



Illinois Department of Transportation

SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Traffic Safety
Relocation from Springfield to Southern Illinois

July 2008



**DTS Geographical Relocation
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Introduction

Governor Blagojevich has focused on improving the local economies all over Illinois with special emphasis on areas that lag the remainder of the State in economic activity, including jobs. As a result, IDOT has decided to pursue a relocation of the Division of Traffic Safety from Springfield, Illinois to the Southern Illinois region.

Description of Project

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Division of Traffic Safety (DTS) Space Needs Assessment project was undertaken to meet the needs of the DTS when relocating their employees during the relocation initiative. A discreet assessment of DTS's space revealed that the division would need approximately 30,000 – 35,000 SQ FT of office space when utilizing CMS' (Central Management Services) standardized office configuration.

Armed with the goals of the project and the office space needs, the Space Needs Assessment team researched properties available in the I-57 corridor south of Mt. Vernon to identify suitable sites. Please note, the Space Needs Assessment Team was kept to a minimum to reduce the probability of property owners inflating purchase prices.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the Space Needs Assessment project was to determine a physical site to meet the following goals:

- Identify a location where IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety relocation could significantly improve the economic environment of the local area
- Locate an existing structure to purchase that was economically feasible
 - o Capable of housing the DTS employees and support functions
 - o Ready access to major roadways
 - o Adequate parking
 - o Minimum renovations
- Locate a community capable of supporting approximately 140 additional families
 - o Consider utility capacity
 - o School capacity
 - o Commercial capability



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Sites Considered:

The following sites were visited during the months of May and June. Each site was preceded with one or more phone calls to gather information regarding the sites availability, square footage, approximate costs, etc.

1. Mid-year 2007 – made first visit to southern Illinois to search for possible sites.
2. We identified a site in West City, Illinois (on the west side of Interstate 57 across from Benton, IL) as a possible location. The site was a former Big John's space that was part of an existing strip mall. Signs identified the site as available and owned by The Bromont Group. They were contacted anonymously to inquire the asking price. We were told the property was available and the asking price was in the range of \$2,300,000.



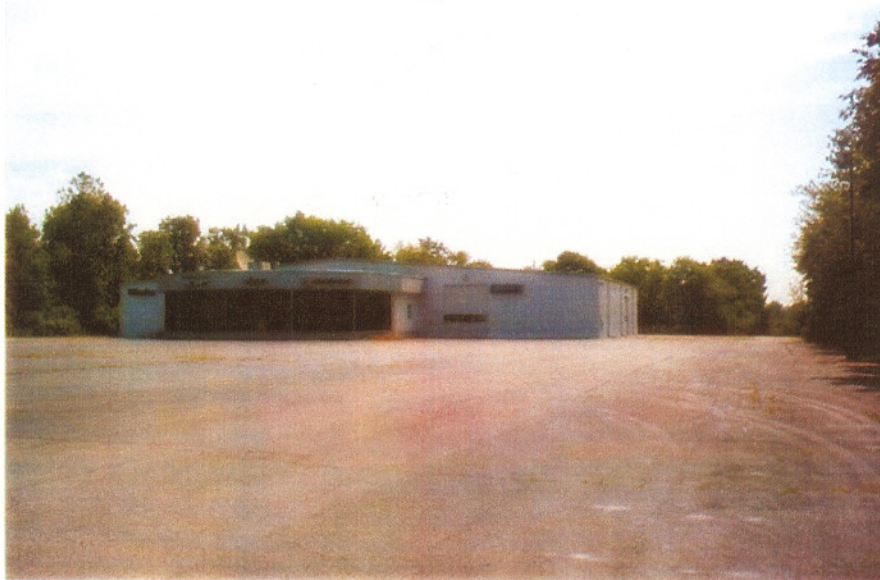
3. After the official announcement of the planned move of Traffic Safety in May the first official contact was made with the owner's agent for the facility in West City. A "Confidentiality Agreement" was signed with Jones Lang LaSalle (the agent for the owner) on May, 6th, 2008 to allow for negotiations of a purchase price. Charles Owen was the contact for Jones Lang LaSalle. At that time it was found that ownership had changed from The Bromont Group to General Electric Capital.

An appraisal was done for the property by IDOT and it showed an approximate value of \$1,750,000. During the last week of May and the first week of June, IDOT negotiated with the owner's agent in earnest. On June 6th, an impasse was reached and a reasonable price could not to be negotiated.



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4. During the week of June 9th, a representative from IDOT visited numerous sites in the region to look at other options. The following sites were visited and the team later considered:
 - a. Vacant auto dealership in Benton – old building that required an addition and extensive remodeling.



- b. An old Christian school in Johnson City – pole barn construction, not well suited for office use.



- c. The old Maytag plant in Herrin – old facility, designed for manufacturing and did not provide adequate office space.



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- d. The old Marion City Hospital – asbestos issues, to large and cut-up.
- e. Closed Wal-Mart in Marion – 118,000 s.f. - to large and expensive.



- f. The former Blue Cross/Blue Shield Building – old building in need of extensive repairs. This building was beyond its useful life.
- g. Southeastern Illinois College Foundation Building (Harrisburg) – the second last building visited and ultimately the one that was determined to be the best value and building.





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Summary

On June 27, 2008 Governor Blagojevich announced the relocation of the Division of Traffic Safety to the Southeastern Illinois Community College Building in Harrisburg, Illinois. In doing so, IDOT can take advantage of a facility with a low costs per square foot and provide sorely needed jobs to an area long ignored by many State policymakers.