

“Today, innovation in the rail industry primarily means innovation in digitalization, because it enables us to satisfy the most urgent demands in mobility: maximum availability and throughput and better travel comfort.”

JOCHEN EICKHOLT, CEO OF SIEMENS MOBILITY

President’s Budget Reaffirms Commitment to High-Performance Rail, Transit

President Barack Obama’s final annual budget proposal reaffirms the administration’s commitment to a national transportation policy that aims to provide citizens with options for how to travel and also to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, the proposal would invest nearly \$20 billion more per year than current spending to reduce traffic and provide new and innovative transit options for American families.

Though the budget faces stiff resistance from the Republican-controlled Congress, it does lay out a clear and principled vision for the country’s transportation future under the “21st Century Clean Transportation Plan.”

“We’re pleased that President Obama and his administration are demonstrating support for a modern and efficient transportation system,” said NARP President

and CEO Jim Mathews. “NARP’s efforts moving forward hope to help the federal government, as well as local governments, provide Americans with safe, reliable and efficient travel options through a national rail network.”

Included in the budget is a commitment to high-performance rail, with a proposal to invest nearly \$7 billion per year on a competitive basis, and an emphasis on incorporating advanced rail technologies. In FY2016, Obama proposed \$28 billion in funding over six years as part of the GROW AMERICA Act, but the proposal did not move forward. Most recently, Congress committed to a national transportation policy in the FAST Act, which for the first time included intercity passenger rail. The Act authorizes \$10.5 billion

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NARP Participates in Gulf Coast Inspection Train

Amtrak and the Southern Rail Commission conducted an inspection tour on February 18 and 19 of the rail route between New Orleans and Jacksonville, in an effort to provide a perspective on reintroducing passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast.

NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews was one of the invited guests and represented NARP and the association’s goals for reestablishing passenger rail service in the Gulf Coast region, which hasn’t existed since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

“The inspection tour is an important



A big crowd greets the Gulf Coast Inspection Train in Bay St. Louis, where Senator Wicker and FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg welcomed Mississippi Gov. Bryant aboard the train.

step in returning passenger rail service to millions of people who live and travel along the Gulf Coast,” said Mathews. “We’re excited about the opportunities and economic growth that rail service could bring to the region.”

The goal of the inspection trip was to examine the existing infrastructure and better understand the economic, cultural and mobility opportunities that intercity passenger rail provides. The trip, hosted by Amtrak, included elected officials, industry

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• • • M E M B E R S H I P N O T E • • •

Manage Your Membership! You can change your address, your phone number or any other important detail in your membership by yourself using the NARP website, at <http://narprail.org/for-members/manage-your-membership>. Just enter your membership number, or create an account to get started.”

Save the Date: NARP 2016 Spring Meeting

NARP’s Council Representatives and members are preparing to come to Washington D.C., for the Spring Council & Membership Meeting April 10-13, 2016. The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Silver Spring, Maryland. Sunday evening, April 10 will feature a reception honoring departing Chairman Robert Stewart. Highlights on Monday, April 11 include industry-related presentations, training for NARP’s Day on the Hill and association committee meetings.

On Tuesday, April 12, members will have the opportunity to meet members of their Congressional delegation and personally make the case for giving Americans the passenger rail system they deserve. The day will end with the Annual NARP Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill, where NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews will present the annual Golden Spike Award and the Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Safety Award.

Sessions on Wednesday, April 13 will

focus on NARP-related business matters including the election of ‘At-Large’ Council Representatives and the Association’s Officers and Directors for the next two years.

Reservations for discounted group rate guest rooms at the Sheraton must be made by March 10. Meeting registration is now available on-line. Visit the event webpage <http://bit.ly/1SxCkPe> for links for room reservations; to register and for the most up-to-date agenda information. ■

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over five “Obama’s new budget proposes an increase of more than \$10 billion per year towards transit projects over the next decade. This would include commitments to the Federal Transit Administration New Starts, Small Starts, and Transit Formula Grants programs, which invest in the safety, performance, and efficiency of existing, new, and expanded transit systems. The \$10 billion investment would also create a new Rapid Growth Area Transit program for fast growing communities, which seeks to implement multi-modal solutions to offset challenges posed by rapid growth.

“Transit ridership continues to grow as more and more Americans opt for public transit on their way to and from work,” Mathews said. “It’s critical that these projects receive the funding they need both to maintain current networks and to expand.”


The budget recommends funding for specific transit projects in cities and metro areas across the country, including Seattle, San Diego, Minneapolis, Dallas, Boston, Fort Lauderdale, and many more in between.

In addition to investments in

high-performance rail and transit, President Obama’s proposed budget would nearly double the amount of grant funding available through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) competitive grant program. The TIGER program supports innovative, multi-modal investments in the nation’s infrastructure to make communities more livable and sustainable.

“Mr. Obama’s budget reaffirms our country’s commitment to passenger rail and a connected, multi-modal transportation system as a whole,” Mathews continued. “NARP looks forward to supporting these proposals moving forward and working to implement the changes necessary to achieve a world-class, 21st century transportation network.”

The president’s plan would be funded by a new \$10.25 per barrel fee on oil paid by oil companies, which would be phased in over five years. By placing a fee on oil, the initiative creates a clear incentive for private-sector innovation to reduce America’s reliance on oil and invest in clean energy technologies moving forward. ■



© National Association of Railroad Passengers
 505 Capitol Court, N.E., Suite 300
 Washington, D.C. 20002-7706
 202-408-8362 / 202-408-8287 (fax)
www.narprail.org narp@narprail.org

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James Abram Zumwalt (Ext. 3123) Ofc. & Projects Coord.
Donna Thomas Graphic Designer/Layout Artist

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Increased Safety On The Rails Comes With Increased Fines from FRA

The Federal Railroad Administration is cracking down on safety. If you are a railroad, look out, because fines have been coming your way and it doesn't look like that is slowing down any time soon. That could be great news for safety advocates.

Following a series of passenger and freight derailments and accidents, the FRA has dramatically stepped up the number and amount of civil penalties it has been issuing. In 2015, the federal regulators enforced rail-safety rules with greater determination and issued more civil penalties against freight and commuter rail lines than ever before.

The FRA's new focus on rail safety led directly to a 23 percent increase in civil penalties against railroads from FY2014 to FY2015 – the highest civil penalty collection rate in the agency's 50-year existence. Overall, the FRA fined 75 percent of the railroads in operation, collecting \$15 million in civil penalties.

For FY2015, more than 6,485 railroad company violations resulted in civil penalties. Motive power and equipment were the top issues, accounting for 29 percent of all violations. Track violations ranked second highest with 26 percent, and hazmat violations received 20 percent of the violations.

"Safety must be the number one priority for every railroad, and the Department of Transportation will continue to take aggressive action against railroads who fail to follow safety rules," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said in a statement on January 20. "A strong safety enforcement program is critical to prevent accidents, save lives and move our country forward."



Amtrak's Capitol Limited in Point of Rocks, MD on its way to Washington D.C.
Photo courtesy of Mark Levisay/Wikipedia

Though Amtrak saw an increase in penalties from the FRA, the rail service only received 70 violations – a fraction of the overall total.

Still, a greater emphasis on improving the safe transportation of people and goods, especially on rail lines that are shared by freight and commuter rail service, is critical to the FRA and enforcement of safety rules. Should railroads continue to not meet standards set forth by regulators, such as meeting the 2018 deadline for implementing positive train control technology, which utilizes GPS and computers to monitor a train's speed and automatically slow or stop trains to avoid accidents, the FRA will continue to issue civil penalties.

"It should be expected by both freight and passenger rail lines that FRA will continue to move forward with strict execution of safety regulations and increased inspections," said NARP president and CEO, Jim Mathews.

"Enforcement of the rules is important for commuter rail, especially at a time when railroads and the FRA are focused on the application of new technologies like positive train control in order to increase safety over the next couple of years."

Efforts in 2015 to increase safety saw a 24 percent decrease in the overall number of railroad accidents from 2014. As the FRA pushes forward in 2016, the federal agency expects railroads to continue to follow the new regulations and increase safety and maintenance activities for freight and commuter rail lines in order to further reduce the potential for accidents and derailments. ■

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representatives, community leaders and federal stakeholders.

The train made 14 stops during its inspection tour, visiting cities throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. A variety of events and spectators, including many mobilized by NARP, gathered at the stops to show their community's support for the rail service.

"Rail service in the Gulf Coast would not be possible if it wasn't for the people who need it on a daily basis to get from home to work, and back again, or for people who want to take a vacation," said Mathews. "Throughout the trip, we saw tremendous support

for reestablishing rail service and we couldn't be happier."

Amtrak launched standalone Gulf Coast service with the Gulf Coast Limited, a train that ran between Mobile, AL and New Orleans, LA during the 1984 World's Fair, and again in 1996-1997. From 1993 through 2005 Amtrak operated an extension of the Sunset Limited through the region, as part of a transcontinental Los Angeles-Florida run, but for various reasons successful on-time performance was hard to maintain, hindering the train's ridership and financial performance.

Since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, service has been suspended east of New Orleans. ■

• • • STATES NEWS • • •

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) put rail safety at the top of its “10 Most Wanted” list of priorities for 2016, reports the Washington Post. The NTSB has been calling for installation of PTC for decades, but the pressing need for the safety system was driven home by the crash of Amtrak Train #188 outside of Philadelphia on May 12, 2015. The agency warned Congress and federal regulators about the potential consequences of delays in installing automatic-braking technology to prevent high-speed derailments and in replacing rail tank cars that carry volatile flammable loads.



The goal of restoring Amtrak service to the Gulf Coast is closer now that an Amtrak report shows a number of scenarios in which the Southern Rail Commission could be heading down the right track in bringing passenger rail back, reports LagniappeMobile.com. Amtrak determined a simple extension of the City of New Orleans line to Orlando would result in the greatest number of riders of all options, generating annual ridership of 153,900, but would include a funding commitment of nearly \$10 million.



Amtrak gave its most detailed report on the Gateway Project to date in a meeting with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, presenting a package of construction projects that includes new Hudson tunnels and an expanded Penn Station, costing around \$23.9 billion. The New York Times reports that building new Hudson River rail tunnels and repairing the existing tunnels will cost \$7.7 billion, with the renovations to Penn Station in Manhattan costing \$5.9 billion. The Gateway Project also includes replacing New Jersey rail bridges.



NARP has been named to the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee’s Hazardous Materials Working Group, which will meet for the first time March 10 in DC. The FRA and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration convened the unusual joint panel to re-evaluate five regulations for moving hazardous materials by rail, addressing emerging and anticipated safety issues including tank cars, trans-loading, speed restrictions and moving energy products in large unit trains.



New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) announced an ambitious \$3 billion plan to renovate Penn Station, reports the New York Times. It includes creating an adjunct train and retail hub in the James A. Farley Post Office across the street. During his press conference, Cuomo also outlined plans for new air and rail terminals, new transit stations and a Hudson River rail tunnel, calling it “the biggest construction program in our state’s history.” The state, working with Amtrak and MTA, will do an RFP from developers, who would take on the project in exchange for the rights to control all the retail shops in Penn Station.



A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress, uses an op-ed in the Atlanta Business Chronicle to show how far the city has come since the one-year anniversary of the Atlanta Streetcar launch, an idea first reintroduced 15 years ago. “In those early days, we gave little thought to potential ridership numbers, economic impacts or even traffic mitigation,”



Mardi Gras costumes on display at the Bay St. Louis train station.

he wrote. “What we strived for was re-connectivity of the central core with its surrounding neighborhoods and preservation of the value of Peachtree Street, one of the city’s most important north-south corridors.”



Construction crews have begun pouring concrete for Florida’s Brightline rail corridor in West Palm Beach, bringing the project one step closer to reality. “This is the launching point for our service. Every day, the trains will come out of here,” said Adrian Share, executive vice president of rail infrastructure. “This is about a 120 cubic yards of concrete going in today... Basically this will be a maintenance pit. When you work on the trains, you work from underneath,” he said. “If you take your car to a repair shop, they lift the car. We don’t lift the trains... We won’t be using 10-train cars for a while, but it’s designed with that capacity. Share said the service, which will run between Miami and Orlando, will be operational by mid-2017.



Cities across the country are moving forward with mass transit projects, despite the required tax hikes and cheap gasoline that encourages commuters to drive their cars, says a report from the Pew Charitable Trusts. The ballot measures, most at the city and county level, passed in states at both ends of the political spectrum, from red states such as Arizona and Utah to bluer ones like Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts and Washington.



NARP Chairman Robert Stewart and Director of Special Projects Bruce Becker staffed a NARP booth at January’s New York Times Travel Show, held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. Show attendees learned about NARP’s goal of expanded and improved passenger rail service for the U.S. and the benefits of becoming a NARP member. In addition, Stewart and Becker distributed Amtrak materials and answered many questions on traveling by train. For the fourth consecutive year, Stewart was a co-presenter during the Show’s Rail Travel Seminar. On Saturday, Becker participated in an ‘Ask The Expert’ panel focused on tourist destinations accessible by rail across New York State. ■

Nominations Now Open For 2016 'At-Large' Council Seats And Officer & Director Positions

NARP is inviting members in good standing to consider running for the 10 'At-Large' seats on the Council of Representatives, the association's volunteer governing body, for a two-year term starting at this April's Spring Council and Membership Meeting. Any NARP member who has paid dues for at least one year, is at least 18 years of age and is a U.S. resident is eligible to run. The Council consists of 112 elected state representatives and the 10 'At-Large' seats.

The Council of Representatives represents the NARP membership in setting and approving the overall policy and direction for the association. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/1MPFruQ>. For an 'At-Large' Representative Candidate

Information Statement form, go to <http://bit.ly/1OHzAZD>.

In addition, nominations are now being sought from those members interested in being elected as an association officer (Chair; four Vice-Chairs; Treasurer & Secretary) and for the eight Director positions. The Officers and Directors are elected by the Council of Representatives at the April meeting. For more information on these positions including the duties, responsibilities and required qualifications, go to <http://bit.ly/1P4h0eB>. For an Officer & Director Candidate Information Statement form, go to <http://bit.ly/1Rit8z9>.

The deadline to submit all Candidate Information Statements is March 31, 2016. ■

NARP Partners with Amtrak Vacations For New Member Benefit

NARP is pleased to announce a significant new member benefit - a 10% discount on the rail travel portion of all Amtrak Vacation tour packages. Amtrak Vacations, the operator of Amtrak's tour & tour package program, offers over 300 destination and attraction-based, all-inclusive, tour packages across North America, which feature Amtrak trains as the method of transportation.

NARP and Yankee Leisure Group (the operator of Amtrak Vacations) have entered into a new, mutually-beneficial partnership, making this discount possible. In addition, Yankee Leisure Group, will offer NARP members a 5% discount on their Unique Rail Journey packages available for destinations

across Europe.

In announcing the new partnership, NARP President/CEO Jim Mathews said, "This is the perfect win-win for all NARP members. Yankee Leisure Group has over 40-years' experience offering first-rate travel packages and they specialize in combining great destinations and train travel. NARP also benefits, as our Association gains access to Amtrak Vacations extensive customer base, many of whom are potential new NARP members."

Watch for more information coming soon on our website www.narprail.org/get-involved/become-a-member on these exciting new discounts. ■



Amtrak Train - WWII Pearl Harbor troop train featuring P42DC #42. Photo Credit: spencerhughes2255, YouTube.com

WEB EXCLUSIVE: Rail Icon Gil Carmichael Passes Away at Age 88

An icon and advocate for a strong national rail passenger network and the father of intermodal passenger transport, Gil Carmichael, passed away on January 31 at the age of 88, leaving behind a legacy that goes beyond the transportation and the railroad industry.

Throughout his lifetime, Carmichael took on many roles and responsibilities; he was an automobile dealer, a real-estate developer, a politician, administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) under President George H. W. Bush, and even Chairman of Amtrak. He pushed for a strong and healthy railroad infrastructure within the United States for the 21st century, and continued his efforts by founding the Intermodal Transportation Institute at the University of Denver in 1991. He was also the Chairman of the Amtrak Reform Council.

“The last time I was in Mississippi last summer I had lunch with Mr. Carmichael and his wife Deanie in Meridian, and we talked at length about his vision for what he called ‘Interstate II,’ to do for rails – and high-speed rail in particular – in the 21st century what Eisenhower did for highways in the 20th,” recalls NARP President & CEO Jim Mathews. “His passion and commitment were palpable, a tireless and positive advocate up until his last breath.”

Prior to his tenure at the FRA, in 1972 Carmichael was entering his career as a Mississippi politician and was the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate. He ran for governor in 1975, and again in 1979, but lost both elections. Carmichael ran one last

time in 1983 against Democratic Lieutenant Governor Brad Dye. Through his platforms, which included support for the Equal Rights Amendment, Carmichael was able to reach a new generation of young Republicans throughout the state and establish Mississippi as a two-party state.

Outside of Mississippi politics, Carmichael brought his influence and vision to the National Highway Safety Advisory Committee in 1973, where he pushed for a strong national transportation infrastructure. He was chairman of the committee from 1974 to 1976, and eventually became a member of the National Transportation Policy Study from 1976 to 1979.

“Mr. Carmichael leaves behind an extraordinary legacy, in politics, in humanity and in achievement. Much of what we’re doing today at NARP comes from his willingness to sit down with me and share his guidance and counsel as I took the helm in late 2014,” said Mathews. “Both I and our members are very fortunate to have benefitted from his thinking, and he will be greatly missed.” ■



Photo Courtesy of University of Denver

NARP Traveler’s Advisory

- ❖ To accommodate a long-term track work project, several Springfield Shuttle trains will be canceled and bus service. Monday through Friday service changes, effective through July 29, 2016: Springfield Shuttle Trains 470, 490, 493 and 495 will be cancelled on Monday through Friday until July 29, 2016. Passengers will be provided bus service between New Haven, Wallingford, Meriden, Berlin, Hartford, Windsor, Windsor Locks and Springfield. All southbound weekday buses will depart all stations 30 minutes earlier than the respective trains.
- ❖ Due to track work being performed by Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF Railway, Sunset Limited Trains 1 and 2, along with Texas Eagle Train 2/422 will operate on adjusted schedules between January 8 and March 13, 2016. Eastbound Train 2/422 will depart Los Angeles six hours earlier than the times shown in Amtrak printed timetables, and operate six hours earlier at all stations through its arrival in San Antonio. From San Antonio to New Orleans, Train 2 will operate five hours and 10 minutes earlier. The schedule for Train 22 from Fort Worth to Chicago will not be affected. With the earlier departure of Train 2/422, Coast Starlight Train 11 will not arrive in Los Angeles in time for passengers to make connections with Train 2/422. Therefore, Coast Starlight passengers connecting with Train 2/422 will detrain in Sacramento and board a bus to Los Angeles that will arrive in time to board Train 2/422.
- ❖ Business Class passengers can buy a daily access pass for ClubAcela at Philadelphia-30th Street Station for \$20.00 a day, which includes priority boarding for all trains. The pass is valid for use at Philadelphia - 30th Street Station only. Cash and credit cards are accepted at the ticket office, while credit cards are accepted inside ClubAcela. Sleeping car passengers, Acela Express First class passengers and Amtrak Guest Rewards Plus and Select Executive members will continue to have priority boarding and complimentary access to ClubAcela. ■