

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Rep. Gary Hayzlett at 2:05 p.m. on February 9, 1999 in Room 519-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

- Representative Aday, excused
- Representative Ballou, excused
- Representative Johnston, excused
- Representative McKinney, excused
- Representative Thimesch, excused

Committee staff present:

- Bruce Kinzie, Revisor
- Hank Avila, Research
- Ellie Luthye, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

- Representative Ed McKechnie
- Jim Woolf, Amtrak
- Representative Carl Krehbiel
- John Mills

Others attending:

See attached sheet

HCR 5004 - establishing rail passenger service task force

The Chair opened hearings on **HCR 5004** and called on Representative Ed McKechnie to present his testimony. He listed four specific opportunities that would place Kansas in an opportune position to connect with entities in other states to provide daylight passenger service to our state. He presented a map that outlined four corridors Kansas might develop. (Attachment 1)

Jim Woolf stated there are two types of trains - the system trains which are supported by general Amtrak revenue and the state supported train. Many states, however, pay a fixed fee to Amtrak to operate their state supported trains. He relayed to the committee the work that was being done, or had already been accomplished, in other states that have Amtrak service. He stated rail service in general is very expensive and a complicated matter - rail passenger service is expensive, complicated as well as time consuming and requires the cooperation of law makers, railroads, communities and the state Department of Transportation. He concluded Kansas has already taken the first step to make rail passenger service a reality by considering **HCR 5004** and that Amtrak stands ready to assist the state in their efforts.

Representative Krehbiel presented testimony by Representative Boston who was unable to appear due to scheduling conflicts. Representative Boston is in favor of endorsing expanded passenger rail service into Kansas and stated Newton is very ready, willing and able to play a significant part of luring passenger rail service from Dallas/Fort Worth, and Oklahoma City to Kansas. (Attachment 2) Representative Krehbiel added his support for this expanded service.

John Mills, retired district supervisor at Amtrak, stated the need for rail passenger service is increasing with each year. He told the committee adding more lanes to the already heavily traveled highways was not the answer but providing rail services. He concluded it was possible now to have a commuter line between Topeka and Kansas City.

Following questions from the committee the Chair closed hearing on **HCR 5004**.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, Room 519-S Statehouse, at 1 2:05 p.m. on February 9, 1999.

After conferring with the Vice-Chair and the Ranking Minority member the Chair announced final action on **HCR 5004**. There being no further discussion Representative Larkin made a motion to pass HCR 5004 favorably, seconded by Representative Grant and the motion carried.

The minutes of the February 2nd and 3rd meetings were presented for additions or corrections. Representative McClure made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Representative Long and the motion carried. Three sets of minutes from the February 2nd, 3rd, and 4th meetings of the Joint House and Senate Transportation committees were presented for review with them being considered correct if there are no objections by February 12th.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m. The next meeting of the House Transportation Committee will be Wednesday, February 10, 1999.

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 9, 1999

NAME	REPRESENTING
Jan Kawalsky	Great Bend, Ks.
Bob Hansen	Great Bend Ks
Bill Watts	KDOT
CARLOS M. MILLER	Great Bend, Ks
Phil Kasperczyk	Great Bend, Ks.
Clark Kinsbury	Great Bend, Ks.
Phil Grossman	Great Bend, KS
Steve Sell	Great Bend, Ks.
Vernon Wenger	Ks. Corp. Comm.
Ken Bahr	Economic Lifeline
Pat Hubbell	KS Railroads
Don Lindsey	UTU
Carl Hill	Ks Motor Carriers Association
John A. Mills	Nat'l Assn of RR Passengers Topeka, Ks
W. A. Elder	Beloit
Donna H. Underhill	Beloit
Alice Thompson	Beloit

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 ROOM 502-S
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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
 REPRESENTATIVES

February 9, 1999

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

VICE CHAIR	RULES AND JOURNAL
MEMBER	APPROPRIATIONS
	BUDGET COMMITTEE ON
	CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC
	SAFETY
	JOINT COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
	POST AUDIT
	COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENT
	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
	MIDWEST LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
	HIGH SPEED RAIL TASK FORCE

Representative Gary Hayzlett
 Chairman, House Committee on Transportation

Rep. Boston and members of the committee, thank you for allowing a hearing on HCR 5004, a resolution that will create a task force to study passenger rail service in Kansas. This resolution was recommended by the Special Committee on Rail Transportation during the 1998 summer interim. It stems from the activities of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and efforts currently underway in the state of Oklahoma to restore passenger rail service to that state.

These two separate and independent activities place Kansas in an opportune position to connect with these entities to provide daylight passenger service to our state. The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative has long-term plans to bring high-speed passenger rail service to Kansas City's Union Station. Oklahoma is currently working to start passenger rail service, what Kansas needs to do is to tie in between the two and benefit from the work of others.

HCR 5004 allows Kansas to do just that. It charges a task force of six legislators and three members of the executive branch to "study the preservation, enhancement or establishment of rail passenger service." The task force is directed to make an interim report to the 2000 legislature and a final report to the 2001 legislature.

There are several specific opportunities:

- 1) With the recent announcement of Amtrak moving back into Kansas City's Union Station, we now have the metro hub necessary to make a regional rail system operate.
- 2) Oklahoma is seeking ways to connect Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties to the national rail system. Service to Oklahoma County is expected to begin in May 1999. Service to Tulsa County is somewhat more complicated and may end up needing to connect either to Kansas City or Newton. Whatever the case it will provide the return of daylight passenger service to the state.
- 3) Missouri currently has two trains a day operating from St. Louis to Kansas City. It would be simple to extend those trains further west to Topeka or Salina.

House Transportation Committee
 February 9, 1999
 Attachment 1

4) or, Kansas may choose to develop a regional passenger rail project that would provide a network along four corridors:

- A) Omaha through Kansas City along the eastern border to Tulsa
- B) Kansas City west through Topeka, Salina to Denver
- C) Kansas City west/southwest through Topeka to Newton, Wichita and Oklahoma City
- D) A southwest spur from Newton west to Garden City

There are many benefits to the taxpayers aside from the nostalgia of passenger rail service. With the new authorized ability of Amtrak to carry fast freight, one can imagine intermodal trucking facilities in Garden City, Newton, Topeka and Kansas City to move heavy trucks off the road and on to rail. This not only saves our roads, but saves costs to the trucking industry of labor and fuel.

There are also savings to the environment. Kansas continues to be a border state on EPA air quality standards. The data supports the argument that in order for a mass transit system to work in a metro-area like Kansas City, an inter-city rail system needs to be in place to support it.

As our population ages, passenger rail service is a reliable way to connect rural Kansans with the needed services of our urban areas.

This task force could do the preliminary work necessary to answer some of the questions around the viability of passenger rail service in Kansas.

Attached you will also find a letter from Senator David Herbert, D-Midwest City, Oklahoma, who is sponsoring similar legislation in Oklahoma. Rep. Ron Clark, R-Gainsville, Texas, is sponsoring the Texas effort.

Your support of HCR 5004 is greatly appreciated.

Oklahoma State Senate

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SENATOR DAVE HERBERT

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January 26, 1999

CHAIRMAN
Tourism and Recreation

COMMITTEES:
Appropriations
General Government
Transportation
Military Affairs
Sunset Review

Representative Gary Hayzlett
Chairman, Kansas House Transportation Committee

Senator Ben Vidrickson
Chairman, Kansas Senate Transportation Committee

Dear Chairmen:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HCR 5004, the Kansas Passenger Rail Task Force. I regret I cannot be with you in person to share the exciting developments that are happening in our region, but I appreciate your consideration of this letter.

The state of Oklahoma has for the last five years worked to restore rail passenger service. We have been successful in establishing a funding source from motor fuel tax that has produced over \$8 million through 1998, and we have also received \$23 million from the feds to restore service. We are now in the process of putting together our rail passenger task force to work with our friends from Kansas and Texas. We feel that by creating this three state compact we will be able to extend the High Speed Rail Corridor from Kansas City through Oklahoma to Dallas. This will allow all three states access to hundreds of million dollars we cannot get as individual states.

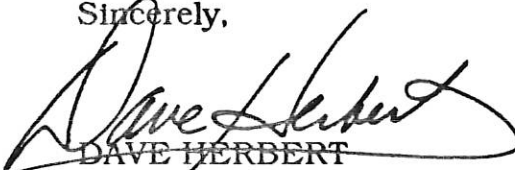
On January 22, Representative Ed McKechnie, along with me and the Director of the Railroad Division of O.D.O.T. visited with two house members and one senator from Texas to report on our progress toward task force and compact status. Representative Ron Clark headed the delegation in Gainesville, Texas. Both Representative McKechnie and I spoke publicly and privately with the Texas delegation and two members of the Texas D.O.T. The meeting was very positive and received good coverage. Both House members from Texas agreed to take our information to the House and Senate Transportation Committees to review and try, at this late date in their session, to get their task force legislated.

I know you will be briefed on the activities of the Midwest High Speed Rail Task Force, and this again is another key opportunity for our states. I believe the best way for us to maximize these opportunities is with the organizational structure found in HCR 5004.

January 25, 1999
Representative Gary Hayzlett
Senator Ben Vidrickson
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This gives our two states, and hopefully soon Texas, the ability to work with rail companies and get the best deal for our constituents. The Oklahoma Legislature is currently working on mirror legislation that I believe will be approved later this month.

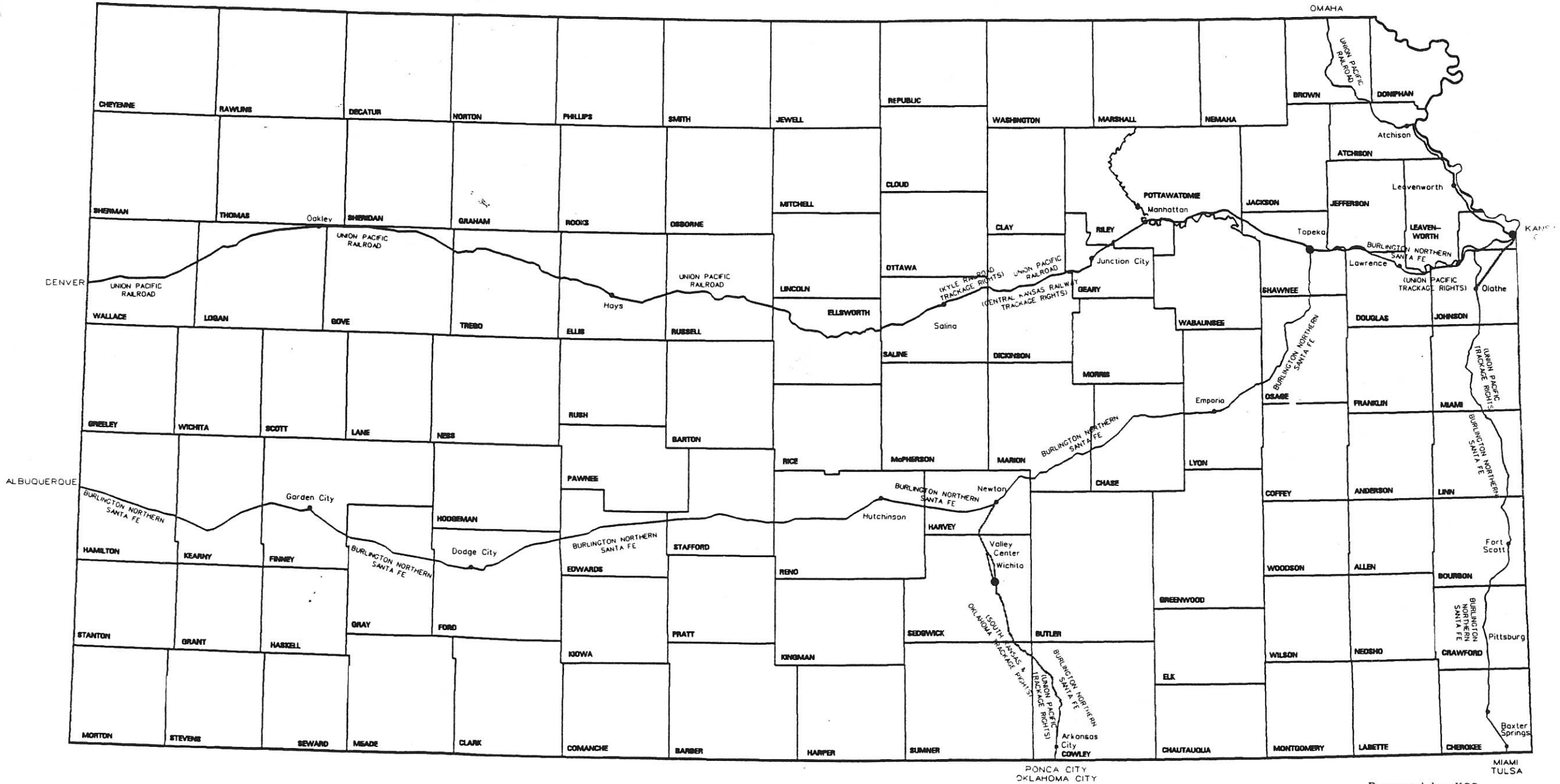
Sincerely,



DAVE HERBERT
State Senator
District 42

DH/fl

POTENTIAL PASSENGER RAIL TRANSPORTATION



Prepared by KCC
Jan. 13, 1999

GARRY G. BOSTON
REPRESENTATIVE, SEVENTY-SECOND DISTRICT
14 CIRCLE DRIVE
NEWTON, KANSAS 67114-1328



TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
CHAIR: FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS
MEMBER: BUSINESS, COMMERCE & LABOR

February 9, 1999

Chairman Hayzlett and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify as a proponent on HCR 5004 - Establishing a rail passenger service task force. I am in favor of endorsing expanded passenger rail service into Kansas.

The railroad literally created Newton, Kansas, 128 years ago. In July 1871 the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad arrived at Newton in its westerly course destined for Santa Fe, New Mexico. Newton was named for many of the railroad's investors who lived in Newton, Mass.

Sand Creek provided softer water which became a factor in the Santa Fe relocating their locomotive repair shops, refitting and car repair facilities along with a turntable from Nickerson, Kansas back to Newton. The soft water was used in the boilers of the steam engines and in some cases the water was so hard that the boiler had to be flushed after a run. The soft water allowed the engine to be used upward to a month without having to be flushed so the water in the area was a major consideration.

One year after the track reached Newton the line to the south was built, this was called the Wichita and Southwestern and trackage was laid into Oklahoma. The Wichita and Southwestern was more of a construction company than a railroad as they had no rolling stock. The Santa Fe leased the line and eventually took the line over in 1901 when the Wichita and Southwestern ceased to exist.

Newton's history has been intertwined with the railroad throughout the years. Newton supported one of the "Harvey Houses" located along the line. Fortunes were made by the Moorlands who supplied food for dining cars and other merchants who provided tools and equipment for the "Company store."

Today at any high school event you will note that the student body is the "Railroaders" complete with a mascot "the Railerman", and the opponents have, over the years, noted the Railer fight song set to the music of "I've been working on the railroad", complete with the whistles and steam gushing out of the drivers.

Newton is very ready, willing and able to play a significant part of luring passenger rail service from Dallas/Fort Worth, and Oklahoma City to Kansas. The value of that service is appreciated today by Newtonians who reflect proudly on our past as a bold and creative endorsement of future passenger rail service in Kansas.

Garry Boston
Representative 72nd District

GB:je

House Transportation Committee
February 9, 1999
Attachment 2