



Boardman Becomes Amtrak CEO

The Amtrak Board announced on Nov. 25 that Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Boardman would become the next president and chief executive officer. In a news release, Chairman Donna McLean said, "In an attempt to maintain the momentum at Amtrak, while finding a permanent CEO candidate, the board has appointed Mr. Boardman for one year, but would conduct a search in the coming months for a permanent CEO."

After Boardman's appointment was announced, he told NARP, "I believe that a national intercity interconnected passenger rail system is one of the most important core and fundamental strengths of Amtrak. Without it, Amtrak will not be what it is and can become. National connectivity comes together with Amtrak. Period." He said much the same thing in a quotation in Amtrak's news release.

Boardman's first high-profile passenger train involvement was the publication of the respected report *Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation* by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). This report (Jan. 16, 2003) was published under his leadership as chairman of AASHTO's Standing Committee on Rail Transportation, while he was commissioner of the New York State DOT. As the Feb. 2003

NARP News noted, the "report contains a wealth of state-generated data about corridor development prospects. It advocates corridor development, but in the context of a nationwide, linked intercity passenger rail network."

Amtrak on Nov. 14 had announced the resignation of CEO Alex Kummant, ending a two-year tenure. McLean: "On behalf of the entire Board, I'd like to thank Alex for his leadership...During the past two years, [Amtrak] has experienced exciting economic times, strong ridership and revenue growth, solid profit and loss

performance, and the advancement of the Amtrak brand overall."

NARP President Ross Capon expressed appreciation for Kummant's work, citing his defense of the national network of long distance trains and "Amtrak's efforts under his leadership to get a decent resolution of issues surrounding the controversial Access to the Region's Core (ARC) project to add more capacity under the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York City" (p.2).

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Bush Signs Amtrak Reauthorization

The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, including the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (Oct.-Nov. 2008 News), became Public Law 110-432 when President Bush signed it October 16.

Key provisions not mentioned in our last issue include matching capital funds for states and—for states or Amtrak—targeted congestion grants to expand capacity on key corridors and capital funds to apply to the 11 federally-designated high-speed corridors. (The table on page three has a breakdown of the bill's passenger train funding. In this article, sec-

tion and title references refer to "Division B," the bill's Amtrak portion.)

Pro-Long-Distance Train "Findings"—14 in all—support a "Sense of the Congress" that "long-distance passenger rail is a vital and necessary part of our national transportation system and economy; and Amtrak should maintain a national passenger rail system, including long-distance routes, that connects the continental United States from coast to coast and border to border" (Sec. 228).

Amtrak's mission replaces its "purpose": "The mission of Amtrak is to pro-

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New Subsidiary of Defense Firm Builds Trolley Cars in Oregon

For the first time since the President's Conference Car (PCC) streetcars were built in the 1940s, an American company is building a modern version of the streetcar (there has been domestic production of light rail vehicles in recent years). United Streetcar, LLC is a newly formed subsidiary of Oregon Iron Works. The factory is located in Clackamas, OR.

The NARP Board of Directors toured the plant as part of its recent meeting in Portland (p. 2). United Streetcar was also a sponsor of a reception honoring the City of Portland (p.2).

United Streetcar is working with SKODA, a Czech Republic-based com-

pany that has been building streetcars and trams for many years. SKODA built the original cars currently used on the Portland Streetcar system. The Portland Streetcar is experiencing rapid growth and United Streetcar will be building new cars for the next streetcar extension on the East Side of Portland. Testing on these cars is due to begin in the first quarter of 2009.

In these times of economic difficulty, it is important to remind politicians and policy-makers that passenger train and mass transit construction can be an economic stimulus tool. This results in well-paying, green, domestic-based jobs. ■



—Ross B. Capon

Vehicle assembly takes place at the United Streetcar plant in Clackamas, OR, near Portland.

NARP Board Approves New Structure

The NARP Board of Directors, meeting in Portland, Oregon, Oct. 18, approved new by-laws overhauling the Association's structure.

"The intent is to bring the organization closer to its members, and give them more ways to be involved, enhancing grass roots efforts," said Chairman George L. Chilson.

Here are some key changes.

- The former, 80-member Board of Directors is now the Council of Representatives.

- The former, 17-member Executive Committee is now the Board of Directors. The Council will elect a Board of 10 to 15 people (including seven officers) in the spring of 2010 and every two years thereafter, just as the Board formerly elected the Executive Committee.

- The officers are: Chair; four Vice-Chairs, Treasurer and Secretary. (The current five vice-chairs, formerly vice-presidents, will serve until Spring, 2010.)

- The terms of current Council members who were elected as Regional Directors were extended until March 1, 2012.

- The nine Council members who had been at-large Board members will serve usual two-year terms. The Council, at its Spring, 2010, meeting will elect up to 10 at-large Representatives.

- December 1, 2011, is closing date for nominations, including self-nominations, for up to 112 State Representative

NARP Presents New Award to City of Portland

NARP presented its newest honor, the "Tracks to the Future Leadership Award" to the City of Portland on October 16th in the city's historic Union Station. Susan Keil, Director of the city's Department of Transportation, accepted the award.

In making the presentation, NARP Chairman George Chilson, quoting from the plaque, cited Portland's "pioneering leadership in smart growth...[and] wisdom to understand the link between the movements of people, and the communities that grow from these movements."

In her gracious acceptance comments, Keil said she was humbled by NARP's recognition. She said PDOT did not act alone in choosing sustainability. She credited a population that embraced modes of transportation with environmental benefits. She said that, when it comes to sound policy, "the political will ought to come from the people, not the reverse of that equation."

positions. Representative positions will be apportioned among the states with a formula that gives equal weight to distribution of the general population and of NARP membership. Elections are to be conducted state by state. Each candidate will need to fill out a candidate information statement. We will be seeking individuals to fill vacant positions before the 2012 election.

- NARP regions no longer exist, but states can combine for various purposes and some multi-state membership meetings based on the old regional boundaries already are planned for early 2009.

- The Council also includes the Board of Directors and the at-large Representatives and thus could have as many as 137 members.

- Authority to amend the by-laws rests with the Council.

- The Board and the Council are both headed by the Chairman, currently George L. Chilson, who previously was President.

- The top staff person now is President, currently Ross B. Capon, who previously was Executive Director. The President is an ex officio member of the Board.

Except for President, all of the positions discussed above are volunteer. ■

For information on NARP's 2009 membership meetings, go to www.narprail.org, click on Events Calendar.

Keil concluded: "We see transportation as a means; it's not an end in itself. People don't get on the bus because it's such a wonderful experience; they're going someplace. It's a way to connect the city." ■



—Ross B. Capon

NARP Chairman George Chilson presents Portland Transportation Director Susan Keil with NARP's first Tracks to the Future Leadership Award.

NARP's New Membership Database

Working with DonorPerfect, NARP has migrated its database to a system that is neater and easier to use. All you need to renew or donate to NARP is your membership number and your last name—not a password.

For your convenience, we now print your membership number on the mailing label atop page four of the newsletter. This number is required to book discounted travel with Amtrak. Six digits are required at www.amtrak.com, so insert zeroes in front of your number if it has 2-5 digits.

Go to www.narprail.org today; you can practice using the site by making a special contribution to NARP! Contributions made on or before December 31, 2008 are deductible on your 2008 tax return.

Also please consider giving someone a NARP membership; it makes a great holiday gift.

ARC Fight Continues

NARP is still pressing for restoration of a link between New York's Penn Station and planned new Hudson River rail tunnels, but New Jersey Transit continues to plan for those tunnels to serve only a dead-end and scaled-back, "deep cavern" terminal under 34th Street, two blocks to the north (NJT; May News, p. 2; June, p. 4).

NARP's Ross Capon joined local advocates in meetings July 9 with then-New Jersey Transp. Commissioner Kris Kolluri and Nov. 7 with State Sen. Jennifer Beck (R-Red Bank) and NJT Project Director Tom Schulze.

The Federal Transit Administration's Brigid Hynes-Cherin (Regional Administrator, Region 2) approved ARC's Final Environmental Impact Statement Oct. 27.

Three key steps remain. Capon wrote and widely circulated a letter to DOT Secy. Mary Peters Nov. 21 urging her not to let FTA take the next step—issuing a "Record of Decision" for the project.

Authorized Funds in Public Law 110-432 (in millions)

	Amtrak Operating	Amtrak Capital	Debt Service	Amtrak Insp. Gen.	State Cap. Grants	Conges-tion Grants	HSR Corridors	Total FY
FY 09	\$530	\$715	\$285	\$20	\$100	\$0	\$150	\$1,800
FY 10	\$580	\$975	\$264	\$21	\$300	\$50	\$300	\$2,490
FY 11	\$592	\$1,025	\$288	\$22	\$400	\$75	\$350	\$2,752
FY 12	\$616	\$1,275	\$290	\$22	\$500	\$100	\$350	\$3,153
FY 13	\$631	\$1,325	\$277	\$23	\$600	\$100	\$350	\$3,306
Total program \$	\$2,949	\$5,315	\$1,404	\$108	\$1,900	\$325	\$1,500	\$13,501

Other Programs

Baltimore Tunnels	\$60
Cooperative Research	\$20
Next Generation Equipment Pool	\$5
H.R. 2095 Grand Total	\$13,586

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vide efficient and effective intercity passenger rail mobility consisting of high quality service that is trip-time competitive with other intercity travel options and that is consistent with the goals of subsection (d).” Subsection (d), enacted in 1997, says, “Amtrak is encouraged to make agreements with the private sector and undertake initiatives that are consistent with good business judgment and designed to maximize its revenues and minimize Government subsidies” (Sec. 201)

Gone from the law is: “PURPOSE—By using innovative operating and marketing concepts, Amtrak shall provide intercity and commuter rail passenger transportation that completely develops the potential of modern rail transportation to meet the intercity and commuter transportation needs of the United States.”

On-time performance (OTP): The Surface Transportation Board (STB) may investigate any Amtrak route where OTP averages below 80% for two consecutive quarters. If the track-owning railroad is found at fault, the STB can award monetary damages to Amtrak (Sec. 213).

Amtrak’s Board is reorganized to make the President a voting member and to include the Transportation Secretary and seven “individuals appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, with general business and financial experience, experience or qualifications in transportation, freight and passen-

ger rail transportation, travel, hospitality, cruise line, or passenger air transportation businesses, or representatives of employees or **users of passenger rail transportation** or a State government” (emphasis ours).

Terms of the seven Presidentially appointed board members “may be extended until the individual’s successor is appointed and qualified.” Also, “not more than 5 individuals [of those seven] may be [from] the same political party.”

This provision takes effect in mid-April (six months after enactment). Current Board members “may continue to serve for the remainder of the term to which they were appointed” (Sec. 202).

Debt: The Secretary of the Treasury “shall enter into negotiations” and “may secure agreements” to restructure and repay debt to provide “significant savings to Amtrak and the U.S. Government” (Sec. 205).

Amtrak must implement a **modern accounting system** (Sec. 203).

In developing its **New Orleans-Sanford, Florida, plan**, due in mid-July (“within 9 months”), Amtrak must consult with stakeholders along the route, including rail passengers (Sec. 226).

Route Evaluations: Within 180 days, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration must consult with the STB, “carriers over whose rail lines Amtrak trains operate, States, Amtrak employees, nonprofit employee organizations representing Amtrak employees, and **groups representing Amtrak passengers**, as appropriate” (emphasis ours) to improve or replace metrics measuring the financial, service, and on-time performance of Amtrak routes. Binding arbitration will determine these standards if an agreement is not reached between the parties (Sec. 207).

Amtrak must evaluate the “financial and operating performance of each long-distance” route every year, rank the

routes into the top, middle, and bottom thirds, and develop improvement plans where appropriate (Sec. 210).

Rail Plans: To get federal passenger train capital funding, projects must be in state rail plans. The Federal Railroad Administrator “shall develop a long-range national rail plan that is consistent with approved State rail plans and the rail needs of the Nation, as determined by the Secretary in order to promote an integrated, cohesive, efficient, and optimized national rail system for the movement of goods and people” (Sec. 307).

Northeast Corridor (NEC): “Within 180 days,” the DOT Secretary must form an NEC Infrastructure and Operations Advisory Commission including representatives of Amtrak, DOT, and each NEC state plus the District of Columbia. “Within two years,” the Commission is to develop a cost-sharing formula and six-year implementation schedule. The STB resolves disagreements.

The Commission also will make holistic near-term and long-term recommendations regarding NEC planning and operations, and examine economic development, including real estate and “optimum utility utilization” (Sec. 212 (a)).

An NEC Safety Committee (to include representatives of rail passengers) will meet at least twice a year “to consider safety and security matters on the main line” (Sec. 212 (f)).

Amtrak and Rhode Island DOT must reach a track access agreement by July 1, 2009 for new commuter rail service between Providence and Wickford Junction, RI. The Federal Railroad Administrator would resolve any outstanding Amtrak/RI disagreements (Sec. 212 (2)(c)).

Private Operations: The FRA must complete a rulemaking allowing Amtrak’s host railroads to bid to operate passenger trains in lieu of Amtrak for up to five years on up to two existing routes (Sec. 214).

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George Chilson, Chairman; James Churchill, Albert L. Papp, Jr., Arthur Poole, David Randall, Robert J. Stewart, Vice Chairs; Nicholas Noe, Secretary; Kenneth T. Clifford, Treasurer

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

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Correction—Boston-Chicago through *Lake Shore Ltd.* sleeper did not begin Oct. 27; no date has been announced yet. Through coaches *did* start and are running.

Memphis—*City of New Orleans* resumed its normal route serving Memphis Central Station on October 15.

New St. Louis station opens—Amtrak began using St. Louis Gateway Station Nov. 19. The station is at 15th and Poplar Streets (mailing address: 430 S. 15th Street), adjacent to the Civic Center MetroLink station. Long term parking is limited; Amtrak is working with the city to try to fix this problem as soon as possible.

Pittsburgh-Harrisburg Steel City Flyer "Business Class" bus service with continuous wi-fi, laptop desks, pillows, movies, attendants. Two daily frequencies link the Pittsburgh area (North Shore; Downtown—Pittsburgh Hilton; and Monroeville) with Harrisburg (Crowne Plaza; Transportation Center; State Capitol). Timed to connect with *Keystone Corridor* trains to and from New York/Philadelphia. More info: www.steelcityflyer.com.

Downeaster Nov. 17 schedule change—Some trains depart from 40 mins. earlier to 20 mins. later; many remained unchanged.

Chairman Oberstar's Stimulus Hearing

Amtrak's William Crosbie testified at an Oct. 29 House Transp. & Infrastructure Committee hearing, "Investing in Infrastructure: The Road to Recovery," noting \$410 million in "immediate capital needs"—including \$71 mill. to return all parked Amfleet cars to service—plus \$540 mill. for 15 new single-level sleepers "to deal with growing business" and to replace

aging equipment.

NARP's statement for the record (at www.narprail.org) added the need to recondition parked Superliners. We asked conditioning of funding for New Jersey Transit's ARC project on restoration of the Penn Sta. link (p. 2). Witness statements: <http://transportation.house.gov>

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Capon continued, "The next CEO of Amtrak must work hard to ensure that Amtrak's recent growth continues...[but] huge and growing demands on the federal budget from all directions make it more important than ever that the new CEO be able to guide the company aggressively and successfully."

Also Nov. 14, R. Hunter Biden, Vice Chair of the Board (and son of Vice-President Elect and long-time Amtrak rider, Senator Joseph Biden), expressed confidence about Amtrak's direction: "Our Board is committed to keeping Amtrak on an aggressive path of performance improvement...We are moving forward with the development of an aggressive long-term plan for the company."

William Crosbie, Amtrak's Chief Operating Officer, was acting CEO during the interim. McLean's statement said "the board is grateful to Bill Crosbie for his dedication to Amtrak and for managing the company during the transition." ■

Amtrak's Nov. 25 release is at www.amtrak.com, click on "News and Media" then "News Releases."

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High Speed Rail: Within "60 days," DOT must issue Requests for Proposals for "the financing, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of a high-speed intercity passenger rail system operating within a high-speed rail corridor," including the 11 federally-designated corridors (the provision was originally to apply only to the Northeast Corridor).

The Transportation Secretary is to transmit to the House and Senate authorizing committees reports on any proposals received (Sec. 502). The NEC aspect of section 502 was a top priority for Rep. John Mica (R-FL), who held Capitol Hill meetings with stakeholders on the NEC (Nov. 20) and the other corridors (Nov. 21).

The STB may conduct nonbinding mediation where commuter rail agencies cannot reach agreement with a rail carrier over use of that carrier's tracks or rights-of-way to construct tracks (Sec. 401). ■

Text of the law is at <http://thomas.loc.gov>, put H.R.2095 into the search box and choose "Bill number" then "Submit". The seventh link is the law.