

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

JULY 2006

## RAILROAD DAYS ROUNDUP by JOHN JAY ULLOTH

This was a big year at Fullerton Railroad Days, May 6-7, 2006, for PRS. We distributed many publications. Financially, we "broke even" with more emphasis on moving company store merchandise (*For the Love of Trains*, videos playing live, PRS Anniversary Pins, and "My Other Car is a Pullman" license plate frames), and Director Lindsay Smith's suggestion to use our Pacific Railroad Museum water sales tent instead of paying for a rental. We enrolled one applicant for membership.

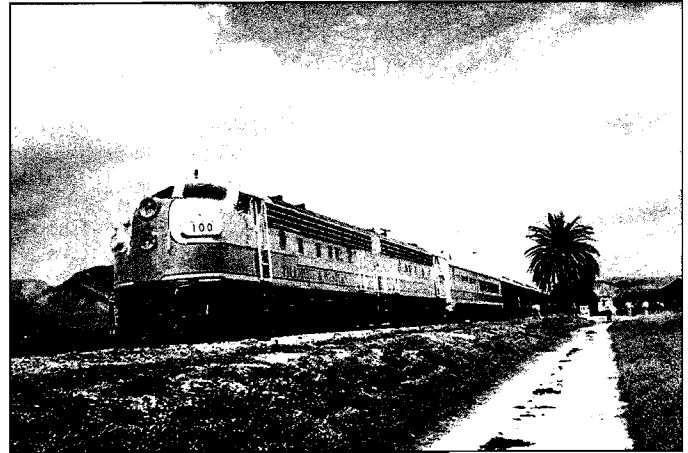
Our tent's design caused us to bring our banner inside. Vince Cammarano wrote a railcar biography sheet, and Director Chris Parker designed a big poster for the east end panel to complete our 2006 remodeling!

Ken Ruben gave up his call-in time on Let's Talk Trains webcast for me to publicize our booth location and PRS programs. They have invited us back for a future show to talk more about our private cars and excursion program.

Our booth would not have been possible without the generosity of many volunteers: Leroy West, particularly for the heavy freight hauling and longest hours, Dan Wheeler, David Rice, Keith Ogle, Will Walters' Friday night delivery of membership literature, sending Bill Hatrick to make sure there was enough, Secretary Bill Smith, Program Chair, Russ Davies, Excursions Dave Abbott, President Vic Carlucci, and many other members who dropped by.

On its first outing outside Disneyland, the *E.P. Ripley*, Walt Disney Enterprises 1955 Steam Locomotive No. 2 (on static display) was the major attraction at Fullerton Railroad Days.

A wonderful surprise came our way at the end of the event on Sunday. Our booth neighbor – AT&SF locomotive 3751's operating organization – donated a huge poster of 3751 that will make a spectacular addition to our museum collection!



*A high point of the PRS 70th Anniversary Celebration held in Ventura, Calif. on April 8, 2006, was the train ride and dining car luncheon that took place the following day in Fillmore, Calif. Two Fillmore and Western "F" units powered the train on the round trip to Piru and return. Observed here, it is evident that locomotive 100 and sister 101 are anxious to depart, and with the engineer about to "whistle-off," PRS members and others scurry to reboard following a stop made at a honey farm.*

Photo by Margo Petros

## PRS' 70TH ANNIVERSARY by BARBARA SIBERT

Pacific Railroad Society celebrated its 70th Anniversary at the Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel on April 8, 2006, in their banquet room. Program Chairman Russ Davies showed a continuous selection of pictures from PRS activities during the social hour. It was followed by a New York Sirloin Steak Dinner. Our honored guest speaker was Chard Walker, who presented a history of Pacific Railroad Society's past events and excursions.

Several of the guests stayed overnight, and on Sunday, April 9, we visited the Fillmore and Western Railway for a delicious luncheon on board their train while traveled from Fillmore to Piru and return. It was a real treat to ride on this portion of the former Southern Pacific line. Thanks to all the participants for making the celebration a success.

## CUMBRES & TOLTEC SCENIC RAILROAD

As of June, trains have started running again through Oct. 15 on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, which is celebrating its 125th birthday this year. The railroad between Colorado and New Mexico, and now owned by the two states, was built in 1880 to access the silver mines and forests of the San Juan Mountains. Trains now run between Antonito and Chama, winding across the state line 11 times during the 64-mile trip. [Info. from Railroad Newsline via Ken Ruben]



*John Ulloth shows off the poster designed by Chris Parker for PRS' 2006 booth at Fullerton Railroad Days.*

Photo by Ken Ruben



**WHEEL CLICKS**

**JULY 2006 VOLUME 70, NO. 4**

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**Membership Dues: \$25.00 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](mailto:PRSTrainman@aol.com) Open Saturdays. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Wednesdays 1-5 p.m.

**MUSEUM COMMITTEE CHAIR** ..... **LINDSAY SMITH**

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**PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

- July 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting on 22nd.
- July 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 1, 15; Extra work day: 8, 22, 29. Committee meeting on 15th.
- Sats.
- July 5 Exc. #525 Coast to Coast on the National Forum.
- Wed. Returns to Los Angeles on the *Southwest Chief*.
- July 7 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri.
- July 14 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m. in Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri.
- July 21 Slide night at Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce, 7:00 p.m. Everyone welcome. Bring slides and your refreshments.
- Fri.
- Aug. 4 Board meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.
- Fri.
- Aug. 5, 12, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.
- Sats. Committee meeting on the 26th.
- Aug. 5, 12, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 5, 19; Extra day: 12, 26. Committee meeting on the 19th.
- Sats.

Aug. 11 Membership meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.

**MEETING PROGRAMS**

by **RUSS DAVIES**

July 14: **Our July presenter is a railroading celebrity!** **Wolf Fengler** of the **San Bernardino Railroad Historical Society** is one of the steam experts featured in the **May 2006 Trains** article, “**Steam’s young guns.**” There’s a picture of him standing in the open smoke box of **SBRHS’s 4-8-4 Santa Fe No. 3751**, the locomotive that’s the subject of the **PowerPoint** presentation we’ll see. **Wolf** is a graduate engineer, and his “day job” involves designing experimental fuel cells for General Electric. **Wolf and his father, Wolf, the elder**, are two of the experts who keep the 3751 functional. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

August 11: **US Railroading in the 1970s, a slide presentation by member Jerry Duncan.** A “mixed bag,” primarily western railroading, including **Utah**, with some **Midwest and East** mixed in. Many of you knew the late **Roger Bogenburger**. Roger and Jerry were good friends, and often times when Roger was on railfanning trips he’d take Jerry’s camera with him and shoot “dups” for Jerry. We’ll see some of Roger’s work either in this program, or a future PRS program that Jerry has committed to. **Be there, and bring slide briefs!**

**MEMBERSHIP**

by **BILL FARMER**

Seniority Nos. 512 and 513 were assigned to late renewals. At the Board meeting on June 2, 2006, Ryan Mittelholtz, Tyler Mittelholtz, Erin Patterson, Mike Palmer, and Arie R. Korporaal were voted into PRS with Seniority Nos. 514-518, respectively.

**BOARD MINUTES SYNOPSIS—MAY 5, 2006**

[Complete minutes can be obtained from Secretary Bill Smith]  
 Call to Order—The Board of Directors meeting was called to order on May 5, 2006, at 7:45 p.m.  
 Roll Call—Present: President Vic Carlucci, Secretary Bill Smith, Treasurer Marti Ann Draper, Directors David Abbott, Owen Danaher, Dick Finley, Chris Parker, and Lindsay Smith; Others present: Ken Ruben and Barbara Sibert; Absent: Vice-President Rob Markowitz.  
 Approval of Minutes—Minutes of April 7 were approved with two corrections.  
 Treasurer—Marti Ann Draper presented the financial report for May.  
 Budget—The Budget of 2006-07 was adopted and copies were distributed by Treasurer Draper.  
 Excursions—Barbara Sibert reported that both the San Diego and San Luis Obispo trips aboard *National Forum* were sold out. One space is left for the transcontinental trip on *Forum*. The Holiday Banquet was approved to be held on Sunday, December 10, 2006, at Via Verde Country Club.  
 Publications—Dick Finley reported the next Mailing Party would be on May 24, 2006.  
 Membership—Dave Abbott read the names and numbers of five applicants, who were then approved for membership.  
 Museum—Lindsay Smith stated the canopy, display poster, and Company Store stock would be transported to Fullerton Railroad

Days on May 6. Student Jonathan Husner did a high school term paper on the SPRR. The Noon donated collection contains a lot of PE items. Richard Weigle has donated an immense collection of timetables. Owen Danaher reported on his role as publicity person for the Museum.

Rolling Stock—Marti Ann Draper reported that *Chippewa Creek* left Saunders Yard a month ago and was graffitied during a long journey to Los Angeles Union Station. However, *National Forum* arrived LAUS in a day thanks to a special UP switch move. Two ex-SP baggage cars are now at Saunders Yard. The interior of *Shadrach Bond* was worked on. *Shasta Springs* was in the consist at Orange Empire Railway Museum.

News Items—Ken Ruben announced the passing of Rob Carlson, owner-publisher of Altamont-Press.

New Business—President Carlucci, Vice-President Markowitz, Secretary Smith, Treasurer Draper, and Assistant Treasurer Sibert were authorized to execute bank documents on PRS' behalf.

Adjournment—The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m. in memory of the late Rob Carlson.

#### CORRECTIONS – JUNE WHEEL CLICKS

The article, "UPRR St. Louis – Kansas City Track Improvements," which appeared on Page 6 contained a reference to Passenger Train Updates – Missouri Trains. The reference is to an item which appeared in the May *Wheel Clicks* Passenger Train Updates column on Page 8. The article should have appeared in the May issue.

At the left hand side of the two top pictures on Page 10 is ex-SP 6721, which was delivered to owners Stan Ames and Stuart Spencer from the Golden Gate Railroad Museum at the same time as baggage car 6615 came to PRS. Stan and Stuart had gone to the GGRM about a year ago to initiate the purchase of the car.

#### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM by LINDSAY SMITH

We have been gathering material and working on making an inventory of our documents. We get more documents per week than we can inventory and classify. We love it! Jim Baker and Roger Fogt are helping in the Wednesday Crew. Russ Davies is making a list of the 35mm slides and he has been showing some parts of this collection in programs at the General Meetings.

Keith Ogle, Richard Weigle, and Marti Ann Draper gave us a significant addition to the archives. We are also discovering more of the Ralph Melching collection. Mel Goyen is leading the conversion of the 8mm movie film to DVD and we are looking forward to showing some of these at the General Meetings.

The Saturday gang includes Leroy West, Joe Moir, Tim Muck and Richard Weigle. We are planning to donate the book shelves that Ralph Melching acquired from the Pasadena Historical Society to the Etiwanda Rail Museum, which will open in the old station and park later this year.

Owen Danaher has been in the hospital and we expect his return to duty by the time you read this. Pete Balch went to lunch with Mel Goyen. Pete has updated the accession list at his home because his back surgery has caused him to lose mobility. We continue to pray for these gentlemen.

It is spring and we have had several visits from high school

students who need to make a Museum trip. When we talk about telegraphy and train control without computers they are sure we are from the prehistoric eras. Most high school students do not think of using carbon paper to make copies. For them, there has always been electricity in the wall! It makes me feel old, BUT they are never going to do some of the hard work I had to do.

#### LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of April 2006, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 307,711.

#### THE NATIONAL FORUM RETURNS TO SERVICE

by CHARLES VARNES

Thanks to the efforts of the Rolling Stock Committee, under the leadership of Will Walters, Pacific Railroad Society's Pullman car *National Forum* returned to service on Saturday, May 13, 2006. It operated from Los Angeles to San Diego on Excursion No. 523, *National Forum on the Surfliner*. It had been out of service since it was damaged in a switching accident in Seattle on Aug. 29, 2003.

The *Forum* made two round trips during the day. The morning trips were on *Pacific Surfliners*, Tr. Nos. 564 and 571. The afternoon trips were on *Surfliners*, Tr. Nos. 580 and 591.

Three travel options were available on the excursion: the "Sunrise Turn" and "Evening Turn," Los Angeles to San Diego with an immediate return; and the "San Diego Clocker," Los Angeles to San Diego on the first trip of the day, with the return on the last rip of the day. A total of 88 guests rode the *Forum* on its inaugural trips.

Following the successful *National Forum on the Surfliner* excursion, the *Forum* operated from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo on Excursion No. 524, *San Luis Obispo Bound*, on Saturday and Sunday, June 3 and 4. The excursion operated on *Central Coast Pacific Surfliner*, Tr. Nos. 799/798. It was scheduled to operate on June 3 only, but it sold out immediately and there were enough unfulfilled ticket orders to sell out a second trip. The Saturday trip carried 30 guests, and the Sunday trip, 28.

Excursion Director, Barbara Sibert, assisted by Dave Abbott, were the car hosts for the excursions. Will Walters and Rob Markowitz of the Rolling Stock Committee rode the excursions to attend to any mechanical problems that might arise.

On Sunday, June 18, the *Forum* will operate from Los Angeles to Washington, D.C. on Excursion No. 525, *Coast to Coast on the National Forum*. The *Forum* will operate to Chicago on the *Southwest Chief*, Tr. No. 4. It will depart from Chicago on June 21 for Washington, D.C. on the *Capitol Limited*, Tr. No. 30., arriving the next day.

On its eastbound journey, the *Forum* will lay over one day in Chicago because the *Southwest Chief/Capitol Limited* consist does not run through to Washington, D.C. The eastbound *Chief* consist terminates in Chicago, is serviced overnight, and departs as the *Capitol* the next day. Westbound, the *Capitol* is scheduled to arrive in Chicago early enough in the morning to permit its consist to be serviced and depart in the afternoon as the *Chief*.

From June 23 through July 1, guests will travel through Maryland, West Virginia, and Virginia exploring the region's

historic sites, and riding several tourist railroads.

The Excursion will begin its return trip departing from Washington, D.C., on Sunday, July 2, arriving in Los Angeles on Wednesday, July 5.

Barbara Sibert and Dave Abbott will be the car hosts for the excursion. PRS member, Bill Hatrick, will be the Rolling Stock Committee representative. He is, also, the owner of the ex-Southern Pacific club lounge car *Overland Trail*.

#### CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDON

In a continuing effort to reduce the number of fatalities along its tracks this year, Caltrain kicked off a Rail Suicide Awareness effort on May 30 at the Fourth and Townsend station in San Francisco. The purpose of the event was to raise public awareness of rail safety, with a focus on suicide prevention, and to introduce Caltrain's team of walkers for the "Out of Darkness" 20-mile walk in July, sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

The Suicide Awareness event follows an article that appeared in the *San Jose Mercury News* on May 10, showing Caltrain to have the nation's second highest number of trespassing deaths per million train miles traveled over the past ten years. Caltrain's average of 7.05 deaths was topped only by San Diego Northern (Coaster), which had over eight. Metrolink's average was 2.85, but the national average was 1.46.

The article goes on to mention what Caltrain has been doing to reduce the high number of trespasser deaths, and why they can't do more. The main reason for the latter is lack of money, and until more money becomes available for extensive fencing and grade separation projects, trespasser fatalities will be a sad reality for many years to come.

Nearly 88,000 residents in South Santa Clara County, as well as parts of San Benito and Santa Cruz Counties received a gift in the mail recently, courtesy of Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and Caltrain. The gift was a pass for a week's worth of free rides on Caltrain or any VTA bus or light rail train. The pass was good only for the week of May 22-28 and increased ridership about 3 percent during that period.

Caltrain ran its annual Bay to Breakers Special on May 21. The train left San Jose at 5:45 a.m. and arrived in San Francisco at 7:21, making all regular weekend stops. The race began at 8:00 a.m. Because race participants return at various times, no southbound special was run. However, regular trains leave hourly until 9:00 p.m., so plenty of options were still available.

#### S. CALIF. COMMUTER RAIL

by DICK FINLEY

##### OPERATIONS

Metrolink weekday, system, schedule adherence during April increased 1% from March to 94%. The Riverside Line's on-time performance is up to 98% inbound and 92% outbound. The systemwide on-time performance in April was 94%.

Trains during April carried an average, weekday, system ridership of 40,802, a 2% increase from March. Riverside/Fullerton/Los Angeles route compared to March '05 showed an increase of 18%.

##### FINANCES

The San Juan Capistrano City Council unanimously voted April 4 to get \$100,000 from the Orange County Transportation

Authority (OCTA) to explore how it might add a shuttle, or some other transportation system, linking the local Metrolink station to residential areas and other points of interest in town. Every Orange County city can receive \$100,000 from OCTA to study how to use mass-transit to tie Metrolink stations with other parts of the community. There is \$30 million set aside for the county's cities. [Info. from *Orange County Register*]

##### CONSTRUCTION

On the north side of Los Angeles Union Station construction has started on increasing the four lead tracks to five. The four tracks will be shifted to make room for the fifth track.

Between Orange and Santa Ana on the second track, the encroachment permits problem has been settled between the City of Santa Ana, the contractor, and Metrolink. As of June 13, the contractor is on the verge of starting construction. [Info. from Tom Nelson]

A new pedestrian bridge and platform, which eliminates walking across the railroad tracks between platforms, is being built at the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center for Amtrak and Metrolink passengers. The \$8.4 million renovation is funded by the State Public Transportation Account and the Orange County Transportation Authority's local Measure M funds.

When the new pedestrian bridge opens, passengers will have direct access from the station to the new platform under construction. Towers on each side of the bridge will include an elevator and stairway. The existing center platform will be removed, and a fence installed between the tracks to close off pedestrian access to the track area. These improvements should be completed by summer 2006.

This year, construction will begin for a pedestrian underpass at the Montclair Station on the San Bernardino Line. Also, work will begin on an extension of the platform at the East Ontario Station on the Riverside Line.

In June 2006 the Alameda Corridor-East Construction Authority commenced construction on the Brea Canyon Road underpass near the Industry Metrolink station. Brea Canyon Rd. will be excavated to run beneath a bridge that will be used by trains. The railroad bridge will be built while Metrolink and freight trains are detoured to temporary tracks constructed south of the existing tracks. A temporary Metrolink station platform will be built to accommodate commuters.

Construction duration will be approximately 24 months. There will be no interruption of Metrolink service during this project. The Industry Station and park-and-ride lot will remain open. Once Brea Canyon Rd. and the Currier Rd. entrance to the parking lot are closed, commuters will use temporary crossings and detours.

Corona crews recently started construction on a \$540,000 bike-lane project slated to provide north-south access for bicycle commuters traveling from South Corona to the West Corona Metrolink Station and other areas on the city's northern end. [Info. from *The Press-Enterprise*]

##### ELECTRONIC PASSENGER INFORMATION SYSTEM

Since 2003, the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) staff has pursued the development of an enhanced passenger information system to replace the limited and outdated Public Address/Changeable Message Sign system at 40 of 54

Metrolink stations. As currently envisioned, a web-based EPIS will provide real time information about train operations to Metrolink passengers, such as train delays, next train arrival at a station, and the track number of arrival. The SCRRA Board authorized increasing the contract with Axtion Systems Corporation until Dec. 31, 2007, by \$75,000 for project management services required to develop and implement the EPIS.

#### SAFETY

Metrolink says it will become the nation's first commuter rail agency to apply the "sealed corridor" approach to grade crossing safety. Metrolink plans to install such improvements as four quadrant gates, "Z" pedestrian crossings, median separators, locked gates, and fencing at 57 crossings along 65 miles of track on its Ventura County and Antelope Valley lines. SCRRA is seeking federal funding to help pay for the program. It already has a \$250,000 federal study grant and \$3 million in crossing funding for FY 06. [Info. from *Railway Age*]

#### PERRIS VALLEY LINE

The San Jacinto Branch Line Commuter Rail (Perris Valley Line) Project is a 19-mile extension of the Metrolink 91 Line, which currently provides service from Riverside to downtown Los Angeles. The extension would begin at the existing Riverside-Downtown Station in the City of Riverside and proceed north on the Union Pacific Riverside Industrial Lead tracks for approximately two miles before turning southeast along the San Jacinto Branch Line. The terminus of the Line is in the City of Perris.

The New Start extension will travel on the San Jacinto Branch Line, purchased by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), which runs parallel to I-215. Upon start up in 2008, the Perris Valley Line Project will include six new stations. The estimated cost of the project is \$179 million, and it is projected to eliminate 4,000 auto trips per day.

The various funding partners and their anticipated shares of the total Project include:

- \$89 million Federal Transit Administration "New Starts"
- \$27 million FTA 5307 Formula Funds
- \$24 million non-new starts Federal Funding
- \$29 million Measure A Local Sales Tax
- \$7 million Other state and local funding
- \$3 million RTA

RCTC is a member agency to the SCRRA and has two votes on its Board. As the presumed operator of the passenger commuter rail service, the track will be designed and constructed to Metrolink standards. Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway retains exclusive freight rights on the rail line and RCTC will work closely with BNSF on the track design of the project to ensure compatibility with continued freight operations for current customers. Most of the properties that could be potentially acquired for stations are private properties. Potential sites for the Alessandro station and for the proposed Van Buren site are owned by March Joint Powers Authority. The proposed commuter rail station sites at Perris (Ramona, Perris and South Perris stations) and University of California-Riverside (Spruce and UCR stations) are on RCTC-owned property.

RCTC's environmental process for this Project is consistent with state and federal rules and regulations to ensure fair and open consideration of anticipated impacts to the environment.

[All non-credited info. is from SCRRA agency publications]

#### NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT

North County Transit District (NCTD) supplies public transportation North San Diego County. The COASTER commuter rail service operates at eight stations between Oceanside and San Diego. It includes seven locomotives and 28 bi-level passenger train cars.

Don Bullock, the district's manager of Sprinter construction on the line between Oceanside and Escondido, said the project is on schedule to allow the trains to begin service in late December 2007. Bullock said construction of train platforms – one of the last tasks to be undertaken – is 7 percent complete. Also, two of the 12 vehicles that will run on the tracks – diesel multiple units rarely used in North America – have come off the production line and were to be tested the weekend of April 22 at a testing facility in Düsseldorf, Germany. The vehicles are being built by Siemens Transportation Systems for \$52 million with delivery of the first cars expected in early August.

During the last of April, the contract to operate, dispatch and maintain the Sprinter line was awarded to Veolia Transportation (formerly Connex North America). The line will extend 22 miles along the Highway 78 corridor. A total of 15 stations will be constructed.

[Info. from *San Diego Union Tribune* and NCTD via Charles Varnes]

#### LOS ANGELES DOWNTOWN BUILDING UPDATES

##### Taylor Yard Central Region High School

The Los Angeles Unified School District began an eminent domain effort to seize a 23-acre parcel near Taylor Yard. In late March last year a prominent Downtown developer had purchased the plot and announced plans to turn it into a mixed-use center and also said it could hold a school.

The LAUSD has argued that the site on the former train yard north of Downtown Los Angeles could be better used as a larger, 2,295-seat school, which would relieve overcrowding at area facilities. The eminent domain effort would require court approval. District spokeswoman Shannon Johnson-Haber said HMC Architects are working on plans for the school, which could open as soon as summer 2010.

##### Northwest Gateway

Construction is underway on a \$55 million mixed-income housing complex on a former rail yard at Second St. and Glendale Blvd. The property contains the Belmont Tunnel, which runs beneath Bunker Hill. Last year, the city's Cultural Heritage Commission designated the tunnel a Historic Cultural Monument. Meta Housing said it would keep the tunnel intact, although it will not be open to the public. Completion of the housing of 276 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments between 527 and 1,820 square feet is scheduled for 2008.

##### Angels Flight Reconstruction

John Welborne, president of the nonprofit Angels Flight Railway Foundation, said three bidders are up for the contract to restore a modern drive system for the storied funicular that links Bunker Hill and Hill St. The train is expected to return to service by the end of 2006, said Welborne.

The two cars, the Sinai and the Olivet, have been repaired, and the two stations have been repainted. The \$3.3 million

restoration has been funded by a campaign that began in 2003. The railway closed following a 2001 accident that left one person dead and seven injured.

#### Blossom Plaza

According to the most recent information, Blossom Plaza at the Gold Line Chinatown Station could connect with another mixed-use development at the Capitol Milling Co. building. The project is comprised of six contiguous lots on No. Broadway, College St., and N. Spring St. Once it begins, construction is expected to last about two years.

#### Capitol Milling Building

A mixed-use development is planned in the Capitol Milling Co. building, a 60,000-square-foot former grain mill and silo at 1231 N. Spring St. Steve Riboli is working with Larry Bond, who is developing the nearby mixed-use Blossom Plaza, on creating a public space to fuse the two sites.

The plans are part of the large-scale Riverview Project at the Cornfield, a mixed-use development on a triangular piece of land stretching from College St. north to the Los Angeles River.

#### Axis at Los Angeles Union Station

Construction is scheduled to finish this month on the first phase of the \$34 million, 272-unit condo complex at Alameda St. and Cesar E. Chavez Ave. near LAUS. The five-story structure includes studio, one- and two-bedroom units between 644 and 1,460 square feet with prices starting in the low \$400,000s.

Half of the residences in Axis' first building were sold in a single day as buyers embraced a new urban development downtown. Two contemporary residential buildings have a cul-de-sac arrival, lobby waterfalls, interior courtyards, rooftop deck, lounge, pool, hot tubs, and BBQ, as well as a fitness center, screening room, meeting/conference room, clubroom, internet cafe, and parking with gated entry.

#### Santa Fe Lofts

Santa Fe Lofts brings the Downtown revival home to two historic buildings boasting 103 live/work loft spaces from 535 to 1,880 square feet and priced from \$900 to \$2,300 per month. Located at 121 E. Sixth St. and originally designed in 1907, the most famous tenant was Santa Fe Railroad, which occupied seven floors from the day it opened.

#### Metro 417 at the Subway Terminal Building

Metro 417 is a historic landmark building. Inside the distinctive collection of 277 rental residences include studio, one- and two-bedroom units and three exclusive penthouses. Building amenities include concierge and 24-hour door attendant, controlled access entry, rooftop spa and garden, club level with lounge, training and health center, screening room, game room, onsite resident and guest parking. Rents range from \$1,300 to \$8,400.

#### Pacific Electric Lofts

At the Pacific Electric Lofts, the grand, turn-of-the-century architecture is seamlessly combined with modern amenities. In fact, Pacific Electric Lofts has more square feet of space devoted to amenities for its residents than any other loft building in Downtown L.A. Completed in 1905 by Henry Huntington, the Pacific Electric Building was L.A.'s first skyscraper. With their one-of-a-kind penthouses, Pacific Electric Lofts is offering an unparalleled opportunity to live in a unique duplex loft that has

all the amenities and grandeur of a condominium. Rents start at \$1,795.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

### HIGH-SPEED RAIL TO LAS VEGAS

The city council of Victorville, Calif., has agreed to work with a private company to explore construction of a rail terminal for a high-speed train to Los Vegas. The council voted unanimously for the agreement with DesertXpress Enterprises LLC, Transit Real Estate Development, and Inland Group Inc. for plans for a rail terminal and maintenance and storage facility.

The high-speed train would have a 200-mile run on newly built track that would mostly shadow I-15. It would run at a top speed of 125 mph. According to a map included with the memo, the area lies on approximately 13,000 acres to the east of Southern California Logistics Airport.

Several years ago, the federal government began studying the environmental impact of the California-Nevada Interstate Maglev Project, a magnetic levitation train from Anaheim to Las Vegas, but not much discussion has been heard on the project since 2003. The difference between that project and DesertXpress is that, according to the memo, DesertXpress would rely on private – not government – funding. Although the Federal Railroad Administration is beginning an Environmental Impact Statement on DesertXpress, the entire review process is not expected to be completed until Jan. 2008.

[Info. from Railroad Newsline via Ken Ruben]

### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES COAST STARLIGHT

The northbound *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 14) schedule will be adjusted from June 14 through Aug. 17, due to a Union Pacific (UPRR) tie replacement in Northern California and Southern Oregon. The southbound *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 11) schedule will be unchanged.

Between those dates, the *Starlight* (Tr. No. 14) will depart Los Angeles, Van Nuys, Simi Valley, Oxnard, and Santa Barbara 45 minutes earlier, and one hour earlier from San Luis Obispo and stations through Salem, Ore. The departure times at stations from Portland through Seattle are unchanged.

The only connection to the *Starlight* at Los Angeles during the project is *Pacific Surfliner* Tr. No. 763, which departs San Diego at 6:15 a.m. and arrives at Los Angeles at 8:50 a.m. The connection from stations on the San Joaquin route is *San Joaquin* Tr. No. 717 to Martinez.

The connection from the *Starlight* to the eastbound *Empire Builder* will continue to be via motor coach from Klamath Falls, Ore., to Pasco, Wash.

The tie renewal project will occur between Black Butte Subdivision, MP 333.64, (22.2 miles north of Dunsmuir, Calif.) and Cascade Subdivision MP 504.10 (Chemult, Ore). During the project four UPRR tie gangs will work seven days per week for two months installing 167,000 new crossties. The work is expected to eliminate 67 miles of slow orders on the *Coast Starlight* route.

### AMTRAK CASCADES

Effective July 1, an additional *Cascade* train began operating daily in each direction between Seattle and Portland, using the

same *Talgo* equipment as the other *Cascade* trains. Southbound Tr. No. 513 departs Seattle at 11:20 a.m., Northbound Tr. No. 516 departs Portland at 2:50 p.m., Tr. No. 513 originates at Bellingham, and Tr. No. 516 terminates at Bellingham. To celebrate the inauguration of the new train, festivities were held at the Bellingham, Seattle, Centralia, and Portland stations.

Beginning in Summer 2007, and continuing through 2013, the Washington State Dept of Transportation plans to overhaul and improve its three *Talgo* trainsets. The improvements include: paint, seating, tables, carpet, toilets, windows, wall coverings, and video and audio systems. The work is intended to restore the trains to like-new condition and extend their service life to approximately 2029.

#### CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

Due to Union Pacific trackwork in Colorado, *California Zephyrs* (Tr. Nos. 5/6) originating at Chicago and Emeryville on Sundays through Wednesdays, July 16-19, July 23-26, July 30-Aug. 2, Aug. 6-9, and Aug. 13-14, 2006 will detour between Denver and Salt Lake City via the Union Pacific Sherman Hill route across Wyoming. The actual dates the train will run on the detour route will be one day later, Mondays through Thursdays.

A substitute bus will operate Denver-Glenwood Springs-Grand Junction connecting from Tr. No. 5 and will return the same day connecting to Tr. No. 6 at Denver. No alternate transportation will be provided to or from stations west of Grand Junction.

Amtrak crews will operate the trains, with UP pilots as required, from Denver to Green River, Wyo., and Green River to Salt Lake City. Green River will be the crew change location, and only passenger smoking stop.

Effective June 10, 2006, shuttle van service between Tr. Nos. 5 and 6 at Glenwood Springs, and locations in Aspen and Vail was discontinued. The service, operated by Colorado Mountain Express, was discontinued due to increased operating costs and insufficient passenger volume.

#### SOUTHWEST CHIEF

The rearmost of two empty *ExpressTrak* boxcars on the rear of the *Southwest Chief* (Tr No. 3 May 14) derailed as the train was passing through Somonauk, Ill. on May 14. As the train continued west the derailed car struck a crossover damaging the track and knocking down a signal bridge. After the two *ExpressTrak* cars were uncoupled the train resumed its trip following an over three-hour delay.

In addition to the *ExpressTrak* cars, the *Southwest Chief* was carrying five private cars en route to Los Angeles. The cars were leased for a three-week Miller beer "Save the Taste" promotion. They operated on the rear of Amtrak trains, spending nights in Los Angeles, San Antonio, Dallas, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Washington, Indianapolis and Milwaukee.

The train consist was AMTK179 P42/161 P42/519 P32/1716 Baggage/ 39026 Transition Sleeper/32025 Sleeper/32066 Sleeper/38037 Diner/33008 Sightseer Lounge/31040 Coach/34080 Coach/34074 Coach/Pvt. 800640 *Pacific Union*/Pvt. 800644 *Henry Hudson*/Pvt. 800651 *Mohave*/Pvt. 800712 *Silver Quail*/Pvt. 800726 *Royal Street*/74026 empty *ExpressTrak* - set-out at Mendota/74093 empty *ExpressTrak*- derailed Mendota.

The private cars used in the Miller special were leased from American Rail Excursions.

The Raton, N.M., depot was staffed, and checked baggage service restored, for the summer during the week of May 21, 2006. Checked baggage will be handled on the Raton-Denver *Thruway* bus during the time the station is staffed.

#### SAN JOAQUIN CORRIDOR THRUWAY

The daily Amtrak *Thruway* Motorcoach which connects with *San Joaquin* Tr. Nos. 701 and 704 at Sacramento, and serves destinations from Sacramento to Redding, has been extended beyond Redding to serve Dunsuir, Mt. Shasta, Weed and Yreka in California, and Ashland and Medford in Oregon.

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies to inaugurate the new service were held on Tuesday, June 13, at Medford and Ashland, and Wednesday, June 14, at Yreka, Weed, Mt. Shasta, and Dunsuir. The Mayor, members of the City Council and the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors of each city, and representatives of the California Department of Transportation and Amtrak participated in the events.

The stops and times (connecting from Tr. No. 701/connecting to Tr. No. 704) are: Sacramento (1:00 p.m./3:55 p.m.), Marysville 2:00 p.m./2:55 p.m.), Oroville (2:35 p.m./2:20 p.m.), Chico (3:05 p.m./1:45 p.m.), Red Bluff (3:55 p.m./12:50 p.m.), Redding (4:25 p.m./12:15 p.m.), Dunsuir (5:40 p.m./10:50 a.m.), Mt. Shasta (6:00 p.m./10:35 a.m.), Weed (6:15 p.m./10:20 a.m.), Yreka (6:55 p.m./9:40 a.m.), Ashland, Ore. (7:45 p.m./8:35 a.m.), and Medford (8:05 p.m./8:10 a.m.).

At Bakersfield, a *Thruway Bus* network connects Las Vegas, Nev., Victorville, Indio, Hemet, Simi Valley, and Santa Barbara with *San Joaquin Corridor* trains. There are bus connections from and to *Pacific Surfliner* trains at Los Angeles, also.

#### NORTHEAST CORRIDOR POWER OUTAGE

On May 25, a massive power outage disrupted service along the *Northeast Corridor* between New York and Washington, D.C. The power failure began shortly before 8 a.m. Power was restored about 10:30 a.m.

The power failure began at 7:55 a.m. when two heavy-duty circuit breakers at Amtrak's Jericho substation sensed a problem and stopped feeding electricity to overhead wires. That event was followed by two breakers opening at a substation in Sunnyside, Queens, N.Y. At 8:02, three breakers opened at the Richmond substation near Philadelphia. A few seconds later, one more circuit breaker opened at Richmond, and the whole system began to fail. At that point human operators intervened to kill the power and prevent further damage. The cause of the power failure is still under investigation.

The failure stranded 27 Amtrak trains and 4,025 passengers. Other operations on the *Northeast Corridor* that had strandings were: New Jersey Transit with three lines, 15 trains, and about 35,000 passengers; SEPTA, seven lines, 23 trains, and about 8,000 passengers; and MARC (Maryland), one line, three trains, and about 5,000 passengers.

In response to the power failure that stranded several trains in the tunnels under the Hudson River, Amtrak is now stationing a diesel rescue locomotive near the entrance to the Hudson River train tunnel system between New Jersey and Pennsylvania Station to remove stranded trains.

#### CALIFORNIA FARES INCREASED

Effective Monday, June 5, 2006, *Capitol*, *Pacific Surfliner*,

and *San Joaquin* corridor fares were increased approximately five percent. *Pacific Surfliner Business Class* accommodation charges increased \$1. The increase applies to *Coast Starlight* rail fares between stations in California, also. Sleeping car accommodation charges did not change.

#### AMTRAK WEB SITE UPDATED

On Sunday, June 11, Amtrak scheduled the launch of an updated home page on its Internet site.

The web site was unavailable from 9:00 p.m. on June 10 to 3 a.m. PT the next day for maintenance and upgrading. Users trying to enter the site during that time received a message saying that it was down for maintenance.

#### AMTRAK INTERACTIVE ROUTE ATLAS

On Apr. 24, Amtrak introduced its Interactive Route Atlas, which allows travelers an opportunity to explore all the various places Amtrak travels. At column deadline the link to the Atlas did not appear on the Amtrak Home Page. It is not until the user clicks on "Schedules, Routes, Station, Hot Deals," or "Traveling With Amtrak" that the link to the Atlas appears.

A broadband (DSL or cable) connection is recommended for downloading the Route Atlas. The free Macromedia Flash Player (version 8) must be installed on your computer to use map. A link to the Macromedia download site is provided on the introduction page.

The Atlas opens to a page containing instructions for using the interactive map. Launching the Atlas opens a page containing a United States map showing Amtrak's train and *Thruway* bus routes, and major stations. To the left of the map tab browsers allow users to browse by routes, stations, or build a custom route. The Routes and Stations browsers make information available alphabetically, by state, or region. The Custom Route feature allows the selection of departure and arrival stations, and then offers a choice of routes.

A Custom Search for a Los Angeles-Chicago trip offered four choices: two direct routes, the *Southwest Chief* or *Texas Eagle*; via San Antonio, the *Sunset Limited* and *Texas Eagle*; or *Thruway Bus* 5811 to Bakersfield, a *San Joaquin* train Bakersfield-Stockton, *Bus* 3711 Stockton-Sacramento, and the *California Zephyr* Sacramento-Chicago.

#### AMTRAK MOBILE

On June 5, Amtrak announced the launch of Amtrak Mobile, a service which enables passengers to use any web-accessing mobile device such as a cell phone or PDA to connect with the train reservation and information systems at Amtrak.com.

To access the Amtrak web site, passengers simply log on with their mobile device. The system will recognize that the customer is using a handheld device and automatically connect to the functions available through Amtrak Mobile.

Once connected, the passenger can make, or cancel reservations., and check train status.

#### SOME AMTRAK FACTS

In May 2006 Amtrak released a Background and Fact Sheet. Following are a few facts presented.

During FY 2005 (Oct. 2004-Sept. 2005), Amtrak carried more than 25.4 million passengers, representing the third straight fiscal year of record ridership.

In FY 2005, Amtrak earned approximately \$1.89 billion in revenue and incurred approximately \$2.94 billion in expenses, covering 64% of its operating costs. Excluding depreciation, a

non-cash cost, Amtrak covered 79% of its operating costs. No passenger railroad system in the world operates without some form of public support for capital costs and/or operating expenses.

If included among U.S. airlines, Amtrak would rank 8th (2005) in the number of passengers served, with a market share of nearly 5%. On average, there are nearly twice as many passengers on an Amtrak train as there are on a domestic airline flight.

The 25 busiest Amtrak stations in 2005 were:

Rank	City/Station	Boardings	Alightings	Total
1.	New York, N.Y.	4,264,625	4,232,587	8,497,212
2.	Philadelphia, Pa.	1,868,800	1,873,830	3,742,630
3.	Washington, D.C.	1,880,852	1,853,435	3,734,287
4.	Chicago, Ill.	1,226,962	1,224,331	2,451,293
5.	Los Angeles, Cal.	690,068	683,672	1,373,740
6.	Newark, N.J.	605,527	609,273	1,214,800
7.	Baltimore, Md.	485,279	494,843	980,122
8.	Boston, Mass.	476,614	494,582	971,196
9.	Sacramento, Cal.	472,450	460,403	932,853
10.	Trenton, N.J.	439,730	461,699	901,429
11.	San Diego, Cal.	432,248	407,044	839,292
12.	Wilmington, Del.	387,328	391,397	778,725
13.	Princeton Jct., N.J.	362,846	401,959	764,805
14.	Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y.	366,946	367,241	734,187
15.	New Haven, Conn.	327,178	326,946	654,124
16.	Seattle, Wash.	307,290	297,598	604,888
17.	BWI Airport, Md.	291,606	286,948	578,554
18.	Irvine, Cal.	281,576	283,220	564,796
19.	Emeryville, Cal.	254,039	245,767	499,806
20.	Providence, R.I.	242,088	247,741	489,829
21.	Portland, Ore.	240,918	238,450	479,368
22.	Milwaukee, Wis.	238,850	235,958	474,808
23.	Fullerton, Cal.	201,862	200,410	402,272
24.	Solana Beach, Cal.	206,230	193,797	400,027
25.	Bakersfield, Cal.	185,089	184,870	369,959

Note that eight of the top 25 stations were in California, and that Seattle and Portland were numbers 16 and 21 respectively.

Amtrak-owned equipment includes 1,437 railroad passenger cars, 436 locomotives, 80 *Auto Train* vehicle carriers and 74 baggage cars.

Amtrak-operated state-owned equipment includes 128 railroad passenger cars and 19 locomotives.

Amtrak operates more contract commuter services than any other company. It currently provides commuter service for the following state and regional authorities: Caltrain (California), MARC (Maryland Area Regional Commuter), Shore Line East (Connecticut), VRE (Virginia Railway Express), Coaster (North San Diego County, California) through June 30, 2006.

Amtrak provides maintenance services for the Sounder Commuter Rail system in Seattle.

#### GRAND CANYON RAILWAY

The Grand Canyon Railway will operate its own *Sunset Limited* on six weekends in September and October.

The train, new this year, will depart from Williams for the Grand Canyon in the afternoon. Upon arrival at the Grand Canyon, guests will enjoy an exclusive motorcoach tour and witness the sunset. The return trip will be after sunset.



Each *Sunset Limited* passenger train will transport 150 people in "First Class streamliner-era stainless steel rail cars." On the outbound trip a variety of appetizers will be served. On the return trip hot hors d'oeuvres and appetizers will be served along with a full bar.

The *Sunset Limited* will be an adults-only train, with guests age 17 and up welcome aboard. Guests may purchase the train trip by itself, or a tour package which includes hotel accommodations.

#### ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Rocky Mountaineer Vacations began operating a second rail tour, *The Whistler Mountaineer*, on May 1, 2006. The summer-only, daily, train will operate from North Vancouver to Whistler, British Columbia through Oct. 16.

*The Whistler Mountaineer* departs North Vancouver at 8:30 a.m. and arrives at Whistler at 11:30 a.m. Guests are transported by motor coach to and from the train depot to Whistler Village. The train depart Whistler at 2:30 p.m. and arrives at North Vancouver at 5:30 p.m. Motor coach transfers from and to hotels in Vancouver are included in the fare.

Two classes of service are offered., *Glacier Dome*, and *Coast Classic*. The *Glacier Dome* service is offered aboard a custom-built single-level coach with large windows that curve into the ceiling. *Coach Classic* service is in chair cars.

The train carries a Heritage Observation car. The car is ex-Canadian Pacific 598, an enclosed center section, open end sections tourist-service observation car, which was rebuilt from a heavyweight coach. The car is open to all guests.

Rocky Mountaineer Vacations began operating in 1990 as Rocky Mountaineer Railtours, offering rail tours through the Canadian Rockies. In late 2005, the company renamed itself Rocky Mountaineer Vacations, and expanded its array of Canadian tour offerings.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

#### YREKA WESTERN RAILROAD'S BLUE GOOSE

On Saturday, June 3, Yreka, California's biggest tourist attraction, Yreka Western Railroad's *Blue Goose Excursion Train*, returned to action. Because of railroad regulations, the general public had to wait until June 14 for the actual excursions to begin. However, Saturday morning's affair was filled with activity. A live radio remote, a visit from Operation Lifesaver, and a speech by Yreka Mayor Rory McNeill were a few of the highlights. The star attraction was old #19 huffing and puffing up and down the tracks, giving attendees plenty of opportunities to take snapshots or videotape the newly rebuilt steam engine.

[Info. from Railroad Newswire via Ken Ruben]

#### UP CALIFORNIA TRACK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

by CHARLES VARNES

##### OAKLAND – NEWARK

In January the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) began a \$10.1 million track improvement project on its Niles Subdivision between Oakland and Newark, Calif. The project involves the removal and installation of 48,500 ties, spreading 23,656 tons of rock ballast, replacing the surfaces at 95 road crossings, and replacing 2,400 ft. of rail in various curves on the line. It is scheduled to be completed by mid-July.

The Niles Subdivision is used by the Amtrak *Capitols* and

*Coast Starlight*. *Altamont Commuter Express* trains use the line between Niles Junction and Newark.

##### CALEXICO – NILAND

UP is spending \$4.3 million this year on track improvements between Calexico and Niland, Calif. The project involves removing and installing 41,000 ties; spreading 13,400 tons of rock ballast; replacing the surfaces at 58 road crossings and installing walkways along the track between Dannenberg St. and McCabe Rd. in Calexico to improve the safety and efficiency of inspecting railcars by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The tie and crossing improvement projects were completed on May 10, with the construction of walkway portion of the project scheduled to begin June 19.

UP and Ferrocarril Mexicano, S.A. de C.V. in conjunction with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, have finalized plans to change the time of the rail interchange between the U.S. and Mexico to earlier in the day which will eliminate blocked road crossings during peak morning hours in Calexico.

As a result of the construction of the trackside inspection walkways, northbound trains will no longer have to stop and be inspected in downtown Calexico. They can be moved just north of the downtown area to be inspected.

The projects are a part of the \$1.5 billion Union Pacific is planning to spend in 2006 to maintain its track across its more than 32,400-mile system.

#### CALGARY TRANSIT

Calgary Transit celebrated the 25th anniversary of service on its Ctrain light rail transit (LRT) line on May 25. The only North American LRT system to be powered by wind-generated electricity, Ctrain entered service with eight miles of track, and today covers 26 miles with 36 stations, carrying 230,000 riders each weekday.

To mark the occasion, members of the Calgary City Council and other city officials joined Calgary Transit employees for a barbeque at the system's Anderson Garage. The agency also has decorated a Ctrain car with vinyl wrap illustrating the system's history and success after "25 years on track!"

[Info. from Passenger Transport via Bill Smith]

#### ALBUQUERQUE COMMUTER RAIL

The new commuter rail system in New Mexico is called *Rail Runner*, which is named after the state bird, *Geococcyx californianus*, or more commonly called the Roadrunner. The logo emblazoned on the side of their brand new, crisp white, biodiesel-fueled locomotives and passenger cars bears a passing resemblance to that clever bird who always outwitted Wiley Coyote.

The new 50-mile system will operate over former Burlington Northern Santa Fe track that runs from Belen in the south to Sandoval City in the north. Officially beginning service July 14, 2006, it currently consists of five diesel-electric locomotives built by Boise-based Motive Power. Ten double-decker commuter cars come from Bombardier in Canada. Each car seats 140 passengers with another 60 standing. Each train will consist of two-to-three passenger cars.

There will be three morning trips into Albuquerque from each direction, a single mid-day run the full length of the system,

and then three outbound trains in the evening. An extra Friday night train is under consideration, as is weekend service. Nine stations will serve the system and for the first three months fares will be free in hopes of enticing drivers out of their cars. [Info. from Railroad Newsline via Ken Ruben]

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

April 2006	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	136,345	81,704	37,247	15,587
Saturday Ave.	87,354	59,506	21,870	6,718
Sunday Ave.	71,080	49,108	17,076	6,394
Monthly Total	3,519,072	2,177,145	939,670	377,294

**FINANCES**

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) announced on May 8 a \$3 billion budget for fiscal year 2006-07. They plan to expand bus and rail service while paying for it through reserves rather than by raising fares. Officials say they will put off rate hikes for one year.

Roger Snoble, MTA's Chief Executive Officer, said rate hikes are one of the few ways to help pay for the 1.2 million bus and rail boardings made daily. But some MTA board members blame the agency's bloated bureaucracy for costs, saying they have soared and transportation dollars have been wasted on future projects.

Snoble, who calls his agency the country's "leanest," has cut 554 positions over the last four years. He said it has also increased ridership 4.7% and boosted fare box revenues 9% over the last year. The agency has also made \$5 million in cuts to administrative departments, including \$274 million from the CEO's office as well as deferring some construction work and putting off mechanical work on 20 older buses in the fleet.

At the MTA Board meeting on May 25, 2006, approval was given for a \$47,703,791 financial contribution of Proposition C 10% local sales tax funding to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) for its FY 2006-07 Preliminary Budget for Metrolink, as follows: \$32,922,900 for operations, \$14,000,000 for rehabilitation and renovation, and \$780,891 for capital projects. The SCRRA Joint Powers Agreement requires that Metro and the other SCRRA member agencies approve their share of Metrolink funding before the SCRRA Board of Directors can adopt a budget. The SCRRA Board of Directors was scheduled to adopt a budget in June 2006.

**BLUE LINE**

On May 25 the MTA Board approved the Metro Blue Line Grade Crossing Improvements project by \$6,478,000 increasing the life-of-project to \$10,600,000. The project involves replacement upgrades of deteriorated grade crossing materials consisting of various designs and exhibiting accelerated rates of decay at numerous high traffic density locations along the Blue Line right-of-way. These upgrades involve installation with tested, proven low maintenance, longer lasting, corrosion inhibiting materials, which allows improved drainage along the main line corridor.

Metro has completed installation of new LED (light emitting diode) "TRAIN" signs at all 59 left-turn lanes on Long Beach Blvd. and Pacific Avenue in Long Beach. The goal of the

\$500,000 safety program is to help prevent left-turn accidents in the street-running portion of the Blue Line. We have had great success with a similar program in downtown Los Angeles, having reduced left-turn accidents by 71% over the past six years," said Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis. To date, a total of 39 "TRAIN" signs have been installed in the downtown Los Angeles area. Nearly 50% of all train vs. vehicle accidents are the result of illegal left turns on the street running segments of the Blue Line in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

**RED LINE**

On May 25 the MTA Board approved the replacement of the existing Metro Red Line Carwash (Vehicle Wash Facility) and added improvements to the existing car cleaning platform for \$15,400,000. The existing vehicle wash facility was not designed to handle the longer car lengths and current volume of daily car washes required to keep the fleet at an acceptable level of cleanliness. The new facility will be enclosed within a soundproof structure with elevated work platforms on both sides of the vehicles.

The existing railcar-cleaning platform only accommodates the cleaning of a single married-pair (2 railcars). The existing car-cleaning platform will be lengthened to accommodate three married-pair configuration and an additional platform will be constructed providing an overall cleaning capacity of six-married pairs (12 railcars). An all-weather overhead cover will be built for each platform. A personnel facility with restrooms will be constructed along with storage for equipment and supplies.

On May 25 the MTA Board approved a contract with B&C Transit Consultants Inc. to replace the J-Relays at the Metro Red Line (MacArthur Park Pocket Track Train Control and Communications Room) for an amount not-to-exceed \$291,221, inclusive of a 10% contingency. The contract is to replace the existing J-relays with newer technology. The goal of the J-relay replacement is to free-up J-relays to be used as spares at other locations, which is approximately 280 relays and enough for the next 10 years.

**GOLD LINE**

On May 25 the MTA Board approved a life-of-project budget for the Gold Line Warehouse – Equipment and Storage project by \$143,000 increasing the budget to \$1,910,000. The Gold Line Warehouse is a three-phase project, where the first and second phases are already completed. The third phase is the construction of a metal storage building, approximately 7,000 square feet, near the southern end of the Gold Line Maintenance Facility that will be completed by July 2007.

**GOLD LINE – DEL MAR STATION**

LGO Hospitality has signed a lease agreement to develop a restaurant in the 6,200-square-foot space inside the historic Santa Fe Railroad depot, part of the mixed use Del Mar Station development. The restaurant is expected to open within a year.

The mixed-use project includes 15,000 square feet of retail space, more than 340 apartments, 600 parking spaces for apartment residents, and another 600 spaces for transit users. The Del Mar Station development provides housing, retail, dining, public transportation, and services such as dry cleaning and groceries in one area. Residents can walk or use public transportation for nearly all of their needs.

The state encourages mixed-use development near transit

lines, said Pasadena Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Lynne C. Hess. "I think it will be a lifestyle that will be embraced by a lot of people," she said. "It will continue to revitalize an area that desperately needed to be revitalized."

#### GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

Duarte residents got their first look at design and art elements for the proposed Duarte Gold Line Station on May 16. Duarte officials have committed \$5 million in local matching funds for construction of the Gold Line, platform, parking and station design. The station will feature a 270-foot-long platform centered between two sets of tracks near 125 parking spaces.

Kathryn Lim is the project architect who will blend the various ideas, artistic elements, and pedestrian links into a functional light rail station.

[Info. from *Pasadena StarNews*]

#### GOLD LINE EASTSIDE EXTENSION

On June 15 falsework had been erected over the eastbound lanes of the 101 Freeway just south of Los Angeles Union Station for the Gold Line Eastside Extension.

#### MID-CITY/EXPOSITION LRT PROJECT

The Federal Transit Administration issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Los Angeles Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor – Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Transit Project on Feb. 27, 2006. The ROD completes the environmental clearance phase of the project and is based on the determination that all requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) have been satisfied for the project. The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority will be in charge of final design and construction of the project. [Info. from Tom Nelson]

#### SAN DIEGO

The following is a summary of the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) operational statistics for February and March 2006, which are months eight and nine of Fiscal Year 2006.

**Service Effectiveness:** In February, the MTS system carried 5,972,588 passengers with 2,579,934 traveling on rail, and in March, the MTS system carried 6,537,579 passengers with 2,735,382 traveling on rail.

**Service Reliability:** MTS on-time performance was calculated at 91.0% in February and March. MTS rail reported 98.0% of its trips on time in Feb. and 98.4% of its trips on time in March. There were no major failures on MTS rail, so the mean distance between failures in Feb. was 615,642 car miles, and that in March was 698,571 car miles.

**Quality of Service:** MTS rail had three collisions in Feb. at a rate of 0.32 collisions per 100,000 miles. MTS rail had two collisions in March at a rate of 0.29 collisions per 100,000 miles. Non-American with Disabilities Act (ADA) services reported 9.87 complaints per 100,000 passengers in Feb., while there were 18 ADA complaints, which represented 0.07% of total ADA ridership. Non-ADA services reported 8.50 complaints per 100,000 passengers in March, while there were 14 ADA complaints, which represented 0.05% of total ADA ridership.

San Diego Transit Corporation (SDTC), San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI), and the Transit Television Network (TTN) have been demonstrating Transit TV (a TTN customer information and entertainment tool) on MTS buses and trolleys at no cost to the region. This demonstration began in Oct. 2005, and customer reaction to the system has been positive.

Major benefits of the Transit TV system include:

- Automated (audio and visual) stop announcements onboard the vehicle.
- Exterior route announcements to waiting passengers.
- Onboard vehicle outlet for transit-related information.
- Multimedia programming (news or entertainment).

Contract discussions have begun between MTS and TTN, structured along the lines of the agreement between TTN and Los Angeles MTA, TTN's most current customer. TTN has notified MTS that it anticipates completing the Los Angeles system by the end of this summer and could not begin to implement the system in San Diego until that time.

TTN is proposing to deploy this system at no cost to MTS, since it anticipates revenues derived from advertising will pay the cost of the equipment, installation, and ongoing maintenance.

#### BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT

BART riders enjoyed a nearly 96 percent passenger on-time record in April 2006 – the highest in 16 months. "After a string of unfortunate incidents during March, I'm pleased to say BART has bounced back," said Paul Oversier, Assistant General Manager of Operations. When measuring on-time performance, BART requires passengers to be at their destinations within five minutes of when the BART timetable says they should have arrived, or BART considers them late – no matter what the cause.

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

A commuter rail connection between Vancouver and Portland survived the latest study of a new Columbia River crossing, at least until more information can be provided. The Columbia River Crossing Task Force on May 17 endorsed the elimination of high-speed rail, ferries, and some bridge designs from further study. They will continue to explore light rail, bus lanes, and other alternatives to supplement or replace the Interstate Bridge.

The task force staff had argued that the rail option was unfeasible because commuter rail trains would either have to run on the existing railroad bridge down river from the freeway where freight has priority, or on a new right-of-way that would lack connections to the existing bus and rail network. Jay Lyman, project manager, said the commuter rail option survived when a motion to eliminate it failed on a 9-9 vote, when fewer than half of the 39-member task force were present.

[Oregon info. from *The Oregonian* via Charles Varnes]

#### SEATTLE MONORAIL

The City Council on April 3 approved a \$602,000 grant from the Federal Transit Administration to help repair the Seattle Center Monorail. The grant will be matched by a contribution from Seattle Monorail Services, the current operator of the two-train system. The trains collided on a curve on Nov. 26, 2005. The goal is to have the trains running again by August.

Now that voters have canceled plans for the new monorail, the city is considering what to do with the 44-year-old system. Some say it is outmoded and could be replaced by more reliable and efficient transportation. Others say the historic Monorail is a Seattle icon and an important downtown transportation link. A Seattle Center Task Force was scheduled to report its findings to the council committee that oversees the Seattle Center

SEATTLE SOUND TRANSIT

Sound Transit Board members approved an agreement April 13 with the Port of Seattle clearing the way to build the \$244 million, 1.7-mile-extension from Tukwila to Sea-Tac Airport. Construction is expected to begin late this summer, when summer airport traffic drops dramatically, said airport spokesman Bob Parker. The agreement locates the airport light rail station adjacent to the fourth level of the existing airport parking garage, with a pedestrian bridge and dedicated walkway to the airport's ticket counters. A second pedestrian bridge across International Blvd. will connect the station to a passenger drop-off and pick-up facility in the City of SeaTac.

Construction is now underway along the entire 14-mile light rail transit (LRT) alignment between Downtown Seattle and Tukwila, with work now approximately 43 percent complete.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

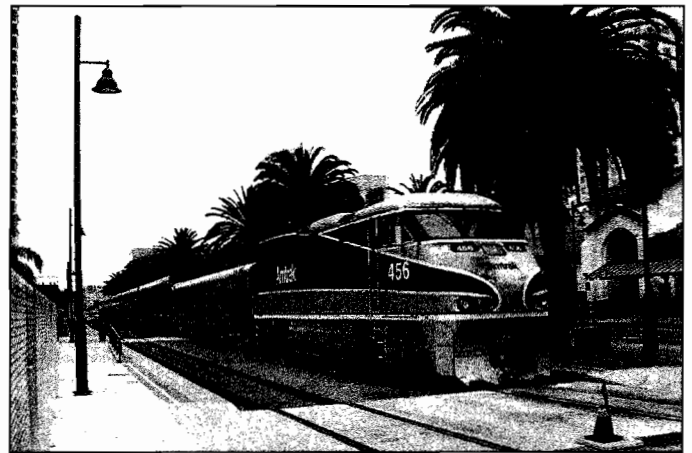
The Sound Transit Board approved a plan on April 27 for extending LRT to the University of Washington with existing taxes and a \$700 million federal grant that Sound Transit is seeking. "We want to start building the University Link in 2008," said Sound Transit Board Chair John Ladenburg. The University Link project will offer much faster travel times for transit passengers than buses. LRT will carry passengers from downtown to the University in 9 minutes instead of 25.

The Sound Transit Board also adopted a final North Link route extending from downtown Seattle to Northgate. The \$1.5 billion University Link project, a subset of North Link, extends 3.15 miles north from downtown to the University of Washington campus via a tunnel. The rest of North Link is envisioned to be included in a regionwide transit and roads ballot measure that will be submitted to voters in 2007. The Board action was preceded earlier by the publication of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the North Link LRT project.

[Seattle info. from *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and Sound Transit via Charles Varnes]



*PRS' National Forum made its first trip on May 13, 2006, following repairs to damage incurred in a switching accident in Seattle in August 2003. In this view the car is seen in the consist of Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, Tr. No. 564, at Los Angeles Union Station shortly before its departure. Photo by Charles Varnes*

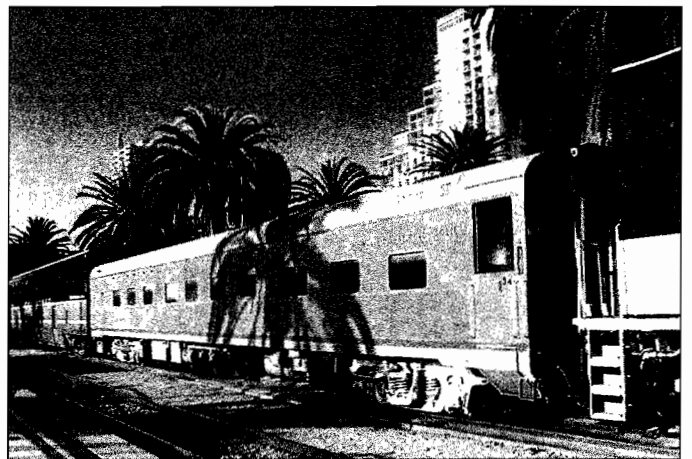


*The PRS National Forum awaits its return to Los Angeles from San Diego in the consist of five cars of Pacific Surfliner Tr. No. 571. The car made two round trips on this day.*

Photo by Charles Varnes



*In her last year of operation in the spring of 1970, Union Pacific Train No. 104, the City of Los Angeles, is caught blasting eastbound in throttle position "run 8" after making a scheduled stop at the East Los Angeles Station. When Amtrak was inaugurated approximately one year later on May 1, 1971, Train No. 104 said adios and sadly exhilarated us no more. UP locomotive 911 then became Amtrak 416. Photo by John Petros*



*The late afternoon sun casts the shadow of a palm tree onto the National Forum as it awaits its 6:20 p.m. departure from San Diego in the consist of Pacific Surfliner Tr. No. 591.*

Photo by Charles Varnes