

IDOT, Amtrak reach agreement on Train Service

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Amtrak announced today that they have reached an agreement to keep in place existing service levels on statesupported routes at a savings to taxpayers and without having to raise fares on the downstate Illinois routes.

“Passenger rail plays a vital role in connecting our state’s great communities and institutions,” said **Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blakenhorn**. “This agreement preserves the service that riders have come to expect while saving taxpayer money and avoiding a fare increase for our downstate routes. We will continue to look out for the public’s best interests in future service agreements with Amtrak.”

The agreement will maintain the Amtrak schedule for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, at a cost of \$38.3 million to the state. In the previous fiscal year, IDOT paid \$42 million for state-supported Amtrak service in Illinois.

To keep the schedule in place, IDOT negotiated the use of credits to lower its annual payment to Amtrak. The credits cover previous equipment upgrades IDOT paid for on Amtrak's behalf, as well as earlier state investments to establish onboard Wi-Fi service. The state also negotiated a \$2.7 million reduction from Amtrak's original request for equipment maintenance for the year.

The state currently supports four daily round trips between Chicago and St. Louis on the Lincoln Service, two daily round trips between Chicago and Quincy on the Illinois Zephyr and Carl Sandburg lines, and two daily round trips between Chicago and Carbondale on the Illini and Saluki lines. Illinois and Wisconsin split the cost of operating seven daily round trips on the Hiawatha Line between Chicago and Milwaukee, with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation providing for 75 percent of the route's cost.

“Our partnership with Illinois is one of the longest and the second-largest, growing to more than 2 million passengers a year,” said Jay Commer, Amtrak SVP/General Manager of the StateSupported Service Business Line. “Amtrak looks forward to working with the State of Illinois to continue to provide this important service to its residents.”

Click here for more information on IDOT and Amtrak or visit www.Amtrak.com.