

# RAIL

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speed for Amtrak trains running the St. Louis-Chicago route now is 79 mph, according to Bill Fleis, vice president and treasurer of the engineering firm Design Nine in St. Louis, which specializes in railroad engineering.

According to Rick Harnish, executive director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, the reason for the proposed 110 mph limit is that that is the legal limit for trains to travel tracks that have at-grade crossings. Exceeding that speed would require vehicle crossings to be separated and would tremendously escalate the cost and time involved in implementation.

Illinois submitted proposals for high speed lines from Chicago to Milwaukee, from Chicago to Detroit and from Chicago to Champaign, in addition to the St. Louis-Chicago line. While anyone who has taken Amtrak from St. Louis to Chicago might think that converting that route to high speed travel would be a huge undertaking, that's not the case, according to Harnish.

"There's a lot of the work on the Chicago to St. Louis route that's already shovel-ready," said Harnish. "That's why we're very well-positioned for it."

Harnish says that there used to be two tracks on the St. Louis-Chicago alignment but one was removed. What that means is that the right of way and rail bed is already in place. Because of the 110 mph limit, vehicle crossings would not need to be separated. It would be necessary, however, to install new gates and control systems, he says. Also, the track would have to be upgraded to much higher tolerances than it is able to withstand today.

"Then the last piece is you really need nice, new, fancy, exciting trains," Harnish said, "specifically, trains that are capable

of doing 110 miles per hour comfortably."

One of Illinois' capital development bills signed by the governor in July contained \$400 million for high speed rail. That money is to be used primarily for engineering to bring the four proposed lines closer to shovel-ready status, according to George Weber, chief of the Illinois Department of Transportation's Bureau of Railroads.

Weber says that one section running from Springfield north for approximately 120 miles to the town of Dwight was already done in 2004, including upgrading the track to handle trains at 110 mph and the installation of new gates at 69 crossings.

Despite the fact that the St. Louis-Chicago corridor would be relatively easy to upgrade to the 110 mph high speed level, it is still estimated to cost approximately \$2 billion, according to Weber. Travel time would be reduced from the current five and a half hours to about four hours, he says.

Harnish says there are multiple reasons to make high speed rail a national priority. According to Harnish, rail travel is cheaper than other forms of travel; people can be more productive on a train than while flying or driving; shortened travel

times will induce people to take more trips generating more economic activity; and, by making train travel more attractive, people will be induced to live closer to train stations, reducing urban sprawl. Finally, says Harnish, train travel is more energy efficient.

"We've forgotten that we've got an energy crisis," said Harnish, "but we really do have an energy crisis. And we've got to find ways for people to be productive and make trips without burning a lot of oil, and the way to do that is with trains."

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## IBJ Business News

### SW Illinois Flood Prevention District hires Sterman

The Southwestern Illinois Flood Prevention District Council has hired Les Sterman as chief supervisor of construction and the works. Sterman, who worked as executive director of the East-West Gateway Council of Governments since 1983, has resigned his position there in order to lead the Metro East levee restoration effort. He began his new job July 21.

The recently formed Flood Prevention District Council is comprised of three representatives from each of the independent flood prevention districts established last summer in Madison, St. Clair and Monroe counties as the entities that would have the authority to collect a quarter-cent sales tax to help fund the levee repairs.

Over the past year, representatives from the EWGCG have assisted with setting up these individual FPDs and preliminary work on the levee restoration initiative. The newly formed council will provide greater collaboration and coordination of effort between the three counties and help expedite the decision-making process as the restoration initiative advances.

### Holland Construction finishes Ulta Store

Holland Construction Services Inc. has completed the tenant finish of the new Ulta Store in Fairview Heights. With more than 10,000 square feet, the beauty supply store also features a salon and spa.

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# ENGINEERING ROUND-UP

*A summary of selected Southwestern Illinois Engineering firms' project highlights*

<u>Location</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Est. Cost *</u>
<b>Alton</b>	Nat'l Great Rivers Research Station	Geotechnology (subconsultant)	\$17 million
<b>Belleville</b>	Wastewater Treatment Facility & Phase I Combined Sewer Overflow Treatment System	Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen Inc. (prime consultant)	\$44 million \$86 million (all phases)
	Illinois State Police Lab	Quality Testing and Engineering (subconsultant)	\$33.5 million
	MetroBikeLink Trail	Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen Inc. (prime consultant)	\$7 million
<b>Brooklyn</b>	New Mississippi River Bridge Project	Kaskaskia Engineering Group (subconsultant)	\$640 million
<b>Collinsville</b>	I-70 Resurfacing/Structure Rehab.	Homer & Shifrin (prime consultant)	\$11 million
	Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion	Quality Testing and Engineering (subconsultant)	\$7.5million
<b>Dupo</b>	I-255 Interchange near Davis St. Ferry Rd.	Burns & McDonnell (prime consultant)	\$33 million
	IL 3 Structure Replacement (over railroad)	Homer & Shifrin (prime consultant)	\$17 million
<b>East St. Louis</b>	I-64 over MetroLink Dual Superstructure Replacement	Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen Inc. (prime consultant) jt. venture with Coombe-Bloxdorf	\$13 million
	Watermain Relocation (for New Mississippi River Bridge)	Kaskaskia Engineering Group (prime consultant)	\$0.65 million
	IDOT Subsurface Utility Engineering	Geotechnology (prime consultant)	\$0.5 million
<b>Fairview Heights</b>	Tri-level Interchange	Geotechnology (prime consultant)	unknown
	Frank Scott Parkway Improvements Phases I and II	Homer & Shifrin (prime consultant)	\$6.5 million
	I-64 @ IL 159 Interchange Enhancements	Homer & Shifrin (prime consultant)	\$1.1 million
<b>Granite City</b>	Abengoa Ethanol Plant	Geotechnology (subconsultant)	\$200 million
	US Steel Cogeneration Plant	Geotechnology (subconsultant)	\$100 million
	US Steel Coke Conveyor	Geotechnology (subconsultant)	unknown
<b>Madison Co.</b>	I-270 over Chain or Rocks Canal	Kaskaskia Engineering Group (subconsultant)	\$100 million
<b>O'Fallon</b>	City of O'Fallon - Elevated Water Storage Tanks (2)	Burns & McDonnell (prime consultant)	\$5 million
	Water Booster Pump Station	Burns & McDonnell (prime consultant)	\$1 million
<b>Scott AFB</b>	USTRANSCOM Facility	Quality Testing and Engineering Inc. (subconsultant)	\$110 million
<b>St. Clair County</b>	I-64 @ Rieder Road AJR	Kaskaskia Engineering Group (prime consultant)	\$15 million
	Confluence Bikeway Corridor Studies	Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen (prime consultant)	\$3 million
<b>Swansea</b>	Wastewater Treatment Facility Expansion	Thouvenot, Wade & Moerchen (prime consultant)	\$23 million
<b>Washington Co.</b>	Prairie State Energy Campus Rail Loop & Rail Car Unloading System	Quality Testing and Engineering (subconsultant)	unknown
<b>Waterloo</b>	Illinois Rte. 3 Widening	Homer & Shifrin (prime consultant)	\$21 billion
<b>Wood River</b>	ConocoPhillips CORE Project	Quality Testing and Engineering Inc. (subconsultant)	\$5 billion

\* Estimated total construction cost, rounded to the nearest million

# CLIMATE

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much harder than other areas."

U.S. Rep. Jerry Costello (D-Illinois) agrees. Costello voted against the bill in the House and hopes that it will ultimately be defeated when it comes to a vote in the Senate. Costello says he opposed the bill because it would increase energy costs for everyone in this region but is especially hard on small businesses, agriculture and rural Americans. Costello says the bill would also hurt manufacturers in the United States - ultimately pushing more production overseas to countries with lax emissions standards, thereby not providing any benefit for the global environment.

"It's a global problem and it needs to be addressed in that way instead of us passing legislation that is unfair to parts of the United States, picking winners and losers, increasing utility rates and losing jobs," Costello said. "If China and India do not implement similar standards, they are going to be the beneficiaries because they're going to end up getting manufacturing jobs moving from the United States to their countries... and in a period of time, we're going to end up with the same pollution problems that we have today if there is not an international effort to address this."

Schukar says Ameren's current estimates are that rates will increase somewhere in the area of 10 to 20 percent in the early timeframe of the bill, 2015-2018. During this period, the bill sets up the highest level of free allocations. After 2030, when there are no longer any free allocations, he says, he expects the impact to be 40 percent or more.

Mike Fitch, president of Alton Steel, says the steel industry is particularly concerned about the repercussions of the bill. Fitch says the American steel industry has been making a comeback but still has had a tough time competing with cheap,

imported steel. Steel producers would be hit with a double whammy, he says, because steel mills would not only have to deal with their own emissions but also be especially hard hit by higher utility prices because they are such large power users.

The whole idea of buying and selling allowances like commodities is particularly unnerving, Fitch says, because it will introduce middlemen into the process who simply wheel and deal in the allocations - adding cost but not adding any value.

"You don't have to look much beyond last year's fiasco with corn and its alter ego, ethanol, and the financial gamesmanship that went on with that basic food," Fitch said. "You had a basic food being distorted into a fuel and then further distorted into an investment by a brokerage. The consumer is not served by that."


Fitch says he thought the ultimate impact of the Waxman-Markey Bill will be to push more production overseas to countries like India and China that have no emissions limits - thus making the global environment worse, not better.

"We could do all that we would like to do and all that people would have us do - escalating our costs and escalating our

prices to our domestic consumers - and at the end of the day, quite possibly, quite probably, the environment would get worse," Fitch said. "Emissions are not an issue today in the developing countries. That will be an issue for those nations 40 or 50 or 60 years from now. Right now, they are only interested in having a ton of steel or a ton of concrete or megawatts of electricity produced, or roads to drive on or an automotive industry to back their nation's growth. If our costs exceed what it costs to get a good or service from any other global competitor, the consumer will buy from them. It's simple economics."

While a life-long Democrat, Costello says that the administration is taking the wrong approach on dealing with this issue.

"The Obama Administration said we need to be the leaders," said Costello. "How do we expect China and India to move legislation and clean up their environment if we're not willing to be the leaders? What I'm saying is that we can lead - and we can lead by sitting down at the table, laying out what we're willing to do and negotiating an agreement. If that is not done, we are going to see small businesses and large businesses like steel and coal hurt. People in the Midwest, in particular, are going to see their utility bills skyrocket. And we'll see small employers who are already at a competitive disadvantage be at a further disadvantage to other countries. It just makes no sense to me at all."



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## IBJ Business News

### Glen Carbon named Best Place to Live

CNN/Money Magazine has named Glen Carbon one of the 2009 Best Places to Live. With a population of 12,500, Glen Carbon's name stands for its mining heritage. The town was honored for its abundant vegetation and "soothing view" of the Mississippi River. Glen Carbon also offers affordable housing with an average median home price of \$181,750.

CNN/Money's Best Places database of 1,800-plus U.S. cities includes towns with populations of 8,500 to 50,000 with satisfactory education and crime scores and where income is below 200 percent of the state median.

### Casino Queen starts construction on sports bar

The Casino Queen is raising the stakes in its bid to capture a larger share of the local gaming market with the start of construction on a new \$2.15 million sports bar and entertainment venue. The 6,250-square-foot facility has been coined "SEVENS," and will house pieces from the St. Louis Cardinals Museum Collection. The new, multi-purpose entertainment venue is expected to open in fall 2009.

### Gori Julian welcomes Beaver

Gori Julian & Associates PC in Edwardsville announces the addition attorney Erin Beavers.



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