



# IOWA RAILS

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

\*\*\*January 2008\*\*\*

## IARP to meet in Dubuque

Our next meeting is Saturday, January 26, 2008, at 1:00 pm at the Depot Café (former Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Train Depot) located at 350 East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Port of Dubuque in Dubuque, Iowa 52001. The Depot Café connects with the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium. Information can be obtained from Museum at 800-226-3369.

Prior to the meeting, attendees may enjoy an optional order off-the-menu lunch at the Depot Café. The Depot Café is a soup and sandwich bar - burgers, hot dogs, etc. Meals will be paid for by each individual participating in the lunch.

The program includes:

Patrick Hendricks, President, IARP  
Passenger rail update

Dick Welch, member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) Advisory Board and former Region 10 NARP director.

Topics:

- Federal legislation supporting the national rail passenger system
- Midwest Regional Rail Initiative
- Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission
- Cedar – Iowa River Rail Transit Project
- Proposed Passenger Train Service to Dubuque
- Proposed Passenger Train Service to the Quad Cities and Iowa City

## Working to Restore Amtrak's *Blackhawk*

We have invited the following people to this meeting –

- Illinois rail promoters from all the towns along the proposed train service from Chicago to Dubuque
- Dubuque area legislators
- Staff from Senator Grassley, Senator Harkin and Congressman Braley
- Mike Blouin, Iowa Transportation Commission
- John Wetzel, Quad Cities Passenger Rail Coalition

The public is invited and welcome and encouraged to attend the program and meeting.

## Directions to the Depot Café (former Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Train Depot):

Take Highway 20 from the West, or Highway 61 or 151 from the southwest or south and when you get downtown, follow the way-finding signage.



*Photo by William J. Manon, Jr.*

Our January meeting will be held in the café in the former Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Train Depot in Dubuque, Iowa.

The depot received an award from the Iowa Historical Society in 2004 for the restoration.

# AMTRAK-ILLINOIS DOT FEASIBILITY STUDY DETERMINES MOST DIRECT ROUTE BEST FOR SERVICE TO ROCKFORD, NORTHWESTERN ILLINOIS AND DUBUQUE, IOWA

Public meetings drive route decision to restore service after 25 years;  
Funding and other agreements still needed to advance the plan

The following is excerpts from this study:

“It is clear from the series of public meetings we’ve held over the last few months and the extensive amount of input we have received from the community that there is strong public support for restoring passenger rail service between Chicago, Rockford and Dubuque,” said Milt Sees, Acting Illinois DOT Secretary. “A reliable rail connection would reduce highway congestion and help give travelers an option to avoid high fuel prices”

“We are excited the State of Illinois has selected the route for Amtrak service and we can move forward to the next step,” said Cong. Don Manzullo (R-Egan). "This quick decision was made possible because our local officials put their personal preferences aside and did what was best for the region. As a result, we are closer than ever to restoring daily passenger rail service to northern Illinois.”

Annual ridership estimates range from 77,500 for the all-CN route chosen by Illinois DOT (“Route C” in the original study) to 46,000 for the Rockford Airport route (“Route B” in the original study). The annual operating cost to the state is estimated at up to \$5 million, based upon a single daily round-trip frequency.

Amtrak estimates two-to-three construction seasons would be needed to make the infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve these travel times, depending on the timing of the completion of negotiations with CN.

UPDATED SUMMARY TABLE  
Feasibility Report on Proposed Amtrak Service  
Chicago-Rockford-Galena-Dubuque

	Route A “Belvidere”	Route B “Airport”	Route C* “Direct”	Route D “Hybrid”
Route Miles	184.0	188.6	182.2	181.0
Number of Rail Carriers	4	5	2	4
Proposed Running Time (hours:minutes)	5:25	5:42	5:10	5:22
Estimated Capital Cost (millions)	\$44.0	\$49.0 to \$55.0	\$32.0	\$34.0
Estimated Annual Ridership	55,600	46,000	77,500	60,800

\*Illinois DOT route choice. Figures are subject to change with further discussions and agreements with CN, Amtrak and Illinois DOT, along with capital, mobilization and operating funding, to initiate service

## **Additional Railroad Passenger Train Feasibility Studies**

The Illinois DOT has requested a study from Chicago to the Illinois Quad Cities of Moline and Rock Island. The results of this study may be available by our meeting in January.

The Illinois DOT has requested a study from Chicago to Peoria.

The Iowa DOT has requested two studies

Quad Cities to Iowa City

Iowa City to Des Moines

## **Illinois Downstate Amtrak Capital**

Springfield leaders are negotiating a spending package for transportation and education capital improvements. They have only included \$100 million over a three year period. The program needs at least \$450 million or \$150 million per year.

## **OSCEOLA DEPOT**

After finally acquiring the BNSF Depot, the city of Osceola plans to repair the building—new roof, tuck-point the bricks, new windows and resurface the parking lot.

These repairs will give passengers boarding and deboarding the *California Zephyr* a positive view of Osceola.

## ***Cedar Iowa River Rail Corridor Transit Project Update***

By Eliot A. Keller

Following the tremendously successful demonstration train on August 25, 2007, between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, plans continue to move forward on the next phase of this project.

More than 2,000 riders had the opportunity to see the route the project could take between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City on the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC). Sponsors included the Iowa City Coralville Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Cedar Rapids Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers.

The next phase is proposed commuter service between North Liberty, Coralville and Iowa City. The initial service would employ used passenger equipment.

A representative of the Johnson County Council of Governments outlined the project to the Iowa Transportation Commission at its meeting on October 9, 2007, in Clinton.

In February, a delegation from the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cedar Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce will travel to Washington, DC, to request partial federal funding support for this phase of the project as well as funding for other non-rail projects.

Supporters of the project need to continue to let their elected officials know they want this project to move forward and that they believe funding from various sources is essential.

## *Merle Reisner*

IARP member Merle Reiser died December 26, 2007 in Indianola, Iowa.

Merle contacted people in 1980 to see if there was interest in starting a passenger rail organization in Iowa. Gary Billmeyer, Leo and Betty Schneider were a few of the people contacted. At this meeting at the Indianola Middle School, the Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers was formed.

Merle was elected the first president of IARP. Merle had the foresight to realize a passenger rail advocacy organization was needed in the state of Iowa.



## *Iowa Transportation Museum Grinnell, Iowa*

The Iowa Transportation Museum has not yet opened its doors.

However, the website [www.TransportationHeroes.org](http://www.TransportationHeroes.org), visitors can nominate individuals who made a difference in transportation.



**NARP**  
**(National Association of Railroad Passengers)**  
**Region 10 Annual Meeting**

Annual Meeting of NARP members of Colorado, Iowa,  
Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah & Wyoming

Date: Saturday, March 15, 2008  
Location: Omaha, Nebraska (specific location yet to be determined)

Confirmed Speakers: Norman Forde, Colorado Railcar  
David Johnson, NARP Assistant Director  
Tom Mulligan, Director, Passenger Operations,  
Union Pacific Railroad

Invited Speakers: Ben Nelson, U.S. Senator - NE  
Brian Rosenwald, AMTRAK



**Joint Meeting of the Midwest High Speed Rail  
Association, National Association of Railroad  
Passengers, Region 7 and Wisconsin  
Association of Railroad Passengers**

Date: Saturday, March 29, 2008  
Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

To include tour of newly opened Milwaukee Intermodal Station that provides passenger rail, bus transit, taxi and limosine service.

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