

"U. Illinois: Illinois Gov. Blagojevich endorses \$5.2 million plan to fight meth"

5/23/07- U-WIRE (Champaign, IL)

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. -- Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich announced Tuesday that 64 counties throughout Illinois will receive a combined \$5.2 million to help fight drug crimes. The funding will be distributed to 28 narcotics enforcement and narcotics prosecution units.

The money will be used to conduct undercover drug operations, crack down on methamphetamine labs and in the prosecution of drug offenders.

"Everyday, law enforcement officers fight hard to keep drugs off our streets," Blagojevich said in a press release. "Methamphetamines and other illegal drugs destroy lives and decimate communities. We must use every resource to fight the production, distribution and use of these drugs.

"These funds will help us strengthen the fight against illegal drugs in dozens of counties throughout the state."

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority will administer \$2.8 million in federal Justice Assistant Grant funds to 20 multi-jurisdictional narcotics units, or drug task forces, throughout the state. Of those receiving grants, the State's Attorney's Appellate Prosecutor, which includes Champaign County, is receiving \$440,486.

Eight prosecution units will also receive \$2.5 million in Justice Assistant Grants to help fund narcotics related prosecutions.

"For the past 16 years, these multi-jurisdictional narcotics enforcement units have successfully fought drug crimes across the state," Authority Executive Director Lori G. Levin said in the release. "We support their efforts and those of the prosecution units in stemming the illicit trade in drugs that continues to plague our communities."

Narcotics enforcement units create area specific strategies to address drug issues facing the counties in its their jurisdiction. Meth is a central focus for many of the units in central and southern Illinois, while marijuana, heroin, cocaine and other designer drugs are more prominent in northern counties.