



Transportation Goals to Cheer About

For years, federal transportation policy has consisted mainly of shoveling dollars to states for highways, with little accountability and no overarching vision or purpose. That may be changing.

When Congress seeks to reauthorize surface transportation programs—usually every five years—there is a good opportunity to reshape those programs. Now is such a time—and two bills propose goals most NARP members will support. Both bills aim to make transportation greener by increasing reliance on transit and intercity freight.

S. 1036, the Federal Surface Transportation Policy and Planning Act, was introduced by Chairman John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV) of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), a long-time rail advocate.

One goal of S. 1036 is to increase total usage of public transportation, intercity passenger rail services and non-motor-

ADD YOUR VOICE

Ask your Senators to co-sponsor S. 1036 and ask your Representative to co-sponsor H.R. 2724 while working to include intercity trains in its language.

Call the Capitol Switchboard (202-224-3121) or visit

www.narprail.org/actnow.

ized transportation on an annual basis.

Reps. Russ Carnahan (D-MO), Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Jay Inslee (D-WA) introduced H.R. 2724, the National Transportation Objectives Act, which is silent on intercity passenger trains, but otherwise establishes specific standards.

Here are the bills' other goals of interest to rail advocates ([] = House language, { } = Senate language):

- Cut carbon dioxide emissions from US surface transportation by 40% {by 2030}.

(continued on p. 3)

BRIEFS

- Almost 1,200 people, including several NARP Council members, spoke at seven outreach workshops as Federal Railroad Administration prepared guidance to applicants for the \$8 billion in high speed rail funds. Guidance was released June 17; applications are due Aug. 24 & Oct. 2.

- NARP Council Member Kenneth Joseph testified at a June 22 House Railroads Subcommittee Pittsburgh field hearing on expanding intercity passenger rail, urging restoration of the *Three Rivers*, and public-private investment to permit more, faster Pittsburgh-Harrisburg passenger trains on Norfolk Southern tracks.

- Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) shelved endorsement of maglev in favor of Las Vegas-Victorville, CA, DesertXpress high speed rail. www.desertxpress.com

Amtrak Chairman Carper Ready for Growth

Amtrak Chairman Thomas Carper, former Mayor of Macomb, Illinois, gave an upbeat breakfast address to NARP's Council of Representatives at its annual Washington meeting April 21.

He had planned to share a vision for Amtrak's future that the Amtrak Board had been working on, but he happily acknowledged that President Obama had trumped the board by making passenger rail supporters' goals into a cornerstone of his administration's plan to revitalize cities, regions and the entire country. Referring to the President's April 16 unveiling of *Vision For High-Speed Rail in America* (May

News), Carper said, "[NARP President] Ross [Capon] and I ran into each other



NARP Chairman George Chilson recognizes Thomas Carper for addressing the Council of Representatives.

at a low-key event here in Washington that may have changed the world..."

Carper (no relation to the Senator and former Amtrak board member of the same name) believes the American public is far ahead of the political class in recognizing passenger rail's relevance as part of an intermodal network, quipping: "A transportation system! What a novel idea."

He seconded the Administration's desire to improve rail service incrementally, saying that such an approach "doesn't mean anyone should give up their dreams." He reiterated that the public, not just those who ride trains on a regular basis, expects trains to be on-time, clean and comfortable, and wants Amtrak

to operate efficiently, but not necessarily to make a profit. Amtrak is increasingly

(continued on p. 4)

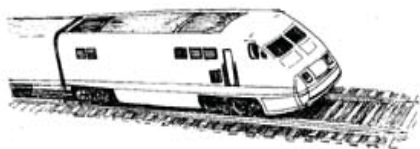
New Amtrak Rolling Stock?

"Frankly, I and others are growing concerned with the slow movement toward ordering new equipment and preparing for a new passenger train future." Thus wrote veteran reporter and Amtrak-watcher Don Phillips in his column in the August *Trains* magazine.

Amtrak told NARP that it issued an RFI (Request for Interest) to manufacturers regarding purchase of equipment for Eastern, single-level overnight trains: 25 Viewliner sleepers to increase capacity, plus 25 diners and 75 baggage/dormitory and baggage cars to replace the "ancient" cars currently in service.

This is similar to Chief Operating Officer William L. Crosbie's October 29 testimony before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Amtrak is using Recovery Act funds to put 88 sidelined cars back into service, including 22 Superliners. Beyond that, Amtrak says it will have a definitive fleet plan by year's end, noting that the same people who have been working hard on Recovery Act projects will soon turn their attention to the fleet plan. NARP will be pressing for an aggressive one. ■



The American Passenger

NARP has released a pilot issue of a tabloid-format newsprint publication called *The American Passenger*. It is being widely distributed and is available online at www.narprail.org/thepassenger. We welcome your comments on its content and appearance. ■

NARP Council of Representatives Grows

NARP continues to implement major changes aimed at making us a more effective grass roots organization (Dec. 2008 and Feb. 2009 *News*).

- Paul Dyson is leader of the Southwest Division (AZ, CA, HI, NV NM); the five other division leaders are in the Feb. 2009 *News* and at www.narprail.org click on "About NARP & Contact Us."

- These **state coordinators** have been appointed: CA—Ryan Stern; CT—Terry Hall; IL—Gordon McCoy; MD—Claude Dixon; NE—Roger Clark; NY—George Haikalis & Steve Salatti; OH—Mark Carlson; TN—Bill Strong; TX—Peter LeCody; VA—Bill Forster & Wayne Rose; WA—Stephanie Weber.

- New **Council of Representatives** members: AK—Robert Flint; AL—Jim Norton; CA—Larry Boerio & Robert Manning; CO—Eric Miller; FL—Steve Sayles; GA—Steve Vogel; IA—Dick Welch; IN—Steven Coxhead; LA—John Sita Jr.; MI—Rich Vavra-Musser; MT—Barry Green; NY—Anthony Rudmann; PA—Michael Alexander; VT—Christopher Parker.

Please contact the NARP office if you would like to serve on the Council, or go

to www.narprail.org/council for job description and candidate application form. Several Council vacancies remain.

At our April 20-22 Council meeting, NARP Division leaders held breakout sessions with Council members in their respective divisions, in which representatives discussed goals and opportunities for the next year on the state and national levels. Council members were asked about their interests, capabilities and time available.

The Council meets in St. Louis Oct. 16-17; NARP members are welcome. It is a great chance to see what is happening and perhaps get more involved. More information is on our web site. ■

NARP's "Donor Walls"

Your generosity gives NARP the strength and resources critical to winning the fight for the passenger train network Americans need. We are grateful to all of our members for their support.

We now have three on-line "donor walls" honoring individuals who have gone the extra mile for NARP.

- Heritage Circle recognizes those who have put NARP in their wills. Bequests have proven crucial in helping NARP survive at key, difficult points in our history.

- "Silver Rail" members gave at least \$1,000 in the most recent year.

- Major donors are those whose lifetime gifts, including bequests, have exceeded \$25,000.

The donor walls are at www.narprail.org/donate (click on the appropriate link at the bottom) and are displayed at NARP's biannual Council of Representatives meetings.

We want these lists to be as complete as possible. If you know of any omissions, please contact our office. ■

An Infrastructure Bank Bill

Pres. Obama proposed in his budget an independent institution to funnel public and private investment to transportation and infrastructure improvements. Thus, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) introduced H.R. 2521, the National Infrastructure Development Bank Act. The Bank would objectively review economic, environmental, social benefits, project costs and other criteria, and fund projects of significance. It would get \$5 billion a year for five years, to support loans & similar instruments. Treasury would provide a backing of up to \$250 bill. in total subscribed capital, if needed.

I want to help expand and revitalize America's passenger train network by joining the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Please enroll me in the following membership:

- \$35 Individual
 \$45 Family*
 \$50 Donor*
 \$75 Sponsor*
 \$125 Sustaining*
 \$20 Student
 \$25 Senior

My check is enclosed, payable to NARP.
 Charge my credit card:
 VISA
 MasterCard
 Discover
 American Express

Account No: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____ Security code on back: _____

Name: _____ * Second Member Name _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

I would like E-mailed Action Alert and passenger train service updates.
 Mail to: N.A.R.P., 900 2nd St. NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002

I would like to receive my monthly NARP News by E-mail rather than U.S. Mail.
 Or join online at www.narprail.org

Saco, Maine: A Green Station For Green Travel

The new Amtrak facility in Saco, Maine is powered by its own 100-foot wind turbine and is heated through a geothermal well. Its design has other heat-conserving aspects as well.

The station, which opened February

27, is modeled after classic, early 20th-century rail depots, featuring a clock tower and a brick facade that echoes nearby mills. The station houses the



An artist's rendering of the new Saco station.

Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce, whose staff answers train questions by day; station host volunteers take over 5-9 PM. A Quik-Trak ticket machine is accessible from 5:30 AM until 9 PM.

The station will become a hub for the planned Saco Island Development, a mixed-use community of condominiums

and businesses, and will serve growing Downeaster ridership.

"[This station] conveys we are serious about the future, bound to the needs of today, but deeply respectful of, and rooted to, our community's heritage," said Saco

Island developer and TrainRiders/Northeast Board Member Bob Martin at the grand opening ceremony. "[It] recognizes the value of integrating rail to restore a vital balance in our transportation system. Rail...is a key part of creating sustained economic prosperity. It's part of the principles of smart growth to create walkable, green, transit-oriented communities."

Special thanks to TrainRiders/Northeast for the material in this article.

Goals

from page 1

- Reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita {each year} [by 16%].
- Boost [triple] the use of walking, cycling, public transit {and intercity passenger rail}.
- {Raise the proportion of freight movement provided by railroads and intermodal services by 10% by 2020}.
- [Increase by 50% the number of essential destinations for low-income, senior and disabled populations accessible within 15 minutes on foot or within 30 minutes by public transportation.]

Surface transportation is usually defined as highways and transit, so the reference to trains in S.1036 is encouraging.

Both bills await committee hearings

and need co-sponsors. S. 1036 has been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation; H.R. 2724 to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. More at www.narprail.org, under "Take Action."

Critics long have urged Congress to set "national purposes with outcomes and accountability, design programs around purposes/outcomes...and [aim] to reduce greenhouse gas emissions..." to quote March 19, 2007 testimony by Anne Canby, President of the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, to the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.

With your support, what Canby and others advocated can become real.

New Surface Authorization

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee leaders in June released a bipartisan white paper on, and "Committee Print" of, their Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2009. The six-year bill has \$450 bill. for highways/transit and \$60 bill. to develop the 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors (10 have been designated). Benefits of new transit projects are more fairly evaluated; there is a move towards

"intermodal planning and decision-making"; projects must "advance the livability of communities." A consolidation effort phases out the Sec. 130 railroad/highway grade crossing program after two years, eliminating a specific requirement for states to spend money on this. The bill leaves open the question of funding sources. Meanwhile, in direct conflict with Chairman Oberstar, the Administration seeks an 18-month extension of the old law.

NARP Welcomes Malcolm Kenton

Malcolm Kenton of Greensboro, North Carolina, joined the NARP staff May 26 as Transportation Assistant. He graduated



with High Honors from Guilford College (Greensboro) in 2008 with a BA in Political Science and Environmental Studies.

His Guilford activities included serving in student government, on the Sustainability Council, and as host of a weekly program on the college radio station.

Passenger trains were central to Kenton's senior research project, which included a film, *Re-Training America*.

He interned in Washington with the Humane Society of the United States and *The American Prospect* magazine, where he wrote online content. He has worked for several political campaigns and been involved in numerous grassroots organizations.

He wrote the cover story in the Spring 2009 *Passenger Train Journal*, detailing North Carolina's rail service and plans for its expansion. In the same issue, *PTJ* Editor Mike Schafer wrote, "The world of rail passenger proponents needs more people like Malcolm -- young, energetic, and willing to endure the complexities of getting things done in today's politically vulcanized world."

At NARP, Kenton is working on grassroots outreach strategies aimed at involving more people, particularly those under 40. He has major newsletter responsibilities and is primary steward of the **now-more-active NARP Blog—please read and post comments to it!**

David Johnson Joins MARC

NARP Vice-President David R. Johnson left NARP May 1. On May 6, he became a trainmaster for the Maryland Mass Transportation Administration's MARC commuter train service.

He was the first student member of the Amtrak Customer Advisory Committee and worked as an intern at both Amtrak and NARP before joining NARP full time in 2003.

President Ross Capon's tribute to David's impressive 5-1/2 years at NARP is at www.narprail.org/johnson



National Association of
Railroad Passengers

NARP NEWS

Vol. 44, No. 7

July 2009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

George Chilson, Chairman; James Churchill, John DeLora, Albert L. Papp, Jr., Arthur Poole, David Randall, Robert J. Stewart, Vice Chairs; Nicholas Noe, Secretary; Kenneth T. Clifford, Treasurer

Ross B. Capon, President; Sean Jeans-Gail, Communications Director; Tiffanie H. Childs, Coordinator of Resource Development; Malcolm M. Kenton, Transportation Assistant

National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News* (ISSN 0739-3490), published monthly (except Nov.) by NARP; 900 2nd St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, <narp@nartrail.org>, <www.nartrail.org>. ©2009 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 July 1. Vol. 44, No. 6 was mailed May 26.)

our mission: a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice americans want.

Carper

from page 1

viewed as an integral part of the nation's transportation web, Carper maintains, both by federal policymakers and the freight railroads.

Carper praised Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo and Amtrak CEO Joseph Boardman. Szabo [former United Transportation Union State Legislative Director for Illinois] "and I have worked on lots of issues in Illinois. [He] understands passenger rail and is well steeped in the rail business." Boardman "has the experience, the vision and the passion to take Amtrak to where we want it to be and progress it into the future."

Carper envisions an Amtrak that makes better use of communications technologies to connect passenger rail to a wide range of constituencies. To applause, he said, "The long-distance system needs to be fully evaluated, and even expanded. Some logical extensions could benefit parts of the country...We should have a forum where stakeholders can throw out ideas for more fully developing the system and adding ridership."

He admonished rail advocates to maintain constructive dialogue with Amtrak, policymakers and others, to be realistic, and to continue to engage a broader base in support of our goals, including the small business community, local government leaders, smart growth organizations and historic preservationists. "Mayors view rail as economic development and tourism tools and that does get them excited and engaged."

He concluded, "Keep up whatever you've been doing. It's working." ■

Amtrak Guest Rewards: The Fast Way to Free Travel

Members of Amtrak's "frequent flyer" equivalent, Amtrak Guest Rewards (AGR), earn two points for every dollar spent, with a minimum of 100 points per segment, on all Amtrak travel, with bonuses for Acela Express travel in certain city pairs. Points also can be earned patronizing partner businesses and by using an AGR World MasterCard from Chase, which grants an additional two points per dollar for all Amtrak purchases (including those made on-board) and one point per dollar on all other purchases charged to the card. Points can be redeemed for Amtrak travel and products from partner businesses, like Hertz car rentals and nights at Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

Select (earning 5,000 rail points in a calendar year) and Select Plus (10,000) members enjoy benefits like access to Acela Express ticket lines at major stations, complimentary upgrades to Business Class or Acela First Class, and free companion vouchers. Select Plus members have access to Club Acela lounges and Continental Airlines' Presidents Club Lounges. Select and Select Plus members also get 25% and 50% (respectively) bonuses on points earned for Amtrak travel.

Unlike most frequent flyer programs, AGR allows you to book a rewards trip as little as one hour before departure if space is available, the ticket is booked at Amtrak.com, and can be picked up at the station. Blackout dates around major holidays are much less restrictive than those of airlines. If a few points shy of what you need, you also can buy points for 2.75 cents each (minimum of 500, maximum

of 10,000).

Redemption levels range from 1,000 points for most state-supported routes to 5,000 for one-zone coach to 50,000 for a three zone (transcon) Bedroom.

Check options before redeeming points. It may be better to pay a low advertised fare and save your points for when fares are higher. If you make trips of differing lengths on the same service, the flat rates argue for using AGR points on the longer trips.

AGR points only expire if you do not take a paid trip on Amtrak for three years; you are notified 90 days before deletion. To join AGR, check point balances, see offers from partner businesses and organizations, and book certain AGR trips, visit www.amtrakguestrewards.com or call 1-800-307-5000. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Don't miss your train: Amtrak instituted earlier ticketing and gate closure times at three cities. At Washington Union Station, ticket agents stop 5 minutes before departure and gates close 2 minutes prior to departure. At Chicago and Denver, agents stop 10 minutes before departure and gates close 5 minutes prior. Quik-Trak machines can be used after agent sales cease. Amtrak recommends arriving 30 minutes before departure at most stations (45 if purchasing tickets or checking baggage) and 1 hour at New York and Chicago.