



AARP Endorses Rail

The AARP, for the first time, endorsed passenger rail in its annual "The Policy Book: AARP Public Policies."

"The Policy Book" is used by AARP staff, volunteers, and members when they write or speak on behalf of the organization. The book's content results from input the AARP gets from letters, legislative forums, surveys, and polls. The information is then analyzed by the AARP's Legislative Council and submitted to the board for approval.

Chapter 10 of the 2003 Policy Book (on "Transportation") provides the AARP's rationale for supporting passenger rail and its recommendations (see box for text).

Given the large membership and

influence of AARP, this is a very welcome development indeed. Inclusion of passenger rail in the Policy Book follows a dramatic flow of communications from AARP members in the last year. It also culminates a years-long effort by NARP Director Doras Briggs, of Emeryville, Cal.

The AARP is a nonprofit, membership organization aiming to addressing the needs and interests of those 50 and older. It has 35 million members, making one of the largest (if not the largest) membership advocacy group in the U.S. Before 1999, it was known as American Association of Retired Persons. ■

The Policy Book can be read on-line at <<http://www.aarp.org/legipoly.html>>.

Important Timetable Changes April 28

Amtrak's April 28 timetable has many changes in train schedules. This reflects President and CEO David L. Gunn's direction to give passengers primary consideration, and to accommodate mail where that does not inconvenience passengers. The winding down of carload express obviously helps there.

Reduced (or eliminated) en-route switching has sped up many trains.

Chicago-East Coast trains generally

run later westbound, and earlier eastbound. With faster schedules of trains from the West, it is hoped that the earlier departures of the *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* will not lead to an increase in misconnects at Chicago.

The new timetable could be even more passenger-friendly but for some major scheduling obstacles: the many sections of single-track railroad, and stations—even in big cities like Cleveland and Toledo—that effectively are one-track stations.

For example, Rockville is the only intermediate stop that can handle both *Capitol Limiteds* at once. And the problem is not just the inability to take two trains at once, but also crossing-over delays (or host railroad resistance) involved in stopping on a multi-track railroad where only one track has a platform.

A summary of major changes follows:

AARP ON PASSENGER RAIL

"Passenger rail is another mobility option for midlife and older people who travel both within congested regional corridors and between cities separated by long distances. The 1995 American Travel Survey found that people age 65 and older make more than a half million long-distance trips (100 miles or longer) by train. Amtrak estimates that nearly a quarter of its national ridership (4.7 million people) is age 55 and older, and that on 13 of 36 routes, more than a third of the riders are age 55 and older.

"...Passenger rail provides essential service to many rural communities, and it is an alternative to air travel in the more congested corridors, such as in the Northeast. Many states perceive rail as an important contributor to economic development.

"Congress [and states] should ...support nationwide passenger rail service that is integrated and coordinated with regional, state and local passenger rail; and establish a dependable funding mechanism that ensures continuing passenger rail service."

—AARP 2003 Policy Book, Chapter 10

Southwest Chief

Eastbound (Los Angeles-Flagstaff-Albuquerque-Kansas City-Chicago): Train 4 arrives Chicago 1:16 hours earlier, thanks largely to elimination of express switching at DeSoto, Kans. (between Kansas City and Lawrence).

The train reaches Kansas City in time to restore the guaranteed connection to the *Ann Rutledge*. This eliminates a five-hour wait for those bound for St. Louis and many other Missouri and Illinois points. Amtrak wanted an earlier departure from Los Angeles, but this was prohibited by train length (with mail) and lack

(continued on page 2)

SELECTED SCHEDULE CHANGES

Train name	Train number	Change in departure from origin (hours)	Change in running time (hours)
Southwest Chief	3	0:00	0:00
Southwest Chief	4	0:00	- 1:16
California Zephyr	5	0:00	- 1:00
California Zephyr	6	0:00	- 0:45
Empire Builder	8	0:00	- 0:35
Texas Eagle	22	- 1:00	- 0:25
Capitol Limited	29	+ 2:10	+ 0:13
Capitol Limited	30	- 1:25	- 0:10
Lake Shore Limited	48	- 0:45	- 0:45
Lake Shore Limited	49	+ 2:05	+ 0:02
Cardinal	51	+ 2:00	+ 0:05

Note—Minus sign (-) means earlier or faster; plus sign (+) means later or slower. *Lake Shore* running times are Chicago-New York.

New Timetable (from page 1)

of track space at Los Angeles.

Westbound: Train 3 has no change in overall running time, though Chicago-Topeka is 49 minutes faster. The train leaves Chicago all made up—no stop for switching in the Chicago yard; no telling passengers to stay in their seats/rooms until the switching is done, and—again—no more switching at DeSoto.

To accommodate the longer train in the Chicago station, the *Chief* uses a track that must be vacant by 3:20 pm—the earliest possible *Empire Builder* arrival. If Chicago had two long tracks, the *Chief* could leave an hour later (4:15) and still arrive Los Angeles at 8:40 am. There is no market reason—or track space—for scheduling an earlier Los Angeles arrival, particularly as the train can arrive 30 or more minutes ahead of schedule.

California Zephyr

Eastbound (Emeryville-Salt Lake City-Denver-Omaha-Chicago): Train 6 is 45 minutes faster, arriving Chicago at 3:25 pm, instead of 4:10 pm.

Westbound: One hour faster, reaching Emeryville at 4:50 pm instead of 5:50.

Empire Builder

Eastbound (Seattle/Portland-Spokane-Twin Cities-Chicago): Train 8/28 is 35 minutes faster, arriving Chicago at 3:45 pm, instead of 4:20 pm.

Texas Eagle

Eastbound (San Antonio-Dallas-St. Louis-Chicago): Train 22 arrives at Chicago at 2:25 pm, instead of 3:50 pm. Overall, the train is 25 minutes faster.

Train 22 departs San Antonio at 8:00 am, instead of 9:00 am, so that on *Sunset Limited* through-car days those cars will have a layover of three hours instead of four. This increases chances for a late San Antonio departure.

However, Union Pacific CEO Dick Davidson sees better on-time performance (Feb. News), and Amtrak's San Antonio switching is quicker than in years past.

Chicago-Cleveland-East Coast

The *Capitol Limited* serves Toledo (and Detroit via Thruway bus) and other "west end" stations at better times than either the *Capitol* or *Lake Shore* offered before. Toledo is 7:00 am westbound; 11:00 pm eastbound.

Hammond-Whiting, Elkhart and Bryan shift from the *Lake Shore* to the *Capitol*.

REBUILT TURBOLINERS ENTER SERVICE

Amtrak began running two rebuilt Turboliners in revenue service on a trial basis on the Empire Corridor on April 14. A total of seven are being rebuilt at state expense. One is shown at right at Albany-Rensselaer that day.

Test runs went well, and one train got a regular assignment by April 25.

The ride is said to be quieter and smoother. Big windows now are unobstructed—steel bar removed; luggage racks higher (but harder to reach). Aisles are narrower. Baggage towers have been removed from car ends.



—Photo by Bruce Becker

The *Lake Shore* also drops Elyria, which has caused a stir there. *Lake Shore* stops were dropped so the eastbound train can go fast—elapsed time between departures from Chicago and Cleveland is 48 minutes less—clearing Cleveland-area single track in time to avoid delaying the westbound *Lake Shore*.

Lake Shore passengers at the dropped stops can use the *Capitol* and change at Cleveland, but NARP has urged that the westbound *Lake Shore* stop in Elyria.

Running the westbound *Lake Shore* later would be better. But Penn Station no longer has room for a long-distance train at 4:35 pm (pre-2002 departure time) and Amtrak does not want to displace the heavily used 3:45 pm train to Albany.

Capitol Limited: Eastbound—Chicago departure moves to 5:35 pm (from 7:00 pm); Washington arrival to 12:20 pm (from 1:55 pm). This should make the train more useful for Chicagoans. Amtrak would like a pre-noon Washington arrival, but Chicago track space is a problem.

Westbound—Washington departure moves to 5:20 pm (from 3:10 pm; puts train behind a 5:10 Maryland local); Chicago arrival to 10:59 am (from 8:30 am)—less useful for a full business day in Chicago. Amtrak wanted some more attractive times in northern Ohio and could not get them with the *Lake Shore*.

Lake Shore Limited: Eastbound—Chicago departure moves to the current *Capitol* slot at 7:00 pm (from 7:45 pm); New York arrival moves to 1:50 pm and Boston to 5:20 pm. Chicago-New York running time is 45 minutes faster; Chicago-Boston 20 minutes faster.

Westbound—New York departure moves to 2:50 pm (from 12:45 pm); Boston departure to 11:50 am (from 9:50 am; Chicago arrival to 9:10 am (from the unattractive 7:00 am).

Cardinal

Westbound (Washington-Charleston-Cincinnati-Indianapolis-Chicago): Washington departure moves from 10:55 am to 12:55 pm, worsening times at Cincinnati but improving them at Indianapolis and—significantly—for the connecting train, which leaves New York City at 8:10 am weekdays (8:05 am weekends). Printed timetables still show the old 6:35 am departure. NARP has asked Amtrak to extend the train to New York, since it is now single level again.

The northbound *Kentucky Cardinal*, which ends after July 6, has a 4:40-hour layover in Indianapolis.

Three Rivers

Eastbound (Chicago-Akron-Pittsburgh-Philadelphia-New York): Train 40's February 10 schedule stays—leave Chicago 10:30 pm, arrive New York 8:04 pm.

NARP is concerned about the marketability of this late schedule, but Pennsylvania wanted the revised *Pennsylvanian* to leave Pittsburgh at 7:30 am (7:20 am as of April 28), which meant either running two trains less than an hour apart or running the *Three Rivers* later.

Westbound: Train 41 runs about 90 minutes earlier, departing New York City at 12:15 pm, producing:

- Some separation from the *Lake Shore*, the other New York-Chicago train;
- Reasonably good Pittsburgh times (10:00-10:30pm), important now with the *Capitol* there much later (1:06-1:40 am);
- An early Chicago arrival (7:45 am) for those who need it.

Empire Corridor

Changes in Western New York service are driven by changes to the *Lake Shore* (see above). Ridership may grow with

(continued on page 3)

NARP Working With Friends

Recognizing the importance of working with like-minded groups to overcome the huge forces opposing balanced transportation, the National Association of Railroad Passengers has signed and endorsed three documents in conjunction with our many allies. All three have gotten impressively broad support. The first two are notable for their similarity and for specifically endorsing the existing nationwide passenger-rail network.

- **The "American Passenger Rail Agreement"** emerged from a November meeting sponsored by the Midwest High Speed Rail Coalition and the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission.

It "endorses a nationwide, interconnected passenger rail system that stimulates higher levels of efficiency, innovation and responsiveness" and urges establishment of "a dedicated, multi-year federal capital-funding program for intercity passenger rail, pat-

terned after the existing federal highway, airport and mass transit programs." So far, 82 organizations have endorsed this.

- **"Coalition Principles for High-Speed Train Development,"** spearheaded by High Speed Ground Transportation Association, says, in part, "Federal financial support of intercity passenger rail should have two overarching goals: preserving the existing network of passenger rail service and developing new services in partnership with state and local government, the private sector and Amtrak as appropriate in each corridor...Congress, the Administration and Amtrak [to] agree on a plan that provides adequate resources to preserve the existing network of service."

Groups that have signed both the "Agreement" and the "Principles" include the National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Council of State Governments Eastern Region, States for Passenger Rail Coalition, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Railway Supply Institute and

United Transportation Union. The City of Chicago has endorsed "Agreement"; Chicago Business Leaders for Transportation endorsed "Principles."

- **The Alliance for a New Transportation Charter** "is a national network of organizations and individuals dedicated to using transportation as a tool to build livable, healthy, prosperous and just communities."

It is spearheaded by the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP). It states, in part, "The transportation system should allow every American to participate fully in society whether or not they own a car and regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, or income." So far, 665 organizations (including 60 national groups) have signed.

Local groups that sign the Charter get STPP's newsletter and e-newsletter with updates about the TEA-21 (highway/transit) reauthorization.

Stay the Course: How to Make TEA-21 Even Better, STPP's own blueprint for the authorization, supports

(continued on page 4)

New Timetable (from page 2)

elimination of the present "extreme," weekday west end times (Niagara Falls 4:10 am eastbound, 12:15 am westbound). But those from Western New York will not be able to spend a full day in Albany, and their last departure from New York City will be 2:50 pm.

The New York-Toronto *Maple Leaf* is virtually unchanged except that the present westbound schedule will run daily rather than 30 minutes later on weekends.

Eastbound: Western New York service is revised to produce Niagara Falls departures at 5:50 am weekdays (7:50 am weekends) and 10:00 am instead of 4:10 am Monday-Saturday (3:20 pm Sunday) and 8:05 am, so the first reliable, weekday arrival in Albany from the West is at 11:50 am (vs. 9:50 am before).

Westbound: New York City departures for Western New York are around 10:00 am weekdays (11:45 am weekends) and 1:45 pm.

Palmetto

Northbound (Miami-Tampa-Charleston-New York): Train 90 still departs Miami 3:00 pm, arrives New York 7:40 pm. This earlier schedule began January 15; ridership seems to have improved as a

result. Selma, N.C., is now a stop.

(Track work will require a detour and running about two hours later north of Raleigh on weekdays, April 28-June 20. A bus will serve Dillon and Fayetteville.)

Crescent

Trains 19 and 20 (New York-Charlotte-Atlanta-New Orleans) are faster by at least 22 minutes north of Washington.

Boston-Washington Night Train

The previous Newport News-Boston *Twilight Shoreliner* is replaced with the Washington-Boston *Federal*, a train name last used in 1971. The *Federal* leaves both cities at 10:00 pm, with sleeping-cars open at 9:00 pm.

There is a connecting Regional train at Washington for Richmond and Newport News, with 30-minute layover southbound on weekdays (1 hour on weekends); northbound: good, tight connections far as New York City, but 3:20 layover to *Federal* for New England points).

Neither train will have checked baggage, meaning complete loss of such service at Providence and New Haven, and leaving Boston with only one train with baggage service—the *Lake Shore Limited* to/from Albany/Chicago.

It also means unboxed bicycles are

carried on only two Northeast routes (*Adirondack, Downeaster*). This service was dropped earlier from *Vermonteer*...

New Haven-Springfield-Boston

Between New Haven, Hartford and Springfield, weekday service grows from 11 one-way trips a day to 16 (eight round-trips: two through-trains, six shuttles). Weekend service rises from 10 one-way trips to 13, including three through-train round-trips. Increased service comes with no increase in equipment or crews.

Removal of the last, weekday eastbound Washington-Worcester-Boston train, leaves the *Lake Shore* as the only weekday Boston-Springfield train, but weekend Washington-Worcester-Boston service continues in both directions.

Michigan Corridor

The third daily Pontiac-Detroit frequency is restored (trains 350-355). The biggest change is train 353 departing Detroit at 10:53 am instead of 12:07 pm. In fact, all but two trains run earlier. The two are train 352, leaving Chicago at 2:10 pm instead of 1:15; and train 355, with unchanged times Detroit and west.

Capitol Corridor

A 12th weekday frequency is added between Oakland and Sacramento. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Special service—Oregon DOT's Portland-Astoria train runs Friday-Mondays, May 23-September 1 (and September 2), in connection with Lewis and Clark Bicentennial festivities. Morning west, evening back. Reservations and tickets through Amtrak (do not confuse with Portland-Astoria Thruway bus).

Food Service Upgrade—Three Rivers dinner westbound and lunch eastbound will be plated and served on linens.

Checked Baggage was restored April 28 to about 20 stations including Houston. Maricopa (for Phoenix) gets it for the first time.

MICHIGAN UPDATE

Amtrak and Michigan DOT agreed to a three-month extension to the contract to run the *International* and *Pere Marquette* (through June 30). That extension would cover the first nine months of fiscal 2003, with Amtrak providing the service for less than it says it needs.

While the DOT has adequate funding to run both trains, the legislature last year imposed a cap on such funding. A bill to lift the cap (HB4343) was approved by the House Transportation Committee on March 27.

HB4343 was referred to the Appropriations Committee April 2.

New CSX Weather Policy

In the face of tough criticism of its reaction to February snows and March rains, CSX in late March agreed to change its policies for imposing slow-orders on passenger trains. That should help Amtrak, Virginia Railway Express, and MARC services.

CSX had held passenger trains to 15 mph over long stretches of line due to flash flood warnings—while freight trains were allowed 40 mph.

The new policy lets passenger trains go up to 50 mph, at the engineer's discretion. A 15-mph order will be imposed on both passenger and freight trains only in more localized areas where high water is a greater threat.

CSX also agreed to install new switch heaters between Alexandria and Fredericksburg.

CSX modified its very restrictive heat speed restrictions policy of last summer. The new policy reduces normal passenger-train speed limits by 20 mph (1:00 pm to 9:00 pm). Due apparently to big temperature swings, these already have been imposed twice this year (April 15-16).

REGION 3 MEETING NEW DATE

Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA); Sat., May 31; Harrisburg, Pa.; 11 am; Zion Lutheran Church, 15 S. 4th St. (across from Amtrak station); fee: \$15 (send check payable to meeting contact; include your e-mail address); contact: John Dawson, 17 Cornell Rd., Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

NARP Friends (from page 3)

dedicating "a share of National Highway System funds for improvements in intercity passenger and freight rail projects that improve travel options and traffic conditions in NHS corridors," and providing "new funds for intermodal investments and the important connections among the modes—highway, rail transit, air, and water—to better meet intercity travel needs and reduce urban congestion."

Full texts and signatory lists: Agreement <www.midwesthsr.org>; **Principles** <<http://www.hsgta.com/documents/principles.pdf>>; **Charter** <<http://www.antc.net/>>.

Two Differing Plans

Amtrak on April 25 released its detailed five-year plan (2004-08) aimed at getting the railroad back to a "state of good repair."

This was followed quickly by an April 29 Senate hearing at which DOT Deputy Secretary Michael Jackson outlined a passenger rail plan to be released within two months.

Jackson said the plan envisions—at the end of five years—no federal operating grants, and federal capital grants that cover only 50% of project costs, far less than highway and aviation projects get. Given those restraints, it would be a steep challenge for the new system to "provide more passenger service than today," as Jackson said it would.



News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers

Vol. 37, No. 4

April 2003

RETURN REQUESTED

Alan M. Yorcker, President; George Chilson, James R. Churchill, Wayne Davis, David Randall, Vice Presidents; Robert W. Glover, Secretary; Joseph F. Horning, Jr., Treasurer; Ross B. Capon, Executive Director; Scott Leonard, Assistant Director; Jane L. Colgrove, Membership Director.

News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490) is published monthly except November by NARP; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, e-mail narp@narprail.org web www.narprail.org. ©2003 National Association of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues are \$30/year (\$16 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. For the latest passenger rail news, visit our on-line Hotline, changed at least weekly.

Postmaster: Send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557.

(This has news through Apr. 29. Vol. 37, No. 3 was mailed first-class Apr. 1.)

Second Class Postage Paid
At Washington, D.C.