

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2009

ATK-09-007
Amtrak Contact: Marc Magliari
312 880.5390
MoDOT Contact: Kristi Jamison
573 526.2482
Rod Massman
573 751.7476

AND THE WINNER IS ... *MISSOURI RIVER RUNNER* Nearly 5,500 votes cast to rename MoDOT's Amtrak trains

JEFFERSON CITY – The public has spoken: *Missouri River Runner* is the new name for the state-supported Amtrak trains between St. Louis and Kansas City. The name evokes the river that parallels much of the route, plus the Mississippi River at the eastern terminus and the Kansas River at the western end. It was submitted by Keith Kohler of Glendale, Mo., and it received 2,036 votes, or 37 percent of the votes cast.

More than 8,300 name submissions were entered late last year. After contest judges narrowed those submissions to just five finalist names, 5,455 votes came in by mail and via the morail.org website.

At a ceremony today, Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) Director Pete Rahn and Amtrak Senior Director Ray Lang, presented Kohler with the grand prize – two round-trip sleeping car tickets to any Amtrak destination in the U.S.

“The Name the Train contest has stirred up excitement for passenger rail service in Missouri,” said Rod Massman, MoDOT’s administrator of railroads. “We’re happy that so many people participated in the contest. A new brand name and new track investments along the railroad corridor are a great way to start a new year for Amtrak service in Missouri.”

MoDOT and Amtrak sponsored the “Name the Train” contest in celebration of 30 years of state-supported passenger rail across Missouri, as well as major service improvements in the works.

“We’re working with MoDOT and Union Pacific Railroad on a capacity improvement later this year, the new St. Louis Gateway Station is anchoring the east end of the route and the improvements at the Sedalia station are going forward, too, all making the service even better,” said Lang.

“Ridership grew nine percent on this route in the last quarter, bucking national economic trends and record-low gasoline prices, so we’re on a roll into 2009,” Lang added.

In addition to the grand prize, all five finalists were presented with a gift basket from one of five participating cities located on the passenger rail line. The St. Louis Convention and Visitors Commission, the Washington Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson City Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce and the Kansas City Convention and Visitors Association provided the gift baskets. Each of the five finalists also received two round-trip coach tickets to any Amtrak destination in Missouri earlier in the contest.

The other four finalists were:

- *Missouri Rail Blazer* – submitted by Betty Crancer of Sunset Hills; 1,204 votes, 22 percent
- *ShowMeMO* – submitted by Kerry Simmons of Independence; 1,196 votes, 22 percent
- *Truman Service* – submitted by John Fernandez of St. Louis; 597 votes, 11 percent
- *River Cities Corridor* – submitted by Richard A. Chenault of Webster Groves; 422 votes, 8 percent

Missouri River Runner replaces the little known names that identified Missouri’s cross-state passenger trains: *Missouri Service* formerly named the *Ann Rutledge* – a leftover from that train’s Illinois origins; and the *Mules*. The service will operate under a single brand, a practice that is common on other Amtrak corridors, and the spring Amtrak timetable will reflect the branding.

About the Missouri Department of Transportation

Our mission is to provide a world-class transportation experience that delights our customers and promotes a prosperous Missouri. For more information, visit www.modot.org or call 888-ASK-MODOT (within Missouri).

About Amtrak

Amtrak has posted six consecutive years of growth in ridership and revenue, carrying more than 28.7 million passengers in the last fiscal year. Amtrak provides intercity passenger rail service to more than 500 destinations in 46 states on a 21,000-mile route system. For schedules, fares and information, passengers may call 800-USA-RAIL or visit Amtrak.com.

###