

News from the
**National Association of
Railroad Passengers**

Vol. 25 No. 8  August, 1991

RETURN REQUESTED

John R. Martin, Pres.; **Eugene Skoropowski, Vice Pres.;** **Robert Glover, Sec.;** **Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.;** **Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.;** **Scott Leonard, Asst., Dir.;** **Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.;** **Harriet Parcels, Transp. Assoc.**

News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 900 Second Street, NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002, (202) 408-8362. Membership dues are \$20/year (\$10.00 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 900 Second Street, NE, Suite 308, Washington, DC 20002.

(This has news through August 9. No. 7 was mailed first class August 8.)

Second Class Postage Paid
At Washington, D.C.

Major Rail Links Proceed . . .

. . . Outside the U.S.

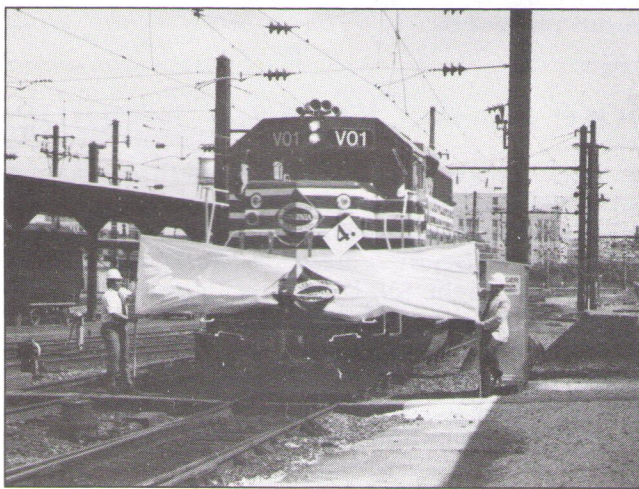
While getting U.S. intercity rail projects is like pulling teeth, rail projects in other parts of the world go forward much more smoothly. In one region, Scandinavia, several worthwhile projects are being discussed and pursued—projects which have gotten far less attention than they deserve in the U.S.:

- **Great Belt link:** An 11-mile rail bridge-tunnel is now being built by the Danish government across a major body of water, the Great (or Store) Belt, to be ready in 1994. A parallel, all-bridge tollroad link will be complete in 1997. To complement this link, another 3-mile line is being built by the Danish State Railways (DSB) near Fredericia to avoid a back-up move, and gaps in electrification and double track between the bridge-tunnel and Hamburg, Germany are being filled in. This will replace an existing ferry service.

- **Oresund Link:** DSB and the Swedish State Railways (SJ) have made a joint proposal to build a new 28.5-mile rail line (including a 10.5-mile road and rail bridge-tunnel) across another major body of water between Malmo, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark, by 1998. The Danish and Swedish governments signed a treaty approving this project Mar. 23. Freight and passenger trains would use the rail link, with regional and X2000 passenger train service (see below) offered from Sweden through to Copenhagen's airport at Kastrup and Copenhagen Central Station. This would also replace an existing ferry service.

- **Fehmarn Belt link:** A 12-mile rail bridge or tunnel across the straits between Rodby, Denmark and Puttgarden, Germany is also being discussed. This is a much shorter route between Copenhagen and Hamburg and currently has a ferry service.

- **Higher-speed trains:** SJ placed its first X2000 train set into service between Stockholm and Gothenburg Sep. 4, 1990. The X2000 (built by ABB Traction, maker of the AEM-7 electric locomotives used in the U.S.) is an electric-powered tilt train capable of 155 mph on upgraded, existing tracks. SJ reports that half the new rail riders using the X2000 are former air travellers. When more sets are delivered and full Stockholm-



—NARP Photo by Scott Leonard

The first locomotive delivered to the Virginia Railway Express breaks a banner at Washington Union Station June 26 (NARP Headquarters are at right). It was rebuilt by Morrison-Knudsen at Mountain Top, PA. Commuter service to Washington from Fredericksburg and Manassas, VA is now expected to begin Jan. 1992.

Appropriations Process Underway

H.R. 2942, the FY '92 transportation appropriations bill, was approved by the House on July 24 by a vote of 379-47. For the first time in quite a while, Amtrak was not the target of an unfriendly floor amendment. However, several floor statements related to Amtrak:

- Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA) in support of the New Haven-Boston electrification funding, which the Subcommittee eliminated (see below).

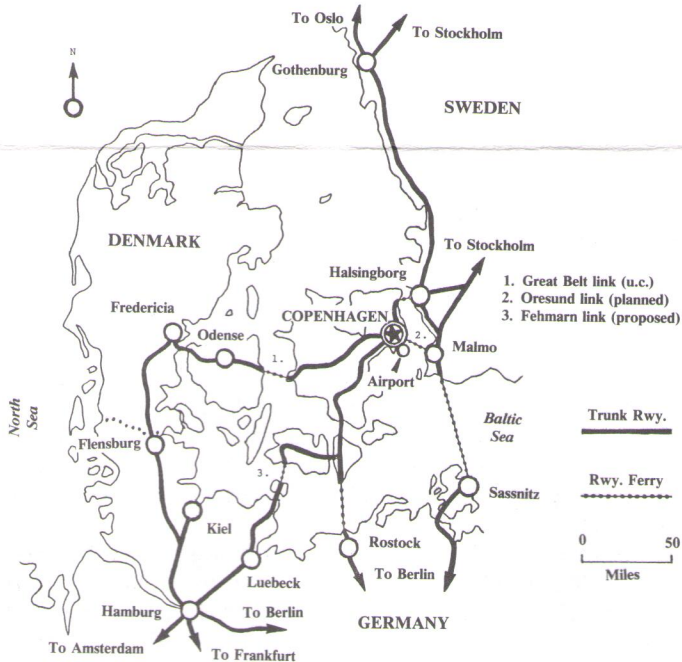
- Rep. Sam Gejdenson (D-CT) in support of the electrification and a "Montrealer" stop at Willimantic, CT.

- Rep. Ron Marlenee (R-MT) in support of southern Montana being included in the Amtrak study on service to places not now served (see July '90 News), due July '92. Congress said

continued on page 3

Gothenburg service begins in 1992, the old travel time of 4 hrs. will be cut to 3. Amtrak hopes to bring an X2000 train set to the Northeast Corridor for tests in 1992.

● **Stockholm airport link:** The Swedish National Rail Administration (Banverket), which in 1989 took over SJ's rights-of-way, plans to build a new, grade-separated passenger line from Stockholm Central Station to Arlanda Airport, north of the city. The new rail terminal will be built directly below the air terminals. Arlanda currently has no rail service. The rail service will operate at 10-min. intervals at peak hours, run up to 125 mph and make the trip in 23 min. (half the present road trip). Construction will take place 1991-97. A connection will be built from the airport to the Uppsala main line, allowing long-distance through service and providing an attractive alternative to short-distance feeder flights into Arlanda.



Combining these projects reveals an ambitious program to provide a more coordinated, efficient rail system that will draw Scandinavia closer to the European Community. For the first time ever, through rail service from Stockholm and Copenhagen (including both international airports) to the Continent will be possible. Of course, Scandinavia is not the only place where rail projects are going forth. The English Channel tunnel is still on schedule to open June 15, 1993, and high speed and electrification projects are proceeding in many countries around the world.

Lessons for Us in the U.S.

Why *not* here? Direct intercity Amtrak service to major airports is supported by NARP, particularly to Chicago O'Hare (see July News). The cost to put into place frequent (preferably electric) rail service to the airport from the surrounding region would be less than the cost of building an additional airport—and much better for the environment and energy security. Passengers could transfer from regional trains to longer-distance flights—many regional flights could be eliminated, freeing up valuable terminal space for more-profitable, longer-distance flights. Of course, through trains should also continue on into the city center.

Increasing train speeds to attract passengers need not involve the maglev (which is far from ready for revenue service) or expensive, new rights-of-way, if the Swedes can run trains at 155 mph on existing rights-of-way.

How High Speed?

“Railways with the population, topography, and the financial resources to justify building brand new lines for high-speed operations remain the exception rather than the rule. Most authorities seeking to enter the (125+ mph) arena are looking to make parallel improvements in track and trains to achieve their commercial objectives in a cost-effective manner. (Though TGV-like speeds are not reached) the railways can nevertheless rise to the challenge of the automobile and the airlines on their own territory.”

—April 1990 International Railway Journal

Finally, if the Swedes and Danes can coordinate combined road-rail bridges and tunnels linking major urban centers under technically difficult conditions, why is it so hard for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Federal Highway Administration to figure out a way to put a North-South Stations rail link in the \$5 billion Boston Central Artery highway project? In this regard, Massachusetts NARP members should ask Gov. William F. Weld and Lt. Gov. Paul Cellucci (both R) to support the rail link, which would connect northern New England and the northern Boston suburbs with their southern counterparts, and to support the New Haven-Boston electrification.

After all, the U.S. is supposed to be the country with the “can-do” philosophy. ■

More Book Offers for Members

San Diego Co. Stations

NARP member Jim Price of San Diego is offering a discount to other members of his 1988 book, *The Railroad Stations of San Diego County: Then and Now*. Background on how railroads came to the San Diego and Tijuana areas and the history of each station is told in 55 pages (paperback), with 40 b/w photos and 2 maps. Surviving stations are shown “then and now.” Some are still used by Amtrak’s “San Diegans”—some others unused but still visible from the train.

A book for those who like railroad and local history, *Stations of San Diego* sells for \$6.95 retail, but NARP members may get it for \$5 (plus \$1 shipping) by sending a check to Price & Sieber; P.O. Box 6772; San Diego, CA 92166 (indicate you are a NARP member).

How to Ride Amtrak

Novice Amtrak riders usually don't know what to expect from their first trip. Sometimes, their travel experience wildly exceeds or falls far short of their original expectations. Mauris Emeka, an Amtrak on-board service employee in the West, has written a guide spelling out the basics of Amtrak travel (from his own point of view, not as a representative of Amtrak), called “Getting the Most From Rail Travel.” Seasoned travelers will have learned most of this by trial-and-error, but those just starting out may appreciate the information on how to make a reservation, how Amtrak equipment is laid out, what services are available, etc. Some of this information appears in the fine print of Amtrak timetables, but “Getting the Most From Rail Travel” is much more user-friendly. It is 25-pages, bound in a clear, plastic cover and published by the author.

The book is sold for \$8, but NARP members (who indicate such) can get it for \$7 plus \$2 shipping by sending a check to Rail Passenger Services Consulting; 4564 Oakhurst Lane, SW; Port Orchard, WA 98366. ■

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

(millions of \$)

PROGRAM	1991	DOT REQUEST	AMTRAK REQUEST*	H.R. 2942
Amtrak:				
Operating	343.1	180.0	321.0	328.9
Capital	132.0	150.0	242.0	175.0
Special FRA Account**	<u>150.0</u>	<u>150.0</u>	<u>149.0</u>	<u>145.0</u>
Amtrak Total	625.1	480.0	712.0	648.9
NECIP:				
On-going projects	40.0	0.0	51.2	36.0
Dual-mode locomotives	14.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Boston electrification	<u>125.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>171.8</u>	<u>0.0</u>
NECIP Total	179.0	0.0	223.0	36.0
UMTA	3,269.7	3,329.5	—	3,847.0

*Supported by NARP in testimony to House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Apr. 30 (See July News).

**Certain Railroad Unemployment and Retirement payments, mandated by law, which exceed Amtrak's costs to those systems (See July 90 News).

Appropriations (from page 1)

the study should be confined to routes which would cover their own operating costs. However, southern Montana may indeed end up on the final study list, because Amtrak will be considering state 403b payments as a factor in operating cost recovery.

- Rep. Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) in support of northern New Jersey rail transit improvements.

- Reps. Bill McCollum (R-FL) and Jim Bacchus (D-FL) in support of \$1 mill. for a proposed downtown Orlando light rail service.

Key items in the bill include:

- Amtrak funding \$648.9 mill. (see box), a 3.8% increase over FY '91, and a 32.6% increase in capital.

- NECIP: \$36 mill., all for on-going projects (down 10% from FY 91 on-going projects account). No money for New Haven-Boston electrification. The Committee opposed it because only \$2.9 mill. in unappropriated funding authorization remains in NECIP, and that the \$179 mill. appropriated in FY 91 had not been obligated before hearings began this spring. However, Rep. Frank pointed out that Amtrak had obligated \$140 mill. since then. Also, the Committee was concerned that Amtrak's plan did not reflect the cost of eliminating grade crossings. [The Senate subcommittee, chaired by Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), may restore this funding].

- Amtrak operations: Amtrak considers its operating budget request very tight. However, \$5 mill. was earmarked within the operating budget to increase locomotive overhauls. Another \$5 mill. was earmarked to "begin developing and implementing a more aggressive, focused marketing program." Operating losses for the second Raleigh-Charlotte 403b train got a \$700,000 earmark. Amtrak had told North Carolina DOT it would not cover any of the second train's operating losses; Subcomm. member David E. Price, D-NC,

got the money in. A \$500,000 earmark goes to a Chicago-St. Louis high speed rail study, to be conducted by Illinois DOT. At the same time, \$4 mill. in insurance and interest expenses was cut, leaving Amtrak very little room to maneuver within its operating budget.

- The Committee noted Amtrak passenger complaints were up 40% in one year (see July News).

- Maglev research funding would be \$4 mill. (\$3 mill. for safety research and \$1 mill. for high speed rail), a great cut from \$10.3 mill. in FY 91 and the \$15.6 mill. requested by DOT. The Committee noted that a recent FRA survey found little interest among private investors in maglev, and that "since federal officials have clearly stated that large-scale federal financing of maglev development and construction is not envisioned, it would appear that the prospects for implementation of advanced technology maglev systems in the United States are very dim."

- FRA railroad safety programs would rise 8% to \$37.1 mill., but 9.5% less than requested by the DOT.

- Mass transit: \$3.847 bill., up 17.7% from FY 91 and 15.6% above DOT request.

- Aviation: \$8.93 bill., up 9.7% from FY 91 and 3.6% below DOT request.

- Fed. Hwy. Admin.: \$17.77 bill., up 9.3% from FY 91 and 8.2% above DOT request.

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation is expected to mark up its bill after Congress returns from recess Sep. 11. ■

ADA UPDATE

Pres. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (P.L. 101-336) on July 26, 1990. The law includes the House bill's Amtrak and transit provisions (NARP News, May '90) except for some minor changes relating to paratransit service.

Forest Service Provides Guides

Amtrak's on-board interpretive guide program has been expanded for the summer through an experimental U.S. Forest Service project. After evaluation, the Forest Service may renew the project in 1992. Added services are on the following trains:

- "Coast Starlight," Klamath Falls-Eugene, OR, daily except Wed., through Sep. 15.

- "Pioneer," eastbound only, Portland-Hood River, OR, Fri.-Sun., through Sep. 1.

- "Empire Builder," westbound only, Bingen-White Salmon, WA-Portland, Fri.-Sun., through Sep. 1. Also through Glacier Park, MT, sporadically.

- "California Zephyr," Denver-Glenwood Springs, CO, sporadically.

Interpretive guide services are offered on other Amtrak trains as well:

- "Southwest Chief," Albuquerque-Gallup, NM, daily, year-round (Intertribal Indians Assn.).

- "Pennsylvanian," Johnstown-Altoona, PA, summer weekends (National Park Service).

- "Cardinal," through West Virginia's New River Gorge, weekends year-round (National Railroad Historical Society).

- "California Zephyr," Sacramento-Reno, daily, year-round (California State Railroad Museum).

Amtrak is negotiating with groups to provide guide service on the "Pioneer" in Wyoming. ■

Atlanta Gets Intermodal Terminal Study

Removing a major obstacle to increased train service to Atlanta is the topic of a study announced May 8. The Urban Mass Transportation Admin. presented a \$65,000 grant to the Atlanta Regional Commission to look into building an intermodal terminal downtown. The Atlanta Chamber of Commerce contributed another \$25,000. The study will examine costs and propose an implementation plan.

The new terminal would be located downtown at the site of the old Union Station, adjacent to the Five Points rapid rail station—MARTA's crossroads. Besides access to MARTA, the new terminal would serve customers of Amtrak, intercity bus lines, local bus transit, taxis and airport limousine services. Airport ticket counters and baggage check-in would be available. The Amtrak section of the terminal would be designed to accommodate both the present, daily "Crescent/Gulf Breeze" and future Chicago-Florida service (NARP News, Apr. & Dec. '90) without the necessity of back-up moves. Possible future commuter service would also be taken into account.

Amtrak's present Atlanta facility, Brookwood (aka Peachtree) Station, began as a suburban stop to complement Southern Railway's downtown Terminal Station, but the latter was closed in 1967.

Train travel has grown significantly since then, however, and Brookwood is ill-suited to serve the 130,000 passengers now using it. Because the waiting room is so small, passengers are often lined up, unsheltered, along Deering Rd. to wait for the train. Parking is so limited that the city vetoed Amtrak's plans for an Atlanta-Savannah Thruway bus connection (Sep.

'90 Travelers' Advisory) because it would have had to park on the street.

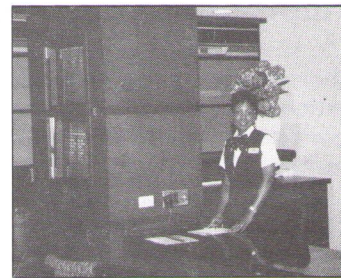
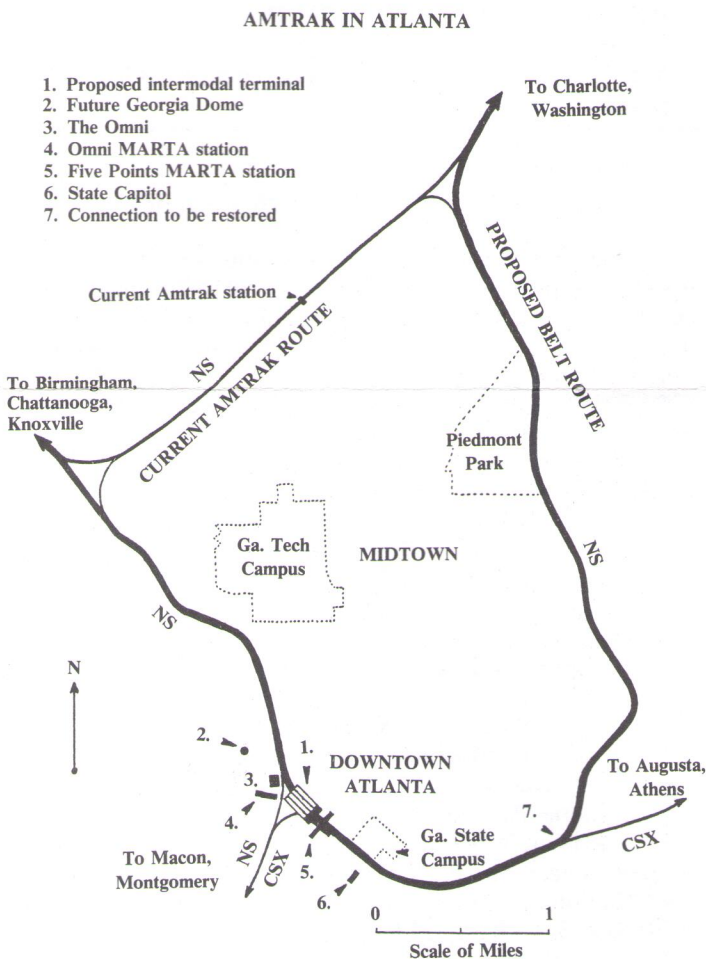
Brookwood has good road and local bus access, but the station has no rail transit connection and is inconveniently located halfway between downtown and Buckhead, Atlanta's "second downtown."

To serve downtown without a back-up, the "Crescent" would have to use an old Southern beltline passing along Piedmont Park and east of downtown. The line must be upgraded and a connection restored to CSX's ex-Georgia Railroad line at Decatur St. Then, about 30 min. would have to be added to the "Crescent's" running time.

Amtrak and Intermodalism Elsewhere

The Atlanta study represents the happy convergence of two major efforts: the campaign for a Chicago-Atlanta-Florida Amtrak route spearheaded by the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce (whose transportation committee chair is NARP Dir. Alan Yorker) and Federal Railroad Administrator Gil Carmichael's interest in intermodalism.

After the City of Memphis killed the Mud Island garage Amtrak station plan (see Dec. '89 News)—and threatened to remove all downtown Illinois Central tracks—the FRA awarded the Memphis Area Transit Authority a \$50,000 grant to study renovating Amtrak's present Memphis stop, Central Station, and making it into an intermodal facility. Carmichael and the FRA have also expressed interest in intermodal facilities for Cleveland (Terminal Tower/Tower City), Oakland (Jack London Square, replacing quake-damaged SP station), St. Louis (Jefferson Ave.—planning well-under way), Chicago (at O'Hare Airport) and others. ■



—NARP photos by Scott Leonard

Fireside seating area in Amtrak's newest first-class lounge (see Travelers' Advisory below); lounge attendant Mary Barnes, who has worked at Chicago Union Station since 1970, beside lounge's train information monitors.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Amtrak now hopes to extend the "Sunset Limited" east to Jacksonville and Miami tri-weekly in 1993 (see May News on FRA study). Amtrak has told the on-route states it would cover the \$1 mill. a year operating loss and supply one train set. Florida has offered \$6.5 mill. in other capital costs; Louisiana is considering \$2 mill. in track improvements at CSX's Gentilly Yard in New Orleans. Amtrak says this does not reverse previous policy not to cover new services' operating losses, because "Sunset" extension losses would be "so low" and might disappear within a couple years.

Amtrak's Metropolitan Lounge at Chicago Union Station opened June 30. Available to first-class sleepers only (not slumbercoach or Custom Class), it offers a self-serve beverage bar, separate restrooms, pay phones, large screen TV, fireplace and personal computer. The first of this series of new first-class lounges opened at New York Penn Station in Sept. '90, Washington and Philadelphia will be open by this fall and Los Angeles in '93.