



**Visioneering  
Unified Legislative Agenda  
LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL - 2010**

**1.0 PROPOSAL:** The Northern Flyer Alliance (NFA) requests that the Visioneering Unified Legislative Alliance include **State Amtrak Passenger Rail Service** as a 2011 legislative priority. The Alliance communities recommends extending the *Heartland Flyer* route north from Oklahoma City to Kansas City and south to Fort Worth (for a total of 602 miles), including a Wichita stop (*see attachment 1 for a proposed route map*). Economic development, energy conservation, quality of life, and environmental benefits are anticipated.

**2.0 ISSUE BACKGROUND:** Amtrak's 206 mile *Heartland Flyer* operates daily between Fort Worth and Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma and Texas departments of transportation (ODOT-TxDOT) manage the operation. Both states provide funding. Numerous benefits have been shown in both states since service began in 1999. The proposed expansion provides daytime rail service, with south central Kansas stops. **Amtrak delivered a Scope and Feasibility study to the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) in March 2010. KDOT has contracted with Parsons Brinkerhoff to prepare a Service Development Plan for intercity passenger rail service along the corridor which includes Wichita.** This study addresses capital improvements, annual costs, stops, and various operational scenarios. SDP Study release is expected in November 2011.

**Benefit Studies dovetail with Amtrak Study:** Kansas University's School of Business produced a benefit study that was delivered to the state in December 2009. The Wiedemann Foundation provided a \$10,000 grant to cover costs of the study and is the owner and distributor of the results. **The KU return on investment study indicates a ratio of over 3.2 to 1 on state passenger rail expenditures. In addition, Texas A&M University's Transportation Institute showed an annual \$18 million economic impact to the states of Texas and Oklahoma with an annual subsidy of \$4 million for Amtrak's Heartland Flyer service, a ratio of 4.5 to 1.**

**Estimated Operational and Capital Costs:** The estimated annual cost for daily operation (one northbound; one southbound) on this corridor is \$3 million for Study Option 1 and \$8 million for Study Option 3. Federal matching programs may significantly offset capital investment required for development of service on this corridor.

### **3.0 REGIONAL IMPACT OR SIGNIFICANCE TO SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS:**

*The service would...*

- ...Bring new economic benefit to Wichita and South Central Kansas communities.
- ... Provide direct and connecting transportation service along a 50-mile wide, 600-mile long rail corridor.
- ...Expand the reach of Wichita Mid Continent Airport.
- ... Further develop tourism and economic development opportunities at stops and nearby cities.
- ...Link the Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas state capitals.
- ...Connect with Amtrak's national system that is present in 46 states with over 500 destinations.
- ...Provide safe, weather resistant, economical transportation, with lowered environmental impact.
- ...Provide mobility to seniors, the elderly, persons with disabilities and those with medical needs.
- ...Integrate into a broader and more effective intercity transportation plan.

### **4.0 JOB GROWTH, PER CAPITA INCOME BENEFITS, EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS**

**4.1 Transportation Related Job Growth:** Amtrak is a national transportation service company. The fastest growing segment of Amtrak's business is corridor rail development of 100 to 500 miles. Vibrant and healthy economies will flourish with every investment that reduces energy costs. The south central rail corridor can play a role in increasing energy efficiency by reducing reliance upon fossil fuels.

Route economic gains have already been established and quantified. As with any transportation source, economic benefit and job creation extend beyond the transportation service itself. *Heartland Flyer* After-the-Fare-Box-Revenues have resulted in a positive annual \$8 million economic impact in Oklahoma, and \$10 million in Texas. Regional economic benefit generated by the *Heartland Flyer* is increasing rapidly with record and growing ridership numbers since 2005. *Heartland Flyer* ridership will reach over 80,000 for FY2010. The USDOT reports that 48 transportation related and ancillary jobs are created for every million dollars invested in transportation.

**4.2 Kansas Job Growth:** During FY2009 Amtrak employed 15 persons in Kansas and Oklahoma supporting *Heartland Flyer* and *Southwest Chief* Amtrak routes. The average employee salary was \$59,611. Amtrak spent \$21,862,005 on goods and services in the Kansas-Oklahoma region. Amtrak's limited presence in Kansas and Oklahoma will grow with expansion and provide advantage for small-business travelers through Amtrak's low fares.



**4.3 Tourism Growth:** Route expansion would effectively expand the reach of Wichita and South Central Kansas tourism. Increased number of, and attendance at major sporting events, concerts, conventions, and conferences could be expected. Wichita Metro Area destinations such as Old Town, Intrust Bank Arena, the Water Walk, Tall Grass Prairie National Preserve, Walnut River Blue Grass Festival and many other city and area attractions could expect an inflow of additional patrons. Arkansas City's Arkalala and Winfield's Walnut Valley Festival would become more accessible. Approximately 100 cities in the South Central area would receive benefit. Increased state tax revenue, some from out of state sources, would benefit all Kansans.

**4.4 Education:** Students matriculating at higher institutions of learning would enjoy the benefits of a new travel option between home, college campus, and other campuses. Twenty major universities and colleges are located in convenient proximity to the proposed route, including ten of the Big XII schools. Three regent universities (KU, Wichita State and Emporia State) and Washburn University are located on the route; with KSU in close proximity to the Topeka stop. Increased mobility to and from regional airports would effectively grow student and international student populations, thereby encouraging curriculum expansion as well. Game days would see a spike in ridership, promoting intercollegiate activities.

**4.5 Transportation for the underserved:** Persons with disabilities and the elderly would finally be able to travel with less personal risk. Many can no longer drive, many are prohibited by medical condition from flying, and sometimes driving is not an option. This route connects cities along a corridor with a total population of 14 million people. **Thousands of those will have limited transportation options, and passenger rail is a transportation mode that is simultaneously economical, efficient, and safe.**

**NEXT SECTION:**

**5.0 LEGISLATORS SUPPORTING THE PROPOSED PASSENGER RAIL EXPANSION:**

Senator Dwayne Umbarger Chair-Transportation <a href="mailto:senatorumbarger@yahoo.com">senatorumbarger@yahoo.com</a> 620-839-5458 Senator Jean Schodorf <a href="mailto:jschodorf@aol.com">jschodorf@aol.com</a> 316-831-0229	Senator Carolyn McGinn <a href="mailto:mcginn@senate.state.ks.us">mcginn@senate.state.ks.us</a> 316-772-0147 Senator Roger Reitz <a href="mailto:roger.reitz@senate.ks.gov">roger.reitz@senate.ks.gov</a> 785-539-1710	Representative Melody McCray Miller <a href="mailto:melody.mccray-miller@house.ks.gov">melody.mccray-miller@house.ks.gov</a> 785-296-7687 Representative Peggy Mast <a href="mailto:pmast@ink.org">pmast@ink.org</a> 620-343-1559
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A significant number of Kansas State Senators and Representatives favor expansion. Senate Bill 409, <http://www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/409.pdf> establishing a State Passenger Rail Program passed 37-3 in the Senate and 115-5 in the House of Representatives respectively.

In addition, HB 2552 <http://www.kslegislature.org/bills/2010/2552.pdf> established the Midwest Interstate Passenger Commission passed 38-2 in the Senate and 112-10 in the House of Representatives respectively.



## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The Northern Flyer Alliance of corridor communities has led an aggressive four year campaign to contact and educate all interested parties and benefactors with regard to expansion benefits. The NFA continues to develop a communication conduit between businesses, governments, communities, civic organizations, and states with regard to the expansion initiative. Resolutions requesting inclusion of passenger rail expansion in the Kansas 10-Year Transportation Plan sought to support and endorse the Amtrak expansion initiative. In response to this, KDOT commissioned a Service Development plan which is under contract with Parsons-Brinkerhoff. Nearly 50 communities and 19 civic organizations have submitted almost 90 resolutions and letters of support to government transportation authorities requesting expansion in the states of Kansas-Oklahoma-Texas.

Dialog continues to grow along the Kansas City-Fort Worth corridor through NFA outreach; however, more dialog across state lines is necessary. The development of expanded intercity passenger rail service requires informal compact development. High level Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas communication is in progress with monthly conferences of civic and public partners, city officials, the state DOT's and legislators. Colorado, Nebraska, and Missouri have begun similar discussions regarding local expansion initiatives based upon the successful NFA template.

The FRA's National Rail Plan dated October 16, 2009 acknowledges the forward movement being taken in Kansas and Oklahoma. Unveiled on January 28, 2010, the Federal Railroad Administration's new National Map identifies the proposed Heartland Flyer-Northern Flyer expansion as part of their Vision for a National Passenger Rail Network.

The Northern Flyer Alliance seeks inclusion of intercity passenger rail development in the 2011 ULA to sustain the forward movement that has been undertaken by the state government.

**ATTACHMENT 1  
NORTHERN FLYER ALLIANCE  
KANSAS CITY to FORT WORTH  
602 MILE PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR**

