

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

April 29, 2009

Mr. Joseph P. Clary
Illinois Department of Transportation
Division of Public & Intermodal Transportation
J. R. Thompson Center, Suite 6-600
100 West Randolph
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Clary:

In 2008, Michigan State University initiated its Railway Management Program with the complete support of the United States railroad industry. The purpose of the program is to educate middle level managers with the knowledge needed to move to the upper ranks of leadership in railroad companies. The Certificate Course in Railway Management runs four weeks and has 160 classroom hours. Additionally, the participants are responsible for course work and assignments to be completed between the weeks.

During the four weeks, the participants study all facets of the industry from the perspective of managing each function. We have an excellent adjunct faculty who deliver lectures on all subjects from railroad operating practices to customer relations and finance. These sessions are combined with field trips so the participants can observe and learn first-hand about the function being studied in the classroom.

We have located one of the four weeks in Chicago where the participants can visit railroad customers, hear first-hand reports from various financial institutions involved in railroad operations, and learn about public-private partnerships and their role in the industry.

To satisfy the last learning objective we are privileged to be able to spend a half a day with the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE), perhaps the best example of a working and effective public-private partnership in America today. There, the participants can benefit from both the presentations provided by the staff at the CREATE headquarters, and then go out and see and learn about the projects that were just described.



RAILWAY MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

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These projects include needed rail and highway infrastructure improvements in Northeast Illinois. The development of these 78 critically needed projects will improve the quality of life for Illinois residents and increase the efficiency of freight and passenger rail service throughout the region. We support the continuation of the State of Illinois capital and Federal funding to fulfill the 1.3 billion needed to complete CREATE projects between 2009 and 2015.

This learning experience is so valuable to our participants because they generally have no understanding of what can be accomplished by public-private partnerships. With sufficient funding and the willingness of the railroad companies operating in the region to participate, CREATE is solving a host of transportation problems. We are appreciative of their role and are grateful they can willingly devote the time necessary to help educate the future leaders of the railroad industry.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Neilson
Executive Director
Railway Management Program
Michigan State University