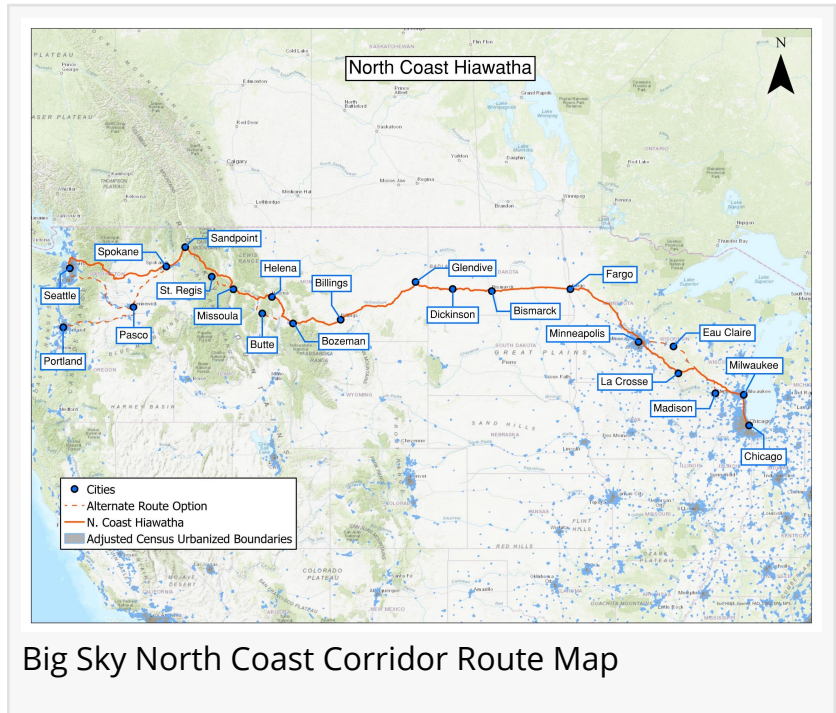


# Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Selects David Evans and Associates, Inc. for Corridor Identification Program Support

*BSPRA selects a team led by David Evans and Associates (DEA) to plan and design new passenger rail service on the former North Coast Hiawatha route.*

BILLINGS, MT, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority](https://www.einpresswire.com/) (BSPRA) is excited to announce the selection of a team led by David Evans and Associates (DEA) and including Quandel Consultants (Quandel), KLJ Engineering (KLJ) and the Steer Group (STEER) for the pivotal role of planning and designing new passenger rail service on the former North Coast Hiawatha route, hereafter referred to as the [Big Sky North Coast Corridor](#). This vital work will be funded through the Corridor Identification (Corridor ID) Program of the Federal Railroad Administration. BSPRA's partnership with the DEA Team marks a significant milestone in expanding passenger rail service in the Greater Northwest Region from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Northwest.



Big Sky North Coast Corridor Route Map

DEA, a national leader in transportation planning, and its team partners were chosen following a competitive request for proposals (RFP) process to engage a top-tier consulting team to spearhead this transformative project. An initial \$500,000 federal government award and a continuing commitment to millions of additional funds for detailed planning and design work underscore this initiative's national importance and potential.

The DEA team has deep roots in rail and other transportation projects throughout the Big Sky North Coast Corridor, spanning rural and tribal communities to the largest Metropolitan areas in the region. The team members have also engaged in developing or expanding every new or upgraded passenger rail line in the Great Northwest Region and Colorado: Amtrak Borealis, the Northern Lights Express, Colorado Front Range, and Amtrak Cascades.

The Big Sky North Coast Corridor stretches from Seattle and/or Portland to Chicago, traversing up to eight states, including southern Montana and North Dakota. It represents a landmark in U.S. rail system expansion and constitutes the only new long-distance route accepted into the Corridor ID program nationwide.

“This partnership with the DEA Team is a crucial step forward in our journey to revitalize and reintroduce the former North Coast Hiawatha service,” said Dave Strohmaier, Chairman of BSPRA. The DEA Team's expertise in large-scale infrastructure projects, geographic breadth of coverage, and deep bench of experience will prove invaluable as we develop a comprehensive service development plan.

The initial grant of \$500,000 will be utilized to create a detailed scope of work for the service development plan, which is essential for moving this project from concept to reality.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has already pledged additional non-competitive funding through the Corridor ID Program for the actual planning and design work. That funding will enable the Authority, working with at least seven other states, their local communities, and Tribal governments in the region, to prepare a service development plan and conduct the necessary environmental analyses and detailed engineering to bring this new passenger rail service to the point of implementation.

“The ambitious goal of the Authority is to have a 21st Century passenger rail service designed over the coming years to enable the passenger service to operate by 2032 if Congress so chooses,” stated Dave Strohmaier, BSPRA Chair. He noted that key goals for the passenger service include on-time performance, twice-daily service in each direction, and the development of connecting transportation services to outlying communities and destinations within the route.

“We are thrilled to partner with Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority on this historic initiative,” said Dwight Schock, Transit and Rail Practice Leader at DEA. “Our team is committed to delivering a scope of work that meets or exceeds the federal requirements and strategic communications that will strengthen and broaden BSPRA's already amazing outreach efforts to key interested parties.”

Bringing passenger rail service to the Big Sky North Coast Corridor will boost local economies, revitalize local and Tribal communities, enable travelers to connect, not simply to points on the route but also to the national rail network, and provide a sustainable transportation alternative across several states that operate when air service and vehicle travel are disrupted by hazardous weather or road conditions.

#### ABOUT THE BIG SKY PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY (BSPRA)

The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority is a subdivision of state government and the largest

transportation district in Montana. It was formed to re-establish safe, reliable, and sustainable passenger rail service across southern Montana and comprises 19 member counties and ex-officio membership of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Crow, and Northern Cheyenne tribes, Amtrak, Montana Department of Transportation, BNSF Railway and the AFL-CIO. Passenger rail service through southern Montana ended 45 years ago with the loss of Amtrak's North Coast Hiawatha, and the BSPRA is working towards its revitalization.

For more information on the Big Sky North Coast Corridor project and progress updates, please visit [Bigskyrail.org](http://Bigskyrail.org). For questions or interview requests, please contact BSPRA Chairman Dave Strohmaier at 406.529.5580 or [dstrohmaier@bigskyrail.org](mailto:dstrohmaier@bigskyrail.org) or BSPRA Executive Director Jess Peterson at [jess@wssdc.com](mailto:jess@wssdc.com) or by phone at 406.850.1592.

### END ###

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