



Sick of ‘construction season’? It turbocharges Metro East growth

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There’s a popular saying that Illinois has two seasons: construction and winter. As productive building season winds down, it’s a good time to reflect on the true value of infrastructure investment and appreciate that summer slowdowns have put Illinois on the fast track to economic growth.

A recent analysis of Rebuild Illinois, the historic public infrastructure program enacted in 2019, illuminates the benefits across the state and throughout the Metro East. The study, commissioned by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois, examined transportation investments made between 2020 and 2025. In those six years, \$2.6 billion was invested in the Metro East area. Importantly, the study found that every dollar invested generated an additional \$1.45 in economic activity — a nearly 150% return.

Those benefits reach far beyond the engineering and construction industries.

Rebuild Illinois created or preserved approximately 39,200 jobs annually and for the Metro East region alone nearly 3,000 jobs were created or retained. About 21,600 were directly connected to construction, including skilled tradespeople, engineers and other professionals. In addition, our study found that nearly 17,600 more jobs were supported outside the construction industry through supply-chain purchases and the spending of workers whose incomes were supported by these projects. That includes spending on retail, professional and business services, health care, financial services, and leisure and hospitality.

When Illinois invests in transportation infrastructure, it creates economic activity that reaches far beyond the project itself. Suppliers receive new orders, businesses expand their workforce, and workers spend their wages in communities across the state. As a result, economic growth occurs at nearly every level.

That means infrastructure investment does not end when construction begins or even when a project is completed. It continues to circulate through the economy, generating lasting benefits for Illinois residents and businesses. Together, we’re building a brighter future for all.

Consider the impact on local governments. Rebuild Illinois resulted in additional funds for counties, municipalities and townships. As a result, communities have been able to move forward with billions of dollars in projects that might otherwise have remained on hold due to funding constraints.

The broader economic activity generated by the program also produced substantial tax revenue for local governments, generating roughly \$7.3 million in additional funding in the Metro East region to support vital programs communities rely on.

For the Metro East, transportation infrastructure plays a vital role in connecting our rural communities to metro suburban areas. Better infrastructure expands access to jobs, connects consumers with local businesses, supports new commercial development, and encourages private investment. At the same time, it strengthens the local tax base and helps communities address aging roads and bridges before conditions worsen and repair costs escalate.

Rebuild Illinois has delivered meaningful progress statewide, helping repair more than 21,000 miles of roadway, rehabilitate or replace more than 800 bridges and complete nearly 1,200 safety improvements.

However, Illinois cannot look at measurable success and rest on its laurels. We must continue to prioritize investments in transportation infrastructure to maintain and improve the vast network of roads, bridges and waterways that power our economy.

Our study results show there has been progress in the Metro East area with measure improvements resulting in smoother roads and stronger bridges, as well as the creation of new jobs, stronger local businesses, additional municipal revenue and more resilient communities.

So, the next time it feels like the construction season is never-ending, know that the economic progress and positive regional effects from the investment in infrastructure is paying dividends across Illinois and in the Metro East.

