



News from the

National Association of Railroad Passengers

April 1995

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Vol. 29

Amtrak: Ups and Downs in the Budget Battle

Broad support for continued federal operating and capital funding was reflected in two important letters:

- A March 23 letter to the chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Budget Committees, signed by a bipartisan group of 41 U.S. Senators and 81 Representatives.
- An April 4 letter to Messrs. Dole, Daschle, Gingrich and Gephardt, signed by a bipartisan group of 22 governors.

Amtrak fared reasonably well in the first round of budget cuts approved by the House Budget Committee. Operating grants gradually decline to zero in 2000, but capital grants and mandatory payments remain at current levels through 2000, Northeast Corridor capital grants through 1999.

However, on national television Sunday morning, April 2, columnist George Will suggested to Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) that a Congress that didn't cut Amtrak could not be serious about cutting spending generally. Gingrich denied Amtrak had been spared and talked of eventual privatization.

The *Wall Street Journal* ran negative Amtrak news stories (March 24 and the April 6 lead story), using out-of-date data to suggest that service quality had collapsed.

The House-passed tax cut increased the danger that Amtrak will take another hit in the Budget Committee's second round of cuts in late April and early May. Meanwhile, an April 11 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) memo noted that "sec-

ond-order" costs—including railroad retirement and unemployment costs—of an Amtrak bankruptcy "could offset [for six years] most or all savings" from eliminating Amtrak subsidies. And that does not reflect costs of accommodating present and future Amtrak passengers on planes and cars. ■

REGIONAL FORUM WRITTEN COMMENTS

In addition to attending one of Amtrak's seven regional public forums being held through May 3, NARP members can send written comments (postmarked by May 3) to: Amtrak's Future; 60 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.; Washington, DC 20002 (or fax to 202/906-3865). Focus your comments on what sort of Amtrak system you wish to see in the future, and how to make it happen (for example, a national system growing from increased capital coming from a unified transportation trust fund).

Amtrak Board Approves Round Two Cuts

"We are down to what we think is the defensible foundation of rail passenger service. We can't look at another round of this [cuts]. From now on, we have to grow this business."

—Amtrak President Tom Downs, at April 6 news conference

As part of its effort to avoid a cash shortfall this year and to retire as many older cars as possible, Amtrak announced on April 6 the balance of planned service cuts for the year (subject to modification if states "buy back" some service). Paragraph numbers below are keyed to the map on page 3.

1. CUTS IMPLEMENTED FEBRUARY 1 AND APRIL 2

These are shown for reader reference. This first round was announced December 14 and modified when some states agreed to increase (or begin) paying for the service. (Details: January *News*, p. 2; March, p. 3, *Travelers' Advisory*.)

JUNE 11 CUTS

2. **The Hoosier State** will be cut from daily to tri-weekly (from Chicago Wednesday, Friday, Sunday; Indianapolis Tuesday, Friday, Sunday). After the *Cardinal* (below) is cut, this market will be down to three weekly round-trips from ten.

3. **The Illini** (Chicago-Carbondale) will be cut to four-times-a-week (Monday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday both ways). With the *City of New Orleans* reduction (item 6, below), this corri-

(continued on page 3)

SEND A POSTCARD



—Rodney Maxwell

NARP Director Doras Briggs organized an informational table at the Emeryville, CA Amtrak station March 18, the day Directors at stations across the country held rallies to "Save Our Trains!" She found passengers at the station to be very responsive, and got them to fill out dozens of postcards to Congress on the spot.

FRA High Speed Outreach Meetings

It is a busy season for public meetings—in addition to the Amtrak regional public forums (see *March News*), there will be six public outreach meetings sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration on the topic of high speed rail (see box at right).

As directed by ISTEA, the FRA is holding the meetings to help it “develop policy in support of the implementation of high-speed ground transportation as an element of an intermodal transportation system. The Department is currently working to lay the groundwork for the implementation of HSGT through state and local planning and investment and through a federal partnership for technology development. [from *Federal Register* notice, March 27].”

The FRA also will consider “ongoing changes at Amtrak. Since the future of HSGT, particularly options to operate at up to 150 mph on existing rights-of-way, is linked to the future of conventional Amtrak service in corridor markets, the recently announced restructuring of Amtrak presents new chal-

lenges as well as new opportunities, for state developments.”

Those who wish to submit comments in person are encouraged to contact the FRA in advance (John Cikota, 202/366-9332). Otherwise, written comments before May 30 are accepted care of: *The Honorable Jolene M. Molitoris, Federal Railroad Administrator; U.S. Department of Transportation; Attn.: HSGT Policy; 400-7th St., S.W., Room 8206; Washington, DC 20590.* ■

FRA HIGH-SPEED PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETINGS

Date/City	Location	Contact
April 20 Chicago 5-7 pm	Knickerbocker Hotel Grand Ballroom 163 E. Walton Pl. 312/751-8100	Merrill Travis, Ill. DOT 217/782-2835
May 2 Loudonville, NY 1-4 pm	Shaker Ridge Club 802 Albany Shaker Rd. 518/869-0246	Don Baker, N.Y. DOT 518/457-5521
May 4 Richmond 5-7:30 pm	Virginia DOT Main Auditorium 1221 E. Broad St.	Leo Bevon, Va. DOT 804/786-8410
May 15 Portland, Ore. 5:30-8 pm	BPA Fed. Office Bldg. Auditorium 9th & Holladay 503/326-2107	Donald Forbes, Ore. DOT 503/378-3373
May 17 5-7:30 pm Sacramento	Grand Hall 1215 J St.	Steve Zimrick, Caltrans 916/227-9409
May 25 Orlando 5-7:30 pm	Marriott Hotel 7499 Augusta Natl. Dr. 407/851-9000	Charlie Smith, Fla. DOT 904/487-4261

Registration begins 30 minutes before each meeting.



—Wayne Davis

MAINE RAIL ADVOCATE HENRY FERNE

NARP Region 1 Director Henry Ferne, II of Edgecomb, ME died February 20 after a long illness. He had represented Maine on the NARP board since 1978, (which was only one year after moving there from Connecticut). He was 85.

Mr. Ferne had a long and varied career. He was born in Philadelphia, educated there and in Boston, and worked as a Wall Street investment counselor, a Red Cross field director at Fort Dix, NJ during World War II, and as a four-term state legislator representing Westport, CT during the 1950's. He established state police memorial funds in Connecticut and Maine, and was active in local politics as chairman of the Lincoln County (ME) Republicans.

Of course, Mr. Ferne was extremely interested in promoting passenger trains, especially restoration of Boston-Portland service. He had been active in the TrainRiders/Northeast group since its founding in 1989. Mr. Ferne was disappointed not to see Portland service restored, but he was on hand for the Portland visits of the ICE and Talgo.

MORE ON AMTRAK SBU STAFF

Here are more names of some key Amtrak management in the three strategic business units, and their general areas of responsibility (exact titles may vary, CEO names were published here last month):

Area of General Responsibility	Northeast (Philadelphia)	Intercity (Chicago)	West (Los Angeles)
Chief Executive Officer	George Warrington	Art McMahon	Gil Mallery
VP—Customer Services	Stan Bagley	Pete Turrell Chuck Bothwell (Jacksonville)	Lee Bullock
Counsel/Commercial Dev.	Sally Bellet	Maria Green	vacant
VP—Planning/Finance	John Bennett	Rick Yager	vacant
VP—Marketing	Richard Donnelly	Steve Scott	vacant
Safety/Environment	Michael Pollick	vacant	John Skinner
Communications/Gov't Relations	Barbara Richardson	Debbie Hare	Ron Scolaro Dawn Soper (publ. affairs)
High-Speed Program	David Carol (Old Saybrook)	—	—

More Amtrak Cuts

(from page 1)

dor will have a confusing schedule, and no Wednesday service at all.

4. The Loop (Chicago-Springfield) and **State House** (Chicago-St. Louis) will be eliminated, leaving only two daily Chicago-St. Louis round trips (*Ann Rutledge* and *Texas Eagle*).

5. The Illinois Zephyr (Chicago-Quincy) will be cut to four-times-a-week (Friday through Monday, both ways).

6. The City of New Orleans (Chicago-New Orleans) will be cut from daily to five-times-a-week, dropping trips originating in both directions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

7. California Zephyr Salt Lake City-Bay Area service will drop from daily to four-times-a-week. Between Chicago, Denver and Salt Lake City, the quad-weekly *Zephyr* and tri-weekly *Desert Wind* will preserve daily service. The lengthy switching layover at Salt Lake City should be eliminated. The *Zephyr* will originate in Chicago and Emeryville Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday. Amtrak is evaluating methods of delivering Bay Area mail to accommodate the postal contract.

SEPTEMBER 10 CUTS

8. The Broadway Limited will be discontinued west of Pittsburgh. A new New York-Pittsburgh coach-and-mail train will connect in Pittsburgh with the Washington-Chicago *Capitol Limited* (Northeast Corridor passengers also could connect at Washington). NARP has asked Amtrak to investigate the possibility of through New York-Chicago coaches; the *Capitol Limited* will carry the *Broadway's* mail west of Pittsburgh, so switching will be required at Pittsburgh in any event. Some mail will go to the *Lake Shore Limited*.

New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania will lose direct service to Chicago; many will balk at the planned Pittsburgh connection with the *Capitol* (11:47 pm westbound, and perhaps 5:30 am eastbound, as the *Capitol* may leave Chicago at 7:00 pm rather than 6:25). The *Broadway* has been Amtrak's last eastbound train from Chicago (now leaving at 8:55 pm), tak-

ing East Coast connecting passengers from late West Coast trains; to fill that role come September, the *Lake Shore* may leave Chicago around 8:15 (vs. 7:15 today).

Service to Akron and Fostoria, OH; and Garrett and Nappanee, IN will be eliminated. Only last fall, the *Broadway* began using a track connection at New Castle, PA, eliminating a back-up move at Pittsburgh, saving 40-45 minutes and costing Amtrak \$2.6 million. If Ohio pays for a connection at Ravenna, OH, the value of the New Castle connection would be preserved, the *Capitol Limited* could serve Youngstown immediately, and eventual extension to Cleveland of New York-Pittsburgh trains (*Pennsylvanian*, the new train or both) would be facilitated.

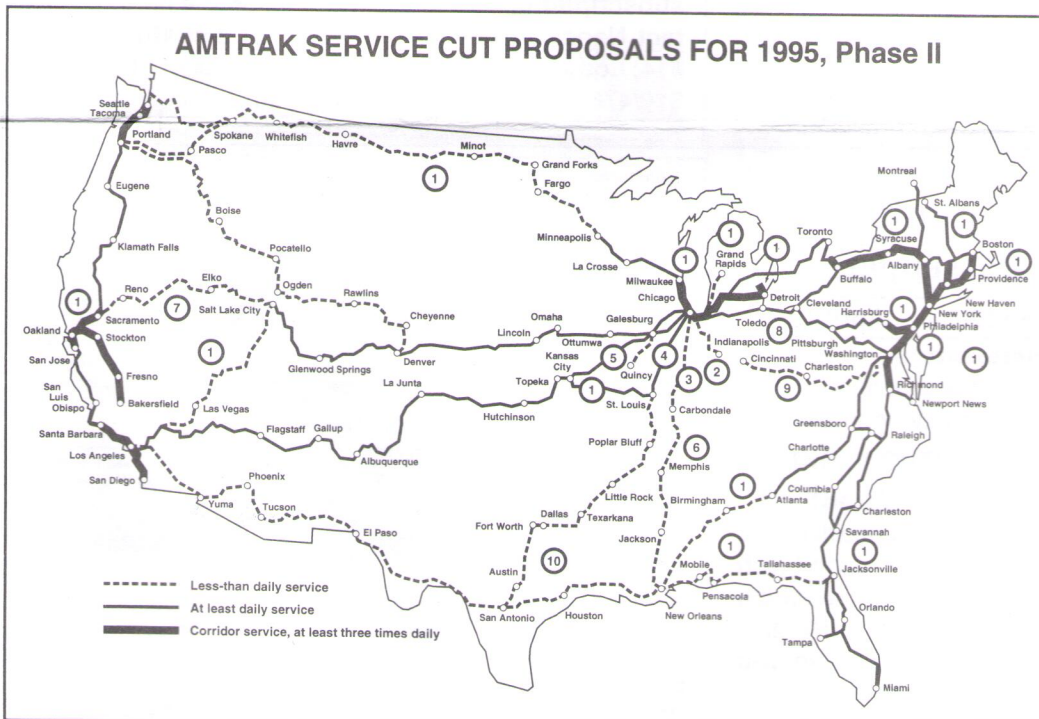
Under Amtrak, the CSX Pittsburgh-Chicago route used by the *Broadway* had passenger service only since November 1990, when the *Broadway* and *Capitol* were rerouted off of Conrail's former Pennsylvania Railroad mainline via Canton, Lima and Fort Wayne. In connection with this reroute, about \$2 million in community funds were spent to restore the Youngstown B&O station; thousands more for other stations (see Sept. '92 *News* for Fostoria).

9. The Cardinal will be discontinued west of Cincinnati and east of Washington. Points between Cincinnati and Indianapolis (Hamilton, OH; Connersville, IN) will lose all Amtrak service. A day train, using Superliners and the newly enlarged Capitol Hill tunnel in Washington, DC, will connect Washington and Cincinnati, forcing Philadelphia/New York/etc. passengers to change trains in Washington. No connections offered from Cincinnati to Indianapolis, Chicago and the West. The train will stay tri-weekly, but run Friday/Saturday/Sunday instead of Sunday/Wednesday/Friday. This means four consecutive days of no service each week; NARP is asking Amtrak to review whether this makes sense.

NARP urged Amtrak to tighten the current 14-hour Washington-Cincinnati running time, noting the importance of connecting with at least one Northeast Corridor train in each direction that has more attractive times at Corridor points than the *Night Owl*.

To the south, connections must be kept with the *Silver Meteor* in both directions. All this dictates an early departure from and late arrival at Cincinnati. *Crescent* connections at Charlottesville will continue, and actually improve for the westbound *Cardinal*.

10. The Texas Eagle Houston section—which began in 1988—will end. A Thruway bus will connect Houston to the *Eagle* at Longview (and give Corsicana and College Station their only "train" service), cut total trip time to Chicago-Arkansas points and—thanks to no more Dallas switching—slightly cut trip time between Chicago-Longview points and Ft. Worth-San Antonio points.

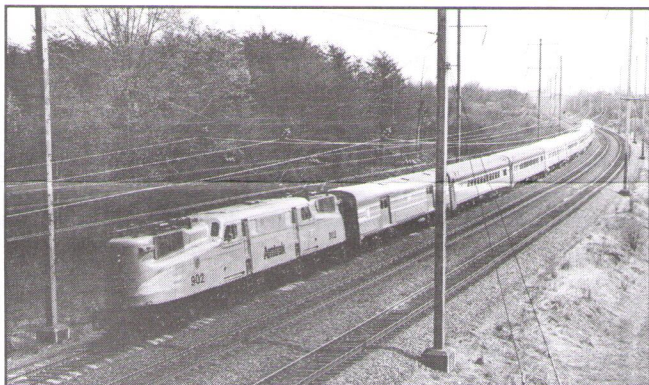


—Scott Leonard

THANK YOU

NARP wishes to thank the many individual members who have contributed so generously during the past year. In addition, special thanks go to the Empire State Passengers Association, Indiana Association of Railroad Passengers, Keystone ARP, ProRail Nebraska, Tennessee Association of Railroad Passengers, Train Riders' Association of California, Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers, and Regions 1, 4 and 12.

THE BROADWAY HAD SEEN BETTER DAYS



—Don Phillips

Partisans of the once world-famous *Broadway Limited* "felt that it was the perfect expression of the *belle époque* of surface travel," according to the late writer Lucius Beebe. The former Pennsylvania Railroad flagship has run continually since it was launched in 1902 as the *Pennsylvania Special* (renamed in 1912), to compete with the *Twentieth Century Limited*. It was the last all-Pullman train in the United States when combined with the *General* in 1967.

Even into the Amtrak period, the *Broadway* was the preferred eastern train of another noted rail writer, the late Rogers E. M. Whitaker ("E. M. Frimbo"). In 1972, it was the first long-distance train to get a refurbished, matched set of equipment (above, though NARP protested then that the improvements were merely cosmetic).

Since then, the *Broadway* declined gradually, due to deteriorating equipment, a clumsy 1990 reroute through Pittsburgh, and the emergence of other Amtrak Chicago-East Coast services. The low point came when the *Broadway* didn't even have a dining car during much of 1994. Amtrak will discontinue it September 10.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Seattle-Vancouver: State of Washington/Amtrak revenue service begins May 26, morning northbound, evening south. It will be called the *Mount Baker International*, and use the Talgo set that currently is used on the *Mount Adams*. The state hopes for a second train (with opposing schedule permitting Portland-Vancouver travel) soon.

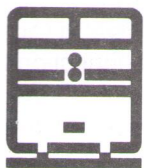
Keystone Corridor (Harrisburg): Amtrak and Pennsylvania agreed March 24 to keep a service pattern different from that printed here last month. Since April 2, there have been five weekday, four weekend New York round trips, *plus* three weekday and one weekend local Philadelphia round trips (all including the *Pennsylvanian* and *Broadway Limited*).

New Oakland station at Jack London Square should open by May 22—earlier than announced previously.

Rumor Control: Thanks to an erroneous press account, we reported that the Independence, MO station was destroyed by fire February 13—actually, it was only partly damaged and restoration is underway...A non-NARP account had the active Newark, DE station destroyed April 6—it really was the inactive Newport, DE station.

TRAVELIN' WOMAN...

...is the name of a lively, ten-page, monthly newsletter by Los Angeles travel journalist Nancy Mills, which just marked its first anniversary. The February issue featured North America's ten most romantic rail trips, travel health information, travel tips, book reviews and more. "I am sure [*Travelin' Woman*] will be of great benefit to all women travelers," wrote Polly Ring of Auckland Tourist Hospitality in New Zealand. "You are providing a worthwhile service." Annual subscriptions are \$48 (or \$4 for a sample issue); contact Nancy Mills Communications; 855 Moraga Dr., #14; Los Angeles, CA 90049; phone 800/871-6409; fax 310/476-8389; e-mail TravlinW@aol.com.



News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers

Vol. 29, No. 4



April 1995



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News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP; 900 Second Street, NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; (202) 408-8362, fax (202) 408-8287. ©1995 National Association of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues are \$24/year (\$12 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. For the latest passenger rail news, call the NARP Hotline: 1-900-988-RAIL (\$1.20 per minute, most messages last 4 minutes; service available 24 hours a day; callers under 18 must have parental permission to use this service; updated at least every Friday PM).

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(This has news through Apr. 12. Vol 29, No. 3 was mailed Mar. 31.)

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