



Jerseyville Mayor Russell: Rail hub in city "very close" to being a reality

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEYVILLE – There is excitement brewing in **Jerseyville** that hasn't been present in a quite some time with the possibility of a rail hub coming.

The rail hub would likely include warehouses and other storage space, and several additional solid paying jobs with excellent benefits to the Jersey area.

Jerseyville Mayor Bill Russell couldn't be more excited about the possibilities. To date, the Kansas City Southern Railroad moves through the city with its rail system.

Recently, Russell had a private meeting about the potential system with U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis, R-Taylorville, who sits on the federal transportation board and Illinois Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer, R-Jacksonville.

“We have huge interest in the rail possibilities,” Russell said. “We would like to be a major freight transportation hub in the Midwest. I am not at liberty to say who the corporation is that we have been talking to due to confidentiality requirements, but we are very, very close to being able to say something. This is all being driven by private business. We have been working on this for close to two years.”

Russell said he has approached this attempt to land a major business in a non-partisan way and he said government in general needs to be more bipartisan, doing what is right for their community and constituents.

“There have been a lot of missed opportunities in Jersey County in the past,” Russell said. “Officials weren't willing to work together and now they are willing to do that with other counties. The whole area needs a boost.”

Russell said he is hoping to be able to make an announcement about the business movement in Jersey County by mid-July, which would be within about 10 days. He also added there isn't a site that can be announced on where the potential rail hub would locate, but more than multiple areas of Jerseyville are being considered.

Jersey is fortunate to be close to Interstate 255 and on U.S. Route 67, which also connect to other major state and federal highways. He said if this situation was to officially materialize, he thinks it will open up the completion of Route 67 from Delhi, through Jersey and Greene County to Jacksonville, a 31.8-mile stretch. There was a Jerseyville bypass set for U.S. 67 in the original Illinois Department of Transportation plans, which would alleviate the heavy traffic flow through the city.

Russell said the Jersey officials have been in constant contact with Governor Bruce Rauner's office about the present rail expansion and he is aware of the need to finish the stretch of Route 67 from Delhi to Jacksonville.

[Russell said he is very aware of the traffic problems through the day in Jersey County.](#)

"It is almost impassable on 67 at times of the day," he said. "I preach to everyone if you sit at CVS at 5 o'clock in the morning and watch the traffic flow coming out of the north, you would be surprised. The reality is we have received 1,000 different answers on why 67 isn't connected to Jacksonville. This is something now that can't be done on a 20-year plan. We are going to have to make it a reality."

The Jerseyville mayor said the tax relief to residents this particular business expansion would provide would be of large magnitude.

"It would add to the tax base for our schools which is also positive," Russell said of the potential rail hub to the community.