



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(This has news through November 20. No. 10 was mailed October 7.)

RETURN REQUESTED

The Next Congress

NARP Board Seeks Track Program, Other Improvements

The NARP Board of Directors, at its Oct. 9-11 semi-annual meeting, urged enactment of a federal fund to help create fast intercity passenger train service where states and/or others agree to pay 30% of capital costs (track, equipment, and facilities).

The Board urged no federal funds be granted for lines hampered by unreasonable speed restrictions. These restrictions, imposed by some cities, towns, and state public utilities commissions, would reduce the cost-effectiveness of track improvements. To achieve a given running-time between endpoints on a line, for example, arbitrary speed restrictions on some portions would have to be offset with costly "extra fast" running elsewhere.

Appropriately enough, the Board met in Portland, Oregon. Operation of Amtrak's Seattle-Portland trains is adversely affected by several municipal speed restrictions.

In passing the resolution, the Board noted that a federal authorization for such improvements would stimulate more state investment—in at least one case, unlocking state funds already waiting for a federal matching share—and that this in turn would increase the efficiency of the basic Amtrak system the federal government is already supporting.

In other matters, the Board

- encouraged "Amtrak to reexamine recent service reductions particularly in the Pacific Northwest and Midwest and (to) restore a Saturday 'Pioneer' round trip between Seattle and Portland." (Amtrak responded positively to the latter item; see Travelers' Advisory.);

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TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Amtrak did not end Saturday "Pioneer" service between Seattle and Portland as originally planned when train was cut from daily to tri-weekly Oct. 26 (Sep. News). At NARP's request, Amtrak agreed to preserve Sat. trains in both directions over the busy

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Senate Changes— Our Problems Don't Andrews Out; His Message, 'Work Hard,' Lives On

At first glance, the Nov. 4 elections would seem to make the fight for balanced transportation much easier. Three "hard-core" anti-Amtrak senators were replaced by 3 who have been pro-Amtrak in the House (one of them outspokenly so).

As usual, however, the situation is more complex, and next year may be very difficult for us. True, the next Senate will include Wyche Fowler Jr. (D-GA), whose pro-Amtrak efforts over his many years in the House were very impressive. Similarly, Amtrak supporters will be glad to see Richard Shelby (D-AL) and Harry Reid (D-NV) in the Senate. Their predecessors—Mack Mattingly (R-GA), Jeremiah Denton (R-AL), and Paul Laxalt (R-NV)—voted solidly against Amtrak. Overall, the 13 outgoing senators were 8-5 against Amtrak, while their replacements could be as much as 10-3 for Amtrak.

On the other hand, the FY '88 Gramm-Rudman-Hollings deficit target of \$108 billion is \$36 billion lower than the FY '87 target—and many people believe Congress only "met" the '87 goal by using "smoke and mirrors" (i.e., overly optimistic economic projections). President Reagan is maintaining his opposition to tax increases, while the new Senate Majority Leader, Robert Byrd (D-WV), has made it clear the Democrats will not get out in front of the

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THANK YOU, MICHAEL GROSS!

NARP member and television actor Michael Gross, star of NBC-TV's *Family Ties*, was interviewed on the July 9 television broadcast of *Hour Magazine*. During the interview, he discussed his interest in passenger trains and urged viewers to join NARP. He even gave our address over the air, which resulted in some new members!

Portland Loves Light Rail!

On Sep. 5, Portland, Oregon, became the tenth U.S. city with a light rail trolley transit system, when Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District (Tri-Met) opened a \$214 million, 15-mile line between downtown and east-suburban Gresham. The project was completed on schedule and within budget, and only cost \$14.5 million per mile. (According to the Congressional Budget Office, the average cost of urban Interstate highway is now \$25 million a mile, although certain remaining Interstate segments exceed \$80 million a mile!)

Portland's is the third light rail system to open in the U.S. in the last 5 years. Others are San Diego in 1981, and Buffalo in 1984.

Public response to Portland's new trolleys has exceeded all expectations. Weekday ridership had originally been projected at 14,000-17,000 per day after one year, but has already reached 20,000 after two months! "But the biggest surprise has been weekend ridership," says Tom Matoff, Tri-Met's Director of Light Rail Start-Up. Saturday patronage is averaging 30,000, while Sunday is about 15,000. To handle this unexpectedly heavy weekend traffic, Tri-Met has been forced to operate 2-car rather than 1-car trains



—Photo by Barry Williams

Trolley glides quietly down SW Morrison Street in downtown Portland. City's new light rail system, which opened Sep. 5, is carrying substantially more riders than predicted.

on most runs, and effective Nov. 23 will increase Sunday frequency from 30-minute to 15-minute headways (i.e., intervals) between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM.

The Portland trolley line, nicknamed MAX (Metropolitan Area Xpress), was built primarily with federal funds made available by the trade-in of an Interstate highway. 1500 homes and businesses would have been demolished and removed from the property-tax rolls for the Mt. Hood Freeway. No buildings were razed for MAX, which was built mostly in existing rail and road rights-of-way.

The 15-mile line is all double-track except for the easternmost 2 miles, and serves 27 stations. To cross the Willamette River, trolleys use the upper deck of the existing Steel Bridge (Amtrak uses the lower deck). The 26 trolley cars, which attain a maximum speed of 55 mph, were built by Bombardier. Like San Diego and Buffalo, fare collection is on the honor system, with self-service ticket vending machines and roving on-board ticket inspectors

(although travel is free in downtown's Fareless Square).

Prominent in the 1970s effort to substitute light rail for the freeway was then-Portland mayor Neil Goldschmidt, who will become Oregon's new governor. Goldschmidt's Nov. 4 gubernatorial victory has encouraged supporters of rail-system expansion. The most-likely first addition to the system would be a line between downtown and west-suburban Beaverton, although various neighborhoods and suburbs, envious over light rail's success, are now showing heightened interest in getting trolleys for *their* areas first! ■

NARP DIRECTOR OFFERS RAIL VIDEO

NARP Dir. Jim Herron of Tampa is selling a rail video, "Glory Machines," which he helped create from vintage 16-mm. films rescued from an estate in St. Petersburg. The mostly-color video covers 32 U.S. railroads from 1928 to 1952. Mostly steam, some diesel; emphasis on New York Central, Lackawanna, Reading, Southern Pacific, Santa Fe, Union Pacific. Says *Railfan & Railroad*: "All in all, this has to be one of the all-time great collages of the era, and a real collector's item." VHS and Beta II videocassettes, 64 minutes, \$69.95 postpaid: Jim Herron, 2016 N. Village Av., Tampa, FL 33612 (Florida residents should add 5% tax). Indicate you're a NARP member, and Jim will contribute 30% of the proceeds to NARP! Thanks Jim!

Next Congress *(continued from page 1)*

President on taxes.

Thus, pressures to reduce spending on domestic programs like Amtrak and transit may be stronger than ever next year, while the public's "leverage" on legislators to maintain such programs will be reduced because 1987 is not an election year.

Not surprisingly, there are indications the President yet again will propose a zero budget for Amtrak and the usual devastating cuts in mass transit. While no one expects Congress to ratify such proposals, predicting the numbers Congress will adopt is no easier now than it was before the election.

Sen. Mark Andrews (R-ND), who, as chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, was a strong Amtrak and transit supporter, lost his bid for reelection. His successor in that chairmanship apparently will be Lawton Chiles (D-FL). Chiles generally has supported Amtrak, which has a relatively strong Florida presence, but Chiles would be subjected to 2 pressures that Andrews was not.

First, Chiles will be chairman of the Budget Committee, and it is unclear whether he would resolve "budget-vs.-public transportation" conflicts as favorably from our point of view as did Andrews. Second, Florida's strong interest in maximum Coast Guard funding led Chiles to vote against Andrews' successful effort to table the 1985 Kassebaum amendment that would have significantly cut the FY '86 appropriations for Amtrak and various other transportation programs while increasing aviation and Coast Guard funding. Coast Guard remains part of the Dept. of Transportation and Chiles as subcommittee chairman would have increased influence over how funds are allocated among DOT's programs.

Even if Congress does find a way to expand transportation funding, there will be intense, bipartisan pressures to

concentrate the spending increase exclusively on highways and aviation. Both enjoy "trust-funded" status, meaning that the powerful interest groups supporting these modes are itching to spend the user fees which have accumulated in the trust funds. Much public attention has been brought to the long delays commercial airliners are experiencing and concerns about air safety, and to the growing highway congestion problems of cities and suburbs nationwide.

Before adjourning, the last Congress failed to pass a highway reauthorization bill; states therefore are funding their highway programs from unobligated 1986 dollars and some projects are being delayed. There will be tremendous pressure for Congress to take up the highway bill early—perhaps before budgetary pressures have built up—and Sen. Quentin N. Burdick (D-ND), who will chair the Environment & Public Works Committee (which authorizes highway spending) reportedly may seek increased highway funding.

Meanwhile, the Senate Banking chairmanship will return to Sen. William Proxmire (D-WI), a strong opponent of federal transit operating subsidies, and the man who gave his Golden Fleece award to the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. (The award is to recognize waste of taxpayers' money. Not surprisingly, Ralph Stanley, the current UMTA head, was pleased to accept the award and to have another opportunity to criticize rail transit projects.)

We must work hard to show that part of the solution to the airways problem is development of more high speed rail passenger service, and part of the solution to suburban highway congestion lies in innovative transit solutions, including building more rail transit—particularly light rail, which has a much lower per-mile construction cost than the heavy rail systems now operating in Atlanta, Baltimore, and Washington. Light rail's ability to share roadway lanes and to cross them at grade means less environmental disruption and better community acceptance in residential areas—an important consideration when one is attempting to provide new transit routes near the homes of affluent, politically active suburbanites!

Lurking ominously in the background for Amtrak is the declining health of the rail freight industry, where most



—Photo by Barry Williams

Light rail trolley systems are unobtrusive and less environmentally-disruptive than grade-separated highways and heavy rail systems. Quiet, clean trolleys are well-suited to low-density residential neighborhoods. Here, a trolley on Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's Green Line passes homes in affluent Shaker Heights, OH. Trolleys are a bargain, too: San Diego's new light rail system is costing under \$8 million a mile, while Washington's heavy rail system is over \$85 million a mile.

of the news since we published "Rail Freight Problems" (NARP News, June 1986) has been bad. Details in a future issue.

When Senator Andrews addressed the NARP Board last May, he said: "Don't Lie Down and Relax!" His message is just as valid today as it was then. The best time to write to your legislators—whether they are newly elected or not—is now, before the hectic schedule is underway and when legislators still have a little time to focus on broad concepts such as the need for balanced transportation. ■

Legislative Update

Appropriations. In lieu of the 13 regular appropriations bills, Congress passed a comprehensive continuing resolution, providing funds for all federal functions for Fiscal Year 1987. President Reagan signed the measure on Oct. 19, and then again on Oct. 30, when an omission was discovered in the first version. The continuing resolution contains \$602 million for Amtrak, \$17 million for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, and \$3.452 billion for the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

Conrail Sale. On Oct. 21, Reagan signed the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which, among other things, provides for the sale of the federal government's 85% ownership of Conrail. Conrail will be sold to the public through the largest stock offering in U.S. history. Transportation Sec. Dole will soon select 4-6 investment banking firms to underwrite the \$1.7 billion offering, and CR stock may be trading on the major exchanges by spring. House attempts to attach "rail reregulation" language, and to extend labor protection requirements to the sale of Class I rail lines, were unsuccessful. These controversial House efforts were strongly opposed by the rail industry and the White House but "railroad... unions will be making a push on Capitol Hill next year to regain labor protections lost in the post-deregulation years. The unions think they may succeed in light of the Democratic Party's newly won control of the Senate" (*Traffic World*, Nov. 17). More regulation efforts also seem likely.

Tax Reform. On Oct. 22, Reagan signed the Tax Reform Act, which will have these impacts on the rail industry: reduce the maximum corporate tax rate from 46% to 34%, impose a stiff alternative minimum tax, eliminate the Investment Tax Credit retroactive to Jan. 1, 1986 (although 65% of previously-accumulated credits may be carried forward and used), and lengthen track and rolling stock depreciation schedules from 5 to 7 years (although this will be largely offset by speeding-up accelerated depreciation to 200% of the straight-line amount). Says the Association of American Railroads: "Railroad income tax payments will increase for most companies under the new legislation. However, the amount of future increases will vary inversely with earnings levels." (In other words, the tax burden will increase on weaker roads with declining earnings.) ■

TRAIN CREW TAKEOVERS—PHASE III

On Nov. 5, Amtrak assumed train and engine personnel running its trains on Southern Pacific: Los Angeles-Klamath Falls, Oakland-Sparks; on Union Pacific: Barstow-Las Vegas; and on Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe: Los Angeles-San Diego, LA-Needles, Oakland-Bakersfield. About 840 T & E employees have joined Amtrak this year during Phases I-III.

HARRISBURG DEPOT RESTORED



—Photo by Barry Williams

Harrisburg's restored 1887 train station. Work was completed on the building in late 1985; track platforms and shed were finished earlier this year. The \$13.5 million project was paid for by federal, state, and local sources (Sep. 1985 News). "Harrisburg Transportation Center" serves Amtrak trains, Capitol Trailways buses, city buses, and taxis. In foreground, surplus platform canopy (retrofitted with glass roof) provides pedestrian shelter.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

Seattle-Portland segment, thus ensuring full weekend coverage there (i.e., "Pioneer" runs quad-weekly there). Idea was proposed by a Kansas director at NARP's fall board meeting in Portland and presented to Amtrak by NARP's president.

Checked baggage service was restored at Indianapolis Oct. 26 after a 7-year absence. NARP had urged this; Indianapolis had been most-populous Amtrak city lacking baggage service.

In early Sep., Chicago-New Orleans "City of New Orleans" lost its seasonal diner, and New York-New Orleans "Crescent" lounge was cut back to NY-Atlanta, but NY-Chicago "Cardinal" has kept its dining car. In mid-Oct., Chicago-Portland sleeper returned to "Empire Builder."

Seasonal NY-Hyannis "Cape Codders" ended Sep. 14; will resume next June. Until then, the trainsets are running to/from Boston as extra-fare reserved trains; Fri.-only dp. Washington 2:00 PM, dp. NY 5:05 PM, ar. Boston 9:27 PM; Sun.-only dp. Boston 5:30 PM, ar. NY 10:03 PM, ar. Philadelphia 11:34 PM.

In late Oct., Amtrak added two weekday Metroliners departing both NY and Washington at 10:00 and 11:00 AM. Thus, Metroliners dp. both cities every hour on the hour from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Mon.-Fri. Also added: a weekday NY-Phila. Metroliner: dp. Phila. 7:10 AM; dp. NY 7:00 PM. [Note: Metroliner pay phones (July News) also function NY-New Haven.]

United's Apollo became third airline reservation system to be linked with Amtrak's Arrow system, on Sep. 25. Others are TWA's PARS (Jan. 1984), American's Sabre (Nov. 1984).

Amtrak's Newport News-Norfolk connecting bus now stops at Norfolk's Waterside Complex, rather than Hotel Madison.

Trailways Lines Inc., formerly Continental Trailways (and largest of 36 Trailways companies), wants to drop all bus service in states north of Interstate 40. I-40 runs through AZ, NM, TX, OK, AR, TN, NC.

HOW TO BECOME A NARP DIRECTOR

NARP is governed by a board of directors that includes 70 regional directors who are elected by you the members, with each of 12 regions entitled to a number of directors proportional to its share of NARP's nationwide membership. The 1987 board meetings will be in Washington, DC, Apr. 23-25, and Chicago, IL, Oct. 8-10.

In accordance with the NARP bylaws, anyone wishing to run for the position of regional director must send his or her name, address, telephone number, and candidate's statement/resume not to exceed 75 words to the NARP office. We must receive statements/resumes on or before Mon., Jan. 5, 1987. Send to: NARP, 236 Massachusetts Av., NE #603, Washington, DC 20002.

NARP Board (continued from page 2)

- expressed particular concern about and urged Amtrak to "revise its station staffing criteria so that it is based primarily on ridership. For smaller stations which do not meet the new criteria, a commission agent structure should be created." (The latter reference was inspired by the fact that Greyhound and the Amalgamated Transit Union this year cooperated on a systematic program under which 120 of 124 company-owned bus terminals were converted to commission agencies and the company claimed substantial savings. The NARP proposal, however, is restricted to the reopening of already-closed Amtrak stations.);

- urged "Amtrak to reconsider its decision to include meal charges with sleeping car charges, especially with regard to single travellers in economy bedrooms and short-distance riders" whose trips do not include meal times. (More on the Portland meeting next issue.)

AMTRAK BREAKS RECORDS IN '86

In Fiscal Year 1986 (the 12-month period ended Sep. 30), Amtrak's revenue-cost ratio improved for the fifth consecutive year to an all-time high of 62%—up from 58% in 1985. Transportation output, as measured in passenger-miles, rose for the fourth consecutive year to an all-time high of 5.01 billion—shattering the previous record of 4.90 billion set in energy-crisis year 1979. Revenues hit a record high of \$861 million—up from \$826 million in 1985.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
1986	1985	1986	1985	1986	1985
1. Cash and cash equivalents	12,937	12,937	12,937	12,937	12,937
2. Accounts receivable	32,321	32,321	32,321	32,321	32,321
3. Inventory	3,729	3,729	3,729	3,729	3,729
4. Prepaid expenses	3,454	3,454	3,454	3,454	3,454
5. Other assets	3,985	3,985	3,985	3,985	3,985
Total Assets	56,426	56,426	56,426	56,426	56,426
6. Accounts payable	12,937	12,937	12,937	12,937	12,937
7. Long-term debt	32,321	32,321	32,321	32,321	32,321
8. Other liabilities	3,729	3,729	3,729	3,729	3,729
9. Retained earnings	16,839	16,839	16,839	16,839	16,839
Total Liabilities and Equity	56,426	56,426	56,426	56,426	56,426