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**Edgar signs legislation for state takeover of Meigs**

By Dave McKinney

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SPRINGFIELD-Gov. Edgar signed legislation Monday authorizing a state takeover of Meigs Field, but continued to call on Mayor Daley to negotiate on the future of Northerly Island.

Edgar's move came as lawyers for the state and city presented arguments before the Illinois Appellate Court Monday on a state lawsuit contesting Daley's Sept. 30 closure of Meigs.

If the court upholds a lower court's ruling against the state, the Edgar administration believes the governor's move will prevent Daley from ordering out the bulldozers and demolishing the shuttered lakefront airstrip.

State lawmakers are expected to return to Springfield Jan. 6 and 7 to pass similar Meigs takeover legislation. That bill would allow for an immediate state takeover, unlike the bill the Legislature passed earlier this month and Edgar enacted Monday, which provides for a June 1, 1997, takeover.

Edgar was scheduled to appear at a Monday evening dinner of the Commercial Club of Chicago, which has floated a compromise plan that would allow part of the island to be converted into park space while keeping Meigs open.

"The governor is hopeful this issue will be resolved through compromise," Edgar spokesman Mike Lawrence said in a statement announcing Edgar's move Monday morning.

However, Daley and federal transportation officials have dismissed the group's plan, saying a park adjacent to the airport would not be feasible.