

Ethanol Plant Reflects Importance of Short Line Railways

AYLMER, August 17, 2007- With the official groundbreaking ceremony on Friday of the Integrated Grain Processors Cooperative ethanol plant in Aylmer, Ontario, the Port Colborne-based Trillium Railway has taken another step towards playing an even bigger role in the regional and provincial economy.

Once completed in the second half of 2008, the 150 million litre ethanol plant will be able to receive corn by Trillium Railway, and send ethanol and co-products to markets abroad using the railway. The entire project will involve more than 5,000 feet of new rail siding, and will connect to the continental network through Trillium Railway.

Wayne Ettinger, president and CEO of Trillium Railway, has said this access to the railway was one of the key components in the selection for the Aylmer site. In fact, it is also one of the most important elements for the operation of an ethanol plant. The chairman of the Integrated Grain Processors Cooperative, Tom Cox, has spoken highly of Trillium Railway and rail's overall importance to the project and industry.

But this praise goes beyond just the local and burgeoning ethanol industry. Economic development officers in Port Colborne and Tillsonburg have stated that the presence of rail is essential for economic growth in the community, and each municipality has mentioned the presence of rail in their local economic development strategy.

In fact, since Trillium Railway began its operations in 1997, it has established 20 customers on its two lines, and the railway moves a number of commodities including grain, corn syrup and by-products, fertilizer, agricultural chemicals and pipe.

As important as the railway is for the region, it is also no exception. The short line railways across Ontario play a proud and prominent role in building and growing the Ontario economy.

Railways move more than 40 per cent of Ontario's goods each and every year, directly employing more than 10,000 people and supporting tens of thousands of jobs indirectly. Eighty per cent of Canada-U.S. domestic and international rail traffic passes through Ontario's borders.

In fact, these short line and regional railways originate more than 140,000 carloads of freight traffic each and every year, or the equivalent of 500,000 truckloads moving on area highways. These are raw materials and goods manufactured in Ontario, which are then moved to markets in the United States, Asia and Europe by local rail companies.

Beyond the benefits rail provides to the Ontario economy, Ontario's railways are essential to building a green and sustainable future. Rail can relieve traffic congestion on area roads and highways, as the addition of just one train removes the equivalent of up to 280 trucks or 1,000 cars.

In addition, a train that moves 1,000 kilometres will save 4,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions compared to moving those goods by truck. In fact, trains carry 65 per cent of Canada's surface freight, 63 million passengers and account for only three per cent of the transportation sector's greenhouse gas emissions.

“Ontario, as home to 13 short line and regional railways connecting Ontario’s small and medium-sized communities to major markets throughout North America and around the world, can ensure green economic growth through supporting these railways,” said Cliff Mackay, president and CEO of the Railway Association of Canada. “They have a strong and vibrant role to play in the future of Ontario’s economy and in ensuring sustainable, green growth.”

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