

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MARCH 2007

## ANGELS FLIGHT – ALL ABOARD?

[*Wheel Clicks* for February 2007 carries more current facts.]

On January 23 Angels Flight operators announced that the funicular connecting Bunker Hill and the Historic Core of downtown Los Angeles would run again by the end of summer. Leaders of the Angels Flight Railway Foundation, the private nonprofit that oversees the railroad, announced that the third and final phase in their \$2.6-million restoration process has begun and that all funding needed for repairs has been raised.

While John Welborne, president of the foundation, said he expects customers to be riding by the end of summer – and to still pay 25 cents a trip – at a press conference he would not provide details how the railway will meet the 30-week schedule for reopening. Welborne said he will continue to raise funds for a grand opening and other costs not related to renovation.

Les Okreglek, president of Pol-X West Inc., the engineer overseeing the project, said the initial safety certification will be submitted to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) “in no more than two weeks.” A spokesperson for the PUC declined to comment on how long approval would take once Angels Flight submits plans, but said the agency welcomes the redesign and further meetings.

[Info. from *L.A. Downtown News*]

## AN INSPECTION OF PRS' STEP-DOWN CAR 39919

by BOB JOHNSON

I had one vacation day left in 2006 and wasn't sure what to do with it. After some research, I decided to go to the St. Louis area to get away and do some railfanning. I contacted ex-Pacific Railroad Society member Jim Carpi, who I had not seen in 10 years, and he invited me to inspect four of his own private cars (one car happens to be an ex-PRS owned car, named the *Bloomington*). He also mentioned that the former ex-Amtrak, ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level Step-down car 39919, that PRS purchased about a year ago from Amtrak, was at the same location.

The location of the yard is in Madison, Illinois, just a few miles across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, Missouri. The company is owned by Ben Butterworth and is named the Illinois Transit Assembly Co. ITA specializes in passenger car re-building and re-furbishment. It is also a storage yard for over 100 other passenger cars that are property of ITA or others, such as PRS and Jim Carpi's company that he calls Sunset Limited Railcar Corporation, of which he is president

This yard is part of the former Chicago & North Western Railroad Madison Yard. CNW was taken over by Union Pacific in 1995. UP still retains the southside of this yard for local freight service.

On Saturday, November 18, after getting off from my job at 10 p.m., I left for the St. Louis area for my three-day weekend, “Railfan mini-vacation getaway.”



*Pacific Railroad Society's ex-Amtrak, ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level Step-down car 39919, sits in storage at the Illinois Transit Assembly Yard in Madison, Illinois (Located just east of St. Louis, Missouri) on November 20, 2006. Forty-year truck work and inspection has already been performed by ITA as evidenced by the silver paint on the trucks. Photo by Bob Johnson*

I arrived in St. Louis after an all-night drive with a rest-stop in Blytheville, Arkansas. I drove around the St. Louis area, viewing many rail operations. Then went to bed early, looking forward to a visit to the ITA yard the next morning, Monday.

That morning, November 20, I stopped in Mitchell, Ill., to observe a couple of NS and UP trains go by, and then saw a yard job on the Alton & Southern Railway. The A&S is a switching company owned by UP. They were using NS ex-Conrail GE road engines for switching power at a lumber yard.

I arrived at the ITA yard in Madison about 12 noon, and checked in at their office, which consisted of a former UP coupla and CN coupla cabooses. Jim arrived shortly thereafter and was given permission to not only view his cars and PRS' car, but the entire yard!

This made me feel important, as the warning sign at the entrance to the yard says that railfans are not welcome on this property. Of course, I was a PRS member on business and had arranged in advance to be there, so I was told there was no problem in my being there. I put on my Hard Hat, Safety Glasses, Gloves, and camera, of course, and away we went.

We looked at the outside of 39919, which is in good condition. It still retains an Amtrak Red, white, and blue paint stripe on either side. This stripe is the last style that was applied to these types of cars before being retired, so it has a twist to it on the “high diaphragm end.”

Amtrak had modified the “step-down” end of the car from  
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### MARCH 2007      VOLUME 70, NO. 12

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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](mailto: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

Mar. 2 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

Mar. 3, 10, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: 24.

Mar. 3, 10, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders 17, 24, 31 Yard at Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular Sats. Day: 3, 17; Extra Day: 10, 24, 31. Committee Meeting: 17.

Mar. 9 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

Mar. 16 Slide Night, 7:00 p.m. at Saunders Yard, Noakes & Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome. Bring slides and refreshments.

Mar. 18 "Breakfast in the Diner" on board our UP Dining Sun. Car *Starlight Cafe*.

April 6 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

April 7, 14 Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: 28.

April 7, 14 Rolling stock repair day, 6:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders 21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular

Sats. Day: 7, 21; Extra Day: 14, 28. Committee Meeting: 21.

**MEETING PROGRAMS** by RUSS DAVIES  
 March 9 **A tribute to the late Bill Farmer!** Tonight we'll see a sampler from **Bill's fantastic and well documented slide collection.** By the time you read this, we will still be only partially finished with archiving this extensive collection. Among other subjects we'll revisit some **old PRS Excursions** featuring "**PRS on the Road.**" **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

April 13 **The World's Premier of Mel Goyen's CD "Diesel 1,"** one of 11 now available for purchase from your **Pacific Railroad Museum!** Speaking of the Museum, we now have the projection equipment for screening programs of this type, as well as digital images, and slides that have been digitized. **Watch for coming attractions! Be there for this program, and bring slide briefs! (We'll continue to have a slide projector available at all meetings.)**

#### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by LINDSAY SMITH

We are selling the DVDs Mel Goyen and Xiomara Nunez have created from the Blackhawk 8 mm movies. You received a flier in the December 2006 *Wheel Clicks*. Several folks have not been able to compute the cost of multiple DVD orders from the instructions on the form. If you want 5 DVDs, you will pay for 4, i.e., \$79.80. That is the same you will pay for only four. If you buy 10, you will pay for 8 or \$159.60, 9 for \$139.65. We have shipped quite a few already, but we would like to sell more. Many of the engines and trains are no longer available for imaging in more modern techniques. The old silent films were popular before VHS tapes and DVD Discs. Some of these scenes preceded commercial television; the new HD television images are so much better.

One of our buyers points out that the only way he is going to see some of the early steam in action is from these images and thus the quality is not an issue. Next month Mel will select a title for the presentation at the General Meeting. We will project it with our new Epson projector. Tim Muck found one that was scrapped by his employer.

Matt Wiles is a student at Damian High School near the Museum. Matt is looking forward to working on the railroad after graduation. Matt comes to the Museum almost every Saturday and has recently been adding book titles to our computer list. He has been surprised as he has read several old books while he has been performing the analysis on the titles. The old rule books are very much smaller than the current general regulations.

Owen Danaher reports that we had over 800 guests sign our visitor log last year. A few of the visitors came from India and China. The volunteers have worked over 8,000 hours. We are still open on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Joe Moir is being treated for colon tumors and we pray for his recovery to good health. Joe has been working on our inventory of the Ralph Melching images. Bob Washburn and Russ Davies have been making the first cut at enumerating the Bill Farmer 35 mm slide collection.

Ed Saalig is still collecting material relating to our RDC car #191. The Coast Line used the cars in a push-pull operation rather than sending the cars to a wye at either San Diego or Los

Angeles. The history and lore will make good reading when he publishes. Pre-publication is more than just gathering some images and copy. We also watched John Hockaday prepare his new Cajon Book for printing. It came on the book shelves recently. I recommend both authors because they aggressively pursued the truth.

[INSPECTION from Page 1]

the stairs in the middle to have eight dormitory rooms, four on each side. In the early 1990s the windows on the dorm rooms were modified and the smaller Amfleet-size windows were installed. This was done so that there was an emergency exit window in each dorm room for safety purposes.

Each dorm room has two beds, set up very similar to the roomette (formerly named economy bedroom) in a modern Amtrak Superliner Sleeping Car. The only difference is that these are true bunk beds and stay down all the time.

The Coach section on the high end of the car has the older seats in it and are not Amfleet style, which were installed in many other ex-Santa Fe Hi-Level cars that Amtrak had retained. These seats are very comfortable and recline further than Amfleet style seats. They do not have meal trays or trash hasps that are found otherwise.

The end doors are regular metal swing doors that Amtrak installed around 1990 to replace the electric sliding doors that were originally installed when the car was delivered new to Santa Fe Railway. This was done because the parts to maintain the electric doors were no longer available and the electric doors were malfunctioning as a result.

Downstairs, the Womens Lounge & Restroom and Men's Restrooms remain virtually unchanged, except that sometime in the 1980s, Amtrak had taken out the original toilets and replaced them with metal ones. Also, both had Amfleet style floor coverings installed. The car attendant's room had been modified to include a toilet and shower.

The car is in good condition, but cannot be used in service as it lacks holding tanks for the toilets. To install such a system would cost several thousand dollars. My inspection reveals that the car is currently very dusty and dirty and will take a good days cleaning by several people, otherwise it is ready to roll.

PRS still has to decide what additional modifications to make to the car, but anything that is done will attempt to make it as close to the original as possible as when it was delivered to Santa Fe.

After inspecting 39919, the remaining part of the day I spent with Jim and his helper, Carl. Carl showed me Jim's ex-UP baggage car, ex-UP coach, ex-UP full diner, and ex-IC (PRS) Pullman car *Bloomington*.

We viewed the outsides of the additional cars that were either being stored or stripped for parts. After several hours of looking at all this equipment, it brought back to me memories of riding Amtrak in its early days of operation.

A big thank you goes to Jim and Carl. Also a big thank you goes to Ben Butterworth, owner of the company, for authorizing me to view all this equipment – a good memory I will have for a long time to come. The remainder of the evening I spent riding the St. Louis Light Rail System, called MetroLink, between the Emerson Park stop and the end of one of its two lines at the

Shrewsbury Stop.

The next day, November 21, I spent driving to my home in New Orleans, La. ending a great railfan mini-vacation getaway! Oh, in addition, the Bloomington is still in the same condition it was when PRS sold it. Jim has immediate plans to refurbish and restore the car to operating condition, running it on some trips.

### ATWATER VILLAGE TRAIN DERAILMENT

A memorial installation and dedication was held at Los Feliz Blvd. and Seneca Ave. on January 21, 2007 in remembrance and gratitude for the 11 who perished and those who were injured in the train disaster involving Metrolink and Union Pacific on January 26, 2005, and to honor those whose brave efforts helped so many. Officials from Los Angeles City and County, and City of Glendale gave comments. Many local businesses contributed to the dedication.

### CLEANER UNION PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVES

The first of 60 locomotives that will reduce emissions by 80 percent and use 16 percent less fuel arrived on Jan. 31 at the Union Pacific Railroad yard in Commerce. The 60 low-emission diesel engines, called Genset, will be delivered to the railroad through July. Wednesday's ceremony included a dedication from Commerce Mayor Nancy Ramos.

In 2005, Union Pacific locomotives used 1.3 billion gallons of diesel fuel. UP said the 2,100-horsepower low-emission engines will serve customers and replace the 95 low-horsepower engines the company currently uses to deliver goods across the country.

Reducing emissions from engines is a priority of the Environmental Protection Agency, said Francisco Arcaute, an agency spokesman. The agency would like to reduce emissions from the more than 11 million diesel engines by 2014, he said.

[Info. from *Railroad Newsline* via Ken Ruben]

### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

On January 15, Caltrain ran its annual *Martin Luther King Special* between San Jose and San Francisco. Powered by engines 903 and 905 pushing 10 cars, the special left San Jose at 10:00 a.m. ahead of Train No. 143. It made stops at Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, and San Mateo, arriving San Francisco at 11:25 a.m. No southbound special was run, but tickets were honored on all regular trains.

Starting in July, Palo Alto's downtown and California Avenue stations will be getting improvements to the tune of \$14.85 million. The improvements at the downtown station, Caltrain's second busiest, will include a new ramp for wheelchair access, a new pedestrian underpass, and new north and south boarding platforms.

At California Avenue, which has only one platform, a second platform and a pedestrian underpass will be built. This will allow two trains to occupy the station at the same time.

On April 2, Caltrain will raise fares by 25 cents per zone. This is part of the overall fare increase approved by the Caltrain Board last June.

Also on April 2, Caltrain will make minor adjustments to seven southbound morning trains. Train Nos. 208, 218, and 228 will depart San Francisco one minute earlier at 6:24, 7:24, and 8:24 a.m., respectively, and Train Nos. 314, 216, 324, and 226

will depart San Francisco three minutes later at 7:14, 7:19, 8:14, and 8:19 a.m., respectively. Times for intermediate stops and arrival times in San Jose for these trains will be adjusted accordingly.

Construction crews are installing a new turn-out on what is normally the northbound track into San Francisco. The addition of the new turn-out will allow trains to be rerouted around the main track, increasing the flexibility of the system.

On January 25, a suspicious package was discovered in the underpass at the Palo Alto Caltrain station. The #2 (southbound track) and the north end of the station was shut down for over an hour, forcing trains to use only the #1 (northbound track) and to make their station stop at the south end of the station, resulting in minor delays. Trains were crossed over at CP Alma, between Menlo Park and Palo Alto, and CP Mayfield, between California Avenue and San Antonio. The package turned out to be just some bricks.

### **S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP** by **DICK FINLEY**

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during December decreased from November by 4,343 to 37,842 or by 10 percent. The decrease was essentially systemwide although the Riverside Line decreased 15 percent. December ridership is always less active. Total system ridership increased by 1 percent over a year ago.

Schedule adherence weekdays on systemwide Metrolink trains was 95 percent, which was a 4 percent increase over the month before.

#### **METROLINK OFFER**

The L.A. Kings, Metrolink, and San Bernardino Associated Governments have teamed up to bring Inland Empire hockey fans a St. Patrick's Day offer. On Saturday, March 17, the L.A. Kings take on the Columbus Blue Jackets, and it can be enjoyed on "Lucky Charm" ticket packs. Packs are \$25, \$45, and \$75 each, and include a Kings game ticket, a round-trip Metrolink ticket, a hot dog, and a beverage. Metrolink special event staff will direct fans from the train to the game at Staples Center. The designated fan train (#369) will depart San Bernardino at 4:10 p.m. and stop at every station on the line. There will be special activities and giveaways aboard this regular-service train. One more lucky bonus: all game attendees will receive a commemorative green Kings cap. For more information, call (213) 763, 4664.

#### **SEALED CORRIDOR PROGRAM**

Following the Glendale incident in Jan. 2005, the Federal Railroad Administration (FAR) provided a \$250,000 grant to Southern California Regional Rail Authority to initiate a Sealed Corridor Program on the Antelope Valley Line between downtown Los Angeles and Sylmar and now as amended on the Ventura County Line between Burbank Junction and Moorpark. The Sealed Corridor project area contains a total of 63 rail crossings over a 58 track-mile area.

Intensive efforts have been taking place along the San Fernando Rd. corridor in the City of Glendale, a portion of which is shared with the City of Los Angeles. This corridor currently contains five public highway-rail grade crossings:

Chevy Chase, Broadway/Brazil, Doran, Grandview, and Sonora. These activities have been precipitated by the City of Glendale's plan to open a new at-grade crossing at Flower Street.

A Settlement Agreement between interested municipal, state, and private parties provides for the City of Glendale to undertake comprehensive enhancements to the crossings at Sonora Ave., Grandview Ave., and the construction of the new Flower St. crossings at the sole expense of the City of Glendale. For those crossings shared with the City of Los Angeles, the Settlement Agreement provides for the City of Glendale to assume its equitable cost of enhancements at Chevy Chase Dr., Broadway/Brazil, and Doran St. Toward that effort, the City of Glendale will deposit \$2 million in escrow with SCRRA to partially fund this work. Important to this entire corridor effort is the potential to close the Doran St. crossing, although the environmental review process for this closure has not been undertaken anew. Approved on Jan. 26 at its Board meeting was an increase of the contract with DMJM+Harris by \$150,000 to perform engineering and design and services in support of the project for a new total not to exceed \$500,000. As part of the funding package, SCRRA has committed up to \$1.5 million from sources already available under the Sealed Corridor Program.

#### **FULLERTON TRANSPORTATION CENTER**

A multi-level parking structure containing 1200 spaces is proposed to meet both current demand and accommodate future growth of both intercity and community rail ridership. There are approximately 600 existing spaces. The city is in the process of selecting a site for the parking structure. Project definition by December 2006.

The turnback facility consists of designing and constructing an additional station and connecting tracks for added train capacity in support of Orange County Transportation Authority's 30-minute Metrolink express service between Fullerton and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo station.

The third station track will diverge from the San Diego Subdivision, south of Fullerton Junction, to minimize any impact to services of the BNSF Railway. Right-of-way mapping is ongoing, and operational analysis is underway to determine the best solution at this interim terminus. Project definition by November 2006.

#### **KELLER STREET PROJECT**

Keller Yard is a former Santa Fe Railway yard on 2.15 acres of vacant underutilized property, bounded by the west bank Metrolink rail corridor, the Highway 101 overpass, Keller St., and Cesar Chavez overpass. The site is within 2000 feet (walking distance) of Los Angeles Union Station.

The project would construct a "multi-purpose" rail yard with the capability to store train sets, perform minor repairs, unload maintenance-of-way cars, and perhaps use as an emergency passenger unloading location due to the yard's proximity to LAUS. Storage capacity would be four to six train sets composed of 30 to 40 cars. The yard would be paved, drained and lighted and would include a small support trailer and container storage.

The project budget is \$5 million. Currently in preliminary engineering, the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2007 or early 2008. Funding is provided by OCTA and Federal sources.

### MAIL DOCK PROJECT

LAUS currently has 10 serviceable platform tracks numbered 3 through 12. Track 13 is not useable for passenger loading and unloading because it was used by Amtrak for handling mail and freight on an adjacent long unloading dock. Amtrak no longer handles mail or express freight.

The project would remove the mail dock and restore the platform adjacent to Track 13 for passenger service. A new connection from the platform to the pedestrian tunnel will be constructed provided sufficient funding is available.

The project is under conceptual design and is scheduled to be constructed in 2007 and in service early 2008. The project budget is \$3 million and funding is provided by OCTA and Federal sources.

### I-10 TIE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Metrolink's San Bernardino Line operates in the median or adjacent to Interstate 10 from the Los Angeles River to El Monte. This 10-mile segment of track is extremely difficult to access for track and signal maintenance.

Approximately 33,000 timber ties were replaced with 27,000 concrete ties through the use of a large mechanized track renewal machine. The machine acts as a moving production line and removes and replaces wood ties with concrete ties in one pass of the machine. The work was performed on several weekends. Concrete ties were used due to the longer life as compared to wood ties (50 yrs. vs. 30 years). Cost of this tie replacement program was \$6.5 million.

### NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

The Sprinter underwent a test on Dec. 14, 2006, to prepare it for the day in late 2007 when the passenger line will begin operating between Escondido and Oceanside. The transit district was to test all 12 Sprinters during the next week and a half.

The test track between Woodland and San Marcos Blvd. crosses no street for more than a mile. "It gives us the opportunity to go full speed," or 55 mph, said Don Bullock, manager of the North County Transit District's \$484 million Sprinter construction project.

The operator stopped several times to test the brakes, which made a loud noise each time they were applied. Wolfgang Husemann, a supervisor for train car manufacturer Siemens, who has been overseeing the cars' setup for the transit district explained the brakes will make that noise until they're broken in. "They're big brakes, better than (in) Germany," said Husemann, noting the train's stopping power. Bullock said the brawny brakes were installed to satisfy a California Public Utilities Commission requirement.

Husemann noted that each car has features not installed on its European counterparts, such as a jumbo air conditioner to accommodate Southern California's warm climate. It also has two large Mercedes-Benz engines, which will become standard on Siemens trains elsewhere. District representatives along with officials from Siemens and Veolia Transportation, which will operate the train, were on board during the test.

[Info. from *San Diego Tribune*]

### COLTON CROSSING

Each day, more than 100 trains, some more than a mile long,

go through Colton Crossing, an intersection of railroad tracks and switching equipment. They roll along on two of the nation's busiest rail lines, which intersect at Colton Crossing at a 90 degree angle. Some trains inevitably have to wait, sometimes for hours.

Unclogging that mess would smooth interstate commerce, improve air quality in the surrounding neighborhoods, help Metrolink trains to run on time more often, and reduce traffic delays caused by trains stalled at street crossings, officials said.

"It is a major rail bottleneck in Southern California," said Eric Haley, executive director of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC). It also could get much worse. Imports through the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports are expected to nearly triple between 2004 and 2020.

Inland transportation leaders want to spend \$150 million to revamp the interchange by raising the east-west Union Pacific Railroad tracks above the north-south Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway tracks between Rancho and Mount Vernon avenues in Colton. "It would effectively remove half of the competing rail traffic there," said Cheryl Donahue, a spokeswoman for San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG).

Each day, dozens of BNSF and UP freight trains share the tracks with eight Metrolink trains and a couple of Amtrak trains, said Stephanie Wiggins, regional programs director for the RCTC. Metrolink's agreement with the freight operators calls for commuter trains to receive priority when two trains need to use the same track at the same time. But freight dispatchers sometimes fail to give Metrolink first priority for using the track, Metrolink spokeswoman Denise Tyrrell said.

Construction on the grade separation, however, is years away. The first step comes in April, when SANBAG expects to award a \$2.2 million contract for environmental and other studies that would help quantify what exactly should be built and what effect the new arrangement would have on the environment.

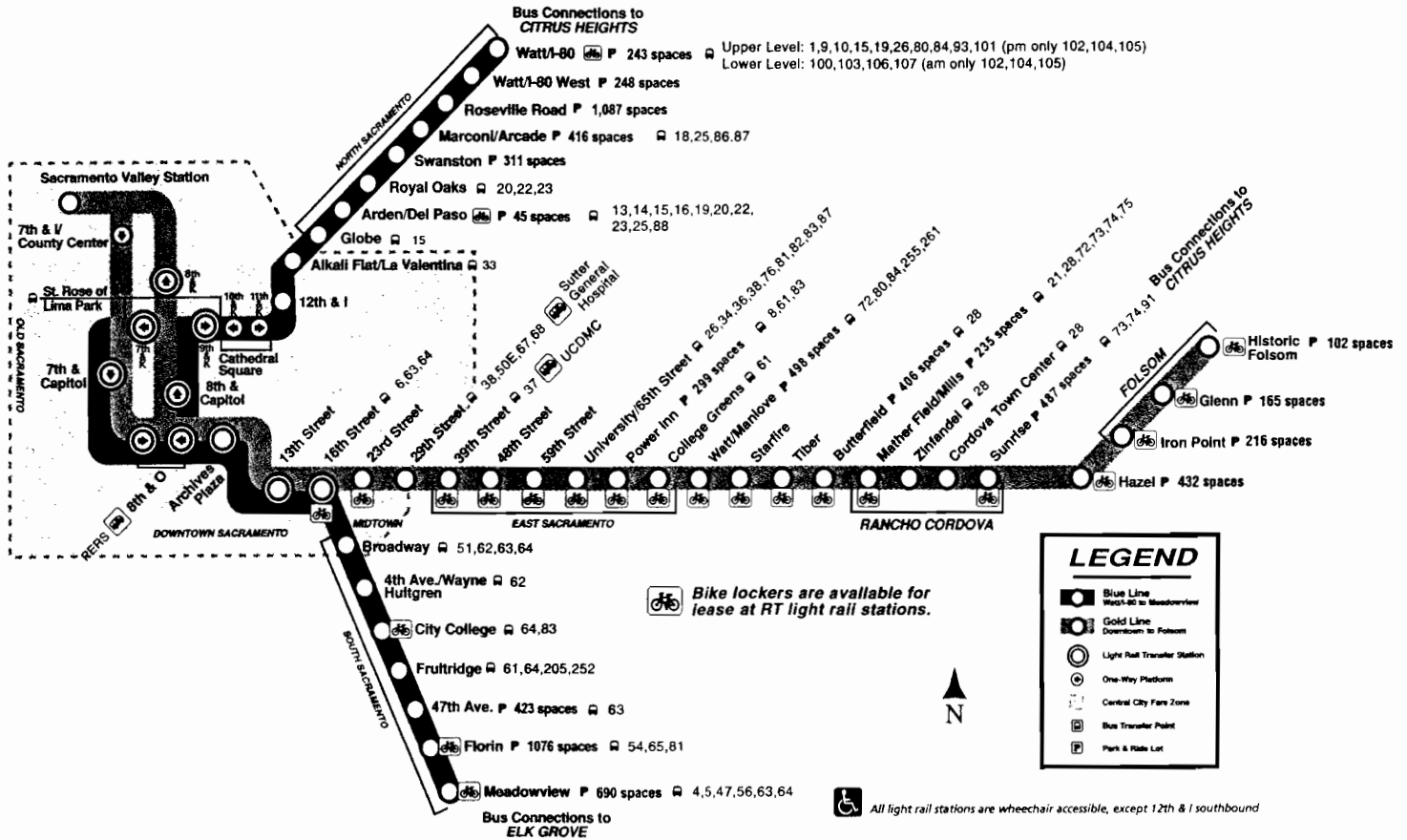
Trains caught in the congestion have to begin stopping long before reaching the intersection, and they need several minutes to power up and get going again. Delays at the intersection vary from a few minutes to a few hours, depending on how many freight and commuter trains are trying to use the tracks that day.

As with most traffic jams, nearby residents suffer. Instead of shutting down trains while waiting for a chance to pass through the intersection, many conductors leave the trains idling, which sends diesel fumes and noise into nearby neighborhoods.

Locomotives around Southern California are responsible for about 33 tons per day of smog-and particulate-forming nitrogen oxides. The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) adopted rules last February to reduce emissions from unnecessary locomotive idling, but has been unable to enforce them because of a lawsuit from BNSF, UP, and the Association of American Railroads.

The rules would require railroads to shut down most locomotives that have been idling for 30 minutes. The railroads contend the rules are pre-empted by federal laws and would unduly interfere with interstate commerce. The case was expected to go to a mediator in January, according to the AQMD.

[Info. from *The Press-Enterprise* via Ed VonNordeck]



Sacramento Regional Transit District Light Rail Lines – December 8, 2006

**RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO** by TOM NELSON  
SACRAMENTO

As mentioned in the Jan. 2007 issue of *Wheel Clicks* under DEPOT DOINGS, within the PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES column, Sacramento Regional Transit District's (RT) light rail transit (LRT) Gold Line to Folsom had its Sacramento terminal relocated to the Amtrak station from K St. on Dec. 8, 2006. In the Feb. *Wheel Clicks*, within the RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO column, it was stated further that regular rail service at the new terminal began in conjunction with the grand opening ceremony on Dec. 8. The better transfer location was provided by a 0.55-mile, double-track, Gold Line extension from existing track. RT also improved the passenger platform at St. Rose of Lima Park Station.

Regional Transit began LRT service on Mar. 12, 1987. Since then the rail part of RT has grown into a 37.42-mile system carrying 43,600 riders on an average weekday. Passengers are boarded at 47 stations, 18 of which have park-and-ride facilities.

The rail system operates on 28.57 miles of double track and 8.85 miles of single track. Wooden cross-ties were utilized in the track structure originally, but since 1994 all track laid has been on concrete ties. There are 49 mainline switches, 19 of which are spring operated and 27 power operated.

In downtown Sacramento, single trolley wire was strung to permit running of historic streetcars as well as light rail vehicles (LRVs). Elsewhere the LRVs make contact with catenary to

draw power. The overhead wires are fed by 33 electrical substations to distribute the low-voltage power used to run the LRVs.

The roster of 76 LRVs is made up of single-articulated units supplied by two manufacturers, Siemens and Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles. These bi-directional cars have high floors with 64 seats each. Both types of equipment have a maximum speed of 55 mph.

[Info. from Regional Transit via Robert Blymyer]

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS**

During the month of December 2006, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 242,353. This was a 14 percent decrease over last month.

**STOLEN COPPER WIRING**

Thieves were stealing large spools of copper wiring from the Union Pacific Railroad yard in downtown Tyler, Texas. A UP official at the scene told authorities that thieves have been hitting the railroad all across that southern region, and that UP was paying \$2 per foot for the wiring, which is used to run switching stations. Last month thieves struck the switching station in Winona and stole the copper wiring used to operate the switching mechanisms on the tracks. Such a theft could cause a serious accident between oncoming trains.

[Info. from *Railroad Newswire* via Ken Ruben]

**PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES** by CHARLES VARNES

On Jan. 16, 2007, Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) introduced Senate Bill 294, A bill to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes. The short title of the bill is the "Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007." The bill has 23 cosponsors, including Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

The Act has four Titles: Title I--Authorizations; Title II--Amtrak Reform and Operational Improvements; Title III--Intercity Rail Passenger Policy; and Title IV--Passenger Rail Security and Safety.

Title I authorizes operating grants for Amtrak's fiscal years (FY) 2007, \$580,000,000; FY 2008, \$590,000,000; FY 2009, \$600,000,000; FY 2010, \$575,000,000; FY 2011, \$535,000,000, and FY 2012, \$455,000,000.

Title I authorizes capital grants for Amtrak for FY 2007, \$813,000,000; FY 2008, \$910,000,000; FY 2009, \$1,071,000,000; FY 2010, \$1,096,000,000; FY2011, \$1,191,000,000; and FY 2012, \$1,231,000,000. Out of the amounts authorized for capital grants, the following percentage will be made available each fiscal year for capital grants to States, to be administered by the Secretary of Transportation: 3 percent for FY 2007; 11 percent for FY 2008; 23 percent for FY 2009; 25 percent for FY 2010; 31 percent for FY 2011; and 33 percent for FY 2012. The Secretary may withhold up to ½ of 1 percent of amounts appropriated for the costs of project management oversight of capital projects carried out by Amtrak.

Also, on Jan. 16, Sen. Lautenberg introduced Senate Amendment 97 to S.B. 294. The amendment adds two titles: TITLE V--Rail Bond Authority; and TITLE VI--Rail Infrastructure Bonds.

Both the bill and amendment were referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, where they are awaiting action.

On Jan. 29, House Joint Resolution 20, "Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes," was introduced. The Joint Resolution amends the Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007, which expired on Feb. 15, to extend through September 30, 2007. The Continuing Resolution funds the Department of Transportation, and other government departments through the end of the current fiscal year. Under the Continuing Resolution, Amtrak would receive approximately \$1.29 billion for FY 2007.

At deadline, H. J. R. 20 had passed the House of Representatives and was awaiting Senate action.

**DAYLIGHT TIME**

Daylight-saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m. on March 11, 2007, and ends on Nov. 4, 2007. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 established that, beginning in 2007, Daylight time will start on the second Sunday in March and end on the first Sunday in November. The Standard Time Act of 1918 established daylight-saving time, a contentious idea at the time.

Amtrak schedules will change on April 2.

**AMTRAK****Royal Train**

Charles, Prince of Wales, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, traveled from Philadelphia to New York City on Jan. 29 aboard a special Amtrak train. The consist was Amtrak AEM-7s 946 and 923, and the Juniata Terminal cars *Little Juniata Rapids*,

*Warrior Ridge*, and *120*. The first two cars are ex-Southern Pacific cars built for the *Sunset Limited*, now painted in Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) Tuscan red, and the *120*, an ex-PRR business car. The Keystone "drumhead" on the rear of the *120* bore the words Royal Train with an image of a Union Jack centered between them. Regular Amtrak Tr. No. 932, which operated 20 minutes in advance of the Royal Train served as the pilot train.

**INTERCITY TRAINS****Southwest Chief**

The third coach was removed from the *Southwest Chief*, Tr. No. 3, consist from Jan 10 through Feb. 15. The third coach on Tr. No. 4 was removed from Jan. 12 through Feb. 17.

**Coast Starlight**

The southbound *Coast Starlight* may hold for as much as two hours at Paso Robles because of a Union Pacific trackwork project Feb. 1-8 and 16-23, and March 1-8 and 16-20. The length of the hold will depend on whether or not the train is on time. The northbound *Starlight* operates outside of the work window and will not be affected.

Beginning Feb. 1 digEplayer entertainment units became available for rent aboard the *Coast Starlight*. The units can be rented from the *Sightseer Lounge* car attendant. This is in addition to the rental kiosks in Seattle, Portland, Emeryville and Los Angeles.

**WESTERN CORRIDORS****Pacific Surfliner**

To promote *Pacific Surfliner* service and the Amtrak/Metrolink Rail 2 Rail partnership, Metrolink, Amtrak, and Caltrans are offering the "Travel Free to Santa Barbara on Weekends" program. The promotion offers travel to stations north of Los Angeles aboard *Pacific Surfliner* trains on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from Feb. 2 through April 29. Travelers holding either a Metrolink monthly pass issued for any city-pair on the Metrolink system, or an Amtrak monthly pass issued for any *Pacific Surfliner* city-pair, may travel for free in coach on any *Pacific Surfliner* train, or on any *Pacific Surfliner* thruway service, between Los Angeles and Paso Robles and intermediate points. Free travel is not permitted during the Presidents' holiday weekend, Feb. 16-19. The promotion is not available for travel aboard the *Coast Starlight*, or *Pacific Surfliner* trains operating south of Los Angeles.

To accommodate a track and signal work project at San Onofre on Feb. 9 and 10, Feb. 16 and 17, and Feb. 23, the line was to be closed overnight. *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 596 and 597 were canceled on those dates. Substitute bus service was to be provided, except for Tr. No. 597 on Feb. 17.

**San Joaquin**

The BNSF Railway conducted a major track work project between Bakersfield and Fresno from Jan. 17, 2007, through Feb. 20, 2007.

During the project, buses were substituted for Tr. Nos. 702, 712, 713, and 715 on Sunday through Thursday between Bakersfield, Wasco, Corcoran, Hanford and Fresno.

Tr. No. 701 operated 30 minutes earlier than the published schedule, departing Bakersfield at 6:45 a.m. Bus connections from Los Angeles, Glendale and Van Nuys for Tr. No. 701 operated 30 minutes earlier than the published schedule.

On Fridays and Saturdays all trains operated to or from Bakersfield. However, Tr. No 701 continued to operate on the earlier schedule.

#### Transit Transfer Program

Travelers aboard *San Joaquin* and *Capitol Corridor* trains can obtain free Transit Transfers from participating transit agencies while aboard the train. The Transfers allow the passenger to continue to their final destination and ride local transit back to the station for their same day or later return trip. Travelers obtain the transfers from the train's conductor. If they are not returning the same day, they should tell the conductor. The transfer is divided into two parts, one for the outbound trip and one for the inbound trip on the local bus service or light rail. The conductor will validate both parts of the transfer.

The Participating transit agencies and the stations they serve are:

AC Transit (East Bay only) at Richmond, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, Hayward, and Fremont.

Benecia Transit at Martinez.

The Bus (Merced County Transit), and The County Connection at Martinez.

e-Tran (Elk Grove Transit) at Sacramento.

Fairfield Suisun Transit at Suisun.

Fresno Area Express (FAX) at Fresno.

Rio Vista Transit at Antioch, Lodi, and Suisun..

Sacramento Regional Transit (RT) at Sacramento.

Unitrans at Davis.

Santa Clara Valley Transportation authority (VTA) at Santa Clara/Great America and San Jose Diridon.

WestCat at Martinez and Richmond.

Yolobus at Davis.

Discounted BART tickets can be purchased aboard the trains, also.

#### Cascades

Ridership aboard Amtrak *Cascades* trains in 2006 was 629,996. This ridership total was 1.1% lower than the total for 2005.

The ridership decline was largely due to a record number of Amtrak *Cascades* train cancellations in January, February, November, and December, primarily because of weather-related railroad route closings. For the first time since the state of Washington began investing in intercity passenger rail service in 1994, annual ridership failed to surpass the total of the preceding year. This occurred despite the addition of a new Amtrak *Cascades* daily round trip between Seattle and Portland in July 2006.

Since the new daily Amtrak *Cascades* service was added in July 2006, monthly ridership on Amtrak *Cascades* increased by an average of 2 percent when compared to the final six months of 2005. The Washington State Department of Transportation anticipates that *Cascades* ridership will continue to increase in 2007.

#### MIDWEST ROUTES

St. Louis-Chicago *Lincoln Service* Tr. No 306 had its schedule adjusted to reflect railroad operating conditions effective Jan. 23. The adjustment was made after a review with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific railroads. The revised schedule is: depart St.

Louis 5:30 p.m.; Alton, Ill 6:15 p.m.; , Carlinville, Ill. 6:45 p.m.; (No Change); Springfield, Ill 7:30 p.m.; Lincoln, Ill. 8:01 p.m.; (5 minutes later) Bloomington-Normal, Ill. 8:36 p.m.; Pontiac, Ill. 9:40 p.m.; Dwight, Ill. 9:22 p.m.; (10 minutes later) Joliet, Ill. 10:02 p.m.; Summit, Ill. 10:27 p.m.; (13 minutes later); arrive Chicago 11:10 p.m. (20 minutes later).

#### NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

*Acela Express* rail fares were increased between 3 and 7 percent and first class accommodation charges increased 3 percent on Jan 23.

#### DEPOT DOINGS

ELKO, Nev. The passenger shelters have been closed due to vandalism. It is not known when they will be repaired and reopened. Currently, the only passenger facility is the platform itself. Elko is a stop for the *California Zephyr*. Westbound the *Zephyr* is scheduled to stop at 3:21 a.m.; eastbound at 9:40 p.m.

WORCESTER, Mass. The Franklin D. Roosevelt American Heritage Center Museum is located on the second floor of the Union Station. It contains a large, diverse, and historically significant collection of Roosevelt and New Deal materials. The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is no admission charge. More information is available at the Museum's web site [www.fdrheritage.org](http://www.fdrheritage.org). Its telephone number is (508) 770-1515. In addition to the Museum the station houses two dining and entertainment venues, The Restaurant at Union Station and the Union Station Blues, a jazz and blues showroom. The station is served by the Boston-Albany-Rensselaer section of the *Lakeshore Limited*. Westbound Tr. No. 449 is scheduled to depart at 1:03 p.m. Eastbound Tr. No. 448 is scheduled to stop at 5:01 p.m.

#### TRAVEL INFORMATION

##### Amtrak Special Meal Limitations

Amtrak offers only two types of special meals, kosher and vegan. The meals are available only in dining cars and *Acela Express* First Class service. Vegetarian meals are available as regular menu items. Because most regular meal entrees are not prepared aboard the dining car, it is not possible for passengers to request variations to a meal.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

#### UP L A BASIN CROSSING IMPROVEMENT UPDATES AVAILABLE VIA TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER

In February the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) established a toll-free telephone number to update motorists about temporary crossing closings in the Los Angeles Basin.

The toll-free telephone number, (800) 269-2059, will be updated regularly to provide motorists with information in both English and Spanish regarding when crossings will be closed temporarily to renew crossing surfaces. Plans are to keep the toll-free number accessible to residents in the Los Angeles Basin during future major Union Pacific improvement projects that may impact motorists.

UP crews completed the first part of the \$38 million track improvement project on the line between Mira Loma and Pedley in mid-January. [*Wheel Clicks*, Feb. 2007 Union Pacific Los Angeles Basin Lines Track Improvements] Work is now being done on the line between Hobart – in E. Los Angeles near E. Washington and S. Downey Rd. – and Diamond Bar, also known



as Metrolinks' Riverside Line, going through the communities of Pico Rivera, Hacienda Heights and Montebello. This work is scheduled to be completed on February 23. Crews will then start working on the line that parallels Metrolinks' San Bernardino Line between El Monte and Marne – just west of UP's City of Industry rail yard, going through the communities of Bassett and La Puente, beginning March 1 and scheduled to be finished on March 16.

[Info. from [www.uprr.com/newsinfo/](http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/) via Charles Varnes]

**LAS VEGAS MONORAIL**

The Las Vegas Monorail saw ridership collapse by more than 30 percent in 2006, capping a disappointing year with its worst ridership the last month of December with 15,430 daily riders. When the monorail opened to the public in mid-2004, officials predicted an many as 50,000 daily riders, a target that no longer is seen as realistic for the four-mile line, which runs between Sahara Ave. and Tropicana Ave., mostly along Paradise Road behind the Strip's east side.

The monorail's precipitous ridership drop coincided with a late Dec. 2005 increase in the base one-way fare to \$5 from \$3. The increase in 2006 was 4 percent, with farebox revenues producing an average of \$86,062 per day. That is well short of the estimated \$123,000-plus that the monorail needs from passengers each day to break even.

The privately financed \$650 million line has never made a profit and has fallen far short of revenue targets promised to bondholders who underwrote the bulk of construction costs. That caused some credit rating firms to drop the Las Vegas Monorail Co.'s grade to "junk" bond status in 2006. Last fall, an official from Fitch Ratings, a New York City-based firm, said "default is a real possibility" as soon as next year if the monorail cannot find a way to make more money. Fitch analysts have suggested the \$5 fare is probably too high.

Officials hope that a \$500 million planned monorail extension to McCarran International Airport will increase ridership, but a plan to pay for such an upgrade – given the monorail's poor credit rating – is unclear, as is whether increased ridership spurred by the airport leg would offset increased debt to build the extension. Monorail backers have said they do not plan on asking taxpayers for money. But analysts at Fitch have expressed concern whether there would be any sort of a market for additional bond sales, given the monorail's finances.

If financing is found, construction could start next year with an opening by 2011.

[Info. from *Las Vegas Review-Journal* via Fletcher Swan]

**REMOTE-CONTROLLED LOCOMOTIVES**

Remote-controlled locomotives (RCL) soon may rumble at low speeds the length of Hermiston, a dusty Columbia Basin farming town, replacing those driven by conventional long-haul engineers. That possibility worries city officials, who think the RCLs may be unsafe, said Mayor Robert Severson. Hermiston, population 14,450, has eight Union Pacific Railroad grade crossings, five of which lack crossing gates, he said.

But the rail cars will not be without a live human aboard. Remote control in this scenario means a Union Pacific staffer on board will carry a radio device that commands the train. That

staffer, less experienced than long-haul engineers but officially licensed as an engineer, will simply not be in the so-called driver's seat. He or she also has the advantage of being able to command the train in a rail yard without signaling, which can be potentially confusing, to a behind-the-wheel engineer. Still, the practice is uncommon and new territory in train management.

The employee would wear an 18-inch-by-10-inch, battery-powered transmitter linked to an onboard computer in the locomotive, allowing for its direct operation, said Warren Flatau, a spokesman for the Federal Railroad Administration in Washington, D.C.

Federal officials are not authorizing the use of radio-controlled locomotives over main-line track. "There should be no difference in the way the train would come through the community," Flatau said. The technology was pioneered in Canada and has been in use for six years in this country, said Mark Davis, spokesman for Union Pacific. He said it has added an extra dimension of safety in rail yards.

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

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT**

by **DICK FINLEY**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL  
RIDERSHIP**

December 2006	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	123,990	71,778	32,833	17,956
Saturday Ave.	82,404	52,054	19,709	11,955
Sunday Ave.	71,206	40,895	14,851	9,857
Monthly Total	3,319,061	1,941,203	844,304	478,046

**LOS ANGELES UNION STATION**

As of Feb. 12 ex-Santa Fe locomotive 3751 was on Track 13 at LAUS with a consist of three cars for classrooms to teach children safety around railroads. They will also go to other locations in S. Calif. for similarly teaching other children.

**METRO RAIL DURING NEW YEAR'S EVENTS**

Metro Rail and Bus teams had a shuttle operation on New Year's Day that transported Rose Parade and Rose bowl game fans between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) and Pasadena in record time. With Metro Gold Line trains running every seven minutes – backed by a fleet of 10 Metro buses – the four stations serving Pasadena were cleared of thousands of passengers within two hours after the parade ended. Later that day, the trains and 17 assigned buses required only an hour and a half to transport USC and Michigan supporters to LAUS. "We handled our own and got people out of there quite quickly with a combination of buses and trains," said Bruce Shelburne, the rail division transportation manager who developed the shuttle plan.

Metro also provided shuttle service for some 1,500 riders from Sierra Madre Villa station to Pasadena's Tournament Park, where the Rose Parade floats were on post-parade view to the public, according to Transportation Operations Supervisor Steve Rank, who coordinated the shuttle service.

**RED LINE**

The MTA Board approved on Jan. 25 awarding of a contract for the preliminary design of 14 new canopies over exposed escalators and stairs at subway station entrances in the amount of \$833,997. Though not required unless renovated or replaced, the canopies will protect the escalators, stairs, and Metro customers

from rain and will reduce potential claims.

The MTA Board approved on Jan. 25 an Exclusive Right to Negotiate with Thomas Properties Group, Inc. a mixed-use retail, office and production facility project with subterranean and structured parking on Metro properties adjacent to the 101 Freeway at Universal City.

The proposed Project would include a first phase consisting of a five story low-rise production facility of 200,000 square feet, associated ground floor retail space, a 23-story high-rise office structure of 450,000 square feet, and a parking structure with both subterranean and above-ground space. A second phase of a 22-story high-rise structure of 400,000 square feet and a second parking structure is also proposed.

A morning groundbreaking was held on Feb. 12 at the parking lot at Hollywood and Vine Station for the joint-development of the block bounded by Hollywood Blvd., Argyle Ave., Selma Ave., and Vine St. Construction plans include the W Hotel, condos, apartments, ground-floor commercial, and underground parking. The Taft Bldg. at the corner of Vine and Hollywood will be unaffected by the adjacent construction.

#### GOLD LINE

The Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has applied for money from the MTA to put high-speed wireless hubs all along the train's route. Wi-Fi – wireless fidelity – provides wireless access to the internet and is faster than cellular networks. The idea to add Wi-Fi to the Gold Line is to improve traffic in downtown Los Angeles by encouraging more people to ride the rail line, said Curtis Gibbs, a senior resource development officer at the CRA. People would be able to use their time for work purposes or entertainment, Gibbs said.

The roughly \$1.1 million proposal would hook “Wi-Fi radios” to poles along the right-of-way and put one on top of each rail car to prevent dropped connections, Gibbs said.

MTA employees who will evaluate this and other proposals for grant money that funds transit projects declined to comment on Jan. 29, explaining they do not discuss applications until after they make recommendations to the board, which they do not expect to do until at least June 2007.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Construction crews recently finished boring the twin 1.7-mile tunnels for the Eastside Extension.

The First Street Viaduct over Los Angeles River Project has a revised total cost of \$67,560,000, a construction start date of July 2007, and a completion date of September 2009. This information appeared in the existing call for projects supplemental funding, which was approved by the MTA Board on Jan. 25.

The MTA Board approved the development on Jan. 25 of a mixed-use project on Metro properties at 1st and Lorena Streets, currently being used as a construction staging area. The proposed project includes housing and retail elements, including 43 housing units with all units affordable, and 94 parking spaces.

The MTA Board approved the development on Jan. 25 of a senior-housing project consisting of approximately 130 affordable, for-rent, senior-housing units and a shared parking structure containing 200 parking spaces for the exclusive use of transit parking plus spaces necessary for the housing project.

The Metro-owned property of approximately 1.12-acres is located at the intersection of Pomona (extension of 3rd St.) and Atlantic Boulevards, east of the Atlantic Station.

#### EXPO LINE CORRIDOR

The MTA is beginning to design Phase II of the Expo Line that will run from Culver City to the west. On Jan. 3 the Cheviot Hills Homeowners Assn. voted unanimously to oppose use of the historical right-of-way, which is already owned by the MTA. The alternate corridor is southwesterly along Venice Blvd. to Sepulveda Blvd. and then northwesterly toward Santa Monica.

“The population density along Palms/Culver, which includes multifamily housing, would make available low-cost transit to thousands of residents along that corridor,” wrote Anthony J. Padilla, who thinks the southerly route makes far more sense. But the southerly route would be longer by more than a mile, it would block traffic at more crossings than would the northerly line, it would take longer to get from one end to the other, and it would cost as much as \$50 million to \$100 million more to build because of its length.

We're still several years away from seeing the Expo Line open for business, but some important decisions have to be made soon, writes Steve Lopez. L.A. County Supervisor and MTA board member Zev Yaroslavsky has said he won't take a position on the best route for the Expo Line until the MTA completes a study of both routes – probably a year from now.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

#### SAN DIEGO

First Quarter 2007 Performance Indicators for Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) Rail were the following.

Ridership – July: 2,776,732, August: 3,384,753; and September: 3,061,956.

On-time Performance – July: 96.3%; August: 97.5%; and September: 96.8%.

Mean distance between failures – July: 707,963; August: 750,651; and September – 664,411.

Collision accidents per 100,000 miles – July: 0; August: 0.3; September: 0.2.

#### SAN FRANCISCO

Transit officials unveiled details of the \$1.4 billion Central Subway project in Oct., which will create continuous rail service from Visitacion Valley to Chinatown and is expected to reduce the commute by half. The 5.1-mile Central Subway is an extension of the newly created Third Street Light Rail, which runs from Bayshore Blvd. to Visitacion Valley to the Caltrain station at Fourth and King streets. Full operation of the Third Street Light Rail is to begin in April.

The Central Subway line will continue up Fourth Street across Market St. and end at Clay and Stockton streets in Chinatown. The subway will also connect BART and other Muni lines at the Powell Street station. Construction of the project is expected to take up to 10 years.

[Info. from *San Francisco Examiner*]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

##### TRANSIT MALL RENOVATION

Construction starts early in 2007 on the downtown bus mall renovation that will add seven light-rail stops on Fifth and Sixth Avenues between Union Station and Portland State University.

Starting Jan. 14, buses were to be moved off the mall. To minimize disruption, reconstruction of Fifth and Sixth Avenues will occur a few blocks at a time, with each segment expected to take two to three months. Stores and sidewalks will remain open throughout construction. Completion is expected in mid-2008.

During construction, 17 bus lines will be relocated to Third and Fourth Avenues. Sue Keil, Portland transportation director, said the city will make about 200 parking spaces available on the mall during construction to make up for spaces lost on Third and Fourth Avenues. Despite all the efforts to make the downtown changes go smoothly, officials concede it will be a commuting challenge, particularly during the evening rush hour.

#### NEW GREEN LINE

Meanwhile, 6.5 miles of track will be laid between Gateway Transit Center and Clackamas Town Center. When the new Green Line opens in 2009, riders will be able to travel between Portland State University, north and east to Gateway Transit Center and south to the Clackamas mall without transferring.

#### PORTLAND STREETCAR

By August, the Portland Streetcar should offer full access to the South Waterfront district. A \$14.5 million extension will add a 16-block loop to serve the new neighborhood's first three high-rise condominium towers and several more on the way. Combined with the tram, the streetcar provides a new option for commuters heading for Marquam Hill. Completion is summer 2007.

Oregon Iron Works Inc. announced Jan. 26, a \$4 million federal contract to produce the first U.S.-made modern streetcar. The low-floor streetcar will be built by the Clackamas steel fabricator for Portland under a technology transfer agreement with Skoda, the Czech Republic-based streetcar manufacturer. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., lobbied for an earmark in the 2005 federal transportation reauthorization bill calling for a U.S.-made prototype.

Oregon Iron Works, selected by Portland in a competitive bidding process, will hire 20 new workers to complete the vehicle but envisions serving a market of as many as 80 other American cities.

#### PORTLAND AERIAL TRAM

The \$57 million people mover already is ferrying nurses and doctors between Oregon Health & Science University's (OHSU) two campuses – the OHSU Marquam Hill campus and its new South Waterfront campus by the end of the Portland Streetcar Line. The last in a series of grand openings for VIPs to ride the Tram was to be held Jan. 25. After the free opening rides, any non-OHSU employee must pay \$4 for a round-trip or use TriMet and streetcar passes.

The City of Portland owns the Tram but OHSU operates it. On Jan. 27, the Tram opened its doors for the first time for free rides to the public. OHSU was expecting 7,500 riders by the end of the grand opening weekend, after 5,000 tickets were given away in advance. The free rides were to continue every Friday night and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through the end of February.

#### WASHINGTON COUNTY

Work began in Jan. on station stops and park-and-ride lots along the 14.7-mile commuter rail route linking Wilsonville to

Beaverton. The stops will be at Wilsonville, Tualatin, Tigard, Washington Square and Beaverton. Colorado Rail Car will begin work on the diesel-powered units that will carry morning and evening commuters. Completion is in September 2008.

#### INTERSTATE BRIDGE

The latest proposal from a bi-state task force is to build a new six-lane freeway bridge with room for transit, bicycles and pedestrians. The existing spans would be removed. Cost is estimated at \$2 billion. A final decision is due in 2008.

A recent survey says more than two out of three Clark County, Washington, voters favor extending light rail across the Columbia River. The City Council of Vancouver, Wash., in January was weighing the merits of light rail or a bus rapid transit system across the proposed Interstate Bridge replacement.

[Portland info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

#### HILLSBORO TO FOREST GROVE CORRIDOR

During a January city council meeting in Forest Grove, the extension of the west-side light rail line moved from an idea to a plan. Transit Consultant Gerald Fox briefed council members on what he felt was the best way to continue light rail service through Cornelius and into Forest Grove. He recommended that the Hillsboro-Forest Grove line operate separately from the existing Blue line to Gresham, with riders transferring at the downtown Hillsboro Central Transit Center.

The line from Hillsboro to Forest Grove would include eight new stations. Their locations were proposed at the council meeting, with two stations in Hillsboro, two in Cornelius, and four in Forest Grove.

Fox said that until the actual alignment was settled, it is impossible to know how much the project would cost. Assuming the tracks largely follow the publicly owned right-of-way (which he figures is worth at least \$25 million), he estimated that the project would cost between \$165 million and \$185 million if built today.

[Info. from *Railroad Newsline* via Ken Ruben]

#### YUKON RAILROAD STUDY

The results of a \$6-million Alaska-Canada Rail Link Feasibility Study into a proposed railroad through the Yukon, will be unveiled soon, said Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie. The first stage of the study, which looked at technical, engineering and market analysis of the proposal, was completed in June. It suggested a route through Carmacks, north of Whitehorse, would be much better than following the Alaska Highway corridor through Whitehorse.

[Info. from *Railroad Newsline* via Ken Ruben]

#### PACIFIC HARBOR LINE

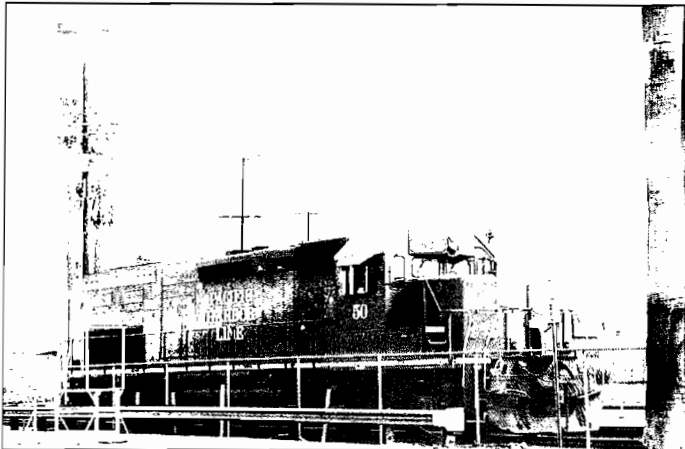
by DENNIS GILKEY

On November 11, 2006, I went to the Los Angeles Harbor area to photograph the Pacific Harbor Line Railroad. I had read in September that Pacific Harbor Line was going to get rid of their old engines and replace them with new ones at the first of year 2007.

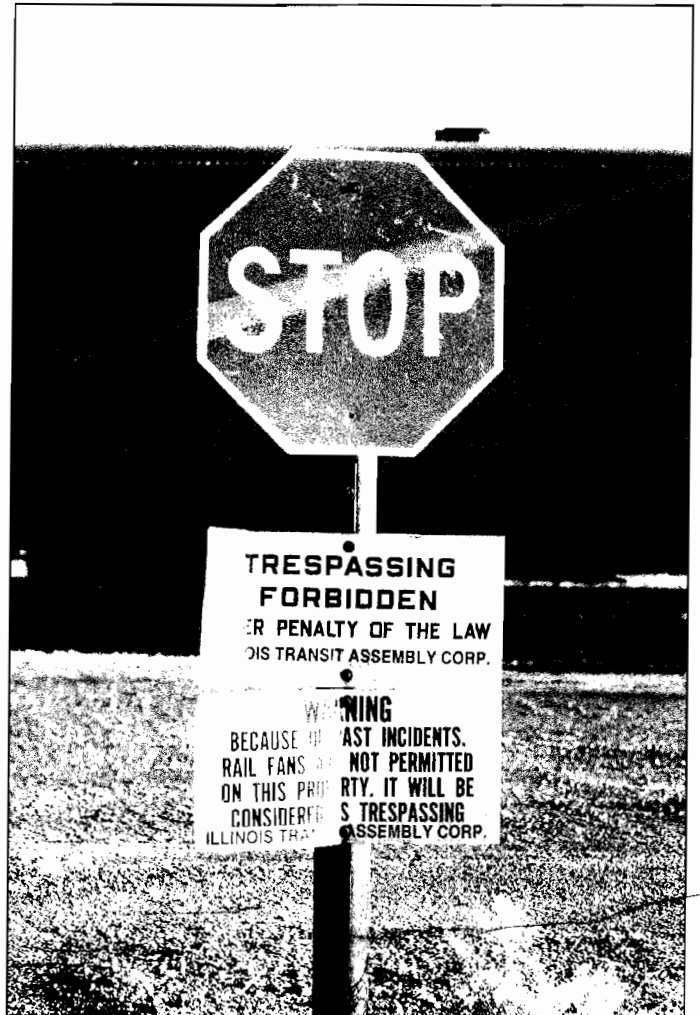
While there, a harbor police officer pulled up with flashing lights and asked me for identification. He called his office and told me he had to check on me for security reasons; someone from the railroad had called him. He said that since there were no

warrants out on me, I could stay and take all the pictures I wanted. But the next time I was in the area to check with the police department and let them know before hand.

I was given a card with the following address and numbers. 425 S. Palos Verdes St., San Pedro, Calif. Phone: (310) 732-3500; Office: (310) 513-7800; Fax: (310) 513-7801.



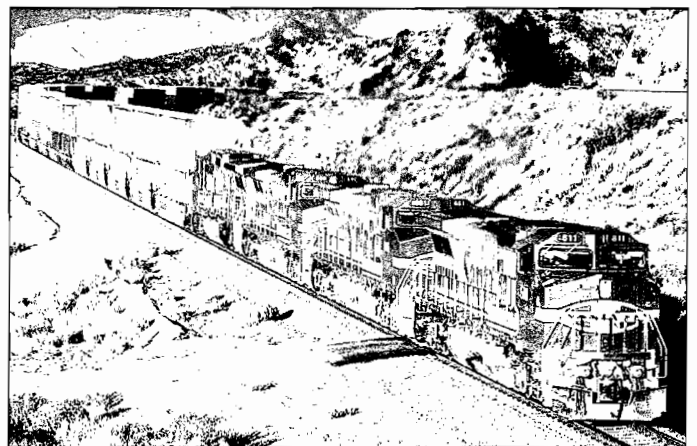
Pacific Harbor Line EMG(GM) SD40T-2 #50 (Former Southern Pacific unit) seen at Fries Ave. & Water St. at Los Angeles Harbor Photo by Dennis Gilkey



Located at the entrance to Illinois Transit Assembly's yard are these "Trespassing Forbidden" and "Warning" signs. This makes it very clear that Railfans are not welcome in their yard, as observed on November 20, 2006. Photo by Bob Johnson



On a nice weekend day in November 2006, Union Pacific Train Symbol KATLB (Intermodal Medium Priority, Atlanta, Georgia to Long Beach, California) passes West Bridge Junction with engine UP 2001 in the lead. This engine was painted to recognize the Winter Olympics held in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2001 through 2002. This train was just received in interchange from CSX at Gentilly, Louisiana. Note the mixture of UP and Tropicana-owned refrigerator cars with Tropicana Orange Juice right behind the locomotives, destined for the distribution yard at City of Industry, California. Photo by Bob Johnson



A quartet of Santa Fe Super Fleet GE's led by C40-8W #811 are eastbound at Milepost 58 of the Cajon Subdivision in summer 1995. Photo by Herbert Johnson