

NEWS

OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: April 20, 2007

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MIDWEST REGIONAL RAIL ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT RELEASED

Enhanced passenger rail service could generate \$23.1 billion benefit in
Midwest

Ohio would see \$1.2 billion to \$2.3 billion in user benefits

Fast, frequent passenger rail service can translate into substantial economic benefits to users, communities and states served by it according to a new report issued by the nine states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin) participating in the **Midwest Regional Rail Initiative** planning effort.

Enhanced passenger rail service being planned under the proposed 3,000 mile Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS) could generate \$23.1 billion in user benefits from time savings, congestion relief and emission reductions during the first 40-years of the project. For Ohio, the benefits total between \$1.2 billion and \$2.3 billion, in addition to creating 3,520 new permanent jobs and generating \$55 million in extra household income.

“This report shows that investing in frequent and reliable passenger rail services pays significant returns beyond creating greater mobility for moving people and goods,” Ohio Rail Development Commission Acting Director Matt Dietrich said. “This report is also

confirming the preliminary economic impact numbers we are seeing for our own Ohio Hub System, which would connect the MWRRS system with planned and existing rail systems on the East and Mid-Atlantic Coast.”

Dietrich says details of the Ohio Hub Economic Impact Report should be ready in a few weeks for public release.

The MWRRS Report notes that the investments in passenger rail provide a benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.8, which indicates that for each dollar spent on the system, one dollar and eighty cents is returned in benefits, one of the highest returns for any regional rail system in the U.S.

The report also shows that development of the Midwest Regional Rail System would create 57,450 new jobs, provide just over \$1 billion in extra household income across the nine-state region, and provide \$4.9 billion in increased joint development potential for the 102 cities with MWRRS stations.

The proposed MWRRS would consist of a 3,000-mile network with a hub in Chicago. The service would offer travelers the benefits of trains operating at up to 110-mph, providing travel times that are competitive with driving; increased trip frequencies; improved on-time performance; and new trains with modern amenities. One of those routes would also serve the Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland market, while a second would connect Cincinnati with Chicago.

Several communities throughout the nine-state region are already making plans to expand their stations and provide multi-modal connections with buses, taxis, and other modes. These improvements encourage development of nearby properties. The resulting increase in property values is referred to as “joint development potential.” Joint development potential for MWRRS communities has been estimated at \$4.9 billion.

Increased MWRRS joint development potential in Ohio ranges from \$238.9 million to \$360.4 million. Estimates for Ohio communities include:

Cincinnati	\$119 - \$179 million
Cleveland	\$74 – \$111 million
Toledo	\$35 - \$53 million
Elyria	\$5 - \$8 million
Sandusky	\$3 - \$5 million
Defiance	\$2.9 – 4.4 million

Brochures summarizing the findings of this report are available from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation by calling 608 266-9498. The entire report is also available on the web at: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/news/index.htm>

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(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>)