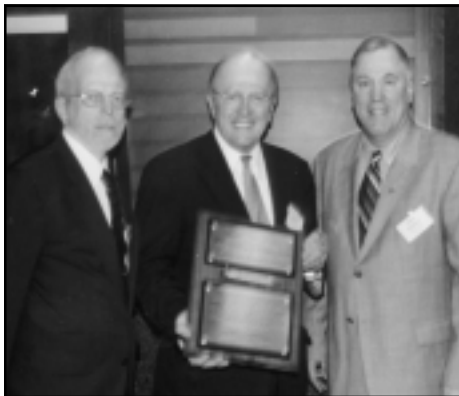




NARP Honors Carper, Boehlert

NARP presented George Falcon Golden Spike Awards to Sen. Thomas R. Carper (D.-Del.) and Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert (R.-N.Y.), at its Washington reception at Union Station, April 22. The Association gives this award periodically to recognize outstanding efforts in support of passenger rail.



Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert (R.-N.Y.), center, accepts the Golden Spike Award from NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon (left) and President Alan M. Yorker, on April 22.

Boehlert was recognized for his "tireless work over many years for high speed rail development and for our national rail passenger system," according to the wording of the plaque. Also noted was that Utica, N.Y., has a fine passenger terminal "largely due to his efforts."

Boehlert's frequent sponsoring of high-speed rail bills, signing of pro-rail appropriations letters, and writing of op-ed columns about Amtrak and passenger rail also were recognized.

Carper was recognized for his many efforts as a U.S. Representative, governor, Amtrak board member, and Senator "to broaden support for America's national rail passenger system."

Carper's award also said, "His never-ending willingness when on the Amtrak board to make the case for Amtrak to legislators, his commitment as governor to Delaware's investment in the Northeast Corridor, and his indefatigable work in 2003-2004 to get a rail title into the next

surface transportation authorization deserve special mention."

"As a daily Amtrak passenger and as someone who has always loved trains," Carper said, "it is with sincere gratitude that I accept this award. We stand at a crossroads right now in the history of our nation's transportation policy. If we provide for a strong Amtrak and push for a federally backed system to fund rail infrastructure, we could be looking at a new rail renaissance in this country. America needs a strong Amtrak and strong freight railroads if we are to maintain the economic prosperity and mobility that we

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Sen. Thomas R. Carper (D.-Del.), holds the Golden Spike Award he received from NARP President Alan M. Yorker on April 22.

George Chilson Elected NARP President

The NARP Board of Directors elected George Chilson of San Diego as President of the National Association of Railroad Passengers. He succeeds Alan M. Yorker of Decatur, Ga. The president (who is also the association's chairman) is a volunteer.

The board also elected as vice presidents Arthur Poole of Coos Bay, Ore., and Robert J. Stewart of Fort Myers, Fla.,

SENATE PASSES RAIL CREDITS

S.1637, approved by the Senate on May 11, has \$1 billion in federal tax credits for rail for fiscal years 2005-2007. Section 636 has \$495 million for passenger-rail capital projects. States can transfer credits to other entities (with federal tax liabilities) up to an amount equivalent to 50% of a project's cost.

This section also has tax credits for rail infrastructure projects in the New York Liberty Zone. Section 635 has \$500 million for track maintenance for short line and regional railroads.

S.1637, the "Jumpstart Our Business Strength Act" also called the FSC/ETI bill (foreign sales corporation/extraterritorial income), is considered "must-pass" legislation because it should end penalties against U.S. corporations that result from an adverse World Trade Organization ruling.

If the House bill does not include the rail provisions, the Senate rail provisions will need to be preserved in the House-Senate conference committee. This will be difficult, so please ask your Senators and Representative to work hard to keep the Senate-passed rail provisions in conference.

and re-elected Wayne E. Davis of Yarmouth, Me., and David Randall of Alton, Ill. The new secretary is Albert L. Papp, Jr., of Millington, N.J., and the new treasurer is Robert W. Glover of San Francisco.

Chilson has served on the board since 1998. Since 2000, he has been one of the association's four vice presidents. He

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After Madrid, More on Rail Security

The tragic attacks on commuter trains in Madrid, Spain, on March 11, has helped publicize the gap between federal spending on aviation security (\$14.5 billion since the September 11 attacks) and rail security (\$115 million).

The House Railroads Subcommittee, chaired by Jack Quinn (R.-N.Y.), held a hearing May 5 on rail security. Rep. Steven Lynch (D.-Mass.) noted that while the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has "a federal director of security in every airport," there is no such equivalent rail security director for the

Pro-Amtrak Business Group Formed

The formation of the Amtrak Business Coalition was announced at a news conference at Washington Union Station on May 5. It has 55 business organizations in 12 states from Maine to Virginia (and D.C.), including city, regional and state chambers, and tourism groups.

The Coalition's goals statement says, "We believe that Amtrak and commuter and freight rail services provided along the Northeast Corridor are vital to our economy, mobility and quality of life."

Among those goals are "to support and advocate for policies and capital funding that would preserve and improve the quality and reliability of Amtrak, commuter, and freight services along the Northeast Corridor...This includes restoring the equipment and infrastructure along the Northeast Corridor to a state of good repair and improving the trip times between major markets on the Corridor."

At the news conference, John Porcari of the Greater Washington Board of Trade (and former Maryland Transportation Secretary) said, "We're here for the long-haul to get stable and adequate funding for Amtrak." The Board's release is at <http://www.bot.org/html/news/press/press_051104Amtrak.asp>. James Brett, President of The New England Council, said, "The strength of our regional economies depends heavily upon a strong transportation network."

Amtrak President David Gunn said, "This support is very, very encouraging... We desperately need an infusion of capital...Time is running out. We don't have the luxury of stopping to debate the future of the Northeast Corridor." n

Northeast. Indeed, Chet Lunner, TSA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of Maritime and Land Security testified that his division as yet has no personnel outside Washington.

Also at this hearing, Federal Railroad Administrator Allan Rutter noted that "security is not our only purpose" and that "we need a balance between security and economic liberty."

On May 19, by arrangement with Amtrak, NARP staff joined a tour of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) rail passenger screening pilot project at New Carrollton, Md. TSA's Land and Marine division is managing the project; the checkpoint is staffed 5:00 am-10:00 am and 3:00 pm-6:00 pm.

Initially, plans called for the May 4-28 demonstration to be voluntary for passengers, and the Justice Department approved it that way. After Madrid, TSA requested and Justice approved the switch to a mandatory screening policy, although TSA may "waive" passengers through the inspection (at its discretion, not theirs). Any passenger choosing not to be screened is entitled to a full refund (which, with the exception of discounted fares on the *Carolinian* to points south, is somewhat redundant since all Northeast Corridor fares are fully refundable).

The screening includes a "body portal" for detection of explosives, and a European-style airport x-ray machine for bags. In the portal, passengers "stand still for a few seconds and...feel several quick 'puffs' of air, which will immediately be analyzed for traces of explosives" (Maryland MTA release). Passengers need remove only hats and winter coats.

Golden Spike

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have come to expect."

Boehlert and Carper both thanked the Association for its work on behalf of passenger rail and said a strong rail system would be better for the environment while reducing U.S. dependence on imported oil. Carper reminded the audience that "today is Earth Day" and asked his listeners to consider the air pollution that could be avoided if railroads handled more passengers and freight: "We could make everyday Earth Day, and really something to celebrate."

Likewise, both legislators ride Amtrak.



—David R. Johnson

NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon stands inside the explosive-detecting "body portal" during the May 4-28 test at New Carrollton, Md. The baggage x-ray machine is at right.

The body explosive-detection system takes about 10 seconds. Only if the machine detects something are passenger subjected to a physical search; during this pilot program, "sensitive" body areas are omitted from pat-downs.

The x-ray machine is set to search only for explosives. Certain items banned from air travel (scissors, tweezers, butane lighters, needlepoint knitting, etc.) are still permissible for rail travel.

Phase II of the rail security project is planned to screen checked luggage at Washington Union Station. Phase III may involve screening on a rail car while the train is moving. This would involve setting aside an entire car which would inspect passengers who boarded at stations where no inspections are made.

The security portion of NARP's March 19 statement to the House appropriations subcommittee was in April News, page 3. Our May 5 statement to the counterpart Senate subcommittee, with an expanded security section, is available at our web site, <www.narprail.org>.

Boehlert said, "When we go from upstate [Utica] 230 miles down to New York City, we go down and get on Amtrak. When we visit our kids in Cleveland, as we did for several years, we go down to the train station and get on the *Lake Shore Limited*."

Carper compared his Wilmington-Washington train trips with the congestion he sees during occasional auto trips forced by his need to go home via southern Delaware. He said: "I think the best days of trains are not behind us; the greatest need for railroads is ahead of us." n

Gasoline Prices Up To Stay?

Oil prices around \$35 a barrel and higher may be here to stay. This makes gasoline a hot issue, even though—on an inflation-adjusted basis—“gasoline prices remain substantially lower than they were in the early 1980’s” (*The New York Times*, May 12).

The Environmental Protection Agency says average, car-and-light-truck fuel economy fell from 22.1 miles per gallon in the 1980’s to 20.7 in 2003. Similarly, average vehicle weight was greater in 2003 than in any year since 1976. Now, though, U.S. consumers are starting to change, with the least fuel-efficient vehicles showing sales declines.

The U.S.—with 4.6% of world population—consumes about 25% of world oil production.

“Some believe that getting [worldwide production] much above today’s 80 million barrels a day would be horrendously costly if not impossible. If they’re correct, two billion Chinese and Indians, right now beginning to trade their bicycles for Toyotas, would be stuck trying to achieve modernity by outbidding the rest of us for a share of the world’s current rate of oil production...” (Holman Jenkins, Jr., May 19 *Wall Street Journal* column).

China “accounted for 37% of the growth in world oil consumption over the last four years” (Paul Krugman, *New York Times* column May 7). “Most of China’s energy demand is for industrialization [whereas] roughly half of the United States’ demand is for personal consumption, primarily for [private vehicles]...” (*New York Times* editorial, May 19).

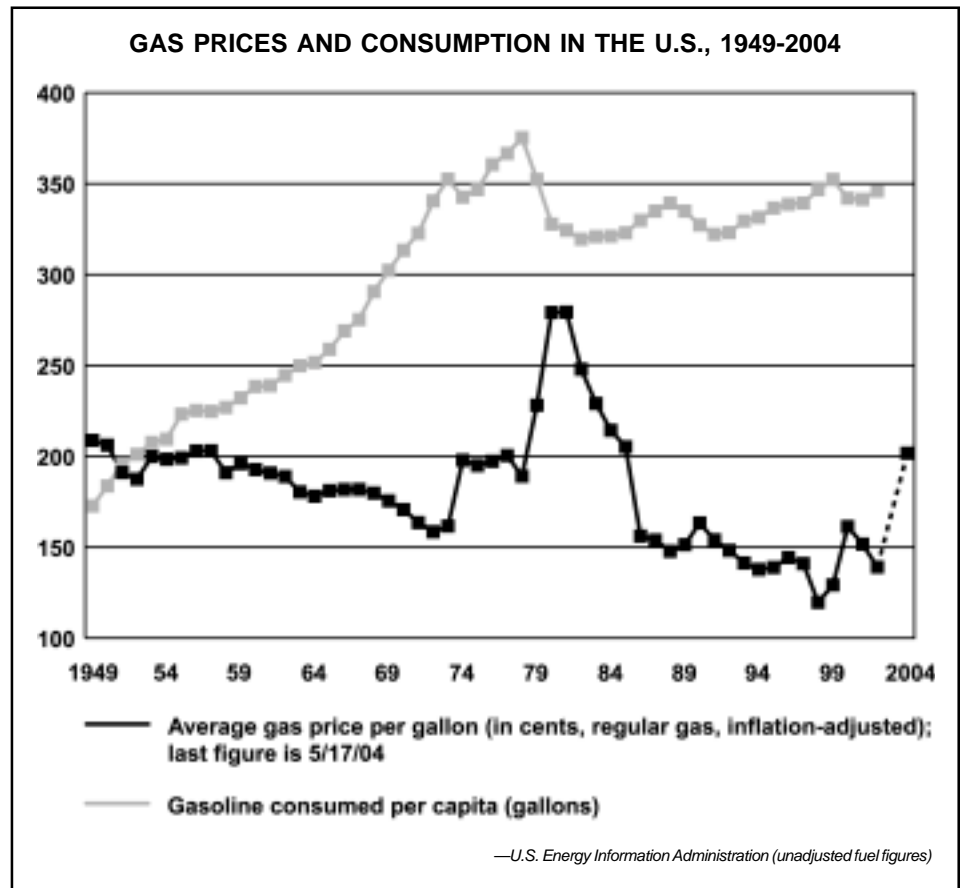
Oil prices reflect transport and refinery systems near capacity, but also fear. Jenkins quotes a Houston energy banker who says “we could be on the verge of seeing a collapse of 30% or 40% [of Saudi oil production] in the next three to five years.”

A May 5 *Wall Street Journal* news report cites a prediction that a 27.5% cut in Saudi production could lead to \$100 a barrel oil. As for terrorist insiders, the article said that, according to the Saudi Interior Ministry, three of the four terrorists in the fatal, early-May attack on a

petrochemical plant in Saudi Arabia were employees with authorized access.

While fuel costs are a smaller percent of total costs for Amtrak than for the airlines, the first impact Amtrak sees from a surge in fuel prices is on costs. The good news is that Amtrak hedges about half its fuel purchases (compared with Southwest’s 80%, Delta’s 32%, Continental’s 10% and American’s 5%; *Barron’s*, March 22). Hedging is a form of protection against future price rises.

If prices indeed remain high, that will underline the importance of maintaining and improving America’s energy-efficient public transportation choices—including Amtrak. n



George Chilson

Chilson

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chaired the committee that wrote the association’s June, 2002, report, “Modern Passenger Trains: A National Necessity”. He led the December, 2003, update of that report (<www.narprail.org>, click on Resources).

Now retired, his professional career included working for General Mills in Minneapolis as a product manager (1965-69); for MJB Company in San Francisco as Manager, New Products (1969-71); and for Plus Products, Los Angeles, as Vice

President of Sales and Marketing (1971-1979). From 1979-98, through the Chilson-Rose Corporation, he was a business owner in the apartment and hospitality industries.

A native of Kingston, N.Y., Chilson holds an A.B. in economics from Princeton (1963), and an M.B.A. from Stanford (1965).

The elections took place on April 23 in Washington, D.C. n

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Stations—Amtrak will begin renovating the first-class lounge at Chicago Union Station around June 15. During that time, the space will have to be vacated, so a temporary facility is being planned just off the Great Hall (former main waiting room).

The Amtrak space in the newly renovated Tucson, Ariz., station is open.

Sleeping cars—More trains will offer public sale of standard rooms in Superliner transition-dorm cars (as was planned when many of the cars were designed and built). The rooms are numbered 17-24.

Amtrak now allows this on the *Texas Eagle* and *City of New Orleans*, and will expand it this summer to the *California Zephyr* and *Capitol Limited*.

Dining service—The *Texas Eagle* currently has full meal service between Chicago and Fort Worth only. Starting June 1, Amtrak will expand this to Chicago-Austin by changing the lay-over point for dining-car crews.

Peak fares—Amtrak on April 26 changed most Northeastern Friday/

Sunday peak fare hours to 9:00 am-6:59 pm. (from 11:00 am-11:00 pm).

Scheduled start time of travel determines fare applicability; changes do not apply to Acela Express/Metroliner trains, which still have their own peak/shoulder/off-peak time periods. The changes apply to other travel within the Northeast Corridor (including Keystone Service) and the New York-Amsterdam portion of Empire Service.

Here are some examples:

- All passengers riding the overnight Boston-Washington train (former *Federal*) now are non-peak. Previously, passengers boarding Boston-Kingston southbound and Washington-Baltimore northbound paid the higher fare;
- Passengers taking long daylight trips must start earlier to get the lower fare. The last, off-peak morning departure from Washington to Boston now is 7:05 am Friday/6:20 am Sunday instead of the former 9:05/9:25.

Overall, the change seems sensible, with fare increases where demand is strongest and decreases where it's not. High-fare zone duration is cut from 12 hours to just under 10 hours.

ACELA SETTLEMENT REACHED

Amtrak and the Bombardier/Alstom consortium announced in March 17 a settlement of their legal disputes involving aspects of the Northeast Corridor high-speed rail program.

The consortium was involved in building 20 Acela Express high-speed train sets and 15 HHP-8 electric locomotives, building three new maintenance facilities, and maintaining those previous items until 2013.

Mutual legal claims dating from November 2001 are now dropped. The consortium will get \$42.5 million of the \$70 million in payments withheld by Amtrak (pending satisfactory completion of the program). Amtrak also excuses the consortium from its maintenance responsibilities in October 2006 (when Amtrak will take over those functions).

Amtrak President David L. Gunn said, "Instead of continuing to spend unnecessary time and money on costly and attention-diverting litigation, the full focus of our efforts will now be on improving the performance of Acela Express and delivering the best service we know how for the passengers who enjoy and depend on it."

CORRECTION—The name of the chairman of Georgians for Better Transportation, Wayne Shackelford, was misspelled in April.

NARP ADDRESSES RAIL OFFICIALS

NARP Transportation Associate David Johnson addressed the Metropolitan Railway Club of New York, in New York City, on April 1. The audience included operations officials from Amtrak, and New York

area commuter and freight railroads. Johnson gave a legislative update, covered Amtrak's positive operating statistics and ways his audience could contact legislators, and answered questions.



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