

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

AUGUST 2012

## MR. LINCOLN'S RAILROAD

They say an army moves on its stomach. For the first time during the American Civil War, it also moved on the rail – and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, first chartered in 1827, proved to be the primary purveyor of men, supplies, and those precious commodities.

The first common carrier railroad in the United States, the B&O found its loyalties split right from the beginning of the war. John Garrett, then president of the B&O, was a Maryland native and his personal leaning to the South was indisputable. However, he and his executives understood that their financial viability lay with the North. And when Abraham Lincoln called up 70,000 troops in the wake of the fall of Fort Sumter in April 1861, and they needed transport, Garrett answered the call, and the B&O allied with the North.

An early challenge was to get those Union forces from Baltimore to Washington. But the road from the north did not meet the B&O directly, and as the troops marched across the city to board the southbound train, rioting broke out and four soldiers and nine civilians were killed.

The B&O also confronted trouble at Harpers Ferry, where Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson harassed operations throughout that first summer and the road had to suspend operations for 10 months.

In 1864, the B&O rose to its glory with the successful delivery of some 25,000 men from Virginia to Chattanooga, Tenn., to keep the city under Union control; it also was instrumental in getting Federal troops and supplies to Monocacy Junction, MD., where although the Confederates technically won the battle, Union troops were able to hold them up long enough for reinforcements to arrive and Washington was spared occupation.

The B&O lives on in today's CSX Transportation Co., now providing service along 21,000 miles of railroad in 23 states. [Info.: *The History Channel Magazine* via Caroline Hobson]

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by NEIL BJORNSEN

CONGRATULATIONS! PRS has taken possession of the remaining 20% of the museum facility in San Dimas, California (the former AT&SF depot). Now comes the task of engineering utilization of the space. The Museum Committee will be meeting soon regarding this subject.

On Saturday, July 14, the PRS Board conducted a special meeting at "Saunders Yard" in the City of Commerce (PRS' Railcar Museum location) for the purpose of inspecting PRS' rolling stock assets. In particular, the Board included a more thorough inspection of ex-AT&SF high-level transition car No. 545, checking on work completed to date to make the car

operable. Board discussion also addressed the scope of work and effort necessary to make this car an operational reality for future PRS excursions.

We hope to have an "open house" day at Saunders Yard for PRS' membership in the near future.

We continue to seek membership volunteers for the various PRS projects. PRS is YOUR organization and can only perform and have activities as long as you, the membership, are willing to support it. Volunteer time and labor are crucial elements to making PRS an organization of excellence in terms of what we are about and the services offered to the railroad enthusiast community.

Please feel free to contact me through the Pacific Railroad Society Museum or at PRS.exec@yahoo.com with your thoughts and ideas. I would, however, request you including your thought-out solution(s) to accompany those thoughts and ideas submitted.

## BOB HOPE AIRPORT

### NEW METROLINK STATION

A new Metrolink train station is on track on the north side of Bob Hope Airport, connecting the airport with the Antelope Valley. The Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority in the third week of June committed \$1.75 million toward building the station at Hollywood Way and San Fernando Road.

The station would be a significant addition to Metrolink's Antelope Valley line, said Don Sepulveda, executive officer for regional rail for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which would administer the project. "We believe that this is a very important station for not just the airport but also the Metrolink system, and it really enhances the regional connectivity that I know the airport is interested in," he said. MTA, along with other funding sources, will make up the difference to pay for the station, which is expected to cost between \$3 million and \$4 million, according to airport officials. Metrolink already has a station south of the airport along West Empire Drive, which leads to Los Angeles Union Station.

### TRANSIT CENTER

Officials broke ground the first week of July on a long-planned \$112.6-million transit center at Bob Hope Airport. The 520,000-square-foot complex is expected to open in summer 2014, and officials say it will make using the airport easier for commuters. The center will connect the airport with a new bus transit station and the existing Metrolink and Amtrak train station. It will replace the airport's rental car facilities, which are too close to a runway. Officials approved the center, which is the largest capital project in the airport's history, in 2010.

[Info. from *Burbank Leader* via Margo D. Petros and *Los Angeles Times*]



**WHEEL CLICKS**  
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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES**

Aug. 1, 8, PRM open Wednesday, 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 15, 22, 29 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 August 3 PRS Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room,  
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel, Alhambra.  
 Aug. 4, 11, PRM open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.  
 Aug. 4, 11, Saunders Yard open Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to ?,  
 21, 28 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce.  
 August 10 PRS Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra  
 Friday Rm., Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel, Alhambra.  
 August 29 September Wheel Clicks Mailing, 10:00 a.m., 1240  
 Wednesday Dominion Ave., Pasadena.

**PROGRAMS**

by **RUSS DAVIES**

August 10: **Hawaiian Railroad, a Double Feature!** Our DVD guru, **Harvey Laner**, will present footage of the

**Hawaiian Railroad Society** obtained by **Neil Bjornsen** (Neil's a member there), and **Harvey's** personal footage of the **Lahaina, Kaanapali and Pacific Railroad** on Maui. The HRS is on Oahu near Honolulu. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

At the Board Meeting on July 6, 40 Late Renewals were reported and assigned seniority numbers 349 through 388. The one new member in July was Virginia Elwood-Akers with seniority number 389.

**UNDELIVERED WHEEL CLICKS**

Wheel Clicks is sent to the known address of all members. A change of address can cause the Post Office Department to return the newsletter to Wheel Clicks' return address with a no such number, impossible to forward, away temporarily, or some other reason. We do not know when to start mailing the newsletter again, and so are asking recent members to mail us at our return address the past months for which they did not receive the newsletter, with their correct present address.

**NORTH HOLLYWOOD STATION – SOUTHERN PACIFIC BURBANK BRANCH**

Based on personal observations and a confirmation from the office of the Chamber of Commerce, the former Southern Pacific – Pacific Electric Station located at Lankershim and Chandler boulevards in North Hollywood, California, is presently undergoing a complete restoration. Information regarding a completion date is not yet available. [Info. from Margo D. Petros]

**MASTER PLAN FOR UNION STATION**

After considering a half-dozen teams of architects and engineers led by some of the biggest names in the profession – Renzo Piano and Norman Foster among them – the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is poised to hire a group led L.A.'s Gruen Associates and London's Grimshaw Architects to produce a new master plan for Union Station.

Metro purchased the 1939 landmark and about 40 acres surrounding it last year. In April, looking ahead to the day when the station might welcome high-speed trains from San Francisco, it asked the six teams to produce "vision boards" imagining the site in 2050.

The vision boards were only distantly connected to Metro's decision-making process (or what will actually be built), and the choice of Gruen and Grimshaw, which awaits approval from Metro's board, seems to underscore that. Their 2050 scheme was among the most fanciful. However, they've been selected for the job of expanding the station and planning adjacent new shops, apartments and offices, based on their experience in this kind of transit planning. Gruen worked with Metro on the recently opened first phase of the Expo Line.

The master plan is expected to take about two years to complete.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times* via Tom Geer]

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT****'BIG POUR' ON GOLD LINE BRIDGE**

A 'big pour' of 2,100 cubic yards of concrete occurred on the 584-foot Gold Line Bridge on June 19 inside the wood forms above the eastbound lanes of the 210 Freeway. "It was a significant milestone for the completion of the iconic bridge," said Lawrence Damore, project executive with Skanska USA, which was awarded the design/build contract in June 2010. "But you won't see anything really different until we start removing the forms... although there will be a lot of work going on behind the scenes." The wood forms will stay in place while the concrete cures and hardens. "The rail-deck portion of the \$18.6 million bridge will be poured overnight in July, Damore said, and that will be much smaller with about a quarter of the concrete."

When the concrete structure – which includes about 1,000 tons of steel reinforcements – is complete and the bridge is self-supporting, the finishing touches will be installed, said Habib Balian, CEO of the Gold Line Construction Authority. "The next stage is installation of the 'baskets' in September," Balian said, referring to the two sculptural columns that echo the weaving traditions of local Native Americans. "Then there will be after-construction cleanup, then (building of) the abutments and then we'll begin landscaping and lighting," Balian said.

The project's overall design was envisioned by artist and "concept advisor" Andrew Leicester. In contrast to the "typical gray-tinted concrete" on the bridge, the giant baskets will be an aggregate of different colored materials, Balian said. "It's unique, nothing like it's been done before."

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

**TWO EXPO LINE STATIONS TO OPEN**

The \$930-million light-rail Expo Line finally reached Culver City on June 20. Transportation officials opened the Culver City station – near Washington and National boulevards – about noon after a celebration with elected officials. Most of the first phase of the Expo Line was opened in April, allowing commuters to travel 7.9 miles between downtown Los Angeles and the eastern edge of Culver City at La Cienega station in about half an hour.

But they did not open two stations along the line: Culver City and Farmdale, which officials said needed more work because they were added further along in the project. The extension to Culver City is about 0.7 miles from the previous stop at La Cienega and Jefferson boulevards.

"I'm real anxious to see it opened all the way to Culver City. That's going to open up huge opportunities for Culver City residents and the businesses in the area as well," said Rick Thorpe, head of the construction authority in charge of building the first phase of the line.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

**SUBWAY PROJECT BEGINS IN SAN FRANCISCO**

San Francisco commuters should prepare for headaches as construction crews began to dig a 1.6-mile subway tunnel through the heart of the city. The San Francisco Chronicle reports that transportation officials are still waiting for finalization of federal funding for the project, but that preparations are nonetheless beginning that will affect traffic greatly. Crews were to start digging up a block of Fourth Street on June 11 between Bryant and Harrison, and had already begun building a

series of 100-foot-deep walls that would span Fourth Street.

The new subway line will link Chinatown to the city's main train station in the South of Market area. The city believes a federal funding guarantee worth \$942 million would be approved in June, covering much of the project's \$1.6 billion cost. [Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

**PORTLAND, OREGON RAIL FUNDING**

Work continues on the Willamette River between Marquam and Ross Island bridges. Federal officials signed off May 22, 2012 on a \$745.2 million contribution to the Portland-Milwaukie light-rail extension. The other half of funding for the nearly \$1.5 billion project will come from several local sources of cash and in-kind contributions.

Construction on the light-rail bridge across the Willamette River started in July 2011, and Orange Line service is scheduled to begin in September 2015. As of May 10, 2012 the project has generated 1,439 direct jobs, mostly for engineering, administration and construction. The total project is expected to generate 7,122 direct jobs and 7,370 indirect jobs.

TriMet's MAX Orange Line has 7.3 miles of rail, 800 trees removed, 2,000 trees planted, 675 park & ride spaces, 400 bike parking spaces, and a \$3 million public art budget.

**PORTLAND STREETCAR DEBUT OFF RAILS**

Portland's \$148.3 million eastside streetcar line will open ceremoniously on September 22, but it's increasingly unlikely that the star of the show – America's only domestically produced modern streetcar – will be ready. Officials for Clackamas-based United Streetcar acknowledged the second week of June that work on their first five streetcars is months behind schedule. Representatives for the city's streetcar division remain hopeful that at least one of the vehicles will be ready for the line's opening.

The setback is just the latest as United Streetcar, a subsidiary of Oregon Iron Works, attempts to break into a sector that's traditionally been accomplished by European companies. Design problems already prompted city leaders to delay the line's opening by five months and reduce the number of cars from six to five, while barely trimming the \$19.5 million budget.

Portland officials are supposed to "conditionally accept" five streetcars from July 10 to Oct. 30 according to the contract. But a consultant for Portland said officials are now targeting Sept. 8 to an unknown date in October.

Despite its lack of experience, United Streetcar has become a savvy contractor and political darling. The company has secured contracts in Tucson, Ariz., and Washington, D.C. Last year, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood even starred in an online video promoting United Streetcar as "made in America, by American workers, who know how to manufacture the best kind of streetcars anywhere in the world." But United Streetcar has yet to manufacture a single vehicle, and work has been anything but smooth.

Clackamas-based United Streetcar has about 100 employees and subcontractors working on the Portland-streetcar project. The city has paid about \$14.3 million on its contract. Had delivery milestones been met in June, that figure would have been about \$17.3 million. Portland currently has 10 streetcars, seven of which are in daily service on Portland's westside. When the eastside line opens, the city will operate just 11 cars

because of funding constraints.

Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who previously questioned progress on the streetcars, said he hopes the investment pays off. "The verdict's still out," he said, "on whether this was a wise move or not."

#### PORTLAND, OREGON NOTES

TriMet slices services in September. There will be no fare zones and no free rail zone.

There will be no more free rides on Portland Streetcar. Following TriMet's example, the streetcar hopes to eliminate the downtown fareless district.

The Columbia River Maritime Museum has started a 2.5 million project to restore a derelict train depot in Astoria. The depot was constructed in 1925 and the Burlington Northern Railroad gave the depot to the museum in the 1980s.

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

#### HIGH-SPEED RAIL FUNDS OKAYED

The California Assembly on July 5 approved legislation that would authorize the state to begin selling about \$4.5 billion in state bonds for the nation's first high-speed rail system, taking an initial step toward the ambitious \$68 billion project that Gov. Jerry Brown hopes will be a part of his legacy. Lawmakers approved S.B. 1029 on a 51-27 vote, with Republicans opposing it.

The bill paves the way for California to begin selling \$2.6 billion in voter-approved bonds and allocates another \$1.9 billion for regional rail improvements in Northern and Southern California, and allows the state to tap \$3.2 billion in federal grants to start construction of the first segment in the Central Valley. Democrats framed the debate as a choice between investing in the state's future transportation needs or getting mired in the politics of the day. The bill authorizes the first 130-mile stretch of high-speed rail from Madera to Bakersfield.

Assemblyman Charles Calderon, D-Whittier, urged lawmakers to recall the work of previous generations of Californians, who built the state water project and its highway and university systems. "We have issues, in terms of budget problems," the Sacramento Bee quoted Calderon as saying. "Does that mean that we stop looking to the future?"

Assemblywoman Bonnie Lowenthal, D-Long Beach, said it was time to "get this monumental project started." "We've held hearing after hearing and it's been a long haul. We've studied this project for years and it's now time to begin. We've sent the authority back to the starting line, we challenged them to bring their A-game and they have," she said.

Republicans called the project a boondoggle the state cannot afford in the midst of a serious budget crisis and high unemployment. Assemblyman Jim Nielsen, R-Gerber, said lawmakers were relinquishing control over future spending to an authority that has already come under heavy criticism for flawed plans. "The authority and the proponents haven't even come close to getting it right ever. It's been astounding the figures that they have fouled up in terms of ridership, in terms of cost, in terms of impediment," Nielsen said.

Citing recent polling showing high-speed rail has become unpopular since voters approved it in 2008, Curt Hagman, R-Chino Hills, urged the Assembly to put the project back to a

public vote, the Bee reported. "Let them help us prioritize what's important," Hagman said.

The overall cost of the project from Los Angeles to San Francisco is estimated at \$68 billion, after it was scaled back from a \$98 billion proposal, but authorities have yet to identify where most of the remaining financing will come from.

Democratic leaders have spent the last few weeks crafting the bill to entice support from as many lawmakers as possible, and in recent days, they included additional financing to help electrify Caltrain, a San Jose-San Francisco commuter line, and upgrade Metrolink's commuter lines in Southern California.

Dan Richard, chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, which is managing the project, tried to emphasize those projects rather than the massive high-speed rail infrastructure on the 5th, as a Field Poll showed that support for Brown's November proposal to temporarily raise state sales and income taxes could slip considerably if lawmakers approve funding for high-speed rail.

"What our new business plan is all about is an integrated rail modernization program for the state," Richard, a Brown appointee, told reporters before the Assembly convened. "It's not just high-speed rail, it's \$12 billion of programs that include upgrading Caltrain in the Bay Area, replacing BART cars, updating the central subway system in San Francisco, building the regional interconnector in Los Angeles. These are top priority projects, and this vote is about funding all of those."

Brown, a Democrat, has said the state needs to build new transportation infrastructure to accommodate a growing population that now stands at 37 million. Richard said if lawmakers do not act this week, they will lose the federal aid, essentially killing high-speed rail in California.

Critics say the project is unnecessary and too expensive. Republicans in the Legislature and Congress oppose the project, and some Democratic lawmakers remain skeptical. They have suggested using funds to improve existing rail systems in densely populated areas, rather than start construction in the Central Valley.

Richard said the latest proposal already includes funding for those projects. "IF we're going to build a statewide, intercity rail system, we've got to connect the state and that means we're connecting the cities. At some point, that means you're going to be building through the middle of the state," he said.

Lawmakers are under pressure from labor groups that say the project is sorely needed because it will bring jobs, particularly to a region with higher-than-average unemployment. The Obama administration has threatened to rescind federal grants if the Legislature doesn't appropriate California's share of funding in the Central Valley.

The governor is counting on those federal funds and state bonds for a total of roughly \$6 billion to build the first segment. California was able to secure more than expected after Florida, Ohio and Wisconsin turned down federal money.

The authority faces a September 2017 federal deadline to finish the first segment of the line.

#### STATE TO BEGIN SELLING \$4.5 BILLION IN BONDS

California lawmakers approved billions of dollars July 6 in construction financing for the initial segment of what would be the nation's first dedicated high-speed rail line connecting Los

Angeles and San Francisco. The state Senate voted 21-16 on a party-line vote after intense lobbying by Gov. Jerry Brown, Democratic leaders and labor groups.

The bill authorizes the state to begin selling \$4.5 billion in voter-approved bonds that includes \$2.6 billion to build an initial 130-mile stretch of the high-speed rail line in the Central Valley. That will allow the state to collect another \$3.2 billion in federal funding that could have been rescinded if lawmakers failed to act on the 6th.

"The legislature took bold action today that gets Californians back to work and puts California out in front once again," Brown said in a statement. Brown pushed for the massive infrastructure project to accommodate expected population growth in the nation's most populous state. The bill now heads to Brown for his signature. The final cost of the completed project from Los Angeles to San Francisco would be \$68 billion, although earlier estimates pegged it at nearly \$100 billion.

"The voters want a do-over vote on High Speed Rail, but the Democrats blocked legislation for a new HSR ballot measure," Senate Republican leader Bob Huff of Walnut said in an email. "The voters want pension reform, but the Democrats have blocked an up-or-down vote on their own governor's plan. Sen. Ted Gaines, R-Granite Bay, said the project would push California over a fiscal cliff. "It will require endless subsidies and will blast a massive hole into our budget."

"This is a courageous step forward for California's future," said Jim Wunderman, the president and CEO of the Bay Area Council, a group of business leaders from the San Francisco Bay and Silicon Valley areas. "California has grabbed a golden opportunity to build the nation's first high-speed rail system, create the backbone of a new, clean 21st century transportation system and support our future economic growth."

[Info. from *The Associated Press*]

#### CHALLENGES REMAIN FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL PLAN

California lawmakers may have given their OK to what could be the nation's first high-speed rail line, but the project is still a ways from leaving the station. Bullet train backers must still overcome a number of challenges, including environmental concerns, clashes with local leaders over land use, a \$68 billion overall price tag with no funding guarantees, and an increasingly disenchanted public.

[Above Info. from the *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### AAR JULY STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of July 1, 2012, 317,681 freight cars were in storage, an increase of 4,743 from June 1, 2012, and equal to 20.7% of the North American fleet, excluding cars without a load since before 2005. Total cars in storage have increased for nine straight months, with nearly all of the increase occurring in covered hoppers (generally rising since May 2011), open hoppers (October 2011), and gondolas (December 2011). Coal and grain, carloads of which have been down sharply for many months, are carried in these car types.

For the last 12 months the number of stored freight cars (and the percentage of the fleet excluding cars without a load since before 2005) on the first day of the month was: 2011: July, 276,236 (18.2); August, 276,943 (18.2); September, 271,404

(17.8); October, 260,317 (17.1); November, 261,695 (17.2); December 263,912 (17.3); 2012: January, 273,390 (18.0); February, 283,236 (18.6); March, 289,505 (19.0); April, 299,324 (19.6); May, 307,957 (20.1); June, 312,938 (20.4).

Of the 502,853 cars that were in storage on July 1, 2009 (excluding those that last moved loaded prior to 2005), only 44,888 remained in storage continuously through July 1, 2012. More than 90 percent of the cars that were in storage at the peak have either carried a load since then (and perhaps subsequently returned to storage) or been scrapped.

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

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

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK INTEGRATES AND UPDATES NEC AND HIGH-SPEED RAIL VISION PLANS

A new report issued July 9, 2012, by Amtrak summarizes and updates the ongoing planning efforts to expand capacity on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) rail network to accommodate more trains operating at faster speeds with significantly reduced trip-times and improved service reliability while also developing 220 mph (354 kph) next generation high-speed rail (NextGen HSR).

*The Amtrak Vision for the Northeast Corridor: 2012 Update Report* describes the current stage of conceptual development and planning for the future of the NEC rail network. It details actions taken by Amtrak and other stakeholders since the release of two major NEC planning reports in 2010 and also highlights the key findings of a recently completed NEC business and financial plan. Most importantly, it provides input for a new NEC environmental analysis and planning process led by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

Recent Amtrak studies continue to indicate that improvement and expansion of the NEC, including the development of segments of NextGen HSR, is feasible and achievable using an integrated capital investment program and incremental implementation strategy.

#### NEC Future – FRA Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP)

The FRA-led *PRCIP* will develop a new long-term service plan and related environmental analysis to create a NEC investment plan for the next 30 years. The *PRCIP* is a critical step in defining and realizing future improvements to the NEC and will provide necessary information to support future FRA investment decisions. It is comprised of two components: a Service Development Plan that articulates the overall scope and approach for future intercity passenger rail service along the NEC and a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) programmatic environmental impact assessment that addresses the broad environmental impacts for the entire Corridor along the route of proposed service. It is to be completed in 2015.

### Amtrak NEC Capital Investment Program (Program)

Since the release in 2010 of *The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Master Plan* and *A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor*, Amtrak has continued its work and has now integrated these two plans into a single, coherent \$151 billion service and investment program called the *NEC Capital Investment Program*. It calls for investments to be made over the coming several decades to improve and expand the NEC, and affirms the Amtrak commitment to implementing critically needed near-term Master Plan projects while advancing the long-term development of a 220 mph (354 kph) NextGen HSR network through incremental “Stair-Step” improvements to its current high-speed rail service (see attached chart).

Amtrak received feedback from states, commuter rail agencies and other NEC users and stakeholders, and has made several changes to its planning since 2010, including: announcement of the Gateway Program to increase track, bridge, station and tunnel capacity from Newark, N.J., to New York Penn Station; a revised alignment of the proposed NextGen HSR route to travel through Providence, R.I., rather than Woonsocket; and changes to various proposed stations.

### Amtrak NEC Business and Financial Plan (B&F Plan)

The *2012 Update Report* also discusses key findings from the recently completed *NEC Business and Financial Plan* to guide Amtrak on how to potentially fund and finance its integrated vision for the NEC. Scientifically, the *B&F Plan* finds greater than anticipated ridership demand for, and associated revenue from, the planned Amtrak services levels supported by the *NEC Capital Investment Program*, forecasting a 25 percent increase in ridership and revenue over 2010 projections. However, the *B&F Plan* also finds that the schedule and large annual capital expenditures in the peak period of planned construction should be modified to strengthen opportunities for public and private sector funding, to take into account resource constraints and to ensure effective management and delivery of the Program.

To advance the *Program*, the *B&F Plan* concludes that Amtrak should pursue a phased approach and strategically advance specific elements with the biggest impacts on improved reliability, increased capacity and reduced trip-time as quickly as funding allows, while deferring remaining elements to subsequent phases. This approach will help Amtrak achieve early successes that strengthen revenue and financial performance and create additional capital funding to support other *Program* elements.

For example, the proposed Amtrak Gateway Program to improve travel to and through New York City via new tunnels under the Hudson River and the expansion of the Moynihan Station and Penn Station terminal complex is essential to the entire NEC network. Its completion will deliver many key benefits for intercity and commuter rail service and set the stage for future NextGen HSR expansion.

The *B&F Plan* also recommends that a combination of funding, policy decisions and cooperation from federal, state, and local governments, NEC users, regional partners, the private sector and Amtrak are necessary to advance a program of this size and regional and national significance. Further, public sector leadership and funding is essential during the early years.

While the *B&F Plan* finds that current Federal, state, and local transportation investment programs are insufficient to support the *Program* presently, strategies are available to generate funding, including enhanced access fees paid by NEC users to support state of good repair and other improvement projects to the existing corridor that provide the greatest benefits to their services.

### Current Amtrak NEC Improvement Projects

Several major projects are now underway that will improve existing services and support the Amtrak NEC vision, including \$15 million for Gateway Program planning, design and preliminary environmental review and utility relocation to support construction of a new Portal Bridge in New Jersey, which itself is currently in the final design stage.

Another major ongoing effort is a \$450 million project funded by the FRA high-speed and intercity passenger rail program to improve service reliability for intercity and commuter trains, modernize the electrical system and boost top speeds from 135 mph (217 kph) to 160 mph (257 kph) along a 24-mile section of the NEC between Trenton and New Brunswick, N.J. — making it the fastest passenger track in North America. It also will reconfigure track switches at the western entrance to New York Penn Station to mitigate congestion issues. Major construction work is to begin in 2013 with anticipated project completion in 2017.

In addition, Amtrak is nearing the completion of a \$140 million project to replace the 104-year-old movable Niantic River Bridge in East Lyme, Conn., to improve reliability, increase speeds on and near the bridge and minimize traffic delays. Rail traffic will begin to shift to the new structure in late summer 2012 with full project completion scheduled for spring 2013.

### Next Steps

While initial NEC NextGen HSR studies have been completed, the specific phasing plan, schedule, alignment, stations, and other components analyzed by Amtrak represent the range of possible alternatives and service configurations that could be developed. These concepts and others will undergo considerable scrutiny as the NEC Capital Investment Program continues to be refined by Amtrak and our partners, is considered through the FRA PRCIP process and is subject to extensive future planning and engineering studies.

### A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor

The *Amtrak Vision for the Northeast Corridor: 2012 Update Report* follow up the Amtrak concept plan, *A Vision for High-Speed Rail in the Northeast Corridor* (NEC), released in September 2010, which claims a financially viable route could be developed. Upon its full build-out in 2040, high-speed train ridership would approach 18 million passengers with room to accommodate up to 80 million annually as demand increases in the years and decades that follow. Departures of high-speed trains would expand from an average of one to four per hour in each direction, with additional service in the peak periods, and total daily high-speed rail departures would increase from 42 today to as many as 148 in 2040.

The service would generate an annual operating surplus of approximately \$900 million and its construction would create more than 40,000 full-time jobs annually over a 25-year

construction period to build the new track, tunnels, bridges, stations, and other infrastructure. More than 120,000 permanent jobs in improved economic productivity along the corridor and in rail operations are predicted by 2040.

In addition to significant travel time savings between major cities, tremendous mobility improvements would come with environmental, energy and congestion mitigation benefits. The new transportation capacity obtained with this investment will allow a larger share of the intercity travel market to be via high-speed rail, strengthening sustainable, energy-efficient development in the corridor’s metropolitan areas.

NEC Infrastructure Master Plan

An *NEC Infrastructure Master Plan* issued earlier in 2010 predicted that the capacity gains achieved within the current NEC “footprint” would be maxed out by 2030. The Next-Generation High-Speed Rail system will provide the necessary new capacity to meet growing demand well beyond 2030. By operating the highest-speed trains on the new infrastructure, capacity on the existing NEC would become available for additional commuter and conventional intercity passenger trains as well as for freight operations.

Historical Route On-Time Performance

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

| Route                 | June 2012 | May 2012 | Last 12 months |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|----------------|
| Sunset Limited        | 53.8%     | 76.9%    | 56.6%          |
| Texas Eagle           | 58.3%     | 61.3%    | 80.6%          |
| Heartland Flyer       | 45.0%     | 62.9%    | 65.9%          |
| Southwest Chief       | 58.3%     | 66.1%    | 80.6%          |
| California Zephyr     | 45.0%     | 57.4%    | 55.5%          |
| Empire Builder        | 53.0%     | 70.2%    | 71.5%          |
| Coast Starlight       | 81.7%     | 79.0%    | 78.8%          |
| City of New Orleans   | 91.7%     | 87.1%    | 89.5%          |
| Pacific Surfliner     | 74.3%     | 83.6%    | 77.2%          |
| San Joaquin           | 85.3%     | 89.5%    | 88.8%          |
| Capitol Corridor      | 93.9%     | 93.6%    | 93.4%          |
| Amtrak Cascades       | 85.7%     | 69.0%    | 73.5%          |
| Hiawatha              | 89.0%     | 91.3%    | 92.3%          |
| Illinois Service      | 89.0%     | 79.9%    | 92.3%          |
| Michigan Services     | 63.0%     | 63.9%    | 54.2%          |
| Missouri River Runner | 83.3%     | 91.9%    | 92.8%          |
| Acela Express         | 85.0%     | 86.5%    | 91.0%          |
| Northeast Regional    | 79.8%     | 87.4%    | 79.8%          |

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

**CALTRAIN NEWS**

by **MIKE GONDRON**

When Transit America Services assumed Caltrain operations from Amtrak on May 26, the first few days were filled with delays and confusion, as expected. Now, after about five weeks, trains are basically running on time again and delays are down to those of normal day to day operations.

For the past few years, Caltrain has been struggling financially, raising fares and reducing service. Suddenly, thanks mainly to full payments by its participating agencies, Caltrain is enjoying a financial boom and recently approved a \$111 million budget that began on July 1. A surge in ridership, aided by rising gas prices and an improving job market, also added about \$10 million to Caltrain’s coffers. In the past year, ridership is up

11 percent.

The additional money is allowing Caltrain to restore six trains to its schedule, as mentioned last month. The new trains will begin in September and will bring the weekday total to 92. The decision is being questioned because next year at this time, Caltrain could be deep in the red again. The budget deficit could be as high as \$40 million and we’ll be back to threats of reduced service and station closures.

The Out of The Darkness suicide prevention walk on June 9-10 between San Mateo and San Francisco raised nearly \$12,000 for suicide prevention awareness. A team of San Mateo County Transit District employees who manage Caltrain joined about 2000 other participants in the walk to benefit the American Suicide Prevention Foundation. In spite of efforts by Caltrain and local agencies to educate the public, suicide continues to be a problem, disrupting operations and causing emotional trauma for operating crews and first responders.

On July 4, Caltrain again ran extra trains to serve the crowds of people attending San Francisco’s fireworks display at Pier 39. Its last regular train was scheduled to depart San Francisco at 9:15 p.m., right about when the fireworks were getting started, so additional trains were needed. This year only three extra trains were run. The first left San Francisco at 11:15 p.m., ran nonstop to San Carlos, then made all local stops to San Jose Diridon. The remaining two trains left San Francisco at 11:30 p.m. and 12:01 a.m., and ran as locals to San Jose Diridon, making all stops.

**NEW TRESTLES BRIDGE OPENS NEAR SURF SPOT**

With an Amtrak *Pacific Surfliner* crossing over the new Trestles bridge on the morning of May 14, local transportation officials marked the completion of a multimillion-dollar project to replace the structure that was built in 1941 as an 858-foot stretch of a wooden post-and-beam bridge. It has served as the gateway to a San Diego County beach of Southern California’s surf culture.

Although the original bridge remained strong, with more than 40 passenger and freight trains crossing per day, the trains were required to slow down to reduce vibration and wear and tear. The bridge also required frequent maintenance to protect against fire damage and corrosion, officials said.

The new version, officially named the San Mateo Creek Bridge, replaced 558-feet of the wooden bridge with reinforced concrete. The \$8-million project was finished in less than two years – under budget and six months ahead of schedule, officials said. The bridge has been owned since 1992 by the North County Transit District. Some of the beach’s devotees weren’t in favor of the change, which officially opened to the public when President Nixon ordered a portion of Camp Pendleton to be handed over to California.

Jerome Stocks, mayor of Encinitas and chairman of the San Diego Assn. of Governments’ board of directors – who surfed there when he was younger – said that the renovation “will help to ensure that we keep passengers and goods moving safely” along the busy coastal rail corridor. Traffic on the tracks used by Amtrak, Metrolink and freight haulers is expected to double in coming years, with officials anticipating 60 trains a day, seven days a week, by 2030.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



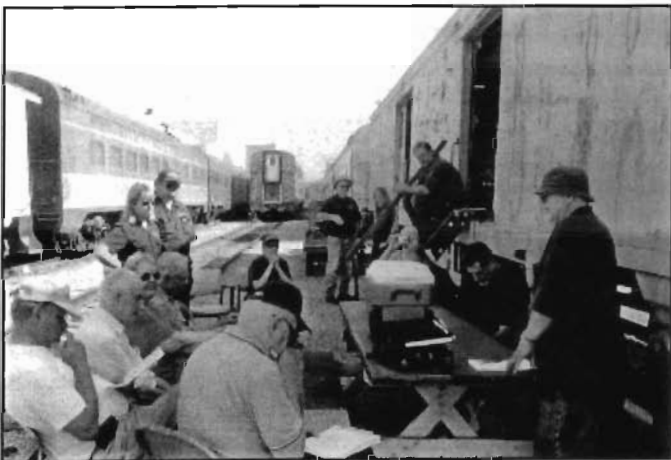
*Ex-Santa Fe 3751 leads the San Bernardino Railroad Days special train back to Los Angeles on April 22, 2012.*

Photo by Robert Black



*Exposition/Crenshaw Station on Expo Line with eastbound platform to west of Crenshaw Blvd.*

Photo by Dick Finley



*PRS assembly on July 14 at Saunders Yard for a discussion with many of our cars surrounding us.*

Photo by Tom Geer



*Expo/Crenshaw Station with westbound platform to east of Crenshaw Blvd. in the distance.*

Photo by Dick Finley



*PRS Board at the special Board Meeting on July 14 at Saunders Yard, minus two members. From L to R: Lindsay Smith, Virginia Grupp, Neil Bjornsen, Dick Finley, Larry Aandahl, Marti Ann Draper, and Nick Teel.*

Photo by Tom Geer



*Pacific Railroad Society assembly at the special Board Meeting on July 14 at Saunders Yard. From L to R: Neil Bjornsen, Al Novak, Andy Novak, Marti Ann Draper, Ed Saalig, Larry Aandahl, Dave Housh, Nick Teel, Will Walters, Lindsay Smith, Ray Ballash, Steward Spencer, and Rolland Graham.*

Photo by Tom Geer