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Capital bill means big bucks for Q-C

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By **Brian Krans**, bkrans@qconline.com

A Western Illinois University riverfront campus in Moline, a new school in Silvis and expanding John Deere Road to six lanes are among projects funded by Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn signature Monday of a bill allocating \$31 billion to projects across the state.

The "Illinois Jobs Now!" capital improvement plan, Illinois' first in 10 years, will be funded by expanded gambling, new targeted sales taxes and expanded fees. The bill and its funding are separate from the state budget, which lawmakers have yet to pass.

The program allocates \$57.8 million to the first two phases of the WIU riverfront campus, allowing the Quad-Cities to shake the stigma of being the largest metropolitan area in the United States not served by a full-fledged public university campus.

"We are extremely excited and most appreciative of local support as well as the general assembly and the governor," Joseph Rives, WIU vice president, said Monday. "This is a momentous day for us."

The money allows first for the renovation of the current building for academic services, administration and the business and technology departments. The second phase involves bringing programs to the campus, which will serve 3,000 students, Mr. Rives said.

All three phases of the campus, which Gov. Quinn previously said he supported, is slated to cost \$80 million. Mr. Rives said WIU is concentrating on the first two phases before worrying about funding for the third phase.

Within a few weeks, crews will be on the campus, paving in a culvert to allow construction equipment access to the site. The paving will be paid from university money, Mr. Rives said.

"The first building will be open within two years of the beginning of construction," he said.

The Silvis School District received more than \$11.9 million to build a new George O. Barr Elementary School -- which also houses the junior high school -- ending seven years of waiting since the district was promised a new school back in 2002 by former Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

In December, the Silvis district bought 35 acres for \$1 million as the new school's possible site. Officials were set to start considering earthwork bids at the site, but put those plans on hold pending word from the state.

The new school's costs have grown to an estimated \$26 million since the state money was first promised. Supplemental funding could come from the sale of bonds. School district officials were unavailable for comment Monday.

The capital bill also directly allocates more than \$77 million to Quad-Cities area road and bridge projects, the largest being \$48.9 million to expand John Deere Expressway (Illinois 5) from four to six lanes from 16th Street to just past 70th Street in Moline.

John Wegmeyer, project Implementation engineer with the Illinois Department of Transportation, said the project is still in the first phase of designs and wouldn't begin for at least another year. None of the road projects on the list would start this summer, he said. The earliest they could begin would be next spring.

Another major road project, split into three parts, is resurfacing Interstate 80 from the Rock Island County line to the Bureau County line, including the I-74 interchange. Its total cost is \$45.3 million.

Patching and resurfacing work also was approved for Illinois 17/U.S. 34 from U.S. 150 to Market Street in Galva, and Illinois 84 south of Carbon Cliff to the Henry County line at the Rock River.

Other Quad-Cities capital improvements could be included in the bill, including \$150 million for Amtrak service statewide. A Chicago to Quad-Cities line has been the focus of local, state and federal leaders.

In a statement about the bill, U.S. Rep. Phil Hare noted funds for WIU and Amtrak.

"It provides an important match to federal transportation dollars secured in 2005 and puts Illinois in a much better position to receive additional funds when we consider the multi-year highway bill later this year," he said. "And at a time when our economy is struggling, this bill will help put more people back to work. Today is a long overdue victory for Illinois" families."

Other area projects in the plan (this list may not include all): - East Moline Correctional Center
- Replace windows and upgrade roofing, \$718,329

- Illinois Youth Center, Kewanee - Replace sprinkler system, \$6,500,000

- Rock Island County - Capital improvements to facilities, \$160,000

- Henry County - All costs associated with highway and bridge maintenance, \$250,000

- Mercer County - Infrastructure improvements, \$100,000

- Alleman High School - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000

- Rockridge School District - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000

- Sherrard School District - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000

- Aledo School District - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Rock Island-Milan School District - Infrastructure improvements at Rock Island High School, \$50,000
- Moline School District - Infrastructure improvements at Moline High School, \$50,000
- Black Hawk College-East Campus - Capital improvements to Kewanee Park, \$100,000
- Black Hawk College - Energy efficient infrastructure upgrades, \$1,000,000
- Rock Island - Renovations to Martin Luther King Center, \$400,000
- Rock Island - Construction of a Martin Luther King Center Park, \$600,000
- Rock Island - Capital improvements to Douglas Park, \$75,000
- Rock Island - Engineering and design work associated with a new business park, \$40,000
- East Moline - Capital improvements to Northeast Sports Complex, \$900,000
- Kewanee - All costs associated with st improvements, \$100,000, and capital improvements, \$75,000
- Rock Falls - Emergency and industrial water well activation phase 1, \$125,000, and costs associated with capital improvements, \$37,600- Galva - Capital improvements, \$100,000
- Atkinson - Costs associated with sewer improvements, \$120,000
- Cambridge - Capital improvements, \$100,000
- Woodhull - Capital improvements, \$65,000
- Alpha - Capital improvements, \$65,000
- Annawan - Capital improvements, \$70,000
- Andalusia - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Bowling Township - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Matherville - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- New Windsor - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Milan - Infrastructure improvements, \$75,000
- Viola - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000

- Moline - City Hall renovations, \$190,000
- Rock Island - Infrastructure improvements, \$190,000
- Reynolds - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Aledo - Infrastructure improvements, \$100,000
- Keithsburg - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Sherrard - Infrastructure improvements, \$25,000
- Monmouth - Construction of co-generation power facility, \$100,000
- Kewanee Rural Fire District - Buying of a new fire truck and/or capital improvements, \$120,000
- Illinois City/Buffalo Prairie Fire Protection District - Infrastructure improvements, \$100,000
- New Horizons Center for the Developmentally Disabled - Costs associated with capital improvements, \$100,000
- Hope Creek Care Center - Infrastructure improvements, \$100,000
- Big Island Soil and Water Preservation Association - Infrastructure improvements, \$70,000
- Blackhawk Area Council of Boy Scouts of America - Infrastructure improvements, \$50,000
- Big River State Forest in Mercer County - ADA improvements, \$322,611
- Quad City Track - Improvements, \$475,000
- Boys and Girls Club of Mississippi Valley Valley - Construction of a teen center, \$100,000
- Skip-A-Long Child Development Services - Construction of classrooms at the Moline Campus, \$400,000
- Arc of Rock Island - Replacing HVAC system, \$275,000
- Two Rivers YMCA - Renovations, \$175,000
- Erie Family Health Center - Site improvements to Erie Helping Hands Health Center, \$250,000