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Gov. Culver: Railroads receive more than \$9 million in disaster aid
5/29/2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Troy Price, Governor's Office

(515) 281.0173

troy.price@iowa.gov

Tamara Nicholson, Iowa DOT

(515) 239.1052

tamara.nicholson@dot.iowa.gov

GOVERNOR CULVER ANNOUNCES IOWA RAILROADS RECEIVE MORE THAN \$9 MILLION IN DISASTER AID

Funds will help pay for repairs after the floods of 2008

DES MOINES – Today, Governor Chet Culver announced the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has awarded more than \$9.6 million to the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) to reimburse three of Iowa's shortline and regional railroads for emergency repairs to damaged railroad infrastructure resulting from last year's flooding.

"While it has been nearly a year since our state was hit by the floods of 2008, the work of rebuilding our state continues," said Governor Culver. "These funds will help move our recovery efforts forward while restoring rail service that is vital to many communities across our state. These dollars, when combined with our state's I-JOBS Initiative, will help rebuild this state, and create a stronger, safer, smarter future for Iowans."

Funding has been awarded for:

- Flood damage restoration to rebuild a bridge and repair signals on the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway - \$6,965,163.
- Flood damage restoration for the Keokuk Junction Railway Yard - \$459,200.
- Replacement of the Waterloo Bridge over the Cedar River for the Iowa Northern Railway - \$2,174,880.

Governor Culver also signed legislation earlier this week that includes an additional \$1 million for the Waterloo Bridge over the Cedar River.

Shortline and regional railroads located in a federally designated disaster areas impacted by flooding, hurricanes and other natural disasters were eligible to compete for \$20 million in disaster-relief funding through the FRA's Rehabilitation and Repair Program. The FRA awarded only \$15 million of the flood relief grants, but fully funded the three projects submitted by the Iowa DOT's Office of Rail Transportation. The Iowa DOT submitted the grant applications on behalf of the railroads and will administer the grants that reimburse the railroads for up to 80 percent of the repair costs.

Previously, the Iowa DOT made available nearly \$4 million in no-interest, deferred-payment loans to seven Iowa railroads to repair flood damaged track.

Tammy Nicholson, director of the Iowa DOT's Office of Rail Transportation, said, "I am pleased that the FRA recognized the need for disaster-relief funding to help in the recovery of Iowa's rail transportation system, which is so critical to the shipment of Iowa's industrial and agricultural products.

Despite the devastating damage that was caused by last year's floods, Iowa's railroads have worked tirelessly to repair and restore services to pre-flood levels. These grants to pay for repairs will go a long way toward recovery," said Nicholson.

Governor Culver has made recovering from last year's disasters one of his top priorities. His signature program from the 2009 legislative session – I-JOBS – provides \$265 million for disaster recovery efforts throughout the state, and includes an additional \$10 million for multi-modal projects, like rail.

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