

# NEWS from DM&E

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## ***DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN RAILROAD CORPORATION***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Brookings – DM&E Railroad Reach Community Agreement**

*55 of 56 communities on DM&E rail project route have signed agreement*

(Sioux Falls, SD) – Brookings, SD last night became the 55<sup>th</sup> of 56 communities on the DM&E proposed rail renewal project route to sign a formal Community Partnership Agreement with the railroad. The agreement addresses certain mitigation issues and affirms Brookings' formal support for the DM&E rail revitalization project. "We are very pleased to have worked through the issues in Brookings. Reasonable people can work out problems, and we are happy to have accomplished that in Brookings after many efforts to do so," said DM&E President and Chief Executive Officer Kevin V. Schieffer.

With the Brookings action, all of the cities on the planned DM&E project route in South Dakota support the project and have formal agreements with the railroad to address mitigation issues. All but one of the communities on the route in Minnesota support the rail project and have signed a Community Partnership Agreement. "The unprecedented degree of success in the Community Partnership program underscores both our commitment to address reasonable and legitimate issues of concern, and demonstrates how important this infrastructure project is to our entire service region," said Schieffer. The rail renewal project is estimated to cost roughly \$2 billion, and will create thousands of jobs and provide vastly better rail service in South Dakota and Minnesota. It is strongly supported by all agriculture organizations, economic development groups, and many others in both MN and SD. The USDA has noted that the superior transportation service and market expansion resulting from the project could increase grain prices by as much as 10 to 20 cents per bushel in South Dakota and Minnesota.

The rail renewal project is still opposed by the Mayo Clinic, which has prevented Rochester from signing a similar agreement. Schieffer said he is hopeful to reach agreements with all 56 communities, even though such agreements are not required to move the project forward. "We already have accomplished a degree of consensus that is unprecedented in a project of this magnitude. This has never been done in the railroad industry, and we are proud of our proactive outreach effort," Schieffer said. "It would be great, though, to include all 56."

Earlier this week, the City of Mankato, MN signed a Community Partnership Agreement designed to encourage DM&E to relocate its route into the city limits instead of its current location in the rural county area south of Mankato. The railroad is working with city and county officials to determine the feasibility of that approach. If successful, the DM&E rail project would then traverse 57 communities along its line.

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