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Route is Selected for New Rail Service Between Meridian, Miss., and Dallas/Ft. Worth

AMTRAK CONTINUES TO GROW ITS NATIONAL NETWORK

MERIDIAN, MISS. -- Amtrak today announced its intended route for new rail passenger service between Meridian, Miss., and Dallas/Fort Worth on the Crescent Star. The new train will be an extension of Amtrak's Crescent service, operating between New York and New Orleans via Meridian.

Meridian Mayor and Amtrak Board Member John Robert Smith said the Crescent Star will connect Meridian with Dallas and Fort Worth through Jackson, Miss., and Shreveport, La., primarily on track owned by the Kansas City Southern. The train will also operate over small segments of track owned by the Canadian National/Illinois Central; the Dallas Area Rapid Transit; and the Union Pacific.

"The Crescent Star is a vital component of our plans to grow the national network, which remains a top priority for Amtrak," said Smith. "The new service will connect vital markets in the southwest and northeast, providing a valuable new option for rail passengers."

Amtrak and the Kansas City Southern are working together to secure funding for necessary track infrastructure upgrades and repairs on portions of its railroad. Start-up of the Crescent Star will begin once funding has been identified.

Smith said work will now begin on determining which cities along the Crescent Star route will become station stops. "We will start reaching out to communities along the route where we believe a market exists and where there is an interest in rail passenger service," he said. "There will be some financial obligations on the part of the cities. However, we look forward to establishing profitable and long-term partnerships."

Amtrak's current New York-New Orleans long-distance train, the Crescent, will play a key role for the new service. Upon arrival in Meridian, the Crescent will be divided into two trains with one train, the Crescent, continuing southbound to New Orleans and the other train, the Crescent Star, heading west to Dallas/Ft. Worth along the new route. On the reverse trip, the two trains will be combined in Meridian continuing northbound to New York.

In addition to the new markets that the Crescent Star will open up, the new train's success will be powered by the recent success of the Crescent, which enjoys one of the corporation's strongest ridership trends.

During the first quarter of fiscal year 2001 (Oct. '00-Dec. '00), the Crescent carried 65,660 passengers which represented a 5.3 percent growth over the same three months of fiscal year 2000. The Crescent also generated an additional 14 percent in revenue growth during the same period. Ridership also grew on the Crescent by 13.9 percent during the last quarter of fiscal year 2000. "With ridership up on the Crescent, it makes the revenue possibilities even greater for the Crescent Star," said Mayor Smith.

Ridership and revenue growth for the Crescent mirrors that of the entire Amtrak system. Last year

Amtrak served a record 22.5 million passengers and most recently set an all-time first quarter record in fiscal year 2001 with six million passengers. Its record revenue of \$2.1 billion in FY 2000 included a 10 percent increase in ticket revenue over FY 1999. For the quarter ending Dec. 31, 2000, ticket revenue was up 14 percent over the same period the previous year.

Building on this momentum, Amtrak last week announced a bold 20-year capital investment plan which will help relieve the nation's chronic highway and airport congestion, modernize and expand the current national system and accelerate plans for high-speed rail service in busy corridors throughout the country. The plan addresses a "rail investment gap" in the United States in which intercity rail currently gets less than one percent of all transportation modal spending and has received about \$2 billion less than what Congress has authorized for rail transportation since fiscal year 1998.

Amtrak operates a 22,000-mile intercity passenger rail system, serving more than 500 communities in 45 states. For more information about Amtrak, including schedules, fares and reservations, visit Amtrak's web site at www.amtrak.com or amtrakcrescent.com.