



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

Progress Amid Adversity

BARRY COMMONER ON TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT

"In essence, the effort to deal with environmental pollution has been trivialized. A great deal of attention has been paid to designing—and enforcing the use of—control devices that can reduce hazardous [automobile] emissions only moderately. Much less attention has been given to the more difficult but rewarding task of changing the basic technologies that produce the pollutants.

"Production technology encompasses not only the design of a particular facility, such as a car, but the overall system in which it operates—in this case, transportation. While remedying the vehicle's inherent faults is useful, much greater environmental improvement can be accomplished by addressing the system of transportation as a whole.

"Compared with railroads, cars are a highly inefficient means of long-distance and commuter travel, but they are essential in many places, even with effective mass transit, for urban travel. Cars designed exclusively for this purpose could be much lighter and driven by less powerful, low-compression engines or, for that matter, by non-polluting electric motors. Together with the expansion of urban and suburban mass-transit systems and interurban rail lines, this would virtually eliminate ozone and smog and greatly reduce environmental nitrogen oxides. Moreover, lower gasoline consumption would reduce carbon-monoxide emissions even without exhaust controls. In the same way, carcinogenic diesel exhaust could be sharply reduced by a shift from truck-borne freight to railroad freight, which is four times as fuel-efficient.

"In sum, the serious continuing impact of the transportation system on the environment results from the failure to alter not only the technical design of cars, trucks, and buses, but also the system of transportation itself."

—Dr. Barry Commoner,
Director, Center for the Biology of Natural Systems,
Queens College, New York City,
The New Yorker, June 15, 1987



When we look through *NARP News* back issues, we are reminded that many improvements now taken for granted were considered "big steps forward" fairly recently. Good news does not come as often as it should, but it has come with surprising regularity. To illustrate that, we hope to present annually a chronology of "major openings" scheduled during the following 2 years—bearing in mind that, to some degree, all predictions even during such a short time-span are tentative. This first effort also includes openings since the start of April, 1987.

1987

- Apr. 5—New Bakersfield-Barstow bus links "San Joaquins" and "Desert Wind" [Mar. News, p. 3].
- May 2—Boston heavy rail Orange Line moves from aged elevated structure to former New Haven Railroad mainline Back Bay-Forest Hills (3.9 miles) [Apr. News, p. 2].
- May 22—Pittsburgh light rail modernization completed (10.5 miles of 22.5-mile system) [July News, p. 3].
- June 21—New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority opens huge new Caemmerer Yard (coach storage/servicing) in Manhattan.
- June 22—Long Island Rail Road extends third-rail electrification Hicksville-Farmingdale (5.4 miles).
- July 19—Baltimore heavy rail Reisterstown Plaza-Owings Mills segment opens (6 miles), creating 14-mile line [Apr. News, p. 2].
- July 31—Detroit's automated people mover opens (2.9 miles) [Aug. News, p. 2].
- Sep. 5—Sacramento's light rail East Line opens (9 miles

(continued on page 3)

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

EFFECTIVE OCT. 25:

● Los Angeles-San Diego Southwest Corridor gained eighth "San Diegan" frequency. Train 570 dp. Los Angeles 6:15 AM, ar. San Diego 9:00 AM; Train 587 dp. San Diego 8:45 PM, ar. Los Angeles 11:25 PM. Train 585 rescheduled: dp. San Diego 6:45 PM, ar. Los Angeles 9:25 PM. Note: this does not appear in new Amtrak system timetable, but does appear in western regional edition and in new Caltrans timetable (send us SASE).

(continued on page 4)

GIVE NARP TO A FRIEND—A SPECIAL HOLIDAY OFFER!

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The Booming Southwest Corridor

When Amtrak began operating in May, 1971, its Los Angeles-San Diego service consisted of 2 daily round-trips plus the thrice-weekly "Coast Starlight." With the Oct. 25 addition of the newest "San Diegan," the 128-mile route now has 8 round-trips a day.

From 1973 to 1987 (fiscal years), a 133% increase in service frequency produced a 357% ridership increase!! (328,000 rode the 3 1973 trains while 1.5 million rode the 7 trains in the fiscal year just ended.) 1985's ridership of 1.3 million broke the line's all-time patronage record, set during World War II. Today, more people are riding the "San Diegan" line than at any time since the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway opened it nearly a century ago.

Corridor Improvement Study

In response to this impressive record and to projections that ridership will jump to almost 4 million trips within 10 to 15 years, the State of California recently completed a study aimed at upgrading the Southwest Corridor to improve and increase Amtrak service.

Following the demise in late 1984 of the controversial Los Angeles-San Diego bullet train proposal (Dec. 1984 News, p. 2), the California Legislature enacted legislation authored by state Sen. William Craven (R-Oceanside) creating a Southwest Corridor study group (Mar. 1986 News, p. 4). The 11-member group consisted of state and county transportation officials, state legislators, Amtrak, Santa Fe, rail labor, and the Federal Railroad Administration. The group's objective was to propose more affordable, incremental improvements to the existing Santa Fe/Amtrak line.

The study group completed its work earlier this year and issued a report recommending a \$256 million program to fund more than 185 individual capital improvement projects. The projects are divided into three categories:

- Short-range (1987-1990)—\$38 million: track improvements to increase traffic capacity and operating reliability, reduce train running times; construction of two new stations; station platform improvements;
- Intermediate-range (1990-1995)—\$53 million: replace about 100 miles of aging 112-pound jointed rail with new 136-pound welded rail (or, substitute new 115-lbs. welded rail for a cost-savings of 20%).
- Long-range (1995-2000)—\$165 million: purchase intercity equipment for additional Amtrak frequencies; institute

commuter rail service Los Angeles-San Clemente, San Diego-Oceanside; track improvements to increase capacity, reduce running times.

The 8th 'San Diegan'

On Oct. 25, an 8th Amtrak frequency was added to the Southwest Corridor, constituting the first train of the day southbound, and the last of the day northbound (see *Travelers' Advisory for schedules*). To our knowledge, this is the greatest number of passenger trains ever scheduled on this line.

The new train is a 403(b) operation—that is, financed jointly by Amtrak and the state. In fact, 4 of the 8 "San Diegans" are 403(b). Without question, the state's heavy financial commitment to the Southwest Corridor—consisting not only of 403(b) funding but advertising, station improvements, and feeder buses—has been the primary reason for the route's dramatic development during the past 16 years.

One of the most critical projects recommended by the corridor study group—rail replacement—will actually begin this winter, as a direct result of the 8th "San Diegan."

County Money for Track Improvements!

Santa Fe, which owns the Los Angeles-San Diego line, agreed to the new train when Amtrak, California, and the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego agreed to contribute funding for rail replacement. The existing rails between Fullerton and San Diego were milled between 1939 and 1941 and are nearing the end of their 50-year life. Unless they are replaced soon, train speeds will have to be reduced and schedules lengthened. Under the agreement, California will provide \$4 million, while the three counties, Amtrak, and Santa Fe will each contribute \$0.8 million—for a total of \$8 million for Phase I rail replacement. This is the first time in Amtrak's history that funds from *county governments* are to be spent on intercity passenger track improvements!

This multiparty arrangement was advanced by Sharon Green, consultant to the Orange County Transportation Commission and head of the corridor study group's technical advisory committee, and NARP Reg. 12 Dir. Carl Schiermeyer of Long Beach.

Extension to Santa Barbara

A historic event in the evolution of the Southwest Corridor will occur on Jan. 19, when "San Diegan" Trains 774 and 783 will be extended northward 103 miles over the Southern Pacific Railroad from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara—another cooperative effort involving the state and Amtrak (Sep. 1986 News).

This extension will double the corridor's reach, permit passengers to travel through Los Angeles without changing trains, and hopefully lead to a new round of ridership growth. This run-through operation, made possible by the arrival of push-pull trainsets, will be especially useful for suburban Los Angeles residents who need to travel across the Los Angeles basin—e.g., north-suburban residents traveling to Orange and San Diego Counties, and south-suburban residents traveling to Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. ■

PROGRESS (continued from page 1)

Sacramento-Rancho Cordova), completing 18-mile "starter" line [Aug. News, p. 2].

- Sep. 10—Amtrak moves into new Oxnard multimodal transportation center [this issue].

- Sep. 18—Hartford Amtrak station rededicated as multimodal transportation center [Aug. News, p. 1].

- Oct. 5—Amtrak and commuter trains resume service to Boston Back Bay Station and resume use of old New Haven Rr. mainline (now depressed) through Boston. The new station is also served by the relocated Orange Line which goes direct to North Station (for north-side commuter trains) [Sep. News, p. 1].

- Oct. 15—New Jersey Transit dedicates major new maintenance facility at Kearny.

- Oct. 19—Boston-Needham Heights commuter trains resume after 8-year suspension. In 1977, the Needham branch accounted for over 20% of Boston's south-side commuter rail ridership total. (Boston-Needham Heights is 13.6 miles, the branch itself—Forest Hills-Needham Heights—is 8.5 miles. 1.6-mile Needham Jct.-Needham Heights segment only gets rush hour service).

- Oct. 25—New "Ambuses" link Roanoke to the Amtrak system (via Clifton Forge) and make St. Petersburg-Miami travel possible again (bus runs Winter Haven-St. Petersburg) [Sep. News, p. 4].

- Oct. 25—San Diego-Los Angeles gets 8th daily Amtrak frequency, up from 2 daily plus one thrice-weekly in May 1971 [this issue].

- Oct. 25—Begin non-stop Metroliner Service New Carrollton, MD (suburban Washington), to New York, 2½ hours (2:40 from Washington Union Sta.) [Sep. News, p. 4].

- Dec. 11—San Jose dedicates Phase I of new light rail system (northernmost 7 miles of planned 19-mile line). Free service throughout weekend. Dec. 14 revenue service begins.

1988

- Jan. 18—Long Island Rail Road extends third-rail electrification Farmingdale-Ronkonkoma (18.1 miles).

- Jan. 19—One Amtrak "San Diegan" is extended into Santa Barbara, providing second daily frequency Los Angeles-Santa Barbara (after "Coast Starlight") [this issue].

- Feb.—(tentative) Pittsburgh light rail spur into downtown Amtrak station opens.

- Apr. 10—Ft. Worth-Meridian section of "Crescent" begins IF Amtrak secures mail contract [Sep. News, p. 1].

- Apr. 29—(tentative) Free service begins on San Jose light rail Phase II, including downtown transit mall. May 2 revenue service begins. [Phase III is to share right-of-way with a freeway and may be seriously delayed. A court just rejected the freeway environmental impact statement due to extravagantly-designed highway ramps.]

- June 15—Atlanta heavy rail extension to Hartsfield Airport opens (2.6 miles).

- June—Boston South Station's new Amtrak concourse opens (6 tracks with new high-level platforms are now in

HARTFORD STATION RESTORED



—Photo by Barry Williams

Hartford's Romanesque train station, built in 1897, is now a multimodal transportation center, housing Amtrak trains, intercity and transit buses, taxis, offices, and restaurants. The \$19 million center, funded by federal, state, and private sources, was dedicated Sep. 18. It is located adjacent to the Connecticut Capitol grounds.

service; all 11 tracks may be in service by Dec. '88, direct pedestrian tunnel to Red Line by mid-1989, parking garage and bus terminal by end of 1991).

- July—New Jersey Transit extends catenary electrification Matawan-Long Branch (16 miles).

- July—Miami-West Palm Beach commuter rail service begins on CSX Railroad (65 miles).

- Sep.—Washington Union Station reopens as one of the nation's most beautiful buildings. Dramatically improved environment and passenger access, especially for trains serving lower-level tracks (i.e., all trains going through Virginia plus many corridor trains as well).

- Sep.—(tentative) new, permanent Pittsburgh Amtrak station opens.

- Dec.—New York City's Archer Ave. subway extension opens.

1989

- Apr.—Amtrak service commences on Philadelphia-Atlantic City line (60 miles).

- Aug.—San Diego light rail Euclid Ave.-El Cajon segment opens (11.1 miles).

- Late 1989—Los Angeles-Long Beach light rail line opens (21.5 miles).

- Late 1989—(tentative) Amtrak's Manhattan West Side Connection opens (1990 more likely). ■

Amtrak Station Problems: Denver and Detroit

The future of rail passenger service at 2 venerable terminals Amtrak inherited remains unclear, but it appears that trains will move in Denver and stay where they are in Detroit.

Denver

Since "Amtrak Leaving Denver Union Station?" appeared in the June *NARP News*, and NARP Member/Amtrak Board Member Paul Weyrich raised the subject at Amtrak's July board meeting, it has become clear that there is a strong political commitment in Denver to the road project that would force Amtrak to move.

A thorough search of the Denver area has revealed only one suitable alternate site, a location near Burlington Northern's (BN) Prospect Yard and not far from where the west-bound "California Zephyr/Pioneer/Desert Wind" now stops

before backing into Union Station. The location is just north of I-25 and south of West 38th Ave. and is bounded on the east by Fox St. As described in the Sep. 21 *Rocky Mountain News*, this is "near the I-25 interchange at West 38th Ave. and 23rd St. That [interchange], under current city and state highway department plans, will be the major access point from I-25 to downtown. And for Amtrak, it would mean a smooth, one-stop station without backing up its trains." Thus the change could reduce the overall running times of Amtrak trains serving Denver.

The article also said "the city may conclude that costs of relocation, which are estimated to be more than a million dollars, dictate the service remain at Union Station," but most observers think that cost will not derail the much more costly road project that created the need to move Amtrak. One possible solution: the city might build a station for Amtrak to lease, and use highway money to fund trackwork—which may not be confined to Amtrak-related work; BN may require track changes to protect Prospect Yard moves from the new Amtrak operation.

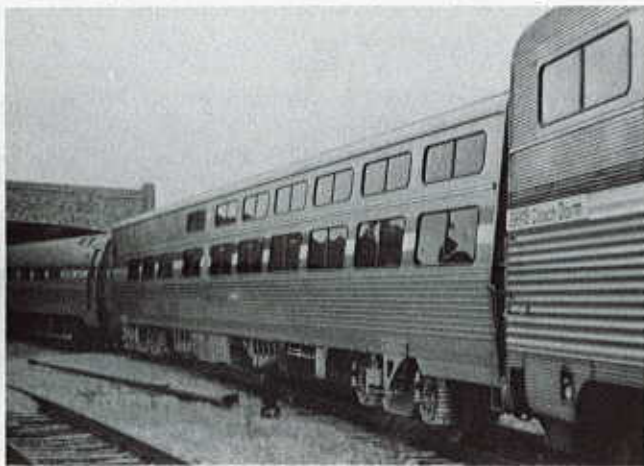
Detroit

For years, the old Michigan Central Depot (MCD) has been deteriorating. When the last Conrail offices moved out this fall, Amtrak became the only tenant. Here are the four major options and their status (quotations from an Oct. 14 story in *The Detroit News*):

- "Plans to build a \$5.5 million Amtrak station in the Joe Louis Arena parking garage [see *NARP Pres. John Martin's May 23, 1986, letter to members, p. 3*] . . . were scratched after the federal government rejected a move last year to resume commuter train service between Ann Arbor and Detroit. Amtrak would have shared the . . . station with the commuter trains." (SEMTA did not have the local funding the federal government normally requires in such cases.)

- Amtrak threatened to terminate trains at suburban

INTRODUCING . . . THE VIEWLINER



—Photo by Barry Williams

Two years behind schedule, Amtrak's first Viewliner car, Sleeper 2300, left Beech Grove Shops on Oct. 7, destined for a travel agents' conference in Houston. The single-level car, designed for restricted eastern railroad clearances, is distinguished by its two tiers of windows. The car contains 3 deluxe bedrooms (1 of which is handicapped-accessible), and 14 economy compartments. Deluxe rooms are shower-equipped; all 17 rooms have toilets, sinks. Nearing completion are 2 sister cars—a diner and another sleeper. The cars' first revenue assignment is to be the Lorton-Sanford Auto Train, then the New York-Chicago "Cardinal." Amtrak Pres. Graham Claytor wants to run the cars for 1-2 years to identify and correct any design flaws before placing a production order. Viewliners were developed to eventually replace aging Heritage cars on Amtrak's eastern routes.

Dearborn, which now handles more passengers than MCD, if needed MCD improvements were not forthcoming. Meanwhile, plans to redevelop MCD continue to make no apparent headway.

- A suggestion was made to extend Chicago-Detroit trains to Pontiac and relocate from MCD to Detroit's New Center area where more ridership might be generated, due to the proximity of Wayne State Univ., the huge Henry Ford Hospital, General Motors' world headquarters, and the world headquarters of Unisys (the huge electronic/data manufacturer created from the merger of Burroughs and Sperry). Amtrak would gain access to the large Detroit north-suburban market by stopping at Pontiac and Royal Oak, both with new, under-utilized intermodal transportation centers and no passenger trains. Amtrak would also use the Pontiac maintenance facilities completed (with federal aid) in 1981 for the Detroit-Pontiac commuter trains SEMTA discontinued in 1983.

- The City of Detroit, however, remains committed to MCD's redevelopment and to using Amtrak's presence to support that redevelopment. The city engineered "a \$460,000 state transit grant to build . . . a temporary train station" adjacent to MCD. The heat will not be turned on in MCD this winter; Amtrak hopes to relocate by the end of Nov.

Successful MCD redevelopment would not automatically preclude the Pontiac extension; it simply means all trips would traverse the 0.7-mile MCD "branch" twice, an operation which the forthcoming push-pull equipment should facilitate.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

- Pittsburgh-New York "Pennsylvanian" gained special Sunday eastbound schedule: dp. Pittsburgh 11:45 AM (2:10 later than other days), ar. New York 8:49 PM.

- Chicago-Oakland "California Zephyr" added Roseville, CA. Station times, which are not in system timetable, are: westbound 12:41 PM, eastbound 3:04 PM.

- Persons travelling from Midwest to Florida once again use "Capitol Limited" and "Silver Star" via Washington.

Sep. News corrections: Chicago-New York "Cardinal" will continue to carry local Chicago-Indianapolis traffic, although space may sometimes be limited. Kansas City-Carbondale "River Cities" through Kansas City-New Orleans coach was not truncated to St. Louis-New Orleans.

Amtrak moved into beautiful new \$7 million multi-modal transportation center in Oxnard, CA, Sep. 10. Located 1 block west of old station, new center was funded by city and also houses intercity and transit buses, taxis, retail shops, and offices.

STATEMENT OF CHARGES, MAINTENANCE AND CIRCULATION		DATE OF PREPARATION	
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