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August 3, 2009

## Indiana High-Speed Rail Elects Davis of West Lafayette Brings Marketing Tenor to Increase Awareness, Support

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA—The Indiana High Speed Rail Association (INHSRA) has elected West Lafayette's Thom Davis its new president. As director of media services for Indiana Design Consortium, Inc., (*idc*), a Lafayette-based branding and business development firm, Davis represents a new marketing-centric leadership for the organization.

According to Dennis Hodges, one of the Association's founders, Davis' presence comes at a most opportune time, when the organization is seeking to establish greater statewide awareness and support for high-speed rail technology.

"Through Thom Davis, we're getting an energetic and visionary leader, who can take our mission to the level of restoring passenger rail as part of Indiana's economic growth and entrepreneurial heritage," says Hodges.

Davis will replace Roger Sims of Munster, who served in the office for 12 years. Sims will move into the role as chairman of the board, where he will continue to monitor, through his Sims Professional Engineers in Highland, the business activity of the association.

In addition to maintaining a career with *idc*, Davis is a small business owner and a graduate of Purdue University, where he received a B.S. degree in aeronautical technology. Since joining INHSRA, he has played an active role in the group's government affairs strategies, leading the way in communicating to state officials the inherent benefits of implementing a high-speed rail system.

"Efficient modes of transportation, like high-speed rail," says Davis, "are critical to our state if we're to compete in the global marketplace. When you consider how widely recognized Indiana is as the true crossroads of America for its proximity to the nation's overall population, it simply does not make sense for us to be without a proven 21st century system like this."

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By proven, Davis refers to the number of high-speed rail systems around the world that are already delivering significant cost, energy, transport efficiency and environmental benefits to the communities they serve.

In fact, the INHSRA began to take shape in 1993, when Hodges, a writer and global marketing consultant of Merrillville, returned from a high-speed rail tour of France and Germany. So inspired, he soon organized the statewide association, on which, today, he serves as the vice president of membership and marketing.

As the new president going forward, one of Davis' priorities is to align the Association's board of directors to include a representation of communities along the federal high-speed rail corridors in Indiana.

Established in 1999, when the INHSRA negotiated access to some 630 miles of Federal Railroad Administration track, these "corridors" include: Chicago, Gary and Michigan City to Detroit; Chicago, Gary and Fort Wayne to Cleveland; and Chicago, Gary, Lafayette and Indianapolis to Cincinnati.

Still being considered is Chicago, Gary, Lafayette and Indianapolis to Louisville. The only state to have more federal corridor miles is California with 800.

Overall, Davis' vision for the INHSRA is to "increase the grassroots support for high-speed rail around the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative and, thus, make high-speed rail in Indiana a reality."

The Indiana High Speed Rail Association is organized to advocate for the funding and implementation of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative in Indiana. For further information, call Dennis Hodges @ 219.887.1351.

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