

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

FEBRUARY 2008

TILLAMOOK RAIL'S FUTURE SHAKY

The Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad, built in the early 1900s through some of Oregon's most scenic but rugged terrain, lost so much of its line to a major storm in early December that it's not clear if or when it will recover. The situation highlights the vulnerability of Oregon transportation infrastructure touted through storm- and landslide-prone terrain. The 95-mile railroad winds through the peaks and valleys of the Coast Range along the remote Salmonberry River, through many tunnels and several high trestles, much of it inaccessible by road.

"We fixed it in 1996 to the tune of \$12 or \$13 million, and now it looks like it's going to be another \$20 million," said Kelly Taylor, administrator of the Oregon Department of Transportation's rail division. An alternative might involve loading rail cars onto barges in Tillamook Bay and sending them to Astoria, where they could be transferred to a railroad to Portland. Another option could be extending the Tillamook line along the coast to Astoria.

Now, landslides and washouts have left sections of track hanging in mid-air and others covered with tons of rocks and trees. One tunnel is packed full of thousands of cubic yards of mud and trees.

The lore of the railroad is intertwined with its rugged topography. The line, originally built by Pacific Railway & Navigation Co., got the nickname "Punk, Rotten and Nasty," because its steep grades, hairpin turns, towering trestles and smoke from the locomotives made passengers queasy, according to the Oregon Historical Society.

The line climbs from the Willamette Valley to about 1,800 feet where it crests the Coast Range and then back down to the coast at Wheeler and south to Tillamook. The railroad is a lower cost shipping option for lumber. Managers at a Weyerhaeuser mill in Garibaldi said it would cost an extra \$320,000 a year to use trucks. The line also carries occasional scenic passenger trains, though that service was suspended last summer.

It's also a major conduit for feed that supports Tillamook's famous dairy industry. The Port of Tillamook Bay purchased the railroad with help from the state lottery in 1990 after the Southern Pacific Railroad, now part of Union Pacific, decided to abandon the line.

The Port is still pursuing the goal of repairing and reopening the line as soon as possible, said director Robert Van Borssum. Because most of the line is inaccessible by road, any repairs would have to be supported by trains running from each end of the severed line.

The federal government provided most of the cost of repairing the railroad line after floods in 1996 swept away more than a mile of track. Van Borssum said he's waiting for the damage report to get a clear picture of the costs this time but said federal

damage assistance usually requires local governments to cover 25 percent of the costs. The Port doesn't have the money for that, he said, and would require state help.

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



When the local train is heard going through San Dimas on Wednesday afternoon, PRS members at the Pacific Railroad Museum go outside to watch it go by. On November 28, 2007, they were Jim Baker, Owen Danaher, Roger Fogt, Russ Davies, and Lindsay Smith (L. to R.).

Photo by Tom Geer



The beautifully restored Boise, Idaho, depot is seen in this picture on February 19, 2007. No longer used as a railroad depot, today the structure houses a museum and is available as a site for special events.

Photo by Charles Varnes



WHEEL CLICKS

FEBRUARY 2008 VOLUME 71, NO. 11

EDITOR **DICK FINLEY**
TECHNICAL EDITOR **CHARLES VARNES**
MAILER **FRED KNOX**

Opinions expressed in unsigned articles are those of the editorial board, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society, its officers or directors. Opinions in signed articles are those of the author only. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0043-4744. ©2008 BY PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.

Published monthly by **PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.**, P. O. Box 80726, San Marino, California 91118-8726. The Society is a California chartered, nonprofit organization of those who share an interest in railroad operations, travel and history. Telephone (same as Museum): (909) 394-0616.

Membership Dues: \$35.00 per year

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

MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR **LINDSAY SMITH**

EXCURSION DIRS. **BARBARA SIBERT, VINCE CAMMARANO**
 For excursion information, phone (626) 570-8651 or (818) 445-8723.

WEBMASTER **RUSSELL HOMAN**
 INTERNET Home Page: <http://www.pacificrailroadsociety.org>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF PACIFIC RAILROAD SOCIETY, INC.
VIC CARLUCCI **PRESIDENT**
VINCE CAMMARANO **VICE-PRESIDENT**
BILL SMITH **SECRETARY**
OWEN DANAHER **TREASURER**
MARTI ANN DRAPER (2007-2010) **DIRECTOR**
DICK FINLEY (2005-2008) **DIRECTOR**
CHRIS PARKER (2006-2009) **DIRECTOR**
LINDSAY SMITH (2005-2008) **DIRECTOR**
WILL WALTERS (2007-2010) **DIRECTOR**

PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Feb. 1 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at
 Fri. Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Feb. 2, 9, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4
 16, 23 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: 23.
 Feb. 2, 9, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 16, 23 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 2, 16; Extra day: 9, 23. Committee Mtg.: 16
 For more info.: call Will Walters: 714-637-4676.
 Feb. 4 Exc. #534 "The Sierra in Winter" leaves on the
 Mon. 10:45 a.m. *San Joaquin* bus-train from L.A.
 Feb. 8 Exc. #534 leaves Emeryville on the 10:15 a.m.
San Joaquin train-bus for Los Angeles.
 Feb. 8 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room
 Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
 Feb. 15 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes &
 Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.
 Mar. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4

15, 22, 29 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
 Sats. Committee meeting: Feb. 22.
 Mar. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day. 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders
 15, 22, 29 Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular
 Sats. day: 1, 15; Extra day: 8, 22, 29. Com. Mtg.: 15.
 Mar. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn
 Fri. Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

MEETING PROGRAMS by RUSS DAVIES

February 8: **Traction Night!** We're fortunate to have **Dr. Phil Stevenson** back again. You will recall his great Traction night presentation at our October 2005 meeting. Phil's presentation, "**Japanese Streetcar Sampler**" will be a rare treat! **Be there, and bring slide or digital image briefs!**

March 14: **The Pacific Northwest, featuring Portland and Seattle!** Our Northwest was, and is, a treasure for railfans and traction fans "**Then and Now.**" This is a slide presentation from **Your Museum Committee.** **Be there and bring slide or digital image briefs!**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by VIRGINIA GRUPP

There were no late renewals this month. At the Board Meeting on January 4, 2008, Donald Jeffrey was voted into PRS with seniority number 514.

SP 4449 AND NEW OREGON RAIL MUSEUM

Portland's giant steam engine, Southern Pacific 4449, was in fine fettle for the Holiday Express weekend excursions. But it was a close-run thing, since weeks before, it was jacked up before volunteers made and installed two new main bearings. The bearings were 350-pound horseshoe-shaped blocks of brass and white metal in which the 13-inch-diameter driver axles spin. There were eight, two for each of four axles.

Early in December at the Brooklyn Roundhouse, 4449 was back on its wheels. Volunteers checked it over prior to filling its boiler with hot water from a booster car and lighting the fire in its steel firebox.

The orange-and-black art deco streamliner is considered one of the world's most beautiful locomotives. The locomotive that once pulled passenger trains at 70 and 80 mph was to trundle between Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) and Oaks Park pulling Portland families to raise money for the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation's (ORHF) hoped-for new home and museum near OMSI.

With rail freight booming, Union Pacific has plans to develop the entire Brooklyn property. Portland's vintage locomotives are the 1941 SP 4449 at 110 feet long and 16 feet tall, which tips the scale at 433 tons and can apply 5,000 horsepower to the rails. And the SP&S 700, built in 1938, which is one foot longer and one foot taller than the 4449; and the OR&N 197, which had her coming-out party at the 1905 Lewis & Clark Exposition.

Union Pacific has offered to sell a small piece of property it owns adjacent to the tracks that run by the OMSI. It's a site the ORHF has targeted as the future home for a railroad museum. The heritage foundation figures it will take about \$1 million to acquire the property and as much as \$500,000 to build there a bare-bones "utility barn" in which work on the locomotives could continue. [Info. from *The Oregonian* via Caroline Hobson]

ANOTHER PERFECT BNSF – UPS PEAK SEASON

BNSF employees and their service partners pulled together in 2007 to achieve yet another perfect UPS “Peak” shipping season. Between Thanksgiving and December 23, more than 34,000 UPS trailers carrying holiday packages made it to their sorting facilities on-time and damage-free.

The operation came off without a hitch, despite some tough circumstances in the Northwest, Central and South regions. More than 11 inches of rain led to three washouts and over 40 mud slides along 30 miles of track between Everett and Seattle, Wash., early in December. Employees in the Northwest quickly figured out a solution to the problem by arranging to have UPS loads de-ramped at a customer’s rail facility and trucked to Seattle.

Ice storms that downed trees and left hundreds of thousands of homes without power in the Midwest blocked BNSF’s line on the Ottumwa subdivision. Maintenance-of-Way employees there used a geometry inspection car and chainsaws to cut trees off of the track. A special command center was quickly set up in Lincoln, Neb., to manage any problems, and Signal department employees used portable generators to keep grade crossings working and protect communities.

“We even found a way to run extra trains to help UPS get around a closure of the I-5 freeway between Portland and Seattle due to flooding,” explained Director Jim Gordon, who manages the UPS account for BNSF. “The fact that we had a perfect Peak season is a major accomplishment that should be celebrated across the company and savored by each and every person who had a hand in making it happen,” Gordon said.

2007 was BNSF’s eighth perfect UPS Peak season since 1995, including back-to-back seasons in 1997 - 1998 - 1999 and 2002 - 2003 - 2004.

[Info. from www.bnsf.com/ via Charles Varnes]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by **MIKE GONDON**

Caltrain announced that this year’s Holiday Train, mentioned last month, collected 4179 toys and books for the Marine Corps Reserve’s Toys for Tots program and the Salvation Army. In addition, nearly \$1900 was donated by visitors at stations along the train’s route. Nearly 35,000 gifts have been generated by the Holiday Train since its inception in 2001 for needy Bay Area children.

As it does every year, Caltrain offered free rides on New Year’s Eve, after 11 p.m. In addition, three additional trains were run on New Year’s morning to accommodate those attending festivities in San Francisco. The trains left San Francisco at 12:45 a.m., 1:30, and 2:00 a.m., making all local weekday stops, which means they didn’t stop at Broadway or Atherton. The trains ran only as far as San Jose Diridon station, so there was also no service to Tamien station.

On January 1, BART made a nearly unannounced change to its San Francisco Airport service by no longer providing direct service from Millbrae. Now, passengers coming from the Peninsula must first board a BART train from Millbrae to San Bruno, then transfer to another BART train to get to the airport. Those coming from the airport can still ride BART directly to Millbrae. The only announcement I saw regarding this change was in the form of “take one” cards placed aboard Caltrain a couple weeks

in advance of the change.

On December 28, Caltrain ran a special train for fans attending the sixth annual Emerald Bowl football game at AT&T Park in San Francisco, pitting Oregon State against Maryland. Because the game was on a weekday, plenty of regular scheduled trains were available going to the game, which had a 5:30 p.m. kickoff. The special only ran southbound, after the game, when not as many regular scheduled trains were available.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of November 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 299,343. This was an increase of 1 percent from the previous month.

S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

by **DICK FINLEY**

RIDERSHIP

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during November were 43,658. This was an increase from the previous month of about 3 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within 5 minutes of scheduled time) was 95 percent.

EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE ON DEC. 14, 2007

Mr. Lydon first updated the Board on the locomotive order delay, noting that two locomotives were scheduled to be shipped by the end of December from Boise, but there was a two month delay because of a large number of issues surrounding sub-assembly parts. Items that needed to be corrected before staff would allow shipment include (1) Supplemental cab heaters, which need to maintain a minimum temperature. (2) Motive Power, Inc. (MPI) is working to improve the emissions performance and cleanness of the engine to reduce leakage around the seals. (3) The material to be placed above the cab was a lighter produce, but it warped in the yard, so MPI has reverted to a fiberglass-supported plastic. (4) Warping of the metal panels behind the cab, along the roof to side-body connection, has MPI devising additional support to keep it from rippling. (5) The head-end-power (HEP) units were received with 24-volt power systems but the locomotives run on a 72-volt system, so the power system needs to be replaced.

It is anticipated that the first unit will go into revenue service the first week of March, although this has not been confirmed by MPI. The units will undergo extensive testing prior to going into service.

Mr. Lydon updated the Board on the status of the rail car order. A certain steel, A710, had been selected by all involved in this process (i.e. Rotem, FRA, the Volpe Center, SCRRRA) to be used in the substructure. Upon trying to purchase the product, enough steel was available for five cars only but not for the rest of the fleet, and the staff was informed that due to unspecified military orders, the factories were booked at 100% capacity through next fall at the very least and more orders are still expected. The two companies in the U.S. that produce this product are Oregon Steel and Metal. The group also checked the international markets and found that this condition is indeed the condition of the industry, and worldwide demand for the 710 steel is tremendous.

The group has selected Domex steel to replace the A710

and, although the lead time to receive this material is not long, the engineers have had to make significant changes to the finite element model. He noted that another correction that will be changed in parallel to the finite element model update is the process for welding this steel, which is significantly different from the A710 and Rotem's Engineering and Production Departments have proven that they can adjust their robotic steeling machines to accommodate the new steel, which is very good news. A sixth-month delay is anticipated for the first car.

OPERATIONS UPDATE ON DEC. 14, 2007

Mr. Ed Quicksall, Director Operations, noted October was an extremely busy month for the Operations and all departments in SCRRRA due to the I-5 tunnel closure and the fires through Southern California. There were a total of 1,017,850 passengers. The Riverside line operated at 94.5% during this month and due to the tunnel closure, the Antelope Valley Line reached a record ridership of 10,102.

AGENCY UPDATE ON JANUARY 11, 2008

The Federal Transit Administration has approved Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC)'s small-starts application to go into preliminary engineering for the Perris Valley Line. The mileage is approximately 23 miles, and it is likely that Metrolink will oversee the railroad elements of this project, such as track and signal.

The preliminary engineering will be performed by RCTC, who has hired a contractor. Metrolink will be doing a lot of work with the Orange County Transportation Authority around the same timeframe related to the 30-minute service.

OPERATIONS UPDATE ON JANUARY 11, 2008

Mr. Ed Quicksall, Director Operations, reported Metrolink transported 917,000 passengers in November. He noted the number of total passengers transported included the reduced service day of Thanksgiving where ridership declined to less than 3,000 and the Friday after Thanksgiving where ridership declined to slightly over 12,000 from the normal 43,000 daily passengers. The Antelope Valley Line had an on time performance of 89.7% due to the facility construction at Lancaster and bus bridges between Lancaster and Palmdale.

Union Pacific will be diverting the freight traffic off the Alhambra branch to replace the wooden crossties. Bus service will replace trains on the Riverside Line on January 2-4, 7-10, 16-18 and 21-24, 2008, February 1, 4-8, and 18-22, 2008, and March 3-7, 2008. The diversion will only affect train 402 (the 1:15 p.m. departure from L.A. to Riverside) and train 411 (the 3:07 p.m. departure from Riverside to L.A.).

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Director Brown commented the Holiday train made a stop at Camp Pendleton once again this year, with over 4,000 attendees. He reported the Buena Park station has been a success; parking at the station is already at its maximum capacity and the City of Buena Park is in negotiations with OCTA to have shuttle service between a nearby park and ride facility to the Metrolink station.

BOARD MEETING ON JANUARY 11, 2008

The Board of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority approved a contract for the construction of the Eastern Maintenance Facility to Brutoco Engineering Inc. in the amount of \$32,121,750 plus a ten percent contingency. The site, with more

than 20 acres, is along the Burlington Northern Santa Fe main lines and provides excellent access to the San Bernardino Station and is on a direct route from the Riverside station. EMF will be developed in three phases to provide storage, servicing, maintenance, and shop repair facilities as the fleet size increases and additional funding is made available.

Work is comprised of the grading and site improvements, track connections to the BNSF Main track, a four-track train storage yard with capacity for four six-car train sets, two Service and Inspection tracks with pits, fueling, lube and sanding, underground diesel fuel storage tanks, an enclosed train washer, and a single-story 5,150 square foot Transportation Building containing offices and mechanical staff welfare area and other site work. The construction duration of Phase 1 is approximately 18 months so the EMF should be ready for occupancy in October 2009.

As additional funding is made available Phases 2 and 3 will provide a locomotive and coach maintenance shop and track, additional storage tracks for eight train sets for a total of fourteen, wheel truing in a separate building, Laurel Street at-grade crossing improvements, improved connections to the BNSF main track and a track and structures maintenance compound. This will be by separate advertised bids.

NASCAR WEEKEND

Metrolink currently offers charter Sunday NASCAR trains dedicated solely to the event on Sunday, February 24, 2008. A round-trip ticket is required prior to boarding. You can purchase your Metrolink tickets by either calling the California Speedway box office at (800)-RACE (7223). When ordering your tickets, please make sure you include the Train Number. All round trip tickets are \$25, and includes all stops on all lines.

The Oceanside-Orange Line leaves Oceanside at 6:10 a.m., the Lancaster Line leaves Lancaster at 7:10 a.m., and the Oxnard Line leaves Oxnard at 6:30 a.m. All trains leave approximately 1 hour after the checkered flag waves.

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES

On Dec. 26, 2007, President Bush signed H.R. 2764, Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008. The omnibus bill gives Amtrak \$1.325 billion. This is a \$31-million (or 2.4%) increase over the 2007 level, but \$255 million less than Amtrak requested. Operating funds are \$475 million, capital grants are \$850 million. Up to \$285 million of the capital grant may be used for debt service.

AMTRAK NEWS

To promote travel and increase ridership and revenue on its Long Distance routes during the traditionally slow winter and early spring travel period, Amtrak offered a long distance train fare sale, valid only for coach travel. Sleeper or Business Class upgrades were not allowed. The fares were on sale from January 8 through January 21, 2008, for travel January 14 through March 31, 2008. The fares were promoted on the Amtrak web site, in targeted communications via Amtrak.com and Amtrak Guest Rewards, and in major newspapers.

INTERCITY TRAINS

Sunset Limited

The Union Pacific Railroad scheduled a major tie replacement project on its Alhambra Line, the *Sunset Limited* route, in

January and February. For the duration of the project the *Sunsets* will operate between Colton and Pomona via the BNSF San Bernardino and the UP Los Angeles subdivisions, missing its Ontario stop. The *Sunsets* which were scheduled to pass Pomona from Jan. 2 through Feb. 22 are the trains affected. On the days they operate, the westbound *Sunset* is expected to pass the Riverside station around 8:00-8:30 a.m., and the eastbound around 3:45-4:00 p.m. The train will not stop there. The first day the *Sunsets* detoured was Jan 4.

Southwest Chief

Raton-Denver Thruway Bus Service Change

In mid-November the Amtrak *Thruway* bus connection between Raton, N.M. and Denver was replaced by an Albuquerque-Denver connection. The Thruway bus route is Denver-Colorado Springs-Pueblo-Albuquerque.

While the new connection is made at a station that is staffed year around, the bus ride becomes longer, eight hours compared to the previous four hour ride

California Zephyr

Denver-Cheyenne-Casper Thruway Bus Service Change

Powder River Transportation, the operator of *Thruway* buses between Denver, Fort Collins, Cheyenne, Casper and intermediate points, has discontinued their scheduled intercity bus service. The last day the service operated was Dec. 9, 2007. The next day Arrow Stage Lines began operating a Denver, Cheyenne, Douglas, Casper, and Gillette route. The connection from the westbound *California Zephyr* departs Denver at 8:30 a.m. and arrives in Gillette at 6:45p.m. The connection to the eastbound *Zephyr* departs Gillette 6:00 a.m. and arrives in Denver at 4:05 p.m.

WESTERN CORRIDORS

Capitol

During March and April, 2007, Union Pacific conducted a major track renewal and upgrade program between Richmond and Martinez. For the duration of the project the *Capitol Corridor* reduced mid-day service by 4 round-trips to give the track crews more uninterrupted time to complete their work. A similar project will occur in late Spring this year between Martinez and Suisun City/Fairfield. Instead of reducing service during the project, the *Capitol Corridor* will provide a bus bridge on late-morning and mid-day trains between those points. Increased ridership is the reason for providing bus bridge instead of reducing service

RENO FUN AND SNOW TRAINS

Key Holidays will operate their popular *Reno Snow Train* and *Reno Fun Train* again this year.

The *Snow Train* will depart from Emeryville on Tuesdays, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, and March 4, 2008 and return on the following Thursdays. The *Fun Train* will depart on Fridays, Feb. 8, 15, 22, 29, March 7 and 14, 2008 and return on the following Sunday.

The *Snow Train* is scheduled to depart Emeryville at 9:45 a.m. stopping at Martinez, Suisin, Sacramento, and arriving in Reno at 6:00 p.m. The Thursday return is scheduled to depart from Reno at 10:30 a.m. and arrive in Emeryville at 6:00 p.m.

The *Fun Train* will operate on the same schedule, except for the Feb. 22 and March 7 departures, which are scheduled to leave Emeryville at 2:00 p.m. and arrive in Reno at 9:00 p.m.

DEPOT DOINGS

OAKLAND, Calif. On Nov. 26, 2007, construction began on a new seven-story parking garage, with retail stores at the ground level, on the existing parking lot in front of the Oakland Jack London Square Station. During the construction period passengers may park free in the Jack London waterfront parking lot on the other side of the tracks from the station. Passengers parking there can use the pedestrian overpass to access the station. Amtrak *Thruway* buses will board on 2nd St. across from the station. AC Transit local bus service (line 72) will be available at Alice and 2nd Streets.

FOR THE TRAVELER

With the holiday season past, it's time to begin making summer travel plans. Here are some scenic train rides to incorporate into a trip to the area where they are located and a reminder that the North American Rail Pass is offered again this year.

Scenic Train Rides

The May 2007 issue of Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel magazine nominated the following as America's most scenic train rides.

ARIZONA. The Grand Canyon Railway, (800) 843-8724, thetrain.com. The Verde Canyon Railroad, 800) 320-0718, verdecanyonrr.com.

CALIFORNIA. The Sierra Railroad, (800) 866-1690, sierrarailroad.com.

COLORADO. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, (888) 286-2737, cumbrestoltec.com.

MASSACHUSETTS. The Cape Cod Central Railroad, (888) 797-7245, capetrain.com.

WASHINGTON. The Mount Rainier Scenic Railroad, (360) 569-2588, mrsr.com.

WEST VIRGINIA. The Cass Scenic Railroad, (304) 456-4300, cassrailroad.com.

North American Rail Pass

The North America Rail Pass, offered jointly by Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada, provides 30 consecutive travel days with unlimited rides and stopovers throughout the United States and Canada. Off-peak fares, October 16, 2007 - May 22, 2008, are US\$709.00 (\$638.10 with senior, student and child discount). Peak fares, May 23, 2008 - October 15, 2008, are US\$999.00 (\$899.10 with senior, student and child discount). The fares are for coach class travel. Upgrades to Business Class or sleeping car accommodations are available for an additional charge. At least one trip must include travel between the U.S. and Canada, and travel on both Amtrak and Via Rail Canada is required. The Pass may be purchased from Amtrak (1-800-USA-RAIL) or a travel agent.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

by DICK FINLEY

LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL

RIDERSHIP

November 2007	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	130,131	73,984	37,561	19,000
Saturday Ave.	88,731	53,273	21,566	11,641
Sunday Ave.	76,489	43,053	17,973	9,814
Monthly Total	3,470,116	1,982,022	964,914	494,699

DOWNTOWN DASH

On Jan. 1, 2008, Downtown DASH buses would no longer accept Metro passes. Due to a dispute between Metro and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, which operates the DASH system, LADOT will now charge 25 cents per ride. The reason is that starting this year Metro will no longer reimburse the department for those who essentially got free rides. According to LADOT, Metro has been paying about \$760,000 a year. "There are many Metro pass holders riding on Commuter Express and DASH buses," said LADOT General Manager Rita Robinson. Those who rely on Metro passes are being urged to buy an LADOT bus pass or an EZ transit pass.

[Info. from *L.A. Downtown News*]

GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

Starting at 7:00 p.m. on January 28, 2008 (Closure postponed one week from original notice), the Contractor will re-stripe First Street in Los Angeles between Mission Road and Vignes Street in preparation for guideway construction on the First Street Bridge that will commence on Monday, January 29, 2008. Closure will be continuous on a 24-hour basis for approximately one month, weather permitting.

- No vehicular access on First Street Bridge, except for emergency responders.
- Westbound traffic on First St. will be detoured northbound Mission Rd. to westbound Cesar Chavez Ave., to southbound Alameda St. to westbound First St.
- Primary detour for eastbound traffic will be northbound Alameda St., to eastbound Cesar Chavez Ave., to southbound State St., to eastbound First St.
- Alternate detour for eastbound traffic will be southbound Alameda St., to eastbound Fourth St., to northbound Cummings St., to eastbound First St.
- Pedestrian access will be maintained on the south side of the First Street Bridge.
- Work crews will work daytime, evening and weekend hours.
- Temporary bus stop relocations:
 - Eastbound bus stop on First St. and Vignes will be relocated to First St. and Alameda; and First St. and Mission will be relocated to First St. and Utah.
 - No change for westbound buses.

This four-week closure is being implemented in lieu of multiple weekly full closures that would need to occur during the next 10 months. Future additional short-term full closures may be required due to the widening of the bridge by the City of Los Angeles. Additional traffic reconfiguration over the bridge will be implemented when Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension begins testing trains in the fall of 2008.

[Info. from Metro via Ed Von Nordeck]

SAN DIEGO

At the Metropolitan Transit System Joint Board meeting on Nov. 8, 2007, the following occurred.

A development in National City involves a parcel of land owned by the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railroad. National City wants to purchase the property for retail space, a hotel, and a restaurant. The price and terms of payment were discussed in Closed Session.

Mr. Wayne Terry, San Diego Trolley, Inc. Vice President of

Operations, provided an overview of FY 07 trolley operations. He also discussed improvements that had been made to Maintenance Facility C, rail-related maintenance activities during the year, and closed-circuit television installations.

Mr. Tom Doogan, SDTI Special Events Coordinator, provided an overview of service to Padres games for FY 2007. For a particular sample series, SDTI experienced net operating revenue of \$4,231 per game. He reported that 2,900 passengers per game is SDTI's break-even point and added that SDTI carries a season average of 43,000 passengers on this service.

Mr. Jablonski, MTS CEO, provided an overview on MTS' assistance during the recent wildfires. MTS curtailed some bus service up the I-15 corridor and the eastern rural areas during this period. MTS transported some firefighters and helped transport evacuees from a retirement home and a convalescent home. MTS experienced a 35 to 50 percent ridership decline during the fires, but ridership is now back to normal levels. One of MTS's radio sites, San Miguel, was burned down, but MTS was able to divert communications through its sight at Pt. Loma. MTS will try to get reimbursement for construction costs for San Miguel from FEMA.

At the Joint Meeting of the MTS Board on Dec. 13, 2007, the following occurred.

MTS has been pursuing a policy for third-party entry of MTS-owned facilities, which includes a per-bus entry fee of \$20. First negotiations have been conducted with casino transportation representatives whose third-party carriers are currently using the El Cajon Transit Center without permission. Representatives from the various interests, including Viejas, Sycuan, and Barona Casinos and Sundiego Charter, have met and communicated with MTS numerous times. It was stated to be MTS's responsibility to make the best use of its real estate properties, but that MTS should also ensure that the fee it is imposing is justified. The matter will be presented to the Executive Committee and then the Board on Jan. 17, 2008.

SAN DIEGO NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

Local politicians, business leaders and others turned out for a trial run on Dec. 28, 2007, of the North County Transit District's 22-mile Oceanside to Escondido light rail line. Service to the public opens Jan. 13. Transit officials hope to attract 11,000 to 15,000 riders daily.

When voters were asked to approve a tax hike to pay for the Sprinter DMU service, they were promised it would run by 1999. The service's startup budget also ballooned from an estimated \$60 million to \$477 million. Former Congressman Ron Packard, who supported the train line, says he knows there are "naysayers" but he hopes that will change.

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT

Sacramento County's principal public transportation agency, Regional Transit, finds itself in an ironic predicament as a difficult 2007 comes to a close. The region is growing, but RT is shrinking. Today, only 4 percent of local commuters use transit. In 2006, total riders were 32.7 million, while in 2007, total riders were 32.0 million. The decrease is both rail and bus.

Now, amid questions about RT's relevancy, agency officials are launching an effort to boost the profile of public transportation and – against odds – entice the next generation of commuters to leave the car at home. The make over starts at the top.

where the agency board is searching nationwide for a new general manager to replace Beverly Scott, who left in Oct. to head Atlanta transit.

RT must do some serious housecleaning. Officials plan a new assault on an old problem – bad behavior on trains. In a survey, three of ten riders said they're uncomfortable on trains. The complaints include: People who smell bad, talk loudly on cell phones or swear, rowdy teens and the frequent absence of fare checkers to prevent freeloaders.

Improving security is a first step. RT faces a bigger marketing challenge, Interim RT General Manager Mike Wiley said. Despite RT's 35-year history of running buses in Sacramento, recent surveys indicate many commuters don't know where the buses cutting through their neighborhoods are coming from or going to, or when they can catch one.

RT is expected to convene a national panel of transportation financing experts for advice. The goal is to find a new source of local funds by 2012 to make the agency more independent of the ebb and flow of state funds. It could be added sales tax, developer fees, gas taxes or private partnerships, officials said.

The agency also faces an identity question as it builds: Continue with more light rail, or rebuild the bus network? The agency recently opened rail extensions to Meadowview, Folsom, and the Amtrak depot, while reducing bus service. Light rail to Cosumnes River College is next.

The agency recently hired a British consultant to guide them through a \$1.2 million planning process, called the Transit Master Plan. "We wanted fresh ideas, world experience," Wiley said. The agency will hold 15 public meetings in the spring, and RT officials will go around the county in a bus to connect with non-riders to ask what the agency could do to get them on board.

"We're at a crossroads," Wiley said in Nov. But he's optimistic the agency can be a bigger player in commute circles.

[Info. from *The Sacramento Bee* via Roger Titus]

PORTLAND, OREGON

Much of Gresham's crime occurs near the MAX light rail transit (LRT) lines, so Mayor Shane Bemis announced in early Nov. that city police officers would begin riding the trains. Law enforcement services on MAX are currently provided by TriMet officers, but Bemis said he consistently hears from constituents that they do not feel protected. "It's time to take matters into our own hands," he said. "We're going to...protect our citizens so people feel safe riding the system." He cited TriMet's failure to realize they have issues.

City statistics show that 84 percent of gang crimes, 40 percent of fights and 42 percent of drug crimes occur within a quarter-mile of the tracks. "Not to mention vandalism, business burglaries and the fare inspections that aren't happening," he added. A TriMet official said the agency welcomes the help.

Only the Beaverton Police Department regularly assigns officers to ride MAX trains. In Beaverton, where two full-time bike officers patrol the trains every day, Sgt. Paul Wandell said the presence of uniformed officers has been a deterrent.

Gresham is the only city in the metro area that lacks surveillance cameras along the MAX line. Officials acknowledged the scheduled installation at Gresham Central Transit Center was incomplete and that they had been unable to pay for cameras there until after receiving money from the Department of Homeland

Security.

Crime on LRT has generally kept pace with ridership, both doubling since 1999, figures show. No one, it seems, has a plan to beef up the police presence on MAX. On the contrary, TriMet's transit police unit is falling apart, even as crime persists and ridership rises. In Washington County, police officials say TriMet police hardly come around at all. After years of growing frustration, the sheriff yanked his deputies out of the TriMet force.

In Hillsboro, police chose not to enter into the interagency pact in 1994, largely because TriMet refused to guarantee its officers would be used to patrol MAX stations west of the Oregon Zoo. As a result, Hillsboro pays for its own special patrols of stations, including two bicycle officers. Hillsboro police respond to an average of 300 calls a month at TriMet stops, a third of which are "priority one" calls for crimes such as assault and robbery, Hillsboro police Cmdr. Chris Skinner said. Like Hillsboro and Gresham, Beaverton sees higher call loads at MAX platforms and in nearby neighborhoods.

Recently, *The Oregonian* reported that the Bay Area Rapid Transit system in San Francisco and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority both have a huge police presence on their trains in comparison with MAX. Although their systems are very differently designed, the disparity certainly raises a question about whether TriMet has outgrown its original, small-town, friendly design.

Police throughout the region increasingly view MAX as a super-efficient "criminal-delivery" system. For many criminals, MAX is not only fast and effective at getting them where they want to go, it's also a free ride. TriMet's failure to enforce fare payment is part of the problem. But this kind of failure is rare for the transit system, which has earned a national reputation for doing things right. TriMet needs to do nothing less than re-engineer its security system, and create a MAX where riders feel safe riding again.

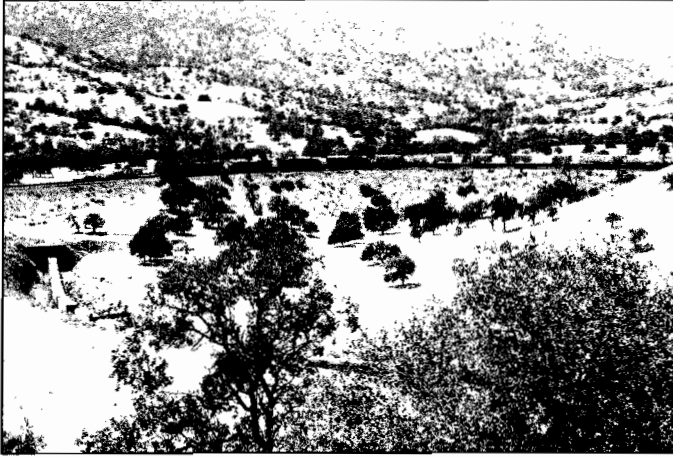
At one of two summits TriMet organized in early Dec. in response to safety concerns, law enforcement experts said the challenge or riding a MAX train is not so much that one might be attacked but that one might feel unsafe or threatened by obnoxious passengers. "It's a quality-of-life issue," said TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen.

TriMet already has plans to increase the number of private security officers patrolling the line from 21 to 36 and is looking at bringing in more sworn officers and fare inspectors, Hansen said. "People will see a difference and feel a difference," Hansen said. "It's not going to happen overnight, but it will happen."

PORTLAND TO LAKE OSWEGO

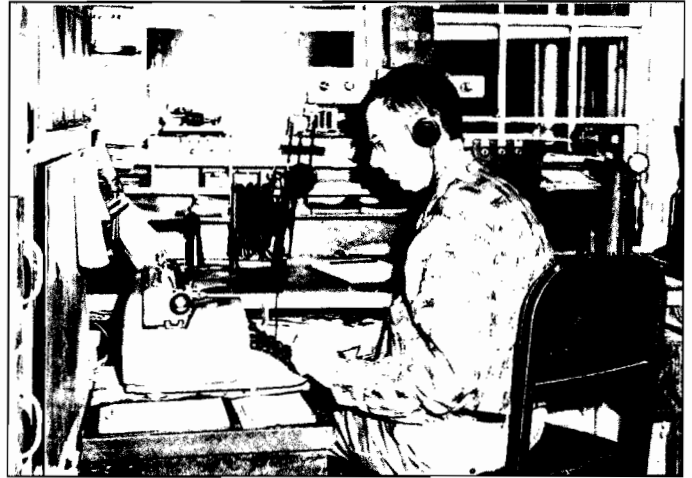
A streetcar linking South Waterfront to Lake Oswego took another step closer to reality in mid-December when Metro councilors approved an environmental impact study. The study will examine the effects of two transportation options: a streetcar ending at Johns Landing or Lake Oswego or enhanced bus service along Southwest Macadam Ave. and Oregon 43. Lake Oswego Mayor Judie Hammerstad said Metro is wasting time and money to study anything other than a streetcar to Lake Oswego. "The need is to take the congestion off 43," he said. "It will be a parking lot in 2025."

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



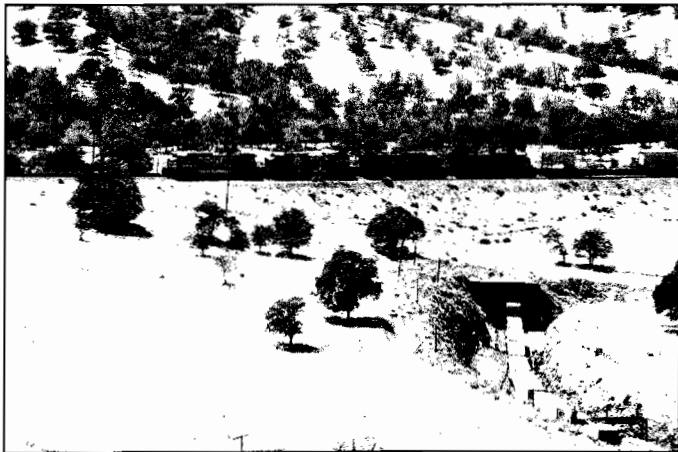
Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train at Tehachapi Loop about 2 p.m. on June 9, 2007, during a PRS excursion.

Photos by Hal Rothenborg



On January 29, 1961, Chard Walker is seen at work in the Summit Depot of Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway at the summit of Cajon Pass, California.

Photo by L. T. Gotchy



The BNSF train is passing over its rear freight cars.

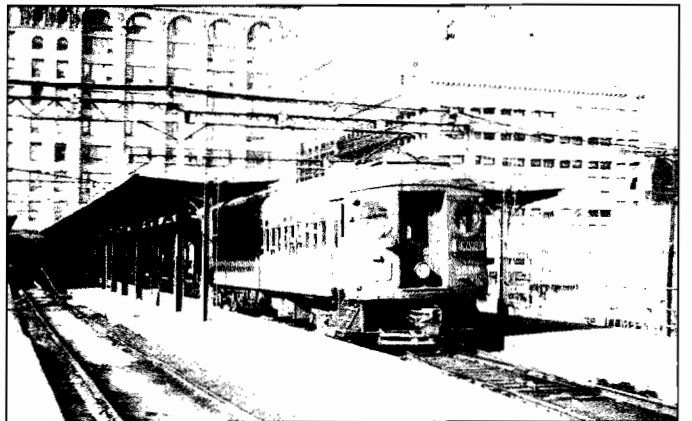


The Del Mar Station on the Metro Rail Gold Line in Pasadena, California, is seen on December 24, 2007. The station has been rebuilt from the old A.T.S.F. and Amtrak station, and will include a restaurant, businesses, underground parking, and upper-story residences nearby.

Photo by Dennis Gilkey



The train is ascending the easterly grade toward Barstow.



Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority closed out passenger rail service to San Pedro on December 7, 1958. Car 1539, carrying SAN PEDRO dash sign, is making one of the final noon departures from the 6th/Main Streets elevated platforms a few days earlier.

Photo by Jack Whitmeyer