

# News Release



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## MILLIONTH PASSENGER MILESTONE REACHED FOR AMTRAK *HEARTLAND FLYER* University student honored at events in Oklahoma & Texas

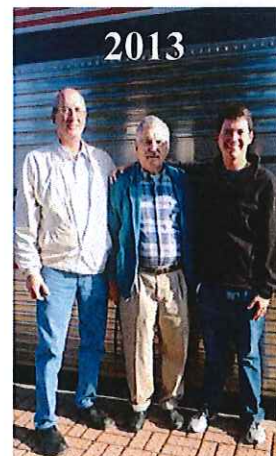
OKLAHOMA CITY and FORT WORTH – A university student from Oklahoma City was identified today as representative of the one-million passengers who have ridden the [\*Amtrak Heartland Flyer\*](#) route in Oklahoma and Texas since 1999. Rooke Jackson attended events in Oklahoma City and Fort Worth with his father and grandfather.

Wayne J. Jackson and his son Rooke are familiar with the route and the Amtrak train crew members who nominated him for the honor. By the family's count, they have ridden the *Heartland Flyer* more than 150 times, mostly to visit Wayne R. Jackson, Rooke's grandfather. Pictures of Rooke in Pauls Valley, Okla., in 1999 at age four and today at age 18 with his father and grandfather, are to the right.

The *Heartland Flyer* is jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma and Texas transportation departments.

"The time on the train can be a great way to catch up on some business, visit with family and friends or simply enjoy the scenic ride through the Arbuckle Mountains," said Craig Moody, Rail Programs Division Manager at the Okla. DOT.

"TxDOT would like to thank the local communities for their support of the *Heartland Flyer* passenger service and we look forward to the continued success of this state-supported route," said Erik Steavens, TxDOT Rail Division



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Director. "We are pleased with the positive impact the *Heartland Flyer* has had on both the economy of the region, mobility, and the associated environmental benefits."

"We'd also like to congratulate the 'millionth' rider and wish the Jackson family many more, enjoyable trips on the route."

Mike Patterson, Executive Director of Okla. DOT, attended the brief ceremony at the Paul Adams Memorial Platform at the Oklahoma City Amtrak Station to congratulate the Jackson family.

Rooke Jackson is a freshman at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater who said, despite owning a classic car from the 60s, taking Trains 821 & 822 "is more enjoyable than driving." His mother, Elaine Jackson, brought him to the *Flyer's* inaugural event in 1999. In the 14 years to follow, Rooke has become friends with the Fort Worth-based Amtrak crews who have watched him grow to young adulthood. Rooke said all the trips over these years have given him "a unique perspective" on the train crews and their responsibilities.

Amtrak operates the *Heartland Flyer* under state-funded contracts with Okla. DOT (since 1999) and TxDOT (since 2006) to provide daily service, with regularly scheduled stops in Oklahoma City, Norman, Purcell, Pauls Valley and Ardmore in Oklahoma and in Gainesville and Fort Worth in Texas. For details about the stops along the route or to find out more about the *Heartland Flyer* and its history, go to [HeartlandFlyer.com](http://HeartlandFlyer.com), which is operated by the Heartland Flyer Coalition, representing the communities on the 206-mile route.

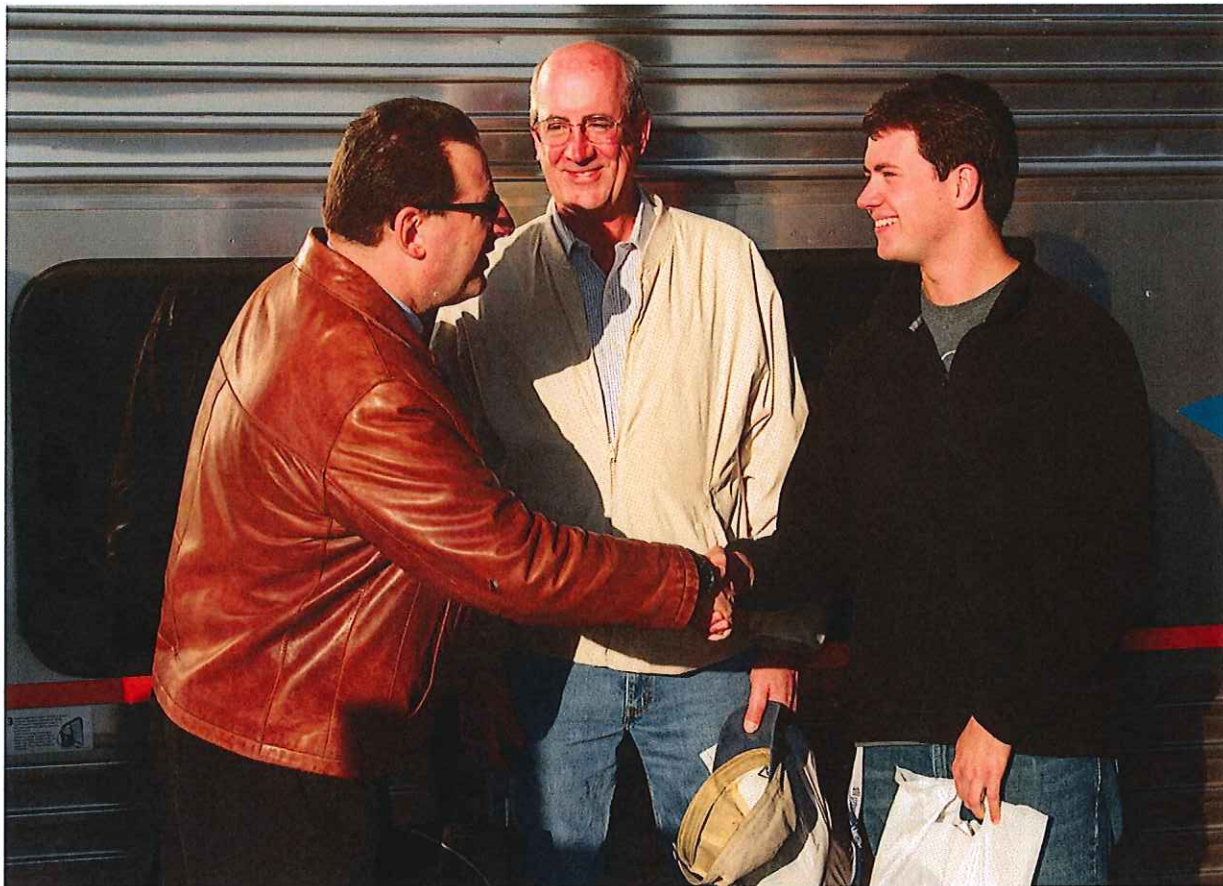
In 2007, Amtrak, the transportation departments and the coalition recognized a grandmother from Oklahoma City, as the 500,000<sup>th</sup> passenger on the train, which consistently ranks among the best in the Amtrak network for customer satisfaction.

"Each and every time a passenger boards the *Heartland Flyer*, we want that trip to be the very best experience for them," Moody said. "The high customer service marks speak to the professionalism of the care and service by Amtrak. It is extremely important to us for Amtrak to keep a pulse of passengers' travel experiences and constantly strive for improvements."

#### **About Amtrak®**

Amtrak is America's Railroad®, the nation's intercity passenger rail service and its high-speed rail operator. Amtrak and its state and commuter partners move people, the economy and the nation forward. Formally known as the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak is governed by a nine member board of directors appointed by the President of the United States and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Anthony R. Coscia is board chairman and Jeffrey R. Moreland is vice chairman. In FY 2013, a record 31.6 million passengers traveled on Amtrak on more than 300 daily trains – at speeds up to 150 mph (241 kph) – that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Enjoy the journey® at [Amtrak.com](http://Amtrak.com) or call 800-USA-RAIL for schedules, fares and more information. Like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Amtrak), Follow us on Twitter ([@Amtrak](https://twitter.com/Amtrak)) and check out our blog at [blog.amtrak.com](http://blog.amtrak.com).





**Caption 1:** Amtrak Media Relations Manager Marc Magliari congratulates Rooke Jackson as the *Heartland Flyer*'s millionth passenger as he gets ready to board the *Heartland Flyer* in Oklahoma City with his father Wayne J. Jackson on November 15.



**Caption 2:** At the Santa Fe Depot in Oklahoma City, Rooke Jackson was recognized as the *Heartland Flyer's* millionth passenger on November 15. Pictured from left to right are ODOT Rail Programs Division Manager Craig Moody, Amtrak Media Relations Manager Marc Magliari, Rooke Jackson's father Wayne J. Jackson, Rooke Jackson, *Heartland Flyer* Coalition member Karen Adams, ODOT Executive Director Mike Patterson, *Heartland Flyer* coalition member Judi Elmore and *Heartland Flyer* Coalition member Don Hummer.

\*\*\* Additional photos and video footage of the *Heartland Flyer's* millionth passenger event are available on ODOT's FTP site at

<http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/tvideos/Millionth%20Passenger%20HLF/> \*\*\*