistic excellence and merit that give students exposure to a live performance. These performances may be held in the theater company's facility, a school, or a community venue, but must be conducted in partnership with schools or school districts. Matching grants of \$25,000 will be awarded to up to 40 theater companies to support performances and related educational activities for middle and high school students from a minimum of ten schools. Deadline: February 4, 2016. Click [here](#) for more information.

Cover Crops Workshop To Be Held

A Cover Crops Workshop will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, from 11 AM - 3 PM at the Naaman Diehl Auditorium, 811 South Clay Street, Mt. Carroll, IL.

Topics presented:

- Reasons for Considering Cover Crops
- Northern Illinois Cover Crop Research
- Putting Cover Crops in the Crop Plan
- Local Producer Panel
- Local Seed Dealer Opportunities

Presented by:

- Russ Higgins, U of I Extension, Commercial Ag Educator
- Mark Bramstedt, Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Scientist
- Jay Solomon, U of I Extension, Environmental Educator
- Farmer Presentation and Panel Discussion



There will be a question and answer session with experts from the field, and a free networking lunch sponsored by area seed representatives and agribusinesses.

Register by January 4, 2016, to reserve a spot for lunch. Please register at go.illinois.edu/covercrops or call the U of I Extension office at 815-244-9444 or the Carroll County Soil and Water Conservation District office at 815-244-8732 Ext. 3.

Tri-State Local Food Summit

The local foods movement is not only about our personal health and well-being, but encompasses the health of our entire community: farmers, consumers, the poor, our land, public spaces, and schools.

The 2016 Tri-State Local Food Summit will be held on Saturday, February 6, 2016, from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Sinsinawa Mound Center, 585 County Road Z, Sinsinawa, WI. The summit will provide an opportunity to explore the intersections of people and land, with a special focus on food and farm practices that advance social equity and environmental justice. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in inquiry, education, and networking around a variety of topics.

Session topics to include:

- Beginning Farmer Development: New Programs Empowering Farmers on the Edges
- Food Justice & Health Equity: Expanding Local Food Access in Rural & Urban Communities
- Healthy Food Distribution: Innovative Collaborations Combating Hunger & Obesity

For more information click [here](#) or contact Sinsinawa Mound Guest Services at 608-748-4411.

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