

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2007

## RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO

by TOM NELSON

### DENVER

Having seen previously only the initial stages of construction on Denver's first light rail transit (LRT) line (to Littleton), by the Regional Transportation District (RTD), I took the opportunity as soon as it occurred to visit the new system. My former Air Force group was to have a reunion in Colorado Springs during July this year, so I arranged for three days in Denver prior to the reunion.

The completion of the T-Rex Project added a new, and longest, line plus a spur to RTD's growing LRT system. Also, an LRT connection was built to Union Station.

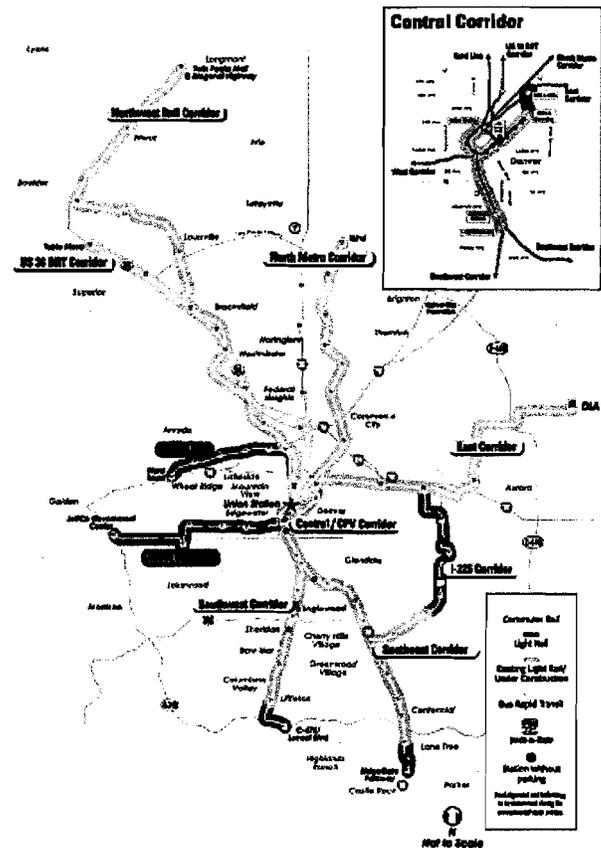
With the long routes to Littleton and Lincoln, RTD instituted a zonal fare system, which complicated the operation of their ticket vending machines (TVM) for a first-time user. The TVM does give instructions on its screen as one proceeds, but there is a time limit between steps which, if exceeded, shuts down the process, requiring one to start over.

A phone number and web site are displayed to offer help, so I went back to my hotel (nearby) and phoned. The RTD person was very knowledgeable and pleasant, telling me the amount of fare for various trips and to use the discount fare to obtain the senior rate. By the time my first day was over, I became skilled with the TVM. Unfortunately, RTD does not offer a Day Pass, so take a handful of bills and coins to beat the time limit.

On Sunday, July 8, and Monday, July 9, my wife, Mary Anne, and I rode the entire revenue trackage of RTD's LRT system. Sunday it was the E Line from Union Station to Lincoln, G Line from Lincoln to Nine Mile (we were the only ones on board), and the H Line from Nine Mile to 16th and Stout in downtown Denver. Union Station is also referred to as LoDo (lower downtown) on the tickets. Much of these routes run either next to a freeway or in the median of one, since they were built as part of the combination rail and highway T-Rex Project. The grades and track infrastructure are first class, and there are no at-grade rail crossings at track junctions.

On Monday, July 9, we rode the D Line from 18th and California to 30th and Downing, back through downtown to Littleton-Mineral, then returned as far as Alameda where we transferred to an E Line train which took us to Union Station. The D Line was the first route built and lacks the adjacent freeway noise. The amount of building construction south and southeast of downtown Denver is amazing. Semi-high-rise residential and commercial structures have popped up everywhere. A shopping mall to the west of the track on the E Line is a cluster of individual two or three story brown buildings, possibly shingle covered, each with a cupola on top.

RTD is operating Siemens LRVs of the SD 100 and SD 160 class in one-, two-, and three-car trains. With well-constructed [Continued at **RAIL TRANSIT** on Page 3]

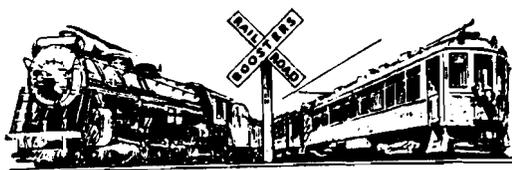


Condensed map of Regional Transportation District 's planned rail transit system for Denver, Colorado. The gray lines below Union Station (the star) are existing light rail lines. All dark lines are planned new light rail lines or planned light rail extensions. The gray lines above Union Station are proposed commuter rail lines. Basic map by RTD.



Regional Transportation District train ready to depart on the E Line from behind Union Station in Denver, Colorado.

Photo by Tom Nelson



## WHEEL CLICKS

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### PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Sep. 2 Exc. #533 *San Diegan* with *National Forum* and  
 Sun. *Overland Trail*. Leave L.A. Train #564 at 7:20 a.m.,  
 or Train #580 at 3:00 p.m., and return Train #571 at  
 1:15 p.m. or Train #591 at 9:05 p.m.  
 Sep. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at  
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Sep. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4  
 15, 22, 29 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Sts., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: 22.  
 Sep. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders  
 15, 22, 29 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular  
 Sats. day: 1, 15; Extra day: 8, 22, 29. Com. Mtg.: 15.  
 Sep. 14 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room  
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Sep. 21 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &  
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.  
 Oct. 5 Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Valencia Room at  
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

Oct. 5 Exc. #529 "Ticket to Tecate" via Amtrak *Pacific*  
 Fri. *Surfliner* from Los Angeles to San Diego. Return  
 Sat., Oct. 6, or Sun., Oct. 7.  
 Oct. 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4  
 20, 27 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Sts., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: 27.  
 Oct. 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders  
 20, 27 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular  
 Sats. day: 6, 20; Extra day: 13, 27. Com. Mtg.: 20.  
 Oct. 12 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room  
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

### MEETING PROGRAMS

by Ross DAVIES

September 14: **Southern Pacific! Jerry Duncan** will share slides with us from the collection of **noted photographer and collector, the late Roger Bogenburger**. Many of you are familiar with Roger's work. **This will be a good one! Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

October 12: **"Coast to Coast on the National Forum, Part II"** This will be the east to west, return portion of the **June and July, 2006, PRS Excursion #525**. We'll ride along with **Tom Geer** and his **Digital Image wizardry**. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by VIRGINIA GRUPE

Late renewal members were assigned Seniority Numbers 490-503. At the Board Meeting on August 3, William Ward with seniority number 504 was voted into PRS.

### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM

by LINDSAY SMITH

The Pacific Railroad Society has installed a new roof on the Museum. That is an oxymoron statement, because we replaced the old roof with as many of the old tiles as the contractor could save. The old roof was loose and, as a result, unsafe. Some termite-damaged structure was replaced over the Historic Society's Museum doorway. We replaced a roof puddle installed in the city modification to the building when they installed the Senior Center. The "new" roof will outlast even our youngest members. It is on heavy felt and each tile is tied with stainless steel wire. Our contractor, IIShea Roofing, was professional and thorough in every aspect of the project. Our member, Larry Aandahl, who had installed the HVAC equipment two years ago, was completely satisfied with the workmanship and condition of the re-installed air-conditioning machines. The cost was taken from the David Cameron fund.

In our long range plan, we have to replace the old, termite damaged window casings on the north (Parking Lot) side before we can repaint the exterior. The environmental-friendly paints only last a few years on our end of the building but the west end paint suffers from a poor application to the city-built ramps. The new stucco was not "pickled" and some lime is bleeding through the paint. There is a rarely used door on the west end (Historical Society) that is deteriorating.

Although there was a plan to move the Historical Museum to the Walker House, I am not confident it will occur. The cost of maintaining "historical" buildings is far from trivial. Our Society has spent significant funds annually to maintain the depot and the \$1.00 per year rental fee is truly insignificant. The His-

torical Society has not shared costs of ownership with us. The cost of maintenance on the Walker House has not been estimated by the City but no funds can be identified in the budgets and long term plans. As a result, the Historical Society may have a future problem if they leave the Depot.

Our collection continues to grow. We have had several requests for information and images from our collection. We continue to have visitors and guests who are impressed with our maintenance of railway history and our ability to recall the significant events in the industrial revolution and growth of the United States of America.

(RAIL TRANSIT from Page 1)

track, the LRVs run smoothly. One problem we noticed while riding to Lincoln on the E Line was station announcements inside the LRV often were not synchronized with the geographical location of the LRV. Many times our car had stopped at the station before the station name was announced. At times, the doors were closed before the station at which we had stopped was announced. Boarding of wheelchair patrons was via fold-down bridge equipment stored near the front doors of each train. It was operated by the motorman who stopped the LRV next to a short section of car-floor-level platform.

I was unable to find a printed fare schedule, but zones one and two are considered local fares. Regular round trip fare to and from zone 3 is \$5.50, and discount fare for this zone is \$2.70 round trip. Round trip discount fare for zone 4 is \$3.70. Shaded circles on RTD's LRT map show which stations are in each zone.

Hearings were held in late May and early June 2007 concerning a decrease in service on the G Line between Nine Mile and Lincoln. Because of low ridership, the plan was to eliminate G Line trips on weekends and holidays beginning in August. Travel between the present G Line terminals at Nine Mile and Lincoln can be handled by regular H Line and E Line trains with a transfer near the H/E junction. Weekday evening service on the G Line would be discontinued, also, and midday service would run every 60 minutes instead of 30 minutes.

At present RTD's future attention is directed toward its \$4.7 billion, 12-year FasTracks Program to build 119 miles of new LRT and commuter rail and 18 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT). Included are three new LRT routes, three short LRT extensions, three commuter rail lines from Union Station to the northwest, north, and northeast, and a two phase US highway 36 BRT corridor to Boulder. Completed and adopted is the master plan of construction improvements to Union Station needed to accommodate the first three rail projects, the LRT portion to be finished by mid-2012 and the commuter portion by mid-2014. The final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Union Station work is expected to be available this year.

The first LRT line to be completed in the FasTracks Program will be the 12.1-mile West Corridor project from Union Station on existing track to Auraria Station. Then it branches to head westward to Oak, south to Federal Center, and finally west to Jefferson County Government Center/Golden. To learn the present status of this project, I visited RTD headquarters (HQ) in downtown Denver on July 9, only to learn that design work is performed in a building at some distance from HQ. The telephone switchboard operator connected an HQ phone with Brenda

Tierney in the other building. She told me the West Corridor design is expected to reach the 90 percent stage in Nov. this year. Construction may start by the end of 2007, although the schedule has it marked for mid-2008. Opening of the line is on the calendar to occur by the end of 2012.

The next two rail lines on the schedule for completion are both commuter rail from Union Station, with the target date to open at the end of 2014. The line that will serve Denver International Airport will run easterly via Stapleton to Airport Blvd./40th Ave., continuing northeasterly to the airport. This 23.6-mile East Corridor route is planned to have four intermediate stations, all with park-n-ride facilities. The planning phase is nearing completion with the expectation of the Draft EIS being issued this year. Construction is to begin by 2010.

The other route scheduled to open at the end of 2014 is in the Northwest Rail Corridor. From Union Station it will proceed northwesterly through Broomfield to 30th/Pearl in Boulder, where it will turn to head northeasterly to its terminal at Twin Peaks Mall in Longmont. This is the longest of the proposed routes at 38.1 miles. The seven stations, after departing Union Station, are all to have park-n-ride facilities. Work on the EIS is scheduled to begin this year, and construction is expected to start in 2010. Other FasTracks rail projects are scheduled to be completed in 2015, except two extensions not until the end of 2016.

[Info. directly from Denver RTD]

#### NEW ORLEANS

Streetcar service on Canal Street in New Orleans received some improvement effective July 8, 2007. Three more Perley Thomas cars were assigned to Canal Street, and the operational speed was increased to 10 miles per hour from eight. With seven cars running at the slightly higher speed, passengers had their waiting time for a streetcar reduced from 23 or 27 minutes to only 15 on Canal. The approximately 30 minute wait on the North Carrollton Ave. spur, however, remains the same.

Although reduced for three to two buses on Canal St., they must continue in use them because the Perley Thomas cars are not equipped to carry the handicapped. The buses assigned to Canal St. have wheelchair lifts as did the new replica streetcars that were assembled in the Carrollton Shops prior to Hurricane Katrina striking on Aug. 29, 2005. The replicas were made unusable due to the severe flood damage they suffered.

Rider requests and an increase in residents returning to New Orleans, also persuaded the Regional Transit Authority to improve the bus service. Some bus routes were reactivated or expanded, particularly in eastern New Orleans, the Upper 9th Ward, and elsewhere.

[Info. from *The Times-Picayune* via Charles Varnes and Ken Ruben]

#### SACRAMENTO

Since Sacramento's 1995 study of starting a streetcar line in downtown, the idea lost any urgency until recently when West Sacramento became interested in the possibility. The mayors of both cities appear to be supportive. The two cities joined a year ago in hiring a consultant to do a new study of a project which would cost a maximum of \$50 million.

The report was released in May this year, recommending a 2.2-mile route between West Sacramento Civic Center and down-

town Sacramento via the Tower Bridge over the Sacramento River. Part of the route may share Regional Transit's (RT) tracks on 7th, 8th, and K Streets. Azadeh Doherty, principal planner for the Sacramento Dept. of Transportation, believes the unanimity of feelings about building a streetcar line is favorable at the present time.

Annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated to be up to \$3.5 million. There has been a suggestion that funding could be mostly from private sources. An assessment district may contribute toward payment of costs, but federal funds would not be sought.

The Sacramento RT District is also planning on an LRT line to reach Elk Grove. Actually it would be a 4.2-mile extension of the South Line, known as phase 2, from Meadowview Station along the Union Pacific right-of-way to Morrison Creek. Here it would turn east to follow Consumnes River Blvd. to Bruceville Rd. and just around the corner to a new terminal adjacent to the east side of the Consumnes River College campus. There are to be three intermediate stations.

The extension is expected to open in 2011. The project is estimated to cost \$226 million; half would come from a federal grant, if approved. With the present stalemate (Aug. 4, '07) in the Calif. State Budget, there may be a delay in this project. Another delay may be caused by the need to move a gas pipeline in the Union Pacific right-of-way to under a nearby street. Residents are upset about the pipeline location, because they feel it will disrupt the neighborhood.

[Info. from *The Sacramento Bee* via Bob Blymyer]

#### ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRAVELER by BARBARA SIBERT

Pacific Railroad Society Excursion #528 with Mountain Outin' Tours left Los Angeles Union Station on Monday, June 11, aboard a Metrolink train for San Bernardino. There we reboarded a charter motor coach for Henderson, Nevada, where we spent the night. The next day we traveled along the north-west shore of Lake Mead and visited Kolob Canyon in the north-west corner of Zion National Park. We continued on to Bryce Canyon Lodge for Tuesday night, overlooking the spectacular red formations of the canyon.

Wednesday we continued east on Scenic Byway Utah Route 12, a beautiful trip, which took us through Grand Staircase National Monument and Capitol Reef National Park. Thursday we boarded Amtrak's California Zephyr at Green River for the trip along the Colorado River Canyon to the Summit of the Rocky Mountains at Winter Park.

Friday we returned to our motor coach, traveling along Trail Ridge Road through Rocky Mountain National Park and along the abrupt east face of the Rockies to Estes Park. We continued on to Golden for the night. Saturday we visited the Colorado Railroad Museum, where this weekend was "steam up" for a ride behind locomotive #40. They also had the Galloping Goose #2 available for rides. In the afternoon we rode the Georgetown Loop Railroad.

Sunday we followed Scenic Byway Route 133 over McClure Pass in the Elk Mountains, and visited the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park. They have a small railroad museum at Cimmaron, and have placed a locomotive, box car and caboos on a portion of track over the River where it exited the Black

Canyon. Very effective. On Monday we drove over the "Silver Thread Highway" which winds through the San Juan Mountains and across the Continental Divide.

Tuesday we rode the Cumbres and Toltec from Chama to Antonito. At Chama we had a chance to visit with PRS member Larry Jennings, who is spending his vacation working on projects that are being done by the "Friends of the Cumbres and Toltec." They sponsor work groups during the summer. Larry said they have as many as 120 people working on the equipment anywhere from a week to all summer.

On Wednesday we boarded the San Juan and Rio Grande Railroad at Alamosa to ride to La Veta Pass which has passenger service excursion trains once again. We continued on to Raton for the night including a performance at their beautifully restored Shuler Theatre. Thursday we had time to explore the town and visit their Historical Society Museum before our departure on the westbound *Southwest Chief* for home.

This was a great trip with spectacular scenery on many of Colorado's mountain highways, and some excellent train rides. Colorado's mining created the narrow gauge railroads, many of which have been preserved. PRS had a large contingent of members on this trip – over half of the group.

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of June 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 311,839. This was an increase of almost 4 percent over the previous month.

#### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

In July, Caltrain announced that it had record ridership and revenue for the fiscal year ending June 30. During that period, Caltrain carried nearly 11 million passengers, up over 8 percent from the previous year, and up 35.7 percent since the introduction of Baby Bullet service in June 2004.

What's most impressive is that this was accomplished despite two fare increases since 2005. More often than not, such action causes a drop in ridership, but not so this time. As of June 30, Caltrain's average weekday ridership was at nearly 35,000. Coupled with the record ridership was record revenue. During the last fiscal year, Caltrain took in nearly \$35 million in ticket and pass sales, a nearly 15 percent increase over the previous year and nearly double the \$19.3 million taken in 2004.

These figures are, of course, impressive, but if Caltrain could offer comfortable cars to ride in, and enough of them, plus a downtown San Francisco terminal, I believe these figures would at least double.

On July 10, Major League Baseball's annual All-Star Game was played at AT&T Park in San Francisco. To help transport the thousands of fans attending the game, as well as a celebrity game on July 8, Caltrain ran two special post-event trains. The first train ran express to San Carlos, then made all local stops. The second train ran as a local for the entire trip. Both trains ran only as far as San Jose Diridon Station. Additional cars were added to selected pre-game trains, but no other specials were run.

In July, Caltrain, along with Samtrans and Caltrans, began offering commuter travel time information on the changeable

message signs on US 101 between San Francisco and San Jose.

The signs, which currently display driving times for various destinations along US 101, will now also display Caltrain travel times and departure times for trains at the Millbrae and Redwood City stations. Smaller signs will show parking availability at those stations, which usually is plentiful. The signs for Caltrain travel will be activated only for the morning and evening commutes.

In July, work began in Burlingame to install 3875 feet of high-security fencing between Oak Grove Ave. and the south end of the Broadway station. The \$1.1 million project is part of a \$7 million program to install fencing at various locations over the next three years. Also, 150 feet of fencing will be installed south of the San Bruno Station.

Crews have already installed 400 feet of fencing near the Hayward Park station in San Mateo, more than 500 feet of fencing north of the Redwood City station, 91 feet of fencing in Belmont, and 700 feet of fencing over the former Stockton Avenue crossing on both sides of the tracks, at the College Park station in San Jose.

Last year, Caltrain sought recommendations from train engineers, transit police, and cities along the route, to identify high risk areas.

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

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during June were 42,889. This was a decrease from the previous month of slightly over 1 percent. The largest decrease was 7 percent on the Riv/Full/LA Line

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (Trains arriving within 5 minutes of scheduled time) during June was 97 percent. This was an increase from the previous month of 1 percent.

### VENTURA COUNTY – SANTA PAULA BRANCH

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board on July 27, 2007, approved a cooperative agreement with the Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC) for a 3.3-mile track upgrade on their Santa Paula Branch between the city of Ventura and the community of Saticoy in Ventura County. VCTC became the recipient of \$6.75 million in State Public Transit Account funds for the project.

Under the agreement VCTC proposes to reimburse SCRRA for all expenditures associated with the project including design, construction, construction and project management, material procurement, and SCRRA administrative time. VCTC will be responsible for any necessary temporary construction easements, environmental approvals, utility relocations, and community liaison during the construction period.

The Fillmore and Western Railroad (FWRY) maintains and dispatches the Santa Paula Branch Line under contract with VCTC. Currently, only Union Pacific local freight service and occasional recreational/passenger service operate over the line. The FWRY will continue to maintain and dispatch the line during and after the track upgrade project.

### ANTELOPE VALLEY LINE

The developers of a 5,800-home project proposed for the

Newhall Pass want to include a people-mover that would transport commuters 30 stories down to a subterranean Metrolink platform. The plan by Palmer Investment envisions commuters living in the Las Lomas project, perched atop the San Gabriel range between Sylmar and Santa Clarita. They would reach the Metrolink platform on elevators cored through a mountain to an already-built rail tunnel 100 yards below.

Palmer Investments would shoulder the entire cost of the station, said Matt Klink, a spokesman for the Las Lomas project. Las Lomas is one of several large-scale developments planned for north Los Angeles County. Ultimately, 21,000 homes are planned at Newhall Ranch north of Valencia, while 25,000 homes are expected at Tejon Ranch, near the L.A.-Kern counties line. Today, nearly 60 percent of Santa Clarita residents commute to jobs outside their valley. With the area's population booming, the job-to-housing balance is expected to become even more uneven as many new residents commute to jobs in Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles City Council's Planning and Land Use Committee approved an agreement that would allow the Las Lomas Land Co. to reimburse the city for staff time needed to speed review and process documents for the project.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

### CLAREMONT PACKING HOUSE

The Claremont Packing House – located alongside the Claremont Metrolink Station – celebrated its grand re-opening in mid-June. Originally built in the 1920s to serve the local citrus industry, the historic landmark has been renovated as a dynamic multi-use structure including live-work lofts, restaurants, a jazz club, boutiques, and the Claremont Museum of Art.

The new Packing House showcases a vibrant mix of the old and the new, including a block-long boardwalk that echoes the building's former loading docks. The Claremont Packing House is located at 532 West First St. in downtown Claremont.

### SCHEDULE CHANGES

Metrolink Train Schedules generally change twice a year. A summary of the Sept. 4 changes is as follows:

#### Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines

■ Monday through Friday Services – Certain train schedules are changes five minutes or less to improve operations.

■ Saturday and Sunday Service – Weekend service is increased on the *Antelope Valley Line* as follows:

Saturday – Increase the current four round trips to six round trips effective Sept. 8.

Sunday – Increase the current no service to three round trips effective Sept. 8.

#### Orange County/IEOC/91 Lines

■ **Buena Park Station** – All weekday and weekend Orange County Line and 91 Line trains will begin stopping at the new Buena Park Station effective Sept. 4.

■ Monday through Friday Service:

Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo – In order to provide additional train service to south Orange County, six existing trains currently operating to Irvine or San Juan Capistrano have been rescheduled to create three additional round trips to Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo.

General changes – Most Orange County, IEOC and 91 Line schedules are changed five minutes or less due to the

increased number of trains operating to Laguna/Niguel/Mission Viejo, due to the addition of the Buena Park stop, and due to the first phase of schedule realignment for year 2010 Orange County 30 minute service. One train has an increase greater than five minutes. Most trains stopping at Buena Park have had three to five minutes added to their schedules for the new stop.

■ **Saturday and Sunday Service – On the Orange County Line** a morning round trip between Los Angeles and San Juan Capistrano is added on both Saturday and Sunday, which increases service from the current six round trips to eight round trips effective Sept. 8.

San Bernardino and Riverside Lines

■ **Monday through Friday Service – No changes.**

■ **Saturday and Sunday Service – Weekend service is increased on the San Bernardino Line** as follows:

Saturday – No changes.

Sunday – Increase the current six round trips to eight round trips effective Sept. 8.

**IRVINE STATION**

As the busiest station in Orange County, the Irvine Station serves more than 1.2 million Amtrak, Metrolink, and Orange County Transportation Authority riders annually. Demand for the Station's services has overwhelmed the 547 parking spaces currently available. To meet commuters' needs, a four-level, 1,500-space parking structure is being built on a current parking lot at the corner of Ada St. and Barranca Parkway., and will be completed by mid-2008. During construction, a temporary lot (488 spaces) will be open to commuters.

**NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT**

North County Transit District (NCTD) officials said the Sprinter light rail line reached a significant milestone Aug. 2 with all 22 miles of rail installed and significant progress made on the \$460 million project's signaling equipment. Don Bullock, capital projects manager for the NCTD, said a more significant date is Oct. 1, when the contractor must transfer ownership of the railway to the district. "At that time we will be able to begin end-to-end testing," Bullock said.

Crews continue to work on the project's 15 stations, paving parking lots, and installing electronic signs, ticket machines, and video cameras on new concrete train platforms. The district announced Aug. 2 that it will extend Sprinter testing from Escondido west to Las Posas Ave. on Aug. 6.

Karen King, NCTD executive director, said that the modern-looking blue vehicles, which can reach speeds of 50 mph, are common in Europe. But because they are new in the U.S., they must undergo more rigorous testing than other, more established designs might. She said the California Public Utilities Commission recently certified the braking systems for the Sprinter's 12 trains, after a long series of tests where steel ingots were loaded into passenger seats to simulate stopping with a full load of riders.

[Irvine, Rolling Stock & NCTD info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT**

by **DICK FINLEY**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL**

**RIDERSHIP**

June 2007	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	136,336	77,485	39,860	19,985
Saturday Ave.	93,520	59,967	24,800	13,778
Sunday Ave.	76,804	44,794	18,693	11,848

Monthly Total 3,637,876 2,106,188 1,035,839 535,977

**TIMETABLE**

A new Green Line timetable was issued effective June 24, 2007. There is essentially no difference from the previous timetable of June 2006.

Go Metro hassle-free with the 12-Minute Map showing the Metro bus and rail routes that run every 12 minutes or less throughout the day during the week. Copies of the map are available aboard Metro buses or trains and at Customer Service Centers.

**METRO BOARD**

Santa Monica City council Member Pam O'Connor will chair the Board of Directors during Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. She succeeds Supervisor Gloria Molina who completed her term as chair on June 30. O'Connor has served on Metro's Board of Directors since 2001, representing the Westside and South Bay cities. She also represents the City of Santa Monica on the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority board.

At its June meeting, the Metro Board approved the \$3.121 billion budget for FY 2008. The budget includes funding for new capital projects, salary increases and benefits for union and non-contract employees.

The budget includes \$975,000 for "incident based recording technology" – so-called "black boxes" – on all Metro buses. The Board also asked for a report on steps needed "to establish a specialized bus accident investigation unit" to be staffed by Metro employees who would be certified accident investigators.

The Board voted to budget \$174.5 million to purchase 50 light rail cars – 16 for operation on the Exposition Line and 34 for the Blue Line. The 34 will replace part of the P865 Nippon Sharyo cars which have exceeded 20 years' service.

The Board set a \$12.9 million budget to build an approximately 60,000-square-foot warehouse and Facilities Maintenance building on Baughet St. adjacent to the Metro Support Services Center (formerly the RRC). The building will allow Metro to centralize bulk warehousing and such Facilities Maintenance functions as Stops & Zones, property maintenance and the sign shop, currently located at the South Park facility. Sale of that property to the City of Los Angeles is pending.

**GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION**

At the July Board meeting, an amount not-to-exceed \$640,000 was approved for repair of cracked shear keys at hinges #4, 5, and 6 on the track I guideway of the Chinatown Aerial Structure. Support structures, such as shear keys, assist in the prevention of differential displacement movement during seismic events. To determine the cause of the cracking and design appropriate repairs, it is necessary to remove broken concrete, and verify the size and location of reinforcing steel bars. Temporary netting had been placed under the cracked shear keys to prevent concrete falling on pedestrians.

A Contract Modification Authority for \$200,000 is being requested for unforeseen field conditions. Subsequent to the initiation of repairs and further inspection of the shear key areas (i.e. 4, 5 and 6) further inspections of shear keys 1, 2, and 3 will begin to locate any additional conditions detected that may require additional work to repair on an exigent bases.

**GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION**

The 1st St. Bridge across the Los Angeles River was built in

railcars. The expansion of the 71-foot-wide viaduct – a bridge composed of several short spans – began in March. Scott McConnell, Metro's construction manager for the city's widening project, said the project is scheduled to be completed in October 2007.

The viaduct's north side will be widened 26 feet to accommodate tracks and catenary down its center, while still providing two traffic lanes and six-foot-wide sidewalks on each side.

#### EXPO LINE

Aug. 10 was the beginning of major construction for the Exposition Light Rail Project in downtown Los Angeles. Metro had a ground-breaking for the tunnel underneath Figueroa St. The \$640 million project, set to open in the summer of 2010, is being praised by officials who believe it will be essential to Los Angeles commuters. Phase One of the light rail project will parallel the Santa Monica Freeway in an attempt to curb traffic.

City officials gathered on Flower St. to witness the sight of drilling getting underway. Guests included Councilwoman Jan Perry, chair of the Exposition Construction Authority, Councilman Bernard Parks, and County Supervisors Yvonne Burke and Zev Yaroslavsky. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa was also on hand and commended the light rail project for being what the city is going to rely on for transportation in decades to come. "I don't have to tell you that L.A.'s expected to grow 30 percent in the next 25 years," Villaraigosa said. "Just think of how many cars will clog our roads and highways."

Villaraigosa also emphasized the importance of attaining additional funding from the state. He said how proud he was of the fact a large portion of the project was entirely locally funded, but emphasized the significance of the additional \$314 million put up by the California Transportation Commission. Villaraigosa also referred to several delays in approving the state's new budget on behalf of the California State Assembly.

#### SAN DIEGO

In 2004, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) issued a request for proposals for a regional customer information system (CIS) that would provide next-stop announcements for bus and trolley patrons. The selected proposer for the CIS project was Transit Television Network (TTN). TTN currently serves transit operators throughout the U.S., including the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority. TTN's proposal included real-time stop announcements, next-stop information, and MTS public service announcements coupled with news clips and targeted advertising. Negotiations and subsequent final contract have been transferred to MTS for completion and administration. Minimum revenue generation of \$30,000 is expected annually, with additional revenue expected.

On July 19, the Board of Directors authorized a revenue contract with TTN and North County Transit District (NCTD). The installation and maintenance of television monitors will be at no cost to MTS. There is a regional consistency by utilizing one firm and one advertising policy for all MTS and NCTD vehicles (currently the Sprinter is not included in the contract but may be added at the discretion of NCTD).

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was to sign an agreement in Portland on July 3 committing federal money to the Portland Mall/Interstate 205 light rail project. The agree-

ment puts the cost of the project at \$575.2 million, with the 60 percent federal share at \$345.4 million. Construction is underway on the 6.5-mile light rail line parallel to I-205 between Clackamas Town Center and the Gateway Transit Center and to extend light rail on the downtown Portland transit mall between Union Station and Portland State University.

The Oregon Legislature has approved \$250 million in state lottery money for the 6.5-mile Portland-Milwaukie light rail line. The lottery funds will pick up most of the \$350 million, 40 percent local matching share needed to finance construction of the project, said Brian Newman, Metro Councilor. Securing the FTA's 60 percent share – about \$550 million – will not be a snap, however, he said.

The Portland Streetcar is chugging east to connect the Pearl District condo life to the slower-growing Lloyd District and central east side. The second week of July the city of Portland was to mail out \$15 million worth of notices of proposed bills to people who own houses or businesses within a few blocks of the future eastside line. The cash will help construct a 3.3-mile loop that crosses the Broadway Bridge and links the Lloyd District south to Oregon Museum of Science and Industry and, eventually, across the river to the condos and tram landing in the South Waterfront. The \$15 million raised from property owners will be charged through what's known as a local improvement district. The city's theory is that property owners will share in the streetcar's benefits with rising property values so they should share in the cost. Construction is expected to begin in October 2008 and the final bills would go out when the work is done in 2011.

The heat during the second week of July forced TriMet to order MAX trains to slow down to no more than 35 mph about 3:30 p.m., even on the Interstate 84 and westside alignments, where trains normally travel 55 mph. The reason, TriMet spokeswoman Peggy LaPointe explained, is that at temperatures greater than 100 degrees, the overhead wires expand and begin to sag. Slower speed keeps the tension up on the wires, she said.

Convenience is the key attraction of many condominium and townhouse projects built in close proximity to Portland's burgeoning light rail system. As local gas prices remain near unprecedented highs, these developments promise buyers freedom from the chains of petroleum dependence – a car-light or even car-free lifestyle made easy through quick access to light rail.

Gresham Station Townhomes was one of the first such projects to open in the metro area. From Gresham to the end of the line in Hillsboro, and from the Expo Center to TriMet's new South Corridor MAX line to Clackamas Town Center (scheduled to open in Sept. 2009), condominium and townhouse projects have sprung up like the wildflowers the city plants along the MAX tracks.

On the west side of metro area, the Willow Creek/Southwest 185th Ave. MAX station in Beaverton is just a two-minute walk from many of the units at the new Heron Creek Condominiums. A total of 51 units in phases I and II had been sold as of mid-June. When all three phases are complete, the complex will include 46 three-story buildings and 276 condos.

Just west of Heron Creek, Arbor Crossing sits on the north side of the Quatama/205th Ave. MAX station. Built by Arbor Custom Homes, the project features Craftsman-style exteriors

with fieldstone facades and covered decks.

Home shoppers who prefer the charm of North Portland can ride the Yellow line to the North Killingsworth Street station, where they'll find the Alberta Court Condominiums, recently converted from a 1945-vintage apartment complex.

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

#### SEATTLE

Washington transportation leaders are searching for a way to pay for more than \$350 million worth of freight rail and road improvements across the state. Washington freight projects that are authorized but waiting for financing:

- Stampede Pass rail tunnel improvements, \$25 million.
- Green River Valley rail project, \$3.5 million.
- West Vancouver freight access, \$7.5 million.

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

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

Congress was in recess from Aug. 6 through Sept. 4, 2007.

Prior to its recess the House passed H.R. 3074 (Making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.) on July 24. It appropriates \$1.4 billion for capital and operating funds for Amtrak, \$50 million for a new initiative to provide federal matching funds to states for intercity passenger rail service, and \$35 million for rail line relocation and improvement grants.

On July 12, the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved S. 1789 (An original bill making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes.). It appropriates \$1.47 billion for Amtrak, \$100 million for a new grant program that will match state contributions for intercity passenger rail operations, and includes language that prohibits Amtrak from moving any of its jobs overseas.

#### PROPOSED FEDERAL REGULATIONS FOR PASSENGER TRAIN SAFETY

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is proposing new federal safety standards that significantly enhance the strength of key structural components of passenger rail cars to make them more crashworthy.

The proposed rule is designed to preserve more space in which both passengers and train crew members can safely survive a collision with another train, a vehicle at a highway-rail grade crossing, or other object by strengthening the car's forward structure. The proposed rule would upgrade existing federal standards for cab cars and multiple-unit (MU) locomotives.

MU locomotive service is passenger rail service involving trains consisting of self-propelled electric or diesel MU locomotives. MU locomotives typically operate semi-permanently coupled together as a pair or triplet with a control cab at each end of the consist. During peak commuting hours, multiple pairs or triplets of MU locomotives, or a combination of both, are typically operated together as a single passenger train in MU service. This type of service does not make use of a conventional locomotive as a primary means of motive power. MU locomotive service is very similar to push-pull service as operated

in the push mode with the cab car in the lead.

Under the proposed rule, forward corner posts would have to withstand 300,000 pounds of force before failing, doubling the current federal requirement. In addition, forward corner and collision posts would have to satisfy new federal standards to absorb a minimum level of energy and bend a specific distance without breaking to maximize the full potential strength of these structural components. The new standards would apply to cab cars and MU locomotives ordered beginning in October 2009 and accommodate new equipment designs.

The notice of proposed rule making was published in the Federal Register on Aug. 1, 2007. Written comments on the proposal may be submitted until October 1, 2007.

#### AMTRAK NEWS

##### Cash or Credit Card Only Coming

Effective with the Oct. 29 fall timetable change Amtrak will stop accepting personal checks for purchases. Personal checks for group travel deposits and final payments will be accepted because the payment deadline is well in advance of travel and the fare is often high. Group meals on trains may also be paid by check by prior arrangement with Amtrak. Company and government checks will continue to be accepted. Also, after the timetable change Amtrak will accept only U.S. Postal Service money orders.

##### Sacramento Caltrans Quick-Trak

A new Quik-Trak ticketing kiosk has been installed at the main Caltrans headquarters building in Sacramento. It is located at the 1121 O Street entrance, adjacent to the Archives Plaza LRT station. It is accessible by the public during business hours.

##### Superliner Coaches

As *Superliner* coaches are cycled through the shops in Beech Grove, Ind. for four-year overhauls, the coaches will be outfitted with electrical outlets at every seat. With the increase in the number of portable electronic devices carried by travelers there is a demand for more outlets, especially on long-distance trains.

#### INTERCITY TRAINS

##### Empire Builder

On Sundays through Wednesdays from July 29 through Sept. 4 BNSF replaced rail and electric power cables in the Cascade Tunnel. The tunnel is on the route of the Seattle section of the *Empire Builder*. A work window was established to permit the project to proceed safely. On days when work was scheduled, if the westbound *Builder* (Tr. No. 7) was two hours or more behind schedule out of Whitefish, Mont., the train terminated at Wenatchee with passengers bused onward to their destinations. If Tr. No. 7 terminated at Wenatchee, the equipment was dead-head back to Spokane, where its equipment was serviced and the next eastbound train originated.

#### WESTERN CORRIDORS

Caltrans has leased two Amtrak *Superliner* I coaches for use within the state, Amtrak 34053 and 34081. The cars were stored out of service at Amtrak's Beech Grove shop because of wreck damage. Reports indicate that Amtrak had no plans to repair the cars. The cars were repaired and modified by Amtrak at Caltrans expense, and leased to Caltrans for six years for the cost of the repairs. More wreck-damaged coaches may be leased and repaired, but each car lease must be negotiated individually.

The interior of the cars was refurbished, and the cars painted

in Amtrak California colors. The cars were renumbered, and named, 34053 to 34953, *Pacific Grove*, and 34081 to 34981, *Pleasant Grove*. They arrived in Oakland on July 17. Because Amtrak *Superliner* cars do not have automatic doors, there will probably be only one such car assigned per train, so that boarding/detraining will be available on cars immediately adjacent to the "Super-Caltransliner" car.

#### Amtrak Cascades

All Amtrak Cascades service in Oregon and Washington was canceled Aug. 3-5, 2007, except for Tr. Nos. 5101517 which operates between Seattle and Vancouver, B.C., when small cracks in the suspension support structure of some of the cars in the Talgo trainsets were discovered. No alternate transportation was provided. Amtrak advised travelers of the cancellation and provided full refunds for unused tickets.

Local travel between Eugene, Ore. and Seattle was permitted aboard the *Coast Starlight* during the cancellation. The Talgos are out of service until at least Oct. 28.

Tr. Nos. 5101517 was not affected by the cancellation because they are currently equipped with *Superliner* cars.

*Amfleet* and *Horizon* cars were moved to the Northwest to substitute for the withdrawn Talgo trainsets. Special Tr. No. 954 was scheduled to depart from Los Angeles at 10:00p.m. on Aug. 3 and arrive in Seattle at 7:30 a.m. on Aug. 5. Its consist was AMTK 505154182580158106182530182630182510182540182570182560158108151000. Cars from the East Coast were moved to the Northwest on westbound long-distance trains.

Service resumed on Aug. 6 on the following schedule.

Southbound. Seattle-Portland. Tr. No. 1001, 7:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Tr. No. 1007, 1:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Tr. No. 1009, 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., continuing from Portland to Eugene 9:45 p.m.-12:20 a.m.

Northbound. Eugene-Portland. Tr. No. 1000, 5:30 a.m.-8:05 a.m., continuing from Portland to Seattle 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Portland-Seattle. Tr. No. 1002, 12:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Tr. No. 1008, 6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

On Aug. 13, following the arrival of equipment from the east coast, the following trains were added.

Southbound. Seattle-Portland. Tr. No. 1003, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Portland-Eugene. Tr. No. 1005, 5:50 p.m.-8:25 p.m.

Northbound. Eugene-Portland. Tr. No. 1004, 9:15 a.m.-11:50 a.m. Portland-Seattle. Tr. No. 1006, 6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

Substitute motor coach service was added, also. Southbound from Edmonds to Seattle. Motorcoach 5633. 9:25 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Connection to Tr. No. 1003. Northbound from Seattle to Edmonds. Motorcoach 5666. 7:45 p.m.-8:20 p.m. Connection from Tr. No. 1006.

The substitute trains operate at reduced speeds and do not include some of the amenities featured on the regular *Amtrak Cascades* service such as business class, feature movies or bicycle accommodations. There is limited seating for mobility impaired travelers.

The consists of the four trainsets operating on Aug. 16 were:

- 902521825 10\*/82580\*158106\*/82530\*/82630\*/457
- 469/82540\*/44706/58 108\*/82560\*/82570\*/90230
- 90253 1433631826211507
- 902501829991825031481921826091826641465

Notes: \* Cars moved from Southern California. 457, 465, 469. P59 PHI locomotives. 507 Dash 8-32 BWH locomotive. 43363 *Amfleet* / Full Dinette. 44706 *Amfleet* / *Metroliner* coach.

48192 *Amfleet* / Club-Dinette. 58100 numbers *Horizon* Club-Dinette. 82500 and 82600 numbers, and 82999 *Amfleet I Regional* coaches. 90230, 90250, 90252, 90253, Non-powered control units.

*Horizon* coach 51000 that was moved north from Los Angeles was sent to Chicago for use on Midwestern trains.

#### NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

To provide some *Amfleet* equipment to operate Cascades service while the Talgo equipment is out of service Amtrak temporarily cancelled New York-Washington, D.C. Friday only *Regional* Tr. Nos. 133 and 134 beginning on Aug. 10, and Saturday and Sunday only *Regional* Tr. Nos. 159 and 192 beginning on Aug. 11.

#### Downeaster

A fifth daily Boston-Portland, Me. *Downeaster*; Tr. Nos. 6881 689, began operating on Aug. 17.

The new schedules are (direction, days of operation, city pair, train number, departure and arrival times):

Southbound. Monday-Friday. Portland-Boston. Tr. No. 680, 5:55 a.m.-8:25 a.m. Tr. No. 682, 8:00 a.m.-10:25 a.m. Tr. No. 684, 12:50p.m.-3:15 p.m. Tr. No. 686, 3:05 p.m.-5:35 p.m. Tr. No. 688, 8:10 p.m.-10:35 p.m.

Northbound. Monday-Friday. Boston-Portland. Tr. No. 681, 9:05 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Tr. No. 683, 11:05 a.m.-1:30p.m. Tr. No. 685, 5:00 -7:25 p.m. Tr. No. 687, 6:20 p.m.-8:50 p.m. Tr. No. 689, 11:20 p.m.-1:45 a.m.

Southbound. Saturdays and Sundays. Portland-Boston. Tr. No. 690, 7:10 a.m.-9:35 a.m. Tr. No. 692, 8:15 a.m.-10:40 a.m. Tr. No. 694, 1:45 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Tr. No. 696, 3:00 p.m.-5:25 p.m. Tr. No. 688, 8:10p.m.-10:35 p.m. Tr. No. 691, 10:25 a.m.-12:50p.m. Tr. No. 693, 1200 noon-2:25 p.m. Tr. No. 695, 5:00 p.m.-7:25 p.m. Tr. No. 697, 6:25 p.m.-8:50 p.m. Tr. No. 689, 11:20 p.m.-1:45 a.m.

The *Downeaster* serves the following intermediate cities: Old Orchard Beach, Saco-Biddeford, and Wells, Mine, Dover-University of New Hampshire (limited service), Durham, Exeter, Haverhill, and Woburn, Mass.

Reserved coach and *Coastal Club* (Business class) seating, and snack car service is available.

#### GRANLUXE RAIL JOURNEYS

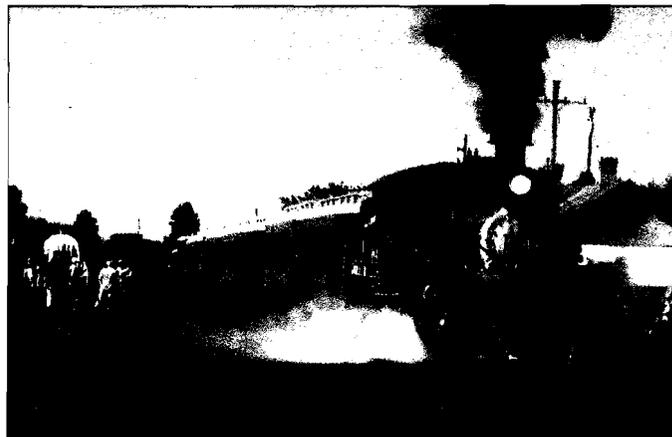
In order to promote its "*GrandLuxe Limited*" passenger service GrandLuxe Rail Journeys is offering Amtrak Guest Rewards program members a premium of up to \$100 worth of beverages aboard GrandLuxe trains as an incentive to potential customers. On Aug. 1 an Associated Press news item left the false impression that the on-board credit is available to all Amtrak passengers, when in fact it is only for "*GrandLuxe Limited*" passengers who are also Amtrak Guest Rewards members. Amtrak issued a correction on Aug. 2 which was posted on the Grandluxe media web page.

GrandLuxe Rail Journeys is now offering travelers on the "*GrandLuxe Limited* on *The Silver Meteor*" the option to disembark in Orlando or West Palm Beach. When travel was first offered on the route, it was only for travel between Washington, D.C. and Miami.

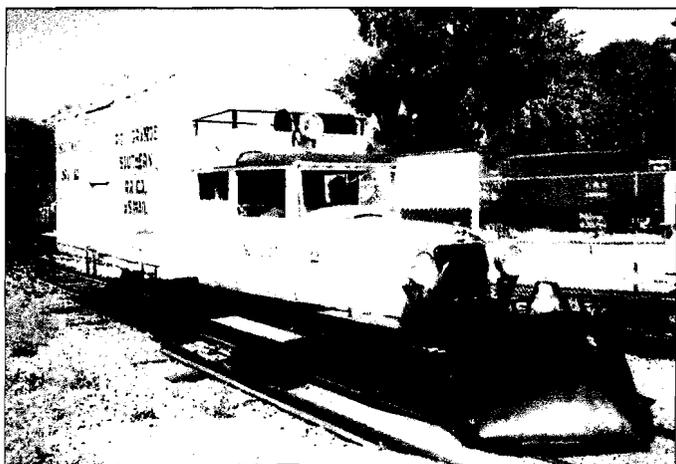
On Nov. 3 the first "*GrandLuxe Limited* on *The Southwest Chief*" will arrive and depart Los Angeles. [Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]



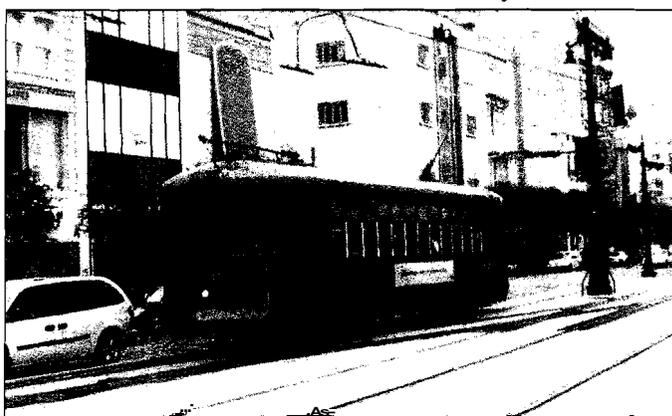
*Locomotive#40 is seen at the Colorado RR Museum at Golden, Colorado, on June 16, pulling a passenger train around their track.*  
**Photo by Dave Abbott**



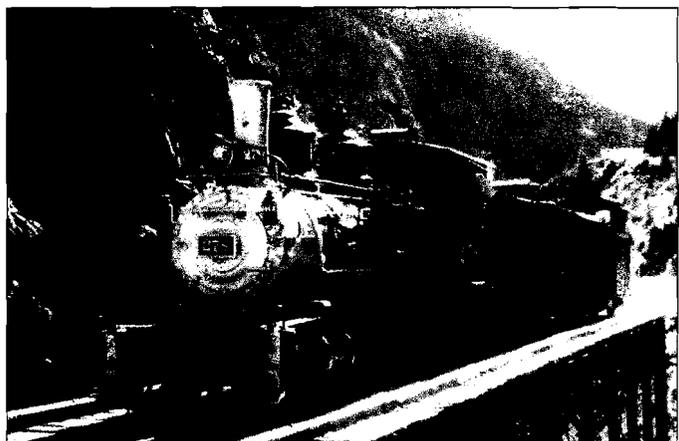
*Cumbres and Toltec train on June 19 about ready to leave Chama, New Mexico, toward Antonito, Colorado.*  
**Photo by Barbara Sibert**



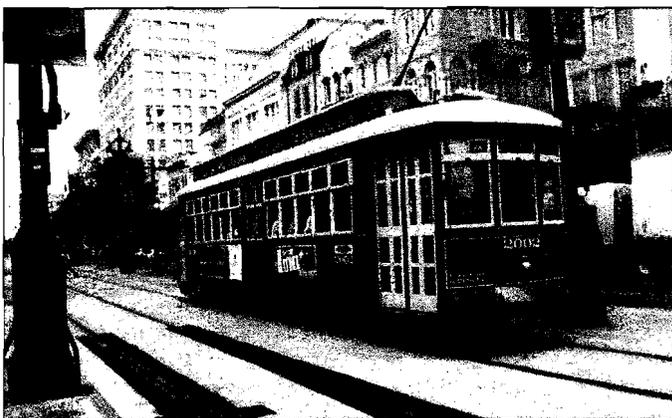
*Galloping Goose #2 at the Colorado RR Museum on June 16 is available for rides.*  
**Photo by Dave Abbott**



*A Perley Thomas green streetcar, No. 900, has just rounded the corner from Carondelet St. to the 3rd track on Canal St. in New Orleans. The track continues one block and turns onto St. Charles Ave, outbound on the St. Charles Line. A turnout from the Canal St. Line is visible.*  
**Photo by Charles Varnes**



*On June 17, Railroad Museum at Cimarron, Colorado, with locomotive, box car and caboose on track over the River exiting the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.*  
**Photo by Dave Abbott**



*One of the red and yellow replica streetcars assembled in New Orleans Regional Transit Authority's Carrollton Shops prior to Katrina. Car 2002 is outbound on Canal St. Notice the doors midway on the side of the car where a wheelchair lift is located. In the foreground to the left, the start of a crossover from the inbound Canal St. Line to the 3rd track used by the St. Charles Line for one block.*  
**Photo by Charles Varnes**