



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
PAT QUINN

For Immediate Release
Thursday, March 21, 2013

Contact

Press Line: (312) 814-3158
Brooke Anderson Brooke.Anderson@illinois.gov
Grant Klinzman Grant.Klinzman@illinois.gov

Governor Quinn Announces Illinois to Lead Multi-State High-Speed Rail Locomotive Purchase

Federal Railroad Administration Names Illinois to Lead National Procurement of 35 Next-Generation Locomotives

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn announced today that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has named Illinois to lead the multi-state procurement of next-generation locomotives for high-speed rail. With the consent of the partnering states, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) will lead the effort to procure at least 35 next-generation diesel locomotives for high-speed passenger trains on behalf of five states – Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington. Today’s announcement is part of the governor’s commitment to bring Illinois’ and our nation’s transportation systems into the 21st century.

“This decision by the federal government is a testament to Illinois’ role as a national leader in high-speed rail,” Governor Quinn said. “This important multi-state procurement is a key to success for high-speed rail throughout the nation, and I have directed my administration to move forward quickly.”

The FRA has allocated \$808 million to build the next generation of passenger rail equipment, including 35 new locomotives and 130 bi-level rail cars. As lead agency, IDOT will manage and oversee the procurement, involve the other states in planning and implementing the procurement process, develop a detailed project plan, and coordinate the review of the procurement among the involved states and FRA.

“Following significant analysis and consideration, FRA recommends that IDOT be the lead agency for the multi-state locomotive procurement,” the FRA stated in their decision letter. “We are confident that your team – jointly with the significant contributions from California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington – will manage the procurement process and stakeholder involvement that will lead to a successful contract award.”

“We are thrilled in Illinois to have the confidence of the FRA and Governor Quinn as we move forward with this crucial procurement effort,” Illinois Secretary of Transportation Ann L. Schneider said. “Our goal is to offer 110-mile-per-hour service on at least 75 percent of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor – the segment from Dwight to Alton – by the end of 2015, and these locomotives are the key to achieving that goal. It takes time to build these complex and powerful engines, however, and we are moving quickly to get this procurement under way as soon as possible.”

Last year, IDOT was part of a multi-state procurement of the 130 next-generation bi-level rail cars for high-speed service, an effort led by the state of California. That procurement resulted in the selection of Nippon-Sharyo, which is building the rail cars from its plant in Rochelle, Illinois, including the 88 cars to be used on Midwest high-speed corridors. The Rochelle plant opened in 2012 and has created 250 jobs in Illinois.

-MORE-

Illinois debuted 110-mph service on a 15-mile segment of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor from Dwight to Pontiac in fall 2012, and IDOT is working with the private railroads and FRA to ensure that positive train control requirements and all needed track and crossing improvements are completed in order to expand 110-mph service as much as possible in the years ahead. The FRA in December provided a Record of Decision on the entire Chicago-St. Louis corridor, allowing Illinois to begin in-depth corridor segment studies and specific project studies to move toward high-speed service on the other 25 percent of the corridor as soon as possible, including segments from Joliet to Chicago and from Alton to St. Louis. The segment from Dwight to Joliet is under development and is expected to offer 110-mph service in 2017.

Illinois also is working in close partnership with the state of Michigan to establish 110-mph service from Chicago to Detroit as the next Midwest segment targeted to run at higher speeds.

The state helps fund 28 Amtrak trains serving four corridors including those from Chicago to Milwaukee and St. Louis. The partnership with Amtrak has led to a steady increase in ridership in recent years. The state-supported corridors together carried a record 1.8 million passengers last year. Ridership growth in Illinois has been exceptional, up more than 92 percent overall since 2006, and up on the Chicago to St. Louis corridor by 224 percent.

###