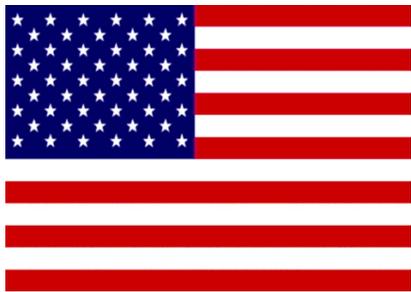


# 2010 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



## DuPage County, Illinois





**DuPage County  
2010 Federal Legislative Agenda**

**County Board Chairman  
Robert J. Schillerstrom  
421 N. County Farm Road  
Wheaton, IL 60187  
(630) 407-6023  
[www.dupageco.org](http://www.dupageco.org)**

**Legislative & Governmental Affairs Committee**

- **James D. Healy - Chairman**
- **Dirk Enger - Vice-Chairman**
- **Jerry “JR” McBride**
- **Michael F. McMahon**
- **Donald E. Puchalski**
- **Brien Sheahan**

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**DISTRICT 2**

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**DISTRICT 4**

**Grant Eckhoff (R) Wheaton  
Jerry “JR” McBride (R) Glen Ellyn  
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**DISTRICT 5**

**James D. Healy (R) Naperville  
Anthony Michelassi (D) Aurora  
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**DISTRICT 6**

**Dirk Enger (D) Winfield  
Linda A. Kurzawa (R) Winfield  
James F. Zay Jr. (R) Carol Stream**



## **DuPage County 2010 Federal Legislative Agenda**

### **Overview**

DuPage County is the second largest county in Illinois, approaching one million residents, and is comprised of 33 municipalities and 9 townships. DuPage is a major employment center for northeastern Illinois, home to over 700,000 jobs as well as 16 colleges, 7 hospitals, 2 federal research facilities, 300 miles of bikeways and 24,000 acres of forest preserve property.

Core county government services include public safety (sheriff & state's attorney), court services (administration of the 18<sup>th</sup> judicial circuit), transportation, health department, stormwater management, convalescent center, community services and animal control.

Currently, the county is experiencing growth and population changes that are redefining DuPage. Few large tracts of land remain undeveloped, resulting in higher densities and redevelopment that are causing new demands on infrastructure, public safety, flood control facilities and transportation services. The population is becoming more diverse and a rapidly growing senior citizen population has increased the need for community services.

DuPage County has changed from a growing suburban county to a mature, urban environment. As a result, county sales tax revenues have slowed to little or no growth while the demand for county services continues to rise, particularly in the areas of health care, the courts, public safety, senior services and mental health care. Declining federal and state funding have also strained local resources, negatively impacting the delivery of services.

Maintaining a high quality of life for all DuPage residents remains the top priority of county government.



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### **Community Services**

**The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – *Monitor*** – CDBG provides over \$4 million annually to DuPage County to support community development initiatives. In recent years, there have been numerous attempts by Congress to revise the current CDBG allocation formula.

To date, four different possible replacement formulas have been developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), all of which significantly reduce DuPage County's allocation (up to 43%). The National Association of Counties (NACO) has urged Congress to create a hold harmless clause as part of any future legislation to re-distribute CDBG funds in order to keep funding for all communities constant.

**Zero Tolerance for Veterans Homelessness Act of 2009 (S 1547) – *Support*** – The legislation expands funding and services to prevent homelessness among veterans. The Act also requires that a comprehensive plan be developed and that HUD and the VA provide more accurate data about the number and needs of homeless veterans. The Department of Veterans' Affairs estimates that more than 200,000 veterans experience homelessness each year.

**"The Calling 2-1-1 Act of 2009" (S 211 & HR 211) – *Support*** – 2-1-1 is a service that currently operates in 37 states that connects callers to essential social service information by dialing 2-1-1. The service typically operates 24 hours per day and providers of this service are required to follow the protocols established by the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). DuPage County's Department of Community Services is already AIRS compliant and would likely operate the system for DuPage or perhaps additional collar counties if 2-1-1 service were to be established in Illinois. The proposed federal Act directs the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to award a grant to each state in order to implement a statewide 2-1-1 telephone service for information and referral on human services.



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Legislation was adopted in 2009 by the General Assembly (Public Act 96-0599) that directs the Illinois Department of Human Services to study and design a statewide system to assure adequate 2-1-1 coverage and to identify the organizations that could provide this service locally (or for a particular region).

**Refugee Support – *New Law*** – Federal law currently allows only 90 days of direct support to refugees. DuPage is one of three counties in Illinois that has refugee resettlement largely due to the location of the organization World Relief. World Relief receives \$900 in federal funds to resettle each refugee. Half of this amount is required to be spent on tangible goods and rent, leaving enough funds to provide case management for only about 90 days - then support is withdrawn. Refugees receive Medicaid, TANF and food stamps for about 8 months; then are expected to be completely self-supporting.

World Relief estimates there are 10,000 people in DuPage who came in as refugees. Although they are usually very successful in becoming self sufficient, the fact that today's refugees are from third world locations such as Burma, Somalia and Darfur makes this acculturation process far more difficult. The current 90 days of direct support was established post World War II and needs to be re-examined and extended.

### **Convalescent Center**

**Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) – *Support*** – An estimated 75% of residents at the DuPage Convalescent Center are currently Medicaid recipients. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus program), Medicaid received a 6.2% FMAP increase until December 31, 2010 that translated into an additional \$23.5 billion in Medicaid funds. Before Christmas, the House acted to extend the increase in FMAP through June of 2011 as part of the federal jobs bill to be considered by the Senate early this year. An extension of these additional monies would ensure that the state's expedited payments continue to flow to the Convalescent Center and that overall Medicaid funding to the center is not reduced.



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### **Stormwater**

**Tronox** – County staff continues to work with the County’s Congressional Delegation and lobbyists to identify sources of funding to complete Reaches 7 and 8 of the Kerr-McGee/Tronox clean-up project in partnership with the Forest Preserve, Cities of West Chicago and Warrenville and the West Chicago Park District.

**Water Resources Development Authorization (WRDA) Requests** – In November of 2009, the County’s Congressional Delegation requested a list of potential WRDA projects (limited to projects that have been included previously in an Army Corp of Engineer Study area). Based on the criteria set forth, the County submitted 2 projects for consideration, both located in Rep. Roskam’s Congressional District:

- Lowering the Meacham Grove Reservoir labyrinth weir by one foot and improving the drainage way into this reservoir. The reservoir and adjacent wetland area provide a valuable 575 acre-feet of storm water storage for the Springbrook watershed. Cost – \$700,000 and;
- The stabilization of stream banks in Bloomingdale, Wood Dale, and Elmhurst. The stabilization of these steeply eroded and unstable banks would alleviate the flood damage created by loss of vegetation in addition to the current blockages caused by excessive sediment in the reservoir and pump areas. Cost – \$1.7 million

Rep. Roskam requested *authorization* funding for both County requests in December. After the authorization bill is adopted, a subsequent appropriations bill containing the actual construction funds will be considered later in the year.



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### **Transportation**

**Transportation Reauthorization Bill** – Although the current federal surface transportation program expired last September, the House acted before Christmas to extend the program until September 2010. Congress has delayed considering a multi-year authorization bill largely due to the fact that a revenue source has yet to be identified to support a new federal transportation program. Gas tax revenues that have supported previous national highway programs are declining and cannot support the anticipated cost of a new reauthorization bill.

Per the request of the County's Congressional Delegation, High Priority Projects (HPP) requests have been submitted for each congressional district in preparation for debate on this issue by Congress:

#### **Congressman Roskam**

- **\$775,000 for additional ramps and expansion of the I-290/Thorndale Interchange.** Thorndale Ave. is a strategic regional arterial route that carries in excess of 50,000 vehicles per day. These dollars would construct an additional collector-distributor lane in the westbound direction and would provide improved safety of those entering and exiting the expressway. This project is strongly supported by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and has received nearly 90% of the total funds necessary through previous federal authorizations.
- **\$10 million for IL Route 19 and York Road intersection and grade separation improvements including gateway enhancement in south Bensenville.** This intersection has been identified by IDOT as a High Accident Location (HAL), and significant congestion and delays are caused at this grade crossing. It is estimated that travelers endure between three and a half to four hours of delays at this one location on an average day.



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The City of Bensenville has strongly supported these improvements since 2005 when initial public forums were held. The congestion at this intersection is a major concern for area residents and local industry seeking access to O'Hare International Airport.

### **Congresswoman Biggert**

- **\$5 million for 75<sup>th</sup> St. from Woodward Ave. to Lyman Ave. (including the Lemont Rd. intersection):** These dollars would widen and resurface 75<sup>th</sup> St. to provide 3-through lanes in each direction, intersection improvements, signal modernization and construction of a bike path.

### **Congressman Foster**

- **\$4.3 million – for land acquisition for a grade separation at Illinois Route 38 (Roosevelt Rd.) & Kautz Rd.: Revised Request:** With passage of a capital bill by the Illinois General Assembly in 2009, \$33 million in construction funding for this project was awarded. **The county's revised request – \$4.3 million,** is for land acquisition. The project includes construction of a new bridge to carry IL Route 38 traffic over the Union Pacific Railroad and to realign/reconstruct this intersection. This project is also part of the CREATE Program.
- **\$11.7 million for Fabyan Parkway:** Dollars would add lanes along Fabyan Parkway from the Kane/DuPage County line east to IL Route 38 (Roosevelt Rd.), including an intersection improvement at Fabyan and IL 38.
- **\$400,000 for the DuPage Technology Corridor Trail:** This proposed off-road trail would link the DuPage Technology Park Trail to the Roosevelt Rd./Kautz overpass (being engineered separately), providing the missing segment to connect to the Illinois Prairie Path Geneva Spur.

**Metra Star Line – Support** – DuPage County supports Congressman Roskam's efforts to secure authorization for the Metra STAR line proposal. The



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STAR line creates a long-needed alternative to the automobile for nearly 1.2 million employees who commute to work at area businesses. By linking nearly 100 communities in the southwest, west, and northwest suburban regions of Northeast Illinois, the STAR line would fill a critical void for inter-suburban commuter rail service.

**Surface Transportation Board – *Support*** – DuPage County supports federal legislation that would consider the effect on the public interest including the safety and environmental effect, of a proposed merger on local communities. HR 3410, the Taking Responsible Action for Community Safety Act, revises requirements with respect to the consolidation, merger or acquisition of control involving rail carriers, to require public hearings in the affected communities if public hearings on a proposed transaction are held.

### **Economic Development**

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization – *Monitor*** – Congress continues to work on legislation to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 that was originally scheduled for reauthorization in 2003. WIA created a locally integrated “One Stop” delivery system to provide job training, employment services and education programs designed to meet local industry demands. With the administration’s current emphasis on job creation, it is likely that this legislation will finally move forward once the health care debate is resolved.

In Fiscal Year 2009, DuPage County received \$4.6 million under WIA to provide workforce services and training to low income adults, youth and dislocated workers. Services include occupational skill training, job search assistance, math and reading skill enhancement and work readiness training. In addition, dollars were allocated to DuPage County businesses to support job training for their current workforce to ensure our local companies remain productive and competitive. A number of reauthorization proposals are being considered including several that would significantly reduce funding to counties



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in favor of greater regional (Cook County) and state control. DuPage County opposes the creation of regional centers that remove local control and flexibility over the use of WIA dollars and eliminate the current structure of business led workforce boards (key private sector involvement) so critical to the effectiveness of local programs (see attached information sheet).

### **Intergovernmental**

**Restore the Partnership Act of 2009 (HR 3332) – *Support*** – This bill would establish the National Commission on Intergovernmental Relations to facilitate the fullest cooperation and coordination between all levels of government. One of NACO’s top priorities for 2010, the bill was introduced in July 2009.

### **Finance**

**Earmark/Member Initiative Requests** – (Will be forwarded to Congressional offices under separate cover.)

**Tax – Exempt Pension Bonds – *New Law*** – By law DuPage County participates in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) pension program. In 2008, IMRF pension losses resulting from the financial markets crash exceeded 30%, with County unfunded liabilities more than doubling to \$81.4 million. Statutorily, these losses must be made up by the County, as employer. IMRF analysis would indicate that this will require approximately a 73% increase in pension costs between 2010 and 2015. County pension pay-in, including the Health Department, would grow almost \$13 million to \$34.9 million. Such a high level and amount of this increase, especially when combined with anticipated health insurance growth, may be too great to absorb by natural revenue growth, creating significant operational problems.

Bond financing has sometimes been used for purposes of meeting pension costs, but have not been tax-exempt, and have sold at relatively high rates. Tax-exempt bonds would be significantly cheaper (4-5% compared to 7-8% for taxables). This may provide a substantially cheaper alternative for DuPage and other governmental entities to eliminate or reduce their unfunded liability cost



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pressures versus eliminating programs or reducing the county's workforce just to meet pension obligations. Tax-exempt pension bonds would require federal legislative and/or regulatory change. Legislation should allow qualifying governmental entities a limited time option to issue tax-exempt pension bonds for the sole purpose of eliminating or reducing unfunded pension liabilities. Pension bonds for discretionary purposes such as early retirement financing would not be eligible. Another option would be to expand the Build America Bond or Recovery Zone bond programs to include these limited purpose pension bonds.

**3% Withholding Repeal – Support** – Legislation was adopted by Congress in 2005 (Section 511 of P.L. 109-222) that mandates federal, state and larger units of local government to withhold 3% from payments for goods and services. The law, scheduled to take effect in 2011, essentially makes counties a tax collector for the federal government and as a consequence, government agencies may see the cost for goods and services increase as firms seek to offset the impact of the 3% withholding mandate. This could put the withholding unit (DuPage County) at a competitive disadvantage against smaller governmental units or against private enterprise that do not have to withhold the 3%. NACO is supporting legislation (HR 275/S 292) to repeal this section of the law.

**Extension of Recovery Bonds – Support** – The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 authorized the use of two new types of tax preferred bonds to spur job creation that may be issued by state and local governments for areas designated as "Recovery Zones." DuPage County was allocated in June 2009 \$46 million for Economic Development Bonds and \$69 million for facility bonds. Recovery Zone Bonds of either variety must be issued however prior to January 1, 2011. Many units of local government including DuPage are monitoring the current economic situation before committing large resources to launch capital programs. It is therefore likely that significant allocations will not be used if the current deadline is not extended for at least one year to permit sufficient time for both governmental and private sector entities to take advantage of these bond programs.