

High Speed Rail: A High Speed Source for New American Jobs

With business leaders and President Obama holding a Jobs Summit at the White House today, and the Labor Department reporting that 480,000 Americans filed unemployment insurance claims last week, one bright spot in transportation technology offers hope for future job growth.

High speed passenger rail service is supported by more than \$13 billion in currently available federal stimulus funding and is anticipated to benefit from an additional \$50 billion over the next six years--presuming the Congress passes the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act early next year. High Speed Rail (HSR) stands ready to create tens-of-thousands of construction, manufacturing and service jobs for American workers.

The American High Speed Rail Alliance (AHSRA), a Washington, DC-based advocacy organization, believes an important key to getting the economy rolling again and people back to work rests in the future of HSR. In just one proposed corridor along the East Coast, project planners estimate that HSR will create more than 54,000 jobs. Multiply that over the 11 high speed corridors proposed by the Administration and you're talking about making a real dent in today's unemployment situation.

Forty states and the District of Columbia have applied to the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) for a portion of the stimulus funding in hopes of getting their various high speed rail projects started. The FRA is expected to announce the first round of winners for this money in early February, and projects that receive stimulus funding must be completed by 2012.

Whether the money goes to a few projects or many, the impact will be a major boost toward building a world-class high speed rail system, creating thousands of jobs and stimulating strong economic recovery in the United States for decades to come.