

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society, Inc.

MAY 2008

## PRS at FULLERTON RR DAYS' 10th

by JOHN ULLOTH

It's that time again—to pitch the tent, blow the dust off the mobile exhibit, roll out the yellow PRS banner—to make tracks for Fullerton Railroad Days, occupying Fullerton's Amtrak/Metrolink Station parking lot on May 3 and 4 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PRS members are encouraged to help staff our booth (for no more than an hour); to help tell some of the 30,000 other rail fair attendees why they should join us; be involved with our wide range of rail activities: programs, excursions, railcars, museum and library; or help sell some of our goods—that make great gifts for railfans of any age.

Volunteers staffing our booth, who like rail-related networking better than walking, sometimes find “the fair comes to them!” To accommodate this trend a little better this year, we're experimenting with one less exhibit table for a more open floor plan.

It's hard to believe, but the Fullerton Railway Plaza Association tells us Fullerton Railroad Days is celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year! In that decade, Fullerton Railroad Days has grown to become Southern California's premier rail fair.

In a contrast of scale and tastes, fair goers may walk through the cab of a modern BNSF locomotive, admire gold leaf details of a Disneyland Railroad locomotive up close, or peer down at an N-scale model locomotive hauling tiny railcars through a tabletop city. Fair goers can buy food, railroadiana and toys, book a “rail cruise,” meet rail webcasters, or visit kid-friendly booths for crafts, games, and entertainment.

Not to be outdone by Fullerton Railroad Days' Anniversary, Fullerton's Fire Department is celebrating its 100th, and will bring its steam fire engine.

Leave a voicemail message at (818) 380-1252 with your name, telephone number (not email), which day and hour you want to volunteer for PRS's booth (likely the same as last year's space #94). For more info. about Fullerton Railroad Days, see: [www.scrmf.org/rrdays/](http://www.scrmf.org/rrdays/)

## BERTH 200 RAIL YARD PROJECT

The Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners awarded a three-year, \$6.2-million contract to J.L. Patterson and Associates to plan and design the Berth 200 Rail Yard Project in Wilmington. The new railroad terminal will be built on a 38-acre parcel currently operating as an auto storage facility, southeast of Harry Bridges Blvd. and Alameda St., according to a port report. Once the project is completed, Port of Los Angeles officials will demolish the rail yard located at Pier A to accommodate the proposed expansion of the TraPac container terminal at the West Basin and Slip 1.

[Info. from *Daily Breeze* via Michael Palmer]



Two-way traffic was restored to the Los Angeles River 1st Street Bridge after a 30-day full closure that began on January 28, 2008. All of the work was completed on-time within the 30-day closure and Metro's contractor has completed the track and guideway installation. Photo by Metro



Boyle Heights/Mariachi Plaza Station roof slab construction has been completed. Underground construction of the West Portal, 1st/Boyle Station, 1st/Soto Station and the East Portal has progressed to the point at which the temporary concrete street deck panels were to be removed in stages from west-to-east beginning in late summer. Photo by Metro



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### PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

May 2 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 May 3 & 4 Visit our table at Fullerton Railroad Days at Fuller-Sat. & Sun. Ton Depot, Pomona & Santa Fe Aves., Fullerton.  
 May 3, 10, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4:17, 24, 31 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: Apr. 24.  
 May 3, 10, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce, Regular day: 3, 17; Extra day: 10, 24, 31. Com. Mtg.: 17.  
 May 9 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 June 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Saunders Yard Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce.  
 June 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4:21, 28 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: May 28.  
 June 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders

21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce Regular day: 7, 21; Extra day: 14, 28. Com. Meeting: 21.  
 June 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 June 20 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.

### MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

May 9: **Surprise selections** from the wonderful **Roger Bogenburger Collection**. We'll see a slide presentation by **Jerry Dunkin**, being backed up by **Tom Geer**. **Be there, and bring slide or digital briefs!**

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

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by VIRGINIA GRUPP

There were no late renewals this last month. James Ready with Membership No. 518 was voted into PRS on April 4, 2008

### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM

by LINDSAY SMITH

We have been busy assisting members research in the archives. Our new member Otto Krotulil has made an extensive study of the lower Cajon Pass and San Bernardino for his model railroad. Otto participates on the Yahoo Group Cajon Pass and they began discussing the history of Keenbeck Station. Otto made high quality prints of Ralph Melching's photo from 1940 and we shared it on the web with other folks. We continue to list Ralph's black and white negatives in a paper journal and then copy that into a computer listing. I have reached drawer 4 of 12 and the computer list is over 790 lines. Joe Moir, who started this effort, has not returned from France.

David Johnston of Flagstaff, AZ, visited to get more photos for his article memorializing the late Chard Walker. David is active in the AT&SF Historical Society. They will attribute our contribution to his material.

Bob Washburn continues to make a computer listing of the Post Cards in the archive. There are wonderful, colorful photos from around the world. We have separated them from the other material and dedicated an archival (Low Acid) box for this segment of our collection.

We have received word that Dick Donat of Summit, NJ, will visit in May. Dick creosoted the underside of *Descanso* many years ago. He kept Chard Walker in Summit shirts and hats over the years. Dick's father gave much to the *Descanso* preservation. He wants to find some facts for his coming articles.

The book inventory continues and the new leader, Tom Geer, has established a file back up system for our computer lists. Jim Baker, Tom and Roger Flogt have been working on the book shelves and computer listing.

Mel Goyen continues to make DVDs from our video and movie media. He has a list of our video collection in the computer. We may begin conversion of some VHS tape recordings to digital files because tape drives are nearly out of production. We have converted most of the movie film to

DVDs. Mel has also made permanent labels for the timetable standing boxes.

Owen Danaher maintains the Treasurer's records in our office. He and Marii Ann Draper are frequent visitors. More of the Society affairs are hosted in the Museum Office. You may have noticed that the Museum is the Society's telephone number. We will be adding computer engines to the collection; Charles Schultz and I bring our laptops to work at the table. We will add a negative scanner and continue to grow the cyber files looking forward to setting up a server and making more of the collection available.

At the last Board Meeting, President Walters created a new Special Committee for improving "Communications with Members." He appointed me, Lindsay Smith, as Chairman. This activity will look to the future and recommend a plan and policy for the future of the Society. It will fit into the plan to make the Museum a cyber communications facility to provide member access to our collection. As the Society Office is centering in the Museum, the co-location of the equipment is reasonable. For the future, US Mail will distribute *Wheel Clicks*. We are considering offering an electronic delivery of *Wheel Clicks* because it is significantly less expensive. We might consider fee adjustments or other incentives to reduce costs. We do not intend to stop publishing *Wheel Clicks* paper issues! Electronic media offers an opportunity to provide video and color to our information distribution. *Wheel Clicks* is a valuable history of the evolution of rail services in the Los Angeles area if not in the United States. At the Museum, we have commenced an Index of the subjects published. This will make the digital copies of the old *Wheel Clicks* available on the web useful for researchers like the Cajon Pass Group. We have to make a policy about the privileges of non-members; "nobody rides for free!" On the other hand, an attractive site will generate interest in the Society and new members. This particular item has been prepared on three different computers; I like the mobility of the cyber files.

Last month, on a Saturday, we noticed the strong smell of SoCal Gas at the Museum. We have had several whiffs in the past. I called the gas company and they cautioned us about igniting the gas and sent over a technician who shut down the line. With help from Archie McLay, the City Parks Department authorized replacement of the old line from the meter near Monte Vista Street into the building. We appreciate having the gas turned on and the heaters working again. Tim Muek is planning to replace the North Side window casements in the coming year. Once we complete the windows, it is time to paint the exterior again. Russ Davies advocates the real Chromium Yellow color.

Russ continues to make an inventory of our 35mm slide collection. He had made several programs for our membership meetings from the collection. Although Russ' format is narrative, I have successfully searched for specific images in our massive collection.

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of January 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 286,523. This was

an increase of about 1 percent from December 2007.

During the month of February 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 297,247. This was an increase of about 1 percent from January.

#### TEHACHAPI STATION by MARGO PEIROS

According to information received from Tehachapi City officials in late March 2008, the ribbon cutting for the Grand Opening of their restored railroad station will take place during the morning hours of Friday, July 4, 2008, followed by a weekend celebration commemorating Independence Day.

#### 2007 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RIDERSHIP

The American Public Transportation Association announced on March 10, 2008, that Americans took 10.3 billion trips on public transportation in 2007, the highest level in 50 years, representing a 2.1% increase over the previous year.

Public transportation use is up 32% since 1995, a figure that is more than double the growth rate of the population (15%) and up substantially over the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on our nation's highways (24%) for that same period.

Light rail (modern streetcars, trolleys, and heritage trolleys) had the highest percentage of ridership increase among all modes, with a 6.1% increase in 2007. Light rail systems showed double digit increases in the following areas: New Orleans (128.6%); Denver (66.2%); Saint Louis (27.0%); Philadelphia (26.2%); Kenosha (18.5%); the state of New Jersey (14.7%); and Memphis (11.3%).

Commuter rail posted the second largest ridership increase at 5.5%. The five commuter rail systems with the double digit ridership growth rate in 2007 were located in the following areas: Nashville (257.9%); Santa Fe (96.6%); Harrisburg (41.3%); Seattle (27.4%); Oakland (14.2%); Dallas/Fort Worth (12.1%); Stockton (11.9%); Portland, ME (11.8%); and Pompano Beach, FL (10.3%).

Heavy rail (subways) ridership increased by 3.1%. The heavy rail systems with double digit increases in ridership for 2007 were in the following cities: San Juan (13.2%) and Atlanta (10.1%).

Bus service saw an increase of 1.0%, but its communities with a population of less than 100,000, bus services saw an increase of 6.4% in 2007. Major increases by large bus agencies occurred in the following cities: Seattle (7.5%), Denver (7.0%); and Minneapolis (5.4%).

[Info. from American Public Transit Assn. via Charles Varnes]

#### CALTRAIN NEWS by MIKE GONDROX

In February, cyclists and transportation officials celebrated the grand opening of a free bicycle valet service at the San Francisco Caltrain station. The service is run by Warm Planet Bikes and operates out of a 1600 square-foot building on Townsend Street, next to the station. It can accommodate up to 130 bikes and also features a retail store and bicycle repair service.

On March 25, a brown out in San Francisco knocked out Caltrain's signal system between Bayshore and San Francisco during the heart of the morning commute. The outage lasted nearly two hours, and during that time, trains had to be authorized by red signals and power switches had to be thrown by

haud. Trains often sat for long periods, waiting for authorization, then operated at restricted speed. At one point, there were five trains stopped at Bayshore. Trains most affected by the outage arrived at their destination over an hour late.

In late March, Caltrain began installing more than a mile of fencing at strategic locations along the Peninsula Corridor to discourage trespassing on the tracks. Cost of the project is \$50,000.

The largest single installation is a 2800-foot stretch along Hedy Avenue in Sunnyvale. The remainder of the fencing will occur in San Francisco, eight locations in Redwood City, Atherton, Menlo Park, and seven locations in San Jose. As funds become available, an additional 41,000 feet of fencing will be installed at about 20 different locations between San Francisco and San Jose for a total cost of \$2.7 million.

On April 1, Caltrain marked another milestone in the construction of the Burlingame station when the new south-bound platform opened for passenger boarding. The northbound platform opened in February.

The new platform extends south from the historic depot and is equipped with ticket validators, electronic message signs, and a new public address system. The old, temporary platform has been demolished.

Even though the new boarding platforms are in use, the new station is not complete because pedestrian crossing gates and permanent fencing have not yet been installed. That will be the next phase, and a grand opening is expected for June.

#### RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO by TOM NELSON

##### NCTD'S SPRINTER

The North (San Diego) County Transit District's (NCTD) *Sprinter* passenger trains began revenue service on March 9, 2008. A ribbon breaking ceremony and celebratory run had occurred on Dec. 28, 2007. Railroad enthusiasts lined up before dawn to board the inaugural run of the *Sprinter* passenger train. The line expects 11,600 daily riders by the end of the year.

Freight trains operate only during late and early-morning night hours. This leaves the tracks available for *Sprinter* trains to carry passengers in the extended daytime the 22 miles between Oceanside and Escondido with stops at 15 stations.

A 53-minute end-to-end schedule time set by NCTD allows for 64 daily trips on weekdays. Cal State Univ. at San Marcos is served via a built-from-scratch 1.7-mile loop deviating from the original line.

The *Sprinter* roster includes 12 Siemens "Desiro" articulated, self-propelled, diesel light-rail-vehicles built for a top speed of 55 mph. Running in pairs, their total capacity per train is 450 passengers.

Fares are established at \$2.00 one-way, \$4.00 all day, and are reduced 50 percent for seniors and the disabled. Children under five years of age travel free.

The final *Sprinter* cost was estimated in March to be about \$480 million, an increase due to flooding and landslide problems during construction.

#### DALLAS

At the present time, all of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) Red and Blue Line light rail trains (LRT) pass through downtown on the same street. When the under-construction Green Line LRT opens plus the proposed Orange Line LRT to

DFW Airport, the single set of tracks on this street would be at capacity. Thus, DART has begun a two-year route study on the feasibility of placing tracks along an additional street.

The DART LRT Type C car has a center low-boarding section. DART expects to receive a \$9-million award from the Federal Transit Admin. to obtain another eight low-floor center-section cars. They will go to the Red Line to provide level boarding.

#### MINNEAPOLIS

Metro Transit issued ridership figures for its Hiawatha LRT Line at the end of 2007. Average weekday ridership in Nov. was 30,877 and in Dec. 30,859. The number of riders during the month of Dec. totaled 843,426, about 50,000 more than projected.

[Info. from Metro, IEFV *Vehicular Technology, and Railway Age*]

#### ALAMEDA CORRIDOR EAST

\$337 million in state bond money will be used to run a major freight rail line underground through the middle of San Gabriel, providing relief to long-suffering commuters along Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue, and San Gabriel Boulevard. The California agency approval for the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority will be used to extend a below-grade trench along Mission Road. It is the largest award given to a single goods-movement project in the state for the Proposition 1B transportation bond, approved by voters in Nov. 2006, authority officials said.

The half-billion dollar project will involve construction of the trench and overpasses at these four main thoroughfares. Construction on the so-called San Gabriel Trench project could begin within two years and be completed between 2012 and 2013, said Rick Richmond, the authority's CEO. The remaining cost of the project will be covered by a combination of local Metro and federal matching funds.

San Gabriel Mayor Harry Baldwin, whose city has been contending with increased freight traffic from Southland ports for years, eagerly welcomed the state's decision. "We have enough traffic just as it is, but if a train stops, then we're really in a problem," said Baldwin, adding that with additional tracks planned alongside the freight rail line going through his city, the problem will only get worse. The trench project "will keep cars from idling, which is a tremendous plus for air quality. It's a win-win for everybody," he added.

Richmond said two other grade separations – which run tracks either over or below street intersections – are slated to be completed this year in Industry and Pomona, with four others under construction. The four crossings in San Gabriel that will be built with the state bond money will leave just six more in the Valley to be funded.

But things will get worse for San Gabriel commuters before they get better, once construction on the project starts in a year or two. "There will be disruption in the area, and we will be limiting how many streets can be closed at one time," said Richmond. "But there will be times when streets have to be closed."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

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

MetroLink weekday, systemwide, average trips during February 2008 were 43,358. This was an increase from the previous month of 36 riders or 0 percent. MetroLink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within 5 minutes) was 97 percent, or an increase of 1 percent from January.

### POTENTIAL FARE INCREASE AND SERVICE CUTS

Last year, MetroLink's Board of Directors approved a three-year program of annual system-wide average-fare adjustments of 3.5 percent, that would take effect on July 2, 2008, and 2009. This was to keep pace with higher costs of operations. However, because of the escalating cost of diesel fuel, scheduled increases in operating-service contracts, and new start-up costs with the arrival of additional passenger cars in 2009, the board is considering a fare increase of up to 7.5 percent as well as potential reductions in service. This is in place of the previously approved 3.5 percent, and would take effect on July 1, 2008.

The MetroLink Board is also considering changes to the Group Travel Program. For more information please visit [www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com), or call (800) 371-LINK (5465).

### CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE

Beginning April 12 on Saturdays and Sundays, the tracks between Oceanside and San Juan Capistrano stations were to be shut down for construction. This would take place over four weekends and was scheduled to end on the weekend of May 3, 2008.

All weekend trains will originate/terminate at San Juan Capistrano. Orange County and Inland Empire-Orange County Line trains that normally run south of San Juan Capistrano will be replaced by bus shuttles operating between Oceanside and Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo, serving all station stops between those two points.

Northbound buses will depart for Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo from Oceanside, San Clemente, and San Clemente Pier 20 minutes earlier than published train times, except for the bus replacing Inland Empire-Orange County Line train 860, which will depart on time. Northbound passengers bound for San Juan Capistrano will have transportation back to San Juan Capistrano from the Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo station.

Southbound passengers going beyond San Juan Capistrano will be provided bus service from Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo, with stops at San Clemente, San Clemente Pier, and Oceanside. A bus or van will originate in San Juan Capistrano for southbound passengers boarding at that station.

Antrak will offer limited service between Los Angeles and Irvine.

### EASTERN MAINTENANCE FACILITY

The "Shortway" is 2.2 miles of single main track between the San Bernardino Station and CP Rana on BNSF's San Bernardino Subdivision. Southern California Regional Rail Authority's (SCRRA) future Eastern Maintenance Facility (EMF) is adjacent to the "Shortway".

The Board approved two signal work orders with BNSF at the Nov. Board meeting for signal work to allow SCRRA dispatching control of the "Shortway" and access to the EMF. At the same meeting, staff advised the Board that an additional work order would be necessary with BNSF for the track work

component of the work.

BNSF labor agreements require BNSF employees to perform work on BNSF property. BNSF under the requested work order will install two turnouts on the "Shortway" and 150 feet of new track that will tie-in to the EMF yard track lead. One turnout will be installed at Mill Street and will be the primary access to the future EMF. The second turnout will be installed between Mill Street and CP Rana and will act as a huckup access point to the EMF.

### INTERMODAL CONTAINER TRANSFER FACILITY

Trucks, trains and other equipment at the Union Pacific rail yard at Willow St. and the Terminal Island (47) Freeway spew about 24 tons of diesel soot annually, significantly less than the 1,700-plus tons emitted by the neighboring port complex, but high enough to create increased cancer risks for nearby residents. The rail yard, known as the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) was completed in 1985 to handle the massive volumes of rail-bound shipping containers arriving at local seaports.

Workers at the site toil around the clock, transferring containers from truck to train, then assembling those trains for transfer inland. The complex now handles about 700,000 containers annually. UP officials said they are working to lower emissions through the use of cleaner fuels, new equipment and greater efficiency. The railroad said it hopes to cut emissions at the site 75 percent by 2020. In addition to the rail yard, residents are breathing a toxic stew of contaminated air emitted by the diesel trucks, ships, locomotives, oil refineries and other heavy industry surrounding them.

The report comes not long after a similar study showed increased cancer risks from the Watson rail yard in Wilmington to the southwest, which is operated by BNSF Railway. A study showed that facility also contributed to higher cancer risks for nearby residents, though not nearly as high as from the ICTF site.

[Info. from *Long Beach Press-Telegram* via Michael Palmer]

### UP PLAN FOR EXPANDING INTERMODAL YARD

Union Pacific wants to increase the capacity at its near-dock Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) north of the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports by adding, among other things, 14 additional acres, five new working tracks and a new access gate, according to the local reports. The railroad also plans to purchase 39 rail-mounted, electric, wide-span gantry cranes and to eliminate 73 diesel-powered yard tractors and 10 diesel-powered rubber-tired gantry cranes.

UP unveiled its 90-page plan at a meeting of the ICTF Joint Powers Authority board. The two ports own the ICTF under a joint powers agreement and lease it to the railroad. The proposed ICTF modernization would more than double throughput capacity from the current average of 725,000 containers per year to about 1.5 million, according to the railroad, while decreasing the facility's operational footprint from 233 acres to 177.

The 14 additional acres would be for construction of a new Western Alameda Street gate. Union Pacific says it would fund the majority, if not all, of the project's costs.

UP says that if approved, the changes would reduce truck-id-

ling and dwell time, and that the new gate would reduce traffic impacts at the Alameda Street gate. Also, the surrounding community would benefit due to decreased particulate matter and greenhouse gas emissions.

The \$300-million modernization project was rejected last June for failing to adequately address key environmental impacts tied to the goals of the Clean Air Action Plan. One of the reasons for the previous rejection was UP's response to pollution from drayage trucks serving the facility. The railroad said that if it gets permission to proceed by the end of 2008, it might be able to complete the project by the end of 2011. [Info. from *Railway Age* via Lindsay Smith]

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

##### National Train Day Celebration at LAUS

Amtrak will celebrate its first national Train Day on May 10, 2008, at Los Angeles Union Station, as well as Chicago Union Station, Washington Union Station, and Penn Station.

During the day visitors may take part in a variety of activities including live performances, photography exhibits, trip planning, children's activities, VIP appearances and trip giveaways scheduled throughout that day. At LAUS actor and recording artist, Drake Bell, will perform a free concert at 2:30 p.m., in the station's historic ticket concourse.

Selected organizations supporting National Train Day include

Angels Baseball, California Department of Transportation, California State Railroad Museum, Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, Fillmore & Western Railway, Grand Canyon Railway, Hearst Castle® - A California State Park, Key Holidays, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Metro), Los Angeles Dodgers®, Oakland Museum of California, San Diego Chargers, San Diego Zoo® and San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park®, San Francisco 49ers, San Francisco Giants, Santa Barbara Car Free Project, and *Wheel of Fortune*.

Take a *Pacific Surfliner*, Metrolink Antelope Valley or San Bernardino line, or Metro Gold Line train to LAUS for the event and avoid traffic and parking problems!

##### Purchase Amtrak Guest Rewards Points

Amtrak Guest Rewards® (AGR) members can now purchase points to add to reward points they earn through the purchase of Amtrak travel. Purchased points can be used by the AGR member to increase their account balance to get the points needed for their next reward, or for use by another AGR member.

AGR members can purchase up to 10,000 points per year in increments of 500 points for themselves. They may purchase like amounts as gifts for any number of persons. The price is \$0.275 per point. There is a \$15.00 per transaction processing fee in non-promotional timeframes. The transaction processing fee is being waived for purchases made before May 31, 2008.

A complete description of the Buy Points program can be found by accessing the Earn Rewards link on the Amtrak home page and then clicking on Hot Deals on the Amtrak Guest Rewards page.

Amtrak Vacations 2008-2009 Rail Travel Brochure

The Amtrak Vacations 2008-2009 Rail Travel brochure is

now available. The 40-page brochure features more than 40 destinations in the United States and Canada and includes helpful hints for travelers planning a vacation including maps highlighting available destinations, discounts available on rail fares, onboard accommodations and dining options.

To request copies of the 2008-2009 Rail Travel brochure, log onto AmtrakVacations.com or contact Amtrak's travel agent reservation center at 1-866-3-AMTRAK.

#### INTERCITY TRAINS Southwest Chief

##### Denver-Raton Thruway Motor Coach Service

Effective April 1, 2008, the Denver-Raton Thruway motor coach connection to the *Southwest Chief*, Tr. Nos. 3 and 4, was restored. In mid-November 2007 the motor coach connection was changed to Denver-Albuquerque.

Denver-Raton Thruway Bus No. 8603 connects with Tr. No. 3. It departs Denver Union Station at 5:40 a.m. with stops at Colorado Springs (7:10 a.m.), Pueblo (8:10 a.m.), and arrives at Raton at 10:15 a.m. Raton-Denver Thruway Bus No. 8604 connects with Tr. No. 4. It departs Raton at 5:30 p.m., with stops at Pueblo (7:10 p.m.), Colorado Springs (8:05 p.m.), and arrives at Denver Union Station at 9:35 p.m.

##### Coast Starlight

Beginning with its April 15 departure from Los Angeles, the *Coast Starlight* was to resume operation as a full-service (sleepers, diner, lounge, and coaches) train to Klamath Falls, Ore.

Beginning with its departure from Seattle on April 16 the *Starlight* was to resume operation as far as Eugene, Ore. Its consist would be coaches and a *Sightseer* lounge.

A bus bridge would operate between Klamath Falls and Eugene via Chemult.

Also on April 16, the bus connection from Klamath Falls to the *Empire Builder* (Tr. No. 28) at Pasco, Wash. was to resume operation.

#### WESTERN CORRIDORS

##### Capitol

In late May/early June, Union Pacific will upgrade track infrastructure (primarily railroad ties and bridges) between Martinez and Suisun/Pairfield, installing approximately 40,000 new wood ties at their own expense. This is the second installment of a multi-year track upgrade project between Oakland and Sacramento.

During the course of the track work, some morning and early afternoon *Capitol Corridor* trains will not operate between Martinez and Suisun/Pairfield. Instead, connecting buses will handle passengers between those two stations, and trains will operate on the remainder of the route on a modified schedule. Early morning and late afternoon/evening trains should not be affected. At this point, the modified schedule for the affected trains is still being worked out. More information will be announced when it becomes available.

On the weekend of March 29-30, 2008, the *Capitol Corridor* operated a modified train schedule and provided bus-bridges for ten weekend trains, whose train schedules were altered. The *Capitol Corridor* put the service alterations in place during the period to give UP construction workers time to do necessary track work.

On those days, UP upgraded and replaced track inside the

Oleum Tunnel between Richmond and Martinez. This was part of a multi-year track upgrade project between Oakland and Sacramento.

#### P-42 TRACTION MOTOR TROUBLES SOLVED

Over the last 16 months, Amtrak has experienced numerous traction motor failures in its P-42 fleet, resulting in many train delays, cancellations, and, in some instances, stranded passengers.

The failures were caused by faulty pinion-end bearing in motors built by GE in 2006 and 2007. A bearing failure prevents the motor's armature from turning, which ultimately results in a locked axle. A new bearing has been designed and, by mid-March, 200 new motors have been delivered and installed with no hearing-related failures.

[Info from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

#### URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL RIDERSHIP

	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
February 2008				
Weekday Ave.	129,521	73,986	35,662	19,541
Saturday Ave.	87,154	47,886	20,883	12,812
Sunday Ave.	73,217	41,795	16,950	10,016
Monthly Total	3,361,425	1,912,432	900,230	501,672

#### BARRIER GATES

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board on March 6 approved a 10-year, \$46-million lease contract with Cnhic Transportation Systems, Inc. to install barrier gates on the Red Line, Purple Line and selected light rail stations. The move is an effort to prevent fare evasion, provide for seamless travel, and improve transit station security.

Installation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant system should take 18 to 24 months to complete. Metro also will seek ways to offset costs through state bond monies and Department of Homeland Security funding.

Currently, Metro operates a barrier-free "honor system." The agency loses \$5.5 million per year due to fare evasion. Overall, Metro has found a 5 percent fare evasion rate across its rail lines. The new gating system could recover \$3-6 million annually to offset these losses as well as realize significant annual savings on fare inspector costs.

Barrier gates are also a key component of Metro's emerging regional Transit Access Pass (TAP) program. TAP is an automated, electronic regional fare collection system that will create a multimodal, multi-operator fare system for L.A. County transit riders.

A total of 379 fare gates will be installed on all subway and selected light rail stations, including the yet-to-be-completed Mariachi, Soto and Atlantic stations on the Gold Line Eastside extension.

"Metro remains the only subway operator in the country to operate a barrier-free system," said Yvonne B. Burke, Metro Board member. "That freedom has come as a significant cost to the agency's bottom line as a result of fare scofflaws. This initiative will pay for itself, makes TAP possible, and further hardens our system to potential security threats."

Additional video surveillance cameras will be installed at all gate entrances, and attendants will be on hand to respond to

situations or assist patrons where needed.

#### EXPO LIGHT RAIL LINE

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority board has approved an additional \$7 million to fund a ninth new station at Trousdale Parkway near USC, said Joel Sandberg, director of engineering and construction for the Expo Construction Authority. The Trousdale station was not part of the original plan.

Sandberg and Angela Winston, Metro's government and community relations representative co-hosted a March 17th public event. Lou Edwards, a retired utility mechanic, said he thinks officials should consider expanding the three planned park and ride lots near the line, expected to offer a total of 1,500 parking spaces to Expo riders.

Damien Goodmon, a critic of the planned at-grade crossing at Farmdale Avenue, near Dorsey High School in South L.A., said he supports grade separation there because of safety concerns. "The main outstanding issue is with the pedestrian issues at Dorsey," agreed Glenn Striegler, an environmental assessment coordinator with the Los Angeles Unified School District. "The main thing we want to see is reducing the conflict between pedestrians, the light rail and cars. I think grade separation would be the best thing to do."

The California Public Utilities Commission is performing an environmental study on options for the Dorsey crossing, said Winston, and expects to hold hearings soon, though no timeline has been set.

A future parking area is being cleared at National and Washington boulevards, the planned terminus for Phase 1 of the project. The terminus will be elevated. Previous plans called for an interim, at-grade station there until funding for an above-grade stop could be secured, said Sandberg, but the California Transportation Commission recently approved the \$54 million needed for the permanent station.

A 61-inch-diameter water main has been reburied from 13 feet to 42 feet below the ground near the Figueroa Street/Exposition Boulevard intersection so future trains will travel four feet above it as they swing past the University of Southern California.

The light rail line, scheduled to open in 2010, will connect Downtown Los Angeles and Culver City, traveling along Metro's Exposition right-of-way. Approximately 8.6-miles long, the line will feature nine new stations, with an estimated travel time under 30 minutes.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

#### EXPO LINE PHASE 2

Following extensive analysis of the nine alternatives that came out of the scoping meetings last March, the Expo Authority has narrowed down the routes and modes that will move forward through the environmental process for further analysis. These include light rail transit (LRT) on the Exposition right-of-way (ROW), LRT on Venice/Sepulveda (then connecting with the ROW), and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the ROW. In addition, Transportation Systems Management Improvements and a No-Build option will also be evaluated.

As the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) document is developed for the remaining alternatives, the Phase 2 team will

be looking at grade separations, station locations, urban landscaping and bike routes in much greater detail. Public Comment on the DEIS/DEIR is scheduled for Fall 2008, along with adoption of the locally preferred alternative. Circulation of the Final EIS/Final EIR is set for Fall 2009.

#### GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Construction is approximately 78 percent complete. Over 2.7 million work hours have occurred since the start of construction in July 2004, and without an accident requiring a single day-away from work. Significant progress has been made in the delivery and installation of the Traction Power Substations and the installation of catenary poles and wires along 3rd Street.

The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension Project is on-time and within budget.

#### PHASE TWO

Rapid transit in the form of light rail could be coming to El Monte, Rosemead, or Whittier – but probably not anytime soon. Metro held a series of meetings in April to get reactions to 17 alternatives for a line that would go east from the Atlantic Station in East Los Angeles. However, Metro officials concede they have no money to build a line. In addition, the 80-square-mile area that includes 13 cities, is in competition with three other sectors of Los Angeles County for a light rail project. Officials say they are beginning the study in case money should become available.

“We want to make sure there are planning documents when the money starts flowing, so we’re not scrambling around starting the planning and studying. Then we could miss the boat,” said Kimberly Yu, MTA project manager. The goal of the meetings is to get a consensus in favor of one route, Yu said.

Yu said Metro staff is expected to go to its board in August with a final recommendation. Fourteen of the 17 alternatives end in Whittier. Of the other three, one ends in El Monte and two end in Industry. Once the MTA decides on a favored alternative, an environmental impact report would be done, Yu said.

In Whittier, the consensus appears to be in favor of a light rail line as long as it comes via Santa Fe Springs on Washington Boulevard to the Uptown area. Some other local reactions:

“I think it’s wonderful. We’d be a destination. We seem to be out of the loop of the bigger transits. We don’t have a tremendous amount of continuous traffic through Uptown.”

– Robert Ruiz, *president of the Whittier Uptown Association*

“It would be excellent. You would get people coming to El Monte to stop and shop.”

– El Monte Mayor *Ernie Gutierrez*

“I’d definitely oppose it if it was going to go down Beverly Boulevard. I’d sure have a lot of questions if they wanted to go to Whittier Boulevard. Can you imagine the economic loss during construction?”

– Whittier Councilman *Bob Henderson*

“In viewing the line coming down Third Street in East Los Angeles, there’s the question of whether it’s going to improve or create more disruption. It’s a difficult call to make at this point.”

*Montebello Mayor Bill Molinar*

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

The Portland City Council made clear in mid-March that it

would be unlikely to support a new Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia River if Vancouver proves unwilling to join the light rail revolution. Although they stopped short of calling light rail a “make or break” element of the proposed \$4.2 billion Columbia River Crossing project, council members underscored strong support for rail lines over buses for mass transit. Light rail has been a political flashpoint between Portland and its northern neighbors since 1995, when Clark County voters rejected their part of a light rail plan by more than a 2-1 ratio.

It appears that next year voters in the C-Tran transit district, covering much of Clark County, will be asked to approve a sales tax increase to cover rail operations on the Washington side. Even if voters turn it down, Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard said the state and federal bridge builders should ensure the structure would accommodate light rail later.

The topic dominated the council’s first public discussion of the Columbia River Crossing, a plan to replace the six-lane I-5 spans with a set of bridges and highway interchanges. During a 60-day public comment period, state highway officials will ask the public whether it would prefer one of five alternatives: build nothing, build a supplemental bridge alongside the current bridge, with bus rapid transit; build a supplemental bridge with a light rail line; build a new bridge with bus rapid transit; build a new bridge with light rail.

The comment period will start when the Oregon and Washington highway departments publish a draft environmental impact statement, not due until mid-May. According to recent projections, replacing the bridge alone and doing nothing else – will just attract more cars. Congestion by 2030 would still be an impossible eight hours a day. Only by applying a toll and offering high-capacity transit does the bridge truly pay off for the region by reducing congestion below current levels

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

#### STEAM ENGINES OF PORTLAND, OREGON

The Brooklyn Roundhouse in Portland, Oregon, is almost completely filled with three huge steam locomotives – massive reminders of the golden age of rail travel that ended around 50 years ago with the introduction of diesel-powered haulers. Two of the engines have been completely restored and still run.

The Southern Pacific 4449 and the Spokane, Portland & Seattle 700 were both out earlier in December 2007, hauling passenger cars around Portland and Vancouver, Wash. The third locomotive, the Oregon Railroad & Navigation 197, is undergoing a complete restoration, with its massive boiler stripped to bare metal and its cab resting outside the building.

The three locomotives are owned by the city of Portland. They were donated to Portland Parks & Recreation by the railroad companies that owned them in the 1950s.

It is not unusual for a city to own half-century-old steam locomotives. Many obsolete ones were donated to municipal governments over the years. But, according to Doyle McCormack, president of the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation, as well as other foundation members, few cities own a working one – let alone two or three.

The three locomotives had been on display in Southeast Portland’s Oaks Amusement Park for decades before the idea of restoring them took hold. The first project was inspired by the



nation's bicentennial celebration in 1976. Two years earlier, a group of local rail buffs came up with the idea of restoring the SP 4449 and having it tour the country. By locating parts across the country and making those that could not be found, the newly formed American Freedom Train Foundation sent the locomotive around the country in a red, white and blue paint scheme as the 1976 Bicentennial Freedom Train.

The locomotive moved to its current home in 1981, where it soon was joined by the SP&S 700 in 1986. After that locomotive was restored, the OR&N 197 was hauled over from Oaks Amusement Park in 1996. Its renovation is expected to take several more years, and probably will take place at a different location.

So far, all of the expenses have been paid by nonprofit organizations created to support each locomotive. Although the labor has been donated, the organizations have raised tens of thousands of dollars each year for replacement parts and fuel.

Fund-raising events have included three annual Holiday Express runs, the most recent of which took place between Dec. 7 and Dec. 16. Although no other excursions are scheduled, discussions are underway for additional runs in the coming year. For information – or to donate to the locomotive fund – contact the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation at P.O. Box 42443; Portland, OR 97242; or visit the Web site orh.org.

#### SOUTHERN PACIFIC 4449

The only remaining operable "Streamlined" locomotive of the art deco era, SP 4449 was built in 1941 and pulled the *Coast Daylight* train from Los Angeles to San Francisco until 1955.

Manufactured by Lima Locomotive Works; Type 4-8-4 GS-4 Northern; Dimensions approximately 110 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 16 feet tall; Weight 432 tons; Boiler pressure 300 psi; 5,000 horsepower; Driver wheels 80 inches diameter; Top speed in excess of 100 mph; Information from Friends of SP 4449 Inc., P.O. Box 42486, Portland, OR 97242, www.sp.4449.com

#### SPOKANE, PORTLAND & SEATTLE 700

One of the largest steam locomotives operable today, the SP&S 700 was built in 1938 and spent its entire life operating in the Columbia River Gorge to Pasco and Spokane, Wash., and connected Portland to Chicago with links to the Northern Pacific and Great Northern Railroads. After being retired to Oaks Amusement Park, it was restored to operating condition by the all-volunteer Pacific Railroad Preservation Association.

Manufactured by Baldwin Locomotive Works; Type 4-8-4 Northern Pacific; Dimensions are approximately 111 feet long, 10 feet wide, and 17 feet tall; Weight 440 tons; Boiler pressure 260 psi; 5,000 Horsepower; Drive wheels 77 inches diameter; Top speed in excess of 80 mph; Information from PRPA, P.O. Box 2851, Portland, OR 97208-2851; www.sps700.org/prpa.html

#### OREGON RAILROAD & NAVIGATION 197

Built in 1905, the OR&N 197 served Portland commerce for more than 50 years before being retired to Oaks Amusement Park in 1958. It was moved to the Brooklyn Roundhouse in 1996, where it is undergoing a complete restoration by the all-volunteer Friends of the OR&N 197.

Manufactured by Baldwin Locomotive Works; Type 4-6-2 Pacific; Dimensions of approximately 79 feet long; Weight of 200 tons; Boiler pressure of 200 psi; 2,500 Horsepower; Drive

wheels of 76 inches diameter. Information from FOR&N, c/o Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation, P.O. Box 42443; Portland, OR 97242, ornl97.org

[Info. from *Portland Tribune* via Dr. Helen Marie Paulus]

#### BNSF SETS MONTHLY COAL RECORD IN MARCH

BNSF loaded a monthly record 23.9 million tons of coal in the Powder River Basin (PRB), including Wyoming and Montana mines, in March, breaking the previous record of 23.7 million tons set in November 2007. The PRB total includes a monthly record 14.6 million tons loaded by mines on the 103-mile Joint Line in Wyoming; the previous record of 14.2 million tons was set in January of this year.

During the first three months of this year, BNSF loaded a total of 69.0 million tons of coal in the PRB, up 5.4 million tons, or 8.6 percent, from the 63.6 million tons loaded during the first three months of last year.

Large-scale construction projects planned by some mines in April are expected to affect coal train loadings on the Joint Line and result in substantially reduced PRB coal loadings in April. [Info. from BNSF News via Charles Varney]

#### CENTRAL OREGON & PACIFIC RAILROAD

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

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

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

#### FORMER PACIFIC ELECTRIC TOLUCA YARD

A \$70 million, multifamily housing project, formerly known as Northwest Gateway, is scheduled to open by April on the site of the former Pacific Electric Toluca Yard at Second St. and Lucas Ave. The five-story complex will include 275 studio, one- and two-bedroom and penthouse apartments between 527 and 1,820 square feet. Included are many amenities and two levels of underground parking.

#### 3751 STEAM LOCOMOTIVE SPECIAL

On Sunday, June 1, 2008, the Central Coast Railway Club and the Pacific Locomotive Association will present a historic train trip behind the magnificent ex-Santa Fe 3751 Steam Locomotive from Los Angeles Union Station to San Diego with intermediate stops at Fullerton and Irvine.

Tickets and information are available at the Central Coast Railway Club site at <http://www.goldenstaterails.com/>



View from 1st Street LRT Guideway to West Portal is seen with construction of the track guideway and the Pico/Aliso Station under way. Photo by Metro



Track and guideway along the center of 1st Street between Lorena and Indiana will be completed in April. Photo by Metro



The West Portal was to have removal of the temporary concrete street decking begun in late March 2008, followed by street restoration. Photo by Metro



Tracks and guideway at the 1st and Indiana intersection was scheduled for completion by mid-April 2008. Photo by Metro



Track installation and guideway have been completed at the 1st and Lorena intersection. Deck removal and street restoration at the East Portal will start in June 2008. Photo by Metro



The Indiana Station and site work along the east side of Indiana progresses with track installation at the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Indiana Street. Photo by Metro