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## News

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Contact: Mark Paustenbach  
Tel.: (202) 366-5408

### **U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood Announces Guidelines for Receiving Economic Recovery Funds for High-Speed Rail**

The Department of Transportation moved another step closer to realizing President Obama's vision for high-speed rail in America today, publishing guidelines for states and regions to apply for federal funds as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"The time has finally come for the United States to get serious about building a national network of high-speed rail corridors we can all be proud of," Secretary Ray LaHood said. "High-speed rail can reduce traffic congestion and link up with light rail, subways and buses to make travel more convenient and our communities more livable."

The historic commitment to revitalizing the nation's rail lines by creating high-speed corridors and improving existing service between cities includes an \$8 billion competitive grant program and a continuing \$1 billion annual investment proposed in the President's budget.

"Rail travel will encourage economic growth and create new domestic manufacturing jobs, while reducing pressure on our highways and airways," said Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo. "In addition to the economic advantages, trains are energy-efficient, capable of reducing billions of pounds of carbons each year from being released into our atmosphere and reducing our country's reliance on oil."

Officials from the USDOT and Federal Railroad Administration met with more than 1,000 people across the country to receive input in preparation for developing the program's grant application guidelines. Vice President Biden and Secretary LaHood also heard from governors and state transportation chiefs at the White House on June 3 about how they hoped to boost their economies with improved passenger rail service.

The guidelines, which can be found at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/2243>, require rigorous financial and environmental planning to make sure projects are worthy of investment and likely to be successful. The program will offer grants for both planning and construction so that states can apply for funds no matter what stage of development their project is in.

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The guidance states that proposals will be considered on the merits for their ability to make trips quicker and more convenient reduce congestion on highways and at airports and meet other environmental, energy and safety goals. And it allows the USDOT to actively promote standard specifications for rail cars and other equipment.

The Federal Railroad Administration will award the first round of grants by mid-September.