



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(This has news through August 18. No. 7 was mailed August 16.)

RETURN REQUESTED

Skinner Seeks Public Input

LAUPT TURNS 50



—Photo by Ed Von Nordeck

During gala May 6-7 celebration of the 50th birthday of Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal, NARP Dir. Carl Schiermeyer of Long Beach, who is also vice pres. of Train Riders' Assn. of Cal., meets some of LAUPT's 60,000 visitors while staffing the "NARP/TRAC table." Carl is talking with Charles Dargan of San Juan Capistrano, a longtime NARP member and "leafleteer." Subway construction will inconvenience Amtrak passengers for 2 more years. By 1994, the subway will make the station even easier to reach!

House Votes Amtrak, Transit Increases

The U.S. House of Representatives August 3 approved the FY 1990 Department of Transportation (DOT) appropriations bill (H.R. 3015). Included is \$615 million for Amtrak (up from \$584 million in FY 1989), \$19.6 million for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Program (NECIP) and \$3.17 billion for UMTA (\$11.9 million more than FY 1989), its first increase in eight years. The Amtrak figure should be enough to allow an order of Viewliners. Amtrak President Graham Claytor has long said if Congress gave him \$50 million in extra capital funds, he could match it for another \$50 million in the private financial market and place the badly needed order.

(continued on page 4)

DOT Holds Hearings on Transportation Policy

"President Eisenhower's biggest contribution as a civilian was the interstate highway system. We need to have another legacy along those lines."

—Samuel K. Skinner, DOT Secretary
U.S. News and World Report, July 24, 1989

Secretary of Transportation Samuel K. Skinner has made the development of a national transportation policy one of DOT's top priorities. With completion of the Interstate Highway System expected in 1991 and a major rewrite of the federal highway/transit reauthorization bill to be enacted by September 30, 1991, such a study is both warranted and timely.

Underscoring the importance he attaches to the study, Secretary Skinner told *Traffic World* (June 19): "I want to make sure that the decisions that Congress and the administration make are consistent with what our national transportation needs are going to be in the 21st Century. . . I feel strongly that you've got to run a business by a strategic plan and we also should run government policy by a strategic plan, and that's what this is."

The target date for issuing DOT's comprehensive National Transportation Policy Statement is early next year. This key document will provide the framework for the Bush Administration's decisions on transportation infrastructure, services, needs assessment and legislative proposals.

FOUR MAJOR COMPONENTS TO DOT POLICY STUDY

1. A Context For Transportation Policy—a document briefly examining the current national transport system and its external environment. This report, "Moving America", was issued in July.

2. Policy Development Outreach—The issues and recommendations of the transportation community, including consumer, industry, labor, government and other interest groups, obtained through meetings and hearings in July and August.

3. Policy Issues Seminars—A series of seminars, held concurrently with the Outreach phase, examining issues with

broad implications for the development of a national transport policy (i.e., energy, national security, transportation disadvantaged).

4. Overall Policies And Strategies—Development of a national transport policy (incl. short- and long-term strategies) based on the above three components and internal staff work, due early next year.

Skinner has remarked that DOT does not intend to re-study everything. "A lot of work has been done by AASHTO (American Assn. of State Highway and Transportation Officials) and aviation people and some at Maritime with the Sealift study. So we're going to take all this together and put it in an integrated plan." (*Traffic World*).

To conduct the outreach component, DOT has established six "cluster groups": Urban/Suburban, Rural America, Intercity Passenger, Intercity Freight, International and Innovation/Human Factors. Each cluster group is holding field hearings in cities across the country and meetings in Washington, D.C. during July and August to elicit input from concerned organizations and individuals. In addition, written comments may be submitted to DOT through September 1 (see NARP News, July 1989 for details on where to write).

NARP PARTICIPATES IN THE OUTREACH

On July 25, NARP Vice President Eugene Skoropowski, and NARP's Ross Capon, Scott Leonard and Harriet Parcels met with the Intercity Passenger cluster group in a 3-hour session in Washington, D.C. NARP emphasized the need to change federal policies that have disadvantaged passenger rail in

TRANSPORTATION POLICY STUDY CONSIDERS HIGH SPEED RAIL

"High speed rail works in Europe. There are exciting technologies in the Pacific Rim. We have to see if it makes any sense in this country," stated Secretary Skinner at a DOT policy study field hearing in Des Plaines, IL. Noting that there are corridors in the U.S. where high-speed rail would make sense, Skinner added, **"If you can travel 200 mph between Chicago and St. Louis and get reliable service, people would rather go by train downtown to downtown."** Skinner did not commit the federal government to building the new rail links. **"First let's find out what the nation's needs are, then we'll talk about financing."**

In formal comments to DOT on Aug. 5, NARP stated that Skinner's positive references to high speed rail are "encouraging" but noted "we are concerned about his suggestions that trains must go 200 mph to be air-competitive. . . We believe there is substantial evidence that slower trains could offer—indeed are providing—significant airport congestion relief. . . The 200 mph definition unnecessarily increases costs of high speed rail thereby perhaps strengthening the case against it."

At a July 24 forum, sponsored by DOT at the National Academy of Sciences, one of the guest speakers, Edwin Colodny, President of U.S. Air, stated, **"I for one support the need for improvement of ground transportation by rail. If we can develop high speed rail in our dense corridors, we should. It helps reallocate the use of airport facilities in certain areas which are in short supply. . . In 20-30 years, for example, should we still be moving all of these people in short-haul markets that are dense—should we be moving them by air? Or should we be moving them by high speed rail? I see no incompatibility between aviation in that regard and surface transportation."**

terms of the total amount of federal dollars spent for passenger rail vs. other modes and in terms of federal tax policies. NARP pointed out the substantial hidden subsidies enjoyed by competing modes (roughly \$17 billion annually for highways!) which fail to show up as line items in the budget and the large indirect costs associated with these modes (i.e., air pollution, water pollution, noise, loss of farmland, etc.). On August 25, NARP will participate in a meeting of the Urban/-Suburban cluster group.

At the field hearings NARP Directors, members and state rail associations are driving home the need for greater investment in energy-efficient, safe passenger and freight rail and mass transit. On July 31, Ken. L. Bird, NARP Director and President of the Illinois Assn. of Railroad Passengers, spoke at the Intercity Passenger rail hearing in Des Plaines, IL. Bird cited polls and surveys, rising rail ridership and many magazine and newspaper articles that attest to the growing American demand for rail.

Bird noted that while not one Chicago-area Amtrak route offers air-competitive schedules, "a [1987] street survey conducted by the *Chicago Sun-Times* shows that 3 of 4 respondents would prefer using improved Amtrak midwest corridor trains to flying. . ." In California, 17 counties representing about 78% of the state's population have voted to allow some of their state gas tax money to be used for rail passenger service.

"I think building 20 new airports at a cost of \$3 to \$4 billion—spending \$100 billion for airports—is not out of the question. You know, it's the lifeblood of our economy."

—Skinner
Traffic World, 6/19

Opening the Intercity Freight hearing in Baltimore, MD on July 26, Intercity Freight cluster chairman Bill Watt stated that "environmental compassion looms far larger this time" in the development of new policy and that the major drive in the development of this policy will be to "balance the system." NARP has fought hard for more balanced U.S. transportation and believes that federal policy is a fundamental reason for our currently imbalanced system. NARP Director Lawrence Joyce testified at the hearing that "We believe the public interest demands elimination of policies that prevent the rail mode from handling much traffic for which it is ideally suited. Specifically we believe the following policies should be enacted:

- "eliminate current large public subsidies to competing waterway users and the heavy truck industry: increase waterway user fees on barge operators and enact a national weight-distance tax on heavy trucks;
- " earmark at least one penny of a federal gas tax hike (or reallocate existing gas tax monies) as state matching money for freight rail track repair and/or other priority freight and passenger rail needs designated by the states;
- "prohibit further truck size and weight increases."

NARP President Jack Martin testified at the hearing on Urban/Suburban issues held in Atlanta, GA on August 2. In his opening remarks, Martin stated, "I hope the transportation policy process is not viewed as a lobbying tool to help Congress understand the need to throw billions more at highways and air facilities. I hope close attention will be paid to underutilized rail facilities and the potential of the rail mode in general to relieve congestion on our road and air systems and to provide maximum carrying capacity with minimum environmental cost."

Martin pointed out the anti-transit tilt in federal tax law (allowing employers to provide free parking worth over \$200/month in major cities but only \$15/month in tax-free benefits for transit commuters) and the anti-transit tilt in federal funding. Martin called for increased gas tax monies earmarked for transit and for passenger and freight rail projects and an Urban Mass Transit Administration that recognizes the benefits of rail. "UMTA seems to devote an inordinate amount of energy to persuading state and local officials that rail is not the way to go. We would rather see this energy spent emphasizing the types of land-use and parking policies needed to make rail (and all transit) successful." Also testifying at the Atlanta hearing about the need for greater investment in rail transit were Ross Goddard, President of the Georgia Assn. of Railroad Passengers and Alan Yorker, NARP Board member and Vice President of GARP.

Other NARP members have testified at hearings across the country during August. NARP thanks them for their participation. ■

UNION STATION BOOK OFFER

An updated version of last year's "Union Station: A Decorative History of Washington's Grand Terminal" by Carol M. Highsmith and Ted Landphair is being offered to NARP members at a discount. The story of Washington Union Station is told from its predecessors to its construction, its heyday, its near demise in the last 20 years and (in a new final chapter) its rebirth as retail space, rail terminal and Amtrak headquarters. Dozens of recent color and historic black and white photographs appear in the book's approximately 100 pages.

Regular price is \$19.95, but NARP members pay only \$14.50 (plus \$2.00 shipping; D.C. residents add 6% sales tax). Indicate you are a NARP member and make check payable to Chelsea Publishing, 1300 G Street NW, Suite 3-D, Washington, DC 20005 (tel.: 202/347-0910). This offer is good while supplies last.

Maglev Committee Reports to Senate

The Maglev Technology Advisory Committee, organized at the request of Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY) last fall, issued an executive report in June to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. The report stressed that the U.S. should not let the technological edge in this potentially important transportation mode be lost to the Japanese and Germans.

However, the report incorrectly shows conventional rail as part of America's mobility problem, lumping together a photo of a rapid transit station with photos of crowded airports and freeways and industrial air pollution. It also said "Maglev is to diesel locomotives what *Star Trek* is to *Wagon Train*," not mentioning that the Japanese and Europeans are investing heavily in electrified high speed rail. In comparing maglev fuel economy, pollutant emissions and cost construction to highways and air, the report conveniently left rail out of the analysis.

Otherwise the report does offer a clear overview on how maglev works and on the current status of its development. For a copy, write Michael Proise, Grumman Corp., MSA02-26, Bethpage, NY 11714-3580. ■

TRANSIT BENEFITS FOR CALIFORNIA WORKERS

Last summer California Gov. George Deukmejian (R) issued an executive order directing each state agency to formulate a ride-share policy. State agencies were allowed to give employees \$15 per month tax free for mass transit costs, and several agencies have done so. The amount might have been even higher except that \$15 is also the maximum tax-free benefit allowed anyone by the federal government. Pending House legislation (H.R. 2265, sponsored by California Rep. Matsui) would raise that ceiling to \$60. If H.R. 2265 becomes law, California likely would allow its employees more.

New Hampshire Editor Notices Sam Stokes . . . and Trains

The return of Amtrak's "Montrealer" was the occasion for a superb July 21 editorial in *The Keene Sentinel* highlighting the yeoman work NARP Dir. Samuel E. Stokes, Jr. has done for years on behalf of balanced transportation. The editorial said, in part:

"The passenger train seems anachronistic to many of us modern-day Americans. . . . In this, we are practically alone. . . . From the Bullet Trains of Japan to the TGV of France, trains are carrying millions of people more swiftly and efficiently than cars do here—and requiring much less strain on pocketbooks and on the environment. . . .

"But Americans want to ride in cars, and anyway it's too late now. All over the country, just as here in the Monadnock Region, we've torn up the tracks and paved them over, knocked down the bridges and put shopping malls in the roundhouses. We don't want trains.

"That's what Sam Stokes Jr. hears all the time. For years, the Alstead resident has persisted in telling people the truth about trains. He writes letters to the editor; he corresponds with politicians. (Or, in some cases, he corresponds to politicians.) He bombards people with information about automobiles. He dropped off a packet of it here the other day. Information such as:

- "In Jan. '89, 68% of our trade deficit was caused by imports of automobiles and petroleum.

- "The automobile, since the first car crash in 1903, has killed 2.5 million Americans and permanently injured 43 million.

- "The automobile is a major producer of the pollution that causes acid rain.

- "90% of New Hampshire residents live in areas that fail to meet the standards set by the Clean Air Act of 1970.

"Sam Stokes has become something of a pest about such things. His insistence on disseminating common sense is annoying to highway planners, to finger-to-the-wind politicians and to ordinary citizens who simply like the convenience of cars.

"But . . . someday, and it may not be too far in the future, we expect a lot of people are going to wish they'd listened to Sam Stokes."

Sam was also featured in a Sep. 10, 1986 *New Hampshire Times* story, "He's been working for the railroad." In 1987, Sam wrote and paid for his own newspaper ads on behalf of balanced transportation and, as a result, was interviewed on several radio and TV stations. ■



Sam Stokes

House Votes *(continued from page 1)*

For the first time NARP included staff of environmental groups in its visits to the staff of House members on the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. This NARP/environmentalist combination probably helped get such good Amtrak and transit appropriations. The visits with House staff stressed Amtrak and transit's relevance to environmental issues and President Bush's stated desire to be an environmental president.

The bill's Amtrak money was approved despite an amendment offered by Rep. Robert S. Walker (R-PA) to eliminate all Amtrak funding. The Walker amendment was defeated by a solid 372-43 vote. Among the 43 representatives voting for the amendment, none spoke in its defense; 11 of the 372 against it rose to speak in opposition. They were William Lehman (D-FL), chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA), ranking member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Thomas Luken (D-OH), chairman of the Energy & Commerce Transportation Subcommittee, Bob Whittaker (R-KS), ranking member of the Energy & Commerce Transportation Subcommittee, Norman Lent (R-NY), ranking member of the Energy & Commerce Committee, Robert Garcia (D-NY), Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), Thomas Carper (D-DE), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Harold Volkmer (D-MO) and Ben Jones (D-GA).

UMTA appropriations included \$422.5 million for new rail starts and extensions to existing systems, including:

- \$140 million for continuation of Los Angeles rail construction project.
- \$625,000 for a Chicago loop circulator study, possibly to involve light rail.
- \$60 million for Houston light rail.
- \$52.5 million for Atlanta rail construction.
- \$6 million for Baltimore light rail.
- \$70 million for St. Louis light rail.
- \$32 for BART rail construction in San Francisco area.

Another \$430 million is for rail modernization for existing systems, including:

- \$200 million for New York City.
- \$92 million for southwest Connecticut.
- \$57 million for northeast New Jersey.
- \$8.5 million for Maryland commuter rail (rolling stock acquisition).

The Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee has not yet taken up DOT appropriations. **If you still haven't written your senator, do it as soon as possible and say that the \$615 million appropriated by the House is the minimum needed by Amtrak to finance the Viewliners. Senate action could come as soon as the week of Labor Day!**

The following are some highlights from the House debate on the Walker amendment to eliminate Amtrak funding on August 3:

Thomas Carper—"Fifteen or so years ago, when Amtrak was in its infancy, it might have been more properly characterized as a source of shame rather than as a source of pride. A lot has changed in those 15 years. Today I think we can all regard Amtrak with pride as Americans. We have but to walk a few blocks from where we are this evening to Union Station, to visit that station and other stations up and down the Northeast Corridor, to see the kind of changes that have been made in our Nation's passenger railroad system. . . I would say that rather than trying to cut, to eliminate entirely the budget for Amtrak, this is the time that we might more appropriately say to the people who work for Amtrak, who run Amtrak, 'Thank you. Thank you for a job well done.'" [*Congressional Record*, Aug. 3, p. H-5053]

NEW WISCONSIN DELLS STATION



—photo by Oliver Reese

The new Wisconsin Dells station was dedicated June 10. The old structure, built around 1856, was destroyed in a Milwaukee Road coal train derailment in 1982. Under the leadership of local businessman Oliver Reese, the Wisconsin Dells Community Transportation Association worked to raise funds and recruit volunteers to build a new station. Much of the \$50,000 raised came from sales of a 20x24 inch color print of the old station, signed and numbered, by railroad artist Russ Porter, which are still available until Nov. 1. (To order send a check for \$50—tax deductible—plus \$3.50 for shipping to Dells Depot Fund, P.O. Box 213, Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965. Indicate how you want your name to appear on a plaque listing contributors' names.) Speakers at the dedication included Reese, Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI), NARP's Scott Leonard, Amtrak and Soo Line officials and other community leaders. New stations were also dedicated in Flint, MI June 2 and St. Joseph, MI July 8. The new Flint station was built with \$500,000 in state money on land donated by the Mass Transportation Authority of Flint. The old St. Joseph station was renovated for approximately \$400,000 in funds from the city, state, and a restaurant leasing space in the building.

Ben Jones—"Amtrak has a remarkable record . . . Amtrak is right now at a point where it badly needs capital improvement. Every time we have given it capital improvements, it has shown it can do the job, and they decrease their dependency on Federal funding. Let Amtrak roll. Let the train roll. Defeat this amendment." [p. H-5054]

Lawrence Coughlin—"I think that everyone recognizes that passenger railroad transportation is a vital part of an integrated transportation system. That is what Amtrak is, part of our national transportation system. Every nation in the free world, and I dare say, every nation in the non-free world, has a passenger rail service, and provides government support for it. We provide government support for passenger railroad service the same way we do for passengers in automobiles on our highways, on our aircraft, on our waterways." [p. H-5055]

Robert Torricelli—"This is a subsidy against congestion so that people are off the highways, out of our crowded airways and into trains. Amtrak is part of the economic and social fiber of this country. Does it cost money? Yes. But are the dividends there for families, for communities, for clean air, for the environment? They are. Amtrak is an investment that makes sense." [p. H-5053]

Richard Durbin—"Rep. Walker) would spend billions of dollars for a space station to the stars, but deny railroad service for people travelling to work. He would spend millions to go to the moon but deny railroad service to America's families. He would spend millions more for a journey to Mars but deny railroad service to the thousands of college students who rely on Amtrak. This is not a visionary amendment; it is a reactionary amendment." [p. H-5054]