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## Transportation Secretary suggests midwest rail czar

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By [Darwin Danielson](#)

Governors from multiple midwest states are meeting in Chicago on Monday to discuss how that region could benefit from an expansion of Amtrak service. Among the routes proposed are one from Chicago to the Quad Cities then Iowa City and one from Chicago to Dubuque.

U.S. Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood, says he has one hope for the summit. That they appoint "somebody who gets up every day and the only thing that person thinks about is how to put the very best application together for the midwest."

LaHood says a midwest rail czar who would manage the application process for stimulus money. He says the only thing that person would think about is how to bring all of these states together to work together in a collaborative multi-modal application that can secure some of the eight billion dollars.

LaHood says the success of passenger rail service is an important part of President Obama's mark on transportation. LaHood says, " This will become President Obama's transportation legacy, in my opinion. Nobody else can really take credit for this."

LaHood wouldn't say what he thinks of Iowa's chances of getting money for a route, but says the recent allocation is the most money ever invested in high-speed passenger rail. He says congress is considering putting four billion more dollars into Amtrak development for next year.