



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

FOCUS ON SUN BELT

Missouri-New Orleans Link Likely in April!

A major gap in our national passenger rail system should close Apr. 29, when Amtrak is expected to extend its Kansas City-St. Louis "Mule" eastward to Centralia, IL, a city served by the Chicago-New Orleans "City of New Orleans." A Kansas City-N.O. through coach and sleeper would be carried in the two trains. Thus, St. Louis (metro pop. 2.4 million) and Kansas City (1.3 million) would gain direct rail service to New Orleans for the first time in years—and just in time for the May 11 opening there of the World's Fair.

On Jan. 31, Rep. Paul Simon (D-IL) announced that Amtrak management wants the linkage and will seek board approval Feb. 15. Board approval is expected.

REGIONAL MEETINGS: Yet another date for Reg. 5 in Charlotte, NC—Mar. 30-31. Reg. 6 meets 17 Mar., Mexican Village Rest'nt, 3 blocks S of Detroit Amtrak sta., 1:30-7 PM, state ARP biz first, then NARP. \$15 reg. fee includes dinner, must be rec'd by 12 Mar. by John DeLora, 1869 Brys Dr., Grosse Pointe Woods 48236. Reg. 3: 24 Mar., 30th St. Sta. (Phila.) Rm. 360A, 10 AM-5 PM. Reg. 8: 10 Mar., Davenport Hotel, Spokane. 10 AM meeting, NARP VP John Kirkwood will be luncheon speaker.

The extended "Mule" would use Southern Railway between St. Louis and Centralia, and would serve an Illinois suburb of St. Louis. Capital costs: \$250,000 for new suburban platform and track connection improvements at East St. Louis and Centralia.

The concept of a Missouri-New Orleans link got its start just over a year ago when NARP Member Bill Wullenjohn produced an analysis indicating the service would have a net benefit to Amtrak (Jan., Feb. 1983 News). The route originally envisioned was Illinois Central Gulf's St. Louis-DuQuoin (-Carbondale) line, but ICG's hefty capital improvement demands caused Amtrak to turn to Southern.

As it examined Wullenjohn's proposal, Amtrak went a step further and explored the possibility of closing a second gap with the same train, by extending the "Mule" northward from Kansas City into Omaha for connections with the "California Zephyr," "Pioneer," and "Desert Wind." In late Sep., Amtrak inspected the Kansas City-Omaha mainlines of Burlington Northern and Missouri Pacific. The market potential looks promising; we hope Amtrak soon will use this opportunity to link St. Louis and Kansas City with Omaha and all points west on the "CA Zephyr/Pioneer/Desert Wind" routes.

Incidentally, the last through-train service between St. Louis and New Orleans ended with the expiration of the St. Louis section of Illinois Central's "Panama Ltd." in 1970; the last Kansas City-New Orleans service died with Kansas City Southern's "Southern Belle" in 1968. ■

Amtrak Finds Oklahoma Viable; Considers "Sunset" Reroute with Dallas-Houston Link & Faster Chicago-Phoenix, Dallas-LA Runs

Amtrak projects a tri-weekly "Lone Star" through Oklahoma would post a healthy 58% revenue-to-cost ratio in FY '85, and average 216 passenger-miles-per-trainmile (PMTM) (vs. the statutory long-distance criterion of 150, and the 171.3 average posted by long-distance trains in FY '83). The avoidable loss per passenger-mile (ALPM) would be only 5¢, less than half the 11.4¢ Amtrak projects the present law would permit for long-distance trains in FY '85, and less than the 8¢ to which the Reagan administration wants the law changed.

Amtrak projects a tri-weekly "Lone Star" through Oklahoma would easily beat congressional criteria, but startup of Oklahoma service will require a congressional mandate. Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor Jr. is holding firm to his policy of introducing on his own initiative only those services whose revenues would cover or exceed operating costs.

Under the economically strongest of seven alternatives Amtrak studied, "Lone Star" would operate (Chicago-Kansas City)-Newton-Wichita-Oklahoma City-Ft. Worth on the same days as the Chicago-San Antonio (-El Paso-Los Angeles) "Eagle," with which there would be cross-platform transfers at Ft. Worth. As with all options studied, "Lone Star" would carry through cars to/from Chicago and be linked with Dallas by a bus connection at Ft. Worth.

The economic performance of most Oklahoma options would be even stronger if Amtrak dramatically improves rail connections at Ft. Worth, with new Houston-New Orleans service and much faster El Paso-Tucson-Phoenix-Los Angeles service.

Ft. Worth would gain just such connections under a proposal for rerouting Amtrak's Los Angeles-Phoenix-El Paso-Houston-New Orleans "Sunset Ltd." via Ft. Worth and Dallas instead of San Antonio. This proposal was advanced by NARP Director John A. Mills of Topeka, KS.

Early-February inspections of the two freight lines that would gain service under the Mills plan—Southern Pacific Dallas-Houston and Missouri Pacific Ft. Worth-Abilene-El Paso—suggest that Claytor is seriously interested and recognizes the plan's potential for making Amtrak service in the region far more useful.

OKLAHOMA

Good Statistics: Amtrak projected a tri-weekly "Lone Star" would have a FY '85 avoidable loss per passenger-mile (ALPM) of only 5¢, which meets the 8¢ criterion the Reagan administration wants in the law, and is less than half the allowable 11.4¢ Amtrak estimates would apply to long-distance trains in FY '85 under current law.

Tri-weekly "Lone Star" is projected at an average of 216 passenger-miles-per-trainmile (PMTM), which compares favorably with the statutory 150 criterion for long-distance trains and with the 171.3 posted by those trains in FY '83.

Finally, this train would have a revenue-to-cost ratio of 58%, better than the 57% average posted by long-distance trains in FY '83 and only slightly below the (optimistic?) 63% long-distance average Amtrak projects for FY '85.

The Case for a Legislative Mandate: Legislators and citizens from other parts of the country need good reasons to support or acquiesce in adoption of an Oklahoma mandate. We believe the following reasons make a persuasive case.

1. Amtrak projects the Oklahoma service would easily meet existing and proposed statutory criteria, something which could not be said about some trains Congress has mandated in the past.

2. The strongest Oklahoma options would strengthen the "Southwest Ltd.," which could use more revenue, and all options would reduce pressure on the often sold-out "Eagle."

3. Oklahoma is by far the largest state without Amtrak service today, and one of only two states to have had Amtrak service and lost it (Wyoming is the other).

States Without Amtrak Service	Population (1980 Census)
Oklahoma	3,025,290
Maine	1,124,660
Hawaii	964,691
New Hampshire	920,610
South Dakota	690,768
Wyoming	469,557
Alaska	401,851

4. Oklahoma boasts two of the nation's six largest metro areas lacking rail passenger service: Oklahoma City, population 834,088, and Tulsa 689,628. (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area [SMSA] populations from the 1980 census.)

5. Oklahoma was the victim of a game of "dirty pool" during the 1978-79 route restructuring process. The "Lone Star" route was included in U.S. DOT's May '78 "Preliminary Report" on the

HELP WITH THE NARP SLIDE SHOW!

NARP Directors Anthony Perl and Ted Scull are assembling a NARP Slide Show to be made available at nominal charge for local use by members and state associations. Although the show might provide NARP with a modest direct income, the main purpose would be attracting new members while acquainting still more people with available train services.

Perl says "the show would be built around the concept of a rail travel seminar—what it's like to take the train, where they go, how to get information. It would include long-distance trips as well as day-trips of varying lengths. The show would be designed so that as much local content could be added as a member wants. This would be especially important for the day-trip section.

"Each person showing it might find one or several sponsors—school, church, or travel agent—who would provide space for the show, publicity, or, in the case of an agent, a direct donation in return for being introduced as the local rail passenger (and travel) specialist and distributing literature with the agent's address.

"Though Ted and I both have fairly large slide files, we invite members who want to help to send slides carefully packed in cardboard (limit ten per member) to: Theodore W. Scull, 325 E. 72nd St., New York, NY 10021. The labeled slides should depict current aspects of passenger trains in America, including people, stations, equipment (especially interior views), scenery, etc. Members wishing slides returned should include stamped (with enough postage!) self-addressed envelope; all slides would be returned by the end of April. Any slides used would be credited."

The hope is to have the show with accompanying text ready for general use in May.

"SOUTHWEST LTD." ROUTE UNLIKELY TO CHANGE

It appears that a potential threat to continued Amtrak service in western Kansas, southeastern Colorado, and scenic northeastern New Mexico has been squashed.

Amtrak, at the request of the Santa Fe Railway, examined an alternate route for the Chicago-Los Angeles "Southwest Ltd."—a Newton, KS-Albuquerque routing via Wichita and Amarillo. This would require a backup move into Albuquerque, although Amtrak felt present overall Chicago-LA running times could be maintained even with the backup.

Under the reroute, service would be discontinued at Hutchinson, Dodge City, and Garden City, KS; Lamar, La Junta, and Trinidad, CO; and Raton, Las Vegas, and Lamy (for Santa Fe, the state capital), NM.

As word of the possibility spread, opposition arose, and it became obvious that the attempt to implement this change would be, to put it politely, politically messy. At press time a final decision had not been made, and there was no guarantee that a stay-where-we-are decision by Amtrak this month would prevent Santa Fe from trying to apply more pressure in some future non-election year.

Amtrak route structure, leading citizens to believe they would not have to fight to keep service. The Rail Services Planning Office of the Interstate Commerce Commission, which had a statutory mandate to review and comment upon the preliminary plan, thought likewise and scheduled no public hearings in Oklahoma.

But the Jan. '79 "Final Report" from DOT showed no service in Oklahoma, and the complicated political deals which ensued saw "Lone Star" discontinued while three routes with inferior ALPM's and four routes with inferior PMTM's were retained. Subsequently, those inferior routes were dropped or restructured, but that doesn't change the fact that Oklahomans didn't get a fair deal on Amtrak service.

Claytor himself recognizes the uniqueness of Oklahoma's relationship to Amtrak. He reportedly told the state's congressional delegation meeting at Amtrak headquarters Jan. 27 that Amtrak's study of Oklahoma route possibilities was more thorough than any other study the company has undertaken.

The 403(b) Option: Claytor also told the legislators that Amtrak would move quickly if the state(s) applied for service under Sec. 403(b) of the Amtrak law, which provides for state/Amtrak cost-sharing. He distributed a separate analysis which showed projections that the tri-weekly "Lone Star" would require the lowest state contributions (\$2.1 million year one, \$1.7 million thereafter). Ideally, thinks Amtrak, these totals could be divided

ATTENTION NARP TRAVEL AGENTS:

We will run an updated list of NARP-member travel agents in the next issue of NARP News. If you're a NARP member and an Amtrak-appointed travel agent and have not yet contacted us, please send us a note on your agency stationery right away!

between Oklahoma and Kansas, since Wichita would also gain service.

Tulsa, 105 highway miles east/northeast of Oklahoma City, has strongly supported an Amtrak routing that includes Tulsa. The city has pledged to spend up to \$100,000 of its own money to build a station. Therefore, it is worth noting that the lowest cost option including Tulsa service, a tri-weekly extension of the Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City "Ann Rutledge" to Ft. Worth via Tulsa-Oklahoma City was projected to require a state contribution of \$2.3 million in the first year; \$1.7 million thereafter.

The Routes Compared: "Lone Star" cars would operate in the "Southwest Ltd." Chicago-Kansas City-Newton, while "Oil Flyer" cars would be in the "Southwest" Chicago-Kansas City and operate as a separate train Kansas City-Tulsa-Oklahoma City-Ft. Worth.

"Tulsa Eagle" would be a tri-weekly St. Louis-Springfield, MO-Tulsa-Oklahoma City-Ft. Worth-Austin-San Antonio extension of the Chicago-St. Louis 'short' "Eagle" which now operates on the

four days/week when Chicago-Arkansas-Texas service is not operated. "Tulsa Eagle" is the only option which would have no western connections. These could only be obtained if it operated the same days as today's 'long' "Eagle." Amtrak felt this would mean too much overlap in city-pairs between "Tulsa Eagle" and today's 'long' "Eagle."

Here, ranked according to ALPM and revenue-to-cost ratios are the seven options:

Tri-weekly "Lone Star" 5¢, 58%.

Daily "Lone Star" 7¢, 51%.

Tri-weekly and daily "Ann Rutledge" 10.8¢, 44%. (Tri-weekly would have higher PMTM—114 vs. 91—and smaller subsidy requirement).

Tri-weekly "Oil Flyer" 12.2¢, 41%.

Tri-weekly "Tulsa Eagle" 13.6¢, 39%.

Daily "Oil Flyer" 14.8¢, 36%.

SUNSET REROUTE

Under the Mills plan, "Sunset" would have a new schedule and would run between Houston and El Paso via Dallas, Ft. Worth, and Abilene instead of via San Antonio. The Chicago-San Antonio "Eagle" would continue on its present schedule, but "Eagle-Sunset" through cars would be switched at Dallas instead of San Antonio. This would knock 274 miles off all trips between Dallas-east points and El Paso-west points.

The direct Dallas-Ft. Worth-El Paso route through Abilene is 647 miles, 30% shorter than Amtrak's present 921-mile route. On the other hand, the proposed Houston-El Paso routing is only 96 miles longer than the current route (911 miles proposed is 11.8% longer than the present 815-mile run). The benefits:

- Shorter trip times for key existing markets, as reflected in these figures prepared by John Mills.

Market	Trip-Time Reductions	
	Westbound	Eastbound
St. Louis-Los Angeles	13:15	9:05
Chicago-Phoenix	13:15	9:05
Dallas-Los Angeles	13:30	9:30
Ft. Worth-Los Angeles	13:20	9:50
Dallas-Phoenix	13:55	8:35
Los Angeles-Austin	4:12	:12
Phoenix-Austin	4:37	(:38 longer)

(N.B.: These and the other running-time adjustments noted in this article are subject, of course, to change depending on what schedules Amtrak might eventually negotiate with the railroads.)

- Dallas-Houston would be linked again, and have its first respectable rail running-times since 1965.

FLASH! Auto Train won't go daily March 1.

- "Eagle" would link Chicago/St. Louis/Little Rock by through cars or connections to the six largest metro areas in Texas (Dallas-Ft. Worth, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, El Paso, and Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange).



HELP THE "MT. RAINIER"

The Washington Assn. of Railroad Passengers plans to promote ridership on the Seattle-Portland "Mt. Rainier" with radio and newspaper ads. NARP members wishing to help should send contributions to "Mt. Rainier Fund, Wash-ARP, P. O. Box 7381, Bellevue, WA 98008.

- Dallas would finally become the hub it should always have been—with expeditious service to Houston and El Paso-Tucson-Phoenix-Los Angeles, and through but circuitous service to New Orleans and (as at present) Austin-San Antonio. This makes sense commercially—and morally, given the unprecedented and successful efforts by Dallas to turn Union Station into a major center of activity (NARP News, June '81 lead story). Within the past few months, Dallas area voters approved a massive light-rail system (News, Aug. '83) and its city council on Jan. 11 voted to lift onerous speed restrictions which have hampered passenger and freight train operations within the city's huge boundaries for years.

- Tucson and Phoenix finally would gain reasonably-timed service to the Midwest.

- The St. Louis-Los Angeles traveler would have expeditious through service again and—for those willing to change trains in Kansas City—two genuine schedule choices on days when "Eagle" runs. ("Ann Rutledge/Southwest Ltd." is the alternative.)

- "Sunset" would run overnight between New Orleans-Houston, so people connecting between it and the 2 (soon-to-be-3) other routes serving New Orleans would no longer have to spend the night in a New Orleans hotel and NY-Houston-Dallas through cars would be possible. (Currently, no same-day connections are possible with the NY-New Orleans "Crescent" and the eastbound "Sunset" does not connect with the Chicago-New Orleans "City of New Orleans" and will not connect with the Mobile-New Orleans "Gulf Coast Ltd." when that train starts running Apr. 29.)

For the first time, you could ride between Los Angeles-Atlanta, New York-Houston, Atlanta-Phoenix, etc., without an overnight layover.

- As noted above, drastically improved connections at Ft. Worth should produce even higher ridership projections and lower subsidy requirements for Oklahoma service than those Amtrak recently produced.

- San Antonio travelers would no longer have to catch east-west trains at ridiculous hours (4 AM westbound; 6 AM eastbound); connections to everywhere would be offered at "Eagle's" more civilized times: approximately 8 AM outbound, 10 PM inbound.

- Service would be introduced at three SMSA's on the Ft. Worth-El Paso line: Abilene (139,192), Odessa (115,374), and Midland (82,636), and possibly at some of the seven other communities along the route with populations between 12,000 and 25,000 (this includes Mineral Wells, nine miles from Millsap station).

- "Sunset" should be transformed from one of Amtrak's weakest routes to one of its strongest. In an Oct. 4 letter to NARP President John R. Martin, Claytor said the "Eagle" "is becoming one of our strongest long-haul services." A strong showing by "Sunset" as well could lead to serious consideration of increased frequencies for the entire "Sunset/Eagle" operation—from the present thrice-weekly to five or seven round-trips per week.

- Establishment of a transcontinental schedule which would connect in Los Angeles with an overnight Los Angeles-San Francisco train should enhance the chances of reviving such a service and having it succeed.

The costs:

- San Antonio would lose its present, unattractively-timed east-west direct service. However, connections to all points could be made via the better-timed "Eagle." San Antonio-Los Angeles would be 6:50 slower west, 7:15 east. San Antonio-Houston and San Antonio-New Orleans travel would effectively be lost, though connections would be available for those willing to put up with the extra mileage.

- New Orleans-Los Angeles would be slower by 2 hours west, 1:40 east; Houston-Los Angeles by 2:10/2:25.

- The connection between "Sunset" and the Los Angeles-Seattle "Coast Starlight" would be broken, but Los Angeles, the nation's second largest metro area, should be able to generate enough traffic even without connections.

- Service would be eliminated at these stations: Del Rio (30,034), Alpine (5,465), and Sanderson (about 1,300), and along SP's 723-mile Houston-San Antonio-Sierra Blanca mainline—MP uses SP tracks for the 92-mile Sierra Blanca-El Paso run.

- While the trains remain tri-weekly, days of operation would change to reflect service speedups (e.g. Los Angeles arrivals on 3rd instead of 4th day out of St. Louis, 2nd instead of 3rd day out of Dallas) and to enable travelers to connect in Ft. Worth to/from all four "compass points" (Chicago/New Orleans/San Antonio/Los Angeles). This would work if trains departed Chicago/New Orleans/Los Angeles, for example, on Sun./Tues./Thurs. San Antonio arrivals and departures and Ft. Worth connections would be Mon./Wed./Fri.) Hopefully overall revenues would grow so that a 4th trip could be added soon to restore some shorter-distance existing traffic that might be lost with the day changes.

- Amtrak would operate a mere 82 trainmiles per day more. ("Sunset" run would be 96 miles longer, as noted above, times 6 one-way trips per week—for tri-weekly service—equals 576 new trainmiles/week, divided by seven equals 82 trainmiles/day.)

Countless rail advocates have looked at the map trying to figure out how to give Texas a presentable service within roughly the present number of trainmiles. Our congratulations to John Mills for figuring out a plan that makes sense, to President Claytor for taking it seriously, and to Amtrak Director Charles Luna for enthusiastically supporting it. ■

New S.F.-Sacramento-Reno Train?

Nevada DOT asked Amtrak to project results of adding a second train on the San Francisco/Oakland-Reno segment of the "California Zephyr." Amtrak's forecast is for a 56.5% revenue-cost ratio—meeting California Gov. George Deukmejian's 55% requirement—and 88.3 passenger-miles-per-trainmile. Amtrak assumes two sets of equipment to permit optimum schedules as worked out with Nevada DOT: 9 AM from Oakland, 3:35 PM into Reno; 3 PM from Reno, 9:55 PM into Oakland. (Sparks, 3 miles east of Reno, would also be served.)

California and Nevada are negotiating over how much financial support each would provide, since the train would be jointly funded by Amtrak and the states pursuant to Sec. 403(b) of the Amtrak law.

NARP Vice President John Kirkwood has written to Gov. Deukmejian supporting this effort.

A new Reno train would bring added capacity and reliability to a market in which rail has demonstrated extraordinary popularity—as judged by the number of Reno establishments which advertise their Amtrak accessibility in Bay Area newspapers, and by ridership on the "Zephyr" and on Amtrak's "Fun Train" specials. Also, the new service would reduce overcrowding on the western segment of the "Zephyr," thereby improving reliability of that train and making it more pleasant for its riders. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

An early-morning Jan. 20 fire near the Charles River drawbridges at Boston's North Station is expected to keep B&M trains north of the river for 9 to 12 months. Lowell/Gardner-Fitchburg lines passengers are bussed between Cambridge rail yards and MBTA's Lechmere (Green Line) station; Haverhill-Reading and Ipswich/Rockport line passengers make direct connections with MBTA's Orange Line at Malden Center and Sullivan Square, respectively.

Station times at outlying commuter rail points were not changed initially, but a new timetable may be developed because people were having to leave work early to reach their regular B&M trains.

The first phase of Amtrak's inclusion in TWA's automated reservation system (PARS) was effective Jan. 30, when the nearly 3,000 PARS agents gained access to Amtrak's schedules and space availability for information only. By the end of Feb., agents will be able to make Amtrak reservations on their computer keyboards, and the ticketing capability will be added sometime after March.

As the result of a complaint by NARP Director Peter Van Zanten of Kansas City to the NARP office, Amtrak is offering full meals on the Chicago-St. Louis-Kansas City "Ann Rutledge" as a 60-day experiment. Eat it or lose it! Earlier, pressure from several local NARP members helped secure a long-distance coach and a dinette car with tables for the "Rutledge."

"Michigan Executive" commuters have been "saved" under a plan developed at the last minute: evening "Twilight Ltd." continues to honor commuter tickets and to stop at Ypsilanti, MI, while a Michigan DOT bus replaced the morning Ann Arbor-to-Detroit "Exec."

Dedicated buses now link Tampa Union Station with the following points: Clearwater Amtrak station and Clearwater Beach Civic Center; St. Petersburg Amtrak station and Treasure Island Community Center; Manatee County Courthouse bus station in Bradenton and Sarasota City Hall bus station. Buses operate to/from "Silver Meteor" and "Silver Star."

Those special "Silver Palm" and "San Joaquin" discount roundtrip fares (Sep. News) have been renewed through Mar. 31: "SP" is OW + \$5 (30 days); "SJ" is OW + \$7 (7 days).

"San Diegans" began using the new \$7.5 million Ocean-side, CA, transportation center Feb. 1. The downtown facility also houses Greyhound, Trailways, county transit buses, a travel agency, and a soon-to-open Burger King.

Speaking of fast food, the first McDonald's in a U.S. rail station opened in Philadelphia's 30th St. Station in mid-Dec., shortly before McDonald's founder Ray Kroc's death.

Ottumwa, IA, Amtrak station returned to daily staffing Dec. 19; had been staffed only 5 days/week since Oct. 30.

In accordance with its contractual obligations, Chessie System built Amtrak a \$307,000 station at Huntington, WV, so that Chessie could expand its offices in the old station. The new facility, which opened Oct. 10, has parking and is well-lit, but it is in a deteriorating neighborhood (across the tracks, ¼-mile from the old station), has no platform canopy, and seats only 34 people. (50 passengers often board "Cardinal" here during holiday and summer peaks, and many passengers are accompanied to the station by friends and relatives.) Amtrak may expand the station in the future. Hopefully, it will also expand the platform length, now 4 cars and causing delays during peak periods when long trains must triple-stop.

Amtrak plans to improve views from the dome by reducing height of upper-level seat backs in dome cars.

Sleeper passengers on #1 westbound "Sunset Ltd." may occupy rooms until 7:15 AM—even if train arrives Los Angeles early.

Some sleeping-car passengers—generally those spending one night on any given train—can save money by booking coach space during non-sleeping hours. Currently, for example, the Chicago-Albuquerque round-trip is 21% cheaper (\$261.50 vs. \$331 including All Aboard America rail fare) for one person who travels economy room and buys room from Fort Madison, IA, to Garden City, KS, and from La Junta, CO, to La Plata, MO than for someone who buys the economy room the full length of the roundtrip.

If one travels all the way from Chicago to Los Angeles, however, it's best to buy the room all the way since that room charge is \$78 one-way and most overnight segments of reasonable length will cost at least roughly \$40 each. Similarly, this trick won't work in slumbercoach, where Amtrak charges flat rates that don't vary with distance traveled.