

Northern Lights Express

Winter 2009
Update

Alliance Participants

Chair—St. Louis
County Commissioner
Steve Raukar

Vice-Chair—Anoka
County Commissioner
Dan Erhart

Regional Rail Authorities

- Hennepin County
- Anoka County
- Isanti County
- Pine County
- St. Louis & Lake Counties

The cities of

- Minneapolis
- Duluth

Also participating

- Superior, Wisconsin
- Douglas County, Wisconsin
- Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe
- Cities of Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley, Sandstone
- Agencies along the corridor

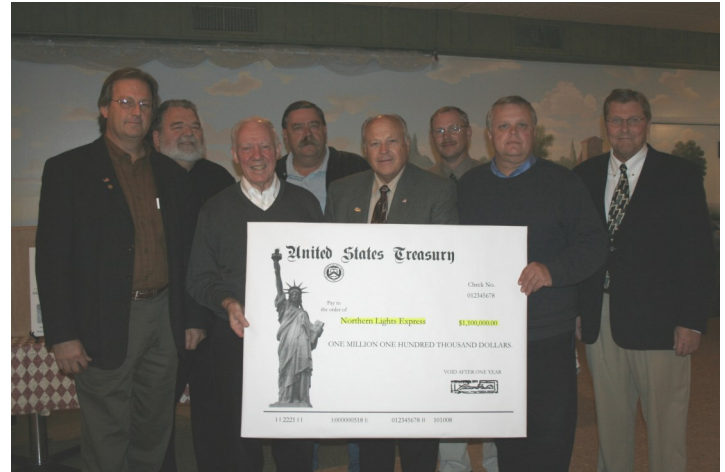


NLX receives \$1.1 million federal grant

NLX is one of 15 rail projects nationwide to receive funds from the Federal Rail Administration. A \$1.1 million mock check was presented by Congressman James Oberstar to members of the Minneapolis–Duluth/Superior Passenger Rail Alliance at their October meeting in Chisholm.

Congressman Oberstar briefed members of the Alliance on legislation supporting rail initiatives like Northern Lights Express.

Pictured are Alliance Chair and St. Louis County



Commissioner Steve Raukar, Douglas County, Wisc. Supervisor Nick Baker, Oberstar, Isanti County Commissioner Larry Southerland, Alliance Vice-Chair and Anoka County Commissioner Dan Erhart,

Pine County Commissioner Roger Nelson, St. Louis County Commissioner Keith Nelson, and Lake County Commissioner Paul Bergman.

Alliance approves legislative session agenda

At the December meeting of the Alliance, a legislative agenda was approved.

At the state level, a handful of items are being worked on.

- Request \$1 million in state bonding for expanded railroad corridor transportation plan and environmental study to include engineering and station development
- Request sales tax exemption on construction activities,

materials and equipment for intercity passenger/high-speed rail

- Develop statutory framework for inclusion of passenger/high-speed rail
- Prepare Legislature and governor for the long-term financing plan requiring 20 percent local match to federal funds for total project cost estimated at \$560 million, not including BNSF track usage costs

At the federal level, \$2.3 million is being requested for railroad corridor transportation plan and environmental studies to include engineering and station development activities.

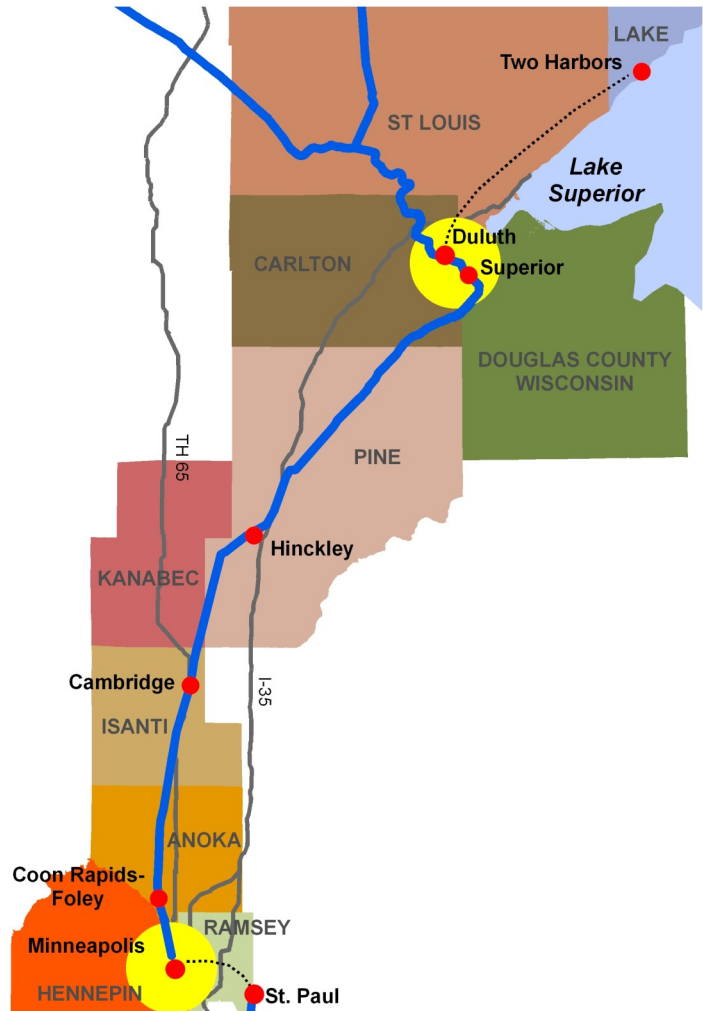
The requests are backed up by a completed feasibility study that has been reviewed by BNSF Railway, the owners of the existing tracks.

Minneapolis-Duluth/ Superior Passenger Rail

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Soon to be on the Web!
NortnerLightsExpress.com



Existing railroad tracks connect Minneapolis and Duluth/Superior.

Alliance exists to explore service options

**Economic boost
predicted for proposed
Minneapolis-Duluth
rail**

The Minneapolis-Duluth/
Superior Passenger Rail
Alliance is a joint powers
board formed to explore
options for renewing
passenger rail service in the
155 mile corridor.

The National Passenger Rail
Study Group in December
2007 identified this corridor as
one of eight top priorities for
development.

The Alliance has completed a
feasibility study using the
TEMS consulting group.
Based on that study, the group
is looking at four alternatives
and round trips varying from
four to nine per day at

different service levels.

The TEMS report projects:

- 3,000 riders per day
- Top speeds of up to 110 miles per hour
- 2-hour service between Minneapolis and Duluth
- \$2 billion in development potential and 13,833 jobs
- Likely fares of \$36 for one-way from end to end; \$18 from Hinckley to Minneapolis, excluding discounts
- Operational within four years of securing funding

BNSF Railway, which owns

the existing tracks, has
reviewed the TEMS report
and provided valuable
feedback.

Based on information from
these two sources, the current
projected capital cost is \$560
million, not including track
usage fees. Annual operating
costs are expected to be
covered by riders within a few
years of startup.

The project may be eligible
for up to 80 percent federal
funding.