



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 18, No. 1 January, 1984

OFFICERS: John R. Martin, *President*; John Kirkwood, *Vice President*; George Tyson, *Secretary*; Joseph Horning, Jr., *Treasurer*; Ross Capon, *Executive Director*; Barry Williams, *Assistant Director*; Kay Stortz, *Membership Dir.*

National Association of Railroad Passengers News, (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 417 NJ Av., SE, Washington, DC 20003. 202/546-1550; news hotline (evenings & weekends) 202/546-1551. Membership dues are \$15/year (\$7.50 under 21 or over 65) of which \$4 is for a subscription to NARP News and Getting There. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: Send address changes to NARP, 417 New Jersey Av., SE, Washington, D.C. 20003.

(Vol. 17, No. 11 was mailed December 8)

RETURN REQUESTED

Gulf Coast Train Approved!

CHANGE! Charlotte, NC, meeting of NARP Region 5 members will be Sat.-Sun., Mar. 24-5! Reg. 2 meets Feb. 25, 1:30 PM (room opens noon) Albany Public Library, 161 Wash. Av.

Additional NARP board candidates: Richard S. Ambrogio, 44 N. Broadway, #56D, White Plains, NY 10603; Peter Calleo, 928 Lehigh Av., Union, NJ 07085; Samuel Clark Jr., 226 McAlway Rd., Charlotte, NC 28211; Richard P. Duffy, Equitable Life Assurance Soc., 2 Corporate Park Dr., White Plains, NY 10604; Kenneth McFarling, 7417 SE 20th Av., Portland, OR 97202. **Withdrawn:** T.H. Schramel (MO), B.E. Green (MT).

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

SEPTA added 558 Philadelphia-based commuter trains per week effective Oct. 30, in an effort to lure back more riders after the long strike, and to take advantage of the improved labor contracts which were signed at the end of that strike. Features of the current timetable:

- Hourly service Mon.-Sat. to Doylestown (34.2 miles);
- Service at least once every two hours on Sundays on all lines, except there is still no Sunday service west of Elwyn on the West Chester line;
- Full service to Fox Chase (11.1 miles): Sunday round-trips were increased from three to eight; Sat. from 12 to 19; weekday from 20 to 26; and
- Peak-hour limiteds stopping only at Paoli/Berwyn/Devon/Strafford (3 east; 4 west).

Service west of Swarthmore on the Media-West Chester line resumed Oct. 2. (It had been out since Oct. '82 due to a defective bridge.)

Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) ended all Detroit-Pontiac commuter trains (3 weekday round-trips) after Oct. 17. (Last trips were to have been Fri., Oct. 14, but Michigan ARP secured a temporary restraining order; the judge dissolved it Monday.)

Amtrak's weekday Ann Arbor-to-Detroit "Michigan Executive" will make its last run Jan. 13; the state is withdrawing its financial support. (Sep. '83 ridership averaged 90/trip vs. 79 in Sep. '81.) Ypsilanti thus loses all service.

(continued on page 4)

Gulf Coast travelers will have a new choice beginning April 29 when Amtrak, for the very first time, extends its reach into Mobile—Alabama's second-largest city—and the white-sand beach resorts of the Mississippi coast.

On Nov. 30, 1983, Amtrak's Board of Directors approved an application from the Louisiana-Mississippi-Alabama Rapid Rail Transit Commission for a daily New Orleans-Mobile train, to be funded jointly by Amtrak and the three states under Section 403(b) of the Amtrak Act. This is the first commitment of public funds for passenger rail service by any of these state governments, and brings to 11 the number of states now involved in the 403(b) program (the others are California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania). It is also the first 403(b) contract involving more than two states.

The new "Gulf Coast Limited" will serve New Orleans, Wave-

"[Yesterday] Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole told the National League of Cities convention in New Orleans that the federal government is trying to head off transportation problems during the [World's Fair] by contributing to several projects meant to make traffic flow smoothly.

"We want to encourage the use of public transportation throughout the summer of 1984, when the world will be riding the train they call the City of New Orleans to the World's Fair," Dole said.

"Federal help has consisted of sharing the costs of three studies on the fair's impact on transportation, help with plans to develop a heliport in New Orleans, and the passenger train service from Mobile, Ala., she said."

—from banner headline story,
"Amtrak OKs Mobile-to-N.O. train for fair,"
New Orleans Times-Picayune, Nov. 30, 1983

land (Bay St. Louis), Gulfport, Biloxi, Pascagoula, and Mobile—cities which have been without passenger trains since the final run of Louisville & Nashville's "Pan American/Gulf Wind" on the eve of Amtrak nearly 13 years ago. It is hoped the train will cover the 145-mile Seaboard System (ex-L&N) route in 3:20 east and 3:25 west, but Amtrak would need to get relief which it is seeking from numerous municipal train speed restrictions.

(continued on page 4)



More From Carl Englund . . .

(Here, continued from the Dec. News, is our report on a presentation given to the NARP Board of Directors in Boston on Oct. 7 by Transportation Consultant Carl R. Englund Jr. See Dec. News for his background.)

Costs: We need to be "reducing the amount of help that's necessary to make the moves so that we get better productivity." By "help" he meant "across the board—starting at the top level with Amtrak [headquarters] and coming down through labor."

He noted that Holland's Rotterdam-Amsterdam 12-car expresses operate at 90 mph with only one crew member—the motorman—and fares collected at the gate. [Even with Amtrak's new agreements, Northeast Corridor (NEC) two-to-six-car trains require three railroad workers (one in cab, two—excluding On Board Services personnel—with the passengers); seven-plus-car trains require four workers.]

Pay levels also need to be dealt with. "What you've got to do is see that these government bodies can somehow help us face the music—the same as the airlines are." Although NEC pay is now calculated on an hourly basis, "still the payroll is up there."

Underlining the need for different working agreements, he presented some comparisons between rail and air crew productivity:

| RAIL | AIR |
|---|--|
| Engineer 2,300-2,500 miles/mo. | Pilot 25-45,000 miles/mo. |
| Train capacity 75-250 psgrs. (most trains outside NEC) | Plane capacity 75-220 (jumbos up to 400) |
| Train can generate revenues of \$10,000 running 18 out of 24 hrs. | Plane can generate revenues of \$70-100,000 over the same period |

Equipment replacement costs favor rail in most cases, however. (100-seat plane costs around \$15 million; three-car Amfleet train seats about 220 and costs about \$4 million including locomotive.)

History of Market Shifts: "Business travel around 1950 accounted for roughly 65% of the principle rail carriers' intercity passenger revenues. . . . Most of this travel has since shifted to the airlines. In the early 1950's, about three-quarters of the intercity business travellers began the first leg of their trips in the later afternoon or evening, and a quarter started in the morning. Most were traveling by train. So they'd catch either a late afternoon hotshot like one of the 'Twilights' between Chicago and Detroit, or the 'Merchants' (Boston-NY), or the 'Ohio State,' or one of the 'Mercuries' (Detroit-Cleveland)—or they'd take the overnight sleeper.

"The bedroom of most of our business travel was still in the city [around 1950]—roughly 75%; 25% out in the suburbs. . . . By the later 50's, three-quarters of our market, instead of making the first leg of a trip in the evening, made it in the morning. By this time, you could get on a plane and go to a city such as Chicago (from New York), do your day's business, and come back home again that night. So we had an about-face on the timing of the first leg of the trip.

"Another thing . . . that throws quite a block into our plans for building center-city major passenger station origin of riders: by the late 50's, 75% of our business market—our potential market—had bedrooms in far-out suburbia, and only 25% in the city.

"So we have two or three shifts: the bedrooms of our business travelers which constitutes 65-70% of our ridership; and their origin starting times; and their origin points. . . ."

Within the New York metropolitan area, Englund said Long Island now originates over 40% of all business travel; Westchester/Fairfield Counties over 20%; Manhattan under 15%; northeastern New Jersey about 13%; and the fringe counties like Monmouth (NJ) and Rockland (NY) around 8%.

"What has that done to us? We've got six airports in the New York City area, and we've got two major ones and a minor on Long Island that are very easily reached by our 40% source of riders—there's very little point for them to struggle to New York City when the majority are within a 30-minute drive of La Guardia or JFK or the local air park that's farther out. We're automatically knocked out of attempting to corner a large part of this volume market on our trains, even on the NEC today—and this is one

AUTO TRAIN PRODUCTIVITY: GOOD!

Everyone associated with Amtrak's new Auto Train service is paid by the hour and they are all on Amtrak's own payroll—except for those employed by the contractor responsible for driving autos on and off the train.

While the train runs tri-weekly, shopcraft employees at Lorton and Sanford are part-time, paid at a monthly rate based on 87 hours/month.

Eight train and engine (T&E) crew members are required for the entire run instead of about 30 under traditional practices. There are an engineer, assistant engineer, conductor, and flagman. Even though there is a change of railroads at Richmond, VA, the only crew-change is Florence, SC, 378 miles from Lorton and 470 miles from Sanford.

The United Transportation Union contract and the conditions of employment for Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers workers (BLE has not yet signed a contract) are similar to those which apply in the Northeast Corridor.

Clearly, Amtrak has gone all-out to help Auto Train meet the stringent economic criteria set out by Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Clayton Jr., and which would be mandated by law if part of HR 3648 is ever enacted.

Amtrak is studying the feasibility of establishing crew-bases in various locations to permit direct employment of T&E crews on other Amtrak trains. Among the operations under study are those based in Los Angeles and Chicago, New York-Niagara Falls, and the remaining services on the Washington-Florida run.

of our big roadblocks in building volume out of New York. The fact that it's so easy to get to the airport."

Markets Rail Can Draw On Now: "First, a strictly time-oriented intercity business travel market" which "should not exceed two to three hours. The closer the elapsed travel time can be squeezed to two hours, the better the potential. This is a very powerful thrust for trying to develop the very high-speed railroads such as they have in mind in Ohio, for example, and Michigan, and in California.

"The second basic market is the time/distance-oriented personal travel market, sometimes called 'Ma and Pa and the Juniors.'" Significant volumes can be attracted for trips up to "a distance roughly equivalent to a day's travel, 400-550 miles, but preferably accomplished during the daytime.

"The third are the special affinity markets which will travel year round in fair volumes on runs of 12-15 hours." Examples include "ridership on the Illinois Central between Chicago and points as far south as Mississippi; between Northeastern cities and the Carolinas and Georgia; and, in Canada, between Montreal or Toronto and the Maritime provinces.

"A fourth special market is the tourist and seasonal market, such as the movements between the North and Florida, plus the bulk of remaining transcontinental movements.

"A fifth is the skeletal remainders of former crowded overnight sleeping-car runs catering primarily to business travel.

"And then the variable markets made up of people who are afraid to fly, who haven't really been considered because the fear of flight is a fast-diminishing phenomenon."

Corridors: Englund believes efficient corridor services can be developed with trains running at 80 mph top speed, but sees no near-term hope for bullet trains because only the NEC has the requisite population density.

On both the NEC and various U.K. corridors (London to Leeds, Manchester, and Liverpool), Englund said population density is about 100,000 per linear mile. (He noted a bit of "distortion" in the case of the NEC because of the concentration around New York/Newark while "it's relatively light east of New Haven.") "The original Tokaido line—Tokyo-Osaka—was 370 miles long and had 95,000 population per linear mile, but look at the business they're doing: 85 round-trips/day. And what are we doing on NY-Boston? Seven round-trips plus the two Metroliners. On NY-Washington, 15 conventional and 10 Metroliner round-trips.

"On [Amtrak's route] between Chicago, Springfield [IL], and St. Louis, our population per linear mile is 54,000—over half what

OHIO'S 80 MPH TRAINS: YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

(from Discussion at the NARP Board Meeting)

Englund: "We did 'Operation Rejuvenation' in the mid-50's in Ohio. [NYC Pres. Alfred] Perlman gave me a million extra trainmiles a year, and he said go out there and do something with this mess because the Ohio politicians were raising a lot of hell with it. So we put on five round-trips a day between Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati, and we gutted our prices and we did a good job.

"Business was phenomenal! We started out with three or four coaches on our train—64-seaters—and we found we had to raise it up to 10, 12, 14 coaches on a train, two diners, plus the head-end equipment, and we really did a knock-down, drag-out business.

"You know what killed us? Cincinnati Union Terminal. We unbalanced the number of people and cars coming into that terminal. We wound up contributing \$4.50 from every ticket to CUT. We need to figure out how to get around those terminal expenses, because they're monstrous."

NARP Pres. Martin: "Carl, is it your view that if Ohio had, today, 80 mph [top speed] trains between Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, and no major terminal costs at either end, that it would be successful?"

Englund: "If we could reconcile the labor situation, I think it would do pretty doggone well. There is a market—a good one—and we had it worked out, and we did extremely well. But we did well with the kind of a volume that would support what you're talking about. It would never in the world support a super-railroad."

it is on the Tokaido! And we can hardly get a scarecrow load in the trains. [Ed.: three round-trips, one departing St. Louis 4:40 AM, and none averaging over 53.7 mph.]

"In Canada, where they're still extremely successful with the Rapidos and the others between Montreal-Kingston-Toronto—only 18,000 population per linear route mile. [Fastest Rapido now averages 75.8 mph including 3 intermediate stops.] And Windsor-Toronto and Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec—14,000. So it isn't population alone, it's the kind of railroad you run."

To get super-railroad passenger volumes, it's also the kind of mass transit systems the relevant cities have. "The transit system in Paris is marvelous. It's extremely easy to get to Gare de Lyon from almost anywhere, especially with this new cross-city [subway] connection now. And [the subway trains] don't sit and buck and halt and pound the way they do in Boston.

"And then the TGV fares are quite a bit less than the airline fares. Air fares within Europe are extremely high. Some are upwards of 40¢/mile."

A key factor in projecting ridership is the assumption made regarding how far people will go to reach the train. Englund's Delaware Valley research "as far out as Coatesville [38 miles from Phila.], Trenton [32 miles], and West Trenton [33 miles]" found

INCREMENTAL APPROACH

"I am not against super railroads, but think that for the moment there are other ways to better use less money. For the time being, we should put just a fraction of the dollars super railroads would cost back into present operations in order to raise speeds somewhat, cut fares substantially, and restore the mass people market that has been largely driven away by transportation costs. The run-of-the-mill taxpayers are being taken by Amtrak in that they help pay for rail services they can't use.

"The masses who once rode the trains now fall into a deprived category since they no longer can afford the rail mode of travel. The Northeast Corridor should be handling between double and triple its present ridership and other principle corridors should also be doing far better, i.e. serving a far greater cross-section of the taxpaying public, if fare and operational structures were to be more favorably oriented."

—Carl R. Englund Jr.

"that our biggest volume was within three miles of the track on either side, and after that it dropped off astoundingly." Thus he is skeptical of LA-San Diego bullet train projections which show people coming in from 10 miles away to ride the bullets at stiff fares for 20-mile segments.

He also found that "people would drive several miles in the outlying territory to get to the railway [Pennsy or Reading] which would take them as little as half a block closer to their destination in [Phila.]." The implications are obvious for sprawling southern California with virtually no local rail transit. Englund asked, "are you going to pay . . . to ride [the bullets] and then be afoot in a sprawling area? . . . Are you going to generate 100,000 riders a day?"

AHSRC RESPONDS

NARP sought a response from American High Speed Rail Corporation, the company spun off from Amtrak and now working on development of Los Angeles-San Diego bullet train service. AHSRC's Nicholas A. Brand emphasized the positive on local transit: "About 40% of the people coming into downtown LA today at rush hour are on buses. . . . There's enough public transit out here today that 35% of the people riding Amtrak use it to get to or from the stations at Los Angeles and San Diego."

He noted the forthcoming Wilshire Boulevard (Downtown LA)—North Hollywood subway, the existing Tijuana and forthcoming El Cajon trolley lines out of San Diego, and reported that, "in Orange County, they're going to vote in June on a ¼¢ sales tax to fund light rail that would serve both our Anaheim and Santa Ana stations, and link them to all kinds of activity centers in the region.

"For the 20-mile segments, we defined our market as being within 5 miles of the station. . . . The fare from San Diego to LA downtown . . . will probably end up at between \$20 and \$25."

Brand also noted that population per linear route mile will be

BRITISH RAIL (BR): CHEAP FARES = HIGHER PROFITABILITY

"During the 1970s BR developed its pricing policy to maximise net revenue from price-sensitive markets. In particular the price structure was not attractive to the leisure market—so a policy was developed of cheap fares aimed specifically at this market, as far as possible using off-peak capacity. This led to the development of day, weekend and monthly return fares.

"In addition, a policy was adopted of selling Railcards giving low price travel to identifiable leisure travellers—such as Senior Citizens, Young Persons, family groups and Her Majesty's Forces. . . .

"[Intercity bus] deregulation . . . led to the [1981] introduction of (initially) very low Saver [rail] fares on the Liverpool-London route which have since been extended to most routes. These are . . . a simple, low price return fare available at times when spare capacity is available. . . .

"Volume rose dramatically, but more importantly revenue grew by between 15% and 30% as compared with various control flows on which Savers were not introduced. Around 60% of Saver passengers would not have made the journey by rail in the absence of Savers. . . .

"The increased volume does have cost implications, and these were investigated for the Liverpool route. . . . In the short run, the marginal revenue benefits of savers were significantly larger than the marginal costs. Even when capital costs of rolling stock were taken into account the Saver scheme broke even.

"Since then, Saver prices have been increased by 50%, and though some volume has been lost, revenue has increased. So marginal revenue is probably now significantly above marginal cost, and a recent exercise suggests that any conceivable extra infrastructure costs are also being covered. It is probable that Saver fares could have been higher when first introduced and thus made a contribution to fixed costs. Very low price Savers did, however, have a large market impact, and established the brand name very successfully."

—Cyril Bleasdale, BR's InterCity Sector Director, July paper quoted in Oct. *Modern Railways* (U.K.)

97,000 "by the time this service is projected to run," when population in the region will have grown from about 11 million to 12.6 million. He quoted the Rand McNally Commercial Atlas as showing population density in Los Angeles as the highest in the nation—"if you look at the urbanized boundaries and don't rely on the county-wide figures that include all the mountain and desert around the basin." The populations per square mile: Los Angeles 4,000; New York 3,000; Chicago 2,000; Phila. 1,500.

He emphasized the high quality of service AHSRC will provide (local trains averaging 87+ mph; expresses "about 130"), with Shinkansen-style 99% on-time performance ("real"—no extra pad as at Amtrak). Brand concluded: "When you combine the timesavings with (the) cost factors and with the demonstrated preference that people have for relaxing while they travel, we will have no trouble attracting enough patronage to make the bullet train a profitable operation." ■

**NEW RAIL TRAVEL NEWSLETTER—
SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR NARP MEMBERS**

Travel to the far reaches of the world through the pages of *The International Railway Traveler*. This new mini-magazine/newsletter features late reports about passenger trains worldwide plus a taste of "the delight of riding them." Recent issues have reported on the 100th anniversary of the "Orient Express," West Germany's revamped "Rheingold," and India's "Palace on Wheels."

The IRT, edited by Owen Hardy, formerly a reporter with the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, is published 6 times/year and is available to NARP members at the special discount rate of only \$10/year—1/3 off the regular \$15 rate. Send check or money order to IRT, Dept. K, PO Box 35067, Louisville, KY 40232. Single copies are \$2.50 each. This special discount is good through Feb. 28 only, so act now!

Gulf Coast Train (continued from page 1)

The train will depart Mobile at 7 AM, depart New Orleans at 6 PM, and will consist initially of two coaches and a cafe, although Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor Jr. has pledged additional cars if demand warrants.

Helping create demand for the new train will be the Louisiana World Exposition in downtown New Orleans, which will run from May 12 to Nov. 11. Shuttle buses are planned between the fairgrounds and the train station. Local tourism officials are excited about the train, as it will permit fairgoers unable to find lodgings in New Orleans to book rooms on the coast and have easy access to the fair in the morning and back to hotels in the evening.

At present, the train is funded to run for five months, from Apr. 29 through Sep. 30, but already there is strong local support for making the service permanent.

By the time negotiations between the tri-state commission and Amtrak reached the serious stage this year, the legislatures of the three states had already adjourned, making it impossible to obtain legislative appropriations for the service in time for the opening of the World's Fair. As a result, the parties agreed to scale back the project with the hope that the governors could then cover its costs with funds from their limited discretionary accounts. Capital improvements, first projected to cost \$2.5 million, were slashed to \$115,000 (nearly \$500,000 of this reduction resulted from Seaboard President Richard Sanborn's offer to permit use of the former L&N passenger station in Mobile, thus



—Photo by Ed Wojtas

Baltimore's Pennsylvania Station was rededicated Sep. 14 (its 72nd birthday) as a \$5.3 million renovation funded by the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project neared completion. The classic Beaux Arts station, designed by Kenneth Murchison and opened in 1911, is the 5th-largest revenue-producer and 7th-largest passenger-producer in the Amtrak system. It has been described by Amtrak President Claytor as "the most beautiful station in the East, perhaps in the nation." The project included installation of new air-conditioning, train platforms, escalators, signs, and lighting, as well as restoration of stained-glass skylights, terrazzo flooring, brass fixtures, Rookwood ceramic tiles, and oak benches.

avoiding the cost of a new facility). Also to reduce costs, the operation was limited to five months. These actions reduced the states' costs to about \$167,000 each. By November, all three governors—George Wallace (D-AL), David Treen (R-LA), and William Winter (D-MS)—had committed the requisite funds.

The tri-state commission is seeking regular state appropriations for continuation of service beyond Sep. '84. **Residents of the three states, please urge your state legislators to support full FY '85 funding of the train!**

We hope that the "Gulf Coast Ltd." will one day be extended to Jacksonville or Orlando, thereby filling a critical gap in the Amtrak system and capturing lucrative "bridge traffic" between Florida and the West/Midwest—travelers whose only current rail approach to Florida is a circuitous itinerary including Washington, DC. **Florida residents, please urge your state legislators and your governor to support state funding for this extension.**

But for now, our congratulations to the tri-state commissioners and various NARP members for their astonishing work, and our thanks to the governors, state and federal legislators, and Amtrak and U.S. DOT officials, whose cooperation and support have made this service restoration a reality. Commission Vice-Chairman James W. (Bill) McFarland, a NARP member from Tuscaloosa, AL, said special credit is due to Robin Deck and Sara Smith, who serve on the Washington staffs of Rep. Jack Edwards (R-AL) and Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS), respectively. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

Dec. 30, 1983 saw the last runs of New Jersey Transit's 3 weekday Phillipsburg-High Bridge round trips. Jan. 3, 1984 marked the start of an experimental added High Bridge-Newark round trip. Instead of three inward and four outward trips at High Bridge—56 miles from New York and 20 miles east of Phillipsburg—there now are four in and five out.

Discount 5-day round trip tickets being sold thru Mar. 31 between: Montreal and Vermont points, one-way plus \$5; Las Vegas and "Desert Wind" points west, one-way plus \$1.