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WEST TENNESSEE RAILROAD AWARDED $20.3 MILLION FEDERAL CRISI GRANT TO ADVANCE NETWORK MODERNIZATION

$29.0 million project will renew ties, rail and crossings across the Fulton–Corinth mainline and Kenton Branch, and extend interchange capacity in Humboldt, Tenn.

JACKSON, Tenn. — October 29th, 2026 — The West Tennessee Railroad (WTNN) has been selected by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to receive a $20.3 million grant through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program. The award funds the West Tennessee Rail Modernization Project – Final Phase, the latest phase of WTNN's ongoing effort to modernize its 183-mile rail line.

The $29.0 million project builds on WTNN's prior investments in bridge replacements and rail upgrades by renewing tie conditions across the network. The work includes installing more than 90,000 new crossties and new rail on more than 6 miles of track, rehabilitating 25 public grade crossings, and building a new 6,600-foot CSX interchange siding at Humboldt capable of handling a 105-car unit grain train.

The CRISI grant covers 70% of the project cost. The remaining 30% comes from the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the West Tennessee Railroad.

"This award is a major step forward for West Tennessee," said JJ Hohorst, President of the West Tennessee Railroad. "For more than 40 years, we have fought to keep service running on this line and to replace aging infrastructure to meet modern shipper requirements. We have made significant investments in bridge replacements and rail upgrades across our network, and this project builds on that work by bringing our tie conditions up to the same standard. The project will directly benefit existing shippers in the region, especially the agricultural community. West Tennessee is well positioned for growth, and we are proud to do our part by providing the modern, efficient rail service the region deserves. We are grateful for our partnerships with our customers, FRA, TDOT, our railroad authority partners and our congressional delegation."

“The CRISI award is great news for Tennessee’s short line railroads and the communities that depend on them. This investment will strengthen critical freight infrastructure, improve safety and reliability, and help keep supply chains moving for agriculture, manufacturing, and other key industries. Strong rail connections mean stronger local economies and more opportunity for Tennesseans—and I’m glad to support this kind of investment in our state’s transportation network.” said U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn.

"Efficient rail access is essential to keeping Tennessee soybeans competitive in domestic and export markets. The new unit train interchange at Humboldt and the upgrades across the West Tennessee Railroad will lower transportation costs and give growers in the region better access to the markets they serve," said Stefan Maupin, Executive Director of the Tennessee Soybean Promotion Council.

This is WTNN's third CRISI award. Construction on this phase is expected to begin in the spring of 2028 following execution of the grant agreement with FRA.

About the West Tennessee Railroad The West Tennessee Railroad (WTNN) is a Class III short-line railroad operating approximately 183 miles of track in West Tennessee, with connections into Kentucky and Mississippi. With its main yard in Jackson, Tenn., WTNN interchanges with CN at Fulton, Ky., CSX at Humboldt, Tenn., and Norfolk Southern and CPKC at Corinth, Miss.

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