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NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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AMTRAK FEASIBILITY STUDY RECEIVED, DOLE SCHEDULES THURSDAY MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Bob Dole announced today he has received the requested feasibility study on a proposed AMTRAK route through Kansas, along the Union Pacific tracks, from Kansas City to Denver. After receiving the report, Dole spoke with Transportation Secretary, Claude Brinegar, expressing his hope that the proposed route could be established as an AMTRAK experimental line. Dole announced further that he has scheduled a meeting for Thursday in his office, to bring together officials from Washington and Kansas to further explore the possibilities for establishing the new route.

"The feasibility study convinces me that we should go ahead with our efforts to establish this service as an AMTRAK experimental route," Dole said. "The study anticipates significant loss in the first year of operation, but I am convinced that the energy crisis, and the quality of service AMTRAK could provide, would, over time, increase actual ridership over present estimates and that the line could turn out a success."

Dole said he would meet Thursday with AMTRAK Vice President Harold Graham, Interstate Commerce Commission Chairman George Stafford and Kansas House Majority Leader, Donn J. Everett. "The two available alternatives," Dole said, "seem to be either the establishment of the experimental route funded totally by AMTRAK for a period of one year, or a commitment by the State Legislature to cooperate in funding the line by picking up 2/3 of whatever operating losses may be actually incurred."

The feasibility report anticipates a first year loss of \$1,985,000 for a route added as an extension of existing AMTRAK service. If a separate train originating in Kansas City were employed, the loss estimate is \$2,361,000. Dole stressed that the feasibility study delivered today does not include estimates of costs which may be incurred from improvements to track, station, storage facilities and similar capital costs. The Senator said he would request that the on-site investigations necessary to develop these figures be started as soon as possible so that "we may have a more precise estimate of the expected costs of operation."

Dole said he will make copies of the study available to the Governor and other State and local officials concerned with the effort to improve rail transportation in Kansas along the proposed route.