



News from the
**National Association
of Railroad Passengers**

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(This has news through May 15.)

RETURN REQUESTED

Moynihan Stuns Highway Lobby

New Superliners on the Way!

Amtrak has an approximately \$340 million contract with Bombardier Corp. to purchase 140 new double-decked long-distance Superliner cars, with delivery to begin around July 1993 and conclude in late 1995—the first new long-distance cars to be delivered since 1982.

The contract, signed April 22, includes 55 sleeping cars, six of which would be for Auto Train and would have 10 deluxe rooms upstairs and four economy rooms, one family room and one handicapped room downstairs. The other 49 sleepers would be like Amtrak's existing sleepers—14 economy rooms, five deluxe, one family, one handicapped—but would also have a shower downstairs for economy room passengers.

As on today's Superliner sleepers, deluxe rooms "may be combined in pairs to form two-bedroom suites."

Other cars ordered: 38 coaches, 20 dining cars, 15 lounge cars, and 12 transition dormitory cars.

The new cars, which will be added to Amtrak's existing fleet of 282 Superliners delivered from Pullman-Standard in 1979-81, will replace single-level cars on the "City of New Orleans," "Capitol Ltd.," and Auto Train. Some of the displaced cars will be used to make the New York-Charleston, WV-Cincinnati-Chicago "Cardinal" daily.

The new order will also permit adding one sleeper each to these Western trains: "California Zephyr," "Coast Starlight," "Empire Builder," "Southwest Chief," and "Texas Eagle" (Houston section); the Houston "Eagle" also will get a lounge, and "Coast Starlight" will get a peak-season second dining car. (Amtrak's plans, of course, could change by the time the cars arrive.)

Sleepers (deluxe last) will come first for prompt Western-train expansion. Transition cars also will come early so the 3 Eastern trains can run "mixed" (Superliner+single-level). Diners, lounges, and coaches will follow in that order.

The contract with Bombardier includes an option to purchase 39 additional cars—the number needed to make "Sunset Ltd." daily and to establish Oklahoma service.

The new Superliners all will have "full retention waste-disposal systems that will comply with federal law requiring all

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Half the Funds Could Go to Rail!

AASHTO Decries S. 965 as "Flexibility Run Amok"

S. 965, the Senate highway/transit reauthorization, faithfully reflects Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's (D-NY) comments in recent public hearings—and in his 1960 article he inserted in the *Congressional Record* to accompany S. 965.

Moynihan thinks the Interstate highway program decimated our cities, mass transit systems, and railroads. His article blamed highway subsidies for diverting freight from railroads to trucks.

Under his bill, theoretically, non-road projects could get half the funding! Also, S. 965 would prevent anti-transit state governments from blocking urban-area projects included in transportation plans approved by metropolitan planning organizations (which are comprised of local elected officials).

Moynihan is chairman of the Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Water Resources, Transportation and Infrastructure.

Perhaps the highway lobby was shocked most by Moynihan's list of cosponsors: Committee Chairman Quentin N.

BUT HOW WILL CONGRESS VOTE?

"The prospect of having more flexibility at the state level . . . I think will meet with a great deal of attraction."

—Rebecca Brady, transportation committee director, National Conference of State Legislatures, quoted in *May 7 Journal of Commerce*

Burdick (D-ND), and John H. Chafee (R-RI) and Steven D. Symms (R-ID), ranking members on the full committee and subcommittee, respectively, and Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), chairman of the Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation.

This is the key phrase in the list of acceptable uses for

(continued on page 3)

Some Recent NARP Staff Activities

The NARP staff has spent more time than usual in recent weeks fielding calls from reporters, mostly on the 20th anniversary of Amtrak's operations (which began May 1, 1971) and the growth in Amtrak's popularity among business travelers.

- The CBS Evening News of Sunday, Apr. 28 observed the Amtrak anniversary with upbeat clips from Ross Capon and from Rep. Al Swift (D-WA), who this year succeeded retired Rep. Thomas A. Luken (D-OH) as chairman of the Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Hazardous Materials.

- *The Washington Post's* front-page anniversary story on Apr. 28 carried the following Capon quotes: "I think a lot of repeat business comes because people get on trains and find it's a nice place to be. . . . The biggest problem you have is inconsistency on crews. You've got some great ones and you've got some rotten ones." Also, Capon expressed concern about possible overemphasis on cost-cutting at Amtrak: "Let's get serious, folks, you get what you pay for. I just don't want to see what the British would call a crumbling edge of quality." Writer Don Phillips called NARP "a consumer group that backed the formation of Amtrak and is now a constant supporter and critic."

- Harriet Parcels and Scott Leonard met on May 13 with Rep. Thomas H. Andrews (D-ME), a freshman interested in becoming active on rail issues.

- Parcels was one of 6 panelists at a 2-hour Mar. 27 National Press Club forum on the highway/transit reauthorization which was broadcast on C-Span II.

- Parcels was one of 4 speakers on a May 3 Capitol Hill panel on energy and tax policy sponsored by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute.

- Capon letters-to-the-editor appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* Apr. 1—responding to their Feb. 28 anti-Amtrak editorial, "Chug, Chug, Chug"—and *The Journal of Commerce* Mar. 5—answering their Feb. 5 editorial statement that the Bush Administration "would have been wise to again propose an end to" Amtrak subsidies.

Both letters got double-exposure for our message. *The Wall Street Journal* ran the letter with a typo obscuring our statement about Amtrak energy efficiency; at our request they ran a correction note Apr. 4. *The Journal of Commerce* ran an editorial note after our letter which prompted Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr. to write his own defense of Amtrak subsidies, published as a letter Mar. 28.

- Leonard spoke on "The Future of Passenger Railway Transportation in Oklahoma" on Nov. 8 in Ada, OK, at the Southern Oklahoma Development Assn.'s 2nd annual infrastructure symposium.

- Leonard participated in a Dec. 18 meeting on the Hudson River waterfront transit project in Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg's (D-NJ) Newark office along with New Jersey ARP members, local elected officials and New Jersey Transit officials. (NJARP with strong community support has been fighting NJT's busway plan in favor of light rail.)

- Capon was a panelist at an Amtrak Government and Public Affairs Department retreat in Annapolis, MD, Jan. 8 and at the American Public Transit Association's Commuter Rail Conference in Boston Mar. 27. He also spoke to the General Railway Signal Management Assn. in Rochester, NY, on Apr. 1.

- Parcels has been busy coordinating the 37-member Campaign for New Transportation Priorities, of which she is project director. This includes editing and coordinating publication of both the policy papers featured in *March News* and those now in process: energy and transportation, rural transportation, and intercity passenger.

- Leonard usually does the NARP Hotline—a time-consuming task—and most of our followup on your individual Amtrak complaints. ■

NARP ANSWERS ATTACK ON S. 965 BY JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

"Your editorial, 'One Step Backward' (May 6) . . . did not answer [Senator Moynihan's] charge that 'top-down' federal and state overemphasis on highways decimated our cities, transit systems and railroads.

"For years, federal and state decisionmakers neglected railroads and transit, creating a 'fly/drive' system that wastes land and energy and damages the environment far more than necessary. It is logical now to transfer some power to what you call 'city and county bureaucrats.' The bill also gives states flexibility, but not the power to thwart metropolitan planning organizations—important bodies of elected local officials you disdainfully call 'local groups'—in their efforts to comply with the federal Clean Air Act.

"We agree with you that 'mass transit deserves more than the \$16 billion it would receive under the Bush bill.' But your recitation of the Senate bill's permissible non-highway uses of highway trust funds should have been followed by a ringing endorsement, not a timid 'in principle, there's some merit to that idea.' . . ."

—Letter from NARP's Ross Capon
published May 16

POST COLUMNIST SUPPORTS S. 965

"1991 provides the first real opportunity to rethink national transportation policy since the interstate highway system was launched 35 years ago. . . . Beyond a shadow of a doubt, we now know that new roads generate more traffic than they serve. . . ."

"It has been said that a working definition of lunacy is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different outcome. . . . The administration has proposed a new 150,000-mile highway program (including the existing interstate) to be called Highways of National Significance [ed.: 'National Highway System' in Feb. News page 2 box]. Without a discernible rationale for a huge new construction program, the handsome name rings hollow. . . ."

"The Moynihan proposal [S. 965] drops the new highway system and eliminates the longstanding bias against using federal money for anything other than highways. Under this plan the federal sharing ratio would be equal for all modes of transportation, and more than half of the money could be used for transit. It lets states choose how to spend these funds. . . . [it] shifts power to local and regional authorities. . . ."

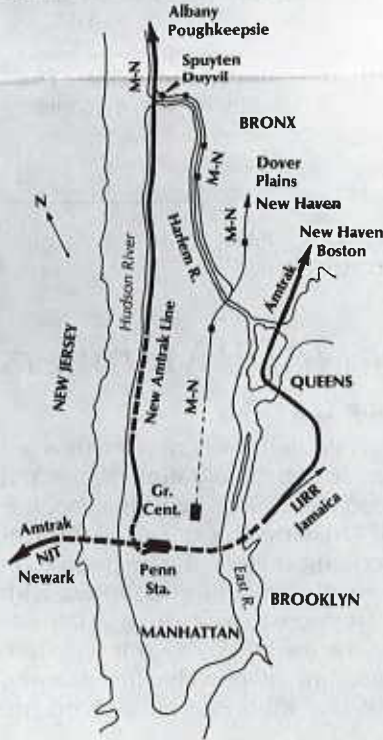
"Success requires overcoming the rich, powerful and experienced highway lobby, which over the years has come to view this pot of money as a birthright. . . . It will be a classic battle between pork and policy, whose outcome could improve the quality of life in this country immeasurably."

—Jessica Mathews,
op ed column in *The Washington Post*, May 12



—Photo by John A. Ross

AMTRAK'S NEW EMPIRE CONNECTION



—Scott Leonard/NARP Graphics

Empire Connection Opens
Amtrak on Apr. 7 finally consolidated New York City service at Pennsylvania Station, the Amtrak portion of which has been refurbished as nicely as one can refurbish the cramped basement left for passengers after the historic Pennsylvania Station was destroyed in 1963-66. The Long Island Rail Road portion is still being renovated.

Above, Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-NY), who successfully fought to get funding to double-track the connection (the 2nd track is to enter revenue service in Dec.) speaks at Apr. 4 inaugural ceremony in Rensselaer. Others, from left: NARP Dir. Frank Barry, Rensselaer Mayor Joseph Harrigan, New York Transp. Commissioner Franklin White, Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr., and James O. Barber, Amtrak's Dir. of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Moynihan Stuns (continued from page 1)

non-Interstate highway funds: "capital and operating costs for mass transit, rail and magnetic levitation systems including expenditures on right-of-way and associated facilities."

Markup of the bill is expected May 21. The word "rail" reportedly will either be dropped or modified to exclude rail freight. We hope that any change makes clear that Amtrak-related projects—projects primarily beneficial to intercity rail passenger service—will remain eligible.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding the catchy "run amok" phrase (attributed to Francis Francois, executive director of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) in our headline, many state officials like S. 965.

Indeed, some officials who at first were upset about it have found upon closer examination that they like the added power the bill gives them.

But the highway lobby—confronted with a serious debate for which few rail and transit supporters dared hope a few months ago—will work hard to block the new concepts in S. 965. Those of us who support it need to speak up. ■

"PIONEER" SCHEDULE UPDATE

For June 16, Amtrak rejected our suggestion to move some layover time from Denver to Ogden for more attractive departure times from both Ogden and—via bus connection—Salt Lake City, but will "make every effort to 'fine tune'" the schedule in Oct. "to maximize our revenues." For June, Amtrak said it has already "negotiated confirmed schedules with the railroads." But Amtrak also noted that added dwell time at Ogden would lengthen trip times "for passengers traveling from the Pacific Northwest to Wyoming and Colorado."

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

News about Amtrak fares:

- Children's fare now covers ages 2-15 (was 2-11) —50% the adult one-way or round trip excursion fare when accompanied by an adult.
- Peak season blackouts for disabled passengers were removed last fall. Disabled adults now get the 25% discount on one-way coach tickets year-round (children 50%). For more information: 800/USA-RAIL (ask for Special Service Desk); or TTY 800/ 523-6590.
- The military fare is extended until Sep. 30 to family members visiting military persons wounded in the Persian Gulf War and in a military or veterans hospital. When making a reservation, Amtrak will ask the name of the patient and hospital.
- Special "City of New Orleans/River Cities" senior citizen fare through Sep. 30, better discount than regular senior fare, no blackouts.
- A special coach-only regional fare through June 30 (2-day advance, non-refundable): \$138 for travel in one of the All-Aboard America regions, \$188 in 2 adjacent regions and \$228 in all 3.
- Auto Train automobile charges are reduced through June 17—\$114 southbound, \$150 northbound, \$238 excursion (vs. \$115, \$207 and \$298 a year ago). Spring season passenger discount also ends June 17.

Amtrak passengers who were caught in the freight railroad strike in April may be eligible for refunds of penalties on "11th hour" first-class accommodation reservation cancellations. Write Amtrak Customer Relations if you think you may qualify; tell NARP if you think Amtrak treated you unfairly.

Brewton, AL will become a "Gulf Breeze" stop June 1. New thruway bus connections with trains to and from Chicago at Battle Creek, MI will serve East Lansing and Flint, providing longer days in Chicago and better western connections than available with the "International." Start-up date to be announced.

Trancisco Tours dropped its San Jose-Reno service Apr. 30, citing low demand. Equipment will go to a British Columbia train it is planning with Holland America Line.

Transit News

South San Jose light rail extension from Tamien to Almaden and Santa Teresa (2 branches) opened Apr. 27.

MARC peak-hour commuter service was extended May 1 to Perryville, MD, on Northeast Corridor 36 mi. east of Baltimore.

Washington Metro opened 1.5-mi. Green Line subway segment to Mt. Vernon Sq., Shaw, U St. (all in D.C.) May 11. Blue line segment King St.-Van Dorn St. (3.8 mi.) in Alexandria, VA opens June 15.

FRA Report Boosts "Sunset" Miami Extension

"Extending the tri-weekly *Sunset Limited* to Miami [would] substantially improve the financial performance of the *Sunset Limited*."
—"Potential Jacksonville-New Orleans Service Option,"
March 1991 Joint Report by FRA and Amtrak

Amtrak's first true coast-to-coast train—a Los Angeles-Miami "Sunset Ltd."—could be created for a remarkably low cost: capital investment of \$25.2 million and a first-year operating subsidy of up to \$1.1 mill. that would decline as traffic grew.

The service would close one of the most obvious gaps in Amtrak's national network and provide Amtrak's first service to Tallahassee, Florida's capital city, as well as Pensacola.

The report, mandated by the FY '91 DOT appropriations law (July '90 News), says changes in local speed restrictions "would have to be made before Amtrak could agree to operate" over the Jacksonville-New Orleans segment.

- "The Jacksonville-Flomaton, AL, track [413 miles] has 17 local speed restrictions over 45 miles of track. The restrictions could be modified or removed by the state of Florida, but the willingness of the state to make changes is unknown at this time. Service should not be considered without relief from these restrictions."

- Between Mobile, AL and the Louisiana border, "maximum speeds are limited to 45 mph for a total of 42 miles by an understanding between CSX and the cities. The feasibility of further speed increases in this territory is unclear."

The study also examined a daily New Orleans-Jacksonville train, projecting a \$6.1 mill. first-year operating loss.

Both operating-loss projections assumed "Amtrak's current operating practices and work rules," but "going from a 4-person train and engine crew to a 3-person crew would" cut the daily service subsidy by \$409,000 and the tri-weekly subsidy by \$342,200.

"Other opportunities for reducing operating costs and improving financial performance include modifying equipment maintenance work rules, having state or local entities be responsible for station maintenance, staffing stations with travel agents, and combining certain on-board service functions."

The report gave this breakdown for capital expenses:

- \$12 mill. in rolling stock (one train set) for the "Sunset" extension or \$23 mill. (2 sets) for the daily train;
- \$5 mill. for station-related improvements;
- \$7 mill. for signal, grade crossing, and other right-of-way improvements, and
- \$1.2 mill. for contingencies.

What You Can Do

- If you live in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana, tell your officials you know of the FRA report and you want Amtrak service on the New Orleans-Jacksonville route. Perhaps aided by highway trust fund "flexibility" yet to become law, the states could "add on" to Amtrak's existing Superliner order to extend the "Sunset" however often it is then running.

- If you live in the latter 3 states, tell officials you would like Amtrak's "City of New Orleans" extended to Mobile, creating a Chicago-New Orleans-Mobile route. Those states are now considering such a proposal, which would cost about \$500,000, and which could be implemented much sooner than a "Sunset" extension.

(For a copy of the report, write to John Cikota, Federal Railroad Administration, Room 5407, 400—7th St., SW, Washington, DC 20590.)

New Superliners on the Way! *(continued from page 1)*

trains to have such systems by [Nov. 16] 1996." Sec. 601 of the National and Community Volunteer Service Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-610, signed Nov. 16) contains the deadline, which the law says is "subject to the appropriation of funds."

This may help Amtrak get more capital funds than otherwise would have been forthcoming, but means that Heritage cars not converted to full retention—probably including all Heritage sleepers—will be removed from service then. Amtrak plans no successor to the popular slumbercoach, ending Amtrak's cheapest private room services (see table).

BUDGET SLEEPER ROOM CHARGES COMPARED

	Mileage	Single Rooms	Double Rooms
Slumbercoach (meals not included)			
Boston-Chicago	1,017	\$46/\$77*	\$57/\$96*
New York-Palatka, FL	1,036	\$90	\$155
Economy Rooms (meals included**)			
Chicago-Denver	1,037	\$135/\$188*	\$125/\$188*

*Charges through April 30/from May 1.

**All economy rooms actually have two bunks.

Viewliners: Amtrak plans to place an order for new single-level long-distance cars "next fiscal year." ■

Book Offers for NARP Members

"Making Tracks"

In 1988, NARP member Terry Pindell of Keene, NH, traveled almost every Amtrak line, seeking an "integration of past and present, of history and headlines." The resulting book—published in 1990 and called "Making Tracks"—is part travelogue and part history, describing the trains, the people on them and the routes they travel. Pindell's encounters with other passengers and with train crews will strike a familiar chord with others who have traveled today's Amtrak system extensively (including an account of how he first learned about NARP—he met NARP Dir. John A. Mills aboard the "City of New Orleans").

The \$22.95 book is 375 pages (hardbound) but is available to NARP members at a 20% discount (plus NY sales tax and handling) by calling publisher Grove Weidenfeld at (800) 937-5557.

"Booked on the Morning Train"

George F. Scheer III of Chapel Hill, NC, also has written a narrative of travels on Amtrak. "Booked on the Morning Train" (1991) is Scheer's account of 14,000 miles' continuous train travel made over a six-week period in the mid-1980's, when he wanted to see if "the excitement of traveling by train (had) vanished beneath the uniform red, white, and blue livery of Amtrak." Scheer's story is a somewhat more personal journey than Pindell's, and talks more about what communities are like away from the Amtrak station. Various Western fishing spots and the narrow gauge lines of New Mexico and Colorado are also described.

NARP members will receive a 20% discount by sending a check or money order for \$17.96 (includes postage and handling) to Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill; c/o Workman Publishing; Attn: BOT; 708 Broadway; New York, NY 10003. This book is 300 pages, hardbound.

—Scott Leonard