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| **Division of Communications  1980 West Broad Street Columbus, Ohio 43223**  <http://www.dot.state.oh.us> |
| *3C “Quick Start” Passenger Rail Update:*  **Ohio passenger rail service moves full-speed**  **ahead with $400 million stimulus investment**  **COLUMBUS** *(January 29, 2010)*– After months of far-reaching public and private support for intercity passenger rail, Ohio Governor Ted Strickland joined U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, state and local officials, and rail supporters from across the state to announce today that Ohio has received $400 million in federal stimulus resources to invest in passenger rail.    With the goal of launching service by 2012, the 3C “Quick Start” Passenger Rail Corridor will connect Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati with daily train service for the first time in nearly 40 years.  “With today’s historic announcement by President Obama, Ohio takes a major step toward modernizing our state’s transportation infrastructure,” said Governor Strickland. “The 3C Corridor will create economic development opportunities and serve as a model of environmental sustainability. Most importantly, it will put thousands of Ohioans to work over the next few years.”  “I’d like to acknowledge all of the members of Ohio’s congressional delegation who had the courage to support the Recovery Act – the federal stimulus bill – without which this historic announcement would not have been possible,” Strickland added. “Today, we are seeing the beginning of a new way to travel, and this new way to travel has left the station and is bound for Ohio.”    Ohio’s 3C “Quick Start” Plan has drawn unprecedented support from citizens and community leaders, business owners and organized labor, sports teams and universities.  In October 2009, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) submitted a strong application seeking a share of $8 billion in federal passenger rail funds made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.  “Based on ridership, the 3C ‘Quick Start’ service would rank as the nation’s 12th largest generator of passenger rail traffic in its inaugural year,” said ODOT Director Jolene M. Molitoris. “At the same time, we will work with Amtrak to strengthen Ohio’s existing service connecting Cleveland, Toledo, and Cincinnati with Chicago, Pittsburgh and the East Coast.”  The application detailed the state’s plans for investing, constructing, and operating a passenger rail service corridor that would serve an estimated 478,000 passengers in its first year of operation - based on projections by Amtrak, the nation’s largest passenger rail service provider.  Nearly six million Ohioans live within 15 miles of the 250-mile long 3C Corridor, a federally-designated high speed rail corridor and one of the most densely-populated corridors in the U.S. currently without passenger rail service.  Ohio’s initial application requested $564 million in federal stimulus funds - a figure from a fall 2009 Amtrak study that provided estimates for needed investments in infrastructure, station stops and equipment. Those costs included a 30 percent construction cost contingency.  ODOT and ORDC will work with Amtrak and the state’s freight railroads to quantify final investments needed to maximize capacity for fluid freight and passenger operations, and safely provide passenger service at speeds of up to 79 miles per hour.    In addition, the state will work with local communities on the costs and needs of eight station stops, including locations in downtown Cleveland, southwest Cleveland, downtown Columbus, downtown Dayton, the Cincinnati suburb of Sharonville, and Cincinnati, as well as in Springfield and near the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Riverside.    Based on the same Amtrak study, ODOT estimates that annual revenue - including ticket sales - from the initial 3C “Quick Start” service will be approximately $12.2 million each year. The study then estimates that Ohio would need to identify approximately $17 million in additional annual state investment.    ODOT is identifying non-gas-tax dollars for these operating funds, including existing federal grant dollars, revenues from advertising on the train, and innovative public-private partnerships.  The $400 million stimulus investment in the 3C “Quick Start” is expected to result in at least 255 immediate construction jobs over a two year period. According to job-creation formulas by the U.S. Department of Commerce, this investment in Ohio will generate at least 8,000 spin-off jobs and could add at least $1.2 billion to Ohio’s economy.  **###**  **For more information, contact Scott Varner, ODOT Communications, at (614) 644-8640**  **or Stu Nicholson, Ohio Rail Development Commission, at (614) 644-0513**  **More information about Ohio’s 3C “Quick Start” Passenger Rail Plan can be at** http://3CisMe.ohio.gov. |