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Railroad Gives Dexter 'An Advantage'

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By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

The nation and Missouri have surely seen brighter economic times. Governments are concerned about how to finance needed improvements and stimulate the economy that will lead to better days ahead.

One engine that will help with growing toward a better future will undoubtedly be the railroad. That message was delivered this week in Dexter by one of the senior officials of Union Pacific Railroad.

Robert W. Turner, Senior Vice President of Corporate Relations for Union Pacific, was in Dexter to recognize the efforts of the city in working with the railroad to promote safety. While in town, Turner spoke about the role railroads will have in helping rebuild the economy.

Turner said as the nation looks ahead and examines the infrastructure challenges, communities such as Dexter that have strong rail service will have a brighter future.

“I think more and more of what drives the economy is going to move by rail,” he said. “If you are in a town that has tracks and has a connection to that economy you’re going to have an advantage. You have connection in this town to the global economy that a lot of towns don’t have and a lot of towns wish the could.”

Turner says Union Pacific officials foresee great years are ahead for rail transportation.

“We are looking forward to being with you (Dexter) for the next 100 years,” he said. Generally there is a cost advantage to moving goods by rail rather than by highway, he said, and better for the environment as well.

“We can move a ton of freight 500 miles on one gallon of diesel. That’s like your SUV getting about 250 miles to the gallon,” he said.

Transporting goods by rail is good for the economy and eases traffic congestion, Turner added. The UP official also told the group gathered at the Dexter City Administration Building that the federal government has done studies about how the nation’s economy will grow, where goods will move and how.

“It’s going to be a real opportunity,” Turner said. “As the standard of living grows around the world, the quality of food is to improve. You’re sitting here in the heart of one of the great food-producing regions of the world. Whether it's food going to some part of North America or food going out for export, with the productivity in farming and the ability to get more yield per acre, it’s going to become a huge advantage for this region.”

He also predicted that exports would continue to be a “strong driver” for the nation’s economy.

“You have a great rail network that gets you to the ports,” he said. He added that about one-third of UP’s business today starts or ends in another nation.

Colby Dengney, manager of the local Union Pacific Railroad operation, said Tuesday there are an average of 40 trains each day that travel through Dexter.

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