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JOIN US AT THE MOVING FORWARD BY RAIL REGIONAL SUMMIT

Next steps for expanding rail in the Upper Midwest

By Richard Rudolph, Ph.D.
Chair, Rail Users' Network

Our 16th annual conference is taking place Friday, June 1, 2018 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicollet Mall in downtown Minneapolis. The conference, which is sponsored by the Rail Users' Network and All Aboard Minnesota, will examine what's happening in the Twin Cities and the Upper Midwest regarding passenger rail and rail transit issues. The focus will be on recent success stories, which projects are moving forward and which are standing still and could use more help. Time will be also be set aside to hear from the grass roots:

rail advocates who are working at the state and local level to expand passenger rail and rail transit.

The day will begin with opening remarks given by Richard Rudolph, Chair of the Rail Users' Network, and Brian Nelson, the President of All Aboard Minnesota. Alice Hausman, the DFL's (the Minnesota Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party) State Representative who serves on the House Transportation Finance Committee, will also be on hand to greet and talk with attendees.

The morning featured speakers include Dan Krom, Chief of the Minnesota Department

of Transportation Rail Office, and Arun Rao, Passenger Rail Implementation Manager, WisDOT. They will talk about the proposed second daily frequency over the 418-mile route between St. Paul and Chicago. Frank Loetterle, the Northern Lights Express Project Manager who has also been invited, will provide an update on the current efforts to expand passenger rail to Duluth, MN.

The morning session will also include presentations by the Ramsey County Rail Authority spokesperson, Keven Roggenbuck, who has been

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MTA PREPARES SERVICE OPTIONS FOR CANARSIE TUBE SHUTDOWN

By Andrew Albert

Hurricane Sandy devastated quite a few under-river subway tunnels, and many have had post-storm work done to keep them safe and reliable. Work has been done on the Montague Tube, which carries the R trains; the Cranberry Tube, which carries the A,C trains; the Joralemon Tube, which carries the 4,5 trains; the 53rd Street Tube, which carries the E, M trains; and the Steinway Tube, which carries the 7 trains. This leaves the Rutgers Tube, which carries

the F trains, and the Canarsie Tube. The big difference with the Canarsie Tube is that unlike the others, it is not interchangeable with other lines. Running from the Canarsie section of Brooklyn through Brownsville, East New York, Bushwick, Ridgewood, Williamsburg, and across 14th Street in Manhattan, it carries over 400,000 daily riders. It is largely responsible for the explosive growth of the Williamsburg and Bushwick areas, and was the first line in the New York subway system to get Communications-based

Train Control (CBTC). The frequency is often every two minutes—even at 11 p.m., when hordes of people are riding either to Williamsburg clubs and restaurants, or back to Manhattan after enjoying those clubs and restaurants.

Built in 1924, the Canarsie Tube was made of cast iron, with a concrete liner. There are two tubes, each carrying one track. In 2012, Hurricane Sandy exploded into the New York City area, devastating

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UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES FOR NEW JERSEY TRANSIT'S RIDERS

By David Peter Alan

In our last issue, we highlighted the uncertainty that Garden State rail riders face on New Jersey Transit (NJT). At that time, the system was plagued by delays, there was a shortage of engineers that renders train service unreliable to the point that some trains are canceled, and it was unclear where riders would stand under recent changes in New Jersey politics. We can now report that the uncertainty has not abated, and New Jersey's turbulent politics may not bring much-needed transit improvements.

For the riders, little has changed since last fall. Each morning, WNYC and other New York radio stations report the morning's transit delays that emiserate the commuters' trips into the City. On most mornings, at least one line in the NJT system is hampered by delays, but riders do not know in advance which one, or ones, will be hit that day. It also appears that the shortage of engineers, which forced numerous train cancellations last year, will continue for the foreseeable future. It takes almost 18 months to train new engineers, while local media report that some of those who have worked for NJT for years are defecting to Metro-North in New York State, for better pay.

At this writing, it is too early to tell how much funding the New Jersey legislature and Gov. Phillip Murphy will be willing to provide for the state's transit, so it is too early to tell how much service may be cut and how much fares will increase this year. Nobody seems to dispute that a fare increase is certain, though.

It is also uncertain what will happen to the proposed Gateway Project, and even the part of it that would build new tunnel capacity into Penn Station, New York. On Dec. 29, the Deputy Director of the Federal Transit Administration informed Gateway officials in New York and New Jersey that the Obama Administration

had not promised fast-track funding for Gateway, as politicians on both sides of the Hudson had expected, and President Trump warned on Feb. 12 of a reduced federal role in infrastructure funding. These developments make it less likely that the Feds will chip in a major portion of the estimated \$30-billion cost of Gateway.

The Lackawanna Coalition and other advocates have called for a scaled-down project that would include two new tracks into the existing Penn Station, one new bridge with sufficient capacity for future train traffic, and improvements at Penn Station itself. They say this "Affordable Gateway" could be built for about one third of the cost of the currently-proposed Gateway Project, because it would not include the separate Penn South station for NJT trains, or extra infrastructure in the Secaucus area. The New York *Daily News* has also called for a scaled-down version of Gateway. At this writing, Gateway's proponents, Amtrak and most politicians in the region are still endorsing the \$30-billion project, despite the FTA's and Trump's advisories.

Many Trenton-watchers and NJT riders have hoped for major improvements in their transit with the exit of former Gov. Chris Christie and the arrival of his successor, Murphy. Murphy is a Democrat, while Christie was a Republican. The Democrats controlled both houses of the legislature during Christie's eight years as Governor, and they still do. Murphy had complained about NJT during his campaign, and he blamed much of the agency's bad performance on Christie and some of the managers he appointed. Before Murphy took office, the head of his transition staff ordered NJT Executive Director Steven Santoro to demand the resignations of a number of management employees, which effectively terminated their employment. Some of the most notorious Christie appointees were spared, while most of the employees targeted were either managers who joined NJT before

Christie took office, or they were secretaries who have no line authority. Not all of the them have been fired yet; some have been retained on a day-by-day basis. Their futures could not be more uncertain.

Murphy has appointed a new Commissioner of Transportation, who is also Chair of the NJT Board, and a new Executive Director for NJT. Neither has experience in managing transit operations or the customer-oriented side of transit, and advocates hope they will learn quickly. Donna Guiterrez-Scachetti, the new Commissioner, worked in the highway sector for her entire career. She will now be required to preside over the governance of the third-largest transit agency in the nation. The new Executive Director is Kevin Corbett, whose last job was at the large consulting firm AECOM. His transit-related experience was promoting and managing large-scale projects, and advocates expect that much of his job will be to push for Gateway and other big-ticket capital projects, although it remains unclear how much money New Jersey has for its share of the cost, or how much the Trump Administration is willing to chip in for the federal share. If the FTA's advisory letter from Dec. 29 and Trump's infrastructure speech in February are any indication, they will not contribute much.

The Lackawanna Coalition and other advocates have expressed their concern that Corbett has no experience in operations or the customer-oriented side of transit. Robert Lavell, the current head of NJT Rail, will have retired by the time you read this. At this writing, nobody knows who will take his place, so the uncertainty about rail service in the Garden State continues.

There is a bill before the New Jersey legislature (Assembly Bill A-1241) that purports to introduce reform at NJT but, in actuality, it will not do so. The Lackawanna Coalition and other advocates have complained that the NJT Board is a

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IN RAIL TO TRAIL PLAN BYPASSES PUBLIC INPUT

By Phil Streby

The Rail Users Network's mission is to advocate for improvement in passenger rail service, whether on Amtrak or on local and regional passenger railroads, as well as transit systems. In this context, RUN is concerned about the recent petition that the Surface Transportation Board has received from Hamilton County along with the cities of Fisher and Noblesville, IN regarding their request to convert nine miles of the rail line between these two cities to a walking/bike trail.

First, a bit of background on this rail line. This route was incorporated as the Peru and Indianapolis Railroad in 1846 to connect with the Wabash and Erie Canal at Peru. Construction began in Indianapolis in 1849, with service beginning in 1851 over 21.42 miles north to Noblesville, then to Tipton (1852), Kokomo (1853), and Peru (1854) a distance of 73 miles. Takeovers and consolidations of railroads north of Peru allowed the Peru and Indianapolis to reach Michigan City, IN (161 miles) in 1871. With other railroads, most notably the New York Central and Pennsylvania also utilizing this line for passenger and freight service, traffic became so heavy that a block signal system was installed in 1911.

By the 1930s, with passenger service on the decline, the last Nickel Plate passenger train southbound carried a funeral wreath on the rear of the last car; and the line became freight only. Following a series of railroad mergers, the general decline of freight service, and the construction of the Interstate Highway System, the south end of the line was cut (2007) and a bridge removed at 10th Street (and the line further removed to about 22nd St). On the north end, the track was cut and the diamond was removed across the Norfolk-Southern (NS) main at Tipton (1997). Effectively land-locked, the Indiana Transportation Museum (ITM), though, continued to run the Indiana State Fair Train using former Lake Erie and Western (NKP #587), displayed in Broad Ripple Park, removed in 1983, and restored to service at Amtrak's Beech Grove shops, (1988) 2-8-2 and F7s with coaches once belonging to the Santa Fe RR and New Jersey Transit. A new station was built (1995-96) in Fishers (between Indianapolis and Noblesville) to both accommodate the Fair Train and other excursions but also for the possible commuter service which was being planned.

During this time, freight service regrettably ceased, and the route was petitioned for abandonment by NS with the Indiana Railroad providing the last service. The cities of

Noblesville and Fishers, along with Hamilton County (AKA "the Owners") forming a Port Authority to oversee the operation, acquired the property, and continued to allow for the running of the excursion trains by ITM, which brings us to today's issue.

The owners want to abandon and remove nine miles of track between their cities, and turn the right-of-way into a walking/biking trail. It appears that this proposal by the mayors, without the knowledge of the city or county councils, has additional "flaws." My sources tell me:

- 1) The City of Fishers already has a grant to build a bikeway from downtown north to the Connor Prairie attraction with encroaching on railroad right-of-way.
- 2) The "Owners" mistakenly believe the right-of-way is theirs after abandonment is completed and the track removed. Most of the railroads in Indiana were built using easements. When the railroad is gone, the land reverts to adjacent property owners.
- 3) Abandonment procedures were not undertaken by the cities. They are relying on an NS petition which we, the opposition, assert does not apply, since the railroad continued to operate after the sale to the government entities involved.

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The Rail Users' Newsletter is published quarterly by the Rail Users' Network, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation.

Current board members include:

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|----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| Richard Rudolph, Chair | Portland, ME | NARP / TrainRiders Northeast, Maine Rail Group |
| Andrew Albert, Vice-Chair | New York, NY | New York City Transit Riders Council |
| Chuck Bode, Membership Secretary | Philadelphia, PA | Tri-State Citizens' Council on Transportation |
| Steve Albro, Treasurer | Cleveland, OH | Cleveland RTA Citizen Advisory Board |
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| Mela Bush-Miles | Boston, MA | Greater 4 Corners Action Coalition (MBTA) |
| James E. Coston, Esq. | Chicago, IL | Corridor Capital LLC |
| Bill Engel | Canal Fulton, OH | Ohio Rail Tourism Association |
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| Andy Sharpe | Philadelphia, PA | SEPTA |
| Phil Streby | Peru, IN | Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance |
| Ken Westcar | Woodstock, ON | Transport Action Ontario |

Please send comments, letters to editor or articles for possible publications to the Rail Users' Network at:

RUN; P.O. Box 8015, Portland, ME 04104 or email to rrudolph1022@gmail.com

Layout/design editor: Paul Bubny

IN RAIL TO TRAIL PLAN BYPASSES PUBLIC INPUT

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4) The “Owners” did not consult with the City of Indianapolis. This is important because of the once-proposed commuter service on this line to alleviate some of the severe traffic congestion on nearby I-69/IN-37.

5) The “Owners,” being a government entity, acquired the property with public money, formed a Port Authority for operational control, yet restricted ITM from running for the past two years on the grounds the railroad was not properly maintained, refuted by an FRA inspection.

6) While the Port Authority petitioned for operators, the best choice out of six, it is alleged, was rejected because the company wanted to run freight in addition to excursion trains and possibly commuter service. This appears to go against the premise of having the Port Authority oversee railroad operations on a government owned railroad, and also appears to have fulfilled a desired outcome made months earlier.

Rejecting this bid by the Port Authority looks suspiciously like they never intended to operate the line as proposed in the bidding process. It is my belief they thought this would give them additional grounds to remove the line. This country and state cannot afford to lose any more railroad already in place. It is imperative for future generations that connections between towns and regions be maintained, not broken.

A group formed in February 2017 after the cities proposal became public, “Save the Nickel Plate” headed by Logan Day, has spearheaded the movement to generate opposition to this proposal. Dozens of volunteers have signed on to inform the public, emplace yard signs, write letters to the Surface Transportation Board (STB), and attend public meetings when they are known.

We have requested that the STB reject the proposal put forth by the cities of Fishers and Noblesville and Hamilton County to remove any track and direct them to utilize this railroad as intended when they accepted taxpayer dollars to purchase this railroad line.

We assert the line can be made a viable freight route once again, with several industries along the route also petitioning the STB with their objections. Those several have suggested car loadings approaching 6,000+ per year while diverting truck traffic to rail.

Another operator, US Rail Corp (Toledo, OH) has also objected on behalf of ITM’s petition to cease abandonment proceedings. Even trail advocates have spoken in opposition suggesting, instead, that a trail be installed next to the track.

Many local, and even not-so-local, citizens are speaking out on the grounds that these proceedings have been done “behind closed doors,” and public meetings are held without proper notice, repress public comment (allegedly even going so far as to pack the front of the room with pro-trail people), or conducted without responsible public officials on hand to answer questions.

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is a grassroots, volunteer citizen organization, incorporated in 1994 as an Indiana not-for-profit corporation, dedicated to making available to both the general public and state and local governments, information about the issues and benefits of the development of modern, 21st Century passenger rail systems in the state of Indiana. This includes, but is not limited to, the connection of Indiana communities with the national transportation system by passenger rail.

We have been following the events and recent Petition with the STB, by the Owners of the Nickel Plate railroad, to

convert the corridor to a multi-use trail. As an organization that is dedicated to advocacy for modern, 21st Century passenger rail systems in Indiana, we oppose the proposed trail conversion of the railroad right-of way.

It is the firm belief of our organization that severing the line in any way will severely diminish the future value of the corridor to many Central and Northern Indiana communities and businesses. Therefore, we have urged the STB to closely consider all comments and evidence thus far submitted prior to ruling on the Owners’ petition. This line has the potential to be revitalized for a variety of rail service options in the near future. Indiana would not be well served by the removal of any portion of the line.

As a national nonprofit organization, RUN represents rail and transit users, as well as advocates who want better rail service in the United States and Canada. Our members represent many states, including Indiana, which is the home state of one member of our Board of Directors. Given what we have learned regarding the lack of public input regarding the rail to trail plan, and the potential for restoring train service on the line which was arbitrarily suspended in 2015, as well as concerns about the process used to select a new railroad operator who will only run excursion trains on the northern portion of the railroad, we have urged the STB to reject this proposal to abandon the rail line.

The STB, in a recent move, has allowed petitioner comments submitted thus far to be included for consideration even after the cut-off date had passed. The “Owners” have objected.

Phil Strebby is a RUN Board member and a board member of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance.

REPORT FROM EN ROUTE TO NEW MEXICO

By J.W. Madison

This little catch-all piece is derived from my trips on the *Lake Shore Limited* (Train 49) on Jan. 15-16, and on the *SW Chief* (train 3) on Jan. 19-20.

Missing Links: Relatively cheap and quick steps toward a true national rail system

Let's forget for the moment what's possible next year or at the next legislative session; just what's desirable as hell and not too expensive. Full disclosure: There are many Amtrak routes I've never travelled, by train anyhow. Consider this when you read the following.

Look at an Amtrak map. Look at the gaps noted below, many of which still carry tracks or abandoned right of way. The Group One pairs are, in my opinion, priority projects, a main course. The Group Twos are tasty side dishes. The California HSR project shows a Los Angeles - Bakersfield link. Maybe that scratches one off the list, maybe not.

Group One:

El Paso, TX — Albuquerque, NM
La Junta, CO — Denver, CO
LA, CA — Bakersfield, CA
Oklahoma City, OK — Newton, KS
Denver, CO — Cheyenne, WY —
Shelby, MT
Jackson, MS — Meridian, MS
Jacksonville, FL — New Orleans, LA

Group Two:

Phoenix, AZ — Flagstaff, AZ — Salt
Lake City, UT — Spokane, WA
Houston, TX — Texarkana, TX
Barstow, CA — Bakersfield, CA

I'm looking for feedback in these pages from those of you more knowledgeable about this than I am. Like David Peter Alan, who keeps most of America in his head.

I'd also like to see a comparison chart or graphic comparing the cost and difficulty of closing the above missing links with those of a true High Speed Rail Line like the ones being built in California and Texas, just so people know what they're missing right now and for the near future.

HSR's going to be a long time coming. How quickly could we fill in these smaller gaps? It seems to me that we could have both this regular-speed "Rail Interstate" and the HSR lines already under way.

Suggestions for greatly improving Amtrak service, also cheap and quick

Deeper cup holders on the Superliners, like on the Viewliners.

This one requires a little delicacy. Here we go: When depositing solid material into an Amtrak toilet, it's important to drop in a few sheets of paper first. Attendants should add this to their passenger briefings. Don't laugh; try it and see.

Wash the train windows, for Chrissake. People are always complaining about this, especially photographers. It's hard to imagine even a Flat Earth train-saboteur Congressman raising too much hell about this one. Scratch that last sentence. It's easy as hell to imagine.

How about Joe Biden for president of Amtrak? Kay Bailey Hutchinson appears to be otherwise engaged.

Albuquerque "Transit"

Here's a very brief summary of the most recent problems (mild word) with Our Bus Rapid Transit ("ART") service:

— The buses have electrical problems. Of the 9 out of 20 units that actually arrived when they should have, none could be charged without resorting to what amounts to jump-starting.

— The buses do not line up properly with at least one station platform.

— ADA compliance is inadequate.

— The FTA has not approved the project, and funding has not been released.

They're working feverishly to fix these minor glitches (heavy sarcasm here). If you want to dig deeper into all this, drop me a line and I'll send you some links. And as these conditions are remediated (or not), I'll get word to RUN and to Short Runs.

J.W. Madison is a RUN Board Member and president of Rails Inc, based in Albuquerque, NM.

Your help is needed as we continue to grow organizationally!

The Rail Users' Network has established two new committees to expand our membership and to respond to issues that arise before the STB, FRA, and Congress which have an impact on passenger rail and transit rail issues. These new committees will be chaired by RUN board members and will be open to anyone who belongs to the organization. Most of the work can be accomplished via conference calling. Please let us know if you are interested in serving on either of these two committees. We are also creating a new RUN brochure which will be placed in racks at trains stations where we have permission to do so. We need help distributing these new brochures. Thanks in advance. Please call 207-776-4961 or send an email to rrudolph1022@gmail.com.

BRIGHTLINE BEGINS INTRODUCTORY SERVICE

By Bill Engel

History will tell us if the day Jan. 13, 2018 will go down beside May 1, 1971 in rail history. On the May date, Amtrak began federally subsidized operation of US rail passenger service. On the January date, Brightline began introductory service between West Palm Beach, FL and Fort Lauderdale, FL. Unlike Amtrak, which relies on federal and state subsidies, Brightline bills itself as the only privately funded, operated, and maintained rail service in the United States. Will such services be successful and return nationwide?

Brightline uses diesel powered train sets, constructed by the Siemens Co. at their Sacramento, CA plant, where the new electric locomotives for the Amtrak Northeast corridor were built. Pictures of the equipment show sleek lines, evoking thoughts of European designed trains. These train sets feature bridge plates which extend from the sides of the cars to reach high-level platforms. The feature allows freight equipment to clear the platforms.

The introductory service will offer 12 trips on weekdays between West Palm Beach

and Fort Lauderdale. Although Saturday and Sunday service is reduced operation is seven days a week, timetables show a 40-minute nonstop trip between those points which is faster than either Amtrak or Tri-Rail commuter trains. Both Tri-Rail and Amtrak make intermediate stops as well.

Brightline is offering free parking at the West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale stations during the introductory period. The Fort Lauderdale station is located at 101 NW 2nd Street (off Broward Boulevard) while the West Palm Beach Station is 501 Everania St.

Two levels of service are offered. Smart Service features two side by side 19" seats which can also be four seats facing a table. Select Service offers 21" seats in a single or paired configuration, which can also be four at a table. Select Service includes complimentary snack and beverage service and access to the Select Lounge.

The fare for Smart Service is \$10 one-way. Select Service is \$15 one-way.

Sadly, during the first days of introductory

service two individuals were struck and killed at grade crossings by Brightline trains. There were calls for the service to be stopped until a thorough safety investigation could be completed. In its defense, Brightline issued a news release emphasizing how it worked with the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Agency, local law enforcement, governments along its corridor, and Florida Operation Lifesaver to raise awareness of rail safety. Safety literature was prepared in three languages, English, Spanish, and Creole. Since Brightline trains use tracks of the Florida East Coast freight line, it is hard to understand why the public would not be aware of the railroad.

Later in 2018, when construction of the Miami station is completed, service will be expanded. Construction will also go forward so Brightline trains can reach Orlando.

For more information about Brightline, visit their website at gobrightline.com.

Bill Engel is a RUN Board Member based in Canal Fulton, OH.

UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES FOR NJ TRANSIT'S RIDERS

(Continued from page 2)

"rubber stamp" with no members who ride transit regularly, and who essentially never vote "no" on any issue. For more than 12 years, every vote was unanimous, and the Board has voted against a management proposal only twice; in 1995 and again in 1996. The advocates have also complained that the Governor interferes too much with the day-to-day management of the agency, and that there is too much secrecy and too little transparency at NJT.

The bill does not address any of these concerns. The Commissioner of Transportation, whose primary responsibility is the state's highways, would remain Chair of the NJT Board. The

agency would still be located within the Executive Branch of state government, so the hoped-for independence from the Governor's Office is not a part of the bill. The Board would be expanded, but there is no provision for any Board members to be transit-dependent, and the few transit riders to be appointed must only have ridden for three of the past seven years. There would not be a non-political "merit" path to being appointed to the NJT Board; legislative leaders and other "transportation establishment" organizations would have nominating power for some members, along with the governor, but independent advocates who do not have the approval of these persons or organizations would remain out in the cold. Neither does the bill eliminate any of the secrecy connected with decision-

making at NJT. Even the North and South Jersey Advisory Committees at NJT would continue to operate in secret, even though their counterparts at other transit agencies have meetings open to the public.

The bill also does not address the need for secure, stable and sufficient funding for NJT, without which the agency cannot provide reliable service. NJT continues to live from year-to-year on discretionary funding, which is never reliable. Without better funding, the riders' uncertainty will continue to get worse.

David Peter Alan has been an advocate since 1985, Chair of the Lackawanna Coalition since 2000 and a member of the RUN Board since 2005. He lives and practices law in South Orange, NJ.

MTA PREPARES SERVICE OPTIONS FOR CANARSIE TUBE SHUTDOWN

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low-lying areas, tracks, yards, and of course, subway tunnels. Initially, there was talk about this rebuilding project taking 18 months. Many folks in Williamsburg talked about moving out of the area, rather than putting up with no direct subway service to Manhattan. Elected officials worried about their Brooklyn neighborhoods, and many have spoken out at neighborhood meetings the MTA held in virtually every area served by the L line.

In the last month or so, there have been four “open houses” held: two in Williamsburg, and two in Manhattan to detail the service plan for the April, 2019 shutdown of the Canarsie Tube—which will last 15 months, not the 18 months that was expected. There is a very involved plan to substitute service to get people to their jobs and recreation, the highlights of which are:

1. Additional service on the J,M lines, which border some of the neighborhoods served by the L line.
2. Additional service on the G line, as well as lengthened trains, to accommodate more people.
3. Lengthened trains on the C line.
4. On nights & weekends, M service will run to 96th St/2nd Ave.
5. New transfers between lines are being offered, at least one of which will be made permanent:
 - a. New transfer between the L & 3 trains at Livonia Ave/Junius St
 - b. New transfer between J,M,Z trains at Hewes St & the G line at Broadway
 - c. New transfer between G trains at 21st St/Van Alst and 7 trains at Hunters Point Avenue.

In the case of the Livonia/Junius transfer, this is a walking transfer, as are the others,

but is in the MTA's Capital Program to build an enclosed transfer complex. These transfers will help, as most residents of Williamsburg and Bushwick live near either the J,M, or G lines. There will also be a new ferry across the East River from Williamsburg to East 20th Street in Manhattan, which will connect with a new M14 Select Bus Service route, which will cross 14th Street, as the L train normally does. The new bus service will extend as far west as 10th Avenue, while the subway only went as far as 8th Avenue.

There are major improvements to several subway stations during the tunnel closure, principally two new A.D.A.-accessible entrances are being built - one at the Driggs Avenue end of the Bedford Avenue station in Brooklyn, the other being a new Avenue A end of the 1st Ave/14th Street station. In addition, new stairs are being constructed at the Broadway Junction station, where many L train riders coming from Canarsie will likely change trains during the shutdown.

New stairs will also be built at Court Square in Long Island City, where many G train riders are likely to change trains to get to Manhattan, if their destinations are in Midtown. And long-closed stairways at several J & M line stations are being re-opened to allow for additional riders and access to the platforms.

Special HOV lanes are being established on the Williamsburg Bridge to accommodate buses, of which there will be several routes serving areas that will be losing L train service during the closure. 14th Street in Manhattan will be getting special treatment, with special bus-only lanes, as well as still allowing for commercial deliveries. A two-way bike lane will be established on 13th Street, and a special treatment for Grand Street in Williamsburg will also be established, which will serve as a bus/bike approach to the Williamsburg Bridge.

All of these changes are, of course, subject to change once the project begins, if it is shown they are not effective. It is important to keep in mind that the entire L line is not being shut down—just the section between Bedford Avenue station in Williamsburg, and all the Manhattan stations.

Riders on the other parts of the line have access to many other lines to reach their destinations, including the 3, A,C,J,M,Z, & G lines. How many will divert to those respective lines will be closely observed, and additional service will be placed in the appropriate places.

Obviously, shutting down a subway line in a city such as New York is a very complicated and stress-inducing process. One of the things the MTA is especially good at is creating brochures during major closures such as this, detailing alternate travel plans, depending on your destination, and all your travel options. The 15 months of the Canarsie Tube shutdown are going to be painful, but New Yorkers are great at getting through difficult situations, and most will find alternate routes for the period.

There really is no alternative, as the tunnel received major damage, which was demonstrated to the public on a video run-through. The tunnel is safe to use now, obviously, as service continues there. But to let this go several more years without addressing the crumbling structure would be to place riders in harm's way—something the MTA will obviously not do. The benefits, aside from a safer tunnel, will be obvious when the project concludes.

Andrew Albert is Vice-Chairman of RUN, the Chair of the NYC Transit Riders Council, and Riders' Representative on the MTA Board.

TRANSPORT FOCUS: THE VOICE OF PASSENGERS IN GREAT BRITAIN

By Sara Nelson

What makes a good journey for transport users? How good are their current experiences? And why is it important to get their views?

As the independent watchdog for transport users across Great Britain, Transport Focus ensures the voice of road users, train, bus, tram, and coach passengers are put at the heart of operator and government decision-making and investment.

Everything we do is evidence-based: our knowledge of passengers' experiences helps the transport industry and government understand why and what changes are needed.

Unreliable trains, broken promises, and poor communication have left British rail passengers feeling frustrated with the cost of their journey.

The National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), out last month, is the largest published rail satisfaction survey in the world. It reflects the views of over 50,000 passengers on all parts of the service, including value for money, punctuality, and frequency of service.

This time, an overall satisfaction level of 81% was overshadowed by poor value for money scores, with just a third of commuters satisfied with the cost of travel.

While there are signs that investment is paying off, as shown by an increase of 13% for overall satisfaction of new trains on the Thameslink route—a 140-mile route north to south through London which carries a huge proportion of daily commuters—the NRPS shows clear areas for train operating companies in which to improve.

In one area in particular, performance was poor. South Western Railway has struggled to recover since major disruption which involved the upgrade

at London Waterloo—a major station. Passenger satisfaction dropped to 75%, and even further, to 64%, for passengers travelling in the peak.

Transport Focus recently called South Western Railway and Network Rail, which manages all British rail infrastructure, to a special Board meeting to explain the poor performance, their approach to managing disruption, and investment plans.

Transport Focus will continue to campaign to improve performance for today's passenger but also look to the future to ensure the passenger voice is heard at the highest level when the major decisions are being made about investment, franchises, and other issues. Rail services are mostly run by franchised operators, selected by the Department for Transport (or the respective home governments in Scotland and Wales).

Transport Focus influences this process using our NRPS and, where possible, specific research to explore passengers' views of their current experience and aspirations for each franchise. In 2014, we carried out research to identify rail passengers' priorities for improvements across the country and also use this information in our franchising discussions.

We work closely with the decision-makers at all stages of the process, and then afterwards we liaise with the franchisee to hold them to account for continued improvements.

Looking even further to the future, High Speed 2 (HS2) is a planned high-speed railway network in the UK, linking London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, with additional cities to be linked to the network by HS2 trains running over existing tracks.

The HS2 project aims to drastically reduce journey times from London to Birmingham to 49 minutes (down from one hour and 21 minutes) and London

to Manchester to one hour and eight minutes (down from two hours and eight minutes). It will open up connectivity to the north of the country and create thousands of jobs.

Transport Focus teamed up with HS2 in 2014 and has been exploring how the railway of the future should look, by setting up a customer community to ensure that their opinions are heard from the start of the design process.

The community is a panel that runs both online and at regular “real life” workshop sessions to consider aspects of future journeys. Most recently we published its thoughts on three key areas: payment and ticketing, luggage and catering.

“Technology is great—we still want friendly staff, though” was the message. While the group was excited at how technology could improve their journey experience, they were clear that it shouldn't be at the expense of having friendly staff available to help.

As in many other of our reports exploring passengers' thoughts on emerging or future technology such as smart ticketing and contactless payments, passengers told us they are willing to embrace technology, but unwilling to rely on it fully.

Transport Focus will continue to work alongside HS2 for another year, aiming to provide valuable insights into the experiences of the everyday traveller.

Someone to appeal to?

Transport Focus is the statutory appeal body for rail complaints, helping passengers when deadlock has been reached with the operator.

Passengers never like paying the prices they do but are willing to tolerate it if the basic promises are kept. As performance remains unreliable, complaints are climbing and backlogs are building up.

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CANADA REPORT, FEBRUARY 2018

By *Ken Westcar*

Southwestern Ontario High Speed Rail

The Ontario provincial government continues to move ahead on several fronts including preliminary route surveys and selected local community consultations. The detailed Environmental Assessment will be released in late spring and, currently, excludes any options including improvement to existing VIA Rail services. This suggests the project is politically directed, rather than evidence-based.

Serving Toronto, Pearson Airport (with mobility hub aspirations), Guelph and Kitchener make sense because a good portion of the up to 27,000 daily seats planned for the route will find willing bottoms. Ridership projections indicate about 20,000 on weekdays. It's not unreasonable given the focus of both Guelph and Kitchener on being robust participants in the 4th Industrial Revolution. Major highways in this corridor are heavily congested and some rare lucidity on the part of provincial government argues that more or expanded roads will not solve the mobility problem.

Meanwhile, the 65-mile, largely greenfield section between Kitchener and London is receiving much scrutiny for two reasons. Firstly, it could involve the loss of approximately 800 acres of some of the best farmland in North America, raise crop input/output costs and negatively affect land values and accessibility. Secondly, London continues to struggle with its mobility future with bus rapid transit that will not actually pass the train station. It's very much a car-dependent city, given to developer-led

sprawl and having only vestigial VIA Rail and Greyhound bus services as regional connections.

In 2016 VIA Rail Canada carried approximately 1,800-2,000 London passengers daily to and from Toronto. Raising this to between 8,000 – 10,000 daily by 2030 to make the C\$5-billion-plus HSR investment between London and Kitchener worthwhile remains purely speculative. Adding insult to injury is that the HSR plan calls for retention of parallel VIA Rail services in southwestern Ontario which smacks of extreme political naivety.

Hudson's Bay Railway

Contrary to the last Canadian Report, no agreement has been reached between the Canadian federal government and Omnitrac on repairs to washouts on the line. Countersuits mean that a resolution is not imminent, so the Port of Churchill will continue to receive supplies by air—at huge cost to Canadian taxpayers. Omnitrac argues that the dissolution and privatization of the Canadian Wheat Board (a centralized, federally-operated marketing organization), under a previous federal government, no longer guaranteed the flow of grain shipments through Churchill so the government has defaulted on the terms of original operating contract. There are rumours of a taxpayer-funded highway if there's no resolution on track repairs.

VIA Rail

Although publicizing strong ridership growth throughout 2017, the Canadian federal government continues its “Rip Van Winkle” approach to VIA's equipment rust-out.

Maintenance staff at VIA have performed well during a very difficult winter season although the “Canadian” has incurred operational problems due to periodic intense cold.

VIA's proposal for a new “freight-free” route from Toronto to Ottawa and Montreal along the long-abandoned Canadian Pacific Havelock subdivision appears stalled. Close scrutiny shows immense technical and commercial challenges. It doesn't help that VIA management claims the line will be “profitable.” Meanwhile, they continue to squeeze what capacity they can out of the current Toronto – Montreal route at a time when host, Canadian National, are posting significant freight traffic gains with track capacity deficits on some routes.

Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB)

This new federally sponsored organization is ramping up with several high-profile board members. Its mandate is to use federal funds to stimulate interest in the private sector to provide alternative financing for major rail and other infrastructure projects, nationwide. While the concept is appealing there are concerns that investment decisions could be politically motivated or present a significant risk to Canadian taxpayers unless public/private contractual terms are watertight. Governments wishing to keep debt off their books welcome the CIB but need to be mindful of intense public scrutiny if there's a hint of undue taxpayer risk or voodoo accounting.

Ken Westcar is a Board Member of Transport Action Ontario.

TRANSPORT FOCUS: THE VOICE OF PASSENGERS IN GREAT BRITAIN

(Continued from page 8)

Our previous research has showed that almost two thirds of eligible passengers weren't aware they could claim compensation. It is good to see more people getting money back but there is still work to be done. The process for claiming compensation could be made even easier—with greater automation—to help yet more people claim. The ideal situation would be for performance to improve so there is no need to claim, but passengers claiming will prevent

train operators from resting on their laurels.

Every year we help around 3,500 people in this way. You can read case studies about how we have helped passengers on our website, transportfocus.org.uk.

Changing lifestyles, passengers being more vocal about their experiences when traveling, rising costs—Transport Focus is working hard to support passengers using the railway today, and ensuring their needs are built into decisions

which will impact on them in the future by influencing decision-makers in the industry on a number of issues, including performance and disruption, fares and tickets and investment.

All our work, alongside further information, is available on our website: www.transportfocus.org.uk

Sara Nelson is head of communications with Transport Focus.

MOVING FORWARD BY RAIL REGIONAL SUMMIT

(Continued from page 1)

invited to talk about Minnesota's High Speed Rail Coalition. Derrick James, Amtrak's Midwest Communications and Public Relations Manager, will provide an update on long distance rail service. David Christianson, the Executive Director of the Organizing Council for the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition, will also be on hand to provide a status report on the proposed Eau Claire, WI to St. Paul Passenger rail effort. The morning session will close with Brian Lamb, General Manager of Metro Transit, who has been invited to talk about the Twin Cities Blue and Green Light Rail Lines and plans for expansion.

During lunch, participants will have an opportunity to share information and experiences regarding their efforts and those of their organizations to promote passenger rail and rail transit in their local areas.

The afternoon session will start with a keynote address which will highlight the economic impact that expanded passenger rail/trail transit has on cities and towns across America. Chris Coes, Vice President of Real Estate Development, Smart Growth America, has been invited to give the address.

The remainder of the afternoon will be devoted to an advocacy panel which will feature representatives from the various rail and rail transit advocacy groups: the Northern Lights Express, All Aboard Minnesota, Wisconsin Association of Rail Passengers, All Aboard Wisconsin, the West Central Rail Coalition, and Transit for Livable Communities. Each panelist will have 15 minutes to present their thoughts and vision for expanded rail and rail transit in the upper Midwest. This will be followed by a short break and a q&a Audience Forum, which will enable conference participants to ask questions and share their ideas about how rail transit and passenger rail services can be expanded and improved.

Participants attending the conference will also have an opportunity to sample public transportation in the Twin Cities area, with an optional tour on Saturday, June 2. In the morning, we will ride the popular and expanding light rail lines in the Twin Cities. We will also visit the restored St. Paul Union Depot and other points of interest in the city. In the afternoon, we will ride on the Northstar Commuter Rail Line to Big Lake and back.

We have set the registration fee low (\$40 which includes morning refreshments and lunch) to encourage as many people as possible to attend. We hope to attract not only rail advocates, but also civic leaders, business people, environmentalists, planners, real estate developers and members of the general public who want to know more about the issues that will be discussed.

The early registration fee until May 1 is \$40; after that \$45 until May 28 and \$50 last-minute registrations and at the door. It includes morning refreshments, lunch, and an afternoon refreshment break, and all conference materials/handouts. If you

wish to stay in the Twin Cities before or after the conference, we suggest that you look at the official tourism websites for the Twin Cities.

The Minneapolis Central Library can be reached from different locations in the Twin Cities area by taking the Blue or Green line to the Nicollet Mall Station. The library is located at 300 Nicollet Mall.

Please join us at what promises to be an exciting, worthwhile event. Participants can register and make payment on RUN's website: railusers.net or via regular mail. Checks should be sent to RUN, Box 8015, Portland, Maine 04104. Further details concerning the conference will be announced as arrangements are made on our website and will also appear in the summer issue of the *RUN Newsletter*.

For more information, you can also call Richard Rudolph, Chair, Rail Users' Network. He can best be reached at 207-776-4961 or call Brian Nelson, President, All Aboard Minnesota. He can be reached at 612-781-2894.



RUN TO THE TWIN CITIES: PLACES TO EAT, STAY AND SEE

By Robert Moen

First off, you will be here in June so the weather will be sunny and pleasant. You can use Light Rail to get to downtown Minneapolis from either St. Paul Union Depot (Green Line) or from the airport (Blue Line). As the 14th largest metropolitan area at 3.9 million in population, there is plenty to see and do.

You could stay in either downtown and access the meeting. In St. Paul the Hyatt Place recently opened in the renovated Post Office building next door to Union Station. The classy Hotel 340 is four blocks west. And the traditional standard bearer: The St. Paul Hotel is near the Ordway Center for Performing arts (Broadway shows and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra) and many fine restaurants (Meritage, Pazzaluna, Kincaid's, and St. Paul Grill. Mickey's Diner is nearby for dinner or a late night snack.). You can go up to see the Cathedral and James J. Hills mansion at the start of Summit Avenue west on the hill above St. Paul. If you have transportation, you can head west from there to the restaurants on Grand Avenue between Dale and Lexington Avenues. Popular ones would include The Lexington (traditional), Dixie's (Southern), Wild Onion and my favorite for casual: Café Latte.

Minneapolis has a larger night scene. There you could stay at a variety of hotels. One that comes to mind is the Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel in the historic Milwaukee Road Depot with the Marriott Residence Inn attached. The Raddison Blu and the Marriott City Center are well-located and traditional favorites. W Minneapolis is located in the cool 1929 skyscraper: Foshay Tower, with its fun cocktail lounge on the top floor.

The Nicollet Mall and Hennepin Ave are where the action is in downtown day or night. There are many good restaurants. Murray's Steakhouse is a traditional favorite, with the new Hell's Kitchen across the street serving less expensive tasty fare. Jax (need Uber), Lion's Pub, and Sawatdee (Thai) are always excellent. You could also eat at the Mary Tyler Moore table at Basils Restaurant in the IDS Center Crystal Court. Or pose for a photo by her bronze statue across the street on the Nicollet Mall where she tossed her hat in the air.

You can take in a play at the famous Guthrie Theater or a show at the Orpheum and State Theaters. There are many other professional theaters in town. Minneapolis has more

professional theater seats per capita than any city outside New York, so take your pick. The Jungle Theater and Theatre Latte' Da are always first rate.

You can also take in a Minnesota Orchestra concert or stop by the Minneapolis Institute of Art for traditional or the Walker Art Center for modern art. If you want to get outside you can stroll down the Nicollet Mall and walk out on the Stone Arch Bridge built by James J. Hill for his Great Northern Railway. It offers stunning views of the Mississippi upper water falls, as does the balcony at the Guthrie Theater.

You could also take a taxi down to Lake Calhoun and walk around the lake on a Sunday afternoon or to Lake Harriet and ride an original streetcar. The chain of lakes and parks right in the city is one of Minneapolis' greatest attractions. Just north of the state capitol in St. Paul is the Minnesota Transportation Museum, which is a complete railroad museum. And of course you can always take the Blue Line down to the Mall of America if you want to see a really big shopping mall! But as you can see there is a lot more to the Twin Cities than the Mall of America. Enjoy!

Robert Moen is Treasurer, All Aboard Minnesota.

See any red on your address label?

It means your dues are past due!
Please remit **immediately** to continue receiving
the RUN Newsletter!

A SURVEY OF LONG-DISTANCE AND STATE-SUPPORTED PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE IN THE WESTERN US

Part One: Existing

By *Dana Gabbard*

To keep this survey at a manageable length, it is being divided into two parts. This part deals with existing long distance and state-supported passenger train service in the Western United States. State-supported passenger train services (also known as 403(b) services after the section of the 1970 Rail Passenger Service Act that allowed partnerships with states for services beyond the national network if they reimbursed Amtrak a "reasonable portion of any losses associated with such services") are defined in the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), passed in 2008, as routes of 750 miles or less. Amtrak routes that enter any of the West Coast states (Washington, Oregon and California) are included in this survey. It is organized geographically by West Coast starting point, beginning in the Pacific Northwest and working south along the coast. The state-supported services coordinating committee is given its own section. Other topics treated separately include multi-state cooperative locomotive and coach procurements, common issues for the three California state-supported intercity services and improvements of and plans for Los Angeles Union Station.

Because our readership is diverse, consisting of savvy activists, experienced DOT and Congressional staffers but also laypersons, this survey may explain things already familiar to some readers. This is reflecting the aforementioned diverse audience that will be reading it. The intent of the historical background is to provide context, not fixate on every detail. For those who wish for that there are plenty of resources where one can find it.

All Amtrak routes have dedicated Thruway motorcoach bus service at

some stations for reaching destinations outside the corridor (e.g. Portland, OR to Pendleton, OR continuing to Boise, ID and points in-between). State-supported services are especially aggressive in this regard, and also often supplement rail service in their corridors with Thruway bus routes.

State-supported Amtrak passenger rail service coordination

The State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee is a congressionally mandated entity, meant to report on state-supported passenger rail routes. In all, 18 states and 21 agencies are involved, along with Amtrak. Its website is at www.highspeed-rail.org/Pages/saiprc.aspx

Cascades

Passenger service in the *Cascades* corridor existed since the era of private passenger rail service pre-Amtrak. Initially Amtrak had two daily round-trips between Seattle and Portland, along with the *Coast Starlight* providing service between those points before continuing south to Southern California. Over the years service expanded north to Vancouver, BC and south to Eugene, OR. Service bore various names until *Cascades* (after the mountain range) was introduced in 1999.

There are 18 stations on the route, and the corridor is 467 miles long. Major stops besides Seattle, Portland, Eugene and Vancouver, BC include Salem, OR and Olympia, WA. Currently there are four daily round-trips between Seattle and Portland; two between Seattle and Vancouver, BC; and two between Portland and Eugene. No single train operates the full length of the corridor (Eugene to Vancouver, BC). As of Fiscal Year 2017 it is the eighth highest ridership Amtrak route with

810,000 riders (all ridership figures are for FY 2017, taken from the Monthly Performance Report for Sept. 2017 (Preliminary and Unaudited) dated Dec. 27, 2017 posted on the Amtrak website).

The service is a partnership of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), which fund operations and also own most of the equipment used on it. They have an operating agreement with Amtrak for the service (as do all state-supported services). The Cascades Rail Corridor Management Workplan (adopted in 2013) provides the framework for how the agencies jointly manage the service. WSDOT is the lead agency for operations management. Long term the agencies have plans for more frequent service and shorter running times. Unique among Amtrak routes, it uses Talgo equipment with the ability to tilt through curves without slowing down which shaves about 25 minutes from the running time between Seattle and Portland.

WSDOT in 2010 was awarded \$800 million from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for corridor improvements, in recognition of its status as one of eleven designated high speed rail corridors. This funded 20 projects between Vancouver, WA and Blaine, WA including:

- * new equipment – WSDOT used \$58.3 million of the ARRA grants to purchase 8 new locomotives (more detail on these in the state-supported equipment purchase section).
- * a new station in Tacoma at Freighthouse Square (aka Tacoma Dome station) providing intermodal access to Tacoma light rail, Sounder commuter rail, Greyhound and local transit which the existing station mostly lacked

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A SURVEY OF LONG-DISTANCE AND STATE-SUPPORTED PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE IN THE WESTERN US

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* the Point Defiance Bypass along an alignment known as the Lakewood Subdivision (replacing the coastal alignment between Tacoma and Steilacoom which, while scenic, includes a number of curves and single-track tunnels plus significant freight traffic).

Besides reducing running time between Seattle and Portland by 10 minutes the goal was to improve reliability (88% on time performance), relieve congestion and augment service by adding two round trips between Seattle and Portland for a total of six.

On Dec. 18, 2017 the first *Cascades* train, #501, operated along the bypass. At approximately 7:34 a.m. PST, the train derailed in DuPont, WA at milepost 19.86 while negotiating a curve in close approach to a bridge over the southbound lanes of Interstate 5. The train consisted of 12 cars and two locomotives.

One locomotive and several cars landed onto the freeway below. There were three fatalities, including two prominent rail advocates/activists: Jim Hamre and Zack Wilhoite, who were riding it to celebrate the opening of the bypass. 62 passengers and crewmembers were injured. Eight people in automobiles on I-5 that collided with the train equipment were also injured. *(Editor's note: All Aboard Washington's Lloyd H. Flem remembers Hamre and Wilhoite in an article on page 16)*

The 8-degree, 22-minute curve leading into the bridge was posted for 30 mph, with advance speed reduction signs located two miles before the curve on the engineer's side, and another 30 mph sign posted just before the curve at the point where 30 mph was effective. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators report based on the lead locomotive's event data and video recorders that at the time of the derailment the train was operating at 78 mph.

Due to injuries sustained by the engineer and conductor in the locomotive when the derailment occurred, they could not be interviewed by NTSB until the week of Jan. 15, 2018. A NTSB press release includes these key points regarding the interview with the engineer:

- The engineer told investigators that he was aware that the curve with the 30 mph speed restriction was at milepost 19.8, and that he had planned to initiate braking about one mile prior to the curve.
- The engineer said that he saw mileposts 16 and 17 but didn't recall seeing milepost 18 or the 30 mph advance speed sign, which was posted two miles ahead of the speed-restricted curve.
- The engineer said that he did see the wayside signal at milepost 19.8 (at the accident curve) but mistook it for another signal, which was north of the curve.
- He said that as soon as he saw the 30 mph sign at the start of the curve, he applied brakes. Seconds later, the train derailed as it entered the curve.

Both the engineer and the conductor reported they were rested and did not feel distracted while in the cab. Service between Seattle and Portland was suspended for a portion of the 18th. When service resumed it was detoured via the former coastal route and it was announced the bypass would not be operated upon (by the *Cascades* or the *Coast Starlight*) until Positive Train Control (PTC) is activated along it. During the holiday season, service was adjusted due to operational consequences of the DuPont incident. Beginning Jan. 2, 2018 a modified schedule was put in place with service in Oregon maintaining the new schedule that began Dec. 18, 2017, while in Washington the service went back to the schedule offered pre-Dec. 18th with a slight change in the morning southbound train out of Seattle.

All Amtrak trains will serve the Tacoma Amtrak Station located at 1001 Puyallup Ave. until further notice. The additional two round trips and the new Tacoma Dome

station are both on hold for the foreseeable future. WSDOT on its website states it "... has received assurances from Amtrak that they will meet the federal deadline of Dec. 31, 2018 for operating in the Amtrak *Cascades* corridor under PTC and will make every effort to advance the deployment date."

A mudslide covering the tracks forced a temporary substitution of motorcoach buses for *Cascades* service between Vancouver BC and Seattle WA and the *Empire Builder* between Everett WA and Seattle WA beginning Jan. 29, 2018. This continued until the tracks were cleared on Feb. 8, 2018. For more about the *Cascades* service, see its website, www.amtrakcascades.com/ (which also has a link to a q&a about the derailment). For the latest about the NTSB investigation of the derailment, Google the accident # RD18MR001.

State-supported equipment procurement

To get a better price per unit, a number of states have pooled jointly their orders for locomotives and coaches to serve state-supported Amtrak corridor routes.

Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington in March 2014 selected the Siemens SC-44 Charger diesel-electric passenger locomotives for a joint procurement. After several options were exercised by various parties the total order currently stands at 63. Of these, 22 are for California (6 for the San Joaquin/Capitol Corridor joint equipment pool, 16 for the *Pacific Surfliner*), 8 for Washington and 33 for Illinois/Michigan/Missouri.

These are manufactured by Siemens at its plant in Sacramento, CA. In a press release Siemens described the attributes of these locomotives. "The Charger locomotive is powered by a high-performance, environmentally friendly, 4,400-horsepower-rated Cummins

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A SURVEY OF LONG-DISTANCE AND STATE-SUPPORTED PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE IN THE WESTERN US

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QSK95 diesel engine. Designed to operate at speeds up to 125 miles per hour, the locomotives are the first high-speed passenger locomotive to receive Tier 4 emissions certification from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 90% emissions reduction compared to Tier 0 locomotives."

Delivery of the first batch (including all 8 for Washington and the 6 for Northern California) occurred in Summer 2017. After testing and training they were put into service by the end of the year. The additional 16 for the *Pacific Surfliner* are due for delivery starting this year.

The Charger procurement has been relatively straight forward with no surprises or design flaws found during the test phase. Would that the same could be said for the Illinois/California joint order for rail coaches.

I

In 2012, a contract was awarded to Sumitomo for bi-level cars. They subcontracted construction to Nippon Sharyo of Japan. After the prototypes failed mandatory safety testing the contract was in limbo. Since federal stimulus funds (the aforementioned ARRA) were being used to pay for it, a deadline at the end of 2017 loomed to have the order go forward or the funding lapse.

In August 2017, it was announced the subcontractor was being changed to Siemens and instead of bi-level they would be single level cars. Also, delivery was accelerated to be 24-34 months instead of five years. Of the 137 cars ordered, 49 are for California and 88 for Illinois.

There are concerns about the order changes, not only regarding diminished seating capacity but also accessibility. The rail advocacy community is divided about the revised procurement. Rail Passengers Association (RPA, formerly NARP) President and CEO

Jim Mathews stated, "We support the decision to substitute Siemens' equipment, since it has become clear that Nippon Sharyo is not going to be able to deliver the equipment to meet Federal Railroad Administration requirements. [Given] the advanced age of Amtrak's existing fleet, and surging demand for passenger train service, the top priority is acquiring new rolling stock as soon as possible."

The Train Riders Association of California, in the Nov. 2017-Feb. 2018 issue of its *California Rail News*, has an article by editor Michael D Setty titled "Caltrans' Choice of Unsuitable Car Design Will Hamper Rail" decrying the five steps that will need to be climbed to enter the cars, which will mean longer station dwelling times due to the necessity of lifts for wheelchairs and those of limited mobility versus simple concrete ramps and bridge plates for access to current low floor equipment. Setty urges the cars be sent to the Northeast Corridor which has high platforms more suitable for this kind of equipment and a new procurement be undertaken that, "should at least have modern features like low-level boarding, superior acceleration, and modular design, like modern diesel multiple unit (DMU) sets. With DMUs, operating costs could be greatly reduced and train capacities more precisely matched to demonstrated demand."

Some of the operators also have concerns. At the Dec. 6, 2017 Special Board of Directors meeting of the Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency (who manage the Pacific Surfliner) the minutes report, "[Jennifer Bergener, Managing Director] added that this week, she and a number of Amtrak and LOSSAN staff met with a company called Great Lakes Central Railroad, who has equipment available for lease or sale. She reported that while the State has proceeded with issuing a contract that includes Siemens single-

level equipment, the procurement is only for 49 cars which may not meet the needs of this corridor. The approximate time of receiving those cars would be in 24 to 36 months and the cars would still need to go into a testing process before being put into service."

Empire Builder

The Great Northern Railroad began the *Empire Builder* in 1929, naming it in honor of its founder James Hill whose nickname was The Empire Builder. It operated daily between Chicago and Spokane WA where it was split for service to continue west to either Seattle, WA or Portland, OR.

Amtrak, when it began operations in 1971, retained the route but eliminated the Portland-Spokane leg. Over the years the frequency varied. The Portland-Spokane service was restored in 1981 and it has been daily since 1999. Currently it serves 46 stations, with one of the Montana stops shifting seasonally between East Glacier Park (May-October) and Browning (Oct.-May). Major stops include the aforementioned Portland, Spokane, Seattle and Chicago plus Glacier National Park, Fargo, ND, Wisconsin Dells, St. Paul/Minneapolis, MN and Milwaukee, WI. The distance is 2,206 miles (Chicago - Seattle) or 2,257 miles (Chicago - Portland). It is the highest ridership Amtrak long-distance train with 454,000.

In the Rail Passengers Association Northwest Region 2017 Annual Newsletter, Montana RPA state representative Barry Green notes, "In Montana, the town of Culbertson is working on establishing an Amtrak station stop for their community for current and future growth in and around the surrounding area due to current and future oil field exploration and to allow for another choice for travelers from NE and SE Montana and Canada to take the train."

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A SURVEY OF LONG-DISTANCE AND STATE-SUPPORTED PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE IN THE WESTERN US

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Two strong advocates for it are U.S. Senator Steve Daines and Roosevelt County Commissioner (and former Culbertson Mayor) Gordon Oelkers. During a Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation hearing on passenger rail held Feb. 23, 2016, Daines secured a commitment from then-Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boardman to have Amtrak staff work with local stakeholders. He also drafted language in the FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill that Amtrak prepare a report on developing passenger rail service in the Bakken Region. The report estimated the stop would generate about 7,000 riders annually.

Oelkers is quoted by the *Great Falls Tribune* in the Feb. 16, 2016 article "Culbertson on Board For Amtrak Stop" as noting the stops nearest to Culbertson are 50 miles in each direction: Williston, ND to the east, Wolf Point, MT to the west. Oelkers also noted that Amtrak used to stop in the town until the mid-1970s. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari in the piece explains that the key issue is the stop has to be of a sufficient length to accommodate the *Empire Builder*. "It's a long train," he said.

In the *Sidney Herald* Mar. 16, 2016 article "Amtrak Eyes Culbertson Stop," Magliari provided more details about the potential for a station. "We know that it makes business sense to stop at Culbertson. There's a long distance between Wolf Point and Williston. Where we are now is talking with Culbertson about where the stop would be. It has to be at a place that doesn't add delay to the *Empire* or the trains that pass through there."

Estimated cost for a platform and unstaffed depot is \$3.5 million. The city is exploring options for funding.

Coast Starlight

During the era of private passenger rail service, no single train ran the length of the West Coast. When Amtrak began operations in 1971, it had an unnamed train running three days a week between Seattle and San Diego. Over the next three years, it went to daily service, dropped the Los Angeles to San Diego segment and settled on the name *Coast Starlight*, inspired by two Southern Pacific trains it emulates: the *Coast Daylight* and *Starlight*.

It has 30 stations. Besides Seattle and Los Angeles, major stops include Tacoma, WA, Portland, OR, Klamath Falls, OR, Sacramento, CA, Oakland, CA, San Jose, CA and Santa Barbara, CA. It travels a distance of 1,377 miles and is the second highest ridership long-distance train with 439,000.

Unique among Amtrak routes, the *Coast Starlight* had a lounge for its sleeper passengers. Known as the Pacific Parlour Car, these were Budd Hi-Level Sky Lounge cars, built in 1956 for the Santa Fe's *El Capitan*, modernized by Amtrak and maintained by Amtrak's Beech Grove IN maintenance facility.

I use the past tense referring to them, because in mid-January it was announced the Pacific Parlour Car equipment was being removed from service permanently as of early February, the notice stating this was "... part of Amtrak's ongoing work to modernize its fleet of equipment. ... Amtrak is reviewing what amenities offered in the Parlour Car will be available in the future." When the word about this change started being shared by rail fans before the notice was made public, there was some confusion because initially Amtrak had stated the equipment was just being removed during the slow period for their annual maintenance.

RPA President Jim Mathews in a statement noted, "While we understand and strongly support Amtrak's overarching goal to upgrade and modernize its rail cars, we also think that providing only two weeks' notice is a missed opportunity for the company to provide a special, and likely revenue-positive, send-off to a beloved piece of passenger rail [history] in the U.S. Too many of our members will not even have a chance to book a final ride on their [favorite] equipment."

When contacted about the move, Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson told Mathews that with much of the Amtrak running stock in need of overhauling, the cost of maintaining the Parlour Cars was, "money we cannot afford to put in 60-year-old assets.... We need to prioritize investment in a new fleet for Amtrak instead of investing millions in maintaining old cars that need massive interior overhauls."

Brian Rosenwald, Amtrak's former General Manager for the *Coast Starlight*, was interviewed by M.E. Singer in January for a blog post titled "As Amtrak Hits the Bumper Post, It's the Customer Experience, Stupid!" As the chief architect of the Parlour Cars, Rosenwald outlined their origins and role in enhancing the customer experience, something he emphasized during his time at Amtrak earning high praise from rail advocates (he is now retired and owns a wine shop in the Chicago area). In his view the withdrawal is shortsighted, with no understanding of the equipment's role in building high-end ridership. The piece is posted at <https://ntbraymer.wordpress.com/tag/coast-starlight-parlour-car/>

A petition has been started by the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada (RailPAC) asking, "... that the Pacific Parlour Cars remain in service during the 2018 summer season while Amtrak explores alternatives to maintaining premium service and the ticket revenues associated with it."

(Continued on page 19)

REMEMBERING JIM AND ZACK

An appreciation of rail advocates Jim Hamre and Zack Willhoite, who lost their lives in the Dec. 18, 2017 Cascades derailment

By Lloyd H. Flem

It was 35 years ago when I, who had since the early 1970s been a member of NARP, attended my first meeting of the Washington Association of Railroad Passengers (now AAWA) at the Seattle home of a founder of WashARP, the late Hans Mueller. Most in attendance were middle-aged or seniors, but I noticed two young men, Steve Spear and Jim Hamre. Steve is still active in AAWA and Jim's commitment and spirit of passenger rail advocacy lives on in many of us.

Jim's knowledge of passenger rail, whether it be technical understanding, "railfan" details, or significant policy issues was complete and near-always accurate. Jim always kept on me to push issues that were both reasoned and reasonable, whether at a local, state, or national level. That push proved important in my getting our message across.

Jim was a Mariners fan and took me to several Mariners games. We always traveled by train, Amtrak or Sounder. And in keeping with a baseball analogy, Jim's and my styles of rail advocacy differed. Jim liked pitching a hard fastball to elected decision makers and the passenger rail industry, I preferred the slow curve. I think our pitching styles were complementary.

Jim and I were close enough friends that I asked him to be a groomsman at Darleen's and my wedding, held, yes, at Olympia-Lacey's Centennial Rail Station, a few weeks before the then-new-station opened, almost exactly 25 years ago.

For many years Jim and his mother Carolyn Hamre hosted our Annual Picnic

at their suburban Puyallup home. And even in moving the Picnic to Thurston County locations in recent years, Jim served as the skilled chef for the main course. Yet another way Jim will be hard to replace.

Jim was an accomplished and respected civil engineer, his career being at the Washington State Department of Transportation. Now good prose writing is not always the top accomplishment of engineers. Yet the WashARP/AWA *Newsletter*, edited and substantially written by Jim for decades, has been an example of concise, accurate writing. Jim never changed the content of my *Newsletter* columns, but did properly break up some of my compound, complex sentences!

Jim and I had one profound difference: He was a proud WSU Cougar, I a UW Husky. Later in February we will plant a WSU Crimson azalea at the home of Tom and Kristi Hamre, in honor of their brother's loyalty to his alma mater.

About 15 years ago or so, Jim brought a young man into the WashARP fold. We predominantly older WashARP members welcomed Zack Willhoite, who was no more than in his early 20s. Zack brought a very high level of skills in the rapidly growing and changing fields of modern electronic communication technology. Jim and others were good, but Zack was a true professional, being a respected IT man for Pierce Transit (Tacoma).

Zack's knowledge and skills proved invaluable to me. My understanding of the Brave New World of the internet is so elementary that on many occasions I had to phone or email Zack at his work or his home for his expert advice.

Usually within a minute, he patiently and successfully directed me out of the hole I found myself in with my computer. I can grow good carrots, which I happily had at our Annual Picnic for Zack, but he helped keep me afloat in the scary sea of new technology.

It was so nice when Zack brought his wife Taylor to some of our events. In recent months I have gotten to know Taylor and was pleased to know Zack was sharing his life with this fine lady, although for too short a time.

This past Dec. 8 at Tacoma's Freighthouse Square, adjacent to the new Tacoma Amtrak station, Zack attended and contributed importantly to a meeting of AAWA's intermodal connectivity task force. Following our early-evening meeting, Zack walked with me the city-block distance for me to meet the Intercity Transit bus back to the Capital City. The bus was somewhat delayed. A good thing, as Zack and I enjoyed among the best conversations about varied transportation issues we'd ever had.

Zack put in lots of volunteer time for AAWA as both our chief IT man and in charge of membership. We at AAWA will need to struggle hard to begin to fill the holes left in the operation of our organization by Jim and Zack's suddenly leaving us. We cannot replicate their friendships, but they would insist we at All Aboard Washington continue to push the mission of improved passenger rail and transit they believed in and to which they dedicated so much of their time and energies. Let us so endeavor.

Lloyd H Flem is Executive Director, All Aboard Washington.

MARKING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EMPIRE SERVICE

By Michael R. Weinman

In 1967, the New York Central, like most North American railroads, saw a continuing decline in its intercity passenger service. The remnants of its long-distance day and overnight trains had been decimated by parallel limited access highways and jet aircraft. The famous *Twentieth Century Limited* had been combined with the *Commodore Vanderbilt* in 1958, and with the *New England States* in 1967, but still carried relatively few passengers.

Several trains in New York State were on the chopping block, but the New York State Public Service Commission (NYSPSC) was dubious, alleging that the railroad had not operated them properly. Assistant Vice President - Operating Administration Robert D. Timpany, who normally did not get involved with passenger service (but to whom the Operating Management Training program reported), was convinced that the railroad could do a better job of both operating the remaining service, and avoiding expensive blame and hearings when trying to discontinue trains.

Timpany was the lead witness in weeks of hearings, and developed a plan, backed by market research, for a service of short, fast coach trains operated at memory intervals, between New York, Albany, Buffalo, and intermediate points (with extensions and connections to points beyond).

Timpany, operating with the blessing of New York Central President Alfred Perlman, guaranteed the Commission that the Central, if given permission to replace its existing and expensive trains with the new pattern, would run them right: clean, on time, and with the best equipment available to it.

Under the questioning of examiner Walter Zullig (later Metro-North General Counsel) and others, Timpany practically

had to pledge his first-born to the Commission, but in a surprisingly short span of time following the hearings, the Central was given permission to start the service, on Dec. 3, 1967. Timpany rounded up all concerned to get the ball rolling, and told his squadron of trainees that, while they had no authority, the responsibility of getting the service off on the right foot was theirs.

It worked, and worked well, at least for the months until the doomed Penn Central merger (consummated in February 1968) took hold. For the first year, the New York State trains made an “above-the-rail” profit, but after that, the deepening dilemma of the merged company saw the service degrade, along with almost all others run by the company. Note that Empire Service, though, was the first memory-pattern service operated in the modern era—a pattern soon to be emulated by the Metroliners.

Of course, Amtrak acquired Empire Service on May 1, 1971, and continues to operate it, with more trains, to several destinations. The memory pattern is gone, as is the fast overall time between New York and Buffalo (7'30" in 1967), although running times to Albany (now served through Rensselaer), and maximum speeds, are better today.

In late 2017, PTSI Transportation suggested to Amtrak that the 50th anniversary of Empire Service be celebrated in December 2017. Amtrak Vice President Joe McHugh agreed, as did Empire Service General Manager Kevin Chittenden, and they arranged a ceremony for Dec. 4, to be held in the new station in Rensselaer, owned by the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA). Local officials such as the Mayor of Rensselaer, New York State Department of Transportation officers, and the head of CDTA were invited.

In a mark of gratitude, the family of Robert D. Timpany (who had died in 1998, after service as Trustee of the Central Railroad of New Jersey and a well-deserved retirement) were invited. Daughter Mary (Esq.) and son Robert and one each of their children came from central Pennsylvania and Idaho. They both spoke at the ceremony, and as the introduction stated, it was good to see that Timpany's first-born (Mary) did NOT have to be sacrificed at the altar of the NYSPSC, because the New York Central made good on its commitment—and the longevity of the service (and Mary herself) were living proof. NYSPSC Examiner Zullig, now retired, stated that while that offer of Timpany's first-born was not really made, he found Timpany's sincerity and credibility to be of equal gravity.

Amtrak officers indicated that there were many future plans for Empire Service, in its 51st year and beyond, and hosted a lovely luncheon with a beautiful celebration cake. Many former NYC Operating Management Trainees were invited, and many representatives of the Empire State Passenger Association and other advocacy groups likewise attended, and displayed much information and memorabilia.

It was an honor to have been associated with the creation and successful inauguration of Empire Service, and an honor to have attended and helped to stage this celebration. It was an honor, likewise, to have worked for R. D. Timpany, and to have gotten to know Mary and Bob and their families. Timpany was not a man given to emotion, but in his bound volumes of Empire Service papers, he remarked to the Central's attorney that he had created the service in the hopes that someday, his children might be proud of what he had done. They were and are.

Michael R. Weinman is Managing Director of PTSI Transportation.

A MISSOURI TOWN GETS AN AMTRAK STOP AND ACCOMMODATES TOURISTS WHO RIDE

By David Peter Alan

In 1858, the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad ran southwesterly from St. Louis to the iron mining region of the Ozark mountains and the Arcadia Valley. Northbound trains stopped at Arcadia, MO, while southbound trains stopped at Ironton, the next town to the north. A new station, built of locally-quarried red granite, opened for service in 1941. It accommodated the Missouri Pacific's Texas Eagle and other trains going in both directions until 1968. Today the Union Pacific owns the railroad and Amtrak brought the Eagle back in 1975, but its riders never saw the Ozark countryside, unless the train was very late. It ran through the area in the middle of the night, without stopping, in both directions.

It still runs on that schedule today but, thanks to a concerted effort by citizens and civic leaders in the area, the Eagle has been stopping there again, starting on Nov. 20, 2016. A local business owner also stands prepared to take riders around the town. He owns a local motel and tour company, and can provide an experience of visiting some scenic and historic country towns by train.

In a press release announcing the new station stop, Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari called the area "a geologically rich and historic region." Magliari said: "The city was added to the Amtrak national network largely through an advocacy and planning effort coordinated by Our Town Tomorrow (OTT), a local non-profit organization focused on community revitalization." OTT secured a number of grants from the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), the Iron County Economic Partnership and other sources to build a new platform and make other improvements, so the station could be ready for service again.

The strongest community advocate for re-establishing the stop was Carol Kelsheimer, President of OTT and currently also Treasurer of the Iron

County Chamber of Commerce. The Iron County Historical Society had established a museum in the station in 2008, which inspired Kelsheimer and other civic advocates in Arcadia, Ironton and Pilot Knob (the northernmost town of the three in the valley) to campaign for grants, local contributions and the support of local elected officials to persuade Amtrak to add the stop. The campaign began in 2010 and lasted for more than six years.

Arcadia Valley is now the only stop between St. Louis and Poplar Bluff near the Arkansas border; 169 miles away. OTT still owns the station, and the Iron County Visitors' Center is also located there. As a bonus, passengers waiting for the train can also see the museum.

Kelsheimer praised other members of the community for their involvement. "We've had a lot of support from the community. I have a wonderful group of volunteers; it's very rewarding" she said, and added that she is also one of the volunteers: "I'm there at 3:30 in the morning at least once a week and 10:00 at night at least once a week." She and her group also have more plans for the station. One is to expand long-term parking. "We have a lot of riders from 60 or 70 miles away because of our station. They would rather come here than meet their car in St. Louis," she said. She and her colleagues are also looking into having the train carry bicycles for visiting cyclists. The town is on a nationally-recognized bike trail.

The area is not served by local transit, but it is still possible for tourists to arrive on the train and see the region. That is where local businessman Tim Sappington comes in. Sappington owns the Shepherd Mountain Inn, a motel in Ironton. He also owns Arcadia Valley Tours and plans to conduct tours that comprise Arcadia, Ironton, and Pilot Knob, and sometimes places further away. His planned offerings will include winery tours, tours of unique nature rock formations, and Civil War tours, and he is gearing up for the coming summer season. This writer and another visiting travel

writer were treated to his "Best of Arcadia Valley" Tour last year, which included a sampling of geology, Civil War history and local food. Sappington says that having the train stop is "a complement to our other hospitality offerings" and has made it easy to get to the area. He sends a van to meet guests arriving on the train.

There are a number of sights to see in the area, but not within walking distance from the station. Elephant Rocks State Park is named for giant granite boulders that look like the bodies of elephants. Nearby Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park features water cascading quickly through narrow "shut-ins" in the rocks. Taum Sauk Mountain, the highest point in Missouri, is also nearby. There is also lots of Civil War history in the area. Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as a General in Ironton, in the yard around the 1858-vintage Iron County Court House, which is still in use. Union forces kept the Rebels from getting a foothold in Missouri at the Battle of Pilot Knob in 1864. The battlefield is preserved, and a museum at the site commemorates and describes the battle. There are also a number of historic homes and churches in the three towns, with wineries and historic mines also nearby.

There is also a local food scene. In addition to the usual variety of foods, Baylee Jo's, located next to the Sheppard Mountain Inn, is a unique barbecue restaurant. The meat is smoked over cherrywood, and the sauce is sweetened with cherry syrup. The Old Arcadia Academy is now an inn with a restaurant, bakery and ice cream shop. The building and its complex started as a Methodist school in 1846, and was later a Catholic girls' academy until it closed in 1971.

The Arcadia Valley is not a busy place, but it provides an interesting getaway that is different from anything else offered along the Amtrak network. In a sense, it hearkens back to the time when a local hotel owner met the train, brought tourists to his establishment and offered sightseeing tours to them, so they could (Continued on page 19)

A SURVEY OF LONG-DISTANCE AND STATE-SUPPORTED PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE IN THE WESTERN US

(Continued from page 15)

The petition also is for supporting RailPAC's campaign that new locomotives and rolling stock be acquired for Amtrak's long-distance trains in the Western U.S., the ones covered in this survey. There are over 4,000 signatures for it thus far. The petition is posted at <https://www.change.org/p/amtrak-save-the-coast-starlight-pacific-parlour-cars>

The *Starlight* has a support group, the *Coast Starlight* Communities Network. It describes itself as "a coalition of various interests with the goal of protecting and improving rail service between Washington, Oregon, and California." Its website is www.coaststarlight.net/

California Zephyr

From 1939 through 1970, rail service between Chicago and Oakland operated first as the *Exposition Flyer* and then the *California Zephyr*. During the last year of the private passenger rail era and for a time after the May 1, 1971 start-up of Amtrak, there were ways to travel from Chicago to Oakland that involved two trains, under various names and some segments only ran three times a week. In June 1972, Amtrak launched the daily *San Francisco Zephyr* (named after the *California Zephyr* and *San Francisco Chief*) as a one seat ride between Chicago and Oakland. In 1983, Rio Grande, which had been one of the few private passenger railroads that refused to join Amtrak in 1971 and instead continued operating passenger rail service, finally assented and gave Amtrak access to its trackage.

Amtrak re-routed the line along its historic alignment on the Rio Grande's Moffat Subdivision between Denver and Salt Lake City (which is what it had wanted to do since 1971) and at that time adopted the name *California Zephyr*. Between June 11, 1995 and May 10, 1997, it operated four days a week, then resumed being daily which it is to the present day. Emeryville station became the terminus in 1994, with the closure of Oakland 16th Street station damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The following year, it was extended to serve the new Oakland Jack London station, but in 1997 went back to having Emeryville as the terminus to avoid a long backup move to the maintenance yard between trips.

There are 35 stations on the route and it is 2,438 miles (the second longest after the *Texas Eagle*). It has the third highest ridership among long distance trains with 415,000. Besides the end points of Emeryville (in the Bay Area near Oakland and San Francisco) and Chicago major stops it serves include Omaha, NE, Denver, CO, Salt Lake City, UT, Reno, NV and Sacramento, CA.

While speaking to the aforementioned Marc Magliari, I learned the Fraser station on the *Zephyr*, which serves the Winter Park ski resort, has had an exciting recent enhancement. To learn more I spoke with Michael Koch, Transit Manager for the Town of Winter Park Lift system.

As of Nov. 2017, the Amtrak reservation system, when Winter Park Ski Resort Shuttle Stop (WPS) is given as the destination, lists as part of the itinerary "6206 Thruway Bus

Village Cabriolet Shuttle Stop" and gives this description of the service:

WINTER PARK EXPRESS SHUTTLE

The Lift shuttle buses provide convenient connections to/from the California Zephyr train between the Fraser, CO Amtrak station and the base area of Winter Park Resort. Buses run every half hour during winter season and hourly during the summer season.

When sharing the news, Koch enthused, "I'm particularly excited about this Thruway service with Amtrak and hope it attracts more people to the Fraser Valley!" The span of service year round is 7 a.m.-2 a.m. Connectivity and addressing first/last mile for rail services are growing concerns in urban settings. How refreshing to have them come to the fore in a picturesque setting, marking Winter Park as at the forefront of the burgeoning new urbanism movement.

This of course is in addition to the re-established express ski train (*Winter Park Express*) between Denver Union Station and Winter Park Resort, operating this year on weekends from January through March and on the first Friday of those months.

For schedule and other details about Winter Park's Link transit service, the direct web address is www.theliftwp.com

(To be continued in the Summer 2018 issue of the RUN Newsletter.)

Dana Gabbard is a RUN Board member and executive secretary of Southern California Transit Advocates.

A MISSOURI TOWN GETS AN AMTRAK STOP

(Continued from page 18)

sample the local color. That is what Sappington's tour company plans to offer.

There are a few Amtrak stops that were added to the roster because local civic advocates fought to get them placed onto a train's schedule. Arcadia Valley is one of those stops. While RUN is usually concerned with cities, the transit they offer and how they connect to the rest of the Amtrak network, there are some "off the

beaten path" places that are accessible on Amtrak. Thanks to civic advocates like Carol Kelsheimer and local business people like Tim Sappington, there is a set of three towns in southern Missouri that are now accessible to everyone, with or without an automobile.

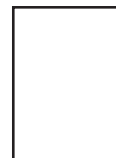
Our Town Tomorrow can be reached at (573) 546-3546 and is developing a web site for the train station and the organization. The site for Arcadia Valley Tours is www.arcadiavalleytours.com, and the phone number is (573) 546-TOUR. The current schedule

for the Texas Eagle is 10:02 p.m. for southbound Train #21 and 4:19 a.m. for northbound Train #22 at the Arcadia station.

For more detailed information about the station and the surrounding area, see the website of the Great American Stations Foundation, www.greatamericanstations.com.

David Peter Alan is a member of the RUN Board of Directors and has ridden the entire Amtrak system, having visited about 400 of the destinations served by Amtrak.

FROM THE RUN BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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We welcome your thoughts and comments about our newsletter. Please write to us: RUN, P.O. Box 8015, Portland, ME 04104

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We invite you to become a member of the Rail Users' Network, which represents rail passengers interests in North America. RUN is based on the successful British model, which has been serving passengers since 1948. RUN networks passengers, their advocacy organizations, and their advisory councils. RUN is working to help secure an interconnected system of rail services that passengers will use with pride. RUN forms a strong, unified voice for intercity, regional/commuter, and transit rail passenger interests. By joining together, sharing information, best practices, and resources through networking, passengers will have a better chance of a vocal and meaningful seat at the decision making table.

RUN members enjoy newsletters, international conferences, regional rail forums, and other meetings to share information while working to improve and expand rail passenger service.

Membership is open to passengers, official advisory councils, advocacy groups, public agencies, tourist and convention bureaus, carriers and other profit-making organizations.

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