

Cattaraugus OKs S

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LITTLE VALLEY - A special session of the Cattaraugus County Legislature Wednesday night approved an \$80,000 commitment that will help keep the county's Shortline Railroad on the tracks.

Robert O. Dingman, president of the New York and Lake Erie Railroad, described the present railroad situation before approval of the resolution by a vote of 16-7.

Dingman's railroad has been in operation under a New York state Department of Transportation subsidy since Oct. 14, 1978, along a 14-mile portion of Erie-Lackawanna tracks between Salamanca and Cattaraugus.

Dingman is required to demonstrate local support to state and federal officials before they make a decision to continue subsidies to the Shortline System. New York state DOT Commissioner William C. Hennessy wrote to the Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency Jan. 4 saying, "The state cannot base its investment decisions on local analysis which conflict with our own. Should Cattaraugus County, together with the other local interests, be willing to provide their own contractual operation, we would be willing to extend the present agreement, which terminates Jan. 14, until March 31 of this year."

Also attending the meeting were Erie County and Chautauqua County IDA directors and several railroad shippers.

The \$80,000 represents a local share of a \$320,000 Appalachian Regional Commission grant to be used by Cattaraugus County to purchase the present operating line from Salamanca to Cattaraugus. The amount will come from the county surplus account.

The IDA will use the money to purchase the 14-mile segment (Salamanca to Cattaraugus), taking over responsibilities for upkeep after March 31. The state DOT presently leases the line from the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad trustees and is ex-