



**ILLINOIS STATE
BLACK CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE, INC.**

Dedicated to
Economic Independence

Officers

Chairman of the Board – Ms. Beatrice Tayui, International Business Consultant

President/CEO – Mr. Larry D. Ivory, Business Consultant

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Rev. Leroy Davis, Pastor Word of Faith Christian Center

Mr. Armando Demarcos, President Champaign Black Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Tammy Miller, Galesburg Black Chamber of Commerce

January 12, 2009

**Mr. Joseph P. Clary
Director
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
300 West Adams St.
Chicago Illinois 60606**

The Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce (ILBCC) is dedicated to economically empowering and sustaining African-American communities through entrepreneurship and capitalistic activity within the state of Illinois and via interaction with the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

The ILBCC currently has over twenty (20) chambers located throughout the state. The geographic area represented by these various chambers encompasses over 58,000 African-American businesses.

As Illinois' leading association of African-American businesses ranging from small enterprises to thriving global organizations, our membership recognizes that reliable freight rail in Northeastern Illinois is critical to business development and business growth throughout the state. With Chicago moving nearly one-third of all US freight rail traffic and experiencing delays that back up freight in excess of 36 hours, modernizing Chicago's freight rail transportation system is crucial to all Illinois businesses and our ability to create and keep jobs in Illinois.

If Illinois intends to remain as the nation's transportation leader, we're confident that our small and mid-size member businesses can take advantage of the commercial opportunities presented by a thriving business climate.

Illinois has 1,001,185 small businesses of those 280,373 have employees. We can certainly play a significant role of incorporating more underutilized Black businesses. Working with our partners, we will be able to increase participation of black business.

Board Members

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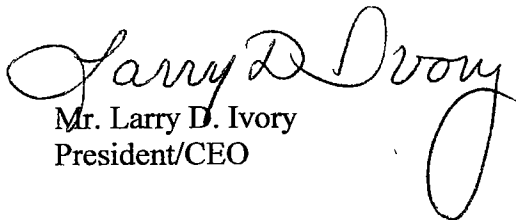
*Mr. Grady Norwood,
President Lawndale
Black Chamber or
Commerce*

Illinois is taking bold steps to address much-needed infrastructure improvements as a charter member of a public-private partnership of federal and local government agencies, along with the national railroads to modernize the Chicago area rail system. This partnership founded the CREATE program to reduce passenger rail, freight rail and highway-rail grade crossing congestion. Improvements include additional tracks, improved connections, improved control systems, rail-over-rail grade separations, and highway-rail grade separations.

Of the seventy-eight CREATE projects, thirty-nine are expected to be in the design or construction phase by the end of 2009. However, much more remains to be done. Without additional funding from US Congress and the Illinois State Legislature, the CREATE program may not be completed, and freight chokepoints in and through Chicago may thwart the economic vitality of the region; limit Chicago's competitiveness with other freight rail communities dependent on intermodal transportation; and adversely affect business development, jobs, and overall quality of life in the region.

The Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce is a strong advocate for CREATE and infrastructure improvements throughout the US that modernizes our aging freight rail infrastructure and lessens shipping delays. We, support CREATE and its efforts to decrease the time and cost of moving goods across America and to points beyond.

Sincerely,



Mr. Larry D. Ivory
President/CEO