

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.  
HIGH-SPEED CORRIDOR GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT  
TAMPA, FLORIDA  
OCTOBER 16, 1992

Thank you ... and let me acknowledge Hillsborough County's Commissioner Ed Turanchik. I would also like to note that Congressman Michael Bilirakis (Bill-arah-kiss) of the 9th Congressional District -- who could not be here today -- played a major role in getting the ISTEA legislation through Congress. His work on the high speed rail provision was especially significant.

This week marks the anniversary of the birth of President Dwight Eisenhower -- who led the nation in the creation of our Interstate Highway System. But it also marks another landmark in transportation -- the renewal of our commitment to developing high speed rail corridors throughout the nation.

When President Bush signed into law the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act -- the law we all call "ISTEA" -- he signaled his intention of carrying our nation's surface transportation system beyond the Eisenhower era to a 21st century system -- including a high speed rail network.

Today we have made good on this promise as we are announcing the designation of a 358-mile high-speed rail corridor between Miami and Tampa via Orlando and initial funding to begin the development of the services. We are allocating to the State of Florida, \$500,000 from the ISTEA funds and an additional \$500,000 from Federal Transit Administration funds. This funding, along with state and other funds, will advance a comprehensive program of highway grade crossing improvements in the corridor.



The state's financial commitment to the corridor is clear. And we applaud this forward-looking approach.

High speed rail service will not only aid in relieving congestion in Florida but will save energy and improve air quality as well. It is the wave of the future capable of moving people at speeds from 90 to 180 miles an hour.

This corridor will further assist in the development of a national intermodal transportation system -- as this corridor will link up to other intercity rail passenger service, to airports, to city transit systems, and to other modes of transportation.

When completed, the corridor will serve 7.3 million people. It will include the existing state-owned route from Miami to West Palm Beach and two or more alternative routings for the rest of the corridor.

Besides dramatically improving our rail service and increasing the efficiency of travel, this program will improve and eliminate highway-rail crossings; thereby saving lives in traffic accidents annually.

The development of this high speed rail corridor will also create jobs. The expenditures for laying track, signal and passenger car construction, and the development of new rail technologies, will boost Florida's economy, its tourist industry, and its employment rolls.

This is a "win-win" situation for Tampa-Miami and Orlando, the state of Florida, and all parties in this high speed rail corridor.

###