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# NARPnews

*"You've got airlines abandoning the rural communities in this nation. You have the bus systems reducing the amount of service they provide. Amtrak is the backbone of public transportation in the United States."*

AMTRAK CEO JOE BOARDMAN

## Acela RFP Seeks Faster Trains and Higher Capacity

Amtrak is looking to update its 15-year-old Acela fleet with faster trains and more capacity and will no longer pursue a joint high-speed corridor order with California. Its recently released request for proposals calls for up to 28 next-generation train sets that will supplement and eventually replace the current rolling stock. Amtrak is now accepting bids from companies that manufacture 160 mph-plus equipment whereas California is seeking 220-mph rolling stock.

The move comes just in time for passengers on the Northeast Corridor who are feeling the strain of growing ridership on the Acela Express service. Ridership is up seven percent from last year, which has translated into crowded trains and sold out tickets. Amtrak says its new train sets will have 40 percent more seats per train than the current train sets, and will be able to meet or exceed current trip times on the existing NEC infrastructure.

This step will also prevent loss of revenue from the would-be Acela patrons who have been forced to travel by regional trains or air shuttle service.

"The Northeast Corridor needs more high-speed rail capacity to help move the American economy forward," said Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boardman. "More and more people are choosing Amtrak for travel between Washington, New York and Boston. New equipment means more seats and more frequent departures to help meet that growing demand."

## As Amtrak's On Time Performance Suffers, NARP Heads to Supreme Court for Relief

As delays continue to plague Amtrak trains, a trend extending back more than year, there is growing concern that this dip in service quality will have a lasting and negative impact on the railroad. In response, NARP is teaming up with Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC) to file an amicus curiae, or "friend of the court," brief with the United States Supreme Court on a case that could restore regulatory protections for Amtrak service quality.

While On Time Performance (OTP) over Amtrak-controlled track has remained largely unaffected, OTP over host railroad-controlled track has suffered greatly, with system wide OTP hovering somewhere around 74 percent, down thirteen points from FY 2013's 85 percent.

This dip in performance dates back to spring of 2013. While there have been exigent factors—harsh winter and spring weather that has degraded key track infrastructure, a spike in freight demand resulting from the crude oil-by-rail boom coming out of the Dakotas—the surge in delays also followed directly upon a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals - D.C. Circuit (*Association of American Railroads v. U.S. Department of Transportation*, et al., No. 12-5204). In a lawsuit filed by the Association of America Railroads against the U.S. Department of Transportation, the D.C. appellate court ruled it is un-

constitutional for Amtrak, insofar as it is a semi-private corporation, to participate with the Federal Railroad Administration in setting performance standards.

These metrics, however, helped ensure that Amtrak's trains met minimum standards of service quality. Moreover, they were developed in conjunction with a wide variety of public and private parties, including the Surface Transportation Board, freight railroads, states, rail labor, and rail passenger organizations.

Increasingly, it appears the Supreme Court's decision on this case will be a key factor in restoring sanity to Amtrak operations.

"This is one of the most important issues NARP has ever tackled," said NARP Chairman Robert Stewart in a public statement. "The standards adopted by the government provided real protection for the train-traveling public. As a consumer organization representing railroad passengers, our primary responsibility is to ensure that the services provided meet the reasonable expectations people have for getting to their destinations on time and safely. NARP is deeply grateful to ELPC for their professional assistance in presenting our views to the Supreme Court."

The campaign to address these delays is gaining the attention of key leaders...

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## Congress Goes Small on Surface Transportation “Fix”; Kill-Sunset Limited Bill Appears Dead

The U.S. Congress passed a short-term fix to the Highway Trust Fund bankruptcy crisis that provides a mere 10 months of relief before the debate begins anew. Worse yet, this shortsightedness has stalled the campaign to provide passenger trains with the dedicated source of funding it needs.

The House-created bill, approved by the Senate and sent to President Obama on July 31—the very last day of action before the August recess sent Members of Congress back to their home districts—subsidizes highway spending with \$10.8 billion in revenue, which will keep road, bridge, and transit projects funded through May of 2015.

“What we’ve done is we’ve said to governors and state departments of transportation and others that are trying to build highways, bridges and transportation systems, you can count on it for a couple of months, then it runs out,” said Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE). “Stop and go. It’s hugely inefficient.”

The failure to advance the conversation over how to address the investment deficit plaguing U.S. infrastructure also hinders our ability to include passenger trains in a comprehensive surface transportation fund, securing a dedicated

source of funding for Amtrak. By enacting NARP’s plan for \$5 billion in passenger rail investment per year, America could add 100,000 middle class jobs each and every year—construction and manufacturing jobs that can’t be exported.

You can get involved in our campaign to secure \$5 billion a year for trains by going to the Get Involved section at [narprail.org](http://narprail.org). Budget Bill Attacking *Sunset Limited* Stalls One silver lining to the partisan morass afflicting Washington is that the House’s transportation appropriations bill, which included an amendment that would’ve eliminated the *Sunset Limited* route and food and beverage services on long distance trains, has stalled. Caught up in the broader disagreement between the House and Senate over how to move the 12 annual appropriations bill, the House GOP proposals attacking Amtrak’s long distance service look poised to never see the light of day. Instead, Congressional leaders indicate they will rely on a continuing resolution to extend current funding structures through the end of the year.

NARP is still actively working to respond to the attack on the *Sunset Limited*, and let leaders know the importance of this train to the community it serves. Help us build support at the Get Involved section at [narprail.org](http://narprail.org)!

## New NARPrail.org Offers New Advocacy Tools

NARP is proud to announce the launch of a [brand new website](#), which we believe will be a useful tool for our members to communicate, organize and advocate for a world-class passenger rail network.

When you visit the new [NARPrail.org](http://NARPrail.org), you will find all the resources that you know and love at your fingertips: hotline and blog, train status, advocacy materials and more. But we’ve added a brand new feature we think you’ll be excited about: a [powerful advocacy tool](#) that breaks down the hottest issues we’re tackling and equips you to take

action. For example, right now we’re featuring ways to support the *Hoosier State*, the *Sunset Limited*, All Aboard Florida and more.

The new [NARPrail.org](http://NARPrail.org) also gives you the ability to change your username and password and update your contact information at any time. We hope you’ll like the new look and feel, too.

Some of the most important improvements to the website are behind the scenes, like its better-than-ever functionality and reliability. Ultimately we at the office, and you out in the field, need to be able to focus on our advocacy efforts. We believe that this platform will allow us to do just that.

## California HSR Makes Strides

After winning billions in state funding, California Governor Jerry Brown said that the state is now capable of moving forward on the Los Angeles - San Francisco high-speed rail project, even if the federal government cannot commit more funds.

The Third Appellate District Court of Appeals issued a ruling on July 31 that will allow the State of California to begin selling \$9 billion in voter-approved bonds, green-lighting a key source of funding for construction the statewide project.

“We welcome the court’s ruling. The High-Speed Rail Authority has always been committed to building a modern high-speed rail system that will connect the state, precisely as the voters called for when they passed Proposition 1A,” said Authority Chairman Dan Richard. “This system will be a clean, fast, non-subsidized service, and will create jobs and enable smart, sustainable growth while preserving farmland and habitat.”

The momentous court victory comes on the heels of news that the 220-mph train will receive revenue from the recently approved cap-and-trade program, securing roughly \$250 million in funding in the first year and a dedicated source of revenue going forward.

The Authority also announced it will accelerate delivery of the Palmdale to Burbank end-segment in Los Angeles, transforming a 90 minute train ride into a 15 minute trip. These improvements would happen simultaneously with work on the Central Valley spine, and would let residents of Los Angeles County, the states most populous region, see benefits from the project much sooner.

We encourage our California members to contact their local representatives and voice their support for Governor Brown’s plan to build the nation’s first true high-speed rail!

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# Indianapolis Rail Service to Chicago Threatened

By Bill Malcolm, Editor-*All Aboard Indiana* and Media and government relations representative, *Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance*  
 Passenger rail service on the *Hoosier State* Amtrak train which runs four days a week between Indianapolis and Chicago could end as early as October 1 as the City of Indianapolis announced it will not support continuing its funding of part of the cost to operate the train. The City paid \$300K last year to offset operational costs.

The state took over funding of the train on October 1 last year per the 2008 Federal law, which only allows Federal funding for Amtrak's long haul lines. The state made local government's fund half the cost of operating the train as part of the deal.

In the 1950s, eight trains a day operated between Chicago and Indianapolis on three separate rail lines taking as little as 3 ½ hours. Further, the downtown-to-downtown service has great potential. Indy's Union Station – the city's oldest building – is across the street from both the convention center and football stadium and just steps away from the city's hotels and museums. Indeed, the city has a surprisingly large convention and tourism business with over half of it coming from the Chicago area. Further, the train is used by Amtrak to haul trains for repair at the Beech Grove facility in Indianapolis.



Brian Gildea (Indy Chamber), Charlie Monte Verde and Rick Burton (Amtrak) pose at with refurbished car at Amtrak Beech Grove during IPRA tour

The train stops in Lafayette on the way to Chicago – serving Purdue University students and faculty. Indeed, this community was instrumental in saving the train in negotiations with the state last year. Further, Lafayette, West Fayette, and Tippecanoe County (which includes the two cities) all contribute towards the cost of train operations, as do other cities along the route as well as Beech Grove. Despite the great potential of the train and the support from the Purdue University community, the *Hoosier State* is rife with challenges, which gives it the dubious distinction of having the lowest ridership of any Amtrak route. Problems include:

- Takes over 5 hours to go under 200 miles
- Leaves Indy at 6 a.m. and returns at 11:50 p.m. if on time
- Has no food nor beverage service nor WiFi
- Must cross or go through several rail lines (including a Union Pacific maintenance yard at 5 miles)
- Takes an hour or more to go just

30 miles from Dyer to Chicago's Union Station • Can only go 59 mph from Indy to Dyer due to CSX restrictions.

Earlier this year, INDOT put the *Hoosier State* service out for bid in order to improve service and ridership. Eight bidders responded and INDOT tentatively selected Corridor Capital LLC as the winning bidder. However, the matter was contingent on a three-year commitment from local communities to continue funding 50% of the cost.

In an email to All Aboard Indiana, Will Wingfield of INDOT clarified the situation:

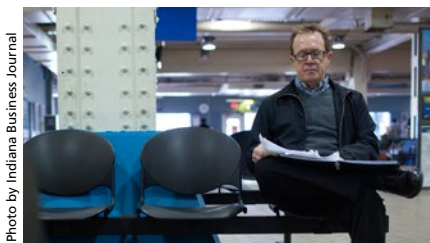
"INDOT believes that the local communities should continue to be responsible for half of the operating subsidies. INDOT is researching alternative funding sources and discussing options with legislators and other state agencies.

INDOT is also encouraging its community partners to help recruit other local governments to participate, such as counties along the route."

Passenger service on the *Cardinal* – which operates the other three days of the week – is not subject to state funding and will continue.

The train service can be extended for an additional four months per an agreement between Amtrak and INDOT (until January 2015). Indiana is the only state that requires local communities to contribute to passenger rail operation.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: BILL MALCOLM



Bill Malcolm waiting in the Amtrak Bus Station (Union Station) in Indianapolis in March

Bill Malcolm of Indianapolis is the editor of *All Aboard Indiana* and media and government relations representative for

the *Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance*, and has been a key player in the ongoing struggle for *Hoosier State* service which operates between Chicago and Indianapolis.

Working with local attorney Doug Yerkeson, the group worked closely with advocates in Lafayette headed by the regional chamber of commerce in order to save the threatened service in 2013.

His advice to advocates defending the *Hoosier State* is to emphasize economic impacts – in this case, the 525 jobs at the

nearby Amtrak Beech Grove Maintenance facility and the Amtrak locomotive engines being built by Cummins, the state's third largest company.

Malcolm says he is inspired by the more advanced development of rail in other states like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois where trains go 110 mph on parts of the route, or where service frequencies and travel times are closer to ideal.

"We have a lot of great stories to tell the public about the great things about passenger rail travel in the Midwest," he says.

Photo by Indiana Business Journal

## With Funding Questions Still in the Air, Amtrak's President Engages in Whistle Stop Diplomacy



Marty Mayfield Photography

With no agreement in place on how to continue the *Southwest Chief* along its current route, Amtrak President & CEO Joseph Boardman went on a whistle stop tour of the affected communities raise awareness about the significance of the impending deadline. The Amtrak chief also educated public officials and business leaders on the benefits that passenger rail service brings to the communities served.

The *Southwest Chief's* route through Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico is threatened due to a decision by host railroad Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) decision to downgrade the

maintenance program of the mainline. BNSF has told Amtrak that the declining volume of freight business along the line no longer justifies maintaining the track to standards that allow 79 mph passenger service.

The train can continue along the current route if each of the affected parties—Amtrak, BNSF, Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico—pays \$4 million a year over the next ten years. With Congress mired in partisan turmoil, the affected states and communities have been forced to come up with local sources of funding. While Colorado and Kansas have made progress in their state legislature, New Mexico has yet to commit; the state recognizes the importance of the service continuing, but insists it is a federal responsibility.

On the tour, which ran between Albuquerque, New Mexico and Newton, Kansas, Boardman talked about the 350,000 passengers that ride the train

every year, and the vital transportation connection that Amtrak provides.

"You've got airlines abandoning the rural communities in this nation," said Boardman at an event in La Junta. "You have the bus systems reducing the amount of service they provide. Amtrak is the backbone of public transportation in the United States."

Some advocates have used the crisis to push for expanded service; a recent study by Colorado State University-Pueblo found that extending the line to Pueblo would create 1,000 new jobs, roughly \$145 million in new economic activity, and \$4.5 million in additional tax revenue for the state and local governments.

For people who live along the line, the case for continuing the train is simpler: they've come to rely on it as an essential public service.

"It's vital to all of [our] people," Lamy resident Kathy Pilknock told KRQE News. "It's a part of our community, it's a part of our heritage and we hope it is for the future."

## EIS Will Chart Future of Houston-Dallas High Speed Rail Corridor

Texas Central Railway's plan for a high speed passenger train connecting Houston and Dallas is one step closer to reality after the Federal Railroad Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation said they would prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the project.

The statement will look at alternative routes for the corridor and conclude the potential environmental effects of the bullet train and its associated stations, power facilities and maintenance facilities. The FRA and TxDOT, which will oversee the privately-funded project, are now taking comments to uncover any possible significant impacts of the high speed rail corridor.

Formed in 2009 to bring high speed rail to the Lone Star state, Texas Central Railway proposed a bullet train that would run on a dedicated line and whisk passengers between Houston and Dallas – a 240-mile trip – in under 90 minutes. The train would depart every thirty minutes and serve the 50,000 passengers that make at least one weekly trip between the two metropolitan areas.

Texas Central High-Speed Railway, the private company funding the multibillion-dollar project, is working closely with Japan Central Railway to model the train after Japan's Tokaido Shinkansen System. The Shinkansen is considered one of the world's best electric high

speed rail system, known for its safety, reliability and low emissions.

"This is going to be a tremendous economic development tool for Texas... Simply put, it is going to change the way we travel here," said Peter LeCody, NARP board member and president of Texas Rail Advocates.

Comments on the project should be directed to Michael Johnsen, Lead Environmental Protection Specialist in the Office of Railroad Policy and Development at the Federal Railroad Administration by September 25, 2014. They can be mailed to 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, MS029, Washington, DC 20590, or emailed to michael.johnsen@dot.gov.

## “All Roads Now Lead to Denver Union Station”



Thousands of excited patrons flocked to the Denver Union Station on July 26 for the historic station’s grand opening after its 18-month-long, \$54 million transformation. Denverites were greeted by an impressive intermodal hub and new transit options that might make them think twice about taking their cars. Moreover, the multimodal station sets the scene for a bright transportation future in Denver – one that echoes its past as a booming railroad hub. The reno-

*The Denver Union Station will serve train passengers of all types: intercity, regional and local. Photo taken by NARP Council Member Albert L. Papp, Jr. on July 19, 2014.*

vated station now connects passengers with train service of all types. Regional Transportation District commuter lines, light rail and bus terminals are located behind and below the station; meanwhile, Amtrak is front and center in the grand train hall, where passengers can readily access ticketing, baggage and a passenger waiting area.

“All roads now lead to Union Station, and in 2016, we will extend those opportunities when the East Line to DIA will carry passengers between the airport and downtown in half an hour.” said Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock.

Enter beyond the station’s historic façade and you’ll find a variety of retail stores and restaurants, as well as the Crawford Hotel. This Pullman-themed accommodation balances spot-on historical touches and a modern sleekness. Take the hotel taxi for example: it’s an all-electric Tesla.

The lack of parking around the station has some people worried, but the light rail and bus system make it easy to skip the car (and more people are bound to try it). It’s clear that all the details have been thought out in Denver’s new Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) masterpiece – a model other cities would be wise to emulate.

## OTP, from page 1

...with Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) issuing a strongly-worded rebuttal of Canadian National’s dispatching of freight and passenger trains.

“I am disappointed—but not surprised—that I continue to hear reports of CN’s unwillingness to meet its most basic obligations in delivering safe and reliable rail service in Illinois,” Durbin said. “CN has failed communities across Illinois, from the suburbs of Chicago that have experienced a record number of blocked rail crossings to towns in Central and Southern Illinois that must face repeated delays in Amtrak service. Today, I asked the STB to come to Illinois and observe these issues firsthand, so that we can work toward a solution.”

## Leave a Legacy of Passenger Rail for the Next Generation

By joining NARP’s Heritage Circle, you are providing your loved ones and future generations of Americans with the ability to prosper in their daily lives by establishing a better, more efficient and modern national train network.

Once you join the growing number of NARP members who have placed NARP in their wills, we will honor you as a Heritage Circle member, and your legacy will be a constant in the hearts and minds of future train passengers.

Have you already included NARP in your estate plans? If you have, and have not yet received your Heritage Circle pin or would like more information on how to become a Heritage Circle member, please contact our Director of Resource Development, Logan McLeod. He can be reached at (561) 846-2236 or by email at [lmcleod@narprail.org](mailto:lmcleod@narprail.org).

NARP and the American passenger thank you for your generous gifts towards the future of passenger rail.



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This issue has news through July 25, 2014.  
 Vol. 48, No.6-7 was mailed July 14, 2014.

# CAF USA SHIPS FIRST OF AMTRAK ORDER

CAF USA announced that it's shipping the first three cars of Amtrak's order for new long-distance equipment. The cars will be delivered to Albany.

CAF USA reported that 70 car shells have been built so far out of the 130 baggage, diner, sleeper and bag-dorm cars included in its \$300-million contract with Amtrak. The Elmira, NY-based company employs over 700 local workers.

Representative Tom Reed (R-NY) was present at CAF USA for the announcement of the shipment. He said the company's impact is significant on the Southern Tier region of New York State, and that the company expects to increase its workforce.

## New Member Benefit: Nevada Northern Railway



NARP is now offering dues-paying members a 15% discount on all Nevada Northern Railway Museum trips and tours! Just use the promotion code "NARP" when you make your reservation.

The Nevada Northern Railway, a National Historic Landmark in Ely, NV, consists of the original right-of-way, steam locomotives, passenger cars,

rolling stock, and buildings that served the copper mining region of Central Nevada for over a century.

Today railfans and historians can come and enjoy riding through time on an original piece of American history. It has been acclaimed as "the best preserved and most original example of an American railroad facility."

Visit [nnry.com](http://nnry.com) to find out more.

## NARP Presents Golden Spike Award to Governor Quinn of IL



*Sean O'Shea, Deputy Chief of Staff to Governor Quinn (middle) accepts the Golden Spike Award on behalf of Governor Quinn. Also pictured: NARP Acting President Larry Scott and NARP Council Member Rick Harnish (From L to R)*

On July 9, NARP presented its highest honor, the Golden Spike Award, to Governor Patrick Quinn of Illinois during the Crossrail Celebratory Lunch at the Museum of Broadcast Communications. The award honored Governor Quinn for his outstanding dedication to America's train passengers. Governor Quinn has presided over an Administration that is

implementing higher speed service on the St. Louis to Chicago line, leading a multi-state procurement of next-generation rail cars and locomotives and expanding Amtrak to new communities including Rockford and the Quad Cities. He is also a true high speed rail visionary, funding planning studies for 220 mph service.

### TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

Amtrak has added six Thruway bus routes – 4 Greyhound, 1 Capital Trailways, and 1 Jefferson Lines routes. These include:

- Pittsburgh-Columbus (Schedules 8029/8030)
- Montgomery-Mobile-New Orleans (Schedules 8658/8659)
- Jackson-Mobile (Schedules 8858/8859)
- Albuquerque-El Paso (Schedules 8103/8104)
- Mobile-Tuscaloosa (Schedules 8019/8020)
- Williston-Missoula (Schedules 8207/8208)

*Heartland Flyer* Trains 821 and 822 are expected to experience 30-45 minute delays from now until September 1, 2014, due to track work being performed by BNSF Railroad.