

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

APRIL 2011

SP 4213 DERAILMENT

by DICK DONAT

John Petros' 1949 photo of SP 4213 heading the first section of the Owl in February's *Wheel Clicks* reminded me of an earlier misadventure of the same locomotive and SP engineer Fritz Iverson.

Of course if you were superstitious, you might have reservations about any engine numbered "13", but in this incident it was a case of two "13's". During World War II, Fritz was lead engineer on a pair of eastbound cab forwards, 4213 and 4113, running lite and headed for Los Angeles on the SP's Mojave Subdivision through Soledad Canyon about 45 miles from L.A. The SP line shared the canyon with the usually creek-like Santa Clara River. But the stream's placid nature had been changed by several days of heavy rains and rushing water had undercut the SP roadbed about a mile east of the passing track at Ravenna. Early in the morning of Jan 23, 1943, the two AC's hit the washout derailing both and spreading mallets and tenders all over the landscape. Since the locomotives were moving slowly, all crew members were able to unload without serious injury. Wartime restrictions meant that the incident received no press coverage and SP forces worked rapidly to get this critical line back in service. Fritz had several "unofficial" photos of the wreck scene that he passed on to my dad about 35 years ago.

EUROPEAN FAST TRAINS

This year marks the 30th anniversary of European high-speed trains, which debuted between Paris and Lyon, France, in September 1981. Since then, 1.5 billion people have traveled on fast TGV (Train à Grande Vitesse) trains in France, and high-speed lines have proliferated across the Continent.

Besides TGV, you'll find ICE in Germany, Eurostar connecting Britain, France and Belgium; Thalys between Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam and Cologne, Germany; AVE in Spain; X 2000 in Sweden; and Eurostar Italia and NTV, a new private rail company putting luxury, state-of-the-art, French manufactured AGV (Automotrice à Grande Vitesse) trains on Italian government tracks.

Europe's super trains travel as fast as 200 mph and have the added money-saving convenience of embarkations and disembarkations in city-center stations, including London's gloriously renovated St. Pancras, with a 100-foot-high train shed that was the biggest enclosed space in the world when completed in 1868.

But Europe's railways aren't just for train buffs and speed demons. More and more, taking a fast train is a principal part of the European tourist experience, especially for Americans who think railroad travel is almost as bad as taking the bus.

Even if you book second class, there are roomy, reserved seats, clean restrooms and appealing buffet cars. If you go business or first class, amenities include light and full meal service. Wi-Fi and laptop plug-ins, special check-in counters



SP 4213 lies on its fireman's side following its Jan. 23, 1943, early morning derailment. The almost brand new 4213 is an SP class AC-10 4-8-8-2 built by Baldwin in 1942. It was retired in 1956. Photo by Fritz Iverson from the Dick Donat Collection.

and waiting lounges, complimentary newspapers and the opportunity to book a taxi that will be waiting for you on arrival.

Recently completed routes include Paris-Stuttgart, Germany (3½ hours), Madrid-Valencia, Spain (1½ hours) and Perpignan, France-Figueres, Spain (1¼ hours). The most popular line is Paris-Avignon, France (2½ hours, which costs between \$100 and \$250 one way, depending on class and date of travel. To get the best rates, book early on the line's website (for instance, www.thalys.com) or at Rail Europe (www.raileurope.com).

{Info. from *Los Angeles Times*}



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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

Apr. 1 no PRS Board Meeting today.
 Apr. 2-3 Excursion to Bakersfield on Sat.-Sun.
 Apr. 2, 9, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 16, 23, 30 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats.
 Apr. 2, 9, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 16, 23, 30 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 2, 16; Extra days: 9, 23, 30; Com. Mtg.: 16.
 Apr. 4, 11, PRM Monday open, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., 210 W.
 18, 25 Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Apr. 6, 13, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 20, 27 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Apr. 8 Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m. in Union Station Room.
 Fri. Third Floor Guard will show location.
 . Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m. in MTA Board
 Room. See details below.
 May 2, 9, PRM Mondays open, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., 210 W.
 16, 23, 30 Bonita Ave., San Dimas.

May 4, 11, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. See Wheel Clicks for
 Fri. May
 May 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 21, 28 Sats. to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce. Regular
 Sats. days: 7, 21; Extra days: 14, 28; Com. Mtg.: 21.
 May 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m. See May *Wheel*
 Fri. *Clicks* for meeting location and program subject

MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

April 8: **Traction night!** Tonight we're going to the city famous for **cheese steak**, and nasty fans **who boo Santa Claus** at December Eagles games! **Philly!** Philadelphia is also **Mecca for electric railroading**, Subways, elevateds, and both Commuter Rail (SEPTA) and Amtrak are mostly electric. **Streetcars in the streets, even today!** **Be there, and bring digital rail briefs!**

Once again we'll be meeting at the MTA Building.

Details: The MTA Building is adjacent to the east side of Union Station. Parking is available in the underground lot shared by the MTA and Union Station. The probable cost, \$5, or the **maximum, \$6**, depends on timing. Free parking is available at **Denny's** across the street from the MTA garage entrance **if you eat dinner there, AND advise the Denny's Manager.** To get to the meeting from Denny's, **for safety**, cross the street at the traffic signal, and walk right into the covered MTA garage and parking. Then follow the signs in the garage to the MTA Building elevators, to your right. **The Board Room is on the Third Floor.**

You can also take any of the Metro rail lines, or Metro and "MUNI" bus lines, that serve Union Station, and Metro-link.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT.

by VIRGINIA GRUPP

At the Board Meeting on March 4, 2011 there were no late renewals. One new member voted into PRS was Richard Nelson, seniority number 431.

DESCANSO

by LINDSAY SMITH

Our funeral car, *Descanso*, is now the pride of Orange Empire Railroad Museum (OERM). It is on display in the barn just off Broadway Avenue. On February 21, 2011 it was out of the barn and up on the street. While it was out, the OERM folks dropped an electric cord from the barn overhead to install a lamp inside the car. The lamp is an LED because it has little heat or UV radiation. The car has incandescent lamps but they get warm and use interior wiring. Since the car is wooden we fear fire.

In the new location, the car has a platform so that guests can see into the car. There is a movement sensor that detects guests and turns on the light. The light turns off when no one is near the car. OERM has placed a plastic sheet in front of the casket and added more displays on the barn walls. They are available for the enjoyment of visitors and crews. The space in barn two

will be used for maintenance of other cars.

Late in the afternoon we put the car back in the barn. From time to time they dust the car off with a California Brush. Car show folks use such a brush to keep cars shiny.

CHARD WALKER'S MAP AND IMAGES

On February 21st, Orange Empire Railroad Museum's John Smatlak used their wide scanner to digitize Chard Walker's 42" by 54" Los Angeles Railway map. Chard drew the map in 1938 by copying an original LARY map that hung outside the PRS space in the Pacific Electric Headquarters at 6th and Main Streets in Los Angeles.

The LARY map was displayed in Chard's garage in Hesperia when Charles Schultz recovered it for our Museum. The OERM has a similar map drawn by Ray Younghans about the same time. Chard copied the LARY revision notes that record the dates that changes occurred to the LARY routes.

Ray's legacy included many other maps and car drawings. The OERM folks have been scanning and cataloging this material. I helped sort Ray's photos of the PE Cars and in the next few months will catalog these photos.

Jim Baker and Russ Davies are working on Chard Walker's and Ralph Melching's photos of similar cars in the PRS Museum. Steve Crise has collected a number of then-and-now photos of the street and interurban cars and has spent time looking at collections around Los Angeles.

Several members of the local ERHA-SC also belong to the OERM, PRS and other groups.. It is through this group that we met at OERM and continue to support people like Steve Crise to collect and publish the history of the rail systems in our area. We enjoy the photography and memories of the original Railroad Boosters.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The tally of ballots of PRS members for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 was counted at the meeting on March 4, 2011. The Ballot Committee counted 7 miscellaneous votes for various offices in addition to the listed votes. The winning officer is indicated by an *. New officers take over on April 1. The total number of ballots returned was 135, so out of a membership of about 420, approximately 32% voted.

President	Marti Ann Draper	132*
Vice-President	Lindsay Smith	124*
Secretary	Neil Bjornsen	76*
Secretary	Bill Smith	66
Treasurer	Nicholas Teel	127*
Director	Dick Finley	124*
Director	Larry Aandahl	120*
Director	Robert Washburn	116*

Ballot Committee: Virginia Grupp, Bill Leslie, Robert Davis, James Baker.

METRO TO BUY LOS ANGELES UNION STATION

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) approved an agreement on February 24 to buy historic Union Station in downtown Los Angeles for \$75 million. The purchase will clear the way for the expansion of transit operations and new developments on the surrounding

property. The MTA board decided to buy the rail hub from Catellus Operating Limited Partners, which is owned by ProLogis, based in Colorado. The deal, which is expected to close in 30 days, includes 38 acres and development rights to 5.9 million square feet of property around the station.

"Union Station is absolutely critical to the current and future mobility of our region," said county Supervisor Don Knabe, chairman of the MTA board. "We now have the ability to retain the historic nature of Union Station and prepare it to serve as a world-class, 21st century transportation hub." MTA officials wanted control of the station to help accommodate an expected surge in passengers from the proposed Westside subway extension, a planned downtown connector for the region's light-rail lines, increased bus service, and the state's high-speed rail system if it is built.

Built in 1939, Los Angeles Union Station is a national landmark and one of the last great railway facilities in the United States. It serves Amtrak, Metrolink, Metro Red Line subway, Metro Gold Line light-rail trains, transit buses, and Fly-Away coaches to Los Angeles International Airport.

MTA officials say that the current commercial uses on the property, such as retail outlets and restaurants, generate about \$6 million a year in revenue – an amount that will increase as the site is developed.

California High-Speed Rail Authority officials said February 23 it will set aside \$30 million in federal funding to acquire property and develop railway in the Los Angeles area. In a statement, rail authority officials said they are still interested in a partnership with Metro.

Roger Moliere, chief of real property management and development for Metro, said the agency purchased the 1939 transportation hub without the rail group. "We're buying it ourselves," he said. "High-Speed Rail has some regulatory hurdles they have to go through before they can enter into any kind of negotiation."

[Info. from *L. A. Downtown News* via Mary Anne Nelson and *Los Angeles Times*]

METROLINK PLANS RUSH-HOUR EXPRESS TRAINS

Southern California's commuter rail service will soon launch its first rush-hour express trains to downtown Los Angeles, which will cut the longest travel times by about half an hour each way. The pilot program could make Metrolink trains a more attractive alternative to driving to work with higher gas prices.

The express trains will run mornings and evenings beginning in May. One line will be from the Antelope Valley and one from San Bernardino, each will end at Los Angeles Union Station. In traffic, each commute takes about two hours by car.

The San Bernardino express will take an hour, compared with the current 90 minutes for trains that make about a dozen stops. The express will stop only in Rancho Cucamonga and Covina.

The new service from Lancaster, 70 miles north of Los Angeles, will take 88 minutes, compared with the current two-hour Metrolink run, stopping at all of the line's 11 stations. The express will stop only in Santa Clarita and Burbank.

The express trains will be on top of the currently scheduled

runs and will continue for a six-month evaluation period. If successful, express service could be added for other outlying areas, officials said.

Getting express trains to Palmdale and Lancaster has been talked about for many years, said Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, who represents the area. He predicted the time savings of an hour or more a day could fundamentally change attitudes about commuting options.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR EAST

A two-decade project to improve crossings at the two Union Pacific railroad tracks that run along the southern San Gabriel Valley could be derailed by rapidly dwindling federal funding – and intensifying competition for what’s left, including Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s plan to speed up construction of the so-called subway to the sea.

In 1998, the San Gabriel Council of Governments approved a \$1.5 billion program, called the Alameda Corridor East, to improve crossings over 70 miles of tracks from East Los Angeles to Diamond Bar. The bulk of the project consists of 20 grade separations allowing trains to pass without interrupting the flow of trucks and cars.

To date, 14 of the railroad crossings have been completed or are slated to be built. Safety improvements have been completed at others. But up to \$300 million in funding for the final six separations – including two for dual tracks at Fairway Drive in the City of Industry – has not been secured.

“I would say that completing those grade crossings is very important, both from the perspective of business and the community. Whether it will happen, though, is anybody’s guess,” said Fran Inman, who serves on the California Transportation Commission., and is senior vice president of the largest commercial property owner in the City of Industry.

Residents and business owners have long complained about delays caused by train traffic, which only got worse as the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach handled more goods as international trade boomed. The project was seen as even more critical with the 2002 opening of the Alameda Corridor, a 20-mile sunken rail line built to speed cargo from the ports to East Los Angeles rail yards – where it then proceeds east into the San Gabriel Valley.

The crossings in question, in addition to those at Fairway Drive, are at Montebello Boulevard in Montebello, as well as the City of Industry’s Rose Hills and Turnbull Canyon roads and Puente Avenue. Those who live or work nearby say that massive traffic jams with delays of 30 minutes or more are not uncommon during rush hour as the freight trains pass through.

Trucks have to drive further and spend more time looking for passable routes, increasing the cost of maintenance, fuel and in some cases, employee hours.

Actually, the problem could be worse. Cynthia Kurtz, president of the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnerships, said that the recent economic woes have reduced the traffic. The recession caused a sharp decline in imports and exports at the ports, easing train traffic.

“We’re still suffering from the loss of 40,000 jobs,” Kurtz said. “And when people aren’t working, they aren’t driving.”

This means the traffic problem will likely get worse if the economy picks up.

So far, more than \$1 billion for Alameda Corridor East has come from a combination of federal, state, county, local and railroad funds, but the remaining portion must come entirely from the federal government. And that what is causing worries.

The Obama administration has made transportation funding a priority, but with the federal deficit at nearly \$1.5 trillion, few think transportation will escape the axe. “There are going to be massive cuts in federal spending across the board, which means that far less money will be passed around,” said Mary Beth Sullivan, executive director of the California Institute for Federal Policy Research.

In addition, the rail crossing improvements are up against proposals with far higher profiles. About a year ago, Villaraigosa proposed his 30/10 transit plan, which proposes compressing 30 years of transportation improvements into 10 years. Among the biggest beneficiaries would be the multibillion-dollar extension of the Metro Purple Line to the Westside. the so-called subway to the sea.

As a project that has already been allotted \$400 million in county Measure R transportation funds, the Alameda Corridor East was formally included in the 20/10 proposal. However, Paul Hubler, director of government and community relations for the construction authority, said that the rail improvements are jolt in line to receive any additional funds from 30/10, unlike the Purple Line extension.

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, D-Santa Fe Springs, who represents portions of the San Gabriel Valley and sits on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, puts the predicament this way. “The prospect of getting any funding for (at least) the next two years is less than dim,” said Napolitano, even though she views the Alameda Corridor East as “critical.”

As a result, Rick Richmond, chief executive of the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority, is reviewing the remaining grade crossings to determine their importance and ways to cut costs. “We are in the home stretch, but finding that money isn’t going to be easy,” he said.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Business Journal* via Mike Palmer]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

2011 is not getting off to a good start for Caltrain, as far as trespasser fatalities go. After two months, four people have already been killed on Caltrain tracks – the latest occurring on February 28 at the Palo Alto station. A 24-year-old man stepped in front of Train No. 284 as it passed through the station. An investigation is still underway, but suicide is suspected. The first three incidents have all been ruled suicides.

After initially proposing to close seven stations to help close a \$30 million budget shortfall, that number has now jumped to sixteen, including everything south of San Jose Diridon. A proposed 48 train weekday schedule shows intermediate service only to 22nd Street, Millbrae, San Mateo, Hillsdale, San Carlos, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, California Avenue, Mountain View, and Sunnyvale.

All trains would be limited stop trains, operating on an approximately 70 minute schedule. Morning trains would depart each end every fifteen minutes in both directions between 5:45

a.m. and 8:30 a.m. Afternoon trains would depart each end every fifteen minutes in both directions between 3:45 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. This proposed schedule is a worst case scenario if additional funding isn't secured, and would take effect July 2, 2011.

A series of public meetings were held at various locations along the Caltrain route during February to try to find ways to secure that funding. Though the general consensus is that money will be found to at least partially close the budget gap, Caltrain has to have a plan ready in case it isn't.

If the 48 train schedule becomes reality, it would be a step back about 30 years in time. That's the number of trains Southern Pacific ran in 1981, though those trains were spread out throughout the day. Southern Pacific also provided weekend service.

Meanwhile, work continues on construction projects in San Bruno and Santa Clara to improve Caltrain operations. The San Bruno project will eliminate three grade crossings and the Santa Clara project will improve the Santa Clara station. Ironic, considering Santa Clara is one of the stations slated to close if the worst case scenario becomes reality.

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL

An announcement on February 1 that President Obama will seek \$53 billion over the next six years for high-speed rail projects was met with caution by some San Gabriel cities that have sought to slow down the local planning for California's project. Part of a proposed route from the Bay Area to San Diego would run through the San Gabriel Valley. The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) has proposed an elevated platform 60 feet above the median of the Interstate 10 Freeway as a possible route.

California won a competitive \$2.3 billion federal grant for high-speed rail last year. According to the Obama administration's announcement, \$8 billion would be available to the state during the next fiscal year. "This is the kind of bold investment in the future of our nation's infrastructure that will get the attention of the private sector and make high-speed travel a reality in the United States," said Roelof van Ark, the CHSRA's CEO.

But officials in Alhambra and Rosemead oppose placing high-speed trains anywhere near homes and businesses. In a letter to the authority, Rosemead officials called the proposal for an elevated train down the 10 Freeway "absolutely unacceptable." Alhambra Assistant City Manager Jessica Keating said even though construction of high-speed rail in the Valley is likely decades away, local residents feel the authority will try to push its plans on them, unless they get involved early in the process. Alhambra would prefer the CHSRA put the train in a trench under the median of the 10 Freeway, she said.

West Covina is taking a more measured approach, angling for a rail stop in the city while keeping a close eye on the project, Deputy City Manager Chris Freeland said. Like many cities, West Covina was to send a delegation to a March 3 meeting of the CHSRA.

While many consider the proposal impractical, voters in 2008 approved the state's borrowing \$10 billion of the \$65 billion to \$80 billion needed to build the 800-mile-long route. Construc-

tion is scheduled to start in 2012 on a phase through the Central Valley.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration remains committed to high-speed rail projects. During last month's State of the Union address, the president said he wanted 80 percent of Americans to have access to high-speed rail within 25 years.

In a statement, Rep. David Dreier, R-San Dimas, said he wondered whether his constituency was ready to support high-speed rail. "In this era of budget crunches, we need to ensure our limited resources are expended on projects that have been proven effective," Dreier wrote. "Right now, high-speed rail would not meet that criteria for Southern California."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

CHSRA supporters began angling February 16 for a sizable share of \$2.3 billion in federal high-speed rail funding that Florida Gov. Rick Scott rejected. Scott, a Republican, told reporters he didn't believe projections for a proposed high-speed train between Orlando and Tampa and feared Florida taxpayers would end up having to subsidize the service. The Obama administration said after Scott's announcement that it will consider redistributing the stimulus funds to states that are proceeding with new, high-tech rail systems.

After the November elections, new Republican governors in Ohio and Wisconsin turned down federal high-speed rail money. About half of that funding – \$616 million – was reallocated to California for their high-speed rail with trains running up to 220 mph. California officials now hope to get a large part of the money originally intended for Florida. Work on a \$5.5-billion, 120-mile section of Central Valley track is expected to begin next year.

Close to \$15 billion in future federal allocations still will be needed to complete the entire line, officials say. But GOP leaders who control the House of Representatives have attacked Obama's plan to spend \$53 billion on high-speed rail over the next six years.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

The three candidates in the March 8 City Council election in Rosemead were approaching voters with diverse ideas on how to improve the city. One of the toughest battles the council could face in the coming four years is the construction of a high-speed train through the region. The CHSRA is exploring several potential routes for a future train, two of which would pass through Rosemead. All three candidates said they opposed the use of eminent domain to take people's homes to make way for the train.

One candidate, William Alarcon, said he would rather see a rail route along the 60 Freeway instead of the 10 Freeway. "We could have a station at the mall, which would increase our revenue," he said. For her part, Polly Low said she would support a route along the median of the 10 Freeway if it went at grade or below grade, and if such a proposal is supported by the residents." The third candidate, Alejandro Gandara, said he was an organizer of people to fight against things.

HIGH-SPEED RAIL ROUTES DOWN TO 2

The CHSRA on March 3 voted to study just two potential bullet train routes through the San Gabriel Valley. In a meeting at the MTA headquarters, the nine-member board voted 7-0 to further study routes along the 10 and 60 freeways. Two other

potential routes – both using Union Pacific rights-of-way – were eliminated from consideration by the board. “Our goal with all these alignments is to make sure we minimize the impact we’re having on all the communities we’re touching,” said Authority board member Matt Toledo.

Members of the board said the train – proposed to run from Los Angeles to San Diego – would follow the median of the 10 Freeway if that route were chosen. Engineers have studied at-grade routes, trench and elevated structures for the train. Proponents of the state’s high-speed rail plan say the system has already banked \$3.6 billion in federal money and committed nearly \$10 billion in bond money from California taxpayers.

Although it will take several years to complete, backers believe a train is a prudent investment in California’s future as the state is expected to soar to 50 million in the next two decades, up from 38 million today, officials said. At the meeting on March 3rd, residents of Rosemead and Alhambra expressed concerns their quality of life would be diminished by a proposed aerial structure for the train and instead asked officials to seriously consider a tunnel or trench.

Damien Arrula, El Monte’s economic development manager, said the city hopes a station can be built there. “El Monte believes in the potential of a high-speed rail station including benefits it would provide. Benefits such as jobs,” Arrula said. Rosemead Councilman Steven Ly said he was concerned about the property value in his city, in particular because there’s a high density of homes along the freeway.

Toledo asked staff if the 10 Freeway route stays on the median the whole time. “That alignment stays within the center of the I-10 all the way from Union Station to the 57-Freeway,” said Mike Zdon, project manager for this section of the plan. “If in fact the El Monte transit center is chosen, the alignment would come slightly off the 10 Freeway there and again when it goes into a tunnel in the San Dimas hills. Other than that it stays within the center.”

An environmental impact report and record of decision of decision is expected to be complete by 2016. Zdon said the Authority will continue to evaluate ridership numbers, make sure the train is compatible with other modes of transportation, and have more discussions with the community.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

AAR MARCH STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

by CHARLES VARNES

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of March 1, 2011, 306,316 freight cars – 20.2% of the total fleet – were in storage, a decrease of 12,457 cars from February 1, 2011.

The peak number of cars in storage was July 1, 2009, when 502,853 cars met the AAR’s definition. Today, there are nearly 197,000 fewer cars in storage. During this period, the freight car fleet (of cars with loads in 2005 or later) has declined from a peak of 1.579 million cars in July 2009 to 1.519 million cars as of March 1, 2011. This means that of the 197,000 fewer cars in storage, a net of about 137,000 cars are back in revenue service, while approximately 60,000 have been scrapped.

In their report the AAR commented, “Even with still-high levels of cars in storage, there have been recent press reports of

large new orders for new rail cars. Presumably, the new cars have features and characteristics that are lacking in cars in storage.”

AAR defines a freight car is “in storage” if it has had a loaded revenue move since 2005, but not in the past 60 days. Rail cars are stored when they are not needed due to lack of demand; they come out of storage when demand improves. Figures are for the entire North American rail freight car fleet and include rail cars owned by railroads, leasing companies, shippers, and others. The total freight car fleet changes from month to month as new cars are added and old cars are scrapped. [Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

February 2011 marked 16 consecutive months of Amtrak ridership growth and was the best February on record with 2,099,010 passengers.

There was a 7.6 percent increase in riders in February 2011 vs. February 2010, or more than 147,000 passengers. The 16 straight months of ridership growth spans from November 2009 to February 2011 and averages a 6 percent growth rate over this period.

Factors that are contributing to the success of Amtrak include a moderately improved economic environment allowing some recovery of business travel along the *Northeast Corridor*, sustained high gasoline prices, the increased appeal and popularity of rail travel, effective marketing campaigns, and the introduction of Wi-Fi on the high-speed *Acela Express* trains.

Amtrak reports its ridership in three groups: *Northeast Corridor* trains, state supported and other short distance corridor trains, and long distance trains.

Northeast Corridor February 2011 train ridership was 773,098 vs. February 2010’s 720,481, a 7.3 percent increase. Ridership for the first five months of FY 2011 was 4,319,618 vs. FY 2010’s 4,154,374, a 4.0 percent increase.

State supported and other short distance corridor February 2011 train ridership was 1,022,594 vs. February 2010’s 945,713, an 8.1 percent increase. Ridership for the first five months of FY 2011 was 5,721,492 vs. FY 2010’s 5,315,364, a 7.6 percent increase.

Long distance train February 2011 ridership was 303,318 vs. February 2010’s 285,217, a 6.3 percent increase. Ridership for the first five months of FY 2011 was 1,770,838 vs. FY 2010’s 1,676,481, a 5.6 percent increase.

Total Amtrak February 2011 train ridership was 2,099,010 vs. February 2010’s 1,951,411, a 7.6 percent increase. Ridership for the first five months of FY 2011 was 11,811,948 vs. FY 2010’s 11,146,219, a 6.0 percent increase.

Amtrak achieved an 85 percent cost-recovery ratio in FY 2010.

AmtrakConnect WiFi

AmtrakConnect, is the official Amtrak Wi-Fi network. It is provided by Nomad Digital Limited, a rapidly-growing privately owned company which focuses on the provision of broadband communications solutions to the transportation sector.

Currently AmtrakConnect offers a free internet connection aboard the *Acela Express*, *Amtrak Cascades*, and in the *Coast*

Starlight Pacific Parlour Car.

Free AmtrakConnect service is available at the Baltimore, Md., - Penn Station; Boston, Mass. - South Station (available inside *ClubAcela* only); Lorton, Va., New York, N.Y. - Penn Station (available in the gate areas and inside *ClubAcela*); Philadelphia, Pa. - 30th Street Station (available in the gate areas and inside *ClubAcela*); Providence, R.I.; Sanford, Fla.; Washington, D.C. - Union Station (available in the gate areas and inside *ClubAcela*); Westwood, Mass.. - Route 128; and Wilmington, Del. - Wilmington Station, also.

Historical On-Time Performance

The February 2011 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	February 2011	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	100.0%	87.6%
Texas Eagle	75.0%	78..8%
Heartland Flyer	85.2%	91.2%
Southwest Chief	76.8%	74.6%
California Zephyr	38.9%	54.3%
Empire Builder	20.9%	34.0%
Coast Starlight	83.9%	75.4%
City of New Orleans	85.7%	84.7%
Pacific Surfliner	85.4%	82.4%
San Joaquin	93.5%	91.9%
Capitol Corridor	95.7%	96.3%
Amtrak Cascades	52.3%	57.6%
Illinois Service	62.0%	69.0%
Michigan Services	26.9%	39.1%
Hiawatha	79.2%	83.6%
Missouri River Runner	79.6%	85.3%
Acela Express	83.5%	73.9%
Northeast Regional	79.8%	73.9%

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

January 2011	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	143,634	79,709	40,891	33,947
Saturday Ave.	91,154	49,464	24,105	22,705
Sunday Ave.	68,127	40,998	17,405	22,633
Monthly Total	3,789,697	2,117,728	1,059,557	939,501

[Info. From Metro via Ken Ruben]

PORTLAND, OREGON

President Barack Obama’s budget calls for \$200 million to go to the proposed Portland-Milwaukie light-rail line. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the administration’s funding recommendations February 15th for 10 new transit construction projects around the country, including the newest MAX line.

Obama’s budget proposal includes a record \$3.2 billion for 28 transit construction projects across the U.S. that LaHood said will increase mobility, reduce energy consumption, curb air pollution and help the nation compete economically. The president, LaHood said, wants a full-funding grant in the next fiscal year for the so-called Orange Line extending 7.3 miles over a new bridge. Construction on the 1,720-foot bridge – to be used only by trains, buses, streetcars, pedestrians and

bicyclists – is expected to begin this summer. The Orange Line is to start running in September 2015.

Portland already boasts a world-class light-rail system, and this addition will enhance access to the South Waterfront and destinations across the Willamette River,” LaHood said in a statement. He also noted that the Portland-Milwaukie light-rail project meets the requirements of the Federal Transit administration’s New Starts program, which are in place to ensure a project is a good investment of taxpayer dollars.

TriMet is still scratching to find an additional \$35.2 million in state and local matching money to cover its share of the most expensive transit project it has ever undertaken. The new MAX line is expected to cost about \$1.5 billion, with half coming from federal transportation grants.

The president’s budget also includes new funding for rail and bus rapid transit projects in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Texas, Utah, and Washington. The budget also provides \$835.4 million for the continued funding of seven additional rail transit projects already operating or under construction in New York, Dallas, Salt Lake City, Seattle, and northern Virginia. LaHood said the beleaguered Columbia River Crossing might also “become ready” for part of \$400 million for unspecified transit projects in the president’s budget.

[Info. from *The Oregonian*]

METRO EXPOSITION LINE

The Expo Line project between Culver City and Santa Monica will proceed, following a superior court judge’s ruling against a community group. On Feb. 22, Judge McKnew of the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles ruled that Phase 2 of the Expo Line will move forward, as he officially dismissed challenges to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

McKnew denied Neighbors for Smart Rail’s Petition for Writ of Mandate, which challenged the project’s FEIR and proposed mitigation measures. This follows a tentative ruling issued in December 2010.

The ruling confirms the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority’s (Expo Authority) confidence in the Phase 2 project’s compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The alternative selected through the environmental review process is the result of many meetings and briefings with communities and key stakeholders, thousands of public comments and reflects the highest standards for design, public safety and environmental protection. The judge’s decision dismissed each of Neighbors for Smart Rail’s legal challenges to the FEIR.

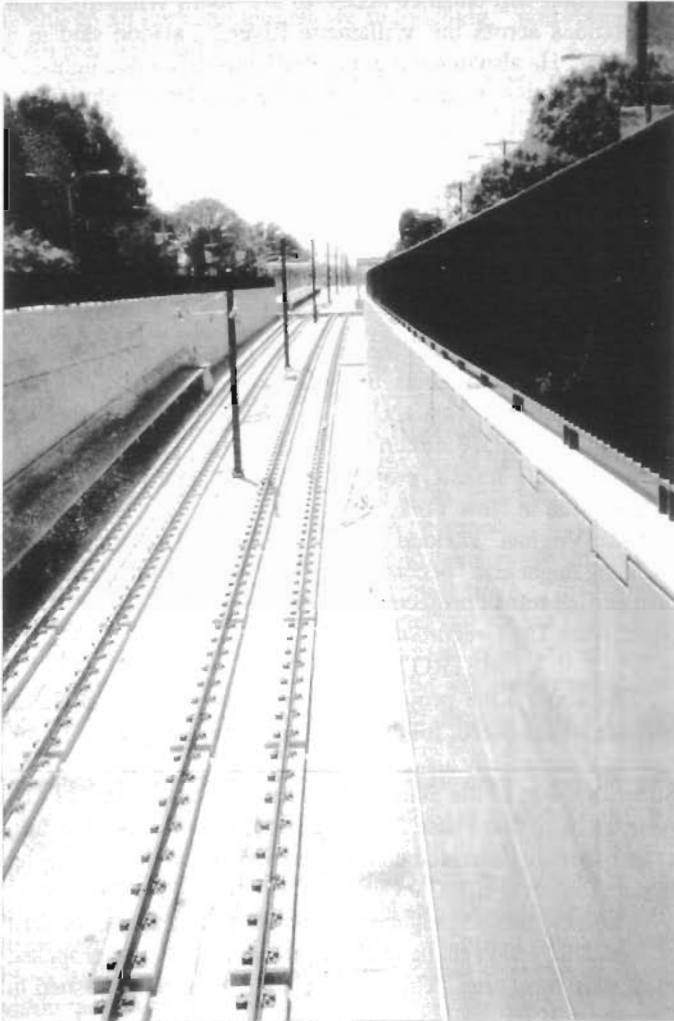
The Expo Authority looks forward to starting the design-build process on Phase 2, which is essential to the full realization of the entire project, which will connect downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica. Phase 1 of the Expo Line, between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City, is 86 percent complete and is expected to partially open this fall.

[Info. from *Culver City News*]

ST. KITTS RAILROAD IN THE CARIBBEAN

The only operating train in the Caribbean today, exclusive of major islands, St. Kitts Railroad was built for business and renovated for pleasure. Double-decked cars are designed for touring. Each car has open-air and A/C observation areas. Tours include

the coastline, fields of sugarcane, and tall bridges.
[Info. from Caroline Hobson]



The Exposition Line is seen to the west at west approach to Figueroa Street undercrossing on July 24, 2010.

Photo by John L. Whitmeyer



La Cienega Aerial Station platform during construction — looking west.
Image by Metro



Concrete placement of East Pedestrian Plaza at La Brea Aerial Station during construction.
Image by Metro



Rebar installation at La Cienega parking structure of Expo Light Rail Line during construction.
Image by Metro



Testing of track geometry of Expo Light Rail Line during construction — looking west.
Image by Metro