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Ohio commission to consider several rail projects, one rail-car plant proposal

Today, the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) will vote on several measures.

Commissioners will consider approving a lease agreement with the Newark, Heath and Buckeye Lake Scenic Railway for use of the Glass Rock Branch; rail rehabilitation projects planned by Cleveland Commercial Railroad, Indiana & Ohio Railway and Ohi-Rail; and an application to be submitted to the Federal Railroad Administration seeking American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the "3C Quick Start" project.

To be developed by 2011, the 3C Quick Start system initially would feature passenger trains operating at conventional speeds of 79 mph between Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati. ORDC's long-term goal is to develop the 3C Corridor — a federally designated high-speed rail corridor — between the four cities.

ORDC commissioners also will consider a proposal to serve as US Railcar L.L.C.'s public sponsor for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery, or TIGER grant application the diesel multiple unit (DMU) manufacturer plans to submit to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

US Railcar is seeking more than \$8.7 million in federal funds and \$3.6 million in state dollars to help finance the construction of a rail-car manufacturing and maintenance facility in Gahanna, Ohio, that would be served by the state's Panhandle Rail line.

Earlier this year, private investors affiliated with asset management firm Value Recovery Group Inc. (VRG) acquired the former Colorado Railcar Manufacturing L.L.C.'s DMU. VRG formed US Railcar and plans to resume manufacturing the self-propelled passenger cars in a new facility. US Railcar would manufacture both single- and bi-level DMUs designed to operate in all mixed-mode U.S. freight corridors.

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