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| Subject: | Stabbing on San Joaquins, Metrolink's locos falling apart, BNSF is a "Cash Machine" |
| From: | Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net) |
| To: | ntbraymer@yahoo.com; |
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for November 17, 2014

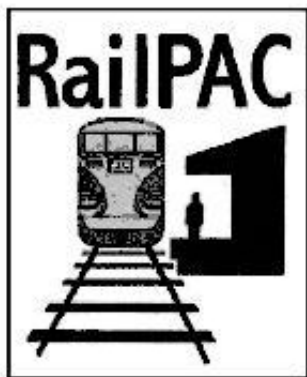
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Recent view at downtown Perris where Metrolink service will be extended next year. In the background is the original 19th century Santa Fe Station. The Perris Metrolink platforms are nearby. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Fight onboard an Amtrak train ends with a stabbing](#)

ABC30.com-Nov 12, 2014

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) --

Authorities are investigating a stabbing on an Amtrak passenger train. The Amtrak train involved was number 714.

[Amtrak train from Okland delayed over alleged fight between two ...](#)

KERO-TV 23-Nov 12, 2014

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - An Amtrak train headed for Bakersfield got delayed Wednesday afternoon after two people on board started fighting, according to Amtrak Police.

The train was supposed to arrive to Bakersfield at around 4:11 p.m., but the time of arrival later got changed to 4:51 p.m. At around 5:30 p.m., the more than 70 passengers inside the train coming from Oakland arrived safely to Bakersfield.

[Engineer beaten by purported gang members sues Amtrak](#)

Sacramento Bee-Nov 12, 2014

One night seven years ago, Amtrak engineer Jacob Keating lay beaten and bleeding alongside the railroad tracks in West Sacramento, knocked senseless by a crowd of drunken neighborhood gangsters who attacked him when he came down off the train to shoo a trespasser off the tracks.

[Santa Fe to Support Amtrak Southwest Chief in Legislature](#)

Santa Fe Reporter-Nov 13, 2014

The City of Santa Fe is seeking to convince state lawmakers to support Amtrak's Southwest Chief in the 60-day Legislative session that starts in January.

Service between Lamy and Raton, Kan., has been in jeopardy. Amtrak asked Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico to invest \$40 million in taxpayer money over a decade to support track upgrades along the historic train route that runs between Chicago and Los Angeles.

[Riding the Sunset Limited](#)

Huffington Post-Nov 12, 2014

Recently my wife and I rode Amtrak's Sunset Limited from Los Angeles to New Orleans. We were heading out for a two-week vacation tour of Louisiana and were in no hurry to reach our destination. We wanted to avoid the stress and aggravation of air travel, view the American Southwest rolling by our window, have time to read and talk in the privacy of our own compartment. Our last extended railroad journey had been many years ago, when we took the train from Vancouver to Jasper through the Canadian Rockies, a trip made memorable for the beauty of the scenery and the comfort of the train.

[State ends negotiations with Amtrak alternative](#)

Journal and Courier-Nov 10, 2014

The Indiana Department of Transportation has ended contract negotiations with Corridor Capital LLC to provide passenger rail cars, marketing and other services for the Hoosier State line between Indianapolis and Chicago, said INDOT spokesman Will Wingfield.

Wingfield did not comment as to why negotiations were terminated.

But he said the state is looking at its options to continue the service after the Jan. 31 expiration date on INDOT's contracts with Amtrak and the communities along the route.

[Amtrak Worries About Northeast's "Achilles' Heel"](#)

CBS Local-Nov 15, 2014

A regular cause of delays on the heavily traveled Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston, the 104-year-old Portal Bridge over the Hackensack River in northern New Jersey is viewed as the embodiment of aging railroad infrastructure in dire need of upgrading to accommodate increasing demand in the region.

[Hour-plus delays expected for Metrolink San Bernardino train](#)

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Nov 12, 2014

A mechanical issue has caused delays of more than an hour around the Covina Metrolink station on Wednesday, officials said.

San Bernardino Line Train 331 will be delayed up to an hour and 20 minutes, Metrolink officials said via Twitter. The delay was a result of rescuing a disabled train near the Covina station, officials said.

[Trains, ticket machines ail Metrolink](#)

OCRegister-Nov 14, 2014

Despite a reduction in customer complaints and largely staying within a goal of 20 mechanical delays per month, problems are ahead, said Bombardier's Matt Byrne, vice president of services, who gave a presentation on the agency's progress toward reducing mechanical issues at the Metrolink board meeting Friday.

"The fleet is aging, the fleet will continue to have problems," Byrne said.

[Study finds declining air pollution from Metrolink maintenance yard](#)

Los Angeles Times-Nov 14, 2014

Potentially harmful diesel emissions from Metrolink's maintenance facility near downtown Los Angeles

are in decline and lower than other air pollution sources in the area, according to a study released Friday...

The report also found that the pollution from diesel emissions along Interstate 5 and other roads in the area was double the amount from the maintenance facility. In addition, I-5 was identified as the dominate contributor to the cancer risk in the area.

[Buffett Said He Paid a Lot. \\$15 Billion Later, BNSF Is a Cash Machine](#)

Businessweek-Nov 10, 2014

Buoyed by an onshore oil boom, BNSF has become a cash machine for Buffett. The railroad had sent more than \$15 billion in dividends to Berkshire through Sept. 30, according to quarterly regulatory filings, the latest of which was released last week. More stunning: The business is on pace to return all the cash Buffett spent taking it private by the end of this year.

Annual revenue at the railroad has risen 57 percent, and earnings more than doubled to \$3.8 billion since Buffett bought it. Sales have climbed even as BNSF faced increased public scrutiny over service delays and safety.

[North Dakota Considers New Rules to Make Rail Transport of Oil Safer](#)

NBCNews Nov 13, 2014

The new standards would require oil producers to remove volatile gasses from the crude oil before loading it into rail tankers. That would make the cargo far less explosive in the event of an accident, according to state regulators.

[Report: Mexico president's home built, owned by affiliate of high-speed rail contractor](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune-Nov 9, 2014

MEXICO CITY — The private home of President Enrique Pena Nieto was built and is registered under the name of a company connected to a controversial high-speed rail contract that he abruptly canceled last week, according to a report by a leading Mexican journalist.

[Chinese rail companies could gain competitive edge for high-speed rail contracts](#)

Sacramento Business Journal-Nov 13, 2014

Two of China's biggest train manufacturers are discussing a merger in order to win more deals abroad -- a development that could affect contracts for the California high-speed rail, the South China Morning Post reported Wednesday.

[High-speed rail officials host meeting about Fresno construction](#)

Fresno Bee-21 Nov 12, 2014

Representatives from the California High-Speed Rail Authority and its contracting companies will hold an open house Thursday for people to learn more about upcoming rail construction in the Fresno area.

[Possible high-speed rail quickens Dallas transit plans](#)

Dallas Morning News-Nov 9, 2014

A private company's plans to connect Dallas and Houston with a 90-minute high-speed train ride is prompting Dallas Area Rapid Transit to fast-track plans for increased transit options downtown.

The region's largest transit agency is working on a three-pronged approach to increase rail lines, streetcar routes and downtown train capacity by 2021, when Texas Central Railway's trains could arrive in Dallas.



Recent development seen around the San Diego Train Station and San Diego Trolley line. Most of this development dates to the last 20 years. Transportation improvements, particularly rail passenger service drive development and economic activity. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Voters Are Willing to Pay for Infrastructure. Is Congress?](#)

National Journal-Nov 10, 2014

Last week's midterm elections showed that the willingness to set aside money for transportation extends to the voting public. In Hawaii, California, Rhode Island, Texas, Wisconsin, and Maryland, voters approved ballot initiatives to secure funding for water resources, roads, and transit. In Texas, 81 percent of voters approved a measure to dedicate half of the state's oil and gas revenues to a state highway fund, as long as that money isn't going to tolled roads. Maryland and Wisconsin voters approved "lockbox" initiatives to make it harder to take money out of the state's transportation coffers. Rhode Island voters gave a thumbs-up to bond initiatives for infrastructure.

[California Could Unlock Billions for Infrastructure](#)

GovExec.com-Nov 12, 2014

The law, S.B. 628, is expected to revitalize the practice of tax-increment financing in California—a means of generating revenue based on projections of higher property values and taxes arising from long-term property development following in the wake of infrastructure construction. It lowers voter-approval thresholds and expands the range of infrastructure projects eligible for support. If communities embrace the new statute, billions of dollars in new financing will become available.

[Jerry Brown looks to solidify legacy with big state projects](#)

SFGate-Nov 11, 2014

SACRAMENTO — Fresh off winning a historic fourth term as governor, Jerry Brown plans to push

ahead with a pair of projects that could transform the California landscape: high-speed rail and delta water tunnels.

[Everything Starts in California](#)

Commentary by and opinion of Noel T. Braymer

California has for almost the last 100 years, for better or for worse been the trendsetter for this country. Whatever it is, it either starts or takes off in California before spreading to the rest of the county and often the rest of the world. Be it freeways, hula hoops, personal computers, Disneyland, surf music, skateboarding, McDonald's, smog, Ronald Reagan, drive-thru fast food, the internet. the tax revolt or Hippies, they all got their start or took off first in California. California was the first place in the United States to build modern Light Rail with the San Diego Trolley in 1981. San Francisco which never got rid of all of their Steetcars, upgraded them as the Muni Metro at about the same time. Soon thereafter we also had Light Rail systems in Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Jose.



This is the current state of construction on the Gold Line extension from Pasadena to Azusa. All the tracks are laid, catenary is being strung, and the stations are almost finished. This is the downtown Azusa Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Border rail line faces 40-mile gap](#)

U-T San Diego-Nov 11, 2014

The investor group that was awarded a 99-year lease by Metropolitan Transit System to resurrect the dormant Desert Line railroad hasn't been able to reach a key agreement with officials in Mexico, dashing hopes for a binational railroad that economic boosters have long sought.

Instead, railroad officials have switched to a secondary plan using only U.S tracks.

[Could Bob Hope Airport Become Hollywood Burbank Airport?](#)

Curbed LA-Nov 12, 2014

Anyway, a name change probably isn't that likely, but the airport is very serious about a brand new replacement terminal and finding some way to lure in flyers who travel into LAX because it's named after the place they want to go—they'll start by "try[ing] to build a stronger association between the airport and nearby media companies, entertainment venues and tourist attractions." A potential link-up to the Metro rail system would be a big boost too; the airport is already close to Metrolink and Amtrak, unlike some other airports we could name.

[San Clemente asks government for relief from loud train horns](#)

OCRegister-Nov 12, 2014

Local officials in San Clemente are hoping the Federal Railroad Administration will let the city and the Orange County Transportation Authority tone down railroad noise along the coast in 2015.

In August, the city applied for a waiver from a federal rule that requires all trains to sound the horn four times approaching each of seven railroad crossings along San Clemente's 2.3-mile beach trail.

[Caltrain vs. BART: Palo Alto calls for bigger tax hike to ensure commuter- rail funding](#)

Silicon Valley Business Journal-Nov 13, 2014

As Silicon Valley gears up for a 2016 ballot measure to increase sales tax for transportation improvements, policymakers in the particularly gridlocked tech hub of Palo Alto are calling for a bigger tax hike to ensure more funding for the region's Caltrain commuter rail system.

[Studies Show Car Traffic in San Francisco is Dropping](#)

STREETSBLOG SF

Nov 12, 2014

Car traffic has dropped in San Francisco in recent years, despite an economic boom and a growing population, according to studies by the SF County Transportation Authority.

A newly updated study (reported by SF Weekly) by the SFCTA counted fewer cars at 11 of 15 intersections during evening peak hours this year, compared to earlier counts taken between 2009 and 2012. Driving speeds, meanwhile, are "increasing moderately."

[Caltrain Holiday Train Soon Headed Through The Area](#)

Patch.com-Nov 14, 2014

The first weekend in December, Saturday, Dec. 6, and Sunday, Dec. 7, will be the 12th year the beloved train has chugged down the Peninsula. The "bedazzled" train has become a favorite holiday tradition for communities all along the Caltrain rail corridor.

[Caltrain seeking volunteers for its bicycle advisory committee](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Nov 12, 2014

Caltrain announced Tuesday it is seeking four volunteers for its bicycle advisory committee. The committee of nine members and Caltrain staff serves the three counties of San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara that make up Caltrain's route.

While the committee serves in an advisory capacity only, the committee offers new ideas for discussion and helps guide Caltrain's investments.



This picture is of the HOV off ramp from the 405 to the 5 freeways in Orange County. This gives a rough idea of the amount of space and visual impact of building an aerial structure for High Speed Rail on an existing freeway. Given the difficulty of finding land for right of way, freeways may be our best option in urban areas for new rail projects. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: HSR Vancouver - San Francisco

The real ROW issues will be from Vancouver to south of Tacoma and from Eugene to Redding. Finally, a tunnel from Suisan/Martinez/Richmond to downtown SF would be a requirement. Anybody have US\$1T sitting around?

Lloyd Adalist
Seattle

Re: Is the Milwaukee Road available as Chicago-Seattle bypass?

With increased freight traffic, has there ever been a discussion of reactivating the old Milwaukee Road right of way from Washington state to Minnesota?

Robert Toole

Anybody know the answer to this question? NB

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

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