

NEWS RELEASE
April 20, 2004

The CREATE partners announce award of \$12.5 million for preliminary engineering contracts

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – April 19, 2004 – The Illinois Department of Transportation today announced consultant selections to begin engineering on critical elements of the CREATE Program, a proposed \$1.5-billion modernization of the freight and passenger rail infrastructure serving Chicago and northeast Illinois.

The six major freight railroads serving Chicago and Metra, who together with the City of Chicago and IDOT crafted the CREATE Program; will contribute \$2.5 million to the initial engineering effort and for a mapping project. The base mapping project has been awarded to HNTB. The state funds were designated for railroad improvements in and appropriated as part of Illinois First, the state's five-year, \$10-billion transportation and education infrastructure investment program.

The program includes five critical groups of projects for awards. The firms selected include Parsons Transportation Group, Inc., Edwards and Kelcey Design Services, TranSystems Corporation, Hanson Professional Services, Inc., and Alfred Benesch & Co.

“Our grant of \$10 million will provide seed money to begin engineering work on CREATE so we can jump-start construction when additional funding becomes available,” said IDOT Secretary Timothy Martin. “The freight railroads have shown their commitment to the CREATE Program by adding to the funds available for this early work.”

The CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency) Program will improve passenger rail service, reduce freight rail and highway congestion, eliminate numerous conflicts between rail and road traffic, reduce motorist delays, and enhance safety. The program will concentrate trains in North America's busiest rail hub on five primary corridors that run, with only minor exceptions, on existing rail right-of-way. By reducing the time rail traffic requires to transit Chicago, the program will improve nationwide freight flows, with benefits for consumers and businesses throughout the United States.

“IDOT, along with the City of Chicago, strongly supports CREATE and we are urging the Congress to include significant funding for the project in the transportation infrastructure bill,” said Martin. “By making money available now so necessary engineering work can begin in earnest, Illinois and the rail industry are preparing the way for construction to begin.”