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## **National Train Day highlights importance of passenger rail**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The fourth annual celebration of National Train Day on May 7 marks 142 years of connecting travelers coast to coast and commemorates the day the first transcontinental railroad was created. Celebrations are scheduled nationwide Saturday to celebrate the history and future of passenger rail in America.

Gladys Knight will kick off the celebration at Washington, D.C.'s, acclaimed Union Station. Celebrations also will be held at train stations in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Chicago, and will feature live entertainment, interactive and educational exhibits, kids' activities, and train displays and tours.

“Passenger rail service is seeing tremendous growth and support, as well as financial investments from state and federal governments,” said Paula Hammond, States for Passenger Rail Coalition (SPRC) chair and Washington State Transportation Secretary. “National Train Day is a wonderful opportunity to pay tribute to this important and growing transportation resource.”

Hammond noted that passenger rail has gained in popularity over the past several years as the nation seeks alternate transportation options due to rising gas prices and environmental concerns. In March, Amtrak achieved 17 straight months of year-over-year ridership growth with an average increase of 6.3 percent.

In addition, the emergence of a national policy to develop a world-class passenger rail system in the United States has brought added support and funding. Hammond said ongoing support from President Obama, Congress and state leaders will be crucial to the future of passenger rail service.

Hammond said the members of the SPRC, which represent transportation agencies in 33 states, will continue their bipartisan effort to support intercity passenger rail initiatives and work to achieve sustained and dedicated funding for investments.

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### **About the States for Passenger Rail Coalition**

The States for Passenger Rail Coalition is an alliance of state and regional transportation officials who work together to promote the development and growth of intercity passenger rail as part of an integrated national transportation network.