



Crossroads of Opportunity

# Effingham

ILLINOIS

**CITY HALL**  
201 East Jefferson  
P.O. Box 648  
Effingham, Illinois  
62401-0648

**Mayor**  
John J. Lange  
Public Affairs

**Commissioners**  
Alan Harris  
Accounts & Finances

Karen Flach  
Public Property

Merv Gillenwater  
Public Health & Safety

Larry Micenheimer  
Streets & Public  
Improvements

February 3, 2009

Dear CREATE Program:

Fast, reliable Amtrak service is critical to the residents and businesses of Effingham, 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 directly benefit 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, 21,345 Amtrak riders got on or off the train in Effingham, an increase of 18 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 strong, 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 Effingham strongly supports the CREATE program and recognizes the value of the passenger rail improvements CREATE would provide to communities throughout the state.

Sincerely,

John J. Lange

Mayor

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Building Official  
217-342-5300  
Fax 217.342.5391

City Clerk  
217-342-5301  
Fax 217.347.2675

City Treasurer  
217-342-5302  
Fax 217.342.5311

Engineering  
217-342-5303  
Fax 217.342.5391

Mayor's Office  
217-342-5304  
Fax 217.342.2746

Water/Sewer  
217-342-2366  
Fax 217.342.5356