

## OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

**NEWS** 

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## Governor Quinn and U.S. Senator Durbin Announce Plans for High Speed Passenger Rail Investment

\$1.2 Billion Award will Fund Chicago to St. Louis Corridor; Create 6,000 Jobs

CHICAGO – January 29, 2010. Governor Pat Quinn and U.S. Senator Dick Durbin kicked off a series of announcements in Chicago today to discuss details about Illinois' \$1.2 billion federal award to bring high-speed passenger rail service to Illinois by 2014. Illinois is among only three states to receive at least \$1 billion for high-speed passenger rail, which will make the trip between Chicago and St. Louis faster than driving and will provide new train equipment.

"Illinois was one of only three states in the country to receive over \$1 billion for high speed rail. We appreciate the confidence of President Obama to bring high-speed rail to Illinois," said Governor Quinn. "Thanks to hard work and perseverance, our vision to have Illinois serve as the nation's high speed rail hub is becoming a reality, bringing jobs and economic growth to our communities."

The Obama Administration announced the competitive awards Thursday as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program. The investment from the federal government is expected to create approximately 6,000 jobs in Illinois. Illinois received the third largest award among 31 states chosen to share in the \$8 billion made available nationwide for high-speed passenger rail. Thirty-seven states applied for funding.

"Investing \$1.2 billion into improving our rail system is going to mean more jobs – jobs for today and jobs for the future," said Senator Durbin. "Today's announcement assures that Chicago, already a major rail hub of the nation, will soon become the major high-speed rail hub of the Midwest and nation.

"Today, President Obama's vision is bringing high-speed rail to Illinois and the rest of the United States," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. "This groundbreaking program will put many people back to work in Chicago and across the country, and it will also help transform transportation for the entire Midwest region."

Illinois' high-speed rail signature route, Chicago to St. Louis, will receive \$1.1 billion for corridor improvements. Improvements to this 284 mile route will allow passenger rail service to operate at speeds up to 110 mph, reducing the total trip time from Chicago to St. Louis by over an hour. The improvements include an overhaul of track, signal systems and existing stations as well as the implementation of state-of-the-art train control technology that will improve train safety. In addition, Illinois will receive \$1.25 million to complete an environmental impact study for a second track along the same route.



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The award for Illinois includes \$133 million to build the Englewood Flyover on Chicago's South Side, a Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) project which will clear one of the largest rail bottlenecks in the nation. The improvement will eliminate significant delays for commuter trains, Amtrak trains and freight trains.

"This is great news for Illinois and the Midwest," said Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig. "I commend President Obama, Governor Quinn, Senator Durbin and the entire Midwest region for their leadership and commitment through a long and competitive process. I also want to express my gratitude to the staff at the Illinois Department of Transportation who have remained focused and dedicated on efforts to make high-speed passenger rail a reality in Illinois."

Thanks to multi-state steering group formed by Governor Quinn, Illinois will benefit from awards to several other neighboring states that make up the Chicago Hub Network. The region received a total of \$2.6 billion – more than any other regional network. The network is designed to connect cities throughout the region to Chicago with reliable high-speed and conventional intercity rail service.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) received 259 grant applications from 37 states and the District of Columbia requesting nearly \$57 billion in funding – far exceeding the initial \$8 billion available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. In total, 79 applications from 31 States were selected for funding.

For more information on the awards to Illinois and the other Midwestern states for high-speed rail, go to MidwestRail.org.

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