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Railport receives \$2 million

By Elise Loyola

Herald Staff Writer

CLINTON — The Clinton Regional Development Corp. received a \$2 million grant from the Iowa Department of Transportation Commission for the Lincolnway Railport on Tuesday.

The grant is one of four awarded by the DOT from funds secured by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Grants were awarded to projects for railroad development and rehabilitation activities.

CRDC and the Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce had originally entertained the concept of creating a port authority due to economic growth potential.

Companies with their eye on the project were looking at creating around 400 new jobs at the railport.

In 2007, the Union Pacific Railroad approved access to the railport as it is adjacent to its mainline.

Because of congestion on the mainline, more than 10,000 feet of track must be constructed in order to accommodate unit trains or trains more than a mile in length.

The railport will be located south of U.S. 30 and west of 54th Street and is part of the Quality Jobs 4 A Strong Future initiative.

Among the unique advantages of the railport are the potential for more than 1,000 acres of land, Mississippi River and highway access, the availability of three electric providers and three major natural gas pipelines, as well as access to the UP railroad mainline and the Chicago and Eastern line.

The DOT awarded a grant to the railport project based on level of readiness to begin construction, potential for economic development and freight traffic benefits.

Freight traffic benefits include increased capability to move freight, improved service to rail customers and value of rail access to a business or group of businesses.

Other projects receiving funds included Keokuk's Mississippi River bridge, Council Bluffs' Iowa Interstate Railroad Intermodal Facility and the upgrading of up to nine railroad bridges between Dewar and Oelwein.