

Secretary Mineta Visits NARP

Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta addressed the NARP Board of Directors on April 27. He emphasized the importance of passenger rail in developing a truly intermodal transportation system for the new century in the United States to alleviate congestion.

He congratulated NARP President Alan Yorker on his recent election, noting, "Your experience as President of Georgians for Transportation Alternatives and the Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers, put you in an ideal position to help lead the effort to promote rail as an essential transportation option for the 21st century." He continued, "The NARP Board and its members are also fortunate to have Ross Capon, who has long been a strong advocate for passenger rail, on your team."

Mineta said he recognizes the crucial role passenger rail will play in the future, stating, "[NARP] has identified one of the most important areas of transportation policy; one that is



Secretary Norman Y. Mineta

going to see increasingly rapid growth in the coming years: rail and mass transit systems have indeed captured the attention of the American people as they look for ways to make their commutes easier and more convenient." He described how the inconvenience and burden to business from airport and highway congestion serves as the impetus for providing the public with alternatives, which are "key to our economic success and quality of life...It is clear that passenger

rail is one of those very important alternatives."

He acknowledged the difficulty in convincing members of Congress to support passenger rail and develop a consistent policy. "It is my hope to change the mindset of many who

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TRAINS BELONG IN ENERGY POLICY

With release of President Bush's National Energy Policy Development Group's National Energy Policy on May 18, NARP wrote to Transportation Secretary Mineta (a Group member) urging inclusion of passenger rail in overall energy policy.

Noting that "even modest service improvements produce impressive ridership growth," NARP said, "Better train service is not about sacrifice. It conserves energy while giving travelers more choices."



Before his April 27 talk, Amtrak President George Warrington (right) presented NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon with an Acela Express model train set. NARP President Alan M. Yorker is also shown. The gift was a way for NARP to honor Capon for a quarter-century of service. He joined the staff in January, 1975, and was executive director a year later. Clearly thrilled, Capon said sons Tommy, 13, and Phillip, 11—who, along with his wife, Louise, and son, William, 1, were present—would love the gift; he later reported it was running full speed on the living room floor when he got home that night.

Warrington at NARP Board

Speaking to the NARP Board April 27, Amtrak President and CEO George D. Warrington offered these observations:

- Amtrak hopes to take delivery of all Acela Express train sets "probably by late fall, maybe a little earlier."
- Amtrak has 137,000 guests signed up for the Guest Rewards program; Ritz-Carlton is joining. Hertz is doing an Amtrak promotional mailing to up to 500,000 customers.
- MBNA and Amtrak will issue a co-branded credit card tied to Guest Rewards [this happened May 14]. The Amtrak affinity card issued by Capital One has been discontinued.
- Expects a *Kentucky Cardinal* extension across the river from Jeffersonville, IN, to Louisville "in September, I believe."
- Amtrak "just signed an agreement with the Florida East Coast" under which Amtrak for the first time would provide direct service to Daytona Beach and other lucrative markets along Florida's east coast. However, the project depends on about \$50 million in investment by Florida DOT.
- On dealing with freight railroads: "Generally, across the board, day-to-day relationships are much better these days."
- On Amtrak's promotional relationship with NASCAR driver Rusty Wallace: "He does lots of appearances for us. We're on his uniform. His internet site has a direct link to ours. Race car drivers have the best product loyalty in the world." [Wallace has also helped promote a *Monster Mile Express* special, New York-Dover, DE, June 3.]

Rail Book for All Ages

William C. Vuantuono, editor of *Railway Age*, deserves much credit for the "pro-passenger" slant of an industry journal with a freight-dominated readership. He also has written about railroading's challenge to attract talented young people to the industry. Now, he has done the industry another favor—perhaps helping railroads meet that challenge—by publishing an attractive book on "the story of today's railroad industry" (emphasis his)—*All About Railroading*.

The book is "written especially for youth age 10 and up," but it can teach people of all ages—including some with a lifetime in the industry. There are separate chapters on Amtrak (by President George Warrington), high-speed rail, commuter rail, heavy-rail transit and light rail. American Public Transportation Association President William W. Millar provides an overview of rail commuting. A chapter on "How trains are designed" comes from Cesar Vergara, Amtrak's longtime chief designer and now Senior Director-Rail, TEAGUE (and creator of the Talgos' "wings" in the Pacific Northwest Corridor).

Seven freight railroad executives provide a forward and chapters on operations, small railroads, locomotives, freight cars, track/bridges/structures and signals. There is a brief chapter on preserved steam locomotives, an impressive glossary, and a list of useful web sites (including NARP's).

At \$26.95 (plus \$7.15 shipping), *All About Railroading* is not the cheapest paperback, but its 100 pages are packed with color photos and diagrams. Among the diagrams: How automatic air brakes work; Railroad track: The basics; Signal rules; How ABS (Automatic Block Signaling) works. A diagram of a diesel locomotive rebuilt for California's Altamont Commuter Express identifies 42 different parts.

A great gift for anyone interested in trains, regardless of their level of knowledge. Order from Simmons-Boardman Books, 1/800-228-9670 or <www.transalert.com>. ■

BURCH AWARD TO DAMIAN GARDEN

The Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Safety Award this year went to Damian Garden of Yalesville, CT, a nearly-26-year track department veteran. The award, presented by the Burch family at the annual Washington reception of the NARP Board, honors the railroad employee judged to have made the biggest contribution to the safety of railroad passengers. He works out of New Haven as an "ARASA" Supervisor in Amtrak's Maintenance of Way Department. (ARASA, the American Railway and Airway Supervisors Association, is the supervisors' union and a division of the Transportation Communications Union.)

In nominating him, Henry Marcell (Director of Safety in the Amtrak Northeast Corridor Engineering Department) wrote: "Mr. Garden's value to the welfare of our passengers and customers is evidenced by the simple fact that other departments routinely approach him for assistance with operational-related problems...He can be described as the consummate 'go to' guy...Mr. Garden oversees inspections of all track and switches between New Haven and Boston and New Haven and Springfield. He directly contributed to many of the infrastructure improvements that support Amtrak's new high-speed rail service. Safety, quality and consistency are the hallmarks of his work. His unyielding, untiring, and uncompromising efforts to maintain our track to the highest standard are paramount to ensuring the safe movement of our trains and passengers."

In accepting the award, Mr. Garden said, "No test is more important than safety. Amtrak through its dedicated employees has and always will provide the highest level of safety possible."



Burch Award Winner Damian Garden, holding his award. Cedeetra Jordan, General Manager-Safety for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, holds another award, one of several gifts Amtrak officials presented to Garden. From left, Kathy Burch Pettyjohn, Michael Burch, Bette Burch, Jordan, Garden, Susan Garden (the award winner's wife), Amtrak Northeast Corridor President Stan Bagley, and Amtrak Vice President and Chief Engineer Alison Conway-Smith. See box (above, right) for more.

GOLDEN SPIKE HONORS JACK MARTIN

NARP presents its George Falcon Golden Spike Award to those who have worked hard for passenger rail development. Usually, but not always, recipients are politicians.

In April, the award honored NARP's president for 21 years, John R. "Jack" Martin, and was accepted by Faye Martin, his wife (at left with NARP President Alan M. Yorker).



Also present were Jack's sister, Patricia Coppedge, her daughter, Susan, and a cousin, Rick Martin.

Jack's award was in the works before his untimely death September 1. As the lead story in the October issue, this newsletter ran an "appreciation" of him and his work.



—Donald M. Stewart, Jr.

Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta answering a question from the NARP Board, April 27, with NARP President Alan M. Yorker (left).

LANGE WINS FIRST MARTIN AWARD

Leif Erik Lange, a longtime former NARP director who has worked for California DOT and the California Assembly, won the first annual John R. Martin Passenger Rail Advocacy Award (see box at lower right for information about the award).

The presentation was at the annual Washington reception of the NARP Board, April 27. The award text reads: "In recognition of over 20 years of dedicated commitment to, and work for, the improvement and expansion of rail passenger service, as a board member and vice president of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, a board member of the Train Riders' Association of California, a rail planner at the California Department of Transportation, and a staff member of the California Assembly Transportation Committee. Mr. Lange's professional and personal efforts were critical to the significant growth in California passenger train service—both intercity and commuter rail—that occurred over the past two decades. His work helped lay the foundation for further growth in the years to come."



Lange, of Elk Grove, CA, is in the photo (on right) with NARP President Alan M. Yorker.

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Mineta at NARP Meeting

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work in the transportation arena," said Mineta. He said he will need the support of NARP to educate and promote passenger rail solutions to civic and business leaders.

Mineta cited the building support for passenger rail, noting that 62% of the people questioned in a survey for the U.S. Conference of Mayors stated that they would be interested in riding high-speed rail and 69% favored high-speed rail to connect to major population centers in their own regions.

Mineta said President Bush "understands that rail is an important part of our intermodal transportation system," and has therefore proposed that "Amtrak receive \$521 billion for fiscal 2002 to put the corporation on the guideway to self-sufficiency." (The Administration does not yet have a position on the High Speed Rail Investment Act.)

Speaking to another rail conference May 10, Mineta said, "Amtrak's books do not look good, but we cannot afford to let Amtrak go down." Unfortunately, CNN picked up just the first half of that sentence.

THE JOHN R. MARTIN PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCACY AWARD...

...was established after his death to honor his memory by presenting a plaque and \$1,000 every year to the rail passenger advocate judged on the basis of their efforts to be the most deserving. Initial contributions to the award fund were stimulated last September when the Martin Family named NARP as one of the organizations to which donations could be made in Jack's memory. A selection committee drawn from the NARP Board—plus Faye Martin—selects the award winners. We welcome additional contributions to this fund. Our goal is to reach the point where income generated by the fund will be adequate to support the annual award. Make checks payable to NARP, and put "Martin Award" on the memo line.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

April 29 timetable—In addition to the added Acela Express service (Apr. News), the following are planned:

- **Texas Eagle**—northbound, leaves San Antonio two hours earlier and arrives Chicago about three hours earlier, reestablishing a connection with westbound *Empire Builder*. But southbound, it swaps time slots with train 305. The 3:30 pm *Eagle* departure from Chicago breaks the connection from the *Empire Builder*, but it now arrives San Antonio 9:00 pm (instead of 11:15).

- **Kentucky Cardinal**—Chicago-Jeffersonville trip 45 minutes faster overall (15 minutes cut from Indianapolis dwell and 30 minutes cut south of there).

- **Crescent**—northbound runs 20 minutes later New Orleans-Alexandria; up to 44 minutes later to New York.

- **California Zephyr**—eastbound runs about 25 minutes earlier east of Sparks; westbound runs about 50 minutes earlier throughout.

- **Southwest Chief**—eastbound leaves Los Angeles 20 minutes earlier and arrives Chicago 21 minutes later.

- **Chicago-Detroit**—Higher-horsepower locomotives permit 15-minute speed-up of all trains; last westbound train restored to earlier slot (depart Detroit 4:35 pm).

- **Acela Express**—the weekday Washington-New York non-stop round trip introduced March 5 gets a stop at Philadelphia and two minutes to its running time added; it leaves Washington 0:30 later (7:20 am).

- **New Haven-Springfield**—Previous schedule (seven southbound and eight northbound) cut to five a day each way, plus a weekday-only train. Mostly, New Haven shuttles were cut (not through trains to/from Washington).

- **Capitol Corridor**—The San Jose-Oakland segment had four daily Amtrak trains; two more weekend trains were added. The Oakland-Sacramento segment went from seven to nine daily trains. The Sacramento-Auburn segment remains at one daily.

- **Capitol Limited-to-Silver Star**—Same-day

connection at Washington is available again.

- **Twilight Shoreliner**—Boston-Newport News night train got a baggage car April 29, including a rack for unboxed bikes (reservation and small fee required).

- **Sunset Limited**—Some days of operation change (as shown in April timetable). Eastbound, starting May 30, trains leave Los Angeles Wednesday (not Tuesday), Friday, Sunday. Westbound, starting June 3, trains leave Orlando Sunday (not Saturday), Tuesday, Thursday.

- **Pacific Surfliner**—An additional weekend frequency begins May 25 (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) between San Diego and Los Angeles, the 12th round trip there on those days.

- **Fares**—Amtrak began selling a Florida Rail Pass, May 10. It allows Florida residents to use any Amtrak train in Florida (plus Orlando-Tampa-Fort Myers buses). Good for a year, it sells for \$199 (\$249 after August 10).

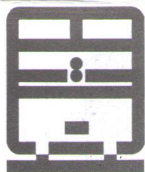
- **Amtrak has a 30th Anniversary fare (G/PRO/ANV)** good for 30% off regular, full adult fares, May 22-August 31. Purchase by June 15. Several restrictions, black-outs apply; not available on Amtrak web site.

- **Quiet cars**—Amtrak expanded its popular Northeast Corridor "quiet car" program, April 2. Those trains that now have them (new ones designated with "****") are southbound Metroliners 107, 109*, 111*, 113*, 115, 117*, 125*; southbound NortheastDirect 151, southbound Acela Regional 177*; northbound Metroliners 104*, 106, 108*, 110*, 112*, 114, 116*, 124*, 128*; northbound Acela Regional 170, 190*. On all trains, the designated car is the first car.

- **Thruways**—Bellingham-Vancouver bus connecting with trains 761-762 ends May 31; low ridership.

- **Transit**—MetroLink opened a 17.4-mile extension in Illinois of its light rail line from downtown East St. Louis to Belleville Area College, May 5.

- **Valley Transportation Agency will open an extension of San Jose's Tasman East line May 18, from Baypointe (N. 1st St.) to I-880 in Milpitas (1.9 miles).**



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