



Locals take development agenda to D.C.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Passenger rail, the Interstate 74 bridge and the future of the Rock Island Arsenal topped the agenda of the [Quad City Development Group's](#) annual lobbying trip to Capitol Hill.

Some 75 civic and business leaders from Illinois and Iowa were to attend the trip, which was to run through Friday, said QCDG President Nancy Mulcahey. Meetings were planned with House lawmakers and senators from both states and their staffs, she said, though it was unclear if Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., will leave the presidential campaign trail to meet with them personally.

David Heymsfeld, staff director for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, was expected to speak to the group on Friday. Rep. Phil Hare, D-Rock Island, said Tuesday that the committee's chairman, Rep. James Oberstar, D-Minn., has scheduled a day-long visit at his request to the Illinois Quad-Cities Feb. 22.

Rep. Oberstar is to meet with regional and local officials about the area's transportation needs and the possibility of Amtrak service from Chicago through the Quad-Cities to Iowa.

Ms. Mulcahey said Amtrak service has become a bigger priority because of last month's feasibility study by the railroad, which found a route to Chicago could be competitive with automobile trips. That study found annual ridership of 111,000 is possible if improvements are made to existing railways, at a cost of between \$14 million and \$23 million. An annual subsidy of about \$6 million would be required for either of two projected routes.

A select group also is planning to attend a reception Wednesday evening at the Washington home of the Belgian ambassador to the United States, Dominique Struye de Swielande. The ambassador visited the Quad-Cities last August.