

WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

MAY 2011

WONDERWOMAN OF THE PRS 75TH ANNIVERSARY EXCURSION

by ROBERT KORACH

Marti Ann Draper has been with Pacific Railroad Society for many years, having grown up with her father from Railroad Boosters, and she has been instrumental in many successful trips. I have been in PRS since the 1960s when they ran the "Mountain Outin' Trips" via Southern Pacific's old San Fernando, Newhall, Saugus, Soledad Canyon route to Palmdale (now Metrolink's run) and on over the hill via the loop to Bakersfield.

In the 60s, 24 cars with five F units were the norm and the trip ran in April each year as the grasses turned green and the mountains were resplendent with new spring growth.

The weather on the PRS 75th Anniversary trip was also great and the train looked untraditional, but I was so glad it was there in any form since Amtrak's limited car supply makes such runs iffy at best.

With a lot of respect I mention the name of Ralph Melching, who we know was looking down from above and smiling as this trip ran. PRS folks will recall that name with warmth. I wish green signals ahead for PRS.

RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS MESSAGE

by MARTI ANN

Dear Friends! I thank you for all of your kind words. However, the PRS Diamond Jubilee Special was the work of a large number of people, not the least of which were our assistant Excursion Directors, Andrew Novak and Rolland Graham; our Rolling Stock Chairman, Will Walters; and our tireless committee workers including Stephanie Novak, Al Novak, Lindsay Smith, Dave Abbott, Stan Ames, John Anderson, Ameer Doshi, Barry Draper, Russell Homan, Dave Housh, Larry Jennings, Gary Kapic, Winston Lynn, Annette Markowitz, Rob Markowitz, Doug Peterson, Josh Thurman, Matt Wiles, and Mickey Murano.

The private car owners: Stan, Clark, Burt and Al, worked with us to build an interesting and enjoyable consist. Of course, if Union Pacific hadn't consented to the running of the train over their tracks, none of this would have been possible; and the interest, professionalism, and hard work of many Amtrak employees and officials, including Jack Wilson, George Luchs, Bruce Grey, Patrick Malone, Matt Daniels, and most especially Eric Smith, who made the request that we have heritage unit 156 as our lead unit, insured that the trip would be a success.

The reason we have an organization like Pacific Railroad Society is to harness all this individual talent to accomplish wonderful things. Thanks to all of you, and I hope you all had as much fun on this train as I did.

FILMING OF THE PRS 75 ANNIVERSARY TEHACHAPI SPECIAL

by TODD CLARK

Today, Mason, my son, and I spent almost five hours around the deserts and Tehachapi shooting aerial video. On the return we captured the PRS special west of Phelan on the Palmdale Cutoff. This was a tough shoot because the high winds in the desert made for some turbulent flying. Our helicopter was a Hughes 500 which has some amazing maneuvering capability.

The camera is mounted on a gyro-stabilized aerial video mount device that was designed for this purpose. It is an expensive piece of equipment that with the gyroscopes and batteries runs close to \$12,000. I bought mine for Train Festival 2009 and I have been renting it out to other production companies since then.

NOTE

by JIM BAKER

Todd Clark is the Webmaster of Trainorders.com, a subscription website Railroad Forum and an experienced videographer. The PRS train was caught on video just west of Phelan, CA on the Palmdale Cutoff. In the future Clark plans to offer a video of his work to the railfan community.

SAN DIMAS GOLD LINE STATION

by LINDSAY SMITH

On April 14, San Dimas and the Gold Line Construction Authority hosted a town hall meeting. They announced a plan to perform an EIR for a station to be located in central San Dimas between San Dimas and Walnut avenues. Access to the station will be from San Dimas Avenue and Arrow Highway. The automobile parking plan has been reduced to 400 vehicles by the City Planning Department. A parking structure will replace the storage company we use for surplus Museum materials. City Planning will restrict the height of the parking structure to three levels.

Today to enter the Storage Company, you must be westbound on Arrow Highway. The City Planners are protecting the Depot Grove area under development on San Dimas Avenue. There is no station access shown from Walnut Avenue or the Depot Grove area parking. Access from north and south of the tracks will be on San Dimas Avenue. A new crossing was shown at the tracks to restrict traffic through the rail right-of-way.

As I watched the presentation, I was impressed that the 400-car parking estimate is critical to San Dimas commerce because there is little surplus parking on any business day. The Museum Parking area is frequently filled from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. If riders come from outside the community on Interstate 57 or 210 to park all day, it may become difficult to shop or visit central San Dimas.

Planning diagrams show both freight and passenger rails.



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EDITOR DICK FINLEY
 TECHNICAL EDITOR CHARLES VARNES
 MAILER JOHN STALLKAMP

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PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM is operated by Pacific Railroad Society at 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas, CA 91773. Telephone: (909) 394-0616. Museum e-mail: PRSTrainman@aol.com Open Saturdays: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Mondays: 12-5 p.m.; Wednesdays: 1-5 p.m.

MUSEUM CURATOR DAVID HOUSH

EXCURSION DIRECTOR MARTI ANN DRAPER

WEBMASTER RUSSELL HOMAN
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PRS NEWS — ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

May 2, 9, PRM open Mondays, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., 210 W.
 16, 23, 30 Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 4, 11, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 18, 25 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 6 Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at Colonial Kitchen &
 Fri. Restaurant, 1110 Huntington Dr., San Marino.
 Personal dinner in private room at 6:30 p.m.
 May 7, 14, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 21, 28 Sats. to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 May 7, 14, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?,
 21, 28 Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce.
 Sats. Regular days: 7, 21; Extra days: 14, 28; Com.
 Mtg.: 21.
 May 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Board Room,
 Fri. MTA Building. See details below.
 June 1, 8, PRM Wednesday work party, 1:00 p.m. to 5 p.m.
 15, 22, 29 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 June 3 Board Meeting See June *Wheel Clicks*.

June 4, 11, Pacific Railroad Museum work party, 10:00 a.m.
 18, 25 Sats. to 4:00 p.m., 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 June 4, 11, Rolling Stock repair day, 8:30 a.m. to ?,
 18, 25 Sats. Saunders Yard, Noakes & Herbert, Commerce.
 Sats.
 June 6, 13, PRM open Mondays, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., 210 W.
 20, 27 Bonita Ave., San Dimas.
 June 10 Membership Meeting See June *Wheel Clicks*

MEETING PROGRAMS by RUSS DAVIES

May 13: **Amtrak in Southern California! May 1, 2011 marked Amtrak's 40th Anniversary.** On this evening we'll see a wonderful PowerPoint presentation featuring **Bill Volkmer's Amtrak** images from his years here in Los Angeles as a consultant working on the construction and opening of the Blue Line. Today Bill enjoys retirement in Florida, and continues to send valuable contributions to our Museum from his collections, and his photography. **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING DETAILS

Once again we'll be meeting at the MTA Building. The **MTA Building** is adjacent to the east side of **Union Station**. **Parking** is available in the underground lot shared by the MTA and Union Station. The probable cost, **\$5**, or the **maximum, \$6**, depends on timing. Free parking is available at **Denny's** across the street from the MTA garage entrance **if you eat dinner there, AND advise the Denny's Manager.** To get to the meeting from Denny's, **for safety**, cross the street at the traffic signal, and walk right into the covered MTA garage and parking. Then follow the signs in the garage to the MTA Building elevators, to your right. **The Board Room is on the Third Floor.**

You can also take any of the Metro rail lines, or Metro and "MUNI" bus lines, that serve Union Station, and Metro-link.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT by VIRGINIA GRUPP

At the Board Meeting on April 8, 2011, 10 new members were voted into PRS with the following names and seniority numbers: Winston Lynn #432, Matt Wiles #433, Lenore Fusans #434, Walter Lester #435, Lynn Laufek #436, David Crowley #437, L. Steven Cordwell #438, JoAnne C. Smith #439, Kelley W. Smith #440, and Richard Lindheim #441.

CORRECTION: The Election of Officers in the April *Wheel Clicks* should have read for Secretary, Neil Bjornsen, 70; and for Secretary, Bill Smith, 64.

A PRS EXCURSION OVER TEHACHAPI

Through the generous cooperation of the Union Pacific Railroad, Pacific Railroad Society was able to offer the first excursion run from Los Angeles to Bakersfield and return since 1979. The consist of the special train was: Amtrak 156 locomotive in 40th Anniversary scheme/Amtrak 510 locomotive/*Pony Express* former Canadian Pacific baggage car with half open doors for photography built in 1941, now owned by Stan Garner/Amfleet coach 82570/Amfleet coach 82720/Amfleet coach

82500/*Ocean View* former Great Northern dome lounge/
Amfleet coach 82710/Amfleet coach 80560/*Nenana* Rio Grande
Scenic former Santa Fe dome lounge/*Silver Lariat* former
Burlington California Zephyr dome coach-diner-lounge/
National Forum former Union Pacific sleeper now owned by
PRS.

PRS member Dick Donat came to California from New Jersey for a brief visit and to ride the Special Train. Of the approximately 375 passengers, a special one was Chewbacca, the service dog, owned by Judy Decker. He was the quietest passenger on the trip.

[Consist from Jeff Geldner]

AAR APRIL STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

by CHARLES VARNES

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of April 1, 2011, 283,649 freight cars – 18.7% of the total fleet – were in storage, a decrease of 22,667 cars from March 1, 2011. That is a decline of 22,667 cars from March 1, 2011, which is the biggest one-month decline in 12 months. There were 103,380 fewer cars in storage on April 1, 2011, than on April 1, 2010.

Currently, there are 219,204 fewer cars in storage than at the peak in July 2009. The total North American freight car fleet fell from 1.579 million as of July 1, 2009, when cars in storage peaked, to 1.517 million as of April 1, 2011.

In their report the AAR commented, “Even with still-high levels of cars in storage, there have been recent press reports of large new orders for new rail cars. Presumably, the new cars have features and characteristics that are lacking in cars in storage.” AAR defines a freight car as “in storage” if it has had a loaded revenue move since 2005, but not in the past 60 days. Rail cars are stored when they are not needed due to lack of demand; they come out of storage when demand improves. Figures are for the entire North American rail freight car fleet and include rail cars owned by railroads, leasing companies, shippers, and others. The total freight car fleet changes from month to month as new cars are added and old cars are scrapped.
[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators]

PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES AMTRAK

Amtrak reported that March 2011 marked 17 consecutive months of year-over-year ridership growth and was the best March ever for the company.

The railroad set annual ridership records in seven of the last eight fiscal years, including more than 28.7 million passengers in FY 2010. There was a 5.5 percent increase in riders in March 2011 vs. March 2010, or more than 137,000 passengers. The 17 straight months of year-over-year ridership growth spans from November 2009 to March 2011 and averages a 6.3 percent growth rate over this period.

Comparing the first six months of FY 2011 (October to March) to the same time period in FY 2010 shows ridership is up 5.9 percent, or 802,745 passengers. In addition, during that same period ridership has increased on all three of Amtrak’s major business lines: Northeast Corridor up 3.9 percent, state-supported and other short distance corridors up 7.7 percent,

and long-distance trains up 5.3 percent.

March and October through March ridership was: Northeast Corridor, 951,937 and 5,271,555. State supported and other short distance corridors, 1,247,579 and 6,969,071. Long-distance trains, 411,051 and 2,181,889.

Amtrak Fleet Strategy Plan

In April Amtrak issued an updated fleet strategy plan that analyzes the company’s need to replace its existing conventional and high-speed fleet and manage capacity to meet the forecasted growth in ridership across its national network. The 89 page report is available at the Amtrak web site. It can be found under Reports & Documents on the Inside Amtrak page.

Historical On-Time Performance

The March 2010 historical on-time performance percentages for selected routes were:

| Route | March 2010 | Last 12 Months |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------|
| Sunset Limited | 88.9% | 83.1% |
| Texas Eagle | 74.2% | 77.2% |
| Southwest Chief | 83.9% | 77.8% |
| California Zephyr | 49.5% | 52.5% |
| Empire Builder | 33.6% | 33.8% |
| Coast Starlight | 45.2% | 65.0% |
| City of New Orleans | 88.7% | 86.1% |
| Pacific Surfliner | 80.6% | 81.8% |
| San Joaquin | 86.8% | 90.2% |
| Capitol Corridor | 93.9% | 95.4% |
| Amtrak Cascades | 50.3% | 55.1% |
| Illinois Service | 85.1% | 74.7% |
| Michigan Services | 41.0% | 39.8% |
| Hiawatha | 94.1% | 87.3% |
| Missouri River Runner | 91.1% | 87.4% |
| Acela Express | 89.2% | 79.4% |
| Northeast Regional | 83.5% | 77.2% |

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

CALTRAIN NEWS

by MIKE GONDROU

Caltrain, in spite of its shortcomings, has always been considered a safe way to travel. That opinion changed on Friday, March 4, when a 47-year-old San Jose man was attacked by a group of 9-15 people on the platform of the Redwood City station. The victim was waiting for a southbound train at around 7:30 p.m. when he was attacked, then left on the ground by the assailants, who fled before police arrived.

The attack was especially brazen, since it happened in the early evening at a busy station adjacent to a shopping center where there is a lot of foot traffic. The victim was hospitalized in critical condition, and I am not aware of any updates. To my knowledge, none of the assailants have been caught.

On March 11, Metropolitan Transportation Commission Executive Director Steve Heminger announced that the drastic cuts planned for Caltrain service on July 1 might be avoided. Heminger has presented a range of options he offered for consideration by the chief executives of the three partners in the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board – the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), the Santa Clara County Transportation Authority, and the City and County of San Francisco.

Heminger expressed optimism that an agreement could be [continued on Page 6]



Following its arrival in Bakersfield on April 2, 2011, the PRS 75th Anniversary Special was met by a diesel fuel truck.

Photo by Charles Varnes



Marti Ann Draper standing in a vestibule with visitor on the trip to Bakersfield.

Photo by Ed Saalig



The sides of heritage scheme painted Amtrak P42 156 carry its first logo and the years commemorating the railroad's 40th anniversary.

Photo by Charles Varnes



The 75th Anniversary train stopped momentarily in Tehachapi on returning to Los Angeles, so the Tehachapi News could get a better picture under cloudy skies.

Photo by Dick Finley



Its happy passengers having disembarked from the PRS 75th Anniversary special train and departed from the platform, Amtrak 156 and 510 are pushing the train from Los Angeles Union Station to the coach yard.

Photo by Charles Varnes



Double-headed SF locomotives pull PRS Excursion #88 "Springtime in the Tehachapis" west of Mojave on March 20, 1955.

Photo by Dick Donat



Lindsay Smith, VP, presents a Santa Fe plaque to President Marti Ann Draper to mark her success in organizing the 75th Anniversary of PRS by running the Diamond Jubilee Excursion to Bakersfield on April 2 and 3, 2011. Photo by Tom Geer



A Metrolink train is inbound on Interstate 10 on April 6, 2011, with new Guardian Car control cab. Photo by Russ Davies



The staff for the trip to Bakersfield says farewell to Marti Ann Draper on a train platform at LAUS. Photo by Ed Saalig



Light-rail vehicle on the Expo Line right-of-way on April 8, 2011, looking west. This was the first day of testing the LRVs under power. Previously, clearance tests were done by pulling the LRVs by giant high-railer trucks. Photo by Russ Davies



PRS Excursion #86 "Colton Daylight" pauses on Rialto Ave. in San Bernardino on June 20, 1954. The train operated from Los Angeles to Colton via the Southern Pacific and returned via the Pacific Electric San Bernardino Line. Photo by Dick Donat



The light-rail vehicle is stationary in both views, parked for the weekend. This view is looking east with Exposition Park on the right. Photo by Russ Davies

[continued from Page 3]

worked out, but warned that further service cuts may be necessary, even if the worst-case scenario of a 48 train schedule can be avoided.

Caltrain’s Board has received another pasting from the press. According to a story in the San Jose Mercury News, since February 2008, the Caltrain Board has approved 200 straight items by an accumulative vote of 1591 to 0. Among the items voted on were decisions to cut service, raise fares, increase salaries, and change policy.

The Board is made up of nine members, mostly politicians who do not have a working knowledge of rail operations. The only exceptions are Arthur Lloyd, a very well respected rail expert, and Nat Ford, chief of San Francisco Muni. Since 2007, Mr. Ford has missed nearly half of the meetings.

While the Board members seem to get along, it has been suggested that a little raucous debate might be beneficial. Members say that the SamTrans staff has been so thorough when items come before them, there is not much left for the Board to discuss.

URBAN RAIL TRANSIT

**LOS ANGELES METRO RAIL
RIDERSHIP**

| | Red Line | Blue Line | Green Line | Gold Line |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| February 2011 | | | | |
| Weekday Ave. | 143,387 | 80,988 | 40,729 | 33,829 |
| Saturday Ave. | 94,720 | 49,378 | 22,887 | 25,995 |
| Sunday Ave. | 69,863 | 44,790 | 19,014 | 18,621 |
| Monthly Total | 3,526,064 | 1,996,423 | 982,175 | 855,043 |

RIDERSHIP

| | Red Line | Blue Line | Green Line | Gold Line |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| March 2011 | | | | |
| Weekday Ave. | 144,093 | 77,805 | 38,359 | 34,544 |
| Saturday Ave. | 99,973 | 55,221 | 22,096 | 24,687 |
| Sunday Ave. | 68,133 | 39,584 | 15,813 | 16,330 |
| Monthly Total | 3,986,555 | 2,168,741 | 1,033,901 | 958,570 |

[Info. From Metro via Ken Ruben]

LOS ANGELES BUSES CUT AS RAIL EXPANDS

As transit officials push forward on an ambitious plan to expand rail service throughout Los Angeles County, they also are proposing significant reductions in bus service aimed at cutting costs and making the system more efficient. Amid protests and heated debate, the board of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) on March 24 approved sweeping cuts to its bus service.

Plans call for nine lines to be eliminated in late June and for 11 lines to be scaled back through actions such as discontinuing weekend service. The changes will result in a total reduction of 305,000 service hours in 2012 – about 4 percent of all bus hours – and will drop Metro’s peak operating fleet to about 1,900 buses.

The series of reductions by Metro come after a federal judge ended a decade-long consent decree five years ago. The decree gave a court-appointed special master oversight over how the agency managed its bus service, which today accounts for about 80 percent of Metro’s total 1.4 million average weekday boardings.

Metro officials say they are still providing adequate service while making the bus service more efficient. Metro Chief

Executive Art Leahy tried to allay the fears of some at the meeting on March 24 by guaranteeing that “this is not a proposal to go back to 1990.” Leahy earlier said that ridership levels on buses headed into downtown each morning were “astonishingly low” and that the system was operating at only 42 percent of capacity.

Metro Chief Operations Officer Lonnie Mitchell also issued a letter to the Metro board saying that the changes are an effort to create a seamless network with other municipal bus systems and rail lines, such as the future Expo Line, and that “this program focuses on reducing excess bus capacity without leaving existing patrons stranded.”

In a separate action, the board directed its staff to develop a plan to acquire 700 zero-emission buses that would replace vehicles as they are rotated out of service. The proposal would start with a pilot program to bring in 30 zero- or super-low-emission buses.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times, Pasadena Star-News*]

OTHER BOARD ITEMS

Board action included a contract with HDR Engineering to provide professional services for the restoration of historic streetcar service in downtown Los Angeles. The initial tasks include documentation of alternative analysis, advanced conceptual engineering, and environmental technical studies. With approval of funds by the Community Redevelopment Agency, the following options would not exceed \$1,100,000: Environmental Study; Federal Transit Administration Small Starts Application; and Geotechnical Report Summary, Utility Relocation, and Traffic Signal Modification.

A board contract with STV/PB-ConnectLAX Joint Venture for an amount not to exceed \$4,770,585 for professional services to complete the Alternatives Analysis, Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report, and Conceptual Engineering for the Metro Green Line to LAX project with 20 percent contingency.

The MTA CEO is to prepare a Union Station Master Plan to integrate all transportation services serving Union Station and surrounding areas, including MTA rail and bus, municipal operators, Metrolink, Amtrak, and high speed rail, plus pedestrian and bicycle access and facilities, with incorporation of green/sustainable principles in planning, design, and construction. And ensure that Union Station’s historic status is taken into account in the MTA’s master planning activities, including both the positive and negative implications of such a designation.

GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION

The loss of construction jobs has been a serious blow to the San Gabriel Valley’s economy. No other sector has been hit as hard as construction which has experienced a 38 percent decrease in jobs since 2007. We all know that the Metro Gold Line light rail project will provide increased mobility and relieve congestion, but it will also be a huge economic stimulus for the San Gabriel Valley and Southern California.

For those who haven’t been following the project recently, the Gold Line Foothill Extension project extends the current Gold Line from Pasadena east through the San Gabriel Valley. Phase 2 will ultimately go all the way to Montclair in two stages with Phase 2A first extending service through Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale, and Azusa.

Phase 2A has cleared environmental hurdles and is fully funded from money dedicated to transportation, including Measure R, so there is no impact on the state budget. Under the capable leadership of Habib Balian, CEO of the Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority, and the authority's board of directors, the project is moving forward with haste.

But, a serious problem has arisen around the location for the line's maintenance yard. Designating a site for a maintenance yard is an absolute requirement for the Gold Line to move forward. The first proposal for a property in Duarte was met with substantial neighborhood resistance so the city of Monrovia stepped up, bought a property in their city and offered it as the alternative location.

Monrovia purchased it with redevelopment dollars, and the problem now is that the governor has proposed eliminating all redevelopment agencies in California. If the proposal is approved, the state will take all the cash and all the assets from every redevelopment agency in the state, including the Monrovia property. A separate oversight commission would dispose of the properties with all the proceeds going to the state.

This would cast serious doubts about when the construction of the Gold Line project could proceed. This is an example of the kind of unanticipated collateral damage being created by the governor's proposal to abolish redevelopment agencies.

We are so close to seeing this long anticipated project become a reality. We clearly need both the transportation and the economic impacts that it will provide and need them now. Let's hope the state can find another way to fix its budget problems so the Gold Line is not delayed further.

[Info. from Cynthia Kurtz in the *Pasadena Star-News*]

EXPO LINE

After numerous delays and cost increases, officials the first week of April began running test trains on the long-awaited Expo Line and have announced that the line into the traffic-clogged Westside could start operations in November 2011. The first phase of the project promises to move commuters about 8.6 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City in 30 minutes. Originally carrying a price tag of \$640 million, the cost has now reached \$930.6 million. The entire first phase of the line will go into downtown Culver City, but officials say they will be able to open the line only as far as La Cienega Boulevard, just east of Culver City, with an opening date of Nov. 15. They hope to finish the last 0.7 miles early in 2012.

It remains unclear how popular the line, which will extend eventually all the way to Santa Monica, will actually be. MTA has not released any ridership projections for the next nine years. But officials estimate there will be an average of 27,000 weekday boardings from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City by 2020, and an average of 64,000 weekday boardings from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica by 2030.

Officials see the Expo Line as a spoke in a wheel of rail lines that need to be built to provide Angelenos with better transit access and options for commuting. Rick Thorpe, who is heading the authority in charge of building the Expo Line, believes that rail projects are essential to the city's future. "The freeway can't take any more. You're now seeing spillover onto city streets. Pretty soon those city streets are going to get so clogged . . . and you can't add any more freeways; freeways have become cost-

prohibitive," Thorpe said. "Rail is about the only alternative that we've got left."

When the Expo Line was conceived, it was considered a low-cost option for getting rail service into the Westside. Costs rose because of design enhancements, safety concerns, and increases in construction prices. Delays occurred because the construction authority had to relocate its maintenance facility; there was a struggle to gain safety approval where the line crosses Farmdale Avenue near Dorsey High School; and safety improvements were needed at the intersection of the Expo and Blue lines, among other issues.

Officials hope phase two from Culver City to Santa Monica will not be so problematic. The Expo Line could also gain more passengers once the Crenshaw Line, which will run from the Expo Line to the Green Line through South Los Angeles and Inglewood is built

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

METRO BOARD TO CONSIDER LOWER PASS COST

Hoping to entice more riders as pump prices soar well beyond \$4 a gallon, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles is considering dropping the cost of a day pass by one dollar, starting July 1, the agency said April 11. The discount, lowering the day pass rate from \$6 to \$5, would be for a six-month trial basis on all Metro bus and rail lines. The agency's board of directors is scheduled to vote on the proposal May 26, Metro spokesman Marc Littman said.

At the proposed discounted rate of \$5, anyone making at least four rides on Metro buses or rail in a day would get a discount over the usual \$1.50 per ride fare. While the discount is expected to cost Metro as much as \$6 million a year, the agency believes the cost will be made up by increases in ridership.

Metro intends to take other measures, including deploying longer trains on the Gold Line during rush hour and other peak periods to handle additional crowds. It also will add more cars on the Metro Red Line subway during peak and off-peaks to increase capacity, according to Metro's website.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

PORTLAND TO MILWAUKIE LIGHT RAIL

Planning/Design: The project's design phase is 30 percent complete. City planners expect to be 60 percent by May 6. The Willamette River bridge crossing will break ground in July. The project's construction is slated to start after February 2012 after finishing the design phase.

Portland Waldorf School: The light-rail project has planned to install a retaining wall between the light-rail and Union Pacific tracks. Union Pacific's Tillamook Branch railroad tracks run just south of the school, and UP controls the private right-of-way. The newest question, according to Kenny Asher, Portland's community development director, is whether UP will allow TriMet to erect a wall between the school and the light-rail tracks.

Kellogg Bridge: As light-rail trains head south from the planned Lake Road station, they will traverse an elevated track over Kellogg Lake before making a nearly hairpin turn up McLoughlin Boulevard. Asher said the bridge will be "elegant, well-made and well-conceived," but what materials will be used and in what combination remains to be seen.

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

