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RECONNECTING AMERICA COMMENDS OBAMA ADMINISTRATION

HIGH-SPEED AND INTER-CITY PASSENGER RAIL GRANTS

**Economic and environmental challenges require new way of thinking
about how we create connections between regions**

(October 28, 2010) -- Reconnecting America President and CEO John Robert Smith commended the Obama administration for the \$2.4 billion in grants announced today for the development of high-speed and inter-city passenger rail corridors in the United States.

Reconnecting America believes that the nation is at a precipice. The economic and environmental challenges we face require a new way of thinking about how we create connections between cities and regions. Reconnecting America was founded with the mission of improving rail connections within and between communities, and remains committed to the principle that transit connectivity and supportive station area development will be essential components of our national high-speed and passenger rail network.

“A national high-speed rail system is not only an opportunity to redefine how we travel and how our regional economies grow – it represents the type of innovation and progress that can guarantee another century of growth and prosperity in America,” said

Smith. "It gives people a choice in how they travel, something polls have shown Americans want."

Over the last 50 years, the federal government spent more than \$400 billion building our interstate highway system. The interstate system opened new territory for economic development and created the interconnected regional economies that drove our economic growth in the past and still play a role in it today. With an additional 100 million citizens expected by 2050, the nation needs new infrastructure with additional transportation alternatives that have the ability to move more people in more places at a higher speed. Reconnecting America believes high-speed rail will be this generation's contribution to the continued mobility and future economic growth of our country.

"The diversity of grant recipients shows that communities large and small alike will benefit from investments in high-speed and inter-city passenger rail," Smith said. "For example, the States of Iowa and Illinois received \$230 million in grants today to support the development of a new passenger rail connection between Iowa City and Chicago, which will help to revitalize a number of smaller cities along the route."

For a listing of the grant recipients visit <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/passenger/2243.shtml>

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Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities – where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org