

“Once put into action, PTC can help prevent fatal crashes and derailments — and so it’s of the utmost importance that all of our rail lines have this life-saving technology installed as soon as possible.”

U.S. SEN. CHUCK SCHUMER (D-N.Y.)

A Look at November And December On Capitol Hill

Following a contentious election, American voters have given control of the U.S. government to the Republican Party, which has taken the White House



The U.S. Capitol Building
Photo Credit: Getty Images

and retained control of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. Given the disparity between Donald Trump’s infrastructure proposals and the 2016

Republican Party Platform, there is a lot of work NARP staff will need to do to map out a strategic plan for securing passenger-friendly policy in the 115th Congress.

However, there is still important unfinished business in the current congress that passenger advocates must address before the end of the year.

A president’s final lame duck session is often uneventful; but with 11 unfinished spending bills, members of congress will be busy playing catch-up in November and December. Even members leaving Washington (whether because of retirement or electoral defeat) will have to come together to fund critical transportation programs beyond December 9th — and, more broadly, avert a government shutdown.

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Record Attendance At Denver Rail Advocacy Symposium

Over 130 rail advocates from across the country converged on Denver, CO in mid-October to share and learn about best practices necessary to advance NARP’s goal of ‘A Connected America’ in their local regions. Attendees were also able to witness firsthand the wide-ranging economic development that Denver’s rapidly expanding rail and transit network has spurred, along with the renewed vitality of the city’s downtown core, largely centered around the beautifully restored Union Station, now known by locals as ‘Denver’s Living Room’.

The weekend kicked off with an exclusive

tour of Denver’s rail network, including the new electrified Airport Line, which utilizes both new and existing rights-of-way for its 37-minute trips along a 24-mile route from Union Station. Financed through an innovative public-private partnership and part of the region’s overall ‘Fastracks’ initiative, the tour easily demonstrated that modern, fast, and safe rail transit can be the answer to congested highways and long commutes. An evening welcome reception followed the tour, bringing together attendees and invited guests in the vibrant Main Hall of Denver’s Union Station.

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NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews Presents During the Fall Conference.

Photo Credit: Ken Briers

New Jersey Transit Accident Raises Calls For PTC Implementation

As investigators continue to study the September 29th New Jersey Transit rail collision in Hoboken, which injured more than a hundred passengers and killed one woman standing on the station's platform, advocates and policymakers are stepping up calls to implement Positive Train Control (PTC). This safety technology, which can remotely slow or stop a train that is speeding, is critical to improving safety on the country's rail system.

In October, U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) responded to the Hoboken accident by requesting \$33 million in federal grants from the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act that would allow for the installation of PTC on a 94-mile stretch of passenger rail line.

However, it should not take a major accident for lawmakers and transit officials to recognize the ever-growing importance of implementing PTC and other technologies that can help prevent accidents, and in turn, save lives. This comes at a time when the U.S. is seeing new growth in ridership and demand for expanded and new passenger rail lines, and the deadline for commuter lines to implement PTC has been extended to 2018.

Following the events in Hoboken, where the train sped up into the platform before crashing, a national spotlight has been placed on commuter rail and the progress transit agencies have made on installing PTC. Lawmakers and transit officials alike, have raised concerns about the slow implementation of potentially life-saving technologies, especially in New Jersey. Earlier this year, NJ Transit officials admitted to the Federal Railroad Administration that the agency had made little progress on installing PTC.

A joint panel of state legislators are also putting pressure on NJ Transit by examining why the agency has fallen behind in implementing PTC. The accident and requests for information also comes at a time when NJ Transit has increased fares and tapped into the

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Autonomous Vehicles and Commuter Trains Can Work Together for the Future

When one imagines how people will travel in the future, it's often in self-driving cars that carry people effortlessly from one place to the next. It seems only a few years ago these autonomous vehicles, or AVs, existed only in science fiction. But as computers have evolved, this highway technology suddenly appears to be a rapidly approaching reality.

The past few years have seen the creation of self-parking cars, as well as self-braking and lane-keeping cars. Experts in the AV industry believe there is a strong chance of AVs being ready as early as 2020 for use on our nation's highways.

As companies like Google and other startups delve deeper into creating AVs, we are now at a point in time where we are trying to understand the true impact these vehicles will have on society and how they will fit into our current transportation infrastructure; passenger rail for example, is seeing steady demand and growth across the country - from streetcars to high-speed rail.

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NJ Transit Commuter Train Crashes into Hoboken Station. Photo Credit: ABC News

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New Report Showcases Safety In Passenger Rail

In November, OneRail, a coalition of passenger and freight railroad stakeholders that includes NARP, released an important paper that analyzed rail safety data for passenger and freight rail transit within the United States. In the organization's review of research, the OneRail closely examined rail transit as compared to other modes of transportation, as well as accidents and fatalities, approaches to safety in the rail industry, and new efforts that look to make passenger rail and freight rail even safer.

The report, "Rail Safety in the United States" highlighted that transportation by rail is far safer than traveling on our nation's highways. Data collected for the report showed that "the most recent safety and census data indicate that the average American has a lifetime risk of approximately 1 in 100 of dying in a car accident. Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of preventable death, and are even the #1 leading cause of death for American teenagers."

When comparing these statistics to passenger rail specifically, rail transit is notably safer than travel on highway. "Rail Safety in the United States" notes that "when measured by fatalities per billion passenger miles, riding intercity passenger rail (.87³) or commuter rail (.373³) is on average more than 10 times safer than riding in a passenger car (7.033³)."

This report also couldn't come at a more critical time, with lawmakers and transit officials rushing to implement Positive Train Control (PTC) following a rail accident in Hoboken, NJ in September. At the same time, demand for rail transit is increasing across the country. It's important to note however, that rail accidents, whether during transit, at a station, or at a grade-crossing are rare. OneRail's report also highlights a growing trend in safety



A Norfolk Southern and an Amtrak train side by side. Photo Credit: Norfolk Southern

and the reduction of incidents over the past 10 years.

Notable safety trends in the rail industry, for both passenger and freight rail in the past 10 years include:

- 31% decline in train accident rates
- 23% decline in grade-crossing incidents
- 72% decline in release of hazardous materials
- 17% decline in employee casualty rates

Across the board, these statistics are remarkable as both passenger and freight industries look to improve safety even more through new safety technologies, rail safety programs and trainings, and capital investments.

Improvements in these areas will make a safe mode of transit, even safer, and at NARP, we look forward to working with OneRail and other industry organizations to make that happen.

For more information on OneRail and "Rail Safety in the United States" please visit www.onerail.org ■

Consider An End of the Year Donation!

As we enter the last few weeks of 2016, we have been looking back at NARP's accomplishments this past year. The big programs that stand out are Gulf Coast Rail Restoration, engaging the Surface Transportation Board's ruling on On Time Performance, and ramping up the grassroots efforts for a Daily Cardinal.

Needless to say, we have been busy! But we cannot accomplish these goals and many others around the U.S. and take them to the finish line without your continued support. NARP wants to make sure that your legacy of "A Connected America" becomes reality.

You can help by making your year-end donation today! It's easy to do – just log on to your NARP Account and click "Get Involved" then "Donate."

Does your company match donations? If you're not sure, check with your Human Resources Department. Once you make your donation, all you have to do is fill out a form and NARP will receive matching funds from 2-4 times your donation amount depending on your company's policy.

Are you about to buy a new vehicle for the new year? If so, consider donating your old vehicle to NARP. It's easy and a great way to give! Just go to www.narprail.org/vehicle. All the information you need is right there!

Feel free to email me with any questions! Have a wonderful Holiday Season! ■

Betsy Nelson | bnelson@narprail.org

• • • STATES NEWS • • •

Following the train accident in Hoboken, NJ in September calls for improved safety by politicians and safety advocates have come forth. U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer called on the U.S. Department of Transportation to fund installation of a new train safety system, Positive Train Control (PTC), on tracks between Poughkeepsie and Amsterdam in New York. Schumer’s call supports a state grant application for \$33.7 million in federal money to purchase and install PTC. As it stands now, the 2015 federal transportation bill extended the PTC installation deadline for rail operators to install the systems from 2015 to 2018, with full operation in 2020.

Texas Central, the private developer of the Texas bullet train, announced that it is sponsoring a design competition for architecture students from accredited Texas universities to help produce an inspiring vision for the high-speed train passenger stations. Individual students and multidisciplinary student teams that are actively enrolled in a Texas college or university-level program in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, architectural engineering, or transportation were contacted before the fall semester and encouraged to take part in the competition.

California’s high-speed rail authority has announced it will cut planned capacity to manage costs. The change by California’s High Speed Rail Authority will result in the rail system running fewer cars per train than originally proposed - 10 cars instead of 20 cars. This change is significant as it will reduce costs, time, and labor for development and construction of the network and rail stations. Currently, construction is underway for the Initial Operating Segment between the San Joaquin Valley and at least to San Jose; but when reviewing the plans, CAHSRA revised the plans, as the early segments will not need 20 cars. However, as ridership grows, platforms at stations can be lengthened for longer trains.

In an effort to look at the costs and benefits of Amtrak’s Heartland Flyer which runs through cities in Texas and Oklahoma, Oklahoma’s Senate Transportation Committee held a public meeting this week. The study was requested by Oklahoma Sen. Frank Simpson, R-Springer, who raised concerns about why the



Sen. Chuck E. Schumer, along with Schenectady Mayor Gary McCarthy and Federal Railroad Administration Administrator Sarah Feinberg, call for PTC funding. Photo Credit: Albany Times Union

state pays more in state contributions than Texas for the Amtrak line. Simpson noted that each state used to pay 50/50, but now it’s closer to 60/40 with communities in Oklahoma investing millions of dollars in infrastructure investments in their railway stations and other related improvements to capitalize on the rail line, while Texas receives many of the economic benefits.

Passenger rail and public transit advocates recently formed the Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition in an effort to raise attention for the Baltimore Red Line light-rail project. The advocacy group called on Gov. Larry Hogan to redirect \$8 billion for a proposed highway widening project to a statewide rail network that would run from Delaware to Southern Maryland to West Virginia. The line would also connect Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Overall, Governor Hogan has supported the Purple Line that would connect to the Washington Metro system, but he has previously withdrawn state funding for the Red Line to connect East and West Baltimore. The coalition is made up of the Action Committee for Transit, the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition, the Prince George’s Advocates for Community-based Transit, and the Southern Maryland Alliance for Rapid Transit. ■

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capital budget for expenses but has also seen declines in service and increases in breakdowns.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is also working to understand the cause of the NJ Transit accident and determine if PTC could have prevented the Hoboken crash.

In a preliminary report that NTSB released in mid-October, the agency stated it has scheduled additional research after finding that the electronics controlling the train’s brakes and propulsion system were destroyed in the crash. NTSB investigators also stated they will

examine the brakes and platform video, as well as the locomotive, to determine why the train was traveling at an elevated speed as it approached the station.

Following the accident, NARP’s President and CEO, Jim Mathews, stated that “NARP will work with local passengers, New Jersey Transit, and federal officials to ensure that the work is done to prevent these kinds of incidents. Taking a commuter train is still one of the safest ways to get to work—but there are investments that can be made to make it even safer.” ■

NARP Member Benefits

■ If you haven't done so already: claim your Travelers United Advocate Membership, and further broaden the support for consumer focus at <https://travelersunited.org/welcome-narp/>

■ Review the full and growing list of NARP benefits by logging into <https://www.narprail.org/MyBenefits>

■ We all do it, and now shopping online with Amazon can directly benefit NARP thanks to an exciting new agreement; visit www.narprail.org/get-involved/donate

••• Save These Dates •••

✓ Spring 2017 Advocacy Summit & Meeting - Washington, DC

- Sunday, April 23 to Wednesday, April 26, 2017
- NARP's 'Action Day On The Hill' & Congressional Reception – Tuesday, April 25, 2017
- Host Hotel: Sheraton Silver Spring (MD)

✓ NARP's 50th Anniversary Celebration – Chicago, IL

- Thursday, November 2 to Sunday, November 5, 2017
- Four days packed with an exciting array of presentations, speakers, exhibits, tours, and events
- Celebrating NARP's accomplishments over the past 50 years and looking ahead to the future of passenger rail in the United States
- Host Hotel: Millennium Knickerbocker

Check the NARP Events Page for more information!

Important Membership Reminder

● **Please do NOT use any old envelopes,** membership renewal forms, or donation requests you may have saved from previous NARP mailings prior to March 2016. These forms and the PO Box address on the old envelopes are no longer in use and your checks or credit card payment submissions will NOT reach NARP. Please only use the new envelopes and renewal/donation forms you receive with our current mailings, which are addressed to: NARP, PO Box 17082, Baltimore, MD 21298-9485. If in any doubt, you may always send checks and other payments directly to our office at: NARP, 505 Capitol Ct, NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC , 20002-7706.

● **There are still openings for state representatives** on the NARP Council of Representatives in several states, including one each in Alabama; Arizona; California; Delaware; Hawaii; Idaho; Louisiana; Massachusetts; Missouri; Nevada; New Jersey; North Carolina; Ohio (2 Seats); Texas (2 Seats) and Wyoming. If you are interested in becoming more involved with NARP and advancing our goal of 'A Connected America', please visit our website, www.narprail.org for more information on applying and for a complete up-to-date list of the positions available. ■



NARP Representatives meet during the Fall Conference

Photo Credit: Ken Briers

CAPITOL HILL, from p. 1

NARP's staff has been hard at work all year to fulfill the promise of the landmark 2015 legislation, the FAST Act. We've organized members to ensure that partisan gridlock doesn't get in the way of the hard fought progress we've secured. Specifically, FAST Act grants will address maintenance backlogs, fund infrastructure upgrades (including Positive Train Control), and help to restore and add service.

NARP worked with Congress to secure funding for Amtrak and the FAST Act grant programs in the appropriations process,

securing \$1.5 billion in total from the full Senate, and \$1.47 billion in the version passed by the House Appropriations Committee.

Fortunately, while many of the House budget bills contain partisan conflicts, both the House and Senate THUD bills enjoyed bipartisan support in committee. We'll look to members to take up the appropriations fight for the FAST Act programs after the election, so make sure to go to www.narprail.org/action to see how you can help stand up for American passengers, Amtrak, and A Connected America. ■

VEHICLES, from p. 2

In a new report, Boston Consulting Group, revealed one possibility - that AVs will have a strong future, while other mass transit modes like passenger rail, will be left behind. The report, "Will Autonomous Vehicles Derail Trains?" claims that AVs will "constitute a tangible threat to passenger rail within the next one or two decades."

The group made this case by looking at peak hours versus non-peak hours in urban areas. The report states:

"Trains will remain the least expensive mode of transportation during peak times in urban areas. But during off-peak hours and in rural environments, they will lose riders to AVs. Rail companies may even end up in a downward spiral: with reduced overall ridership, rail companies' overall unit costs for all remaining passengers will escalate because of the inherently high proportion of fixed costs in operating a train network."

The report also looks at how AVs will threaten rail ridership due to their eventual ability to travel safely through suburban neighborhoods where children and animals could run around, not just on highways. The report also argues AVs will allow people to save money by lowering labor costs for ride-sharing services.

Though these possibilities can sound appealing, NARP believes the conclusion of the Boston Consulting Group's report ignores basic geometric realities. The past two decades of demographic growth have produced resettlement patterns that see young, educated professionals moving to cities and walkable communities. Sprawl is sprawl, whether encouraged by gasoline-powered vehicles or other means, and it is sprawl that young professionals are rejecting.

A recent report, Foot Traffic Ahead, by the Center for Real Estate and Urban Analysis at George Washington University

School of Business in conjunction with LOCUS: Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors found that demand was increasing in all 30 of the largest metro areas in the country.

This ongoing trend has led to steady growth in passenger rail service, with cities and states looking to develop new rail lines and multi-modal stations with rail at the heart of each. And as people continue to trend towards walkable communities with multi-modal hubs, we can expect to see continued growth for rail service for years to come. We will even see growth in rail service between cities that look to connect passengers faster than ever.

To name only a few cities as examples of new growth and expansion of rail service, Cincinnati and Kansas City both recently opened new streetcar services; Detroit is soon to start a new streetcar line in the

city; Charlotte, NC is currently expanding its light rail system; Dallas and Houston are pushing forward with a high-speed rail line; New York City will open a new subway line in December; and other cities across the country are expanding, developing, and implementing new rail services.

Right now, billions of dollars from federal, state, and local governments as well as private companies are being invested in high-speed rail, light-rail, streetcars, and more, in order to develop a robust rail infrastructure in the U.S. that connects people to where they want to go and the best way possible. This means governments, companies, and rail agencies are not exclusively looking at rail as the only form of transit, but if anything, they are looking for new ways to integrate rail with other modes of transportation in the future, whether it's AVs, airplanes, buses, or bikes.

Only by connecting rail with all transportation platforms throughout the country will we truly be able to see the future of transit. ■



Walkable Communities Can Bring All Forms of Transit Together

Photo Credit: Mobility Lab

ATTENDANCE, from p. 1

Saturday's all-day Advocacy Symposium featured keynote presentations by Mark Imhoff of Colorado DOT and Travis Kelly of the Texas Central Railway, along with six distinct panels covering a wide range of topics. During a panel titled "Solving the Infrastructure Conundrum: The \$300+ Billion Elephant In The Room," participants discussed structural reasons why the U.S. lags behind other countries in transportation investments, most noticeably in intercity passenger rail -- even when those nations have far fewer resources.

Anthony Perl, Professor of Urban Studies & Political Science at Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, BC) looked to the history of passenger rail development in North America to explain some of its unique outcomes, and engaged in a lively back-and-forth with audience members about possible solutions. Answers included bringing U.S. equipment specifications in-line with international safety standards to lower costs. Another suggestion was easing federal Buy America provisions, which have paradoxically hindered growth of U.S. rail manufacturing by raising prices for trainsets in the U.S. and inhibiting demand.

Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Government Affairs at NARP, looked at federal, state, and municipal revenue sources that are being used to close the investment gap. He also explored creative capital structures, public-private partnerships, and value-capture initiatives that could be used to provide additional transportation funding.

Jim Souby, a NARP Board Director and President of the Colorado Passenger Rail Association, moderated a panel focused on the lessons learned from the ongoing efforts to retain and improve Amtrak's Southwest Chief service across the region. Panelists Sal Pace of Pueblo, CO and Chair of the Southwest Chief Commission, Mark Imhoff of ColoDOT, and Peter Rickershauser, a retired BNSF executive, spoke of the collective grassroots efforts which have now led to a secure future for the train on its present route and for plans to extend service to Pueblo. All agreed that through a highly collaborative process the interests of the passengers and communities who depend on the train are being met.

'Have you ever seen a parking lot right next to a rail station and questioned whether or not it was the highest use of what should be valuable land?' That was the mindset advocates came away with from a panel focusing on the topic of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the wake of many transit agencies, and Amtrak's, recent focus on developing land for revenue generation adjacent to stations they own.

Panelist Rusty Roberts, VP of Government Affairs for the Brightline Project in Florida, cautioned that while that the ambitious, privately-financed, high-frequency rail service is expected to cover its operational expenses, the overall scope of the project is one of significant land development in the heart of Florida's major cities and that without this development the rail component wouldn't be viable.

NARP's Director of Resource Development, Betsy Nelson (fresh from an engineering program in transportation planning) reminded us as intercity train advocates that the TOD effect isn't just for big cities. Leveraging passenger trains for property development has worked recently in small towns across the country from Meridian



Denver Union Station

Photo Credit: Ken Briers

MS, to Bloomington-Normal, IL. Public dollars spent on those train stations induced nearby private investment that far exceeded the initial project cost; by as much as five times, in the case of Meridian.

As advocates, the importance of this effect can't be overstated--as it is why passenger railroads were brought to life in the first place. The TOD argument can cement support from property developers, chambers of commerce, and powerful stakeholders. The trick is getting them on the same page; it takes a village to build a village, as the Panel's moderator Abe Zumwalt of NARP concluded.

Other panels addressed topics including: 'A Sneak Peek at the Future of US Passenger Rail', moderated by NARP President/CEO Jim Mathews with panelists Bill Moyer of Solunatory Rail and Rusty Roberts of the Brightline project; 'Fulfilling High-Speed Rail's Promise' moderated by NARP Chair Peter LeCody with Travis Kelly of the Texas Central Rail project contributing; and 'Moving Ahead With Shared Passenger/Freight Corridors' with panelists Andrew Goetz of the University of Denver and Mariah Morales of Amtrak Government Affairs sharing their perspectives on the road forward for mixed-use rights-of-ways.

The weekend concluded over lunch on Sunday with a keynote address by Gary DeFrang, President of the Winter Park (CO) Resort, who enthusiastically spoke about the resumption this winter of regular ski train service between Denver and the slopes at the western portal of the Moffat Tunnel in Winter Park. He discussed the joint process which led to a 'win-win' for all the parties, including Amtrak's operation of the trains utilizing off-season idle Superliner cars and Winter Park's construction of a new platform for the safe handling of passengers and their skis. Advance ticket sales have far exceeded expectations and the entire region is looking forward to welcoming back this winter sport's transportation alternative.

Advocates left Denver with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment, along with the knowledge that, with Denver as an example, U.S. cities can plan and build a highly-effective, comprehensive, and popular transit system. All it takes is for the community's citizens, business interests, and elected officials to come together for the common good. ■

WEB EXCLUSIVE!

NARP is proud to share a new video that highlights the significance and growing importance of passenger rail in the United States. The video features actor and rail-enthusiast Dan Aykroyd, along with NARP's President and CEO Jim Mathews, as they share their views on passenger rail services, such as Amtrak.

The video also discusses the many benefits of taking

passenger trains for local commutes or for vacation travel. Benefits include how passenger rail service can be integrated into transit-oriented development that connects people to where they want to go, whether it's by train, bus, airplane or bike. This is in addition to also helping grow local economies and reducing traffic congestion and pollution.

To see the video for yourself, please visit www.narprail.org. ■

NARP Traveler's Advisory

- ❖ Due to extreme heat and safety risks, Amtrak has banned Samsung Galaxy Note7 mobile phones on all Amtrak trains, Thruway buses, facilities, stations, platforms and as an item carried within a vehicle on Auto Train. This ban was been made effective immediately in October, 2016.
- ❖ Public transit employees for the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) went on strike November 1, 2016. The strike has shut down all transit services, including subways, buses and trolleys. This has also resulted in service interruptions for Amtrak customers traveling in and out of Philadelphia 30th Street Station.
- ❖ Amtrak is giving riders more options for travel this fall between San Diego and Los Angeles, and has started promoting the service on its website. Starting November 7, Amtrak will expand morning and evening service with the addition of two new trips between the two cities on the Pacific Surfliner, and from October 31 - December 4, Amtrak will increase the number of Business Class seats available
- ❖ Amtrak's popular On-Board Pets Program has been expanded to include all services in New York State and on the Ethan Allen Express to Vermont points. Pet reservations are now being accepted for travel. There is a \$25.00 fee per pet, a limit of 5 pets per train, and other restrictions apply. ■