

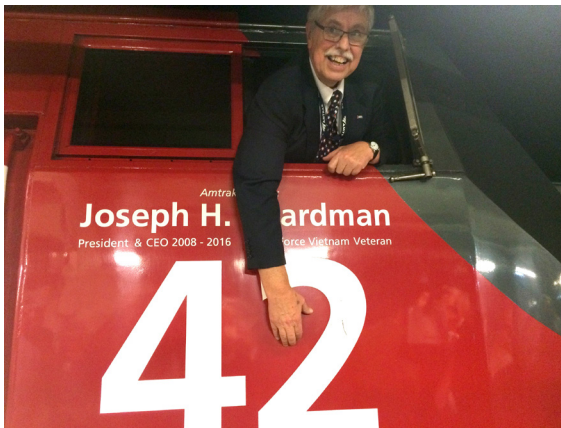


RAIL PASSENGERS  
ASSOCIATION

# PASSENGERS Voice

APRIL 2019 | VOL. 53, NO. 4

## RAIL PASSENGERS REMEMBERS JOE BOARDMAN



Joe Boardman (1948-2019)  
Photo Credit: Jim Mathews

“Joe Boardman believed in his bones that all Americans should have the ability to choose to travel by train. He was a passionate defender of the National Network, and a passionate believer in Amtrak. He was also very gracious with his time and his insights, always willing to meet with us to hear about the concerns of passengers and always willing to meet with me to

talk about rail policy. After retirement, he traveled all the way to Miami to be with us last Fall during our RailNation: Miami national convention in a classic example of the kind of leader he was. We will all miss him very much.”

Boardman was involved in the transportation industry for more than 40 years, working as the head of Amtrak, as well as Administrator for the Federal Railroad Administration and Commissioner of the New York State Department of Transportation.

## TRUMP ADMINISTRATION BUDGET WOULD END NATIONAL RAIL NETWORK

The White House released a budget proposal today that would slash funding for critical rail and transit programs, cutting \$455.6 million from Amtrak and intercity rail programs—23% less than the amount approved by Congress in FY2019—and eliminates long-distance routes, replacing corridor train service with subsidized bus service. The Trump Administration also recommends cutting \$1 billion from New Starts Capital Investment Grants program—39% less than the amount approved by Congress in FY2019—which provides important grants for rail transit systems across the U.S. Overall, the Trump Administration is calling for a \$5.9 billion cut to transportation, a 21.5% reduction.

TRUMP BUDGET, p. 2

## WSJ OFFERS ‘FALSE CHOICE’ BETWEEN CORRIDORS AND NATIONAL NETWORK

A Feb. 20 Wall Street Journal story caused quite a stir when it suggested that Amtrak might propose growing service in the Southeast and West by gutting the National Network to free the resources to make it happen. The story prompted many anxious calls from congressional offices and elsewhere to Rail Passengers’ DC team, asking us what it meant, whether it was true, and if it were true how to stop it.

Amtrak has floated this trial balloon before. And our answer last year was the same as it is now: of course we support better, more frequent, daylight service into under-served or un-served communities. But we reject the idea that we have to choose between having more and better trains in fast-growing areas or having a National Network that connects America. And we certainly reject the idea that dozens of small communities which today depend on the

WSJ, p. 2

“Putting butts in seats has occupied most of my career.”

Joe Boardman



# RAIL PASSENGERS

ASSOCIATION

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This issue has news through March 12, 2019.  
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## WSJ, from p. 1

economic engine of Amtrak service should lose their trains in exchange for Cincinnati getting to see trains in the daytime.

As a government-supported enterprise, Amtrak exists to serve as much of America as possible. And that includes places like Normal, Ill., Meridian, Miss., Minot, N.D., and Cut Bank, Mt. Congress agrees, and repeated that agreement in the bipartisan appropriation bill that passed in February to keep the government funded through the end of Fiscal 2019. Lawmakers insisted that Amtrak preserve existing routes, and also insisted that any changes to the National Network happen in consultation with the affected communities and their congressional delegations. Your Association had a lot to do with that language.

It would appear that, at least a

year ago, Amtrak leadership saw it that way as well. Chairman Anthony Coscia told us during a meeting in his office that the concept that was beginning to take shape then was development focused on corridors with strong growth potential in lightly served or un-served areas, "corridors hanging off the legacy National Network routes like a necklace."

The vision outlined in the Journal doesn't match that exchange. Congress' recent actions suggest they would support a vision much like the one Mr. Coscia outlined for us last May.

Last month marked the second year in a row Congress appropriated near-record dollars to support Amtrak as a vital and cost-effective economic development tool. There is political and fiscal appetite to

**WSJ, p. 6**

## TRUMP BUDGET, from p. 1

"This is a disappointing considering the bipartisan agreement to increase funding in transportation struck by Congress a few short weeks ago, and fails to live up to the many promises that President Trump has made to revitalize and modernize America's rail infrastructure," responded Rail Passengers President Jim Mathews. "Fortunately, we've seen Congress ignore these misguided White House proposals for rail and transit for the past two years, and we will continue to advocate for real solutions to building a better national rail network."

The budget explicitly admits the cuts to intercity rail as a devolution of funding from the federal government to the states, asking Congress for "\$550 million

in transitional grants as States and Amtrak begin the process to restructure the network and States prepare to incrementally take financial responsibility for the newly created State-supported routes, and \$936 million in direct grants to Amtrak for the Northeast Corridor and existing State-supported lines. Likewise, the White House calls for refocusing on New Starts projects that have "high non-Federal funding commitments."

While it is admirable to look to shrink the federal deficit, it should be noted that shifting essential interstate transportation investment responsibilities off the federal ledger and onto states isn't the same as solving the problem—it's avoiding taking responsibility for the problem.

The full budget will not be available

until March 18, so many of the details are still unclear. U.S. DOT officials were very clear that they would not support federal funding for new Hudson River rail tunnels, with DOT Deputy Secretary Jeffrey Rosen saying those "transit projects are local responsibilities, and elected officials from New York and New Jersey are the ones accountable for them." (The Hudson River rail tunnels are actually an interstate project with massive regional and national implications.)

Rail Passengers has launched a response campaign this week, offering Members of Congress a better blueprint for a modern, efficient American rail system. Take part at [www.RailPassengers.org/Action](http://www.RailPassengers.org/Action), or call your elected officials and tell them you support funding for a National RAIL Network!

## REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 2019'S RAILNATION D.C.

Join the Rail Passengers Association in Washington, D.C. for our annual Spring advocacy conference (April 1 - 3) where we'll discuss the challenges and solutions to building a better American rail system.

With the surface transportation reauthorization kicking into gear, advocates have a unique opportunity to bring about real change. Join us in drafting the blueprint for 21st Century passenger rail in the U.S. Register Now by visiting [www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org).

The event will be held at the Westin City Center in downtown Washington, D.C.

### DAY ON THE HILL + CONGRESSIONAL RECEPTION

Each year Rail Passengers members meet with hundreds of Representatives and Senators to advocate for better trains and transit. The day will wrap up with a cocktail reception on Capitol Hill where will honor Senators Michael Bennet, Cory Gardner, Martin Heinrich, Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts, and Tom Udall for their role in saving the Southwest Chief.

### NO SCHEDULES: REGIONAL RAIL AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN PASSENGER TRAINS

Panelists will discuss the immediate and long-range visions of transforming current commuter service, and creating a frequent,



Northeast Field Coordinator Joe Aiello leads a First/Last Mile Panel in Miami feat. representatives from Miami-Dade TPO, Uber, and The Underline  
Photo Credit: Tom Girsch

regional mobility worthy of a 21st century economy. Panelists include Peter Brassard, Chair of the Rhode Island Association of Rail Passengers and TransitMatters member; D.W. Rowlands, DC Transportation and Demographic Issues Writer with Greater Greater Washington; and T. R. Hickey, Chief Development Officer of Virginia Railway Express. Moderated by Laurie Schintler, Associate Professor of Public Policy at George Mason University.

### THE VIEW FROM THE HILL: INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE 116TH CONGRESS

We'll hear from congressional staffers on the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation about the transportation agenda for the 116th Congress and the plans for addressing the transportation crisis in the U.S. in the coming reauthorization.

### HOW TO SELL TRAINS TO YOUR CONGRESSMAN

Mike Friedberg, a partner at Holland & Knight who specializes in transportation, will give tips on

how to best advocate for passenger rail and investment to your elected officials.

Mr. Friedberg most recently served as staff director of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure under former-Chairman Bill Shuster.

### INVESTMENTS, NOT SUBSIDIES: HOW AMERICAN LONG DISTANCE TRAINS MAKE MONEY

Learn exactly how and why American long distance passenger trains create economic benefits that far outweigh their costs, and how the Rail Passengers Association is quantifying the benefits of America's National Network trains through economic impact. Panelists will include Rail Passengers President Jim Mathews and Dr. Yuanyuan Zhang, Research Professor at the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Logistics, Trade and Transportation.

### WHAT CAN PASSENGERS DO?: ADVOCACY STRATEGIES THAT REALLY WORK

There are other Rail Passengers around the country, just like YOU, that have made amazing progress for expanded passenger rail service in their communities. This panel of other Rail Passengers' Council Members will share success stories, advocacy tips, and strategies for bringing about real change. Panelists will include Bruce Ashton of Rail Passengers - Texas.

## WELCOME JONSIE STONE, DIRECTOR OF RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

I'm excited to join the Rail Passengers Association, an organization that I not only believe in but have benefitted from as a long-standing train commuter. I look forward to working with Rail Passengers' current partners as well as establishing new relationships to advance a Connected America.

I have been building partnerships benefiting nonprofits for more than twenty years generating revenue for organizations such as NACHA, the Bob Woodruff Foundation and the Armed Services YMCA. Most recently I served as the Senior Director of Strategic Relationships for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and was proud to be involved with opening the National Law Enforcement Museum. I'm a born and bred Virginian and live with my husband of 27 years, our 2 sons, 3 beagles and a cat in Bristow, VA.

## #VIEWSONATRAIN

We are sharing many of the great photos we have received on Instagram ([www.instagram.com/railpassengers](http://www.instagram.com/railpassengers)).

We are also still looking for more submissions. Photos can be submitted via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter depicting your experience as "The Rail Passenger" and your views from a train. Rail Passengers Association executives will be judging the photos, and the winners' images will be used as part of our new visual identity on our website, in our monthly newsletter, on social media, and more!

When submitting your photos on social media, be sure to use the hashtag #ViewsOnATrain and tag @RailPassengers.

## PRIVATE CAR OWNERS STRUGGLING UNDER NEW AMTRAK POLICIES

Private railcar owners are being driven to the brink, despite directives from Congress in the appropriations joint explanatory statement and in the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) to partner with private cars to help offset deficits.

The private railcar community points out that in just one year, Amtrak – the car-owners' only practical choice for most movements – increased prices 25%.

Coupled with removal of points of access, denial of parking in major hubs and what the owners describe as usurious long term parking rates, more than half the owners who charter indicate they are ceasing operation.

One casualty of Amtrak's policies is well-known to Rail Passengers members: the Dearing, owned by Borden Black and RPA Council member Nelson McGahee,

barred from parking at DC's Union Station during the upcoming Day On The Hill meeting. An Amtrak official reported in January that in nine months private car revenue had declined 23%.

As Rail Passengers noted in its Feb. 8 Hotline, Amtrak's Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that Amtrak — which it contends took in about \$3.7 million in private-car-related revenue in Fiscal 2018 — has a poor grip on costs and revenues stemming from private cars, has no standard operating procedures and only limited parking and safety guidelines.

OIG concluded that Amtrak "does not know the extent to which it is capturing these costs through its pricing decisions."

Amtrak should complete a study of its costs by the end of March, paving the way for price hikes in October.

# SECOND TRAIN FROM CHICAGO TO TWIN CITIES IS A GREAT INVESTMENT

*'Baby Builder' could generate \$25M in Minnesota every year*

By diverting thousands of car trips and inducing new travel and spending that would not otherwise take place, a new, second daily train between Chicago and the Twin Cities could generate total annual economic returns in the range of eight- to ten- times Minnesota's annual net spending to support the service, Rail Passengers reports in a new "Research Note."

Issued in March, "**Impacts From A Second Train To Minnesota**" assessed the benefits of proposed new service to Minnesota from Chicago. The "Research Note" picked up where Amtrak left off with its 2015 study, "Feasibility Report on Proposed Amtrak Service Chicago - Milwaukee - LaCrosse- Twin Cities (St. Cloud)."

Where Amtrak's study was confined to assessing the feasibility of adding a second train in addition to current Empire Builder service, Director of Policy Research Abe Zumwalt took it a step further to assess some of the economic benefits of the service. The Rail Passengers team used the IMPLAN economic-impact planning tool, which examines

both direct and indirect economic effects at the county level, to analyze Amtrak's results.

"[According to Amtrak data] we expect that 60 percent, or 90,000 people who would ride the additional Amtrak service would come from automotive trips -- helping Minnesota, as well as Illinois and Wisconsin, see decreases in road maintenance, auto accidents and emissions." Said Jim Mathews, Rail Passengers CEO.

The additional service's annual operating cost -- which Amtrak estimated at \$13.4 million -- is easily offset by the economic benefits generated by the service. Ridership revenue (i.e., fares paid and some associated spending on-board) can be expected to contribute about \$6.8 million each year to offsetting the annual operational cost. The overall economic benefit for three states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois would be \$47 million annually -- an overall return on investment of better than seven-to-one.

The full assessment findings are available online at the Rail Passengers Association website: [www.railpassengers.org/mn](http://www.railpassengers.org/mn)



Photo Source: From cover page of, "Impacts From A Second Train To Minnesota."

## There Is Still Time To Register For RPA's Spring 2019 Advocacy Summit, 'Day on The Hill', Congressional Reception & Annual Council Business Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Sunday, March 31 through  
Wednesday, April 3

- RPA's Annual 'Day on The Hill' & Congressional Reception Is Tuesday, April 2
- Visit The Event Page For Complete Information

## Upcoming Regional Rail Passengers Association and State Passengers Association Member Meetings & Events

Saturday, April 13

Arizona Spring 2019 Passenger Rail Summit - Mesa, AZ

Saturday, May 18

Rail Passengers Northwest Division Meeting - Cut Bank, MT

WSJ, from p. 2

do more, and that's the plan Amtrak should submit. We do not need to choose, especially when the choice offered is a false one. That's the message Rail Passengers has delivered consistently to Amtrak over the past year, and it's one you can help

amplify by getting in touch with your congressional representative or Senator. Members can find their elected officials by following this link: <https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/current-campaigns/find-your-elected-officials/>

## RAIL PASSENGERS MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS, POLL RESULTS

### QUESTION...

**DO YOU WISH YOUR CELL SERVICE WORKED EVERYWHERE, EVEN ON THE MOST REMOTE TRAIN JOURNEY?**



**A. Yes** - I can't live without my smartphone.

**B. No** - It's kind of nice to unplug on a long trip.

Click here to submit your answer to this poll on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/narprail>, or send in your response via email to: [survey@narprail.org](mailto:survey@narprail.org).

Late last year we began conducting polls on social media and in our newsletters to spark conversation and provide another outlet for you to share your thoughts on rail.

During the first week of March, we asked: "Did you meet your spouse or significant other while traveling on a train?" More than 100 passenger rail advocates responded to the poll, but less than 5% admitted to 'finding true love' on while on the rails. The comments submitted included:

- **Mathew Butte:** "My parents met on a train in 1944!"
- **Gerald Davidson:** "This has the makings of a new marketing strategy for Amtrak"
- **Dylan Busse:** "It is romantic traveling by train with my husband"
- **Robert Ramirez:** "No, but I have met a stranger on the train"

# WORKING TOGETHER TO FURTHER IMPROVE NEW ALTON, IL STATION

Amtrak began serving the new Alton Regional Multimodal Transportation Center (MCT) on Sept. 13, 2017. The \$14.4 million multimodal center was built using federal funding awarded to Illinois DOT, augmented by \$13.85 million awarded to the city and MCT through the USDOT Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. Now completed, the upgraded line is expected to present an even stronger transportation alternative for drivers along the congested Interstate 55 corridor.

The building, a classic prairie style design, features a bright and spacious waiting room, with ample parking, space for pick up and drop off of passengers and several bays for MCT bus connections. The new station offers wi-fi, bicycle lockers and a covered corridor leading to the waiting room.

The opening of the Alton station has been a source of importance to the community, but even with all the amenities, there was a problem. The station was only open, 5:00 am - 4:30 pm or the departure of Train



The Amtrak station in Alton, IL

(Photo Credit: Dave Handall)

304, if running late. Passengers boarding Train 306 and the southbound Texas Eagle and arriving on Trains 305 and 307 had to wait outside in inclement weather. Unlike the old station where passenger stayed in their cars until the train arrived, the parking is too far away from the platform. This lasted until February 1, 2019 when all parties agreed to staff a second agent, and to once again provide checked baggage service.

## STATE NEWS

**VIRGINIA'S PUBLIC RAIL STRATEGY** — The addition of a new Amtrak train from Norfolk to Washington starting this month is part of an overall strategy that relies on state taxpayers funding improvements on CSX & Norfolk Southern rail lines. In exchange, the freight railroads are allowing more passenger and commuter trains on tracks around the state. The resulting improvements also boost economic growth by allowing freight to move more smoothly through the commonwealth and have resulted in time savings for travelers - including saving 20-25 minutes off trips through Richmond via the Acca Yard project.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE RAIL STUDY** — The New Hampshire Senate passed a bill in February that will allow the state to obtain federal money to study passenger rail service. The bill will study the expansion of commuter rail service north from Lowell to Nashua and Manchester. Pressure from city officials in Hillsborough County, who say rail would help them develop jobs and business, helped put it onto the state's 10-year transportation improvement plan.

A similar bill was discussed last year, but the commuter rail study was cut - despite public pleas from local groups such as "NH Business for Rail Expansion" as well as our own membership in the state.

**SOUND TRANSIT LIGHT RAIL RIDERSHIP** — In 2018 Sound Transit continued to see significant growth in rail ridership, as Link light rail ridership increased 6.1 percent over 2017 and Sounder ridership increased 4.5 percent.

"Our steady ridership growth further confirms the urgency of the light rail, commuter rail and bus rapid transit expansions our region's voters approved," said Sound Transit CEO Peter Rogoff. "These gains benefit all commuters and will keep coming as more people seize the opportunity to escape congestion and as light rail reaches Northgate in 2021, the Eastside in 2023 and Lynnwood and Federal Way in 2024."



## ON THE MOVE

Local, state and federal agencies have seen several appointments in the past month. A few of them include:

- **Sarah Feinberg**, who served as U.S. Federal Railroad Administrator in the Obama Administration from 2015 to 2017, has been nominated by New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to fill a vacancy on the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board.

- **Joseph J. Giulietti** was confirmed as commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation by the Connecticut General Assembly February 20, following nomination by Governor Ned Lamont in January. Joe Giulietti served as president of MTA Metro-North Railroad from 2014 to 2017.

- **Therese McMillan** has been named Executive Director of California's Bay Area MPO, the



(Photo Credit: Railway Age)

Sarah Feinberg

Metropolitan Transportation Commission. McMillan was the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration from 2014 to 2016.



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