

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

NOVEMBER 2012

## GOLD LINE 210 FREEWAY BRIDGE

Work on the \$18.6 million, 584-foot-long Gold Line bridge above the 210 Freeway is, in the middle of October, two months away from completion. The bridge, which will allow connection between Pasadena's Sierra Madre Villa Station and the future Arcadia station, is the first piece of the \$735 million, 11.5-mile Pasadena-to-Azusa Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension to move to construction.

Dozens of workers will continue removing the falsework – the temporary structure that has supported the massive bridge during construction – in the coming weeks. “We’ve spent a year designing this bridge, and now we’re all able to see the outcome of that effort and that time as the architectural elements are revealed,” said Lisa Levy Buch, a spokeswoman for the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority.

The project has been a challenge to build over an active freeway and has taken coordination with Caltrans and Metro, which is eventually inheriting the project, as well as city and California Highway Patrol officials, said Habib Balian, Gold Line Construction Authority CEO. But contractor Skanska USA has been able to do the project with minimal change orders, Balian said.

“The design started off a little slow because of the complication of getting everybody to work together and understanding the process of design build,” Balian said. “Once that got rolling, everything fell into place.” With the help of consultants and Construction Authority staff, the project has remained “on budget and on schedule,” he said.

As the falsework is being removed little by little from the bridge, specialists have been sandblasting the superstructure's exterior and doing other finishing activities. Fabrication of the baskets – a design element that represents the basket-making tradition of area American Indians – is taking place offsite at a Gardena plant.

About 640 full concrete truck loads will be used in the bridge's construction and 1,000 tons of steel to reinforce the bridge. More than 72,000 feet of rebar was used on the three 111-foot deep foundation cages, which Construction Authority officials say is “enough to wrap around Santa Anita's racetrack 14 times.

Once the bridge is completed on Dec. 15, the Construction Authority will transfer it to the alignment design-build team to construct the track on the deck. The Pasadena-to-Azusa extension will include stops in Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale and Azusa. The light-rail bridge replaces one that was removed after the 1994 Northridge Earthquake because it didn't meet seismic standards, according to Gold Line Construction Authority officials.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

## CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

On September 26, the California Transportation Commission voted to release \$39.8 million to advance the Caltrain Modernization Program and prepare the Peninsula corridor for a future blended system with California High Speed Rail. The money will be used to develop Caltrain's signal system, known as the Communications Based Overlay Signal System with Positive Train Control.

The new signal system should be in operation by 2015. The entire modernization project should be completed in 2019 with Caltrain switching from diesel to electric operation. Total cost of the modernization project is roughly \$1.5 billion.

In June, Caltrain reached an all-time ridership high, averaging over 50,000 riders per week day. Not surprisingly, the result has been many standing-room only trains during peak commute times.

In response to the surge in growth, on October 1, Caltrain restored four trains that were moved in 2010 due to budget cuts, and added two others. The restored trains are northbound Train Nos. 237 and 257, departing Tamien at 9:33 a.m. and 2:33 p.m., and arriving San Francisco at 11:02 a.m. and 4:02 p.m., and southbound Train Nos. 236 and 256, departing San Francisco at 9:37 a.m. and 2:37 p.m. and arriving Tamien at 11:07 a.m. and 4:07 p.m.

In addition, a new northbound train now departs San Jose at 4:31 p.m. and arrives in San Francisco at 5:39 p.m. A new southbound train departs San Francisco at 6:20 p.m. and arrives in San Jose at 7:28 p.m.

Altamont Commuter Express, which runs between Stockton and San Jose, also added two new trains on October 1. The new westbound train departs Stockton at 7:05 a.m. and arrives in San Jose at 9:17 a.m. The new eastbound train departs San Jose at 6:38 p.m. and arrives in Stockton at 8:50 p.m.

Over the past twenty years, Caltrain has converted most all of their “hold out” stations to double platform stations, protected with either fencing and crossing gates, or a pedestrian underpass, allowing two trains to occupy the platform. One of the few remaining “hold out” stations in South San Francisco was the site of a near tragedy on August 24. Train No. 221 was stopped at the station transferring passengers when Baby Bullet No. 324 went through, forcing passengers to scramble for safety. Thankfully, no one was injured, but the incident received major media coverage in newspapers, television and radio. Both engineers were removed from service while the incident is being investigated.

Because of the apparent miscommunication, engineers are now required to communicate with dispatchers before entering a “hold out” station. The other “hold out” stations are Broadway, Atherton, and College Park. Broadway and Atherton offer only weekend service.



**WHEEL CLICKS**

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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES**

Nov. 2 PRS Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room,  
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Nov. 3, 10, PRM open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
 17, 24 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Nov. 3, 10, Saunders Yard open Saturday, 8\_30 a.m. to ?,  
 17, 24 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce.  
 Nov. 5, 12, PRM open Monday, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 19, 26 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Nov. 7, 14, PRM open Wednesday, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 21, 28 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Nov. 9 PRS Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra  
 Friday Rm., Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel, Alhambra.  
 Nov. 28 Wheel Clicks December Mailing, 10:00 a.m.,  
 Wednesday 1240 Dominion Ave., Pasadena, CA 91104

**PROGRAMS**

by **RUSS DAVIES**

**November 9: Traction Night** will be presented by **Harvey Laner**, featuring a video presentation of Mid-Western Electric Traction lines in Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Be there, and bring digital briefs!

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

One new member was voted into PRS at the Board Meeting on October 5, 2012. Jeff Gorjens has No. 396. Two late renewals rejoined with numbers 397 and 398.

**METROLINK AND CARMAGEDDON**

Metrolink announced on Sept. 24 that it was adding seven round-trips on its Ventura County line, between Los Angeles and Chatsworth, to provide Southern Californians with more public transportation options during the second closure of Interstate 405. This service was in addition to regularly-scheduled trains on the Antelope Valley, Orange County, Inland Empire-Orange County and San Bernardino lines. Metrolink's popular \$10 Weekend Pass provided riders unlimited system-wide travel privileges from Friday at 7 p.m. until the last train on Sunday night.

Special Ventura County Service operated Chatsworth to Los Angeles Union Station, with stops in between at Glendale, Downtown Burbank, Burbank – Bob Hope Airport, Van Nuys and Northridge.

During the first closure of the 405, Metrolink experienced record weekend ridership and weekend pass sales. This year, there were even more reasons to ride Metrolink. Metrolink and Los Angeles World Airports have a partnership that allows Metrolink Monthly Passholders with a boarding pass to ride the Flyaway for free on the day of their flight. Additionally, Metrolink recently launched a retention program in line with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) "Eat, Shop, and Play Locally" theme that allows partnering businesses to offer discounts to Metrolink riders. This allows Metrolink to support local businesses, while rewarding the loyalty of valued customers. A list of participating businesses is available at [www.metrolinktrains.com/rewards](http://www.metrolinktrains.com/rewards)

Riders can also connect to Metro buses and light rail at no additional charge to access destinations along their extensive network.

[Info. from Metrolink via Charles Varnes]

**ODELL SIDING – FASTEST ON THE UNION PACIFIC**

by **Bob Johnson**

The Odell, Ill., siding/pass(ing track) on the Joliet Subdivision, now has a maximum speed of 50 MPH, effective the week of Sept. 9. This includes the turnouts at either end for both passenger and freight trains. As a result, this is the highest speed siding/pass in the entire Union Pacific System. It is part of the Illinois High Speed Rail Project.

The Pontiac, Ill., siding is currently out of service. One of the requirements of High Speed Rail is that adjacent tracks have to be a certain distance away and Pontiac is not. This pass is in the process of being moved to be in compliance.

### EIR RELEASED ON LONG BEACH RAILYARD

Developers of a controversial \$500 million railyard project on Long Beach's western border say an updated environmental study released September 27 affirms the proposed project's environmental and traffic benefits to the community. The new study, which is based on updated data on expected port cargo demand, as well as traffic, noise and pollution impacts, says that without the railyard, truck traffic along the 710 Freeway will drastically increase in the coming years.

"This report validates that building SCIG is the right choice for green growth in Los Angeles," Burlington Northern Santa Fe Chairman and CEO Matthew K. Rose said in a written statement. "I'm proud of the hard work we've done over the past seven years to design the greenest intermodal rail facility in the country." BNSF has proposed building the 153-acre Southern California International Gateway railyard in Wilmington near the 103 Freeway, south of Sepulveda Boulevard, north of Pacific Coast Highway, and east of Alameda Street.

Community and school groups from Long Beach and Wilmington have fought the new railyard since its inception, citing concerns about potential pollution and traffic impacts. Railroad officials contend that the project will use green technology at the facility and help remove 1.5 million trucks per year from the 710 Freeway.

According to the environmental impact report, without building the railyard, the 710 will have an additional 212 daily truck trips in each direction in 2023, increasing to 6,082 extra trips per day in 2035. The study points out that because of increased cargo at the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, air pollution in the area will increase regardless of whether the SCIG is constructed.

The Port of Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners will use the report to determine if the project should be built. Proposed in 2005, the facility is designed to help accommodate the rising demand in cargo by allowing trucks to load containers and put them on trains closer to the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, rather than having trucks drive 24 miles away to another BNSF facility in downtown Los Angeles.

"The railyard will still be a few hundred yards away from five schools, a day care center and homeless housing for veterans," said John Cross, a West Long Beach resident. The public has 45 days to comment on this newest report, with comments limited to only the updated chapters of the draft EIR. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

### PROJECT IN ANAHEIM PICKS UP SPEED

Soon the project will grow from an industrial patch between Anaheim's sports stadiums, a massive 67,000-square-foot structure with white steel ribbons arching high into the sky and a state-of-the-art transparent material that will let the Southern California sun gleam into what has been billed as the upcoming transportation hub of Orange County. The Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center – known simply as ARCTIC among transportation planners – will look like an iceberg beside the 57 Freeway by the time it's estimated to be finished in 2014.

Supporters hail the \$184-million project as the realization of a long-held ambition and an essential piece of the transportation puzzle in Orange County, where current rail and public transit

options might someday meet up with the promised California high-speed rail or other futuristic projects. Its detractors scoff at the station now under construction as ostentation and ill-advised.

But civic boosters say ARCTIC, with its arresting architecture, will serve as a bold reminder of Anaheim's prominence as one of the state's large cities. "Anaheim is really a centerpiece, a gateway for Southern California," said Kris Murray, a city councilwoman. "It's a beautiful facility, I think it will be a destination in itself." The station is being planted alongside some of the top destinations in the city. It's wedged between the homes of the Angels and the Ducks. The convention center, among the largest on the West Coast, is nearby. Disneyland is too.

"The design reflects what it really is," said Lorri Galloway, another city councilwoman and an Orange County Transportation Authority board member. "It is iconic, futuristic – something that draws people, the mere beauty of it." It's also something that a county with 40 million annual visitors desperately needs. Planners anticipate that ARCTIC will draw more than 10,000 daily boardings once it opens and will encourage residents and tourists alike to consider transportation options other than clogging the freeways.

ARCTIC will replace a more modest station closer to Anaheim Stadium that now is a hub for Metrolink and Amtrak, with 2,700 daily boardings, according to city officials. The new station, officials say, will consume a 200,000-square-foot plot of land – enough for 4½ football fields – and have 1,082 parking spaces. Yet, it's going to be energy-efficient, they promise, with a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, certification.

The project is funded predominantly through Measure M, the county's half-cent sales tax that voters approved in 1990 and renewed in 2006. Over the years, the tax money has mostly been spent widening freeways. Natalie Meeks, Anaheim's public works director, said the concept of ARCTIC has been discussed by city officials for nearly 20 years. The notion gathered momentum when Anaheim was chosen as the southernmost terminus of the planned statewide high-speed rail line. At one point, construction was set to begin in Anaheim, but now there's some doubt whether the high-speed train will ever extend that far south.

Murray contends that the station will be a critical asset – one that will be useful the moment it's scheduled to open in two years. Among the benefits will be the 5,000 jobs that officials say ARCTIC will create during and after construction.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

### SAN DIEGO GREEN LINE TROLLEY EXTENDED

The San Diego Trolley's Green Line began running through Downtown San Diego past the Convention Center and Petco Park all the way to the 12th and Imperial Transit Center starting Sept. 2, marking a major milestone in the \$720 million Trolley Renewal project currently under construction by SANDAG and the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS).

A ceremony was held today at the newly renovated Gaslamp Quarter Trolley Station to celebrate the extension of the Green Line, which currently terminates at the Old Town Transit Center. The event drew more than 100 participants,

including: MTS Chair Harry Mathis, SANDAG Chair and Encinitas Mayor Jerome Stocks, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders, MTS Vice Chair and County Supervisor Ron Roberts, and U.S. Department of Transportation Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers.

“With the Green Line coming downtown, people all over San Diego can now reach the downtown area more conveniently,” Mathis said. “This event also marks about the half-way point in a major reinvestment of our trolley infrastructure, which will bring low-floor cars and modern stations to our entire trolley network.”

With the Green Line extension, riders will enjoy direct service from Santee, El Cajon, La Mesa, San Diego State University, and Mission Valley to Downtown San Diego without the need to transfer. Trips through downtown will be six minutes faster for people who transfer to and from the Green Line at 12th and Imperial, and trips from Euclid Avenue to Old Town will be nine minutes faster. Trips from Mission Valley to Petco Park/Gaslamp Quarter will be 12 minutes faster, with two transfers eliminated.

“The Trolley Renewal project reflects SANDAG’s deep commitment to making transit an attractive alternative to driving alone,” Stocks said. “Not only is this project producing enormous benefits for riders, it also is giving a major boost to the local economy. Overall, Trolley Renewal is expected to create 8,640 jobs directly and indirectly in the region. Many of the contractors currently working on the project are based in San Diego County.”

Trolley Renewal started in fall 2010 and is scheduled to be complete in 2015. The project will bring 65 sleek, low-floor trolley cars to the region, improving access for all riders. The new vehicles provide nearly level boarding, so time-consuming mechanical lifts will no longer be needed.

Combined with 11 low-floor cars already in the MTS fleet, the Trolley system will eventually have 76 low-floor cars. The new vehicles will be added to the Orange Line in spring 2013, and to the Blue Line in summer 2014. The ultimate result will be faster boarding for all passengers and improved on-time performance.

The system-wide overhaul also includes raising 35 station platforms to accommodate the low-floor vehicles, replacing outdated rail and overhead wires, and improving street crossings, switching, and signaling. In addition, the project will expand freight capacity between Downtown San Diego and the border area.

The Blue Line, which has been one of the most successful light rail lines in North America, as well as the Orange Line, will benefit greatly from the renewal project. New shelters, closed circuit television, next-arrival signage, enhanced lighting, and a smoother ride will improve the customer experience. The Blue Line carries up to 75,000 passengers every weekday and the Orange Line adds another 25,000 daily riders.

So far five renovated stations – Civic Center, Convention Center, Gaslamp Quarter, Middletown, and Washington Street – have reopened. All of the Green Line extension stations are expected to be substantially complete by October 2012, and all of the Orange Line stations are expected to be substantially complete by March 2013.

Trolley Renewal is funded by a variety of sources, including TransNet, the regional half-cent sales tax for transportation; California Proposition 1B and 1A bond money; and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, commonly known as the federal stimulus package.

Launched in 1981, the Trolley became an immediate success and sparked a resurgence of light rail transit across the nation. Today, the system is 31 years old. Many of its original components are nearing the end of their useful lives. The Trolley cars that are getting replaced have up to 2.5 million miles on them.

[Info. from San Diego Association of Governments via Charles Varnes]

## NEWS FROM PORTLAND, OREGON

### CLACKAMAS COUNTY PAYS LIGHT-RAIL TAB

Clackamas County paid TriMet \$19.9 million September 14 for its contribution toward Portland Milwaukie light-rail after securing a private loan from Bank of America. The 20-year loan has a 2.74 percent interest rate, according to a news release from Tim Heider, a Clackamas County spokesman. With closing costs, the county borrowed \$20.08 million, said Dan Chandler, the county’s strategic policy administrator.

Chandler said the terms of the loan, which include a balloon payment in 15 years, are nearly identical to those predicted for full faith and credit bonds, which the county originally intended to use to finance its payment to the transit agency.

### CLACKAMAS COUNTY VOTERS DEMAND VOICE

Clackamas County light-rail opponents scored a convincing victory September 18 that could resonate for decades. Measure 3-401, which passed 60 to 40 percent, requires countywide voter approval before officials can spend money to finance, design, construct or operate any rail lines in the county.

Its unclear what effect the measure will have on the controversial Portland-Milwaukie light-rail extension, the \$1.5 billion project at the heart of the battle. The line is already under construction and Clackamas County officials have just obtained a private loan to pay TriMet for its share of the project.

But if left intact after possible legal challenges, the measure could severely limit the future development of rail in the county, including possible high-speed passenger rail connecting Seattle and Eugene. Early discussions have mentioned possible high-speed routes that would traverse parts of unincorporated Clackamas County. Similarly, efforts to expand freight rail for industrial and commercial uses could also be limited.

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

## SECOND QUARTER PUBLIC TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

Nearly 2.7 billion trips were taken on U.S. public transportation in the second quarter of 2012 as ridership increased by 1.6 percent over the second quarter of 2011, according to a report released on Sept. 18 by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). This was the sixth consecutive quarterly increase.

All major modes of public transportation increased. Light rail and heavy rail saw the largest increases in the second quarter with increases of 4.3 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. Some public transit systems throughout all areas of the United States

reported record ridership for the second quarter, including in the following cities: Ann Arbor (MI), Boston (MA), Fort Myers (FL), Grand Rapids (MI), Lewisville (TX), Oklahoma City (OK), Olympia (WA), Portland (OR), and San Carlos (CA).

“Since nearly 60 percent of the trips taken on public transportation are work commutes, public transit is a vital service for cities and towns nationwide,” said APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. “Public transportation not only enables people to get to work, but development around public transit helps to create an economically prosperous community.

“In some areas of the country, local and regional economies are rebounding, and not surprisingly, public transit ridership is up in regions where jobs are increasing and employment is up,” said Melaniphy.

Some of the cities experiencing public transit ridership increases as their local economy improves include: San Francisco (and the Bay area), Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Salt Lake City, Denver, Boston, Chicago, and Phoenix.

Pointing out that gas prices declined in the second quarter, Melaniphy said, “Even though gas prices declined in the second quarter, more people decided to take public transportation. This goes to show that there is a growing public demand for public transportation services and the next Congress and President must address this issue.

#### April – June 2012 Ridership Breakdown

Nationally, heavy rail ridership increased by 2.5 percent and 11 out of 15 heavy rail systems (subways and elevated trains) experienced ridership increases in the second quarter of 2012 over the same period in 2011. The heavy rail systems with the highest increases in ridership for 2012 were in the following cities: Cleveland, OH (9.9%); San Francisco, CA (6.8%); and Chicago, IL (4.4%).

Light rail ridership increased by 4.3 percent in the second quarter, as 21 out of 27 light rail systems reported an increase in ridership from April through June 2012. Light rail systems saw double digit increases in the second quarter in six cities: Memphis, TN (36.7%); Salt Lake City, UT (28.8%); Pittsburgh, PA (21.2%); Los Angeles, CA (13.8%); Sacramento, CA (13.4%); and Seattle, WA (10.3%). Other light rail systems with large increases were in the following cities: Boston, MA (8.0%); Phoenix, AZ (7.3%); and New Orleans, LA (7.0%).

Eighteen out of 28 commuter rail systems reported ridership increases and commuter rail ridership grew by 1.7 percent. Commuter rail ridership saw a triple digit increase in Lewisville, TX (258.0%) due to new service and saw double digit increases in the second quarter in the following cities: Austin, TX (14.8%); Seattle, WA (14.6%); San Carlos, CA (13.3%); and Stockton, CA (12.2%). Other commuter rail systems showing high increases were located in the following cities: Salt Lake City, UT (7.4%); Anchorage, AK (7.1%); Portland, OR (6.7%); Harrisburg-Philadelphia (6.2%); Baltimore, MD (5.8%); and Los Angeles, CA (5.8%).

Nationally, bus ridership rose by nearly one percent from April through June of 2012, some of the highest bus ridership increases in large cities were reported in: Oakland, CA (9.5%); Providence, RI (9.3%); Saint Louis, MO (6.7%); Long Beach, CA (5.2%); Arlington Heights, IL (4.5%); and Denver, CO

(4.5%). Demand response (paratransit) increased in the second quarter of 2012 by 2.2 percent. To see the complete APTA ridership report go to: <http://www.apta.com/resources/statistics/Documents/Ridership/2012-q2-ridership-APTA.pdf>

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

#### REOPENING SISKIYOU RAIL

Almost five years since the last freight train trudged from Weed, California, to Ashland, Oregon, a triumphant collaboration of private and public stakeholders hear the train coming again. The light at the end of the tunnel – a \$9.49 million rehabilitation project with a 2013 construction start date – is expected to reopen the Siskiyou Rail Line within the next two years. The Siskiyou Summit Railroad Revitalization project will repair and revitalize a section of the 296-mile stretch of the short line railroad, including rail, tunnels, ties and bridges as well as upgrading its freight capacity to handle the 286,000-pound industry standard for rail cars.

Last June, the \$7 million Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant awarded to the Oregon Department of Transportation and California’s Siskiyou County for the Siskiyou Summit Railroad Revitalization project was met with a celebratory roar throughout the region. U.S. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley announced the TIGER grant award together, emphasizing how reopening the Siskiyou Rail Line will boost the regional economy.

“Reopening of the Siskiyou Summit line will have an immediate and important positive economic impact for Southern Oregon,” Wyden said in a prepared statement when the TIGER grant was awarded. “It will save shippers hundreds of thousands of dollars in transportation costs, get goods to market more efficiently, take heavy trucks off the interstate and reduce road damage.”

Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP), which owns the line, will backfill the remainder of the project cost along with the help of private shipping companies. Meanwhile, ODOT and CORP are working together with the Federal Rail Administration to complete the federal processes, agreements and guidelines necessary before construction can begin.

The contract is on schedule to be let by the end of April 2013, well ahead of the September 30, 2013 statutory deadline for obligating funds. “Unlike traditional highway projects, freight rail improvements to existing rail infrastructure can be completed relatively quickly,” Anderson said.

Mike Montero, co-chairman of the Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation, concurred with Anderson, noting the environmentally-friendly aspects of restoring the Siskiyou Rail Line. “The potential for reduced emissions and reduced traffic on I-5 is a benefit in the Rogue Valley,” Montero said. “Bulk freight and heavier materials like lumber can be shipped more economically on rail.”

A second smaller project funded through the ConnectOregon IV program will improve the clearances of tunnels and other rail infrastructure between Douglas and Jackson counties. The \$5.7 million project, which received a \$4.5 million ConnectOregon IV grant, will open access to the Rogue Valley with modern, high-capacity rail car equipment.

[Info. from *ODOT Moving Ahead* via Gordon Nunnally]



## AAR OCTOBER STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of October 1, 2012, 309,261 freight cars were in storage, a decrease of 1,965 cars from September 1, 2012 and equal to 20.2 percent of the North American fleet, excluding cars without a load since before 2005.

Of the 502,853 cars that were in storage on July 1, 2009 (excluding those that last moved loaded prior to 2005), only 39,477 remained in storage continuously through October 1, 2012. Approximately 92 percent of the cars that were in storage at the peak have either carried a load since then (and perhaps subsequently returned to storage) or been scrapped.

For the last 12 months the number of stored freight cars (and the percentage of the fleet excluding cars without a load since before 2005) on the first day of the month was: 2011: October, 260,317 (17.1); November, 261,695 (17.2); December 263,912 (17.3); 2012: January, 273,390 (18.0); February, 283,236 (18.6); March, 289,505 (19.0); April, 299,324 (19.6); May 307,957 (20.1); June, 312,938 (20.4); July, 317,681 (20.7); August, 314,971 (20.6); September 311,226 (20.3).

A freight car is "in storage" if it has had a loaded revenue move since 2005, but not in the past 60 days. Rail cars are stored when they are not needed due to lack of demand; they come out of storage when demand improves. Figures are for the entire North American rail freight car fleet and include rail cars owned by railroads, leasing companies, shippers, and others. The total freight car fleet changes from month to month as new cars are added and old cars are scrapped.

There is a great deal of complexity in freight car usage patterns. For example, increases in demand for rail service for a particular commodity relative to another mean that some car types might be in very short supply at the same time that others are plentiful; a freight car might go through cycles where it is stored for a few months and then returned to service for a few months; and changes in scrap prices might make scrapping cars more attractive at one time than another.

[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators via Charles Varnes]

## PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

### Fiscal Year 2012 Ridership

Amtrak carried more than 31.2 million passengers in Fiscal Year 2012 ending September 30, marking the highest annual ridership total since America's Railroad started operations in 1971 and the ninth ridership record during the last ten years.

A year-over-year comparison of FY 2012 to FY 2011 shows ridership grew 3.5 percent to a new record of 31,240,565 passengers and ticket revenue jumped 6.8 percent to a best ever \$2.02 billion. In addition, Amtrak system-wide on-time performance increased to 83 percent, up from 78.1 percent and its highest level in 12 years.

"People are riding Amtrak trains in record numbers across the country because there is an undeniable demand to travel by rail," said President and CEO Joe Boardman. "Ridership will continue to grow because of key investments made by Amtrak and our federal and state partners to improve on-time performance, reliability, capacity and train speeds."

During FY 2012, ridership on the Northeast Corridor was

up 4.8 percent to a record 11.4 million, state-supported and other short distance routes were up 2.1 percent to a record 15.1 million and long-distance services were up 4.7 percent to their best showing in 19 years at 4.7 million.

Also, FY 2012 produced other ridership achievements including new records for 25 of 44 Amtrak services, and 12 consecutive monthly records with July being the single best month in the history of Amtrak. Since FY 2000, Amtrak ridership is up 49 percent.

Boardman noted ridership numbers for FY 2013 will get an early boost this fall when the extension of Downeaster service to Freeport and Brunswick, Maine begins Nov. 1, and Amtrak Virginia Northeast Regional service is extended to Norfolk, Va., starting Dec. 12.

Factors contributing to Amtrak long-term ridership growth include improved passenger services such as Wi-Fi and eTicketing, high gasoline prices, continued growth in business travel on the Northeast Corridor, the increased appeal and popularity of rail travel, dissatisfaction with congested highways and air travel, and effective marketing campaigns.

### Ridership Highlights FY 2012 vs. FY 2011

**Northeast Corridor (NEC)** The NEC between Washington and Boston had a 4.8 percent increase in ridership to its best year ever with more than 11.4 million passengers. Specifically, ridership on the *Northeast Regional* service is up 6.6 percent to a new record of more than 8.0 million and the high-speed *Acela Express* is up 0.5 percent to its second-best year ever to nearly 3.4 million.

**Northeast Ridership on the *Keystone Service*** (New York – Harrisburg) is up 5.8 percent to a new record of more than 1.4 million. Other ridership record setting routes include: *Downeaster* (Boston – Portland) up 4.3 percent to more than 541,000; *Adirondack* (New York – Montreal) up 5.3 percent to nearly 132,000; and *Ethan Allen* (New York – Rutland, Vt.) up 10 percent to more than 54,000. Routes with notable percentage growth increases include *Vermonter* (Washington – St. Albans, Vt.) up 5.5 percent to more than 82,000, *Empire Service* (New York – Albany) up 3.8 percent to more than 1.06 million and *Pennsylvanian* (New York – Pittsburgh) up 2.2 percent to more than 212,000.

**Chicago Hub / Midwest** The combined ridership on the Chicago-St. Louis corridor from *Lincoln Service* and *Texas Eagle* trains increased 11 percent to set a new record of more than 675,000 passengers. Other routes setting ridership records include: *Hiawatha Service* (Chicago – Milwaukee) up 2.3 percent to more than 838,000; *Missouri River Runner* (St. Louis – Kansas City) up 5.3 percent to nearly 196,000; and *Blue Water* (Chicago – Port Huron) up 1.1 percent to more than 189,000.

**West Coast *San Joaquin*** (Bakersfield – Oakland) is up 7.2 percent to new record of more than 1.1 million riders. *Capitol Corridor* (San Jose – Sacramento/Auburn) up 2.2 percent also set a new record with nearly 1.75 million passengers.

**Virginia and North Carolina** In Virginia, the Washington Lynchburg service is up 14.1 percent to a new record of almost 185,000 and the Washington Newport News service is up 11.9 percent also to a new record of nearly 624,000 passengers. In North Carolina, the *Piedmont* (Charlotte – Raleigh) set a new record of more than 162,000 riders and had the best percentage

increase of all Amtrak routes at 16.2 percent.

Long-Distance Routes All 15 Amtrak long-distance routes experienced an increase in passengers resulting in their best combined ridership numbers in 19 years. Routes setting new ridership records include: *Lake Shore Limited* (Chicago – New York) up 4.3 percent to almost 404,000; *Texas Eagle* (Chicago – San Antonio) up 12.8 percent to nearly 338,000; and *City of New Orleans* (Chicago – New Orleans) up 8.5 percent to more than 253,000. Routes with significant percentage growth in ridership include: the *Empire Builder* (Chicago – Seattle/Portland) up 15.8 percent to more than 543,000; *Coast Starlight* (Los Angeles – Seattle) up 6.5 percent to more than 454,000; and *Cardinal* (New York – Chicago) up 4.9 percent to more than 116,000.

Winter Timetable Available in January

Amtrak is delaying the release of the next printed system timetable from this month to January 14 to allow for the inclusion of several new service additions that are starting this fall. All current and up to date schedules can be found on Amtrak.com.

Amtrak is launching several new services that will be listed in the new timetable including the Amtrak Virginia Northeast Regional Service Extension to Norfolk, Va. on Dec. 12, the Downeaster expanded rail service to Freeport and Brunswick, Maine on Nov. 1, and the new Amtrak Thruway bus service in Eastern North Carolina that will launch on Oct. 3. Updated route schedules for these new services will be available on Amtrak.com shortly before the services start.

The magazine-style booklet, printed bi-annually, will be available in stations and can be ordered and viewed online at Amtrak.com. In addition, passengers can get Amtrak schedule information by calling 800-USA-RAIL or on the Amtrak iPhone and Android apps.

In addition, Amtrak will produce special printed and downloadable schedules for the Thanksgiving travel period (Nov. 20 – 26) that will be available on Nov. 5.

Historical On-Time Route Performance

The September 2012 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

Route	September 2012	August 2012	Last 12 months
Sunset Limited	96.2%	77.8%	63.7%
Texas Eagle	73.3%	N/A	62.7%
Heartland Flyer	46.7%	24.2%	54.9%
Southwest Chief	86.7%	69.4%	78.6%
California Zephyr	83.3%	53.2%	58.3%
Empire Builder	65.3%	20.7%	60.6%
Coast Starlight	81.7%	67.7%	77.1%
City of New Orleans	83.3%	91.9%	89.2%
Pacific Surfliner	84.6%	67.3%	75.1%
San Joaquin	88.6%	67.3%	88.2%
Capitol Corridor	96.3%	92.2%	93.8%
Amtrak Cascades	79.6%	69.2%	73.8%
Illinois Service	84.4%	70.8%	79.3%
Missouri River Runner	95.8%	83.9%	88.1%
Hiawatha	89.8%	84.7%	89.9%
Michigan Services	69.3%	51.6%	55.1%
Acela Express	87.3%	86.2%	89.4%
Northeast Regional	86.1%	84.5%	86.8%

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Amtrak Operated Test Trains at 165 Mph

Beginning September 24 and continuing into the following week, Amtrak operated high-speed test trains at 165 mph in four areas covering more than 100 miles of the Northeast Corridor. The tests in Maryland / Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts are locations that may at some future time experience regular 160 mph service.

The tests utilized high-speed *Acela Express* equipment and measured the interaction between the train and the track, rider quality and other safety factors. The test runs must be performed at 5 mph above the expected maximum operating speed of 160 mph.

The test areas between approximately Perryville, Md. – Wilmington, Del. (21.3 miles) and Trenton – New Brunswick, N.J. (22.9 miles) currently have a maximum speed limit of 135 mph. The test areas between approximately Westerly – Cranston, R.I. (29.2 miles) and South Attleboro – Readville, Mass. (27.8 miles) currently have a maximum speed limit of 150 mph. The same areas were used for similar high-speed tests before the introduction of *Acela* service.

The initial test run is in New Jersey where Amtrak is presently advancing design, engineering and other pre-construction activities for a \$450 million project funded by the federal high-speed rail program. The project includes upgrading track, electrical power, signal systems and overhead catenary wires to improve reliability for Amtrak and commuter rail service, and is necessary to permit regular train operations at the faster speeds. Some construction activity is anticipated in 2013, but the project will ramp up dramatically thereafter to be completed in 2017.

Amtrak Qualifying Trains for New Norfolk Service

Starting Friday, October 5, Amtrak began operating trains to serve as training for locomotive engineers and conductors to learn the tracks and territory between Petersburg and Norfolk, Va. These trains carried no passengers and operated two times per day, Monday through Saturday.

The new *Amtrak Virginia* service, open to passengers, starts December 12, 2012, and will extend Northeast Regional service to and from Norfolk. Tickets are available for this new service via AmtrakVirginia.com, the iPhone app or Android app, or by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL.

The round-trip train will bring intercity passenger rail service to Norfolk for the first time since 1977, and will provide a same-seat trip from Norfolk to Washington DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York City and other stations along the Northeast Corridor.

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

NOTES—

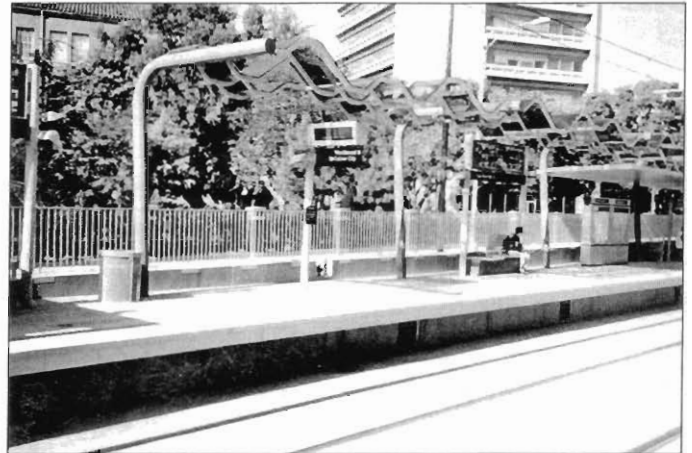
Caltrans and Metrolink dedicated Track No. 13 and 14 at Los Angeles Union Station on October 17. The tracks, last used decades ago, are for both Metrolink and Amtrak. Ribbon cutting occurred on a new platform

Denny’s restaurant to the east of Union Station is now officially Denny’s again with complete service all the time.

[Info. from Ken Ruben]



3751 Santa Fe locomotive with Eric Smith positioning the stop location on National Train Day 2012. Photo by Tom Geer



Expo Park/USC Station with westbound platform and USC buildings beyond tracks. Photo by Dick Finley



Exposition/Vermont Station with westbound platform beyond Vermont Ave. crossing. Tracks are in concrete. Photo by Dick Finley



Expo Park/USC Station with eastbound platform to right of tracks and tracks leading toward tunnel beneath Figueroa Street. Photo by Dick Finley



Expo/Vermont Station with eastbound platform to east of Vermont Ave. USC buildings beside Exposition Blvd. and Expo Line tracks in concrete. Photo by Dick Finley



MPGP15 # 1730 Diesel locomotive at Longview, Texas, on March 25, 1930, with single horns. Photo by Dennis Gilkey