

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

DECEMBER 2008

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT by DICK FINLEY LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

RIDERSHIP

September 2008	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	149,699	84,917	45,346	25,511
Saturday Ave.	95,063	59,428	22,389	14,326
Sunday Ave.	90,946	54,580	19,042	13,203
Monthly Total	3,978,655	2,293,859	1,137,028	659,050

[Info. from Ken Ruben]

METRO STORE ONLINE

Exclusive artwork rail posters, one-of-a-kind commemorative lapel pins and other authentic Metro merchandise is available by shopping at the online Metro Store at *metro.net*. Whether it's that special gift for out-of-town friends or just something to set you apart from the crowd, look no farther than Metro.

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

The light rail extension from Los Angeles Union Station to East Los Angeles is 90 percent complete and should open on **schedule next summer**, Metro officials said Nov. 12. Installation of all of the tracks has been completed, but construction was continuing on two of the rail line's eight stations. Construction of the 6-mile line has remained within budget and gone more than 3.6 million working hours without a lost-time accident, according to Metro.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

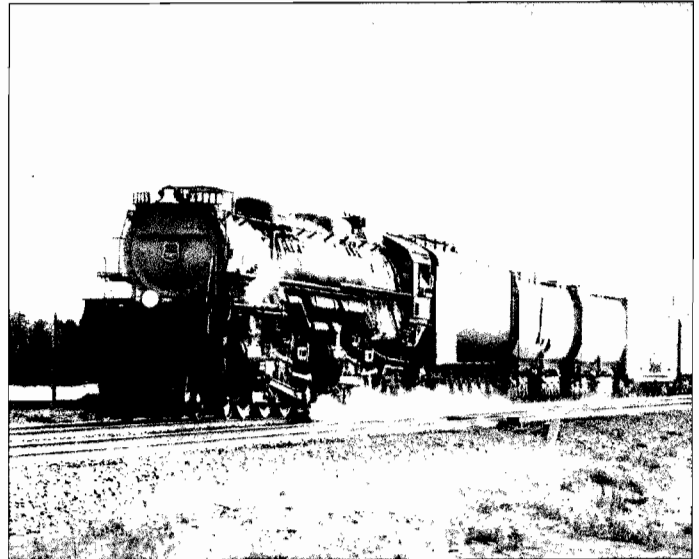
PORTLAND PREFERS DEVELOPMENT NEAR STOPS

Commuters who drive each morning to the Sunset Transit Center looking for a space in the park-and-ride lot learn quickly they need to be early. From the day it opened 10 years ago, the Sunset park-and-ride essentially has been full. It's among eight park-and-ride lots along light rail – from Cleveland Avenue in Gresham to Quatama in Hillsboro – that were at least 90 percent full during TriMet's annual survey in September.

The competition for spaces could get more fierce at lots such as the Sunset and Gateway transit centers next year as TriMet opens the I-205 light rail and the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter rail. While each line will have its own park-and-ride spaces – 2,300 for I-205 and 680 for WES – they are concentrated at the southern end of the lines. WES won't have a park-and-ride lot at the Beaverton end of the line, and TriMet won't add spaces to Gateway at the northern end of the I-205 line.

That fits with TriMet's philosophy that land around close-in light-rail stations is too valuable for parking garages, let alone sprawling surface lots. In emphasizing development near light-rail stops instead of parking, TriMet has fewer than half the ratio of park-and-ride spaces per rider than four comparable cities – Denver, Dallas, Salt Lake City and Sacramento.

Because there isn't as much sprawl in the Portland area, there's less need for commuters to drive long distances to get to



3985 is getting underway after a brief stop at CP 459, a few miles east of Pine Bluffs, Wyoming. Photo by Bobbie Black



The late Victor N. Carlucci, Jr. at the Gateway (east) end of Los Angeles Union Station. Photo by Ken Ruben

mass transit, said Alan Lehto, TriMet's director of project planning. The Beaverton Transit Center, the northern end of WES in Beaverton, is served by light rail and 11 bus lines, so commuters should be able to get there without driving, TriMet officials say. Lehto said the agency doesn't engage in social engineering, but TriMet clearly would rather commuters leave their cars at home and find another way to light rail stations.

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



WHEEL CLICKS
DECEMBER 2008 VOLUME 72, NO. 9

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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.

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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

- Dec. 5 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., **PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM**, 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas
- Fri. Dec. 6, 13, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Avenue, San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting: December 27.
- Dec. 6, 13, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 6, 20; Extra day: 13, 27. Committee Mtg.: 20.
- Sats. Dec. 12 **PRS HOLIDAY PARTY**, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra. SEE FLYER FOR DETAILS.
- Fri. Jan. 2 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room, Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri. Jan. 3, 10, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Avenue San Dimas.
- Sats. 17, 24, 31 Committee meeting: January 24.
- Sats. Jan. 3, 10, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 17, 24, 31

- Sats. 3, 17; Extra day: 10, 24, 31. Committee Mtg.: 17
- Jan. 9 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room,
- Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

There were no late renewals this month. At the Board Meeting on November 7, 2008, Virginia Elwood-Akers and Lee Gustafson were voted into PRS with Nos. 474 and 475, respectively.

VICTOR N. CARLUCCI, JR.

Vic Carlucci's funeral service was held at Calvary Cemetery on Oct. 2, 2008. Vic was the immediate past president and current director of PRS until his passing. He was an active volunteer at the Pacific Railroad Museum

Vic had worked for the MTA in their real estate department for about 10 years. He formerly worked for the Santa Fe Railway. Vic's father, Victor Carlucci, Sr., is a retired Santa Fe Railway employee.

THOMAS P. SARGENT, JR.

Tom Sargent died Aug. 1, 2008, while on a trip in China. Born in 1933, Tom was a life-long resident of Redlands with a degree from Cal Poly Pomona and a graduate degree from the University of Redlands. He farmed orange groves planted by his father.

Tom was a dedicated volunteer in many organizations including PRS. He was a great help to Ed Von Nordeck during the first few years of the summer Beach Trains of Metrolink sponsored by the Riverside Transportation Commission.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of September 2008, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 347,701. This was an average increase per day from August of 3,335 riders or about 1 percent.

ALAMEDA CORRIDOR-EAST

The Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority (ACE), as Lead Agency, will prepare an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA) for the San Gabriel Trench grade separation in the City of San Gabriel. The Lead Agency has prepared a Notice of Preparation for the EIR to initiate early consultation and provide opportunity for comment from public agencies, stakeholders, organizations, and interested individuals on the scope of the environmental analysis addressing the potential effects of the proposed project.

The San Gabriel Trench grade separation project is located primarily in the City of San Gabriel, beginning just west of the border with the City of Alhambra and ending just east of the border with the City of Rosemead.

The San Gabriel Trench grade separation project is located along the Union Pacific Railroad Alhambra subdivision. The existing track depression through the City of Alhambra would be continued eastward through the City of San Gabriel. A 2.1-mile section of the track will be lowered to below grade in a trench

and bridges would be constructed at Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue and San Gabriel Boulevard. The rail line would return to grade where it crosses the Rubio Wash, east of San Gabriel Blvd. Ramona St., Mission Rd. and Del Mar Ave. all would remain at their current elevations; however, San Gabriel Blvd. would be raised not more than two feet to accomplish the grade separation at that crossing. The rail crossing at Walnut Grove Avenue will remain at-grade with a shallow lowering of the roadway to match the proposed railroad grade. In addition, new bridge structures will be provided at the Alhambra Wash and the Rubio Wash. Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in 2011 and be completed in 2014.

UNION PACIFIC ANNOUNCES POSITIVE TRAIN CONTROL PLAN FOR THE LOS ANGELES AREA

Union Pacific announced on October 8, 2008, that it has developed an implementation plan that should deliver Positive Train Control (PTC) technology to UP rail lines shared with commuter lines in the Los Angeles region in the year 2012.

UP has begun testing its version of PTC technology called Vital Train Management System (VTMS) across 456 miles of track in Iowa, Nebraska and Wyoming, and in Washington and Idaho as part of an international test with Canadian Pacific Railway.

PTC is a predictive collision avoidance technology that can stop a train before an accident occurs. PTC is designed to keep a train within authorized limits on a track and under its maximum speed limit. When necessary, VTMS will override the engineer or operator of the train.

UP has entered into interoperability agreement with Norfolk Southern and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Interoperability is one of the key challenges since freight and passenger trains share tracks and must be able to exchange and use information.

Passed October 1, 2008, The Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 requires all Class I railroads and passenger railroads to implement a PTC system by December 31, 2015, on all main line track where intercity passenger railroads and commuter railroads operate, as well as on lines carrying hazardous materials. Train signal systems such as Automatic Train Control (ATC) and Automatic Train Stop (ATS) are used across many rail networks today, but these are not PTC systems. ATC and ATS are reactive systems, which means they wait for train engineers to acknowledge alarms and would not prevent collisions under all circumstances. PTC involves predictive technology that detects upcoming conditions and takes control of the train when needed. [Info. from www.uprr.com/newsinfo/ via Charles Varnes]

CALTRAIN NEWS by MIKE GONDON

In September, the Caltrain board approved a 25 cent fare increase to its base fare that will take effect January 1, 2009. The new base fare will become \$2.50, and is expected to raise an extra \$943,500 in revenue for the remaining six months of the fiscal year. An extra \$1.8 million is expected to be raised for the next fiscal year.

The reason for the increase, of course, is the skyrocketing price of fuel over the summer. However, if fuel prices keep dropping as they have been, increased revenues will probably

exceed expectations. Caltrain will also discontinue its ten ride ticket in March, in favor of an eight ride ticket.

A couple of dramatic train-truck crashes have marred Caltrain operations in recent weeks. The first occurred on September 29 when Baby Bullet Train #312 struck a tractor-trailer at Broadway Avenue in Burlingame, injuring the driver. No one on the train was hurt. The southbound track was closed for about 90 minutes and all trains used the northbound track between CP Trousdale and CP Palm.

On October 30, Train #101, the first northbound train of the day, struck a pickup truck at 9th Avenue in San Mateo and dragged it four blocks, killing the driver and damaging the power switch at CP Palm. Again, no one on the train was hurt. Both tracks were shut down for over three hours before the southbound track was opened. The northbound track opened about 90 minutes later, but trains ran late until after Noon.

Caltrain's ridership surge, coupled with its car shortage, have frustrated bicyclists who are constantly being denied boarding because of full bike cars. As a result, the Caltrain Board pledged to find a way to allow more bikes on the trains and also approved its Bicycle Access and Parking Plan, which calls for more bike lockers at stations, a bike sharing program, and other improvements to make Caltrain more bike friendly.

Perhaps the major complaint is lack of consistency. A train may have two bike cars one day and just one the next day. Unfortunately, because of Caltrain's high rate of mechanical failures, it's rare when all trains run with the equipment they were originally assigned, making consistency difficult. The situation should improve somewhat now that all of Caltrain's eight new cars are in service.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

In a brief statement issued on Nov. 14, 2008, Amtrak announced the resignation of its President and CEO, Alex Kummant. The appointment of William Crosbie, Amtrak's Chief Operation Officer, as Acting President and CEO was also announced.

On the same day Trains News Wire reported that Kummant did not voluntarily resign, but was forced out by the Amtrak board due to a dispute over debt restructuring.

Food and Beverage Warehouse Management

Amtrak has selected ARAMARK Corp. to serve as the company's food and beverage warehouse management provider effective Jan. 1, 2009. Its contract with Gate Gourmet Inc. will expire at the end of this calendar year.

The company is in the final stages of selecting vendor to develop a new on-board point-of-sale system to capture food and beverage sales. Once the vendor is selected, Amtrak and the vendor will begin development, which will culminate in a pilot program and a 2010 rollout.

Historical On-Time Performance

At column deadline, Amtrak historical on-time performance data for October had not been released.

BNSF Amtrak On-Time Performance Percentages

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

Amtrak On-Time Performance	2008-11-10
TRAINS	YTD OTP
MTD OTP	
Long-distance Trains	88%
Short-Distance Trains	95%
Pacific Surfliners	93%

INTERCITY TRAINS

Southwest Chief

The *Southwest Chief*, Tr. No. 4, operated from Los Angeles to San Bernardino via the Metrolink San Gabriel Subdivision on Nov. 15. The detour was caused by the closure of its usual route, the BNSF San Bernardino Subdivision, due to the wildfire in Santa Ana Canyon, which also closed the 91 Freeway in both directions between Corona and Anaheim. The *Chief* departed Los Angeles at 6:54 p.m., nine minutes late, passed CP Cambridge (located between Pomona and Claremont) at 7:32 p.m., and departed San Bernardino on time at 8:29 p.m. Because of the detour passengers from Fullerton and stations south, traveled aboard *Pacific Surfliner*, Tr. No. 795, to Los Angeles, where the *Chief* was held for the connection.

Coast Starlight

The *Coast Starlight* operated between Los Angeles and Sacramento via the Union Pacific's San Joaquin Valley route in late October and early November because its normal route was closed to permit the UP to perform trackwork in and around tunnels north of San Luis Obispo.

The detour route was from Los Angeles via the Metrolink River and Valley Subdivisions to Metrolink CP Harold (south of Lancaster). At that point the *Starlight* entered the UP Mojave Subdivision and continued its run to Bakersfield. From there it ran via the Fresno Subdivision to Elvas (near Sacramento). The detour was completed via a backup movement into the Sacramento depot on the Martinez Subdivision, a move which positioned the train correctly for its departure for Seattle.

Because of the detour the *Starlight* missed all stops between Los Angeles and Sacramento. No specific bus transportation was provided from the missed stops. It was possible, however, to connect to and from the Train using combinations of Amtrak *Thruway* buses and other trains.

Starlight departures from Los Angeles occurred on Oct. 24, 26, 29, Nov. 8, 10, 12, and 14, and were detoured.

Starlight departures from Seattle occurred on Oct. 23, 25, 28, Nov. 7, 9, 11, 13, with the detour originating in Sacramento on the following day.

Because the detour route was faster, the northbound *Starlight* arrived in Sacramento around 9:30 p.m. and held for its scheduled 11:59 departure. The southbound *Starlight* operated on its normal schedule to Sacramento. Its 6:35 a.m. scheduled departure from there permitted its arrival at Los Angeles shortly after 6 p.m.

On Nov. 10 the UP replaced a trestle on its line between Albany and Eugene, Oregon. On that day, the southbound *Coast Starlight* operated as a normal train between Seattle and Portland, and Eugene and Los Angeles with a bus bridge between Portland and Eugene. The northbound *Starlight* which arrived in Eugene that day operated in the same manner.

City of New Orleans

The *City of New Orleans* (Tr. Nos. 58/59) resumed service to Memphis on Oct. 15, 2008. A sinkhole which developed on city

property just south of the station resulted in detours by the train and the closure of the station's parking lot beginning on April 23, 2008. During the time the repairs were in progress, Memphis passengers were bused between the station and the train.

Northbound Tr. No. 58 (Oct. 14) operated via the detour route, with a bus connection to the station, because it had departed New Orleans before the line reopened. Southbound Tr. No. 59 (Oct. 14) was the first *City* to operate via its normal route through Memphis. Tr. No. 58 (Oct. 15) was the first northbound *City* to operate via its normal route.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Cascades

On Nov. 10 when the Union Pacific Railroad replaced the trestle between Albany and Eugene, the line was closed for 24 hours. The following *Cascades*, Tr. Nos. 507 (Nov. 9), 504 (Nov. 10), 507 (Nov. 10), 509 (Nov. 10), 500 (Nov. 11), and 504 (Nov. 11) were canceled between Portland and Eugene, with bus replacements.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

Northeast Corridor monthly multi-ride ticket holders can continue to upgrade to off-peak *Acela Express* trains 30 minutes before departure for \$20.00 through Feb. 28, 2009. The plan to discontinue the upgrade on Nov. 1, 2008, was canceled.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INTER-CITY PASSENGER RAIL GRANTS

As part of a new plan to improve intercity passenger rail service nationwide, the U.S. Department of Transportation is providing \$30 million to match local investments in 15 rail capacity enhancement projects across the country. These federal-state partnerships will support projects designed to reduce delays and expand capacity on existing intercity passenger rail routes and help establish new services where none exist today.

Projects in the west, and their benefits are:

CALIFORNIA: San Joaquin Corridor – 4.5-mile double tracking, Kings Park, \$5 million.

Description: The project involves the conversion of 4.5 miles of running side track to a second main line, construction of side tracks, the addition of two #24 crossovers and other turnout improvements, as well as related signal and highway crossing improvements. Completion of the project will result in 9.5 miles of continuous double track that will allow trains to pass each other at maximum track speed of 79 mph. This location has been identified as one of the worst congestion points in the corridor and a priority for capacity enhancement on the BNSF sections of the San Joaquin service route operated by Amtrak.

Benefits: The project would connect existing sections of double track. With the recently completed Shirley to Hanford project to the north, the Kings Park project would result in a continuous 9.5 mile section of double main track. Operations analysis indicates that the project would reduce Amtrak train delays by five hours per week and increase average speeds of the San Joaquin service by 1.3%.

ARIZONA: Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Tucson to Phoenix, \$1 million.

Description: The planning study would conduct a Phase I EIS for new intercity passenger rail service in the Sun Corridor between Phoenix and Tucson (140 miles). The service would

operate trains at speeds up to 125 mph with as many as 15 stations. New track would be needed, existing tracks upgraded, and improvements made at many public and private highway-rail grade crossings. The Phase I EIS will complete a majority of the environmental analysis necessary for project development and result in a selection of alternatives for further design and feasibility studies.

Benefits: There is no daily, punctual rail service in this corridor today (the unreliable Amtrak Sunset Limited is tri-weekly). Modern rail service is projected to carry approximately 1.2 million passengers annually. This service could ultimately interlink with commuter rail programs.

WASHINGTON: Point Defiance Bypass (D-M Street Tacoma), \$6 million.

Description: This project will provide for preliminary engineering, environmental review, and right-of-way acquisition for the 1.2 mile D to M street segment of the 19.5 mile Point Defiance Bypass project from Tacoma to Nisqually. The D to M street segment will include new track and signal systems on a realigned right-of-way in Tacoma, including a grade-separated railroad crossing at Pacific Avenue. Ultimately, the Point Defiance Bypass Project will redirect intercity passenger trains between Tacoma and Nisqually from the circuitous BNSF freight line along the coast to a passenger oriented inland route.

Benefits: The new routing will enable WSDOT to operate two additional round trip Cascades trains from Portland to Seattle and Sound Transit's Sounder to extend service to Lakewood. The project will reduce travel time by 6 minutes between Portland and Seattle as well as avoid freight traffic interference through two single-track tunnels and port activities along the current route. Ultimately, Amtrak services will relocate to the newly constructed Freighthouse Square station in Tacoma providing direct access to Sound Transit's Sounder commuter rail, and Link light rail to downtown Tacoma.

Projects elsewhere in the U.S. are:

ILLINOIS: Installation of Centralized Traffic Control and Cab Signals from Joliet to Mazonia, \$1.55 million.

ILLINOIS: Installation of Cab Signal Technology from Mazonia to Ridgeley (Springfield) \$1.85 million.

MAINE: Portland Area Track Improvements, \$500,000.

MINNESOTA: Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Twin Cities to Duluth High-Speed Rail, \$1.1 million.

MISSOURI: Siding Extension, St. Louis-Kansas City, \$3.3 million.

NEW YORK: Albany Station Track and Signal Improvements, \$1.25 million.

OHIO: Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati Planning and Alternatives Analysis, \$62,500.

VERMONT: Vermonter Route – One-Mile Rail Replacement/Bridge Redeckings, \$450,000.

VERMONT: Ethan Allen Route - 2-Mile Track Reconstruction, \$581,775.

VIRGINIA: Third Track south of Fredericksburg, \$2 million.

WISCONSIN: Chicago-Milwaukee Welded Rail (17.85 mi), \$5 million.

GRANDLUXE EXPRESS CEASES OPERATION

GrandLuxe Express, the former *American Orient Express*, suddenly ceased operation on Aug. 28, 2008. The cessation

occurred concurrently with the return of its Great Northwestern National Parks tour to Tacoma on that day. Two days earlier the company notified Amtrak, which supplied the locomotives and operating crews that it was ceasing operation. It was reported that its on-board service crews were notified the previous day while the passengers were off the train on a tour.

The *GrandLuxe* equipment remained in Tacoma until Sept. 30. On that day the equipment began a move to Sacramento using Amtrak locomotives and crews. It was scheduled to arrive in Sacramento the next day, and following its arrival there to move to Napa.

The train operated as Amtrak Tr. No. 965. It was pulled by AMTK 172 P42/465 F59PHI (*Amtrak Cascades* livery)/505 DASH 832 BWH.

In mid-September *GrandLuxe* Rail Journeys L.L.C. retained investment banking firm Libra Securities L.L.C. to sell its luxury train equipment. Twenty fully operational cars and 11 additional cars currently not in service were offered for sale. Qualified buyers will be offered the opportunity to inspect them in Napa.

The *GrandLuxe Express* web page remained unchanged until late September when it was replaced with a stark page stating::

“GrandLuxe Rail Journeys (“GLRJ”) has closed it’s doors. Please note the following information pertaining to GLRJ status:
* GrandLuxe Rail Journeys has ceased operations and is closing it’s doors.

* GrandLuxe Rail Journeys is no longer accepting reservations. For Inquiries pertaining to existing reservations, please send an email to: reservations@grandluxerail.com
Please keep in mind that it may take 10 days or longer to respond to your inquiry.”

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

WEST COAST RAILWAY NEWS by JACK WHITMEYER VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

There is hectic activity in Vancouver, B.C. making ready for the 2010 Winter Olympics. There is much high rise building construction in downtown. The Light Rail Line from the Airport to downtown is almost complete including several miles of subway. The False Creek B.C. Electric Rwy's two interurbans are packed away temporarily, making room for Olympic housing.

The Railway Museum at Squamish is building a four-stall roundhouse and turntable, however their Royal Hudson 2860 is hamstrung by the Canadian National's refusal to allow the locomotive to operate over the former BC Railway. Fired up in September, it will use only their own 800 feet of museum track.

SNOQUALMIE, WASHINGTON

The Northwest Railway Museum in Snoqualmie, Washington is on another major building effort – this time a large exhibit building “loosely modeled after a trainshed.” The 24,000 square foot building will be adjacent to the new Conservation and Restoration Center on the new railway history campus that was acquired last year through a land swap with the city. The projected cost of the new building is at \$3.6 million.

WHITEHORSE, YUKON

Having enjoyed a steamboat tour, I walked to the Rotary Peace Park near the boat to take a ride on the Whitehorse

Waterfront Trolley. The sign said that operating hours were 1100-1700 daily, with departure on the hour. I boarded the single truck car No. 531 (Lisbon, Portugal heritage, built 1925) and we were off for a 2.5-mile ride on the former White Pass & Yukon narrow gauge tracks.

The trolley is powered by a generator car which tags along and generates the electricity to power the car. The ride was great fun and ended near the shopping center at the north end of town. I then returned to the WP&Y depot at the town center (original building built 1900) where I got off and went back to my hotel to continue my trip to visit family members.

WASTE-BY-RAIL IS GREEN by LINDSAY SMITH

If God created humankind, living men and women are the same as our ancestors. We walk and run at about the same speed as our ancestors. We can move faster because modern vehicles move faster than horses. Olympic track records have identified the fastest humans, but speed of commuters getting on or off the vehicles is constant and slow. Mortals can only improve the vehicles to deal with the constant capability of the passengers and operators.

Over the years, we have used colors to send a message with lights, flags, signs and other information channels. Red has become stop in our Western traffic control systems. Yellow flags and lights say "caution." Blue is a favorite for police cars but in railroads and other vehicles, it means "caution, there is a person who can be injured by this control or moving this vehicle." Green means come ahead for vehicles. In drag racing, it means go like hell! Green has another meaning in our new speak. To an environmentalist, green programs are good for Mother Earth. The environmentalists are concerned that man is using up assets and abusing the earth's space and energy. One fact is uncontroversial; the human population is increasing over the earth. Human requirements for the goods of life are one of the pressures for economic development of communications or transportation systems. Population growth is forcing development of communication systems including more, wider and faster roadways and byways. Increasing density in the lines of communication allows smaller channels such as roads. Roads are located under the surface, on the surface and in the space above the ground. Radios use the ether of space. It makes sense to seek green solutions to accommodate our transportation and communication needs in the future. To be green they must show higher density in the lines and require less energy to move through the lines that use less space or earth surface. Although many vehicles can claim they are more efficient and/or green, they must fit into a complex system before they are useful. To move tons of freight and people over Mother Earth, rail systems are green by nature. They move the most people or cargos with the least waste. Exhaust is the waste from locomotive systems. Rail locomotives haul more ton-miles of cargo per ton of fuel. Humans have more waste from their daily lines. We make many tons of material for disposal by our sanitary systems. We have run out of room in the County for open dumps for the solid waste. Our liquid waste is digested so that the water is separated and solids remain that most be safely stored.

Our funeral car *Descanso* was created to solve a similar problem in the early part of the last century. The undertakers in

downtown Los Angeles had trouble finding more space to inter the dead. The Los Angeles Railway Car *Descanso* provided the means to take the bodies to the countryside where there was more space for cemeteries. At present, the Los Angeles Sanitary Districts have a similar problem, space is required to inter our waste. The answer is to haul the garbage and wastes from our daily lives to remote dumps by rail. Presently, the Puente Hills local dump site handles 13,200 tons per day. It will close on November 1, 2013. As our population grows, we must increase the facilities to handle waste. At present, the change from local dumps to remote desert sites is causing the development of a major industry. The Sanitary Districts of Los Angeles will become a major rail transport operator.

In 2002, we reported the purchase of remote desert sites by the Los Angeles Sanitary Districts at Mesquite and Liberty Mine. The Liberty Mine site is currently unscheduled because environmentalists objected to the environmental impact report in the San Diego Federal Court. It is claimed construction may harm the desert turtles. The Mesquite Regional Landfill site is 200 miles southeast of Los Angeles near Glamis and the Chocolate Mountains. In 2005, we reported the Puente Hill Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) commenced sorting 500 tons a day. It is licensed for 4,000 tons per day. Under Waste-By-Rail, after removal of recyclables, trash will be loaded into sealed containers and taken to an intermodal yard and loaded onto rail cars for delivery to a new rail yard at Mesquite. The containers will resemble the Intermodal freight containers used on trucks and railways. Trash must be kept moving to reduce the danger and obnoxious effects of stagnation. If rail is not available, over the road trucks will have to move the trash to avoid problems.

As originally conceived, the Sanitary Districts planned to use an existing rail yard but there is no room in the existing facilities. The Districts have an option to purchase 17 acres from the City of Industry Redevelopment Agency. The yard is permitted to load 8,000 tons of trash per day. They will load two trains of 66 cars to carry 132 containers or 4,000 tons. Half will come from the MRF and the other containers will come from the trash companies that sort waste at other locations. The yard will have six 800-foot loading tracks and a lead from the Union Pacific main line for making up and breaking down the trains. In addition the yard will have the offices, empty container storage, repair facilities and other support structures. Straddle cranes will load and unload the cars. Construction is to start in 2009. Trains can be loaded in late 2011 or early 2012. The construction is budgeted at \$9 million in current dollars. The Districts look forward to additional MRF facilities and growth of rail operations.

Modern green projects become very complex because they seem to grow as we plan. At the onset, the new intermodal yard will not handle the Districts load. Other facilities are in the planning and permit application stages. The traffic on the UP main line through the Alameda Corridor East and down through Palm Springs will increase by four trains per day. At Mesquite new yards, dumps and support facilities are planned. The dump lining requires a major construction effort. As the dump fills, it will be covered by three feet of clean soil.

Of course, the fees increase at the MRF from the \$29 per ton

to \$75 per ton over the next 20 years. Local cities are already increasing the trash collection costs to reduce the future “Sticker Shock.” The revenue will pay for some of the construction and current operating costs. Green is not cheap.

The Fairplex Garden Railway exhibit has a MRF model since 2006. It is a large green building in the industrial area on the grandstand side.

RAILROAD BUFF DERAILED AGAIN

Darius McCollum, 43, flashed a bogus badge and a forged ID card to a Long Island Rail Road conductor after boarding a train in Penn Station on Oct. 5, 2008, Metropolitan Transportation Authority police said. Prior to that, McCollum had been arrested 25 times for pretending to be a transit worker.

McCollum in recent years has been living in North Carolina, but he ignored his mother’s warnings and took a bus back to New York City, she said. McCollum’s first run-in with the law came in 1981, when he assumed the role and duties of a subway motorman. He drove an E train full of unsuspecting passengers for a joyride.

McCollum bounced in and out of jail for a series of lesser stunts until his 2004 arrest in a Queens railyard. He had a handful of stolen railroad keys and said he wanted to learn how to drive one of the new commuter trains, authorities said. The Queens arrest resulted in a state prison stint for McCollum, who has been diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, a form of autism. He was paroled in 2006 but was sent back for violating the terms of his freedom.

Several months ago, the NYPD stopped McCollum as he tried to enter a restricted area of a station. He was wearing a blue T-shirt and blue work pants typically worn by track workers, as well as a hard hat and gloves bearing the NYC Transit logo. That netted him a five-day sentence.

On Oct. 5, a conductor recognized him from a “be-on-the-lookout” bulletin posted by MTA police. When approached by the conductor, McCollum showed the badge and bogus “National Justice Bureau” ID card, officials said.

The train crew notified MTA police officers, who arrested McCollum in Suffolk County. His mother complained that authorities are “picking on him, not trying to help him.”

[Info. from *New York Daily News* via Ken Ruben]

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during September 2008 were 47,382, which was an increase from the previous month of 271 or 1 percent. Average daily Metrolink monthly passholders on Amtrak were 1,845, which was an increase from the previous month of 14 or 1 percent.

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, total schedule adherence (within 5 minutes of scheduled time) during September was 94 percent.

[Info. from Charles Varnes]

METROLINK TRAIN 111

The devastating collision of Metrolink Train 111 and a Union Pacific freight train the afternoon of September 12, 2008, in Chatsworth caused many actions by Metrolink, its Board of Directors, and member agencies, which were enacted to help

ensure the continued safety and security of the public.

Metrolink’s Board of Directors approved several actions in the immediate days after September 12, including creation of an ongoing Trains Collision Assistance Fund to provide an opportunity for the general public, businesses, and community members to offer their financial support to those affected by the collision and creation of an Assistance Fund using Metrolink resources to expedite payment of certain costs incurred by families. In recognizing passengers on the Ventura County Line, the board also authorized a passenger-compensation program to provide a complete refund for any rider who chose not to continue riding the train after September 12.

Metrolink has taken numerous steps to enhance safety measures since September 12, which include:

- Placing additional staff in Metrolink locomotives and lead passenger cars as “another set of eyes” calling the safety signals alongside the engineer.
- Establishing an independent rail-safety review panel to assess all aspects of Metrolink’s operations and make forward-looking safety recommendations.
- Evaluating new advanced-train-control technologies that have the potential to further reduce the likelihood of human error in potentially dangerous situations.
- Evaluating and updating the agency’s contract oversight process and emergency-response plans.

All together, the agency’s continued focus on safety will help improve the safety of Metrolink’s rail service—and, ideally, will encourage other railway systems nationwide to adopt new critical safety programs.

Metrolink staff and Board members have also been working diligently with Congressional representatives in California and Washington, D.C., to accelerate legislative support for rail safety and to encourage much-needed investment in the transportation infrastructure. Metrolink greatly appreciates the support of elected leaders, who share a commitment to safety and security, and who believe in the future of rail in Southern California.

Metrolink knows that many questions remain about the Chatsworth collision and that much more important work lies ahead. It and its Board continue to work closely with the National Transportation Safety Board in their investigation into the cause of the tragic accident and to use Metrolink’s resources to help ensure this type of event does not reoccur.

RAIL SAFETY LEGISLATION

On October 16, the President of the United States signed broad rail legislation with important safety provisions supported by Metrolink. Among its key mandates, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 will require new safety controls on trains that will help reduce crashes. The President also signed the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008.

Key elements of the Rail Safety Improvement Act include:

- Collision avoidance: Mandates installation of Positive Train Control (PTC) on major railroads and passenger and commuter railroads by December 31, 2015. The legislation includes a grant program for deployment of various PTC technologies.
- Increased penalties: Increases the maximum penalty for grossly negligent violations, or a pattern of repeated violations, to \$100,000, up from \$20,000.

- **Anti-fatigue measures:** Prohibits freight train and signal crews from working in excess of 12 hours a day and 276 hours a month; requires railroads to develop fatigue-management plans through a mandatory risk-reduction program. Provides for a study of crew work-hour regulations for implementation with passenger railroads.

- **Training:** Establishes minimum training standards for railroad workers; requires certification of conductors.

- **Locomotive cab safety:** Permits the Federal Railroad Administration to ban cell-phone use, and other distractions, in locomotive cabs.

- **Grade crossings:** Establishes a grant program to provide emergency grade-crossing safety improvements at locations where there has been a grade-crossing collision involving a school bus or multiple injuries or fatalities.

The bill also provides new authorizing legislation for Amtrak that nearly doubles the amount of annual funding and includes grants to states with Amtrak service, such as California, for capital improvements.

“The Metrolink Board of Directors applauds this action by the President to sign this landmark legislation into law,” said Board Chairman and Temecula City Council Member Ron Roberts. “It clearly articulates a long-needed commitment by our federal government to provide the resources to bring our transportation infrastructure into the 21st century.”

IMPROVING TRAIN SAFETY

Metrolink has been a national leader in on-board, grade-crossing, and right-of-way safety since 1992. Metrolink is the first passenger rail operator in the country to design and have manufactured passenger cars with new crash energy management (CEM) technology. The agency is one of the first operators in the country to begin a Sealed Corridor Program on nearly 65 miles of the Metrolink system. Metrolink has closed, grade separated, or improved dozens of rail crossings on the Metrolink system throughout Southern California.

Following the September 12 collision, Metrolink’s Board of Directors unanimously approved a sweeping set of safety initiatives designed to further enhance the safety and security of its railway operations, its valued passengers, and the extended Metrolink family. Critical measures underway include:

- The Board established the formation of an independent Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel consisting of industry experts to make recommendation on the operation of the Metrolink system. The panel is focused on all aspects of Metrolink’s operations. The panel will submit its final report with recommendations in early December to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Board Ad Hoc Subcommittee, which consists of Director Richard Katz and Vice Chairman Keith Millhouse. The panel may also submit interim recommendations prior to its final report.

- The Board approved development of an updated Crisis Communications Plan, an updated Emergency Preparedness Plan, and an Equipment Safety Review – all of which will assess current protocols and make forward-looking recommendations for improvements to enhance the agency’s capacity to prevent, mitigate, and respond to any future crises.

- Metrolink is developing short- and long-term strategies to place “another set of eyes” in Metrolink trains to provide support

for the engineer in calling the signals – a safety measure already enacted immediately following the accident in almost 50 percent of its trains. The agency is also exploring the installation of video cameras in its cab cars to provide video-surveillance capabilities.

- In its continued efforts to accelerate the development and implementation of additional safety technologies, Metrolink is installing LEDs (light emitting diodes) on all of its signals to improve their visibility and reliability; repositioning some signals to improve their visibility; analyzing locations for installation of Automated Train Stop (ATS) as another incremental improvement in safety; and working closely with the other railway operators who share its tracks and the supplier of evolving PTC technology, as Metrolink works diligently to build the necessary infrastructure for this new train-stopping technology once it is ready for Southern California.

HOLIDAY TOY EXPRESS

Metrolink is once again running the *Holiday Toy Express* at Metrolink stations. For 12 years the Holiday Toy Express has been a winter tradition for families all over Southern California. Over 50,000 twinkling lights and holiday decorations adorn a 650-ton Metrolink train that will be stopping at most Metrolink stations to do a free live stage show. This full theatrical production stars Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, elves, reindeer, and other characters who sing and dance for the audience.

The fun kicks off with a giant party at the Baldwin Park Station on Saturday, Nov. 22, then hits the rails to visit the rest of Metrolink’s stations on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays throughout the rest of November and December.

Metrolink, along with ABC-7, is a partner in the Firefighters’ Spark of Love Toy Drive. Please remember to bring a new, unwrapped toy to give to the firefighters who will be at the stations. All toys collected will be distributed to families in need in the cities where they were donated.

The *Holiday Toy Express* can’t run in the rain. In the event of inclement conditions, please call Metrolink’s customer service line at (800) 371-LINK (5465) to find out if the night will be rescheduled. All times are p.m. in the Schedule:

SATURDAY, November 22: Baldwin Park, 5:30; Claremont, 7:00; Montclair, 7:45; Upland, 8:30.

SUNDAY, November 23: Simi Valley, 5:00; Chatsworth, 6:00; Northridge, 7:00; Van Nuys, 8:15.

FRIDAY, November 28: Buena Park, 6:45; Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs, 7:35.

SATURDAY, November 29: North Main Corona, 5:00; Downtown Riverside, 6:45; Riverside-La Sierra, 7:45.

SUNDAY, November 30: Pedley, 5:00; East Ontario, 5:50; Downtown Pomona, 6:45; Industry, 7:35; Montebello/Commerce, 8:30.

FRIDAY, December 5: Newhall, 7:30; Sylmar/San Fernando, 8:30.

SATURDAY, December 6: Tustin, 5:45; Irvine, 6:30; Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo, 7:30; San Juan Capistrano, 8:30.

SUNDAY, December 7: San Clemente North, 5:45; Camp Pendleton USMC, 7:15; San Clemente Pier, 8:45.

FRIDAY, December 12: Downtown Burbank, 6:15; Glendale, 8:00.

SATURDAY, December 13: Rancho Cucamonga, 5:15;

Fontana, 6:15; Rialto, 7:45; San Bernardino, 8:45.
 SUNDAY, December 14: Montalva, 5:00; Oxnard, 5:45;
 Camarillo, 6:30; Moorpark, 7:30.

FRIDAY, December 19: Covina, 7:30; El Monte, 8:30.

SATURDAY, December 20: Anaheim, 5:15; Orange, 6:00;
 Santa Ana, 7:00; Fullerton, 8:30.

SUNDAY, December 21: Lancaster, 5:00; Palmdale, 6:50;
 Vincent Grade/Acton, 7:45; Via Princessa, 9:00.

[All info. from *Metrolink Matters*]

CORONA

New transit-oriented development can be built in Corona along North Main Street under zoning changes approved recently by the Corona City Council. The council agreed to change the zoning of about 17 acres to allow as many as 60 residential units per acre, and a mixture of commercial and residential units will be allowed on close to 22 acres.

All the rezoned property is in the city's redevelopment area and close to the Metrolink station, where a new parking garage is under construction to encourage use of public transit.

[Info. from Ed Von Nordeck]

SISKIYOU RAIL LINE

The Coos/Siskiyou Shippers Coalition (CSSC) announced at the end of Aug. that they had filed an emergency Petition for Alternative Rail Service with the Surface Transportation Board to allow West Texas and Lubbock Railway (WTL) and Yreka Western to operate the Siskiyou Summit Line. Bob Ragan, spokesperson for the Coalition is quoted in a press release. "The CSSC shippers are hopeful that the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) will stand aside and allow another short line operator to provide the needed service that they would not provide."

According to the press release, shippers on the line had to switch to hauling what would have normally been transported by rail to transport by truck. That, according to a study by Dr. David Gallo, Dept. of Economics, California State University, Chico, has a financial impact of a loss of \$9.1 million annually on local economies. The release states that WTL, "a successful short line operator, who has a record of rescuing troubled rail lines, is able and willing to restore service to the south end of the Siskiyou Summit line in cooperation with the Yreka Western Railroad should the Shippers' Coalition emergency Petition for Alternative Rail Service be successful."

CORP's reply said, "CORP has met all reasonable requests for railroad service on the line between Black Butte, CA and Dillard, OR. The reply goes on to say that CORP would allow WTL to run operations over the Siskiyou Line from Montaque to Ashland if WTL meets certain criteria. In the conclusion to the reply, CORP states: "CORP respectfully requests the Board to deny the emergency service sought by Petitioners because they have failed to demonstrate...inadequacy of rail service provided by CORP.

[Info. from *Siskiyou Daily News* via Roger Titus]

UNION PACIFIC 3985, NORTH PLATTE TO CHEYENNE by BRIAN BLACK

Union Pacific steam locomotive 3985 is a member of the *Challenger* class, and was designed for heavy, fast freight

service. This engine has a 4-6-6-4 wheel arrangement, and since it's restoration to operation, is the largest operating steam locomotive in the world.

In September and October 2008, the 3985 embarked on a tour of Union Pacific points in Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota. On October 9, the 3985, pulling a short train, some of whose cars were being added to the UP historical collection, returned from North Platte, Nebraska to its home base in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

During the winter and spring of 2008, the engine received some major work to its running gear and crank pins. As part of this work, a European-style exhaust system called the Lemper system was installed in the hope of getting better fuel and water economy.

Unfortunately, the Lemper system is not living up to its promise. Operating experience is revealing that it does not provide adequate draft through the firebox, which necessitates using more fuel than in the past. This creates much more smoke than the original exhaust system. To an experienced watcher of the 3985, the exhaust at the stack sounds mushy, rather than the hard, sharp barks of the original Alco system. To quote a member of the UP steam crew I talked to along the way; "that system was designed for itty bitty European engines, not these big ones!" He went on to say that there was talk of restoring the original Alco system.

We spent the night in North Platte so as to be in position to follow the train all the way to Cheyenne. It departed North Platte about 9:00 a.m. and quickly hit its cruising speed of between 55 and 60 mph. There were only about eight other vehicles chasing the train; quite a contrast to the madness of a California steam chase.

Quick stops were made at Ogallala, Nebraska, and Julesburg, Colorado. At both locations were large groups of school children. Engineer Lynn Nystrom put on a fine show for everyone as the train departed both places with the cylinder cocks belching clouds of steam, and the old Manning and Moore steamboat whistle roaring away. You can believe those kids had a story to tell their parents that night!

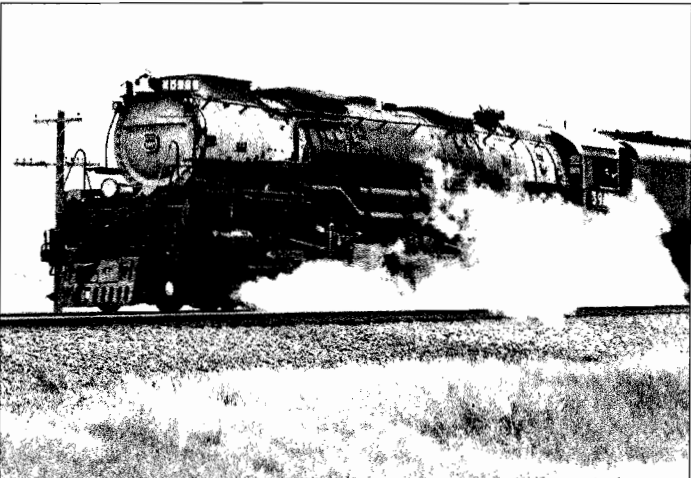
Another stop was made at Sidney, Nebraska to inspect the engine and lubricate the rod bearings, and then it was on to Cheyenne. Relatively little delay was incurred, as the dispatcher kept the special moving right along. The only exception was a 20 minute delay at CP 459, a few miles from Pine Bluffs, Wyoming, where an eastbound freight crossed over ahead of the special, due to maintenance work on the No. 1 track.

Upon arrival in Cheyenne, the 3985 was used to perform numerous switching moves to put the train away. As an unexpected treat, No. 96, an old switch engine which is part of the historical collection, was fired up and assisted in the switching. This engine is one of the oldest diesels on the UP. In the later years of its career, it was rebuilt with the enlarged radiator on the front of the engine. After this, these engines were called "hammerheads" by their crews.

The UP steam program seems to be alive and well. Northern class 4-8-4 No. 844 has recently been rebuilt, and if the exhaust system issues are resolved on the 3985, there will be two large steam locomotives in tip-top shape ready to handle any job the Union Pacific requires.



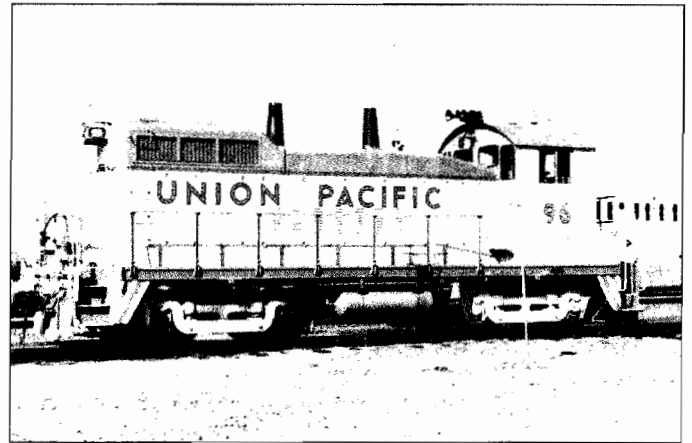
3985 special passing Hershey, Nebraska, about 15 miles west of North Platte. Photo by Brian Black



3985 passing through O'Fallons, Nebraska. This is the junction where the Powder River coal line joins the Overland Route. Photo by Brian Black



3985 switching the train at Cheyenne. Photo by Brian Black



Switch engine No. 96 is part of the Union Pacific historical collection, and was used to help switch out the train at Cheyenne. Photo by Brian Black



Barbara Sibert's Memorial Service on Nov. 8, 2008, held in Rhodes Park adjacent to the Pacific Railroad Museum in San Dimas. Photo by Ed Von Nordeck



Saunders Yard from Ted Creveling's Cessna 182 airplane. The band at left, covering up much of the Union Pacific Yard, is the airplane's wing strut. Saunders Yard curves from left to middle right with rail cars on three tracks. As a tribute to Barbara Sibert, her ashes were carried over the yard before internment in Inglewood Park Cemetery. Photo by Dave Abbott