

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MARCH 2008

## SISKIYOU COUNTY RAIL

Local representatives joined members of the Coos-Siskiyou Shippers Coalition (CSSC) in Dec. to discuss the decision to reroute rail traffic on Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad's (CORP) Siskiyou Line. The conference, according to Yreka Chamber of Commerce Manager Pete LaFortune aims to try to organize the shipper in Oregon and California who rely on the rail line and "to speak in one voice and see if RailAmerica, who is making the call regarding the closure, will talk to us."

Executives at RailAmerica, CORP's parent company, were not available for comment. RailAmerica, Inc. is based in Boca Raton, Fla., and operates 41 lines in 25 states and three Canadian provinces.

The Siskiyou line runs from Springfield Junction in Eugene, Ore. to Black Butte, near Mount Shasta. According to the *Mail Tribune*, CORP plans to cut rail shipments over the Siskiyou Pass by Jan. 15 and may eliminate them altogether by April. All California-bound rail traffic originating from Ashland or north of Ashland will be rerouted to Eugene, Ore., then head south to Klamath Falls on a Union Pacific line, the *Tribune* said.

CORP has a business problem of losing money operating over the Siskiyou Subdivision. "Because of the local mills and other businesses who rely on the rail line, this would be a very bad thing for Siskiyou County's economy," said Tonya Dowse, Executive Director of Siskiyou County Economic Development Council.

If the Siskiyou line is shut down, it would be the second within a year. The CSSC was formed at the beginning of Dec. after CORP announced in Sept. that their Coos Bay line would be closed due to unsafe tunnel conditions.

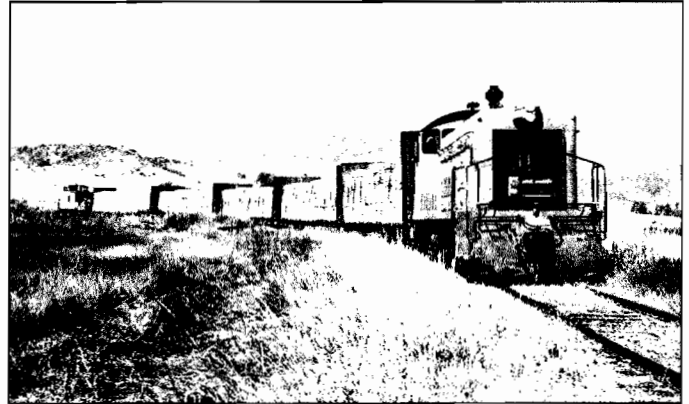
[Info. from *Siskiyou Daily News* via Roger Titus]

## 2008 BNSF AND UP CAPITAL PROJECTS

BY CHARLES VARNES

BNSF plans a \$2.45 billion capital investment plan for 2008. \$1.8 billion will be invested in maintaining and improving track, signal systems, structures, freight cars and upgrading technologies. BNSF anticipates leasing 200 locomotives with a cost of about \$400 million and investing over \$200 million in track and facilities to expand capacity.

Union Pacific plans to invest a total of \$3.1 billion for capital projects during 2008. The investments include \$1.6 billion to maintain and strengthen the track infrastructure, \$840 million to increase network and terminal capacity, \$490 million to upgrade its locomotive and freight car fleet, including the acquisition of 175 high-horsepower locomotives and new covered hoppers, and \$170 million primarily to upgrade information technology systems, including the testing of positive train control.



*Yreka Western Railroad #21 (ex-SP EMD built 1953) is seen September 5, 2007, with lumber loadings from Timber Products Mill en route to Montague, Calif. YWRR #21 is the locomotive used most of the time in its freight operation. The timber products mill is YWRR's sole shipper.*

Photo by Conductor Roger Titus



*The historic railway funeral van that carried the body of former Prime Minister Winston Churchill to his final resting place 42 years ago has been returned from the United States for preservation by the Swanage Railway. Southern Railway van S2464S arrived back in the United Kingdom on Sept. 24, 2007, after an 8,000-mile voyage from Long Beach, California via the Panama Canal on the transport ship, "Tamerlane". The funeral van is seen unloaded at Southampton Docks. The return of the car was made possible in large part from the generous sponsorship of the transport costs by the previous owners, the city of Industry, California. From Southampton Docks, the car was transported to Cranmore on the East Somerset Railway for restoration prior to display on the Swanage Railway. [Additional information and other photographs on the car appeared in the October 2007 issue of *Wheel Clicks*.] Photo by Bruce Williams*



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### PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Mar. 1, 8, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: Mar. 22.  
 Mar. 1, 8, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 1, 15; Extra day: 8, 22, 29. Com. Mtg.: 15.  
 Mar. 7 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 Mar. 14 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 April 4 Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 April 5, 12 Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Bonita & Monte Vista Aves., San Dimas.  
 Sats. Committee meeting: Mar. 26.  
 April 5, 12 Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?, Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert Sts., Commerce. Regular day: 5, 19; Extra day: 12, 26. Committee Mtg.: 19.

April 11 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alhambra Room Fri. at Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 April 18 Slide Night at Saunders Yard, 7:30 p.m., Noakes & Fri. Herbert Sts., Commerce. Everyone welcome.

### MEETING PROGRAMS

by **RUSS DAVIES**

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!**

April 11: **The best of Ralph Melching!** See all of **Ralph's** wonderful **black and white images** in slide form, plus other images from his priceless collection. We'll see the **opening ceremonies of LAUPT** in 1939, and other treasures. A slide presentation from your Museum Committee. **Be there, and bring slide or digital briefs!**

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by **VIRGINIA GRUPP**

There was one late renewal in February with Seniority #516.

### PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM

by **LINDSAY SMITH**

Ed Saalig is nearing publication of his book on the Santa Fe DC 191 and 192 cars. He continues to archive history on these cars. He seeks material from our membership and friends. He would like to get any video or other media (ads, documents, and letters) about the Santa Fe RDC cars. Ed is anxious to continue restoration of the DC 191 car as well as defining the history of these two famous and little known cars. The book will complement the restoration project. He has a matching fund for donations for the restoration effort by the Rolling Stock Committee. He has already made a presentation to PRS and remains available to present a program for other groups. Ed may be contacted at 909-982-7825 or zermatt2@verizon.net

### STREAMLINED DAYLIGHT 70TH ANNIVERSARY

by **CHARLES VARNES**

Seventy years ago, on March 21, 1937, the new lightweight, streamlined Southern Pacific *Daylights* made their inaugural runs. On that day the new 12-car streamliners entered regular service departing from Los Angeles and San Francisco at 8:15 a.m., arriving at their destinations at 6:00 p.m., on time.

The first *Daylights* were heavyweight trains, which began operating on April 28, 1922, as Tr. Nos. 71 and 72. In February 1937 in preparation for the operation of the new streamliners, the train's numbers were changed to 98 and 99.

### DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES AND ANGELS FLIGHT

Downtown Los Angeles in 2008 will be at the center of many mobility-related discussions. An issue by the City Council is the ability of pedestrians and residents to access public transportation on the weekend, in particular by expanding the DASH bus routes to more points of interest and extending its hours. The return of a steel-wheeled streetcar to Downtown remains a recurring topic of interest for locals to move about the city. The Exposition Light Rail, a \$640-million project, will eventually connect Downtown to Culver City via Exposition Park and USC.

In 1901, Colonel J.W. Eddy opened and operated the "Shortest

Railway in the World.” The funicular system of two counter-balanced cars moved up and down on a single track with mid-way passing tracks. It transported passengers between Third and Hill Streets and the top of Bunker Hill. The ride lasted one minute and cost one cent.

In 1996, the railway reopened at a cost of \$6.3 million and at a new location a half-block south of the original. It was run by the nonprofit Angels Flight Railway Foundation (AFRF). Rides were 25 cents for the 153-step climb. In 2001, an accident took the life of Leon Praport, injured seven others and damaged the railway’s two cars, Olivet and Sinai. Angels Flight has been closed since then. In 2006, a lawsuit with victims of the accident, which has been blamed for many of the delays in reopening the railway, was settled.

John Welborne, president of the nonprofit AFRF, has given multiple reopening dates. In January 2007, he held a press conference announcing a resumption of service during the summer. That was pushed to the end of December 2007. In September he said the \$3.3 million renovation was waiting on the installation of a new drive system. The National Transportation Safety Board investigation faulted the city contractor, the Yantrak Company, for improper design and construction, which meant that replacing the drive-system became more costly.

Welborne in early January 2008 said the drive’s manufacturer installed the machinery in late November. “Additional work on wiring and related matters is taking place now,” he said.

The California Public Utilities Commission must approve the incline railway and its safety features before Angels Flight resumes service. Once the commission is notified that repairs are complete an inspection of the railway can take about 30 days, said Susan Carothers, public information officer for the commission.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

### RESURRECTING THE STREETCAR

Ever since the streetcars ferried their last passengers across Downtown Los Angeles in 1963, there have been attempts to resuscitate the fabled transit system. But scraping together the funding and rallying the political will to get it rolling seemed to frustrate even the staunchest supporters.

Now, momentum for reviving the iconic streetcar appears to be building, thanks to a new plan aimed at enlivening the historic Broadway theater district. Fourteenth-District City Councilman José Huizar, who is heading the Bringing Back Broadway initiative to turn the corridor into a shopping and nightlife destination, said the streetcar is a key component of that effort.

The plan centers on restoring the district’s collection of 12 faded movie houses to active use, whether through live productions, music and comedy shows, or as nightlife venues. Huizar’s office said \$16.6 million in city, state and federal funds have been secured for sidewalk and streetscape improvements, as well as finding property for a new parking facility and to study the comeback of the streetcar that once traversed Downtown.

Huizar’s office said ultimately \$4.5 million from the Community Redevelopment Agency will be used for street improvements. Another \$12 million will be used to identify additional parking solutions for Broadway, a reality that has stymied efforts to program events.

On Feb. 7, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) voted to boost funding for a Downtown streetcar feasibility study that would connect the bustling Broadway corridor to the \$2.5 billion L.A. Live entertainment district on the south and the planned Grand Avenue project on the north. The original study, which was completed in 2005 by IBI Group, will receive another \$60,000 to fund the next phase. In the coming months, the CRA will examine station locations, analyze how the streetcar would operate on Broadway, and identify potential maintenance and repair facilities.

There have been several explorations of reviving the transit system. In the most recent effort, U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard secured the initial \$100,000 in federal funds to study bringing the streetcar back. She has secured an additional \$98,000 for streetcar planning in the 2008 federal budget. Curtis Gibbs, a CRA project manager, who is spearheading the streetcar effort, said the CRA is contracting with transportation engineer Allyn Rifkin of Reconnecting America to conduct a public workshop this spring on reviving streetcar service in Los Angeles.

According to the 2005 CRA study, construction costs for a Downtown Los Angeles line would range between \$60 million and \$73 million. Annual operating costs are pegged at up to \$5 million. Victor Franco, with Downtown-based consulting and lobbying firm Ek & Ek, is part of the street railway advisory committee, which has held occasional meetings during the last few years to push the vision of a fixed rail line that would operate in much the same way as the original line, with overhead contact wire.

Metro officials are now studying how the line could be incorporated into a long-term plan for a Downtown Regional Connector that would link up to the Gold and Blue light rail lines. The idea is that they would work together,” said Metro Project Manager Dolores Roybal. “At a certain point, the streetcar would be going farther east from our alternatives, but it would be a wonderful compliment to the connector. It would help connect the L.A. Fashion District to the existing system.”

[Info. from *Los Angeles Downtown News*]

### UNION PACIFIC ROAD LOCOMOTIVE CAMERAS

Union Pacific this year plans to install more than 1,600 Track Image Recorders (TIRs) aboard locomotive cabs to digitally record a view of the track, crossings and signals directly in front of a train as it travels over the rails. “Installation of TIR equipment is another step in Union Pacific’s commitment to employee and public safety,” said Bob Grimaila, vice president-safety and environment. “This equipment is a valuable tool in assisting with the investigations of pedestrian or grade-crossing incidents.”

UP began installing TIRs in 2005 and has more than 4,000 locomotives equipped with TIRs out of their over-the-road locomotive fleet of more than 6,000 locomotives. More than 85 percent of Union Pacific’s road freight trains now have a TIR-equipped locomotive in the lead. A small camera is mounted inside the locomotive cab, looking down the track and providing the train crew’s point of view. A microphone is mounted outside to record the locomotive’s air horn and bell. The video image disk can record up to five days of information. TIR video images and locomotive event recorder data can be synchronized

to provide detailed information about what occurred prior to an incident.

[Info. from [www.uprr.com/newsinfo/](http://www.uprr.com/newsinfo/) via Charles Varnes]

### CALTRAIN NEWS

by **MIKE GONDON**

On January 21, Caltrain ran its annual Freedom Train to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year marked the 23rd anniversary of the popular train.

The train left San Jose's Diridon Station at 10:00 a.m., ahead of Train No. 139, with 10 cars, powered only by Caltrain engine 907, probably the worst engine in the fleet. Usually the train is powered by two locomotives, but due to the large number of locomotives out of service, Caltrain probably did a good job to dig up that one.

The train made stops in Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, and San Mateo, and arrived at San Francisco's 4th and King Street station about 11:20 a.m. with nearly 1500 passengers. At Sunnyvale, police had to be called to remove a disruptive passenger, delaying the train about 10 minutes and marring an otherwise upbeat trip.

Special tickets were required to ride the Freedom Train, but because people returned home at different times, no southbound train was run. Freedom Train tickets were honored on all regular Caltrain service.

Caltrain suffered its first fatality of the year when southbound Train No. 256 hit a trespasser just north of the Hayward Park station in San Mateo. The incident halted service in both directions for about an hour when the northbound (No. 1) track was opened and used for "single track" operations between CP Palm and CP Ralston.

Construction continues on the new platform work at Burlingame and California Avenue stations. During the week, construction takes place at daylight hours, without disruption to Caltrain operations. But on the weekends, "single tracking" takes place between CP Trousdale and CP Palm for the Burlingame construction, and between CP Alma and CP Mayfield for the California Avenue construction. This results in some delays to weekend trains and requires passengers at some stations to board on the opposite platform.

Construction is also taking place at the Palo Alto station, but so far, it is not causing delays to Caltrain service. All projects are expected to be completed by this summer.

### LOS ANGELES COUNTY RIDERS

During the month of December 2007, the average number of weekday riders traveling on trains going to, from, or within Los Angeles County, other than on Amtrak, was 284,203. This was a decrease of about 5 percent from the previous month, and was evident throughout the system.

### RAIL TRANSIT TEMPO

by **TOM NELSON**

FRESNO, CALIF.

Mayor Alan Autry's plan for the central part of Fresno included a two-mile circulator streetcar line. For a study of the line, \$60,000 in sales-tax funds were to be used, but on Oct. 3, 2007, the council voted to drop the project. Subsequently the mayor vetoed the council's action, allowing the study to continue. On Nov. 27 the council tried to override the veto but failed, so the study will proceed.

### SACRAMENTO

Sacramento Regional Transit District's (RT) Oct. 2007 total ridership was up more than 6 percent from Oct. 2006. Light rail alone gained 9 percent increase. RT's fare revenue exceeded budget by more than \$400,000 in the latest quarterly report. RT issued a new system map effective Jan. 6, '08. It contains information on fares, service frequency, use of light rail ticket machines, and transit center bus connections.

### SEATTLE

Voters in the central counties of Puget Sound on Nov. 6 rejected Proposition 1 which would have approved a \$30.8 billion plan to add 50 miles of new light rail transit (LRT) projects in a 30-year program. Many felt, however, the defeat was due to the measure's inclusion of 186 miles of highway lanes. If the proposition had passed, it would have increased Seattle's sales tax to 9.4 percent.

### SPOKANE, WASH.

As reported in this column in 2006, two ballot measures to establish an LRT route between Spokane and Liberty Lake failed at the ballot box by no more than two percentage points. The sponsor of the proposal was the Spokane Transit Authority (STA), which following the election ceased all activity to continue promoting LRT.

Several members of the Spokane Transit's LRT steering committee felt the vote was too close to give up, so they and others have formed a private grass-roots group called Friends Of Rail Transit (FORT). Their objective is to educate the public, focusing on rail-based transit, because of the limited time the STA had for public outreach prior to the 2006 election. STA is not involved with FORT, so another government entity will be needed to finance any project that results from FORT's advocacy.

For further information email to [kc@friendsoftrailtransit.org](mailto:kc@friendsoftrailtransit.org) or phone (509) 475-5778.

### DENVER

The Denver Regional Transportation District's Board gave preliminary approval on Nov. 13, 2007, to purchase 55 Siemens SD160 light rail vehicles (LRVs) at \$3.17-million each. They will be needed in five years for lines being built under the FasTracks project and for service expansion. The SD160s were chosen rather than a low-floor LRV, to match the present fleet to reduce maintenance and training costs.

### LITTLE ROCK

Our information is a bit late, but I did not learn until last month that the extension of River Rail, on the Little Rock side of the Arkansas River, opened for service to the Clinton Presidential Center area before June 2007. According to the plan, it was originally to be built along President Clinton Ave. A new system map, however, shows the line running south one block along Commerce St. to East 3rd St. and then easterly to the end of the extension. Gomaco Trolley Co. built two replica streetcars to add to the River Rail roster.

### KANSAS CITY, MO.

The voter-authorized, 27-mile, LRT line was repealed by the city council on Nov. 8, 2007. Consultants said the plan was impractical and underfunded. On Nov. 29 the council announced that decisions on a light rail route, technology, and funding would be made by late January. The Area Transportation Authority's

36 member citizen task force favors modern streetcars rather than LRVs and a 12-mile starter line.

**MINNEAPOLIS**

About \$200-million must be cut from the budget of Minneapolis Council's proposed Central Corridor LRT project connecting Minneapolis and St. Paul to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) cost-benefit requirements. Proposed were elimination of a short tunnel through the Univ. of Minnesota campus and a platform that is level with Union Depot at the Central Corridor's St. Paul terminal. A decision on this must be made before preliminary engineering can be completed.

**HOUSTON**

Houston's Metropolitan Transit Authority plans to proceed with five proposed LRT lines instead of building some as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Fifty percent FTA funding will be sought for all five. Since no conversion to BRT will be needed, the cost will remain \$2-billion. Also, start of revenue service should remain in late 2012.

[Info. from Bob Blymyer, Ed Von Nordeck, Frank Mares, *Railway Age* and IEEE *Vehicular Technology*]

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

Metrolink weekday, systemwide, average trips during December were 40,630. This was a decrease from the previous month of about 7 percent. Metrolink weekday, systemwide, schedule adherence (within five minutes of scheduled time) was 96 percent.

**AIR POLLUTION PLAN**

The California Air Resources Board (ARB) has approved a South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) plan designed to curb nitrogen air pollution from diesel trucks, commuter trains, construction equipment, and ports. The district's 2007 Air Quality Management Plan is aimed at ensuring the region meets the 2015 deadline for complying with the federal government's standards for controlling fine particulate pollution.

Under the plan, the ARB will require modernization of private and port heavy-duty truck fleets, while the ARB and AQMD will seek \$50 million in incentive funds to retrofit Metrolink trains with pollution-control devices.

[Info. from *Eastside Sun*]

**ANTELOPE VALLEY LINE**

Thousands of commuters who usually drive into the San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles boarded trains instead Oct. 15, out of fear that a fiery weekend big rig pileup on Interstate 5 would snarl workday traffic. But most lanes of I-5 reopened through the Newhall Pass before dawn Monday, at least a day earlier than expected, though truck lanes were still closed as officials from Caltrans and other agencies investigated the structural stability of an interchange tunnel in which more than 30 vehicles collided Friday night and caught fire.

Metrolink ridership was up by approximately 50 percent Monday on the Antelope Valley Line, which averages more than 7,100 riders a day. "It was less than we were expecting, but we were also expecting the freeway to be totally shut down," spokeswoman Denise Tyrrell said.

Tyrrell said all trains on the Antelope Valley Line, which

runs from Lancaster to Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) had at least two extra cars Monday. Metrolink added two additional trains between LAUS and Via Princessa station in Santa Clarita. Traffic was much better than expected Monday, thanks to the freeway's opening, but Tyrrell said many commuters might have taken the day off.

Metrolink was to add extra cars and additional trains on Tuesday, but was to go back to regular service on Wednesday.

[Info. from *Antelope Valley Press*]

**QUARTERLY UPDATE ON PROJECTS**

Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) staff has been monitoring or providing input on Metrolink operations and capital projects, many of which are included herein.

1. Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) plans for 30-minute service between Laguna Niguel/Mission Viejo and Fullerton.
2. OCTA's grade crossing safety enhancement program.
3. Perris Valley Line, where in December 2007, the Federal Transit Administration granted approval for Riverside County Transportation Commission to go into Preliminary Design.
4. LOSSAN Corridor Service improvements, where member agencies met to scope near-term initiatives.
5. SANBAG Redlands Rail Service, where staff is providing technical input in development of this service.
6. Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC), where staff provides input as needed.
7. Park-Spectrum Guideway Demonstration Project, where staff continues to monitor the development of an advanced guideway transit project to serve the Great Park and Irvine Spectrum areas of the City of Irvine with the Irvine Transportation Center (ITC) serving as a hub.
8. BNSF/Caltrans Improvements on the BNSF between Commerce and Fullerton, where staff monitors the progress of these capital improvements and grade separations.
9. Grade Separation Projects, where staff has provided technical and construction support for numerous grade separations to be constructed by others on Metrolink rights-of-way with their current status:
  - Ramona Blvd. in the City of El Monte - In construction
  - Sierra Highway in Santa Clarita - In construction
  - I-5 Sylmar Overhead Gap Closure - In construction
  - I-5 Sylmar Overhead Widening - Design (100%)
  - Providencia Overhead (Burbank) - Design Review (65%)
  - Jeffrey Road in Irvine - In construction
  - LaPaz Overhead Widening, Mission Viejo - Design (100%)
  - Oso Pkwy Overhead Widening, Mission Viejo - Design (100%)
  - Citrus Ave Underpass, Pasadena Sub Azusa - In construction
  - Palm Dr Underpass, Pasadena Sub Azusa - In construction
  - SR-22 widening, Orange Sub in Orange - complete/close out
  - Newport Ave Underpass, Orange Sub Tustin - Design concept
  - Red Hill Underpass, Orange Sub in Tustin - Design concept
  - Sand Canyon Underpass, Orange Sub Tustin- Des Rev (65%)
  - Marine Way Overpass, Orange Sub in Irvine -Design concept
  - Mariposa Pedestrian Underpass, San Clemente - Begin Construction
  - First St Bridge widening, River Sub in LA - In construction
  - Sixth St Bridge replacement, River Sub LA - Design concept

- Seventh St Bridge widening, River Sub LA - Design Review (35%)
- Main St Bridge widening, River Sub LA - Design Rev (35%)
- Haven Ave Undercrossing, San Gabriel Sub in Rancho Cucamonga - Design (100%)
- Bassett Overhead Widening, San Gabriel Sub in Baldwin Park - Design (100%)
- Empire Ave Undercrossing, Valley Sub in Burbank - Design Review (65%)
- Buena Vista Undercrossing, Valley Sub in Burbank - Design Review (65%)
- Monte Vernon Bridge replacement, SG Sub in San Bernardino - Design Review (35%)
- Fairmont Ave Overhead, Valley Sub in Glendale - Design (100%)

10. Downtown Riverside Station, where staff is assisting RCTC with review of opportunities for joint development.

11. Riverside La Sierra Station, where staff is assisting RCTC with joint development for 20 acres encompassing the station.

12. Anaheim Canyon Station Master Plan, where staff is assisting the City of Anaheim and the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency in an transit-oriented development at the station.

13. Cities of Anaheim, Orange and Villa Park Go Local Program, where staff is assisting transit connections to Metrolink in OCTA-funded Go Local initiative in Orange County.

14. California High Speed Rail, where staff continues to monitor progress.

15. Southern California Association of Governments task force, where staff continues to attend these monthly meetings.

16. Santa Clarita Via Princessa Relocation/Vista Canyon Ranch Station Development, where staff has met to provide the City and developer with Environmental Impact Report (EIR) comments.

#### **PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES** by CHARLES VARNES

On Feb. 4, 2008, President Bush submitted his Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget proposal to Congress. The Department of Transportation budget proposes \$800 million for Amtrak, the same amount as in the FY 2008 budget proposal. The budget proposal includes no operating funds. Its proposed amount comprises \$525 million for capital expenses (which includes up to \$285 million for debt service) and \$275 million for efficiency grants.

The proposed budget includes a provision of \$100 million for state matching grants for intercity passenger rail capital projects to empower states, not Amtrak, to address their transportation goals and priorities, also. Amtrak planned to present its budget request to Congress in late February.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, which makes appropriations for FY 2008, omitted the provision from the 2002 emergency U.S. Department of Transportation loan that prevented Amtrak from using federal funds to initiate new intercity passenger train routes.

#### **NEW PASSENGER TRAIN SAFETY RULES**

Commuter and intercity passenger rail equipment will be safer under a new federal rule that ensures improved emergency window exit availability, specifies additional emergency rescue features, and requires two-way communication systems.

The new regulations issued by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) mandate that passenger rail cars be equipped with two-way communication systems that better help train crews inform and instruct passengers during emergency situations and allow passengers to report potential safety or security problems to them. Also, emergency evacuation and rescue access windows are required at all levels with passenger seating, and all new passenger rail cars must be equipped with emergency roof access locations. In addition, the rule includes minimum requirements for the inspection, testing, maintenance, and repair of these safety systems.

The new rule was published in the Federal Register on Feb. 1, 2008. A related FRA rulemaking proposing to enhance passenger rail car emergency lighting systems, exit path markings, and emergency signage is expected to be completed later this year.

#### **AMTRAK INTERCITY TRAINS**

##### **Coast Starlight**

On Jan. 19 a massive mudslide severed the Union Pacific railroad in two places between Klamath Falls and Eugene, Ore. The slide buried over 3,000 feet of main line track in 20 feet of mud, snow and downed trees.

On that day the northbound *Coast Starlight* (Tr. No. 14 Jan. 18) was held at Chemault, Ore. and then returned to Klamath Falls. The southbound *Starlight* (Tr. No. 11 Jan. 19) was terminated at Portland. A bus bridge moved passengers aboard the trains between the stations. Tr. No. 14 (Jan. 18) turned at Klamath Falls and operated to Los Angeles as Tr. No. 11 (Jan. 19). Tr. No. 11 (Jan. 19) was turned at Portland and operated to Seattle as Tr. No. 14 (Jan. 18). The next day's *Starlights* short-turned at Portland and Klamath Falls and a bus bridge was operated between the trains.

From Jan. 21 through Jan. 23 Tr. No. 14 operated between Los Angeles and Klamath Falls. From Jan. 21 through Jan. 24 Tr. No. 11 operated between Seattle and Portland. A bus bridge was operated connecting the trains. After those dates the *Starlight* was canceled with no alternate transportation offered.

On Feb. 6 *Starlight* service was partially restored with a stub train operating from Los Angeles to Sacramento. Service between Sacramento and Los Angeles resumed the following day. The stub train operates with one locomotive, a baggage car, lounge and three coaches. No first-class service is offered. Checked baggage service is offered, and reservations are still required.

The *Starlight* between Seattle and Portland remained canceled. Travelers between those points can use *Amtrak Cascades* trains. The Union Pacific railroad estimates the line will reopen sometime between the end of March and mid-April.

##### **Coast Starlight Fare Structure Change**

Effective Jan. 18 *Coast Starlight* fares from Redding through San Jose, Calif. were restructured to follow the standard pattern of four bucket level fares valid all year. Previously the fares were priced on a peak/off-peak travel basis. At some time in the future the changes will become effective south of San Jose.

##### **Crescent**

The *Crescent* was annulled between Atlanta and New Orleans Monday through Thursday beginning Feb. 10 because of Norfolk Southern trackwork. Service along the entire route con-

tinued Friday through Sunday. No alternate transportation was provided south of Atlanta. The trackwork was expected to take approximately four weeks.

**WESTERN CORRIDORS**

**Capitol**

*Capitol Corridor* fares are expected to increase 3 percent in June (and possibly in November). Service frequencies and schedules are expected to remain at 32 trains on weekdays, and 22 on weekend days.

The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, the policy body that oversees the *Capitol Corridor* intercity train service, held its annual series of workshops for the public to have input into the future plans for the Capitol Corridor in February. In addition to the workshop held in the BART boardroom in Oakland on Feb. 4, several workshops were held aboard *Capitol Corridor* trains. The first on-board workshop was held the same day on Tr. No. 540. Other workshops were held on the following dates and trains: Feb. 5, Tr. Nos. 542 and 544; Feb. 6, Tr. Nos. 536 and 538; Feb. 7, Tr. Nos. 545 and 547.

**Cascades**

A collision in an unusual location between a train and a pickup truck occurred on Jan. 14, in Auburn, Wash. *Cascades* Tr. No. 501 struck the pickup which was backing up in the parking lot of an auto repair shop and backed into an area too close to the tracks. The collision occurred about 8:30 a.m. and delayed the train by about 45 minutes. No one was injured in the accident.

**DEPOT DOINGS**

VICTORVILLE, CALIF. The Amtrak station will gain six additional parking spaces with the demolition and redevelopment of the adjacent Forrest Park. On Jan. 16, the Victorville City Council approved the demolition of the park which had become a high crime area. There are no plans for the use of the remainder of the land at this time.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. Amtrak has relocated its passenger service operations in Albuquerque to the Alvarado Transportation Center at 320 1st Street, SW. The Center is an intermodal station located just across a plaza from the former Amtrak depot. It provides better accommodations and connections between the *Southwest Chief* and other modes of transportation. Amtrak and Greyhound share the building with ABQRide, the city transit operation, Greyhound subsidiaries Texas, New Mexico & Oklahoma Coaches and Americanos USA. Also, the state's *Rail Runner Express* trains share track and platform space with Amtrak trains. Amtrak plans to convert its former space into a base for train and engine crews.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

**URBAN RAIL TRANSIT**

by **DICK FINLEY**

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL**

**RIDERSHIP**

December 2007	Red Line	Blue Line	Green Line	Gold Line
Weekday Ave.	127,020	68,843	34,155	18,177
Saturday Ave.	84,190	46,332	19,027	11,608
Sunday Ave.	75,618	41,657	16,223	9,270
Monthly Total	3,415,072	1,858,461	875,573	477,212

**GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION**

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

(MTA)(Metro) has delayed in putting the Gold Line Foothill Extension on a critical funding list. Hundreds of millions of dollars in developments planned or already under construction around proposed Gold Line stations in Monrovia, Azusa and Glendora could be in jeopardy if the light rail extension is not completed. The MTA Board of Directors decided in January to keep the estimated \$1.4 billion project off the list, at the least delaying the 24-mile rail extension from Pasadena to Claremont.

It is no surprise that the San Gabriel Valley has so far been unsuccessful in getting even the \$8 million operating commitment from MTA, said Douglas Johnson, a fellow with the Rose Institute of State and Local Government at Claremont McKenna College. "On all levels, federal, state and county," Los Angeles and the Westside have the advantage, said Johnson. "The perfect example is the Gold Line, which has been talked about for years with no progress, while the Westside Subway (to the Sea) has been resuscitated in recent months. The contrast is just telling."

"We are very concerned," said City Manager Fran Delach. Developers are spending between \$120 million and \$150 million in transit-oriented projects around one of Azusa's proposed Gold Line stations. Construction has already begun on the Azusa Village Center, a 66-condominium development with 32,500 square feet of ground-floor retail space going up within a block of the proposed Downtown station. Further delays to the Gold Line – or outright cancellation of the project – could spell disaster for such projects, according to Delach.

Despite MTA's decision, Delach said his city is proceeding as planned in the hopes that the project will eventually be built. Delach added that the Metrolink line along the 10 Freeway corridor has been extremely successful and would be replicated in the north San Gabriel Valley. "Frankly I don't understand what is wrong with the MTA," he said.

Officials in Monrovia and Glendora, which also have development planned around their respective stations, vowed to push forward with their projects. "We in the city believe that the Gold Line will eventually come through," said Glendora Planning Manager Dianne Walter, who said two transit-oriented developments alongside the city's proposed station near Glendora Avenue are "moving forward rapidly." "We have designed our whole central area including our village and town center mixed-use district around our future station, so it is our hope and expectation that (the Gold Line will be built)," she said.

Monrovia Mayor Rob Hammond was also optimistic that "ultimately the Gold Line will come true." And it better, because there are plans for an 80-acre revamp of the South Myrtle Avenue area around the station including homes, commercial and office buildings that has an estimated cost of \$750 million to \$1 billion. "It is our fervent hope that the MTA sees the value of the people of the San Gabriel Valley," Hammond said. "We have been left out of so much compared to Los Angeles and we are due some help. We can't be quiet forever."

Local cities have been trying to get the Metro Board to put the project on its funding list – known as the long-range plan – since at least 2006. The move is necessary because by doing so, Metro would at least guarantee funding to operate the line – a requirement to qualify for up to \$320 million in federal funds.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### NORTH COUNTY TRANSIT DISTRICT (SAN DIEGO)

The North County Transit District (NCTD) has selected March 9, 2008, as the start date for public service of the new *SPRINTER* light rail train. NCTD originally hoped to begin passenger service by the end of Dec., but settled instead for a trial run for VIPs on Dec. 28, 2007.

"We want to begin offering service for passengers on the *SPRINTER* as soon as possible but safety certification of the system is our current priority," said NCTD Executive Director Karen King. Even with the date of March 9, there may be some landscaping and other tasks that will need to be completed after operations begin.

The reasons for the delay are numerous. Diesel Multiple Unit trains, such as the *SPRINTER*, have never been operated before in California and therefore, both state and federal regulatory agencies have employed a high level of scrutiny during inspections.

One technical issue that will not likely be resolved is the eastbound platform at the Escondido Avenue (Vista) station. The Escondido Avenue platform has been a continual problem. The district originally designed its stations for a shorter train, and saw after awarding bids that the new train cars were longer, forcing the district to redesign the 15 stations. A modification to adjust the station platforms to more accurately line-up with vehicle doors is presently underway.

The cost of demolishing and rebuilding the platform is unknown, said Peter Aadland, NCTD's director of communications and business development. The \$477 million project is approaching its \$484 million budget cap. Passengers will be transported to/from this station for all eastbound trips via bus, which will be in place when the *SPRINTER* service begins on March 9. It is anticipated that the eastbound Escondido Avenue station will be fully functional by late spring 2008.

Aadland said the revised start date will offer the operations contractor for the *SPRINTER* added time to test the operating schedule to ensure a more reliable service. The project involves rebuilding 22 miles of track that was used by freight for 60 years between Oceanside and Escondido.

[Info. from NCTD via Charles Varnes, *Observation Platform*]

#### OCEANSIDE PASSING TRACK

A new passing track project underway in Oceanside aims to make local rail more efficient, officials said. It will run parallel to the existing coastal rail line, from Oceanside Blvd. south almost to the Oceanside-Carlsbad border and will include a new concrete rail bridge over Loma Alta Creek.

About 50 passenger and freight trains ride local rails every day, and the approach to Oceanside is one of the worst because so many different types of trains stop there, said Lane Fernandes, manager of commuter rail for the NCTD. That makes it a challenge to shunt trains onto a passing track when another train is coming in the opposite direction, he said. The \$8.5 million project will include a "universal crossover" which will make better use of the existing parallel tracks from Oceanside Blvd. north to the Oceanside Transit Center on South Cleveland St., Fernandes said.

The transit district owns 60.6 miles of track from the Orange County border south to the Santa Fe Station in downtown San

Diego. Though the district, which operates the Coaster commuter train, owns the rail, it is not paying for the new passing track in Oceanside. Rather, Amtrak Inc. and the California Division of Rail will pay for the 18-month project. The transit district's role as owner is simply to oversee the work in North County.

Vernae Graham, a spokeswoman for Amtrak, said that her company generally does not build track anywhere in the United States. But she said that the additional track, taken together with other improvements planned for the Los Angeles to San Diego rail corridor, should help Amtrak improve its on-time performance, which stood at 81 percent in October.

The Oceanside Transit Center on South Cleveland St., has become a hub of rail traffic. The station handles Amtrak, Coaster commuter train traffic, and is the southern terminus of the Metrolink commuter system that runs north through Orange and Riverside counties. When the *Sprinter* light rail operation begins in March, it will also have its westernmost stop at the transit center. However, the *Sprinter* has its own set of tracks, so it does not compete for space with coastal trains.

Fernandes said 26.2 miles of the 60.3 total between Oceanside and downtown San Diego have double tracks. The new 1.2-mile Oceanside extension will push that total to 27.4 miles. "As you can see, still less than half of our track is double," Fernandes said. "We are largely still a single-track line down here in San Diego."

[Info. from *North County Times*]

#### PORTLAND, OREGON

By the end of January, TriMet and Washington County police agencies hope to establish a westside precinct of the transit police force, filling five officer vacancies. The officers would spend most of their time on MAX light rail trains and transit stations west of the Oregon Zoo station. Gresham Mayor Shane Bemis says TriMet needs to send its police attention eastward as well as to the west. Rick Van Beveren, who represents Washington County on the TriMet board, said the new precinct should boost the police presence on the entire system.

#### Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad

It should be abundantly clear that Oregonians are in the midst of a wetter-than-normal climate period. Four storms of "100-year" proportions have now unleashed their ravaging power along the coast since 1996. Perhaps the most graphic example of nature's raw power was the devastating damage incurred by the Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad in 1996, devastation that was repeated during December's storm.

The rail line, which was built in the early 1900s along the pristine Salmonberry River, passes through some of the most rugged and landslide-prone terrain in Oregon's Coast Range on its way from the Willamette Valley to Tillamook. The rail line was repaired following the 1996 storm at substantial cost to taxpayers. But it now appears prohibitively expensive to repair the line again – the latest estimate to emerge is more than \$26 million – twice as much as it cost to repair the line the last time.

The Port doesn't have the financial resources to pay for the repairs. Fortunately, alternatives to the rail line exist that would not only protect the valuable Salmonberry watershed and its wild steelhead trout but also enhance the economic viability of Tillamook County, which is dependent on the flow of timber



and grain.

Extending a rail line from Tillamook to Astoria is also prohibitively expensive. So it's likely that barging rail cars to Astoria would provide the greatest benefit overall, given the potential costs of navigational improvement to Tillamook Bay vs. chronic and increasingly expensive rail line repairs. Many other commercial and recreational users of Tillamook Bay would also benefit substantially as a result of the desperately needed navigational improvements.

So what would become of the Salmonberry rail line? Ideally, the state would acquire the line and develop a scenic recreational trail, which would surely be treasured by tourists for generations to come.

[Info. from *The Oregonian*]

#### SEATTLE

Construction is moving full speed ahead on the new Lakewood Station in Pierce County. The Lakewood project, including a new parking garage, bus transit center and Sounder commuter rail platform, will be finished this year. Buses will begin using the Lakewood Station in the fall. Trains will begin running once track and signal improvements on the line to Tacoma are completed, two to three years in the future.

The Lakewood Station, located along the existing freight tracks adjacent to Pacific Highway Southwest near 47th Avenue, will include a side platform for Sounder passengers, as well as shelters and ticket kiosks. The parking garage will provide commuters with more than 600 parking spaces. The station will be a hub for regional and local bus service, providing important new connections to Tacoma, Seattle, Thurston County and the Olympia areas. Sound Transit is coordinating with the city of Lakewood on plans for street improvements near the station.

#### SOUNDER TRAINS

Starting Sept. 24, 2007, more Sounder trains began running. The third round-trip began running in the north. Sound Transit added a train leaving Everett at 7:12 a.m., leaving Edmunds at 7:36, and arriving King Street Station at 8:10. The new train will leave King Street Station at 5:35 p.m. for Edmunds and Everett.

One additional round-trip in the south will make a total of six round-trips trains running in the south. One train departs from the Tacoma Dome Station at 5 a.m. to King Street Station. A new reverse commute train leaves King Street Station at 6:10 a.m., arriving in Tacoma Dome Station at 7:10 a.m. The new trains will make all current station stops.

#### DOUBLE-HEADER ON THE SIERRA RAILROAD

by JEFF GELDNER

Sunday, November 4, 2007, dawned sunny and mild in Oakdale, California. The Pacific Locomotive Association of Niles Canyon Railway fame had organized an all-day excursion on the Sierra RR. The "Cooperstown Limited" would take railfans on a roundtrip from Oakdale to Cooperstown and return, featuring numerous photo run-bys.

Completed in 1897, the Sierra Railway main line extended from Oakdale in the west with Santa Fe and Southern Pacific connections to Tuolumne City in the east for a connection with the West Side Lumber Company. With a financial reorganization during the Great Depression, the Company's name was changed to the Sierra Railroad.

Fast forward to 2007 and the visitor to the state park at Railtown 1897 in Jamestown finds locomotives and equipment lettered with the historic Sierra Railway name. To the west in Oakdale, the operators of freight trains and the Golden Sunset Dinner Train use the Sierra Railroad name. Usually, Sierra Railway #28 and her consist only operate from Jamestown to Rock Quarry, a few miles east of Chinese. But the train was dead-headed on Saturday November the 3rd to a rendezvous with McCloud #18 in Oakdale.

McCloud #18 was built by Baldwin in 1914 and is slated for operations on the Virginia and Truckee's line between Carson City and Virginia City, once the venerable line is restored to operation. The Sierra RR has the contract to operate the V and T excursion trains, and it has use of #18 on their own line until the Nevada railroad is ready to take on passengers again.

Sierra #28 was built new in 1922 by Baldwin for the Sierra Railway. It and many of its sister locomotives, such as the #3, appeared in countless films and TV shows throughout the years. Through the magic of Hollywood, the "Hooterville Cannonball" lives (for those of us who remember the days of Petticoat Jct.)!

Shortly before 9 am, the train backed into the Sierra's Oakdale station, which currently consists of a collection of retired passenger cars next to the Golden Sunset Dinner Train's equipment. From the head end, the Cooperstown Limited Sierra extra #18 east consisted of the following:

McCloud #18 2-8-2 oil burner

Sierra #28 2-8-0 oil burner

Sierra 12 ex-SP Harriman heavyweight coach

Sierra 14 ex-SP Harriman heavyweight coach

Sierra 15 ex-SP Harriman heavyweight coach

Sierra 597 ex-Canadian Pacific heavyweight open-air car

Sierra 599 ex-Canadian Pacific heavyweight open-air car

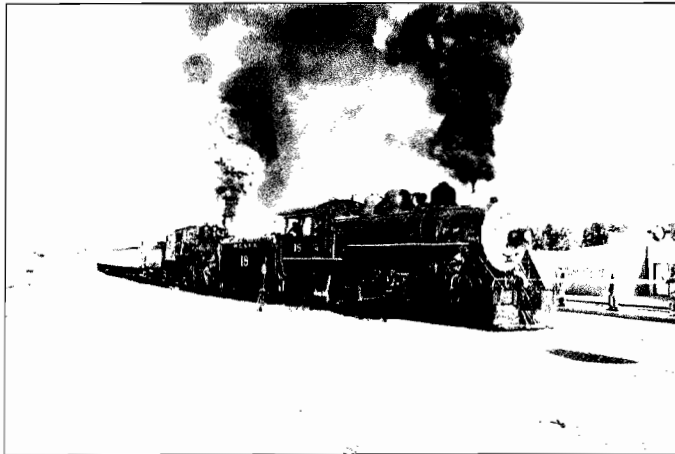
The passenger cars were all painted Pullman green. The former SP coaches operated until the 1980s in Peninsula commuter service in the San Francisco bay area. Some PRS members may recall the 599, the rear open-air car (with original seating configuration as built for the Canadian Pacific Railway) which was featured in SP special trains over Tehachapi Loop during the 1960s. Sister car 597 was equipped with a concession stand staffed by the Sierra RR where coffee, sodas, beer, wine, snacks and souvenirs were sold. Pre-paid box lunches with tasty sandwiches were prepared by Mrs. Luna, who stood at the ready to pass them out in exchange for the lunch coupons. Her husband, Harry, kept busy throughout the trip making announcements and organizing the photo run-bys. Yours truly may have lost count but I recall at least seven splendid run-bys were staged throughout the journey.

The first run-by of the day was a "false start" in Oakdale. The others were arranged in more rural locations away from the main highways where we were reminded to watch out for rattlesnakes! Thankfully, none of the participants had any encounters with snakes, although horses and cows seemed to run at the sound of the steam whistles.

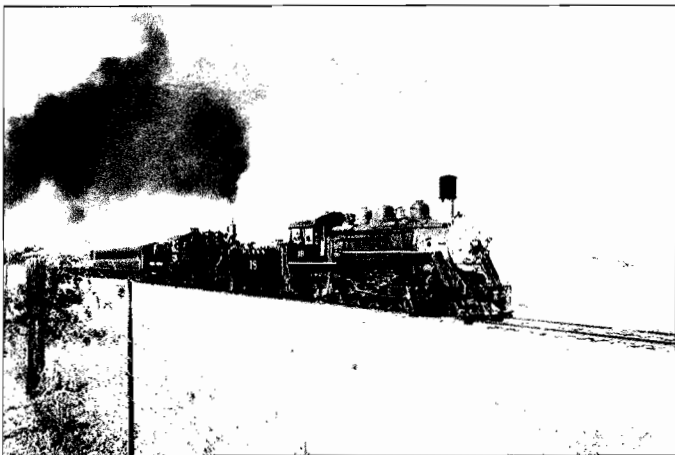
Usually the dinner train operates no further than Paulsell but our special continued to Warnerville for a long water and service stop. Once the train's servicing was complete, we received the highball for Cooperstown. Here, both engines were turned on the wye. #28 ran light ahead of the special to Warnerville. This would enable one photo run-by with #18 doing a solo-act

for the railroad enthusiasts.

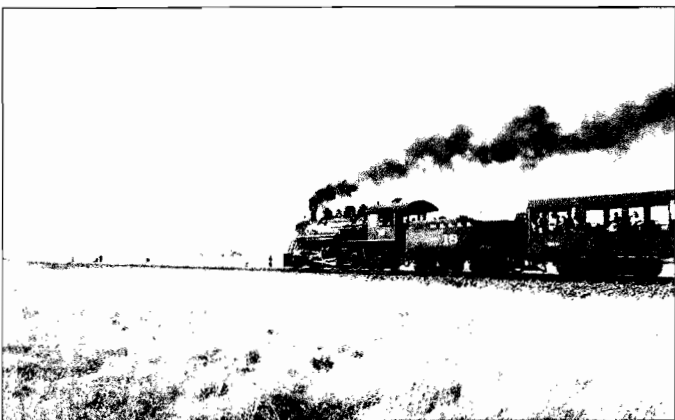
Our special returned to Oakdale for an arrival close to on time (4:30 p.m. or thereabouts). Everyone seemed to enjoy this unique excursion. A salute should go to all those involved, from the PLA, to the Railtown 1897 docents and the Sierra Railroad's dedicated crew.



*"False-start" run-by at Oakdale station of Sierra Railroad on November 4, 2007.* Photo by Jeff Geldner



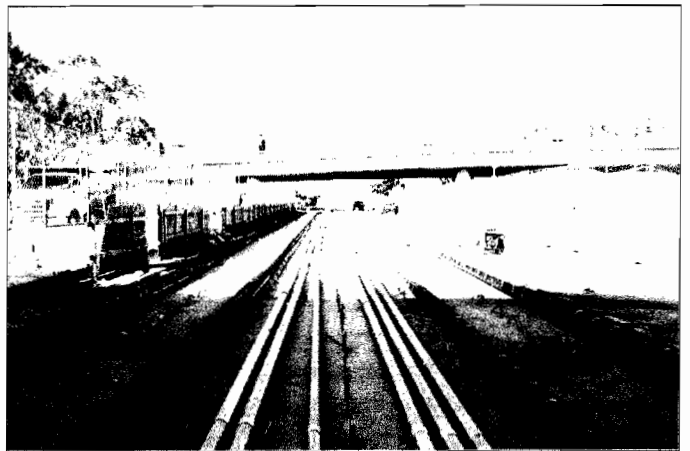
*Photo run-by between Oakdale and Paulsell on round trip to Warnerville and Cooperstown.* Photo by Jeff Geldner



*McCloud #18 engine only between Cooperstown and Warnerville on return trip to Oakdale.* Photo by Jeff Geldner



*Gold Line Eastside Extension is seen to the west along 3rd St. near Sunol Ave., where the U-Channel section has been completed and Overhead Contact System poles are being installed within the guideway.* Image by Metro



*View is west along 3rd St. at I-710 Overcrossing. Metro's contractor completed the I-710 seismic retrofit and structural upgrades on-time to allow Caltrans to continue work on the freeway median and shoulder improvements.* Image by Metro



*View to the east along 3rd St. is seen near McDonnell Ave., where Overhead Contact System poles are being installed within the new guideway. Metro and the Contractor are determining if vehicular access to properties can be improved as construction of the track guideway progresses.* Image by Metro