

# Amtrak Adapts to New Situation by Using Decision Lens



## THE ORGANIZATION

Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation. Amtrak is a government-owned corporation, the nation's intercity passenger rail provider and its only high-speed rail operator. In FY 2010, 28.7 million passengers traveled on Amtrak on more than 300 daily trains that connect 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces. Amtrak operates trains in partnership with 15 states and four commuter rail agencies.



## THE PROBLEM

**MONEY ROLLING IN.** Amtrak needed to establish a spending plan for some \$1.3 billion in funds it received under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Additionally, the company needed to prioritize other corporate operational goals while considering the requirements of its many disparate departments.



## THE SOLUTION

**OLD FRIENDS, NEW SYSTEM.** Amtrak had previously used Decision Lens to select vendors and the designate projects for ARRA funding, so Amtrak selected Decision Lens again for the much broader requirements of allocating resources for its \$1.3 billion ARRA spending plan. In using Decision Lens, Amtrak executives established project evaluation criteria and their relative weights of importance for both new and continuing plans and loaded them into the application.



## THE RESULTS

**RESOURCEFULNESS.** Amtrak established a spending plan for the \$1.3 billion in ARRA funds it received, allocating a significant portion to its security and life safety programs. The company also modified several operational practices, including allocating 63% of its ARRA funds to contracted projects. This allowed necessary resources to be applied rapidly to plans, enabling those tasks to be expedited, and avoiding layoffs once they were completed. According to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) officials, Amtrak's use of Decision Lens improved the capital budget prioritization process because the software allowed for transparency.