



PASSENGERS Voice

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CHEF ON RAILS

“Summer By Rail” is perhaps the greatest internship in America. Started in 2016, each summer the Rail Passengers Association sends its paid intern correspondent on a month-long cross-country trip by train to see America. On their journey, the correspondent reports on the rail passenger network from inside the train. They talk with passengers about how they use transportation to work, live and play. They meet with mayors and government officials in big cities and small towns on planning issues. And, they sample the local food, drinks, entertainment and recreation that is available through the passenger rail network. In 2019, the focus Rail Passengers has decided to focus on food and Chef Madison Butler (Chef Madi for short) is the Summer by Rail intern!



Chef Madi
(Photo Credit: Madison Butler)

During this year’s trip, Chef Madi will sample regional cuisines, get behind the scenes in some great kitchens, and meet interesting people from Maine to California through a variety of routes, including Amtrak’s Downeaster, Northeast Regional service, the Crescent, the City of New Orleans and the Southwest Chief.

She is a graduate of Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts. She is passionate about creating fun menus that preserve artisanal methods while experimenting with new flavors. Hailing from the Bluegrass State, Madison is an advocate for sustainable agriculture and food accessibility.

She completed training under Austin chefs Amy March, Paul Qui, and Gregory Dishman, and has since pursued a variety of consultant and private chef roles internationally. When she isn’t assembling food trucks, tweaking software and training fry cooks, she can be found in friends’ restaurants. Madison also volunteers to prepare food for various groups and shelters to assist those who struggle with food security.

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SUPREME COURT AFFIRMS RIGHT TO BE ON TIME

The Supreme Court June 3 turned down the Association of American Railroads’ bid to appeal passengers’ victory last summer in the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, removing the final hurdle to Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration once again setting metrics and standards to ensure that passengers have the right to be on time.

Noting that new metrics and standards now must be set, AAR quickly reacted to the Court’s decision with a pledge from AAR President and CEO Ian Jefferies to “work with the FRA and Amtrak” so that railroads can provide “efficient and reliable service to all their customers and tenant railroads.”

Like AAR, Rail Passengers too “recognizes the importance of moving increased freight volume to help support the U.S. economy.” But Rail Passengers President and

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“ I believe the intersection of food and rail culture bring us together and make us stronger. ”

Chef Madi Butler,
2019 SBR correspondent



RAIL PASSENGERS

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Chef Madi's call to join the Rail Passenger Association was brought on by her interest in transportation by rail. After her childhood in Kentucky where public transit services are limited, she has gone on to ride internationally. She has continued her passion by trying to find rail routes to and from her culinary events and is deeply appreciative to do so now with this new experience. By fusing rail culture and food culture, she hopes to provide insight on accessible, sustainable experiences with each community's special charm and individual transit needs.

If you have any questions about the program or want to learn more about Summer by Rail, visit summerbyrail.com, check back often for blog post updates and follow us on Instagram @ [railpassengers](https://www.instagram.com/railpassengers).— All Aboard and stay hungry!

COURT, from p. 1

CEO Jim Mathews insisted that Congress and the courts have also recognized the importance of the national railroad network to the traveling public – which bailed out the railroads at taxpayer expense in 1971 in exchange for paid access to those railroads for passenger trains.

"The Court's decision is terrific news for everyone who relies on trains to get to work, to school, and to visit friends and family, and it's even more important for our disabled, seniors and veterans for whom trains are a lifeline and late trains are a threat," said Mathews. "We're looking forward to everyone involved rolling up their sleeves and working on how to balance the legitimate needs of the host railroads for network fluidity and capacity with the equally legitimate -- and lawful -- needs of the rail-riding public to get where they're going on time."

CALL FOR SPEAKERS IS OPEN!

RailNation:California is your opportunity to present directly to activist passengers and commuters who rely on rail and fight for sustainable rail transportation in the U.S.

We've designed conference tracks to look at rail travel's challenges and opportunities today... and tomorrow. Details on these tracks – Inclusion & Equity, Making Change Happen and What Passengers Want – and information on how to submit a speaker proposal can be found by visiting the [RailNation:California Call for Speakers page](#). The descriptors are to provide perspective on the types of topics Rail Passengers Association would like to see covered, but we also warmly welcome session proposals that may stretch the essence of the three topics. We want to hear from you!

Upcoming Regional Rail Passengers Association and State Passengers Association Member Meetings & Events

Saturday, August 10

• Empire State Passengers Association Meeting - Utica, NY

Please contact Bruce Becker (bbecker@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and online) of upcoming events!

VIEW FROM THE HILL

HOUSE APPROPRIATORS: IT'S NATIONAL OR NOTHING

The House Appropriations Committee passed a transportation budget for FY 2020 and the news is good for passengers, where our advocacy continues to produce concrete funding and policy gains.

Committee members passed the bill to the full House, which includes a \$146 million increase for passenger rail and a \$60 million increase for transit compared to last year's funding levels. This is another step in the right direction, and billions more than the transportation budget proposed by the Trump Administration.

THE TRANSPORTATION BILL INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING FUNDING FOR PASSENGER TRAINS AND TRANSIT:

- Amtrak - National Network: \$1,292
- Amtrak – Northeast Corridor: \$700
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Grants: \$350
- Federal State Partnership for State Of Good Repair: \$350
 - Restoration & Enhancement Grants: \$0
 - **Total Intercity Rail: \$2,692**
- Transit Formula Grants: \$10,800
- Capital Investment Grants: \$2,302
 - WMATA: \$150
 - **Total Transit: \$13,252**

The bill included much more than increased funding for Amtrak, however. Appropriators used report language accompanying the funding bill to chastise Amtrak for ignoring congressional intent on customer-facing issues like station agents and long-distance trains, and strongly supported maintaining a truly national long-distance network that improves transportation options for all

Americans, including those who live in rural areas.

SPECIFIC POLICY WINS FOR PASSENGERS INCLUDE:

• Language stating that “the Committee strongly reminds Amtrak that section 24701 of title 49, United States Code, requires Amtrak to operate a national passenger rail system. Further, the Committee directs Amtrak to seek any potential changes to the National Network through the reauthorization of the FAST Act, and urges Amtrak to ensure any such proposals also increase ridership in rural areas and improve service for long-distance customers.”

• Appropriators singled out the notion of potentially replacing long-distance trains with a series of corridor trains for particular criticism, echoing Rail Passengers’ concerns that well-intentioned moves to add service to under-served or unserved areas “could have unintended consequences for long-distance customers, especially in rural and small communities where passenger rail serves as an important mobility option and economic driver.”

• Language directing Amtrak to “conduct comprehensive outreach and consultation” with a whole range of stakeholders, including “passenger rail organizations,” noting that Amtrak “must engage in an open and transparent process” which takes into account anyone who might be affected by changes, for good or ill.

The Committee highlighted a number of recent changes to policies that they would like

Amtrak to seek input on, including “procedures relating to charter trains, private cars, station agents, call centers, food and beverage service, and law enforcement, all of which have impacts on its ridership, employees, and communities.”

• A strongly worded rebuke to the Trump Administration over its plans to recast the Restoration and Enhancement Grants program as a way to gut the National Network and to force states to shoulder more of the burden of paying for intercity passenger rail: “The Committee rejects this proposal and provides strong funding for Amtrak to continue to provide service through long-distance and state-supported routes.”

• Elsewhere in the report, lawmakers shared their disapproval with the U.S. DOT over the “slow pace in executing FRA’s competitive grant programs,” noting with disappointment that the FRA has “failed to select projects for three competitive grant programs with more than \$640,000,000 in fiscal year 2017 and fiscal year 2018 appropriated funding available,” and failed to issue a single Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for four competitive grant programs with \$670,000,000 in fiscal year 2019 appropriated funding available.”

• The Committee provided \$1.5 million for additional FRA staff to support the oversight of competitive grants and required the FRA to deliver a report to the House and Senate Committees

RAILNATION CALIFORNIA IN SACRAMENTO



Sacramento Valley Station

Make plans now to attend the Rail Passengers' **RailNation: California Advocacy Symposium** in Sacramento, Friday, October 18 – Monday, October 21, 2019. **Event registration and tour/trip ticket purchase** is now open! **Discounted group rate rooms are also available** at the host hotel, the historic Sheraton Grand Downtown; space is limited and will sell out, so don't delay.

Saturday's Advocacy Symposium will focus on three thematic tracks - 'Inclusion & Equity'; 'Making Change Happen' & 'What Passengers Want'. The general session speakers and concurrent panels &

presentations will explore these topics in depth.

Friday afternoon will offer an optional 'Hands-On' Advocacy Workshop lead by Sean Jeans-Gail. Designed to provide useful and effective strategies for rail advocates of all interests, knowledge levels and experience, workshop participants will leave with a 'tool-box' of ideas and tactics to use in their advocacy efforts.

RailNation:California will also offer a variety of local/regional tours & trips, in addition to plenty of free time to explore Sacramento, America's premier **Farm to Fork** food & wine destination.

NTSB CITES SOUND TRANSIT IN 2017 TACOMA DERAILMENT

The National Transportation Safety Board last month singled out the Central Puget Sound Transit Authority's failure to mitigate the hazardous Defiance Bypass curve in the absence of Positive Train Control **as the formal "probable cause" of the Amtrak 501 derailment** that killed Rail Passengers members Jim Hamre and Zac Wilhoite.

It's clear in reality, however, that despite the legal requirement to uncover a single "probable cause," many factors contributed to this tragic accident. And during the May 21 hearing NTSB Chair Robert Sumwalt made a point of opening and closing with a fierce and impatient admonition to regulators and railroads to embrace Positive Train Control, and especially for the Federal Railroad Administration to issue its final System Safety Program rules. "It's time, it's past time, for the FRA to act," he declared. "As we've seen, lives depend on the issuance of that rule."

In making 53 specific findings and issuing 26 targeted recommendations to everyone from DOT and the Federal Railroad Administration to Amtrak, Washington State and even the Defense Dept., the Board highlighted the many ways that individually reasonable decisions added up to indefensible results. NTSB cited minimal oversight and coordination by multiple agencies, choosing to operate without PTC, and other choices as contributors to the incident.

For example, NTSB concluded that while the engineer was not distracted by the conductor sitting next to him getting qualified on the territory, he was distracted by the overspeed alerts that the locomotive was giving him, partly because he had never had the benefit of encountering these alarms in a safe environment like a simulator. NTSB also concluded that the conductor in the cab was too passive, acting more like an observer than an active crewmember.

2019 ROSS CAPON AWARD

The Rail Passengers is now accepting nominations for the Ross Capon Advocacy Award. The award pays tribute to Ross' focus to engage and mobilize the citizen advocate.

The amplification of disparate voices, as a community in support of an issue, especially one focused on rail transportation infrastructure, is not easy, but can be transformative.

Community partners are coming together, and the Rail Passengers Association wants to know about rail advocacy efforts/projects taking place at the local level.

ELIGIBILITY

Rail Passengers would like to hear about rail transportation advocacy efforts/projects that engaged with underserved communities, connected/expanded different citizens, involved the growth of the business community, and/or impacted the overall health of a locality.

Consideration will be given to multi-modal transportation advocacy that enhance the rail efforts already in use in a community.

The nominee does not have to be a member of the Rail Passengers Association or any of its chapters.

SELECTION PROCESS

- Nominations solicited from membership as well as the public.
- Self-nominations will be accepted.
- Nominations will be judged by a five-member committee seated by the Association's Board Chairman.
- Email nominations to rosscaponaward@narprail.org.

NOMINATION MATERIALS

- A nomination letter including name, title,



Ross Capon
(Photo Credit: Rail Passengers Association)

institution/organizational affiliation (if applicable), mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address for both the nominee and nominator. Also, please indicate if the nominee is aware of this nomination.

- A brief description of the nominee's work related to rail/transportation community advocacy.
- Projects must demonstrate community involvement and interaction and should show the larger public benefit such as improved mobility, economic development, etc.
- Detailed project timeline and outcomes, obstacles and successes.
- Two letters of reference providing evidence of how the nominee has contributed to community activism related to issues of rail (passenger and/or commuter) transportation.
- Collateral to support the nominee's work such as (but not required) video collateral or interviews.

IMPORTANT DATES

- June 1, 2019 - Launch Open Nomination Search
- August 11, 2019 - Three finalists announced
- October 18, 2019 - Winner announced at RailNation:California Reception

NOTE: Three finalists are required to attend October 18, 2019 RailNation:California in Sacramento

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RAIL PASSENGERS

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If you're reading the Passengers Voice and are a current member, **THANK YOU** for your support. Rail Passengers invites you to share our membership information with your family, friends, colleagues, etc.

If you're reading the Passengers Voice and NOT a current member, we invite you to join.

Visit railpassengers.org/join
or call 202-408-6382 to join!

STOP

Looking for the latest in travel advisories and tips?

Be sure to read the **HOTLINE** each and every Friday.

railpassengers.org/hotline

LOOK

RAIL PASSENGERS MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS, POLL RESULTS

QUESTION...

SHOULD RAIL PASSENGERS FIGHT TO SUPPORT ALL RAIL TRANSPORTATION, OR PRIMARILY LONG-DISTANCE TRAINS?:



A. Yes - Primarily Long Distance.

B. No - All Rail & Public Transportation.

Click here to submit your answer to this poll on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/narprail>, or send in your response via email to: survey@narprail.org.

Each month we conduct polls on social media and in our newsletters to spark conversation and provide another outlet for you to share your thoughts on rail.

In last month's poll question, we asked: **"In celebration of Mother's & Father's Day, have you traveled by train with your parents?"**

A vast 74% majority said **'Yes - Love To Do It'**, and only 26% responding **'No - Need To Do It'**

Poll comments included:

- **Sara Bower** - Yes, to Moosonee on the Ontario Northland in 1960; rode in the caboose. From North Bay to Cochrane then from Cochrane to Moosonee. My mother saw this rail line running to the James Bay and wrote to the Ontario Northland for more info. Would love to do it again to see how it has changed.
- **Mathew Butte** - Yes (so I'm told), my first ride with my parents was when I was 3 months old from Utica to Rochester, NY.

#RAIL PASSENGERS TRAVEL REVIEW

Feedback on your recent Amtrak travel experience is very important to us! Please take a moment and tell us the good & the bad of your journey. Share your thoughts at railpassengers.org/travelreview or scan the QR code from your mobile device.



Remember, the progression of the data we collect depends upon the feedback you provide as well as your outreach to other rail passengers. Please help us to keep this going. If you have any constructive feedback or suggestion, please send an email to TravelReview@narprail.org.

#VIEWSONATRAIN

We are sharing many of the great photos we have received on Instagram (www.instagram.com/railpassengers).

We are also still looking for more submissions. Photos can be submitted via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter depicting your experience as "The Rail Passenger" and your views from a train.

Rail Passengers Association staff will select images, which we will use as part of our new visual identity on our website, in our monthly newsletter, on social media, and more!

When submitting your photos on social media, be sure to use the hashtag [#ViewsOnATrain](https://twitter.com/ViewsOnATrain) and tag [@RailPassengers](https://twitter.com/RailPassengers).

LEAVE A LEGACY

Please consider the Rail Passengers Association in your will. If you have already included us in your estate plans, let Jonsie Stone know at jstone@narprail.org or 202.408.8362 Ext. 3207. We'd like

to thank you for your generosity and make sure the purpose of your gift is understood.



VIEW, from p. 3

on Appropriations within 120 days of passage. Restricting the U.S. DOT from rescinding or clawing back the previously approved grant agreements between the FRA and the California high-speed rail project.

- Language directing Amtrak "to provide a station agent in each Amtrak station that had a ticket agent position eliminated in fiscal year 2018," and directing Amtrak to "improve communication and collaboration with local partners and take into consideration the unique needs of each community, including impacts to local jobs, when making decisions related to the staffing of Amtrak stations."
- Appropriators also took up the cause of charter operators and private-car owners, directing Amtrak

to include an updated report on charter train and private car policies in Amtrak's fiscal year 2021 budget justification, including a more transparent process for communicating locations available for private car moves and a plan to standardize the cost and revenue analysis for the private car program.

Rail Passengers is providing tools for passengers to support this bill—and improve it! Please join us in taking action at www.RailPassengers.org/Action, or by calling the United States Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121, and asking them to connect you to your Representative so you can ask them: "Please support the passenger rail funding levels and policies in the FY2020 T-HUD appropriations bill."



ON THE MOVE

There have been several key rail industry appointments in recent months. A few of them include:

- **Tracie Winbigler** has been appointed to the position of Amtrak's Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer. Tracie comes to Amtrak from her position as CFO at Recreational Equipment, Inc (REI). Prior to this, Tracie was with the National Geographic Society for just over 3 years, first as CFO and later as Chief Operating Officer, responsible for corporate strategy and all aspects of financial operations. Tracie started her career

at General Electric, beginning with the Finance Management program and Corporate Audit staff. She held a series of divisional CFO roles, including at GE Nuclear, GE Transportation and GE Asset Management.

- **Devon Barnhart** has been appointed Deputy Director of the One Rail Coalition (of which the Rail Passengers Association is a member). A lawyer and civil engineer with a focus on transportation policy, Barnhart most recently served as the subcommittee staff director for the Transportation and Safety



Tracie Winbigler

(Photo Credit: Ohio Wesleyan Univ.)

Subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee. She's served with the Senate Commerce Committee as professional staff since 2013, and earlier as legislative assistant and counsel.



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