



Administration
222 S. Poplar Street
Centralia, IL 62801
618-533-7622 Phone
618-532-4534 Fax

www.cityofcentralia.org

December 17, 2008

Dear CREATE Program:

Fast, reliable Amtrak service is critical to the residents and businesses of Centralia, Illinois. Shorter and more reliable Amtrak trips provide improved access to our community for tourists, businesspeople, and other visitors as well as an important transportation option for our residents traveling to Chicago and other cities along the corridor.

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) will improve freight and passenger rail flow through the rail hub of the nation. Thirteen of the CREATE projects will improve Amtrak service in Illinois as it enters the congested Chicago region. If the project P4 (Grand Crossing) to install a new connection between the Canadian National and Norfolk Southern railroads is completed, it will provide a new route for Amtrak trains into and out of Chicago Union Station, eliminating 10 to 15 minutes from Amtrak train schedules on the Illini Corridor. Additionally, because the rail system functions as a network, CREATE improvements to freight flows benefit passenger trains by reducing the potential for blocked crossings and delays on tracks shared by freight and passenger trains.

From July 2007 to June 2008, more than 18,000 Amtrak riders got on or off the train in Centralia, an increase of 21.4 percent over the previous year. Overall ridership along the Illini corridor between Chicago and Carbondale increased 15 percent between October 2007 and September 2008, compared to the previous year. The demand for intercity passenger rail is great, and growing.

The CREATE improvements to passenger and freight rail will be very beneficial to Amtrak service to southern Illinois and to our community. The City of Centralia strongly supports the CREATE program and recognizes the value of the passenger rail improvements CREATE would provide to communities throughout the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rebecca Ault'.

Rebecca Ault
Mayor