



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

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Governor Quinn Announces High-Speed Rail Service for Thanksgiving Travelers on Chicago-St. Louis Corridor

110-MPH Rail Segment Starts in Time for Peak Holiday Season, Marks Major Milestone for Illinois' Rail Network

SPRINGFIELD – November 22, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn, Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann Schneider and Amtrak officials today announced that 110-mph rail service has started on a 15-mile segment of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor, just in time for the heavily-traveled Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Today's announcement is a major step towards the establishment of a high-speed rail network in Illinois, one of Governor Quinn's key priorities as he works to modernize the state's infrastructure.

"This next generation rail system gives passengers a safer, more reliable way to travel across Illinois and connect with family this holiday season," Governor Quinn said. "Today's announcement demonstrates significant progress on this major transportation initiative that will continue to boost Illinois' economy and make sure our state has the best rail system in the nation."

Starting today, Amtrak *Lincoln Service* trains are operating at a maximum speed of 110 mph between Dwight and Pontiac. These include northbound Trains 300, 302, 304, and southbound Trains 301, 305, and 307. Other Amtrak trains on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor will continue to operate at 79 mph top speeds, including the *Texas Eagle* (trains 21/321/421 and 22/322/422).

"Governor Quinn's leadership and guidance on implementing high-speed rail service has been instrumental in moving this major infrastructure project forward," Secretary Schneider said. "We are extremely proud to introduce 110-mile per hour rail service to Illinois Amtrak passengers for the very first time, and look forward to continual progress in bringing enhanced services to riders along the corridor."

In addition, select Amtrak *Lincoln Service* trains will have free AmtrakConnect Wi-Fi service throughout the coaches, business class seating and cafes. Passengers are advised to look for the Illinois High-Speed Rail logo and AmtrakConnect posters on Trains 300, 301, 304, and 305.

"Regular operations at 110 mph for six daily Amtrak *Lincoln Service* trains are a major milestone in the development of our Chicago Hub network," Amtrak President and CEO Joe Boardman said. "Combined with our high-speed trains in Michigan, this means Amtrak now has a total of 14 daily trains to and from Chicago that operate at 110 mph."

The 15-mile segment showcases major infrastructure improvements, state-of-the-art signaling, and significant technological and safety advancements. The 110-mph service is projected to be in place along nearly 75 percent of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor by 2015, reducing travel time by more than an hour.

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As the transportation hub of the Midwest, Illinois is a national leader in passenger rail expansion. Total ridership on Amtrak's four Illinois routes has grown nearly 75 percent over the past six years, rising to more than 2.1 million passengers last year. Ridership on today's Chicago-St. Louis *Lincoln Service* alone has doubled in that time period. When completed, trains traveling from Chicago to St. Louis will reach top speeds matching those of trains now traveling between Chicago and Detroit, the fastest passenger trains in North America outside of the East Coast.

Today's announcement follows the recent awarding of a \$352 million multi-state procurement contract to design, build and deliver 130 bi-level passenger railcars for use in California and the Midwest, including the Chicago to St. Louis corridor. The contract will now allow Rochelle, Illinois-based vendor Nippon-Sharyo/Sumitomo Corporation of America to move forward as the builder of the railcars, the first of which are slated for delivery in fall 2015.

To follow progress, updates and completed improvements along the signature Chicago-St. Louis high-speed rail corridor, please visit www.idothsr.org. For the latest Amtrak schedules, fares and more information, visit www.Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL.

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