



INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

Newsletter

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July 19, 2021

The Infrastructure Council is an initiative of the Illinois Chamber that brings together Chamber members with a focus on increasing infrastructure investments in a strategic and thoughtful way to boost the overall business climate in Illinois. Our focus is on the public and private systems that are essential to Illinois businesses.

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Transportation Spotlight

On Wednesday, Governor Pritzker made an unannounced trip to Washington DC to meet with President Biden for a bipartisan discussion on Infrastructure. Pritzker took part in a bipartisan roundtable conversation with other state governors and local mayors but was also given a private slot with the President.

Recapping the private conversation, Governor Pritzker [says](#) that he asked for federal funds for highway and rail improvements as well as assistance for the state's unemployment insurance trust fund deficit.

I appeared on WTTW's Chicago Tonight with Amanda Vinicky to discuss these developments. Our conversation focused on the need for a federal infrastructure package, Rebuild Illinois and future transportation funding mechanisms at the state and federal level. The full Chicago Tonight episode can be viewed [here](#).

We're Number 1!?!

CNBC ranked IL the best state for infrastructure in their latest study. Illinois was ranked number one for the best state for infrastructure which looked at roads, bridges, airports, utilities and broadband.

The study praised Illinois for being a leader in value of goods shipped, having a reliable power grid, boasting good broadband connectivity, having abundant air travel and offering plenty of available commercial space.

Illinois also has infrastructure issues, including roads and bridges described by CNBC as "decrepit" and public water systems needing major refurbishment. We are still number one despite this description, what are the other guys doing?

Number one for best infrastructure, Illinois was #15 as the best state to conduct business. You can read the full study [here](#).

CREATE ANNOUNCES \$19.1 Million Infrastructure Grant for Archer Avenue Grade Separation

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program partners received a \$19.1 million federal grant for construction of the Archer Avenue Grade Separation at the Belt Railway of Chicago (BRC) rail tracks.

The Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant, awarded by the United States Department of Transportation, ensures this project is fully funded through construction. The Illinois Chamber's Infrastructure Council is pleased to have lobbied successfully for the receipt of this critical funding.

The project will reconstruct portions of Archer Avenue and lower it approximately 15 feet under a new rail bridge to serve the existing BRC tracks, add side paths for people walking and bicycling under the rail bridge and update utilities and sewer lines in the project area along Archer Ave.

This project, CREATE Program project GS9, will benefit the communities of Archer Heights and Garfield Ridge by reducing delays at the current at-grade crossing. On an average day, 18,600 vehicles and 259 CTA buses (#62) pass through the crossing. Grade separating this crossing will eliminate delay to more than 2,700 vehicles daily, alleviating nearly 59,600 annual motorist hours

of delay. It will also eliminate the potential for collisions between vehicles and trains.

Bill Signing of Interest

[HB 118](#) (Guzzardi) **Underpayment Penalties** This bill provides that an employee is entitled to recover damages of 5% (rather than 2%) of the amount of any underpayments in wages for each month following the date of payment during which such underpayments remain unpaid. This bill was signed by the Governor.

Groundbreaking for Rebuild Illinois Funded Computer Design, Research, and Learning Center at University of Illinois Chicago

University of Illinois leaders and other stakeholders broke ground this week on a new Computer Design, Research, and Learning Center (CDRLC) at the University of Illinois Chicago. The new 135,000 square foot Center will provide state-of-the-art facilities for research and innovation, accommodate the rapidly increasing undergraduate enrollment in computer science, and become a major campus hub. Construction of the new \$118 million center is partially funded by a \$98 million funding allocation from Rebuild Illinois

The new building will create a hub for both engineering and computer science with a 1,200-square-foot robotics lab and 16,000 square feet of classroom space.

That includes research areas comprised of 16 classrooms, 35 dry and specialty labs, collaborative teaching and learning spaces for undergraduate and graduate students, an undergraduate learning and community center; an auditorium; and a flexible events room; all unified by a five-story daylit atrium. The CDRLC will be delivered on an accelerated schedule to meet the demands of the department, doubling its capacity by 2023.

US EPA Seeking Nominations to Mobile Sources Technical Review Subcommittee

The United States EPA (USEPA) is seeking nominations from representatives of nonfederal interests to serve on the Mobile Sources Technical Review Subcommittee (MSTRS) by **August 2, 2021**. Interests include, but are not limited to:

- Community and/or environmental justice
- State, tribal, and local government
- Environmental advocacy groups
- Future transportation options and shared mobility
- Transportation and supply chain shippers
- Marine and inland port interests
- Mobile source emission modeling

MSTRS members are appointed by the EPA Administrator for three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment to a second term. Through its expert members from diverse stakeholder groups and from its various workgroups, the subcommittee reviews and addresses a wide range of developments, issues and research areas such as emissions modeling, emission standards and standard setting, air toxics, innovative and incentive-based transportation policies, onboard diagnostics, heavy-duty engines, diesel retrofit, and fuel quality.

The MSTRS, a federal advisory committee chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, provides the Clean Air Act Advisory Committee with independent advice, counsel, and recommendations on the scientific and technical aspects of programs related to mobile source air pollution and its control. The subcommittee's website is at <https://www.epa.gov/caaac/mobile-sources-technical-review-subcommittee-mstrs-caaac>.

For more information on how to submit a nomination, please see the Federal Register Notice announcing the request for nominations. Nominations must be received by **August 2, 2021**. If you have any questions, please contact: Julia Burch, burch.julia@epa.gov, Designated Federal Officer.

Articles of Interest

[Taxis, Lyft hype sweeteners as commuting gears back up](#)

[What Pritzker asked for at the White House](#)

[United Airlines plans to buy 100 small electric planes for regional flights](#)

[AT&T says it will bring mmWave 5G to seven US airports this year](#)

[Federal 3-judge panel to decide whether state redistricting plan is constitutional](#)

[Op-Ed: Let's stop lawsuits from impacting business](#)

[United Airlines adds flights to beach destinations, expecting travel recovery to continue](#)

Until next time,

Clark

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