

RALPH M. HALL
4TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

2405 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4304
(202) 225-6673
(202) 225-3332 FAX
e-mail: rmhall@mail.house.gov

COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4304

October 17, 2011

Secretary Ray La Hood
U.S. Department of Transportation
Attn: CFDA #20.933
New Jersey Ave. 20590-0001

Dear Secretary La Hood:

I am writing in support of a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Act, "Tiger III" grant program. This grant is important to the Fourth Congressional District and NETEX: which includes Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin, Titus and part of Collin Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in the District.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Rail Road (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation costs for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching, and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that the service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars for deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 miles per hour. This project would bring the line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 miles per hour. NETEX is seriously concerned that the rail line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this application and urge the Department of Transportation to give serious consideration and fund this application.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Ralph M. Hall
Member of Congress

The Senate of The State of Texas

CAPITOL OFFICE:

P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0102
Fax: (512) 463-7202
Dial 711 For Relay Calls



ROBERT F. DEUELL, M.D.
TEXAS SENATE DISTRICT 2

DISTRICT OFFICES:

18601 LBJ Freeway, Suite 400
Mesquite, Texas 75150
(972) 279-1800
Fax: (972) 279-1065

2500 Stonewall St., Suite 805
Greenville, Texas 75401
(903) 450-9797
Fax: (903) 450-9796

October 25, 2011

U. S. Department of Transportation
Office of the Secretary
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary La Hood:

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, TIGER III grants program. This grant is of extreme importance to State Senate District Two and the surrounding region. The NETEX District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in rural east Texas.

NETEX and the Blackland Railroad have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The present condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or less than 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this application and urge DOT to give serious consideration to funding it in full.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Deuell".

Senator Bob Deuell, MD
District Two



ERWIN CAIN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
HOUSE DISTRICT 3

CAPITOL OFFICE
P.O. Box 2910
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78768-2910
(512) 463-0650
FAX: (512) 463-0575
OFFICE SUITE: E1.402

DISTRICT OFFICE
P.O. Box 834
SULPHUR SPRINGS, TEXAS 75483-0834

October 18, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: ID: HarleyDavis10377

Mr. La Hood:

I write today to urge you to grant the request of the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) in their efforts to acquire funding through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Act, or Tiger III. NETEX is a political subdivision of the state of Texas serving the Northeast corner of Texas, including Collin, Hunt, Delta, Hopkins, Franklin and Titus counties that represents a large, rural agricultural region, with business, industry and manufacturing. Rail transportation has become a vital component of the transportation system in this region. Aggressive efforts by NETEX and the Blacklands Railroad (BLR) have increased business on the line from 453 carload loads in 1999 to 5000 carloads in 2008, with a projected 6000 carloads in 2011. Due to the lack of maintenance by the previous owner, Southern Pacific Railway Company there is a need to upgrade the railroad to increase safety capacity on the line and to keep the line competitive with other modes of transportation.

The funding from the Tiger III grant will focus on replacing 77,000 crossties with associated ballast and surfacing work, rail alignment, and profile corrections necessary to achieve and maintain FRA Class II standards enabling 25 mph track speeds. Also, included is the relocation and construction of two trans-load facilities, one in Sulphur Springs, Texas and one in Commerce, Texas.

The total proposed cost of this project and the amount being applied for in the NETEX Tiger III application is \$9,990,045. The project when completed will be sustainable and serve the needs of shippers and receivers along the NETEX rail line and maintain a vital mode of transportation for these rural counties for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erwin Cain".

Erwin Cain
Texas House of Representatives

CC: NETEX Board of Directors



Circa 1912

Franklin County Judge

Paul Lovier

200 N. Kaufman St.

Mt. Vernon, TX 75457

(903)537-2342 (903)537-2418 Fax



Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U. S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: CFDA #20.933

Re: Tiger III CFDA # 20.933 FY 2011

Dear Mr. La Hood,

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990, 045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX), is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "Tiger III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to Franklin County. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in counties such as ours.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BRR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Trail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990s. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and would permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

If you have any questions, please call me at (903) 537-2342 ext. 6.

Best Personal Regards,

Paul Lovier
Franklin County Judge

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is a political subdivision of the state of Texas serving the Northeast corner of Texas, including Collin, Hunt, Delta, Hopkins, Franklin and Titus counties that represents a large, rural agricultural region. Rail transportation has become a vital component of the transportation system in this region. Aggressive efforts by NETEX and the Blacklands Railroad (BLR) have increased business on the line from 453 carload loads in 1999 to 5000 carloads in 2008, with a projected 6000 carloads in 2011. Due to the lack of maintenance by the previous owner, Southern Pacific Railway Company there is a need to upgrade the railroad to increase safety, capacity on the line and keep the line competitive with other modes of transportation; and

WHEREAS, The NETEX line is constructed of predominantly 112# jointed rail on ties that date from the 1940's to the 1980's. Most of the ties have exceeded their expected service life and are severely deteriorated. The line is in need of rehabilitation to address poor tie conditions, rail alignment, and profile deficiencies to achieve and maintain FRA Class II (25 mph) status; and

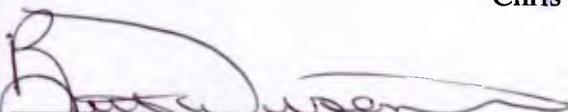
WHEREAS, The major activities of the project will focus on replacing approx. 70,000 crossties with associated ballast and surfacing work, rail alignment, and profile corrections necessary to achieve and maintain FRA Class II standards enabling 25 mph track speeds. Also, included is the relocation and construction of a 1,000 ft. transload facility from downtown Sulphur Springs to a location outside the city to reduce noise and truck traffic within the city limits; and

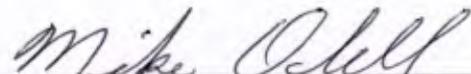
WHEREAS, The total proposed cost of this project and the amount being applied for in the NETEX Tiger III application is \$9,990,045. The project, when completed, will be sustainable and serve the needs of shippers and receivers along the NETEX rail line and maintain a vital mode of transportation for these rural counties for years to come; and

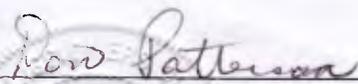
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hopkins County Commissioners' Court wishes to support Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) in their request for funding for a TIGER III Grant in order to continue the expansion of rail transportation in the rural agricultural region in Northeast Texas which includes Hopkins County.

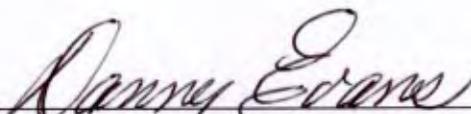
APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Hopkins County Commissioners' Court at the regularly scheduled meeting on the 24th day of October, 2011.


Chris Brown, Hopkins County Judge

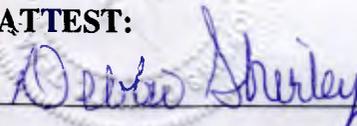

Beth Wisenbaker, Commissioner, Pct. 1


Mike Odell, Commissioner, Pct. 2


Don Patterson, Commissioner, Pct. 3


Danny Evans, Commissioner, Pct. 4

ATTEST:

 COUNTY CLERK



Office of the
County Judge



County Courthouse
Post Office Box 288
Sulphur Springs, TX 75483



October 18, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590

Attn: CFDA # 20.933

Dear Mr. La Hood:

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to Hopkins County. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in Hopkins County.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's.

Mr. Ray LaHood
Page 2
October 18, 2011

The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Respectfully,

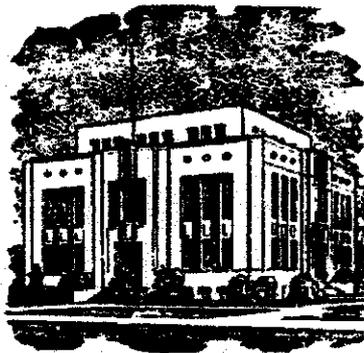


Chris Brown
Hopkins County Judge

CB/br

HERBERT BROOKSHIRE
Delta County Judge
COOPER, TX 75432

Office Phone (903) 395-4400 x226



COMMISSIONERS
B.V. "Rip" Templeton, Pct. 1
(903) 395-4206
David Max Moody, Pct. 2
(903) 395-4924
Wayne Poole, Pct. 3
(903) 395-673
Mark Brantley, Pct. 4
(903) 395-2617

October 24, 2011

Mr. Ray LaHood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
ATTN: CFDA#20.933

Dear Mr. LaHood,

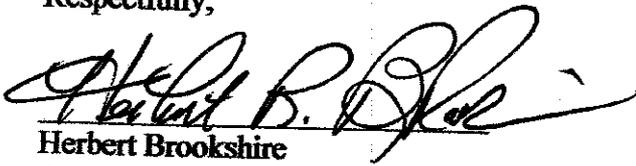
I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to Delta County. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in Delta County.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

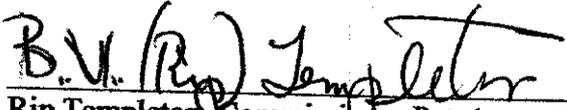
NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable, and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

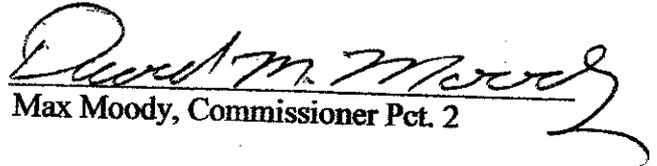
Respectfully,



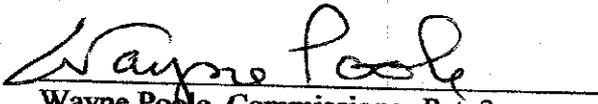
Herbert Brookshire
County Judge



Rip Templeton, Commissioner Pct. 1



Max Moody, Commissioner Pct. 2



Wayne Poole, Commissioner Pct. 3



Mark Brantley, Commissioner Pct. 4



HUNT COUNTY

POST OFFICE BOX 1097 • GREENVILLE, TEXAS 75403-1097

JOHN L. HORN
HUNT COUNTY JUDGE

KATRINA PEMBERTON
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

(903) 408-4146

(903) 408-4299 FAX

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: CFDA # 20.933

Dear Mr. LaHood;

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to Hunt County.

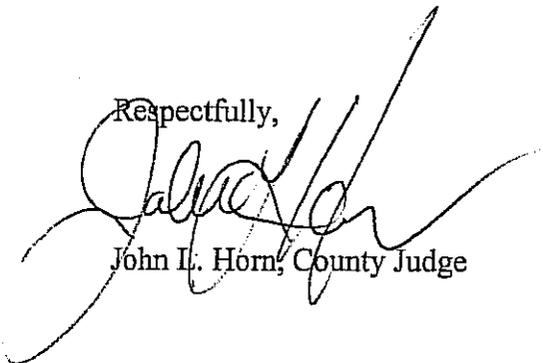
The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in Hunt County.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Horn", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned over the typed name below it.

John L. Horn, County Judge



Sulphur Springs
Hopkins County
Economic Development Corporation

1200 Enterprise Lane, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482
Phone 903-439-0101, Fax 903-439-6396
www.ss-edc.com

October 17, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: CFDA # 20.933

Dear Mr. LaHood:

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to The Sulphur Springs Hopkins County Economic Development Corporation. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in the Sulphur Springs Hopkins County area.

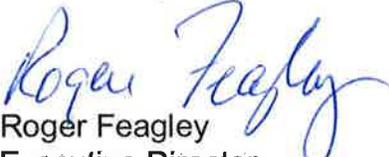
The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BRR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will

immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Respectfully,


Roger Feagley
Executive Director



October 17, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Tiger III CFDA #20.933 FY 2011

Dear Mr. La Hood:

This letter represents my support of a grant application by the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) in the amount of \$9,990,045, submitted under the provision of the **TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, TIGER III**” grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to the Commerce Economic Development Corporation, as well as my community. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes the following counties: Collin, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Hunt and Titus. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in Commerce.

The NETEX Board of Directors and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch Line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation costs for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the rail line could face *closure* for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a *safe, reliable and self-sustaining* rural rail line. The project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the state and national averages.

I support this application and urge the DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bonnie Hunter' in a cursive script.

Bonnie Hunter
Executive Director

Commerce Economic Development Corporation
1119 Alamo Street, Commerce, Texas 75428
(903) 886-1121 - Fax: (903) 886-8929
www.commercetxedc.org - e-mail: bonnie.hunter@commercetx.org



October 27, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: CFDA # 20.933

Dear Mr. LaHood;

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to the City of Sulphur Springs. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource in Sulphur Springs, Texas.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately

City of Sulphur Springs

put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Maxwell', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Marc Maxwell
City Manager



October 24, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
New Jersey Avenue
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: CFDA # 20.933

Dear Mr. LaHood:

I am writing to support a grant application, in the amount of \$9,990,045, which the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) is submitting under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. This grant is of extreme importance to the Greenville Board of Development (GBOD). The NETEX District includes: Collin, Delta, Hopkins, Hunt, Franklin, and Titus Counties. The grant application is specifically a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project, which affects a vital infrastructure resource to Hunt County and the Greenville Board of Development.

The NETEX Board of Directors, and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the C-Branch line (STL SW Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail service, many small businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation cost for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade. During this period, revenue has not been enough to make up for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance that was inherited when the line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The poor condition of the Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10mph. This project would bring the Line up to a Class 2 Rail Line and will permit train operation up to 25 mph. NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons if major rehabilitation is deferred. This project will provide long term benefits of a safe, reliable and self-sustaining rural rail line. The Project will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the State and National averages.

I support this Application and urge DOT to give serious consideration and fund this application.

Respectfully,

Greg Sims
President/CEO
Greenville Board of Development
P.O.Box 825
Greenville, Texas 75403
(903) 455 - 1197



October 28, 2011

Mr. Ray La Hood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: TIGER III CFDA # 20.933 FY 2011, TIGER ID: HarleyDavis10377

Dear Mr. La Hood,

As president of Texas A&M University-Commerce, I am writing to support a grant application for \$9,990,045 to be submitted by the Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District (NETEX) under the provision of the TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT GENERATING ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACT, "TIGER III" grant program. The Northeast Texas Rural Rail Transportation District includes: Franklin, Hopkins, Delta, Hunt, Collin, and Titus counties, and the grant application is specifically for a Rural Freight Rail Transportation Project. The funding of this grant proposal is very important to A&M-Commerce since it would affect a vital infrastructure resource in the university's service area.

The NETEX Board of Directors and contract operator, Blacklands Railroad (BLR), have worked diligently to save the former C-Branch line of the St. Louis Southwestern Railway (Cotton Belt Route) which would otherwise have been abandoned. Without rail freight service, many businesses and individuals on the NETEX Rail Line would face much higher transportation costs for the products they use in manufacturing, farming, ranching, and construction. Rehabilitation of the Rail Line would assure shippers and receivers that service will continue to be available.

I understand that NETEX and BLR have more than doubled carloads shipped during the last decade, but revenue generated cannot compensate for the millions of dollars of deferred maintenance inherited when the Line was acquired in the mid 1990's. The current state of the Rail Line necessitates train operation to be at or under 10 mph; however, this project would bring the Line up to Class 2 standards and permit train operation up to 25 mph. If major rehabilitation is further deferred, NETEX is seriously concerned that the Rail Line could face closure for safety reasons. This project will provide long-term benefits of a safe, reliable, and self-sustaining rural rail line and will immediately put people to work in a depressed rural area where wage levels are far below the state and national averages.

On behalf of all members of the university community, I support this application and urge the Department of Transportation to give serious consideration and fund this "fast-track" project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan R. Jones'.

Dan R. Jones, Ph.D.
President

Office of the President

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