

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

JUNE 2008

FRONT RUNNER COMMUTER RAIL

Going from Pleasant View in Weber County to Salt Lake City, the new Front Runner Commuter Rail travels a length of 44 miles. It has 38 miles of new track built by Utah Transit Authority (UTA) on an exclusive right-of-way east of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) mainline track. Six miles of track from Ogden to Pleasant View are shared with UPRR.

There are 43 at-grade street crossings and two bridges: one 1450-foot bridge spanning the Weber River and one 680-foot bridge in the UPRR Ogden Rail Yard. The construction project used 32,900 tons of rail, 640,000 tons of ballast, and 112,000 concrete ties.

Eight stations occur on the line with locations at Salt Lake City, Woods Cross, Farmington, Layton, Clearfield, Roy, Ogden, and Pleasant View. The latter station was not finished in mid-May. The platforms have a maximum length of 850 feet to accommodate a 10-car consist. Park and Ride lots and bus staging are at each station. The Salt Lake City Intermodal Hub provides a connection to TRAX, the Salt Lake City light rail system.

The diesel-electric locomotives operate in push-pull mode. Passenger cars are Bombardier bi-level cab cars and refurbished single-level cars. The initial train consist is one locomotive with three passenger cars; ultimately trains can have up to 10 passenger cars.

Hours of operation are 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturdays. Headways are at least 30-minute daytime service, hourly night and Saturday service. Ridership projections were 5,900 on opening day of April 26, 2008, and 12,600 daily riders by 2025. Fare is \$2.50 one-way between any two stations with \$0.50 for each additional station, or \$145 for a FrontRunner Monthly Pass (good for all UTA services).

The Maintenance Facility is the Warm Springs Service Center in Salt Lake City (former UPRR Diesel Locomotive Maintenance Facility). A Layover Facility is at the Ogden Intermodal Center.

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR

In May 2008, the Alameda Corridor, which connects the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach with downtown Los Angeles rail yards and the national rail system, logged the 100,000th train to use the freight-rail expressway since it opened in April 2002.

The Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority owns and governs the 20-mile corridor, which includes a 10-mile, triple-tracked mid-corridor trench shared by BNSF Railway Co. and Union Pacific Railroad via trackage rights.

[Info. from *Observation Platform*]



The two accompanying photographs, taken in late February 2008, show the ex-SP station located at Tehachapi, California. When the process of restoration and renovation is completed, the station will become a visitor center and a museum of Southern Pacific railroad history. In addition, the station appears in the California Register of Historic Resources, and the National Register of Historic Places.

The original station, which was built in 1876 when the site was known as Tehachapi Summit, was destroyed by fire and was subsequently replaced by the present structure in 1904, utilizing the standard ESPEE station plan, No. 23.

[Info. by John Petros, and Photos. by Margo Petros]





WHEEL CLICKS

JUNE 2008 VOLUME 72, NO. 3

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Published monthly by **PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.**, P. O. Box 80726, San Marino, California 91118-8726. The Society is a California chartered, nonprofit organization of those who share an interest in railroad operations, travel and history. Telephone (same as Museum): (909) 394-0616.

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 AND DEPARTURES

- June 6 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Saunders Yard** Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Fri.
- June 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas. Sats. Committee meeting: May 28.
- June 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular Sats. day: 7, 21; Extra day: 14, 28; Com. Meeting: 21.
- June 13 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- June 20 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes & Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.
- July 4 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- July 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas. Sats. Committee meeting: July 26.
- July 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. Meeting: 19.
- July 11 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

MEETING PROGRAMS by RUSS DAVIES

June 13: **The best of Ralph Melching, Part 2.** Many of you saw Ralph's early black and white images at the April meeting. Ralph was also a widely traveled and accomplished color slide photographer. This night we'll see his **color slides, including some European scenes. Be there, and bring slide or digital briefs.**

July 11: **ERHA of Southern California President Al Fishel** will present slides of **steam and diesel railroading** taken by **Jack Ferrier and Ira Swett** in the **1940s and 50s. This will be a good one! Be there, and bring slide or digital briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by VIRGINIA GRUPP

There were no late renewals last month. Athella Christie with Membership No. 519 was voted into PRS on May 2, 2008.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS by VIRGINIA GRUPP

Your new membership card is enclosed with this issue. Don't throw out the envelope until you have retrieved your card. This year's card is bright blue.

Many of our newer members may not know that the founders of the Society decided to emulate the seniority system used by the railroads in maintaining the membership list. Therefore, the longer you maintain a continuous membership, the lower your member number. Over the years some numbers have been retired. Members number one through six were the Charter Members. They were Richard and Roy Fleming, Wayne and Ralph Melching, Al Haij and Lewis Harris. Their numbers have been retired. Also, number eight, held by James Grupp, was retired after his passing in 1974. This last October, Chard Walker's number was retired. Chard was member number nine.

By using a seniority system, everyone receives a new card every year usually with a new number. This includes all classes of members. Even Life Members will receive a new card each year. We currently have eighteen Life Members. They are: Luzius Amrein, James Baker, Robert Burket, Frances Creveling, Ted Creveling, Jerry Duncan, Dennis Hardy, Daniel Munoz, Wayne Saunders, Barbara Sibert, Charles Varnes, Richard Weigle, Dr. Wendell Weir, Fred Ziesenhenn, Robert Johnson, Kenneth Acord, Fr. Karl Claver and Kenneth Peale.

As a non-profit organization, the Society is eligible to use Bulk Rate postage to mail *Wheel Clicks*. While the cost of Bulk Rate also goes up with each postage increase, it is still a considerable saving over First Class. One of the requirements of using Bulk Rate is that the contents of all envelopes must be identical. This means that when the dues renewal envelopes are sent out at the first of the year, even the Life Members listed above will receive an envelope.

Lindsay Smith, our Museum Director, has started on making *Wheel Clicks* available online or via email. Members could opt to receive *Wheel Clicks* electronically every month. There will be more information as this gets closer to being available. As

with all PRS functions, maintaining the Membership roster and the production and mailing of *Wheel Clicks* is done entirely by volunteers. The Society has no paid staff.

PRS BYLAWS **by MARTI ANN DRAPER**

Official notice: On July 11, 2008, at 7:30 p.m. at the regular membership meeting to be held at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra CA 91801, the membership will be asked to vote on whether or not to ratify proposed changes to the PRS bylaws. The following is a summary only. The full text of the changes appears in a flyer which is inserted in this issue of *Wheel Clicks*. **ANY MEMBER WHO WISHES TO OBTAIN A FULL COPY OF THE ARTICLES AND BYLAWS AS THEY NOW STAND SHOULD CONTACT MARTI ANN DRAPER OF THE BYLAWS COMMITTEE AT THE MUSEUM NUMBER, (909) 394-0616.** Leave a message with your full name, address and telephone number.

First: To change the "candidate statement" which a candidate running for office may submit for consideration by the membership from 150 to 250 words.

Second: To eliminate the paragraphs pertaining to the 1559, Descanso, and historical and research committees. (The Descanso is now overseen by the Rolling Stock committee, and Historical and Research is now overseen by the Museum Committee). The remaining committees will be consolidated and re-numbered.

Explanation: In order to clean up and clarify our bylaws, the Board of Directors has adopted certain changes which the Bylaws Committee has recommended. These changes have to be voted on by the membership at a regular meeting before they come into effect. The changes remove references to committees that no longer exist and re-number the resulting paragraphs so that they are in order.

MOUNT LOWE MEMORIES

The Pasadena Museum of History has opened two exhibits, "Mount Lowe: Souvenirs from the Incline Railway" and "Curators' Choice: Objects Selected from the Museum's Collections," and will offer related events through July 2008. The curator for this double delight is Michael Patris. He is the founder of the Mount Lowe Preservation Society Inc. and the author of "Mount Lowe Railway" (Arcadia, \$20).

Construction on Mount Lowe began in 1891 and the site opened July 4, 1893. An incline railway brought visitors up from Altadena. People loved it because they could "get up the mountains without having to hike," Patris said. Visitors would take the Pacific Electric Red Car to the foothills, often making it a family outing. "It was the Disneyland of its day," Patris said. "It's a neat piece of local history that very few people know about, whether they were born here or not."

Mount Lowe was beset by a series of natural disasters – fires, floods, gale-force winds and torrential rains – starting in 1900 and ending in 1936. The buildings had been destroyed and not rebuilt, and the railway stopped operating there. The Mount Lowe Railway officially abandoned the site in 1941 and returned

it to the National Forest Service. Much later, in 1993, Mount Lowe was placed on the National Register of Historical Places.

The Pasadena Museum of History exhibits will feature pieces from the Mount Lowe Society archives. The organization has been gathering items for nearly 20 years and is seeking a home for a permanent display.

Special events on Mount Lowe occur in May, June and July. Reservations are required for all events. Call (626) 577-1660 Ext. 10. Pasadena Museum of History, 470 W. Walnut St., Pasadena. www.pasadenahistory.org.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of March 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 324,042. This was an increase of 26,795 riders per day from February or about 9 percent.

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

As gas prices continue their unrelenting climb, more and more Bay Area commuters are leaving their cars at home and heading for public transit. This has resulted in an all time record for Caltrain weekday ridership.

In February, Caltrain transported an average of nearly 37,000 riders per weekday. This was a 9.3 percent increase over February 2007, a nearly 45 percent increase since Baby Bullet service began in 2004, and a whopping 75 percent increase since 1992, when the Joint Powers Board assumed control of Caltrain from Southern Pacific.

To help accommodate these extra riders, Caltrain is buying eight more Bombardier cars to be used on weekday peak hour trains. The cars should be in service by the end of the year. Originally, the cars weren't expected to arrive until 2009, but apparently the Caltrain Board realized the urgency of the situation, especially with the high rate of mechanical failures that plagues the current equipment.

The positive ridership numbers are tempered by the fact that trespasser fatalities are also up this year over 2007. By the end of April, six people have been killed on Caltrain tracks, compared to eight in all of last year.

Caltrain has spent millions of dollars over the years on fencing, educational videos, ad campaigns, and even suicide prevention walks, trying to address this problem, without much success. Now the latest idea is to install cameras on all locomotives and cab cars to try to learn why people do what they do.

The Caltrain Board has asked the state for nearly a half million dollars in homeland security funds to install the cameras on each end of all 30 train sets. While the cameras won't be able to prevent anyone from illegally crossing the tracks, it will allow investigators to see what the engineer sees, and hopefully give some insight into what exactly happened, and why. The fact that the money will be coming from homeland security funds has raised objections from some people who are otherwise supportive of the idea.

The camera idea seems to be catching on. BART and Metrolink are already using mounted cameras, and Amtrak's Capitol Corridor, which has experienced a large number of trespasser fatalities, was recently granted \$600,000 to install cameras on its locomotives and cab cars.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK REAUTHORIZATION

S.294, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes, was introduced in the Senate in mid-January 2007. It was passed at the end of October and sent to the House of Representatives where it was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and then to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, where it awaits further action.

H.R.6003, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes, was introduced in the House on May 8, 2008, and referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. It was referred to the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials on the following day.

The bill contains five titles: Title I—Authorizations; Title II—Amtrak Reform and Operational Improvements; Title III—Intercity Passenger Rail Policy; Title IV—Commuter Rail Transit Enhancement; and Title V—High-speed Rail.

Title I authorizes the following amounts for operating funds Fiscal Years (FY) 2009, \$525,000,000; FY 2010, \$600,000,000; FY 2011, \$614,000,000; FY 2012, \$638,000,000, and FY 2013, \$654,000,000. For capital projects and grants during the five-year period, the bill authorizes the following amounts: FY 2009, \$1,202,000,000; FY 2010, \$1,321,000,000; FY 2011, \$1,321,000,000; FY 2012, \$1,427,000,000; and FY 2013, \$1,427,000,000.

There are many differences in the two bills which will need to be reconciled in a conference committee.

The text of the bills and Congressional action can be found by searching for S.294 or H.R.6003 at the Library of Congress Thomas web site, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>.

AMTRAK NEWS

An historical on-time performance link was added to the Amtrak home page in May. It appears in the center of the page below the Train Status search box. Clicking on the link opens the Route Performance page. The page lists all Amtrak routes individually and contains a Browse by Region link. A route or region page contains performance statistics, a pull-down menu for viewing performance statistics by individual train, and a route map displaying the railroads over which the train operates.

INTERCITY TRAINS

Coast Starlight

Amtrak resumed normal operations between Los Angeles and Seattle on the disrupted *Coast Starlight* route beginning May 6, 2008, with the northbound *Coast Starlight*. The first southbound *Starlight*, departed Seattle on May 7, 2008. Full service was restored on trains operating in both directions.

Starlight service was suspended between Los Angeles and Seattle on January 19, due to massive landslides over the Union Pacific line north of Chemult, Ore.

Amtrak began partial “coach only” train service on Feb. 1, between Los Angeles and Sacramento, with no alternate transportation north of Sacramento. On Feb. 29, Substitute motorcoach service began between Sacramento and Portland. On April 15, Amtrak extended train service beyond Sacramento to Klamath Falls, Ore. with motorcoach connections to Eugene, Ore. At Eugene, passengers were able to board *Cascades* trains to Seattle and intermediate destinations.

With the resumption of through Los Angeles-Seattle *Starlight* operation, stations between Eugene, Ore. and Seattle became “discharge only” again.

On-Time Performance

April 2008: 91.1% – Last 12 Months: 75.9%

Primary Cause of Delays – April 2008

Train Interference: 54.4%

82.4% on Union Pacific and former S.P.

12.8% on S.C.R.R.A. (Moorpark to LAUPT)

4.9% on Burlington Northern Santa Fe

Track and Signals: 28.1%

95.0% on Union Pacific and former S.P.

4.3% on Burlington Northern Santa Fe

0.7% on S.C.R.R.A. (Moorpark to LAUPT)

Operational: 7.3%

89.3% on Union Pacific and former S.P.

6.4% on S.C.R.R.A. (Moorpark to LAUPT)

4.3% on Burlington Northern Santa Fe

The top three causes of delays, in percent of delay minutes, may not add to 100 percent.

ROHR TURBOLINERS FOR SALE

In mid-April Amtrak offered its seven Rohr Turboliner trainsets and associated spare parts inventory for sale. Three trainsets have been overhauled and are stored in Delaware; four trainsets are in various stages of overhaul and are stored in New York. Each trainset consists of a combination power and coach at each end and three intermediate coaches, one with a food service facility.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

CENTRAL OREGON & PACIFIC RAILROAD

The Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad wants to keep open its line connecting southern Oregon and northern California, spending nearly \$5 million on improvements. But shippers said the plan for the Siskiyou line between Medford and Weed, Calif., means a tripling of rates for hauling wood products, which they can't absorb.

Railroad President Bob Jones said in a statement the contracts it proposed would make freight rail less costly than alternatives. Bob Ragon, executive director of the Douglas Timber Operators, said shippers hope to negotiate on the rates proposed in mid-March. The shippers formed a coalition after the closure in Sept. of Central Oregon & Pacific's spur line between Coquille and Eugene.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT HOUSING

With a \$4 million revenue shortfall this fiscal year and less money expected in the future, North (San Diego) County Transit District is drawing up plans to build offices, homes and retail space at two stations. A 75-foot-tall office building could loom over the Escondido Transit Center for the Sprinter, and a large residential building could anchor the Carlsbad Village Coaster station someday. “They're intended to be money-making opportunities for the district,” said Lance Schulte, the district's economic development administrator. “We're looking at these plans as future plans,” not as specific proposals, Schulte said. The district also may create a similar plan for the transit station

in downtown Oceanside.

Both plans include multilevel parking garages to serve transit riders, shoppers and residents. The 13-acre Carlsbad transit station has 365 surface parking spaces, and the 18-acre Escondido center has 390.

"We need citizens committees for more organized comments as we go through (the process), so we basically don't run into the same problems we're running into in Solana Beach," said David Drucker, a Del Mar city councilman. In Solana Beach, the transit district has partnered with Shea Properties on a proposed development at the district's railroad station.

The project, Cedros Crossing, has faced considerable delay as residents panned the proposal and the City Council ordered new studies to gauge the amount of traffic the project could generate. At the end of Jan., the council approved the project's environmental impact report, but the delay jeopardizes a state construction grant for a parking garage.

[Info. from *The San Diego Union-Tribune* via Dorothy Grava]

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL by DICK FINLEY RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during March 2008 were 44,490. This was an increase from the previous month of 1132 riders or 3 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within 5 minutes) was 97 percent, which was the same as February.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide average trips during April 2008 were 44,792, which was an increase from the previous month of 302 riders or 1 percent. The weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence was 96 percent, or one percent less than in March.

LOCOMOTIVE 888

Keith Millhouse, Metrolink's vice chairman and a city councilmember from Moorpark urged Southern Californians to "go cleaner and greener by riding transit" while launching the newest addition to Metrolink's fleet of locomotives, #888. Metrolink added to a long history of environmental friendliness by rolling out the diesel-electric locomotive on Earth Day, April 22, in a small ceremony at Metrolink's Central Maintenance Facility (CMF) in Los Angeles.

Locomotive 888, the first of 15 new locomotives, was delivered in mid-April to the CMF after traveling to Los Angeles from Boise, Idaho, where the manufacturer, MotivePower Industries, is located. In addition to operating on the lowest-sulfur diesel fuel available (as do all Metrolink locomotives), 888 includes enhanced safety features, improved performance, and reliability.

The new locomotive features automatic stop/start technology funded by the South Coast Air Quality Management District to further cut emissions. The new generation of Metrolink locomotives also feature higher-horsepower engines, improved fuel efficiency, advanced emissions-reduction technology, and microprocessor controls.

Metrolink plans to further "green" its fleet by refurbishing its existing locomotives, which will be upgraded as the newer equipment is placed into service. Locomotive 888 was expected to join the active Metrolink fleet by mid-May.

[Info. from *Metrolink Matters*]

CANYON COUNTRY PROJECT

In January, plans were progressing for a proposed 217-acre housing and commercial development in Canyon Country after the Santa Clarita City council selected a consultant to draft an environmental impact report. The Vista Canyon Ranch project would bring 1,200 to 1,600 residential units, up to 1.5 million square feet of commercial use, 12 acres of parkland, 80 acres of open space, and a Metrolink station to an area just outside the city limits.

The project would be built along Long Canyon Road, east of the Fair Oaks Ranch community, south of Highway 14 and west of Soledad Canyon Road. City Senior Planner Jeff Hogan said he expects the EIR to go before the city Planning Commission and the City council this fall. The developer is also proposing to bridge Lost Canyon Road over the Santa Clara River.

[Info. from *Santa Clarita Signal*]

OVERHAUL OF F59PH LOCOMOTIVES

As Metrolink's equipment approaches or exceeds 15 years of service, a Locomotive Overhaul program is needed for the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) F59PH fleet. The current scope of the work to be performed is a mid-life overhaul up to 10 F59PH locomotives. The option years contain up to three locomotives for both the first and second option years.

The locomotives were built by GMC-EMD between 1992 and 1993 for operation in Metrolink service. The locomotives have been in continuous service for approximately 15 years, have accumulated approximately 800,000 road miles and have not undergone an overhaul. The scope of the overhaul involves inspection, testing, upgrading and replacing selected components. The overhaul will restore the locomotives to "like new" condition to improve and assure continued locomotive reliability.

The Evaluation Team included SCRRA Equipment staff and a retired Amtrak Facility Manager and past President of the Locomotives Maintenance Officer Association, who is a Consultant with Leothacue Enterprise. The evaluation team recommended an award of the contact with MotivePower Inc., the highest technical ranked proposer, for a contract funding authorization amount not-to-exceed \$11,909,839 for a base term of one year with two one-year options. The contract award was authorized at the Board Meeting on April 25, 2008.

FACTS – METROLINK REGIONAL SYSTEM

March 2008 [Bracket number is increase over March 2007]

Number of routes: 7

Stations in Service: 55 [1]

Route Miles (includes shared miles): 512

Route Miles (excludes shared miles): 388

Average Trains Operated/Weekday: 145

Average Trains Operated/Saturday: 48 [8]

Average Trains Operated/Sunday: 32 [10]

Average Weekday Riders on Metrolink trains (Jan thru Mar):
43,737 [4%]

Average Weekday Metrolink Riders on Amtrak (Jan thru Mar):
1,697 [4%]

Total Average Weekday Metrolink Riders (Jan thru Mar):
45,434 [4%]

Average System Speed (M.P.H. with stops): 41 m.p.h.

FACTS – ROUTE CORRIDOR

Ventura County Line (Oxnard to Los Angeles)

Stations: 12

Route Miles: 70.9

Trains Operated/Day: 31 (includes 11 Burbank/BHAIrpt.).

Average Speed: 42 m.p.h.

Antelope Valley Line (Lancaster to Los Angeles)

Stations: 11 [1]

Route Miles: 76.6

Trains Operated/Weekday: 24

Trains Operated/Saturday: 10 [2]

Trains Operated/Sunday: 6 [6]

Average Speed: 41 m.p.h.

San Bernardino Line (San Bernardino to Los Angeles)

Stations: 13

Route Miles: 56.5

Trains Operated/Weekday: 34

Trains Operated/Saturday: 22 [2]

Trains Operated/Sunday: 14 [2]

Average Speed: 39 m.p.h.

Riverside Line (Riverside to Los Angeles)

Stations: 7

Route Miles: 59.1

Trains Operated/Weekday: 12

Average Speed: 42 m.p.h.

Orange County Line (Oceanside to Los Angeles)

Stations: 14 [1]

Route Miles: 87.2

Trains Operated/Weekday: 19

Trains Operated/Saturday: 8 [2]

Trains Operated/Sunday: 8 [2]

Average Speed: 44 m.p.h.

Inland Empire-Orange County Line (San Ber. to Oceanside)

Stations: 14

Route Miles: 100.1

Trains Operated/Weekday: 16

Trains Operated/Saturday: 6

Trains Operated/Sunday: 4

Average Speed: 39 m.p.h.

91 Line (Riverside to Los Angeles via Fullerton)

Stations: 9 [1]

Route Miles: 61.6

Trains Operated/Day: 9

Average Speed: 39 m.p.h.

FACTS – FAST

Average weight of a Metrolink train: 450 tons

Average distance for a Metrolink train to stop: 1/3 mile

Revenue recovered by operations: 55 percent

Passenger car: 85'0" long x 9'10" wide x 15'11" high.

Locomotive (max.): 58'2" long x 10'6.5" wide x 15'11.5" high

FACTS – TRAIN EQUIPMENT

Number of Locomotives (includes 1 leased from Sound Transit in Sept. 2004): 39

Total number of Commuter Rail Cars: 155

Cab Cars (includes 4 leased from Sound Transit + 2 from Altamont Commuter Express): 39

Coaches (includes 8 leased from Sound Transit + 2 from Altamont Commuter Express): 116

Equipment on Order

Locomotives: 15

Cab Cars: 53

Coaches: 54

[Facts Info. from the *Quarterly Fact Sheet* by Metrolink]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

RIDERSHIP

March 2008	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	144,841	78,555	38,909	22,231
Saturday Ave.	96,964	50,934	22,915	14,941
Sunday Ave.	80,130	42,527	18,508	10,975
Monthly Total	3,927,133	2,116,966	1,024,212	596,436

25-YEAR PLAN

More than 12,000 visitors have reviewed Metro's Long Range Transportation Plan on the internet. On average, the plan for L.A.'s transportation future gets 550 views a day.

See what's achievable today and possible tomorrow with more investments in traffic solutions. Find out what the excitement is all about or share your vision at metro.net/imagine or call 213-922-2833.

RAIL OPERATION CONTROL FACILITY

On March 12 the Harris SCADA system, which provided the remote supervision and control required for moving up to 80,000 Metro light rail passengers each day, was replaced by a newer system. The Harris (name of the manufacturer) SCADA's first day on the job, July 14, 1990, was the day the Metro Blue Line opened.

On Harris SCADA's (Light Rail Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) last day on the job, there was no shortage of admiring tributes. "It was a rock steady system," said Ray Schuck, a systems maintenance supervisor and one of the original Metro engineers responsible for maintaining the Harris SCADA system. Turning off Harris SCADA was Tim Elam, who worked for Harris and spent 24 months onsite at Metro designing and implementing the System.

The new AIM SCADA system has enhanced graphics, advanced train-tracking features and the ability to meet future rail expansion. Elam noted that none of the systems created today have the same longevity – technology is moving too fast. As an example, each Harris SCADA mainframe had 10 megabytes of memory and 700 megabytes of disk space, a minuscule amount when eraser-sized flash drives have 4 gigabytes of disk space.

Making the system's success even more incredible, was that it was Metro's first SCADA system and the only transit system Harris ever developed. Elam and his team built the SCADA capability into a system typically used to monitor hydroelectric systems. Those attending the farewell, who created the system and who worked with it, praised its ease of use and its ability to work 24-7.

2008 RAIL RODEO

Two operators and the 2007 International Championship Maintenance team won the chance to go for International Gold at the 2008 Metro Rail Rodeo, hosted at the Metro Gold Line yard. Each of these winners was to represent Metro, May 29, at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

International Rail Rodeo in San Francisco.

Metro Rail Transportation Instruction supports the event, said Linda Leone, Rail Instruction Manager. The instructors design the events, work as judges and provide back-up where needed. This year, Transportation events were designed by Rail TOS Esther Pippins. Equipment Maintenance Instructor Russell Homan (Pacific Railroad Society Member/Webmaster) designed the Maintenance competition.

BLUE LINE

For 16 years, the Blue Line relied on train operators to announce stops. Now, a new automated announcement system designed and built by Blue Line employees will do the work. The Blue Line formerly used two incompatible public address (PA) systems. The older PA systems were developed at different times, so although each worked individually, replacement cars and later-model cars weren't able to fully synchronize with the original system equipment. Not only did they deliver poor sound quality, they limited which cars could be coupled.

To solve these problems, a prototype system was designed by Eric Czintos, maintenance specialist, and Russell Homan, senior instructor for Rail Fleet Services. The final version now uses a standard, off-the-shelf MP3 player to make the actual station announcements. The result of all this work is station announcements that are always clear and crisp and a fleet of trains that are now interchangeable.

GREEN LINE

State Senator Jenny Oropeza plans to introduce legislation to extend the Green Line to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), but the bill faces great hurdles – including opposition from the MTA and a lack of funding. Planners contemplated a connection to the airport when the rail line was built in the early 1990s, but scrapped the idea over jurisdictional issues, technical challenges and financial constraints.

Oropeza's proposal would sidestep the MTA and create a new agency – the Green Line Construction Authority – to design and build the route. Oropeza, D-Redondo Beach, co-authored a similar bill last year with Assemblyman Ted Lieu, D-El Segundo. Lieu introduced the bill in the Assembly, but it stalled in the Appropriations Committee last summer. Other legislators have argued that a higher priority should go to projects such as the Crenshaw Line, the so-called Subway to the Sea, or the Gold Line extension through the San Gabriel Valley.

There are two options for linking the county's light rail system to the airport: extend the Green Line, or build the Crenshaw Line, which would run from Exposition Blvd. down through Inglewood to the Green Line stop at Aviation Blvd. Either plan would link up to a "people mover" system that would carry passengers from a station at Manchester Square to the airport terminals.

"LAX is one of the few remaining airports in a major city that doesn't have light rail," Lieu said. County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, who sits on the MTA board, said she would not oppose the project, provided it had funding.

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

PURPLE LINE

On March 10, Metro joined with KOAR Development Group to celebrate a major construction milestone for the Solair joint development at the Wilshire/Western Metro Purple Line Station.

The event celebrated the placement of the highest structural element at 22-stories of the high-rise. The glass-wrapped tower will offer 186 residences and penthouses, accompanied by a resort-style pool deck and many resident amenities.

EXPO LINE

Traveling along Flower Street or Washington Boulevard reveals construction of the Expo Light Rail Line. A future parking area is being cleared at National and Washington boulevards, the planned terminus for Phase I of the project. A 61-inch diameter water main has been buried 42 feet below the ground near the Figueroa Street/Exposition Boulevard intersection, so future trains can travel four feet above it as they swing west past the University of Southern California.

At the Board meeting on April 24, it was approved that the budget for the Expo Line Phase I be increased by \$54 million. As originally planned, the Culver City Aerial Station and Structure would have been designed and constructed during Phase II of the Expo light rail transit (LRT) project. However, the Expo Construction Authority recommended that the Culver City Station be constructed as part of Phase I to avoid the cost of building an interim at-grade station and to take advantage of State Proposition 1B funds and a contribution from Culver City that have been approved for this purpose.

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

College students and others from throughout the San Gabriel Valley and beyond converged on Metro headquarters on April 24 to urge the agency's board to approve construction of the Gold Line foothill extension from East Pasadena to Montclair. "This is our last chance to make our case to the board," said Kristen Manes, 23, a media arts major from Mt. Sierra College in Monrovia.

The Metro Board must decide in June whether to include the \$1.4 billion project on a critical funding list, a necessary step required to leverage up to \$320 million in federal matching funds to build the first leg of the line to the Azusa-Glendora border.

Officials estimate that once completed, the extension will eliminate 126 tons of carbon monoxide from the air and save about 1.5 million gallons of gasoline each year. Joining the students on Thursday were local elected officials and business leaders from throughout the region, including La Verne Mayor John Blickenstaff. "These students are one more example of the broad base of support for this project," said Blickenstaff, also chair of the Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority Board.

"The Gold Line extension does not just benefit those in the San Gabriel Valley," said Mark Harmsen, a spokesman for Rep. David Dreier, R-San Dimas. "They have a lot of traffic pressure at LAX and we can take this line to the Ontario Airport," said Harmsen. "That would benefit L.A., as well as the San Gabriel Valley."

Manes, the Mt. Sierra student, said with speeds on the Foothill (210) Freeway projected to average just 10 mph by 2025, the region has no choice but to invest in mass transit projects like the Gold Line.

The show of support for the Gold Line was acknowledged by Metro Board Chairwoman Pam O'Connor. "I'd like to ask staff for a report on the Gold Line, its status and readiness, because

of the support shown today," O'Connor said.

If Metro does not include the project on the funded list of its long-range transportation plan – a move that would also require a roughly \$80 million commitment from the agency – the beginning of construction on the extension could be delayed beyond the end of 2009.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION EAST OF ATLANTIC

Five cities – Alhambra, El Monte, Monterey Park, Rosemead, and South El Monte – have sent letters to the MTA in support of the Pomona (60) Freeway as their preference for a light rail route from East Los Angeles. The officials also have gone to community meetings to bolster that route. Unlike three of the routes, which end in Uptown Whittier, the Pomona Freeway version ends at the San Gabriel River (605) Freeway. There also is a fifth proposal for a busway along the freeway.

"The Pomona Freeway is the shortest and fastest route and would impact one of the largest redevelopment projects, the El Monte Transit Village, and help provide access to the Montebello Town Center," said Assemblyman Mike Eng, D-Monterey Park, whose staff helped coordinate the effort. Eng and others are trying to persuade the MTA board to choose the Pomona Freeway as the top route for an eastside line. The board is expected to decide in Aug. or Sept. whether to proceed with any light rail line in this area, and, if so, to choose one or two alternatives.

This latest effort may have caught Whittier city officials, who want the light rail line to come to the Uptown area, off guard. "If they are engaged in lobbying, that is of concern to me," said Whittier Mayor Joe Vinatieri, who has attended both community meetings in Whittier and supported a route to his city. Vinatieri said bringing the light rail line to Uptown – most likely via Washington Blvd. – could help his city. "I don't want it to terminate at the 605 Freeway," he said. "It needs to stop in Whittier. We've got one of the largest private-sector employers in Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital."

Joe Price, professor of religious studies at Whittier College, said a line to Whittier would serve the college by making it easier for students to commute to school and ease demands on parking.

Both the San Gabriel Valley communities and Whittier may be competing with other sectors of the county as well as with each other. Three other sectors of Los Angeles County also are reviewing possible expansions of light rail projects.

Once the MTA staff finishes its review of ridership and cost estimates, it will go to the board, said Kimberly Yu, project manager. The board must decide whether to go forward with an environmental analysis and choose an alternative or even more than one, Yu said. If the board says yes, an environmental impact report would be completed and then plans would be drafted. The process is expected to take seven to 10 years.

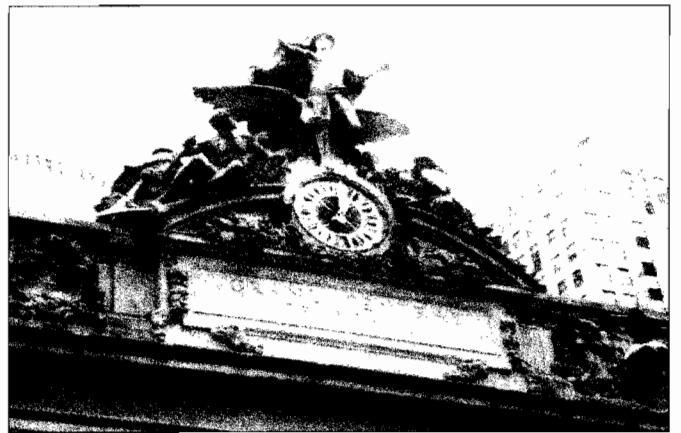
A key city in the mix, Montebello, remains officially undecided as to which route it will support. But Bill Molinari, its mayor, said the Pomona Freeway route is his first choice and he is opposed to lines running along Beverly or Whittier boulevards. Washington Blvd. would be his second choice. "The Pomona Freeway would be the least disruptive to existing

businesses," said Molinari. "Our Montebello Town Center would be a destination place."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]



PRS' National Forum was moved by Union Pacific locomotive 4150 from Los Angeles Union Station to West Colton Yard on May 2 for UP Family Days on May 3. Riding in the car, which was seen in the City of Commerce, were Will Walters, PRS President, and Richard Castagna, UP General Superintendent Transportation Services. Photo by Marti Ann Draper



Clock Tower on Grand Central Terminal from 42nd St. in New York City in 2007. Photo by Matt Wiles

MOUNT HOOD RAILROAD

Mount Hood Railroad was sold on April 2 to Permian Basin Railways Inc., a subsidiary of Chicago-based Iowa Pacific Holdings. "We're very excited about the sale," said Michelle Marquart, general manager for Mount Hood. "It means that our railroad will keep going for 100 more years."

The 102-year-old Mount Hood Railroad offers freight and passenger service through the Hood River Valley. It was bought from Union Pacific by a group of local and regional investors in 1987.

[Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]