



NARPnews

"After years of short-term, last-minute measures, it's time for Congress to step up and bring some stability to how we fund our nation's transportation system." U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANTHONY FOXX, MARCH 13, 2014

Southwest Chief's Existing Route Still Under Threat

New Mexico's State Legislature adjourned February 20, without identifying a solution for the continuation of the Southwest Chief over its current route. However, legislators have vowed to fight on until the necessary funding is secured, and advocates remain positive.

"The goodwill and support that we generated was far higher than usual for an end of the session. The Legislature expects us back next year, and the Governor will support if the studies support the Chief," said Ford Robbins, a leading voice in the fight to save the Southwest Chief.

As NARP previously reported, the Southwest Chief's existing route is threatened to be discontinued because of the declining condition of the mainline in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico.

To keep the train on its current route, each of the three states is asked to chip in \$4 million per year over the next 10 years (after that, the annual costs will drop sharply).

President Outlines \$19 Billion Plan for America's Trains

On March 4th, the Obama Administration released details about a \$302 billion transportation package that includes \$19 billion over four years for passenger trains. The proposal also includes \$72 billion for transit over four years – a 70% increase over current levels – that will fund commuter rail systems, streetcars, and light rail lines across the U.S.

The President's transportation plan is paid for through corporate tax reform – a principle that is being supported by leading Republicans.

The White House has offered a framework that incorporates many of the ideas NARP has long pushed for, including:

- Moving passenger rail funding from the year-to-year appropriation battles, into a guaranteed transportation trust fund. This will allow Amtrak and states to do multi-year planning, place orders for new equipment, and tackle complicated infrastructure improvement projects.
- Dedicated source of funding for long distance trains. The proposal includes \$850 million in FY2015 for operations, long distance equipment overhauls and



VP "Amtrak" Joe Biden tours Amtrak's new Cities Sprinters. <http://blog.amtrak.com/2013/05/new-amtrak-locomotives-the-facts/>

replacement, station upgrades, and maintenance facilities.

- Dedicated source of funding for the Northeast Corridor. The proposal includes \$550 million in FY2015 to address critical backlogs in maintenance and fund new equipment purchases.

- \$1.3 billion to develop high-performance rail networks through construction of new corridors, substantial improvements to existing corridors, and mitigation of passenger train congestion at critical "chokepoints."

(see President on P.2)

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT

NARP members now receive a 15% discount* on all Travelpro Luggage products at travelproluggageoutlet.com. Login to your NARP member account for more details.

*For dues-paying members only. Not a dues-paying member yet? Consider joining and get all of the NARP member benefits. Visit www.narprail.org/donate/join

NARP works to restore service between Oklahoma City and Tulsa

NARP has been working with its members to ensure that local decision makers preserve the right for passenger train service on the rail corridor between Oklahoma City and Tulsa. The Sooner Subdivision was purchased by the state with the intent to preserve it for passenger rail use and the people of Oklahoma deserve that the promise be kept.

Oklahoma State purchased the 97 mile line in 1998 to keep it from being abandoned. Local shippers and manufacturers have benefitted by being able to buy access to the transportation link, and the line provided \$591,000 in state revenue in 2013 alone. Communities along the line are fighting to protect the right to develop a connecting passenger service, with city councils in Oklahoma City Council, Tulsa, the city of Sapulpa, and the city of Bristow passing unanimous resolutions of support.

The Association wrote to Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, arguing that keeping the line under state ownership will provide a solid future base of economic development and jobs for cities and towns served and a travel option for the citizens of Oklahoma.

If the state decides to sell the line, NARP is requesting that Governor Fallin work to strengthen language in the sale document that will let a passenger operator have reasonable and unhindered direct access to run service between Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

In a letter to Representative Pam Peters, NARP asked the legislator to consider four bills that would protect the option of a two hour train link between the cities. "It boils down to mobility, economic development and bringing two major cities closer together," wrote NARP. "The next generation gets it."

Welcome, Jenna

Jenna Jablonski joined NARP in January 2014 as the Coordinator of Outreach, Marketing, and Communications. Before joining NARP, Jenna volunteered as the Social Media and Communications Coordinator at the nonprofit Abriendo Mentés in Potrero, Costa Rica. She also completed marketing internships at Meridian International Center, and the Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy.

Jenna graduated from Ithaca College in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in Integrated Marketing Communications. She participated in the Park Scholar program at Ithaca College a semester studying abroad in Bolivia and two months volunteering in Uganda.

An Amtrak passenger herself, Jenna is especially eager to flex her creativity and use her experience in nonprofit marketing to promote the benefits of passenger rail for individuals, communities, and the environment.

President (from Page 1)

The Administration's transit proposal includes \$17.6 billion for transit in FY 2015. Of that, some \$2.5 billion would go to the Capital Investment Grant Program, which invests heavily in commuter rail, light rail systems, and streetcar lines. The Federal Transit Administration has identified some 30 rail transit projects of national significance—an enormously exciting list of projects that would transform cityscapes across America, revitalizing hundreds of neighborhoods. (For a full list of transit rail projects, read NARP Hotline #852)

NARP is asking Congress to enact these good ideas. We're also asking them to provide even more funding, because that is what is needed to bring U.S. passenger rail into the 21st century. You can take part online at narprail.org/takeaction.

How Do You Like The NARP News New Look?

OK City & Tulsa #12 | North Hudson #11 | NWR Corridor #4 | Member Spotlight #1 | Traveler Advisory #6

NARPnews

After years of short-term, last-minute measures, it's time for Congress to step up and bring new funding to the rail line for passenger service.

Southwest Chief's Existing Route Still Under Threat

President Outlines \$19 Billion Plan for America's Trains

Take the survey at <http://bit.ly/1fYw5wi> and tell us what you think.



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This issue has news through March 12, 2014. Vol. 48, No.2 was mailed March 20, 2014.

Experience March Madness 2014 by Train

For college basketball fanatics, March Madness is the best month of the year. With 68 teams battling it out all across the country, there's more than enough action to satisfy any sports fan.

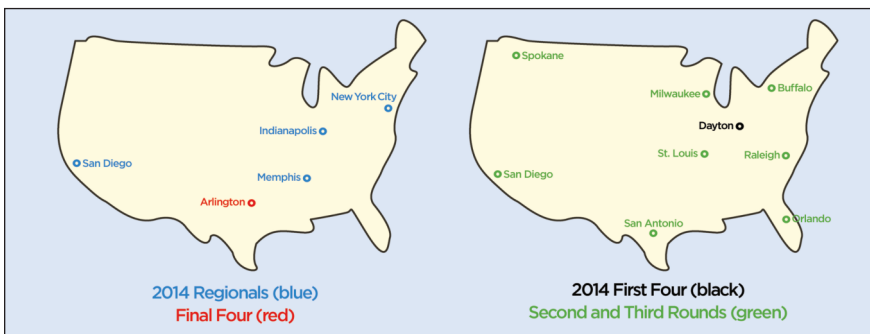
What better way to enjoy the game than taking the train to see perennial powerhouses and Cinderella's try to make a run at the Final Four? Whether you're pre-gaming before the tipoff, looking to sleep off victory celebration,

or staring at the scenery dreaming of next year, you're better off letting Amtrak do the driving. With thirteen of the 14 NCAA Tournament venues served in communities by intercity rail service – Dayton is the lone holdout – Amtrak has college basketball fans covered.

Of course, like all American passenger rail experiences, the regional variations in service are vast. Milwaukee's BMO Harris Bradley Center

is a 15 minute stroll from the Milwaukee Amtrak Station, and grabbing a game in New York City's Madison Square Garden is literally upstairs from Penn Station, America's busiest train station. But while Memphis' FedEx forum is only a mile from the train station, the only train that stops there is the north-south City of New Orleans, which severely limits access. And if you want to watch the April 7th championship game at Arlington's AT&T Stadium, a little more work is required: while you can get into Dallas on an 11:30 westbound/3:20 eastbound, you're still an hour-long ride away, via a trip on the Trinity Railway Express commuter line and a bus connection.

All the more reason to be part of NARP's mission for more and better trains in America. We're working with local and national leaders to build a train network that gets you where you want to go.



Amtrak's New Math for Long-Distance Route Expenses: More Marketing, Less Amenities

BY MATT MELZER

At last month's joint NARP and RailPAC member meeting in Los Angeles, Mark Murphy, Amtrak's new General Manager Long Distance Services presented a vision to improve service on long-distance trains.

Murphy outlined an optimistic vision for the national network trains. With diminished debt, record ridership for 10 of the last 11 fiscal years, and a record 89% operating ratio (89 cents in fares recovered for every dollar of expenses), Amtrak is the strongest it has been in modern times. The 15 long-distance routes are the linchpin of this success, accounting for 44 percent of all Amtrak passenger-miles (actual transportation output). Murphy articulated a tripod strategy "to acquire and retain the most satisfied customers of any travel company in the world," declaring that cost-cutting will not be the prevailing mentality going forward.

So imagine the shock of rail advocates when Amtrak issued an internal notice three days later announcing the elimination of many on-board amenities in the coming weeks for the long-distance trains. While new marketing campaigns will likely be very successful and deliver a handsome return on investment, there is no substitute for the marketing power of excellent product itself.

Congress must level the playing field to place passenger trains on the same footing of dedicated, stable, long-term funding that other surface



Los Angeles City Councilmember Tom LaBonge presents NARP State Rep. Matthew Melzer with a Certificate of Recognition for NARP's work, at the Feb. 1 RailPAC/NARP Steel Wheels Conference in LA.

transportation modes receive. Amtrak, too, must step off its historic roller coaster of short-term product investment and cuts, instead resolving to continually produce a product that maximizes ridership, financial performance, and customer satisfaction.

New Projects Strive to Increase Connectedness in Atlanta

At a recent lecture at the University of Georgia, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. CEO Paul Morris described Atlanta as a city on the move, stating "(i)t may well be for the next twenty years the hottest spot to move in the country."

Like many cities, Atlanta will see significant population growth in the coming years, and leaders like Morris recognize the need to expand mobility to ensure sustainable development. The Atlanta BeltLine, an urban renewal project begun in 1999, connects historical and cultural landmarks in the city using the paths of abandoned freight lines. The goal of the BeltLine is to provide a network of multi-use trails and transit that connect 45 neighborhoods in historic Atlanta, including access points to the MARTA commuter rail service. Though the timeline for completion is ongoing, the BeltLine already connects several parks and trails.

Likewise, the Atlanta Streetcar aspires to lay the groundwork for a new era of connectivity in the growing city. The project, still in its first phase, will carry passengers over a 2.7 mile route along the King Historic District and Centennial Olympic Park. The streetcar is expected to begin operation this spring.

Atlanta Councilman Kwanza Hall told CBS Atlanta, "To be able to have alternative modes of transportation such as this to keep people moving, keep people going to work and school and to keep places open can mean a lot for our economy."

Florida - New Orleans: the Missing Link in the National Network



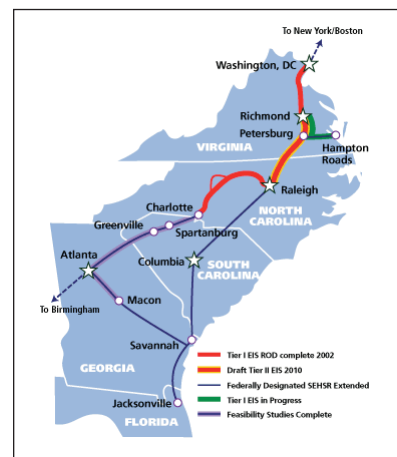
The Gulf Coast rail corridor that runs between New Orleans and Florida is the biggest missing link in the U.S. rail network, and NARP has been fighting to restore it since Amtrak failed to resurrect the Sunset Limited in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The Gulf Coast line is a strategically important component of the national intercity passenger train system, completing the busy I-10 corridor that connects the eight southernmost states. Together, these states have one of every three Americans and account for half the nation's population growth since 1970.

"This is a critical need for our nation, not only just for Florida but for the country..." said NARP Chairman Bob Stewart during a June 2012 restoration rally held in Tallahassee, Florida. "We have an aging population and with 100 million more people in the country by 2050; how are we going to move around the United States?"

The communities along the line are fighting to restore the service, but they're not content with a simple restoration of the thrice-weekly Sunset Limited. Mayors and advocates along the Gulf Coast corridor are working to bring a daily train service that will connect scores of communities and thousands of businesses with frequent and reliable train service. NARP continues to support these grass roots activities and fight for Gulf Coast passengers on Capitol Hill.

SE HSR Corridor Connects the Dots



The Southeast's changing landscape of transportation is highlighted by the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor, a project that would connect Jacksonville with Washington, and serve the major cities in between. The trains would reach 110 miles per hour, providing a viable alternative to air and road travel in the congested region. Though no precise implementation schedule has been established, a number of feasibility studies have maintained momentum on the corridor's development.

Plan to Attend

The NARP Spring Council of Representatives Meeting will be April 28-30 at DoubleTree Hotel in Silver Spring, MD.

Speakers include Amtrak's Mark Murphy and Joseph McHugh.

NARP's Day on Capitol Hill will be Tuesday April 29, open to all NARP members (register by April 7).

See narprail.org/news/calendar for registration costs and details.

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NARP Member Spotlight: Jackson McQuigg

Jackson McQuigg of Atlanta was truly raised a rail advocate. He joined NARP in 1985 and began writing letters to senators about rail service at the age of 15 – and he hasn’t stopped since. Now he serves as a board member and the founding vice president of the Friends of Tampa Union Station, as well as an advisory board member of the Florida Coalition of Rail Passengers.



McQuigg says the Southeast region of the U.S. has a much greater awareness of the benefits of rail than back in the 1980’s. He says the progress the region has made would have been unimaginable to his teenage self. He cites the expansion of commuter rail services in Florida and North Carolina as two examples.

The Southeast has also faced stinging defeats, one of which McQuigg and the Florida Coalition of Rail Passengers are particularly focused on resolving: the suspension of New Orleans – Florida service after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. McQuigg says the communities along the line (including the Florida capital of Tallahassee) are sorely in need of train service, and that trains need to be restored immediately. He thinks it’s time for a fresh look at the service,

emphasizing that the future service shouldn’t be defined by the shortcomings or limitations of the old Sunset Limited service through the region.

McQuigg is equally devoted to leading Friends of Tampa Union Station, a volunteer-led effort to preserve 1912-built Tampa Union Station as both a landmark and transportation asset. McQuigg says that most people think that once you restore something, the fight is over. In reality, that’s when the real work begins—keeping an historic building restored is an ongoing effort!

According to McQuigg, Friends of Tampa Union Station has had success building an endowment to support this station’s continued restoration and continues to spark a community-wide conversation about the importance of preservation. Tampa Union Station, which is the third busiest Amtrak station in Florida, is also gearing up for a big turnout on National Train Day 2014, which drew a crowd of 3,500 last year.

You can learn more about Friends of Tampa Union Station by visiting www.tampaunionstation.com and the Florida Coalition of Rail Passengers at www.fcrprail.org.

More Doors Open for All Aboard Florida

All Aboard Florida is gaining momentum as it chugs towards the goal of 3-hour train service between Miami and Orlando, promising to rely entirely on private capital. The innovative project has even gained the support of Governor Rick Scott – notorious for his rejection of federal high speed rail funds for a line between Tampa and Orlando – on February 17 when he announced a plan to spend \$215 million of state funds to build a train depot at Orlando International Airport, which would serve All Aboard Florida and allow for the expansion of the SunRail commuter service in the future.

Of course, the station is government funded, so All Aboard Florida won’t be going it entirely alone. All Aboard Florida will start construction this year, with operations set to begin in late 2015 or early 2016.

New SunRail Train Station Unveiled in Winter Park

City, county, and state officials gathered on March third to celebrate a significant step in realizing the region’s vision for commuter rail: the grand opening of the Winter Park SunRail Station. The new station, which will serve Amtrak and Sunrail, is the first of 12 to open along SunRail’s 32-mile route between Orlando and DeBarry. SunRail will make its first run on May first.

“Isn’t this indeed a special day? Not just special day in Winter Park, but a special day in our region,” Winter Park Mayor Ken Bradley said at the ceremony. “I would even say a special day in the United States.”

More good news followed the ribbon-cutting ceremony; SunRail found out that President Obama had included \$63 million in his proposed 2015 budget for its extension south of its current route into Osceola County.



The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new SunRail Station on Monday, March 3, 2014 (Photo courtesy of Orlando Sentinel)



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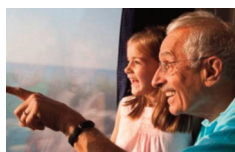
Empire Builder service restored at Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby. As of March 1, westbound Amtrak passengers will no longer be required to transfer to and from chartered buses. Delays are still likely between Chicago and Seattle or Portland.

Some Empire Service trains got faster schedules starting Jan. 13; many departure times are earlier. Train 284 now leaves Niagara Falls 6:50a, not 7:05a, and is 45 minutes faster. The two westbound Niagara Falls trains are 30 and 25 minutes faster. Full schedules at amtrak.com/service-alerts-and-notice.

Service on Cascades Trains 510 and 517 to be canceled on March 25 due to track work by BNSF. Passengers will be provided bus service to and from all stations between Seattle and Vancouver.

Palmetto Trains 89 and 90 will be affected by track work on select days through March 27. See schedule changes and cancellations at www.amtrak.com/service-alerts-and-notice.

Leave a Legacy that will build a Better Tomorrow for Generations to Come



NARP promises to provide your loved ones and future generations of Americans with the ability to prosper in their daily lives by establishing a better, more efficient and modern national train network. Your memory will be constant in the hearts and minds of everyone that will ever ride a train in America. NARP and the American Passenger thank you for your gift of more passenger rail.

Have you included NARP in your estate plans? If you have, and have not yet received your Heritage Circle Pin or would like more information on how to become a Heritage Circle member, please contact our Director of Resource Development, Logan McLeod. He can be reached at our national office at: (561) 846-2236 or you may reach him by email at lmcleod@narprail.org.

Thank you for supporting NARP and the American rail passenger.

