

## TGV Turns 30

French Train à Grande Vitesse Transforming Travel Since 1981

By Paul Derby  
Midwest Rail Report UK Correspondent

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) high-speed rail system in France. The French Government's decision to invest heavily in high-speed rail infrastructure made the country a bullet train pioneer. The subsequent expansion of the network has helped to spread much needed urban regeneration.

When the very first TGV service was launched in Paris by President François Mitterrand on September 27, 1981, the country laid down a marker that the rest of Europe was to follow – at varying speeds – over the next three decades. While Japan's renowned high speed rail network was already in place by this time, in Europe,

France led the way in embracing the possibilities that HSR technology offered.

France started its TGV programme in the late 1960s. By the dawn of the 1970s the first prototype, TGV001, was engaged in intensive testing, later setting a world speed record for a train in autonomous traction at 318km/h. The system was owned and operated by the French national railways organisation SNCF and has since become an integral part of the country's transport strategy.

Two factors drove France's decision to establish its first HSR line: air travel in the country was expanding at a relentless pace,  
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The original TGV Sud-Est equipment began operations at 168 mph between Paris and Lyon on September 27, 1981.

## Governor Quinn Announces Partnership with University of Illinois on 220-mph Study

By Pete Goldin

On June 2 Illinois Governor Pat Quinn announced a partnership between the University of Illinois, the Illinois Department of Transportation and a special advisory group to study the feasibility of 220-mph passenger rail service between Chicago,

Champaign-Urbana and beyond. The study will complement the ongoing construction of a regional 110-mph network that will connect Chicago to 40 cities in the Midwest, while supporting Governor Quinn's vision

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## Massive Economic Benefits from HSR, Says MHSRA Study

The Midwest High Speed Rail Association has released the results of a study focused on the economic impacts of a 220-mph Midwest high-speed rail network on Chicago. The study, sponsored by Siemens, compared the capital cost, ridership and economic impacts of 150-mph and 220-mph high speed rail systems on Chicago.

In terms of economic benefits, the study found that a 220-mph HSR network in the Midwest would drive an annual increase in business sales of \$13.8 billion, 104,000 new jobs and an additional \$5.5 billion in wages each year in the Chicago Metro area. The high speed rail network would also encourage \$314 million in new annual visitor spending in downtown Chicago. Long term, new business sales generated by economic activity associated with the HSR system are estimated to be almost \$300 billion over 30 years.

All of these impressive economic advantages are due to expected high ridership on the network. The study found that a 220-mph HSR network in the Midwest would attract 43 million annual riders from 13 cities and major metropolitan areas, with 25 daily departures on each of the four main corridors. Travel times between Chicago and the furthest points of the network would be 2-3 hours.

The network is expected to generate more than \$2.2 billion annually in user-generated revenues, translating into a cost of about \$58 million per mile, or a total of \$83.6 billion – the same costs as similar systems already operating around the world.

The association is using this study as a tool to engage stakeholders in the process to build political support for investment in bullet trains in the Midwest.

Richard Harnish

# The Future of Rail Funding



On July 8 Congressman John Mica (R-FL), Chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, held an event to outline his proposal to reauthorize the surface transportation program. His proposed legislation would set policy for highways, transit and other programs funded out of the Highway Trust Fund.

Unfortunately, the Democratic members of the committee did not attend. They held their own event at which they focused on the low dollar amount of the proposal.

The previous authorization, SAFETEA-LU, expired on September 30, 2009. The programs have been extended with continuing resolutions

since.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has a significant hurdle to overcome in laying out a new authorization. Gas tax revenues have declined in recent years as people drive less and in smaller cars. Meanwhile, increasing oil prices have caused the cost of highway construction, which is very oil-intensive, to climb. The resulting shortfall has been covered with direct subsidies from the general fund totaling over \$60 billion since 2008.

Raising the gas tax, which has remained a flat 18.4 cents per gallon since 1993, has been judged a political impossibility. House leadership has said that additional direct subsidies are no longer acceptable.

As a result, Representative Mica has proposed cutting highway and transit spending by 34%, resulting in a loss of 490,000 jobs across the United States. He has also proposed eliminating many other programs funded out of the highway trust fund. While some committee members did sign a "dear colleague" letter to the Ways and Means Committee requesting a meeting to discuss ways to raise additional revenues, these still represent significant cuts.

Clearly, the current transportation structure must change, and therein lies the opportunity for high-speed and intercity passenger rail. Congressman Mica even seemed to recognize this when asked about high-speed rail provisions in the bill. He said, "When you see the price of one car on the road, new highway construction through metropolitan areas, or even our rural areas, you become an advocate of transportation alternatives." What this signals to me is that Congressman Mica himself, whether he acts on it with legislation or not, understands that in the process of changing our transportation infrastructure program, we need to start pursuing alternative transportation.

Many of the long-held assumptions about the transportation program are going to be challenged. That gives us the opportunity to offer HSIPR as a real solution to shrinking federal transportation resources and the need for more cost-effective transportation options. High-speed rail and Amtrak have not been included in Mica's program to date and may move forward in a separate bill. One way or the other, you need to let your elected leaders know that you want long-term federal funding for high-speed rail and intercity passenger rail.

Rail supporters must let members of congress know that they feel high-speed rail is a very important solution and should be a priority when restructuring our transportation system. We are receiving reports that opponents of high-speed rail are out-calling and out-emailing the supporters. Visit [StandUpForTrains.org](http://StandUpForTrains.org) to make your voice heard.

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# Midwest Gets \$404 Million for Rail Projects

By Pete Goldin

US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced \$2.02 billion in high-speed rail awards on May 9, providing an unprecedented investment to speed up trains in the Northeast Corridor, expand service in the Midwest, and provide new, state-of-the-art locomotives and rail cars as part of the Administration's plan to transform travel in America. "Earlier this year, President Obama and I made a commitment to improve and expand America's transportation system, including the development of a modern, national high-speed rail network," said Vice President Joe Biden. "And today, we're announcing investments that will continue our progress toward making this vision a reality. These projects will put thousands of Americans to work, save hundreds of thousands of hours for American travelers every year, and boost U.S. manufacturing by investing hundreds of millions of dollars in next-generation, American-made locomotives and railcars."

The new investment will provide \$404.1 million to improve passenger rail service in the Midwest; \$795 million to upgrade some of the most heavily-used sections of the Northeast Corridor, increasing speeds from 135 to 160 miles per hour; \$300 million for the nation's first 220-mph high-speed rail system in California; \$15

million to develop a passenger rail corridor linking Dallas/Fort Worth to Houston; and \$336.2 million for state-of-the-art locomotives and rail cars for California and the Midwest.

Awards to projects in the Midwest include:

**Illinois** – Chicago-St. Louis Corridor: \$186.3 million to construct upgrades between Dwight and Joliet.

**Michigan** – Kalamazoo-Dearborn Service: \$196.5 million to rehabilitate track and signal systems, bringing trains up to speeds of 110 mph on a 235-mile section of the Chicago-Detroit corridor, reducing trip times by 30 minutes.

**Michigan** – Ann Arbor Station Project: \$2.8 million for an engineering and environmental analysis to construct a new railroad station in Ann Arbor.

**Minnesota** – Northern Lights Express: \$5 million to complete engineering and environmental work for establishing the Northern Lights Express, a 110-mph high-speed intercity passenger service connecting Minneapolis and Duluth.

**Missouri** – Merchant's Bridge Replacement: \$13.5 million to advance the design of a new bridge over the Mississippi River on the Chicago-St. Louis Corridor, replacing a bridge built in the 1890s.

## \$268 Million for New Trains

California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri will receive \$336.2 million from the US DOT to purchase American-made trains to run on rail corridors in those states. The announcement was made by US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on August 3. Previously awarded rail dollars bring the amount received by these five states and Washington State to \$782 million for the purchase of 33 quick-acceleration locomotives and 120 bi-level passenger cars.

Midwestern states - Iowa, Illinois, Michigan and Missouri - will purchase 7 locomotives and 48 bi-level rail cars with \$268.2 million in ARRA funds, obligated this month. Illinois will purchase an additional 12 locomotives and 30 bi-level rail cars with the \$222.1 in ARRA funds obligated in December 2010, and the state's \$11.8 million in matching funds.

California and Illinois reached cooperative agreements with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to begin a multi-state procurement of equipment for passenger rail corridors in California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Oregon and Washington State. Through a joint procurement process states will leverage these federal investments, along with state matching dollars, ensuring taxpayers receive the best possible deal while encouraging manufacturers to build equipment in US plants with American workers and suppliers.

The trains will be designed to travel more than 110 mph along intercity passenger corridors, and meet standards developed by the state-led Next Generation Equipment Committee. The committee will provide manufacturers with consistent specifications for all passenger trains in the United States.

The state partners will now begin a joint procurement process, first issuing a request for information (RFI) and then a request for proposal (RFP) to allow for an open and competitive process. The RFI is expected to be issued in late summer 2011.

# Englewood Flyover Takes Off

By Pete Goldin

Construction began on Chicago's Englewood Flyover project on August 23. The \$126 million grade separation project will eliminate one of the most delay-prone intersections in the entire Amtrak system.

A 2,000-foot-long bridge for NS tracks over Metra Rock Island District Line tracks will separate Metra commuter trains from Amtrak passenger trains traveling on the NS corridor. Approximately 78 Metra trains and 14 Amtrak trains, in addition to heavy freight rail traffic, pass through the crossing every day.

The Englewood Flyover is part of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE)

Program, a partnership between the State of Illinois, the City of Chicago, freight railroads, Metra and Amtrak, to remove and reduce train congestion throughout Chicagoland and the Midwest region. This congestion impacts all modes of transportation, forcing more trucks on to the highways, limiting access to airports, and reducing the capacity of railroads, which diminishes the region's effectiveness as the nation's transportation hub. By reducing freight and commuter delays, the Englewood Flyover will keep more people and freight off Chicago's congested highways.

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**IOWA** *continued from back cover*

that Illinois is already moving ahead on the Chicago-to-Quad Cities segment of the rail line.

"The Chicago-Quad Cities service is not impacted by Iowa's debate for extended service along the corridor to Iowa City," Rumler concluded. "Quad Cities passenger rail is still on schedule to begin by 2015."

TGV continued from page 1

while a lack of capacity on the existing rail route between Paris and Lyon – the country’s two largest cities – placed severe restrictions on passenger growth. TGV Sud-Est, connecting Paris with Lyon, began operation with line speeds of up to 168 mph, and passengers quickly took to the idea, in part because fares were kept at competitive levels in a bid to open up HSR to the masses.

Journey times between Paris and Lyon were reduced by 30% and TGV Sud-Est gained a significant share of passenger traffic as a result. Prior to the line’s opening, rail travel on the route accounted for around 40% of passenger journeys, compared with around 30% for air travel. Once operational however, the TGV service attracted 72% of passengers while air travel waned, accounting for less than 10% of journeys.

France recognized from the beginning that building a country-wide HSR network to replace existing infrastructure would be prohibitively expensive. Instead it planned to link new HSR lines with existing routes to offer a combination of shorter journey times and a comprehensive network of destinations.

Professor Chris Nash of the UK’s Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds says this approach was fundamental to the success of the system: “The French success came from understanding that a combination of high speed lines and conventional track would deliver high volumes of traffic and wide geographic coverage.

“France has also been pretty successful in building to budget and getting its pas-

senger traffic forecasts right. There is a lot of talk about optimistic bias in estimates of traffic but aside from the Channel Tunnel, where forecasts were way too high, expectations for the domestic network were largely accurate.”



He also points to the geography of France, which allowed a number of cities to be connected via an initial single high speed line: “France was able to serve a whole stream of cities through one line – contrast that with Spain where Madrid’s location meant that a number of lines had to radiate out from the capital.”

### Expanding the Network

Following the success of the TGV Sud-Est line, the TGV network continued to expand and now includes in excess of 8,000km of track and connections to 230 towns and cities. The expansion began in 1989 with a new route to the west and

serving the Atlantic coast, which opened for business in 1989 under the name TGV Atlantique. It brought connections to cities such as Bordeaux and Rennes.

In 1993 the TGV Nord service was launched connecting Paris to Lille. A year later the opening of the Channel Tunnel created a rail link between UK and France for the first time. In 2001 the TGV Méditerranée line began operation, allowing passengers to travel to destinations including Nice and Marseille. The impact was significant, with annual passenger numbers at Marseille Saint Charles station increasing from 7.1 million in 2000 to 15 million by 2007.

In 2007 the TGV network was extended east to the border with Germany and beyond. The latest phase of the expansion is due to take place in December this year with the unveiling of the Rhine-Rhone LGV.

The expansion of the TGV network in France has been an undoubted success with the lines carrying more than 1.7 billion passengers over the last 30 years. One in three TGV passengers is now a business traveler, emphasising the possibility for people to live in one city and commute to another over long distances.

In financial terms the TGV network also makes a major contribution to the performance of SNCF. 2010 revenues for the SNCF Voyages division that includes the TGV network stood at €7.2 billion (\$10.4bn) with pre-tax profits of €915m (\$1.3bn) as more than 98 million passengers used the domestic network.

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The TGV Duplex was introduced in 1995 as way to increase capacity on busy corridors. It features bi-level cars that can carry nearly 50% more passengers than single level trains.

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## TGV Proves Economic Benefits of HSR

While it is difficult to put an exact figure on the economic and social benefits that the TGV system has delivered in France, the experience of two cities, Lille and Lyon, is evidence that the introduction of a high speed rail line can make a tangible difference to urban renewal efforts.

In a report commissioned by UK public interest body Greengauge 21, which supports the implementation of a high speed rail network in Britain, the revitalisation of Lille and Lyon is one of the areas looked at in detail.

The report notes that high speed rail involves a high proportion of business related travel, as well as commuting and leisure journeys, meaning that there is a strong focus on the service sectors of the economy – business, commerce and tourism, for example. “Thus a positive effect will follow where higher speed rail is provided to a city growing its service sectors,” it states.

Lyon was the first city to be served by a HSR link from Paris and prior to the opening of the TGV line all services were routed through Lyon Perrache station in the historic heart of the city. To support the launch of TGV services a brand new station was built to the east of the city at Part-Dieu.

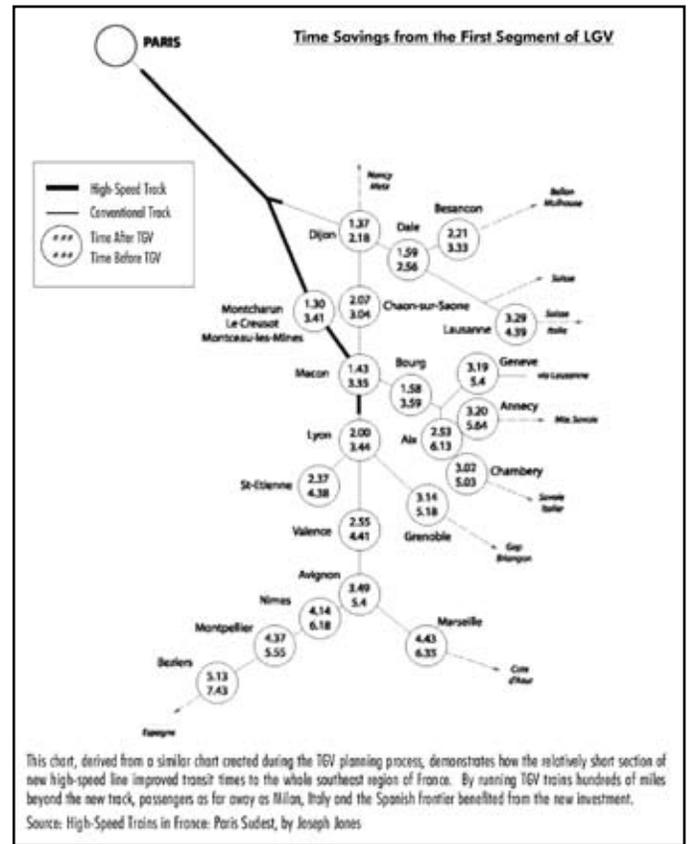
Further commercial development around Part-Dieu quickly followed and office accommodation in the area appreciated in value. Businesses already established in Lyon opted to move their base to Part-

Dieu to take advantage of the nearby HSR line. Hotel accommodation has also expanded in recent years in an area that previously featured very few hotel rooms, suggesting that the HSR line has also helped to boost tourist traffic.

The local public transportation system, the expansion of the TGV network through Lyon, and the connection between the two systems has also helped to spread urban renewal in and around Part-Dieu.

The story of Lille in the north of France contrasts sharply with that of Lyon, it being primarily an industrial city built on the trade in coal, steel and cotton. In what would prove to be a critical forward-thinking decision, the city council set aside land and protected it from other development in expectation of a future TGV extension, recognising the potential a high speed link could have in transforming its fortunes.

The result was Lille Europe— a station dedicated to TGV traffic built on the site of a former barracks. It is a connection point between Paris, London and Brussels. A major commercial center has been established since then with offices, hotels and



a large retail complex sitting alongside a public park.

As the Greengauge 21 report notes: “Further programmes have led to substantial new building of offices, public housing and a very large conference and events hall in areas adjacent to Lille Europe. This forms part of a continuing strategy of development for the area.” Lille’s newfound prominence also enabled the city to win the title of European City of Culture in 2004.



Lyon's Pari-Dieu station (left), built to serve the launch of TGV service, has generated real estate development in the surrounding area (right) including growth in hotel accommodations.

## FLYOVER continued from page 3

“Untying rail congestion in Chicago is critical to developing a Midwest passenger rail network that will connect the 40 largest markets in the Midwest,” said US Secretary

of Transportation Ray LaHood.

The federal obligation of \$126 million, awarded last year, was funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Illinois DOT also contributed

\$6.6 million to the project.

An agreement between Illinois, NS and Amtrak also lays the groundwork for an additional express track for high-speed trains to points east and south.

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**QUINN** *continued from page 1*

to create jobs, enhance regional mobility and improve the environment by expanding passenger rail in Illinois.

“Illinois is leading the nation with our work to expand high-speed and passenger rail,” said Governor Quinn. “This study will provide greater insight into how we can make 220-mph rail service a reality. An expanded and improved rail network will boost our position in the global economy and create thousands of jobs.”

The study will explore the potential costs and benefits of establishing 220-mph service between O’Hare International Airport, downtown Chicago, McCormick Place, and Champaign-Urbana. It will also look at extending the corridor in the region to cities south of Champaign-Urbana, including St. Louis and Indianapolis.

Leading the study will be University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign profes-

sor Christopher P.L. Barkan, director of the school’s railroad engineering program and one of the nation’s top rail scholars. Contributing will be University of Illinois at Chicago Urban Transportation Center director Stephen Schlickman, former executive director of the Regional Transportation Authority. Their findings, made possible through a \$1.25 million contribution from the Illinois Jobs Now! capital program, is expected to be complete and presented to Governor Quinn in late 2012.

“I’m delighted that the University of Illinois can lend its vast expertise to this crucial study, and I’m grateful to the governor and other leaders in the state for their support of this important work,” said University of Illinois President Michael Hogan. “High-speed rail is transformational in its effect on economic development, personal mobility and on our society, in general. It’s an idea that is well worth a hard look. The benefits to the University of

Illinois alone cannot be overstated.”

In addition to offering corridor location recommendations, the study will offer estimated ridership projections, economic impacts, construction costs and financing options. Assisting in the effort will be an advisory group composed of transportation experts, rail advocates, labor leaders, and regional planners who will provide input during the course of the study.

The members of the special advisory group include: State Senator Martin Sandoval (D-Chicago); State Representative Elaine Nekritz (D-Northbrook); Richard Harnish, Midwest High Speed Rail Association; Kevin Brubaker, Environmental Law & Policy Center; Joan Murphy, Cook County Commissioner (6th); Bob Guy, United Transportation Union; J.D. Ross, Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors; MarySue Barrett, Metropolitan Planning Council; Jack Guthman, Shefsky & Froelich Ltd.



Governor Quinn (at podium) announces the State’s 220-mph rail study flanked by members of the study’s advisory group. MHSRA Executive Director is seen second from left.



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## Future of Iowa Trains in Governor's Hands

By Pete Goldin

After an intense budget debate in the Iowa Legislature that came within hours of shutting down the state government on June 30, the budget bill has been passed, and passenger rail survived this round.

Although Republicans in Iowa's House of Representatives sought to eliminate all passenger rail funding, the Iowa State Senate voted to retain the \$5 million appropriated in the two previous year's budgets for the state's portion of the Chicago-Iowa City route, nicknamed the "Green Line." Despite the fact that passenger rail did not receive any new funds, rail advocates see the budget vote as a sign that the proposed route from Iowa City to the Quad Cities is still alive. The decision to move forward on the project is now back in the hands of Iowa Governor Terry Branstad.

"The legislative budget for FY 2012 for passenger rail (\$6.5 million) was deappropriated and the FY 2013 appropriations did not include any multi-modal funding, including passenger rail," explained Tammy Nicholson of the Iowa DOT's Office of Rail Transportation. "The previous passenger rail funds from FY 2010 and FY 2011 were not deappropriated, so that leaves the DOT the use of the previous \$5 million for passenger rail."

The FY 2010 budget included \$3 million in funding, and FY 2011 included \$2 million. The Iowa DOT spent \$500,000 so far, for environmental studies, preliminary

engineering and FRA application preparations, leaving \$4.5 million still available for passenger rail.

"The intent language that was passed in FY 2011, that the legislature intends to provide up to \$20 million over four years to help fund Iowa's match for federal funding, remained," she continued. Iowa would need these matching funds to be eligible to receive the federal grant of \$230 million awarded to the project in October 2010.

The budget bill also ended Iowa's membership in the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC), a coalition of state leaders from across the region advocating passenger rail improvements.

"We are reviewing the legislative appropriations and assessing the impact on the project and our ability to move forward," Nicholson added. "This will involve discussion with our partners, the Governor's office and the FRA."

"We owe a lot of thanks to the Iowa Senate, which continued to include passenger rail funding in their budget," said Paul Rumler, Senior Vice President of Community Development, Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce. "The Senators, especially Dvorsky, Beall and McCoy, continued to fight for passenger rail."

"We salvaged the \$5 million already appropriated but the House insisted on deappropriating 2012 funding and withdrawing from the MIPRC in the standings bill," noted

Iowa State Senator Daryl Beall, a proponent of passenger rail. "I did not realize how deep the opposition to passenger rail is among House Republicans and the Governor."

"Our work is cut out for us to convince the Governor and House Republicans that a \$20 million down payment to pull down \$230 million in federal funds is a good investment for Iowa and Iowans," Beall added. "It likely will be more as Florida and Wisconsin say 'no thanks'."

Iowa State Senator Bob Dvorsky called the passenger rail language in the budget bill "a compromise," noting that the available funds "should allow the DOT to continue the passenger rail process."

"It will also require passenger rail supporters to 'Ramp Up' their support and convince more Iowa House members to support passenger rail," Dvorsky said. "I believe that the Governor will remain 'neutral' in this effort."

"Gov. Branstad continues to review the issue of high-speed rail in Iowa," stated Jimmy Centers, Deputy Communications Director for Branstad. "Gov. Branstad recently met with the Chairman of Amtrak, Mr. Tom Carper, and continues to meet with Iowa DOT officials about the rail route. At this time, no decision has been made."

Although there is uncertainty regarding the fate of Iowa's rail project, rail advocates can still gain comfort from the fact

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