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Preckwinkle touts county's business resources at suburban event

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By Katlyn Smith

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle told a suburban audience Tuesday county officials are creating "an arsenal of tools and incentives" for businesses.

"We want to be able to serve people across the county," Preckwinkle told nearly 90 members from Northwest suburban chambers of commerce. "We need you to ask for help."



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Hoping to link business owners with county resources, Preckwinkle touted an agency unveiled in 2011 to bring a more efficient, regional approach to economic growth.

Last year, the county's Bureau of Economic Development recommended 57 tax incentive applications, up from 45 in 2011, Preckwinkle said.

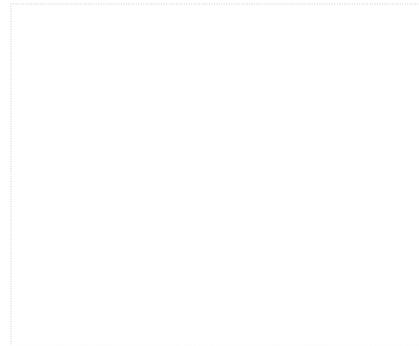
Supporting companies in Cook County, home to more than half of the region's jobs, pays off for the entire area, she said.

"Because of our position in the region, we know that strategic investments locally can have significant impacts regionally," Preckwinkle said.

She also called for the same regional view as the county develops the first long-range transportation plan in 70 years. The county will use the study, expected to take 18 months, to secure funding for projects, Preckwinkle said.

As part of the blueprint, she embraced an expansion of Metra's commuter lines to

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connect north and south suburbs, drawing praise from business leaders.

Arlington Heights Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jon Ridler said bolstering public transit would lure

Chicago shoppers and their wallets.

"If we can really reach those consumers to experience what we have out here, even on a dining or entertainment experience, then they also see there's job opportunities out here in the suburbs," Ridler said.

The breakfast was hosted by Arlington Heights, Barrington Area, Buffalo Grove-Lincolnshire, Des Plaines, Hanover Park, Hoffman Estates, Mount Prospect, Palatine Area, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg and Wheeling-Prospect Heights Area chambers.

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