



1616 P Street, NW Suite 210
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 232-1616
www.goodjobsfirst.org

For Release October 29, 2014

Contact: Greg LeRoy 202-232-1616 x 211 or goodjobs@goodjobsfirst.org or cell 202-494-0888

Local Contact: Mike Matejka 309-208-1120 or matejka53@aol.com

Study: Normal's Uptown Station Helped Spur Illinois' Construction-Job Recovery

The building of Normal, Illinois' Uptown Station created 140,000 hours of work for construction workers in at least 13 different crafts, who were then suffering the highest unemployment rates of their careers. The station connects Amtrak, local transit, intercity buses, bicycling, autos and pedestrians. Even before high-speed rail service arrives, the attractive new station has become Amtrak's second-busiest in Illinois and fourth-busiest in the entire Midwest. The \$49 million project was supported by a \$22 million Transportation Infrastructure Generating Employment Recovery (TIGER) grant, part of the federal stimulus.

Unlike road-building projects where three crafts tend to receive the bulk of the work-hours, Normal's Uptown Station also created work for ironworkers, electricians, bricklayers, plumbers, sprinkler fitters, and sheet metal workers. Private spinoff development anchored by the transit center, totaling \$220 million, is already revitalizing Uptown Normal. It's a best-practice model of long-range neighborhood planning focused around transit investments.

Those are the key findings of a study released today by Good Jobs First, a non-profit, non-partisan group based in Washington, DC that promotes smart growth for working families. It is online at www.goodjobsfirst.org.

"The Uptown revitalization plan has been greatly successful in providing an increased quality of life for all residents. The transportation center created hundreds of jobs during its two-year construction period and continues to create jobs within the community. The current 30+ million-dollar hotel and residential project has also created good construction jobs for the hardworking men and women of our community," said Normal Mayor Chris Koos.

"The Uptown Station was a perfect partnership: the federal government, the State of Illinois, the Town of Normal, local contractors and local unions delivering a high-quality facility on time and on budget," said Rich Veitengruber, president of the Livingston and McLean Counties Building and Construction Trades Council.

"The success of Normal's Uptown Station show how urban redevelopment focused around public investments in multimodal transportation hubs can be a boon to diverse job creation, rebuilding our downtowns," said Greg LeRoy, executive director of Good Jobs First.

“A modest federal investment in a long-planned turnaround is triggering many times more private dollars, creating construction jobs and making a great new place to live and work,” said Thomas Cafcas, primary author of the study. “Uptown Normal should serve as a model on how small- and medium-sized cities can rekindle excitement around Main Street America.”

The study, funded by the Ford Foundation, is the second in a series examining TIGER grant-supported projects. See the first study, about the Union Depot in St. Paul, also at www.goodjobsfirst.org .