

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Huge Belmont Road grade separation project completed

CHICAGO (Oct. 17, 2012) – Gov. Pat Quinn on Wednesday joined state and local officials and representatives of Metra and BNSF Railway to mark the completion of the Belmont Road grade separation project in DuPage County, a massive undertaking that has many benefits for Metra riders, area drivers and the region’s environmental and economic well-being.

Joining the governor at the dedication ceremony were State Sen. Kirk W. Dillard, State Rep. Patricia R. Bellock, DuPage County Chairman Dan Cronin, Downers Grove Mayor Martin T. Tully, IDOT Secretary Ann Schneider, Metra Board Member Paul C. Darley and Metra CEO Alex Clifford.

The \$60 million project eliminated a troublesome and dangerous intersection between the four-lane Belmont Road, a major north-south artery through Downers Grove and DuPage County, and three BNSF Railway tracks, which carry more than 200 commuter and freight trains every day. The road and rails were separated by digging an underpass for Belmont Road and by building new bridges to carry the tracks over the underpass – all of which was done while the road and rails were still open to traffic. The project also included building a new bridge to carry Warren/Burlington Avenue over Belmont Road and feeder ramps to connect that bridge to Belmont.

This project has multiple benefits for Metra passengers as well as area drivers and residents:

- It improves safety by separating rail traffic from Belmont Road vehicles.
- It eases congestion and therefore emissions from idling vehicles on Belmont Road.
- It facilitates economic development in the area by reducing time lost to congestion. It also improves the productivity of Metra and freight traffic.
- It greatly improves the flow of traffic around the nearby Belmont commuter station in Downers Grove.
- It increases safety by providing commuters and other pedestrians with an underpass under the railroad tracks.
- Metra riders also benefit from new commuter boarding platforms and sheltered ADA ramps.
- It increases the amount of parking available to commuters at the Belmont Station by nearly 300 spaces.

Planning for the grade separation project began more than a decade ago and involved a special collaboration among multiple entities, including Metra, BNSF Railway, Downers Grove, DuPage County, Illinois Commerce Commission, Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration. Phase One construction was completed in 2009, when Pan-Oceanic Engineering relocated existing utilities in the area and created new commuter parking lots. Work on the underpass and bridges began in 2010 and was carried out by Lorig Construction.

The work was done with only temporary disruptions to traffic on Belmont Road and to commuter trains and passengers. Metra would like to extend a special thanks to our riders, local drivers and area residents for their patience and cooperation during construction.

The Belmont Road grade separation project is part of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency program, or CREATE. CREATE is a partnership between U.S. Department of Transportation, the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak and the nation's freight railroads to increase the efficiency of the Chicago region's passenger and freight rail infrastructure and enhance the quality of life for Chicago area residents.

CREATE's goals are to improve passenger rail service; reduce freight rail congestion to boost regional and national economic competitiveness; reduce motorist delay due to rail conflict at grade crossings; enhance public safety; promote economic development; create and retain jobs; improve air quality; and reduce noise from idling or slow-moving trains.

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