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## News

DOT 176-08  
Friday, December 12, 2009

### News Digest

**FRA to Hold Public Meeting on Maglev Project Funding.** On December 17, 2008, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will be holding an open, public meeting to answer questions regarding its Notice of Funding Availability for \$45 million in grant funding for proposed magnetic levitation (maglev) projects located east of the Mississippi River. Due to requests for meetings from proponents of eligible projects, and because of the competitive nature of the application process, FRA determined a public meeting is appropriate so all potential applicants can attend. By law, Congress limited the eligible projects to those in or between: Pittsburgh, Baltimore-Washington, and Atlanta-Chattanooga and authorized FRA to award one or more grants which can be used for preconstruction planning activities and the capital costs of the fixed guideway infrastructure. The meeting will be held at the U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters building located in Washington, DC. Click [here](#) for more information. Contact: Warren Flatau (202) 493-6024.

**FRA Issues Decision Supporting California's Preferred Alignment and Station Locations for High-Speed Rail Corridor.** The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued of a [Record of Decision \(ROD\)](#) on the California High-Speed Train (HST) system environmental impact statement (EIS) for the corridor between the Bay Area and Central Valley. The FRA's decision supports the State's selection of preferred alignment and station locations, and considers the environmental benefits and adverse impacts associated with the preferred network alternative. It also describes mitigation measures to address adverse environmental impacts. The FRA has served as the lead Federal agency for the environmental review of the HST program, while the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for its planning, financing, construction, and operation. The Authority and FRA completed the EIS in accordance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), including a broad effort to solicit input from the public, affected agencies and interested parties. This step concludes the program level of NEPA review that will be followed by preparation of site-specific environmental documents for sections of the HST system. Contact: Warren Flatau (202) 493-6024.

**FRA Announces \$31 million RRIF Loan to Iowa Interstate Railroad.** The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced that the Iowa Interstate Railroad is receiving a \$31 million loan under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program. The railroad will use the funds to purchase 12 new locomotives to add to its fleet allowing it to increase train lengths, tonnage, operating speeds, and provide for increased rail service to newly constructed ethanol plants. In addition, the new locomotives are equipped with improved train crew accommodations and safety features and are quieter, more fuel-efficient with reduced emissions. The railroad operates primarily in Iowa and Illinois and transports agricultural products, plastics, chemicals, steel, lumber, and coal. Contact: Rob Kulat (202) 493-6024.

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