

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

DECEMBER 2009

PLANS FOR TRAINS AND RIVER MAY COLLIDE

The plan to build a network of high-speed bullet trains across California is facing opposition from downtown Los Angeles, where community leaders fear the line will hurt efforts for another grand project: revitalizing the Los Angeles River. The rail plan, which has picked up considerable support since voters approved the nearly \$10-billion bond measure in 2008, would use Los Angeles Union Station as a major hub, and the line probably would run along the L.A. River.

Some elected officials and residents believe the proposed rail alignment would seriously clash with their vision for the area, which involves replacing the dilapidated industrial properties along the river with green space, recreation areas and community facilities. Many L.A. officials strongly support the bullet train concept and believe that the Union Station hub would fit into the county's efforts to expand subway and light rail service. But they also believe that revitalizing the river is an important part of making the city core more livable for residents and attractive to visitors.

The proposed rail routes would run near Taylor Yard, a 247-acre freight switching facility in Cypress Park that was closed by 1985. Part of Taylor yard, which is north of Union Station, is still used for rail maintenance and storage by Metrolink, but it also includes Rio de Los Angeles State Park and sites for a planned high school, green space and a mixed-use housing development. The Los Angeles River runs next to it.

On one hand, the high-speed rail aims to increase mobility and improve the environment by providing attractive options for commuters, but having the route run along the river would make it much more difficult to transform the river. Running high-speed rail through Union Station would make sense, some officials say, because the depot is already home to Metrorail as well as to Metrolink and Amtrak. But if the high-speed rail goes through Union Station, some officials and environmental advocates say, it would be difficult to find a route that doesn't run near the river.

Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes said he would like to see other alternatives for routes from Anaheim to Los Angeles and from Los Angeles to Palmdale. He said he supports the high-speed rail but doesn't want to sacrifice the river or the progress of the communities the bullet train would pass through. [Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

TRAGEDY ON THE RAILS IN LOS ANGELES

Over the 15 years of Metrolink's operation, at least 244 people have been killed in train accidents throughout the 388-mile heavy-rail transit system. The largest concentration of deaths were in the north San Fernando Valley. Metrolink safety lapses drew national attention last year when 25 people were killed in a head-on collision with a freight train.



With snow on the ground on this beautiful December 2007 day, Illinois Central Passenger Locomotive 100 with four cars and a freight locomotive in tow, head out of Gibson City, IL with Canadian National Railway's Holiday Special Train, bound for Gilman. Engineer Joe Santucci puts #100's throttle in run 8, making for a great sight and sound, only an F unit could make. Although the ditch lights on the locomotive give away the fact this is 2007, could this really be a scene from 1957 of a passenger train taking passengers home for the holidays? May this snowy scene fill your heart with all the joys of this holiday season.

Photo by Bob Johnson

A Los Angeles Times investigation of accident records found that most of the deaths along with many more serious injuries came from trains hitting automobiles and pedestrians at street crossings. The Times said a pair of busy crossings in the San Fernando Valley – both complicated mazes of streets and signals – have proved the most dangerous in the system.

A January 6, 2003, crash at Buena Vista and San Fernando Boulevard in Burbank killed a 63-year-old driver who rolled his pickup truck into an oncoming train. Two train cars derailed and flipped, killing a train passenger and injuring 20 other riders. Exactly three years later at the same crossing a 76-year-old woman turned in front of a train going 75 mph, and her car was dragged for a third of a mile. She was also killed. Metrolink blamed both accidents on drivers trying to beat the train.

The report suggested making a left-turn arrow more clear and building a more prominent median that would help prevent cars from reaching the tracks, but the agency only made minor refinements. A nearby crossing at Sunland Boulevard in Sun Valley was the most dangerous in the system, seeing 13 train accidents in those 15 years.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]



WHEEL CLICKS

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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 AND DEPARTURES

Dec. 4 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Pacific Railroad**
 Fri. **Museum**, 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Dec. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 to
 19, 26 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats.
 Dec. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Day: 5, 19; Extra Day: 12, 26. Com. Mtg.: 19.
 Dec. 11 **PRS HOLIDAY PARTY**, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra
 Fri. Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave.,
 Alhambra. SEE FLYER FOR DETAILS.
 Jan. 2, 9, 16 Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 23, 30 to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: January 23.
 Jan. 2, 9, 16 Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Day: 2, 16; Extra Day: 9, 23, 30. Com. Mtg.: 16.
 Jan. 8 Board Meeting, 6:00 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

Jan. 8 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Jan. 16, 17, Excursion No. 538 Big Dome to the Bay
 18. Sat., Leaves LAUS on Sat. at 10:15 a.m.
 Sun., Mon. Returns LAUS on Mon. at 8:45 p.m.

MEETING PROGRAM by **RUSS DAVIES**

December 11: See Flyer on Holiday Party.
 January 8: **The Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority** people will be with us and will give us a presentation about their plans and progress. Some of us saw a similar presentation at the November R&LHS meeting. The personally narrated digital presentation is very interesting and timely. **Be there, and bring digital news briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

There were no late renewals. At the Board Meeting on November 6, 2009, Winston Lynn and James Somerville were voted into PRS with Seniority Nos. 448 and 449, respectively.

THE BARSTOW FLYER

Pacific Railroad Society and LA Rail ran a train from Los Angeles through Fullerton over Cajon Pass to Barstow in connection with Railfest 2009 at the Harvey House. The special consisted of Amtrak locomotive 23, Amtrak coach 82580, sleeper *Salisbury Beach*, lounge *Overland Trail*, dome diner *Silver Splendor*, and open platform business car *Tioga Pass*.

Western America Railroad Museum at Barstow sponsors Railfest each fall. Railfest includes modular train layouts courtesy of Pacific Coast Region of NMRA, and craft and hobby vendors. Lunch was prepared and served by the volunteer staff of the railroad museum, with the price included in the train fare.

The train left Los Angeles on time at 8:00 a.m. On the way there were several delays for Metrolink and freight trains with slow entry past the Barstow Locomotive Maintenance and Inspection Terminal at the end of the West D Yard. Our train turned at a wye to back into a spot in front of the Harvey House.

Barstow is great for watching trains to and from Southern California, the Central Valléy, or the East. There was an average of about two trains per hour. Departure was at 5:30 p.m. with most of the return trip after dark. Arrival at Summit was 6:30 p.m., Fullerton at 8:37, and Los Angeles at 9:06.

It was an enjoyable trip by all accounts. Coordination of the trip was by Gary Herod of Archer Travel Service.

CALTRAIN NEWS by **MIKE GONDON**

In spite of increased surveillance by Palo Alto Police and private citizens, a fourth Gunn High School student took his own life by stepping in front of Caltrain at the West Meadow Avenue crossing. The most recent suicide involved Train No. 194. It was the 13th fatality of the year involving Caltrain, all coming after June 1.

A customer service survey conducted in June revealed that 78 percent of Caltrain riders are somewhat or very satisfied with their overall riding experience. Only 4 percent said they were somewhat or very dissatisfied. I guess the remaining 18 percent couldn't decide.

The survey also showed that over 55 percent of Caltrain

customers ride at least four days per week, mostly during peak hours. Responded to the survey were 77 percent of those polled.

Caltrain has announced the schedule for this year's popular Toys for Tots Holiday Train. The train will operate over the weekend of December 5-6. On Saturday, December 5, the train will leave San Francisco at 4:45 p.m. and make stops in Burlingame, Redwood City, Menlo Park, and Santa Clara. On Sunday, December 6, the train will also depart San Francisco at 4:45 p.m., but make stops in San Bruno, San Mateo, California Avenue, and Sunnyvale. After the final stop on each night, the train will deadhead back to San Francisco.

On the day after Thanksgiving, November 27, Caltrain will run a modified Saturday schedule of 38 trains, including two trains to and from Gilroy. Each year it seems a different schedule is run on this day in an attempt to accommodate those who must work, along with the large number of Christmas shoppers.

One of the cost cutting measures Caltrain made in August that I neglected to mention was the closing of the San Francisco ticket office on weekends. In addition, weekday hours were reduced from 5:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. That leaves the San Jose Diridon ticket office as the only one on the entire Caltrain line that is open seven days a week.

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP**

September 2009	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	149,597	78,955	38,619	22,476
Saturday Ave.	94,370	58,162	22,299	16,130
Sunday Ave.	77,647	48,118	17,531	10,740
Monthly Total	3,907,245	2,131,300	987,846	590,217

[Info. from Ken Ruben]

CRENSHAW CORRIDOR

South Los Angeles has won a significant victory as transportation officials recommended this week that a proposed transit corridor along Crenshaw Boulevard be a light-rail line rather than a less expensive dedicated busway. The recommendation, made by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority staff, gives a boost to the estimated \$1.7-billion project, which would run from the Baldwin Hills-Crenshaw area to just outside Los Angeles International Airport.

- A bus line option would span 12 miles with eight stations, providing travel times of about 30 minutes from the Metro Green Line to the Expo Line, or about 40 minutes from the Green Line to Wilshire Boulevard/Western Avenue. The project's cost is estimated at about \$600 million in current dollars, with the expectation that 3,500 jobs would be created during the construction phase.

- A light rail proposal would span more than eight miles with at least seven stations, and an estimated travel time of 20 minutes from the Metro Green Line to the Expo Line. The base cost is estimated at \$1.3 billion, with various design options ranging in cost from \$11 million to \$255 million. The project is estimated to generate about 7,800 jobs.

Funded by Measure R, a half-cent sales tax increase approved by voters in November 2008 to fund transportation projects, the Crenshaw Corridor project is designed to provide

relief to the San Diego (405) and Harbor (110) freeways. It would also improve access to LAX by connecting the Metro Green Line to the south and the Expo Line to the north. A bus line would also connect to the Wilshire Corridor.

About 2½ miles of the project is proposed as a subway, including the section that would run underneath Leimert Park, said MTA project manager Roderick Diaz.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas has supported the light rail option, which he believed was more environmentally friendly and efficient. "For years, these communities have historically been underserved by transit investments, and the project will not only improve local mobility but also will generate jobs directly and indirectly for the entire region," he said in a statement. He wants to find hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding so that more segments, if not all, of the project can be built as a subway.

Diaz estimated that the final design and construction process would begin in 2011 and last up to six years, with the system operational by 2018.

[Info. from the *Daily Breeze* and *Los Angeles Times*]

A NEW WATERFRONT

The Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners was poised the last week of September to consider a \$1.2 billion waterfront redevelopment plan aimed at reviving the image and economy of San Pedro. The 400-acre project primarily focuses on bringing the community closer to the water by building a series of parks, shops, restaurants, harbors, walkways, street improvements, an extended Red Car trolley line and a new cruise terminal that will accommodate larger ships calling at the port, according to a 7,000-page environmental impact report released in September by the port.

The harbor commission is expected to listen to public comments before finally deciding whether to sign off on the massive proposal during a meeting on September 29. "This is probably the biggest project the Board of Harbor Commissioners will ever have before them in terms of magnitude, the area that it covers, and cost," said Geraldine Knatz, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles.

Specifically, the plan calls for:

- A second cruise ship terminal in the Outer Harbor near Cabrillo Beach.
- Cutting into part of the existing waterfront to make room for three new harbors.
- Doubling the size of retail space at Ports O' Call Village to 300,000 square feet with help from a private developer.
- Extension of the Red Car line to stops at City Dock One, Cabrillo Beach, and a new cruise ship terminal.
- A public plaza and fountain surrounded by the existing Los Angeles Maritime Museum.
- New berths that would provide greater visibility for the Ralph J. Scott Fireboat and the SS Lane Victory, a retired vessel used during World War II.

About 64 percent of the port's investment calls for building a stronger connection between the waterfront and San Pedro's downtown area, Knatz said.

"I think the key component has always been the promenade," said Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, whose district includes San Pedro. "We've always wanted a boardwalk

that people can access and allows them to continuously walk along the Main Channel," she said. "I think we can build on the unique and charming fact that people can watch a working port while visiting this waterfront."

The most controversial part of the plan involves developing the second cruise ship terminal near Cabrillo Beach. While plans call for eventually building two berths, only one will be built due to a slowdown in the cruise industry. Port officials could build the new cruise terminal on the south end of the Main Channel as soon as 2012 to accommodate the next generation of large luxury-line vessels projected to measure up to 1,400 feet long and able to carry more than 5,000 passengers and crew.

In June, the harbor commission approved a \$144 million redevelopment plan for Wilmington's 94-acre waterfront, but the project was not listed in the port's budget. The same holds true for San Pedro's proposed plan, Knatz said, but the lack of funds will not deter efforts to move ahead. As a result, it remained unclear what aspects of the San Pedro plan would be built first and when the entire project would be completed.

The proposed project will create a wide variety of transportation options and improvements: including the expansion of Sampson Way along the west perimeter of Ports O' Call; extension of the Waterfront Red Car Line; and creation of an extensive network of public promenades, bikeways, water taxi stops and Coastal Trail connections that facilitate public access to and throughout the waterfront.

The Waterfront Red Car Line would be extended along the waterfront with stops at the Inner Harbor cruise terminal/Gateway Fanfare Fountain, Downtown Harbor, Ports O' Call, San Pedro Park, City Dock No. 1, Outer Harbor Park/cruise facilities, 22nd Street Park, and Cabrillo Beach.

A 17,600-square-foot Waterfront Red Car Maintenance Facility with a 20,000-square-foot exterior Red Car service yard will be built at the existing UP (ex-SP) Railyard south of 7th Street near the proposed 13th Street pedestrian bridge and the proposed bluff parking structures. The seven-acre UP Railyard along Sampson Way, between 7th Street and 13th Street, will be removed to provide opportunities for the proposed bluff site parking structures. However, rail spurs will be retained for exhibit purposes during railroad shows.

The Waterfront Red Car system would be designed with easy street-level boarding access by pedestrians, as opposed to high boarding platforms.

The Red Car Feasibility Study identified a loop through downtown San Pedro. The study indicates that the existing Red Car configuration with high platforms and long handicap ramps at elevated stations could not be developed in downtown San Pedro without significant impact to local businesses, parking and sidewalks. A connection to the existing Red Car system for a downtown loop is not feasible until the current system is rebuilt. The study recommended that the existing Red Car system be modified to a step-on/step-off type of electric trolley prior to expansion.

The Los Angeles Harbor Department is currently seeking transportation funding for these modifications. In order to facilitate receipt of transportation funding, the Red Car Feasibility Study also examined the potential for making the Red Car system part of the larger regional transportation network.

Several alignments were identified for connecting the Red Car system via North Gaffey Street or Wilmington to the proposed expansion of the Metro light rail system. Making the Red Car system part of the regional transportation network positions LAHD's project for federal transit funding. It also provides a way for regional visitors to access the waterfront.

Jack Whitmeyer has included the following notes:

It is good that the line to Cabrillo Beach is prominent, together with two spurs to the planned Outer Harbor Cruise Terminal and to historic Warehouse One. Location of the Maintenance Building-Museum is to be moved north closer to the Maritime Museum. The former S.P. freight yard will retain one spur for visiting trains as has been seen in the past.

San Pedro merchants have been requesting a trolley uptown and this has brought about the logical factor that raised platforms simply will not fit into the scheme of street running. The study brings forth the need for street level loading of the cars, which of course is how the Pacific Electric operated in the "good old days." And this appears to bring about the replacement of the four platforms on the existing Waterfront Line. All well and good, but just how this will comply with the handicapped access ruling is not brought out.

Despite there being three cruise ships in San Pedro on September 26, there was only one car (#501) operating. As previously advised, operation is now Friday, Saturday and Sunday from noon to evening. One of the maintenance persons has been terminated.

After the two replica cars were built, they acquired five motor trucks from the Seashore Museum in Maine, the same as used on the 500 and 501. These trucks are from retired Boston Elevated rapid transit cars. Thus long range plans envisioned the addition of at least two more replica cars.

There is nothing in the project regarding the Wilmington Line and facilities broached several months ago. But do note the suggestion that the Waterfront Line might fit into the long range scheme of Metro Rail expansion in the San Pedro direction!

[Info. from San Pedro Waterfront Project and *Daily Breeze* with highlights via Jack Whitmeyer]

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

Recently the Gold Line Foothill Extension received the commitment it had been waiting for since construction was completed on the first phase (downtown Los Angeles to east Pasadena) in 2003. On Oct. 22, the Metro Board of Directors adopted a new Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and committed to funding construction of Phase 2A (east Pasadena to Azusa) of the project. The plan also included a commitment to pursue funding to complete the light-rail line to the county line (Claremont) and to operate both segments once built.

This was a long-awaited and hard-fought victory for the people of the San Gabriel Valley and the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority (the agency charged by state law to construct the line).

Based on the adoption of the LRTP, the Construction Authority is hoping to break ground in June 2010 with the next segment to Azusa and complete the segment by the end of 2013. It will take an additional four years to construct the segment to Montclair.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

The Gold Line Eastside Extension, which connects the end of the Gold Line at Los Angeles Union Station to within a mile of the Monterey Park city boundary at 3rd Street and Atlantic Boulevard, just south of the 60 Freeway, opened Sunday, November 15. Riders traveled free all day, with the normal Metro fares going into effect on Monday. The six mile, \$898 million extension takes about 20 minutes to ride from Union Station to the end of the line.

It takes about a 53-minute ride from the Sierra Madre Villa Station in Pasadena to the end of the extension, Metro officials say. Taking a bus between those two stations, a more direct route than the U-shaped path the train line follows, will take about an hour, according to Metro's travel planner Web site.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina said she was concerned about the lack of gates and fencing to keep pedestrians off the rails and the lack of Spanish-language safety signs. Yet she was "elated" by the opening. Transportation officials expect 13,000 boardings a day by the end of the first year. Frank Villalobos, the lead architect for the project and president of Barrio Planners Inc., thinks ridership will surpass that because of the amount of downtown jobs, the current economic conditions, the cost of fuel, and because people are trying to be more environmentally friendly.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News & Los Angeles Times*]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

New Strategic Guidance And Five Year Plan

In October, Amtrak released its new Strategic Guidance and its FY 2010-2014 Five Year Financial Plan.

The new Strategic Guidance sets the foundation for the FY 2010-2014 Five Year Financial Plan, and together they encompass the strategy for continuing Amtrak's ridership growth that has increased steadily from 21.6 million in FY 2002 to 27.2 million in FY 2009, with an all-time record high of 28.7 million in FY 2008.

The Strategic Guidance outlines the opportunities and challenges facing Amtrak in the new passenger rail environment where states have the primary role in developing new or expanded intercity and high-speed rail service. It establishes six broad goals to be safer, greener and healthier and to improve financial performance, customer service, and meet national needs. Plus, it creates key performance indicators to measure progress.

The FY 2010-2014 Five Year Financial Plan for the first time provides substantially detailed financial projections for Amtrak's revenue, operating costs, capital programs and debt service obligations. It also provides a comprehensive discussion of initiatives Amtrak is taking to fulfill its goals and key performance indicators with targets by which it will be measured. Among the specific plans to be accomplished by the end of FY 2014 are to increase ridership by 15 percent, grow ticket revenue by 20 percent, expand service on eight existing state-supported corridors, form two new state partnerships and improve reliability of service across the railroad.

The two documents combined create a new vision that supersedes Amtrak's 2005 Strategic Reform Initiatives and align

Amtrak's goals with those passed by Congress in Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 and in the Obama administration's Vision for High-Speed Rail in America.

Amtrak also is partnering with and assisting states as they apply for federal grants to develop high-speed rail corridors, preparing a new fleet plan to replace aging locomotives and passenger rail cars, upgrading tracks and other infrastructure, and installing Positive Train Control technology to enhance safety. In addition, Amtrak plans to deploy Wi-Fi technology on Acela Express, implement next generation reservation and eTicketing programs, and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities to Amtrak trains, platforms and stations.

The announcement of the release of the documents stated that Amtrak is continuing to make lasting investments in all aspects of the railroad including improved business management processes, better on-board services, and modernizing existing passenger car interiors.

Web Page Revised

Effective with the issuance of the 2009/2010 Fall Timetable on Oct. 25, 2009, Amtrak launched its new web home page.

Amtrak's new home page features an uncluttered design with three sections immediately noticeable. From left to right the first section is for purchasing tickets. It has tabs for purchasing tickets, checking train status, schedules, and "My Trip," where travelers can find their reservation or log into their Amtrak.com account. The middle section contains links for other options (weekly specials, multi-ride tickets, and U.S.A. Rail Passes, etc.), and new riders. The rightmost section contains links for booking hotels, travel, and enrolling in the Amtrak Guest Rewards program.

Across the top of the page are tabs for the Amtrak home page, timetables, stations, routes, deals, travel plans and Amtrak Guest Rewards. Some of the tabs have links to drop-down menus which enable users to locate information easily. At the bottom of the page are links to other Amtrak information.

New Inspector General Appointed

In early November, Amtrak announced his appointment of Theodore (Ted) Alves as its' new Inspector General.

Alves recently retired from 35 years of federal service, including serving as the Deputy Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) from 2006 to 2009 where he was responsible for supervising audits and investigations of federal transportation agencies. His start date is still being determined.

From 2001 to 2006, Alves held three progressively responsible executive positions at the U.S. DOT, culminating in the position of Principal Assistant IG for Audits and Evaluations. He also has extensive audit experience at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Government Accountability Office, where he spent 22 years.

He replaces Amtrak Inspector General Fred E. Weiderhold, Jr., who retired in June after 35 years service to the railroad.

Weiderhold was the only person to serve as the Amtrak Inspector General since former Amtrak Chairman W. Graham Claytor, Jr., asked him to establish the Amtrak Office of Inspector General (OIG) in 1989. He was one of the longer serving Inspectors General within the OIG community.

Historical On-Time Performance

At column deadline, Amtrak historical on-time performance data for October had not been released.

BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages

The latest Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages posted on the BNSF News web page before column deadline were:

Amtrak On-Time Performance	Nov. 9, 2009	
TRAINS	MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	97%	89%
Short-Distance Trains	97%	95%
Pacific Surfliners	9%	98%

LONG DISTANCE TRAINS

Bilingual Timetables

Amtrak is now issuing individual bilingual timetables for the *Sunset Limited* (English and Spanish) and *Adirondack* (English and French). The single-sheet timetables are printed in English on one side and the other language on the reverse side. They are folded in such a way that the timetable can be placed in a display with the desired language visible.

Sunset Limited

Effective Oct. 26, 2009, the *Sunset Limited* connection to the northbound *Coast Starlight* at Los Angeles was restored. The *Sunset* is now scheduled to arrive in Los Angeles at 8:40 a.m. The *Coast Starlight* continues to depart from Los Angeles at 10:15 a.m.

At the annual Train Riders Association (TRAC) conference in Ventura, Jonathan Hutchison, Amtrak public relations spokesperson said that Amtrak management had "figured out a way" to run the *Sunset* daily with only a small capital/operating budget increase. He did not mention whether or not this included filling in the infamous New Orleans - Florida gap. Hutchison said the daily *Sunset* operational decision was now before the Amtrak Board. He also said that running a tri-weekly train "did not make sense in 2009, 2005 or 1979."

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Amtrak Cascades

The long-awaited Stanwood, Wash., station was scheduled to open on Nov. 21. Stanwood is located north of Seattle, between Everett and Mount Vernon. Southbound *Amtrak Cascades* Tr. Nos. 513 and 517 stop at 9:18 a.m. and 8:25 p.m., respectively. Northbound *Cascades* Tr. Nos. 510 and 516 stop 9:03 a.m. and 8:14 p.m., respectively.

MIDWEST TRAINS

Wolverine - Blue Water - Pere Marquette

Effective Oct. 25, the Chicago-Port Huron, Mich., *Blue Water*, and the Chicago-Pontiac, Mich., *Wolverine* began stopping at the relocated New Buffalo, Mich. station (See Depot Doings below). The New Buffalo stop for the Chicago-Grand Rapids, Mich., *Pere Marquette*, Tr. Nos. 370/371, was discontinued on that date.

The westbound *Blue Water* (Tr. No. 365) stops at 11:34 a.m.; the eastbound *Blue Water* (Tr. No. 364) stops at 6:23 p.m. The westbound *Wolverine* (Tr. No. 355) stops at 10:25 p.m.; the eastbound *Wolverine* (Tr. No. 354) stops at 8:16 p.m.

The *Wolverine* and *Blue Water* service timetable on the Amtrak web site is correct. The Amtrak System Timetable shows footnote 21 for the trains because the timetable had to go

to press before final approvals for all trains had been received from the CSX.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Due to extensive track maintenance being performed in the Northeast Corridor, *Acela Express* and *Northeast Regional* schedules changed effective Nov. 9 through mid-January. The most up-to-date schedule information is available on Amtrak.com. Downloadable schedules are available in the Timetables section of Amtrak.com.

DEPOT DOINGS

NEW BUFFALO, Mich. On October 26, the New Buffalo station was relocated and service increased from two to four trains per day. Its new location is 225 N. Whittaker St. Complimentary parking is available in a parking lot located just west of the station on Oselka Dr., parallel to the railroad tracks.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during September 2009 were 40,878, which was an increase from the previous month of 1 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide passholders on Amtrak during September were 2,035, which was an increase from the previous month of 9 percent.

2005 GLENDALE TRAIN CRASH

After years of legal wrangling, Metrolink has spent \$30 million to settle most of the lawsuits arising from the 2005 Glendale train crash that killed 11 and injured about 180, plaintiffs' attorneys said October 14. All but about a dozen of the approximately 150 claims and lawsuits filed against Metrolink have been settled, and the remaining cases are expected to be resolved shortly.

The 2005 crash occurred when Juan Manuel Alvarez parked his Jeep Grand Cherokee on the tracks and doused the interior with gasoline in what he later claimed was a suicide attempt. A three-car southbound train being pushed by a locomotive slammed into the vehicle, skidded down the tracks and derailed. The lead passenger car crashed into an idle freight train, jackknifed and collided with a passenger train going in the opposite direction.

Victims' attorneys at first focused on Metrolink's "push-pull" method, in which trains are pulled by a locomotive while traveling in one direction, then pushed from behind when going the other way. Because the lighter passenger cars are more easily derailed, the catastrophe could have been prevented had the locomotive been at the front, attorneys argued.

Last year, an appellate court ruled that Metrolink couldn't be sued for negligence based on the "push-pull" method because federal regulations allow it. A 2006 Federal Railroad Administration report also concluded that there was little difference in safety between trains that are pushed or pulled by locomotives, and that abandoning the practice would be impractical and possibly more dangerous.

Attorneys shifted their attention to testimony by the southbound train's engineer, Bruce Gray, who took the stand at Alvarez's 2007 criminal trial. Gray testified that in the seconds before the crash, he saw what appeared to be a reflection coming

from a vehicle about three-quarters of a mile ahead. Gray said he became fixated on the glimmer, and when he saw an outline of the vehicle, he hit the train's emergency brakes.

Plaintiffs' attorneys seized on the discrepancy between Gray's testimony and the data in the train's black box, which indicated that only service brakes were applied initially and that a few critical seconds passed before the emergency brakes kicked in. Plaintiffs' attorney Jerome Ringler said that if Gray had applied the brakes when he said he had, the deadly crash could have been avoided.

At the same time, Ringler said, the plaintiffs' case was complicated by Alvarez's conviction on 11 counts of first-degree murder. He was sentenced to life in prison for what prosecutors argued was a twisted attempt to get attention and win back the affections of his estranged wife.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

AMTRAK TO OPERATE METROLINK TRAINS

Amtrak and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) were moving forward on October 23 with a Memorandum of Understanding for Amtrak to provide the train and engine crews needed to operate Metrolink commuter trains on all seven of its lines in the Los Angeles area beginning July 1, 2010.

"Amtrak and its employees appreciate the confidence and trust Metrolink has placed in us to provide their passengers the highest standards of safety, efficiency and reliability," said Amtrak President and CEO Joseph H. Boardman, adding the commuter rail system on average operates 149 trains and carries 43,000 riders every weekday. Boardman noted that among the reasons why SCRRA decided to enter into this MOU with Amtrak is because of the railroad's unique qualifications and experience in intercity and commuter passenger rail operations, its present operation of intercity trains over four of the seven lines that comprise Metrolink service, its prior experience as the original operator of Metrolink trains from 1992 to 2005, and how its multiple safety programs will complement and enhance the safety efforts being undertaken by SCRRA.

The MOU calls for a Final Agreement to be reached by December 31, 2009 and an initial four year contract with the potential for two additional three-year extensions. Within two weeks from Oct. 23 a Transition Team was to hold its first meeting and SCRRA was to issue a limited Notice to Proceed permitting Amtrak to begin the work required to complete mobilization and assume operations. Amtrak was to work closely with SCRRA, Metrolink, and the current operator and its employees over the coming weeks to ensure a smooth transition.

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) is the nation's intercity passenger rail operator. Last fiscal year (FY 2009), Amtrak carried 27.2 million passengers, making it the second-best year in the company's history. With 21,000 route miles in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian provinces, Amtrak operates more than 300 trains each day – at speeds up to 150 mph – to more than 500 destinations. Amtrak also is the operator of choice for state-supported corridor services in 15 states and for four commuter rail agencies.

Metrolink is Southern California's regional commuter rail service in its 16th year of operations. The Southern California Regional Rail Authority, a joint powers authority made up of an

11-member board representing the transportation commissions of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties, governs the service. The agency currently contracts with Connex Railroad, LLC for the personnel that operate, supervise and manage Metrolink commuter rail service. Metrolink continues to be one of the nation's fastest growing commuter rail services, operating over seven routes through a six-county (including San Diego) 512 route-mile network.

[News Release from Amtrak via Charles Varnes]

SAFE BICYCLE STATION

Work has begun on an innovative bike station at the Metrolink station in Covina. The station is designed to provide secure, indoor bicycle parking to reduce the risk of theft, thus allowing commuters to bike, park, and ride the Metrolink.

The station will be the first of its kind installed in the country and will serve as a model to other cities, according to Andres White-Kjoss, president and CEO of Mobis/Bikestation. Construction is expected to be complete by the end of the year.

White-Kjoss expects 200 similar bike stations to be in operation in the next five years. They will have monitored electronic security and will feature digital access.

City leaders at last week's groundbreaking praised the secure station as a way to promote environmentally sustainable and healthy transportation in the city. People interested in using the bike station can sign up at www.Bikestation.com.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA FE

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett's \$34-billion acquisition of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp. is the biggest bet yet on a U.S. economic recovery. BNSF is the nation's largest rail transporter of coal and grain and provides a vital link for consumer goods from Asia to the Midwest, many of them flowing through the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles.

"Our country's future prosperity depends on its having an efficient and well-maintained rail system," Buffett said. "Conversely, America must grow and prosper for railroads to do well." BNSF is also Buffett's kind of business. A model-train aficionado, the nation's second-richest citizen (after Microsoft Corp's Bill Gates) has often espoused a simple axiom that investors should invest in what they know well.

The purchase stunned Wall Street, but it was vintage Buffett. The 79-year-old investor, through his Berkshire Hathaway Inc. is known as the Oracle of Omaha for making shrewd investments. Berkshire Hathaway already holds stock in railroad companies Union Pacific Corp. and Norfolk Southern Corp. Also, BNSF has a significant presence in Omaha, Buffett's hometown.

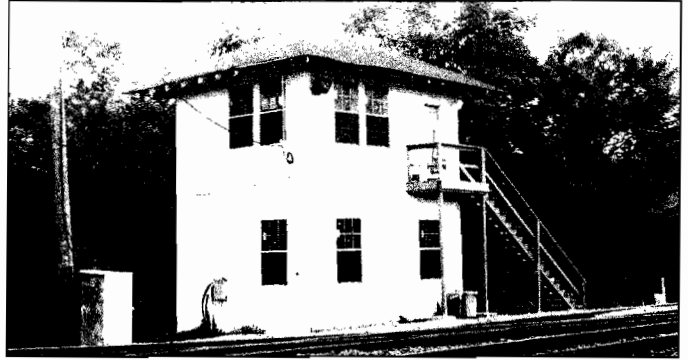
Part of Buffett's investment in the railroad company might not be related to freight at all. He could be eyeing the \$8 billion in stimulus money the federal government has set aside to boost the economy, said Steve Ditmeyer, an adjunct professor with Michigan State University's Railway Management Program. Some of that money could go toward upgrading freight lines so that higher-speed trains can run on them, which would in turn make the freight trains go faster, Ditmeyer said. And with 32,000 miles of track, Burlington Northern Santa Fe is likely to

benefit.

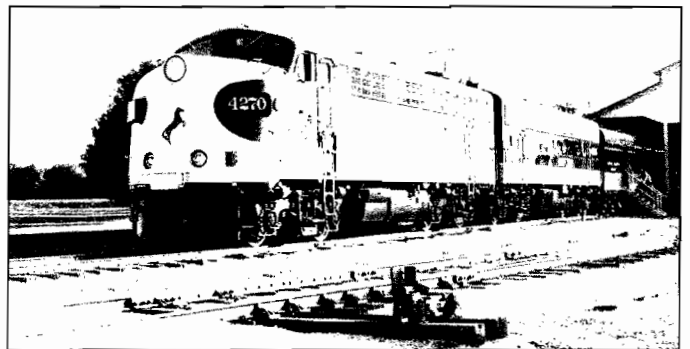
[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



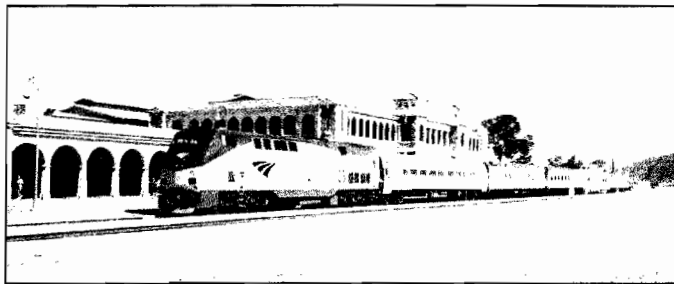
Marti Ann Draper, Conductor on The Barstow Flyer, is seen in the Amtrak coach 82580 on Oct. 17. Photo by Dick Finley



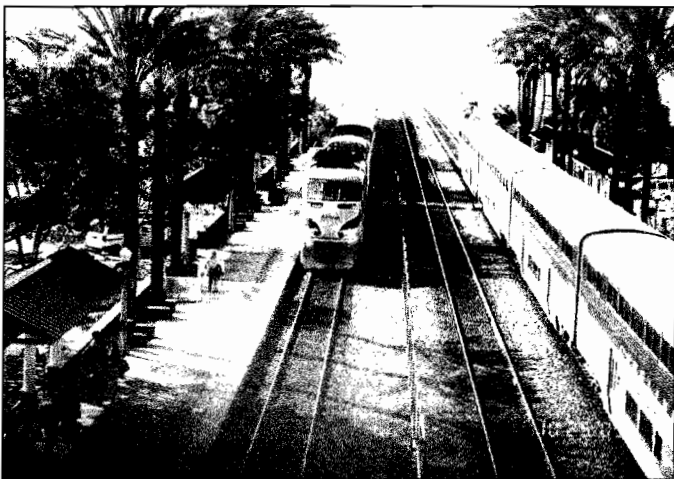
West Bridge Jct. Tower, that controls the switches and signals at the West End of the Huey P. Long Bridge in Avondale, LA, has gone through an extensive building rehabilitation. The Tower has been propped up so it no longer leans. Each wall was torn out, one section at a time, board by board. New walls, along with new windows, now make this tower sturdier, stronger and safer. With construction completed earlier this year, it is seen in this photograph taken September 21, 2009. Amtrak's Sunset Limited passes here. Photo by Bob Johnson



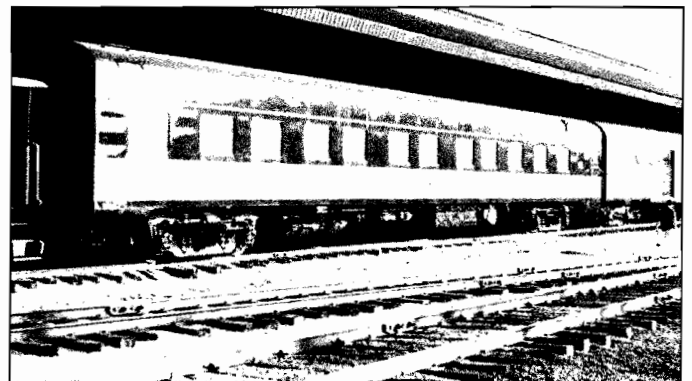
Norfolk Southern Railroad Passenger Locomotives 4270 and 4276 were provided to the Monticello Railroad Museum in Central Illinois for their Rail Festival on the weekend of September 19, 2009. Seen on display, they shine in the sun, after a recent overhaul inside and out by NS. Photo by Bob Johnson



The Barstow Flyer train is parked in front of the Harvey House depot in Barstow, California on Oct. 17. Photo by Dick Finley



On a recent Autumn Sunday afternoon two Surfliners meet at the station in Fullerton, California. Photo by Margo Petros



Former PRS Pullman Car Council Bluffs, now owned by the Monticello Museum in Central Illinois, was on display for the general public as seen here on their Rail Festival Day on September 21, 2009. Note the fresh new paint job on the car, completed by the Museum early last year. Museum members take great pride in this car and they thank PRS for it.

Photo by Bob Johnson