

# WHEEL CLICKS

Pacific Railroad Society Inc.

OCTOBER 2013

## PRESIDENT'S REMARKS by NEIL BJIORSEN

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is continuing the public meeting process with respect to the Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) which MTA now owns and is moving forward with proposed plans for a major "re-work" of the historical facility. MTA has recently been conducting public meetings soliciting public input to the project. In mid-September, the planners will be providing an MTA Board "briefing." Then in October, the MTA Board will vote on one of the plan options. I would suggest the time is ripe for "local" PRS members, who are interested in the LAUS project, to step forward and become engaged with the exciting project. The direction MTA ultimately takes will have lasting impact for years to come. Your interest and input, at this time, could make a difference in creating, developing and implementing a sensible, quality endeavor. Be part of the LAUS "solution" as it is destined to become part of Los Angeles' history. Please contact [www.mta.net](http://www.mta.net) for a solution of on-going meetings. Remember, the MTA Board will be voting on the LAUS plan in OCTOBER 2013.

In a related LAUS matter, the l-o-n-g awaited "run-through" tracks are about to become a reality! There is an "RFP" in the works at this time, courtesy of METROLINK. If any one project would really enhance train operations at LAUS, the "run-through" track concept would be Number One. Stay tuned.

Welcome Aboard to new member, Mr. Josh Thurman, who was elected to PRS membership by our Board of Directors on September 6, 2013. Congratulations, Josh! PRS looks forward to your active participation in our organization.

There is a proposed change to the Bylaws of the Pacific Railroad Society, Inc., which would amend Article 4 sections 4.2, 4.3 and 5.11 of said Bylaws. The amendment proposal, if enacted, would greatly simplify the present annual PRS Board and Officer election process and provide for on-going continuity to those future electeds' serving as directors. PRS members may wish to review the proposed Bylaws amendment which is printed on Pages 2 & 3 of the September 2013 issue of WHEEL CLICKS. This proposed Bylaws change is scheduled to be voted upon by the PRS membership at the NOVEMBER 2013 General Membership meeting.

Summer is about over, children are back at school and there appears to be a lot more traffic congestion out there. Maintain your patience and drive SAFELY. Better yet, ride the train!

## ANGELS FLIGHT CAR ON TILT

Melanie Sherrin was on the Angels Flight car named Sinai, which was at the lower end of the track when it derailed about 11:30 a.m. on September 6, 2013. Sherrin joked that witnesses

were more shaken than she was when the Angels Flight unicular shook and ground louder than usual. The lower train had twisted off its track, leaving its sole passenger stranded in the derailed car.

Five passengers on Olivet, the car that was at the top of the line, were also assisted off the car. No one was injured, said Katherine Main, a spokeswoman for the Los Angeles Fire Department.

The railway's power was disrupted when lubrication from routine maintenance done September 4 weakened the connection between the grounding brush and the third rail, said Angels Flight Railway President John Welborne. The car's backup batteries drained and the emergency brake engaged, which lifted the car's wheels off the track.

The railway looks old, but it has a very sophisticated safety system, Welborne said: Computers make dozens of checks before each ride. September 6's problem was mechanical, he said, and the safety systems worked exactly as they should. The California Public Utilities Commission sent investigators to the scene, but no information about the incident was immediately available, said Andrew Kotch, a PUC spokesman.

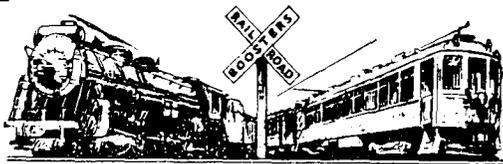
Angels Flight, which first opened in 1901 in a different location, was shut down in 2001 after a fatal accident. In that case, the brakes on Sinai failed, sending it crashing into Olivet. An 83-year old passenger was killed and seven others were injured. Federal investigators concluded that faulty mechanical and brake systems, combined with weak oversight, led to the crash.

The railway was rebuilt entirely in 2009, with several layers of safety systems to prevent such accidents, Welborne said. It reopened in March 2010. Angels Flight also had to temporarily stop operating in 2011 because of wheel deterioration. Inspectors for the state PUC discovered damage to the flanges – which hold the cars' wheels on the rails – during a routine inspection.

Angels Flight could be shut down for months as federal officials investigate why the funicular derailed. Dave Watson, a senior railroad accident investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board, said officials from the California PUC and Angels Flight President John Welborne spent Sept. 9 afternoon inspecting the equipment, running tests on the stalled trolley and gathering documentation.

Officials hope to have representatives from the company that made the funicular's complex system fly in for further testing later in the week, he said. Welborne said the fix probably would not be extensive and he did not foresee any major trouble. He's hoping it will reopen sooner. Angels Flight carries passengers up and down a steep incline between Hill and Olive streets.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]



**WHEEL CLICKS**

**OCTOBER 2013 VOLUME 77, NO. 7**

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**PRS MEMBER MEETINGS**

October 2, PRM open Wednesday, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 9, 16, 23, 30 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas 91773  
 October 4 PRS Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Valencia Room,  
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra.  
 October 5, PRM open Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
 12, 19, 26 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas 91773  
 October 5, Saunders Yard open Saturday, 8:30 a.m. to ?  
 12, 19, 26 Noakes St. & Herbert Ave., Commerce.  
 October 7, PRM open Monday, 12:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
 14, 21, 28 210 W. Bonita Ave., San Dimas 91773  
 October 11 PRS Membership Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Alh. Rm.  
 Friday Joslyn Center, 210 N. Chapel Ave., Alhambra  
 October 23 Nov. Wheel Clicks Mailing Party, 10:00 a.m.  
 Wednesday 1240 Dominion Ave., Pasadena. 626-794-0783

**PROGRAM**

**BY RUSS DAVIES**

**October 11:** On this evening, **Jim Baker will share** a treasure of railroad images from the 50s and 60s with us. Jim discovered them on the internet, and is calling it an **“Internet**

**Photo Album.”** Unlike most PRS presentations, **Jim will SEEK your input** relative to such things as the location, the circumstances, and in some cases, even the name of the railroad! **Be there, and bring digital briefs!**

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE by VIRGINIA GRUPP**

At the Board Meeting on September 6, Josh Thurman was voted into PRS with Membership No. 363. Two late renewals rejoined PRS and were assigned Nos. 362 and 364.

**ARCADIA INTERSECTION TO CLOSE**

The intersection of First Avenue and Santa Clara Street in Arcadia will close for six months starting September 9, 2013. The closure is due to construction of the 11.5-mile Metro Gold Line Extension rail project from Pasadena to Azusa. Crews will build light rail grade crossing improvements through the intersection, according to a press release from the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority.

Front Street between Santa Clara Street and St. Joseph Street will permanently close in September where a parking structure and transit plaza next to the future Arcadia Gold Line Station will be built. The intersection is expected to re-open at the end of February. A temporary re-opening is planned for a few days in late October and early November.

Construction hours are between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Posted detour routes will be in place during the closure. Sidewalks will be open on one side of the street at all times. For more information, visit [www.foothillextension.org](http://www.foothillextension.org) or call the hotline at 626-324-7098.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

**CALTRAIN NEWS by MIKE GONDON**

On September 1, Caltrain increased its daily parking fee from \$4.00 to \$5.00. Monthly parking permits will now cost \$50.00. The increase is the first since 2011 and was approved by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board as part of the Fiscal Year 2014 operating budget.

Caltrain’s ridership continues to grow, having increased by more than 11 percent in each of the last three years. In February 2013, weekday ridership surpassed the 47,000 mark, which is nearly double what it was in 2004 when Baby Bullet service was introduced. Farebox recovery is also strong and now covers 55 percent of the operating cost.

In August Caltrain was awarded a \$18,875 grant by the railroad safety organization Operation Lifesaver. The grant will be matched by Caltrain and used to increase awareness of the dangers associated with an active rail corridor through a series of rail safety videos targeting teens, commuters, distracted walkers, drivers, and other potential unsafe behaviors.

Caltrain has partnered with Operation Lifesaver and other public agencies over the years to try and increase public awareness of the dangers of an active rail line. While progress has been made, incidents still happen. On August 29, an elderly woman was struck and killed at Charleston Road in Palo Alto by southbound Train No. 210. The incident created major delays to the morning commute. Trains in both directions were delayed from 20 minutes to two hours as single tracking was carried out between the San Antonio and Menlo Park stations. The fatality

was Caltrain's tenth of the year.

In August, Caltrain launched a bike sharing program, which bridges the last mile gap between a rider's station and their final destination. Bike docking stations are located at Caltrain stations in San Francisco, Redwood City, Palo Alto, San Antonio, Mountain View, and San Jose. Participants pay to borrow a bike at a docking station and drop it off at another one close to their destination. The program is operated by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

### **METROLINK ROLLS OUT FARE ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE AT LOS ANGELES UNION STATION**

On July 1, Metrolink customer engagement representatives (CERs) and security guards began day one of Metrolink's latest fare enforcement initiative at Los Angeles Union Station. You may recall that, since December 2011, CERs have randomly inspected passenger tickets at select station platforms prior to passengers boarding the trains. The new initiative entails ramping up these efforts.

During weekdays at LAUS, ticket inspections are performed 85 percent of the trains prior to their departure. Metrolink sheriffs and security guards also perform ticket inspections on board the remaining 15 percent of the trains after they have departed the station. On the weekends, 100 percent of the trains are inspected prior to their departure from LAUS, in addition to Metrolink sheriffs and security guards riding the trains.

This fare enforcement initiative is the latest step Metrolink has taken to reduce fare evasion by assisting Metrolink conductors, sheriffs and security guards who already perform on board fare inspections, as well as team members who check tickets at station platforms. The increased security presence at the platforms and on board the trans gives passengers peace of mind during their commute. Metrolink chose to roll out this initiative at LAUS because 63 percent of Metrolink riders begin or end their trips at the station.

Following is a brief timeline related to fare enforcement.

**December 2011:** CERs begin randomly checking fares at select station platforms throughout the Metrolink system.

**October 2012:** Security guards begin riding Antelope Valley Line trains.

**February 2013:** CERs and security guards begin Metrolink's first fare inspection survey to evaluate the trains, stations and lines that need increased staff presence and determine the number of additional staff necessary to assist with fare inspection.

**June 2013:** Security guards begin riding the San Bernardino, Orange County, Inland Empire-Orange County, Ventura County, Riverside and 91 lines.

**July 2013:** CERs and security guards begin inspecting tickets at LAUS prior to passengers boarding. Metrolink employs 21 additional security guards to assist with fare enforcement.

If you board at Los Angeles Union Station, Metrolink encourages you to arrive at the platform at least 15 minutes prior to your train's departure. Please remove your ticket from your ticket carrier and be ready to show your ticket to a fare inspector. Metrolink thanks you for your patience and cooperation as it

works to ensure that every rider has valid fare and that you have a pleasant commute.

[Info. from *Metrolink News Events*]

### **THE COLTON CROSSING FLYOVER WILL SPEED UP CARGO AND LESSEN DIESEL EMISSIONS**

One of the worst railway choke points in the nation was eliminated August 28 with the opening of a \$93-million overpass that separated two busy tracks at historic Colton Crossing in San Bernardino County. Federal, state and local officials cut the ribbon for the 1.4-mile concrete flyover designed to speed cargo through Southern California and stop harmful diesel emissions from trains that used to wait up to four hours for their turn to go through the old street level crossing.

"Nov. 8, 2011, was the ground-breaking," said Raymond W. Wolfe, executive director of the San Bernardino Association of Governments. "Two short years later, we are now celebrating a new era in railroading. It's truly an engineering feat for those who build infrastructure."

Originally estimated to cost \$202 million, the project was completed well under budget and eight months ahead of schedule. Officials attributed the cost and time savings to innovative construction techniques, cooperation among government agencies and a competitive market that produced bids that were lower than expected.

The 43-foot-high span replaces the Colton Crossing intersection built in 1883. It is about 57 miles east of Los Angeles. Over the years, the crossing for what became the main tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company remained largely unchanged, except for modern track and signals.

Located off Interstate 10 near Rancho Avenue, the old crossing saw Burlington Northern's north-south tracks intersect Union Pacific's east-west tracks at right angles, forcing trains to proceed one at a time. More than 100 trains use the tracks daily, including those of the Metrolink commuter service, which shares the Union Pacific route.

Because Burlington Northern controlled the crossing for years and gave its trains priority, Union Pacific suffered the vast majority of delays, with many of its trains halted just short of West Colton Yard, one of the Union Pacific's largest freight facilities.

Robert Kern, a veteran Union Pacific engineer who is now a senior operations manager, recalled that he could make a run from Yuma, Arizona, to Colton – about 200 miles – in seven or eight hours only to be stopped at the crossing for one or two more hours before he could proceed into nearby Colton Yard. Occasionally, he said, the delay lasted four hours. You can't imagine how disheartening that was," Kern said. "This project will be a godsend."

Regional transportation planners say the chronic delays in rail shipments made the Colton flyover a priority for goods movement in Southern California, especially for the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the largest combined harbor in the United States.

Almost half of all U.S. imports shipped in cargo containers flow through Los Angeles and Long Beach before they travel by truck and train to other parts of the country. If trends continue,

the amount of containerized cargo handled by both ports is projected to increase 5% to 6.6% annually until 2020.

The flyover project is a public-private partnership involving Caltrans, the San Bernardino Assn. of Governments, the city of Colton, Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe. Funding came from the railroads as well as state and federal sources, including the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Proposition 1B, which provides money for goods-movement projects in California.

[Info. from *Los Angeles Times*]

#### FIRST SEGMENT OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINE

Two Southland firms will be involved in the design and construction of the first leg of California's 800-mile high-speed rail system. Tutor Perini Corp. of Sylmar and Parsons Corp. of Pasadena are part of the Tutor Perini/Zachry/Parsons joint venture, which has secured a \$985 million contract with the California High Speed Rail Authority to build the initial 29-mile stretch running from Madera to Fresno. The third partner is Zachry Construction of Corp. of San Antonio, Texas.

The contract includes another \$53 million in provisional funds to cover contingencies that might arise along the way, such as the disposal of hazardous materials. "We're very excited," said Ronald Tutor, chairman and CEO of Tutor Perini, which will serve as managing partner of the joint venture team. "We're a California contractor and it's a California job, so there's a lot of pride in it."

Parsons will serve as lead designer for the project. Parsons Group President Todd Wager said his engineering firm is equally excited to be involved. "We have delivered rail and transit projects around the world, and we are very excited to use our experience to provide such a system in California," Wager said in a statement.

Construction is expected to begin early next year and Tutor said the work will involve 500 to 700 workers. The 52-month contract period began in August. Barring any unforeseen delays, the Madera-to-Fresno segment could be completed by late 2017.

California's high-speed rail line will be the first in the nation. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles Basin in about two hours and 40 minutes at speeds capable of exceeding 200 mph, according to the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Depending on traffic conditions, that same trip could take as long as eight hours by car. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations.

The price tag for the entire project will be \$68 billion, according to the rail authority's 2012 business plan. Rail authority spokeswoman Lisa Marie Alley said the money will come from a variety of sources, including state bonds, federal grants and private capital.

The southern portion of the line will route trains through Palmdale before looping west to station options in San Fernando, Bradford Street and Buena Vista. The trains will end their journey at union Station in downtown Los Angeles. Alley said her agency has yet to determine which of those three station options will be chosen.

"We're still studying environmental impacts and how those locations meet up with other transit systems in the area," she

said. "But we're looking forward to working with the joint venture team on the first segment of our high-speed rail system." The rail authority said California's high-speed line will "connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs and preserve agricultural and protected lands."

Providing the equivalent new capacity on the state's highways and airports would cost more than double the investment to develop a high-speed rail system between San Francisco and Los Angeles, according to the agency. And even if that were possible, it would mean building 4,300 new highway lane miles, 115 additional airport gates and four new airport runways at an estimated cost of \$158 billion. Not everyone is thrilled with the concept of high-speed rail in California, and some fear costs could spiral out of control as the project moves forward.

Billionaire technology innovator Elon Musk recently unveiled rough plans for a "Hyperloop" that would ferry travelers from Los Angeles to San Francisco in about a half hour. The system would place them in capsules that would travel up to 760 mph inside a low-pressure tube. Musk said his entire system would cost about \$6 billion.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star-News*]

#### PASSENGER TRAIN UPDATES by CHARLES VARNES PACIFIC SURFLINER SERVICE CHANGES

Effective October 7, 2013, changes will be made to *Pacific Surfliner* Service. Amtrak, in cooperation with the North County Transit District, will begin stopping certain Pacific Surfliner trains at four new stops between Oceanside and San Diego, currently served only by Coaster commuter trains: The stations are Sorrento Valley, Encinitas, Carlsbad/Poinsettia, and Carlsbad Village. The trains that will stop at these four stops are: Northbound Trains 567, 573, 595, and Southbound Trains 784, 790/1790, 796.

Coaster passengers with any type of *Coaster* ticket may travel on Amtrak trains 567, 573, 595, 784, 790/1790 or 796 within the limits of their tickets at no additional charge. Travel may be between any two stops between San Diego and Oceanside, including but not limited to these four new stops. To travel on other Amtrak *Pacific Surfliner* trains (which do not make these stops) the *Coaster* passenger must buy a separate Amtrak ticket at regular fares. The step-up ticket for *Coaster* passengers is discontinued.

Amtrak passengers using Amtrak-issued monthly multiride tickets may travel on any *Coaster* train within the limits of their tickets at no additional charge. Ten-ride tickets are not honored because *Coaster* does not lift or punch tickets and there is no way to cancel a ride on this ticket type if it is used on a *Coaster* train.

A revised timetable for the changed *Pacific Surfliner* service will be issued.

#### AMTRAK GUEST REWARDS PROMOTION

Amtrak Guest Rewards members can earn double points for qualifying Amtrak travel from September 9, 2013 to October 31, 2013. Amtrak Guest Rewards members must register for this offer online at [AmtrakGuestRewards.com/DoubleDays](http://AmtrakGuestRewards.com/DoubleDays) to participate. Members must include their membership number

when making reservations for travel to qualify. A limit of two qualifying one-way trips per day applies. Amtrak Guest Rewards points will not be awarded for cancelled or refunded reservations or tickets. Other terms and conditions may apply.

AMTRAK  
LONG DISTANCE TRAINS  
Texas Eagle

Starting September 2, daily baggage service will be available at Joliet, Il., for *Texas Eagle* Trains 21, 22, 321, 322, 421, and 422 only. Passengers can check their baggage with an employee at the station.

Southwest Chief

Starting August 26, baggage service will be available at Fort Madison, Ia., Mount Pleasant, Ia., Newton Kan., and Topeka, Kan. as follows:

Mondays through Fridays, passengers can check and retrieve their baggage with an employee at the station.

Saturdays and Sundays, passengers must check and retrieve their baggage at trainside with an employee at the baggage car.

Starting September 2, limited baggage service will be available daily at Galesburg, Il. Passengers at Galesburg must check and retrieve their baggage at trainside with an employee at the baggage car.

California Zephyr

: Starting September 2, limited baggage service will be available daily at Galesburg, Il. Passengers must check and retrieve their baggage at trainside with an employee at the baggage car.

MIDWEST ROUTES  
Michigan Services

Amtrak Connect Wi-fi Coming in 2014

In August the Michigan Transportation Commission approved a contract to bring AmtrakConnect® cellular-based Wi-Fi service to Amtrak trains in Michigan. The State is the first in the Midwest to bring this amenity to all its rail passengers.

AmtrakConnect is provided at no cost to passengers and routinely supports between 30 and 50 percent of passengers on a given train. Service in Michigan is expected in early 2014.

To maximize the Wi-Fi experience for passengers, data-heavy activities that can slow everyone down, such as streaming video and music, and file downloads larger than 10MB, are restricted. This ensures high-volume data users onboard the train are not able to degrade the experience for others.

Michigan Track Improvement Project

The first of three Michigan track improvement phases for the 2013 construction season is scheduled to begin on Sept. 9. While the projects will cause some delays and modified schedules, the result will be upgraded tracks and more reliable service for Amtrak *Wolverine Service* trains as part of the Accelerated Rail Program being carried out by Amtrak for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

When all 2013 phases of the project are complete in November, more than 30 miles of new track and 130,000 new crossties will be installed by crews working ten-hour days.

Unlike past projects to make needed repairs, this track improvement work is an upgrade to the route owned by the state of Michigan.

Improvement work that was anticipated over the next two construction seasons is being condensed into 12 to 14 weeks this

fall. This provides great benefits from more reliable track conditions sooner and eliminates the need for similar track disruptions next year.

MDOT is leading a three-state effort to improve the 300-mile corridor from Pontiac and Detroit across Michigan, through northwest Indiana and to Chicago. The result of these and future infrastructure improvements will allow Amtrak trains in mid-Michigan to operate at speeds up to 110 m.p.h. as they do now for 80 miles in southwestern Michigan and part of Indiana.

Michigan has the longest stretch of higher speeds in the Midwest, with the *Wolverine* and Amtrak *Blue Water* trains carrying passengers at the highest U.S. speeds available outside the Northeast.

A goal of the project is to reduce the end-to-end travel time between Detroit/Pontiac and Chicago by approximately two hours from the current 6 hours and 30 minutes. For more information, visit [GreatLakesRail.org](http://GreatLakesRail.org).

The first phase of the project will largely take place east of Jackson Mondays through Thursdays of the coming weeks, with the tracks open for all trains on regular schedules on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. A Passenger Service Notice was distributed on trains and at stations to explain the Monday-Thursday schedule changes and provide more information about possible delays.

Blue Water Trains

Starting Sept. 6, bicycles began to be accepted aboard the Amtrak *Blue Water* (Trains 364 & 365) that operates daily between Port Huron and Chicago via East Lansing and Kalamazoo.

Uniquely in the Midwest, railcars on the *Blue Water* have been modified to create an area to securely carry up to four bikes per train on a popular route that serves two large state universities (Michigan State and Western Michigan) and several bicycle-friendly communities. There is a \$10 charge for transporting a bike in addition to the railfare, and cyclists are encouraged to lock their bikes onto the brackets mounted in the café cars when they walk their bicycles on the trains.

Illinois Routes

Lincoln Service and Texas Eagle Trains

The Illinois Department of Transportation and Union Pacific Railroad are performing the second of three phases of 2013 upgrades to Illinois' signature high-speed route, Chicago-St. Louis, for future 110 m.p.h. operation of Amtrak *Lincoln Service* trains. The construction work includes the installation of new premium rail with concrete ties and stone ballast; upgrades to bridges, culverts and drainage; signal and wayside equipment installations and upgrades; and roadway-rail grade crossing improvements.

For seven days starting September 16, bridge and culvert upgrades south of Bloomington-Normal will require Amtrak to charter buses for *Lincoln Service* (Trains 300-307) passengers at St. Louis, Alton, Carlinville, Springfield and Lincoln. Amtrak *Texas Eagle* (Trains 21/321/421 & 22/322/422) will detour between Chicago and St. Louis for the same period, with alternate transportation in both directions between Joliet and St. Louis.

A final phase of planned 2013 construction will also require substitute transportation in October. Schedules and a notice

about this disruption are available at stations and displayed as part of the booking process on Amtrak.com.

These infrastructure improvements will enable Amtrak to operate service at speeds up to 110 m.p.h. in the future, an increase from the current maximum of 79 m.p.h. in effect over most of the route. Starting last Thanksgiving, the Dwight, Mich., to Pontiac, Mich., segment became the first part of a Midwestern route to regularly experience trains traveling at speeds up to 110 m.p.h.

#### NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

##### Amtrak Special "Autumn Express" Train

Amtrak will operate a special *Autumn Express* train in November. The special train, which will depart from and return to Philadelphia 30th Street Station on Saturday, Nov. 2, will afford scenic views of historic railroad sites throughout Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

The train will travel the *Northeast Corridor* to Perryville, Md., then make a rare trip up the historic Port Road Branch (usually off limits to passenger traffic) along the Susquehanna River, passing through Enola Yard, crossing the Shocks Mill and Rockville bridges before continuing over the Columbia Secondary and back to Philadelphia via Amtrak's Keystone Corridor through scenic Lancaster County.

The *Autumn Express* is a first of its kind charter train which Amtrak will test as a potential new revenue source. The train will consist of a P-42 locomotive, *Horizon* coaches (with larger "picture" windows to take in the view) and café car.

The train sold out shortly after tickets were placed on sale.

Due to overwhelming ticket sales for the *Autumn Express*, a second run has been added on Sunday, November 3, 2013.

[Info. from Ken Ruben, Ed Von Nordeck]

#### AAR SEPTEMBER STORED FREIGHT CARS REPORT

The Association of American Railroads reported that as of September 1, 2013, 304,931 freight cars were in storage, a decrease of 3,727 cars from August 1, 2013, and equal to 19.8 percent of the North American fleet, excluding cars without a load since before 2005. For 18 months, since April 1, 2012, the number of cars in storage has averaged about 309,000, and has not varied from this level by more than 10,000 cars.

For the last 12 months the number of stored freight cars (and the percentage) of the fleet excluding cars without a load since before 2005 on the first day of the month was: for 2012, September, 311,226 (20.3); October, 309,261 (20.2); November 304,410 (19.8); December, 308,780 (20.2); and for 2013; January 317,223 (20.7); February 315,541 (20.6); March 311,739 (20.4); April 311,449 (20.3); May 302,833 (19.7); June, 299,573 (19.5); July, 303,547, (19.8); August, 308,658, (20.1).

[Info. from AAR Rail Time Indicators via Charles Varnes]

#### ALBERTA OIL EXPORT AND ALASKA RAIL & PIPE

Alaskans might get their long-sought rail connection with the Lower 48 paid for by Alberta oil produces. They are now interested in shipping Alberta oil, including tar sands oil, to Alaska to be inserted into the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and loaded on tankers in Valdez.

Another option is a pipeline to a possible Beaufort Sea port at Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories. From there it could be

shipped by tanker to markets in Asia via the Bering Straits.

Canadian provincial officials were in Alaska the week of July 15 to build support for new options to exporting landlocked Alberta oil. "We're pursuing all options, south, west, east and north," Ken Hughes, Alberta's energy minister, told the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, or PNWER, annual meeting, being held this year in Alaska.

PNWER is a regional association of northwest U.S. states and western Canadian provinces, and includes Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories. Shipping more of Alberta's oil south to its traditional U.S. market is stymied by the stalled Keystone pipeline. Efforts to ship oil west and to export oil to Asia through a new pipeline to British Columbia are being opposed there.

Given that, Alberta is now looking north, Hughes said. One option is the rail link or pipeline to Alaska that would transport oil to a possible connection with the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System at Delta. TAPS, which is operating at one-third capacity, would then move the oil south to the Valdez Marine Terminal for loading on tankers.

The second option is shipping oil through the Beaufort Sea. A study of a pipeline in Tuktoyaktuk is nearly complete. Hughes said in an interview, while an assessment of the Alaska plan is due to be finished by 2014. Alberta has retained two consultants, Calgary-based Canatec Associations International on the northern pipeline option and the Van Horne Institute and University of Calgary on the second proposal for rail.

G. Seven Generations Ltd., a Vancouver, B.C. firm with connections to Canadian First Nations groups, has been pursuing the Alaska rail initiative for some time. Hughes said, and has been talking with Alaska state and industry officials. Alberta has made a \$1.8 million (Canadian) contribution toward the cost of the rail option study, he said.

Alaska officials were not available to comment on the proposals by Alberta but an influential legislator, state Rep. Bob Herron, D-Bethel, said the rail option, "will get a chilly reception here after the Quebec disaster." Herron co-chairs the new Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

Hughes said he doesn't believe the Quebec tragedy will stem the growth of oil shipments by rail but that the oil and railroad industries will have to ramp up sharply on safety. "The Quebec tragedy reminds us that if we're to be able to handle the immense amounts of oil we see being developed we'll have to up and game in all aspects," Hughes said.

Representatives of G Seven Generations have made contacts in Alaska in recent months and have spoken of a rail system capable of moving up to 1 million barrels per day, but sources in industry said that number is far higher than would be realistic.

One engineering consultant familiar with the rail idea, asking to remain unidentified, says a technical hurdle will be the cost of heating the oil, or bitumen, in the rail tank cars as they are moved in winter through northwest Canada and eastern Interior Alaska, where winter temperatures can drop to as low as minus 70 degrees Fahrenheit.

Building through hilly terrain through western Yukon Territory and discontinuous permafrost soils in eastern Interior Alaska pose big challenges to a rail or pipeline, the consultant said. Another problem is that west coast U.S. refineries may be

unable to refine the blended Alberta and North Slope crude oil if it is much heavier than the oil now being shipped. Several refineries on the west coast were built or adapted to efficiently process North Slope oil. As the volume of Alaska oil has declined and grown heavier because of the changing types of oil being produced, the refiners have had to import lighter oil from Russia and other places to mix with Alaska oil.

If the oil is made even heavier by adding Alberta crude or bitumen it could complicate things for the refineries, resulting in lower values paid for the oil. A spokeswoman for BP, one of the owners of the Alaska pipeline, said she could not comment on any discussions of the rail/TAPS option.

Alaska Railroad Corp. spokesman Tim Sullivan said the state-owned railroad is still working on its own long-range plan for a rail extension from Fairbanks to Delta, and some day on to the Canada border.

The first increment of that is now under construction, a bridge over the Tanana River at Salcha, east of Fairbanks, Sullivan said. The bridge is dual road and rail and will initially be used by the U.S. Army, who is helping to pay for it, but the bridge is an essential part of an eastern rail extension because the route must be on the south side of the river.

"We have to take this one step at a time, and the bridge is the first step," Sullivan said. Route surveys have been done as far as Delta, and the hope is that the U.S. Department of Defense will help pay the costs to Delta to improve logistics for the missile defense facility there.

The extension on to Canada has always been a big question, but if Alberta oil shippers foot the bill along with sections of new rail from northern British Columbia through Yukon, the question will be answered.

University of Alaska minerals economists have studied to show that rail transportation and less expensive transport costs could lead to more development of mines in Interior Alaska.

[Info. from *Alaska Journal of Commerce* via Gordon Nunnally]

### **MEXICAN TRAIN DERAILS: 5 DEAD, 16 HURT**

An infamous cargo train carrying at least 250 Central American migrants heading to the United States derailed in a remote region of southern Mexico on August 25, killing five and injuring 16, authorities said. The train company and rescue workers were bringing in two cranes to help search for more victims among the eight derailed cars of the train known as "The Beast," officials said. Thousands of migrants ride its roof on their way north each year, braving brutal conditions for a chance at crossing into the U.S.

A mayor from the region, Jazmin Cano, put the number of casualties slightly higher, telling the Reforma newspaper that six people were killed and 22 injured. It was possible the toll would rise as the army and other rescuers continued to search the wreckage in Tabasco. Most of the estimated 250 people on board were Hondurans, Mexican officials said.

La Bestia is notoriously dangerous but is commonly used by migrants who come into southern Mexico from Central America. They hop on board, often after being forced to pay large sums to local gangs. Many ride clinging to the top of the train or to the sides, leaving the migrants especially vulnerable in any accident.

The journey for migrants is beset by dangers beyond La

Bestia. Every year thousands go missing, are killed, forced into slave labor, raped or threatened by drug and extortion gangs who control nearly the entire route and who often work in cahoots with local police or immigration agents. Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and the Foreign Ministry offered condolences to the families of the dead and promised to aid the injured.

Heavy rains had loosened the earth beneath the tracks and shifted the rails, officials said. The locomotive and first car did not derail and were used to move victims to the nearest hospital, which was in the neighboring state of Veracruz.

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

### **CREWS REPLACE TRACKS AT DERAILED TRAIN**

Crews began replacing about 1,800 feet of track on August 4th around the site of a derailed train that leaked a corrosive chemical and forced the evacuation of about 100 south Louisiana homes. The Union Pacific train went off the tracks on the 3rd near Lawtell, about 60 miles west of Baton Rouge. Company spokeswoman Raquel Espinoza said the cause is under investigation. "That section of track had just been inspected about three hours before the accident," she said. "There's no timeline on when the area will be completely clear. We're just taking it one step at a time so we can clear the area in the safest manner possible."

Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal declared a state of emergency on the 4th. Espinoza said one rail car leaked sodium hydroxide, which can cause injuries or even death if it's inhaled or touches the skin. Another spilled lube oil and a third leaked another chemical. State police said all the leaks were contained.

[Info. from *Pasadena Star News*]

### **UNION PACIFIC UNVEILS NEW AERODYNAMIC TECHNOLOGY FOR DOUBLE-STACK INTERMODAL TRAINS**

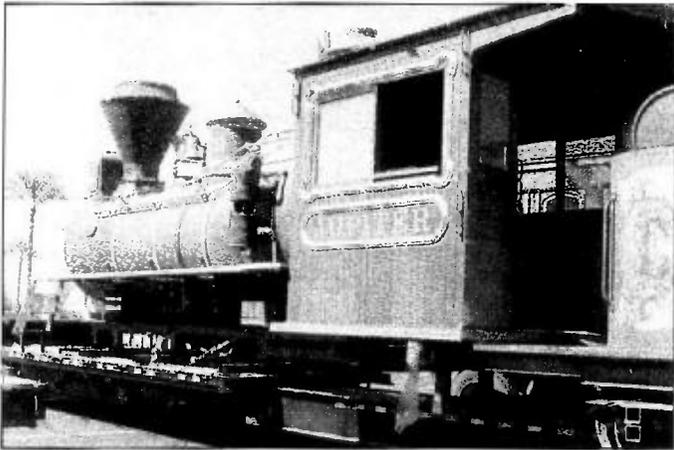
Union Pacific unveiled in August its Arrowedge® production version, piloting the employee-designed aerodynamic technology for fuel and locomotive emissions reductions on double-stack intermodal freight trains. Years in development, the Arrowedge® is the latest innovation in Union Pacific's ongoing commitment to design, build and implement fuel-saving technologies.

A double-stack intermodal train accommodates freight containers placed two-high, one on top of the other, for better ride quality and rail car utilization. Positioned on top of the first freight container, the 48-foot Arrowedge® has a tapered body that allows air to more easily flow around the train's top frontmost containers. This reduces aerodynamic drag for more efficient transport of customers' goods. In addition, drag reductions decrease the amount of locomotive power required to propel the train.

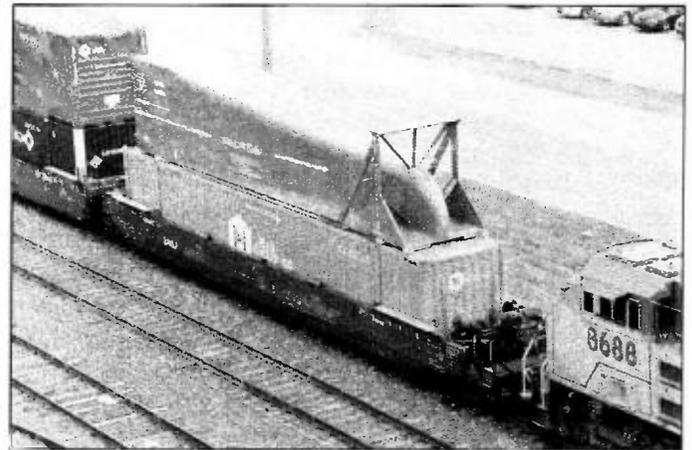
Union Pacific holds two United States patents for the Arrowedge®, with additional U.S. and Canadian patents pending. The company expects to introduce the technology into double-stack train service between Joliet, Ill., and Long Beach, Calif., in September.

Photographs are on Page 8.

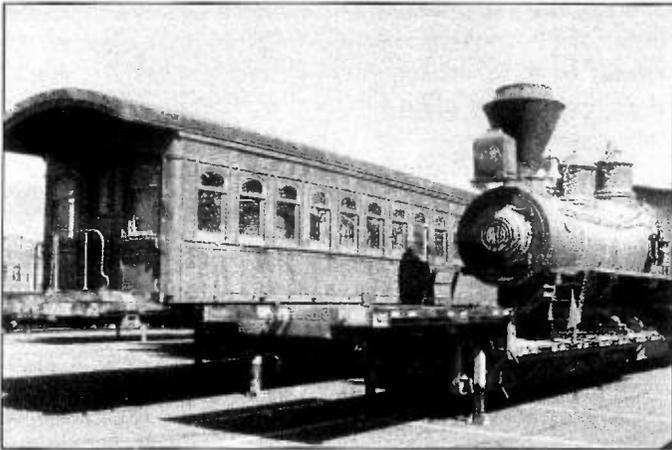
[Info from Union Pacific via Charles Varnes]



*Filming, consisting mostly of green screen work, was scheduled for about three months. Included among several cars is a replica and historical locomotive Jupiter.* Photo by Tom Geer



*A view showing the Arrowedge in place atop the first container of a container on flatcar train.* Photo by Union Pacific



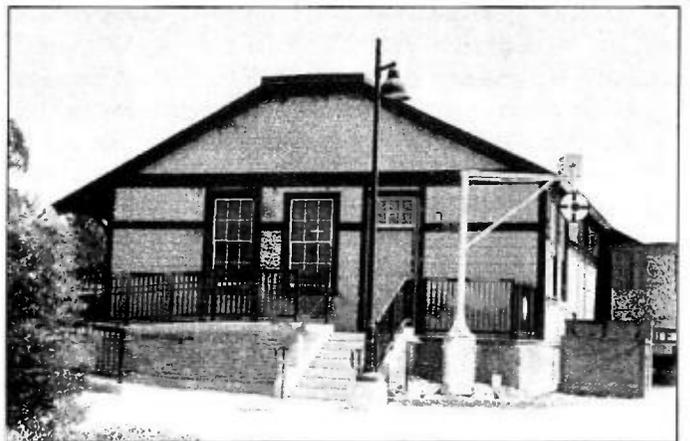
*Another shot of Jupiter with coach of Western Pacific Railroad on trailers. Including the extras, there have been as many as 300 to 400 people working on the site.* Photo by Tom Geer



*A view showing the rear and side of the Arrowedge.* Photo by Union Pacific



*The San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum will have a Grand Opening on October 12, 2013 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The main line is off to the right in this photo to the north.* Photo by John Petros



*In this photo to the south of the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, public parking is to the right. Additional information can be obtained at 805-548-1894 or on the Internet at [www.slorm.com](http://www.slorm.com).* Photo by John Petros