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AMTRAK RELEASES

**Feasibility STUDY OF STATE-SUPPORTED
RAIL SERVICE TO ILLINOIS QUAD CITIES**

Host railroad negotiations and funding are needed to advance the plan

CHICAGO – Amtrak has completed a report requested by the Illinois Department of Transportation (Ill. DOT) that evaluates possible passenger train routes between Illinois Quad Cities (Moline-Rock Island) and Chicago. This “Feasibility Report on Proposed Amtrak Service, Quad Cities-Chicago” is also in response to a January 2007 town meeting in Rock Island, hosted by U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), who was joined by Amtrak and Ill. DOT representatives, labor officials and leaders from Illinois and Iowa. In the report, the approximate cost of upgrading the railroad infrastructure to accommodate passenger train speeds is \$14-to-23 million, over the shortest, fastest and least costly of the potential routes. Not included in this figure are any capital expenses for railcars and locomotives, nor the local costs of providing stations.

Annual ridership on the route is estimated to be nearly 111,000 if improvements are made allowing maximum speeds of 79 mph, based upon two daily round-trips.

The annual state operating cost for the possible routes is in the \$6-million range. Quad Cities-Chicago travel times of about 3 ½ hours are possible and would be competitive with automobile driving, dependant on the choice of routes, agreements with host railroads and required infrastructure improvements. Excerpts from the report and a map are attached. An executive summary of the report is now/will be available this week on the Ill. DOT and Amtrak websites.

“Amtrak and the State of Illinois have seen tremendous growth in passenger rail ridership since Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the Legislature increased funding for state supported routes in 2006,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “These gains indicate there is a significant and growing demand for passenger rail service across the state. At a time when everyone is becoming more conscious of the need to conserve fuel, passenger rail moves people efficiently, helps reduce traffic and is good for our environment.”

"Last year, we held a meeting that showed us that the Quad Cities are committed to bringing Amtrak back to the area," said Sen. Durbin. "Today, we have a feasibility study that shows us that adding rail service between the Quad Cities and Chicago will give businesses and tourists a time competitive and convenient alternative to driving. Amtrak

already provides quick, cost-effective, and reliable public ground transportation to 30 communities in the state – it's time to add the Quad Cities to that list."

"The first passenger rail train pulled into the Quad Cities more than 150 years ago," said Congressman Phil Hare (D-Rock Island). "It's time for it to return to this area. In addition to providing an affordable method of transportation between the Quad Cities and Chicago, our region could be an important gateway to Iowa City, Des Moines and Omaha as we continue to invest in transportation infrastructure."

Amtrak has never operated scheduled trains to the Quad Cities, which lost its Rock Island Railroad passenger rail service in 1978. The feasibility report found the most promising route between the Quad Cities and Chicago would be over a portion of the former Rock Island Railroad now owned by Iowa Interstate Railroad (IAIS) from the Quad Cities to a proposed track connection to the BNSF Railway near Wyanet, Ill.

The cost of restoring the entire former Rocket/Quad Citian route from Rock Island to Chicago via Joliet, Ill., is nearly quadruple the expense of the proposed IAIS/BNSF route. It would attract an estimated 26,500 fewer passengers and use five carriers on a route estimated to be more than 90 minutes longer than the combination of IAIS and BNSF with Amtrak.

The choice of the IAIS/BNSF route is also enhanced by taking advantage of recently improved Amtrak stations at Princeton, Mendota and Naperville, Ill. Station stops would be determined by Ill. DOT, which has been working with Quad Cities leaders and their consultant on the best choice for a station location in the Moline-Rock Island area.

"We look forward to taking the next step, which would involve negotiations with host railroads, development of detailed capital plans and funding requests," said Alex Kummant, Amtrak President and CEO. "This is the same procedure we laid out in the case of last year's Amtrak report on restoring Ill. DOT-supported service to Rockford and Dubuque (Iowa)."

Later this year, in response to a request from Iowa officials, Amtrak will release a version of this report that considers the feasibility of extending the western terminus of this route from the Quad Cities to Iowa City. Also this year, Amtrak will fulfill the Ill. DOT request for a feasibility report on providing state-supported service between Peoria and Chicago, which also lost its passenger rail service by the Rock Island Railroad in 1978.

About Amtrak

Amtrak provides intercity passenger rail service to more than 500 destinations in 46 states on a 21,000-mile route system. For schedules, fares and information, passengers may call 800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak.com.

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Excerpts: "Feasibility Report on Proposed Amtrak Service, Quad Cities-Chicago"
Since the introduction of expanded levels of intrastate service on October 30, 2006, Amtrak trains in Illinois have produced impressive gains in both ridership and ticket revenue. This success and continuing stakeholder support has given rise to a formal request from the Illinois Department of Transportation (Ill. DOT) to Amtrak to develop a feasibility study regarding possible service consisting of a morning and an evening train in each direction between Chicago and the Quad Cities.

The Quad Cities (Davenport, Moline, Rock Island, and Bettendorf) are located along the Mississippi River. Nearly 60% of its visitors are from the Chicago area. With dozens of miles of scenic riverfront, river boating, casinos, and thousands of acres of expansive public spaces, the Quad Cities area is a major draw from both Iowa and Illinois. The huge Rock Island Arsenal, one of the largest military arsenals in the country and located along the river, is transitioning to become the headquarters of the United States 1st Army.

Following receipt by Amtrak of the study request, alternative rail routes between Chicago and the Quad Cities were identified as potential candidates for this service. Two alternative routes were identified as potentially feasible for establishment of Amtrak service between Chicago and the Quad Cities with the westernmost segment between Wyanet and the Quad Cities being common to both alternatives. These alternatives are shown on the map (above). A larger version of the map in .jpg format is available from Amtrak Media Relations, Chicago.

Physical evaluations of the routes were conducted with host railroad personnel, including hi-rail inspections, assessments of capital needs, and identification of operational challenges. Revenue/ridership forecasts were determined based on recommended schedules, and estimates of cost to operate the service were developed. The state and many of its communities have expressed the desire to establish Amtrak service in the most expeditious way possible. This study, therefore, has concentrated on incremental and focused improvements, including the possibility of raising the speeds on some of the route segments up to 79 mph (where they are not present today). As directed by Ill. DOT, no "high-speed" (110 mph) scenarios were considered. The goal was to prepare a high-level and objective report of the findings for Ill. DOT's further consideration. Although there have been general operational discussions and field inspections with the host freight railroads, the specific infrastructure improvement proposals, draft schedules and other railroad-related comments in this report have not been negotiated or agreed to with the host freight railroads and reflect only the findings and best judgment recommendations of the study team. Should further progression of one of the alternative proposals be desired, detailed discussion and formal negotiations will have to be initiated with those rail carriers.

Implementation of service is also subject to the time required to procure rolling stock, complete the package of infrastructure improvements which are ultimately agreed to by the host freight railroads, and recruit and train additional personnel.

Route A – Quad Cities-Naperville-Chicago via IAIS-BNSF-Amtrak

Length of Route (miles) 158.6

| | As-is | 60 mph | 79 mph |
|---|--------|---------|---------|
| Proposed Scheduled Running Time (hr:min) | 4:00 | 3:35 | 3:20 |
| "Order of Magnitude" Capital Cost (\$millions) * | \$0.3 | \$14.1 | \$22.7 |
| Estimated Annual Ridership | 90,000 | 102,700 | 110,800 |
| Estimated Annual Revenue (\$millions) | \$2.1 | \$2.4 | \$2.6 |
| Estimated Annual Operating Expense (\$millions) | \$8.4 | \$8.4 | \$8.5 |
| Estimated Annual State Contract Cost (\$millions) | \$6.3 | \$6.0 | \$5.9 |

Route B – Quad Cities-Joliet-Chicago via IAIS-CXST-Metra-CN-Amtrak

Length of Route (miles) 177.5

| | As-is | 60 mph | 79 mph |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| Proposed Scheduled Running Time (hr:min) | 7:05 | 5:25 | 4:46 |
| "Order of Magnitude" Capital Cost (\$millions) * | \$0.3 | \$78.7 | \$94.1 |
| Estimated Annual Ridership | 40,300 | 69,900 | 84,300 |
| Estimated Annual Revenue (\$millions) | \$0.9 | \$1.7 | \$2.1 |
| Estimated Annual Operating Expense (\$millions) | \$8.4 | \$8.5 | \$8.4 |
| Estimated Annual State Contract Cost (\$millions) | \$7.5 | \$6.8 | \$6.3 |

* Includes \$0.3 million for a recommended Quad Cities layover facility

There are a number of up-front expenses that would be incurred by Amtrak should any of the route alternatives be funded. These include coach rehabilitation (\$2.8-to-4.2 million), personnel recruitment and training, radio equipment, uniforms for on-board personnel, etc. (\$ 1.05 million).

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