NEWTON DAILY NEWS

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Representative Bell takes train ride to support new legislation

Rep. Paul Bell attended a news conference in Moline, Ill., earlier this week, and he traveled by rail to get there.

Bell said he was invited for a train ride from Iowa City to Moline by Henry Posner III, chairman and owner of **Iowa Interstate Railroad.**

The trip was a news conference celebrating the signing of two legislative bills by Governor Chet Culver on Monday.

Senate File 151 was the authorizing language necessary to put into motion passenger rail for Iowa. Bell said he was the floor manager of the bill in the Iowa House, and the bill passed on a 96-0 vote.

(L to R) Henry Posner III and Rep. Paul Bell

House File 822 authorized $3 million from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund.

"The money allocated with help Iowa become an important partner with Illinois in drawing down federal funds for anticipated rail service to Iowa City and Des Moines," Bell said. "The federal money allocated for passenger rail is $8 billion to be implemented in the middle of June."

Bell's train ride was sponsored by the Office of Rail Transportation, a branch of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

The Iowa Interstate Railroad provided two private rail cars for Iowa City and Quad City officials, legislative members, IDOT officials, as well as representatives of the Iowa Economic Development and staff from Senators Charles Grassley and Tom Harkin's office, and Rep. Dave Loebsack's office.

Bell said he had a chance to visit with Posner during the trip about the possibility of reopening the intermodal site in Newton.

"Mr. Posner's response touched on the original need for the intermodal and that was Maytag, and since the closing of Maytag the usage has dropped drastically," Bell said. "For now, the site will remain closed, but if there could be a drastic increase in shipping in the area, he never ruled out the possibility of its re-opening."

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