

China Launches New High Speed Lines



By Pete Goldin

China's Wuhan-Zhengzhou high-speed railway started operation on September 28, with an initial operating speed 186 mph.

Running on the new line will be 24 high-speed rail EMU (Electric Multiple Unit) trains, including the next-generation CRH380AL "Harmony" EMU, designed for speeds up to 217 mph. The new EMU is comprised of 16 cars which can accommodate 1,061 passengers.

According to the Zhengzhou Railway

Bureau, the high-speed train operators underwent comprehensive and rigorous testing to ensure safety on the line, and they are required to have a record of safe rail operation for at least 500,000 km (310,685 miles). Safety is a top priority for the bureau, and every night trains are subjected to not less than four hours of inspection and maintenance.

Travel time between Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, and Zhengzhou, the

continued on page 11

Illinois Begins 110-mph Service on Chicago-St. Louis Line

By Pete Goldin

Amtrak and the Illinois Department of Transportation held a press event on October 19 to preview 110-mph rail service on a 15-mile segment of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor between Dwight and Pontiac.

The demonstration run began at the soon-to-be renovated Joliet Union Station and ended at Normal's brand new multi-modal train station – showcased major infrastructure improvements, state-of-the-art signaling, and significant technological and

safety advancements.

The event attracted noteworthy attendees including Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo, Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann Schneider, Amtrak Chairman Tom Carper, and Midwest High Speed Rail Association Executive Director Richard Harnish.

"That new high speed is an impressive

continued on page 6

High Speed Rail Tour of China

September 2013

It is hard to get your head around China's high-speed rail program. You have to see it in person to understand the true scope of the network.

China has opened over 4,000 miles of new high-speed line since 2008 and continues to invest heavily in railroad development. Beijing and Shanghai (the distance from Chicago to New York) are now linked by 72 trains a day, the fastest making the trip in less than 5 hours.

The new stations themselves are awe-inspiring.

The Beijing - Wuhan segment is expected to open this year. When it opens, Shenzhen and Beijing, the distance from New York to New Orleans, will be linked by high-speed train.

This trip will be two weeks long in order to allow a good mix of facility tours and sightseeing. We will see a wide variety of transport facilities, including subways, light rail, bus rapid transit and factories. And, of course, we will ride the Shanghai maglev.

Please call the Society of International Railway Travelers at 800-478-4881 for more information.

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Richard Harnish

A Year of Milestones



2012 was a pivotal year for passenger rail and the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. Your continued support has been critical to bringing faster trains to the Midwest. This year, we began to finally see tangible progress.

- On February 15, I was honored to be a passenger on the inaugural run of 110-mph service on the Chicago–Detroit line. This is the first time Amtrak has run regular service at these speeds outside of the Northeast Corridor and a big step towards better intercity rail service in the Midwest. Later in the year, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA) gathered 575 comments from the public requesting that 220-mph trains be included in the Michigan Department of Transportation Environmental Impact Statement process, which will have long-term consequences for passenger rail in the region (see stories on page 4 and 5).

- In August 2012, we reached another milestone when Governor Quinn signed HB4078, which allows the Illinois Toll Highway Authority to use all of its existing powers to construct railroad tracks – allowing it to assemble right-of-way, design the civil works, issue bonds and manage the construction of high-speed tracks. The bill had been one of our top priorities due to its wide range of benefits.

- On October 19, I was again honored to participate in the demonstration run of 110-mph service. This time it was on Amtrak's Chicago–St. Louis line (see cover story). Starting on Thanksgiving Day, trains on that corridor have been accelerating to 110 mph on a 15-mile segment between Dwight and Pontiac. By 2015 most of that route will see 110-mph trains, cutting travel time between Chicago and St. Louis by an hour. I strongly feel that our persistent advocacy over the years helped make this happen.

- We are also currently conducting a campaign to influence a multi-state order of new, high-performance locomotives as part of a larger program to improve and modernize Amtrak service in several Midwest states, Washington State and California. If we are successful, these new locomotives will result in a tremendous leap in performance. They will be lighter, faster and burn less fuel than today's locomotives. They will cost less to operate and generate less pollution.

- One of our most significant accomplishments of the past year is the role we played in the decision by the California legislature to move forward with high-speed rail. This vote had tremendous implications for high-speed rail development nationwide for years to come.

In November of 2008, Californians voted to authorize \$10 billion in bonding authority to construct a new, high-speed line linking San Francisco and Los Angeles. As a result, California was the largest recipient of federal high-speed funds in 2009 and 2010. In order to spend the money and begin construction, the California legislature had to include both the federal funds and the bond funds in the 2013 budget. The vote needed to occur by the first week of July 2012 in order meet deadlines attached to the federal funds.

By January 2012, high-speed rail opponents were running a very effective campaign to highlight and exploit the weaknesses in California's implementation plan. We worked in close partnership with the National Association of Railroad Passengers, the US High Speed Rail Association and Californians for High Speed Rail to develop a campaign in favor of the project. NARP and USHSRA provided funding and access to their membership bases. Californian's for High Speed Rail provided the local staff in California.

We repurposed our special issues website – StandUpForTrains.org – as a national action page where California residents could send messages of support and non-residents could encourage their friends in California to take action. Over the next several months we sent a series of email blasts intended to build confidence in the plan and to help counter some of the negative campaigning that was occurring.

We implemented a media outreach campaign that resulted in the placement of four op-eds around the state. MHSRA coordinated an email action campaign and made direct calls to NARP members in California asking for them to show their support.

A supermajority was required to approve the spending. It passed the senate with the minimum required votes.

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Progress Towards Building the Network Core

Quinn Signs Bill Authorizing Tollway to Build Rail

The State of Illinois has a new government agency that can build high-speed rail tracks – the Illinois Toll Highway Authority.

Illinois HB4078 became law in August, amending the Toll Highway Act and giving the state's tollway authority the power to construct railroad tracks.

“For the past year, this bill has been one of our top priorities, due to its wide range of benefits. In addition to Governor Quinn, we want to thank Representative Winters and Senator Sandoval for their leadership in this effort,” said Midwest High Speed

Rail Association Executive Director Richard Harnish.

Illinois has stated it has no immediate plans to take such action, but Tollway Board Chairwoman Paula Wolff confirmed that the agency has discussed the possibility of running a line adjacent to the Jane Adams Tollway from O’Hare International Airport to Rockford.

At the signing ceremony, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn highlighted the need to connect Rockford to O’Hare and downtown Chicago with high-speed rail.

Metra Develops First Strategic Plan

Metra is conducting its first-ever strategic plan, establishing Metra’s mission, values and vision to help prioritize spending decisions and guide the agency in the future.

Reasons for the plan include driving capital programming and planning processes, more effective use of limited resources, increasing public involvement in setting a direction for the agency, improving transparency, and better focus and definition on provision of service.

Metra’s strategic planning process began in the spring, with development of draft Mission and Vision Statements. During a round of open house meetings held in July, attendees completed surveys to provide feedback on the draft statements, agency goals, and capital projects that Metra should pursue. Another round of public discussions were held in November.

Metra’s goal is to complete the initial version of the strategic plan by early 2013, and present a 2013-2017 Strategic Plan to the Metra Board of Directors in February 2013.

The Midwest High Speed Rail Association is working to influence Metra to develop new high-speed infrastructure within its six-county territory.



Illinois Governor Pat Quinn (center) with MHSRA Executive Director Richard Harnish (left) and MHSRA lobbyist Dan Johnson at the signing ceremony of HB4078.

Mayors Unite to Support Rail Investments

Mayors representing approximately one million residents who live and commute along the Rockford–O’Hare Airport corridor sent a letter to Illinois Governor Pat Quinn in October to express united support for high-quality passenger rail service along the Jane Addams Tollway (I-90). The objective of the rail service, according to the mayors, would be to alleviate traffic congestion and support long-term economic prosperity and environmental sustainability.

The mayors requested that Illinois develop a cost estimate for designing and building a new passenger rail line along

the tollway from the eastern side of O’Hare to Rockford, including estimates of the required annual trackage fee revenue to finance the construction and maintenance of these new tracks.

The group recommends that the study should explore timing and engineering opportunities, including a cost-benefit analysis related to job creation and cost savings if the project is initiated now instead of waiting until a future date.

The request is being driven by the Amended Illinois Tollway Act – a new law that empowers the Illinois Tollway Authority to make investments in passen-

ger rail.

“Many of our municipalities have contributed to previous passenger rail studies, notably with the past plans for the STAR line,” the letter states. “We have also spent significant sums on various studies over the years on commuter and intercity rail projects. We have devoted significant resources to planning for rail, including land acquisition for stations. The new law, which empowers the Tollway Authority to support investments in passenger rail as well as highways, is the best opportunity we have had to integrate these multiple planning efforts and accelerate our progress.”

MDOT Moves Forward with Chicago – Detroit EIS

Michigan DOT is leading a joint effort with Illinois DOT, Indiana DOT and FRA to prepare a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Chicago-Detroit/Pontiac Passenger Rail Corridor Program.

The EIS will evaluate passenger rail improvements for 110-mph service along the 304-mile corridor, including the effects of upgrading rail infrastructure and facilities to safely accommodate potential passenger rail service improvements, as well as the impact on the natural environment, jobs, the economy, air quality, traffic, and neighborhoods.

The study is split into a three seg-

ments: Chicago to Buffington Harbor near Gary, Indiana; Buffington Harbor to Porter, Indiana; and Porter to Dearborn, Michigan.

The study will address designing a new, double-track passenger mainline for the first fifty miles of the corridor from Chicago to Porter, IN. This segment is the keystone of the Midwest system. It will be used for trains to Cleveland and beyond, Columbus and Pittsburgh, Indianapolis and Cincinnati, even Champaign and Memphis and possibly St. Louis.

The draft purpose and need statement, which will direct all planning and con-

struction for the life of the project, did not account for the possibility of 220-mph trains on the Chicago-porter segment. DOT officials did not believe there was sufficient public support for high-speed rail to include it in their plans.

Michigan DOT accepted public comments on the EIS this Fall. Normally, few comments are received during the early stages of this type of planning process. But the Midwest High Speed Rail Association gathered 575 comments from the public asking for the needs of future 220-mph trains to be included in the plans for the Chicago–Porter segment, which were submitted to Michigan DOT.

continued from prior page

Timothy Hoeffner, administrator, MDOT Office of Rail. “It will set the stage for additional passenger rail service after the completion of the accelerated rail project. And, because NS retains the freight business, Michigan has a nationally recognized Class 1 operator willing to grow and enhance freight business, which is critical to Michigan’s economic growth.”

Construction on the segment is scheduled to begin this year and continue through the next three construction seasons.

Station Improvements

MDOT received \$28.2 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation to consolidate Dearborn’s two passenger rail facilities into a pedestrian-friendly, intermodal station in the West Downtown section of the city.

The Dearborn Intermodal Passenger Rail Station will be designed for the planned Ann Arbor–Detroit commuter rail as well as future high-speed intercity passenger rail service. It will also accommodate city, regional and intercity bus systems; local and tourist shuttles; bicycle and greenway linkages; and, auto, taxi, and limousine connections to Detroit International Airport.

The new Dearborn station will continue to serve Amtrak’s Wolverine passenger rail service, which provides three round trips daily between Pontiac, MI, and

Chicago, IL.

A ground-breaking ceremony for the project was held on April 10.

MDOT opened the Battle Creek Intermodal Transportation Center in May, after a \$3.6 million renovation.

Improvements include a new entrance and passenger drop-off area, a fenced long-term parking lot, and improved exterior lighting and landscaping, as well as remodeled office space for Amtrak and other tenants.

Funding for the project was provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 with a grant competitively awarded to the City of Battle Creek.

The center serves Amtrak rail passengers, Amtrak Thruway Connection passengers on Indian Trails motor coaches, and Greyhound intercity bus riders.

In June the Ann Arbor City Council voted to accept a \$2.8 million federal grant for a new intermodal station. Fuller Road Station, a collaborative project between the City of Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan will serve AATA and University bus service, pedestrians, bicycles, and Amtrak trains.

Porter to State Line

Closer to the Chicago end of the corridor, the US DOT awarded \$71.3 million to the State of Indiana for the Indiana Gateway Project, an initiative to alleviate congestion in one of the region’s

most delay-prone rail corridors and support the development of higher performing intercity passenger rail service in the Midwest.

The Indiana Gateway Project will target 29.3 miles of track owned by Norfolk Southern Railway between Porter, Indiana, and the Indiana/Illinois state line. This segment is part of a primary passenger route that transits northwest Indiana and plays host to one of the highest freight train volumes in the nation. More than 90 freight trains and 14 Amtrak intercity passenger trains currently travel the area between the Indiana/Illinois State border and Porter, Indiana every day.

The award will fund improvements carried out by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), including track relocation, track reconfiguration, high-speed crossovers, and improvements to signal systems. It will also allow for minor rail additions and a new parallel passing siding.

“As a hub of freight and passenger rail commerce for the rest of the nation, Northwest Indiana’s economic success depends on the quality of our rail infrastructure,” said Congressman Pete Visclosky of Indiana. “The Indiana Gateway project will create jobs in the short-term, improve the transport of passengers and cargo in the mid-term, and build a foundation for a thriving rail infrastructure and a sound regional economy in the long-term.”

Chicago to St. Louis Picks Up Speed

By Pete Goldin

Construction work on the Chicago–St. Louis line resumed in April, with a focus on segments between Wann and Godfrey and from Pontiac to Joliet. Work included building new sidings and second track, upgrades to bridges and culverts, drainage improvements, installation and upgrades to signal and wayside equipment and continued crossing and approach improvements. Work was completed in August. Since the project began in 2010, nearly 240 miles of new rail have been installed.

Illinois to Release Final EIS on Chicago–St. Louis Line

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) have signed and issued the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the full build-out of the Chicago–St. Louis corridor to accommodate 110-mph speeds over most of the route.

The current corridor consists primarily of a single track shared by both freight and Amtrak passenger service. The EIS addresses adding a second main track and passing sidings between Joliet & Alton, improving access into both Chicago & St. Louis – including potential corridor route alternatives between Chicago and Joliet, and building a new route through Springfield.

It anticipates increasing frequencies from five daily roundtrips to eight roundtrips. The fastest trip will be reduced to 3 hours 51 minutes.

“Our greatest concern is that this EIS will be viewed as the State of Illinois’s long-term goal for the corridor,” said Richard Harnish, Executive Director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. “This EIS calls for an express trip time of 3 hours 51

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A freight train carrying concrete rail ties travels north on Union Pacific's Chicago–St. Louis line near Odell, Illinois, on a section of track between Dwight and Pontiac where Amtrak trains now travel 110 mph. It features an entirely new railbed, track, and concrete ties. This photo also shows a new siding, which is in the process of being reconstructed to 110-mph standards, 20 feet on center from the mainline.

ILLINOIS *continued from page 1*

39 percent faster than the one passengers have been living with for years,” LaHood noted. “As passengers in the coming weeks experience speeds of 110 mph between Dwight and Pontiac, Illinois, it’s proof that 21st century rail is indeed coming to America.”

“This demonstration of high-speed rail service would not be possible without the unwavering commitment of President Obama, Secretary LaHood, Senator Dick Durbin, and many others,” said Governor Quinn. “High-speed rail is coming to Illinois and these long-term investments in our transportation system will benefit the citizens of our state for generations to come.”

Passenger service at 110 mph started on Thanksgiving Day on the segment between Dwight and Pontiac and will be offered along about 75 percent of the Chicago-St. Louis corridor by 2015 – reducing travel time by more than an hour.

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minutes with only eight daily round-trips. The long-term goal should be a Chicago–St. Louis trip time of less than 2 hours with at least hourly service.”

The Tier 1 EIS includes IDOT’s preferred Chicago-Joliet route, the Rock Island Corridor (RIC), instead of the existing route, the Heritage Corridor. The \$1 billion estimated cost for upgrading the RIC is \$500 million less than for the Heritage Corridor, mainly because fewer grade separations would be needed.

New Train Stations

The Uptown Normal multimodal transportation center was officially opened in Normal, Illinois, in July, to serve as a station for Amtrak trains and intercity and local buses.

With nearly 245,000 passengers in 2011, Normal is the busiest station in downstate Illinois. In addition to ten daily Amtrak trains, Normal is also served by Amtrak Thruway Motorcoaches operated by Burlington Trailways as far east as Indianapolis, via Champaign-Urbana, and as far west as the

Illinois-Iowa Quad Cities, via Peoria.

The \$45.9 million project – which was completed on time and within budget – received a \$22 million grant under the Obama Administration’s TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) program, as well as \$10.6 million in additional federal funding, and more than \$13 million from state and local contributions such as Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity grants and bonds issued by Normal.

Meanwhile, a new multimodal transportation center broke ground in downtown Joliet on September 21. The new center will improve safety for travelers and serve as a catalyst for future transit-oriented development in Joliet’s historic City Center.

The project will also solve a major challenge at Joliet’s 100-year-old Union Station, which requires passengers to cross working freight railroad tracks in order to board trains. The new station will separate passengers from freight rail traffic and relocate the platform and waiting areas.

Union Station – which serves almost 800,000 riders per year on Amtrak and on Metra’s Heritage Corridor and Rock Island

District lines and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places – will be preserved and incorporated into the design of the new transportation center campus.

The first phase of the project is the construction of a 400-space parking lot southwest of the new station, as well as pedestrian tunnels linking to bus service and other ground transportation. When completed, the new multimodal transportation center will relocate eight land-based transportation modes to one central facility.

The \$42 million project is funded by \$32 million from the Illinois Jobs Now! capital program, \$7.5 million from the city of Joliet and \$2.2 million from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. The Regional Transportation Authority, Pace, Metra, Amtrak, Will County and the Union Pacific Railroad also serve as key partners.

The facility is expected to be completed by 2015.

“This project will make life easier and safer for tens of thousands of Metra commuters and Amtrak riders each day, but it also will make Joliet an important regional center for high-speed rail,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Ann L. Schneider.



Normal’s new Uptown Normal Multimodal Transportation Center.

Midwest and California Jointly Purchase \$352 Million in Coaches

California and a coalition of Midwest states including Illinois, Missouri and Michigan announced a \$352 million procurement to design, build and deliver 130 bi-level passenger railcars.

“By pooling our resources, all four states involved in this partnership can purchase the equipment at lower costs because it will be acquired in high volume under one contract,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty.

According to US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, this the first time multiple states have pooled resources

and settled on a standardized design.

The Midwest Coalition will receive 88 railcars and California will receive 42 railcars. The Midwest Coalition will use its new railcars on the following corridors: Chicago-Port Huron, Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac, Chicago-Grand Rapids, Chicago-Carbondale, Chicago-St. Louis, St. Louis-Kansas City, Chicago-Quincy, and future services between Chicago and Dubuque and Chicago and the Quad Cities.

Funding for the new rail equipment comes from Federal Railroad

Administration grants totaling \$808 million. Of these funds, \$551 million was reserved to purchase the bi-level railcars. The remainder is slated to fund future locomotive and “trainset” procurements as well as to support project management and oversight expenses.

Buy America rules require all 130 railcars to be assembled in the United States, and all the major components to be manufactured domestically. The first railcars are slated for delivery in the fall of 2015, with the final car expected to be delivered in early 2018.



On November 19, Governor Quinn announced that a partnership of Nippon Sharyo and Sumitomo were awarded the contract to build the coaches.

High-Performance Locomotives Coming to the Midwest

Illinois is leading a group of Midwestern states in a multi-state order of new, high-performance locomotives designed to run at speeds above 100 mph.

Today, Amtrak and Metra use locomotives that are based on heavy-haul freight locomotives that cause excessive track wear at speeds over 90 mph. To run at 110 mph on the Chicago-Detroit or Chicago-St. Louis corridors, the existing locomotives are continuously pushed to maximum speed – not ideal for fuel efficiency, safety, or longevity.

Providing an alternative to heavy-haul freight locomotives, the new high-

performance locomotives will be lighter, faster and burn less fuel than today’s locomotives, and they will cost less to operate and generate less pollution.

The new design is projected to reduce



locomotive weight by more than 15 tons. These lighter-weight locomotives will accelerate and decelerate faster, allowing

for faster schedules. They will also cause less damage to track, reducing maintenance expenses.

Lower weight also improves fuel efficiency, which will become essential when the US moves to Tier IV emissions standards on January 1, 2015.

The Association has been actively supporting these specifications for the new locomotive designs by distributing literature, sending e-mail blasts, and holding discussions with key political leaders.

FRA Reports: Railroads Cannot Meet 2015 Deadline for PTC

By Pete Goldin

According to a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) report submitted to Congress in August, the majority of railroads will not be able to complete Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation by the December 31, 2015 deadline – the date established by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA).

In the Midwest, both the Illinois and Michigan departments of transportation are confident that their 110-mph projects will meet the FRA deadline.

The report, entitled Positive Train Control Implementation Status, Issues, and Impacts states: “Both freight and passenger railroads have encountered significant technical and programmatic issues that make accomplishment of these plans questionable. Given the current state of development and availability of the required hardware and software, along with deployment considerations, most railroads will likely not be able to complete full RSIA-required implementation of PTC by December 31,

2015.”

Technical obstacles to PTC cited by FRA include issues with communications, radios, databases, back office server and dispatch systems, and installation engineering, to name a few.

FRA also noted unresolved issues in the areas of budgeting, contracting, and supply chain. For example, the report states: “The pool of experienced PTC system equipment suppliers is limited. There are only five major suppliers who have significant prior experience with PTC equipment manufacturers and not all manufacture all PTC system equipment. The ability of these manufacturers to provide the required quantities of necessary components has yet to be demonstrated. As could be expected with a program of this magnitude and complexity, vendor supply chain and quality control issues have arisen with respect to both hardware and software. Some equipment suppliers do not have the capacity to satisfy overall indus-

try demand in a timely fashion, resulting in delivery delays.”

To date, railroads have spent more than \$1.5 billion of private capital, and the Federal Government has distributed \$50 million through the Railroad Safety Technology Grant Program, to resolve these issues. Solutions have either not been identified or cannot be implemented by the 2015 deadline, the report notes.

The decision is now in the hands of Congress. If Congress considers extending the PTC implementation deadline, FRA recommends a provisional certification of PTC systems that will allow for use of installed PTC systems under controlled conditions before final system certification is complete. This will enable incremental use of PTC systems, and increase safety as the systems are rolled out.

FRA also requested the power to approve alternative safety technologies on specified line segments in lieu of PTC, particularly in areas with lower safety risks.

New Pedestrian Crossing on Chicago–St. Louis Line at Odell



Odell is the first Illinois town to have 110-mph revenue trains passing through. (Several Michigan towns have had 110-mph since Spring.) The crossings have an interesting treatment for pedestrians. The “Do Not Enter” gate swings away from the tracks.

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California HSR Moves Forward

By Pete Goldin

In a major step forward for California High-Speed Rail, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued a Record of Decision that approved the alignment from Merced to Fresno, allowing construction to begin next year.

The approved Merced to Fresno section of the 800-mile system is approximately 65 miles long, parallel with Highway 99 through the northern stretch of the San Joaquin Valley. The station sites are in the City of Merced, where they will connect with the Merced to Sacramento section, and in Fresno, where they will connect with the Fresno to Bakersfield section.

The Merced to Fresno section is the first of several key project sections that make up the backbone of a high-speed rail system that will ultimately connect millions of Central Valley residents to San Francisco and Los Angeles in less than 2 hours.

In July, the California Assembly and Senate approved funding for initial construction of the state's high speed rail system, expected to reach from north of Fresno to just north of Bakersfield. Public comment period for the Revised Draft EIR/EIS for the 114-mile Fresno to Bakersfield segment ended in October.

The next step is for the California High-Speed Rail Authority and FRA to review comments. The EIR/EIS is expected to be finalized in early 2013. Madera County and a group of farmers in the Central Valley filed a lawsuit arguing the

state's plans for the project did meet the requirements of California's environmental law and requested an injunction to halt all planning. They oppose the new rail line running through their properties.

On November 16 Sacramento Superior Court Judge Tim Frawley denied the request on the grounds that federal funding losses due to delaying the project would cause more harm to the state than construction would cause to the farmers. But a hearing on the lawsuit is scheduled for April 2013.

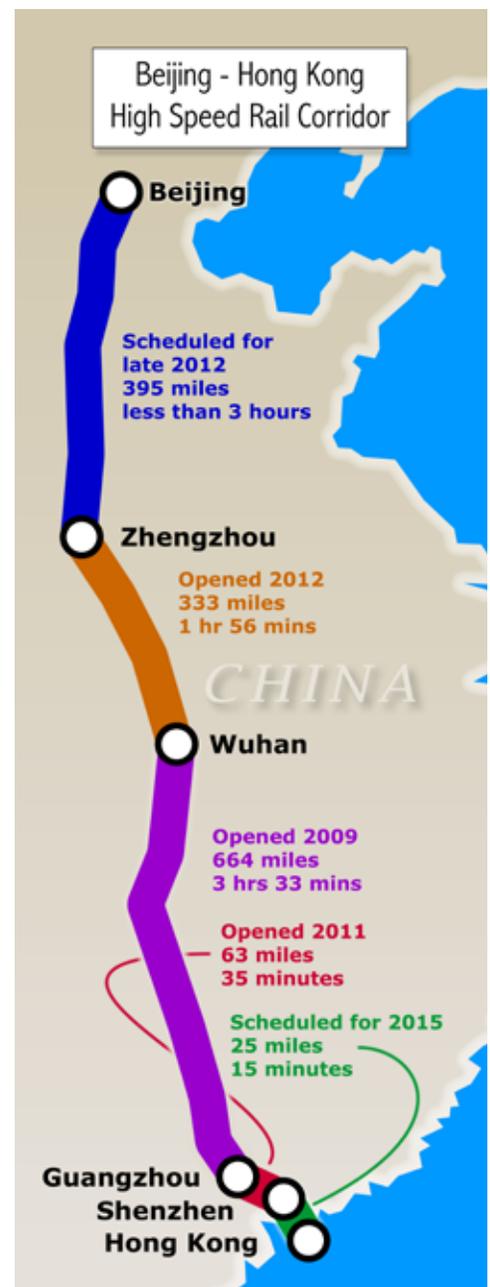
CHINA *continued from page 1*

capital of Henan province – two major cities in central China – is reduced from four and a half hours to only two.

The 333-mile rail line is a major segment of the Beijing-Hong Kong high-speed corridor. The next segment to open will be Zhengzhou to Beijing. Revenue service is expected to begin before the end of 2012, cutting travel time from Wuhan to China's capital city to just five hours.

High-speed test trains are now running from Beijing to Shenzhen, a city 63 miles to the south of Guangzhou and 25 miles north of Hong Kong.

Wuhan, a port city on the Yangtze River and one of the major transportation hubs in China, now maintains a four-hour railway circle to eight provinces – reaching Shanghai in the east, Yichang in the west, Guangzhou in the south and Zhengzhou in the north.





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Italy's NTV Rolls Out "Most Modern Train in Europe"

NTV (Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori) started operation of Italo in April, Italy's first privately owned high speed rail service.

NTV started services on the Napoli – Roma – Firenze – Bologna – Milano corridor. Service will be extended to Salerno, Torino and Venezia by the end of the year, when the entire fleet of 25 Alstom AGV trainsets will be available.

The new AGV trains built by Alstom for NTV are designed for speeds up to 360

km/h (223.7 mph). Thanks to innovative materials, the overall mass of Italo is lighter than comparable trains on the market, reducing energy consumption by 10%, according to NTV.

NTV calls the service "The Most Modern Train in Europe" featuring live television, movies, and free wi-fi.

Backed by a private investment of €1 billion, NTV's objective is to "contribute to optimizing the major investment made

by the Italian State in the development of the high-speed network while finally opening up passenger rail travel to competition, doing so with innovative contents and a new approach to making the most out of travel time, thanks to complete, customized services; comfortable, high-tech settings; top quality; and competitive prices."

Since its debut earlier this year, more than 1.2 million passengers have traveled on NTV's new service.

