

JB PRITZKER, GOVERNOR · JERRY COSTELLO II, DIRECTOR

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## **Pritzker Administration Announces \$58.1 Million Planned Investment in Construction Projects at the Historic Illinois State Fairgrounds**

*The multi-million dollar investment will address years of deferred maintenance*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL** – Excavators, bulldozers, and graders have converged on the Illinois State Fairgrounds as the Illinois Department of Agriculture kicks off a \$58.1 million capital investment addressing years of deferred maintenance on the historic state fairgrounds. From road projects and new roofs to structural repairs on prominent buildings, these construction projects, overseen by the Capital Development Board (CDB), are designed to ensure Illinois families will continue to ‘Grow With Us’ for generations to come.

“For too long, our fairgrounds didn’t reflect the magic of the Illinois State Fair – so my administration is turning that ship around,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “The \$58 million in infrastructure improvements we’re bringing to the Springfield fairgrounds – as well as new funding for Du Quoin – is an investment in the Illinois families that make this celebration what it is. I’m proud to improve the fairgrounds for generations to come.”

“For the past three years, this administration has been committed, and continues to be committed, to improving the Illinois State Fairgrounds,” **said Illinois Department of Agriculture Director Jerry Costello II**. “Starting with the crown jewel, the Coliseum, and expanding across the grounds, the work that is being done today will ensure our fairgrounds will be here for many years to come.”

“The Illinois State Fairgrounds are a haven for residents and families across our state to enjoy nature, camping, entertainment, and more,” **said CDB Executive Director Jim Underwood**. “CDB is looking forward to overseeing these deferred maintenance projects, which are critical for keeping buildings sustainable and accessible to all.”

## **Multi-Purpose Arena**

Construction is underway to restore and renovate the Multi-Purpose Arena (MPA). The \$8.6 million project will repair sidewalks, walls, steps, and expansion joints, while also repairing electrical systems, readjusting the tension structure, installing a new canopy, and rebuilding the retaining walls around the facility. Constructed in 2000, the Multi-Purpose Arena is a 261,000 square foot building set on six-acres of the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The facility is known for hosting the National High School Rodeo Finals, monster truck shows, motorcycle racing, truck and tractor pulls, and demolition derby.

The MPA construction will render the facility unusable during the 2022 Illinois State Fair. The Outlaw 5J Rodeo: Bares, Broncs and Bull Riding will be rescheduled for September 25 at the Coliseum. The STEAM Expo's Drone Racing Competition is slated to take place on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> at the Grandstand. The ITPA Truck and Tractor Pulls and Illinois State Fair Championship Demolition Derby will take place in 2023.

“The work being done to improve our fairgrounds is enabling us to use the grounds for more events year-round, which helps bring in tourism for Springfield and our surrounding area,” **said Illinois State Fair Manager Rebecca Clark**. “In the weeks and months ahead, the Illinois State Fair and the Illinois Department of Agriculture will be working with the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln to build a master plan for our fairgrounds that will provide the blueprint needed to ‘grow’ our facility usage to meet the needs of our community and further define our position as an event destination in central Illinois.”

## **Road Improvements**

This spring, the Department of Agriculture kicked off a \$4.1 million road construction project in the heart of the fairgrounds to improve the conditions of the roads commonly used by non-fair event patrons and state fair agriculture exhibitors. The roads along the cattle barns, swine barn, and along the Avenue of Flags were repaired and resurfaced to withstand heavy trailer traffic often used during livestock shows and vendor deliveries during the fair.

## **Coliseum**

Following the conclusion of the 2022 Illinois State Fair, construction will resume on the multi-phased Coliseum renovation project. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2019 and included addressing various structural problems associated with the 122-year-old facility. Phase 2 will focus on an electrical overhaul, underground plumbing, new seating, new restrooms, an elevator and adding an HVAC system that will allow for heating and cooling of the facility. The anticipated costs for the Phase 2 of the Coliseum renovations is approximately \$16.3 million.

## **Other projects slated to take place in FY 23 include:**

- \$1.87 million: Roof replacements on the Junior Livestock Building, Sheep Barn, Hobbies Arts and Crafts Building, and at least three barns along the backstretch;

- \$11.9 million: HVAC replacements on the Orr Building, Illinois Building, Junior Livestock Building, Artisans Building, Hobbies Arts and Crafts Building, and Grandstand;
- \$2.994 million: Tuckpoint work in the Grandstand, Artisans, Hobbies Arts and Crafts, Emmerson and Block (IDOA headquarters) buildings;
- \$8 million: Road construction along 8<sup>th</sup> Street between the IDOA building and the IDNR building and along the backstretch on the northwest corner of the fairgrounds; provides funding to make structural improvements to the south pedestrian tunnel leading into the fairgrounds from Gate 6/infield parking;
- \$2.585 million: Energy improvement repairs for Block Building;
- \$1.7 million: Roof and HVAC replacement to Illinois State Fair Administration Building.

"The Illinois State Fairgrounds are a cornerstone of Illinois. Since the State Fair always falls on my birthday, I have such wonderful memories of birthday celebrations there. The fairgrounds are a place where everyone, regardless of background, can gather to celebrate their state and community," **said state Rep. Sue Scherer (D-Decatur)**. "I am so grateful to the Department of Agriculture and the Governor for the new construction and improvements to the fairgrounds. These updates will make the fairgrounds an even better place for all Illinoisans to enjoy."

"The investment into the State Fairgrounds will provide an extensive facelift, further improving the fair experience for everyone," **said State Senator Doris Turner (D-Springfield)**. "People from all over Illinois come to enjoy the fair, and these investments will draw more tourists and provide them with a better State Fair experience for years to come."

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