



# IOWA RAILS

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

\*\*\*September 2007\*\*\* A

## IARP to meet in Iowa Falls

Our next meeting is Saturday, October 6, 2007, at 1:00 pm at the Iowa Falls Union Depot located at East Rocksylvania Avenue and Depot Street in Iowa Falls, Iowa 50126. Information on the depot can be obtained from the Iowa Falls Historical Society at 641-648-4603.

Prior to the meeting, attendees may enjoy an optional order off-the-menu lunch at Camp David's Restaurant, 119 Main Street, Iowa Falls, Iowa (641-648-3221). 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 Compact
- Cedar – Iowa River Rail Transit Project
- Proposed Passenger Train Service to Dubuque
- Proposed Passenger Train Service to The Quad Cities & Iowa City

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



The following is from the Hardin County Historical Society —

The first survey of the Dubuque and Sioux City Railway (later to become the Illinois Central) was made in 1857, but it was not until 1866 that the first train reached Iowa Falls. On April 15 there was a large crowd of people at the depot awaiting its arrival. A three-day celebration was held, with a special excursion train running from Dubuque to Iowa Falls on April 24. Both the Dubuque "Herald" and Dubuque "Times" carried stories of the celebration. Evening entertainment, dinner and dancing were held at Sayer's Hall. The following day the excursion returned to Dubuque where another grand celebration was held.

Can you imagine the celebration if the proposed Dubuque train comes to Iowa Falls and beyond?

*Four Iowans appointed to represent Iowa on the  
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission*

Appointed by Governor Chet Culver:

Patrick Hendricks – Private Sector Appointee  
President—Iowa Association of Railroad  
Passengers  
State Director, Iowa Legislative Board —  
United Transportation Union  
Union Pacific Conductor

Jim Larew – Governor’s Designee  
General Counsel to Governor Culver  
Former Iowa City attorney—his practice has focused on  
employment, civil rights and railroad law

Appointed by the Iowa Senate:

State Senator Daryl Beall  
Senate District 25  
Fort Dodge, Iowa  
Member of the Iowa Senate Transportation Committee

Appointed by the Iowa House:

State Representative Paul Bell  
House District 41  
Newton, Iowa  
Member of the Iowa House Transportation Committee

The three main objectives of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission are:

- Promote development and implementation of improvements and long-range plans for intercity passenger rail in the Midwest
- Coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials, and among the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state and local)
- Support current state efforts being conducted through the state departments of transportation.

## **Demonstration passenger train runs in Cedar Rapids-Iowa City corridor in August**

It was historic and prophetic. Coordinated by the Iowa City Coralville Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), on August 25th 2000 passengers got to ride the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC) on part of the route which could become commuter rail between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City.

It was the first time since 1953 that the public could take a trip between the two communities on a passenger train. Using Dan Sabin's Iowa Northern Railway's *Hawkeye Express* former Chicago Metra gallery commuter cars and a locomotive on each end, the train showed the route to two round trips of passengers from each city (five one-way trips).

The trips began at Hawkeye Downs in Cedar Rapids, the same location that had been used in 1988 for CRANDIC's four days of passenger trains to the World Ag Expo in Amana. Iowa City trips began just west of the University of Iowa Main Library, north of Burlington Street near former location of the CRANDIC Iowa City Depot.

Joshua Schamberger, President, Iowa City Coralville Convention and Visitors Bureau, was a co-chair of the Cedar Rapids 15 in 5 Light Rail Committee and wanted to run the free trips to familiarize area residents with the route as well as urge them to contact their elected officials telling the officials they want the passenger train.

IARP members Mary Buczek, Joe Buczek, Jerry Buxton, Nancy Buxton, Dale Brodt and Mike Miller were among the *Hawkeye Express* volunteer car hosts.

IARP President Patrick "Pat" Hendricks, General Counsel George Davison and Excursion Chair Eliot Keller were on-board to promote passenger trains to officials, the media as well as the general public.

Elected officials aboard the train included State Senator Bob Dvorsky, State Representatives Art Staed and Dave Jacoby, the mayors of Cedar Rapids and Coralville, the Mayor Pro Tem of Cedar Rapids, Linn County Supervisor Jim Houser (an IARP member) Johnson County Supervisor Pat Harney and numerous other elected officials and municipal employees. Mary Day, District Director for Senator Charles Grassley was also aboard.

Former State Senator Jean Lloyd Jones, who has been a long-time passenger train supporter and is an IARP member, was also aboard

The riders also included Linda Detroy Alexander, Cedar Rapids *Gazette*, as well as personnel from KCRG-TV, KGAN-TV, KZIA and other media.

IARP past president Dick Welch, IARP members Ed Fischer, Ken May and Eliot Keller were members of the 15 in 5 Light Rail committee.

The trips did run at about one-third of the anticipated speed of the proposed service. Overall response was very positive to the trips and the proposal.

IARP was one of the organizations helping to underwrite the costs of the excursion train project.

What's next? Schamberger hopes more excursions will happen in the near future to demonstrate the feasibility and importance of the project.

Plans are being developed for a first phase of commuter trains running from North Liberty through Coralville to Iowa City. Next, the trains could be expanded north to the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids. The tracks pass so close to the airport that a walkway could be added from a future boarding stop directly into the terminal near the rental car pickup and baggage claim areas.

The third phase could be additional expansion of service north to downtown Cedar Rapids.

The first two phases of the project are estimated to cost about \$35,000,000 (IC to airport) and the downtown extension is another \$35,000,000. This \$70,000,000 price tag compares to \$400,000,000 for making the four-lane Interstate 380 route into six lanes. The passenger train project could help reduce traffic congestion on I-380 as well as at and near the University of Iowa. It may also reduce parking needs around the University.

Schamberger explained the commuter rail proposals at the IARP meeting in Coralville earlier this year. One of the things he reported was that the consultants said the existing rail line is already located right where one is needed for this project to be successful.

*Article written by IARP Excursion Chair Eliot Keller*



Photo by *Hawkeye Express* Volunteer Tom Persoon



# Cedar Rapids— Iowa City Corridor Demonstration Train



*Photos by IARP General Counsel George Davison and  
Hawkeye Express Volunteer Tom Persoon.*

## DUBUQUE CONTINUES AMTRAK EFFORTS

Dubuque's Envision 2010 Passenger Train Committee is working to keep the Dubuque-Chicago Amtrak route in front of the public's eye. Specifically, the group has organized a community-wide breakfast on Sept. 21, inviting over 140 community organizations to view a new promotional CD and discussion by committee and community leaders. The outcome of this breakfast is designed to gather letters of support and as many petition signatures as possible to present at the Oct. 9 Iowa Transportation Commission meeting in Clinton. It is expected that the Iowa Legislature will be asked to help fund the route.

The Dubuque contingent at the Transportation Commission meeting will join other interested parties from Iowa to encourage the DOT's support

The Amtrak study on this route was finished last spring, and the implementation of the majority of the route is awaiting funding by the Illinois Legislature.

The City of Dubuque has hired a retired Amtrak official to help design a platform and terminal facility in Dubuque. It is hoped the terminal will be located on the riverfront at the recently-renovated train station, but other locations are being considered as well.

The committee has incorporated with the ultimate goal of gaining not-for-profit status. This will allow the group to apply for private grants, working in tandem with the City of Dubuque applying for public funds and grants. This corporation is called the Tristate Railroad Area Interurban Nexus (T.R.A.I.N.). Officers are David Overby, president; Thomas Reilly, vice-president; Penny Roeder, secretary; and Daniel Block, treasurer. Contact Overby at 563-588-2336 or [dsoverby@msn.com](mailto:dsoverby@msn.com) for more information

*Article by IARP member David Overby*



There will be a luncheon on Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:45am – 1:00 pm at Centre Station, 1200 River Drive, Moline, Illinois.

Special guests are:

Illinois State Representative Elaine Nekritz, of Des Plaines, Illinois is the Chair of the House Rail Safety Committee, and Illinois State Representative Donald Moffitt, of Galesburg, Illinois is the Republican spokesman for the House Rail Safety Committee. Both legislators have been instrumental in advocating for expanded passenger train service in Illinois, including Amtrak service from Chicago to the Quad Cities.

The Illinois DOT commissioned Amtrak route study for the Quad Cities will be completed in the next few weeks, which will outline ridership estimates, service time and frequency, infrastructure improvements, route alternatives, and the cost to implement service. The Quad Cities Passenger Rail Coalition is advocating for \$45,000,000.00 in capital funding from the State of Illinois to begin working toward immediate implementation of the Chicago to Quad Cities Amtrak route.

For more information about this event, contact [Paul Rumler](#) at 309-757-5416.

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If you are going to a Hawkeye Football game in Iowa City, ride the *Hawkeye Express*.

This is the fourth year for this train.

The numbers of passengers taking advantage of the train keeps increasing.

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