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Pictures by Doug Kerr

SMART dmu interior
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RAILPAC’S WORK AT-A-GLANCE
RailPAC is working with Amtrak, Caltrans and all agencies involved in achieving the following goals for expanding and extending safe and reliable rail passenger service. We support adequate funding for these services and vigorously promote them.

High Speed Rail
Build the High Speed Rail system together with electrification for Caltrain and Metrolink.

Coast Corridor
Reduce travel times. Continue to enhance onboard amenities. Restore connections to long-distance trains at Los Angeles Union Station. Reestablish the Coast Daylight between Los Angeles and San Francisco. New stations at Gilroy, Watsonville, Soledad and King City.

Pacific Surfliner Corridor
Campaign for run through tracks at Los Angeles Union Station to improve punctuality and travel times for Amtrak and Metrolink. Extend service to the Coachella and Imperial valleys.

Sunset Corridor
Introduce daily service and reestablish service to Florida.

San Joaquin Corridor
Increase service to and from Sacramento, as well as a new station in Elk Grove. Extend daytime and overnight service to Los Angeles.

Capitol Corridor
Increase frequency to hourly service between Sacramento and Oakland. Increase frequency of service to San Jose. Extend service to Reno and Redding and Salinas.

Las Vegas
Reestablish service between Los Angeles and Las Vegas.
President’s Commentary

Board Member Changes

Earlier this month the Board reluctantly accepted the resignation of Board member Bruce Jenkins. At 85 years young Bruce is still very active but has decided to reduce his commitments. Bruce has been a regular attendee and RailPAC representative at Caltrain and San Joaquin Board meetings and a great source of suggestions and advice to this writer. We are very fortunate that we have been able to fill this vacancy together with that of the late Arthur Lloyd with two very capable and active replacements. Doug Kerr from Healdsburg is a member of the NARP Council and regular user of the Thruway busses and the Capitol Corridor, as well as the national network trains and now SMART. We also welcome Vaughn Wolfe from Pleasanton back to the Board. Vaughn’s focus is on regional rail services including Caltrain, ACE and connectivity with BART and transit services. Together with Steve Roberts and Marcia Johnston we have a very strong team covering Bay Area and northern California regional services.

Metrolink Antelope Valley and High Speed Rail

I responded to an LACMTA agenda item calling for yet another study of the Metrolink Antelope Valley line. The proposers were Glendale Council Member Najarian, and County Supervisor Barger within whose district I reside.

Dear Supervisor Barger and Councilmember Najarian:

While another study of the Antelope Valley line may help eventually to bring about much needed rail service improvements there is a critical factor missing in your resolution: journey time. The resolution cites “frequency of service, service reliability, safety, and on time performance” but notably fails to mention the Achilles heel of the route north of Santa Clarita. The railroad route was laid out in the 1870s for steam locomotives and is obsolete as a modern transportation corridor other than for slow freight trains. The journey times offered to prospective passengers are, and always will be hopelessly uncompetitive with the adjacent highway except for peak hours. Even then passengers’ fares are heavily subsidized to entice them from their cars. Furthermore peak hour highway journey times will be improved when the I-5 carpool lane project is complete, making rail even less competitive. A study that fails to address journey times is incomplete. RailPAC believes that the line can be useful for regional passenger rail between Los Angeles and Santa Clarita, but if we are serious about public transportation the only viable alternative is a new high speed direct line between Palmdale and Burbank. Money spent on attempting to improve the existing line between Santa Clarita and Palmdale is a waste of resources.

I received a phone call later that day from Barger’s transportation deputy, Dave Perry, and he made note of my points. The State and County are investing about a billion dollars to add a carpool lane between Sylmar and Burbank, and yet there was no study to see whether the parallel Metrolink service could have met the peak hour demand at lower cost. Perry told me that Barger recently took a cab ride on a Metrolink train through Soledad Canyon and apparently was astonished at how slowly the train traveled! Welcome to 1870s railroading, and thank you madam Supervisor for taking the time to go on this fact-finding tour. The Supervisor is also concerned that the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is spending the majority of its resources in the northern part of the project. Perhaps if Los Angeles and surrounding communities put out a welcome mat instead of a lot of NIMBY whining the CHSRA would be more inclined to pay more attention to the south.

My own opinion is that if the High Speed project is to be built they need to focus on getting a service running. That will only happen when Fresno is linked with San Jose and San Francisco. Southern California will have to wait, unless they can identify and put to work the money necessary to build the Palmdale to Burbank cutoff. If you built 100,000 homes in the Antelope Valley and charged $100,000 per home for transportation connections, that would fund $10 billion for a High Speed connection to the Los Angeles basin which would later connect to the rest of California and perhaps Las Vegas as well. Such a connection would certainly add at least $100,000 in value to these new dwellings. You could, and probably should, make the same argument for Fresno of course. Food for thought.

November 18 Members Meeting

Please see the separate announcement about our annual members’ meeting. My apologies for this being a low-key affair rather than the big Steel Wheels© conferences we have had in the past. It’s been a difficult year for me to schedule anything and I’m looking forward to next year being better in many respects.

New Locomotives for State Corridors – But no Passenger Cars (Cover Story)

The new Sacramento-Built Siemens Charger locomotives are starting to enter service on the State rail corridors. As you see from the cover picture they are painted in a new “Caltrans” color scheme, with “Caltrans” in bold letters on the side. I asked Chad Edison, Deputy Secretary for Transportation at Calsta for his comments:

There are many reasons for the current approach. One is the following requirement in the Government Code: 14038.1. Rail passenger equipment owned by the department and operated by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) in a state-supported rail service shall prominently display the department’s logo and the words
“California Department of Transportation,” or other appropriate identification, as determined by the department.

Another is that the Amtrak California brand transitioned when the JPAs were fully implemented. Each has their own identity (Capitol Corridor, Amtrak San Joaquin and Amtrak Pacific Surfliner), but the locomotives are used throughout the state, not on any one corridor. The Caltrans logo is part of the historic fleet as well, but subordinate in its logo to “Amtrak California.”

There is a great deal more that could be added to the history of how the decision was reached and the input that was sought at the time of determining it, but these are two of the most significant reasons.

Note the use of the term “current approach”. It makes you wonder whether this is an interim arrangement. Now I like Chad. He is a very hard-working individual and he inherited a difficult situation. No doubt his response is based on the official State Government line. But I for one think that it’s a particularly stupid idea. The acid test these days is the internet search. Type in “Caltrans” and you will be directed to the State DoT site. What do you find there? Nothing about trains, at least not without digging. The page mostly concerns highway projects and traffic conditions, with a large picture of cars on a freeway as a header. To me, Caltrans is the agency which has failed to deliver new passenger cars in spite of voter approval of Proposition 1B in 2006. Who wants to advertise that?

Professional market research for the State Corridor agencies has consistently demonstrated that “Amtrak” has the highest brand recognition for passenger rail. Where do you go to buy train tickets? Amtrak.com. Where do you find information for all the California routes other than commuter rail in one convenient site? Amtrak.com. I am reliably informed that locomotives rarely leave their assigned corridors so there is no reason I can think of which prevents the use of their logos and the Amtrak name. By all means put a small (inch high letters) notice on the side which states “funded by the State of California” but not Caltrans as the service “brand”.

Steve Roberts writes: (and his comments are more printable than the rest of mine!)

“This same issue arose when the first Caltrans owned locomotives and cars were ordered. Fortunately, the Division of Rail was conducting a huge ($500,000) market research effort during that period. That research included a series of brand awareness questions that showed Amtrak with near universal brand awareness among both customers and non-users. Recognition of the individual routes was much lower, between 8% and 10% for users and below 3% among non-users. Based on this data Caltrans developed the Amtrak California umbrella brand with its distinctive logo.

The same holds true today. Based on comments by the San Joaquin JPA’s ad agency during a Board meeting discussing the role-out of the JPA new ad awareness program, the ad agency’s staff indicated that their research showed Amtrak being the universal brand for intercity rail passenger service. As a result, the ad agency recommended and the Board adopted keeping Amtrak San Joaquins as the route brand.

The color scheme and the brand name on the equipment has nothing to do with ownership, it is designed to create a positive image. It is a 100% marketing effort. Everything should be developed to reinforce the customer’s experience. When the passenger looks at the approaching train his anxiety and potential concern need to be addressed with a visible brand name that tells the passenger that he is at the right location. Passenger concerns are eliminated with an equipment logo that reinforces the brand the passenger has been dealing with all through the entire information, reservation and ticketing process.

That does not mean that Caltrans ownership cannot be recognized. But how big is “prominently”? Is it as large as the logo on the Siemens’ locomotives, big enough to overshadow the marketing brand? Or can it be smaller, large enough to be read while observing the equipment but not so large as to overshadow the marketing brand?

This issue is really bigger than the current Siemens’ locomotives. In seven years California will see a dramatic restructuring of its intercity rail passenger service. One of the key decisions will be how to market the service. Should routes be marketed/branded separately or as a network with an overall umbrella brand made up of several intercity routes including high-speed rail? Should each piece of equipment have the owner’s logo on it? What is the marketing value of painting United Arab Emirates Sovereign Wealth Fund or Deutsche Bank in big letters on the high-speed trainsets just because these entities financed their construction? The goal is to generate ridership. Anything that does not contribute or detracts from that goal undermines the generation of ridership and ticket revenue.

Speaking of passenger cars, information is only trickling out regarding the apparent loss of the ARRA funds, and what exactly will happen with the 1B money. We have heard that the Nippon Sharyo bilevel procurement has been transferred to Siemens, but have been told many times by Siemens that they have no intention of building a bilevel car. Caltrans Division of Rail was the lead agency for this multi-state purchase. Is anyone going to be fired for this disaster? Will the other States sue California? A cynical Paul Dyson would say that likely those responsible have already retired. I met others at Division of Rail that had been brought into that group from other Caltrans divisions that had absolutely no clue about rail and were near the end of their careers.

Of course there should be no surprise about an 11 year project that has delivered nothing. The project was run by a huge, multi-agency committee. Contrast this with Brightline who specified, had built and delivered a fleet of cars in less than half the time. We have a reasonably acceptable car, the Surfliner bilevel. It should not have taken a decade to design in lessons learned from service, together with upgrades and additions such as wifi, to produce the latest version. Now who knows what we are going to get? Will they be Siemens “Brightline” single level cars? These are fine vehicles but are incompatible with our low-level platforms. Even if fitted with doors and steps we would be back to the days of Amfleet cars and unacceptably long station dwell times.

The conclusion I draw is that this procurement process should be removed from Caltrans and perhaps any other public agency.
Siemens and Alstom
Late September we saw the announcement that Siemens (Germany) and Alstom (France) are to combine their rail manufacturing operations into a single entity. It appears that the brand name for all rolling stock will be Alstom, and the company HQ will be in Paris. This is largely driven by growing competition from China whose rolling stock building enterprises receive considerable government support. We are of course hoping that the Sacramento Siemens and the Mare Island Alstom operations will continue to prosper.

California Coast – Who Should Own the Line?
I have become increasingly concerned and frustrated about the evolution of the California Coast line between Los Angeles and San Jose. On the freight side a number of customers no longer ship by rail or have left the area. At the Los Angeles end of the line the Los Angeles Times closed its San Fernando Valley printing plant. Anheuser Busch no longer ships beer in boxcars from Van Nuys. There are plenty more example all the way along the line and once daily operations are now reduced to once or twice a week. With only a handful of “overhead” intermodal and automobile trains one has to wonder what UP’s long-term intentions may be. We understand that the Coast can be a useful diversionary route, but as we have seen in recent wildfire incidents, this can only be utilized if the railroad has sufficient train crews with the necessary route knowledge.

On the other-hand passenger train growth, such as local service between Oxnard and Santa Barbara, or extension of the Capitol Corridor to Salinas, is stifled by Union Pacific’s demands for capacity enhancements. If the line is so short of capacity how could it be used for emergency diversions? In the long term we should be concerned about the physical condition of the line. Of special concern are the cliffs all the way from Ventura to Point Concepcion. We’re not talking about nice, solid chunks of granite here. The prevalent sedimentary rocks are all too susceptible to erosion and there is no program in place for cliff protection. Further north the Cuesta grade and tunnels north of San Luis Obispo are expensive to maintain. Another area for concern is Elkhorn Slough, the low point of the line where rising sea-level will have an early impact. With very little on-line traffic what will UP’s attitude be to a natural catastrophe that severs the line at one of these vulnerable locations?

California needs a comprehensive plan for this important artery. We’ll see what the forthcoming State Rail Plan has to say and comment accordingly. Our aims should be:

• A freight operator that encourages new business, and doesn’t ask shippers and receivers to use reload centers in the San Joaquin Valley.
• Control of the line by an operator that even handedly allocates capacity between users.
• A funded investment plan that improves the line but is not a gift of taxpayers’ money to the owner of the property.
• More passenger trains!

I don’t see Union Pacific performing these roles. Indeed I think that UP is failing in its obligations as a common carrier and I call for the reopening of the STB and CPUC dockets that approved the acquisition of Southern Pacific by UP.

There is perhaps an opportunity here for a public private partnership, and also for a regional operator for the freight service. UP could still retain overhead trackage rights for their through trains but a local carrier would do more to retain and encourage on line traffic.

Paul Dyson. pdyson@railpac.org
Of interest in the July 5, 2017 edition of The Wall Street Journal:

“Hotels, Cruise Lines, Casinos Among Top U.S. Stocks So Far This Year,” followed by the subtitle:

“As consumers shun brick-and-mortar retailers, demand for travel and leisure remains strong.” The headline essentially explains the entire story. Discretionary travel, including very high-end “experience” travel that generates huge revenues to its providers, is huge but still growing by leaps and bounds.

That brings to mind Amtrak’s now 46-year run in the “leisure” (i.e., discretionary) travel business. By any fair estimation, the taxpayer-supported railroad’s efforts can be characterized as “woeful.” We need not recount here the sad history of disastrous train-offs, management attitudes that run the gamut from active hostility to impotent indifference, and on and on. That topic could be the subject of 1,000-page tomes. In short, Amtrak has never failed to fail when it comes to capturing any significant portion of the “leisure” discretionary travel market, the market largely served by its perennially undercapitalized “national network” trains.

A few “data points” are instructive. In contrast to the few years post-war when the streamliners held sway, the USA’s population is now more than double (1950 to 2010 numbers). And the population of the USA has grown by 50% since the inception of Amtrak in 1971. Moreover, not only does the USA have more people, each person is traveling more. Daily average PMT (passenger-miles traveled) per person more than doubled between 1969 and 1995, before leveling off a bit – but it’s still nearly double. Simply put – we have far more people, and those people are far more mobile than when Nixon signed the “railpax” bill. Source: https://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/publications/passenger_travel_2016/tables/table2_1

Amtrak’s transportation output has not kept pace. It is falling farther and farther behind in a rapidly expanding domestic market. Why? – because it has written off most of the country, and it’s fairly obvious there’s not one iota of interest in changing course. Sure, there’s always “inadequate funding…” as a convenient crutch, but merely ask yourself where management’s energies go? Ask yourself what makes the phones ring in Wick Moorman’s office: rotten ties in Penn Station, or Empire Builders and Zephyrs with bad-ordered cars and locomotives? Amtrak already gets a billion and a half dollars of free money every year – how is that “inadequate”? Isn’t the better question where and how Amtrak spends that public money?

At the risk of asking rhetorical questions: how has the National Railroad Passenger Corporation positioned itself to benefit from these long-term and fairly obvious demographic trends? (Answer: it hasn’t.) They’re still institutionally focused on the 60-year-old dream of a Northeastern bullet train. Essentially, Amtrak represents the dead hand of government still pursuing the same old policy goals from the 1960s. Sure, that policy brought us the original Metroliner (debuted 1969), but what have they done for us lately? The Acela, with its annual load factor of just barely over 50%? The second-generation Acela, which is now a-building in upstate New York? Which goes to prove that inertia (and its handmaiden, stale thinking) remains the most irresistible political force in Washington, DC. Apparently, it has never occurred to management at Amtrak that they could invest some of their free federal capital into the same market segment that cruise lines, casinos and high end resorts do – and do so profitably.
Beware - Schedule “Improvements”

By Paul Dyson

According to the announcement on PacificSurfliner.com “A coordinated schedule change that will impact Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, Metrolink and COASTER trains is scheduled to take effect on Monday, October 9, 2017. These adjustments are intended to improve reliability and provide enhanced coordination with other trains operating on the Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo rail corridor.”

Included in the changes are lengthened journey times on some trains between Los Angeles and San Diego “to improve reliability.” Now if your train is perennially late then adding a few minutes to the schedule may make it more punctual.

Changing from a de facto late train to a longer journey is not an improvement of the service. It’s an admission that the schedule is still stressed by the number of trains being squeezed on to inadequate infrastructure. As Noel Braymer recently pointed out, “as for adding up to 10 minutes to the schedule? The last time that was done was in 1980 to add a 7th round trip which was supposed to be for less than a year for some track work. That padding was never taken out of the schedule!

In the ’70’s the scheduled running time was 2 hours and 35 minutes between Los Angeles and San Diego. The plan was that by now we would have running times under 2 hours and 20 minutes with shorter station dwell times with all cars on the trains having low floor loading and remotely controlled doors.”

As an aside, Noel’s comment underlines the fact that RailPAC’s members are the institutional memory of this service, given the turnover of the LOSSAN Board.

The other significant changes affect service north of Los Angeles. LOSSAN seems to be determined to accommodate a “commuter” service between Ventura and Santa Barbara even though there is a specific legislative delineation between commuter and intercity passenger train service. The new schedule is phase one of robbing Peter to pay Paul. Neither the State nor LOSSAN nor Santa Barbara county have been able to extract concessions from Union Pacific to run another pair of trains (see Commentary) so they have to shuffle the existing resources around, trying to satisfy too many constituencies. Revenue and passenger mile results will indicate whether any of this makes any sense, or whether this has become a political rather than a passenger timetable.

Here is the rest of the announcement:

Modifications to Trains Traveling North of Los Angeles

To provide better service, consistency, and reliability, several changes are being made to Pacific Surfliner trains operating between Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo.

Existing Trains Affected New Details

Trains 582 and 784 (afternoon travel between Goleta and Santa Barbara)
- Train 582 will be renumbered as Train 782 (below), and will now originate in Goleta.
- Train 784 will be renumbered as Train 584 (below), and will now originate in Los Angeles instead of Goleta. Riders between Goleta and Los Angeles who currently take Train 784 can instead take Train 782 (below).
- NEW: Train 782 will replace Train 784 between Goleta and Los Angeles, operating 1 hour 15 minutes earlier, departing Goleta at 12:35 p.m. It will run on Train 582’s existing schedule between Los Angeles and San Diego.
- NEW: Train 584 will replace Train 784, originating in Los Angeles instead of Goleta, and departing Los Angeles at the existing time of 5:10 p.m.

Trains 790/1790, 592 and 796 (afternoon/evening travel between San Luis Obispo and Los Angeles)
- Trains 790/1790 will be replaced by Trains 796 and 792 (below).
- Train 592 will be renumbered as Train 792 (below), departing Los Angeles at 8:15 p.m.
- Train 796 will now originate in San Luis Obispo, departing at 4:15 p.m., 2 hours 40 minutes later than existing train 790.
- NEW: Train 792 will replace Trains 790/1790 and 592, originating in Goleta. It will run on a slightly earlier schedule than Train 592 between Los Angeles and San Diego.
- NEW: Trains 590/1588 will replace Train 790/1790 between Los Angeles and San Diego on a slightly earlier schedule.

Trains 761/1761 and 763 (morning travel to the north end of the corridor)
- Train 761/1761 will now extend from Goleta to San Luis Obispo, departing Los Angeles at 8:15 p.m.
- Train 763 will now originate in Goleta instead of Los Angeles, and departing Los Angeles at 5:10 p.m.

New Evening Departure (Los Angeles and San Diego)
With the cancellation of Trains 790 and 592, new Train 590 (weekdays only) will depart Los Angeles at 7:15 p.m., spreading out the weekend train departures. Its weekend counterpart, Train 1588, will operate slightly earlier, departing Los Angeles at 6:45 p.m.

All Trains Will Stop at Old Town San Diego
Trains 562 and 777 will now stop at the Old Town San Diego Station to establish consistency in the schedule – now, all 24 daily Pacific Surfliner trains will stop at this station, located just north of downtown, across from the Old Town Historic State Park.
What’s Wrong With Bakersfield?

by Noel T. Braymer

Bakersfield is finding itself on the losing side when it comes to getting rail passenger service in the San Joaquin Valley. Current plans for the Initial Operating Segment (IOS) of High Speed Rail in the San Joaquin Valley calls for service ending in the south several miles north of Bakersfield at Wasco. Recently the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) announced they are adding service from Fresno to Sacramento at the same time they are eliminating one train from Bakersfield to Sacramento. One of the odd things about Bakersfield which is in Kern County is the county is not a voting member of the SJJPA board. Of course, its representative in Congress is Kevin McCarthy who is an opposition leader against High Speed Rail construction. Kern County is both a major oil production center and has some of the worst air quality in the United States. But Bakersfield is also a major hub for connecting buses with Amtrak trains to Las Vegas and much of Southern California. None of this seems to be a concern of the Kern Council of Governments (KCG) which is the planning body for Kern County which doesn’t bother to be a part of the SJJPA. Kern County is focused on road construction not rail service. Ahron Hakimi, executive director of KCG was reported saying the trains are slower than driving and have trouble being on time. Clearly, he doesn’t ride the San Joaquin trains very often. The San Joaquin trains are the fastest passenger trains in California with an average speed of about 53 miles per hour between Bakersfield and Sacramento. The main problem for travelers is service isn’t frequent enough by train, particularly the two current roundtrip trains to Sacramento. The trains now leave Sacramento early in the morning and late in the afternoon. The trains arrive in Sacramento almost midday and late in the afternoon. There are 5 other San Joaquin trains that travel to Oakland which also have bus connections at Stockton to Sacramento. But what is missing are arrivals into Sacramento at the start of the business day and convenient departures in the early evenings. Peak travel times in most places are morning, midday and late afternoon to early evening. At the heart of the problem getting rail passenger service, but particularly in the San Joaquin Valley is money, or rather the lack there of. Economically the San Joaquin Valley is on a per capita basis one of the poorest regions in the country. The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) in San Joaquin County is in charge of the Altamont Corridor Express commuter rail service between Stockton and San Jose. The SJRRC also manages the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) which means it is responsible for planning future service for the Amtrak San Joaquin Trains. The SJRRC is busy planning ACEforward which proposes to extend ACE service to first to Modesto and shortly thereafter to Merced. ACE recently secured funding for this in the State Budget. ACEforward also calls for connections to BART in Livermore as well as with the Capitol Corridor trains at Fremont. This also includes more frequent rail service for ACE. For the San Joaquin trains there are plans to raise train speeds. This will require track upgrades which have been awaiting funding for quite some time now. At the SJJPA, planning is going ahead to run additional service to Sacramento starting with an early morning arrival at Sacramento by 8 AM which will be the train that skips Bakersfield and leaves Fresno around 4:30 AM. There is a planned bus connection as far as Bakersfield leaving at 2 AM to Fresno. It would make sense to start this northbound bus in the evening in Southern California which has a large market to add riders to the Fresno connection to Sacramento. While there may be more people riding from Fresno and points north, much of the revenue for transportation is from the distance people travel. The planning for adding rail service to Sacramento includes shifting the train route to Sacramento from the Fresno subdivision to the Sacramento subdivision. The Fresno sub is a busy Union Pacific mainline while there is plenty of unused capacity on the Sacramento sub. The downside with the Sacramento sub is it has no connections to the Amtrak Station in Sacramento. The planning calls for additional stations including in downtown Sacramento, North Sacramento and Natomas which is north of Sacramento for a bus connection to the Sacramento Airport. Along with expanded San Joaquin service to Sacramento there are plans to run an ACE DMU self-propelled railcar train as a shuttle between Stockton and Sacramento with connections to ACE trains and possibly San Joaquin trains. At the heart of the planning of the SJJPA, ACE
and SJRRC which are basically the same people wearing 3 hats is to create a system serving as a connector to future High-Speed Rail service. This will give better connections along the northern San Joaquin Valley including Sacramento to High Speed Rail at San Jose, Madera and Merced. The San Joaquin trains will connect to High Speed Rail at a joint station at Madera while ACE will connect at both San Jose and Merced.

Where does this leave Bakersfield? Behind the 8 ball for now. Planning of the route for High Speed Rail to downtown Bakersfield was delayed for years until the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) agreed to use the route along the Union Pacific preferred by the city of Bakersfield instead of on the BNSF. The advantage of the UP route is there were fewer people opposing use of this route compared to a joint HSR station with the San Joaquin trains along the BNSF. One might say the area along the UP is economically depressed compared to the BNSF side of town. Relations between Bakersfield and the CHSRA have improved since most of attention for the High-Speed Rail station is now focused on the UP route. But because of this delay Bakersfield has largely taken itself out of contention as a site for the future HSR central maintenance facility in the San Joaquin Valley. The indifference of the Kern Council of Governments about rail passenger service in Kern county doesn’t help either. For years the cities of Fresno, Merced and Bakersfield have wanted to have the central maintenance facility built in their tax base because it will be one of the largest employment centers in the San Joaquin Valley.

A case could be made that Bakersfield has shot itself in the foot several times when it comes to rail passenger service. But this misses the point that for rail service to work in California we need good service at Bakersfield. The disadvantage is there will be no connections between High Speed Rail and San Joaquin trains in Bakersfield unless the San Joaquin Trains are shifted to the UP Line south of Wasco. Not only would this be expensive, but it would mean leaving the fairly new Bakersfield train station which is closer to the center of Bakersfield than the future UP High Speed Rail station. Time will tell, but as the towns in the northern San Joaquin Valleys see increased development and economic growth with improved rail service, Bakersfield will likely get to work to catch up.

Electrolink North - A Proposal for Rapid Regional Rail

by Paul Dyson

I have a big picture vision of California passenger rail consisting of two regional networks, north and south, linked by a high speed dedicated passenger line. In the north the proposal is called Electrolink North and it builds on the electrification of the Caltrain peninsula line between San Jose and San Francisco.

Included in this project is reopening of the Dumbarton Bridge and tunneling between Pleasanton and Fremont to reduce grades and curves and radically improve journey times.

I’ve always contended that once the Caltrain electrification is complete we should be able to reduce the cost per mile with the experience gained from the first project, and the skilled and experienced labor force which would otherwise be dispersed.

Food for thought, I hope.

Map by Alex Barber.
The biggest challenges for Amtrak this summer have been named Richard, Harvey, and Irma.

Richard Anderson is the new Amtrak CEO who has had no experience in railroading but extensive experience in customer relations in the transportation industry as CEO of Delta Airlines. The departing Amtrak CEO Wick Moorman has been advising the new guy. As URPA’s Andrew Selden told us, “Moorman is late to the party, but he is also corroborating what URPA figured out decades ago: the long-distance trains, as a group, are cash-positive to Amtrak.” Anderson told CBS, “Amtrak is an iconic brand in America and it provides an essential service to many communities... it’s critical to getting people to work every day.” His first priority is fixing the infrastructure (he is listening to Moorman there), the second priority is “we gotta clean up our trains, run our trains on time, fix the interior of our trains and grow our services in the regions that provide the highest levels of service to communities around the country.” RailPAC’s Noel Braymer adds, “I think Richard Anderson is starting to have an impact as the head of Amtrak. We are seeing much more in the way of promotions and marketing going on now to beef up ridership and revenues as well as improve Amtrak’s image. This is clearly needed. But, what will also be needed are more service, more reliable on time service, and connections to more markets.” We are all watching, Richard.

Harvey and Irma of course were the hurricanes that brought havoc to South Texas, Louisiana, Florida and some southeastern states in August and September. While communities still struggle in those states and in the Caribbean because of another hurricane, Marie, the railroads on the US mainland in the affected regions have resumed service including those that carry Amtrak trains. After Harvey blew through, Sunset Limited service was first truncated back to being Los Angeles to El Paso only, and on board personnel tell us that those trains ran nearly empty. The Texas Eagle ran Chicago to Ft. Worth only. Shortly thereafter the Sunset and Eagle were extended back to San Antonio. Then on September 13 Sunset Limited service resumed to New Orleans. The first westbound full Sunset Limited arrived in San Antonio on Saturday, September 16 and this writer and wife rode it to Los Angeles in the full Texas Eagle Sleeping Car. That Trip Report begins below.

Hurricane Irma swept up the Florida peninsula knocking out vital services, and causing Amtrak to suspend service on the Eastern seaboard for a week. According to Gene Poon, when service resumed there was a rash of mechanical issues for those trains, and “NOT ONE can be blamed on the CSX and (its CEO) Hunter Harrison. They were pretty much self-inflicted. (Former Amtrak CEO) Boardman cut maintenance and repairs on the diesel fleet to help bail out the ‘profitable’ Northeast Corridor.” That situation did not happen on the UP’s Sunset Route, as this writer’s trip was nearly flawless and arrived early at most stations, both westbound and eastbound, despite heavy freight traffic including many very long double stack trains headed east. There have been rumors that the UP was emulating the philosophy of Harrison at CSX and running longer trains which meant fewer crews needed. We saw evidence of that. Most of those long double stacks had two rear end helper locomotives vs the usual one. There was excellent dispatching, though, as our Sunset/Eagles wove through the UP’s freight traffic on both double track and single track. The same can be said for the segment of the Texas Eagle on BNSF track in Texas.

Trip Report for train 421 in car 32103, formerly known as the “Ohio” sleeping car, and regular riders will know what we mean when we celebrate that there were NO door rattles! It was clean and the attendant Jason was very helpful and seemed to reflect a very positive attitude we saw throughout this trip. . . . Room service was necessary for us, and we enjoyed the dinner from the Eagle’s dining car. We decided to try some of the new menu items, the chicken enchilada for me and the shrimp for my wife. As usual on the southbound Eagle, the sittings in the Dining Car were limited to only 5:00 and 5:30, giving the crew three hours to clean up before fast detraining in San Antonio, and the Cafe car closed after San Marcos. This was the first trip on this route that I slept through all the banging around in San Antonio when the Eagle cars were switched to the Sunset Limited.
A new car attendant took over our sleeper for the ride from San Antonio to Los Angeles, and she may have been the best one we have had in all our years of traveling Amtrak: “C.C.” was available to her car riders whenever she was needed, and (really!) inquired as to everyone’s needs and scheduled herself to do what was necessary. No hiding requiring a passenger to hunt for her, she was there! Bottled water was always available. We lucked out in that C.C. was scheduled to be on our car when we departed from Los Angeles Union Station to return home, too! C.C. has been with the company for 16 years and still enjoys her travels. . . . The meals on the Sunset Limited were excellent, too, and we enjoyed the scrambled egg breakfast and the magnificent “Angus Steak (cheese) Burger” lunch. Coach passengers were offered the “Just for You” meal-at-your-seat chicken sliders, and many were observed buying it. While there was no PA mention of this service on the return train, we were told that dining car revenues have increased considerably since its start, and it does not require any additional crew. We heard no complaints about the Dining Car service from any fellow riders, and “John’s Place” in the westbound Sunset Limited Sightseer Lounge entertained the folks with his “jokes” on the PA.

Trip Report for train 422 in car 32043, a newer upgraded sleeping car with panels instead of the carpeted walls. While the car was “newer,” the door rattles were there unlike in the older car on our first train. . . . Having C.C. as the car attendant was a big bonus. Avia who came on board in San Antonio, spoke of her 11 year career at Amtrak and the first 10 years were on east coast trains where she could “look out the window and tell where she was then, but was still getting used to the Eagle route.” She was very efficient, too…. Again, the breakfast scramble and the lunch (cheese) burger were excellent choices. The PA announcements varied from crew person to crew person on all four segments of our trip, and while none of the “blame the freight railroad we are riding on” blurbs of the past were heard, only the first Texas Eagle train tried to “sell” dinner in the Diner by describing the available items… This was our first trip on this route that we saw a double spot stop required at the Lordsburg, NM (flag) stop. We were told that construction of the new highway overcrossing at the Maricopa, AZ, station was beginning construction, which will eliminate the necessity of 3 or 4 spot stops there and improve timekeeping… One new thing noticed was there were two non-service type dogs traveling in Coach with their owners this time, thanks to the new regulation. Both animals were quiet and caused no problems. The same can be said for the passengers, as to my knowledge no one was removed because of bad conduct including smoking. There were plenty of warnings from the conductors about no smoking on the trains, and we can definitely say the whole atmosphere on this trip was positive… One last personal note: we enjoyed visiting with both RailPAC e-newsletter Editor Noel Braymer and VP James Smith in Los Angeles Union Station prior to our departure from there. It’s always good to see old friends, and it was also great to see all the work that is going on in that magnificent station. We hope the former Fred Harvey place there will be open on our next trip west…. Meanwhile, Amtrak, keep up the good work, it’s great to be positive about you.
Smart’s Tracks Can Deliver Vallejo-Novato Transit

by Richard Spotswood

With the recent focus on a potential toll road to elevate and widen the traffic- and flood-plagued Novato-Vallejo highway, a reader wrote reminding us that there’s zero public transit available on the congested route.

Here’s a short-term suggestion not yet on the table. Traversing the same Marin-Sonoma-Napa-Solano highway route are tracks of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad. It’ll come as a surprise that the 26-mile rail line now utilized to bring limited amounts of freight to Sonoma County is owned by SMART. It runs from Ignacio to the Napa River, where it connects with short branches to Vallejo and the city of Napa. Even if the highway rebuilding got the go-ahead today, its opening would be a decade away.

The environmental review alone is estimated to cost $25 million. In the meantime, Sonoma Valley, Solano County and North Contra Costa County commuters are relegated to a bumper-to-bumper slog. Even adding a bus route won’t do much as buses will be trapped in the same mess.

The Marin-Vallejo track is Federal Railroad Administration Class 2, suitable for freight service. It doesn’t take much to bring it to Class 3 standards, appropriate for passenger trains traveling almost 60 mph.

Railroad civil engineers indicate the work includes minor surfacing, tie replacement and some track-circuit changes for signals.

I’m not suggesting mimicking SMART. That’s the most expensive, time-consuming way to add public transit.

The idea is that some agency - yes, it could be SMART - leases available off-the-shelf double-decker passenger cars and locomotives from Los Angeles’ Metrolink. The trick is not to get high-priced consultants involved. To them, the ideal of leasing - which requires little in the way of capital - is anathema.

Locate a private-sector railroader with practical engineering and operating experience and the line could be up and running within a year at reasonable cost. Only one or two train sets would be needed and the once-a-day freight train could be shifted to off-peak hours.

Because the already-in-existence equipment is built to heavy-duty passenger car standards, if federal approval can be obtained there’s no need to equip the line with expensive positive train control.

For stations, cheap-to-build low-level platforms can quickly be installed in Vallejo, south Napa and outside the city of Sonoma, in Schellville. The only imagination needed is adapting the downtown Novato station’s high-level platforms to handle the new line’s conventional passenger cars so transfers can be made there to San Rafael and Santa Rosa-bound SMART trains.

Until a road toll is enacted, financing can come equally from Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties, meaning none faces a huge burden.

Transit can be a viable alternative - though not a solution - even when passenger volumes are moderate, if built lean and mean. If local policymakers continue to believe the only way to go is “everything new, everything state-of-the-art,” nothing will get done.

This approach is what SMART should have done from the get-go, but that’s water under the bridge.

Adding public transit to the Novato-Vallejo route will be an opportunity to see just now nimble SMART management and North Bay policymakers can be.

Editor’s comments: This is an excellent suggestion and one which should be considered. It brings to mind the Music Star service in Nashville TN which was started on a shoestring with used equipment. It’s a good model. Unfortunately, such things as Positive Train Control and ADA access are not options but mandates. However, there are plenty of templates out there for providing these essentials at lower cost. There is no need to reinvent the wheel for every new project.

I asked a former railroad manager familiar with the territory for his comments:

He is right on the money. I always thought that it should be top priority to get to Vallejo or Suisun instead of north to Cloverdale. I think they would have a lot more ridership than the north south line. FYI standard trains will fit at the high-level platforms. The cars just need those manual drop floors to take stairs or walk off to level platforms. We did a test to prove it with a freight locomotive.

The infrastructure issue are 3 bridges. Black Point is very old and is in major need of repairs and/or replacement. Black Point is a turn bridge. Brazos is in great shape. It is a lift bridge. Both of them need the required interlocking put back in place. Novato Creek needs complete replacement. It is a rotting timber bridge.

The other most important piece of the puzzle is UP. In order to get to Napa, Vallejo or Suisun you need permission from UP starting at Lombard.

RailPAC will continue to follow this idea with interest and see if it gains any traction with the authorities. Mr. Spotswood tells me he has had a Marin Supervisor call him for more details.

Originally published in the Marin Independent Journal and reprinted with permission. Dick Spotswood is also a long time RailPAC member.
RailPAC Northern California Policy Development

by Steve Roberts

Starting with the State Rail Plan (http://www.dot.ca.gov/californiarail/) and moving down through regional and local agencies there is plenty of reading material to keep our Vice President of Policy and Research Steve Roberts busy. Steve, aided by Vaughn Wolfe and Doug Kerr, with hopefully a little helpful interference from myself, is developing a set of policies in reaction to the publication of ACE Forward.

Steve Roberts writes:

This is our first cut at consensus positions that RailPAC can support. For the longer-term visions or issues that were not part of either the ACE Forward Draft EIR or the Dumbarton Transportation Corridor Draft EIR, I have tried to stay "high-level" to avoid getting bogged down in details.

1. Support San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission’s (SJRRC) focus on capacity, additional frequencies and reliability as outlined in the ACE Forward DEIR;
2. Support expansion of the ACE commuter rail service to Modesto and eventually Merced;
3. Strongly support the ACE Forward recommendation that there be no direct ACE service to Union City BART station. Per the study recommendation access to the BART station at Union City should be via transit bus (initially) and via the Caltrain Redwood City – Union City shuttle after the Dumbarton rail bridge is rebuilt;
4. Once the Berryessa BART extension begins service, stakeholders should investigate a transit bus shuttle coordinated with ACE schedules from ACE Centerville to the Fremont BART station;
5. Remain neutral on the downtown Tracy reroute. While this may be beneficial in the long-term and vital to do it now, this is more a land-use issue (revolving around transportation) than it is a service issue. Please note while there are a lot of potential stops shown in the report, most are associated with replacement stations for the downtown Tracy reroute. Two of the new stations are in the Tracy area - West Tracy and River Islands. Since both of these stops are in the main “load-up” area, the extra schedule time will have minimal ridership impact. Greenville Road, the proposed connection to some sort of BART access, is another matter. This is why the original BART Livermore line route where ACE/BART transfers occurred at an existing station, was a superior option;
6. Remain neutral on the BART Livermore extension or shuttle connection issue. A 5-mile shuttle will probably result in suboptimal cost benefit rating (given the cost of widening I-580) while direct ACE service San Joaquin Valley to Dublin/Pleasanton means additional investment in capacity east of Greenville Road that does not benefit ACE’s core market, San Joaquin Valley to Silicon Valley;
7. Support the Samtrans Dumbarton Transportation Corridor DEIR’s recommendation that maximizes transit usage in the Dumbarton transportation corridor. The recommended alternative, Option 10, would consist of a converting a general service SOV lane in each direction into High Occupancy Toll lanes with enhanced transit bus service combined with the rebuilding of the Dumbarton rail bridge into a high-capacity double track rail line. In support of this recommended option RailPAC also suggests early action investments in the rail bridge to prevent further deterioration, provide a foundation for future construction, and prevent the bridge from becoming a hazard to navigation.
8. Support the start-up recommendation of frequent rail shuttle service between Redwood City and Union City connecting with ACE trains at Centerville/Fremont;
9. Design the Dumbarton rail corridor investments so that they would not preclude the option of creating a new direct one-seat ACE route from the San Joaquin Valley to Redwood City.
10. As the Caltrain Peninsular rail line capacity is increased and road/highway grade crossings eliminated to accommodate future Peninsular travel growth, explore the option of extended through service utilizing the Dumbarton rail bridge. This could be extended ACE service north into San Mateo County or extended Caltrain local service (in lieu of the Redwood City to Union City shuttles) from San Jose to Union City and from northern San Mateo County cities to Union City or a combination of all of these.

Readers opinions are welcome. Write to pdyson@railpac.org with your comments.
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Santa Barbara Car Free is a cooperative project founded and led by Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District for cleaner air and a healthier planet. See OurAir.org.
The ALL ABOARD ARIZONA Board of Directors approved employment of Anthony (Tony) Trifiletti, former President, All Aboard Washington, Seattle, Washington, as ALL ABOARD ARIZONA’S new Executive Director, effective October 1, 2017. Mr. Trifiletti has moved from Lynden, Washington to Scottsdale, Arizona and he has assumed his full time duties here.

In other news, you’re President and Vice President – Roger Clark, presented to the City of Flagstaff Mayor and City Council members specific recommendations for much needed Flagstaff passenger train station improvements. ALL ABOARD ARIZONA is helping to organize an interstate coalition to increase the daily Sunset Limited passenger train service. Board Member and Vice President, Al Richmond, has worked closely with City of Williams officials to retain the Williams Junction train stop, with discontinuance of Grand Canyon Railroad’s shuttle van service, between the train stop and downtown Williams.

Now, for the rest of the story.

New Executive Director Sets Ambitious Passenger Rail Agenda For Arizona.

Newly hired Executive Director, Tony Trifiletti, brings a strong resume of professional business experience and rail activism to Arizona. Born in Philadelphia and reared in New Jersey, Tony was the product of the Catholic school system and began his interest in rail with the simple act of using Philadelphia’s comprehensive metro, light, interurban and commuter rail systems.

He received a B.S. in chemistry from Drexel University in 1971 and spent two years as an Army officer at Fort Lewis, Washington. He enjoyed an early career in radio broadcasting in Seattle, followed by a career in information technology in Los Angeles and Seattle for thirty years.

He was President, All Aboard Washington (1997 – 2008), Seattle, Washington, under my direction as Chairman. He pursued a freight rail bypass project, known as the Cascade Foothills Corridor, which succeeded in getting the state to allocate money for a feasibility study. Tony was also a key player in All Aboard Washington’s effort to save the BNSF’s Eastside Rail line, and was a principal negotiator with the Port of Seattle to purchase the out-of-service rail line.

He co-wrote “Who is John Galt; A Navigational Guide to Ayn Rand’s ‘Atlas Shrugged’; published and available on Amazon. He also co-wrote “The Gospels of the American Civic Religion,” a study of the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers.

Tony has an ambitious rail agenda to promulgate passenger rail development and expansion in Arizona. He will implement our Strategic Plan, develop and implement outreach strategies, meet regularly with key Federal and State Legislators responsible for railroad issues, build coalition relationships with other pro-rail passenger train organizations, especially with the National Association of Railroad Passengers. He will also meet with city mayors, city councils and civic organizations to build public support for passenger rail services. He will especially focus on meeting with academics, in the higher education institutions, to recruit Millennials to support passenger rail and to provide future leadership of our aging leadership organization. Tony will also promote fund raising activities and recruiting new members for All Aboard Arizona.

All Aboard Arizona Makes Train Station Recommendations To Flagstaff City Council

Roger Clark and I were asked to make a presentation to Flagstaff Mayor Coral Evans, City Manager Josh Copley, Vice Mayor Jamie Whelan and five City Council Members, September 26, 2017, concerning recommendations for needed improvements to the Flagstaff Train Station and the necessity of signage on all roads directing travelers to the Train Station. The invitation to speak to the salons was facilitated by City Councilman, Jim McCarthy, also a member of ALL ABOARD ARIZONA and NARP. A summary of the presentation is included here.

Summary Of Presentation Made To Flagstaff City Council

“All Aboard Arizona is pleased to present information showing the major importance of the Flagstaff Train Station, serving the Community of Flagstaff, Northern Arizona University, the Grand Canyon National Park and the North Central Area of Arizona. We would like to present some recommendations how your local Train Station can better serve the many passengers boarding and alighting the daily Amtrak Southwest Chief here. Noticeably absent are any Amtrak train station signs directing passengers on all roads leading to the Flagstaff Train Station. Also, mapping sites and GPS devices variously list the station location on Route 66, Historic Route 66 and Santa Fe Avenue. These problems are fairly easy to solve.

Flagstaff is number one in boarding and alighting of rail passenger in Arizona. With the discontinuance of the Grand...
Canyon Railroad’s shuttle service, between Williams Junction train stop and downtown Williams, Flagstaff passenger boarding’s and alighting’s will increase 15% to 20% early next year, resulting from Williams Junction passengers being handled at the Flagstaff Train Station. Total annual passenger boarding’s/alighting’s have increased the past three years at both passenger train station stops, bringing the combined passenger count to 50,000 a year. If each passenger spent $400.00 for local food, lodging, shopping, etc., they would be putting twenty million dollars a year into the local community.

The City of Flagstaff is to be complimented in keeping the Flagstaff Train Station in a state of good repair. The grounds, station access and parking facilities are well cared for. The Train Station has a staffed ticket office, checked baggage service and Thurway bus service to Phoenix. However, the legacy brick platform is uneven, with water puddling in summer and ice spots in winter. The Station waiting room is not adequate for seasonal passenger boarding’s and alighting’s. You have a nice Visitor’s Center in the Train Station; however, it was constructed, using former Train Station ticket office and waiting room space. Only about 30 people can comfortably sit in the waiting room.

All Aboard Arizona is pleased to offer three recommendations that would make the existing Flagstaff Train Station more accommodating, attractive and functional than it presently is. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The Train Station platform needs to be improved to insure safe movement of passengers moving to and from passenger trains.
2. Train Station signs are needed on all roads, including Interstate Highway 17 and Interstate Highway 40, leading to the Flagstaff Train Station.
3. The Train Station waiting room needs to be significantly enlarged so as to accommodate all boarding passengers with enough seating capacity, including large seasonal passenger boarding’s.

Our Recommendations Were Well Received By Flagstaff City Council

There was considerable discussion following our presentations. City Mayor Evans directed City Councilman Jim McCarthy, and city staff members, to develop more information concerning Train Station issues, and to recommend back to City Council what should be done to improve Flagstaff Train Station issues as we proposed.

ALL ABOARD ARIZONA wishes to thank City Councilman, Jim McCarthy, for inviting us to make our presentation to the Flagstaff City Council. Councilman McCarthy also presented a draft resolution, calling for the City of Flagstaff to urge Congress to enact legislation that: “Continues Amtrak service to Flagstaff and other cities on the Chicago – Los Angeles route. Improves connecting routes to other regional cities.” The City Council approved Mr. McCarthy’s draft resolution to be put on the action agenda for the next formal City Council meeting, for presentation and a vote to approve the resolution.
ARIZONA NEWS

Daily Sunset Limited Coalition Set To Meet In San Diego

Your President; Executive Director, Tony Trifiletti; Board Members, Alan Mott and Earl Van Swearingen and Mike Garey, Officer, will meet with RailPac President, Paul Dyson; Bob Manning, RailPac Vice President; NARP Director, George Chilson; former NARP Advisory and former Amtrak Vice President – Operations, Richard Phelps, in San Diego, California on October 24, 2017 to organize the "Daily Sunset Limited Coalition". The goal of the coalition, in partnership with NARP, is to mobilize all rail passenger organizations, civic and legislative bodies along the Sunset Corridor, to support the daily operation of AMTRAK’s tri-weekly Sunset Limited Passenger Train and directly serving Phoenix, Arizona. We will advise coalition building activities as they develop.

Williams Junction Shuttle Service To Williams Slated To End

The Grand Canyon Railway has announced it will discontinue the only shuttle van service between the Amtrak Williams Junction train stop to the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel at the end of the year. The railroad has provided van service from the Amtrak train stop in Williams Junction, which is located in a remote area about three miles east of Williams, for many, many years. However, since passenger train arrivals and departures are unpredictable, van drivers must be on call most of the night. And passengers, arriving at the hotel, often are sleeping in the lobby, disrupting quests and creating problems for hotel employees.

ALL ABOARD ARIZONA Vice President, Al Richmond, has had several meetings with the Mayor and City Officials of Williams, in an effort to get the City to provide the shuttle van service, but will little success. At this time, he advises there are proposals for Amtrak to operate shuttle service, between Williams and the Flagstaff Train station. The Train Stop site would remain with the Southwest Chief stopping only for special boarding/alighting parties with advance notice. Presently, we have no confirmation what the travel arrangements will be when the present shuttle van services ends in December, 2017. We commend Al Richmond for his untiring efforts to save the van shuttle service.

All Aboard Arizona Fall Passenger Summit Set For December 9, 2017

Roger Clark Vice – President, Membership, has announced our ALL ABOARD ARIZONA FALL PASSENGER RAIL SUMMIT, will be held at Riverpark Inn, 777 W. Cushing St, Tucson, Arizona, Saturday, December 9, 2017. Registration and coffee will be available at 8:30 AM. The meeting starts at 9:30 AM.

Meet the new Executive Director, Tony Trifiletti, who will share his vision and goals for ALL ABOARD ARIZONA 2018. Other speakers include a presentation from Richard Phelps, Vice President, RAILPLAN, past Vice President Operations, AMTRAK. He will speak on “GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT FOR AMTRAK’S SUNSET LIMITED”. A buffet lunch will be served. Following lunch, we will hear a presentation from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILWAY PASSENGERS Chairman of the Board, Peter LeCody, who will address “NARP SUPPORT FOR LONG DISTANCE PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE and THE SUNSET LIMITED/Texas Eagle SERCICE. A panel discussion is planned but details have not been completed at this time.

Registration is $35 which includes the buffet luncheon. You can register and pay on line AllAboardArizona.org or mail your check payable to “All Aboard Arizona” to Roger Clark, 3323 S. Ponderosa Dr., Gilbert, AZ. 85297-7740. The Riverpark Inn offers a discounted room rate of $69 plus tax which includes breakfast. For reservations phone 520.239.2300 transit services in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

NEVADA NEWS

RailPAC is delighted to announce that Ron Kaminkow has joined us as northern Nevada representative. Ron is the Nevada member of the NARP Council and works in the passenger rail industry. He is also active in railroad labor issues and will be our liaison with rail labor. He can be contacted at 608 358 5771, ronkaminkow@yahoo.com. Welcome Ron!

Don’t forget to check your subscription expiration date on the mailing label and renew your membership if it is due.

Thank you for your continued support for RailPAC and passenger rail.
Authentic Dining Car Coffee

“The railroad runs on coffee...” These words have been repeated many times since the 19th century. But what type of coffee makes the special railroad-fueling brew the stuff of legends? Coffee roasted from special peaberry coffee beans, that’s what. Peaberrries, as they’re known, are unique, rare and small coffee beans noted for their superior rich flavor and small, dense size. Only 5% of all coffee beans are considered peaberrries, but their reputation is mighty. The remarkable richness for their small size is why the Dining Car Coffee Company of St. Louis originally chose these beans for their robust railroad blend back at the turn of the 19th century. Dining Car coffee featured these noted peaberry beans and became an early coffee-blend recipe supplied to many railroads’ west-bound dining car operations. Today, we’re proud to carry on this unique and rich tradition through special arrangement with fellow RailPAC member, Verdugo Coffee Roasters in Burbank, California and their own accurately recreated Daylight Dining Car Coffee blend. Enjoy an authentic cup of Daylight Dining Car coffee today and see why it’s still proclaimed, “The Rich and Robust Coffee.” And Best of all, 100% of net proceeds from the sale of Daylight Dining Coffee benefits and goes back to RailPAC’s continued advocacy for investment in and the greater use of passenger rail in California, Nevada and the west.

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The RailPAC Mission: Passenger Rail advocacy, Publications...both print and electronic, Representation at regional meetings, and Rail education.

Join us! More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

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