

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

NOVEMBER 2009

MASSIVE RAIL EXPANSION PLANS

Specific alternative plans are out for \$2.19 billion worth of new bridges, tunnels, and right-of-way widening along the existing rail tracks between Los Angeles and Anaheim. Communities that are now bisected by side-by-side tracks would see six or seven parallel train tracks traverse their cities by 2020, with some of them elevated on towers or depressed in trenches, according to plans released October 2 by state planners.

On October 2 attention was focused on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and other dignities, when they announced they were filing requests for federal high-speed train dollars to match the \$9.95 billion in bond funds pledged by California voters in 2008. But the bigger news may have been the release of specific plans by rail builders to wedge in two 120-mph rail tracks atop the busiest rail corridor in the West Coast, already overburdened by multiple daily Metrolink, Amtrak and freight movements.

Rail planners released preliminary alternatives to be studied in an environmental review, before tracks are laid between 2012 and 2020. They propose using separate pairs of rail tracks for the new high-speed trains, for the existing Amtrak Surfliner and Metrolink commuter trains, and for freight operations.

Amtrak and Metrolink trains would need special equipment to share tracks with freight trains and all those engines would need to be using computerized train dispatch systems that have not been approved by the Federal Railroad Administration, the study notes. If such sharing is not possible, seven separate tracks would be necessary: two for high-speed, three for freight, and two for existing Amtrak/Metrolink service.

The area around Los Angeles Union Station, already a jumble of subways, rail tracks and elevated light-rail trains, would get six new tracks high above the 101 Freeway. These new bridges would carry existing passenger trains and the new high-speed service south from the station, over the freeway, and then east towards the Los Angeles River, then on towards either Anaheim or new tracks to San Diego via Riverside.

The 80-year-old Union Station would see new passenger platforms built 30 feet above the existing tracks. at a cost of nearly \$600 million, and a pedestrian concourse of some sort built above that. The alternative of building a deep, subterranean station, below the new Red Line subway station, would cost \$2.3 billion and was rejected as impractical.

The study says mixing high-speed trains in with existing passenger rail would slow them down so much that it would not be practical, and that one high-speed train needs the same amount of empty track that nine existing trains occupy. As a result, the study says using separate sets of double tracks for high-speed, freight, and existing passenger tracks is the only feasible alternative.

The plan envisions adding four tracks to the two existing,

ground-level tracks between Los Angeles and Fullerton. In some places, four train tracks – two sets each for Metrolink and the high-speed rail – would be placed on elevated towers above the existing double tracks, which could be dedicated for freight trains.

A particular problem for rail planners are areas near the San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers, where large and important rail freight yards, freeways and other key infrastructures are located. Tall fly-over bridges are being studied at those locations. Plans have not been released yet for the tracks north of Glendale.

The elevated tracks north of Union Station would traverse a brand-new state park, and one LA city councilman is flashing an amber warning light. "I have some concerns about how the proposed rail route will impact our neighborhoods, including along the Los Angeles River, especially since we have invested more than \$80 million to provide new parks at the Cornfield and Taylor Yard," Ed Reyes said October 2.

Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle, who is also the High Speed Rail Authority board chairman, said the proposed project would create nearly 130,000 jobs as soon as ground was broken. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

VANCOUVER, B. C.

by JACK WHITMEYER

The photographs in the October issue were taken by Jack Whitmeyer on June 11 on an annual trip to see relatives in Vancouver, British Columbia. The *Coast Starlight* arrives in Seattle around 9:30 p.m., requiring an overnight stay there in order to take Amtrak's *Cascade* at 8:40 a.m. to continue north by rail to Vancouver.

Of particular interest to those visiting Vancouver by Air is the soon to be in service *Canada Line*, a rapid transit rail line extending from the Vancouver International Airport in Richmond to downtown Vancouver, connecting with the *Skytrain*. They were test-operating the equipment and familiarizing personnel on my trip. Unlike *Skytrain*, the equipment has conventional traction motors fed from a third rail.

The Airport Terminal is across the road from the busy air terminal and is elevated through Richmond, passing over the Fraser River on a cable-stayed bridge similar to the one at New Westminster. Maintenance facilities and shop are at the south end of the bridge. Upon entering Vancouver and passing over Marine Drive, the line enters a subway and follows underground along Cambie Street to Downtown Vancouver.

The rail line is complete, but the stations have yet to be finished. Opening date was expected to be in September. This, along with much other construction, is making Vancouver ready for the 2010 Winter Olympics.



WHEEL CLICKS

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Nov. 6 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Nov. 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m. to
 21, 28 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: Nov. 28.
 Nov. 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 21, 28 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Day: 7, 21; Extra Day: 14, 28.
 Nov. 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Dec. 4 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **Pacific Railroad**
 Fri. **Museum**, 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Dec. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m. to
 19, 26 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 Sats.
 Dec. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 19, 26 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. Day: 5, 19; Extra Day: 12, 26.

Dec. 11 **PRS HOLIDAY PARTY**, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra
 Fri. Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave.,
 Alhambra. SEE FLYER FOR DETAILS.

MEETING PROGRAM **by RUSS DAVIES**

November 13: We're going traveling again with young **Matt Wiles**, this time on **VIA in Canada!** Matt will share his digital images from his June 2009 journey from **Toronto to Vancouver**. Among other things we'll see and hear, Matt will give us his views on how **VIA and Amtrak compare**. **Be there, and bring digital news briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT **by VIRGINIA GRUPP**

Late renewals were assigned membership numbers 442 and 447. At the Board Meeting on October 2, Dennis Steinert, Robert Heldenbrand, Harold Leacock, and Charles Hepperle were voted into PRS with membership numbers 443 through 446, respectively.

ANGELS FLIGHT **by KEN RUBEN**

On Saturday, October 10, 2009, the author and several members of Southern California Transit Advocates had the privilege of riding a preview trip on the Angels Flight Railway, which has been out of service for about eight years. The trip was arranged by John H. Welborne, President of the Angels Flight Railway Foundation and SO.CA.TA Recording Secretary Kimberleigh Richards.

Our group rode one of the two cars, *Sinai*, for two round trips. The other car, *Olivet*, was at the other end of the cable for balance. It was a beautiful Saturday and it was special to view and ride this long standing and missing attraction of Los Angeles.

The late David Cameron, Past President of PRS, and the author were the last two passengers on Angels Flight on May 18, 1969, on an arranged "last run" for the Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California. This was at the old location of 3rd and Hill Streets.

Angels Flight reopened at its present location on Hill Street between 3rd and 4th Streets in 1996. It was later shut down due to a fatal accident in 2001. Since the resolution of all accident claims in late 2006, the Railway's entire funicular operating system has been replaced, a second safety cable has been added, and track brakes have been installed on each of the two cars.

The private, nonprofit Angels Flight Railway Foundation has paid for all this work through its successful \$3.5 million Campaign for Angels Flight. To close out the campaign, the Foundation still needs \$248,163. Donations will be welcomed.

The restoration work, including acceptance and inspection testing, was completed last spring. The Railway continues to await the California Public Utilities Commission's review of associated paper work. When the final sign-off is obtained, the public no doubt will throng to the reopened Angels Flight to enjoy it as much as we enjoyed our special ride on October 10. As we left the facility, Angels Flight Railway officials reiterated to us that the reopening should be soon.

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR-EAST

The Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE)

proposes to eliminate four at-grade railroad crossings along the Union Pacific RR in the City of San Gabriel at Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue, and San Gabriel Boulevard. The project site is generally contained within the Alhambra Subdivision of the UPRR right-of-way. Although the length of the project site is approximately 2.2 miles, the actual trench that would be constructed (including retaining walls and other features) would be 1.4 miles and would generally be bounded by Alhambra Wash on the west and Rubio Wash on the east.

Currently the 2.2-mile stretch of railroad has no grade separations between the railroad and vehicles or pedestrians. The proposed project would lower the existing railroad from its current at-grade condition into a trench. Although the actual trench would be located within the City of San Gabriel, construction activities and some limited track work would take place in the Cities of Alhambra and Rosemead and the County of Los Angeles.

The four grade separations will be achieved by lowering the track under these crossings in a trench and constructing bridge structures over the railroad at each crossing location. The existing track depression through Alhambra would be continued eastward through the City of San Gabriel. The rail line would return to grade where it crosses Rubio Wash, east of San Gabriel Boulevard. It is anticipated that Ramona Street, Mission Road, and Del Mar Avenue would remain at their current elevations. San Gabriel Boulevard would be raised slightly and the rail line depressed to accomplish the grade separation. New permanent drainage culverts or bridge structures would also be provided at the Alhambra Wash and the Rubio Wash. A "shoofly" or temporary track will be provided on the north side of the trench during construction to maintain railroad operations.

Project construction is expected to begin in 2011 and continue through 2014. The Mission Road grade separation would be constructed first, followed by the grade separations at San Gabriel Boulevard, Ramona Street and Del Mar Avenue, respectively. All intersections, with the exception of San Gabriel Boulevard, would be closed for a period of three to six months while the bridge structures are constructed at the crossing. No two crossings would be constructed simultaneously and as a result, no two intersections would be closed at the same time. Additionally, San Gabriel Boulevard would remain open with one travel lane in each direction while the San Gabriel crossing is constructed.

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during August 2009 were 39,802, which was a decrease from the previous month of 1 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide passholders on Amtrak during August were 1,879, which was a decrease from the previous month of 9 percent.

VIDEO CAMERAS ON LOCOMOTIVES

Metrolink engineers are now being recorded by video cameras in all of the commuter rail agency's locomotives. Installation of the cameras comes in response to the 2008 rail crash in Chatsworth that apparently involved a distracted engineer. "Metrolink becomes the first rail system in the entire nation, passenger or freight, to install and operate these cam-

eras," Metrolink Board Chairman Keith Millhouse said at a news conference October 5.

The purpose of the recorders is to ensure that engineers comply with bans on cellphones, text messaging and unauthorized passengers – issues that arose during the federal investigation of the Chatsworth crash. Two cameras face the engineer and a third is pointed toward the tracks. The recordings are kept in "crashworthy" metal boxes inside the locomotive, Metrolink officials said.

It cost \$1 million to install cameras in all 52 of Metrolink's locomotives. They will also be standard equipment in 57 new "lead cars" – passenger cars that lead commuter trains when the locomotive is pushing from behind.

The recorders store 96 hours of images, but new data will be recorded over the information if it is not downloaded.
[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

On August 31, Caltrain made good on its promise to eliminate eight of its midday trains, in an attempt to close a \$2.7 million budget gap. Those trains getting the axe were southbound Train Nos. 240, 244, 248, and 252, and northbound Train Nos. 241, 245, 249, and 253.

Of the remaining 90 trains, 34 will be equipped with two bike cars. Caltrain has made public which trains will have two bike cars, and signs are now posted on the nose of locomotives and cab cars, indicating such. Hopefully, this will ease some of the frustration bicyclists sometimes face when trying to board a train.

A project to further increase bicycle capacity on trains is nearly complete. When finished, bicycle capacity on gallery cars will increase from 32 to 40 bike slots and from 16 to 24 bike slots on Bombardier cars.

Caltrain has completed a project to install regulator valves on its locomotive and cab car horns. This will allow engineers to regulate the volume of the horns, rather than having to blow them at full volume all the time. Caltrain officials are still working to see if the horns can be relocated back to below the car body and still conform to Federal Railroad Administration regulations, which require that horn decibel levels be between 96 and 110 decibels.

Meanwhile, the cities of Burlingame and San Mateo have joined Atherton, Menlo Park, and Palo Alto in complaining about the noise of the horns. Residents say they have noticed little change since the horn regulators were installed and that their lives are being disrupted from early morning to late at night. Some residents have even considered moving.

After years of eliminating grade crossings, Caltrain opened a new one on October 7. The crossing is Mission Bay Drive in San Francisco. Located at approximately milepost 0.7, near CP Common, the crossing will provide access to the Mission Bay residential neighborhoods, and eventually, the UCSF Mission Bay campus.

The crossing was originally going to be named Common Street and has actually been in place for about five years. It was installed during the Baby Bullet improvement project in 2004, and though never activated until now, engineers were still required to sound the horn because it was often used by pedes-

trains and trespassers.

Caltrain and the California High Speed Rail Authority have agreed for the next year to split any costs linked to the project that will allow high-speed trains to pass through the Caltrain corridor between San Jose and San Francisco. The deal will cover an estimated \$6.68 million worth of planning, engineering, and public outreach that staff from the two agencies will work on through the end of June 2010.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger requested \$4.7 billion in federal stimulus money October 2 to help build an 800-mile bullet train system from San Diego to Sacramento. The state's application for the grant calls for some \$5 billion in state, local and private matching funds to help pay for the \$45 billion project.

Schwarzenegger told a news conference at Los Angeles Union Station that it was time for U.S. rail networks to achieve speeds reached by systems in Europe and Asia. California voters approved issuing \$9.95 billion in bonds to fund high-speed rail construction last November.

The application filed October 2 seeks more than half of an \$8 billion pot of stimulus money set aside for high-speed rail development across the country. Schwarzenegger said California deserved such a large chunk because it is farther along in planning than other states and is ready to break ground in 2011, a year earlier than federal guidelines call for.

California High Speed Rail Authority officials said the train network would generate 600,000 construction-related jobs while it was being planned and built and that it would create another 450,000 permanent jobs during its operation.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

Fiscal Year Ridership

Amtrak carried nearly 27.2 million passengers in Fiscal Year 2009, marking the second highest ridership total since the National Railroad Passenger Corporation started operations in 1971.

The 27,167,014 total passengers for the 12 months ending September 30, 2009, fell short of the all-time record of 28.7 million for Fiscal Year 2008, but exceeded the Fiscal Year 2007 total by 5.1 percent. Total ticket revenue for the Fiscal Year 2009 reached \$1.6 billion, a 5.8 percent decrease. For the Fiscal Year 2008 the total ticket revenue was \$1.7 billion.

Board of Directors Nominees

On Oct. 5, President Obama announced his intent to nominate the following individuals to the Amtrak Board of Directors.

Bert DiClemente. He is currently serving as the Vice President of CB Richard Ellis, Inc., which is the largest commercial real estate company in the world. He has been serving in this capacity since 2003.

Anthony R. Coscia. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The appointments require Senate confirmation.

Fall/Winter Timetable

The Amtrak Fall/Winter 2009/2010 became available at stations in mid-October. It became effective Oct. 26, 2009, and was posted online beginning on October 26.

In the east, schedules for the *Maple Leaf* and *Empire Service* and the *Keystone Service* return to the pages of the new timetable after an absence from the previous edition and have been adjusted to reflect now completed track work. Schedules for the *Acela Express* and *Northeast Regional* trains are not included due to anticipated and frequent schedule changes to accommodate ongoing track improvement projects in Connecticut and New Jersey. However, periodically updated wallet card schedules for *Acela Express* and *Northeast Regional* trains will be available in stations and at Amtrak.com under the "Routes" tab.

In the west, the schedule for both the west- and eastbound *Sunset Limited* have been reduced by about one hour and the southbound *Texas Eagle* schedule has been shortened by 30 minutes. Schedules on the *California Zephyr* have been reduced by one hour following the completion of track work performed by the Union Pacific Railroad.

Historical On-Time Performance

The September historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	September 2009	Last 12 Months
Sunset Limited	89.2%	87.6%
Texas Eagle	96.7%	83.7%
Southwest Chief	90.0%	87.0%
California Zephyr	78.3%	65.2%
Empire Builder	89.2%	76.7%
Coast Starlight	93.3%	97.5%
City of New Orleans	86.7%	84.4%
Pacific Surfliner	84.5%	84.1%
San Joaquin	85.6%	90.1%
Capitol Corridor	93.6%	92.2%
Amtrak Cascades	73.5%	71.6%
Hiawatha	83.3%	87.6%
Illinois Service	71.3%	72.7%
Missouri River Runner	94.2%	87.2%
Acela Express	89.2%	87.6%
Northeast Regional	86.4%	81.6%

BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages

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

Amtrak On-Time Performance	2009-10-12	
TRAINS	MTD OTP	YTD OTP
Long-Distance Trains	96%	88%
Short-Distance Trains	97%	95%
Pacific Surfliners	98%	98%

INTERCITY TRAINS

Sunset Limited

The *Sunset Limited* (Tr. No. 1/2) and *Texas Eagle* (Tr. Nos. 421/422) operate as a combined train between San Antonio and Los Angeles. However, fares for the same class of service can differ for each train between those cities. The reason for the difference in fares is because within the Amtrak computer system, each train is a separate entity.

In the Amtrak computer system there are: Tr. No. 1/2, the

Sunset (New Orleans–Los Angeles through cars); Tr. No. 21/22, the *Eagle* (Chicago–San Antonio cars); Tr. No. 321/322, the *Eagle* (Chicago–St. Louis cars); and Tr. No. 421/422, the *Eagle* (Chicago–San Antonio–Los Angeles setout coach and sleeping car).

When the *Eagle* departs from Chicago there is a coach designated as Tr. No. 321, another as Tr. 421, but Tr. 21 shows as sold out from Chicago to St. Louis indicating that seats are being blocked from sale in that car.

Following is a fare comparison for travel between those points on both trains as presented on the Amtrak reservations web site on Oct. 15, 2009.

One adult traveling from San Antonio to Los Angeles departing on October 17, 2009		
	Tr. No. 1	Tr. No. 421
Coach seat	\$131.00	\$256.00
Roomette	\$572.00	\$532.00
Bedroom	\$753.00	\$590.00

One adult traveling from Los Angeles to San Antonio departing on October 16, 2009		
	Tr. No. 2	Tr. No. 422
Coach Seat	\$256.00	\$164.00
Roomette	\$532.00	\$509.00
Bedroom	\$1021.00	\$786.00

Texas Eagle

On Oct. 4 the *Texas Eagle* was detoured via the Union Pacific Villa Grove and Pana Subdivisions in Illinois because of trackwork on its usual Springfield Subdivision route on Oct. 3 and 4. The *Eagle*, while operating on the main track, ran a red signal at the south end of the Villa Grove, Illinois, siding. The signal was red because a northbound UP freight train, the QNLCH 04, was lined into the siding. The *Eagle's* crew notified the dispatcher of the run-through. The dispatcher called the UP freight train which began stopping immediately. The freight train stopped about two miles from the already-stopped *Eagle*. The Amtrak and UP Pilot crew was taken out of service and a dog catch crew was called for both crews. The *Eagle* suffered a 4 hour and 44 minute delay due to the recrew.

California Zephyr

Beginning Oct. 10 the *California Zephyrs* (Tr. Nos. 5/6) departing from Chicago and Emeryville began operating on a new, permanent schedule.

Tr. No. 5 operates on its current schedule from Chicago to Salt Lake City. West of Salt Lake City, its new schedule is: Elko, 3:03 a.m.; Winnemucca, 5:40 a.m.; Reno, 8:36 a.m.; Truckee, 9:37 a.m.; Colfax, 11:48 a.m.; Roseville, 12:57 p.m.; Sacramento 2:13 p.m. Davis, 2:44 p.m.; Martinez, 3:26 p.m.; and its arrival at Emeryville at 4:10 p.m., one hour earlier.

Tr. No. 6 departs 40 minutes later from Emeryville, at 9:50 a.m., through Winnemucca. Between Elko and Denver its schedule is: Elko 10:11 p.m.; Salt Lake City, arriving at 3:45

a.m. and departing at 4:10 a.m.; Provo 5:15 a.m.; Helper 7:17 a.m.; Green River, 8:39 a.m.; Grand Junction, 11:03 a.m.; Glenwood Springs, 12:50 p.m.; Granby, 3:52 p.m.; Fraser-Winter Park, 4:30 p.m.; arriving in Denver 20 minutes earlier at 7:18 p.m. It departs from Denver 20 minutes earlier at 7:50 p.m. and operates 20 minutes earlier through to its arrival in Chicago at 3:30p.m.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Capitol

From Nov. 6 through Nov. 22 the Union Pacific railroad will be replacing bridges on its Martinez Subdivision between Martinez and Suisun-Fairfield, resulting in a single-track condition to accommodate the work. During that time weekday Tr. Nos. 526, 527, 533 and 534 will be canceled. No alternate transportation will be offered for the canceled trains. Other *Capitol Corridor* trains and their connecting buses will have minor schedule changes during the period. No weekend trains are canceled, but some trains and buses will have their schedules adjusted.

Cascades

Effective Oct. 1, Seattle-Vancouver *Thruway Bus* No. 8906 began departing from Seattle at 4:45 p.m., 45 minutes earlier. The reason for the schedule change is that the recently extended to Vancouver Tr. No. 516 is attracting passengers from Bus No. 8906. The earlier departure provides more separation between the bus and train.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Amtrak is using \$25 million in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to replace transformers and other electrical equipment — some of which date to before World War II — at 40 substations between New York and Washington, D.C.

In 2002 Amtrak embarked on a long-term program to upgrade and modernize 82 outdated substations along the Northeast Corridor. The need for the improvements was dramatically highlighted during a significant power failure and service disruption in May 2006 between New York and Washington, D.C. that left thousands of passengers stranded on trains.

Transformers in service for as long as 75 years are being removed and replaced with modern models that are more efficient, have less environmental impact, require reduced maintenance and provide increased reliability and redundancy. In addition, enhanced technology designed to self-monitor key substation operations is being installed to identify and alert technicians to potential issues before major problems arise. The electrical and installation work is being performed by Amtrak employees.

Amtrak also received additional ARRA funding that is helping to reduce the backlog of infrastructure projects required to bring the Northeast Corridor closer to a state of good repair, such as the replacement and rehabilitation of several bridges, the installation of thousands of new railroad ties, and enhancing stations for better access by disabled persons. All ARRA-funded projects are to be completed by February 2011.

Some Charlottesville and Washington Thruway Buses

Discontinued

Effective Oct. 1, 2009, Charlottesville-Washington, D.C. Thruway Bus No. 7476 and Washington, D.C.-Charlottesville

Thruway Bus No. 7490 were discontinued. The extension of Tr. Nos. 176, 156, 171, 147 and 145 from Washington, D.C. through Charlottesville to Lynchburg, Va. made the buses redundant because they operated on approximately the same schedule as the trains. Greyhound will continue to operate the buses, but Amtrak will no longer sell them, and they will no longer stop at the Charlottesville and Washington, D.C. Amtrak stations. Thruway Buses 7491 and 7492 will continue to operate.

Amtrak Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia has launched a new website for Virginia's rail travelers, AmtrakVirginia.com, with information on all Amtrak service in Virginia including the new *Northeast Regional* service that provides expanded transportation choices for travelers.

The AmtrakVirginia.com web page contains information or links to routes, stations, reservations and news. There is a train status and a fare finder link, also.

Amtrak Virginia has a Facebook page, also.

AMTRAK GUEST REWARDS DOUBLE POINTS PROMOTION

Now through December 19, 2009, Amtrak Guest Rewards (AGR) members will earn double points for every qualifying trip they take on any Amtrak route from coast to coast — and earn points twice as fast towards free travel and other rewards.

Guest Rewards members may earn double points on up to two qualifying trips per day — one roundtrip or two one-way trips. Travel on every Amtrak route and in all classes of service is eligible. To take advantage of the double points offer, passengers must be members of AGR and must first register to participate at AmtrakGuestRewards.com using registration code 91409 or by calling 1-800-307-5000, selecting option 2 and entering the registration code.

To receive the double points for travel, members should include their AGR membership number when making reservations to ensure they receive credit for all qualifying travel. Reservations may be made online at Amtrak.com or by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL.

AMTRAK INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS CONTRACT

Pasadena-based Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. has signed a contract with Amtrak to provide program management and construction management services for more than 100 infrastructure improvement projects (at over 360 locations) with the potential value in excess of \$560 million funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act economic-stimulus package.

Under the contract, Jacobs will manage, procure, and administer, in part or in full, the design and construction of projects such as maintenance facility upgrades, bridge replacements, track work, security enhancements, and various station improvements.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

LOS ANGELES HARBOR BOARD OKS PLAN

A \$144 million development that will change the face of Wilmington over the next decade was approved in June by the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners. The 94-acre

Wilmington Waterfront calls for a series of parks, shops, eateries and a 200-foot observation tower that will offer spectacular views of the working port and surrounding neighborhoods.

The first phase, set for completion in 2015, calls for building a 10-acre land bridge that would connect the development's northern area to a four-acre waterfront park. The public observation deck — designed to look like a large sail — will loom over the park, serving as a new local landmark.

Another green area, dubbed Avalon Triangle Park, will be built on the southeast corner of Harry Bridges and Avalon boulevards. Plans also call for building a Red Car Museum at Fries Avenue and West C Street, along with a nearby one-acre Railroad Park and 58,000 square feet of commercial development one block south of Harry Bridges Boulevard between Avalon Boulevard and Marine Avenue.

The project's second phase, set for completion in 2020, calls for connecting Wilmington to San Pedro with a bike path and an extended Red Car line. An additional six acres of park space will be built along the waterfront, with about 12,000 square feet set aside for restaurants and shops. About 150,000 square feet will be reserved for businesses interested in developing environmentally friendly "green" technologies that would be used at the port.

Efforts to redevelop Wilmington's waterfront began more than 20 years ago, when port officials launched a series of studies examining how the industrial neighborhood could be spruced up. That eventually led to the construction in 1996 of Banning's Landing Community Center on Water Street near Avalon Boulevard. "I'm actually very pleased in how Wilmington was able to navigate this process and come up with a unified decision to move this project along quickly," said Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, whose district includes the port.

In San Pedro, a series of designs have come and gone. The most recent plan calls for adding new harbors, expanding Ports O' Call Village and building two new cruise terminals near Cabrillo Beach. "Right now, my preference is to see the cruise ships stay where they currently are, because it brings a lot of business to the restaurants, and you lose all that when you move the cruises to the outer limits," Hahn said. "My main focus is that we see a grand promenade on the San Pedro waterfront. All the other elements are icing on the cake."

[Info. from *The Daily Breeze*]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

For a while, officials estimated that the six-mile line from Los Angeles Union Station to Atlantic Boulevard could open as early as June 2009. Now they are hoping for a November opening. That will still give the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) enough time to do testing and open the extension before the year is over, and a federal funding deadline arrives.

No one imagined what problems would be unleashed when workers added a layer of paint to the concrete at "cross-over" points where the light-rail trains could switch tracks. The coloring agent was made of iron oxide. And at intersections like 1st and Clarence streets in Boyle Heights it caused the painted

concrete to conduct an electrical current.

“It was sending out a false signal that the train was there,” said Dennis Mori, the Gold Line Eastside extension’s project manager. “When the weather got hot, it did it more... When we removed the painted concrete, the false signal disappeared.” As the MTA works to replace the painted concrete, the problem is just one reminder of the challenges faced in completing the light-rail system’s first leg into the Eastside.

The challenges have included fault lines miles underneath Soto Street and the unearthing of the skeletal remains of more than 108 people just outside Evergreen Cemetery. Most of the remains are believed to belong to Chinese laborers buried in a potter’s field in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Part of a school also had to be moved.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

EXPO LINE

While the Expo Line light-rail system from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City is about half finished, construction problems have pushed back completion of the project by another six weeks to almost a year. Expo officials said they had planned to open the 8.6-mile line in 2010, but parts of the route would not be completed until the latter part of 2011.

Officials attribute the additional six weeks of delay to the late completion of a bridge at Ballona Creek. Expo Chief Executive Richard Thorpe said there also have been complications involving sewer lines where the route crosses Jefferson Boulevard and La Brea Avenue.

The bulk of the delay has been attributed to the addition of a third aerial station that eliminated the need for an interim station, and a controversy over pedestrian safety at Dorsey High School and the Foshay Learning Center. The California Public Utilities Commission eventually required improvements to a pedestrian tunnel at Foshay and a pedestrian bridge at Dorsey.

EXPO LINE PHASE TWO

In February, Expo held three Public Hearings to obtain community input and receive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Over the past six months, the Phase 2 team has been working with agencies and stakeholders to address issues raised during the DEIR process. Three meetings in October, which were identical, provided an opportunity to share the latest finding before the Final Environmental Impact Report is finalized.

[Expo. info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

The MTA board voted on September 24 to approve a request for federal funding for two county rail projects – the Westside’s “Subway to the Sea” and a connector project that would link several existing lines – but a motion to include the 24-mile Gold Line Foothill Extension line in the request was withdrawn.

The regional connector in downtown Los Angeles will connect the Gold Line directly to several other lines, creating direct routes from Pasadena to Long Beach, Santa Monica and Los Angeles International Airport. MTA officials have said the connector could cut the commute to Long Beach by as much as 21 minutes.

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL FUNDING

Nearly 200 people, many of them representing engineering firms, turned out September 29 at a Gold Line Foothill Extension

Authority event where officials explained how companies could bid for work related to the extension project. What is wanted is a private contractor willing to put up \$100 million to \$150 million to expedite construction of the first segment of the 24-mile Gold Line extension to Claremont.

Authority officials had previously set a completion date of 2013 for the first phase of the rail line, but the agency lacks funding to ensure completion by that date. It is seeking to hire a contractor that can afford to finance the project up front, then receive reimbursement over time, officials announced. The downside would be that interest on the financing could ultimately cost the agency \$30 million, Extension Authority CEO Habib Balian said.

The authority has a commitment to receive up to \$875 million from Measure R funds, but the money will likely trickle in as annual allotments through 2019. The authority is also set to award a \$30 million contract for bridge work. The agency is asking for an up-front commitment of \$5 million from the contractor eventually selected to do that project.

Officials hope to break ground on the first phase of the extension by June. The first phase would extend the Gold Line from Pasadena to the Azusa/Glendora border.

[Gold Line Foothill info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

ANSALDOBREDA

The MTA awarded a contract September 24 to the Italian firm, AnsaldoBreda, for 100 additional light-rail cars, clearing the way for a new rail manufacturing plant that the company has promised to build with union labor in downtown Los Angeles.

Though the board was not permitted to weigh the possibility of local jobs in its decision, the 8-3 vote followed impassioned speeches from union workers who said many of their colleagues were out of work and losing their homes.

The negotiations dragged on for months because of the MTA staff’s frustration with the firm’s work under its base contract for 50 cars. In the new deal, AnsaldoBreda must reduce the weight of its cars, which are 6,000 pounds too heavy, and make them compatible with the rest of the fleet.

Art Leahy, the MTA’s chief executive, recommended against exercising the contract options. But just before the vote, AnsaldoBreda officials circulated an e-mail indicating that the firm’s parent company, Finmeccanica, would back AnsaldoBreda’s financial guarantees.

AnsaldoBreda has contracted with the green-building firm, Shangri-La Construction, to build a 240,000-square-foot manufacturing plant on a 14-acre parcel of city-owned land at 15th Street and Santa Fe Avenue. Villaraigosa’s new chief deputy mayor, Jay Carson, previously worked for Shangri-La on the project, but has recused himself from projects involving his former company.

CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT-RAIL CAR FACTORY

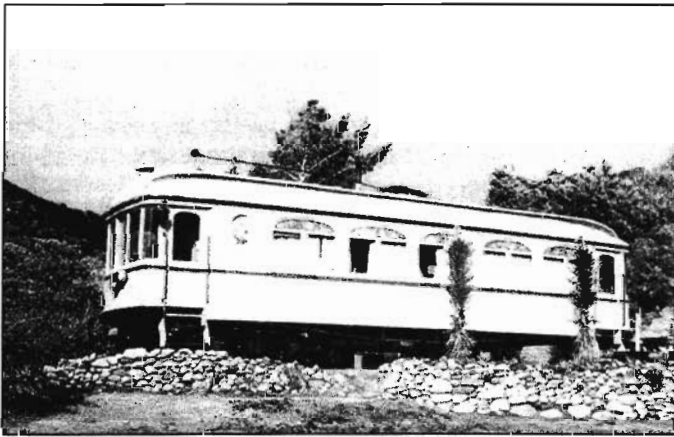
Italian rail-car maker AnsaldoBreda agreed to build a \$70-million plant as part of its successful bid to deliver 100 additional light-rail cars to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The MTA board – which includes Mayor of Los Angeles Antonio Villaraigosa – last week approved the \$300-million contract as an extension of an existing manufacturing agreement.

Construction of the rail facility will begin next summer at the

earliest and would take about a year, officials said. AnsaldoBreda has expectations of building 75 rail cars and refurbishing 36 more annually at the L.A. plant. However, the MTA contract is the firm's only order thus far for that plant, and the MTA expects AnsaldoBreda to produce just 12 cars a year for the transportation agency.

AnsaldoBreda officials said that by establishing a U.S.-based manufacturing plant, the firm expects to win contracts from local governments across the country and become a competitive bidder on high-speed rail contracts in California and elsewhere. The firm would pay \$906,000 in rent annually over the course of a 50-year lease on a city-owned site.

[AnsaldoBreda info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



The Descanso was one of Los Angeles Railway's funeral cars, which were in use when trolley lines served most of the city's cemeteries. It was built by L.A.Ry. in 1909 and was used until 1924, when auto hearses caused the end of the service. In 1940 the car was placed on display at Summit station at the top of Cajon Pass. It was used by Pacific Railroad Society until moved to Orange Empire Railway Museum. Descanso is the Spanish word for "rest" or "repose." Photo by James W. Walker, Jr.



Union Pacific Steam Locomotive 844 passing Baskin, Utah, in Echo Canyon as it returns to Cheyenne, Wyoming, after its Western Heritage Tour to California. Photo by Brian Black

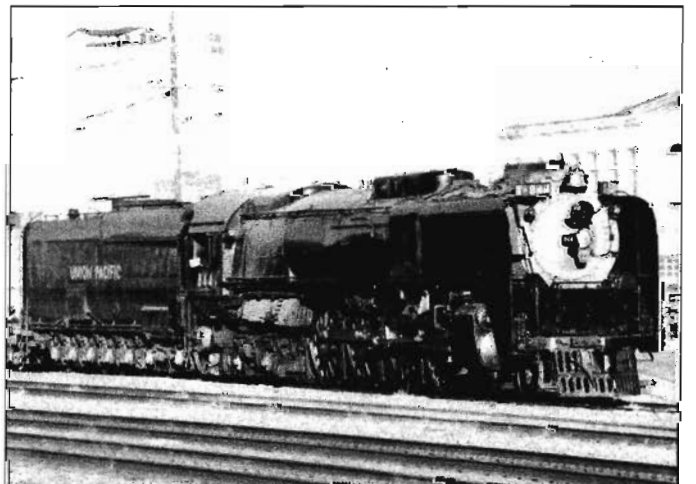


844 approaching the top of Peru Hill, before descending into Green River, Wyoming, where a service stop was made to inspect the engine and grease the rods. Photo by Brian Black



844 making 70 miles per hour as it passes Leroy, Wyoming, a point 27 miles east of Evanston, Wyoming.

Photo by Brian Black



844 basking in the morning sun as it awaits departure from Rock Springs, Wyoming on its final leg to its home base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Photo by Brian Black