

St. Paul Union Depot Reopens

Well-attended ceremony marks completion of \$243 million restoration



- Ramsey County (Minn.) Regional Rail Authority

Over 200 people fill the restored Main Hall of St. Paul Union Depot on Dec. 8 for a grand reopening ceremony. The station, which has not served passenger trains since 1971, is poised to once again become a regional travel hub. Some local bus routes are already serving Union Depot, with intercity buses and Amtrak's *Empire Builder* to follow next year (Union Depot will likely replace Amtrak's existing Midway Station in western St. Paul). The Central Corridor Light Rail line will connect Union Depot to downtown Minneapolis starting in 2014 (see Sept. 2011 News).

Amtrak Board Nominees Closer to Confirmation

Nominations of Yvonne B. Burke and Christopher R. Beall to Amtrak's board were expected to win Senate confirmation before year's end. Pres. Obama nominated Burke in March and Beall in September. Senate Chair Rocke-

feller and Ranking Member Hutchison agreed to seek unanimous consent from the Senate on discharging nominees from the Committee.

Burke, former U.S. Rep. (D-CA) and former Los Angeles County Supervisor,

serves on the California Transportation Commission.

Beall, an Oklahoman, is a Partner at infrastructure investment firm Highstar Capital, L.P., and previously was at Aslan Group and Lehman Brothers. ■

NARP to Present at Major Travel Show in NYC

NARP members save \$2 on admission to the expo, set for Jan. 19-20

NARP will play a prominent role at the 10th Annual *New York Times* Travel Show, an "international celebration" featuring over 500 destinations across the globe. The Show is Sat.-Sun., Jan. 19-20 [open Friday the 18th for travel agents] at the Jacob Javits Convention Center at 34th St. and 12th Ave. in New York City, four blocks west of Penn Station.

NARP Chairman Bob Stewart will give a presentation Sat., Jan. 19, on the unique benefits of train travel. NARP

will host a booth on the convention floor with information on Amtrak travel and train advocacy.

NARP is an Industry Partner for the Show. NARP members can save \$2 on admission, through advance ticket purchase or at the door (use discount code NYT2OFF). Register before Jan. 17 to get an additional \$5 off. Tickets and more information are at www.nyt-travelshow.com (no telephone registrations). ■

Sandy Recovery Funds for Amtrak



An emergency spending bill for damage caused by Superstorm Sandy (see last issue) and to help prepare infrastructure for future storms con-

tains has \$336 million for Amtrak, well over the \$32 million the Obama Administration requested. The bill—H.R. 6581, sponsored by Representatives from New Jersey and New York—was on the Senate floor Dec. 20 and faced an amendment to strike Amtrak funding. The House may consider a much smaller bill.

The \$336 million would offset lost revenue and cover property damage, improvements to protect tunnels into Manhattan against future flooding, and increased capacity into Manhattan (related story, p. 3). ■

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Helping Save Trains

The Obama Administration could fix one funding problem on its own: end the three-year limit on the ability of states to use federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funds for intercity passenger rail operating grants.

The immediate relevance of this is for the Boston-Maine *Downeaster* and the midday Raleigh-Charlotte *Piedmont*. The latter was added in mid-2010, so its three-year limit comes up next June.

CMAQ funds have been key to the *Downeaster* since it began in December, 2001. Retiring Sen. Olympia Snowe and Sen. Susan Collins (both R-ME) periodically rescued the route with legislative band-aids.

This does not give states a "free ride." When a state elects to spend CMAQ funds for this purpose, it is deciding not to use those funds elsewhere, and committing to pay the 20% state match.

I wrote to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Nov. 5 urging him to lift the three-year limit (Dec. *News*). The response, from Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo, said U.S. DOT determined after passage of the 2005 highway/authorization that "a change in the 3-year limitation...was not warranted" and said "Congress has adopted revisions to the CMAQ program in the recently enacted Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)...I will take your request under advisement."

The MAP-21 language appears to support our request.

It is absurd that one of Amtrak's poster-child success stories has depended on this kind of band-aid for survival. And strange that getting this type of flexibility is not a "no-brainer."

While just two routes currently use CMAQ funds this way, Section 209 of the 2008 reauthorization law ("PRIIA") is due to kick in next October 1.

At that point, CMAQ funds could prove crucial in saving routes where state support requirements will be increased, or imposed for the first time.

Among the other routes at risk: the

Hoosier State which covers Chicago-Indianapolis on days the *Cardinal* does not run, and the New York-Pittsburgh *Pennsylvanian*.

On Sept. 20, Amtrak President Joseph Boardman testified that something like the *Hoosier State* is needed to convey cars to and from Amtrak's Beech Grove, IN, shops. Amtrak's *Capitol Limited* Performance Improvement Plan calls for operation of through cars to/from *Pennsylvanian*, which arguably makes it a long-distance train. But Hoosiers and Pennsylvanians should make clear to their governors and stress to legislators that these services are important. ■



Photo: herzogbr on Flickr.com

Hardison Heads Amtrak Marketing; Pohlot Engineering

Matt Hardison is Amtrak's new Chief Marketing and Sales Officer, reporting directly to President Joseph Boardman. Hardison has been Chief—Sales Distribution and Customer Service.

He has been the driving force behind development of the Amtrak Guest Rewards loyalty program (unveiled in 2001), eTicketing (Jan., May & Sept. 2012 *News*), and "Julie," the telephone voice recognition system.

Hardison succeeds Emmett Fremaux,

who retired. He assumed his new position Dec. 21.

Bruce Pohlot is Amtrak's Chief Engineer, responsible for Amtrak-owned rights-of-way. He was at consultancy Parsons Brinckerhoff for 13 years, after working 21 years in the Amtrak department he now heads.

Pohlot reports to V.P. for Operations D.J. Stadler. Pohlot's appointment began Dec. 10. ■

Nichols Becomes CTO; Quigley Short-Distance G.M.

David Nichols, previously Senior Director—Operating Practices, has been promoted to Chief Transportation Officer, reporting directly to Vice President for Operations D.J. Stadler, along with the General Managers of the three business lines.

Nichols, a 33-year Amtrak veteran, "will be responsible for setting, managing and maintaining operating rules and policies to ensure all train operations meet federal requirements and Amtrak's business needs," according to Stadler.

Tom Quigley is now General Manag-

er—State-Supported Services. He has held executive and marketing positions at six firms, most recently as V.P. and G.M. at Owens Corning. His job is to ensure that Amtrak's state partners and their customers receive "excellent service" and meet financial goals and other performance targets.

Quigley manages one of three Amtrak "business lines" on the operations side. The others are the Northeast Corridor, under G.M. Michael DeCataldo, Jr. and the long-distance services, led by Doug Varn (Dec. *News*). ■

NARP News

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This has news through Dec. 21, 2012.

Vol. 46, No. 11 was mailed November 26.

Quick Thinking Saved Amtrak From Sandy's Worst Potential

A post-Superstorm Sandy briefing given to Congress revealed that quick thinking by Amtrak employees likely prevented catastrophic flood damage to New York Penn Station that would've taken a full year to repair.

During the extreme storm surge seen at the height of the hurricane, large swaths of Manhattan were flooded. Resourceful Amtrak workers decided to leave flood gates to the Hudson River tunnels open, with the aim that the tunnels would create a reservoir to draw water away from vital equipment in Penn Station.

When water flooded through the West Side Yard throat and through a Long Island Rail Road vent shaft, that's exactly what the North River Tunnels did, filling with millions of gallons of sea water. The tunnels were flooded, but Penn Station was saved. That may have proved to be the crucial difference that allowed Amtrak to restore service in mere days as opposed to months.

While that quick thinking proved crucial in preventing catastrophic damage, precautionary investments to upgrade infrastructure were just as important. A standpipe system installed as part of a Fire and Life Safety Program materially aided in pumping a total of 13.6 million gallons of water out of the Hudson and East River Tunnels. Upgraded ventilation systems allowed diesel pumps to operate, speeding recovery. And while 80 trees had to be removed from the Northeast Corridor right of way—and 15 repairs made to the catenary system—230 miles of tree trimming and removal prevented the storm damage from being much worse. There was also work done to improve culvert and ditching along the NEC, preventing water accumulation and washouts.

Much of above work was funded by the 2009 Recovery Act, and it emphasizes why Amtrak's \$336 million Superstorm Sandy request—part of a \$60 billion emergency response bill moving through Congress—is so critical. \$190 million will go towards short-term Gate-

(continued on p. 6)

Wickford Jct., RI: A Model Rail-Oriented Development



1,100-car parking garage and is adjacent to a new shopping center with a bank and several stores including a Staples.

Developer Bob Cioe was involved at every step and delivered the project on time and under budget.

NARP Member Everett Stuart notes that Cioe "oversees the operation of the garage (via a subcontractor) and regularly is at the station making sure things run smoothly (often greeting passengers). Cioe actually owns the land under the station and leases it to RIDOT."

Train service began here April 23. "Recently, an elementary school class took the train up to Boston for a field trip. Corporations looking to take business trips up to Boston are also" considering the service [North Kingstown Patch, June 12].

Photos: Ross Capon



MBTA trains to T. F. Green Airport also go on to Wickford Junction (Oct.-Nov. News, p. 2), stopping there on a short, non-electrified siding next to Amtrak's high-speed mainline. The station and adjacent stores are widely described as a model for "smart growth" and for public-private partnerships.

The new station has a

New Faces for the 113th Congress

The new Congress will find many new faces in key positions.

In the Senate, Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) is expected to succeed the late Dan Inouye (D-HI) as chair of the full Appropriations Committee.

Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) will succeed retiring Kent Conrad (D-ND) at the helm of the Budget Committee.

The resignation of Jim DeMint (R-SC) to head the Heritage Foundation means that John Thune (R-SD) likely will become the top Republican on the Senate

Commerce Committee, succeeding retiring Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX).

In the House, Bill Shuster (R-PA) succeeds John Mica (R-TX) as Transportation and Infrastructure chairman. There has been speculation that Jeff Denham (R-CA) might succeed Shuster as Railroads Subcommittee chair. At Mica's last two passenger train hearings, Denham took the gavel after Mica left towards the end. Denham is no fan of California high speed rail but asked probing, intelligent questions. ■

Report: States That Prioritize Transit are Less Gas Dependent

Residents of states that prioritize public transportation tend to spend less of their income on gasoline, finds a Nov. 19 report by the Natural Resources Defense Council.

The report, now in its sixth year, ranks states on their efforts to promote reduced fuel consumption through public transportation and encouraging alternate fuel use, and compares this to the share of residents' income spent on gas.

Maryland, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut ranked in this year's top 10. The report said rural states, which are less likely to have significant transit networks, can still reduce oil dependency by promoting alternative fuels.

Residents of the 13 lowest-ranked states spent at least 7% of their annual income on gas, with Mississippi drivers faring worst at 9%. The national average has increased each year from 2006 to 2011.

"By creating or expanding reliable and accessible public transit programs, states can reduce the number of single-passenger cars on the road, consequently lowering average driving per person," the report stated.

Driven to Spend: Pumping Dollars out of our Households and Communities, a 2005 report by Surface Transportation Policy Project and Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), reached similar conclusions. ■

Read the report at www.bit.ly/nrdcrpt.

More Progress in North Carolina

Major Station Projects Still Awaiting Federal, State Funding

Improvements continue to be made along the state-supported Raleigh-Greensboro-Charlotte Piedmont corridor in preparation for two additional daily train frequencies, slated to begin service in 2017 and 2018, respectively. Complete double-tracking of the Greensboro-Charlotte main line will be completed by 2017, making the new frequencies possible. New I-85 highway bridges will be built over the Yadkin River north of Salisbury, allowing the tracks below to be straightened and thus passenger trains to run at 65 mph.

Aside from the rebuilt Cary station (Sept. 2011 News), Burlington's platform was lengthened and High Point gained 27 more parking spaces. Greensboro has an in-station coffee shop and High Point's is expected to open in 2013. Kannapolis will gain a platform shelter in 2013.

By 2014, 9 North Carolina stations will have electronic information display systems giving up-to-the-minute train status information, and 8 stations will have new security systems, which will be networked with the NC Dept. of Transportation's statewide monitoring system.

Plans are in place to convert a former Dillon Supply building in downtown Raleigh into a multi-modal Union Station. The \$60 million in funding is in place (including a \$21 million federal

Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant), and construction will be completed in early 2017. Meanwhile, Master Developers for Charlotte's new multi-modal hub have been selected, but a construction schedule is being developed.

NCDOT has finalized an agreement with CSX to build three new crossovers along the double-track section of the "A Line" between Selma and the Virginia state line, used by the *Carolinian*, *Silver Meteor*, *Silver Star*, *Palmetto* and *Auto Train*.

An intersection between Norfolk Southern and CSX main lines in Charlotte is being converted from an at-grade diamond to a flyover (CSX being dug underneath NS) with \$129 million in federal funds, with construction starting in Dec. 2013 and completion scheduled for spring 2017. A separate road-rail grade separation in Charlotte that got \$22 million in federal funds is due to be finished in 2016.

All of the state-owned passenger locomotives are in service after three damaged ones were restored.

Lexington (between High Point and Salisbury) has received funding to begin preliminary design of its new station. A planned new station in Hillsborough (between Durham and Burlington) still awaits funding to begin design and construction. ■

2013 NARP Membership Meetings

NARP's winter/spring membership meetings are your opportunity to network with fellow NARP members in your area and get up to date on the information you need to continue to effectively advocate the passenger train development that Americans need. We encourage you to attend the meeting closest to you:

March 2, Tukwila, WA: For members in AK, WA, OR, ID and MT. Times TBA, at the Embassy Suites Hotel Tukwila/SeaTac Airport, 15920 W. Valley Hwy., Tukwila. *Adjacent to the Tukwila*

Amtrak/Sounder station (TUK). Speakers and agenda TBA; check www.narprail.org/calendar or call the NARP office.

March 9, Schenectady, NY: Joint NARP/Empire State Passengers Assoc. meeting for members in New York State. 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Holiday Inn, 100 Nott Terrace (3 blocks from the Amtrak station). NARP Chairman Bob Stewart will be a guest speaker. Registration will be available after Jan. 1 at www.esparail.org.

March 16, Washington, DC: For

members in MD, DC, VA and WV. 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building, Independence Ave. & South Capitol St. SW (Note: You will enter the building through a security checkpoint). *15 minute walk south of Union Station, and close to the Capitol South Metrorail station*. Cost: \$15.00 per person for a sandwich lunch, snacks and beverages. Speakers and agenda TBA.

Keep checking www.narprail.org/calendar for further announcements. ■

Ground Broken for Troy Transit Center



Photos: Steve Sobel

State and local officials gathered at the site of the new Troy (Mich.) Transportation Center for the official groundbreaking. About 100 people witnessed the official start of construction for the 2,000 sq. ft. facility that will serve Amtrak, local buses and future commuter trains.

There will be a bridge over the CN tracks so trains can use either of the two tracks. There is ample parking. Located behind a regional shopping center, the facility will replace the nearby Birmingham stop (platform with bus shelter), and is to be completed by July.

During the Nov. 27 inagural, the crowd cheered as an Amtrak *Wolverine* train (top photo) passed "interrupted" the ceremony as planned.

Former Troy Mayor Janice Daniels (R) strongly opposed this project but was recalled by 52% of Troy voters on Nov. 6 (Dec. News, p. 2).

NTSB Again Places PTC on "Most Wanted" List

Given the slow pace at which Positive Train Control (PTC) for the nation's railroads is being developed, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) on November 14 put PTC back on its "Most Wanted" list of transportation safety improvements: www.nts.gov/safety/mwl.html

NTSB took PTC off this list after enactment of the 2008 law requiring installation of PTC by Dec. 31, 2015 on lines that carry passengers and toxic-by-inhalation cargo. FRA's Aug. report to Congress on PTC is at www.bit.ly/ptcrpt



Doswell, VA. Photo: John H Gray on Flickr.com

Amtrak Extends Richmond Train to Norfolk

Wednesday, Dec. 12 marked the beginning of revenue Amtrak service between Norfolk's new Harbor Park station, Petersburg, Richmond and intermediate points to Washington, DC. The southbound train originates in New York City; the northbound runs through all the way to Boston.

Passengers on a special, Dec. 11, Washington-Norfolk inaugural train included Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, Transportation Secretary Sean Connaughton, Amtrak President Joseph Boardman, Norfolk Southern Chairman & CEO Wick Moorman and CSX Exec. V.P. Ellen Fitzsimmons.

Norfolk departure is 4:50 AM M-F and 6:05 AM Sat. & Sun. Southbound arrivals: 8:50 PM M-F, 11:48 PM Sat. & 8:48 PM Sun.

The temporary Norfolk station is across a parking lot from the Harbor Park station for The Tide light rail, which does not operate early enough to serve the morning trains. Free parking is plentiful, though, and a walk from downtown is doable in about 20-30

minutes.

Over 100 passengers braved a chilly rain to board the Dec. 16 northbound,

most going to Washington, but many going to Richmond and Fredericksburg, and a few going north of D.C.



Photos: Malcolm Kenton

Top: Over 100 passengers boarded Boston-bound train 88 at Norfolk in the predawn hours on Dec. 16.

Bottom: Temporary Amtrak station at Harbor Park, to be replaced by a modern facility now under construction.



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Vol. 47, No. 1

January 2013

our mission: a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice americans want.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

New system timetable effective Jan. 14:

- **Coast Starlight will no longer stop at Richmond, CA** in either direction (effective with the Jan. 14 Los Angeles & Seattle departures). Connecting *Capitol Corridor* service to Richmond will be available.

- **An additional New York-Washington weekday Acela round-trip begins Jan. 28:**

The 5:20 PM Boston departure will run through to Washington (9:15 PM from New York), and there will be a new 8 PM departure from Washington to New York. Reservations can be made now.

Crescent canceled south of Atlanta Mondays-Thursdays Jan. 7 thru Feb. 7 due to NS's annual trackwork exercise. No alternate transportation provided those days. Exception is Mon., Feb. 4, when the train will run south of Atlanta.

Engaging the Public in Kansas City & West Virginia

Mark Corrison



J. Charles Riecks

NARP members Chuck Hatler (above) and Mark Corrison (bottom right) were two of the five volunteers who spread the word about NARP to over 16,000 visitors during festivities Dec. 15 & 16 at Kansas City Union Station coinciding with the arrival of the Kansas City Southern Railway's Santa Train.

Chuck Hatler

Top right: The Friends of the Cardinal sponsored a passenger train promotion and advocacy table at the annual Huntington, WV Train Show on Nov. 24 & 25, as the all-volunteer advocacy organization has done for the past few years. Here, FOC volunteer & NARP member Patrick Burch talks with one of over 350 visitors to the table, a new record. 70 *Amtrak America* booklets and 105 NARP brochures were handed out.

FOC has a similar table at the Bluefield, WV train show, 2 weeks earlier.



Amtrak Saved from Sandy's Worst

from page 3

way Program improvements, which will create the foundation for two new mainline tracks between Newark, NJ, and New York City (including the boring of two new river tunnels). With 425 trains running through the tunnels every day, new capacity is desperately needed.

What's more, Amtrak is forced to single-track every weekend to perform maintenance on the 100-year old tunnels; the redundancy created by the new tunnels will be critical for NEC operations.

There is need for immediate action on the Gateway Program; a real estate com-

pany is breaking ground on a multi-billion dollar, mixed-use commercial and residential development project. If Amtrak does not get the funds to establish the footprint for the new tunnels before the new development is built, the entire Gateway project will be precluded. ■