

# **Sen. Plummer's Week-in-Review: Feb. 3-7**

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VANDALIA- During the week, the first \$50 million of the \$420 million dedicated to statewide broadband Internet expansion was released along with information to apply for this grant.

Also, a recently filed piece of legislation seeks to repeal the outdated Firearm Owners



Identification Act.

Tax season is here and the Illinois Department of Revenue is reminding taxpayers to take full advantage of the Illinois and Federal Earned Income Tax Credit. Aiming to showcase the wide range of items made in Illinois, the Illinois Manufacturers Association (IMA) is hosting a contest to pick the “coolest thing made in Illinois.”

## **Legislation eliminates FOID card**

Those wanting to purchase firearms would no longer need to possess a FOID card under legislation filed recently. Senate Bill 2535 would repeal the Firearm Owners Identification (FOID) Act, which supporters of the bill say is outdated and redundant.

“The reality is, the requirement of FOID cards was a bureaucratic push to make it harder for Illinois residents to exercise their Second Amendment rights,” said State Senator Jason Plummer (R-Edwardsville). “We should be seeking ways to prevent criminals from accessing firearms, not adding to the red tape, costs and hurdles placed on law-abiding gun owners.”

The FOID Act was created in 1968 as a way to identify people who were eligible to own firearms as part of a public-safety initiative in Illinois to meet the requirements of the federal Gun Control Act of 1968. However, with updated technology allowing for the use of instant background checks, the bill’s sponsors say the FOID card serves no real purpose.

While Senate Bill 2535 would eliminate the need for a person to own a FOID card, it would not change any of the other requirements for purchasing a firearm. Those who buy a firearm would still need to undergo strict federal background checks at the time of purchase.

## **First round of funding in statewide broadband expansion announced**

On Jan. 5, it was announced that \$50 million in funding is being released for the first round of matching grants of Illinois’ \$420 million statewide broadband expansion. Applicants for the grant are anticipated to include Internet service providers, rural cooperatives, nonprofits and local governments.

Grant responses for the first round of funding can be submitted through April 3, with up to \$5 million available per project. Interested applicants can find more information about the Notice of Funding Opportunity at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/AboutDCEO/GATA/Pages/2366-1333.aspx>.

The Rebuild Illinois capital plan has slotted \$420 million toward broadband expansion — \$400 million for the grant program and \$20 million to strengthen the Illinois Century Network. The matching requirements in the grant program will leverage state funds to attract at least an additional \$400 million from Internet service providers.

## **Illinois reminds taxpayers to take advantage of Earned Income Tax Credit**

Tax season has begun as federal and state W-2 forms arrive in the mail, but according to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR), thousands of eligible taxpayers fail to claim both the Illinois Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

IDOR acting Director David Harris says those taxpayers are missing out on thousands of dollars.

Anyone eligible for the federal EITC automatically qualifies for the Illinois EIC, which is a refundable tax credit worth up to 18 percent of a taxpayer's federal claim. However, IDOR says nearly 20,000 Illinoisans claimed a federal EITC credit without also claiming the state EIC, leaving more than \$5 million unclaimed.

To be eligible for the tax credit programs, taxpayers must meet certain income and residency qualifications and file a tax return, even if they do not owe any tax or are not required to file. To find out if your family qualifies for the credit, visit the Internal Revenue Service's [EITC Assistant](#).

## **Group wants you to pick coolest things made in Illinois**

In addition to filling in college basketball brackets, Illinoisans can pick winners for another March tournament that will determine the “coolest thing made in Illinois.”

IMA President and CEO Mark Denzler wants to showcase the wide range of items made in the state. He said most people don't realize what all is made in Illinois.

Manufacturing accounts for 12 percent of Illinois' gross domestic product and a \$304 billion economic output — the largest of any industry in the state, according to the IMA. More than 592,000 people are employed in the industry.

“We have to attract the next generation of workers to Illinois,” Denzler said. “By showing the products and companies that are here, hopefully we can also help provide that next pipeline of workers.”