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NEWS RELEASE

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Congressional Delegation Announces Federal Funding for Jackson County

August 19, 2011 (KANSAS CITY, MO) – Senators Claire McCaskill and Roy Blunt, joined by Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, announced today that the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have awarded Jackson County a \$652,200 competitive federal grant to study a transportation corridor in south Kansas City.

“I want to thank Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the Federal Highway Administration for their continued support of regional transportation in the Kansas City Metropolitan area,” said Jackson County Executive Mike Sanders. “The momentum to study and ultimately build a competitive and efficient transportation system in our region continues to get stronger. This would not be possible without the support of our local elected leadership in Washington D.C. including Senator McCaskill, Senator Blunt and Congressman Cleaver. Their vision on this issue has helped secure critical funding for our community.”

The grant funds will be used to conduct a transportation alternative analysis in the U.S. 71 Highway commuter corridor including Kansas City and Grandview in Jackson County and Raymore and Belton in Cass County.

“We’re moving in the right direction, and this funding will put us one step closer to bringing commuter rail to the Kansas City region,” said Senator Claire McCaskill. “This project has the potential to attract new jobs to our state and to grow our economy. Mike Sanders and his entire team deserve a pat on the back and our thanks for advancing this project.”

Jackson County, in partnership with the Mid-America Regional Council, Kansas City, Missouri and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority is currently conducting a similar study on two other corridors including I-70 between downtown Kansas City and Odessa and the Rock Island Railroad between downtown Kansas City and Pleasant Hill. Funds for this study were received last December.

“I’m pleased that DOT has decided to grant this important funding, which will help us better understand the transit options for the region, encourage economic growth and improve access to private sector jobs,” said U.S. Senator Roy Blunt.

The FHWA received more than 1800 applications for funding from 14 different grant programs. Requests for these funds came from every state as well as Puerto Rico and Washington D.C.

“This project reflects a coordinated regional approach to assess the costs and benefits associated with rapid rail transit, leverage prior local, state, and federal investments, and advance the livability outcomes for communities within the Fifth District,” said Congressman Emanuel Cleaver. “I am happy to see the funds being awarded to Jackson County, and I know the grant will yield dividends for all my constituents.”

The “Alternatives Analysis” is a necessary step in the process of applying for and receiving federal transportation dollars which lead to the construction of new transit systems.