

One Gift



Iowans Helping Iowans

This year's statewide One Gift campaign is set for Sept. 22 to Oct. 22. The state's departments of Public Health and Human Services are the lead agencies this year. With contributions from members of all Iowa's state agencies, One Gift funds more than 400 programs in Iowa, from early childhood education in child care centers to job training programs for adults to programs providing the elderly with hot, nutritious meals so they can live independently in their homes.

All employees will receive information and be invited to participate in this campaign in early September. Contact the Office of Policy and Legislative Services at 515-233-7964 with any questions you have, or visit the One Gift Web site at www.state.ia.us/onegift.

Iowa welcomes new railroad

by Chris Thomas

Iowa has a new railroad! On June 16 the Union Pacific Railroad sold the Marshalltown to Steamboat Rock portion of its line to the Iowa River Railroad. Iowa River Railroad has also acquired the long-dormant portion of track from Steamboat Rock to Ackley from the North Central Railway Association.



This dormant rail line between Ackley and Steamboat Rock will be rehabilitated and used by the new Iowa River Railroad.

The new railroad is in the process of hiring employees, and restoring the formerly idle track between Ackley and Steamboat Rock. The railroad interchanges with Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad (owned by Canadian National) at Ackley and Union Pacific Railroad in Marshalltown. Diane McCauley of the DOT's Office of Rail Transportation noted, "Reinstating the Steamboat Rock to Ackley portion of track provides Iowa River Railroad with two interchanges, giving shippers the ability to connect to wider and different markets."

The principal owners of the Iowa River Railroad are the Pine Lake Ethanol plant, United Suppliers and Prairie Land Coop, which has a facility at Union. "Pine Lake Ethanol building on this line gave the shippers more incentive to get together and move this rail connection from the planning stage to reality," said McCauley.

In the late 1980s, shippers on the line (including United Suppliers and Prairie Land Coop) purchased the track from Steamboat Rock to Hampton, which was a former Chicago & North Western mainline. Their original vision was to create a railroad from Mason City to Marshalltown and retain rail service to the shippers on the line. Over the years, interest in preserving the track north of Geneva died and that track is now gone. The segment of track from Ackley to Geneva remains under ownership of the North Central Railway Association and is operated by Chicago, Central & Pacific. Just a few years ago, the DOT built a bridge over the dormant track that will return to operation on the new alignment of U.S. 20. McCauley said that building the overpass, although the track was not operational at the time, was good foresight by the shippers and the DOT. She said, "Building that overpass allowed a railroad that was once a distant dream to become vital again."