

Reactions from the public on September 30, 2008  
Wichita, Kansas  
Reported by Julius Karash

**Autumn Heithaus, Kansas Executive Director of the Northern Flyer Alliance, Wichita** – “I have talked to many, many people, young and old, who desire this passenger train. Passenger train service moves people, keeps them mobile. Not everybody can fly and not everybody can drive. “

**Bart Hildreth, T-LINK member, Wichita** - “The question I have for everyone is not whether we have the ability to pay, because we do as a state. The question is whether or not we have the willingness to pay? How do you expect the state to pay for these projects?”

**Bill Pickert, T-LINK member, Wichita** - “We’re very well served in the state of Kansas. We’d always like more. But if you look at the road systems and the other transportation modes that we enjoy in this state, I think it’s head and shoulders above any other state in the region.”

**Brian Silcott, city administrator of Goddard** - “The roads that feed into U.S. 54 and intersect in with the city of Wichita are overloaded with traffic. Many of our intersecting roadways are essentially township roads that have been slurry sealed. We’re seeing degradation due to the volume of traffic. We, being a community of 4,000, don’t have the capacity to handle the construction projects that would get folks on and off of there.”

**Charles Swayze, general manager of the Farmers’ Coop in Isabel and member of the Barber County Development Board of Trustees** – “We do have a terrible bottleneck in Wichita, trying to get through WTA (Wichita Terminal Association terminal railroad). It’s very important that we move grain as efficiently as we can. Without the railroads it would be very difficult. One rail car out of our area, that would be three and a half semis. If there’s a better way to get (rail) cars pushed on through Wichita, that would be a real plus.”

**David Spears, Sedgwick County Public Works Director** – “When you’re looking at a comprehensive highway program, you have to select projects that are regional type projects, not just a local project that benefits just a few people. That’s going to be the biggest challenge that I think we all face. “

**Harland Priddle, executive director of the K 96 Corridor Development Association and former Kansas Secretary of Commerce** – “I think it’s vitally important we have a plan. Without a plan, you don’t know where you’re going. The funding of that plan is an issue that may have to be addressed in phases, separately.”

**Joe Reardon, T-LINK member and Mayor of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas** – “If you look at the commitment that’s been made to transportation over the last several decades in Kansas, you can see that we’ve been fortunate. Our connectivity through the highway plan is just fantastic. If we stop investment or we slow investment down in transportation, I think we put in peril our economic development and our ability to grow. Reinvestment in transportation is a reinvestment in ourselves as Kansans.”

**Kathy Sexton, City Manager of Derby and Transportation Task Force Chair of the Regional Economic Area Partnership of South Central Kansas, which comprises representatives from seven counties and 27 cities** – “The REAP region is the manufacturing backbone of the state of Kansas. One of our goals is to remain competitive in the global economy. That means a lot of changes in the way our governments operate, cooperate and work with each other and with business. Clearly, the state should focus its transportation funding on infrastructure of regional and statewide importance, rather than on city streets and county roads. We need to preserve the transportation system, which means maintaining what we have.”

**Kelly Parks, Sedgwick County Commissioner** – “The Northwest Bypass is something that’s been on the books for about 20 years. If there’s any doubt that there’s economic development to be had from this, just look at the Northeast Bypass on the other side of town. Even if it’s 20 more years down the line, we need to start buying a little bit of right of way out there. I would like to see this finished in my lifetime.”

**Mim Wilkey, executive director of community development for the Greater Wichita YMCA** – “We see bike paths, sidewalks and any mode of transportation regarding bicycles and walking as extremely important. Here in Wichita we’ve been very successful with our public/private partnerships in supporting healthy ways of living. We would encourage you, in your plan, to look at those partnerships. We ask of you that when you go through this planning process and you develop your priorities, always take into consideration how this affects the pedestrians and the bicyclists.”

**Paul Faber, Chairman of the Board of the Kansas Public Transit Association in Topeka and Executive Vice President of Operations of Heartspring, a school for severely handicapped children in Wichita** – “Remember transit and the individual citizen, the person with a handicap who chooses to be a taxpayer and not a tax consumer, who chooses to ride on specialized transportation with their guide dog or wheelchair or personal aid, so they can get to work and back home, and financially provide for themselves and their families.”

**Rep. Geraldine Flaharty of Wichita** – “Economic development is one of the things that the Legislature is very interested in. Infrastructure and an educated work force are the two drivers for economic development. It’s very important that we develop another (transportation) plan. “

**Steve Phillips, Manager of the Syracuse-Hamilton County Airport and President of the Kansas Association of Airports** – “Because we’ve had no program in the past, other than the recent program to get that pavement index up, there has been no funding for modernization ever in the state of Kansas, from the state, for airports. The association would like to see some sort of amount put in toward reaching that goal.”