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## **Local community leaders meet in Hazel Crest to discuss Governor Blagojevich's *Investing in Families* plan**

*Top Blagojevich officials discuss how Governor's plan will address needs in communities statewide by investing in Schools, providing access to affordable healthcare and improving the overall quality of life for Illinois residents*

**HAZEL CREST (May 9, 2007)** – Community leaders, labor, education and social service representatives met tonight at a hearing hosted by the Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc., (CEDA) at the Advocate South Suburban Hospital to hear from state officials and economic experts about how Governor Blagojevich's *Investing in Families* plan would improve the quality of life for middle-class and working families throughout Illinois by increasing the state's investment in education, providing property tax relief and giving every person in Illinois access to affordable health coverage. The Governor's plan accomplishes these goals by correcting the inequities of the state's tax system that has placed an increasing burden on individual taxpayers, while some of the largest corporations in Illinois pay little or no taxes.

Through the Governor's comprehensive plan, Schools in Hazel Crest and the surrounding communities would receive an estimated \$175 million in new state support in FY08 as a result of his \$1.5 billion proposed investment in Schools statewide. Additionally, healthcare providers in the region would receive an estimated \$27 million in new funding as a result of the Governor's *Illinois Covered* initiative that would increase access for the uninsured, and assist small businesses and individuals with the increasing costs of healthcare. Local residents and businesses would also benefit from \$1 billion in statewide property tax relief.

"We know that the one of the best ways to promote the well-being of children and families is to support those who are facing an economic crisis due to the sky-rocketing costs of healthcare. Governor Blagojevich's plan will provide Illinois families with access to affordable healthcare and will provide a much-needed break on working-class and middle-income families. I urge all of you to reach out to your lawmakers to make sure they understand that the need for affordable healthcare is real, and the need is now," said Erwin McEwen, Acting Director, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

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“As an educator, public servant and a businessman, I am confident that Governor Blagojevich’s bold plan will provide millions of uninsured residents in Illinois with access to affordable healthcare and will improve the overall education system. The Governor is tackling our greatest concerns responsibly and I encourage the people of Hazel Crest to support his effort to ensure a brighter and healthier community for ourselves and future generations,” said Dr. Robert Donaldson, Mayor, City of Hazel Crest.

The officials presented how the Governor’s *Investing in Families* plan will improve the lives of residents statewide:

- *Helping Kids Learn* – a record new investment of \$10 billion in Schools over the next four years – nearly three times bigger than any increase in state history;
- *Illinois Covered* – an affordable, reliable healthcare plan to cover the 1.4 million uninsured adults in Illinois and provide assistance to millions of middle-income families and small businesses struggling to keep up with health insurance costs;
- Statewide property tax relief to alleviate costs that have escalated as a result of the state neglecting its primary funding obligation; and,
- Investments in the state’s transportation infrastructure through a \$3 billion bonded capital road program.

**Through the Governor’s *Investing in Families* plan, Hazel Crest and surrounding area School Districts will receive the following increases in education funding and property tax relief:**

Arbor Park School District 145:	\$2,526,791
Bloom Township High School District 206:	\$7,635,968
Bremen Community High School District 228:	\$15,069,624
Brookwood School District 167:	\$1,950,932
Calumet Public Schools District 132:	\$2,104,686
Chicago Heights School District 170:	\$6,695,586
Consolidated High School District 230:	\$7,682,301
Country Club Hills School District 160:	\$3,203,837
Dolton School District 148:	\$5,622,928
Dolton School District 149:	\$5,850,902
Elementary School District 159:	\$3,205,611
Flossmoor School District 161:	\$4,652,672
Ford Heights School District 169:	\$ 948,400
Forest Ridge School District 142:	\$2,394,404
General George Patton School District 133:	\$ 327,366
Harvey School District 152:	\$3,873,860
Hazel Crest School District 152-5:	\$2,228,338
Homewood Flossmoor High School District 233:	\$9,624,613
Homewood School District 153:	\$3,202,941
Kirby School District 140:	\$4,287,693
Lansing School District 158:	\$4,653,968
Matteson Elem School District 162:	\$5,915,340
Midlothian School District 143:	\$3,287,296
Orland School District 135:	\$2,907,539
Park Forest School District 163:	\$4,933,919
Posen-Robbins El School District 143-5:	\$3,265,011
Prairie-Hills Elementary District 144:	\$5,657,747

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Rich Township High School District 227:	\$13,242,698
Sandridge School District 172:	\$ 814,846
South Holland School District 151:	\$3,125,146
South Holland School District 50:	\$1,595,803
Steger School District 194:	\$2,540,576
Summit Hill School District 161:	\$3,666,485
Sunnybrook School District 171:	\$1,647,139
Thornton School District 154:	\$ 144,834
Thornton Township High School District 205:	\$20,806,333
Tinley Park Community School District 146:	\$1,196,413
West Harvey-Dixmoor Public School District 147:	\$2,110,311

**Increased reimbursement rates and revenue growth from Illinois Covered would benefit Hazel Crest area hospitals:**

Oak Forest Hospital: \$826,210

South Suburban Hospital: \$3,388,409

St James Hospital and Health Centers: \$6,984,516

Ingalls Memorial Hospital: \$6,414,144

Provena St. Mary's Hospital: \$3,629,417

Riverside Medical Center: \$5,303,117