



ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS

NEWS

Communications Department

Contacts: AAR Tom White (202) 639-2556
City of Chicago Brian Steele
Illinois DOT Mike McClaffey

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First Federal Funds Released for CREATE Program
Construction to Begin on Seven Projects in 2007

CHICAGO, February 13, 2007 --- Chicago's CREATE Program is rolling ahead in 2007 as the federal government has released the first \$25 million of its initial \$100 million commitment to the program which will reduce both highway and rail congestion in the Chicago area.

Release of the federal money means that construction can begin during 2007 on seven projects. Another seven projects will begin construction in 2008, while eight highway-rail grade separation projects have already progressed to the design or construction phase.

Earlier the six Class I railroads that are participating in CREATE --- Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency --- had indicated they would put \$100 million into the program's initial phase. The State of Illinois has pledged to put up \$100 toward the program while the City of Chicago has pledged \$30 million for this initial phase.

"I am delighted that CREATE is moving ahead this year," said Edward R. Hamberger, president and CEO of the Association of American Railroads (AAR). "This is good news not just for Chicago and the state of Illinois but also for the entire nation. Some 1,200 freight and passenger trains a day go through Chicago; one-third of the nation's rail and truck cargo originates, terminates or passes through Chicago. Congestion here can have a ripple effect across the economy."

"CREATE is a vitally important project, both for our economy and because it will improve safety and decrease congestion at a number of railroad crossings in the region," said Acting IDOT Secretary Milt Sees. "We are grateful to Rep. Dan Lipinski and his Congressional colleagues for recognizing the importance of CREATE and securing these funds that allow us to moving forward with the project."

"This first set of CREATE projects will have an immediate positive impact not only on rail operations, but on the communities in which they occur," said Cheri Heramb, Acting Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Transportation. "As the projects are built, nearby residents will experience less congestion and delays at rail crossings and benefit

from improved air quality as trains and cars idle less, while businesses will receive their supplies and goods on time."

The federal funds are part of a \$100 million CREATE authorization that was included in SAFETEA-LU (the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users) which was signed into law by President Bush in 2005. Rep. Dan Lipinski of Chicago was instrumental in securing the funding in that legislation.

While the initial phase is expected to cost \$330 million, the entire program is estimated to cost about \$1.5 billion. It includes construction of a number new overpasses or underpasses where roads cross railroad tracks. This will reduce congestion on roadways, reduce grade crossing accidents, and also help reduce air pollution. It also includes streamlining Chicago's rail network to benefit both passenger and freight services.

"CREATE stands out as a prime example of what a public-private partnership can accomplish," Hamberger said. "The projects that are part of CREATE might never be built without a public-private partnership." Under a public-private partnership, railroads pay for the benefits they receive while the public pays for the benefits it receives.