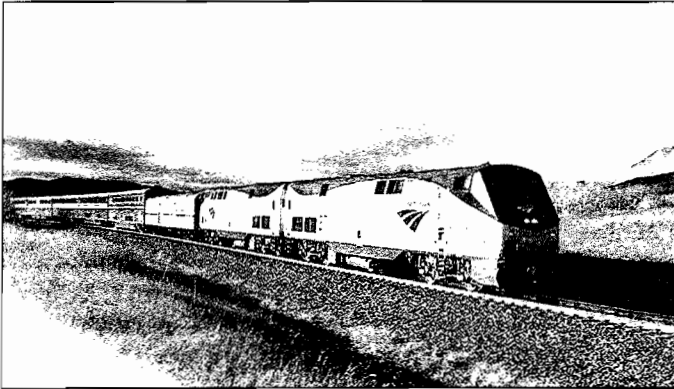


# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MAY 2006



*The photograph above was included with the announcement of the 2007 Amtrak calendar to illustrate its current livery (paint scheme).* Amtrak photograph

## AMTRAK 2007 CALENDAR PHOTO CONTEST

Calling all shutterbugs! Amtrak's fourth annual "Picture Our Train" photo contest is underway. Train and photography enthusiasts are invited to submit their best work with the winning image to be featured on Amtrak's 2007 wall calendar.

Amtrak is encouraging passengers and rail fans to enter their best shot of Amtrak equipment in the current paint scheme. This includes the livery (paint scheme) on Amtrak Cascades, Amtrak California and Pacific Surfliner trains.

A panel of judges will review each entry and select one to be featured on the railroad's 2007 wall calendar, available for purchase later this year at Amtrak.com.

In addition to this honor, the first-place winner will receive a photo credit on the calendar and an Amtrak travel voucher for travel of \$1,000. Four runners-up will receive travel vouchers of lesser amounts.

To enter, mail an original 8"x10" color photograph featuring an Amtrak train with the current Amtrak logo and livery (paint scheme) clearly visible to: Amtrak 2007 Wall Calendar Contest, 60 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Suite 4E-315, Washington, D.C. 20002. Digital photographs will be considered, provided the resolution permits enlargement to poster size. All entries must be postmarked no later than June 9, 2006.

The contest is open to U.S. residents, 18 years of age or older, including most Amtrak employees. Full entry rules are available on Amtrak's Web site: [www.amtrak.com/photocontest](http://www.amtrak.com/photocontest).

### SAFETY FIRST

Amtrak reminds the public and especially those who may photograph a train to stay out of danger. It is very important to stay away from tracks, moving trains, yards, railroad structures (such as bridges, trestles, towers and wires) and the railroad right-of-way. Photographers must not trespass on railroad

property or on private property adjacent to the railroad. Instead, stay in public access areas, such as stations, sidewalks or parking lots. All participants agree to assume the risk of harm and release Amtrak from all liability for personal injury and loss of property. Photographers are reminded that railroad tracks, trestles, yards and equipment are private property and that trespassers are subject to arrest and fines. Some stations served by Amtrak trains require advance permission for photography. Always obey all local rules and laws.

[Info. from Amtrak Media via Charles Varnes]

## FULLERTON RAILROAD DAYS VOLUNTEERS

by JOHN JAY ULLOTH

Fullerton Railroad Days, held the first weekend in May, is probably Southern California's premier rail event – from N-gauge modular layouts to full-sized locomotives, private railcars, railroaders, food, music, and things for kids. Sponsored by Fullerton Railway Plaza Association at Fullerton Station, the best way to arrive is by train. As many as 30,000 attend during the weekend. Since it's a natural place for networking, with people we know and people we haven't met yet, PRS will have a booth there again this year.

Volunteers are needed – for one hour between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. – to assist at PRS' booth and tell visitors about our publications, programs, museum, rolling stock, and excursions ... and why they should join up! To volunteer, leave a voicemail message at (818) 380-1252, stating your **name, callback number, which day** (Saturday, May 6, or Sunday, May 7), and **what hour** you'd like to help out.

## UP 844 STEAMS

by CHARLES VARNES

On Apr. 4 Union Pacific 844 made a break-in round trip from Cheyenne, Wyo. to Greeley, Colo. in preparation for its 2006 operating season. It pulled a train consisting of UPP 809 water tender/UPP 6334 *Art Lockman*, tool car/UPP 209 *Howard Fogg*, power car/UPP 9374, 9336, 9313 (lettered rotary snow-plow) boxcars/UP 24567 bay window caboose.

The first event is the South Central Express Heritage Tour 2006. Its announced schedule is Apr. 27, Cheyenne to Denver, Colo.; Apr. 28, Denver to Sharon Springs, Kan.; Apr. 29, Sharon Springs to Salina, Kan.; Apr. 30, Salina (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 1, Salina to Herington, Kan.; May 2, Herington (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 3, Herington to Pratt, Kan.; May 4, Pratt to Guymon, Okla.; May 5, Guymon (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 6, Guymon to Dalhart, Tex.; May 7, Dalhart to Alamogordo, N.M.; May 8, Alamogordo to El Paso, Tex.; May 9, El Paso (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 10, El Paso to Alpine, Tex.; May 11, Alpine to Del Rio, [continued at UP 844 on Page 3]



## WHEEL CLICKS

MAY 2006

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EDITOR ..... DICK FINLEY  
 TECHNICAL EDITOR ..... CHARLES VARNES  
 MAILER ..... FRED KNOX  
 EXCURSION DIRECTOR ..... BARBARA SIBERT

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### PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

May 5 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Valencia Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 May 6 & 7 Fullerton Railroad Days, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at Fullerton Sat.& Sun. Station, 124 E. Santa Fe Ave. Visit PRS' Table.  
 May 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting on May 27.  
 May 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & 20, 27 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 6, 20.  
 Sats. Extra work day: 13, 27.  
 May 12 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Alhambra Room at Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 May 13 Exc. #523 *National Forum* on the *Surfliner* from Sat. Los Angeles to San Diego and return. Leave L.A. 7:20 a.m. or 3:00 p.m. Leave San Diego 10:35 a.m. or 6:20 p.m.  
 June 2 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m. at **Saunders Yard** (Dart) Fri. Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce.  
 June 3 Exc. #524 San Luis Obispo Bound. Leaves Los Sat. Angeles at 7:30 a.m. on *Pacific Surfliner*. Returns Los Angeles at 9:45 p.m.  
 June 3, 10, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 17, 24 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.

Sats. Committee meeting on June 24.  
 June 3, 10, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & 17, 24 Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 3, 17. Extra Sats. work day: 10, 24. Committee meeting: 17.  
 June 9 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 June 18 Exc. #525 Coast to Coast on the National Forum.  
 Sun. Leaves Los Angeles on *Southwest Chief* at 6:45 p.m.

### MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

May 12: **Revisit the Golden Spike Centennial of May 1969!**

**John Petros was there**, and will share his slides of that epoch event with us. We'll see the **joint PRS/OETM Southern California "Centennial Train"** on its way to Utah with **23 cars**, and behind **SIX freshly painted SP F-units** (for you youngsters, OERM was formerly the **Orange Empire Trolley Museum**). Briefly, the itinerary for the May 8 to May 11 excursion was Los Angeles to Ogden via **SP's Valley Line** (including "**The Loop**," of course), **and over Donner** to Utah. The **Golden Spike reenactment** was at Promontory on May 10th, and the return trip was **via UP**. **You'll see it all! Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

June 9: **The PRS 70th Anniversary slide spectacular!** You'll see the slides that ran as an automated collage during dinner at the recent banquet in Ventura. **But**, this time there will be some **narration** by an **all-star panel of PRS historians**. There are slide modules including **PRS excursions** ranging from the late 1930s to the 1990s. And, "**then and now**" **scenes** showcasing Southern California's amazing railroad-ing renaissance. And much more, including **private car work parties**, and some non-historical **scenes at the Museum! Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

### MEMBERSHIP

by BILL FARMER

At the Board meeting on April 7, 2006, Susan C. Culp, Keith Gibbs, and Neil Bjornsen were voted into PRS with Membership numbers 580 to 582, respectively.

### BOARD MEETING SYNOPSIS—MARCH 3, 2006

Call to Order—The meeting was called to order at 7:42 p.m.  
 Roll Call—Present were: President Will Walters, Secretary Bill Smith, Treasurer Marti Ann Draper, Directors Dave Abbott, Stan Ames, Owen Danaher, Dick Finley, and Lindsay Smith. Absent: Vice-President Rob Markowitz (excused). Also present were: Cecelia Ditlefsen, Ken Ruben, Barbara Sibert, and Charles Stone.  
 Treasurer—Marti Ann Draper expressed her thanks to Barbara Sibert, Bill Farmer, and Dave Rohr, for their help in performing her duties as Treasurer. State Fund Workers' Compensation insurance will be reinstated as of May 4, 2006.  
 Budget—Chair Marti Ann Draper issued a call for budgets from Committee Chairs.  
 Insurance—Chair Ditlefsen gave thanks to Barbara Sibert for her help.  
 Motion #54—Adopted by voice vote, the June Board Meeting will be held at Saunders Yard.  
 Excursions—Chair Sibert reported there is still space for the San Diego turnaround on the *National Forum*.

Publications—Chair Finley reported that the mailing party for the April *Wheel Clicks* will be on March 29.

Membership—Vice-chair Abbott reported the names of two new applicants, who were voted into membership by voice vote.

Museum—Chair Lindsay Smith reported there have been many visitors, including a Cub Scout den. A display and cover will be transported to Fullerton Railroad Days

Program—President Walters reported on the future programs.

Publicity—Chair Walters reported that the flyers used at least year's Fullerton Railroad Days will be used again this year.

Rolling Stock—Chair Walters reported on Golden Gate Railway Museum cars, which are still in the Bay area. There were two work days in Feb. at OERM. *Shasta Springs* will be in a consist of a charter special. An inspection of the *National Forum* is pending.

New Business—It was adopted by voice vote to renew our membership in Association of Railroad Museums.

President Walters thanked all members for their services during the past fiscal year. He stated he ran for the office at a time when the private cars were in danger of being sold or scrapped, and the danger no longer exists.

Adjournment—The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m. in memory of the late Walter Abbenseth.

#### **PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM** by LINDSAY SMITH

We are nearly finished shelving the Robert Noon collection. Ted Creveling brought in a box of books that included several he must have bought from the Company Store. They had marks I previously made as we enter or access items. We can discount sales to PRS members because we can expect to see the items again. We are in the middle of incorporating material received from the "Original" Whistle Stop and the late Ralph Melching. Ralph brought several boxes of material to the Museum last year while we were overhauling the freight deck. The freight deck is now labeled the Ralph Melching Archives. In addition, Stan Kistler has donated a box of recently published books from the Harold Stewart collection. Joe Moir has been in contact with Stan and the Whistle Stop. Joe is organizing our timetable collection and we have found several items that are surplus and available from the Company Store. Owen Danaher continues to operate the store. Owen could be helped by anyone who wants to sell surplus on the Internet and through the store. We will try to publish a list of the titles again in a future *Wheel Clicks*. If you are interested, we have excess magazines, books and time tables; call us and ask about them. For example, we have two Kahmbach, Steam Locomotive Encyclopedia, Volume One. Jim baker and I cannot keep up with the additions but we are pleased to be "Over worked and underpaid!"

Pete Balch is not very mobile because he has had extensive back surgeries. Pete was the facilitator of our archive organization or filing system. We are very pleased and proud of our methods and share it with other collections. Pete will be helping us from his home. Because the system is dynamic, each new accession seems to bring a new category. We hope Pete will recover his mobility and rejoin our Wednesday sessions.

Tim Muck is waiting for better weather when we will finish getting ready to restore the roof. We had no rain damage this year but we are sure we cannot expect the tiles on the south side

to remain in place much longer.

Come on out for lunch or "Beans" at Roady's on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

[UP 844 from Page 1]

Tex.; May 12, Del Rio to San Antonio, Tex.; May 13 thru 19, San Antonio (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 20, San Antonio to Austin, Tex.; May 21, Austin (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 22, Austin to Palestine, Tex.; May 23, Palestine to Marshall, Tex.; May 24, Marshall to North Little Rock, Ark.; May 25, North Little Rock (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 26, North Little Rock to Russellville, Ark.; May 27, Russellville to Claremore, Okla.; May 28, Claremore to Kansas City; May 29, Kansas City (Layover and display, Open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.); May 30, Kansas City to Fairbury, Neb.; May 31, Fairbury to North Platte, Neb.; June 1, North Platte to Cheyenne.

Following the tour UP 844 will run from Cheyenne to Denver July 20, where it will be on display at the Denver Union Station on the following day.

On July 22 it will pull the Denver Post *Frontier Days Special* on a round trip to Cheyenne, and will be on display again the next day. [Details in Passenger Train Updates – Denver Post Cheyenne Frontier Days Train]

It will return to Cheyenne on July 24, pulling a one-way special train for the Lionel Collectors Club of America.

#### **TRACKING THE 844**

A Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) transmitter is installed on one of the cars in the 844's train. The GPS system is integrated with a map on UP's Web site (<http://www.up.com/index.shtml>). Enter the word "Steam" in the search box on the homepage for a shortcut to the map.

Web site visitors will be able to access route maps with varying amounts of detail. The GPS system updates the map every five minutes showing the 844's location.

#### **LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS**

During the month of February 2006, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 295,859.

Correction: The figure reported for Jan. '06 was incorrect. The actual number of riders was 289,147

[Calculations by Tom Nelson].

#### **CALTRAIN NEWS**

by MIKE GONDON

Caltrain is in the process of developing a "real-time" information system that will be installed at nine major stations and aboard trains. The stations chosen are San Francisco, Millbrae, San Mateo, Redwood City, Palo Alto, Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Santa Clara, and San Jose Diridon.

The present system only allows for general information and estimates of delay if trains are running late. The new system will let riders know when their train will actually arrive, as well as arrival and departure times for connecting buses. The new system will cost \$2.7 million and should be up and running by 2008.

Special Caltrain service for San Francisco Giants baseball games at AT&T Park began on March 31. This year, only one

extra train will run northbound before games. Two extra trains will continue to run after games, but only for evening and weekend games. Following weekday day games, a special train will run only if needed.

Continuing a policy begun last year, alcoholic beverages are prohibited on trains departing San Francisco beginning at 9:00 p.m.

Construction projects continue on the Peninsula Corridor that are affecting mostly just evening and weekend service.

On March 27, work began on rebuilding a bridge that crosses Redwood Creek at Maple Street in Redwood City. The project should be completed by June 12, and during that time "single-tracking" may be necessary, possibly requiring passengers at Redwood City and San Carlos to board on a different platform.

On April 14, crews began reconstructing a small bridge in Mountain View that crosses Permanente Creek near Farley Street. This is a smaller project, that should be completed over two weekends. As with the Redwood City project, "single-tracking" will be necessary, requiring Mountain View and San Antonio passengers to board on a different platform.

These reconstruction projects are part of a larger project to upgrade several bridges on the Peninsula Corridor which have reached the end of their useful life. Many are nearly 100 year old.

#### **KLEIN TO WRITE THIRD INSTALLMENT OF UNION PACIFIC HISTORY**

Union Pacific Railroad has commissioned historian author Maury Klein to write his third installment of the history of Union Pacific from 1970 to the 1990s. Klein has published two comprehensive books that chronicle the railroad – Union Pacific: Birth of a Railroad, 1862-93 in 1987 and Union Pacific: The Rebirth, 1894-1969 in 1990. Both books have recently been reprinted. No publication date has been set for this third historic look at Union Pacific.

[Info. from Union Pacific Railroad via Charles Varnes]

#### **S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL by TOM NELSON**

The average, weekday, system ridership on Metrolink trains during the month of February 2006 was 40,266, a very slight drop from Jan. Because of Union Pacific's (UP) track work in progress on the Riverside Line, many riders switched to other routes. The passenger count on the Riverside Line decreased 31 percent from Jan., while it increased by 25 percent on the 91 Line (Riverside/Fullerton/L.A.) and 6 percent on the San Bernardino Line.

System, weekday schedule adherence during Feb., was 93 percent. The Riverside Line was on-time only 75 percent of the time due to UP work. The Ventura County Line was the top performer at 97½ percent. In Mar. to the 24th, the system was operating at 92 percent on-time. There was hope for the Riverside Line, as the track work was completed Mar. 22, normal operations resumed on the 23rd, and speed restrictions were to be lifted on the 27th.

#### **FARE ADJUSTMENT**

At the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board meeting on Mar. 24, the first item on the agenda was a Public Hearing on the proposed fiscal year 2006-07 fare

adjustment. No one present volunteered to speak, however, over 100 Metrolink passengers had previously sent in their comments. The majority opposed an increase in fares. Additionally, many were concerned about late trains, overcrowding on some trains, insufficient fare enforcement, and conditions of the seat-bottom cushions in the commuter railcars.

The principal need for a fare increase is the rising cost of fuel to run the trains. During fiscal year 2005-06, SCRRA has faced diesel fuel cost spikes over 76 percent higher than assumed in the budget. Current Average cost per gallon for the year is more than 36 percent higher than budget estimates. In fiscal year 2006-07, the cost of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel used by Metrolink locomotives is expected to rise by 40 to 50 percent. Every five cent increase in the price of diesel fuel is equivalent to an added annual \$300,000 expense.

Approximately 52 percent of the growth in Metrolink's current service costs is attributable to fuel and insurance increases. These comprise a combined rise of \$5.2 million, not including proposed new weekend services. Assuming a ridership growth of 7.6 percent, only 44 percent of Metrolink's costs will be covered by fares. The SCRRA's member agencies will subsidize most of the remainder.

Thus, on Mar. 24, 2006, the SCRRA Board took three steps toward financial solvency. A system-wide average fare adjustment of 5.5 percent effective July 1, 2006, was approved. An adjustment of the maximum average fare for any station pair, not to exceed 10 percent, was approved. The chief executive officer (CEO) is authorized to return to the Board, if necessary, with a mid-year budget adjustment that may include a request for up to an additional 2 percent system-wide fare increase.

#### **COMMUTER RAILCARS**

Although the SCRRA Board on Feb. 24 approved an award of 87 commuter railcars, on the base order, to Rotem in South Korea, the official contract had not been signed as of Mar. 24. Rotem officials present at the Mar. 24 meeting, in answering a question concerning the relationship of Rotem and Hyundai, stated that Rotem is a member of the Hyundai Group.

The SCRRA specifications for the new railcars include certain requirements for crash energy management (CEM) features. The SCRRA CEO and other personnel were at the test site in Pueblo, Colorado, on Mar. 23 to witness Federal Railroad Administration tests of cars with and without CEM modifications. A locomotive pushed a non-CEM-equipped coach at about 35 mph and crashed it into a standing locomotive. The coach sheared off the cab of the standing loco, as well as itself, and climbed on top of the standing loco. A train of several CEM modified cars was pushed to smash into a standing loco. It stayed on the track with no override or lateral displacement. The visual observations of the head on collision indicated that no change in the CEM requirements within the SCRRA specifications would have been needed.

As a comparison with SCRRA's acquisition of new railcars, SCRRA has been interested in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's (SEPTA) railcar procurement. On Mar. 23, 2006, SEPTA's Board recommended the award of 104 commuter railcars from United Transportation Systems (UTS). UTS is a consortium of Rotem and another company. The successful bid price was \$274,796,714, about \$58 million less

than the bid from Kawasaki and \$7 million less than the engineer's estimate. The Rotem officials present at the Mar. 24 SCRRA meeting stated that the production facility in Philadelphia will have more than enough assembly capacity to handle cars of SCRRA and SEPTA simultaneously.

#### LOCOMOTIVES

The SCRRA Board on Mar. 24 approved an amendment to the fiscal year 2005-06 capital budget to increase from \$9 million to \$34.6 million the authorization for procurement of remanufactured locomotives. The funding authority of Contract No. EP 161-06 was increased from \$6,880,000 to \$31,928,424 for purchase of 11 locos. Also approved was SCRRA's acceptance of assignment of Utah Transit Authority's (UTA) Contract No. UT05012VT for 11 remanufactured locomotives included in the base order.

Originally SCRRA was to receive four locos. on UTA's solicitation, but the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) authorized \$32 million to buy seven for additional service in Orange County, making the total 11 to operate on Metrolink. UTA issued an addendum to its document to increase to 11 the number of locos. on the SCRRA base order. SCRRA has one option for four additional locos. when funding becomes available.

The remanufactured locomotives will come from Motive Power, Inc. (MPI). UTA and MPI have been negotiating on various issues, such as production and payment schedules, which were expected to be resolved by the end of Mar. To enable receipt of the 11 locos. by Apr. 2008, SCRRA needs to execute its agreement directly with MPI. SCRRA and MPI have been negotiating to determine the salvage value of three F-40s owned by SCRRA, which will help offset the dollar amount of acquiring the remanufactured units. Additionally in negotiation are costs associated with SCRRA-requested modifications and deletion of certain items specified by UTA.

#### CONSTRUCTION

The OCTA Board on Mar. 27 acted to make available \$3,452,618 from Measure M funds toward constructing the second mainline track between Santa Ana and the City of Orange. An existing casing protecting a high-pressure gas line must be extended within the street to accommodate the new track. On Mar. 24 the SCRRA authorized executing a work order with the Southern California Gas Co. in an amount not to exceed \$78,165 to perform the job. Without the casing, underground pressures due to trains running on the new track could damage the gas line.

In another action of the SCRRA Board on Mar. 24, the award of a contract was authorized, No. C3089-06, to J.A.Placek Construction Co. to lay a 5th Lead Track extension at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) for a total amount not-to-exceed \$1,715,724.

The new track will be west of the four lead tracks laid in 1997, and the existing four will be reconfigured. This will add track capacity north from LAUS for trains running on the Ventura County and Antelope Valley Lines. It will eliminate conflicts between major traffic flows during peak periods at LAUS.

The 5th Lead Track will be about 250 feet in length. Track No. 13 will be reactivated temporarily during construction, if needed. It will provide an extra track for boarding and discharging of passengers, if congestion develops.

#### BNSF THIRD MAIN TRACK IN BARSTOW

Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) announced on Mar. 10 that it was planning a third main track stretching nine miles in Barstow at a cost of \$16 million. "What that does is allow for operational efficiencies and expedited handling of trains going through Barstow without stopping," said Lena Kent, spokeswoman for BNSF.

A portion of that money is reserved for track maintenance in the Needles area. Work on track construction is expected to begin later this year and should be completed by mid-2008. BNSF operates more than 100 trains through the area every day, which in turn, helps take some 280 trucks off the nation's highways, Kent said.

BNSF's other rail enhancement and maintenance projects this year include a \$9 million expansion of the parking structure at the San Bernardino intermodal facility and a \$26 million expansion of Los Angeles' intermodal facility's parking and stacking capacity. BNSF also plans to buy 310 low-emission locomotives for another \$600 million.

The track expansion in Barstow is not tied to a multimodal rail facility BNSF wants to build. The company is eyeing Barstow, Victorville and Bakersfield as possible locations for such a facility, meant to help move along cargo coming through ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. [See Southern California Logistics Airport in April 2006 issue of *Wheel Clicks*.]

About 60 percent of the cargo arriving through the ports is picked up by BNSF and Union Pacific Railroad, while the rest either stays in the area or is loaded onto trucks, Kent said. [Info. from *Victorville Daily Press* via Chard Walker]

#### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF RAILROADS NEWS

by LINDSAY SMITH

Amid a strong economy and increased demand for rail services in 2005, the number of overall train accidents and derailments declined, according to the latest statistics compiled by the Federal Railroad Administration, and announced by U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta on April 1, 2006.

Preliminary full year data comparing 2005 with 2004 shows that overall train accidents decreased 7.9 percent, including an 8.4 percent reduction in the number of derailments, Mineta said. In addition, the total number of highway-rail grade crossing fatalities declined 3.5 percent and the grade crossing collision rate reached an all-time record low of 3.81 per million train-miles, he said.

"Railroads are making progress, but we still have miles to go with our safety program," Mineta said. The preliminary data also reveals that human-factor caused train accidents – the leading cause of all train accidents – decreased 12.8 percent last year, he said. The rail employee on-duty injury rate also dropped 12.7 percent, while train-to-train collisions increased 8.4 percent, Mineta added. In addition, trespassing remains the largest single cause of rail-related fatalities accounting for 53.7 percent of the total.

To help further drive railroad safety performance in the right direction, Secretary Mineta launched a National Rail Safety Action Plan in May 2005 to target the most frequent and highest risk causes of train accidents. Many elements of the plan have been implemented including pilot projects to test technology to



identify small cracks in rail joints, monitor track switch positions in non-sigaled or dark territory, and provide timely hazardous materials information to emergency responders.

In 2006, Mineta said federal inspectors will begin studying data to identify potential problem areas that need more attention before an accident occurs, and FRA will launch two new automated track inspection vehicles, tripling the number of track miles inspected annually by FRA. In addition, a proposed federal rule to reduce the most common human errors that lead to train accidents will be issued, Mineta added.

## RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO

by TOM NELSON

### SPOKANE

The Spokane Transit Authority (STA) in Spokane County, Washington, continues to develop a plan for the South Valley Corridor transit line. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was approved for distribution by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and STA on Dec. 29, 2005. Public comments on the DEIS were due between mid and late Feb., 2006. Also, a public hearing was to be held.

The proposed line would run from downtown Spokane easterly to the City of Liberty Lake. There are two light rail transit (LRT) alternatives, as well as bus rapid transit with two route options. One of the LRT alternatives would utilize track shared with Union Pacific on a large part of the first half of the route (from downtown). Continuing on the second half of the route, the LRT would be on its own track via an abandoned right-of-way, ending in the City of Liberty Lake. The other LRT alternative would run on separate track for the entire distance.

The length of the route is approximately 16 miles. A minimum operable segment for an LRT alternative would be 7.9 miles. It remains to be seen which will be selected, including no build, for the final EIS and sent to the voters for their consideration in financing the project.

### SACRAMENTO

The Sacramento Regional Transit District's 0.7-mile LRT spur to the Amtrak depot is expected to open in Sept. When it does, LRT trains will operate from the depot to Folsom. The other through line will run between Watt/I-80 and Meadowview.

### SANTA CLARA COUNTY

The opening of Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's (VTA) Vasona LRT extension last Oct. brought electric railway passenger service to Campbell for the first time since Peninsular Railway ended its interurban schedules there on Apr. 1, 1932. The additional passengers carried resulted in the highest VTA rail ridership in 3½ years, an average, weekday, system ridership of 26,034 in Nov.

Unfortunately, due to lack of funding, VTA had to scale back its building of station parking lots along the Vasona Line. This resulted in complaints from businesses and a church along the route concerning unauthorized parking of vehicles on their lots. When attending events in San Jose, Vasona Line riders had to stand in long lines to buy their return tickets at the conclusion of the events, because round trip tickets are valid for only two hours.

### IRVINE, CALIF.

On Jan. 24, 2006, the Irvine City Council authorized \$5.6 million to conduct an initial study of a 5½-mile LRT line. It

would run from the future Great Park in Orange County (former El Toro Marine Air Base) via the Irvine Amtrak/MetroLink station to the Spectrum shopping center. The study will include engineering design, environmental impacts, ridership estimates, and other factors. The project must obtain approval from the Orange County Transportation Authority.

This LRT line would cost about \$210 million to build. Irvine would like to use \$125 million from the state that Irvine could apply to the new project instead of the CenterLine as originally intended. Irvine would be required to match this, but the needed match could come from private sources or possibly from an extended Measure M.

### PHOENIX

The first track rail for Valley Metro Rail was set and placed in concrete within the median of Washington St. at 56th St. about the first of Mar. '06. It consisted of two 100-foot-long rails which came from an Austrian steel mill. These rails will be part of a 1¼-mile test track between 44th and 56th Streets beginning in spring 2007. The KinkiSharyo light rail vehicles (LRV) should start arriving in Dec. '06. Final assembly will be in Arizona. Each LRV will be 92 feet long by 8½ feet wide, seat 66 people, and carry 170 to 200 passengers.

As of Mar. 6, 2006, the \$1.2 billion project was 32 percent completed. The 20.3-mile Central Phoenix/East LRT line is expected to open before the end of 2008. An extension to Glendale is scheduled for an opening in 2017.

### OMAHA

When Mayor Hal Daub was in office, a proposal for a streetcar line along 10th St. drew interest by some business people, although there was opposition to the idea. Since then, Mayor Fahey's administration began thinking a streetcar line would be just what Omaha needs, and some leading corporate executives agreed. Fahey and Heritage Services members visited the Portland (Oregon) Streetcar, and lines were examined in Memphis and Little Rock.

Charles Hales, a transit planner with Omaha-based HDR Engineering, helped to develop the current streetcar study. It was financed by Heritage Services, a private fund-raising group headed by Omaha business executive Walter Scott. Fahey was briefed on the study results late last year.

The initial route would run from Creighton University via Qwest Center to the Old Market, a distance of less than four miles. It could be expanded to include Mutual of Omaha and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The initial route is estimated to cost less than \$100 million. Will the citizens of Omaha support a return of streetcars, as so many other U.S. cities have?

### ST. LOUIS

St. Louis Metro (formerly Bi-State Development Agency) MetroLink's Cross Country LRT extension remains on track to open Oct. 31, 2006. The 8.2-mile, nine-station line will provide service from Forest Park-DeBaliviere station through Clayton to Shrewsbury, Missouri. Delivery of 22 Siemens SD 460 LRVs was completed last year, making a total of 87 LRVs in the fleet. Running tests of SD 460s on the new LRT extension should begin in May.

The next MetroLink extension in Illinois is to run between Shiloh-Scott and MidAmerica St. Louis Airport. The FTA has

recommended, however, that this extension remain on hold until airline traffic at MidAmerica increases.

#### LITTLE ROCK

The River Rail streetcar line in Little Rock, Arkansas, is being extended. The additional 0.5 mile, to serve the Bill Clinton Presidential Library, is expected to open in mid-summer this year.

#### NEW ORLEANS

Following Hurricane Katrina, the A. Philip Randolph facility on Canal St., owned by New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA), was flooded. All 24 of the new, red RTA-Brookville PT-2000 streetcars and six of the seven Riverfront streetcars that were stored there were ruined. The 80-year-old, historic Perley Thomas streetcars that ran on the St. Charles Line, and were housed in the Carrollton area's Willow St. barn, were fortunate, because this barn escaped the flooding. The overhead wires along the St. Charles tracks had extensive damage due to winds and falling oak trees.

On Dec. 18, 2005, streetcar service resumed on the restored Riverfront Line and part of the Canal Street Line utilizing Perley Thomas cars. As of early Mar. 2006, the St. Charles streetcar line was targeted to reopen in late 2007. It was estimated that although work has started on refurbishing the PT-2000s, it could take two years to complete all of them. As of Feb. 20, only six of NORTA's streetcar fleet were providing service. But the Federal Emergency Management Agency is funding the free operation of NORTA's streetcars and buses through June 30.

To re-power the streetcar line on upper Canal St., the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority loaned a portable electric substation to NORTA. The concrete base slab for it was poured Feb. 22. It was to be energized for testing by mid-Mar. The tracks on Canal had been relaid only months before the hurricane. Passenger service was to resume to City Park from downtown along Canal St. in April (last month).

[San Jose, Phoenix, Omaha info. partially from *Light Rail Now*, *Ariz. Republic*, *Glendale (Ariz.) Star*, and *Omaha World Herald* via Charles Varnes; other info. partially from STA DEIS, *NARP News*, *L.A. Times*, *Ry. Age*, *Metro Magazine*, and *Passenger Transport*.]

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES HAPPY 35<sup>TH</sup> AMTRAK

The first Amtrak train to depart Los Angeles was Los Angeles-San Diego Tr. No. 76. The May 1, 1971 Amtrak timetable shows the train consist as coaches and a lounge. The *San Diegan* train name did not appear in the timetable.

#### AMTRAK APPOINTMENT

Thomas P. Schmidt of Jacksonville, Fla., a 35-year railroad veteran, has been appointed to head the Transportation Department of Amtrak. At CSX Railroad from 1985 to 2003, Schmidt served in several top leadership capacities, including Vice President of Engineering. He also held senior positions in network operations, train control technology and service design, as well as serving as President of the subsidiary Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad.

Schmidt began his railroad career in 1969 with Penn Central Railroad as an assistant trainmaster and industrial engineer. He retired from CSX in 2003 and most recently has been associated

with the Jacksonville-based transportation infrastructure planning firm Transystems Corporation.

As Assistant Vice President of Transportation, Schmidt will be responsible for the safe operation of service, compliance with federal operating rules and the efficient allocation of trains and crews throughout Amtrak system. As part of the railroad's ongoing effort to more closely align reliable operations and superior customer service, Schmidt and the department will report to Customer Service Vice President Emmett Fremaux.

Schmidt graduated cum laude with a B.S. degree in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University and received a J.D. degree from St. Louis University.

#### COAST STARLIGHT

Beginning Apr. 4, Metrolink will begin a \$9 million seismic retrofit of Tunnel 26. The 7,369 ft. tunnel is located on the Metrolink Ventura Subdivision between CP Hasson (MP 40.8) and CP Santa Susana (MP 439.2). It is the longest tunnel on the Metrolink system.

The work is scheduled Monday through Thursdays from 10:00 p.m. until 4:00 a.m. the following morning, and on Friday and Saturdays from 10:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. the following morning. There will be an absolute work window in place during those times. This means that the line will be closed to all rail traffic. There are 209 work windows scheduled.

If the southbound Coast Starlight (Tr. No. 11) cannot pass by Simi Valley by 10:00 p.m. it will be terminated at Santa Barbara and its passengers bused to their final destinations. The equipment from Tr. No. 11 will proceed to Los Angeles after the work window is closed the following morning. There is an extra set of equipment in Los Angeles to permit an on time *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 14) departure the following day.

On March 17, 2006, the *Coast Starlights* (Tr. Nos. 11/14) were terminated at Oakland and San Luis Obispo due to a southbound Union Pacific ballast train derailed near Metz, California. Metz is located between Soledad and King City in the vicinity of the UP Coast Subdivision MP 149. Tr. No. 11 (Mar. 16) was terminated at Oakland and its equipment became Tr. No. 14 (Mar. 17). Tr. No. 14 (Mar. 17) was terminated at San Luis Obispo and its equipment became Tr. No. 11 (Mar. 16). Passengers were bused between Oakland and San Luis Obispo. Passengers from Tr. No. 11 were accommodated on *San Joaquin* Tr. No. 716 to stations between Oakland and Bakersfield.

The UP ballast train was UP 4663 south. It derailed a few minutes after 7:00 a.m. The last five cars derailed with the rearmost four cars turning on their sides. At least 1500 feet of track were damaged. UP estimated that the line would be reopened by 8:00 a.m. Mar 18.

On March 19, the *Starlight* (Tr. No 14, Mar. 18) suffered another service disruption when one car of UP freight train MRVPT 17 derailed at Penoyar, Calif., blocking the railroad. The train was held at Mt. Shasta. UP 5450, which was at Dunsuir for flanger duty was dispatched to pull the train back to that station. Passengers destined for points north of Portland were bused to their destinations. Passengers for stations between Dunsuir and Portland were offered a choice of remaining on the late *Starlight* or waiting for additional buses. When the line opened, the train continued to Portland where it was cleaned, serviced, and turned to represent (become) Tr. No.

11 (Mar. 20). Passengers for Tr. No. 11 (Mar. 20) from Seattle to Portland were handled by alternate transportation to Portland. Passengers who missed their connection to the *Empire Builder* (Tr. No. 28, Mar. 19) at Portland were housed overnight there and reaccommodated on the next day's *Builder* (Tr. No. 28, Mar. 20).

The delayed northbound *Starlight* was led by Amtrak Cascades F59HI 457, plus two P42s, 119 and 113.

#### PACIFIC SURFLINER

On Apr. 14 Los Angeles-San Luis Obispo *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 799 was terminated at Goleta, Calif. due to a missile launch scheduled between 4:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Alternate transportation was provided between Goleta and San Luis Obispo. San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles *Surfliner*, Tr. No. 798, was cancelled between San Luis Obispo and Goleta. Passengers were provided alternate transportation to Goleta where they boarded the equipment from Tr. No. 799 which had been turned to represent Tr. No. 798.

#### PACIFIC SURFLINERS TO PETCO STADIUM

San Diego Padres fans can ride *Pacific Surfliner* trains to the San Diego station, transfer to the San Diego Trolley – the stop is across the street from the station – and ride to one of two trolley stations (The Gaslamp Quarter or 12th & Imperial Trolley Stations) within walking distance of PETCO Stadium. Sunday games start at 1:05 p.m. which allows Padres fans to ride daily Tr. Nos. 564 (Dp. Los Angeles 7:20 a.m. - Ar. San Diego 9:58 a.m.), or 566 (Dp. LAX 8:30 a.m. - Ar. SAN 11:20 a.m.) to San Diego. Fans can return on Saturday - Sunday Tr. Nos. 587 (Dp. SAN 5:20 p.m. - Ar. LAX 8:05 p.m.), 591 (Dp. SAN 6:20 p.m. - Ar. LAX 9:05 p.m.). There are a few weekday games starting at 12:35 p.m. Fans can ride to those games aboard Tr. Nos. 564 or 566, and return aboard Monday - Friday Tr. No. 589 (Dp. SAN 5:50 p.m. - Ar. LAX 8:50 p.m.).

#### AMTRAK 67 NORTH

On Jan. 19, Amtrak operated an extra train from Los Angeles moving nine Amtrak Express boxcars for storage on the Santa Maria Valley Railroad. The train consist was AMTK 67 (P42)/31046 (Coach/Baggage)/nine Express Boxcars.

On the following day the P42, and *Superliner I* Coach/Baggage 31046 were spotted in Santa Maria for use in a first-response emergency training exercise. The exercise was conducted between Jan. 23 and 26, and involved emergency services personnel from the surrounding area.

#### CAPITOL CORRIDOR

As part of the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority's (CCJPA) efforts to shift to electronic ticket sales and maintain cost efficiency, beginning April 4, Amtrak reservation agents at 1-800-USA-RAIL will not have access to Capitol Corridor information and will no longer be able to sell tickets over the phone. Tickets may still be purchased online at Amtrak's web site, from a station agent, or at a Quik-Trak machine. Capitol Corridor information, including train status can be obtained by telephone at 1-877-9-RIDECC.

On Mar. 23, 2006, Kirk Swenson was counted as the 10 millionth Capitol Corridor passenger as he approached Tr. No. 527 at the Davis station. The Capitol Corridor presented Swenson with a complimentary monthly pass. He was also given a scenic Delta River Cruise from Harbor Bay Maritime

and tickets to an upcoming Oakland Athletics game. Aboard the train Capitol Corridor staff members passed out commemorative chocolate bars that contained chances for passengers to win free 10-ride tickets for the Capitol Corridor service.

#### South Lake Tahoe Bus Stop Suspended

On Apr. 17, 2006, the bus stop for the Sacramento-South Lake Tahoe/Carson City motorcoach Route 23 at the Harvey's Stateline Casino in South Lake Tahoe was temporarily suspended. Until a new stop is determined, the only Tahoe stop available is the Tahoe Wye stop at the South Y Transit Center, 1000 Lake Tahoe Blvd. The Harvey's Stateline stop will be undergoing construction and will no longer offer bus stop access.

#### AMTRAK CASCADES

Amtrak is promoting train travel to Seattle Mariners baseball games again this year. Fans may purchase train tickets directly from Amtrak or take advantage of Seattle Mariners game packages for train and game tickets from SportsWorld Tours, offering travel to Safeco Field from most *Amtrak Cascades* stations in Oregon and Washington.

Packages include:

- Grand Slam package — reserved round trip tickets on *Amtrak Cascades* and field level game tickets at SAFECO Field
- Night Games package (first pitch at 7:05 p.m.) — reserved round trip tickets on *Amtrak Cascades*, field level seating at SAFECO Field, return following day
- Hotels package — choice of downtown Seattle hotels, reserved round trip tickets on *Amtrak Cascades* and field level seating at SAFECO Field

#### ST. LOUIS – KANSAS CITY TRAINS

The Union Pacific Railroad will be carrying out major trackwork projects at several locations between St. Louis (STL) and Kansas City (KCY), Mo., from Apr. 1 through Sept. 1, 2006. The trackwork will require changes to Amtrak service on the route that include lengthened schedules and bus substitutions. The trains affected are the *Ann Rutledge* (Tr. Nos. 313/314), *Kansas City Mule* (Tr. No. 311), and *St. Louis Mule* (Tr. No. 316).

The train schedule changes which became effective Apr. 1, 2006, are: Tr. No. 311 departing STL at 7:30 a.m., 30 min. earlier, arriving KCY at 2:10 p.m., 40 min. later; Tr. No. 313 departing STL at 230p.m., one hr. earlier, arriving KCY at 9:10 p.m., same time as now; Tr. No. 314 departing KCY at 7:30 a.m., 25 min. earlier, arriving STL at 2:10 p.m., 35 min. later; Tr. No. 316 departing KCY at 4:30 p.m., 1 hr. 25 min later, arriving STL at 11:10 p.m., 2 hr. 25 min later.

On some days, motorcoaches will replace the trains, make the same stops as the trains and operate on the same schedule. Complimentary beverages and snacks will be provided on the substitute motorcoaches, and Amtrak personnel will accompany the passengers. The motorcoaches will serve all scheduled stops and the on-time status of the motorcoaches will be available on-line, just as trains are shown on the Amtrak.com website.

The schedules of the *Ann Rutledge* (Tr. Nos. 303/304) between STL and Chicago are unchanged. The train operates as a through Chicago-KCY train. The two train numbers are used for accounting purposes.

Amtrak and UP agreed on the final details of the new,



temporary summer schedule, following a ruling by an arbitration panel reaffirming Amtrak's right to operate trains while the rail line was in use by freight trains. The UP had initially sought to prohibit Tr. Nos. 311 and 314 from operating from April 1 through May 15 while it continued to operate freight trains on the STL-Jefferson City segment. The arbitration panel rejected the UP's position and the two railroads consequently agreed on a plan to operate Amtrak morning trains when feasible during the entire track rehabilitation project.

*The Southwest Chief* (Tr. Nos. 3/4) to and from KCY and the *Texas Eagle* (Tr. Nos. 21/22) to and from STL both use different routes and are not directly affected by this trackwork project.

#### ST. LOUIS TRANSPORTATION HUB

A groundbreaking ceremony for the long-planned St. Louis Transportation Hub took place on Mar. 20, 2006. Amtrak Acting CEO David Hughes, St. Louis Mayor Francis G. Slay, and other transportation and elected officials participated in the event.

The project has for elements: an already complete and operational Metrobus station; the construction of the \$13.1 million Multimodal Center, which will house Amtrak and Greyhound bus operations, a food court and concourse linkage between Greyhound, Amtrak and bus/rail transit; access improvements to the site, with plans to upgrade Spruce Street; and station platforms, track improvements, public parking and service roads that will accommodate the Amtrak use.

The project is funded by federal, state and local governmental agencies, with participation from Amtrak, Greyhound, and Metro. The project is scheduled for completion in the summer of July 2007.

A temporary Amtrak station opened in January 2005 in a newly-constructed building on the site. When the new Transportation Hub opens, the building will become the train and engine crew facility.

#### NEW ORLEANS – BATON ROUGE TEST TRAIN

On Apr. 4, Amtrak operated a test and inspection train from New Orleans to Baton Rouge via the Kansas City Southern Ry. News reports indicate that transportation officials are studying the possibility of an Amtrak passenger train route between New Orleans and Baton Rouge to help handle the flow of commuting workers following Hurricane Katrina. A four round trips per day schedule has been mentioned. Another report indicates that federal funding for the project will be sought.

#### ACELA EXPRESS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Amtrak has awarded a multi-year contract, estimated at \$80 million, to Alstom to manage spare parts supply and provide technical assistance to its *Acela* passenger fleet.

Under terms of the contract, Alstom will manage a comprehensive supply chain to deliver complete overhaul packages, corrective maintenance materials, and scheduled maintenance kits for the trains. Alstom will provide the carrier with technical assistance to help Amtrak further manage the maintenance of the *Acela* fleet, also.

#### PENN STATION BALTIMORE REDEVELOPMENT

Amtrak has revived a plan to open a boutique hotel inside its Baltimore – Penn Station. The hotel, if developed, would be a first in an Amtrak-owned station. The company is negotiating with an unnamed developer to create a 72-room hotel on three

levels at the station. The upper floors of the station, once used as offices for Amtrak police, customer service and maintenance workers, are vacant. The plans also include some redevelopment of the station's main floor for shops. The hotel would occupy about 40,000 square feet.

A redevelopment project proposed about four years ago did not occur. Some suggest that the timing of the redevelopment is better now because of residential development and redevelopment in the neighborhoods around Penn Station.

Penn station is Amtrak's tenth busiest, with over 900,000 boarding and detrainings per year. It is a stop for Amtrak's *Acela Express*, *Cardinal/Hoosier State*, *Carolinian/Piedmont*, *Crescent*, *Metroliner*, *Regional*, *Silver Service/Palmetto*, and *Vermont* trains. The station is also served by MARC Camden and Penn Lines trains.

#### DENVER POST CHEYENNE FRONTIER DAYS TRAIN

The *Denver Post* will sponsor its 15th annual *Cheyenne Frontier Days Train* on July 22, 2006. The train, pulled by Union Pacific steam locomotive 844, will carry travelers from Denver to Cheyenne, where they will attend the Cheyenne Frontier Days Rodeo.

Reservations will be available online or in the *Denver Post* newspaper beginning May 2006. Accommodations aboard the train include assigned Coach seats (Premier) and Dome seats (Dome). The dance car is open to all passengers.

The advertised schedule is depart Denver at 7:00 a.m., with boarding beginning at 6:30 a.m., arrive Cheyenne at 10:00 a.m. The return trip departs Cheyenne at 5:30 p.m., with boarding beginning at 4:30 p.m., arriving Denver at 8:30 p.m.

The announced train consist is Union Pacific 844/UP Water car/Helper Diesel Locomotive/UP Tool Car/*City of Salina* (Premier)/*Portland Rose* (Premier)/*Sunshine Special* (Premier)/*Texas Eagle* (Premier)/*Columbine* (Dome/ Premier)/*Sherman Hill* (UP Souvenir 1)/*Council Bluffs* (Dance Car)/*Challenger* (Dome/ Premier)/*City of Portland* (Lounge) Crew Car/*Katy Flyer* (Premier)/*City of Los Angeles* (Lounge) Private Party/*Colorado Eagle* (Dome/Premier)/*Missouri River Eagle* (Dome/ Premier)/*Power Car/Harriman* (Dome/Lounge) Private Car/*City of San Francisco* (Dome/ Lounge) Private Car/*Feather River* (Business Observation Car) Private Car.

The first *Denver Post* train operated in August 1908, carrying politicians, influential business leaders, and "anyone who might do The Post some good." There were no trips in 1924, the year Frederick G. Bonfils' (the newspaper's publisher and co-owner) business partner and friend Harry H. Tammen died, or during World War II (1942-45). Due to a shortage of passenger equipment there was no 50th Anniversary train in 1946. The Post resumed the train's operation in 1847 and continued it until 1970. Costs, plus the lack of Union Pacific passenger equipment, led to the demise of the train. It was revived in July 1992 as the *Centennial Special* to celebrate The Post's 100th anniversary, using coaches of the Ski Train pulled by Amtrak locomotives and carrying 790 passengers. In 1994, the *Denver Post Cheyenne Frontier Days Train* resumed its annual trips, pulled each year by either the Union Pacific 844, or Challenger 3985.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS UPGRADES

The rail fare component of an Amtrak ticket may change when accommodations are upgraded. Under Amtrak's yield manage-

ment system each accommodation type has its own inventory and fare levels. Availability of fares is based on demand within accommodation types. This means that a lower priced rail fare for a specific accommodation type may not be available for another accommodation type. When a passenger changes accommodation types, the rail fare component of the original booking is not protected. The passenger pays the rail fare and accommodation charge that applies to the new booking.

The rule does not apply to accommodation upgrades purchased from conductors, outbound telemarketing sleeping car space offers, and upgrading to Business Class on some state-supported corridor services.

#### NORTH AMERICAN RAIL PASS

The prices for the North American Rail Pass increased on Apr. 1. The peak season (May 26 - Oct. 15, 2006) fare increased from \$766 to \$999, and the off-peak (Oct. 16 - Dec. 31, 2006) increased from \$543 to \$709. A ten percent discount is offered to travelers over the age of 60.

The North American Rail Pass is offered jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada. It provides 30 consecutive travel days in Coach Class with unlimited rides and stopovers throughout the United States and Canada. Travelers may upgrade to Business Class or Sleeping Car accommodations for an additional charge. It is valid on all Amtrak trains except *Acela Express* and the *Auto Train*. Travel must include at least one journey between the United States and Canada, and must include travel on Amtrak and Via Rail Canada. Some other restrictions apply, also.

#### AMERICAN ORIENT EXPRESS

The American Orient Express (AOE) has been purchased by Colorado Railcar Manufacturing (CRM), and renamed Grand-luxe Rail Journeys. Reports indicate that CRM will renovate the AOE equipment, and develop a tour program that will make better utilization of the equipment during the winter months.

CRM has built double deck "dome" railcars for Holland America, Princess Cruises, and Rocky Mountaineer Vacations, Royal Caribbean Cruise Line, and both double and single-level "dome" cars for the Alaska Railroad. The "dome" cars are actually double deck cars with large windows that curve into the roof area, and windows in the ends of the cars. Some of the double deck cars were built with open platforms.

CRM has also developed a line of diesel multiple unit commuter rail equipment.

[Info. from Bob Johnson, Ken Ruben, and Ed Von Nordeck]

#### BNSF 2006 CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM

by CHARLES VARNES

BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) plans a \$2.4 billion capital commitment program for 2006, an increase of about 10 percent over 2005.

The railroad anticipates spending over \$1.4 billion to maintain its infrastructure by replacing track, signal systems, structures, rebuilding rolling stock, and implementing new technologies. For the second consecutive year, BNSF anticipates investing about \$400 million in track and facilities to expand capacity – for customers in coal, agricultural products, industrial products and intermodal – to meet increasing demand for consistent freight rail service. Also, the railroad plans to acquire 310

locomotives at a cost of about \$550 million.

Some of the major 2006 capacity expansion programs are:

- Southern Transcon – Double- or triple-track another 40 miles and start building a second main line across Abo Canyon, a project scheduled for completion in 2007.
- Coal Route – Expand Lincoln, Nebraska, Yard, and add about 50 miles of double- and triple-track on the Powder River Basin Joint Line and in Nebraska.
- Intermodal Facilities – Expansions at Alliance, Texas; Houston; Logistics Park – Chicago; Memphis; San Bernardino; Los Angeles, Seattle; and St. Paul, Minnesota.
- Other Infrastructure – Extend sidings in Washington, Texas and British Columbia; expand and improve fueling facilities in Nebraska, Texas, Illinois and New Mexico.

BNSF plans to invest more than \$100 million of its 2006 capital program to expand rail capacity in California and to maintain its track, facilities and equipment in good condition. Capacity enhancements in California include a \$26 million expansion of parking and stacking capacity at BNSF's Hobart intermodal facility in Los Angeles, a \$16 million track expansion on BNSF's main line near East Barstow, and a \$9 million expansion of parking capacity at BNSF's San Bernardino intermodal facility, in addition to continuing work on a third main line on the Cajon subdivision.

#### URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

##### LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

##### RIDERSHIP

February 2006	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	128,091	80,378	36,374	15,325
Saturday Ave.	82,890	57,462	21,575	7,003
Sunday Ave.	67,910	47,314	17,019	6,599
Monthly Total	3,165,018	2,026,660	881,863	360,902

[Info. From Tom Nelson]

##### TIMETABLES

A Metro Red Line timetable has been issued effective Mar. 12, 2006. It has changed the map format. Midday Saturday, Sunday, and Holiday service has been changed from 10 minutes to 12 minutes headway.

##### UNION STATION FLYAWAY

The new Union Station FlyAway takes passengers from Metro Rail, Metrolink, Amtrak, and others at Patsaouras Transit Plaza at the east end of Los Angeles Union Station to LAX. Tickets are \$3 one-way for adults, and \$2 for children between 2 and 12 years old. Parking at the Metro Gateway building is \$6 a day. The FlyAway service takes advantage of HOV lanes on the 110 and 405 freeways for a planned 45-minute run. Fly-Away buses leave Union Station for LAX (and vice versa) every 30 minutes between 5 a.m. and 1 a.m., and every hour from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m.

##### DODGER STADIUM SHUTTLE BUS

A proposed shuttle bus service to take riders from Metro Rail stations to Dodger Stadium is still under study. A status report was to be given at the Operations Committee April 20. The same report will be given to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board meeting on May 3, which will decide what to do about the plan.

## GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

Arcadia voters packed the polls in high numbers on April 11 to pass Measure A, which calls for the city to build a railroad bridge over Santa Anita Avenue to mitigate the effects of the proposed Gold Line extension on safety and traffic. Measure A, which needed a two-thirds majority to pass, had 72 percent approval.

## GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

The two giant machines – nicknames “Lola” and “Vikki” – now tunneling beneath the streets of East Los Angeles are marvels of the construction industry. Built in Germany, these “earth pressure balance” tunnel boring machines (TBM) are 344 feet long and weigh more than 2 million pounds each. A crew of about six miners operates each TBM.

Powered by eight hydraulic motors, the TBMs advance by means of 32 push cylinders exerting 5,000 pounds per square inch of pressure around the tunnel circumference. The 144,000-pound cutting head excavates a tunnel 21 feet, 4 inches in diameter. A 193-foot screw conveyor – the longest in the world – moves the excavated soil away from the tunnel face and into waiting “muck cars” for disposal.

The TBMs also can lift 8,000-pound pre-cast concrete tunnel liner segments – six to complete the circumference of the tunnel – into place as the TBM inches forward. The result is a concrete-lined tunnel 18 feet, 10 inches in diameter that’s ready for installation of tracks and other rail equipment.

## EXPOSITION LIGHT RAIL PROJECT

On Dec. 15 the Metro Board of Directors certified the Los Angeles Mid-City/Exposition Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR).

The MTA in mid-March secured \$208 million in traffic congestion relief funding from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) for the Exposition Light Rail Project. Metro had also requested another \$315 million in State Transportation Improvement Program money. The CTC was to consider Metro’s request at its April 27 meeting.

The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority’s Board of Directors voted Mar. 2, to approve a \$420.2 million design/build contract and its execution with FCI/ Fluor/Parsons. The Board’s action followed the announcement that the Federal Transit Administration had issued a Record of Decision, indicating the line had completed environmental clearance.

The light rail transit line (LRT), which will begin in downtown Los Angeles, will share two stations – 7th Street/Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn – with the existing Blue Line. Using Flower St. in downtown Los Angeles, the line will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Blvd. and terminate at Venice/Robertson in Culver City. Construction is slated to begin this summer on the 8.5-mile LRT project for a not-to-exceed amount of \$640 million.

In certifying the FEIS/FEIR, the Metro Board adopted several design options:

- >Undercrossing between Jefferson Blvd. and Trousdale Pkwy, beginning along Flower St.
- >La Brea aerial station and grade separation
- >La Cienega station parking at La Cienega and Jefferson Blvds.
- >Jefferson Blvd. north side widening at La Cienega Blvd.
- >Jefferson Blvd. grade separation over Ballona Creek

>Washington/National interim station located east of National Blvd. within the Metro-owned Exposition right-of-way

The Dec. 15 Board action also included environmentally clearing the following design options for construction in the event that additional funding becomes available:

- >USC/Exposition Park optional at-grade station near Kinsey Dr.
- >USC/Exposition Park extended undercrossing option (precludes optional at-grade station near Kinsey Dr.)
- >Venice/Robertson aerial station

[Info. partially from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

## SAN DIEGO

In January, the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) carried a total of 5,943,491 passengers, with 2,376,081 traveling on MTS rail. Systemwide on-time performance was calculated at 91.2 percent, with MTS rail reporting 98.6 percent of its trips on time. MTS rail had no collisions in January.

The 25th and Commercial/Cesar E. Chavez Station Improvement Project on the Orange Line at one of the system’s oldest stations added lighting enhancements, station shelters, additional seating, and upgraded landscaping. The construction budget for the upgrade project was \$350,000.

The artwork, which was previously approved by the Board, includes on its westbound platform an 18-foot tall eagle sculpture. The new seating elements located on both the westbound and eastbound platforms have mosaics illustrating the life story of Cesar E. Chavez. The budget for the artwork and art installation was \$60,000.

On Mar. 23, 2006, after the MTS Board meeting, the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture hosted an “unveiling” of the completed artwork and dedication panel. The Board and the public were invited to this community event.

## PORTLAND, OREGON

TriMet stepped up security on MAX trains for several days to coincide with the second anniversary of the Madrid commuter train bombings. Tim Garling, TriMet director of safety and security, said the effort was not in response to a specific threat. However, the March 11, 2004, terrorist attack that killed 191 in Spain offers an opportunity to remind people that security on the transit system is an issue “that’s never going to leave us,” he said.

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

## SEATTLE SOUNDER COMMUTER RAIL

Sounder Home Run Service goes to all Saturday and Sunday games of the Seattle Mariners starting at 1:05 p.m. The train arrives in downtown Seattle at King Street Station, which is a short walk from Safeco Field, approximately one hour before the first pitch and departs King Street Station 30 minutes after the game ends.

Sounder Home Run Service departs Tacoma at 11 a.m., makes five intermediate stops, and arrives Seattle at 12 p.m. Another train departs Everett at 11:15 a.m., makes one intermediate stop, and arrives Seattle at 12:13 p.m. To avoid lines, purchase tickets in advance at ticket vending machines (TVM). Stop by any Sounder station TVM, select “Special Event” as the ticket type, and select the date of the game you will be attending.

## SEATTLE MONORAIL

The Red and Blue monorail trains remained frozen on the

track above Fifth Ave. and Olive Way after the two sideswiped each other in a tight curve on Nov. 26, 2005. Authorities had known about the squeeze since 1989, when the inclusion of Westlake Center changed the original 1962 track design. The Monorail operates only two trains, although the two are out at the same time only during peak periods.

Authorities hoped that the trains would be home at Seattle Center by Dec. 2. Workers used tow trucks and wires to pull the trains, a task exacerbated by having to hook and unhook the wires to avoid power lines and streetlights. Since the two tracks spread apart away from the crash site, the trains came apart as they were pulled about 40 feet along the way.

Human error caused the Seattle Monorail accident. The inbound driver failed to yield to the other train at the point where the tracks are too close together for passing, authorities said Nov. 30.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nichols said Feb. 9, that the city will repair the disabled Seattle Center Monorail trains and restart service this summer at a cost of \$3 million to \$4 million. Safety devices will be installed next winter to prevent another accident at the site where the two trains collided. The new system, debated years ago but never installed, will automatically stop the trains if they both get too close to the curve where the tracks were positioned too close to allow both trains to pass each other. Two-train service will not resume until the brake-safety system is installed.

#### SEATTLE STREETCAR

The Seattle City Council gave approval on March 27 to build a 1.3-mile streetcar line from Westlake Center to South Lake Union. Last summer, council members has initially approved the streetcar approval, aimed at improving transit service into a neighborhood where Microsoft Corp. co-founder Paul Allen and his investment firm plan major developments. The final approval means that assessments will be mailed to the property owners within two weeks, and construction can begin this summer, said Michael Mann, deputy director of the mayor's Office of Policy and Management.

The city thinks it has a good chance of covering the \$2.8 million in construction costs it needs with a federal economic-development grant still under review but supported by members of the state's congressional delegation.

Streetcars operated on Seattle streets in the late 19th and early 20th centuries but were removed as the use of autos increased. Service was resurrected in 1982 on the waterfront between Pier 70 and South Main Street. That line was extended to the International District in the early 1990s.

The city's operating plan assumes trains will initially run at 15-minute intervals for 15 hours a day. Metro would operate the trains. The operating plan, estimated through 2016, is based on Metro paying 75 percent of the operating costs not covered by ticket sales, with the city paying 25 percent.

#### SEATTLE'S MONORAIL PROJECT

Shut down by voters in Nov., Seattle's Green monorail project moved quickly on Nov. 10 to start shutting itself down and selling off its \$72 million worth of property by early next year. Voters rejected a ballot measure permitting the agency to build a line shortened from the original 13.6 miles. The measure

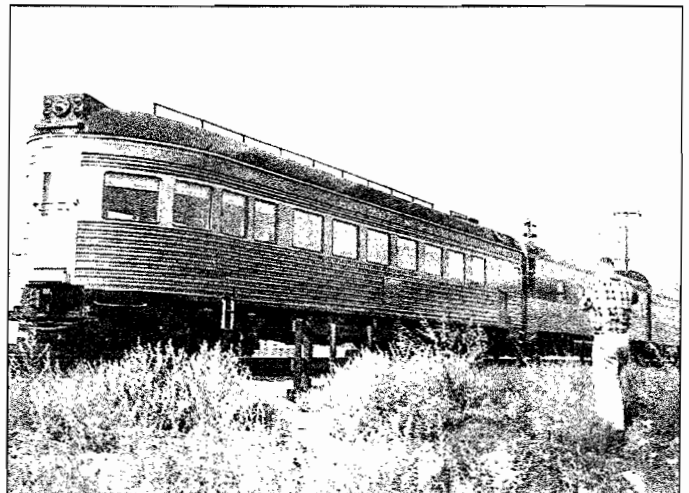
provided that a monorail wouldn't be built if voters turned the measure down, and board members had agreed earlier that they'd close the organization if the measure was defeated.

The monorail agency in Seattle will stop charging its 1.4 percent license tax on Seattle vehicles in Aug., and the doors to the project will be completely closed by the end of the year after a move to extend the tax another year and lower it was turned down Mar. 23 in a 5-2 vote.

[Seattle info. from Sound Transit and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* via Charles Varnes]

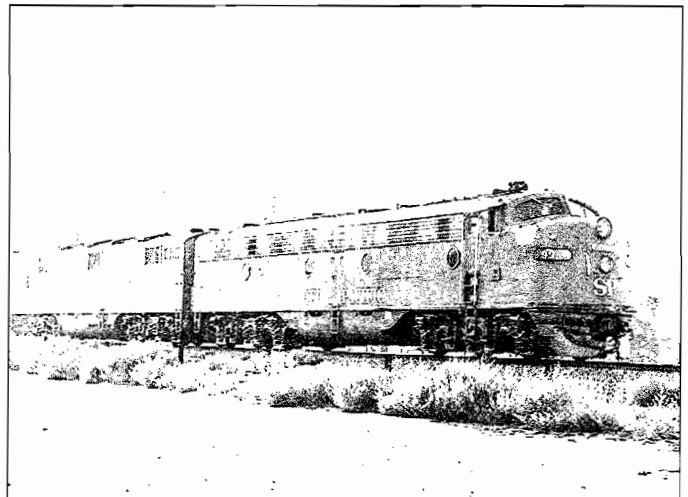
#### THE DAYLIGHT IN BURBANK by JOHN PETROS

In the fall of 1959 Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev paid a goodwill visit to Los Angeles under tight security. After tours to 20th Century-Fox Studios and various L.A. suburbs, he departed aboard the *Daylight*, Second 99, on September 20, 1959, for the Southern Pacific Bayshore Yard in South San Francisco, where he continued his trip.



*Nikita Khrushchev's special Daylight powered by SP E-9 6049, Class EP624A-1, is seen in Burbank on Sep. 20, 1959.*

Photo by John Petros



*The Premier is ensconced in the Daylight's greatly-missed round end parlor-observation car.*

Photo by John Petros