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Port of Benton Receives \$9.56 Million Federal Grant

RICHLAND, Wash. – Port of Benton was selected this week to receive a \$9.56 million grant under the federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

The grant will fund repairs and improvements to the port’s Southern Connection industrial rail line from Columbia Center Blvd. in Kennewick to Horn Rapids Road in Richland. Following the official award, the following projects are planned:

- Replacing 12,000 rail ties along the rail line
- Replacing the entire 1 mile of Wye track, including the ties and ballast
- Upgrading 3 miles of track along elevated curves to heavier-duty track to accommodate longer unit trains

Union Pacific and BNSF Railway utilize the port’s rail. Both carriers move goods in and out of the region.

“Every year, 1.3 million tons of freight travel along the Port of Benton’s 16-mile Southern Connection Rail Line. After the Port makes long overdue repairs funded by this grant, more railcars will be able to travel along the line, making it a central location for shippers in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The modernized line promises to create new jobs in the Tri-Cities and get more trucks off the highway, too,” said Senator Cantwell.

“With these much-needed improvements, the track can return to Class 2 conditions, allowing train speeds to return to 25 mph. The increased speeds will reduce the time a unit train blocks an intersection from as much as 18 minutes to as little as four minutes. This reduction will shorten vehicle travel times and lessen the impact to fire and emergency vehicles, greatly improving public safety,” stated Diahann Howard, port executive director.

Port of Benton and the City of Richland recently finalized phase I of an industrial land transfer in north Richland. The land exchange will allow the port to utilize the property for an expanded intermodal facility adjacent to its existing industrial property and rail assets.

Senator Murray created the RAISE program in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and funds can be used for local or regional infrastructure projects. Senator Cantwell worked to authorize the RAISE grant program for the first time ever in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provided the program with \$7.5 billion over five years, a 50 percent increase in annual funding.

To learn more about the RAISE Grant Program, visit <https://www.transportation.gov/RAISEgrants>.

About Port of Benton

Port of Benton drives economic growth, development and private-sector investment in its district and the broader region through innovative projects and infrastructure improvements. The port’s airports, rail, business parks, industrial facilities and tourism and recreation attractions further enhance the region’s economic vitality.

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