

UCCI



# Legislative NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
UNITED COUNTIES COUNCIL OF ILLINOIS

## MESSAGE from the PRESIDENT

As we shift into high gear to work with newly elected Governor Pritzker and Members of the 101st Session of the Illinois General Assembly, it is important that our very purpose in service to our members is realized. UCCI has always undertaken the task of providing the necessary tools that allow local county boards to serve their constituents.

We have in the past and will continue to be that resource you can turn to when you need clarification on statutory language and its applicability to your specific circumstances. By working with your local state's attorney, we provide those answers... and, in a very timely manner.

If an existing statute fails to address a specific issue, our staff and our attorneys are in the Capitol working with the Governor's staff, the leaders of the House and Senate, the rank-and-file members of the Illinois General Assembly, and those parties who may not embrace our position. Our legislative team is experienced and focused on the needs of our county members. Their purpose is to assist you.

As the laws and rules change on how to address local issues and how to assure compliance with the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act and the Local Records Act; the UCCI staff and the law firms of Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes and O'Halloran, Kosoff, Geitner & Cook are conducting education seminars

at various locations across the state. These programs are offered at no expense to our members and afford you the opportunity to participate in the discussions that will assist you in your home county settings.

Are we proud of our legal assistance programs, our outreach and education seminars, and our legislative involvement... Absolutely! We have always embraced the philosophy that if we focus on achieving the results requested by our members, then the foundation of UCCI will remain strong.

Our local government insurance coverage program, ICRMT ... Illinois Counties Risk Management Trust, was once just a fledgling concept started over 30 years ago. Today, it is one of the premiere programs to provide the coverages that meet your needs at home.

It is because of your membership and your participation in our insurance sponsored programs that new doors can be opened and expanded. In 2019, UCCI assisted over 60 Illinois counties in joining the National Association of Counties. This new relationship is very promising, and hopefully will continue in the coming years.

Thus, as we go forward in 2019, I would like to thank you for your service and participation in UCCI. We will continue to provide you updates of our activities, as we provide weekly electronic reports and monthly printed issues in our newsletter, UCCI Legislative NEWS.

*On behalf of your Executive Committee*

**David Meyer,**  
PRESIDENT

## MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

### East-West Gateway Board of Directors Names Kern Chairman for 2019

*Posted on February 4, 2019 By AuthorBlog*



Mark Kern, St. Clair County Board Chairman, is the new chairman for the East-West Gateway Council of Governments Board of Directors.

The board approved Kern's appointment at its Jan. 30 meeting, and he will serve as the chairman for the remainder of 2019. St. Charles County Executive Steve Ehlmann will serve as vice chairman of the board. Robert Elmore, chairman of the Monroe County Board of Commissioners, will continue as the second vice chairman.

The board chairman for St. Clair County since 2004, Kern previously served as alderman and then mayor of Belleville, Illinois. In addition to his political career, he is the president of Belleville Mechanical, Inc., a commercial heating and cooling business he founded in 1995. Kern was born and raised in Belleville. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Milliken University and received Juris Doctorate and Master of Business Administration degrees from Washington University.

East-West Gateway also welcomed two new members to its board of directors—Franklin

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**

# Budget Overview

by Linda Baker

*On Wednesday, February 20, 2019, newly inaugurated Governor J.B. Pritzker gave his first major policy speech to the Illinois General Assembly and the residents of Illinois in his first annual budget address. The Governor began by announcing a balanced budget, projected at \$38.748 billion in General Revenue funds. With the state government carrying a \$3.2 billion deficit and a \$15 billion backlog of unpaid bills, the Governor's efforts to put the state's fiscal house in order will require more than a single year of balanced budgets.*

The Governor asked legislators for bipartisan support in addressing the need for identifying cuts, restraining spending and enhanced revenue. To raise the needed revenue, the Governor reaffirmed his commitment to a progressive income tax rather than the current flat tax structure currently in place. To enact this, the Governor would need legislators to vote to put the measure before voters, with the earliest possible option being the November 2020 ballot. In addition to his progressive income tax proposal, Governor Pritzker discussed other options to decrease the budget deficit.

One option required cutting government expenditures without a change in current income taxes, thereby necessitating identification of a minimum of fifteen percent in spending cuts for all discretionary spending. An alternative would be to raise new revenue by increasing the income tax based on the flat tax, but adding taxes on services, currently the fastest growing segment of the IL economy, and retirement income. The Governor pointed out, however, that this route would lead to an additional \$1000 in each family's tax burden, disproportionately affecting those least able to pay. The unpalatable nature of either option made the third alternative, his progressive income tax proposal, the most viable option.

## **PRITZKER PROCEEDED TO IDENTIFY HIS ADMINISTRATION'S LONG-TERM PRIORITIES:**

- Putting the state government on sound economic and budgetary footing
- Strengthening the social safety net
- Developing an accessible, world class education system to create a highly skilled workforce
- Criminal justice reform
- Public safety

- Maintaining and expanding Illinois' infrastructure
- Enhancing the state's competitiveness in the global economy

To accomplish these goals, the governor is proposing limiting spending increases in the FY2020 budget to the areas of education, human services and public safety. His spending plan includes increases of \$375 million for evidence-based funding, \$5 million for career and technical education, \$55 million for public universities and \$13.9 million for community colleges. MAP grant funding will be increased by \$50 million to provide funding to an estimated additional 15,000 students, along with \$35 million in merit-based funding for the AIM High scholarship program for those attending the state's public universities.

Increases in human services funding include a proposal for an additional \$390 million for Medicaid, along with funding for nineteen additional staff to improve Medicaid compliance and recovery. Funding for these increases will come from cigarette and e-cigarette tax revenues.

In addition to the sources identified above, the Governor also proposed new revenue sources in the short term, including \$175 million from the Delinquent Tax Payment Incentive Program, \$212 million in taxes and fees from sports betting, and \$170 million in taxes and fees from the legalization of recreational cannabis. Significantly, the MCO Assessment is expected to generate \$390 million in revenue. Decoupling the federal tax credit for repatriated corporate income is anticipated to yield an extra \$94 million, along with smaller revenue streams generated by a 5-cent statewide tax on plastic bags, \$10 million from the taxation of e-cigarettes and \$55 million from another tax increase on cigarettes.

In addition to tax increases, some changes to the tax structure are also anticipated

to yield increased revenues, including \$6 million from the phasing out of the private school scholarship tax credit, \$89 million from progressive changes to the tax structure for video gaming, and a cap on the retailers sales tax collection discount, yielding \$75 million.

In total, education spending, the largest budgetary item is budgeted at \$10.8 billion. Medicaid and healthcare spending is set at \$7.2 billion, followed closely by human services spending at \$6.4 billion. To address the state's ongoing pensions funding shortfall, the Governor proposes \$7.1 billion. Government services are set at \$3.4 billion. Public safety spending is set at \$1.8 billion, while spending on environment and cultural items is at \$59 million and \$56 million is budgeted for economic development funding.

There will be some additional spending on items that will also yield economic stimulus. While details are not available as of yet, Governor Pritzker did commit to introducing a capital bill for much-needed infrastructure during the current General Assembly session to develop a revitalization plan for downstate Illinois and increased opportunities for minority-owned businesses. In addition, there will be \$600 million and \$150 million programmed for deferred maintenance of state and higher education facilities, respectively, and \$20 million to further the statewide deployment of broadband internet infrastructure.

## **MEMBERS ON THE MOVE CONTINUED**

County Presiding Commissioner Tim Brinker and Jefferson County Executive Dennis Gannon, both of whom were recently elected to their positions.

The East-West Gateway Board of Directors has 24 voting members, including the mayor of the city of St. Louis, and the top elected officials of the surrounding seven counties. There are five non-voting members on the board in addition to the 24 voting members. The East-West Gateway region consists of the city of St. Louis, and Franklin, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties in Missouri, and Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties in Illinois.