



News from the

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—Sandra Baeder

From left: NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon, Youth Rail Passenger Citizen Award recipient Trey Davis, Spartanburg Mayor James Talley.

## NARP Honors Trey Davis For Saving Spartanburg Station

*This is not about what one person did. It is about what the city, the railroad and individuals did working together.*

—Trey Davis, *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*,  
September 16, 1997

Paul Dupree “Trey” Davis III, 18, of Spartanburg, SC, received the first “Youth Rail Passenger Citizenship Award” of the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Executive Director Ross B. Capon presented the award at a city-sponsored ceremony at the station on July 24.

Amtrak’s Ray Lang gave Davis two round-trip tickets from Spartanburg to New York or New Orleans, and *Crescent* shirts, mug and cap. Frank Machiaverna, Norfolk Southern’s Resident Vice-President for South Carolina, presented a letter of congratulations from NS Chairman David Goode and a handsome, mounted-for-desk-top model of a NS locomotive.

City Manager Roy Lane was master of ceremonies. Other speakers: Mayor James Talley, NARP Director Alan Yorker of Decatur, GA; Martin Wheeler, president of Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains; and staff of Sen. Ernest F. Hollings Jr. (D) and Rep. Bob Inglis (R). Also present: Trey’s proud mother, father, sister, grandmother, grandfather, aunt,

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## Amtrak Funding Advances

The Senate and House passed transportation funding bills without changing Amtrak funding levels set in committee: \$555 million in the Senate and \$609 million in the House.

The Senate approved its bill, S 2307, on a 90-1 vote on July 24. Negotiations among interested Senators eliminated the need for votes on Amtrak-related amendments. Commerce Chairman John McCain (R-AZ) insisted on a restriction against using appropriated funds for those labor costs resulting from wage increases in the new labor contracts. (Amtrak had testified in March that it could live with such a restriction.) Also, the subsidy disclosure requirement inserted at full-committee mark-up by Transportation Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL; *July News*) was extended to airline tickets and highway signs and thus was seen as likely to be dropped in the House-Senate conference.

The House bill, HR 4328, passed on July 30. Transportation Appropriations Chairman Frank R. Wolf (R-VA), the bill’s floor manager, accepted an amendment by Robert E. Andrews (D-NJ) adding language already in the Senate bill denying the Amtrak Reform Council (ARC) the ability to spend appropriated funds on consultant services. The \$500,000 appropriated for the ARC—including \$50,000 in previous funding—is to be used solely for travel expenses.

Wolf indicated in an interview shortly before the House took up the bill that many Representatives are concerned about the Reform Council’s broad jurisdiction. The full House Appropriations Committee had approved the bill July 22.

Two other items conferees should kill: a Senate provision requiring the Amtrak Reform Council to “identify routes that are candidates for closure or realignment” (*July News*); a House provision requiring review of Amtrak capital plans by DOT and the Office of Management and Budget.

Both House and Senate bills now are numbered HR 4328.

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**“I think the staff did an excellent job at [finding off-sets for the TEA-21-mandated spending increases] and then, in order to find the money for Amtrak, you did what some might call some very innovative financing, but as Budget Chairman I could find nothing wrong with it. I don’t even want to comment on what shortcomings it might present in future years. I just want to say it meets the numbers that are in the 302(b)’s [subcommittee’s funding allocation] right to perfection and I commend both of you [Senators Shelby and Lautenberg] for it.”**

—Senate Budget Chairman Pete V. Domenici (R-NM),  
at July 8 subcommittee mark-up

# Amtrak Funding

(from page 1)

Given the relative lack of controversy, action could be quick after Congress resumes work in September. (The Senate is due back August 31, the House September 8.) Staff work is

under way. The House-Senate conference committee will meet in September. Senate conferees are the subcommittee members plus Ted Stevens (R-AK). Your legislators must hear **strong support for the House's Amtrak funding level, and the Senate's flexible definition of Amtrak capital.**

Wolf inserted in the *Congressional Record* comments he solicited from various "railroad experts" (see box at left). ■

**"[Amtrak's viability depends on] dedicating federal transportation revenues to intercity passenger rail in the same way that they are spent on aviation, highways and transit....[Allowing] states to spend federal transportation dollars on intercity rail projects under the same administrative, economic and political terms as they do for airports, highways, or urban transit holds the key to Amtrak's long run viability....I am optimistic [that a consensus is nearing] that passenger trains belong on the same policymaking agenda as America's other transportation modes. This will occur as Amtrak's enhanced services demonstrate the economic and social contribution that passenger trains could make across America, a contribution that can be maximized by managing passenger trains within the same framework as other transport modes."**

—Anthony Perl, University of Calgary, inserted by Rep. Frank Wolf in July 30 Congressional Record

## 1999 TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Compared with Previous Years  
Appropriations (\$ millions)

|                       | 1998    |             |                 | 1999          |               |
|-----------------------|---------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
|                       | Enacted | Amtrak Plan | Clinton Request | Senate S 2307 | House HR 4328 |
| Administration        |         |             |                 |               |               |
| Federal Highway       | 23,481  | —           | 23,115          | 27,019        | 25,511        |
| Federal Aviation      | 9,111   | —           | 9,751           | 9,856         | 9,478         |
| Federal Transit       | 4,844   | —           | 4,776           | 5,365         | 5,365         |
| Federal Railroad      | 732     | —           | 751             | 702           | 729           |
| * Amtrak + N.E. Corr. | 594     | 621         | 621             | 555           | 609           |

\* Also in Federal Railroad Administration total.

## Intercity Passenger Rail Categories

| Amtrak:           | 1998         |              |                 | 1999          |               |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
|                   | Enacted      | Amtrak Plan  | Clinton Request | Senate S 2307 | House HR 4328 |
| Operations (A)    | 344          | (B)          | 0               | 0             | 0             |
| Capital           | 0            | (B)          | 410 (C)         | 355           | (E)           |
| Northeast Corr.   | 238          | (B)          | 200 (C)         | 200           | (E)           |
| Penn Sta./Farley  | 12           | 0            | 12              | (D)           | (D)           |
| High Speed Rail   | 20           | —            | 13              | 30 (G)        | 15            |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   | <b>614</b>   | <b>621</b>   | <b>634</b>      | <b>585</b>    | <b>625</b>    |
| "TRA money" (F)   | 1,092        | 1,092        | 1,092           | 1,092         | 1,092         |
| <b>RAIL TOTAL</b> | <b>1,706</b> | <b>1,713</b> | <b>1,726</b>    | <b>1,677</b>  | <b>1,716</b>  |

### NOTES:

A) Includes "mandatory payments" (federal railroad retirement and unemployment insurance costs beyond Amtrak's demands on system), about \$150 million a year. The 1996 operating figure includes \$100 million towards "transition costs"—mostly related to employee buy-outs and setting up the business units—largely incurred in 1994 and 1995.

B) Amtrak's request is for either \$621 million or "adequate" operating and capital support.

C) Some general capital could go to Northeast Corridor.

D) Farley not funded for 1999 because it received other funding in TEA-21.

E) House bill combines Amtrak capital categories.

F) In Taxpayer Relief Act, not subject to appropriation.

G) Includes \$5.25 million a year in TEA-21 for highway-rail grade crossing work in high speed corridors.

## AMTRAK-ILLINOIS "PROVING ITS WORTH"

Highlights from an editorial in the State Journal-Register, Springfield, IL, July 21:

When the agreement between the state and Amtrak was reached early last year, we, as well as many others, agreed it was a major step forward that should improve service, foster increased use of rail service and keep state subsidies under control.

With the first full year of operation completed under the agreement, all three of those expectations have been met. Amtrak service has noticeably improved, more passengers are traveling by train, and the subsidies the state is paying are fixed by the agreement...

Under the new contract, the state paid \$7 million in the last fiscal year and it will pay \$7.5 million and \$8 million in the second and third years of the agreement, respectively...

The contract states that if fewer than 99% of its trains leaves within 30 minutes of their scheduled departure times, Amtrak has to pay the state \$2,700 for each late train. During the first year of the contract, more than 99% of Amtrak's trains [made that goal].

With this better service has come an increase in passengers. [During the first nine months of fiscal 1998, October-June], ridership rose 10.4% on the Chicago-St. Louis route over the October 1996 to June 1997 period, 19.6% on the Chicago-to-Carbondale route and 19.1% on the Chicago-to-Quincy route.

In commenting on the improvement, Gov. Jim Edgar [(R)] noted, "The first year of the state's contract with Amtrak was clearly a success with great ridership gains and improved on-time performance"...

## FERC RULES AGAINST AMTRAK DEAL

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission denied an application by Enron Power Marketing of Houston for access to the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland Interconnection regional power pool. Enron had hoped to sell discount electricity to Amtrak, lowering the cost of much of Amtrak's electricity by 50%. Some of the savings would have gone to commuter operators like New Jersey Transit, SEPTA and MARC. After the April decision, Amtrak said in a statement that it would continue looking for ways to buy discounted power. Eventually, electric deregulation is expected to lower rates modestly, but Congress is unlikely to act this year and states are moving slowly.

## Amtrak Cuts Deals with NS, CSX

Amtrak said in May it reached agreement with CSX and NS on how the three railroads will use each other's tracks after the latter two acquire Conrail. Amtrak agreed to support the Conrail breakup; CSX and NS agreed to:

- protect intercity passenger and commuter rail interests;
- "Surface Transportation Board (STB) oversight of the on-time performance of Amtrak trains on [CSX and NS] lines [outside the Northeast Corridor] for three years following the transaction" [STB increased this to five years];
- reduce charges for operating Amtrak's *Cardinal*, reportedly by about \$150,000 a year;
- "cooperate in publicly funded efforts to achieve high-speed service on Amtrak's" Chicago-Detroit and New York-Buffalo routes. (Also, see Richmond-Washington, p. 4.)

Amtrak "agreed to cooperate in NS and CSX plans to provide improved freight service on the NEC, provided that there is no adverse impact on safety or on Amtrak and commuter rail services, and without cost to Amtrak." NS plans "to increase Amtrak clearances in Maryland to permit double-stack trains to serve the Port of Baltimore."

"Additionally, Amtrak and NS entered into a separate agreement that will allow Amtrak, on an interim basis, to carry certain express shipments on Amtrak trains that operate over NS lines while Amtrak and NS pursue negotiations over a possible joint venture for the handling of express." This was effective immediately; other provisions above take effect August 22, when CSX and NS take control of Conrail. (Much more work, notably on labor agreements and computer systems, will be done before operations are integrated.) The STB voted June 8 to approve the Conrail split-up and issued its 424-page, written decision July 23. ■

### AMTRAK INTERCITY FOOD, LOUNGE UPDATE

• **By popular demand, toast—temporarily absent from many Amtrak diners—has returned. Biscuits remain as a choice (and for when toasters break down). Diners have "industrial-type" carousel-style toasters. Amtrak says there were serious pilferage problems with the small toasters used before, even though they did not use ordinary house current.**

• **The *California Zephyr* once again has an ice cream dish, called "Turtle Pie."**

• **On May 17, Amtrak Intercity cut costs by going to one distributor per food item (lounges and diners, long-distance and Midwest corridors) and benefiting from leveraged buying.**

• **Intercity lounges on May 17 cut the price of coffee back to \$1.00 (the experimental \$1.25 hurt both volume and total revenues) and, for similar reasons, restored pizza in place of hot pockets.**

• **So far, Amtrak's test of a single-level lounge car with sealed-off smoking area is a great success. If all goes well, plans are to put this area in all such lounges and to give First Class passengers a non-smoking, non-staffed lounge in the dormitory cars.**

• **Styrofoam dishes occasionally turn up on dining cars, when the dishwasher breaks down.**

## NARP Award in Spartanburg

(from page 1)

two cousins; and NARP Director Don Stewart of Fayetteville, NC, who first recommended creation of the award.

In 1996, fire damage to the station caused the city to lose Amtrak service for nine weeks, until platform improvements were done. Hearing that NS was going to tear down the station, Davis wrote to NS, asking what could be done to save it, and he visited city officials. He told the Spartanburg *Herald-Journal*: "Restoring the depot would be a good way to bring the community together and get us to thinking about other things we should save around the city" (August 15, 1996).

On September 15, 1997, the City Council voted unanimously to purchase the station and the two acres surrounding it from NS for \$30,000. The station is one of three adjacent buildings; the first two were torn down in 1971 and 1986.

Restoration funds will be: city \$150,000; federal \$200,000; Great American Station Foundation \$30,000; plus \$200,000 being raised from corporate and private contributors. John Poole, chairman of the "All Aboard" Fundraising Campaign for the Depot and president of Carolina Southern Bank, spoke at the ceremony. He told NARP in mid-August that about three quarters of the \$200,000 has been raised.

The *Herald-Journal's* July 25 report on the ceremony said: "Mayor James Talley said Trey's fight to save the depot has been a shot in the arm for the city's preservation efforts. 'The depot is the first in a lot of city/private partnerships you will see to bring about historic preservation in the city.'" City planners say the depot and its improved surroundings will contribute to and help anchor the revitalization of the downtown.

The Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce on May 28 urged the governor to promote high-speed rail and extension of the Section 1010 Washington-Charlotte corridor to Atlanta.

Davis is a 1998 graduate of Spartanburg High School, headed for Duke University. He is interested in public policy. His efforts on the station earlier won him the Order of the Silver Crescent, South Carolina's highest award for youth.

Through the Youth Rail Passenger Citizenship Award, NARP seeks both to honor exemplary work and to encourage involvement of more young people in modernizing and expanding the national rail passenger network. ■



—Ross B. Capon

The Amtrak station in Spartanburg, SC, built in 1904. It burned in 1996 but will be restored thanks to efforts by Trey Davis and others.

## TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

**Pennsylvanian:** This New York-Pittsburgh train will run Philadelphia-Chicago starting November 7—in daytime Pittsburgh-Cleveland-Toledo, but with bad end-point times (Philadelphia 6:35 am westbound, 12:25 am east; Chicago 6:00 am east, 11:59 pm west). New times start October 25 Philadelphia-Pittsburgh.

**New station:** Amtrak's *Three Rivers* began early-morning service to Akron, OH on August 10.

**Empire Corridor:** Due to track work between Peekskill and Beacon (NY), Amtrak's Empire Corridor schedules change August 24 and September 21.

**Auto Train:** Amtrak has a new toll-free number for Auto Train customers, 877/SKIP-I-95 (877/754-7495).

**Thruways:** The existing Lamy-Santa Fe (NM) interline connection becomes an Amtrak Thruway September 1. However, the Albuquerque-Amarillo interline connection will be dropped (passengers must make own arrangements with Greyhound).

### BLE IS FOURTH AMTRAK UNION TO RATIFY

Amtrak members of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers ratified a new contract July 22. It took effect August 1. A key provision extends the number of hours an engineer may work alone in the cab from four to six. The four-hour restriction was a key reason why Amtrak initially cut the *Sunset Limited* back to Sanford rather than Orlando, FL.

Amtrak already had agreements with the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), Transportation Communications Union and Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen. The four unions cover 48% of Amtrak's unionized work force. All the new agreements follow the BMWE pattern as to improvements in both productivity and wages.

Also, Amtrak has a special agreement with shop craft workers covering maintenance of the high-speed train-sets to be delivered starting late next year.

## Richmond-Washington CSX Upgrade

Here's good news for rail passengers riding the Washington-Fredericksburg-Richmond line:

- CSX plans to spend \$19 million on double-tracking the Virginia Avenue tunnel in Washington and increasing its speed limit from 10 to 40 mph. Although the tunnel, now owned by Conrail, serves freight trains only, it is less than a mile from the passenger line and northbound freights delayed by tunnel congestion can delay passenger trains.

- CSX plans by September to finish converting the Richmond line's odd-ball cab signal system to 100 hertz, compatible with Amtrak and Conrail systems; 130 of 150 segments were done by August 10. Thus, MARC diesels will be able to run south of the Potomac and VRE diesels north of Union Station, removing an obstacle to long-recommended Maryland-Virginia commuter run-throughs. (The change also will let CSX run Conrail diesels on the Richmond line.)

- CSX plans to upgrade track, initially Washington-Fredericksburg, increasing superelevation and changing spirals (curve approaches) to give a smoother ride. The track was designed for one-way operation but trains now run both ways, producing uncomfortable lateral movements the redesign should eliminate. The goal: a top speed of 80 mph (not 79!); the current top limit is 70. NARP has asked CSX to consider whether some segments could support 90 mph, and Virginia's Commonwealth Transportation Board has approved \$13 million to assist in raising speeds to 90 mph.

- The curved, single-track Quantico Creek bridge is to be replaced with a straight, three-track bridge. TEA-21 earmarks \$9.5 million for it; \$3 million more in federal transit (Section 3) funding is being sought. State and county contributions also are expected, as total project cost may be around \$20 million. Prince William County could convert the existing, single-track bridge to highway use.

The U. S. DOT/Amtrak New York-Washington plan, ordered in the Senate's 1996 appropriations report, also will cover Richmond-Washington (and Philadelphia-Harrisburg). ■

(Note: The first two items also benefit Manassas commuter trains and Amtrak's Crescent and Cardinal.)



## News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers

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