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NEWS RELEASE

Kansas Department of Transportation News Release

January 28, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARRA Grant to Help Fund Development of a Kansas Passenger Rail Plan

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has been awarded a \$250,000 grant to create a Service Development Plan for potential expanded passenger rail service in Kansas. The grant is included in the \$8 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program.

The Service Development Plan is a detailed, comprehensive business and operations plan for implementing passenger rail service. It will build on a soon-to-be completed Amtrak Expansion Feasibility Study that will assess the capital requirements and operating costs needed to provide state-sponsored passenger rail service between Kansas City, Oklahoma City and Fort Worth. The study and plan are early information gathering steps that will assist the Kansas Legislature in deciding whether to fund railway infrastructure improvements and service operation subsidies.

The grant requires a 50% match of \$250,000. KDOT and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation have committed to share the cost of this match requirement.

“I’m pleased that Kansas has received this grant, and now we must find match money in our budget, which has been hard hit by cuts and decreased revenue this year,” said Transportation Secretary Deb Miller.

“After the Amtrak study and the Service Development Plan are completed, we will provide the reports to the Legislature, who ultimately will determine whether the proposed expansion of rail service can be funded.”

President Obama and Vice-president Biden made multiple grant award announcements today with most targeted at the development of large-scale, high-speed rail programs. Thirty-one states and the District of Columbia will receive grants.

KDOT also applied for two grants that were not selected. One requested \$7.6 million to make track improvements between Emporia and Barclay on BNSF Railway tracks. The project would allow increased speeds on Amtrak’s Southwest Chief, a Chicago to Los Angeles daily route that makes six stops in Kansas.

The second was a \$10 million request to upgrade signals and crossings on BNSF Railway tracks from Newton to the Oklahoma state line. These improvements would be necessary if an extension of the Heartland Flyer passenger rail service is extended from Oklahoma City to Newton.

Additional information on the High-Speed and Inter-city Passenger Rail program is available at U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood’s blog (<http://fastlane.dot.gov/2010/01/president-obama-delivers-on-american-highspeed-rail.html>)

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