



Rail Coalition Marks Celebration Of National Train Day

May 4, 2009

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WASHINGTON, DC — States for Passenger Rail Coalition Chairman Frank Busalacchi today released remarks applauding the celebration of National Train Day. The event will be celebrated here and in other cities across the country May 9.

“National Train Day is an important time to celebrate the vital role trains play in our nation’s transportation system,” Busalacchi said. “Passenger trains are reemerging as an important way to move people in all parts of America. They are energy-efficient, pollute less than other transportation modes, and ease congestion on highways and in the air. Our challenge is to make sure that the federal government fully funds passenger rail so it can meet the traveling demands of today and the future.”

National Train Day marks the day the “golden spike” was driven into the final railroad tie that joined 1,776 miles of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railways, ceremonially creating the nation’s first transcontinental railroad. That spike was driven on May 10, 1869 in Promontory Summit, Utah.

Busalacchi noted that the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, of which he was a member, last year identified funding levels required to ensure the future stability and growth of the nation’s passenger rail network.

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The commission's final report concluded \$357.2 billion in capital improvements would be required by the year 2050. Additionally, a commitment of \$5 billion per year will be needed for the 80/20 federal rail grant program over the six-year reauthorizing period. This important program provides an 80 percent federal/20 percent state funding split for passenger rail projects, mirroring the funding split in highway projects.

“As Congress considers the reauthorization legislation for the nation's surface transportation system, it is vital that passenger rail service be funded more generously than ever,” Busalacchi said. “Passenger rail travel is rising to levels that have not been seen in many years. Americans want a world-class passenger rail system.”

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