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Amtrak ticket Information on the Internet at www.amtrak.com or call 1-800-USA-RAIL



www.iowarail.com

Did you know...

According to the National Transportation Safety Bureau:

- ◆ every 115 minutes, either a person or vehicle is hit by a train; and
- ◆ people are about 30 times more likely to die when involved in a collision with a train than when involved in a collision with another car, bus or truck.

Most crashes happen close to home. Don't become over familiar or overconfident at the crossings you cross every day.

As winter arrives, use *extra* caution when approaching crossings and be prepared to safely stop when a train approaches or gates and lights are activated.

Feature Articles

What is SAFETEA-LU?

SAFETEA-LU is the acronym for the federal Act titled “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users.” That doesn’t make it a whole lot clearer, so let me explain what this is and how passage of this Act is important for the rail transportation system.

The logo for SAFETEA-LU, with the text in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters 'A', 'E', and 'U' are slightly larger than the others.

SAFETEA-LU is the Act (HR 3) that authorizes spending for transportation programs for 2005 to 2010. This Act determines what programs will be supported at the federal level and establishes the federal participation in funding. When the details are worked out, each state will know what level of federal funding will be available in each year to fund highway construction, safety programs, public transit, and other transportation programs.

For the very first time, an entire section or “title” in the Act is devoted to rail transportation. In an Act often referred to as the “Highway Bill,” having a separate rail transportation title, as opposed to a mention here or there throughout the Act, is a step toward a greater understanding of the role rail plays in the transportation system.

Funding and support for various rail programs included in SAFETEA-LU will increase safety and strengthen the rail freight system nationwide.

SAFETEA-LU embodies the following rail-related provisions.

- Additional funding is provided to improve and upgrade highway rail grade crossings. Specifically, Iowa will receive approximately \$1 million more annually for crossing safety programs.
- Funding has been increased for the program that provides long-term loans to railroads for rail rehabilitation and upgrading. Iowa Chicago and Eastern Railroad and Iowa Interstate Railroad have been approved for rehabilitation loans. Other Iowa railroads are applying for these federal loans or considering making an application.
- A new program is created that allows states to compete for funding to relocate and improve rail lines in municipalities.

The Act also includes a total of \$5 million for three Iowa rail development projects, including:

- \$1 million toward the purchase and rehabilitation of the Bondurant rail line (which was scheduled for abandonment);
- \$1 million to reconstruct the D & W Railroad line between Oelwein and Dewar to handle heavier rail cars; and
- \$3 million to extend a rail line to the Eastern Iowa Industrial Center in Davenport.

Building Iowa’s rail system

Iowa’s rail system is far from a static system. It continues to evolve as new agricultural processors and other industries locate along Iowa’s rail lines to take advantage of the benefits of rail transportation.

The Iowa Rail Finance Authority (IRFA) now has an opportunity to assist in further development of Iowa’s rail system through a new funding program. IRFA, an independent board, will administer the funding program with staff support from the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Last year the Iowa General Assembly recognized the need for rail funding to help grow Iowa’s economy and passed legislation to create the Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Program. Loan repayments from past loans for rail development will now be available to reinvest in new projects.

Grants or loans will be available for rail projects that spur economic growth. Industries, local governments or economic development agencies may apply for financial assistance for projects such as:



- building rail spurs to a new or expanding development;
- building or rebuilding sidings to accommodate growth;
- purchasing or rehabilitating existing rail infrastructure; or
- rehabilitating existing rail lines to increase capacity.

This year nearly \$3.6 million will be available in grants or loans, with the conditional cap of no more than 50 percent being awarded in grants.

Applications for the Rail Revolving Loan and Grant Program are available on our Web site at www.iowarail.com. The application deadline is February 10. If you or someone you know is interested in assistance in building or rehabilitating Iowa's rail system, visit our Web site in mid December or contact [John Hey](mailto:john.hey@dot.iowa.gov) at 515-239-1653 or [Larry Mesenbrink](mailto:larry.mesenbrink@dot.iowa.gov) at 515-239-1066 or larry.mesenbrink@dot.iowa.gov.

Industry News

Locomotives come to Iowa

RELCO Locomotives, Inc., a leading provider of locomotives and locomotive maintenance services, opened a new locomotive rebuilding and service facility near Albia in August. The impressive plant is located on a 95-acre site that includes a main locomotive shop, self-contained blast and paint shop, and office space. The 90,000-square-foot main shop houses: five tracks; six overhead cranes, with 50-ton capacity; two raised rail pits; and state-of-the-art fabrication and component rebuilding areas.

The new facility includes over two miles of its own track used to store and stage the locomotives. Located on the Appanoose County Community Railroad (APNC), which has a direct interchange with the BNSF and IC&E railroads, RELCO has the ability to easily receive and send locomotives anywhere in the country. APNC partners with RELCO to test locomotives on their rail line using APNC engineers.

Mark Bachman, executive vice president of RELCO operations said, "When it was clear that our Illinois plant, which was hemmed in by urban growth, needed to move, we sent staff to tour a number of potential locations. It was clear that Iowa had the type of workforce and work ethic that we were looking for. Next, we looked for an area rural enough to meet our needs for a large, relatively noisy facility that could provide the rail access we needed. We are happy to have found a great location in Albia on the APNC that provided the qualities that we needed, and look forward to a successful future of growth."

The future looks good for RELCO as large railroads focus more on the core business of moving goods, and are increasingly outsourcing heavy maintenance and engine refurbishing. Many smaller railroads and Fortune 500 companies such as ADM, Exxon and Cargill rely on RELCO to manage their locomotive needs.

The RELCO facility has hired over 40 employees and is well on the way to exceed their goal of creating 71 new jobs within three years. The Iowa DOT assisted in the relocation with a \$100,000 Rail Economic Development grant, which was contingent on job creation, for track work at the facility.

RELCO Locomotives, Inc., a family-owned business based in the Chicago area, began operations in

1961. RELCO's services include locomotive sales and leasing, locomotive rebuilding, component and parts sales, locomotive maintenance, and crash repair.

Safety News

A train for life

Over 300 passengers were treated to a train ride out of Boone on a beautiful September day. But it was not all just fun and games. The focus of this trip was saving lives.

On board the special Operation Lifesaver train were law enforcement officers, government officials and others who have an interest in rail safety. Passengers received a train-side view of highway rail crossings, and observed traffic behavior as the train approached and passed. The speed and power of trains was dramatically brought home to riders when trains sped by in the opposite direction at what *seemed* a mere arm's length away. At the "end of the line" Operation Lifesaver representatives gave each car a presentation on rail safety, including the grim statistics along with actions that riders personally and professionally could take to improve safety.

Iowa's Operation Lifesaver State Coordinator, Jari Mohs, said, "This was a unique way to give riders an opportunity to learn about rail safety in a meaningful environment. Operation Lifesaver has certified volunteers trained and available to present free programs on rail safety in your community. If interested in scheduling a presentation, contact Jari Mohs at 515-291-2492 or via E-mail at iowa4ol@mchsi.com.

The six-car, two-engine (and one caboose) train traveled from Boone to Jefferson and back on the Union Pacific double-main track. The train equipment was provided by Union Pacific Railroad. Union Pacific employees, with help from Operation Lifesaver volunteers, handled all the arrangements to make this event possible.

Riders were treated to a brief stop atop the Kate Shelley Bridge for a majestic view of the Des Moines River Valley. The Kate Shelley Bridge is the world's longest and highest double-track railroad bridge. Completed in 1901 by Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, the bridge spans a length of 2,685 feet and is 185 feet above the Des Moines River.



Operation Lifesaver is a non-profit, educational program sponsored cooperatively by the nation's railroads; federal, state, and local government agencies; and highway safety organizations with a mission to end collisions, deaths and injuries at places where roadways cross train tracks, and on railroad rights-of-way.

For more information about Operation Lifesaver, visit their web site at www.operationlifesaver.org

Preparing for the unexpected

Highways and railways transport a variety of essential goods, including hazardous materials such as chlorine gas which is used to treat our water supplies and anhydrous ammonia that fertilizes Iowa's farmland. Throughout October, Transcaer[®]'s national outreach effort, which is sponsored by chemical manufacturing and the rail and tanker truck industries, hosted a series of training sessions for emergency responders and other local officials on how to recognize and deal with incidents potentially involving hazardous materials.

The participants rotated through three hands-on stations and learned about the:

- basics (inside and out) of a railroad locomotive, including the all important control to shut down a

- locomotive from the ground;
- types of valves and other controls that a responder may encounter on a rail tank car and how they operate; and
- configuration and controls on an anhydrous ammonia truck trailer.

Overall, 362 people took advantage of this valuable training opportunity so that they would be better equipped to handle the unexpected. Participants appreciated the opportunity to learn "hands on," and become more familiar with the transporting equipment and its operation.



The Transcaer tour made stops in Sioux City, Council Bluffs, Mason City, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, Ottumwa, and Davenport. Each stop on the tour was equipped with training rail cars and a locomotive supplied by Union Pacific Railroad, BNSF Railway, CF Industries, and Exxonmobil. Several railroads worked together to move the equipment to each site, including: Union Pacific; BNSF; Norfolk Southern; Iowa, Chicago and Eastern (ICE); and the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway (CRANDIC).

Several truck transport firms and chemical producers provided highway training tank trailers, including Iowa Tank Lines, Terra and Barsol. Also, several governmental agencies participated with displays and personnel, including the Environmental Protection Agency, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and regional hazmat teams for Iowa communities. Local site coordinators from each of the regional hazmat teams worked with the railroads to find locations for each of the events and sent invitations to the applicable local agencies.

"We were very pleased with the attendance and quality of training provided at each stop," said Rodney Tucker, Iowa Transcaer chairman and tour leader. "The planning paid off and we were well received at each stop, with the site coordinators and trainers doing a great job."

More information on Transcaer[®] can be found on their Web site, www.transcaer.org.

On the Web

[iowarail.com News](#)

iowarail.com has a variety of information about Iowa's rail transportation system and the programs offered by the Iowa Department of Transportation. But, we want to make it better. A Web site redesign is in the initial planning stages. Is there information you are seeking that you cannot find on our site? Are there features you would like to see? Let the site Webmaster (diane.mccauley@dot.iowa.gov) know your thoughts.

Passenger Rail Corner

Up in the air

No one can say that passenger rail has been forgotten this year. With an unprecedented level of activity, Amtrak and passenger rail is generating a lot of publicity and debate. But, where it will all lead is still up in the air for the long term future of Amtrak.

Here are a few of this year's highlights (or lowlights).

- The Bush Administration proposed sweeping changes for Amtrak, with fundamental changes in

the way passenger rail is financed and operated.

- The Bush Administration's proposal created a lot of discussion and activity in Congress. Many bills were introduced in the House and Senate, containing widely differing funding levels and reform language.
- At the same time Congress was discussing the funding issues, the General Accounting Office published a scathing report on Amtrak and Amtrak's financial reporting and condition. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee formed a working group to evaluate the report.
- David Gunn, former Amtrak CEO, was fired by the Amtrak board, which created a heated discussion among opponents and proponents of Amtrak alike. The board's action spawned a Congressional hearing on the firing and condition of the Amtrak board.
- President Bush recently signed a \$1.318 billion Amtrak appropriation. HR3058 includes funding for 2006, as well as a number of reforms in Amtrak operations.

How any of these recent activities will eventually play out is anybody's guess. The best that can be said is that the issues faced by Amtrak have been more prominent than any time in the past and Amtrak is funded for another year of operation while Congress and the Administration wrestle with a long term solution.

Many organizations are interested in the outcome of this issue. Their opinions can be viewed at the following Web sites:

www.s4prc.org

www.fra.dot.gov

www.narprail.org

States for Passenger Rail Coalition

Federal Railroad Administration

National Association of Railroad Passengers

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