



# **Staunton Receives \$750,000 in ‘IKE’ Disaster Recovery Funds**

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Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Director Warren Ribley announced mid-June that 85 communities throughout the state are receiving funding from the federal “IKE” Disaster Recovery Program to assist with water and sewer improvements and other critical public infrastructure needs. The \$48 million in grants will support long term recovery efforts within Illinois communities that were substantially impacted by storms in 2008 that caused devastation and flooding throughout much of the Midwest.

“We are directing millions of dollars in federal disaster recovery funding to help residents and businesses devastated by the 2008 storms get back on their feet and begin to rebuild,” said Director Ribley. “By taking these steps, we’re continuing the state’s economic recovery and putting in place the building blocks for future economic growth.”

The City of Staunton will use their portion of funds, \$750,000, to replace culverts and storm sewer. Also to widen and grade ditches.

“This will improve an ongoing drainage problem in Ward 2, located on the east side of the tracks,” said Hank Fey, Staunton Public Works Director. “This has been the most affected area after the storms.”

Macoupin County Board Chairman, Andy Manar, met with DCEO Director Warren Ribley to lobby for this grant application, following the grant being submitted by the City. Manar was made aware of the drainage issue back in 2008 when then Mayor Fred Stein held office. The issue was investigated along with County Board Members Larry Lux and Bob Vojas, Nelson Grman and then Staunton Public Works Director.

A second meeting was held with former Mayor John Willmon, Chairman Manar, and Board Members Lux and Vojas. It was under Willmon's term in office that the City applied for the "IKE" funds. Current Staunton Mayor Craig Neuhaus will continue the process to make sure those secured funds are now put to proper use.

"We have several outstanding 'IKE' grants in the County with applications pending at DCEO and I am working to get those awarded to help other communities as well," said Chairman Manar.

Projects approved under the IKE-Public Infrastructure component of the program range from upgrades to water and sewer main lines, improvement to levees, pump stations, restoration of culverts, ditches, installation and/ or replacement of emergency power generators. These projects will help ensure that communities are equipped with the necessary infrastructure to mitigate future disaster-damage to residences and commercial buildings that can negatively impact the economic vitality of a community.

Caption:

*(Left to Right) Alderman Herb Sievers, Alderman Jack Kolkovich, Public Works Director Hank Fey, Mayor Craig Neuhaus, Macoupin County Board Chairman Andy Manar, Alderman Nelson Grman and Alderman Rick Johnson.*