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For Immediate Release
Oct 25, 2010

AMTRAK

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA – The Federal Railroad Administration announced today that the States of Iowa and Illinois have been approved to start up a new passenger train service between Chicago and Iowa City, Iowa. The service would operate two scheduled trains per day at speeds up to 79 MPH. The trains would terminate at Union Station in downtown Chicago and the old depot on Wright Street in Iowa City. Based on preliminary estimates, the service could start in early 2013 after completion of engineering, track work, signalization and new equipment is manufactured.

Dennis H. Miller, President and CEO of Iowa Interstate Railroad Ltd. stated, “Daily passenger rail service between Chicago and Iowa City has been a dream for many Iowans since the 1970’s. I know many people in our communities have worked very hard for a long time to bring this plan to fruition and their diligence and perseverance has finally paid off. Iowa Interstate Railroad personnel have also spent many hours working with the local community leaders, the States of Iowa and Illinois, and AMTRAK to make sure that if this service was approved, we could handle it in conjunction with our existing and growing freight business. We feel confident that our company can accommodate these extra trains in a safe manner and allow for them to operate on time and without delay. Had our company not invested millions of dollars in capital improvements over the past 8 years, this project would not have happened. AMTRAK had studied this lane for over 20 years and each previous time could not justify the service due to slow speeds caused by track conditions. Our freight business has grown over 100% in the last few years thanks to our current customers and new industry that came to rely on our railroad for reliable, safe service. We invested in our infrastructure to support their business. As a result of our investment, less public sector investment was required to accommodate passenger service thus making it a feasible.”

IAIS Chairman Henry Posner III commented, “As a member of NARP (National Association of Rail Passengers) since 1969 and a frequent user of passenger trains worldwide, I am personally gratified to see the emergence of intercity passenger service on Iowa Interstate.

“But more importantly, the return of passenger service to our formerly-abandoned line vindicates the judgment, tenacity and vision of our stakeholders over the years, beginning with our formation from the ashes of the Rock Island in 1984. It was not so long ago that we were considered excess capacity in the downward spiral of the age of regulation; the lesson here is that a healthy freight network is the single most important building block for passenger service.”

Founded in 1984, the Iowa Interstate Railroad, Ltd. is a privately held, regional railroad that operates across the Council Bluffs, Iowa to Chicago, IL corridor with a connection to Peoria, IL. It further provides freight rail service, directly or indirectly, to the Quad Cities (IA and IL), Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, and Iowa City. For more information, please visit www.IAISRR.com.

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