



February, 2011

THIS WEEK ON THE FLYER CORRIDOR

HB 1686: TAKE A DEEP BREATH

The ground work for HB1686, *The Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Development Task Force*, has lead to a quick moving bill. HB1686 has passed unanimously (17 – 0) out of the House Transportation Committee. All of you are to be congratulated for your work. As Transportation Chairman Shannon said, "I received over 100 e-mails this weekend for this bill."

Such activity/support will be required at each step in the complex; yet fast, legislative process. State Representative Richard Morrissette (D)-Oklahoma City is the House author and State Senator Brian Crain (R)-Tulsa is the Senate author. Please write letters to these two leaders and thank them for their support.



If passed, HB1686 will create a task force to develop a Public Private Partnership (P3) for passenger rail development along the *Oklahoma City – Tulsa* corridor. The state of Oklahoma owns 100 miles of railroad between Oklahoma City and Sapulpa. The remainder of the route is owned by the BNSF Railway.

KANSAS SLOWDOWN: SHAKEDOWN

The laboriously slow process of studying passenger rail along the *North Flyer* route continues. Three documents are required to qualify for federal capital funding. These include:

1. **State Rail Plan** ... a draft is available at www.ksdot.org
2. **Service Development Plan (SDP)** ... expected release this fall
3. **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** ... future project

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The Oklahoma and Texas departments of transportation (ODOT)(TxDOT) have placed the SDP process for the ***Kansas City – Wichita – Oklahoma City – Ft. Worth*** corridor in the hands of the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). KDOT has chosen to study both *Alternative – 1** and *Alternative – 3** for the 606 mile corridor SDP.

KDOT claims the dual-alternative SDP prevents them from beginning the NEPA process. KDOT also claims that all three states must select their preferred alternative before proceeding. Further, Kansas Governor Sam Brownback expressed written opposition to passenger rail expansion in constituent letters last year.

It will likely be May 2012 before a decision can be made to begin a NEPA study. Kansas residents and legislators are urged to communicate with Governor Brownback and KDOT. The NEPA study process must begin as soon as possible. \$500 million in federal capital funding is at stake.

* *Alternative – 1* is a simple *Heartland Flyer* expansion to Newton (Wichita). *Alternative -3* would provide a new passenger train along the same route all the way to Kansas City, MO. For proposed *Alternative -1* and *Alternative – 3* schedules please refer to www.NorthFlyer.org

*This Week on the Flyer Corridor is a product of Passenger Rail Oklahoma/
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