



INFRASTRUCTURE COUNCIL

# Newsletter

Clark Kaericher | Vice President, Government Affairs | 217-522-5512 x 296



[Email Clark](#)

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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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How old is too old to dress up for Halloween? Asking for a “friend” whose wife wants him to dress up as a giant lobster from Little Mermaid...

## Session Update

The General Assembly returns this Tuesday for six scheduled days of Veto Session. Since all of the actual vetoes have been dispensed with during the extra days of session for the energy bill, this Veto Session is going to focus mainly on two topics: Congressional Maps (View the map [here](#)) and legislation dealing with abortion.

The danger for the business community is that these two contentious issues get bogged down and leave openings for surprise legislation. We saw a similar dynamic to this with the prejudgment interest bill in late May.

### **House Transportation Regulation and Roads Committee to Discuss Soundproofing Windows around Chicago's Airports**

The House Transportation Regulation and Roads Committee is scheduled to meet twice during the Veto Session. The first meeting is a subject matter only hearing on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Belzekas Museum to discuss soundproof windows near Midway Airport.

The second hearing is two days later on October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Des Plaines City Hall to discuss soundproof windows around O'Hare Airport.

### **Save the Date- Next Infrastructure Meeting Scheduled**

Our next Infrastructure Council meeting will be November 10<sup>th</sup> at 9-10:30 am at the Chamber's Chicago office in the Loop. I am excited for the agenda which features:

- Congresswoman Marie Newman to discuss federal transportation funding. Representative Newman serves on the influential House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.
- RTA Chairman Kirk Dillard. Chairman Dillard will discuss recent activities of the RTA and the return-to-work process underway in the city.
- Transportation Funding expert and former Bradley Professor Dr. Amir Al-Khafaji

I'll send out a fancy graphic next week but I wanted to give you the details to ensure your availability. We are excited to return to an in person meeting but will offer a live streaming Teams option for those still on travel restrictions. Please let me know if you plan to attend either in person or virtually.

### **Governor Wants Undisclosed Electric Vehicle Incentive Package Passed During Veto Session**

Crain's Greg Hinz had a great piece this week about the Governor's push for an electric vehicle package during Veto. The package, which legislative leaders in both parties have yet to see, is expected to offer millions in incentives in order to keep Chicago area vehicle manufacturers and woo battery maker Samsung to Bloomington.

Some of the reported incentives include:

- A refundable state income tax credit of 75% or 100% of withholding from workers at electricity manufacturing and supply plants, for up to 15 years. The larger, 100% figure would apply to newly hired workers at a facility located in an “underserved area” of the state.
- A reduction in energy taxes
- Tax credits for construction materials purchased
- Credits for job training
- Zero property tax relief- problematic considering the state’s sky high rates
- You can read Greg’s piece [here](#).

## **HomeField Advantage Heartland Conference**

At the suggestion of Illinois Secretary of Transportation Omer Osman, the Illinois Chamber participated in the HomeField Advantage Heartland Conference. The event took place on Friday, October 15 and boasted over 380 attendees from across the country with most concentrated in the Midwest.

The event was a unique opportunity for the agriculture, transportation, and technology industries to learn from each other. As may have been expected, conversation surrounded topics like automation and the global supply chain.

Ed Mortimer, VP of Transportation & Infrastructure at the US Chamber of Commerce participated in the event. Mortimer said that to alleviate supply chain issues, distribution centers and other transport facilities must be built in the “heart” of the country and the greater Midwest region.

Ryan Endorf, Economist at the US Department for Transportation also spoke on supply chain disruptions. Endorf said that he believes the bottleneck of supply reaching consumers may be easing. Endorf said that the supply chain issues witnessed across the country are “decades in the making” but aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dana Peterson, Chief Strategy Officer of Emerging Prairie has been investigating what autonomous farming technology is currently on the market and echoed the sentiments of other speakers. One example given was that some state DOTs have transitioned to automated mowing technology which offers promise for the future in this space.

One interesting argument from the conference was how remote work can help rural communities. That is, some rural communities may be unable to attract talent due to a variety of reasons including lack of amenities, housing options

or connectedness to other cities. However, if the work allows, a business may be able to bring on strong candidates from across the country who are given the option to work from a larger city.

The event was split into two parts with much of the second half of the day concerning sustainability and emissions reductions through technological innovation. Phil Silver, State and Local Govt. Transportation leader for Amazon participated in the event and spoke on the benefit of new technologies that can reduce carbon emissions.

Concerning sustainability and project funding, the event host said how it is “easy” to invest in infrastructure as the results are easily discernable for many constituents. However, the meaning and results of infrastructure spending are different for younger generations. The speaker implied that new roads and bridges will help all generations, but younger individuals see infrastructure as investments in technology and sustainability. Therefore, the event host urged policy makers and stakeholders to evaluate their messaging on this issue.

Overall, the value of this event lies in its potential forecasting of the future. The conversations held at the conference are a possible glimpse into the future partnerships between state and private stakeholders in these sectors.

## **Other Legislative Updates**

Keep an eye on [SB 1233](#) (Harmon). It’s a Transportation shell bill that is on 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading. Its deadline was recently extended to December. I have yet to hear any concrete plans for this bill, and there are various shells with different titles sitting on third in the Senate, but if they are looking to do something transit wise, this will likely be the vehicle.

## **Articles of Interest**

[Inside Pritzker's push to steer electric vehicle investment to Illinois](#)

[State grants \\$15.4 million for lab space development](#)

[New push to expand Chicago-based passenger rail](#)

[UPS, FedEx, USPS release holiday shipping dates as retailers brace for more supply chain disruption](#)

[Officials break ground for \\$86 million transportation center](#)

Until next time,

Clark

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IL Chamber Infrastructure Council | 215 E Adams St., Springfield, IL 62701

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