



THE RAILWAY ENGINEERING-MAINTENANCE SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION

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[Congressman Rod Blum Joins REMSA Member HiRAIL for Tour and Rail Discussion \(/hirailblum\)](#)

Congressman Rod Blum Joins REMSA Member HiRAIL for Tour and Rail Discussion

LISBON, IA – On August 18, 2016, U.S. Congressman Rod Blum (R-IA-1) joined representatives from HiRAIL Corporation to tour their Lisbon facility and discuss pressing rail and manufacturing issues with various rail stakeholders, state and local officials, and business guests. The Railway Engineering-Maintenance Suppliers Association (REMSA) coordinated the event.

The tour was led by Eric Schook, President, HiRAIL. The tour highlighted HiRAIL's rubber grade-crossing systems which are manufactured on site. Their products utilize recycled rubber from vehicle tires that otherwise would be destined for a landfill.

"We are honored to host Congressman Blum and demonstrate our commitment to environmentally friendly products and manufacturing here in Iowa," said Schook. "Our business and local communities rely on consistent freight and transit investments and grade-crossing safety programs to grow our local economy and protect our families. It is critical we highlight these pressing issues to our policy makers in Washington."



Schook and Rep. Blum

Founded in 1983, HiRAIL has since grown to become a world-class manufacturer of top-quality, full-depth, 100-percent rubber grade crossing systems. For over 25 years, HiRAIL has utilize recycled rubber from old vehicle tires in their products. In addition to their environmental commitment, HiRAIL's exclusive manufacturing process produces durable rubber panels resulting in superior railroad crossings. HiRAIL operates a state-of-the-art, centrally located manufacturing facility in Lisbon and staffs sales offices from Canada to Mexico. They employ 7 in Iowa.

Congressman Blum focused his remarks on encouraging economic development in Eastern Iowa, ensuring awareness and safety at rail-highway grade crossings, and the need for a strong, efficient, and safe freight rail system to connect Iowa's agriculture producers to the global market.

"A strong and efficient railroad is crucial for Iowa farmers and agricultural producers in getting their goods to market," said Congressman Blum. "I look forward to working with companies like HiRAIL to continue to create manufacturing jobs and promoting grade crossing safety here in Iowa."



HiRAIL Facility

The rail stakeholder group highlighted Congressman Blum's support for increased funding for the Section 130 Railway-Highway Crossing Program, as part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The Section 130 funds are used for the elimination of hazards at railway-highway crossings on state roads, while Iowa's Highway-Railroad Grade Crossing Surface Repair Fund supports similar improvements on local roads. The group also discussed the recent bipartisan and bicameral introduction of the Building Rail Access for Customers and the Economy (BRACE) Act, which would make the Short Line Tax Credit permanent. This effort will allow the nation's small, local freight railroads to increase their reinvestments to upgrade and expand the "first and last mile" of their transportation infrastructure. The bill has garnered 180 bi-partisan cosponsors in the House, including Congressman Blum.

Also in attendance were: Harlan Arians, Manager, Public Works, Canadian National; Walter Barry, Vice President, HiRAIL; Kevin Driscoll, President, Bridge Community Bank; Keith Eibey, Commercial Portfolio Manager, Bankers Trust; Jeff Hines, Vice President, Commercial Banking, Bankers Trust; Cory Hoffmann, Manager, Track and Structures, Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railway; Amy Homan, Director, Carload Marketing, Iowa Northern Railway Company; Onna Houck, Corporate Counsel, Iowa Interstate Railroad Company; Greg Ingram, Assistant Chief Engineer, Maintenance, Iowa Interstate Railroad Company; Ranae Juhl, Vice President, Bankers Trust; Jim Kvedaras, Director, U.S. Government Affairs, Canadian National; Connie Meier, City Administrator, City of Lisbon; Phil Meraz, Rail Regulation and Analysis, Iowa Department of Transportation; Mayor Beryl O'Connor, Mayor, City of Lisbon; Al Recker, Supervisor, Track and Structure, Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railway; and Sean Winkler, Grassroots Coordinator, REMSA.

In Iowa, 14 freight railroads operate over 3,800 miles of track and support over 3,700 jobs.

Local Coverage:

1. The Gazette: Rail lines reps press Rep. Blum for permanent extension of tax credit for maintenance, safety (<http://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/rail-line-reps-press-rep-blum-for-permanent-extension-of-tax-credit-for-maintenance-safety-improvements-20160818>)
2. KCRG: Blum, Vernon fight for 1st district (<http://www.kcrg.com/content/news/Blum-Vernon-Fight-for-First-District-390642621.html>)

Industry Coverage:

1. RT&S: Rep. Blum tours HiRAIL Corp. (<http://www.rtands.com/index.php/track-maintenance/off-track-maintenance/rep-blum-tours-hirail-corp.html?channel=>)
2. Progressive Railroading: U.S. lawmakers tour facilities in Iowa, Texas (http://www.progressiverailroading.com/supplier_spotlight/news/US-lawmakers-tour-rail-facilities-in-Texas-Iowa--49199)

PRESS RELEASES (GRASSROOTSPR)

- > **PortaCo Hosts Rep. Peterson's Staff for Tour and Discussion**
(portaco)
- > **Congressman Joyce joins Iron Horse Engineering, MAGNET, and REMSA for tour, highlights rail and manufacturing in Ohio** (ironhorse)
- > **Sen. Graham, Scott staff joins GoRail and REMSA for Koppers tour**
(koppersc)

> **Sen. Corker's Transportation Staffer Joins UNITRAC for Tour, Discusses Rail Issues (unitrac2016)**

> **Rep. Coffman's Chief and Sen. Gardner's Regional Director Tour New RTD Maintenance Facility, Discuss Rail & Transit Issues (balfourrtd)**

> **Congresswoman Bustos tours REMSA member Rail Construction Equipment, discusses rail issues (rcebustos)**

> **Congressman Fitzpatrick joins REMSA member TRAC Lubricants & Coatings and the New Hope & Ivyland Railroad for demonstration, discussion (newhopetrac)**

> **Rep. Polis joins REMSA Member Encore Rail Systems for Demonstration, Discussion (encorepolis)**

> **Senator Debbie Stabenow Joins REMSA Member Harsco Rail, UAW Local 811 for Tour and Policy Discussion (harscostabenow)**

> **Congressman Rod Blum Joins REMSA Member HiRAIL for Tour and Rail Discussion (hirailblum)**

> **REMSA Member Flexovit USA hosts Congressman Collins for reopening tour, policy discussion (flexovitcollins)**

> **REMSA Members LT Resources, American TieTek host Congressman Gohmert for tour, rail discussion (tietekgohmert)**

> **Congressman Mike Rogers Joins REMSA Member Knox Kershaw and Alabama Railroads for Tour and Discussion (knoxkershaw)**

> **Congressman Flores Staff and Waco Mayor Kyle Deaver Join NRC/REMSA Member Axion Structural Innovations for Tour, Rail Discussion (axionflores)**

PHOTOS (CONTENT.ASP?

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