

Jill Shelley

| Oklahoma - Selected Passenger Rail Developments | | |
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| | topic | |
| 1978 | rail tax | Oklahoma establishes its Freight Car Tax, a 4 percent tax on freight rail care revenues; that tax with leases and lease-purchase agreements generated approximately \$1.6 million a year, now reduced to \$1.2 million a year. The Railroad Rehabilitation Act of 1978 also established the Oklahoma Railroad Maintenance Revolving Fund. |
| 1980-1981 | state investment in rail | The Oklahoma legislature appropriated \$12 million in 1980 and \$10 million in 1981 to be invested in the Oklahoma rail system; several Class I railroads had declared bankruptcy. The State acquired nearly 500 miles of railroads. The branch line between El Reno and Oklahoma City and the branch line north of Lawton were leased to the Union Pacific through a lease-purchase arrangement. (The last payment was made to the state in October 2011.) As of 2012, the state continues to own 428 miles of track and leases the majority of it to Class III railroads. |
| 1993 | tax directed to rail | 1993 HB 1078 redirected a portion of gasoline taxes to rail. Of the 70 percent of the gasoline tax directed to the State Transportation Fund, between 4% and 5% was to be used by ODOT to "contract railroad passenger services, including but not limited to a route linking stations in Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties with other primary points in the national railroad passenger system and to provide necessary facility, signaling, and track improvements" |
| 1996 | passenger rail act | The Oklahoma Tourism and Passenger Rail Act (1996 SB 1192, Ch. 255) was enacted. Its purpose is to "do all things necessary to restore passenger rail service to the state, to enhance the state's position as a tourist destination site and to improve the quality of life for residents of this state by offering an alternative mode of intrastate and interstate travel." |
| 1997 | federal payment | The federal Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 provided payments to states that did not have passenger rail service. The payment of \$23 million to Oklahoma provided the basis to establish the Heartland Flyer. |
| 14-Jun-1999 | service began | Heartland Flyer service began, operated by Amtrak. |
| 2000 | official designation | The Tulsa-Oklahoma City-Dallas corridor was officially designated by the USDOT as a high-speed corridor in 2000. Since 1991, the Federal Railroad Administration has identified 11 high-speed rail corridors, positioning them for federal funding. |

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| 2006 | official sponsor | Texas became a co-sponsor of the Heartland Flyer. It is the only state-sponsored service with more than one state taking the responsibility. Oklahoma and Texas pay Amtrak a fixed amount for the service plus 50 percent of the fuel cost and BNSF track usage fees (capped at \$2.3 million; Oklahoma's fixed amount in federal FY 2012 was \$1.1 million) |
| 2009 | federal grants | Oklahoma applied for but did not receive approximately \$2 billion in Track Two funding for service development, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR). ODOT's rail plan says the state will continue to pursue all federal funding opportunities. Texas was awarded \$3.75 million for final design and construction of signal timing improvements at grade crossings between Fort Worth and the Oklahoma line to increase the operating speed of the Heartland Flyer. |
| FY 2010 | federal grants | Oklahoma was awarded three HSIPR grants: - \$2.24 million for a High-Speed Rail Corridor Investment Plan for a new service between Tulsa and Oklahoma City; - \$384,000 for updates to its state rail plan (estimated total cost: \$644,000); - \$1,660,793 for construction of a track extension plus new switches to allow the Heartland Flyer to exit the Oklahoma City station without having to make a reverse move (estimated total cost: nearly \$3 million) |
| 2010 | appropriation | The Legislature designated \$2 million a year for Heartland Flyer operation (O.S. 69-1521). (This remains in place as of October 2012.) The statutes (O.S. 68-500.6) also direct the second \$850,000 collected from taxes on gasoline and compressed natural gas to the Oklahoma Tourism and Passenger Rail Revolving Fund. |
| 2011 | task force | The Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Development Taskforce was created by enacted legislation (2011 OK HB 1686). The task force is charged with examining the development of conventional and high-speed passenger rail transportation between Tulsa and Oklahoma City using public-private partnership formulas. Its report is due by the end of 2012. Legislation would be required to allow public-private partnership funding. |
| 2012 | line to Tulsa | During 2012, Oklahoma will begin its effort to obtain the necessary environmental clearance and Federal Railroad Administration authority to develop a passenger line from Tulsa to Oklahoma City. |

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| 31-May-2012 | line to Tulsa | Tulsa's Advisory Committee to the Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Task Force said a private entity reported it would be possible to rehabilitate the existing state-owned rail line, provide rolling stock and implement passenger rail service between Sapulpa and Oklahoma City for a state investment of \$50 million. The Tulsa committee recommended using existing rail tracks rather than new dedicated tracks (at an estimated State cost of \$400 million) on which trains could run at much higher speeds. |
| 1-Oct-2012 | new corridor rail study | Texas DOT has begun a two-year study to explore the best options for developing passenger trains that will connect metropolitan areas from Oklahoma City to Dallas/Fort Worth on south to Austin and San Antonio and potentially farther south. The \$14 million study is partially funded through a federal FY2010 \$5.6 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration's High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program; TxDOT is providing a 20 percent match. The Oklahoma City-Fort Worth corridor is a federally designated high-speed rail corridor. The contract for this work has been awarded to CH2MHill, and regional modeling will be included. |
| <p>Sources: "Oklahoma Statewide Freight and Passenger Rail Plan," prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff for ODOT, May 2012; "Tulsa to Oklahoma City: A Public-Private Partnership," Tulsa's Advisory Committee to the Eastern Flyer Passenger Rail Task Force, 31 May 2012; Department of Transportation websites: http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/recovery/hs_rail/index.htm, www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/HSIPR/ProjectFunding.aspx, http://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/division/rail/high-speed/aug-09.html</p> | | |
| KLRD, October 2012 | | |

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