



Governor unveils vision for Illinois Innovation Network

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CHICAGO – Governor Bruce Rauner and the University of Illinois System today unveiled plans for an Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) to help ignite the state's economy through a \$1.2 billion network of research universities, businesses, and public

sector partners focused on the development of solutions in computing and big data, advanced materials, food and agriculture, and biosciences and health.



The network will help ensure a knowledge-based, 21st century economy in Illinois where discovery and innovation are the focal points. The plan is to nurture the inventors and entrepreneurs of tomorrow by allowing them to hone their talents in Illinois. The

network will be led by the University of Illinois System, with universities in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield and satellite campuses in Peoria and Rockford. The University of Chicago and Northwestern University will be inaugural partners.

“We anticipate that over time other Illinois state universities as well as world renowned international research universities will join the network to help spread DPI’s impact around the state and around the world,” Governor Rauner said.

The first step in building IIN is the development of the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) with a major facility located in Chicago. Related Midwest, a Chicago-based real estate developer, will donate land south of Roosevelt Road along the Chicago River for the institute.

“The institute will be a center for developing ideas and talent,” Governor Rauner said. “Students will attend the institute, learn and share ideas with world-class faculty, and then return to their campuses to seed and develop their plans.”

“This campus for innovation, anchored by the University of Illinois System, will be a transformative force on the South Side of Chicago and for all of Chicago,” Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. “I look forward to working with the Governor and the many partners involved as we turn this vision into a reality.”

“By facilitating the focused collaboration of our state’s incredible resources, we can deliver a high-powered jolt to the Illinois economy that will accelerate innovation, enterprise, and job creation for the entire state,” the Governor said.

The U of I System expects DPI to house up to 90 faculty and 1,800 students per year when it is fully operational. They will work alongside leading researchers and Illinois businesses to create new technologies and advancements in its areas of study. The idea is to have collaborators advance global solutions to attract both venture capital investment and talent to the state.

“DPI and the IIN will add to the momentum that has been building rapidly in Illinois to create an innovation network at a scale that can massively accelerate progress and economic development,” U of I President Tim Killeen said. “It also will help reverse an outmigration of top graduates to other states, exposing thousands of students to Chicago, its vibrant business community and everything the city has to offer. I am grateful to Governor Rauner for his support and for his confidence in the University of Illinois System to lead this game-changing initiative.”

Chicago is an ideal location for the institute. It is a global destination with deep connections to statewide research and its computing, engineering, manufacturing and

agriculture communities. The city is home to world-class healthcare research through its concentration of academic medical centers.

The U of I System, which recently launched a new capital development program, will lead fundraising efforts with private sector individuals and corporations. Governor Rauner, who said that the institute is referenced in the City of Chicago's bid to win the Amazon HQ2 competition, expects DPI to be financed primarily from private resources though he hopes to convince state and local officials to invest in the program as well.

The U of I System estimates a substantial return on investment including training for about 10,000 student entrepreneurs every five years once DPI reaches full operation, support for more than \$300 million in private real estate investment, and an estimated \$500 million in new annual research and development spending. The System also estimates that the project could stimulate \$4 billion in annual venture capital investment, a level four times higher than Illinois currently enjoys.

“The original research that our scholars and students are pursuing offers profound opportunities for scientific discovery, technological advancement and economic development. As an active partner in the Illinois Innovation Network, the University of Chicago is committed to expanding collaborations across Chicago and Illinois, developing new ideas that benefit our society that will create the next generation of new business ventures,” said University of Chicago President Robert J. Zimmer.

“We’re very pleased to be a partner in this project and we look forward to collaborating with the University of Illinois and the other academic institutions on this important initiative,” said Northwestern University President Morton Schapiro. “Northwestern University and Chicago already are hubs for path-breaking research and innovative technology, and the Discovery Partners Institute will accelerate those activities.”

“This project is exactly what the Illinois economy needs to drive business investment and job creation,” Governor Rauner concluded. “Thanks to the commitment from the University of Illinois System, the partnerships with the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, and Related Midwest’s contribution, we are off to a great start.”