



Passenger Rail Bill Reintroduced as S. 294

"We have a chance to get Amtrak back on track...The future of Amtrak is looking bright...Congress is ready to pass a bill to revitalize Amtrak...I chair the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine. This bill is my top priority."

—Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ)

"This bill used to be Lott-Lautenberg. Now, it's Lautenberg-Lott. We never miss a step...There are some things in Washington that are truly bipartisan, including transportation...There are limits to how many lanes we can build, how many planes we can fly."

—Sen. Trent Lott (R-MS)

Senators Lautenberg and Lott, appearing January 16 at a joint news conference at Washington Union Station, announced that they would introduce their Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act, which they did later that day. The new bill, S. 294, is similar to S. 1516 in the last Congress, except for changes in the dates and technical amendments. S. 294 also includes the rail security package that the Senate has passed unanimously three times, most recently in H.R.4954, the SAFE Port Act.

Lott said the new bill was essential in

Amtrak's Strong Fiscal 2006

Amtrak's Fiscal 2006 ticket revenues were \$1.37 billion, a record, and up \$132 million from Fiscal 2005. This was Amtrak's first year-to-year increase over \$100 million.

Amtrak said its ridership of 24.3 million was "nearly 300,000 more than for the same trains in the previous fiscal year." This comment, akin to "same store sales" reports from some businesses, is used because of ridership losses from sharply increased rates for Northeast Corridor monthly passes on Oct. 16, 2005, and Feb. 16, 2006 (Sept. 2005 News, p. 4; Oct. 2005 News, p. 3), and from the effective hand-off of the last *Clocker* schedules and their New York-New Jersey rid-

order for the U.S. to have a reasonable national rail passenger network and an adequately funded Northeast Corridor. "This is about reform and accountability. We're going to try to find some efficiencies and some savings."

Amtrak CEO Alex Kummant introduced Lott and Lautenberg and expressed appreciation for the Senators' efforts. He said that the bill fits his vision of the rail network of the future.

Here are the highlights of S. 294:

- Over six years, authorizes \$3.3 billion for operations and \$4.9 billion for capital investment.

- Defines national rail passenger system as: Northeast Corridor, designated high speed rail corridors, and other long and short distance routes "operated by Amtrak as of the date of enactment."

- According to Sec. 201(1)(c), "Nothing in this Act is intended to preclude Amtrak from restoring, improving, or developing non-high-speed intercity passenger rail service."

- Requires monitoring of on time performance of Amtrak trains; Surface Transportation Board investigates when OTP of any Amtrak route falls below 80% for two consecutive quarters.

ers to New Jersey Transit on Oct. 31, 2005 (Nov. 2005 News, p. 4).

But because the lost riders traveled short distances, systemwide passenger-miles were nearly flat (down 1.1%) even though ridership fell 3.9%. (A passenger-mile is one passenger traveling one mile and is a standard measure for intercity travel, where trip lengths vary sharply.)

- Short-distance corridors outside the Northeast saw an average 5% ridership increase.

- Northeast Corridor ridership was down 13.5% (passenger-miles down only 4.7%) for the reasons explained above. Ridership on the premium fare Acela/

(continued on page 4)

- STB develops penalty schedule for passenger delays caused by host railroads.

- Freight railroads and Amtrak can petition STB for grievances (now only Amtrak can petition).

- Federal-state funding partnership; federal share, "not to exceed 80 percent of the total net capital cost".

This bill can provide a solid footing for Amtrak and represents bipartisan support for passenger rail. **Ask your Senators to support this bill, and urge your House member to support introduction of companion legislation.** ■

Amtrak Board Update

Since our last report (July News), the Senate on July 26 confirmed President Bush's nominations of Republican Donna R. McLean and Democrat R. Hunter Biden.

The recess appointments of Republicans Enrique Sosa and Floyd Hall expire when the Senate concludes the first session of the 110th Congress (at the end of 2007). President Bush renominated them for full terms, as reported in the January 9 *Congressional Record*.

However, given the Senate's preference for bipartisan confirmation packages, the Amtrak Board's current make-up that includes only one Democrat, and the fact that there would still be a vacancy even if Sosa and Hall were both confirmed, these nominations are unlikely to go anywhere until the White House comes up with at least one—perhaps two—new Democratic nominees.

Thus the board now has six members: Chairman David Laney (whose term expires in Nov.), DOT Secretary Mary Peters (represented by FRA head Joseph Boardman), McLean, Biden, Hall, and Sosa.

Amtrak's Diner-Lounge Program Advances

Changes of the magnitude Amtrak envisions here (Dec. 2005, Feb. 2006 *News*) must be made with care, including operation of prototypes. Amtrak must avoid a rerun of the Acela problems that stemmed from going into production without first running a prototype.

NARP strongly pushed Amtrak for a prototype. Amtrak agreed, and a converted diner (car 37000) is running on the *Capitol Limited* from mid-December to the end of January "solo" and—during the holidays—next to a conventional diner. It appears that there also will be a prototype converted Sightseer lounge. The plan is to convert all 48 Sightseers but only about 18 Superliner diners.

Amtrak's Brian Rosenwald told NARP, "If used correctly, the diner-lounges will open up opportunities and improve customer service." "Correctly" means not trying to run large trains with a single diner-lounge.

Rosenwald was answering NARP's Ross Capon who, expressing the concerns of some NARP board members, asked if the diner-lounge program is merely a way to downsize the service.

Rosenwald quoted Amtrak CEO Alex Kummant: "I don't know any business that has cut its way to prosperity."

It appears that most Superliner overnight trains will have a converted Sight-

seer car, paired with either a converted diner or a standard diner; in some cases, there could be two converted Sightseer cars. On the *Coast Starlight*, if the internal business case is made for retaining the Pacific Parlor Cars, the parlor would continue as a third feature car.

Tentatively, it appears that the *City of New Orleans* and *Texas Eagle* will have a diner-based diner-lounge running solo [NARP will challenge the *Eagle* plan]. This also could be true seasonally on the *Sunset Limited*, depending on how ridership develops; it has been returning strongly. On the *Capitol Limited*, single-car operation is likely during off-season periods, but using a converted Sightseer lounge.

Three NARP staff and several NARP members have ridden during the test period. Customer Service Managers are riding each trip, getting passenger feedback, including by written evaluations.

Many design changes already are planned based on the prototype experience, including more conventional seating and larger, differently-shaped tables.

NARP remains concerned about the project's impact on service quality and revenues and continues to monitor developments carefully with frequent comments to Amtrak management. ■

Major Transit and Rail Projects Completed in 2006

Continuing on last month's "Wheels of Progress" feature, here is a list of milestones achieved in 2006. [Note edits to last month's future projects list above.]

January 3—Edmonton light rail, University Station to Health Sciences (0.5 miles). First above-ground segment of the system.

January 23—Metra (Chicago) commuter-rail extension, Geneva-La Fox-Elburn (10 miles).

January 30—Metra commuter-rail extension, Orland Park-Manhattan (11 miles); intermediate station at Laraway Rd. opened October 6. Also Metra commuter-rail improvements, Chicago-Antioch (North Central Service); increase in frequencies, more reverse flow service, and opening of new stations at Grayslake, Schiller Park, Franklin Park and Rosemont.

February 25—New Jersey Transit (NJT) Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, Weehawken (Lincoln Harbor)-North

Bergen, 19.1 miles.

February 27—Completion of Baltimore Light Rail Double tracking.

June 25—Chicago Transit Authority "Pink Line" using parts of existing Blue and Green lines and recently rebuilt "Pauline Connector". Two new stations on connector at Madison Street (United Center) and Van Buren Street to open in the future.

July 1—Fourth Seattle-Portland *Cascades* round-trip.

July 14—Sandoval-Albuquerque, New Mexico, "Rail Runner" commuter rail. Los Lunas station opened December 11.

July 17—NJT Newark Light Rail (formerly Newark City Subway), Broad Street Station-Washington Park-Penn Station (1 mile).

August 14—New Amtrak station opened at Sturtevant, WI (Sept. *News*).

August 28—More Capitol Corridor frequencies for a total of seven San Jose-

Wheels of Progress Updates

These events are either corrections or additions to the larger list published in January *NARP News*.

Lengths of Extensions of Calgary Transit: Dalhousie-Crowfoot, 2.4 mi; Whitehorn-McKnight/Westwinds: 1.6 mi.

January 8, 2007: Montreal AMT (commuter rail) extension, Blainville-St. Jerome (9.8 mi.).

Late January 2007: Downtown Bernardillo station and Albuquerque-Belen segment of New Mexico's Rail Runner Commuter Rail open.

Late February 2007: Little Rock River Rail (streetcar) extension to Bill Clinton Library and Heifer International Headquarters. First test trip operated on January 18.

Fall 2007: New Jersey Transit Pascack Valley Line capacity improvements permit reverse-flow and weekend service.

2013: East Side Access project in New York City, providing access for Long Island R.R. commuter trains into Grand Central Terminal. FTA signed the Full Funding Grant Agreement in December.

Oakland round-trips, 16 Oakland-Sacramento (highest outside Northeast Corridor).

August 28—St. Louis MetroLink Cross County light rail extension, Forest Park-Shrewsbury (8 miles).

September 18—Nashville-Lebanon "Music City Star" commuter rail (32 mi.)

October 30—New Amtrak Illinois services: one more round-trip each Chicago-Carbondale and Chicago-Quincy; two more Chicago-St. Louis (Page 3 and June, December *News*).

October 30—Keystone Corridor (Harrisburg-Philadelphia-New York City) returns to all-electric operation with cab control cars; faster, more frequent service (December *News*).

November 19—Denver "T-REX" Southeast Corridor Light Rail expansion 19.1 miles, I-25/Broadway to Nine Mile Road and Lincoln Road (two branches).

December 8—Sacramento light rail spur to Amtrak station (0.7 miles). ■

Lincoln Service (Chicago-St. Louis) Inaugural Festivities



—All three photos, David Johnson

More trains on existing Illinois lines were celebrated October 17-19 (December News); ridership on these routes has been impressive: Chicago-Quincy up 37.5%, Chicago-Carbondale up 75%, and Chicago-St. Louis up 42% (all December 2006 vs. December 2005). Here are photos from the Lincoln Service inaugural:

(above, l.) The Springfield Community Band greeted the special train. Illinois DOT Secretary Timothy Martin addressed the crowd.

(above r.) Honest Abe himself came out to cut a ceremonial ribbon for “his” train at Lincoln, IL. Joining “President Lincoln” in dedicating the train are (l. to r.) Springfield Mayor Timothy Davlin, Lincoln Mayor Elizabeth Davis, Ray Lang of Amtrak Government Affairs, and other local officials.

(r.) Alton Mayor Donald E. Sandidge and other dignitaries turned out to welcome the special train and held a banner reading “Alton Welcomes New Amtrak Arrivals!”



Amtrak Restructures, Names New Executives

A number of key management changes took effect December 18, and more followed—or are to come—in January.

Emmett Fremaux gained responsibilities and is now Vice President for Marketing and Product Management, reporting directly to CEO Alex Kummant. Fremaux had been Vice President—Customer Service under Chief Operating Officer Bill Crosbie.

Joe McHugh, Vice President—Government Affairs, now also has Corporate Communications. Currently, Cliff Black is the senior communications official, reporting to McHugh.

Barbara Richardson, who managed the Marketing and Sales organization, and Bill Schulz, Director of Corporate Communications, both have left Amtrak.

On January 5, Amtrak announced that **Roy Johanson** had been named Vice President, Planning and Analysis. Since 2005, he had been CEO for Foresti Partners LLC, dealing in corporate development strategy for a variety of industrial and manufacturing clients. He had worked as an Engagement Manager for McKinsey & Company, where he specialized in companies with “distributed assets,” including airlines and Union Pacific (but not Amtrak). He holds a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering from the Univer-

sity of Michigan and an M.B.A. from Cornell. Paul Nissenbaum, who had been director of planning, will work closely with Johanson before assuming a new executive role in the next several months.

In Transportation, Jon Tainow is acting vice president following the departure of Tom Schmidt. Also, **James F. McDonnell III**, with over 30 years of security and counterterrorism experience, will be chief risk officer. As head of the Police and Security Department, which was separated from Operations, McDonnell reports directly to Kummant.

After the 9-11 attacks, McDonnell first led the Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Assurance. After creation of the Department of Homeland Security was announced, he moved to the White House Security Transition Planning Office where he was responsible for developing the plans, budgets and policies required to transfer operations from six agencies into DHS. He then became director of DHS’s Protective Security Division before starting his own consulting firm. At Amtrak, McDonnell succeeds Al Broadbent.

Eleanor Acheson begins as General Counsel on January 29. She will succeed Alicia Serfaty, who will continue as Counsel to the President to assist in the transition. Acheson served the Clinton Ad-

ministration as U.S. Attorney General for Policy Development. More recently, she has been director of Public Policy and Government Affairs for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. A distinguished attorney, Acheson was one of two legal experts interviewed on the News Hour in October, 2004, discussing significance of the likelihood that the winner of the 2004 Presidential election would get more than one nominee onto the Supreme Court. She is the grand-daughter of Dean Acheson, President Harry Truman’s famous secretary of state and Cold War policy architect.

H. Edgar (“Ed”) Trainor began as Chief Information Officer on December 16. Since 1994, he has been Senior Vice President/CIO for Paramount Pictures. He served Amtrak 1976-85 as Assistant Vice President, Computer Services. Steve Emanuel, who headed that department, is Trainor’s deputy, handling the day-to-day operations of Amtrak Technologies.

Treasurer **Dale Stein** is acting chief financial officer; David Smith has left.

Also in December, **Frank Vacca** was selected to be chief engineer. Bruce Willbrant once again is deputy chief engineer for maintenance. He had been acting chief engineer after David Hughes became acting CEO in Nov., 2005. ■



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
RAILROAD PASSENGERS

NARP NEWS

Vol. 41, No. 2 February 2007

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

George Chilson, President; James Churchill, Wayne Davis, Arthur Poole, David Randall, Robert J. Stewart, Vice Presidents; Albert L. Papp, Jr., Secretary; Robert W. Glover, Treasurer;

Ross B. Capon, Executive Director; David R. Johnson, Assistant Director; Douglas Kidd, Director of Finance and Administration, Tiffanie H. Childs, Office Manager

National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News* (ISSN 0739-3490), published monthly (except Nov.), by NARP; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, <narp@narprail.org>, <www.narprail.org>. ©2007 National Assoc. of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues \$35/year (\$20/under 21, \$25/over 65), of which \$5 is a subscription to *NARP News*. Periodicals Postage Paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News*; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557.

(This has news through January 22. Vol. 41, No. 1 was mailed January 4.)

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Capitol Corridor, San Joaquin service changes—For UP and BNSF Railway (respectively) trackwork projects in January and February. Full details on both projects at www.amtrakcalifornia.com, or contact Amtrak.

Trackwork affects Palmetto—Extensive CSX track and tie replacement program will affect the *Palmetto* in January and February. Check with Amtrak prior to traveling: the service modifications are numerous, vary by date, and include terminating the train at Florence or Dillon and detouring the northbound *Palmetto* on the route of

the *Silver Star*.

Amtrak Guest Reward Credit Card Changes—Amtrak and Bank of America have agreed to discontinue the existing credit card program. AGR will be offering a new Amtrak Guest Rewards credit card beginning in April; details to follow. Current cardholders will continue to earn Amtrak Guest Rewards points on the Amtrak Guest Reward credit card from Bank of America for all purchases that are posted prior to the closing date of the May 2007 Bank of America statement. No new credit card applications are being taken at this time; more information on that in April.

Amtrak's 2006

(from page 1)

Metroliner services rose 8.8%.

- Overnight trains, in spite of three routes impacted by Hurricane Katrina's and three other routes devastated by terrible on-time performance, saw ridership fall just 1.3%. The *Empire Builder* continued to respond positively to the extra effort Amtrak has given it, with ridership and passenger-mile growth both exceeding 4%. *Acela Express* on-time performance was 84.6%, up 20 percentage points from Fiscal 2005. The Fiscal 2007 figure through Jan. 18 (3-1/2 months) is 87.8%; the goal is 90%.

In addressing the NARP board in October (Dec. *News*), Amtrak Chairman David Laney stated with pride that Amtrak's "employees' injury rate is down steeply from 4.3 per 200,000 hours worked in 2002 to 3.2 today." ■

Attend your 2007 NARP Regional Meeting!

This is a good way to meet NARP officers, staff, board members, and fellow rail advocates. There are informative outside speakers as well.

Specifics about each meeting, including location, registration fee, and contact information, are on our website and will be detailed in a mailing you should receive well in advance of your meeting.

NARP members who live inside and outside the U.S. are welcome to attend any meeting and of course to bring guests.

The list below also shows where NARP President George Chilson, Executive Director Ross Capon, Assistant Director David Johnson and selected Amtrak executives are to speak.

Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT): March 31, Boston (Johnson)

Region 2 (NY): March 10, Schenectady (Capon)

Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA): May 12, Harrisburg (Johnson)

Region 4 (DC, MD, VA, WV): March 17, Baltimore (Chilson and Emmett Fremaux, Amtrak VP, Marketing & Product Management; see page 3 story)

Region 5 (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN): March 31, Nashville (Capon)

Region 6 (IN, MI, OH) and Region 7 (IL, MN, ND, WI): Combined meeting, March 24, Chicago (Chilson)

For the latest news, visit our website at <www.narprail.org> and click on "Hotline News." It is posted Friday afternoons.

Region 8 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA): March 17, Tacoma, WA (Johnson)

Region 9 (AR, KS, MO, OK, TX-except El Paso): March 31, Mineola, TX.

Region 10 (CO, IA, NE, SD, UT, WY): March 31, Council Bluffs (Chilson)

Region 11 (AZ, NM, El Paso, TX): Date to be announced; visit www.narprail.org for more information,

Region 12 (CA, HI, NV): March 17, Los Angeles (Capon and Amtrak President & CEO Alex Kummant). ■