



## **For Immediate Release**

### **INDIANA RAIL ROAD PLEDGES \$50K MATCHING DONATION FOR DUGGER-UNION**

INDIANAPOLIS, Wednesday, Aug. 20, 2014 – Indiana Rail Road has pledged \$50,000 in matching funds to support the residents of Dugger, Ind., and their effort to establish and sustain Dugger-Union Community School.

Located in the heart of Indiana Rail Road's 500-mile operating territory, in Sullivan County, Dugger's 910 residents were faced with a threat to their town's long-term viability last winter when the Northeast School Corporation board voted to close Dugger Union High School.

The closure – a budgetary measure – called for Dugger Union students to transfer to schools that would be as much as a one-hour bus ride away, one way.

The response from Dugger community leaders and parents has been sheer determination. They've worked for months to keep a school in their town, first by establishing a partnership with Indiana Cyber Charter School (ICCS). The next step was applying sweat and elbow grease to clean the school from ceiling to floor and make light repairs.

Dugger-Union Community Schools, grades Kindergarten to 12, opens on August 25.

"As a native of a small town in Illinois and a long-time proponent of the southwest Indiana economy, I've seen what can happen to communities that lose their schools: they simply dry up," said Tom Hoback, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of INRD. "Dugger is an important anchor for INRD and our nearby customers, such as Peabody Energy. Many of our employees and families live there; many generations have attended Union High School. I know it hasn't been an easy year for Dugger parents and volunteers, but I'm proud and happy to see their efforts come through."

Since the ICCS's mission is to serve primarily as an online ("cyber") school – although staff will be on hand for each grade and all core high school courses – ICCS is not responsible for funding building maintenance or extracurricular activities such as sports.

INRD's donation of \$50,000 will be directed to operational expenses and extracurricular activities, and is contingent upon the school's ability to raise a sum-total in matching grants – or find a donor willing to fully match INRD's \$50,000 pledge.

INRD is also pursuing options, along with Peabody Energy's nearby Bear Run Mine, the local carpenters union and other local employers, to provide in-class training for Dugger-Union students who wish to pursue a career in vocational trade industries.

The Indianapolis Colts and BSN Sports have pledged sponsorships and in-kind donations to support Dugger-Union's athletic programs, and numerous alumni and concerned citizens alike have made donations to get Dugger-Union Community Schools off the ground.

Dugger's efforts have also received national attention, thanks to CBSSports.com writer Gregg Doyel's ongoing coverage. For more information, visit the school's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/DuggerBulldogs>.

The Indianapolis-based Indiana Rail Road Company is a privately-held, 500-mile railroad which hauls the equivalent of more than 800,000 truckloads of consumer, industrial and energy products each year. For more information, visit the Indiana Rail Road online at [www.inrd.com](http://www.inrd.com) or on Twitter and Facebook.

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