



News for Immediate Release

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Governor Rendell: Federal Recovery Funds Create Jobs, Improve Pennsylvania's Major Rail Corridor

Harrisburg – Governor Edward G. Rendell said today that the investment of more than \$26 million in two Pennsylvania high speed rail projects will help increase ridership, improve competitiveness and create jobs over the next two years. The investment, announced by President Obama today, is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In addition to creating jobs for people working directly on the Keystone East and Keystone West corridors, these two projects will boost the economy by generating orders for 250 tons of asphalt, 150 cubic yards of concrete and 50,000 pounds of steel that will keep workers in factories and companies on the job producing the necessary materials. Most materials for these projects will come from Pennsylvania firms and keep workers on the job.

“Investing in high speed rail passenger service is critical to our future economic success because it increases our competitiveness and relieves congestion on our overburdened highways,” Governor Rendell said.

The funding includes:

- \$25.6 million to continue improvements to the Keystone Corridor between Philadelphia and Harrisburg. The preliminary engineering work will improve signals and track. Two new bridges will be constructed and the three remaining grade crossings on the 105-mile line will be eliminated.
- \$750,000 for a feasibility study to determine improvements needed to make high speed passenger rail service on the Keystone Corridor West between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh a reality.

Funding for Keystone Corridor improvements was the top priority in the applications Pennsylvania submitted last year for high speed rail funding.

“I applaud President Obama’s leadership for recognizing and investing in strategies that will be crucial if we are to meet the transportation needs of the next century,” Governor Rendell said. “From a national perspective, it is highly appropriate to make the largest investments in the two marquee projects in California and Florida while continuing to move other shovel-ready projects forward. I am pleased that

the U.S. Department of Transportation selected our two priority projects for funding. Pennsylvania and the nation must continue to look for ways to underwrite more passenger rail investment.

“These awards are terrific and we hope that future rail allocations can consider two other important Pennsylvania rail projects – the Pittsburgh Maglev Project and the Scranton to New York passenger rail service,” he stressed.

Ridership on the Keystone Corridor East increased by more than 30 percent after Amtrak and the commonwealth completed a \$145.5 million upgrade that helped to boost train speeds from 90 mph to 110 mph. The improvements increased ridership from 891,764 in 2006 to 1.2 million in 2009 and reduced the express travel time between Harrisburg and Philadelphia to 90 minutes.

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