

# News Release



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ATK-12-098  
Governor's Office: Brooke Anderson  
312-814-3158(o)  
312-590-0195(c)  
Illinois DOT Contact: Josh Kaufmann  
217 558.0517(o)  
217-836-7870(c)  
Amtrak Contact: Marc Magliari  
312 544.5390

## GOVERNOR QUINN, SECRETARY LAHOOD, SENATOR DURBIN PREVIEW 110-MPH RAIL SERVICE IN ILLINOIS 110-mile per hour Rail Demonstration A Milestone For Midwest High-Speed Rail Network, Thousands of Jobs Created from Work

JOLIET – Governor Pat Quinn today was joined by U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo, Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider, Amtrak Chairman Tom Carper, and local leaders to celebrate the start of 110-mph rail service in Illinois. Today's demonstration of 110-mph speeds between Dwight and Pontiac on the critical Chicago-St. Louis rail corridor represents a historic step towards the establishment of a high-speed rail network that will secure Illinois' position as the Midwest's transportation hub.

The project - part of a \$2 billion federal and state investment in high-speed rail - has created and supported more than 6,000 construction jobs and many more related to production and equipment manufacturing.

The 15-mile demonstration segment showcased major infrastructure improvements, state-of-the-art signaling, and significant technological and safety advancements. Trains will start carrying Amtrak riders at the higher speed between Dwight and Pontiac before Thanksgiving of this year. The 110-mph service is projected to be in place along nearly 75% of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor by 2015, reducing travel time by more than an hour. Today's demonstration is part of Governor Quinn's vision to bring high-speed rail to Illinois and modernize the state's transportation infrastructure.

"A 21st century rail system in Illinois will create jobs and drive economic development throughout the Midwest, while making travel across Illinois faster, safer and more reliable,"

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Governor Quinn said. "This demonstration of high-speed rail service would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of President Obama, Secretary LaHood, Senator Dick Durbin, and many others. High-speed rail is coming to Illinois and these long-term investments in our transportation system will benefit the citizens of our state for generations to come."

"Investing in passenger rail means more options for the traveling public, new jobs and expanding economic opportunities for communities all along the Chicago to St. Louis corridor," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "With next generation rail equipment, new track structures, and renovated and new rail stations, passengers will be able to enjoy faster travel times aboard a greater number of trains. Today's achievement is just one more example of how rail investments are transforming communities across America."

Illinois has become a national leader in passenger rail expansion. Total ridership on Amtrak's four Illinois routes has grown nearly 75% over the past six years, rising to more than 2.1 million passengers last year. Ridership on today's Chicago-St. Louis Lincoln Service alone has doubled in that time period, despite relatively slow speeds and aging equipment. When completed, trains traveling from Chicago to St. Louis will reach top speeds matching those of trains now traveling between Chicago and Detroit, the fastest passenger trains in North America outside of the East Coast.

"Amtrak is a lynchpin in Illinois mass transportation and a vital component in the economic development of communities from Chicago to St. Louis, and with ridership up 6 percent this year, its popularity only continues to grow," U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) said. "Recognizing high-speed rail's outstanding potential to create jobs and drive growth, as well as our state's leading role in transportation infrastructure, the federal government invested close to \$2 billion out of a total \$8 billion made available nationwide through the Recovery Act into Illinois projects. High-speed trains will help move residents quickly and comfortably across the state and ensure Illinois remains a top passenger rail provider. Today's test is a major step toward that goal."

Today's demonstration began at the soon-to-be renovated Joliet Union Station and ended at Normal's brand new multi-modal train station, where transportation officials highlighted the modern upgrades, accommodations and benefits Amtrak travelers will experience first-hand in -

the near future. Before it was complete, the new Normal station and promise of 110-mph service had attracted more than \$200 million in private investments to its downtown area, an example of how rail investment attracts economic growth. Future rail investments along the Chicago to St. Louis corridor will spur economic activity across Illinois in Springfield, Dwight, Pontiac, Lincoln, Carlinville, Alton and Joliet where new or newly-renovated stations are under development or in the planning stages.

“This remarkable 110-mph segment demonstration serves as a testament to exceptional teamwork among all levels of government and the private sector, and exemplifies the dedication to enhancing viable, cost-effective and essential transportation improvements needed to compete effectively in the decades ahead,” Secretary Schneider said. “We are proud to unveil this high-speed rail segment test as a landmark step in rail history and share what travelers may experience in the very near future.”

Today’s high-speed rail demonstration follows the recent announcement of a \$352 million multi-state procurement to design, build and deliver 130 bi-level passenger railcars for use in California and the Midwest, including the Chicago to St. Louis corridor. The Notice of Intent to Award identified Rochelle, Illinois-based vendor Nippon-Sharyo/Sumitomo Corporation of America as the expected builder of the railcars, the first of which are slated for delivery in fall 2015.

“We have worked in partnership with the state of Illinois to make 110-mph service a reality and Amtrak is continuing to bring high-speed rail service in an expanded Midwest network,” said Tom Carper, chairman, Amtrak Board of Directors. “When this project is complete, we anticipate the Chicago-St. Louis corridor will be one of the busiest in the country.”

“I want to congratulate Union Pacific’s field engineering team that has produced some very impressive numbers since this project started in 2010,” said Lance Fritz, Union Pacific Railroad’s executive vice president – operations. “The team has laid more than 2.5 million linear feet of rail, spread nearly 1.3 million tons of ballast to help provide a more stable roadbed and installed nearly 620,000 concrete ties. Thank you for a job well done.”

Existing Amtrak Amfleet cars have been refurbished to include new coach and business class seating, new café cars, healthier menu items and Wi-Fi service. Additional upgrades

underway on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor route include installation of safer quadrant and pedestrian gates at urban crossings, gates at farm crossings, and new signals and road surfaces at crossings.

To follow progress, updates and completed improvements along the signature Chicago-St. Louis high-speed rail corridor, please visit [www.idothsr.org](http://www.idothsr.org).

**About Amtrak®:**

Amtrak is America's Railroad®, the nation's intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. A record 31.2 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2012 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates intercity trains in partnership with 15 states and contracts with 13 commuter rail agencies to provide a variety of services. Enjoy the journey® at [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on [facebook.com/Amtrak](https://facebook.com/Amtrak) and follow us at [twitter.com/Amtrak](https://twitter.com/Amtrak).

**About Illinois DOT**

The Illinois Department of Transportation provides safe, cost-effective transportation for Illinois in ways that enhance quality of life, promote economic prosperity, and demonstrate respect for our environment. Illinois DOT provides leadership throughout Illinois for the improvement and coordination of the state's multi-faceted transportation system and serves as an advocate and trusted adviser to local governments and other community agencies involved in providing transportation access and services for all of Illinois. For more information, visit <http://www.dot.il.gov/>.

For information regarding the Illinois High Speed Rail, visit [www.idothsr.org](http://www.idothsr.org) or call 855-IDOT-HSR (855-436-8477). Join us on Facebook at [facebook.com/IllinoisHighSpeedRail](https://facebook.com/IllinoisHighSpeedRail).

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