

State Rail Authority



The State Rail Authority (originally known as the WV Railroad Maintenance Authority) is responsible for facilitating rail transportation within the State by providing expertise and assistance in matters related to rail commerce to local and state officials, businesses and private concerns.

STATE RAIL AUTHORITY

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Cindy began her career with the state in 1995 with the Division of Highways as a six month temporary for the District Five Office in Burlington, West Virginia. She was hired by the WV State Rail Authority in April 1997 as the Comptroller. In 1999, she was appointed as Acting Director for a period of ten months followed by a subsequent acting appointment in 2004. She accepted the permanent position in September 2006. Cindy serves as both the Comptroller and Director for the Agency.

The SRA performs the following services:

- The SRA provides freight service on the South Branch Valley Railroad (SBVR) to industries in Grant, Hardy, and Hampshire Counties. The SBVR is a 52.4 mile short line serving Pilgrim's Pride Feed Mill, Greer Lime Company, Allegheny Wood Products, Appalachian Railcar Service and Adell Polymers. This line runs from Green Spring, WV to Petersburg, WV and has 35 bridges.
- The South Branch Valley Railroad's excursion train is operated by the Eagle Canon Passenger Car Company and is known as the Potomac Eagle excursion. Information on this tourist attraction can be found at www.potomaceagle.info.
- The SRA owns and oversees the operation of the West Virginia Central Railroad. This is a 132 mile short line with 35 bridges running from Tygart Jct., WV to Bergoo, WV. It is currently in service to MP 91. The operator of this line is the Durbin and Greenbrier Valley Railroad who provides excursion and freight services. Information on the excursion train can be found at www.mountainrailwv.com.
- The State Rail Authority owns 266.28 miles of right-of-ways presently rail banked pending further development. These right-of-ways are currently being used as recreational trails.
- The State Rail Authority maintains station facilities for rail commuter service at Martinsburg, Duffields, and Harpers Ferry.
- Employees:
The South Branch Valley Railroad has a quota of 18.5 employees with 12.5 filled positions. The State Rail Authority has a quota of approximately 5.5 employees with all positions currently filled.

Recreational Trails owned by the State Rail Authority on abandoned right-of-way. These trails are maintained by other entities through agreements.

Greenbrier Rail Trail – 74.93 miles

North Bend Rail Trail – 71.61 miles

Harrison County Rail Trail – 6.93 miles

Harrison County Rail Trail – (West Clarksburg) – 14.13

Marion County Rail Trail – 12.27 miles

Tri Rivers Trail – 14.5 miles

Caperton Trail – 50.23 miles

Harmon Creek Trail – 4.57 miles

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

South Branch Valley Railroad earns revenue from the operation of the freight railroad. Average total revenue from all sources is \$2.2 million. We haul an average of 3,800 freight cars a year. The revenue received from hauling freight pays all of the operating costs for the South Branch Valley Railroad.

The State Rail Authority receives a percentage of the gross revenue earned by the operator of the West Virginia Central Railroad (WVCR). Average total revenue received is \$85,000 a year.

General Fund – The State Rail Authority receives approximately \$2.5 million dollars from the general fund each year. The current level of General Revenue funding is adequate to conduct routine daily operations for the State Rail Authority. Moreover, this funding is used to continue maintenance projects on the SBVR, while allowing the SRA to maintain and make improvement to the MARC train stations and parking facilities in the eastern panhandle. The Authority also uses this funding to undertake rehabilitations and maintenance activities on the West Virginia Central Railroad.

HISTORY

State Ownership – History of South Branch Valley Railroad

The Railroad Maintenance Authority began preparations for state ownership of the line before the actual transfer. A year before the donation, the authority interviewed forty potential operators. When no satisfactory operator was found, the state decided to operate the line itself. The last B&O train ran on October 14, 1978. At 12:01 am on October 15th, West Virginia became the first state to own and operate a railroad, now to be known as the South Branch Valley Railroad. The first SBVR train departed Moorefield for Green Spring at 10:30 am on October 16th.

The state's new railroad was in poor condition. The last end-to-end track rehabilitation and bridge repair program done by the B&O had been in 1948. Sixty percent of the crossties needed to be replaced. Several of the bridges were ancient and had weight limits of just 70 tons per car. In some cases, empty cars had to be placed between loaded ones to help spread the weight. SBVR trains were derailling an average of once a week. In April 1979, the railroad began a six-year effort to upgrade the line to 25 mph operation and rehabilitate the bridges.

INITIATIVES

The State Rail Authority is in the process of developing a high speed and intercity passenger rail plan (HSIPR) for West Virginia utilizing funds received from the Federal Railroad Administration. This study is to determine the viability of potential HSIPR corridors throughout West Virginia, with respect to constructability and anticipated usage. Funds have been established nationwide to build a network of high-speed rail corridors across America. West Virginia applied for and received these funds to identify how our state will assure its connectivity to the corridors that have been identified as the major corridors for potential high-speed rail projects and to identify whether additional opportunities exist to expand HSIPR service throughout West Virginia.

The State Rail Authority is in the process of developing a state rail plan for West Virginia. This plan will articulate the existing and future role of freight and passenger rail within West Virginia's multimodal transportation system. This plan will establish our vision for rail and take into account our current and future rail asset needs.

