



Wheels of Progress

Here is our annual list of major rail passenger improvements planned to enter service, and many dates of planned openings. Dates and projects are subject to change. "Major Accomplishments in 2005" are listed on page two.

2006

January 23—Chicago Metra commuter-rail extension, Geneva-La Fox-Elburn (10 mi.)

January 30—Metra commuter-rail extension, Orland Park-Manhattan (11 mi); intermediate station at Laraway Road opens Summer 2006.

January 30—Metra commuter-rail im-

provements, Chicago-O'Hare-Antioch (North Central Service); more trips, more reverse peak service, and opening of new stations at Grayslake, Schiller Park, Franklin Park, and Rosemont.

February—NJT Hudson-Bergen LRT, Weehawken (Lincoln Harbor)-North Bergen/Tonnelle Ave. (5.1 mi.); limited weekend operation to Port Imperial began in November.

Mid-February—Completion of Baltimore Light Rail double tracking. All but 2.6 miles of 26 mile system will be double track (short single track portions remain in Timonium Business Park, Amtrak's Penn Station, and BWI Airport due to space constraints).

March—Some running at 100 mph will begin on Amtrak's southwest Michigan line.

Spring—Nashville (TN)-Lebanon commuter rail ("Music City Star," 32 mi).

July 1—Seattle-Portland *Cascades* adds fourth run (five total, including *Starlight*), thanks to completion of track improvement projects.

Mid Summer—Little Rock River Rail streetcar extension to Bill Clinton Presidential Library (0.5 mi).

August—Completion of capacity improvements allows one more weekend and three more weekday San Jose-Oakland Capitol Corridor frequencies (bringing the total to seven daily on that segment) and addition of four more weekday and two more weekend round trips, Oakland-Sacramento. Additional service east of Sacramento (to Auburn) pending agreement with Union Pacific and track improvements.

Late Summer—Newark City Subway one-mile extension, Penn Station (Amtrak and NJ Transit) to Washington Park and Broad Street Station (NJ Transit only); will also serve new sports arena for the NHL's New Jersey Devils and New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Summer—Belen-Albuquerque-Bernalillo "Rail Runner" commuter rail—first segment of eventual service to Santa Fe (late 2008). [State/BNSF agreement

(continued on page 2)

Amtrak's FY 2006 Federal Grant: \$1.29363 Billion

After a 1% across-the-board reduction to most federal programs, and subtracting \$8.3 million formerly earmarked for the express freight demonstration, Amtrak should get the following [more info in Nov., Dec. *NARP News*]:

Operations: \$490.05 million, of which \$4.95 million is earmarked for development of the management cost accounting system. That leaves \$485.1 million for "real" operations.

Efficiency Incentive Grants (DOT controls; can be used for operations): \$31.38 million.

Capital: \$495.00 million

Debt Service: \$277.2 million. Congress did not exempt the debt service category from the 1% reduction. Congress has not changed what Amtrak owes the bondholders, so Amtrak will have to use other cash to fill any shortfall.

Total: \$1.29363 billion, compared to FY 2005's \$1.207 billion.



—David Davies

New auto carriers entered service on the Lorton-Sanford Auto Train in July, 2005. The carriers, from FreightCar America (Johnstown, PA), replaced 30+ year old cars Amtrak had purchased from the private Auto Train Corporation, and will let Amtrak carry more vans and SUV's. Amtrak expects lower maintenance costs as well. Northbound Auto Train is shown at Calverton, VA on Norfolk Southern tracks; it was detouring Richmond-Doswell-Gordonsville-Alexandria-Lorton on Jan. 5, 2006, due to a Virginia Railway Express derailment at Quantico, VA.

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to purchase Belen, NM-Trinidad, CO (most of the Raton Pass line) from BNSF awaits opinion from state attorney general.]

September—Sacramento RTD light-rail spur to Amtrak station (0.7 mi). Service patterns will then be changed: trains will operate Amtrak-Sunrise and Watt/I-80-Meadowview.

• **October 31**—St. Louis MetroLink Cross County light rail extension, Forest Park south to Shrewsbury (8 mi)

• **December**—Denver “T-REX” South-east Corridor Light Rail expansion 19.1 miles, I-25/Broadway to Nine Mile Road and Lincoln Road (two branches).

• **December**—S.F. Muni J/Church extension along Third St., San Francisco Caltrain-Bayshore Caltrain via Third Street and Bayshore Boulevard.

• **Late**—Completion of building renovation work at King St. Station, Seattle (used by Amtrak and Sounder). Platform work was completed in 2000.

• **Late**—Corridor One commuter rail initial segment, Harrisburg-Lancaster (36 miles) on Amtrak’s Harrisburg Line

2007

• **Mid**—Braintree-Scituate-Greenbush, MA, MBTA commuter rail (18 mi.).

• **Fall**—Charlotte, NC light rail system (to expand on existing heritage system) Uptown – I-485/Pineville (“South Corridor,” 9.6 miles)

• **Late**—Milwaukee Amtrak station is renovated and made an intermodal terminal.

• **Late**—Sounder commuter rail trains extended south from Tacoma to Lakewood, WA (9 mi.).

• **December**—Oceanside-Escondido, CA, diesel light-rail service (26 mi).

(From this point on, project completion dates are to-be-announced, unless noted, and are organized geographically east-west.)

• Light rail link between San Juan, Puerto Rico and suburban Caguas (10 mi.).

• Keystone line station renovations at Elizabethtown and Lancaster and new stations at Harrisburg International Airport and Paradise (connecting with Strasburg Railroad).

• Georgia’s first commuter rail operation: Atlanta south to Lovejoy (26 miles); further delay due to more funding problems (since April 2004 *NARP News*).

Major Accomplishments in 2005

Jan. 8—Official completion of rehabbed CTA Blue Line Cermak branch (stations re-opened as completed; weekend service restored Jan. 1).

Jan. 18—Rail station opened at Milwaukee’s Mitchell Field airport, served by Amtrak’s *Hiawatha Service*.

Mar. 11—Portland Streetcar extended, 5th/Mill (Portland State Univ.)-RiverPlace (0.6 mi).

May 8—Renovation of *San Joaquin* station at Fresno completed. After resolution of dispute with city, Amtrak moved in **Nov. 19**.

June 6—Oakland Coliseum Amtrak station for *Capitol Corridor* opened; direct connection to BART and shuttle to Oakland International Airport.

June—Renovation of station at Kingman, AZ, served by Amtrak’s *Southwest Chief*, as part of a downtown renewal project.

June 9—San Diego Mission Valley (east) extension of Blue light-rail line opened: Mission San Diego-La Mesa (6.3 miles).

July 29 and October 1—Santa Clara VTA Vasona light-rail line, extended, downtown San Jose-Amtrak/commuter rail station-Campbell/Winchester (5.3 mi).

Sept. 3—SEPTA restored Philadelphia’s 15/Girard line with refurbished, historic PCC streetcars (8.2 mi.); last regular service was in 1992.

Sept. 17—New station platforms and pedestrian crossings dedicated at Berkeley, CA.

Oct. 1—Amtrak began using the restored, historic former Southern Railway Greensboro (NC) station.

Nov. 12—MBTA Green Line re-opened beyond North Station; completion of “Super Station” there, serves Orange and Green Lines.

Nov. 18—Completion of Reno (NV) trench project, lowering Union Pacific tracks through the downtown Reno entertainment strip. Amtrak returned to downtown Reno **Jan. 4, 2006**.

• Calgary “CTrain” (Light Rail) extension, Whitehorn to McKnight-Westwinds (1.86 miles)

• Monterrey, Mexico “Metrorrey” light rail extension, General Anaya to Sendero (San Nicolas de los Garza and Escobedo counties), 5.4 miles

• South Lake Union, WA streetcar to Westlake Center (1.3 miles)

2008

• Rail station opens on Northeast Corridor at Warwick, RI, serving Providence’s T. F. Green Airport, served by commuter rail from downtown Providence (and Boston) and—possibly later—Amtrak trains.

• Phase 2 Richmond Main St. Station project, bringing to downtown the trains now terminating at Staples Mill Road.

• Station opens near Illinois Science and Technology Park on Chicago’s currently non-stop Howard-Skokie “Skokie Swift” shuttle.

• Northstar Commuter Rail (40 mi.), Minneapolis (Target Center)-Big Lake

• Austin (TX) commuter rail, downtown north to Leander (32 miles)

• Calgary “CTrain” (light rail) extension, Dalhousie to Crowfoot

• Edmonton South LRT phase II expansion, Health Sciences Station to University of Alberta South campus

• Rail Runner Albuquerque commuter rail extension, Bernalillo – Santa Fe

• Salt Lake City Intermodal Terminal opens, serving Amtrak (which moved to site in 1999), commuter rail (Intermodal Terminal-Ogden-Pleasant View, 44 mi), and TRAX light-rail branch (Delta Center-Intermodal Terminal, 4 blocks).

• Valley Metro Central Phoenix/East Valley Light Rail (20.3 miles)

• Portland’s Washington County Commuter Rail: Beaverton (Tri Met transfer) west to Wilsonville, 14.7 miles. Project revitalized because Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) got exemption from new, more stringent FTA standards.

2009

• Norfolk, VA (Eastern Virginia Medical Center-downtown-Newtown Road-Kempsville Road) light rail (8.4 miles). Key hurdle recently overcome with purchase of right of way from Norfolk Southern.

• Orlando, FL, north to DeBary, commuter rail (approx. 26 mi.)

• Ottawa, Ontario North-South light rail (expansion of existing diesel LRT “O-Train”), Bayview-downtown Ottawa and

(continued on top of page 3)

Greenboro-Woodroffe (total 19.2 miles)

- Charlotte, NC “Center City Streetcar”, downtown-Eastland Mall (10 mi.)

- Edmonton South LRT phase III to Century Park (5 mi.)

- Two extensions of Los Angeles MTA Gold Line: Little Tokyo-Boyle Heights-East Los Angeles (6 miles) and “Foothill Extension,” Sierra Madra Villa station in Pasadena to the Montclair Transportation Center (24 miles)

- Metrolink (Los Angeles commuter rail) “91 Line” extension, Riverside southeast to Perris (18 mi.)

- Significant increase in Metrolink Orange County Service, funded by Orange County Transit Authority

- Portland Tri-Met MAX Green Line light rail extension to Clackamas Town Center (6.5 miles) and South Corridor light rail, Union Station-Portland State University (21 blocks)

- Seattle Light Rail: Sound Transit Central Link, downtown Seattle south to Tukwila (14 miles); December extension, Tukwila-SeaTac Airport

- TransLink “Canada Line” Vancouver Airport (Richmond)-downtown Vancouver (11.8 miles).

- Vancouver “Evergreen Line”, Coquitlam-Port Moody-Burnaby light rail (6.8 miles)

- **2010**—Trestle at Back Cove in Portland, ME, is completed, letting Boston-Portland *Downeaster* extend north.

- **2010**—Georgetown-Round Rock-Austin-San Antonio Intermunicipal Commuter Rail (110 miles)

- **2010**—Numerous Dallas DART LRT extensions open in segments: Northwest Corridor (American Airlines Center to Frankford Road, 16.4 mi), Southeast Corridor (Downtown to Pleasant Grove, 10.1 miles).

- **2011 to 2014**—119 miles network of commuter rail, light rail, and express bus service blossoms in Denver (including Union Station-Denver International Airport commuter rail line), after approval of “FasTracks” 0.4 cent motor fuel tax by voters in November 2004.

- **Sometime in the future**—Pittsburgh Port Authority North Shore light rail (1.2 mi). Construction of 0.4 mile spur to Convention Center deferred from construction due to rising cost.

- **Sometime in the future**—BART extension Fremont-Warm Springs-San Jose-Santa Clara (16.3 miles); schedule uncertain due to withdrawal of project from

Huge Delays Show Need for Clear Procedures

A CSX freight derailment below Savannah, Georgia—at 12:30 PM on Thursday, Dec. 29—led to severe delays, and much bad publicity for Amtrak. Amtrak waited too long before offering free food, and before making clear that passengers would get refunds or travel credits.

The incident exposed Amtrak’s lack of a standard protocol for dealing with serious delays. Such a protocol exists for handling Amtrak’s own derailments, which Amtrak has done well. Where procedures are widely understood, there is less need for ad hoc decision-making.

This situation was complicated by non-availability of buses, and the fact that CSX kept pushing back the estimated time of track reopening. The train hardest hit was

the northbound *Silver Meteor*, which sat 12 hours at Jacksonville station and another eight hours just south of Savannah. The train finally arrived New York City 25 hours 9 minutes late.

NARP wrote to Amtrak Acting President/CEO David Hughes, underlining the need for a comprehensive, humane major-delays protocol that is well understood throughout the company. Amtrak is undertaking an unusually detailed investigation, with such a protocol expected to be one of the outcomes.

That said, we understand that many passengers felt they were treated well, and that most of those subsequently contacted by phone responded positively to Amtrak’s outreach. ■

Tainow Becomes Acting Vice President

Jon Tainow, an Amtrak veteran who has been chief, System Operations, was appointed Acting VP—Transportation on Jan. 6, following the departure of Ed Walker. In a message to employees, Senior VP—Operations William L. Crosbie, noting Walker’s “28

years of dedicated service,” said, “Ed’s leadership and legacy as Vice President, Transportation; President of the Intercity SBU; General Manager of the Mid-Atlantic Division and in other positions have made Amtrak a stronger railroad.”

For the latest news, visit our website at www.narprail.org and click on “Hotline News.” It is posted Friday afternoons.

FTA’s New Starts Update list.

- **Sometime in the future**—Los Angeles Red Line subway extension Wilshire/Western-Santa Monica (13 mi., first phase to Wilshire/Fairfax, 3 mi) and Exposition LRT line, Figueroa Street (junction with existing Blue Line)-LaBrea Avenue-Santa Monica. Federal legislative prohibition on subway construction set to be repealed and the MTA Board of Directors approved Exposition routing in December.

- **Postponed Indefinitely**—Washington, DC “Anacostia Light Rail Demonstration Project,” Pennsylvania Avenue-Anacostia Metro-Bowling Air Force Base (2.5 miles); District of Columbia and CSX have been unable to come to agreement on public acquisition of right-of-way.

- **Postponed Indefinitely**—Triangle Transit Authority (Raleigh, NC) Raleigh - downtown Durham commuter rail (28 miles). FTA issued a low rating, saying that estimated ridership and costs do not meet tightened standards. ■

Hall and Sosa Restored; Board Again Has Four

On Jan. 4, President Bush recess appointed Republicans Floyd Hall and Enrique Sosa to the Amtrak Board of Directors. Their previous recess appointments expired when Congress adjourned in December. Had the White House failed to act, leaving the Board with just two voting members, challenges to its legitimacy would have been vigorously renewed.

Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta criticized the Senate for not confirming Hall and Sosa, but the Senate—confronting multiple vacancies on a board—prefers to confirm people from both political parties at the same time.

The Board, which has been all Republican since mid-2004, still has three vacancies. The White House is rumored to be interviewing additional candidates, including a Democrat.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Sunset Ltd. has not run east of New Orleans since Katrina; much of the New Orleans-Mobile segment was destroyed. CSX may reopen the railroad in early February. It is not clear what passenger service might result, when that service might begin, and how much of the pre-Katrina *Sunset* route would be served. Amtrak is considering its options and plans to reach out to the state DOTs on the line. NARP will press for the best possible outcome.

Acela Express First Class again has hot entrees: one at breakfast (in addition to continental breakfast), hot soup can accompany lunch sandwich/salad, and there are two dinner hot entrees.

Metra O'Hare Airport-Chicago Union Station Service (North Central line, p. 1) doubles Jan. 30, to 10 trains outbound to O'Hare, nine return runs. Fare \$3.30; free shuttle from Metra station to the airport people mover.

Reno move—Amtrak is back in the renovated former SP station in Reno after completion of the Reno Trench Project and agreement with the city on a lease. Station is at 280 North Center St. (same track location as before the trench, but new street location).

Attend your 2006 NARP Regional Meeting!

This is a good way to meet NARP officers, staff, board members, and fellow rail advocates. There are informative outside speakers as well.

Specifics about each meeting, including location, registration fee, and contact information, are on our website and will be detailed in a mailing you should receive well in advance of your meeting.

Members who do not live in the United States are welcome to attend any meeting and NARP members in the U.S. are welcome to attend other regional meetings in addition to their own.

The list below also shows where NARP President George Chilson, Executive Director Ross Capon, and Assistant Director David Johnson are to speak.

Region 1 (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT): March 25, Portland, ME (Capon)

Region 2 (NY): March 11, Schenectady, NY (Chilson)

Region 3 (DE, NJ, PA): April 1, Trenton, NJ, (Chilson)

Region 4 (DC, MD, VA, WV): March 18, Baltimore (Capon)

Region 5 (AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN): March 4, Atlanta (Johnson)

Region 6 (IN, MI, OH): March 18, Detroit (Chilson)

Region 7 (IL, MN, ND, WI): February 25, Chicago (Capon)

Region 8 (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA): March 25, Havre, MT (Chilson)

Region 9 (AR, KS, MO, OK, TX-except El Paso Co.): March 18, Little Rock (Johnson)

Region 10 (CO, IA, NE, SD, UT, WY): March 25, Denver (Johnson)

Region 11 (AZ, NM, El Paso Co., TX): February 11, Glendale, AZ.

Region 12 (CA, HI, NV): February 25, Sacramento, CA. ■

Capon Joins Travelers Aid Board of Directors

NARP Executive Director Ross B. Capon has been elected to the Board of Directors of Travelers Aid International (TAI), along with Kathleen Baldwin (Travelers Aid Society, San Diego) and Pamela Boswell (American Public Transportation Association).

The organization, formed just before the Civil War, staffs information kiosks in many airports, some bus stations, and a few train stations. Their mission is "to advance and support a network of human service provider organizations committed to assisting

individuals and families who are in transition, or crisis, and are disconnected from their support systems."

TAI's release said, "In joining the Travelers Aid International board, Baldwin, Boswell and Capon join a distinguished 21-person national Board of Directors drawn from Travelers Aid member agencies and the business community, including transportation executives."

TAI, <www.travelersaid.org>, wants to establish a presence in more transportation hubs, including Amtrak stations. ■



National Association of Railroad Passengers

NARP News

Vol. 40, No. 1

January 2006

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Postmaster: Send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News*; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557.

(This has news through January 15. Vol. 39, No. 11 was mailed second-class January 12.)