

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2008

MIRACULOUS PORT SOLUTION

The challenge is how to move cargo from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to a transfer facility a few miles away. Trucks are dirty, noisy and clog up the freeways. Magnetic levitation, or maglev, is clean, quiet and uses its own elevated guideway. Maglev is a technology that's been around awhile as an interesting experiment in public transportation but used in only a few places because it is costly. Maglev could make all the difference in the quality of life for residents living near the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) in West Long Beach.

Maglev trains lift themselves a half-inch off the rails and propel themselves with electromagnetic current. As passenger trains, they take advantage of their wheelless lack of friction to move at extremely high speeds. At the ports, though, they would cover only a five-mile route between the docks and the ICTF, where cargo containers would be loaded onto conventional trains.

The Port of Long Beach, in partnership with the Port of Los Angeles, plans to ask for proposals from several maglev companies to build a five-mile line to the ICTF as a demonstration project, at little or no expense to the ports. The ports would get a zero-emission system to replace thousands of diesel truck trips, and ICTF neighbors would get a clean, quiet transfer facility the ports need badly. Instead of fickle transit riders, the operator of this driverless system would have a huge volume of containers and a dedicated stream of hefty revenue.

Port officials say they want to invite proposals quickly, and will ask the Keston Institute at USC to analyze them and make recommendations. The Institute specializes in research into transportation and other public works and infrastructure projects.

If the project works well, it could lead to maglev lines carrying cargo inland to warehouse centers, and take even more trucks off the freeways. Harbor Commission President James Hankla said he'd like to start construction within a year.

That's a bold schedule. And it's just what diesel-plagued residents and freeway drivers need – relief so impressive it seems almost too good to be true.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

BACK ON TRACK

BY MARGO PETROS

Recently the historic Tehachapi railroad depot was destroyed by fire caused by two people playing with illegal fireworks on June 13, 2008. Tehachapi, however, is in the process of developing plans and securing funds to rebuild the depot. For those groups and individuals, who would care to participate in this effort, please contact: Friends of the Tehachapi Depot, P.O. Box 2044, Tehachapi, CA 93581-2044. (Donations may be sent to the above address.)

SAN BERNARDINO HISTORY AND RR MUSEUM

The Santa Fe San Bernardino Depot is the location of the San Bernardino History and Railroad Museum, which held its grand opening on July 12, 2008. The new Museum is set up in the former baggage room and REA office. The San Bernardino RR Historical Society has sent artifacts from Redondo Junction to San Bernardino for display in the new museum, including a large scale wooden model of an SP 4-8-2 built by Santa Fe machinist George Meir. The San Bernardino History & Pioneer Society has contributed a fully-restored horse-drawn fire wagon and fire reel, both from San Bernardino. Some artifacts from the Santa Fe Shops Fire Dept. will be displayed, also.

It was hoped 3751 could attend the opening of the new museum, but SBRHS President Bob Kittel's quoted fee for operation of 3751 to San Bernardino was much higher than what the City of San Bernardino was able to spend. SBRHS has a policy of seeking a clear profit whenever 3751 is on public display.

[Info. from Glen Icanberry]

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of June 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 351,261. This was an increase of 27,524 riders per day from May or about 9 percent.

STANDING ROOM ONLY

The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) will begin testing railcars with no seats to deal with rush-hour crowding, the *Chicago Tribune* reported on July 17. The CTA hasn't completed details, but it likely wouldn't place more than two standing-room-only cars together in an eight-car train, since cars with seats will be needed for seniors and the disabled.

CTA President Ron Huberman said the authority doesn't like the customer service implications of seatless cars. However, rising gas prices have pushed up both ridership and costs, and the agency, by law, now accepts seniors free of charge.

The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system is experimenting with taking out some (not all) of the seats to make room for more standees.

New York City officials are planning to start a pilot program with flip-up seats in four of ten cars on a train. The seats will be locked in the up position during rush hours. This way, officials hope to get as many as 18 percent more people inside such cars. NYC Transit President Howard Roberts says the seats will be unlocked after rush hours. The program starts in five to seven months. The program will probably be unpopular among riders. [Info. from Trainorders.com via Ken Ruben]



WHEEL CLICKS

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PARTICIPATING MEMBER \$35.00 per year
 SUSTAINING MEMBER \$50.00 per year
 CORPORATE MEMBER \$100.00 per year
 LIFE MEMBER \$500.00

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR LINDSAY SMITH

EXCURSION DIRECTOR VINCE CAMMARANO
 For excursion information, phone (818) 445-8723.

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Sep. 5 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Sep. 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 20, 27 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: September 27.
 Sep. 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. Committee Mtg.: 20.
 Oct. 3 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Oct. 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 18, 25 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: October 25.
 Oct. 4, 11, Rolling stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 18, 25 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 4, 18; Extra day: 11, 25. Committee Mtg.: 18.
 Oct. 17 Slide night at Saunders Yard., 7:30 p.m., Noakes &
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.

MEETING PROGRAMS

by RUSS DAVIES

September 12: **Bill Farmer** was an outstanding and well-traveled railroad photographer, and a **slide collector as well!** He had numerous slide “trading partners” in the ranks of well-known photographers. This night we’ll see a sampler of the work of those partners, many of them known by PRS members. **We’ll see outstanding slides from all over the USA. Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

October 10: **Chard Walker’s incomparable slides!** **Arie Korporaal** has been diligently archiving the priceless collection at **your Museum**, and will share them with us at this meeting. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by VIRGINIA GRUPP

Late renewals were assigned Membership Numbers 460-465. Richard Castagna was voted into PRS on August 1, 2008 with Number 466.

Correction for August 2008 issue of *Wheel Clicks*: Membership #459 is Barry Herlihy.

PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM

by LINDSAY SMITH

One of the strongest advocates for the Museum Committee has passed away. Barbara Sibert was active in establishing and maintaining the Museum. She was active in almost every phase of the Society. The Museum received many items through her friends. Much of what we have become, happened with her guidance from the Board of Directors or recommendations when she was not on the Board.

We continue attempting to archive our collection. Tom Geer, Jim Baker, Roger Fogt, Dave Housh and several others are working hard auditing the book collection. Russ Davies continues to make a list of the 35 mm slides. Matt Wiles has been working over the large flat files. Owen Danaher is establishing the office area as the home for the Society. Bob Washburn can now help find images in our extensive colored Post Card collection. We have limited the collection to railroad related images because our space is limited in the Museum. Mel Goyen is still selling DVD issues of the antique railroad movies.

Dick Donat, of Summit, NJ, has been using the archives to recall his experience at Summit, CA. Dick kept Chard Walker in Summit hats and shirts. Dick creosoted the wooden frame on the *Descanso* one summer years ago. His father, Dr. Donat, DDS was active in getting the *Descanso* from Torrance to Summit.

Lindsay Smith is listing the Melching black and white photographs on the computer. Joe Moir started the list on paper and Lindsay has added to the list and has copied it to the computer. Russ Davies is listing the Melching color photographs. Arie Korporaal continues to convert the Walker collection to digital format.

On July 26, we participated in the San Dimas Bonita Avenue Car Show. Matt Wiles, Charles Schultz and Bill Housh helped Owen Danaher entertain visitors at the Museum. These affairs draw many folks who claim, “I didn’t know you were here!” We also worked with the San Dimas Historical Society on their Ice Cream Social on Sunday, August 24.

SUPPORTING MEMBER BEN SALVATY

Benjamin B. Salvaty III, a quiet but constant supporter of PRS, passed away on April 12, 2008. Ben, a lawyer and a graduate of Notre Dame University, served for many years as General Attorney for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. When the Santa Fe California law department was closed in 1990, Ben was hired by Hill, Ferrar, and Burrell to take care of the railroad's business.

Ben was a past president of the Santa Fe Retired Group, a member of the San Marino Chamber of Commerce, and an active parishioner and sponsor of activities at St. Therese Church in Alhambra.

Ben was never an officer in PRS, but he was always a generous supporter. In 2004, the Union Pacific was re-laying the track in its "Weeds" switching district. In the process, the switch into the spur track, where most of the PRS rolling stock sit was cut, isolating the PRS equipment from all railroad service. Ben volunteered to use his professional contacts to bring the situation to the attention of important persons in the Union Pacific Railroad, who saw to it that the PRS railroad link to the world was restored. Because of Ben's efforts, PRS is still on the rails.



Barbara Sibert on Australian trip in September 2004.

BARBARA SIBERT TRAVELS ON

Barbara Louise Sibert, world traveler, PRS Excursion Director, and excellent friend, concluded her earthly journey on July 25, 2008.

Barbara was born on December 8, 1931, in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and was the only child of Harry and Frieda Sibert. The family moved to the Centinela Valley when Barbara was young. Her father worked for the Southern Pacific at the North Spring Street freight house. The family took many trips on railroad passes.

Barbara graduated from Washington High School. She always had an excellent command of details and was well-versed in clerical and accounting procedures. In 1951, Barbara went to work for the Southern Pacific Railroad in the Superintendent's Office on the 5th Floor of the Pacific Electric Building on Main [continued at **BARBARA** on Page 4]



Barbara Sibert (l.), Wayne Saunders, Frances and Ted Creveling are aboard the Columbia River on the AAPRCO trip to British Columbia in Aug.-Sep. 1995. Photo by Stan Ames



Train Display at Los Angeles Union Station on National Train Day, Saturday, May 10, 2008. Photo by Dennis Gilkey



Amtrak #458 is at Los Angeles Union Station on National Train Day, Saturday, May 10, 2008. Photo by Dennis Gilkey

[**BARBARA** from Page 3]

Street. About a year later, she was moved to the Mission Road Coach Yard Dining Car Accounting Department. Here, in the SP Commissary, Barbara became competent in the use of a comptometer, a sort of mechanical calculator which was the high-tech standard at SP in those days. She was a member of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks Lodge 30.

In December of 1956, Barbara went to work at Texaco where her knowledge of the comptometer was also valued. Anticipating a downsizing at Texaco, she retired in October, 1988.

Retirement gave Barbara the chance to pursue her love of travel, which she did all over the United States and Europe, Asia and Australia. She would go with friends and could often be spotted on excursions with her mother, who lived with Barbara in Alhambra. However, retirement also meant that Barbara's work was just beginning. Her unique gifts made her a valuable worker for tour operators such as Let's Travel Tours, Mountain Outin', Rail Travel Center, the NRHS chapters sponsoring steam excursions, and various private car operators. Barbara was also active in the Pacific Mineral Society (which she served for 15 years as Secretary), the Alhambra Historical Society (which she served for 10 years as Treasurer), and, most outstandingly, in Pacific Railroad Society.

Barbara's work in PRS was extensive and varied. She served as Vice President, Member of the Board of Directors, arranged for Special Events, and was the PRS Donations Secretary. In 1990, Barbara assumed the burden of Excursion Director for all of the Society's trips. Perhaps most of us remember her from those trips that she meticulously arranged and escorted. However, her touch was felt in hundreds of unheralded ways, from personally roasting the unique trail mix handed out in the afternoons on excursions, to raising money by dreaming up raffles and seeing them to their successful conclusion. Barbara stored and catalogued each of the hundreds of sheets, blankets, towels, and dishes belonging to PRS. It will be impossible to lay your head down on a pillow in the *National Forum* without thinking of Barbara, who carefully hand-stitched the pillow liners on each one of the bed pillows which we use in that car.

Barbara was a railfan when women earning that designation were rare. She had her own N-scale models, took photographs of trains, and owned an authentic 1941 Union Pacific caboose, which she shared with PRS. She was a unique person whose determination and fun-loving spirit enhanced and will continue to enhance PRS for all time.

A memorial service is planned for later this year at the Pacific Railroad Museum in San Dimas. Anyone who wishes to donate in her memory may do so to an organization of your choice or your local Humane Society.

Biographical information from Ed and Mary Lee Von Nordeck
Written by Marti Ann Draper

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

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during June 2008 were 47,930. This was an increase from the previous month of 2487 or about 5 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within 5 minutes) was 95 percent.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by **CHARLES VARNES**

On July 22, 2008, the House of Representatives voted to send the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2007 to conference committee, and appointed its committee members. The Senate has not appointed its conference committee members due to a dispute over opening up more U.S. land for oil drilling.

The House is in recess from August 11 through September 5, with a September 26 target date for adjournment. The Senate is in recess from August 9 through September 7. At deadline, the Senate had not determined its adjournment target date.

On July 29, Senator Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) introduced S.3360, "A Bill to Increase the Availability of Domestically Manufactured Passenger Cars for Intercity Passenger Rail Service, and for Other Purposes." The bill is designed to promote rehabilitation of Amtrak's fleet and revive the passenger car industry in the United States. It proposes a package of financing options to bring Amtrak's existing 1,500 passenger cars into a state of good repair and lay the groundwork for the next generation of passenger cars built in the U.S. The bill provides funding to encourage manufacturers currently supplying passenger rail cars overseas to open modern facilities here. It provides a tax incentive for private domestic businesses to re-enter the passenger rail equipment business, also.

Because of the short time before the 110th Congress adjourns, both bills may not see any additional action this year. Amtrak funding may be authorized in a continuing resolution, as in past years.

AMTRAK **INTERCITY TRAINS** **Texas Eagle**

In mid-July Amtrak issued a passenger service notice advising that westbound *Texas Eagle* may experience delays of two to six hours at all stations from St. Louis to San Antonio, and that the eastbound *Eagle* may experience delays of two to six hours from San Antonio to Chicago and at intermediate stations.

Union Pacific made track improvements on the *Texas Eagle* route between Mineral Point and Annapolis, Mo., between the middle of July and the end of August. The railroad removed and installed 67,000 ties, spread 34,900 tons of rock ballast and replaced the road surfaces at 54 crossings. Another project, scheduled to begin on October 24 and scheduled to be completed in mid-November is the replacement of rails on curves between St. Louis and Poplar Bluff, Mo.

California Zephyr

The westbound and eastbound *California Zephyrs* were detoured via the Feather River Canyon on Aug. 12, because its usual Donner Pass route was closed due to track work. Alternate transportation was provided to passengers traveling to stations missed because of the detour.

WEST COAST ROUTES **Amtrak Cascades**

Although the necessary track improvements are complete, the operation of the second *Amtrak Cascades* train to Vancouver, B.C. is being delayed until the Canadian Border Services Agency works out how it will handle additional incoming traffic from the U.S. Reports indicate that the agency wishes to institute a \$1500 per trip charge because the second train will

arrive in Vancouver after their agent's normal working hours.

A 2007 report stated that in its first full year of operation, a second Amtrak passenger train from Seattle to Vancouver is expected to bring approximately 50,000 travelers to Vancouver, injecting an estimated \$13.9 million into the British Columbia economy.

The second train will be established by extending currently-operating Tr. Nos. 513 and 516 from Bellingham, Wash. to Vancouver, B.C. When it begins operating there will be both morning and evening departures from Vancouver and Seattle.

Currently-operating Tr. No. 510 departs Seattle at 7:40 a.m. and arrives in Vancouver at 11:35 a.m., and Tr. No. 517 departs Vancouver at 5:45 p.m. and arrives in Seattle at 10:05 p.m.

Extended Tr. No. 513 will depart Vancouver at 6:40 a.m. and arrive in Seattle at 11:20 a.m., and extended Tr. No. 516 will depart Seattle at 6:40 p.m. and arrive in Vancouver at 10:45 p.m.

Pacific Surfliner

During the Del Mar horse racing season Amtrak operated additional trains between Santa Ana and Solana Beach to accommodate the crowds going to the races on the weekends. The trains operated on Saturdays and Sundays from July 19 through August 24, using *Coaster* equipment.

Southbound extra Tr. No. 1768 operated on *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 768's schedule from Santa Ana departing at 10:30 a.m.; Irvine, 10:41 a.m.; San Clemente, 11:14 a.m.; Oceanside, 11:33 a.m.; arriving at Solana Beach at 11:48 a.m. Regular *Surfliner* Tr. No. 768 operated on its normal schedule from Goleta through its arrival at Santa Ana, and departed 10 minutes later from there, at its remaining station stops, and its arrival at San Diego.

Northbound extra Tr. No. 1591 operated 15 minutes ahead of regular San Diego to Los Angeles *Surfliner* Tr. No. 591 departing Solana Beach at 6:41 p.m.; Oceanside, 6:55 p.m.; San Clemente 7:18 p.m.; Irvine, 7:40 p.m.; and Santa Ana, 7:44 p.m.

MIDWEST ROUTES

Illinois Routes

A meeting between Illinois U.S. Senator Rick Durbin and Amtrak president Alex Kummant in July resulted in a commitment by Amtrak to rehabilitate five cars to add capacity to trains on the state-sponsored Chicago-Quincy *Carl Sandburg* and *Illinois Zephyr* routes, as well as Chicago-St. Louis and Chicago-Carbondale routes. The cars are currently stored at Amtrak's maintenance facility in Delaware, and will be returned to service by the year's end. The additional cars are needed to accommodate a large increase in ridership during the last year.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Amtrak re-launched its Northeast Corridor Regional service in July, renaming it *Northeast Regional*.

The new *Northeast Regional* service features a number of enhancements for passengers. Top among those are 36 refurbished, all-table Café cars with new seat cushions and interior decor. The upgraded Café cars will be positioned in the middle of each train to improve access for coach passengers who account for more than 90 percent of riders. *Northeast Regional* Cafés will also offer a new menu, featuring fresh sandwiches and salads, and introducing a number of popular Northeast brands. Additional service improvements include refurbished Business class seats and interiors, as well as increased en-route cleaning to help keep the trains clean and fresh.

To support the re-branding of the *Northeast Regional*, Amtrak launched an advertising campaign in states along the *Northeast Corridor* from Virginia to Massachusetts. The goal of the campaign, scheduled to run July 13th through September 7th, is to inspire customers who may not be regular *Northeast Corridor* passengers to try the new *Northeast Regional* service themselves.

The integrated media plan for the new *Northeast Regional* re-launch includes newspapers and business journals, radio ads, outdoor gas station and bus placements, and online display ads and search. Messaging focuses on the key elements that draw customers to the convenience and comfort of rail travel – most notably, freedom from traffic congestion, city to city-center trip time, and more recently, higher gas prices.

Anticipating a busy summer travel season and the impact of an integrated marketing campaign, Amtrak expects the re-branding of the *Northeast Regional* and its associated service improvements to attract an additional 136,000 passengers to the service, valued at \$8.9 million in ticket revenue annually. So far this fiscal year (October 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008), Amtrak's Regional service has seen ridership grow to 5.6 million passengers, an increase of 11 percent over the same period last year.

Empire Service

The New York state Department of Transportation and Amtrak are negotiating the start of a non-stop round trip train between Albany, the state capitol, and New York City. If the negotiations are successful, the train will begin operating sometime in the fall. The new train is expected to make the run in less than two hours, compared to the current two-hour, 20-minute schedule. The addition of the train will increase the number of daily trains from 12 to 14.

In addition to the New York City-Albany *Empire Service* trains the corridor also hosts the *Adirondack* (New York-Albany-Montreal), *Ethan Allen Express* (New York-Albany-Rutland), and *Lake Shore Limited* (New York/Boston-Albany-Chicago).

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

On July 10, a broken rail at milepost 17.1 on the #2 (southbound) track, disrupted Caltrain's morning commute operations for about two hours. Train Nos. 104 and 206 encountered red signals and were authorized through the area at Restricted Speed, while the signal department was en route to inspect. Once there, they discovered the broken rail, and the track was immediately taken out of service. With all trains using #1 track between CP Palm and CP Trousdale, delays of about 30 minutes were experienced until the broken rail on #2 track could be repaired.

As gas prices reached the \$4.50 per gallon range in May, Caltrain ridership soared to an all-time high. Average weekday ridership for May was 41,890, the highest ever posted in the 145-year history of rail passenger service on the Peninsula. Also, the figure is 12 percent higher than May of 2007. Couple that with the reduced train lengths because of the cracked bolsters and other mechanical problems, and Caltrain passengers have experienced some very "cozy" train rides.

As if trains weren't crowded enough, the year's only Free

Transit Spare the Air Day took place on June 19. This added thousands more riders, crowding some trains so much that conductors weren't able to pass through the train. At San Francisco's 4th and King Station, nearly 17,000 people got on or off a train during the promotion, which ended at noon. This was an increase of more than 80 percent over a typical weekday morning.

The shortage of parking at Caltrain's San Jose Station is finally being addressed. Parking lots would pretty much fill up by 8 a.m., before gas prices went crazy, sending even more motorists to the train station. Now, in partnership with the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, Caltrain is allowing commuters to buy a \$25 monthly parking permit and park at a lot one block from the San Jose Diridon station. The agencies are working to implement daily parking at another lot soon.

Well, we knew this was coming. Caltrain will be holding a public hearing to consider a fare increase to help offset the continuing increase in the cost of diesel fuel. No date for the hearing has been set.

[In a note from Mike Gondron, he stated that as of Aug. 1, he officially retired from the railroad after 41 years. He plans to continue writing Caltrain News, but may not be able to do it every month, because of not having such easy access to information. The *Wheel Clicks* staff wishes him the best in whatever venture he now enters, and thank him for the Peninsula Rail Information over the past many years.]



Concrete deck panels and steel deck beam removal over the 1st/Soto underground station.
Photo by Metro



Before the 2008 Fullerton Railroad Days, a BNSF locomotive and Santa Fe 3751 are on display. Photo by John Ulloth



Installation of canopy on the Indiana Light Rail Transit Station platform on the east side of 3rd Street. Photo by Metro



View from downtown LA of Los Angeles Union Station and 101 Freeway Gold Line eastside extension bridge. Photo by Metro



Architectural rendering of the Indiana Light Rail Transit Station on the west side of Ramona Opportunity High School.

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

June 2008	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	153,928	84,353	44,034	26,338
Saturday Ave.	101,414	54,328	26,297	17,449
Sunday Ave.	81,051	49,526	19,711	14,295
Monthly Total	4,043,402	2,236,345	1,128,456	694,364

METRO VOTES FOR SALES TAX INCREASE

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority board voted overwhelmingly on July 24 to seek a half-cent-on-the-dollar sales tax increase that could raise between \$30 billion and \$40 billion for transit and highway projects in Los Angeles County over the next three decades. Before the measure can be placed on the ballot, the state Legislature must authorize it. A bill, AB 2321, by Assemblyman Mike Feurer (D-Los Angeles) is pending in the Senate.

If approved by the required two-thirds majority, Measure R – for traffic relief – would boost L.A. County’s sales tax rate to 8.75%, tying it with Alameda County’s for the highest in California. Voters approved a half-cent transportation tax in 1980 and another half-cent in 1990. The money has helped pay for bus purchases, construction of the Red Line subway, and some light rail lines. About 65% of the revenue would be used to expand the county’s bus and rail systems, while 35% would be used for highways, streets and, potentially, bikeways and sidewalks.

The MTA proposal is similar to measures that have been adopted in the last 25 years by surrounding counties. Those counties include Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino, which sought the tax revenue to offset declines in state transportation funding. Orange County’s Measure M, which also required a two-thirds majority, was placed on the ballot several times in the late 1980s and early ‘90s before voters approved it. The tax was renewed by voters last year and is expected to generate \$12 billion from 2011 through 2041.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

GOLD LINE

Several stations on the Gold Line could get turnstiles as part of a state grant. The turnstiles would be used to block passengers who did not pay fares to use the train. Some smaller stations will not be eligible for the turnstiles because they could cause a line to back up onto public streets, according to Metro spokesman Rick Jagger.

The project could improve security on the line by freeing up Metro officers who currently spend time enforcing fare rules, said Jagger. The grant comes from funding in Proposition 1B, a transportation bond measure passed by voters in 2006.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Note: A map of the general area showing stations is on the cover of the December 2005 *Wheel Clicks*. A summary of features follows.

- 6 Mile Alignment
- 1.7 Miles of Tunnel
- 8 Stations (6 At-Grade and 2 Underground)
- Park & Ride Facility at Pomona/Atlantic

- Direct Connection to the Pasadena Metro Gold Line at Los Angeles Union Station
 - \$898.8 million
 - Opens in 2009
- Overview of Major Construction Activity Completions
- Tunnel Excavation – Dec 2006
 - Tunnel Finishes – Jul 2007
 - Trackwork – Jul 2008
 - Boyle Heights/Mariachi Plaza & Soto Stations – Dec 2008
 - Little Tokyo/Arts District Station – Oct 2008
 - Pico/Aliso Station – Dec 2008
 - Indiana Station – Nov 2008
 - Maravilla Station – Sep 2008
 - East LA Civic Station – Sep 2008
 - Atlantic Station – Sep 2008

Third Party Interfaces

- US-101 Freeway Bridge – Feb 2007
- 1st Street Bridge Girder Strengthening – Oct 2007 Plus
- 1st Street Bridge Widening – Feb 2010
- LAUSD Re-Build Ramona Opportunity High School – Feb 2010
- Systems Installation & Integration Testing & Pre-Revenue Operations – Jul 2009

On Sept. 27, 2007, the Metro Board approved funding for Engineering and Environmental Services for the design of a parking structure at the Pomona/Atlantic site. The design would include a multi-level parking structure with a minimum of 200 Transit-Dedicated parking spaces and provisions to allow for the future conversion for up to 7,500 square feet at the ground level for potential commercial space.

A design-build solicitation package was to be advertised in July 2008 and Metro Board approval for additional funding will be requested after the receipt of bids and acceptance of the lowest bidder.

The parking structure will not be completed until after the forecast July 2009 Revenue Operations Date (ROD) for the Eastside Extension Project. Based on the current schedule, the parking structure will open up five months after the July 2009 ROD.

EXPO LINE

Parents and students marched between two large public schools in the city’s Jefferson Park district on Aug. 9, unhappy that the Expo Line now under construction could endanger the safety of thousands of pedestrians. The new trains will pass down the middle of Exposition Blvd. where the artery passes two large high schools and five smaller campuses, but does not include any pedestrian or train grade separations at nearby busy intersections. The state Public Utilities Commission on Aug. 11 starts a public hearing, at which experts from both sides will try to convince the commission of their cause. A decision is expected in Nov.

The only grade separation along the route of the \$640 million project will be at the University of Southern California, where USC is chipping in for an underpass at the complicated intersection of Exposition Blvd., Figueroa and Flower Streets.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

PORTLAND, OREGON

New I-5 Bridge on Columbia River

The Metro Council on July 17 reluctantly endorsed building a new \$4.2 billion Interstate-5 bridge over the Columbia River that will extend light rail transit (LRT) into Vancouver from Portland, require tolls to cross and have room for pedestrians and bicyclists. The alternative that has the greatest backing is a bridge with three through lanes in each direction, cutting it down from 12 planned lanes. It also would have space for bicyclists and pedestrians. Backers maintain that the current bridge – actually two spans that are 50 and 90 years old – is the worst traffic bottleneck on I-5. About 130,000 people a day cross the bridge.

It was the Portland-area regional government's most definitive vote yet on the Columbia River Crossing, which would replace the current six lanes connecting Portland and Vancouver with a 12-lane toll bridge, light rail and six expanded highway interchanges.

The council's 5-2 go-ahead for a new six-lane toll bridge features a light-rail extension to Vancouver. But the council also attached a three-page list of concerns to be addressed by state and local planning agencies as the bridge edges closer to reality in the coming year.

A Safer MAX

An assault by five teenagers on a North Portland MAX train on June 9 revived worries about mass transit safety since several high-profile incidents last winter. Teenage boys and girls punched, used racial epithets and stole the purse of a 28-year-old Vancouver woman who was taking her first-ever MAX ride. The attack renewed calls for more security on the region's light rail system.

A November attack at a Gresham MAX stop on a 71-year old man sparked region-wide outrage. A 16-year old boy on June 12 was sentenced to 9½ years in prison for that attack.

The Nov. beating in Gresham had sparked cries for greater police presence throughout the MAX system. The agency has increased its transit police force from 28 officers to 43. It added two transit police precincts, contract security guards, closed-circuit TV cameras and improved lighting and sight lines at MAX platforms.

TriMet officials on Aug. 1 released revised details of upcoming renovations at two MAX stops in Portland and Gresham where ticket inspectors will staff checkpoints. Inspectors stationed at the checkpoints will be on hand at key travel times, 10 to 12 hours a day, to check tickets at Gresham Central and at Northeast 82nd Avenue.

Gresham Central will become TriMet's first station enclosed by fencing and, with 82nd, which is one of six stations where fare is required to enter the MAX platform, both will be tests for new fare-zone entrances.

Westside Express Service

TriMet's new commuter railcars arrived June 19. The 85-ton Diesel Multiple Unit and its lookalike, but unpowered, trailer car arrived at TriMet's Wilsonville railcar maintenance facility early that morning. The 14.7-mile Westside Express Service will begin carrying passengers between Beaverton and Wilsonville sometime in the fall, aboard three DMUs and one trailer car. The other two DMUs are scheduled to arrive from the Colorado Railcar factory later in the summer. They'll make the trip like

these units did, towed at the end of a freight train.

There are static and running tests to be conducted in the next few months, said TriMet's director of operations, Steve Banta. TriMet estimates that initial ridership will be about 2,500 trips a day, said spokeswoman Mary Fetsch. Those estimates were made will before \$4-per-gallon gas, which could bump ridership above those numbers.

Fuel prices could well be higher when WES starts rolling, making TriMet's choice of self-contained railcars over conventional locomotives and passenger cars look even more inspired. The Colorado Railcar Web site says the DMU gets 2 miles per gallon. Figure a full load of 74 seated passengers, two people in wheelchairs and a few standees and call it 160 passenger/mpg. The mileage drops to 1.5 mpg when towing the unpowered car, but the head count at least doubles, which works out to about 240 passenger/miles for every gallon of diesel.

"A regular diesel locomotive is over powered for hauling a couple of commuter cars," said Jody Moore, a factory test engineer who accompanied the cars on their journey west. "DMUs offer higher fuel efficiency, lowering operating costs and, because there's no separate locomotive, one less vehicle to maintain."

The DMUs meet all new federal safety standards for operating on freight rails, but they have an almost truck-like power train. Most locomotives use big diesel engines to run generators that create electricity for the traction motors that power the train. Each DMU has two smaller, 600 horsepower Detroit Diesels, one at each end of the car. Each engine has a hydraulic transmission that spins a drive shaft powering two of the four wheels at each end of the car.

"TriMet is a perfect example of why DMUs make sense for agencies coming from the bus side," Moore said. "Everything on these vehicles, except maybe for the airbrake system, will have a high level of familiarity to their mechanics."

Proposed Portland to Milwaukie Line

The City Commission of Oregon City passed a resolution supporting the "locally preferred alternative" for the Portland-to-Milwaukie light-rail line. The resolution supports the Porter-Sherman Willamette River crossing, the Tillamook Branch alignment in Milwaukie with a the Park Avenue terminus in Oak Grove. This would provide better service to Clackamas County communities south of Milwaukie.

The Milwaukie City Council approved the same route on July 15. If all goes as planned, a final recommendation was to be voted by the Metro Council on July 24. The line is expected to cost \$1.25 billion to \$1.4 billion. Money would come from the Federal Transit Administration, lottery-backed bonds approved by the Oregon Legislature, Metro, TriMet, Clackamas County, Portland and Milwaukie. The line could open by 2015.

Vancouver Light-Rail Terminus

The MAX Yellow Line should extend from the Portland Expo Center, cross the Columbia River and through downtown Vancouver to a terminus at Clark College next to Interstate 5, the Vancouver City Council decreed on July 7. The council also voted to support construction of a new bridge to replace the Interstate Bridge.

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