



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(This has news through March 17. No. 2 was mailed March 10.)

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DOT: Glimmers of Hope

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Empire Service will be restructured May 21 to replace fixed-consist Turboliners with Amfleet cars on most Niagara Falls trips to accommodate growing ridership in western New York; add a 10th New York-Albany frequency; and, on a summer-only basis, extend one NY-Albany frequency to Syracuse.

May 21 will also see: "Empire Builder" gain Grand Forks-Winnipeg "thruway" bus connection for passengers to/from points east (this Amtrak initiative doubles from one to 2 the number of Fargo-Grand Forks-Winnipeg buses in Greyhound's timetable); eastbound "Empire Builder" leave West Coast points 30 minutes earlier; southbound "Eagle" leave Chicago at 3:15 PM instead of 5:40 PM to improve times at St. Louis, San Antonio; and a new Springfield-Peoria-Galesburg "thruway" bus to put Peoria back on the map and preserve connection from "California Zephyr" to "Eagle." ("Builder"-to-"Eagle" connection will break.)

Amtrak's "Atlantic City Express" trains begin May 23, inaugural runs May 22 (Jan. News). Most trains will serve Lindenwold, NJ. All-reserved Amfleet push-pull trains (coaches, dinette, club). Tickets now on sale.

Effective Mar. 15, All Aboard America Fares are priced as follows: for travel ending by May 25, \$179/229/259 (for 1/2/3 zones of travel); for travel beyond May 25, \$189/269/309.

Amtrak is testing china, glassware, and linen in dining cars of Los Angeles-Seattle "Coast Starlight" and Chicago-Washington "Capitol Ltd." Jan. 15-Apr. 15 to evaluate costs and benefits. This enhancement, which requires an extra employee (dishwasher), is receiving enthusiastic acceptance from passengers. If test is successful, this will be introduced systemwide.

"Eagle's" Chicago-San Antonio lounge is now on train's Houston section due to heavy passenger loads; snack-coach joins diner in San Antonio section.

Cape Cod & Hyannis RR is gone (state funding eliminated).

The U.S. Department of Transportation, at long last, seems to be acknowledging that paving over the nation with highways is not the answer to mounting traffic congestion.

In its new biennial report to Congress on the state of the nation's roads, DOT says current traffic volumes cannot be maintained without adding new roads, but building this added highway capacity is "infeasible" due to right-of-way restrictions and high construction costs. Most new capacity is needed in urban areas, where citizen opposition is most intense and construction costs are highest.

The DOT report says right-of-way restrictions may force road planners to consider tunneling and double-decking projects, but site restrictions and costs may be so prohibitive that planners will seek other options, such as expanded mass

LEHMAN: MASSIVE TRANSIT NEEDS

Frustrated by administration support of a massive cut in federal transit funding, Rep. William Lehman (D-FL), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, noted the sweeping smog-control plan adopted Mar. 17 by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (covering the Los Angeles area), and told Alfred DelliBovi, the departing Urban Mass Transportation Administrator, at a Mar. 23 hearing: "I believe what's happening in California will happen elsewhere. Over the next 25 years, we'll see transit needs far in excess of what we now imagine."

transit, peak-period highway traffic management, and new highway tolls.

Before leaving office Jan. 19, then-DOT Sec. Jim Burnley told the *Journal of Commerce*: "You cannot [continue to develop the surface transportation system] by simply trying to find more grass to pave over. Because, once again, you run into so much local opposition. . . . That, in my judgment, will not happen, as a practical matter. . . . The citizenry isn't going to support that much more pavement. And I happen to think that's probably right. That's not what we need to do in any event. It would be, in fact, very inefficient. What we've got to

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Amtrak in the News

Amtrak has been the subject of a number of favorable and accurate news articles recently, including stories in the Jan. 30 issue of *Business Week*, the January issue of *Modern Railroads*, the Mar. 6 edition of *USA Today*, and the Mar. 13 edition of the *New York Times*. *Modern Railroads'* 6-page cover story named Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr. "Railroader of the Year."

All of the reports emphasized Amtrak's serious equipment

AMTRAK'S CLAYTOR: RAILROADER OF THE YEAR

"This is the first time passenger railroading has ever been recognized in that way. I think that's terribly important. It was a recognition of Amtrak, not of me."

—Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr., before House Approps. Transp. Subcomm. on Mar. 22, commenting on *Modern Railroads'* selection of him as "Railroader of the Year"

"They made a good choice. They could have called you the 'railroader of the decade.'"

—Rep. Silvio O. Conte (R-MA)
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee

shortage, which is forcing the railroad to turn away customers. *USA Today* wrote: "The growing popularity of train travel means more money for Amtrak, but it's a mixed blessing: the nation's passenger railroad system is bursting at the seams . . . Ridership is growing so fast, Amtrak doesn't have enough cars to keep up."

Marching to a different drum, *Newsweek*, in its Mar. 6 issue (p. 42), published this embarrassingly inaccurate statement: "Despite strong revenues from its Washington-to-Boston corridor, the rail service remains addicted to the federal dole—averaging \$30 per passenger—because of its obligation to send nearly empty trains across the United States."

This prompted Mr. Claytor to tell the Senate Transporta-

POWER COMPANIES & TROLLEYS

If your city has an abandoned or little-used rail line which would make a good light-rail transit route, promote the idea with your mayor and city council . . . and with your electric power utility!

The business community has tremendous political clout, and its backing—or lack thereof—can often decide the fate of transportation and public works projects. Within the business community, no one has more reason to be enthusiastic about a light-rail system than the relevant power company.

For example, Portland's Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District expects to buy \$685,000 worth of electricity this year from Portland General Electric and Pacific Power & Light for its light-rail system. Sacramento's Regional Transit District expects to purchase \$900,000 worth of power this year from Sacramento Municipal Utility District for its system. In both cities, the rail system is one of the power company's biggest customers. (Data for both systems are for Fiscal 1989 and include train propulsion, station, and administrative power consumption.)

In the beginning, most of the nation's electric rail transit systems were built and owned by power companies. Congress forced the utilities to divest their transit operations in the 1930s, inadvertently setting the stage for the infamous General Motors transit scandal (July '81 *News*, p. 2).

COMMUTER RAIL NEWS

Baltimore: Ridership continues to grow. On Feb. 27, Maryland Rail Commuter (MARC) nearly doubled service on its Baltimore-Bowie-Washington (Amtrak) line, from 7 to 13 frequencies. Added were more peak-period trains, as well as MARC's first-ever non-peak runs.

Miami: Since opening Jan. 9, Tri-Rail's Miami-West Palm Beach commuter service is carrying about 75% of anticipated ridership. Mar. 6 opening of NW Miami transfer station, permitting direct link between commuter trains and city's rail transit system, together with worsening construction delays on parallel I-95, are expected to boost patronage. A midday train may be added in each direction. NARP Reg. 5 Dir. Charlie Dunn played an important role in this project.

New Jersey Transit proposed discontinuing 143 of its 1,033 daily trains effective July 1, raising fares up to 15% May 1, and postponing startup of the non-Amtrak Atlantic City-Lindenwold commuter trains to July 1990. These would be NJT's first service cuts due to budget problems rather than poor ridership. NJT Board Member John L. McGoldrick: "This really is nothing short of the beginning of the dismantling of N.J. Transit" (*The New York Times*, Mar. 1, 1989).

Philadelphia: Fare increases averaging 21.6% take effect Apr. 9 (one-way and 10-ride tickets), May 1 (weekly, monthly).

Providence: 1-year-old Boston-Providence service is carrying 3 times the projected number of passengers, and Rhode Island officials are now hoping to extend service, operated by Massachusetts Bay Transp. Authority (MBTA), southward to East Greenwich or Westerly.

Wilmington: Ridership is off to a good start, following Jan. 16 restoration of Wilmington-Philadelphia commuter service by Southeastern Pennsylvania Transp. Authority (SEPTA). Route R2, Wilmington-Phila.-Warminster, offers 13.5 frequencies (14 trains north, 13 south). Previous service had ended here in Dec. 1982. Much credit for this restoration belongs to NARP. Reg. 3 Dir. Steve von Bonin and Delaware Rail Passenger Assn.

tion Appropriations Subcommittee on Mar. 2, "It is shocking to me that a responsible publication could say a thing like that without checking the facts . . . without checking with us first . . . Our trains tend to run full even in the off-season, which this is."

A *Newsweek* source told NARP that the magazine has received many letters taking exception to its Amtrak comments. For the benefit of *Newsweek* and anyone else who might suspect otherwise, Amtrak's growing popularity comes in spite of stiff fare increases. Claytor says that, since 1981, Amtrak fares rose an average 48% while air fares fell 6%, gasoline prices fell 30%, and the Consumer Price Index rose 30%. ■

NARP REGIONAL MEETING

Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA): Sat.-Sun., May 13-14, Wilmington, Amtrak sta. Rail equipment display at sta. Details: Steve von Bonin, Rte. 1, Box 135, Hartly, DE 19953; 302/492-3676.

Michigan: More Rail Improvements

The State of Michigan, long a leader in rail service improvements, has announced an incremental, multi-year plan to further upgrade the state's Amtrak services during the 1990s.

The focus of its \$12.5 million "Mainline 90" plan is the Detroit-Chicago corridor, where track improvements would cut travel time from 6 to around 5 hours, allowing same-day round-trips. 403(b) trains, jointly funded by Amtrak and the state, would be added to this route for the first time, increasing service frequency.

All trains would operate with push-pull consists, and offer Custom Class coach service. Amtrak and Michigan are already funding the conversion of 7 old Metroliner cars into Amfleet cab-control coaches as part of this project.

Some improvements would also be made to the state's Chicago-Grand Rapids and Chicago-Port Huron routes.

This past fall, Conrail essentially completed the 4-year, \$30 million rebuilding of its 142-mile Detroit-Kalamazoo line used by Amtrak. With the disruptive construction over, Amtrak's on-time performance has improved dramatically, and ridership appears to be stabilizing. Although Conrail reduced the railroad from double to single track, it upgraded signals and track which will permit Amtrak to raise speeds from 60 or 70 mph—depending on location—to 79 mph in 1990, upon completion of \$4.6 million in state-funded grade crossing improvements.

In other Michigan news, Amtrak will move into a new station in Flint this spring, built entirely with state funds. The \$550,000 station, located at 1407 S. Dort Highway, is about 1.5 miles east of the present depot. ■



NEW AMTRAK HEADQUARTERS

Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corp., began moving into its new headquarters atop Washington Union Station during the first week of March. The move will be accomplished in stages and completed by mid-April.

The railroad's new address is 60 Massachusetts Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002. Its new telephone number is (202) 906-3000. (In most cases, extensions did not change.)

Progress on Roadway Signing

NARP and state rail associations have made considerable progress in recent years in getting cities and states to install roadway guide signs for Amtrak stations. As a result, motorists today in many Amtrak-served communities can easily find the local train station.

In large cities with multiple Interstate highway interchanges, NARP has been working to have signs bearing the legend "Amtrak Station" erected on the highway at the appropriate exit. This is not always easy, as state highway departments don't always care about Amtrak and sometimes "justify" their indifference by citing the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)*, a publication of DOT's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

"Amtrak Station" signs are classified as supplemental guide signs; the *MUTCD* recommends only one per interchange, bearing a maximum of two legends (for example, "Amtrak Station" and "Civic Auditorium"). In addition, destinations (such as train stations) must ordinarily be located within a certain distance of the interchange—the distance being set by each state DOT.

Today, "Amtrak Station" signs are in place on Interstate highways in Chicago (I-90/94), Cleveland (I-90), Atlanta (I-85), St. Louis (I-64), San Antonio (I-37), St. Paul (I-94), Milwaukee (I-94), Orlando (I-4), Ft. Lauderdale (I-95), Newport News (I-64), Alexandria, VA (I-95), Kirkwood, MO (I-44), Osceola, IA (I-35), Delray Beach, FL (I-95), and Deerfield Beach, FL (I-95); and have been approved in Washington (I-395), Philadelphia (I-76), and Kansas City (I-35).

NARP requests for signs in Tampa (I-275) and Salt Lake City (I-15) have been denied, as both interchanges already have the maximum number of signs, and we have yet to find a member of Congress to prod state highway officials. A request for Providence signs (I-95) is pending.

With more commuter and transit rail systems opening, NARP feels it is important that signs for Amtrak stations specify "Amtrak." For this reason, we would like to see existing freeway signs in Los Angeles ("Union Sta."), Indianapolis ("Union Sta."), and Boston ("South Sta.") modified to include the Amtrak name.

Many large Amtrak-served cities still lack Interstate highway signs. Does yours? If so, request signs from your governor or state transportation department. If states can provide signing for airports, colleges, summer camps, and jai alai frontons, they should be able to do the same for train stations. If the state rejects your request citing *MUTCD* reasons, contact a sympathetic member of Congress, if you have one, and ask him/her to push the issue.

If we overlooked any cities with Amtrak freeway signs, please let us know! Incidentally, good signing exists for Amtrak's Auto Train terminals in Lorton, VA (I-95), and Sanford, FL (I-4). ■

COMMUTER RAIL COMES TO FLORIDA



—Photo by Tri-Rail

Florida's very first commuter trains began operating over state-owned (ex-CSX) track between Miami and West Palm Beach Jan. 9. Tri-County Commuter Rail Organization, or Tri-Rail, offers 9 round-trips each weekday over some or all of the 67-mile route. Equipment consists of 5 rebuilt diesel locomotives and 18 new bilevel coaches. 12 of 15 stations are now open—including Amtrak stations at West Palm Beach, Delray Beach, Deerfield Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, and Hollywood. Last 3 stations should open by early May. This \$112 million rail project is being paid for by the Federal Highway Administration during 5-year reconstruction of parallel I-95, to provide an alternative to expected highway gridlock. After that, other funding source(s) must be found. These trains wouldn't have happened without the efforts of Rep. Bill Lehman (D-FL). (Also see *Commuter Rail News*.)

SENATORS SHOW SUPPORT FOR AMTRAK

For the third consecutive year, Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) has introduced a resolution expressing the Senate's belief that Amtrak is valuable and should be given adequate funding to operate its national rail system. Cosponsors of Lautenberg's Senate Res. 24 are: Brock Adams (D-WA), Joseph Biden (D-DE), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Bill Bradley (D-NJ), Quentin Burdick (D-ND), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Jim Exon (D-NE), Charles Grassley (R-IA), Tom Harkin (D-IA), John Heinz (R-PA), Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Bob Kasten (R-WI), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Daniel Moynihan (D-NY), Claiborne Pell (D-RI), Harry Reid (D-NV), Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), William Roth (R-DE), Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), and Paul Simon (D-IL).

In addition, Sen. Jim Exon has introduced a 4-year Amtrak reauthorization bill, S. 462, providing funding ceilings of \$656 mill. in 1990, \$684 mill. in 1991, and \$712 mill. in 1992. It also authorizes up to \$630 mill. retroactively for 1989, although there's no chance this year's appropriation will be increased from \$584 mill. Cosponsors of S. 462 are: Adams, Biden, Bradley, Conrad, Dodd, Jeffords, Kasten, John Kerry (D-MA), Lautenberg, Mikulski, Pell, Rockefeller, Sarbanes, and Simon.

DOT: Glimmers (continued from page 1)

do is a far superior job to what we're doing today in using the system we've got. . . .

"But my great fear, my dread, is what we are, in fact, already seeing out of the AASHTO (American Assn. of State Highway & Transportation Officials) iron triangle, which is: 'Let's just find more grass to pave as an answer to the problems of the 21st century.' And the country ain't gonna buy it" (Jan. 19 *Journal of Commerce*).

Days later, at his confirmation hearing to succeed Burnley, Samuel Skinner told the Senate Commerce Committee: "I come from a mass transit background [in Chicago]. I'm familiar with gridlock. . . . Gridlock means in many respects not only alternative methods of transportation, but we've got to find ways to get people out of the automobile when they don't want to leave the automobile. It's one of the most challenging problems in not only mass transit, but transportation in general, and I think we're going to try to be as innovative and creative as possible with incentives and other things to solve [the problem]."

Skinner was confirmed by the Senate to be the nation's 10th transportation secretary on Feb. 1.

A major contributor to highway gridlock is the federal tax code, which presently encourages Americans to drive to work rather than use transit in order to reduce their tax payment on "fringe" income. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) is working to eliminate this tax-code bias; he came within 2 votes of succeeding last October (Dec. '88 *News*, p. 3).

We were pleased to hear Sec. Skinner tell the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee on Feb. 22 that he, like D'Amato and NARP, supports "a level playing field" on tax treatment of employer-paid parking and transit benefits (Feb. *News*, p. 4). He also said that, to limit congestion, we may need to encourage more vertical—and less horizontal—development, to discourage sprawl and make mass transit more viable.

Still A Long Way To Go

Some important messages have yet to sink in. In a Mar. 9

interview with Wes Vernon of CBS Radio, Skinner insisted a "self-sufficient" Amtrak is not "impossible . . . if you downsized Amtrak and put the cars on the lines with the heaviest traffic. . . . On some routes Amtrak revenues are not covering costs." He was not ready to say which routes should be cut . . . or which routes he thinks are covering all costs!

There is abundant evidence that good rail service gets good use, so we think Skinner's reference to people who "don't want to leave the automobile" misses the mark: public policy is far more wedded to the automobile than are the frustrated auto commuters who have no rail alternative.

We'll rest easier when a transportation secretary doesn't wait until his last month in office to blast the AASHTO iron triangle! And when he answers the Amtrak self-sufficiency question the way Amtrak Pres. Claytor did before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation on Mar. 22: "If you tell me when the price of gasoline will rise significantly, I'll tell you when Amtrak can become self-sufficient."

UMTA: The Dark Ages

Sadly, anti-rail mania is alive and well at the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. The appropriations testimony of outgoing Administrator Alfred A. DelliBovi was filled with UMTA's anti-rail codewords.

In justifying the Reagan/Bush-proposed massacre of federal transit funding, DelliBovi said state and local governments "can increase their subsidy . . . since they currently spend less than 2% of their combined budget on transit."

But federal policies are a big part of the reason for that "less than 2%." The first question most state and local elected officials ask about a project is: "How much federal funding will it generate?" Today, highway and airport promoters answer "lots"; transit promoters, "little or nothing."

Meanwhile, UMTA Planning Director Sam Zimmerman was furiously lobbying in Olympia against growing pressure for Seattle rail transit, warning state officials not to fall for the "mode of the month. . . . Well, the mode of the month today is light rail. And I fear that people are putting too much stock in it" (*The Seattle Times*, Feb. 23).

While DelliBovi was insisting that \$1.56 billion/year (vs. \$3.2 bill. now, \$4.6 bill. in 1981) was adequate to meet transit needs, Zimmerman was citing lack of federal funding as a major reason why Seattle should forget rail and praising what he called the "unheralded" cost-effectiveness of car-pool and bus-only lanes.

Which brings us back to the anti-rail hatchet job in the Sep. 12 *Time* gridlock cover story, based largely on information from UMTA. *Time* attacked Washington's Metrorail for having a farebox cost recovery ratio of "only" 70%, then praised the Shirley HOV lanes serving Washington's Virginia suburbs. *Time* did not report the cost-recovery of the buses using those lanes: about 30%. ■

AMTRAK ADDS LOCOMOTIVES

Last fall, Amtrak purchased 8 used GP40 diesel locomotives from Government of Ontario Transit for \$2.3 million, to ease its serious motive-power shortage. The 3000-horsepower units went to Beech Grove for various modifications. 3 units are now in service; the other 5 should be running by June. Amtrak expects to operate the units, built in the late 1970s, for about 10 years.

Amtrak should receive its two F69 prototype diesels, featuring alternating current traction motors, in April.