



# NEWS

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From the Illinois Senate

*State Senator Dave Koehler*

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Further information:  
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**Koehler legislation to allow Peoria County the opportunity to raise funds needed for Peoria Riverfront Museum; Bel-Wood Nursing Home**

**SPRINGFIELD** – State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) has passed a bill in the Illinois Senate to allow Peoria County the opportunity to try to secure the \$30 million in public funds needed for the completion of the Peoria Riverfront Museum. The legislation also would allow the county the chance to raise needed funds for the renovation or rebuilding of the Bel-Wood Nursing Home.

Senate Bill 1290 would make changes to the state’s Special County Retailers’ Occupation Tax to allow for the use of funds generated by the tax to be used for public facilities, such as museums and nursing homes. Currently, the tax is used specifically for public safety and transportation issues, but has been touted as a resource to tap for the museum and nursing home project locally. The bill will also allow the county to bring the question of an increase in the tax through a referendum.

“By allowing the use of these funds to complete public works projects, such as the Peoria Riverfront Museum and the Bel-Wood Nursing Home, we are using a resource already at our disposal. We do not have to go ‘hat in hand’ to the state to ask for these funds. We can generate them here, at home for use at home,” Senator Koehler said.

Authorities in Peoria County feel they can fund both the museum and nursing home over the next ten years, with the passage of this bill and with the adoption of a small increase in the tax. The bill stipulates that any tax must be implemented in one-quarter of a percent increments and be subject to voter approval.

“This legislation allows the authorities in Peoria County the chance to bring the question of funding the Peoria Riverfront Museum and the Bel-Wood Nursing Home before the voters. I have always felt that questions of public finances should be decided by the electorate. By giving the county the chance to allow the voters their say, I feel we can all move forward on these projects that are important to Peoria and entire region,” Senator Koehler said.

The bill now goes to the governor’s desk for approval.

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