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CREATE Quick to Obligate TIGER Award

CHICAGO (January 5, 2011) - In July 2010, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) finalized a \$100 million grant agreement for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program to begin work on five projects that were awarded funding through U.S. DOT's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program.

Within five months from the grant award, the CREATE partners (IDOT, the Chicago Department of Transportation, and the freight railroads) have officially obligated all of the federal funds.

"The speed with which the CREATE partners accomplished this goal exemplifies all the partners' commitments to embracing the intent of the TIGER grant program - putting people to work and getting projects completed," IDOT Secretary Gary Hannig stated.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's TIGER program is designed to promote innovative, multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional transportation projects that provide significant economic and environmental benefits to an entire metropolitan area, region or the nation.

The five CREATE projects funded by the TIGER grant are:

- Construction of a third mainline track on the Union Pacific Railroad around Proviso Yard in Bellwood, Berkeley, Elmhurst and Melrose Park;
- Installation of a traffic control system along the Indiana Harbor Belt (IHB) Railroad between LaGrange and Broadview;
- Signalization of IHB Blue Island Yard running tracks in Blue Island and Riverdale;
- Construction of a highway-rail grade separation structure under the IHB/CSX railroads at 71st Street in Bridgeview; and
- Improved roadways, sidewalks and curbs under railroad viaducts to enhance safety and security for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians at 14 locations throughout the City of Chicago.

Construction is already underway on some of these projects and the remainder will begin during the upcoming construction season.

About 25% of rail traffic in the United States travels through the Chicago region, in some instances taking longer to cross the City than the time it took to reach Chicago from the east or west coasts. The CREATE Program is alleviating major bottlenecks along freight and passenger rail corridors.

Overall, the CREATE Program includes 46 rail improvements and 25 highway-rail grade separation projects that involve reconfiguring, modernizing and expanding freight and passenger rail and constructing new highway-rail grade separations to improve both rail and highway traffic flow in the Chicago metropolitan area. To date, 11 projects have been completed, 9 are under construction, 8 are in the design phase and 15 are in the environmental phase.

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