



February 6th, 2025

The Honorable Rick Billinger
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Kansas State Legislature Senate
State Capitol, Room 548-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: **SB 86**--Establishing an intercity passenger rail service program and making transfers annually into the passenger rail service revolving fund.

Dear Senator Billinger,

The Sheet Metal Air Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART) is a proponent of SB349.

SMART represents over six thousand active and retired members in Kansas. Our members work in all areas of transportation in the state, from railroad conductors, engineers, and various railroad positions. Our office is the transportation infrastructure throughout Kansas. We move our nation's freight safely and professionally.

A new rail passenger corridor from Kansas City - Wichita - Oklahoma City - Fort Worth will dramatically improve our state's long-term competitiveness. Investments in passenger rail create construction and operating jobs and strengthen our regional economy. Trains consume less energy per passenger than cars and planes, reducing pollution and our reliance on foreign oil.

Feasibility studies have concluded that a 1-mile stretch of new rail line costs approximately \$2 million to construct, while the same 1-mile stretch of highway can cost nearly 20 times as much. This is an affordable investment in Kansas' future. My written testimony includes an Amtrak 2023 Fact and Figure sheet for Kansas.

Now is the time for Kansas to act. The federal government has committed to investing billions to improve our nation's passenger rail system. Kansas needs to commit to competing for these federal dollars.

Importantly, the vast majority of these vital investments will stay close to home, where citizens can see the energy, environmental, and job benefits of rail service. I look forward to our continued strong working relationship.





I cannot say enough about the excitement growing in the state in anticipation of passenger rail once again becoming an integral part of our nation's surface transportation system.

Please Support SB86.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Ty E. Drago".

Sincerely,

Ty Drago
SMART-TD
Kansas Legislative Board
Director & Chairman





Amtrak Fact Sheet Fiscal Year 2023 State of Kansas

Amtrak Service & Ridership

At the end of FY 2023, Amtrak operated two trains per day in Kansas, as part of the following routes:

- **Long Distance**
Southwest Chief (daily Los Angeles-Flagstaff-Albuquerque-Topeka-Chicago)

Stations Served

During FY 2023, Amtrak trains served the following locations in Kansas.

City (Code)	Ridership
Dodge City (DDG)	3,633
Garden City (GCK)	5,351
Hutchinson (HUT)	3,629
Lawrence (LRC)	6,042
Newton (NEW)	16,772
Topeka (TOP)	6,872
Total Kansas Station Usage:	42,299

Amtrak maintains the Great American Stations website (<https://www.greatamericanstations.com/>), which includes detailed profiles of every Amtrak station. Information available includes a brief history of each station, a review of what organization or organizations are responsible for the various portions of each facility, a list of routes serving each station, contact information for the appropriate Amtrak representative for that station, and relevant local community links.

Host Railroads & On-Time Performance

Amtrak relies heavily on the cooperation of other railroads to operate routes using tracks that Amtrak does not own or control. Host railroads are statutorily required to provide Amtrak trains “preference” over freight transportation. However, on-time performance (OTP) on most host railroads is poor and continues to decline largely due to hosts ignoring their statutory responsibilities.

Listed below are the Amtrak services that operate in Kansas with each service’s host railroads and customer OTP in FY 2023:

Service	Host Railroad (s)	FY23 OTP
<i>Southwest Chief</i>	BNSF, New Mexico DOT	34%

Customer OTP measures what proportion of customers arrive at their destination on time. For *Acela* trains, the margin is within 10 minutes of the schedule and the margin is 15 minutes for all other trains. Thus, if a train is 16 minutes late to its final stop, and all its riders are headed for that stop, then even if the train is on time at every intermediate stop, customer OTP would be 0%, reflecting the passengers’ experience.

Amtrak Guest Rewards

At the end of FY 2023, there were approximately 16.7 million members of *Amtrak Guest Rewards* (AGR), with 59,901 members listing an address in Kansas. For more information about AGR, please see: <https://www.amtrak.com/guestrewards/home>.

Procurement

In FY 2023, Amtrak procured goods and services worth \$3.71 billion, and 99.0% of that figure was sourced from firms headquartered domestically. In Kansas, Amtrak spent \$65,161,850 broken down in the following locations:

City	Amount (\$)
Leawood	108,185
Lenexa	101,980
Overland Park	919,569
Pittsburg	550,274
Topeka	874,716
Wichita	62,201,935
Leawood	108,185
Lenexa	101,980
Overland Park	919,569

Employment & Wages

At the end of FY 2023, Amtrak employed 22,642 people, including 18 Kansas residents. Total FY 2023 wages were \$2.21 billion, of which Kansas residents earned \$2,047,142.

Additional Information

Service Expansion and Improvements

The daily *Heartland Flyer* is funded in part by the Kansas Department of Transportation (DOT). Kansas DOT, in partnership with the Oklahoma and Texas DOTs, has received a federal Corridor Identification and Development Program grant to fund planning for the *Heartland Flyer* extension to Newton, Kansas.

Amtrak contracts with Village Travel LLC to operate dedicated connecting motor coach service between existing stations at Oklahoma City and Newton. The service, marketed under the Amtrak Thruway brand, bridges the gap that would be filled by the proposed route expansion, and helps build demand in support of the expansion.

Station Improvements

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that stations in the intercity rail transportation system be made readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. In response, Amtrak developed an ADA Stations Program to bring the stations it serves (and for which it has ADA responsibility) into compliance with ADA requirements and to provide the best possible service to passengers with disabilities in the shortest timeframe and most integrated and efficient way possible.

Garden City: Amtrak is currently in the design stages to provide a new platform, accessible walkways to the public right-of-way, and all lighting and signage for the platform and walkways. Construction will commence in FY 2025 and be completed in FY 2026.

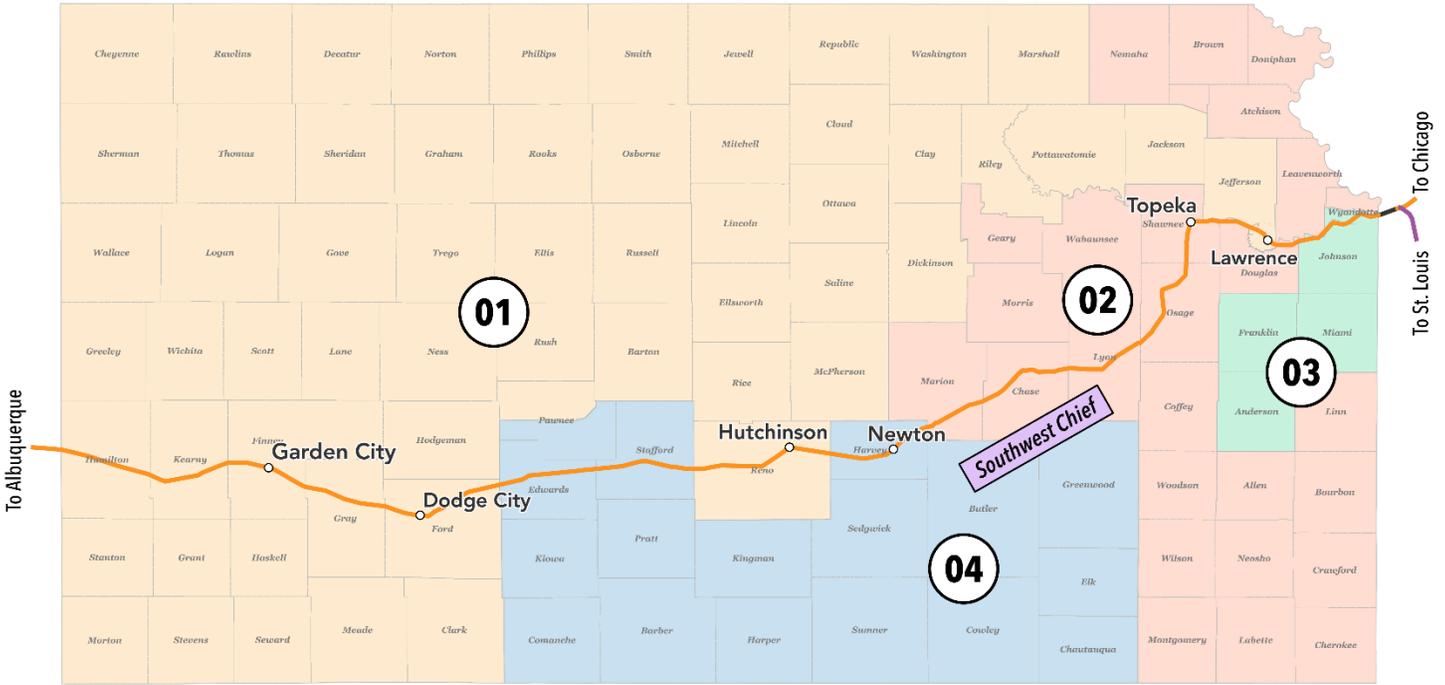
Dodge City and Hutchinson: Amtrak completed platform, lighting, signage, and parking improvements in FY 2022 to bring the stations into compliance with the ADA.

Lawrence: Amtrak completed platform improvements and added station identifier signs in FY 2022 to bring the station into ADA compliance.

Newton: In FY 2016 Amtrak completed a project to bring the station building and parking into ADA compliance. In 2024, Amtrak will initiate a design to address platform non-compliance with construction to commence in FY 2025 and be completed in FY 2028.

Topeka: Amtrak completed doorway, restroom, and lighting improvements in FY 2022 for ADA compliance.

AMTRAK ROUTES IN KANSAS



Track Ownership			
█	Amtrak	█	CSX
█	BNSF	█	NS
█	CPKC	█	UP
█	Other		

01 Congressional District

Route Name