

October 2014



Vol. 48, No. 10

# NARPnews

*"We spend more than \$50 billion per year on highways and transit, over \$15 billion a year on aviation, while Amtrak gets just \$1.4 billion, or less than 2 percent of federal transportation spending... Our number one priority should be trying to figure out how to increase funding for rail, and treat it as a mode equal to the way we treat other modes of transportation."*

REP. JARROLD NADLER (D-NY)

## NARP Releases "Friend of the Court" Brief

NARP publicly released the [amicus curiae brief](#) it has filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in a case that could prove pivotal in eliminating delays that are leaving passengers stopped on the track and stranded at the station.

The amicus, or friend-of-the-court brief, was developed in partnership with the Environmental Law & Policy Center. It lays out an argument structured around two central facts:

I.) "The court of appeals based its decision on two separate grounds: (1) an erroneous finding that Amtrak is a private entity and (2) a complete disregard of the factors indicating sufficient governmental control over the development and implementation of the metrics and standards."

II.) "As a matter of public policy, the decision by the court of appeals, which invalidates Amtrak's on-time performance measures, thwarts the intent of Congress and threatens the future of passenger rail service in the United States."

"These crippling delays directly threaten a transportation choice that Americans have said they want and that tens of millions of Americans rely on every year. Rail links are a public good, and the reason Congress established Amtrak in the first place. It's no coincidence that these delays followed hard on the heels of the DC appeals court ruling, and it's also no coincidence that the result has unraveled a decade of record ridership. It's ironic that these delays hurt... (Continued on Page 2)

## PRRIA Reauthorization Keeps Amtrak Locked in Yearly Budget Battles

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee passed a passenger rail reauthorization bill out of committee with a unanimous voice vote. NARP reviewed the bill, and found many commonsense regulatory and governance reforms. Unfortunately, and more significantly, this bill ignores the funding gap that is holding back the U.S. national rail network, and legislatively enshrines Congress' "kick the can down the road" mentality that is threatening America's infrastructure.

"The Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2014 (PRRIA 2014) has a number of common-sense reforms—reforms that NARP has been advocating for over a number of years. We thank Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member Rahall for the work they've put into drafting this piece of legislation," said NARP President Jim Mathews in a press release. "However, we need to be crystal clear: regulatory improvements are no replacement for a dedicated, predictable, and robust source of funding for trains. NARP is dedicated to working with Members of Congress to ensure that America's passengers get exactly that."

And it wasn't just the funding levels that were cause for concern. PRRIA 2014 directs Amtrak to have an independent entity to evaluate routes and develop performance improvement plans. NARP believes too much emphasis is being

placed upon the cost of running these trains, with not enough emphasis on the benefits that these trains provide for the communities they serve. During the September 17th mark-up, it was clear that NARP was not alone in this view.

"[W]e cannot lose sight of the bigger picture, which is that we are still woefully underfunding Amtrak and passenger rail," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY). "We spend more than \$50 billion per year on highways and transit, over \$15 billion a year on aviation, while Amtrak gets just \$1.4 billion, or less than 2 percent of federal transportation spending... Our number one priority should be trying to figure out how to increase funding for rail, and treat it as a mode equal to the way we treat other modes of transportation. Unfortunately this bill simply reauthorizes the current, grossly inadequate funding levels."

Other highlights include:

- PRRIA 2014 directs the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to convene a working group to evaluate the restoration of intercity rail passenger service in the Gulf Coast region between New Orleans, Louisiana, and Orlando, Florida.
- The bill creates an accounting wall between the Northeast Corridor and the National Network, and there is some uncertainty over how a new funding structure will affect Amtrak. However, there was a bipartisan... (Continued on Page 2)

## YOUR STORIES: PASSENGERS SPEAK OUT AGAINST DELAYS

By now, nearly everyone has heard about the delays plaguing Amtrak's trains as they move people across the U.S. Things have gotten so bad that the on time performance of Amtrak's long distance services is down 21% when compared to the same period last year.

But sometimes it's hard to put a human cost to those numbers. That's why NARP has launched a campaign to tell the stories of the people who are being hurt by these delays. America's leaders need to hear about why Amtrak is important to the public, and what's at stake. We must convince policy makers to enact a solution.

NARP asked for your stories—and you delivered! But we need more of your stories. The Surface Transportation Board is saying they haven't been contacted about delays.

To submit your story, visit the [NARP website](#) or send an email to [sjeansgail@narprail.org](mailto:sjeansgail@narprail.org) (subject line: "Amtrak Delays"). Include the route, the location and duration of the delay, and any fallout from the incident. NARP will use these stories in our advocacy work to educate policy makers and the media on why this problem must be addressed.

Here is just one example of the many incidents of frustration, discomfort, and "never again!" moments being experi-

enced on trains across America:

*George Gibbs—"My wife and I recently took a round trip on the Chief from our home in Albuquerque to Chicago... WE WERE 4 1/2 HOURS LATE TO CHICAGO AND MISSED OUR FAMILY REUNION... My wife has "stage 4" bone cancer. She has to walk periodically. We were counting on those station stops. But, due to the incessant delays, she could never step off the train. She suffered both trips in agony. I believe we should be emerging into another "golden age of passenger railroading" because of all the baby boomers and others who are retired and have the time to travel. Also many of us (I'm 73) have heart problems and simply can't fly."*

You can read many more stories we've received on the [NARP website](#). Don't forget to submit your own if you've been affected by delays. With your help, we can get America's trains moving again!

**Use NARP's new tool to tell Congress to "Fix It!"**

NARP has created an [online app](#) for passengers to let their members of Congress know when they're on a train that's been delayed. With a few clicks of a button, you can let your Representative and Senators know about the delays impacting your life.

Go to <http://tinyurl.com/FixItCongress> or the [NARP website](#) to let your Congressman know each time you're delayed!

## Surface Transportation Board Future Under Consideration

The Senate Commerce Committee passed the Surface Transportation Board Reauthorization Act of 2014 (S. 2777). The bill's main focus is freight rail, and the main impact would be to would expand the number of STB board members and strengthen the regulatory body's ability to investigate cases, both through an increase in funding and through changes to regulations. That could be good news for Amtrak, which needs to go through the

STB to resolve on time performance issues with host railroads.

The bill has bipartisan support but, with the legislative calendar rapidly coming to a close, the 113th Congress is likely to expire before the bill can navigate both bodies and become law. Recognizing this likelihood, Senate Commerce leaders say they will reintroduce the bill in the next Congress if it fails to advance in the coming months.

### Friend of the Court (From Page 1)

...Amtrak's bottom line, increasing its dependence on public subsidies, even as those who back the appeals court ruling decry Amtrak's business performance," said NARP President Jim Mathews in a press release. "NARP would like to thank our partners in this process—especially the team at ELPC—for their hard work in laying out an airtight argument for why the judgment of the court of appeals must be reversed."

### PRRIA Reauthorization (From Page 1)

... consensus among the committee members that the funding levels would provide for continuation of all services. "This bill provides much-needed investments in the long distance network and ensures continuation of all long distance trains, including the Cardinal that runs through southern West Virginia," said Nick Rahall (D-WV). "Reliable passenger rail service helps move our economy forward and is critical to communities across our nation."

- Rep. Dina Titus, a Republican representing Nevada's 1st District, delivered an impassioned call for the return of passenger rail service to Las Vegas. Check [NARPrail.org](#) for the full analysis of the bill.



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## NARP Goes Cross-Country on the People's Climate Train

Last month Jenna Jablonski of the National Association of Railroad Passengers participated in the [People's Climate Train](#), an initiative to take climate justice activists from Emeryville to New York City on Amtrak for the People's Climate March, the largest climate change rally in history. The train trip, organized by the Center for Biological Diversity and other partners, highlighted the role of transportation in climate change and the importance of having travel choices other than cars and planes. Over 170 participants boarded the train during the four-day journey hoping to reduce their carbon footprint and send a message with their transportation choice.

Jablonski live-tweeted from the train, posting frequent photos and updates from the many workshops that took place each day. Meanwhile, the train rolled through some of America's most stunning landscapes – a reminder of what the group was fighting to preserve. By riding the People's Climate Train, NARP sparked a discussion of the role of trains in the climate justice movement. Here are some of the top facts NARP shared from the Climate Train:

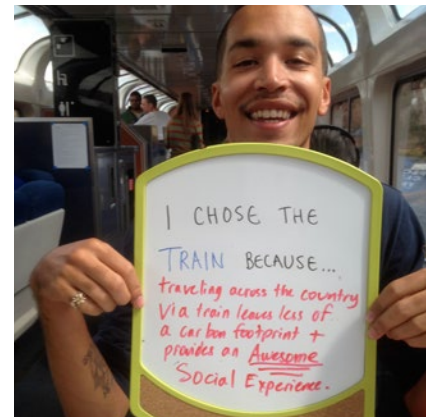
- Transportation accounts for about 30% of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. (Bureau of Transportation Statistics)
- Amtrak is 34% more efficient than cars and 17% more efficient than commercial aviation. (Oak Ridge National Laboratory)
- Commuter trains are 16% more efficient per passenger-mile than cars and 25% more than light trucks. (Oak Ridge National Laboratory)
- 2.9 billion gallons of fuel were wasted in traffic congestion in 2011 – enough to fill the New Orleans Superdome four times over. (Texas Transportation Institute)

Jablonski met several NARP members on the train – some who had given up plane travel altogether to reduce their environmental impact. Many also chose the train for its social aspects, like the opportunity to build community and meet fellow participants before the People's Climate March.

This is just the beginning of NARP's work to educate the public and decision-makers about the climate and energy benefits of passenger rail.

"Building a future transportation net-

work that grapples with the reality of finite conventional energy sources almost by definition demands rail," said NARP President Jim Mathews. "Even without taking into account the energy and environmental benefits we'll get later from innovations like high-speed passenger rail or electric automobiles, passengers are voting with their dollars in favor of lower-carbon travel today." To see the posts from Jablonski's journey on the Climate Train, visit the [NARP Blog](#) and follow [@narprail](#) on Twitter.



*Climate Train participant Kad Smith says he chose the train because "traveling across the country via train leaves less of a carbon footprint and provides an awesome social experience."*



### NARP ATTENDS PRIVATE RAIL CAR CONVENTION

NARP's Logan McLeod and Abe Zumwalt attended the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners (AAPRCO) 37th Annual Conference in Portland, Maine on September 22-24. The convention emphasized engaging Millennials in the mission to preserve and expand our nation's passenger rail service -- something NARP and AAPRCO are planning to move forward on together. Pictured to the left are Thomas J. Lanahan, Secretary of AAPRCO and longtime NARP member, and Abe Zumwalt. They are sitting in the Georgia 300, owned by John H. "Jack" Heard. The Georgia 300 was one of the 27 private cars present at the convention, and has hosted many U.S. presidents, including Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

### Y'all Aboard: Restoring and Improving Passenger Rail Service in the Southeast

NARP President & CEO Jim Mathews attended the Southeast Multi-State Passenger Rail Workshop in New Orleans on September 18. Hosted by the Southern Rail Commission, the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission and the Federal Railroad Administration, this event was the first formal group effort to restore

and expand passenger train service in the Southeast – an issue which NARP knows is a priority for our members.

Over 50 leaders from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Florida and Tennessee came together with the goal of increasing connectivity in the traditionally "flyover" region. The presentations and

discussions reached beyond restoration of the *Sunset Limited* as a solution, opening the door for new and innovative approaches for delivering passenger rail service to communities in the Southeast. All presentations from the workshop are available on the [Southern Rail Commission website](#).

## TIGER Grants Boost Southwest Chief, Dozens More Transportation Projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$600 million in funding for 72 transportation projects in 46 states and the District of Columbia from its TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) 2014 program.

Significantly, the U.S. DOT awarded \$12.5 million grant for track upgrades for Amtrak's *Southwest Chief*, an important first step in preserving the train's existing route through Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico.

The \$12.5 million will fund improvements to around 45 miles of track in Kansas and 10 miles in Colorado, focusing on the most structurally deficient segments. The grant is a significant step in preserving the alignment; however,

many news outlets incorrectly reported that the grant represented a final solution to the problem. NARP Mountain & Plains Division Leader James Souby clarified that the grant is the beginning of the campaign, not the end. The state legislatures in Colorado, New Mexico, and Kansas will still need to find additional funds to perform all necessary repairs. Other highlights include:

- \$20 million to build a 96-hundred-square foot platform for the Ruggles, Massachusetts MBTA station;
- \$8.2 million to the Connecticut Department of Transportation to renovate New England Central Railroad's corridor between New London and the Massachusetts border;

- \$10.3 million for the Central Corridor Transit Enhancement and Job Access Program in St. Louis, Missouri;
- \$12.2 million for Detroit's M-1 Streetcar;
- \$2.8 million to study the long-term replacement of the Long Bridge over the Potomac River;
- \$13 million to construct a new streetcar that will connect Rhode Island's two largest employment hubs to the downtown core;
- \$650,000 to help Rhode Island plan a new mass transit center in Providence.
- \$200,000 to fund a study to look at ways to improve transit connections and stations along the Carolinian and Piedmont rail lines.

## Future Chicago-St. Louis Service Reaches Milestone

In late September the last segment of track and ties were replaced between Chicago and St. Louis, marking a major milestone in preparing the segment for future higher-speed service. Governor Pat Quinn got together with Union Pacific officials to commemorate four years of major track work drawing to a close. The project is part of Illinois' vision for state-wide quality passenger rail service. "High-speed rail service will create jobs and open new economic development opportunities across Illinois," Governor Quinn said in a press release. "The work done today will help residents get to their destinations quickly and efficiently for years to come. I am proud that our state is leading the way on this transportation trend of the future."

The project is on track to reduce train travel time between Chicago and St. Louis by 30 minutes by the end of 2015, and by another thirty minutes by the end of 2017. The improvements will allow much more of the track to accommodate 110-mph service, which is only possible on 15 miles of the corridor today.

The four years of work so far have resulted in hundreds of improved grade crossings along with the addition of four-quadrant and dual gates in several locations. The next step is installing the positive train control



Governor Quinn visiting Granite City to commemorate the replacement of the final tracks and ties for the 110-mph Chicago-to-St. Louis corridor.

signaling system that will ensure safety along the corridor and add to the reliability of freight and passenger service. "Working together with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration, we have made great strides on this important public - private partnership," said Donna Kush, Union Pacific vice president - Public Affairs, Northern Region in a press release. "Our engineering team has produced some very impressive numbers

since this project started in 2010 by installing about 500 miles of rail and nearly 650,000 concrete ties, while spreading more than 1.3 million tons of ballast to help provide a safe and stable roadbed."

The project is supported by \$400 million from Governor Quinn's *Illinois Jobs Now!* capital construction program and \$1.3 billion in federal Higher Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail grant funding awarded to the state.

Photo courtesy of Flickr/IDOT



## Advocates Take First Steps Toward Improving Chicago-Cincinnati Service

The [Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance](#) (IPRA) is making moves towards expanding and improving passenger rail service within the state and beyond -- which could mean several daily trains running up to 130 mph. IPRA recently announced that it will launch a study for a passenger rail corridor between Chicago, Cincinnati and Louisville by way of Dyer, Rensselaer, Lafayette, Crawfordsville, Indianapolis and Connersville, Indiana.

Maryland-based Transportation and Economics and Management Systems, Inc. (TEMS) will examine the business case for public investment in the line, identifying economic benefits of the improved service and laying the groundwork for an environmental impact study (EIS) on the proposed corridor. The study will cost between \$150,000 and \$200,000 and take about four months to complete. IPRA is considering a number of possible sources for the funds.

The Indiana advocates are being joined

in the efforts by their Ohio counterparts, who have shown strong support for expanding service between Cincinnati and Chicago.

"We're seeing our competitors in St. Louis and Detroit that are moving on this, building higher speed rail," said Derek Bauman, southwest director of All Aboard Ohio. "There's a big business case to be made for this. We're looking to signal to leaders in Indiana that we're on the move over here, that we've got 3 million potential customers and we'd like to see the Hoosier State... expand."

TEMS recently completed another study in Indiana: a feasibility study and business plan for a corridor from Chicago to Fort Wayne and Columbus, commissioned by the Fort Wayne-based North-east Indiana Passenger Rail Association. This study has since resulted in a grant request to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to match the Indiana Department of Transportation for funds for the EIS.

## Hoosier State Adds Amenities

Responding to a competition from private operators, Amtrak has announced a series of improvements to the *Hoosier State* service.

The Indiana Department of Transportation issued a request for bids earlier this year, eventually naming Corridor Capital LLC as its new partner in operating the line. While the scope of the partnership has yet to be publicly announced, Amtrak has responded by announcing it will add complimentary on-board Wi-Fi, light food and beverage concessions, and Business Class seating.

In addition to amenities, Amtrak is emphasizing its own credentials.

"Amtrak brings proven expertise in delivering passenger rail service, railroad operations, safety and security, equipment maintenance and repair," said Amtrak President Joe Boardman.

Boardman also signaled they would not serve as subcontractors to Corridor Capital, which apparently lacks the equipment and staff to operate the service without Amtrak. "On what basis would [Corridor Capital] propose that without talking to Amtrak?" he asked during a press conference.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JOE KRAUSE

Neither the *Hoosier State* nor the *Cardinal* serves passengers daily, but volunteer Joe Krause does. Every morning, seven days a week, he is out on the platform at the Amtrak station in Lafayette, Indiana helping passengers get on and off the train.

A longtime NARP member and passenger rail advocate, Krause has been volunteering as a Passenger Assistant for over 13 years. Every day he keeps in touch with the incoming train so he can tell passengers exactly when it will arrive, while he helps them with parking passes and ticketing. Though he's traveled the world by rail, Krause says he

does this job to help and get to know people -- not to watch trains.

Krause helped save the *Hoosier State* by working closely with the Purdue Student Government leaders who urged state and local officials to provide the funds to keep the train running. Krause hopes that more Millennials will take up the fight for passenger trains and tell their peers about their experiences riding the train -- good or bad. He says they should make their generation's presence on trains known to Amtrak and all levels of elected officials, and use student governments as a megaphone.

Krause believes the best way to improve

passenger rail in the U.S. is to incrementally improve the system the U.S. has, with an emphasis on increasing frequency. "It doesn't have to be high-speed; it just has to get there," he said. Krause serves on the Board of Directors of the [Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance](#). He is also a member of [All Aboard Ohio](#), the [Michigan Association of Rail Passengers](#), and the [Midwest High Speed Rail Association](#).

**Do you know a passenger train advocate who deserves recognition? Let us know at [jjablonski@narprail.org](mailto:jjablonski@narprail.org) (Subject Line: "Member Profile,") and we'll try and feature them in a future edition NARP News.**

# New Amtrak Equipment Hits the Tracks

The first new equipment in decades is beginning to appear on Amtrak's national network -- and just in time, as Amtrak's equipment reaches an average age of over 28 years.

On October 20, passengers on Train 605 were the first on Amtrak's Keystone Service to ride a train powered by Amtrak's new electric Cities Sprinter.

The Siemens-made ACS-64 locomotive is one of an order for 70, expected to be done in 2015. About a dozen have entered service, and will serve the Keystone and Northeast Corridors.

Earlier this month, some of the 130 Viewliner II cars being manufactured by CAF USA hit the tracks. The new baggage-dorm cars will be added to eastern long distance routes, while the baggage cars will be used throughout the national network. The entire order is expected to be ready by late 2015.

Meanwhile, California and three Midwestern states have contracted Nippon Sharyo to build 175 new bi-level coach cars for intercity routes connecting in Chicago, and in California. The cars, expected to debut in 2016, will be made at the facility in Rochelle, IL using American steel.

Siemens new Charger™ is also slated for action in 2016, taking over for the current beleaguered fleet of GE Genesis locomotives. The new locomotives will be powered by 4,400 hp Cummins engines and built for speeds of up to 125 mph. Amtrak operations in Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington have already ordered a collective 32 units. The privately financed intercity line, All Aboard Florida, has also has selected the Charger™ to power its future Miami-Orlando train sets, also to be built by Siemens.



Photo by Amtrak

## Thinking of Giving to NARP? Here's How Stock Gifts Can Benefit You and Us

Hypothetically, say you're a NARP member that plans on donating \$2,000 to NARP this year. You can donate cash and receive your tax deduction directly. But what if you also have some appreciating shares that you want to sell for profit? You bought them 10 years ago for \$1,000, and now they are worth \$2,000. If you simply sell the shares, you have a capital gain of \$1,000. If you fall into a tax bracket where you pay the 15 percent capital gains tax rate, you will owe \$150 in taxes on that gain. That

tax bill will partially offset any benefit you received from donating cash to the charity.

But what if, instead of donating cash, you donate the stock? You keep the would-be \$2,000 donation in your bank account and you transfer ownership of the shares to the charity. You get to claim the entire \$2,000 as a deduction on your taxes, but you don't have to pay any capital gains tax.

You receive the full deduction for a charitable contribution, and it isn't par-

tially offset by your capital gains tax bill. This can be a great way to strategize at the end of the year if you have some appreciated shares you want to redeem, whether you are looking for cash, or whether you are trying to rebalance your portfolio.

This is just one of the many ways NARP members can support passenger trains. Please visit our "[Ways to Give](#)" page on the NARP website to find out how you can get creative with your giving this year. Thank you for your support!

## NARP TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

- The temporary *Empire Builder* detour in North Dakota has switched directions and will now affect eastbound *Empire Builder* service (Trains 7/27 and 8/28). Passengers getting on or off at Rugby, Devils Lake and Fargo will be transported by bus from Minot or to Fargo. For more details, visit [Amtrak.com/alerts](http://Amtrak.com/alerts).

- Northbound *Acela Express* trains will depart up to five minutes earlier at Washington, BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport and Baltimore until November 14, 2014. Southbound trains will arrive up to eight minutes later than times shown in timetables.

- Both east and westbound *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* passengers should expect delays of varying length through January 12, 2015 due to heavy freight congestion.

*Delayed? Don't forget to tell us about it, and we'll make sure your story is heard by the people who matter. (See Page 2)*