



RECOVERY ILLINOIS

Office of Governor Pat Quinn

NEWS

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Quinn Administration Announces Plan to Make Chicago to St. Louis High-Speed Rail Travel a Reality

ST. LOUIS - May 8, 2009. Officials from Governor Pat Quinn's administration were joined by Senator Richard Durbin and rail executives today to announce an agreement between the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Union Pacific Railroad (UP) to develop the plan for high-speed passenger rail between Chicago and St. Louis. The *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) is the first of its kind in the country.

"This is a major step forward in reducing the travel time on the fastest growing train route in the state. The Chicago to St. Louis route would go from taking more than five and a half hours to four hours or less," said Governor Quinn. "I am committed to taking full advantage of federal recovery funds to make high speed rail in Illinois a reality."

United States Senator Richard Durbin and other transit agencies are working with IDOT to win the federal dollars needed to make high-speed rail in Illinois a reality, with the Chicago to St. Louis line as the state's premier route and top priority. Under the MOU, Union Pacific and IDOT will develop a Chicago to St. Louis rail infrastructure and safety plan to outline how passenger trains will operate safely at 110 mph and UP's freight trains will operate safely and efficiently.

"This plan will assess and provide estimates to increase track capacity and required safety enhancements," said IDOT Secretary Gary Hannig. "It will also get travelers to their destinations safely and faster than driving."

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* included the largest investment in high-speed passenger rail in history, totaling \$8 billion. This is the largest investment that the federal government has invested into passenger rail over the last decade – an almost 6,000 percent increase in funding for passenger rail.

The four state Amtrak routes in Illinois' system have experienced some of the fastest growing ridership increases of all the state-subsidized routes in the nation. The Chicago-St. Louis route, also known as "The Lincoln," stands out as the leading passenger rail corridor in Illinois – achieving a record breaking 57 percent increase in ridership in 2007-2008, the year the state doubled its investment and increased the frequency of trains along the line.

The American Association of Railroads estimate that every dollar spent on investments in our nation's railroads—tracks, equipment, locomotives, bridges—yields \$3 in economic output. In addition, each \$1 billion of rail investment creates 20,000 jobs.

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