



U.S. DOT Redirects High-Speed Train Funds to Eager States

\$1.195 Billion to be Spread to California, Florida, Washington, Illinois, New York, others

"You are more than welcome to redirect that money to California—where we know how to use it to generate hundreds of thousands of jobs and provide a clean, fast and low-cost way to travel.

"[W]e will be pleased to demonstrate to the rest of the nation the environmental and economic value of high-speed rail."

- Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), in Nov. 16 letter to U.S. DOT Secy. Ray LaHood

The U.S. Department of Transportation's will rescind \$1.195 billion in high-speed and intercity passenger rail funds originally awarded to Ohio and Wisconsin because of staunch opposition from each

state's newly-elected governor.

The money will go instead to states whose leaders remain enthusiastic about making well-patronized trains faster and more frequent and reliable.

U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood announced Dec. 9 that the money would go to these states—in amounts up to that shown:

California: \$624m; **Florida:** \$342.3m; **Washington:** \$161.5m; **Illinois:** \$42.3m; **New York:** \$7.3m; **Maine:** \$3.3m; **Massachusetts:** \$2.8m; **Vermont:** \$2.7m; **Missouri:** \$2.2m; **Wisconsin:** \$2m (for Chicago-Milwaukee improvements, which Gov.-elect Walker



- (l to r) Gwen Stefani Fans, Center for Neighborhood Tech., Pat Arnow

Governors whose support helped their states win Ohio & Wisconsin rejected high(er)-speed rail funds (l to r): Schwarzenegger (R-CA), Quinn (D-IL), Cuomo (D-NY).

supports); Oregon: \$1.6m; **North Carolina:** \$1.5m; **Iowa:** \$309,080; **Indiana:** \$364,980.

Well before LaHood's announcement, outgoing California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-CA) had already rejected the funds. (continued on p. 2)

Trackwork Begins in Vermont

410 Jobs Created, 360 in Construction

Amtrak's *Vermont* will offer a smoother ride up to 127 minutes faster than the current New Haven-St. Albans schedule, thanks to three states' capital projects.

In St. Albans, Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator

Karen Rae, Gov. Jim Douglas (R), Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and other state, NECR and Amtrak officials attended a groundbreaking on Nov. 9.

Gov. Douglas: "This project will put people to work



- Kevin Burkholder

Amtrak Sr. Dir.—State Partnerships Caroline Meal speaks, flanked by Karen Rae (long scarf), Gov. Jim Douglas, Deputy Rail Dir. Trinni Broussard, Rep. Peter Welch & Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT).

constructing...improvements necessary to shorten [the trip], which in turn will make our Amtrak service an even more attractive option..."

Vermont has \$52.7 million in Recovery Act funds for track replacement, bridge work, and crossing and rail bed improvements. This will cut 27 minutes from the *Vermont*'s schedule.

In addition to the 410 jobs created directly, the state estimates the induced economic effect of construction expenditures will add 370 more jobs.

Mass. plans to use its Recov-

ery Act grant to reroute the *Vermont* over Pan Am Railways' Connecticut River line, shortening the run by 10 miles and eliminating the need to reverse directions in Palmer.

Connecticut is double-tracking the Amtrak-owned Springfield-New Haven line, installing Positive Train Control and eliminating many grade crossings, allowing for a top speed of 110 mph and a New York-Springfield travel time of 2:43.

The Vermont Rail Action Network (VRAN) was instrumental (continued on p. 3)



- Kevin Burkholder

The first New England Central Railroad (NECR) rail train passes White River Jct., VT, returning to Pennsylvania after dropping 7 miles of welded rail to replace jointed rail between Brattleboro and St. Albans. This will permit higher speeds for both passenger and freight trains.

ARC Death Aftershocks

The death of the Access to the Region's Core (ARC) Hudson River tunnel project (Nov. *News*) doesn't lessen the need for new trans-Hudson track capacity. And it has jeopardized even plans to replace century-old Portal Bridge west of the Hudson (photo and caption).

The long-term silver lining is that ARC's death may have cleared the way for more useful tunnels—to Penn Station.

The *Bergen Record* reported Nov. 10 that New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (R) told their editorial board, "Amtrak has already spoken to us about whether certain [aspects] of [tunnel-related work] might be something that they could purchase from us..." Amtrak said Nov. 11 that it "is not having formal discussions with NJT [New Jersey Transit] regarding a joint tunnel project and has no plans to purchase any NJT work related to the ARC project..."

The NJT Board Dec. 9 voted to retain counsel challenging the federal demand for the return of \$271 million.

Trans-Hudson Subway?: New York Mayor Bloomberg surfaced consideration of extending the #7 subway to Secaucus Junction, NJ. A Nov. 22 AP report "said [Christie] would consider using state money to help finance" the extension. This would connect NJT and maybe Amtrak riders with key Manhattan and Queens points including Grand Central Terminal.

A Dec. 5 Asbury Park Press report compared this and a Penn Station railroad tunnel, quoting NARP's Capon: "In a perfect world the railroad tunnels should



Courtesy: Amtrak

NJT train on Portal Bridge. Preliminary engineering for its replacement ("Portal North") is done. In Jan., 2010, NJT got a \$38.5 million Recovery Act grant for final design, but NJT has not executed agreements to start work. In August, the Federal Railroad Admin. rejected NJT's \$880 million application for construction under the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail program (needs 20% non-federal match). Next steps—and Gov. Christie's position—on Portal are unclear.

get priority..." But Capon also said the #7 subway extension had value and "the stars" might align first for it.

Funding Review: To work, the ARC needed the Portal Bridge Capacity Enhancement Project. This was to be two spans over the Hackensack River.

- For the mainline, a three-track fixed bridge ("Portal North") would replace the 1910, movable, two-track structure.

- A two-track bridge ("Portal South") would lead to the cancelled two-track Hudson River tunnels and cancelled NJT's 34th Street Terminal.

In announcing his final decision to kill the ARC Oct. 27, Christie cited NJT Executive Director Weinstein's Oct. 26 memorandum. It began, "Despite strong efforts by the federal and state participants...we have been unable to reach agreement on terms that would assure New Jersey's taxpayers would not pay more than \$2.7 billion for a completed...ARC project."

The cost estimates Weinstein cited, augmented by Portal South's \$775 million, were \$10.6 billion to \$13.5 billion.

In August, NJT's "low" estimate for ARC without Portal was \$8.7 billion. This was to have been funded by \$3 billion each in federal and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey funds, plus \$2.7 billion from New Jersey.

DOT offered to increase the FTA grant by \$358 million to \$3.358 billion. DOT also offered a Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing loan of up to \$2.3 billion. These loans have advantageous interest rates; repayments begin 10 years after project completion and run for up to 35 years. Weinstein's memo examined these and other DOT suggestions. ■

Weinstein's Oct. 26 memorandum is at www.bit.ly/njmemo; U.S. DOT's fact sheet is at www.bit.ly/arifact

Funds Redirected from page 1

zenegger (R), his soon-to-be successor Jerry Brown (D), Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn (D), and New York Gov.-elect Andrew Cuomo (D) each made a public announcement that he is interested in using Recovery Act passenger-train funds freed up by Wisconsin and Ohio's decisions.

While Ohio and Wisconsin would have brought train service to communities currently without it, the other states would be expanding service in corridors that are already well-patronized.

North Carolina transportation secretary Gene Conti said in a statement: "North Carolina certainly would welcome any additional funding to support improved service in North Carolina and the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor."

Gov. Quinn told the *Chicago Tribune*, "We'll be happy to take ... anything we can grab hold of." He wrote Nov. 10 to



Chris Guenzler

Los Angeles-area commuter operator Metrolink (www.metrolinktrains.com) has 10 of 137 new bi-level coaches; these three were at Riverside Dec. 8. They feature energy-absorbing retractable couplers, a 'crumple zone' at the front and back of each car, rear-facing passenger seats in cab cars—all designed to minimize the impact of a crash on riders. These could be a model for future passenger cars.

train builder Talgo, asking it to relocate its Milwaukee plant to Illinois: "Illinois continues to have overwhelming public support, enthusiasm and commitment for the expansion of high-speed rail across the state...Illinois wants to make the trains of the future." Talgo announced that the Milwaukee facility will become only a maintenance shop.

Gov.-elect Cuomo, in a Nov. 5 letter to LaHood: "High-speed rail could be the 21st Century Erie Canal for New York State and help rebuild Upstate New York's economy. A Cuomo Administration would move quickly to put the [redirected funds] towards projects that would create thousands of good jobs for New Yorkers," the governor-elect said in a statement. ■

Princeton Dinky Saved But...

Local supporters beat back a threat to the "Dinky," nickname for three-mile electrified line connecting downtown Princeton (and its university) with the Northeast Corridor at Princeton Junction.

Over 150 area residents attended a Princeton Regional Planning Board meeting in near-universal opposition to replacing the Dinky with bus rapid transit (a new road dedicated exclusively to frequent buses). Many wore "Save the Dinky" T-shirts; 5,000 supporters joined the cause on Facebook. The Board killed ("tabled") a pro-bus resolution.

But the university in November announced a plan for the western end of its campus that would cut the Dinky line 460 feet, relocating the station to the south. Rail supporters oppose the move fearing, in part, a resulting ridership drop. ■



Carl Peterman, RailPictures.net

A Dinky train pauses at Princeton station.

Vermont Work from page 1

in raising public and legislator awareness of rail travel's value while working to save the NY-Rutland *Ethan Allen Express*. Vermont Agency of Transportation and the NECR worked to secure the grant.

NARP Council member Christopher Parker heads VRAN, which next wants to extend *Ethan Allen* to Burlington and *Vermont* to Montreal. ■



- W. Mike Weber

A Boy Scout troop boards Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* at Raton, NM. The Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) "premier High Adventure base," Philmont Ranch, is nearby. Approximately 3,300 Scouts arrived and departed at Raton in fiscal 2010, during which time Raton, a much smaller town than nearby Las Vegas, NM, handled 13,534 more passengers than Las Vegas.

BSA is constructing a similar facility, "The Summit: Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve," at Glen Jean, WV, served by Amtrak's *Cardinal* at Prince, 7 miles east. Even with daily service (Nov. *News*), the short *Cardinal*—due to lack of equipment—may not be able to accommodate the large number of Scouts who would arrive by train if Amtrak provided the capacity.

Reach Out to Newly-Elected Officials

The 112th Congress, and state legislatures, have many new faces. Get to them early with facts that show the need for more and better passenger trains.

Legislators are more responsive when they hear first from constituents. Start with an email, or postal letter, followed by a phone call.

To meet in person, get an appointment with the Washington office or a district office—listed on each official's Web page.

If you have a Washington meeting, and schedules permit, a NARP staff person might be able to accompany you.

Establish yourself as a trusted source of accurate information.

More on cultivating legislators is at www.narprail.org/lobby or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope, with a note explaining your request, to N.A.R.P.; 505 Capitol Ct. NE, Ste 300; Washington, DC 20002-7706.

Rhode Island Airport Now Connected to Rail Network



Both photos: U.S. DOT

Providence, Rhode Island's T.F. Green Airport, located in the southern suburb of Warwick, now has a direct rail connection to Providence and Boston and, perhaps eventually, to the entire Northeast Corridor and Amtrak system, thanks to the recent completion of a new train terminal (off the photo to the left) and an impressive skywalk (center of photo) connecting it to the airport. Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff (right) steps off the inaugural special MBTA commuter train. Also aboard were Rhode Island Assoc. of Railroad Passengers President Everett Stuart, NARP Council member Steven Musen, and other NARP and RIARP members.



Robert J. Stewart, Chairman; John Delora, Albert L. Papp, Jr., Arthur Poole, David Randall, Vice Chairs; Stephen J. Salatti, Secretary; Kenneth T. Clifford, Treasurer

Ross B. Capon, President & CEO; Sean Jeans-Gail, Communications Director; Tiffanie H. Childs, Coordinator of Resource Development; Malcolm M. Kenton, Transportation Assistant; Lawrence E. Scott, Special Assistant to the Chairman.

National Association of Railroad Passengers NARP News (ISSN 0739-3490), published monthly (except Nov.) by NARP; 505 Capitol Ct. NE, Suite 300; Washington, DC 20002-7706; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, narp@narprail.org, www.narprail.org. ©2010 National Assoc. of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues \$35/year (\$20/student, \$25/senior), 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; 505 Capitol Ct. NE, Suite 300; Washington, DC 20002-7706.



(This has news through December 15. Vol. 44, No. 9 was mailed November 18.)

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

NARP Leaders Meet With Amtrak's Top Mechanical Officers

NARP Chairman Bob Stewart, Vice Chair Dave Randall, President Ross Capon and Special Assistant to the Chair Larry Scott met top Amtrak mechanical officials in Wilmington, DE, on November 19.

Those officials were Chief Mechanical Officer Mario Bergeron, Deputy CMO—Main Facility Operations Terry Schindler, Deputy CMO—Engineering & Standards Dale Engelhardt (on speakerphone) and Duncan Copland, Principal Industrial Designer. The NARP leaders later toured the shops with Assistant Superintendent Liston Myers and Wheel Shop General Foreman George Dutton.

Section 305 of PRIIA, the 2008 Amtrak reauthorization, required Amtrak to take the lead in setting up a Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee “to design, develop specifications for, and procure standardized next-generation corridor equipment.” California DOT Rail Division Chief William Bronte chairs the committee; Bergeron is vice-chair.

The committee first agreed on performance and technical design specifications for bi-level cars (Sept. News, front page). The focus now is single-level cars. The committee’s executive board may approve this work during the Feb. 2011 annual meeting. Then, attention would shift to conventional-speed train-sets. Separately, Amtrak is working on train-sets for 125 mph-plus operation.

New equipment design work is guided in part by a recently concluded Customer Experience Research Program.



From left: Liston Myers, Asst. Supt. at Amtrak's Wilmington shops; NARP's Capon, Randall and Stewart in the shops Nov. 19. The facility repairs and maintains electric locomotives and diesel switchers.

- Lawrence E. Scott

“Separate rounds of customer focus groups [were] held in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC. In each...customers were asked to tell us what they would like to see changed, fixed, or improved compared to the service they receive today...”

Also, Amtrak has met with various disability advocacy groups about ways in which the rebuild of Superliner I coaches and design of new single-level, long-distance cars from CAF could improve on what the law requires.

As a result of our meeting, NARP's Randall has joined the Interior Design Working Group of the Technical Subcommittee, led by Washington DOT's Andrew Wood.

Here are some of the issues the NARP and Amtrak Mechanical officials discussed:

- Randall expressed concern that baggage storage be easier to use in the new sleeping-car roomettes than in the existing Viewliners, where boosting suitcases into the space above the corridor ceiling is difficult. Answer: elimination of in-room toilets should free space for convenient storage.

- NARP asked about installing a shower on Superliner coaches. Answer: there will be one restroom with no toilet but with a seat to facilitate a “sponge bath.”

- NARP expressed concern about continued winter operation of the weather-sensitive Horizon cars in the Midwest, and suggested sending them to California. Amtrak and California are discussing this.

- When asked about adding revenue capacity to the Superliner Transition Dormitory cars, they advised that this is being considered.

- The 19 Superliners still stored require much more work than the 20 that Recovery Act funds returned to service. Scrapping is likely for 10 cars whose estimated repair work exceeds \$1 million each. The other nine might eventually run again; only five are coaches or sleepers.

- Due to improved maintenance procedures, 16 of 19 Acela train-sets are available for service, vs. 14 out of 20 previously. (The total dropped from 20 to 19 because one is out for major work, and that will continue until all 20 are through the process and various maintenance programs.)