

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 15, 2012

ATK-12-011
Amtrak Contact: Marc Magliari
312 544.5390
MDOT Contact: Janet Foran
517 335.7176

AMTRAK 110 MPH MICHIGAN SERVICE CELEBRATION Federal, state and local officials ride a special train and plan further improvements

NEW BUFFALO and KALAMAZOO, Mich. – A special train operating at a maximum speed of 110 mph today celebrated the inauguration of the first expansion of regional high speed rail outside the Amtrak-owned Northeast Corridor. Aboard were federal, state and local leaders welcomed by Amtrak and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

“This improvement is one of many we are making in the Midwest and throughout our system,” said Tom Carper, Chairman of the Amtrak Board of Directors. “By operating at higher speeds, our passengers can reach their destinations sooner, our trains and our crews can be more productive by covering more ground in less time and we are showing how incremental improvements to Amtrak service can be achieved with new technology.”

Amtrak began raising speeds on this corridor from 79 mph in 2001 to 90 mph in 2002 and to 95 mph in 2005. Sustained operations at 110 mph will shave 10 minutes from the 95 mph schedules and about 20 minutes from the 2001 schedules on the Amtrak-owned segment of the corridor.

“This sets the stage for expansion of accelerated service from Kalamazoo to Dearborn by 2015, helping us meet the demands of the next generation of travelers,” said MDOT State Transportation Director Kirk T. Steudle, who pointed out Michigan is in the late stages of completing the purchase of that track segment from Norfolk Southern Railway, with the support of a federal grant and technical assistance from Amtrak.

FAST FACTS:

- Amtrak trains now operate at maximum speeds of 110 mph in western Michigan and northwest Indiana.
- Federal approval came after success with a safety system on Amtrak-owned track between Kalamazoo, Mich. and Porter, Ind.
- The speed is the highest allowed on Amtrak trains west of Pennsylvania and New York. Amtrak *Wolverine Service* and *Blue Water* train passengers benefit.

- more -

NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION

“The State of Michigan and Amtrak have been partners for more than 35 years and we believe passenger rail service has a bright future in our state,” Steudle added.

“Amtrak is America’s Railroad and we are the nation’s resource as the only operator of trains and systems approved for service at 110 mph here in the Midwest and up to 150 mph and higher in the Northeast,” said Carper.

Carper, Steudle and others were joined on the special train by Joseph Szabo, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Administrator, and they spoke at events in New Buffalo and Kalamazoo.

“This is just the beginning,” said Szabo. “With projects coming to fruition this year and new ones breaking ground, 2012 promises to be the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program’s best year yet.”

The Incremental Train Control System (ITCS) installed on the Amtrak-owned Michigan District between Kalamazoo and Porter has been developed by General Electric Transportation with assistance from Amtrak, MDOT and FRA. ITCS continually monitors the condition of signals, switches and crossings, is full-featured, vital positive train control system with a display in the locomotive control cab (image above).

Amtrak extended ITCS coverage to the western and eastern ends of the line between Porter and Kalamazoo last year, completing the system across 97 miles of track and permitting the higher speeds on about 80 miles of the route, 64 miles in Michigan and 16 in Indiana. The FRA granted approval for regular service at 110 mph (177 kph) on Jan. 27, 2012.

“GE Transportation has had a long partnership with Amtrak, and we are proud to have finally achieved the approvals and 110 mph service. We look forward to deploying this technology further to ensure safe, reliable high speed service,” said Lorenzo Simonelli, President and CEO of GE Transportation. “GE Transportation is committed to providing the latest technology and products to high speed rail programs worldwide as an essential part of sustainable infrastructure growth for many years to come.”

Locomotive Display



Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation have on similar plans on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor where federal regulations also require the use of a train control safety technology. That will be the second 110 mph “spoke” from an Amtrak Chicago “hub.”

About Amtrak®:

Celebrating 40 years of dedicated service as America’s Railroad® Amtrak is the nation’s intercity passenger rail provider and its only high-speed rail operator. A record 30.2 million passengers traveled on Amtrak in FY 2011 on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates trains in partnership with 15 states and four commuter rail agencies. Enjoy the journeySM at Amtrak.com or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Join us on facebook.com/Amtrak and follow us at twitter.com/Amtrak.

About MDOT:

MDOT is responsible for a network of 10,000 miles of state trunkline roadways. This network, comprised of all I-, US-, and M-numbered routes in Michigan, carries 53 percent of all traffic and around 70 percent of all commercial traffic in the state. MDOT also is responsible for administering a comprehensive multimodal program that includes airports, intercity passenger services, rail freight, local public transit services, nonmotorized transportation and the state's Transportation Economic Development Fund. A safe, well-maintained, and efficient transportation system provides the backbone for all economic activity within the state. Join us on facebook.com/MichiganDOT and follow us at www.twitter.com/michiganDOT. On the Web at www.michigan.gov/mdot.

(higher resolution graphics available)