

# NEWS

## OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

50 W. Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 644-0306 telephone or fax (614) 728-4520  
<http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 13, 2007  
CONTACT: Stu Nicholson  
614-644-0513

### **ORDC Commissioners OK Lease Study of Panhandle Line *Also Approve \$\$\$ for Canton Area Tunnel Repairs***

(Columbus) -- A proposed long-term lease of the state-owned Panhandle Line will be studied by ORDC staff and Commissioners over the next three months, with a report on a recommendation due by the January 2008 meeting of the Commission. The study was approved by an 8 to 0 vote and will commence immediately.

Public input from communities, shippers and other interested parties along the line will be sought on the proposal, which would offer a long-term lease to the Ohio Central Railroad (OCRR). The Ohio Central has been the operator of the line since the rail line was purchased by the State of Ohio in the mid-1990's to save it from partial abandonment and scrapping by the former Conrail. Ohio Central currently operates under a five-year lease agreement.

"The Panhandle Line has been a great example of a successful public-private partnership", said ORDC Executive Director Matt Dietrich. "The Ohio Central has also shown it can not only serve shippers on a line that the former Conrail had given up on, but the O-C has also demonstrated it can grow business by working with the State of Ohio and local communities to help existing businesses expand and attract new business and jobs."

In other business, Commissioners approved a \$150,000 grant to the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad for critical repairs to the Robertsville Tunnel near Canton. Railroad officials announced at the meeting that two cabooses that derailed and had become stuck in the tunnel over the last winter were removed the morning of September 13<sup>th</sup> and that repairs to the tunnel are underway. The ORDC grant funds will cover a gap in the cost of those repairs. In making those repairs 125 jobs will be retained by shippers on the rail

line and another 15 new jobs are possible. It will also save shippers the time and expense of a rail detour around the tunnel during the months since the partial collapse of an interior wall during the derailment.

(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>)