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May 17, 2006

David Hughes
President
National Passenger Railroad Corporation
60 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Hughes:

I am writing to request a meeting between Amtrak officials and Rockford, Illinois area community leaders. This meeting would be held to discuss the possibility of restoring Amtrak service on the Chicago to Rockford corridor.

As you know, Amtrak ended its *Black Hawk* route from Chicago to Rockford in 1982. However, since that time, the amount of commuters that travel from Rockford to the Chicago area has increased significantly even though public transportation options are severely limited. Reinstatement of the Chicago to Rockford Amtrak corridor would serve not only those commuters, but would serve the thousands of other people that currently seek to travel to Chicago but are unable to do so due to the lack of quick and reliable public transportation. Moreover, Chicago to Rockford service would also connect Rockford area residents to Amtrak's nationwide network via Chicago's vibrant Midwest Amtrak hub, thereby growing Amtrak's ridership numbers significantly.

I thank you for your recent willingness to work with State officials to provide train cars for expansion on its three intrastate Amtrak routes. This expansion is in response to Amtrak's growing popularity in the state, as almost every route in the state of Illinois recorded a double digit percentage increase in 2005. Accordingly, I believe Amtrak expansion to Rockford would be well-received in Rockford, Chicago, and communities throughout northeastern Illinois.

I look forward to working with you to improve Amtrak service in Illinois and around the nation. I stand ready to assist you in facilitating a meeting between Amtrak and Rockford area officials.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
U.S. Senator