

Should the
TEXAS
BULLET
TRAIN
stay on
TRACK
or be
DERAILED?



MADISONVILLE FFA CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 879

MADISONVILLE, TEXAS 77864

(936) 349-8002

Texas State Qualifying Event: December 6, 2014



ISSUE SUMMARY

1. List course(s) in which instruction occurred.

- Energy and Natural Resources Technology (44 students) – studied the environmental impact of fossil fuel extraction, consumption, and carbon emissions. Compared means of generating electricity and examined the role of government in energy regulation.
- Principles of Agriculture (52 students) – evaluated population growth and distribution. Looked at urban vs. rural population dissemination in Texas. Discussed eminent domain law and its use and explored legislation related to land use management. Projected future demand for agricultural products.
- Wildlife, Fisheries, and Ecology Management (30 students) – researched federal and state regulations regarding threatened and endangered species. Participated in a quail release at Westmoreland Coal Company and toured multiple wildlife improvement and land reclamation sites.
- Professional Communications (18 students) – practiced professional interviewing etiquette and developed oral presentation and written communication skills.
- Business Information Management (22 students) – covered online research techniques, source credibility, and the use of Microsoft PowerPoint® software.

2. Why is this issue important now?

Texas is one of the fastest growing states in the nation (Glink, 2014). Our state is growing twice as fast as the national average (United States Census Bureau, 2015) and according to *Forbes* magazine, five of the ten fastest growing cities in the United States are within Texas (Carlyle, 2015). Nearly half of all Texans live in the Houston and Dallas area (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2014) and by 2050, the combined population of the Dallas and Houston Metropolitan Statistical Areas could easily exceed 30 million (Hoque, McNeil, & Granato, n.d.). As traffic congestion in these cities increases (Shrank, Eisele, & Lomax, 2012), the Texas Department of Transportation is struggling to build and maintain roads to keep up with the demand (Graves, 2014). Realizing this problem as a potential business opportunity, a company called Texas Central Railway recently unveiled plans to build a high-speed rail line between Houston and Dallas (Texas Central Railway, n.d.). Decisions made over the next two years will ultimately approve or do away with this project (Kelly, 2014, personal communication). Our public forums helped citizens become aware of this issue and informed them of twelve public meetings, where they could file comments for consideration in the environmental impact study. Even though the formal public comment period is now closed, the Federal Railroad Administration is still accepting public input through mail and e-mail (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015) and this topic is currently being debated in local and state political arenas. Citizens wanting to influence this process need to act now (Workman, 2015, personal communication).

3. What is the nature of the issue?

The Texas Bullet Train will be an N700, the same type of train currently in operation by Central Japan Railway between Tokyo and Osaka. With running speeds of 205 miles per hour, the electric-powered conveyance would complete the journey between the two cities in ninety minutes or less (Texas Central Railway, n.d.). Texas Central Railway claims they can generate the money to build the project through private investments, not tax money (Kelly, 2014, personal communication).

4. Who is involved in the issue?

Texas Central Railway is the company seeking to build the Texas Bullet Train and is, therefore, the major player in this issue (Texas Central Railway, n.d.). The project is currently under review by the Federal Railroad Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation, as these agencies are conducting an environmental impact study which will recommend the least intrusive route and contain mandates to mitigate for environmental damages (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015). Texas Central Railway is seeking to secure money from private investors. The project does have international implications, as the largest financial investor to date is The Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Central Japan Railway will be the vendor for the N700 trains and the signaling devices (Kelly, personal communication, 2014). Commuters who travel between these routes will have a new travel option available and could see changes in congestion levels as new infrastructure is put into place (Batheja & Smith, 2014). Rural land owners will be impacted financially and physically if the tracks are built on or near their land (Eiserer, 2015). Small towns along the route may see economic gain due to an influx of construction workers during the building stages but could also see losses in revenue if highway travelers are diverted to a train that is not scheduled to stop in their town (Sneider, 2014). If the predictions of Bernard Weinstein and Texas Public Policy Foundation economists are accurate, all Texas taxpayers could ultimately pay a portion of the train's operating costs (Weinstein, 2014, telephone communication and Sullivan, 2014). If this project is profitable in Texas, it will likely lead to the expansion of high-speed rail nationwide (Herskovitz, 2014). The scope of this issue is wide, impacting many lives.

5. How can the issue be defined?

This forum falls under the topic areas of “Economy and Trade” and “Environmental Issues” as listed in the National FFA Agricultural Issues Forum Instructional Materials (National FFA Organization, n.d.). The issue can be defined in its simplest terms by asking: Should the Texas Bullet Train be constructed? This simple question, however, has spurred a flurry of public opinions on both sides (Dickson, 2014). Supporters feel the train will allow for faster and easier travel, which will boost our economy and ease congestion on our roads and in airports (City of Houston, 2014). They also believe the train will help the environment. Each train can carry 450 passengers between the two cities with one half the emissions of automobiles and one third the emissions from a jet (Batheja & Smith, 2014). However, some individuals question whether the environment will be better off in the end when considering the pollution created by construction of the rail line and the increased generation of electricity (Cosgrove, 2010). Opponents also worry that land owners will not receive fair compensation and that noise and loss of access will lower property values and create major problems for those who live along the tracks (Texans Against High-Speed Rail, 2015). Should the Texas Bullet Train stay on track or be derailed? The question is simple, but the answer is not.

6. What is the historical background of the issue?

Significant dates relevant to the development of the Texas Bullet Train are:

- 2009 – Lone Star High-Speed Rail, a company with headquarters in Dallas and Houston, is formed (Cowle, 2014, personal communication).
- 2011 – Lone Star High-Speed Rail changes its name to Texas Central Railway and rolls out a plan to build a bullet train from Dallas to Houston (Cowle, 2014, personal communication).
- June 25, 2014 – The Federal Railroad Administration releases a “Notice of Intent,” beginning the formal environmental impact study (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015).
- October 21 through December 4, 2014 – Twelve meetings are held along the proposed route to gain public comments for the impact study (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015).
- March 12, 2015 – Texas Senate Bill 1601, which would have barred high-speed rail from using eminent domain, is introduced. The measure passed the Senate Transportation Committee but never came to a vote during the 2015 regular session (Texas Legislature Online, 2015).
- April 2015 – The Federal Railroad Administration releases a scoping report summarizing questions, comments, and FRA responses recorded during the official public scoping period, which extended from June 25, 2014 to January 9, 2015 (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015).
- July 22, 2015 – Texas Central Partners, the fundraising entity for Texas Central Railway, announces it has secured \$75 million in domestic investments (Texas Central Railway, 2015).
- Expected late 2015 – The draft environmental impact statement will be released by the Federal Railroad Administration for public review (Federal Railroad Administration, 2015).
- Expected 2017 – Property acquisition and construction will begin (Lawless & Tucker, 2015).
- Expected 2021 – The bullet train will begin transporting passengers (Lawless & Tucker, 2015).

7. What caused the issue?

This issue is a result of the large number of Texans who travel between these two cities regularly. Data from the Rudin Center for Transportation shows 44,300 residents of Dallas work in Houston and 51,900 Houstonians work in Dallas. Fifty-thousand travel between these cities more than once a week (Lindenberger, 2012). Interstate 45, which connects these cities, handles over 300,000 vehicles per day and nearly three million fly between Dallas and Houston annually, making it the 13th busiest air route in the nation (Tomer & Puentes, 2009). Texas Central Railway plans to use this busy passageway for their profit by providing a viable travel alternative.

8. What are the risks?

Opponents of the Texas Bullet Train:

- Believe that Texans will not give up the independence found in driving their own vehicles.
- Argue that no interim stops means rural citizens will get very little use from the train.
- Allege that property values will decline and landowners will be inconvenienced.
- Maintain that tax payers may be called on to bail out the project if it is not widely used.
- Doubt that train ridership will justify the environmental cost of construction.

9. What are the benefits?

Supporters of the Texas Bullet Train:

- Emphasize that our state’s congested highways and airports need some relief.
- Stress that the train will be built using private investments and not tax money.
- Applaud the fact that the train produces less carbon emissions than other forms of travel.
- Declare property owners will be provided generous compensation in exchange for their land.
- Predict the train will benefit our state economically.



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LOCAL FORUM PRESENTATIONS

When	Where	To Whom	# Present
September 25, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madison County Farm Bureau / Rep. Trent Ashby	151
September 30, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative	14
October 6, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Bedias Creek Soil & Water Conservation District	12
October 6, 2014	College Station, TX	Texas A&M Transportation Institute	4
October 6, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville Volunteer Fire Department	28
October 14, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville CISD Board of Trustees	26
October 14, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville City Council	10
October 16, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Lions Club	17
October 16, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madison County Republican Party Meeting	19
October 20, 2014	Austin, TX	Texas Department of Transportation Rail Division	1
October 20, 2014	Austin, TX	Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers	5
October 20, 2014	Austin, TX	Ryan Wallace, Staff of Senator Charles Perry	1
October 20, 2014	Austin, TX	Texas Public Policy Foundation	4
October 31, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Daughters of the Republic of Texas	14
November 3, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Madisonville FFA Open House	45
November 4, 2014	Madisonville, TX	KMVL Radio	2 + Listeners
November 9, 2014	Madisonville, TX	Methodist Prayer Breakfast	31
November 10, 2014	Madisonville, TX	ADK Sorority	7
November 19, 2014	Midway, TX	Parten Operating Safety Meeting	44
November 20, 2014	Ft. Worth, TX	Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway	4
November 20, 2014	Dallas, TX	Texas Central Railway	2
December 5-6, 2014	Huntsville, TX	Texas State FFA Contest	85

Madison County Farm Bureau / Rep. Trent Ashby
September 25, 2014 – Kimbro Center, 6:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 151



We were glad our first presentation was to local farmers and ranchers. We were anxious to hear their views. We talked with State Representative Trent Ashby as well.



402 W Main St
 Madisonville, TX 77864-1911

O 936.348.2753
 F 936.348.3267

Dear Judges of the FFA Ag Issues Contest:

On September 25, 2014, the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team performed at the Madison County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. The meeting kicked off at 6:00 p.m. at the Madisonville Kimbro Center. There were 151 Farm Bureau members in attendance. The heated debate over the "Texas Bullet Train" was very informative to our members.

Regards,
 Shirley Perry - Office Manager



STATE OF TEXAS
 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TRENT ASHBY
 District 57

Dear Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team:

It was a pleasure to see you at the Kimbro Center in Madisonville on September 25, 2014, at 6:00 P.M. I believe the topic of the proposed bullet train is an excellent one to highlight. The presentation was well orchestrated and there's no question that hearing both sides of that debate got the meeting's 151 attendees thinking about how to solve our transportation issues.

I congratulate you on an impressive performance and wish all of you much success throughout your competitions ahead.

Trent Ashby
 State Representative

Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative
September 30, 2014 – Woodbine Hotel, 12:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 14



MARI is a group focused on the economic development of Madisonville. They asked several questions about a stop in our area and the financial impact this would have.



MARI

MADISONVILLE AREA REVITILIZATION INITIATIVE

P.O. BOX 229 • MADISONVILLE, TX 77864 • (936)348-2132

Dear Judges of the Ag Issues Event:

On September 30, 2014 at noon, 14 members of the Madisonville Area Revitalization Initiative were happy to host Madisonville FFA's Ag Issues team. We were grateful to hear opposing perspectives on the high-speed rail project proposed for our area and left the meeting well informed about this issue. We welcome the Madisonville FFA team to any future meetings as we are always blessed by their presence.

Sharon Phelps
MARI President

Bedias Creek Soil and Water Conservation Board
October 6, 2014 – Madisonville City Hall, 9:00 AM
Number in Attendance: 12



The SWCD Board asked how the train would impact sensitive habitats, about wildlife mitigation, and the timeline for the environmental impact study.



BEDIAS CREEK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT #428

120 South Elm, Suite #110, Madisonville, Texas 77864 (936) 348-2173
Post Office Box 217, Centerville, Texas 75833 (903) 536-2940

Dear Ag Issues Team Members,

The **Bedias Creek Soil & Water Conservation District** would like to thank you for your presentation titled "Should the Texas Bullet Train Stay on Track or Be Derailed?" at our Board Meeting on Monday, October 6, 2014 at the Madisonville City Hall at 9:00 A.M. The team was very well researched in each point of view; well articulated in their expression of those points and gave a wonderful informative presentation. The presentation was so well prepared with each side assertively justifying their argument. The 12 individuals that were present were honored to hear the presentation in person. Thank you again!

Sincerely,

Charlie Price
Chairman

Texas A&M Transportation Institute
October 6, 2014 – TTI Gibb-Gilchrist Building, 1:30 PM
Number in Attendance: 4



We met with research directors for the rail division of TTI and Michael Parks, from the Brazos Valley COG, who is working to get a stop on the route for College Station.



Texas A&M Transportation Institute
The Texas A&M University System
3135 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-3135

979-862-2854
Fax: 979-862-2708
<http://tti.tamu.edu>

On Monday, October 6, 2014 at 1:30 p.m., the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) hosted the Madisonville High School FFA team. In attendance were three TTI researchers and one member of the Brazos Valley Council of Governments.

The FFA team was very inquisitive and appeared to have thoroughly investigated the issues related to high-speed rail from the perspective of urban and rural residents. I think we were most impressed with the confidence and passion demonstrated by the team members during their presentation.

It is clear that through research effort these students are well on their way to fully understanding the considerations related to this significant topic area.

Sincerely,
Jeffery Warner

Association Transportation Researcher/ Texas A&M Transportation Institute

Madisonville Fire Department
October 6, 2014 – Madisonville Fire Dept., 7:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 28



Emergencies on the train would impact our local first responders. This group largely opposed the train due to serious concerns about security and emergency access.

MADISONVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dear Judges:

The Madisonville Volunteer Fire Department was grateful to host the FFA Ag Issues Team on October 6, 2014 at the fire station. The meeting was held at 7 o'clock in the evening and 28 people were in attendance. We were glad see these young people take an interest in this high-speed rail project that will impact emergency response services in our area.

Thom Jones 
 Fire Chief – Madisonville Volunteer Fire Department



MCISD Board of Trustees
October 14, 2014 – MCISD Office, 5:30 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 26



The School Board talked at length about eminent domain and rural property values. There was much discussion regarding potential impacts on tax revenue.



MCISD



MUSTANGS

Keith Smith
Superintendent

Dr. Robert Cope
Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Keith West
Assistant Superintendent

To the esteemed judges of the Ag Issues FFA Competition:

The Madisonville Consolidated Independent School District Board of Trustees was honored on October 14, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. to have the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team present at the monthly school board meeting. The discussion truly made an impression on the twenty-six individuals present that evening with the debate concerning the pros and cons of the Texas Bullet Train. The presentation was very informative and the team was extremely genuine in the reenactment of the debate. The members of the MCISD Board of Trustees and the staff commend them for their hard work. We are proud of each of them and wish the team well in future competitions.

God Bless and Go Mustangs!

Keith W. Smith
Superintendent

P.O. Box 879 • Madisonville, Texas 77864 • Phone (936) 348-2797 • Fax (936) 348-2751

Madisonville City Council
October 14, 2014 – City Hall, 7:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 10



We were pleased to visit with our mayor and city council. They had great questions about the economic impact the bullet train would have on our town.



City of Madisonville

210 West Cottonwood • MADISONVILLE, TEXAS 77864
 Phone (936) 348-2748 • FAX (936) 348-3815

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Madisonville City Council, I would like to thank the Ag Issues Team for their recent presentation at our city council meeting on October 14, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. There were 10 community members present. The presentation was interesting as well as thought provoking.

Sincerely,

Danny Singletary
City Manager

Lions Club
October 16, 2014 – Woodbine Hotel, 12:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 17



The Lions Club asked questions about the routes and about the schedule of the train. They also asked us excellent questions on the security of passengers.



MADISONVILLE NOON LIONS CLUB

Judges of the Ag Issues Contest:

On October 16, 2014, at 12:00 P.M. at the Woodbine Hotel, the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team delivered a great presentation to the Madisonville Noon Lions Club on their topic related to high-speed rail expected to run between Dallas and Houston, Texas. There were 17 Lions Club members present. The presentation was very informative and the students did an admirable job answering questions brought forth by Lions Club members.

Sincerely,

Tammy Hoke
Lions Club Treasurer

Madison County Republican Party Meeting
October 16, 2014 – Madisonville Court House, 7:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 19



Our presentation started a lengthy discussion on whether Texans would use the train. County Judge elect Butch McDaniel was present.



MADISON COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY

7445 Live Oak Ln • North Zulch, Texas 77831 • (936) 399-2420

Dear Ag Issues Team:

Thank you for the presentation delivered to the Madison County Republican Party at 7:00 P.M. on October 16th of 2014. The students not only memorized a copious amount of well-researched text, but presented the viewpoints in believable performances, expressing the strong feelings that informed citizens hold! Answers to questions from the nineteen audience members were enlightening to us all. The poise of these students speaks highly for the future of this country! Please accept our thanks.

Sincerely,

Bobbie Holmes
Secretary – Madison County Republican Party

Texas Department of Transportation Rail Division
October 20, 2014 – TXDOT Office, Austin, TX, 8:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 1



We met with Mark Werner with the rail division of TXDOT. TXDOT is helping with the environmental study and will make sure the train meets legal requirements.



Texas Department of Transportation

125 EAST 11TH STREET | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 | (512) 463-8588 | WWW.TXDOT.GOV

Dear Judges,

On October 20th at 8:30 AM, I had the privilege of viewing the presentation developed by the Madisonville High School FFA students on the pros and cons of high-speed passenger rail service. As the Rail Division Planning Section Manager of the Texas Department of Transportation, I am very familiar with the issue of passenger rail services. It was evident to me that the Madisonville FFA Team put a lot of time and effort into this project. They did a thorough job researching the issues and fairly addressing the advantages and disadvantages that could result from the development of passenger rail, not just in Texas, but anywhere in the United States.

Sincerely,

Mark Werner, P.E.



Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
October 20, 2014 – TSCRA Legislative Office, 10:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 5



Representatives from the legislative office of the Texas Farm Bureau also joined us. On June 26, 2015, TSCRA issued a statement encouraging limits on the project.



Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
 1301 W. SEVENTH ST. • SUITE 201 • FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-2665
 817-332-7064 • 800-242-7820 • F: 817-332-6441 • WWW.TSCRA.ORG

Cattleman
 INSURANCE
 SERVICES, INC.

Dear Judges,

I am writing to confirm that the Madisonville FFA Agricultural Issues Team gave a presentation to a panel of agricultural industry lobbyists in Austin on October 20, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. The forum was held in the conference room of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association legislative office. The team presented to five attendees including: TSCRA directors Jason Skaggs, Kaleb McLaurin, and Laramie Adams, as well as Texas Farm Bureau directors Billy Howe and Marissa Patton. TSCRA and TFB work with the Texas State Legislature on issues such as private property rights, eminent domain, and transportation, which are all reflected in the presentation we heard on the Texas Central Railway high-speed rail project. On behalf of both organizations, we commend the Madisonville FFA Team on a great presentation.

Respectfully,

Kaleb McLaurin
 Kaleb McLaurin – Director of Government Affairs, TSCRA

Ryan Wallace - Staff for State Senator Charles Perry
October 20, 2014 – State Capitol Building, 1:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 1



Senator Charles Perry has been a vocal opponent of the high-speed rail project. He believes tax money will eventually be needed to operate the train.



This letter is to certify that students from Madisonville High School FFA attended a meeting in my office at the State Capitol with a member of my staff at 1:00 p.m. on October 20, 2014, to discuss the proposed development of a high-speed rail route between Houston and Dallas. The staff member in attendance, Ryan Wallace, handles transportation issues and reported that the meeting included a robust discussion concerning proposed routes, eminent domain, landowner rights, and financing the project. I am encouraged by the involvement of these students and their desire to research the implications of such a major infrastructure development.

Sincerely,

Charles Perry
 Charles Perry
 State Senator - District 28

Texas Public Policy Foundation
October 20, 2014 – TPPF Office, Austin, TX, 3:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 2



Robert DeVore and his associates oppose high-speed rail. They feel the train will not attract many customers and believe value of impacted properties will plummet.



To the Judges of the Agricultural Issues Forum:

It was our pleasure to host the Madisonville FFA team on 10-20-14 at our office at 3:00 PM. As a professional research organization, we appreciate the development of tomorrow's leaders provided by skills competitions like this one. Given our research on issues impacting landowners, our interest in rail in Texas is intense. We have major reservations on the viability of the Dallas-Houston high-speed rail project. The statements regarding negatives of high-speed rail resonated solidly with us. The entire team was very receptive to the questions and feedback provided by the four senior staff members present.

Most respectfully,

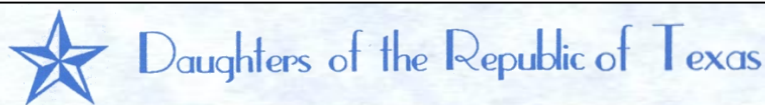
Jaimie Ailshire – Office Manager

Jaimie Ailshire

Daughters of the Republic of Texas
October 31, 2014 – Madison Co. Museum, 10:00 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 14



These ladies were very concerned about their property and the disturbances the train may cause for rural land owners. They also asked about the environmental impact.



On behalf of the Rev. John Haynie Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, I want to thank the Madisonville FFA Ag Issues team for the wonderful program you presented at our Stephen F. Austin birthday celebration on October 31, 2014 at 10:00 A.M. at the Madison County Museum. The material presented was well researched and showed a remarkable understanding of the urban and rural point of view. The team responded quickly to questions posed by an audience of fourteen persons. Thank you again.

Maureen Linnane

Madisonville FFA Open House
November 3, 2014 – Ag Building, 6:00 P.M.
Number in Attendance: 45



We had a large attendance at our open house. We were asked 15 minutes of questions. People really want to know how this project will impact them and our community.



To the Judges of the Ag Issues FFA Competition:

One of the highlights of attending the Madisonville FFA Community Open House on November 3, 2014 at 6:00 P.M. in the High School Ag Building was seeing the Ag Issues Team discuss the bullet train that will have such a large impact on rural Texas. As a rancher, I appreciated a look at how the high-speed train may influence landowners and agricultural acres. The young people exhibited poise in the face of some difficult questions from the 45 community members present. I compliment this group on an excellent presentation.

Kevin Council

Kevin Council

KMVL Radio
November 4, 2014 - KMVL Studio, 8:30 A.M.
Number in Attendance: 2 + Listeners



KMVL broadcasts on 13,000 watts, extending in a 50 mile radius into parts of nine counties. After presenting, we took calls from listeners, answering questions on the air.



102 West Main Street
Madisonville, Texas 77864

(936) 348★9200
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To the Judges of the Ag Issues FFA Event:

Please be advised that Madisonville FFA Ag Issues Team members were guests on KMVL's morning show from 8:30 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. They participated in a live broadcast from the KMVL studio with morning show hosts, Paul Wright and Becky Neal. The students provided information on the pending high-speed rail project, particularly highlighting potential impacts on agriculture.

Thank you,
Paul Wright

Paul Wright

Methodist Church Breakfast
November 9, 2014 – Methodist Church, 7:30 AM
Number in Attendance: 31



This group asked a variety of questions. We discussed the structure of the company, security on the train, possible stops, and the amount of right of way required.



Subject: FFA Agricultural Issues Presentation – 31 Present
First United Methodist Church – Prayer Breakfast, Nov. 9, 2014, 7:30 A.M.

Thank you for your passionate presentation of the issues surrounding the proposed bullet train. The highlight was the question/answer period following the prepared presentation. The team's responses demonstrated excellent understanding of the issue. This FFA program provides a major building block for the development of educated and capable citizens.

Jim Madole

Jim Madole

ADK Sorority Meeting
November 10, 2014 – MHS Library, 4:15 PM
Number in Attendance: 7



Much of the discussion from this presentation focused on economic changes the train could bring if built in our area, especially if a mid-point stop is eventually created.



ALPHA DELTA KAPPA



Dear Ag Issues Leadership Team,

The Texas Epsilon Gamma Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa wants to say a big thank you for coming to our November 10th meeting and presenting your debate on the Texas Bullet Train. Seven members of our chapter were blessed to hear a group of young people who are well informed about a serious subject. The team presented the issue with confidence giving each of those present information we can use to be better citizen participants as this issue unfolds.

Sincerely,
Dena Abernathy



Parten Operating Regional Meeting
November 19, 2014 – Midway Comm. Center, 11:00 AM
Number in Attendance: 44



Parten Operating is a major driller of oil and natural gas. After the presentation, we discussed the conversion of natural gas into electricity to power the train.



Parten Operating Inc. held a regional meeting at 11:00 a.m. on November 19, 2014. The meeting was held at the Midway Community Center and 44 were in attendance. Madisonville FFA Ag Issues students presented a lively debate over high-speed rail. We recognize the controversial nature of this issue as population growth demands new infrastructure. However, we must never allow rural interests or air or water quality to be sacrificed because of urban expansion. Thank you for your excellent presentation.

Troy Sheppard

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
November 20, 2014 –BNSF Operations Center, 9:00 AM
Number in Attendance: 4



We loved this chance to tour the BNSF Railway nationwide operations center and compare freight to passenger rail. The bullet train could parallel portions of BNSF tracks.



Chad M. Peterson
Senior Manager Equipment
Standards & Compliance
Business Unit Operations

BNSF Railway Company
MOB 1
2650 Lou Menk Drive,
Fort Worth, TX 76131
817-867-6177

Dear Judges,

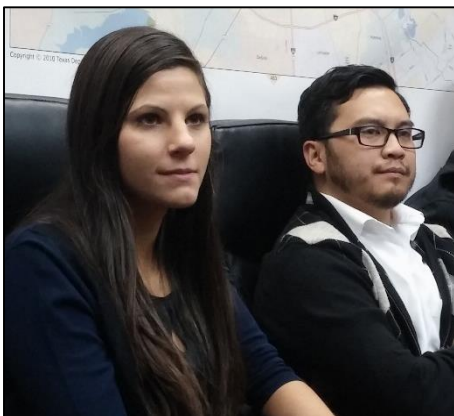
On 11/20/2014, at 9 AM, the Madisonville FFA team visited the BNSF Railway corporate headquarters in Fort Worth, TX. During this visit, the team performed their presentation on the benefits and concerns regarding high-speed passenger rail service in the Houston / Dallas corridor to four BNSF executives. The team did an outstanding job articulating contrasting thoughts and outcomes. Viewpoints included economic, environmental, and land owner impacts, as well as improving efficiency for travelers.

Sincerely,
Chad M. Peterson

Texas Central Railway
November 20, 2014 –TCR Dallas Office, 3:00 PM
Number in Attendance: 2



We presented to Rebecca Cowle and Jason Criss. We also met Kathryn Kaufman, Executive Vice President of Texas Central, and Richard Lawless, who at that time was CEO.



TEXAS CENTRAL RAILWAY
AMERICA'S BULLET TRAIN

4343 Thanksgiving Tower, 1601 Elm Street, Dallas, TX 75201

To the Judges of the Ag Issues Contest:

On the 20th of November at 3:00 PM CST, Ms. Lynita Foster and her team of FFA students came by our Texas Central Railway office in downtown Dallas to present their competition entry and ask additional questions of our TCR executives. In attendance from Texas Central Railway were Jason Criss, Project Director, Environmental and Engineering and Rebecca Cowle, Outreach Coordinator. We thank the Madisonville FFA for their interest and wish them luck in the upcoming competition.

All the best,

Rebecca Cowle
Outreach Coordinator

Jason Criss
Project Director, Environmental and Engineering