

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MARCH 2009

## PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by LINDSAY SMITH

Dick Finley and I were searching for a February 1954 *Wheel Clicks* that was requested by a gentleman from Australia. We did not find one. Dick came across the "Annual Report of the Pacific Railroad Society – April 1, 1953 to March 31, 1954." I used this as an item on the Yahoo Group Cajon Pass recently. As I look through the old copy, I see the reports are full of humor as well as news.

### SUMMIT & NORTHEASTERN DEPARTMENT

Summit & Northeastern Railway

"The Sagebrush Shortcut"

The Summit & Northeastern Railway is composed of about 60 feet of 3'-6" gauge track and one car, the famous and historical *Descanso*, the old funeral car from the Los Angeles Railway. The car is located at the summit of Cajon Pass on the Santa Fe Railway and can be seen from Santa Fe and Union Pacific trains going over the pass. It has been converted into a club house for use of the members of the Society. Use of the car is limited to its capacity, and while members and their friends are welcome to use it, permission for use must be cleared through the S&NE Department. In as much as this old car is one of the most valuable pieces of railroading in the world, the members of the Society have set up strict rules for its preservation. Any person who willfully damages the car in any way or who is careless with its use can be denied further permission to use it. A member of the Society is always on duty at Summit to look after the car and has full authority from the members to request anyone, member or otherwise, to leave the premises if he deems it necessary for the protection of the car.

Much progress has been made in improving the interior of the car and its surroundings during the past year. Level parking space for four cars has been built. Installation of a large water tank was made by Bill Jurdan. Mr. Jurdan also contributed a 30-foot flag pole. A rain gauge was contributed by Russell Phillips as were several umbrella trees by uncles of Chard Walker. Other improvements have been made by other members of the Society, particularly by Jim Grupp, who is the all around handyman at the car. Plans have been made to run electricity and water to the car this year. The upkeep of the car is met by contributions and by the kitty to which all visitors are expected to contribute.

The largest number of visitors to ever inspect the car was on November 1, 1953, when more than 650 people from Excursion #83 went through the car.

Mart Sabransky, Chairman James Grupp

Chard Walker William Jurdan

Note: From the same source, "Excursion #83: Santa Fe. Diesel. Redlands Loop and Cajon Pass for a visit to "The Descanso." This was the largest rail fan trip ever run with a single train. 650 passengers. November 1, 1953."

As you know, *Descanso* is now in the #2 Car Barn at Orange

Empire Railroad Museum (OERM). The car is managed by the Society Rolling Stock Committee. It needs a Committee Chairman or 12" to the Foot modeler. The late Barbara Sibert and I traditionally organized a cleaning party to present the car at the OERM shows. The next show is March 7. We would like some help getting the car swept, dusted and cleaned early in the morning. We are also planning to have a Museum table in the OERM Swap Meet.

After the field day, we need some docents to entertain visitors. We still keep the same rules. We do not allow children to climb on the seats and we do not allow food and drinks in the car. We demand respectful visits by all and we most often hear compliments for the car and its preservation. By the way, the current Director and Membership Chair, Virginia Grupp, remembers helping her mother and father with the membership lists in the home kitchen. Virginia reported the surprise during the *Descanso* refurbishment that the car was labeled "S&N".

We are looking for a car interior photo before it was acquired by the Society or the car interior before it was converted to the club house.

Stan Kistler recently donated the Harold F. Stewart negatives to the Museum. We have many duplicate negatives and we will provide a detailed list in the future. Harold wanted his work to be seen and available for future generations. Stan published a story of Harold's life in the Spring 2008 issue of *Classic Trains* magazine.

We received a massive load of Time Tables and railroad memorabilia from Don Richardson.

Lindsay has set up a HP G4050 scanner that will allow us to scan negatives and make digital copies. We have been making digital scans of 35 mm slides on some other scanners. Roger Fogt made a PowerPoint presentation at the January General Meeting using his laptop computer. I used the scanner as an OCR to copy the S&N item above.

Two of the committee members have given the Museum a new computer. It is installed in the Office.

WINTER RAIL. Marti Ann Draper and Ed Saalig will have a sales table at Winter Rail for the RDC book. Marti Ann will need help at our table. If you can help during the periods that are of low interest to you, the Society will be very appreciative. Please call Lindsay Smith at the Museum (909) 394-0616 or (909) 599-0182, if you can promise some hours.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of December 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 306,281. This was an average increase per day from November of 34,594 riders or about 13 percent.



## WHEEL CLICKS

**MARCH 2009 VOLUME 72, 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 Open Saturdays. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

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### PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Mar. 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn  
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Mar. 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4  
 21, 28 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee Meeting: 28.  
 Mar. 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders  
 21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular  
 Sats. day: 7, 21; Extra day: 14, 28. Committee Mtg.: 21.  
 Mar. 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,  
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Ballot opening for FY2009 PRS Elected Officers.  
 April 3 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn  
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Apr. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m. to  
 18, 25 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: April 25.  
 Apr. 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders  
 18, 25 Yard, Commerce. Regular day: 4, 18; Extra day:

Sats. 11, 25. Committee Meeting: 18. For more info.,  
 phone Will Walters, 714-637-4676.  
 April 10 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,  
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 April 17 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &  
 Fri. Herbert Streets, Commerce. Everyone welcome.

### MEETING PROGRAMS

by **RUSS DAVIES**

March 13: **Re-visit the wonderful Sacramento Raillairs with Joe Bonino!** In this slide presentation Joe will cover the **1981, 1991, and 1999 events.** As a bonus, we'll see the **former SP Shop grounds as they are today** in slides Joe shot in November while attending the recent Lexington Group meeting. The images will include steam and diesel power, both live and static, as well as live power arriving and departing the events. **Be there, and bring rail slide briefs! (No digital facilities this night.)**

April 10: **Matt Wiles, our youngest Museum regular** will present a program of images from his **long distance Amtrak trips, 2002-2008, coast to coast!** This will be a presentation of digital images, from Matt's digital camera. Be there, and **bring digital** rail news briefs!

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

At the Board meeting on Feb. 6, 2009, Donald Wilson was voted into PRS with seniority number 478.

### ANGELS FLIGHT

Angels Flight, the short, historic railroad, connects California Plaza on Bunker Hill to Hill Street across from Grand Central Market. It has been closed since a fatal accident in February 2001, and several announced reopening dates have come and gone. On Nov. 1 the rail line's two cars, Olivet and Sinai, were brought to Hill Street and lifted onto the track.

Engineers have since connected a second safety cable and begun testing the cars, their controls and various feedback and safety circuits, said John Welborne, president of the Angels Flight Railway Foundation. On Jan. 12-17, he said, further tests had the cars running at full speed up and down the railway.

Welborne said the next step is a load test followed by an inspection by the California Public Utilities Commission, which must approve the train and its safety features before Angels Flight can resume service.

Andrew Kotch, a spokesman for the PUC, said the commission has inspected the track components and surveyed the progress. The PUC is waiting for instructions from the Angels Flight Foundation to observe load tests. Once the commission is notified that repairs are complete, an inspection of the railway could take about 30 days.

Although no date was set for when the railway could resume operations, Dennis Luna, chairman of the Angels Flight Railway Foundation, said he was hopeful it would open by early 2009. Many people yearn for the rail line to resume operations, since those 153-steps are hard to climb, especially on a hot day.

A February editorial by *Downtown News* says, "Getting Angels Flight to the point it is now at has taken significant work, and those who volunteered their time and energy, and those who donated money, deserve congratulations. But the key, for all of

Downtown, is to get the railway running again. We think we have to turn to government to make that happen.” [With previous reference to government to mean the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.]

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News* and Margo Petros]

### SOUTH BAY RAIL DELAYS

In early January, South Bay politicians reacted angrily to an MTA proposal to delay two local rail projects due to the worsening economy. In Nov. voters approved Measure R, the half-cent sales tax to fund transportation projects, with the expectation that the Crenshaw line would be completed no later than 2018. But under a new draft proposal from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, that project will not be done until 11 years later, in 2029.

South Bay politicians also expected the MTA to extend the Green Line to Los Angeles International Airport as soon as 2015. Under the new draft, that project will not be done until 2018 at the earliest, and perhaps as late as 2022.

The project that would be most affected by the schedule change is the Crenshaw line, which would run from Exposition Blvd. through South Los Angeles and Inglewood, and join up with the Green Line at Aviation Blvd.

In order to attract federal dollars, Carol Inge, the MTA’s chief planning officer, said the MTA now has to give greater consideration to the subway along Wilshire Blvd. and the Downtown Regional Connector, a subway which would link the Blue Line with the Gold Line. “In order to keep the whole package of projects moving, we couldn’t keep the Crenshaw line on the same schedule,” she said.

Supporters of the Green Line-to-LAX extension were also disappointed because they believe the link is relatively affordable, at \$400 million, and should be completed soon to coincide with the LAX modernization project.

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

### S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during December, 2008, were 42,764, which was a decrease from the previous month of 3,670 or about 8 percent. Average daily Metrolink monthly passholders on Amtrak were 1,660, which was a decrease from the previous month of 83 or about 5 percent.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, total schedule adherence (less than 5 minutes delay) was 94 percent.

[Info. from Metrolink via Charles Varnes]

### APPLICATION OF EMERGENCY BRAKES

Attorneys representing at least a dozen victims of the 2005 Metrolink derailment in Glendale that killed 11 people said Jan. 29th that they had uncovered evidence that indicated Metrolink operator error. The engineer noticed the Jeep when he was about three-quarters of a mile away, but did not apply full emergency brakes until about 870 feet from the point of impact – a lapse of about six seconds, alleged Jerome Ringler, the lead plaintiff attorney in the class-action lawsuit.

Metrolink, citing the pending litigation, declined to comment on the latest allegations, but Glendale City Councilman, Ara Najarian, who serves on the agency’s board of directors, said it

appeared plaintiff attorneys were trying “to be as creative as possible.”

The coalition of attorneys suing Metrolink for the Glendale derailment said that they had advised their clients not to comment on the new evidence, which will be introduced when the trial starts in June.

[Info. from *Burbank Leader* via Margo Petros]

### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

Without any fanfare, Caltrain’s base fare increased by 25 cents on January 1, 2009. The increase will generate approximately \$943,500 in additional revenue this fiscal year to help offset increased fuel costs from last year. Later this year, the current 10 ride ticket will be replaced with an eight ride ticket.

On January 19, Caltrain ran the 24th annual *Freedom Train* from San Jose to San Francisco, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King. This year’s train took on special significance since it was run the day before Barack Obama was sworn in as the nation’s first African-American President.

Actually, this year’s Freedom Train was two trains. Instead of one ten car train, Caltrain decided to run two five car trains, departing San Jose at 9:05 and 9:30 a.m., ahead of and behind Train No. 135. The trains made stops in Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, and San Mateo. No special southbound train was run, but Freedom Train tickets were honored on all regular trains.

Caltrain riders no longer have to worry about being shoe-horned into four-car trains because of equipment shortages. With all eight new cars in service, every trainset now consists of five cars. Originally, plans were to add a sixth car to the most popular trains, but it was decided to keep every train at five cars because of consistency and simplicity. It also allows more cars to be available in case of mechanical failures.

Improvements to the tune of \$1.3 million are taking place at the San Martin station, just north of Gilroy. The project will add 161 parking spaces, plus improve pedestrian safety and help ease access and congestion along San Martin Avenue.

In a seemingly never ending story, the Caltrain board approved a plan to improve bicycle access on trains, and add storage space at stations. The plan, which incorporates extensive public input, focuses on ways to improve bike parking at Caltrain’s ten most popular stations. The board will also study ways to improve onboard capacity, which could include rearranging seats or adding more bicycle space inside the cars.

### UNION PACIFIC SPONSORS LINCOLN EXHIBITION

Union Pacific is the exclusive sponsor of the Abraham Lincoln bicentennial exhibition, which opened at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., Feb. 12, 2009, in celebration of Lincoln’s 200th birthday. America’s 16th president, Lincoln, was a great railroad advocate and is considered the father of the transcontinental railroad. He signed the Pacific Railroad Act into law in 1862, directing the construction of the nation’s first transcontinental railroad and creating Union Pacific.

“With Malice Toward None: The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Exhibition” will provide the general public an opportunity to view rarely seen treasures from the Library of Congress collections. Union Pacific has agreed to loan to the exhibition a rocking chair from Lincoln’s office and a silk

banner from his funeral procession from the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

In addition to the items loaned by the Union Pacific Railroad Museum, the exhibition will include a vast array of Lincoln material including letters, photographs, political cartoons, period engravings, speeches and artifacts. Some specific collection items to be displayed include: the notes Lincoln prepared in advance of his debates with Senator Stephen Douglas; Lincoln's personal scrapbook of newspaper clippings; the critical letter Lincoln wrote but never sent to General George Meade following the Battle of Gettysburg; the Lincoln family Bible; and the contents of Lincoln's pockets on the night he was assassinated.

The exhibition will be on display at Library of Congress through May 9, 2009, after which it will travel to five U.S. cities. Its first stop will be at the California Museum, 1020 O St. Sacramento, from June 24, 2009 through Aug. 22, 2009. The remaining exhibition stops will be: Chicago at the Newberry Library in fall 2009; Indianapolis at the Indiana State Museum in winter/spring 2010; Atlanta at the Atlanta History Center in fall 2010; and Omaha at the Durham Museum in winter 2011. [Info from uprr.com/newsinfo/ via Charles Varnes]

**PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES  
OBAMA INAUGURAL SPECIAL TRAIN**

On Jan. 17, 2009, President-Elect Barack Obama, his family, and members of his official party traveled from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. for his inauguration on an Amtrak special train.. The Obama special train was preceded and followed by security trains. The train's consists were:

**Advance Train**

54 - P42/100 - P42/10020 *Pacific Command* - Security Command car/10002 *Corridor Clipper* - Track Geometry car.

**Obama Special**

44 - P42/120 - P42/82579 - Press coach/82739 - Press coach/43360 - Press Table car, WiFi equipped/82727 - Guest coach/43378 - Guest Table car/82733 - Friends and Family Coach/20174 - Friends and Family Food car/43361 - Security Command Car/81529 - Security Coach/*Georgia* 300 - Dignitary Car.

**Following Train**

71 - P42/77 - P42/82588 - Coach/82705 - Coach/82544 - Coach/43379 - Security Command Car/10001 *Beech Grove* - Amtrak Office Car.

**AMTRAK**

**BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages**

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

Amtrak On-Time Performance TRAINS	2009-02-12 MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	87%	87%
Short-Distance Trains	94%	94%
Pacific Surfliners	94%	94%

**INTERCITY TRAINS**

**Sunset Limited**

Effective with its Jan. 26 departure from New Orleans, the westbound *Sunset Limited/Texas Eagle* began departing 30 minutes earlier at all stops from El Paso to Los Angeles. Its new arrival times at stations in California are Palm Springs, 6:07 a.m.; Ontario, 7:35 a.m.; Pomona, 7:45 a.m.; and Los Angeles, 9:40 a.m.

**Coast Starlight**

Effective Feb. 23 the connection from the northbound *Coast Starlight* to the *Empire Builder* (Tr. No. 14 to Tr. No. 28) at Portland was restored. The Klamath Falls to Pasco bus connection (Bus. No. 3014) which was established to maintain the connection because of the *Starlight's* poor on-time performance has been discontinued. In the event the *Starlight* is delayed en route, or because of planned track work, the following will occur. If the *Starlight* is slightly delayed the *Builder* will be held at Portland for connecting passengers. If the delay is greater and a same-day connection is still possible, a bus may be operated from either Eugene to Portland, or Klamath Falls to Pasco. If the *Starlight* is extremely late, its passengers may be housed in Portland until the next day.

**WESTERN CORRIDORS**

**Pacific Surfliner**

On Feb 6, 13, and 14, the San Diego Northern Ry. performed track work which required the cancellation of San Diego-Los Angeles *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 597. Motorcoach service between San Diego, Los Angeles and intermediate stations was provided. Goleta-San Diego *Surfliner* Tr. No. 796 operated between Goleta and Los Angeles only. At Los Angeles, passengers continuing south were provided motorcoach service to San Diego and all intermediate stations.

**San Joaquin**

Bakersfield-Sacramento *San Joaquin* trains did not stop at Lodi because of track work performed by the Union Pacific railroad. Tr. No. 701 did not stop at Lodi on Jan. 28-30, Feb. 8-15 and 23-28 and Tr. No 704 did not stop at Lodi on Jan. 28-31 and Feb. 8-15. No alternate transportation was provided because travel was available to and from Lodi on other *San Joaquin* trains.

**Cascades**

Due to track work performed by the BNSF Ry. between Feb. 9 through Feb. 13, Eugene-Seattle Amtrak Cascades Tr. No. 500 terminated at Portland with motorcoach service between that point, Seattle and intermediate stations. Seattle-Portland Cascades Tr. No. 501 was cancelled and motorcoach service was to be provided at all stations along the route.

**MIDWEST TRAINS**

Beginning Feb. 2, *Hiawatha Service* Tr. No. 342 began operating five minutes later at all stations from Milwaukee to Chicago.

Beginning Jan. 26, *Lincoln Service* Tr. No. 302 will operate five minutes later at all stations from St. Louis to Chicago.

On these dates, the schedules shown on Amtrak.com replace those published in the printed copy of the Amtrak Fall 2008-Winter 2009 System Timetable.

**St. Louis-Kansas City Trains Renamed**

*Missouri River Runner* is the new name for the Missouri state-supported Amtrak trains between St. Louis and Kansas City. The new train name replaces the little known names that identified Missouri's cross-state passenger trains: *Missouri Service* formerly named the *Ann Rutledge* — a leftover from that train's Illinois origins; and the *Mules*. It was selected from among more than 8000 entries in a "name the train" Missouri Department of Transportation contest.

**NORTHEAST CORRIDOR**

**Quiet Cars Relocated**

Effective Jan. 28, the *Quiet Cars* on *Northeast Regional* trains were relocated next to the Business Class cars, and additional trains received *Quiet Cars*. The reason for the relocation is because Amtrak moved the Café cars to the middle of the coaches, to avoid long walks for some passengers.

**DEPOT DOINGS**

Denver, Colo. Effective Feb. 23 the ticket office stopped selling tickets ten minutes before a train's departure time. The Quik-Trak ticket vending machine remains available until ten minutes before a train's departure time. The gates to the train's track closes five minutes before its departure time. The procedure was instituted in Chicago last summer. Its purpose is to allow time for safe passenger boarding and an on-time departure.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL  
RIDERSHIP**

December 2008	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	139,229	72,010	34,133	22,390
Saturday Ave.	83,800	52,866	18,715	14,381
Sunday Ave.	70,519	44,504	14,549	9,418
Monthly Total	3,750,841	2,018,203	898,529	597,202

**TRANSIT ACCESS PASS**

Getting around the Metro system will be a lot faster and easier now that the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has launched the electronic Transit Access Pass (TAP), a reusable payment "smart" card. The system, which went into effect Jan. 1, is a rechargeable card that will eventually replace weekly and monthly paper passes. Users can pay and the TAP card can be refilled via the Internet and at ticket vending machines in Metro Rail stations. Cards can also be automatically loaded each month. In January, more than 400 retail outlets and Metro Service Centers were selling the TAP cards. Cash will continue to be accepted on both bus and rail lines.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

**EXPO LIGHT RAIL LINE**

Construction of the Expo Light Rail Line continues to move forward. There are a total of 61 rail and street crossings in Phase I. Safety action will occur as follows:

- 17 will be closed.
- 10 will be grade separated.
- 6 will have quad gates installed.
- 19 will have signalized LED flashing signs.
- 9 will have non-signalized LED flashing signs.

[Info. from Tom Nelson]

**MTA CEO ROGER SNOBLE TO RETIRE**

Metropolitan Transportation Authority CEO Roger Snoble announced in December that he would retire after seven years. Whoever replaces Snoble will head one of the nation's largest public transportation agencies, and will have to put the finishing touches on the Metro Gold Line extension to East Los Angeles. A bigger challenge will be helping the MTA work with the funds created by Measure R, a half cent sales tax approved by voters that will raise \$40 billion over 30 years to pay for transportation

improvements. Of course, the new boss will have to deal with critiques about rising fares on buses and will have to continue Metro's green power initiatives, which have resulted in more than 2,500 buses powered by compressed natural gas.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

**GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION**

January 28 the first train cars rolled along the tracks from Los Angeles Union Station to East Los Angeles on the \$898-million line expected to open this summer. The cars were being pulled along slowly by a truck. The trip ended for the day near the west entrance to the 1st St. Tunnel on the east side of the Los Angeles River. The reason for the test run was to ensure that there was adequate clearance along the way for the trains.

The MTA says it is the first time that train cars have run down 1st Street since the days of streetcars 46 years ago.

[Info. from Ken Ruben]

**PHASE II**

Completion of the Gold Line Eastside Extension Phase II could be as much as 30 years away, but some local cities are already taking steps to ensure a spot on the line. The project would extend the line about 9 miles east from its present East Los Angeles terminus at Pomona and Atlantic.

Preliminary plans include four different proposed routes, with two very distinct destinations. One proposed line would follow the 60 Freeway through Monterey Park, Rosemead and South El Monte, and out to the edge of Industry. Three other proposals call for the line to veer south through Montebello and Whittier.

On Jan. 15, the Monterey Park City council voted to go on record supporting the 60 Freeway proposal – and to create a coalition with neighboring cities to more forcefully lobby the MTA to adopt the route.

But Whittier City Manager Steve Helvey can argue just as fervently for the more-southerly route. "The lines here would have the highest ridership. We'd be able to pick up northern Orange County and connect it to our county transit," he said.

The three Whittier routes would also run along the 60 Freeway initially, but would then turn south on Garfield Ave. From there, the proposed 8.9-mile Beverly Blvd. line would run to the Greenway Trail in Whittier.

A second option calls for an 8.9-mile route along Beverly Blvd. to Montebello Blvd. and then to Whittier Blvd., while a third proposal would create a 9.3-mile line along Washington Blvd. All three proposed routes would end up near the Five Points area in Whittier.

The 8.5-mile 60 Freeway route, meanwhile, would end just past the 605 Freeway in Industry. The 60 Freeway route has some drawbacks – it has the most potential for environmental challenges, and it would have the lowest projected ridership numbers, said Kimberly Yu, project manager for the Gold Line extension.

Whittier routes would cost more to build, transit officials said. Helvey believes the routes – he favors a Washington Blvd. line – would generate strong support from residents. And unlike Monterey Park officials, he doesn't believe that showing up at MTA meetings to lobby for the project is productive.

MTA officials in the second week of January committed funding for further environmental study of the routes. That



process could take about 28 months and could end up eliminating some of the proposed routes, said Yu.

While there currently is no funding for two lines, there's always a remote chance that both a Whittier line and a 60 Freeway line could be built one day, Yu said.

As of right now, the Gold Line extension has no clear construction date, although the Long Range Transportation Plan puts the completion date of the project at 2037. But the line does have guaranteed funding from the recently passed Measure R, leaving planners hopeful the route could be completed sooner.

It all depends on when the extension project begins receiving funding promised by Measure R, said Yu. If that happens by the early 2020s, the extension could be completed by 2027, she said. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

The Gold Line Foothill Extension is a 24-mile light rail line that will connect the current terminus in East Pasadena with Montclair. The only roadblock to laying the tracks is funding. Last year, Los Angeles County voters approved a half-cent increase in the sales tax to pay for transportation projects. The Foothill Extension is expected to receive at least \$758 million from Measure R to complete the first segment from East Pasadena to Azusa, and possibly even as far as Glendora or San Dimas.

Early in 2009, the Metro board of directors is expected to adopt a Long Range Transportation Plan that will determine when funding will be released to the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority. Metro will begin collecting revenues from the sales tax increase on July 1.

"We are ready to go. We have the environmental clearances and we own the right-of-way. Once we receive funding, we can get construction boots on the ground in about 10 months," said Construction Authority Chief Executive Officer Habib Balian. "Securing funding for the Gold Line Foothill Extension is our top priority for 2009 because there is no better stimulus for the Foothill Extension cities than construction of the rail line."

Ridership on the Gold Line has been increasing by the month. Today, more than 24,000 people ride the train between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa station. It was the fastest-growing line in terms of daily ridership in late 2008, drawing many passengers from along the Foothill Extension corridor. When the extension opens, it is expected to increase ridership on the line by more than 3.3 million a year.

"The Foothill Extension offers great possibilities for the San Gabriel Valley," Balian said. "With more than \$43 billion in investments that would be injected into the San Gabriel Valley economy, we cannot afford to delay the construction of this project, especially in these tough economic times."

There will be 12 stations added to the Gold Line once the first phase of the extension is completed from Sierra Madre to Montclair. Station locations have already been identified at Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale, Azusa, Azusa/Citrus, Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, Pomona, Claremont and Montclair. Station art will be designed by a different award-winning artist. Balian said, "The designs will instill a sense of pride in each of the Gold Line communities and motivate residents to ride the line all the way through to Union Station." The Construction Authority has concluded that each station's

artwork and design elements should include the following criteria:

- Elements that orient and identify the station within the community,
- Elements that link the station to the proposed parking structures, walkways and pedestrian/vehicular intersections, and incorporate public art into the overall design, providing a unique identity to each station.

The line could also contribute to efforts to regionalize the airport system in southern California, encouraging more people to use LA/Ontario International Airport by increasing its accessibility. In a survey conducted in Oct. 2008, more than 85 percent of San Gabriel Valley residents surveyed said they would ride the Gold Line if it was extended to the airport.

In 2008, the Construction Authority completed a study that examined the feasibility of extending the line is indeed feasible, and identified two preferred routes that connect the line from Montclair to the airport. Now the project can move forward for further analysis. Under Federal Transit Administration rules, transit projects seeking federal funding can take many years to go from planning to operation. This initial study was an important first step in the process. Next steps include more detailed engineering studies and environmental review. Funding partnerships are currently being created to fund the next phase of required study.

In the coming year, the Construction Authority's top priority is to work with Metro to secure funding that will allow the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension to begin construction in 2010. To register to receive the latest project updates, go to the Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority's website at [www.foothillextension.org](http://www.foothillextension.org).

[Info. from San Gabriel Newspaper Group]

#### SACRAMENTO

West Sacramento proposes a \$20 million 1.6-mile line connecting Amtrak-Regional Transit (Amtrak-RT) in Sacramento, then crossing the Sacramento River and ending at Riverwalk in West Sacramento. Operable with a single historic car, or using two or three cars for frequent service, this streetcar service is an economical way to serve commute and business travel needs along with tourism. Even expensive cities like Portland and San Francisco have been able to build new track and electrical systems for streetcar systems for about \$10 million per mile, far less than that for light rail.

In mid-December, RT received notice that it had received its Record of Decision (ROD) on the South Line Phase 2 light rail extension project. RT has officially satisfied the requirements of the Federal Environmental Impact Statement process, which means that RT can now acquire any real property needed for the project and is looking at breaking ground in less than a year. The \$270 million project also will help boost the local economy with jobs and business opportunities. However, the Governor's January 2009 revised budget further cuts State Transit Assistance (STA) funding, which would result in RT losing an additional \$3.9 million in current-year operating dollars.

As the state deficit and budget shortfall continue to grow, it is becoming more evident that RT must secure additional local revenue to meet its growing dependence on public transit. As RT nears the release of its draft Transit Master Plan (TMP), we

must begin to shift our focus to the implementation of the mobility vision encompassed in the TMP and we must all be prepared for “TransitAction”.

The RT TransitAction Awards for transit excellence will launch their debut at the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce 2009 State of RT Breakfast on Wednesday, March 19 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento. These awards will recognize efforts in support of transit and will be presented to selected nominees who have made a significant and positive impact to public transit in the Sacramento region.

In order to balance this year’s state budget, Governor Schwarzenegger proposes to permanently eliminate the STA fund, the only program that provides day-to-day operating funds to public transit. Otherwise the Governor proposes an additional \$230 million cut to STA funds, which would result in an estimated additional \$5.6 million loss in funds to RT. Despite this potential setback, ridership continues to surge, bringing with it additional revenues to offset some of the losses.

The South Line Phase 2 light rail expansion to Cosumnes River College is now scheduled for completion in 2012, pushed back from 2011.

RT recently created another security prevention measure when Senate Bill 1561 was signed into law on Sept. 28, 2008. The law gives RT the ability to ban riders from using the system if they repeatedly violate certain laws. The infractions include, among others, interfering with an operator of a transit vehicle, willfully disturbing others on or in a system facility or vehicle, and defacing District property.

Riders cited on three separate occasions within a period of 60 consecutive days for infractions committed in or on an RT vehicle, bus stop or light rail station can face a ban of 30 days and up to a year for the more serious and chronic offenders.

The Senate Bill became law on Jan. 1, 2009, and would be implemented once guidelines and an oversight committee were established, riders were alerted to the change, and enforcement policies were developed.

[Info. from Bob Blymyer via Tom Nelson]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

#### TRIMET AND COLORADO RAILCAR

Next December, the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District, nicknamed TriMet, will celebrate its 40th anniversary. By then, the agency will have already celebrated three other milestones. In February, it will launch the state’s first commuter rail service; in May, open the refurbished downtown transit mall; and in September, add light rail transit (LRT) to Clackamas County.

TriMet must also deliver something very painful – to analyze what went wrong in its contractual dealings with a shaky Colorado railcar manufacturer. It’s not clear whether TriMet gave its own board of directors all the information it needed to make good decisions.

Late in 2008, Colorado Railcar went bankrupt, after TriMet had given it a transfusion of public funds – more than \$5 million – to keep it alive. TriMet hopes to retrieve some of that money.

In propping up the company, TriMet says it took a risk it had to take to keep the Westside Express Service alive. And the risk, thus far anyway, has paid off. Before going out of business, Colorado Railcar was able to finish four railcars for the commu-

ter rail line linking Beaverton to Wilsonville.

Fortunately, too, the railcars won’t be impossible to maintain. TriMet will be able to turn to the subcontractors who made the components for replacement parts. Still, there could be other huge problems. Colorado Railcar created the software that ties all the electronic components in the cars together. As of January 6, TriMet was trying to figure out whether it had all the information it needed to use the software successfully.

Exactly what the now-defunct company owns, and what TriMet has effectively purchased with its investment in the company, remains to be sorted out. (One consolation prize from this episode would be for TriMet to find a way to turn over any manufacturing expertise it has gained to an Oregon company.)

Federal requirements that the agency “Buy American” tied TriMet’s hands, to some extent. With hindsight, those requirements look ridiculous – and TriMet should lobby to change them. Even so, it’s hard to understand how the agency got itself in the fix of relying on such an unreliable manufacturer. The fact that it was the only one that met TriMet’s specifications should have raised alarm bells – and led TriMet to rethink the project.

#### WESTSIDE EXPRESS SERVICE

TriMet showed off its new commuter train on January 21, 2009, with a “first ride” for westside community leaders, the first public passengers on its route between Beaverton and Wilsonville. After 14 years of planning and troubles with its manufacturers, full service was to begin Feb. 2. Trains will run about every 30 minutes Monday through Friday during morning and evening rush hours.

Transit officials estimate that WES will have 2,400 riders a day as soon as service begins. They expect it to reach 4,600 by 2020. Three diesel self-propelled cars and one trailer will complete 32 round trips a day. Each car has about 80 seats, along with standing room and space for bicycles and wheelchairs.

In addition, WES will have free Wi-Fi onboard and interactive public art at each of its five stops. Parking for cars and bicycles will be available at most of the stops.

WES was supposed to start running last fall but was delayed because of trouble with the company contracting to build the train. TriMet had to take control of the company, Colorado Railcar Manufacturing, after it ran out of money to complete the vehicles. Still, Tom Brian, chairman of Washington County Board of Commissioners, said the final cost of the train would be comparable to building a new highway. “It’s another good day in Washington County,” he said.

#### UNION PACIFIC CORPORATION

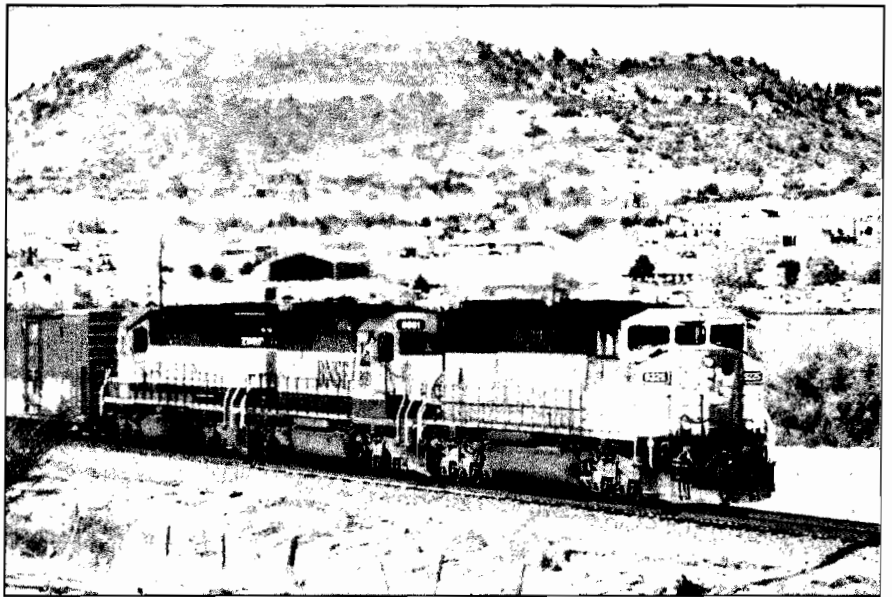
Union Pacific Corp., citing lower fuel bills, improved productivity, and higher shipping prices, increased profits 35 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008. The Omaha, Neb.-based railroad operator earned \$661 million during the three-month period, up from \$491 a year ago. Revenue grew 2 percent to \$4.29 billion.

For the full year, net income rose 26 percent to \$2.34 billion on revenue of \$18 billion. But the company still expects to cut 5 percent of its work force of 47,000 the first quarter of 2009.

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

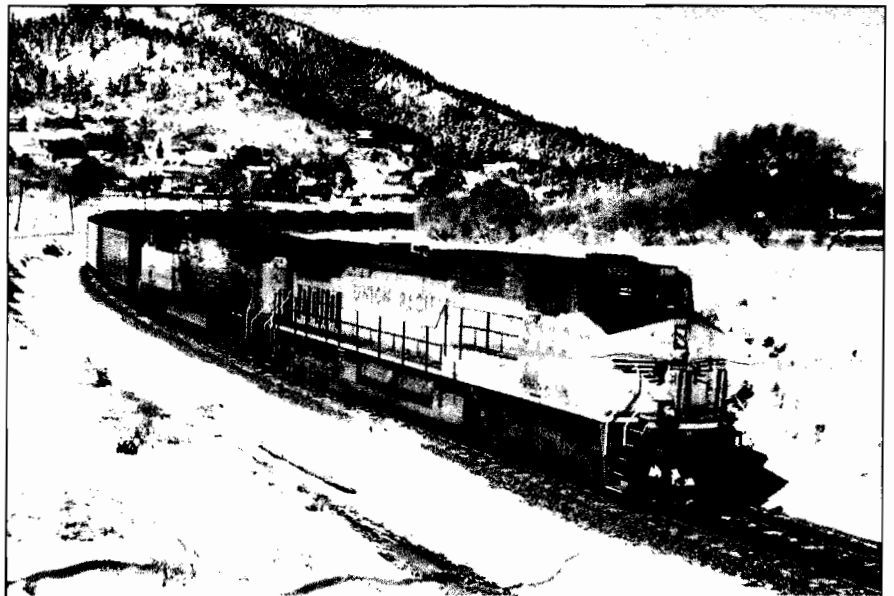
*A southbound manifest train pulled by an old SD-60M in original BN colors, with two SD-40-s behind it is passing through Castle Rock, Colorado, on the Denver-Pueblo Joint Line.*

Photo by Brian Black



*UP 5700 leads a southbound coal train leaving Palmer Lake, Colorado. The photo was shot from the old wagon road crossing.*

Photo by Brian Black



*A southbound BNSF molten sulphur unit train is passing through Larkspur, Colorado, on the joint line. This train is locally known as the "Stinky Slinky." It operates from Bonneville, Wyoming, to Galveston, Texas.*

Photo by Brian Black

