



Daily Oklahoma City to Fort Worth passenger rail service celebrated June 12-13

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OKLAHOMA CITY– Communities along the Oklahoma City-Fort Worth route of the Amtrak *Heartland Flyer* will recognize the 10th anniversary of the daily rail service with celebrations on June 12 & 13. A fare promotion also continues the celebration.

Amtrak representatives will join a delegation from the Texas Department of Transportation to kick-off the event on June 12, just before the *Heartland Flyer* makes its nightly (5:25 p.m.) departure from Fort Worth. The group will ride in an Amtrak Sightseer Lounge car that will be attached to the train for the occasion.

The next morning (June 13) at 7:30 a.m., the public is invited to join Oklahoma and Texas transportation officials and Amtrak representatives in gathering on the Paul Adams Memorial Platform at the Santa Fe Depot in Oklahoma City station to recreate the June 1999 ceremony that inaugurated the service. After the special train send-off for the 8:25 a.m. departure, smaller celebrations are expected at stops on the southbound trip through Oklahoma and Texas.

“The *Heartland Flyer* achieves its high marks in ridership due to the public’s love for the train and the continued support from Governor Brad Henry, the Oklahoma Legislature and our partners in Texas and at Amtrak,” Gary Ridley, Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation said.

“TxDOT considers it a privilege to be connected to such an important element of the country’s rail service,” said Chris Lippincott, TxDOT media relations director. “Texas and Oklahoma are rivals on the football field, but we’re proud to be partners when it comes to the *Heartland Flyer*.”

“This service has exceeded its ridership expectations from the day it started,” said Joseph Yannuzzi, who is responsible for the service as Amtrak General Superintendent, Southwest Division. “Even this fiscal year, despite all the economic conditions, ridership on the *Heartland Flyer* from last October through last month is within about 300 passengers of last year’s record pace.

“This is testimony to the work of our Amtrak employees to attract and keep passengers, in partnership with both state’s transportation departments and the Heartland Flyer Coalition,” Yannuzzi added.

Fare Promotion Still Underway

Rail travelers can now purchase an adult train ticket for as little as \$20 each way to ride the full route, which is 20 percent off the regular ticket price. Kids’ fares and ticket prices between other cities on the route are even lower.

The special anniversary fare is good for travel from now through June 30, 2009, but tickets must be purchased by June 27 to qualify for the discounted price. Reservations for the discounted fare can be booked only by calling Amtrak’s reservation center at 800-USA-RAIL and asking for code V206. Seating is limited and restrictions apply, so booking reservations early is strongly recommended.

***Heartland Flyer* History**

The Amtrak *Heartland Flyer* was inaugurated June 14, 1999, with federal funds received by ODOT that were designed to initiate service in areas without Amtrak trains. TxDOT joined the partnership with ODOT and Amtrak in 2006. Approaching the 10th anniversary of the service, the trains have carried more than 625,000 passengers, with the support of the *Heartland Flyer* Coalition, representing the communities along the 206-mile route.

INFORMATION RELEASE

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“If you and your family haven't ridden the *Heartland Flyer*, now is a perfect opportunity to take advantage of the special fare,” Karen Adams, Chair of the Coalition, said. “You will see some of Oklahoma's prettiest scenery as the train glides through Big Canyon in the Arbuckle Mountains.”

Amtrak operates the *Heartland Flyer* under state-funded contracts with ODOT and TxDOT to provide daily service with regularly scheduled stops in Norman, Purcell, Pauls Valley and Ardmore, Okla. and in Gainesville, Texas (schedule follows).

On the train's 5th anniversary, ODOT released a study showing the *Heartland Flyer* returned \$23 million in economic benefits to the region's economy in 2005 dollars. The economic activity generated by the *Heartland Flyer* included \$11 million in direct consumer spending in Oklahoma, the creation of 349 full-time jobs in the economy paying more than \$6.9 million in salaries and wages and \$5.2 million in federal grants spent by the state for improvements to train depots.

Later this summer, a celebration will be held in Ardmore to celebrate the restoration of that community's Amtrak station. For details about the stops along the route or to find out more about the *Heartland Flyer*, go to www.heartlandflyer.com.

About the Oklahoma Department of Transportation

The mission of the Oklahoma Department of Transportation is to provide a safe, economical and effective transportation network for the people, commerce and communities of Oklahoma. For more information, visit www.okladot.state.ok.us

About the Texas Department of Transportation

The mission of the Texas Department of Transportation is to work cooperatively to provide safe, effective and efficient movement of people and goods. For more information, visit www.txdot.gov.

About Amtrak

Amtrak has had 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 www.Amtrak.com.

Amtrak *Heartland Flyer* southbound (Train 821)

Daily, read down

8:25 a.m.	Depart Oklahoma City
8:49 a.m.	Depart Norman
9:06 a.m.	Depart Purcell
9:31 a.m.	Depart Pauls Valley
10:23 a.m.	Depart Ardmore
11:05 p.m.	Depart Gainesville, Texas
12:39 p.m.	Arrive Fort Worth, Texas

Amtrak *Heartland Flyer* northbound (Train 822)

Daily, read down

5:25 p.m.	Depart Fort Worth, Texas
6:42 p.m.	Depart Gainesville, Texas
7:23 p.m.	Depart Ardmore
8:12 p.m.	Depart Pauls Valley
8:38 p.m.	Depart Purcell
8:55 p.m.	Depart Norman
9:39 p.m.	Arrive Oklahoma City

- www.okladot.state.ok.us -

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