

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

APRIL 2010

ANGELS FLIGHT

Angels Flight began carrying passengers up and down Bunker Hill in Los Angeles on March 15, 2010, nine years after a fatal accident forced an extensive overhaul of the tiny railway's operating and safety systems. Fans of "The Shortest Railway in the World" waited eagerly to board the first ride at 6:45 a.m., recalling memories of riding the orange-and-black wooden cars – named Olivet and Sinai – which looked the same as when they were first put into service in 1901.

The California Public Utilities Commission has approved the safety certificate for the historic Angels Flight funicular in downtown Los Angeles. In a letter to Angels Flight Railway Co., the PUC said that it had "no major safety concerns" regarding the rail line.

The company had faced numerous delays in reopening Angels Flight. John Welborne, head of a nonprofit foundation that is trying to reopen the funicular, said he was pleased by the PUC's decision, calling it an important step forward. He said the group had been waiting for the PUC's approval for nearly a year.

In 2001, a car broke loose and rolled downward for almost a block before smashing into another rail car at the bottom of the hill, killing an 83-year-old man and injuring seven others. Federal investigators concluded that faulty mechanical and brake systems were primarily to blame.

The rail line was designed to connect downtown with the residential community on Bunker Hill. But when the city demolished that neighborhood as part of a 1960s redevelopment, Angels Flight was left with few passengers. The funicular was revived at its present location in 1996 after years of effort by preservationists.

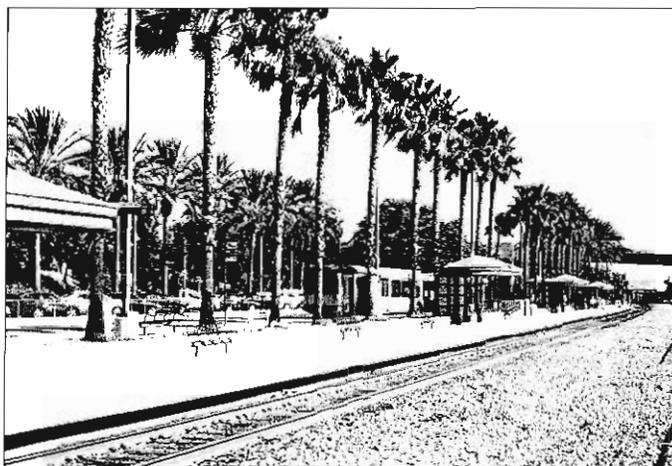
[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

S. P. LONE PINE STATION

by JOHN PETROS

As of June 2009 the standard gauge ESPEE Lone Pine, California, railroad station, now serving as a private family residence, still stands on the site where it was originally built in the early part of the 1900s. Situated near the end of the Southern Pacific 139.3 mile-long Lone Pine Branch, which begins at Mojave, CA, and which also is known as the "Jawbone," the station was erected to support the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct from Owens Valley to the City of the Angels.

At one time the line continued north for a short distance to Owenyo, where it connected across the platform with the narrow gauge Carson & Colorado. Owenyo, which was not a dual gauge operation, was shut down in 1960 at the time the C&C ceased operations, by then known as Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge.



Metrolink Downtown Burbank Station is seen in 2009, with track from Downtown Los Angeles in the distance and track to LA out of view. This is reportedly the busiest Metrolink station, after LA, in Southern California.

Photo by John Petros



According to a report from officials with the restored Tehachapi Depot and Museum, the new affirmed grand opening will be on June 5, 2010.

Photo by Margo Petros

TEHACHAPI STATION – IT'S BACK by JOHN PETROS

The original Tehachapi Summit station was in use from 1876 until 1904 when it was destroyed by fire. It was replaced at that time by using Southern Pacific standard architectural plan No. 23. The 1904 structure was burned to the ground while undergoing renovation on Friday, June 13, 2008 at 3:00 a.m. by vandals.

The newly constructed Tehachapi station, as shown in the two accompanying photos taken in December 2009 by Margo Petros, was also built according to SP plan No. 23. The grand opening of the new station and museum will be held in the Spring of 2010.



WHEEL CLICKS

APRIL 2010 VOLUME 74, NO. 1

EDITOR **DICK FINLEY**
TECHNICAL EDITOR **CHARLES VARNES**
MAILER **JOHN STALLKAMP**

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Published monthly by **PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.** The Society is a California chartered, nonprofit organization of those who share an interest in railroad operations, travel and history. Address and telephone are the same as for Pacific Railroad Museum.

PARTICIPATING MEMBER **\$35.00 per year**
SUSTAINING MEMBER **\$50.00 per year**
CORPORATE MEMBER **\$100.00 per year**
LIFE MEMBER **\$500.00**

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays: 1-5 p.m.

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Apr. 2 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Apr. 3, 10, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 17, 24 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: April 24.
 Apr. 3, 10, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 17, 24 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Days: 3, 17; Extra Days: 10, 24. Com. Meet.: 17.
 For more info., call Will Walters, 714-637,4676.
 Apr. 9 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 May 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 15, 22, 29 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 15, 22, 29 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 2, 16; Extra days: 9, 23, 30. Com. Meet.: 16.
 May 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 May 14 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,

Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 May 21 Slide night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. All welcome and bring
 slides.

MEETING PROGRAM by **RUSS DAVIES**

April 9: Long-time Southern California rail fan and photog-
 rapher, **Alan Weeks**, will present a **slide program** covering
 miscellaneous **Santa Fe in the 50s and 60s**. Some of us
 have seen previews of this in e-mails from Alan, and **this**
one will be great! Be there, and bring slide briefs!

May 14 **Joe Bonino** from the R&LHS Southern California
 Chapter will present a **slide "Double Feature," SP Narrow**
Gauge, and LARY, images from the Chapter's archives.
 Each year Joe and I do a "Home & Home" exchange of
 presentations, R&LHS and PRS. **This will be a good one.**
Be there, and bring slide news briefs!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

There were no late renewals for this report. At the board
 meeting on March 5, 2010, three new members were voted into
 PRS and assigned membership numbers: Denise Pate, #452;
 Catherine Fusano, #453; and Darrell Harvey, #454.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The tally of ballots of PRS members for Fiscal Year 2010-
 2011 was counted at the meeting on March 12, 2010. The
 Election Committee counted 4 miscellaneous votes for various
 offices in addition to the listed votes. The winning officer is
 indicated by *. New officers take over on April 1. Approxi-
 mately 35 percent of the membership voted.

President	Marti Ann Draper	110*
President	Will Walters	53
Vice-President	Will Walters	95*
Vice-President	Marti Ann Draper	59
Secretary	Bill Smith	158*
Treasurer	Nick Teel	156*
Director	Lindsay Smith	84*
Director	Neil Bjornsen	58
Director	Ed Saaleg	15

TREASURER REPORT by **NICK TEEL**

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to take this
 opportunity to thank all of you that have sent in Donations with
 your Membership Dues payment. As much as we would like to
 send each of you an individual acknowledgement of your
 generosity, we just don't have enough people or postage
 available to individualize our thank you. In keeping with the
 IRS requirements, we will continue to send individual confirma-
 tions of donations of \$250 or more. Thank you again for your
 support of Pacific Railroad Society.

CALTRAIN NEWS by **MIKE GONDON**

February 25 was not a good day to be a Caltrain employee or
 passenger. Things went bad early when the first train of the day,
 No. 101, struck an abandoned vehicle north of Mary Avenue in
 Sunnyvale shortly before 5 a.m. No one on the train was

injured, but the vehicle caught fire after being struck, which also caused damage to the train's cab car.

The incident shut down the Caltrain line in both directions for four hours. Northbound trains were halted at Sunnyvale and southbound trains terminated at Mountain View. A bus bridge was set up between the two stations until the line was re-opened about 9 a.m.

Later that afternoon, Train No. 368 struck a trespasser at the San Antonio station in Mountain View. It was the second fatality of the year for Caltrain and caused delays of at least 30 minutes for the evening commute.

In 2011, Bay Area commuters will find it easier to transfer from one transit mode to another when new signage goes up at 24 regional transit centers throughout the Bay Area, including four Caltrain stations. The Caltrain stations involved are San Francisco, Palo Alto, Mountain View, and San Jose. Real-time electronic information displays will also be installed at the stations in 2011.

In February, a new "commuter market" opened in the former ticket office of the Hillsdale Caltrain station. The market, which is open Monday-Friday, sells fresh produce and prepared dinner meals that appeal to busy commuters.

Work is continuing on a \$2.8 million project to upgrade Caltrain's signal system. Begun in June 2009, the project is adding more signals to the line, which will allow for better spacing of trains. Work is performed on weekends and the project should be completed by May 2010.

U.S. AIDS HIGH-SPEED RAIL

The \$2.25 billion in federal stimulus funds awarded the end of January to the California high-speed rail project ensures that construction can proceed on a 520-mile route between Anaheim and San Francisco within three years, rail officials said January 28. Mehdi Morshed, executive director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, said the infusion of federal dollars would pay for completion of the project's engineering and environmental reviews and provide a significant amount of seed money to start building the system by September 2012, as required by the federal grant.

The authority wants to build an initial line from Anaheim to San Francisco via the Central Valley by 2020 at an estimated cost of \$42 billion. Officials say trains would speed passengers at up to 220 mph between Los Angeles and the Bay Area in no more than 2 hours and 40 minutes. A second phase calls for extensions to San Diego and Sacramento by 2026, which would add 300 more miles to the system.

California won the largest share of \$8 billion in economic stimulus funds that the Obama administration distributed to 13 high-speed rail corridors across the country, including Tampa-to-Orlando in Florida and Chicago-to-St. Louis. The state had applied for \$4.7 billion of the available amount.

Some critics of the project doubt whether construction can begin by September 2012 because the rail authority faces substantial challenges. Public opposition has surfaced along the proposed route. An environmental lawsuit in Northern California recently knocked out a proposed alignment, and disputes with freight railroads have surfaced over use of their rights-of-way.

"There are lots of complications that need to be worked out before they can build," said Richard Tolmach, director of the California Rail Foundation. "They haven't determined the right-of-way between San Jose and Gilroy. Service doesn't look feasible in the Central Valley. The L.A.-to-Anaheim route is pretty challenged."

State Sen. Alan Lowenthal (D-Long Beach), who has presided over six hearings into the high-speed rail project as chairman of the Senate Transportation and Housing Committee, is a supporter of the proposal. However, he also said there are significant financial and planning hurdles. Lowenthal contends that the project's ridership and cost forecasts, which have changed repeatedly, might be unreliable and he questioned whether the authority could secure enough money to complete construction as scheduled.

BOB HOPE AIRPORT

Officials in Burbank are pushing the developers of the high-speed rail line to add a stop at Bob Hope Airport. Representatives of the California High Speed Rail Authority had planned to present two station alternatives to their board of directors by May 6. But the Burbank City Council in early March called on the representatives to consider as part of their environmental study a stop near the airport, arguing that a proposed \$120-million regional transportation center there should not be isolated from high-speed trains.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages

The Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages posted on the BNSF News web page on March 8, 2010 were:

TRAINS	MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	89%	88%
Short-Distance Trains	94%	95%
Pacific Surfliners	98%	99%

Amtrak Guest Rewards Promotion

Amtrak Guest Rewards members will receive a 30 percent bonus on points purchased through April 30. Points can be purchased in increments of 500 points to a maximum of 10,000 points per year. The promotion is located on the Hot Deals section of the Amtrak Guest Rewards internet page.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

On March 1, 2010, Amtrak launched its Wi-Fi Internet service, known as AmtrakConnectSM aboard all 20 high-speed *Acela Express* trains, in six major stations along the *Northeast Corridor*, and in all four ClubAcela lounges. Initially offered as a complimentary service, AmtrakConnect is available to every passenger on board *Acela Express* both in Business and First class seating.

Using any laptop computer or other portable device that is Wi-Fi enabled, Amtrak passengers traveling on *Acela Express* between Washington, D.C. and Boston can connect to the service for general Web surfing and reading email. The system also allows passengers to access their corporate networks through most standard Virtual Private Network (VPN) solutions, turning the train trip into productive work time.

In addition, Amtrak is launching AmtrakConnect for all

Amtrak passengers within the gate areas of Washington Union Station, Baltimore Penn Station, Philadelphia 30th Street Station, New York Penn Station, Providence Station and Route 128 Station in Boston. Wilmington Station will be Wi-Fi equipped once major station renovations are completed in early 2011. Wi-Fi service continues to be available in all ClubAcela lounges in Washington, DC, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

AmtrakConnect service on *Acela Express* trains will remain free of charge during the introductory period, after which the policy will be reviewed based on customer demand and system performance.

AmtrakConnect was deployed on *Acela Express* by Virginia Beach-based GBS Group and its partner Nomad Digital. [Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during January 2010 were 40,765, which was an increase from the previous month of 9 percent, and a decrease from the previous year of 7 percent.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide passholders on Amtrak during January 2010 were 1,961, which was an increase from the previous month of 3 percent, and an increase from the previous year of 4 percent.

[Info. from Metrolink via Charles Varnes]

SAFER TRAIN CARS ARRIVE FOR METROLINK

Dockworkers on March 2 unloaded South Korea's first delivery of new crash-resistant Metrolink rail cars designed to minimize damage, injuries and death in the event of a collision. The first two of the 117 rail cars to arrive will undergo a series of rigorous predeployment tests on regional tracks.

The purchases come in the wake of a string of fatal collisions with cars and freight trans on Metrolink tracks in recent years that have claimed more than 35 lives and left hundreds injured.

"These cars have, for lack of a better term, crumple zones designed to absorb the force of an impact and direct it away from passengers and crew," said Metrolink board Chairman Keith Millhouse, who greeted the trains after they were lifted off a freight ship at the Port of Long Beach. "This is state-of-the-art technology. These are the first passenger rail cars with this technology in the nation."

Testing will include car speed and braking capacities, adaption to track, cabin instrumentation, compatibility with locomotives and existing rail cars, engineering, design and other measurements. Metrolink workers will fully disassemble the two cars that arrived this week to learn more about their design and technical aspects before putting them through tests.

More cars will arrive in coming months, with the full fleet of 117 in service by mid- to late-2011, Millhouse said.

The bilevel Hyundai Motor rail cars feature front-end "crumple zones" that tests show absorb much of the impact of a 30-mph collision without significantly damaging the passenger cabin. Known as crash energy management (CEM) cars, they will replace the oldest cars in Metrolink's existing fleet after workers study the design and technology and outfit the cars with

the rail service's logos, route maps and other features.

The new fleet is expected to be significantly safer than the cars involved in Metrolink's two deadliest collisions in the agency's 18-year history, which occurred in 2006 and 2008.

The 2006 incident happened when a suicidal motorist parked his SUV on tracks in Glendale, then jumped out moments before impact. The crash derailed the train, killing 11 and injuring about 100. The SUV driver later was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

In September 2008, a Metrolink train engineer text-messaging a friend apparently missed a red signal in Chatsworth, colliding head-on with a freight train traveling in the opposite direction on the same track. The accident killed 25, including the engineer, and injured 135.

Since it first began operating in 1992, Metrolink ridership has grown between 3 percent and 4 percent annually. The agency, which serves a region stretching from San Bernardino to Oxnard, now handles roughly 47,000 riders each day, according to Metrolink.

The agency is planning for further growth in coming years, and has considered service into San Pedro, Wilmington and Long Beach from downtown Los Angeles, although a light-rail link operated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, or Metro, is more likely for this route.

More Metrolink CEM rail cars will arrive through the Port of Long Beach in coming months from the Hyundai factory near Seoul, South Korea.

[Info. from the *Daily Breeze* via Jack Whitmeyer]

IN-CAB VIDEO CAMERAS

After a 16-month investigation, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which is the independent federal agency charged by Congress with investigating significant transportation accidents, has determined that the actions of the Connex engineer of Train 111 were the probable cause of the Chatsworth collision.

In issuing its findings, the NTSB expressed its strong disapproval of the Connex engineer's failure to observe and respond to the warning signals and red light leading up to the collision because he was engaged in text messaging. Text messaging while operating a train was and is a violation of Metrolink policies and Connex and other railroad rules; it is now a violation of federal law. The NTSB also found that the Metrolink warning-signal system, dispatch system, and equipment were all operating properly and did not play a role in the collision.

The NTSB's forward-looking safety recommendations were a very important outcome of the investigation. The board recommended to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), which is the agency responsible for enforcing systems in the control cabs of all train locomotives nationwide. In making their recommendation, the NTSB underscored that the "safety of the traveling public outweighs privacy."

This action violates Metrolink's decision to become the first railroad in the nation to install inward-facing cameras in their locomotive fleet as part of their multilayered safety program. Metrolink had installed inward and outward-facing cameras in their entire locomotive fleet in October 2009.

"We will continue our diligent work to lead the way in safety

enhancements,” said Metrolink Board Chairman Keith Millhouse. “We are pleased that the NTSB has validated our action in becoming the first commuter railroad in the nation to install and operate inward-facing cameras as a deterrent to unsafe behaviors. Metrolink will continue its commitment to safety as our highest priority.”

Cameras are proving to be a significant deterrent to the types of activities revealed during the investigation, including text messaging, allowing unauthorized persons in the locomotive, and sleeping on the job. The cameras in Metrolink’s locomotives have become an important component of their safety program, and they look forward to seeing other railroads follow their lead in implementing this important safety technology.

In the past year and a half Metrolink has shared updates on the many actions they have taken to safeguard their passengers, crew, and railway workers, and the thousands of Southern California residents who interact with their system.

While the NTSB’s exhaustive investigation was a long-term effort, Metrolink did not wait for the report or hesitate to act in the best interest of public safety. Immediately following the accident, Metrolink moved to enhance passenger safety throughout their entire system by implementing a number of safety-critical actions – with more to come. Some of these actions and initiatives include:

- Establishing an independent Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel of national experts.
- Becoming the first railroad in the nation, either passenger or freight, to install inward-facing video cameras.
- Realigning, hiring, and adding new staff to oversee contractors and ensure compliance with safety regulations.
- Increasing the scope and frequency of Metrolink’s efficiency-testing program (surprise compliance tests) among Connex, UP, BNSF, and Amtrak employees to more than 3,000 tests per month.
- Executing an accelerated strategy to develop and install Positive Train Control – the ultimate train-stopping technology – on their trains by 2012, three years before the federal mandate for implementation.

On March 2 Metrolink delivered another “safety first” when the first two cars of their fleet of Crash Energy Management-enabled cars arrived.

[Info. from *Metrolink Matters*]

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Federal safety officials called for railroads to install cameras and voice recorders in every locomotive control cab in the nation as they publicly warned on January 21 that cell-phone texting by engineers and conductors was a growing and lethal danger. The call came as members of the National Transportation Safety Board publicly concluded their investigation into the deadly collision of a commuter train and a freight train in Chatsworth in 2008 – a crash they blamed on a Metrolink engineer who passed a stop signal as he sent a message from his phone.

In general, text messaging by train crews “is becoming more widespread,” said NTSB Chairwoman Deborah A.P. Hersman, after the board’s public session in Washington ended its 16-month Chatsworth inquiry. “I think we have to nip this in the bud right now.”

The board’s sharp language and findings blaming the engineer could shift tens of millions of dollars in liability away from Metrolink and onto the private contractor that hired and supervised the engineer, Connex Railroad.

Whether the recommendations will be implemented depends on the Federal Railroad Administration, which regulates the industry. Both the railroad administration and the American Association of Railroads said they would study the issue.

Experts say legal claims by survivors of those killed or injured in the crash could exceed a \$200-million federal liability cap. Metrolink had \$150 million in insurance at the time of the crash.

Although Metrolink board members urged deployment of so-called positive train control, they were reminded of the difficulties Metrolink faces in fulfilling its commitment to install the system by 2012. The commuter agency still needs \$100 million for the project, said NTSB investigator Wayne Workman. “This is a tough challenge.”

The NTSB also concluded on January 21 that witness statements that the final track signal light was green for Metrolink 111 were not considered reliable, given technical data that indicated the light was red.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

AAR STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

by CHARLES VARNES

In March 2010 the Association of American Railroads reported the number of freight cars stored on the first day of the month was 418,521, equal to 26.9 percent of the total fleet. Cars in storage as a percentage of the total fleet have now fallen or stayed level for nine straight months.

In its March 2010 Rail Time Indicators, the AAR commented, “21,079 was the most taken out for any month for which we have data (i.e., since March 2009). If that pace continues into the future – not a sure thing – it would take another year and a half before rail cars in storage fell to around 30,000, which is our best guess of what ‘normal’ is.”

On January 1, 2010, 448,555 freight cars, equal to 28.7 percent of the total fleet, were stored. For the month of February the number of stored cars was 439,631, equal to 28.2 percent of the total fleet.

In 2009 the number of cars stored on the first day of the month (and percent of the total fleet) was: March, 437,547 (27.5); April, not reported; May, 493,879 (31.5); June, 502,021 (31.9); July, 502,853 (31.9); August, 489,469 (31.1); September, 478,046 (30.4); October, 462,410 (29.4); November, 541,112 (28.8); December, 451,096 (28.8).

[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators]

TRANSPORTATION GETS STIMULUS

California has been awarded \$83.9 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act transit funding. Aurora Jackson, Montebello’s director of transportation, said cities throughout California are struggling because state transit assistance money that had been in place since the Reagan administration is no longer there.

Since February 2009, the Federal Transit Administration has awarded 881 Recovery Act grants for transit projects nationwide

totaling \$7.5 billion. In this latest \$83.9 million round of funding, 30 California cities, transportation agencies, and organizations received a piece of the money. The largest chunks of the federal funding have been earmarked for the San Francisco area.

Bay Area Rapid Transit will get \$17 million for railcar and station equipment improvements.

Municipal Transportation Agency for San Francisco will receive \$18.2 million to rebuild and maintain light-rail vehicles.

Southland cities and agencies slated to receive funding include:

- Montebello: \$1.3 million will go toward the purchase of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses.
 - Montebello: \$600,000 will be used to retain employees.
 - Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink): \$4.7 million to fund track rehabilitation, positive train controls, Keller Yard storage, central maintenance facility guard and insurance.
 - Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority: \$69,776 for the Metro Blue Line traction power substation.
 - Santa Clarita: \$2.4 million for construction of two transit parking facilities.
 - Simi Valley: \$1 million for garage modernization, ADA operations and equipment.
- [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by **DICK FINLEY**
LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP

January 2010	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	139,409	70,583	35,536	28,227
Saturday Ave.	94,338	54,873	20,636	22,974
Sunday Ave.	76,769	45,957	17,893	22,668
Monthly Total	3,720,490	1,961,778	921,270	815,416

[Info. From Metro via Ken Ruben]

EXPO LINE SETBACK

The long-delayed Expo Line was recently dealt another setback when authorities revoked a permit that allowed construction 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Authorities said they revoked the permit in January because of complaints about noise during late-night construction on the line.

The move could further delay construction, which is already more than a year behind schedule, and add to the \$862-million price tag to complete the first segment from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City. That cost has already grown by more than \$220 million over the project's original budget of \$640 million.

Richard Thorpe, chief executive of the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority, the organization responsible for getting the line built, said he was surprised when the commission revoked the 24-hour permit and that it was important to speed up construction. Without the 24-hour permit, construction is allowed between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends and holidays. Based on construction plans, a city commission will decide whether to issue a temporary variance for closure requests.

EXPO LINE PHASE ONE

Some delays of Phase One are due to safety issues near

schools. Activists have complained that the first phase's route poses a risk to students at Dorsey High School and Forshay Learning Center and have called for improvements, including running the line above or below street level. That issue is still unresolved and the state Public Utilities Commission is deciding which safety improvements are needed near Dorsey High, and those improvements could be costly.

Furthermore, the Expo Authority and the contractor for the first phase of the project are at odds over some of the delays and are wrestling over who is to blame. That could further raise the project's phase one cost depending on how the dispute is resolved.

Officials said they hope to open the first part of phase one, from downtown Los Angeles to Crenshaw Boulevard sometime this year and estimate that the second part of phase one will open about a year later. Thorpe said the timeline of the first phase will not affect the second phase of the project because the sources of funding are different.

Fully funding the line is not a sealed deal because sales tax revenues are lower than expected, there is a state budget crisis and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has projected a historic \$251.3-million operating deficit in the 2011 fiscal year.

EXPO LINE PHASE TWO

Los Angeles transportation officials on February 4 took a major step in bringing commuter rail to the Westside, approving plans for a route linking downtown L.A. to Santa Monica. Officials hope to begin work later this year on phase two, a nearly seven-mile link from downtown Culver City to the corner of 4th Street and Colorado Avenue in Santa Monica's main business district.

Extending the line to Santa Monica would be an important milestone in Los Angeles' ambitious rail-building campaign. It would also mark the farthest west a rail line has reached in several decades, serving a section of the county that is notorious for traffic problems. Transportation planners believe they will have the \$1.5 billion in local and state money to build it.

Although there is broad support for the extension, some neighborhood residents have concerns about portions of the plan. Some homeowners say the plan for the route approved on February 4 is unsafe and will create traffic problems, particularly a stretch near homes in Cheviot Hills as well as areas near Sepulveda Boulevard and Overland Avenue. Those residents insist that at least one portion of the line should be built underground, saying that would make the route safer for motorists and pedestrians. They also argue that the underground route would improve traffic flow.

The Expo Authority, which is building the line, said a subway along that stretch is unnecessary. Building a subway between Westwood Boulevard and Overland Avenue would add about \$224 million to the project's cost. Some speakers urged the authority to approve the plans for the route as is. Opponents of the plans approved on February 4th are threatening to file a lawsuit that could delay construction of the second phase, which officials hope to open in 2015.

Thorpe said that for the second phase, two contracts will be awarded for design, and then one of those same companies will also receive the contract for construction. That way the contrac-

tor is responsible for the plans and the follow-through, Thorpe said.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

The first phase of the Gold Line Foothill Extension from Pasadena to the Azusa/Glendora border appears to be on target for a June 2010 groundbreaking. The Foothill Extension Construction Authority had targeted a completion date of 2013, but L.A. county Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials estimated the line wouldn't be completed until 2017.

Recent discussions between the two groups have left construction authority officials certain enough of receiving funding that board members on January 28th voted to begin the search for a contractor to build the line – with a June groundbreaking as a goal.

Ara Najarian, a Glendale councilman and chairman of the MTA board, credited MTA CEO Art Leahy, who was appointed last March, with changing the attitudes of MTA officials toward the Gold Line. Other local officials had different explanations. Azusa Councilman Keith Hanks, a member of the construction authority's board, said an independent study that found the Gold Line extension could create 7,000 jobs probably helped motivate the MTA.

The construction authority will likely receive its full Measure R allotment of \$851 million for the project over 11 years, according to Habib Balian, the construction authority's CEO. The plan is to find a construction company with enough cash reserves to fund much of the project's costs, with the authority paying back the money as its Measure R funds trickle in.

Plans are also moving forward on a 584-foot bridge that will span diagonally across the Foothill (210) Freeway and connect the existing Sierra Madre Villa Station with the future Arcadia station south of the freeway. The authority's board voted on January 28th to solicit bids from six companies it has certified as qualified to construct the bridge, which is estimated to cost between \$20 million and \$25 million.

MAINTENANCE YARD

The MTA has mandated that the Gold Line Extension can not move forward without a railroad maintenance yard somewhere along the line, and cities have been reluctant to volunteer. Monrovia decided last year that a 28-acre site previously slated as part of the Station Square mixed-use development project could be the answer.

On February 16, the city council was expected to award a \$144,000 contract to Hogle Ireland Inc., an Irvine-based planning consulting firm, to explore the environmental impacts of a maintenance yard, City Manager Scott Ochoa said. Ochoa said the city chose to make a play for the yard to help expedite the Gold Line.

"I think it's the best of all the sites that have been identified," said John Fasana, Duarte Councilman and MTA board member. The site, south of the 210 Freeway at the northeast corner of California Ave. and Duarte Rd., is already in an industrial part of town. Building the rail yard there would require the purchase of more property by the city, which owns about half the acreage now, Ochoa said.

The environmental reports could be completed in several

months and, assuming the site still looks feasible, the City Council could be voting on a project by this summer, Ochoa said. The yard will cost an estimated \$200 million, a bill that the MTA and Gold Line Construction Authority would need to divvy up, Ochoa said.

TRACK FOR RECOVERY

For the line's backers, aside from a proposed pro football stadium in Industry, the \$400 million light-rail Pasadena-to-Azusa project is just the thing the region needs. Just during its construction, say some economists, it will pump \$930 million into an economy hit by a collapsed financial services industry, foreclosures and tight credit.

After months of differences between local and county officials over the project's timeline, MTA board members voted in January to begin the search for a contractor to build the line, with a goal to start in June. That's when the ground will break on the extension – and its 584-foot-long bridge over the 210 Freeway that will connect the Sierra Madre Villa station with a yet-to-be-built Arcadia station south of the freeway. By 2013, officials hope the actual rail will be finished, complete with a maintenance yard constructed to house Metro's rail fleet and rail cars.

A key to getting it off the ground by June will be the ability to find a contractor who can fund much of the project now. And in return, the firm would agree to be paid back with voter-approved transportation funds over time.

Habib Balian, CEO of the extension's construction authority, said, "This is not federal stimulus. - This was an L.A. County, voter-approved initiative." Now that June is in the works, Balian can look beyond Azusa, to ultimately extending the line to Montclair and, he hopes to Ontario. "It's probably the single, largest project that's going to go forward in the San Gabriel Valley in the next two, four, five, six, seven years," he said.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

FREIGHT TRAIN CAR DERAILS AND STARTS FIRE

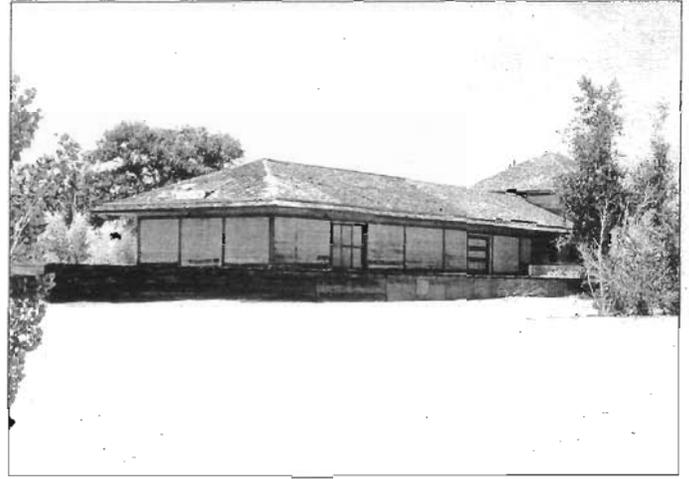
Firefighters on February 20 battled a stubborn fire that broke out when part of a freight train derailed at 9:30 p.m. at the entrance to the tunnel on the Tehachapi Loop at Keene, CA, the Kern County Fire Department said in a statement. About seven homes were evacuated when the tanker car carrying denatured alcohol burst into flames, producing a toxic cloud, said Fire Department spokesman Justin Corley.

The fire was confined to the tunnel, and firefighters allowed it to burn out, Corley said. But during the night, the fire spread to at least two other cars, one containing plastic pellets and another containing cornmeal, he said. Crews were able to suppress the flames enough to attach cables to the burning cars and pull them out of the tunnel. They used a large backhoe to rip open the cars and extinguish the blaze with foam and water, Corley said. Firefighters hoped to have the blaze contained by midnight February 21.

It was not immediately clear what caused the train to derail. The train was traveling from Barstow to Stockton on Union Pacific tracks, said Lena Kent, a spokeswoman for BNSF Railway. Fire crews believed just two cars came off the tracks. [Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



Comparative photographs of the old and new Tehachapi Stations. The upper picture was taken March 2007, and the lower one in December 2009. Photos by John Petros



We see the Lone Pine freight house portion of the station, looking north-west.



This is the north side of the rebuilt Southern Pacific Depot in Tehachapi with the Union Pacific main line track in the left foreground. Photo by Margo Petros



We are looking south-west at the Lone Pine station toward the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Photo by John Petros



This is a close-up view of the freight house portion of the Lone Pine station. Photo by John Petros



The view is toward the south at the family residence section of the Lone Pine station. Photo by John Petros