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RETURN REQUESTED

THANK YOU, RAILROADS!

LEWIS LIKES "EMPIRE BUILDER" RIDE

In early August, Secretary of Transportation Drew Lewis and his wife, a Pennsylvania state representative, traveled from Chicago to Seattle on Amtrak's "Empire Builder." We believe this makes Lewis the first sitting transportation secretary to make a long-distance rail trip; in Feb. at Albuquerque he became the first secretary to set foot in a long-distance rail passenger car (*Mar. News*).

Lewis wrote the following in response to a request for comment from NARP NEWS: "The recent trip Marilyn and I took on an Amtrak train from Chicago to Seattle was one of the most delightfully relaxing trips we have ever taken. The service was outstanding and the food was good. I highly recommend the trip. Great fun!"

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Vancouver is once again linked by rail to Jasper and Edmonton. From Oct. 31, British Columbia Railway tri-weekly North Vancouver-Prince George trains are changed to operate on those days when connections are available on VIA's tri-weekly Prince Rupert-Edmonton "Skeena." BCR's northbound through trains will run Sun./Wed./Fri. (not Mon./Th./Sat.) with a 1:10 connection to "Skeena" at Prince George (change of stations required). Southbound trains will run on Mon./Th./Sat. (not Tues./Fri./Sun.) with a 1:30 connection from "Skeena." BCR requires seat reservations (604/987-6216 in Vancouver) and payment at least two days in advance.

Biggest Oct. 31 improvement in NY-Albany running time will be 17 minutes (not 16 as noted here last month): the southbound weekday "Storm King" will take 2:11. The northbound daily "Mohawk" will take 2:12. These are the fastest schedules ever offered on the line. New "North Star" times are 10 mins. faster north, 5 mins. faster south. It runs daily Nov. 19-28 and Dec. 17-26.

Don't forget changes in days of operation of "Sunset/Eagle" (*July News*) and the various other Oct. 31 changes reported here starting with the *June News*. We have not reported all Oct. 31 changes!

"International Ltd.," the new Amtrak/VIA Chicago-E. Lansing-Toronto service which supplants Amtrak's "Blue Water" will begin Oct. 31, departing Chicago 10:25 AM, arriving Toronto 9:50 PM. Westbound trains depart Toronto at 8:10 AM (except 1 PM on Sundays) and arrive Chicago at 6:02 PM (connection to "Zephyr/Pioneer/Desert Wind," except on Sundays when arrival will be 10:47 PM). Since northbound "City of New Orleans" will connect with east-

(continued on page 3)

Strike-related Transfer to Buses Held to Minimum

Except on Southern Pacific's "troubled, cash-poor railroad," transcontinental passenger trains en route when the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) struck at 12:01 AM Sunday, Sept. 19, operated through to their destinations, where trains arrived up to 48½ hours after the strike began. (Our characterization of SP is from a Sept. 26 *Washington Post* story reporting that GTE Corp. is "looking to purchase or invest in" the railroad's newly profitable subsidiary, Southern Pacific Communications Corporation.)

This was possible because railroad management saw to it that supervisory personnel were assigned to operate Amtrak's trains. Special thanks to Burlington Northern, Milwaukee Road, Santa Fe, and Union Pacific! Special thanks also to Illinois Central Gulf for running the overnight "City of New Orleans" through, to Seaboard Coast Line for keeping the Florida trains running, and to Baltimore & Ohio for manning the eastbound "Capitol Ltd." Sunday. Thanks also to RF&P for trying, though unsuccessfully, to find a crew to run the northbound "Silver Star" from Richmond to Washington on Sunday.

Southern kept the northbound "Crescent" rolling, but killed the southbound in Atlanta.

Finally, thanks to Amtrak and the cooperating bus companies for planning and executing "operation lifeboat" on the SP so well. Since Amtrak had a good idea of how SP would behave, buses were waiting to forward passengers SP left in the lurch. The eastbound "San Francisco Zephyr" died in Sparks, NV, and passengers were bussed to Ogden, where UP held the morning eastbound train three hours so the "lifeboats" from Sparks could deliver SP's unfortunate charges.

Buses transported passengers to Oakland from two westbound "Zephyrs" at Ogden (Chicago departures of Friday and Saturday). Buses also rescued passengers after 2 AM from the eastbound "Sunset" at Del Rio, TX, the westbound "Sunset" at Phoenix, the southbound "Spirit of California" at Oakland, the northbound "Spirit" at San Luis Obispo, the southbound "Coast Starlight" at Klamath Falls, OR, and the northbound "Starlight" at Oakland (though SP would have moved the train to Sacramento if Amtrak had requested).

Amtrak officials noted that the bussing went more smoothly than with line closures because of the advance notice. Klamath Falls was the only place where passengers had to wait (about 2 hours).

President Reagan signed the legislation ending the strike late Wednesday, Sept. 22. Only a few hours later, UP originated a "Desert Wind" in Ogden. SR started a westbound "Crescent" from Atlanta Thursday morning, and all other trains started as usual from their originating terminals that day. ■

SUPERTRAINS

Talk and Studies—Will There be Service?

(See also our April report, "LA-San Diego Bullet Trains in 7 Years?" and four May items: supertrain support from Joint Economic Committee Chairman Rep. Henry S. Reuss, D-WI; "Northrop Subsidiary Sees National High-Speed Rail Net"; Florida Bullet Trains; and Oklahoma's High-Speed Passenger Rail Advisory Commission. We printed NARP founder Anthony Haswell's criticism of supertrain fever in January.)

Americans don't take kindly to being technologically outdone by foreigners, so it's not surprising that the development of 130+ mph intercity passenger trains on dedicated rights-of-way in Japan and France has prompted great interest in such trains here.

Interest is especially high in Ohio, California and Florida. The determination early next year of whether Los Angeles-San Diego supertrains can be privately funded may be crucial in determining whether the U.S. will get any supertrains in this century.

A Bit of History: In the 1960s, technicians concluded that a mostly new, mostly straight New Haven-Providence right-of-way would be required to get Boston-NY running times of 2½ hours, which they felt would be required for rail to dominate business travel.

Politicians concluded that no such right-of-way would be built. There were the usual environmental/landowner problems that highway-builders encounter, and highway-builders had been making new right-of-way assembly increasingly unpopular. There was the usual rail-boosters-weaker-than-road-boosters problem. In addition, the service benefits appeared to be largely in Massachusetts while the political costs were in Connecticut where most of the land would be taken and, it was feared, New London and Old Saybrook stood to lose much of their service.

(Perhaps the latter concern is the least convincing argument against supertrains; supertrains abroad have brought more people onto the rails, enhancing demand for connecting and parallel rail services.)

In any event, no new New Haven-Providence right-of-way was assembled. Even Boston electrification and the curve-straightening projects—north and south of New York—which did survive into the original Northeast Corridor Improvement Project plans have been dropped. Amtrak will at least approach the coveted 2½-hour timing NY-Washington, but not Boston-NY.

Ohio: Cleveland-Columbus-Springfield-Dayton-Cincinnati, 260 miles via Conrail mainlines, is perhaps the nation's most logical corridor for rail passenger service which has never been served by Amtrak.

Instead of contracting with Amtrak for conventional train service, the state created the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority in 1975-76 to study and promote the establishment of supertrain service within the state. ORTA has spent \$3 million on supertrain studies, including preliminary engineering for a high-speed test track, and also has assumed the task of administering the state's rail freight programs.

ORTA's current executive director is Robert J. Casey, a former NARP executive director. In Oct. '76, and again in Dec. '80, Gov. James J. Rhodes appointed NARP Member and longtime Ohio ARP President Thomas R. Pulsifer of Xenia to the ORTA board. Tom served as ORTA's chairman during the latter part of his first term; his current term runs through Oct. 10, 1985.

For fast passenger trains between major Ohio cities, a 547-mile network of electrified rail lines is envisioned. Cleveland-Cincinnati is the backbone, but there would also be Toledo-Cleveland-Akron-Youngstown and Toledo-Columbus links. The latest cost estimate is \$8 billion. Project supporters hope neighboring states will help construct two 63-mile extensions: Detroit-Toledo and Pittsburgh-Youngstown.

Supporters of the project were forced to attempt to pass a 1¢ sales tax, Issue Two on the Nov. 2 ballot, to fund supertrain construction, but prospects for passage don't look good. Tax

increases are never popular, and the present campaign has been complicated by plans for the test track which would run north from Warren for 20 miles, roughly halfway to Ashtabula along a line currently owned by Penn Central. The test track has been criticized both because it would be built before revenue-producing lines and because it would not ultimately be part of the revenue-producing network.

At its July 24 Cleveland meeting, Ohio ARP voted to endorse Issue Two. The group is also developing a plan for near-term, or "interim," conventional service, and expects to unveil and start promoting that plan in November.

California Update: As reported in May, American High Speed Rail Corp. plans to construct and operate an LA-San Diego supertrain line without public funds. In June, the New York-based First Boston Corp. agreed both to act as financial adviser for AHSR and to be the underwriter of any securities issued as part of the permanent financing.

A new California law creates a commission which could sell up to \$1.25 billion (not \$1.125 billion as some newspapers reported) in tax-exempt state revenue bonds to help finance the project. The law also expands one of 16 previously existing exemptions to California's Natural Resources Act. As previously written, the act exempted introduction or expansion of rail passenger service over existing lines from the Environmental Impact Review requirement. (This took care of all of the state's 403b Amtrak trains and the San Diego trolley.) The new law expands the exemption to include rail passenger lines constructed over highway rights-of-way, in light of AHSR's designs on portions of I-5.

Before private investors can be attracted, it is likely that AHSR's favorable but tentative marketing figures will be refined further, possibly by an independent consultant. AHSR expects to know by next spring whether current funding plans will be feasible.

Under the plans, 25% of the total project cost (which will exceed \$2 billion when inflation is taken into account) will be invested by Japanese businessmen and the balance will be financed in the U.S. both from investors who buy securities of AHSR and lenders who buy tax-exempt bonds and other debt instruments.

"Everything up to now gives us reason for optimism," says Richard Harris, vice-president of First Boston's Tax-Exempt Transportation Group. "But people who buy revenue bonds—sophisticated institutional investors—are paid large sums of money to be skeptical and will go over the financial feasibility with a fine-tooth comb."

It's clear that, if the project succeeds, it will be largely due to AHSR President Lawrence D. Gilson and his boundless faith and energy. On Sep. 20, Gilson resigned his position as Amtrak's VP—Corporate Development effective Oct. 20 to concentrate on his AHSR work, the most recent task being the super lobbying job to get the new state law.

Following First Boston's advice that fast action was desirable,

SPEEDING PAYS

"I didn't feel too comfortable in going that fast either. But in acting this year I think we've saved the cost of the project, at a wild guess, 25%."

—John F. Foran (D-San Francisco), Chairman, California Senate Transportation Committee

Gilson presented the first draft of the legislation in early August, only a month before adjournment. "With a seeming capacity to be everywhere at once, he traversed Southern California, talking to county supervisors, other elected officials, potential investors and anyone else who might help the cause.

"They were seeing everybody,' one Orange County official said. 'They were like superballs bouncing off the walls.'" (LA Times, Sep. 22) They were also aided by the fact that key legislators had traveled to Japan around Easter, at the expense of Japanese interests, "to counteract a strong perception among key lawmakers that a California high-speed train was just another of Jerry Brown's 'moonbeam' ideas."

Gilson emphasizes that, notwithstanding the provisions of the new state law, AHSR will have to deal with many public hearings,

including one by the commission that would sell the tax-free bonds, as well as those linked with federal environmental procedures and local zoning, ordinances, franchises and easements.

Gilson can talk eloquently about why San Diego supertrains could be the first in the world to succeed in a transport environment so heavily dominated by the private auto. He notes that LA building height restrictions were relaxed several years ago as a result of modern construction techniques said to offer greater resistance to earthquakes. This, combined with improved mass transit (including supertrains, LA-Long Beach light rail, and the Wilshire subway) will encourage the high-density development in downtown LA which is compatible with high transit useage.

AHSR also expects intense development around the San Diego station, already served by the successful trolley and Amtrak conventional trains, with a second trolley line likely before the

AMTRAK VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CHANGES

From Oct. 20, Timothy P. Gardner, currently VP—Corporate Planning, will be VP—Corporate Planning and Development, combining the responsibilities formerly held by Gardner and Larry Gilson. On Aug. 18, Don R. Brazier, formerly VP—Finance and Treasurer, was appointed Group VP—Finance and Administration, succeeding Robert T. Eckenrode, who died Apr. 27. Charles Hayward, formerly Asst. VP—Resource Management, assumed Brazier's former duties. Hayward is a West Point graduate with an MBA from Syracuse University. He served in operational and financial positions in the Defense Department before joining Amtrak.

supertrains roll. AHSR is working with owners of the real estate near the San Diego terminal.

U.S. planners are accustomed to seeing a relationship between local rail transit and development patterns. Gilson, however, notes that Japan's *intercity* supertrains also have influenced development of adjacent real estate and connecting transit services. Indeed, the intercity rail impact is already apparent in our Northeast Corridor (NEC), as evidenced by a full-page ad in the New Jersey edition of the Sep. 15 *NY Times* in which brokers for Metroview Corporate Center proclaim the new office building as the state's newest, most strategically located office building "within walking distance of Amtrak's high speed Metroliner" (at Metro Park station, Edison, NJ).

Interstate High Speed Rail Passenger Compact was formed as a joint effort of Midwestern state officials to coordinate activities and share information. The first meeting was in 1980. The first chairman was Pa. Rep. Richard A. Geist (Altoona); the second and current chairman is James C. Kellog, Chief Administrative Officer, Urban and Public Transportation, Michigan DOT. Other voting delegates to the compact are: Benedict Garmisa, Chicago, Chairman of the Illinois Transportation Study Commission; John B. Conolly, Waukegan, IL, a member of ITSC; Indiana Rep. Thomas Coleman (New Castle) Chairman of the Roads and Transportation Committee of the Indiana House; Sam F. Cryderman, Lansing, Deputy Director—Planning, Michigan DOT; Pulsifer (see Ohio above), David Weir, Columbus, Director of Transportation, State of Ohio; and Penn. Sen. James E. Ross (Beaver).

NARP Director Don Maxwell of Ashland is working with Kentucky state legislators to get that state to join the Compact.

Florida: In addition to the Japanese- and Amtrak-sponsored studies underway on the Tampa-Disney World-Orlando-Miami corridors, Bombardier, Inc., of Canada, which is promoting the LRC train that uses existing tracks, announced that it would underwrite its own study of the Florida rail market.

New York, which currently offers the fastest rail service off the NEC, is getting about \$350,000 from the Federal Railroad Administration for half the cost of "a comprehensive analysis of the long-term needs and capacity for rail passenger service in the Empire Corridor." The study will consider extending existing high-speed rail operations from Schenectady to Buffalo, and will "enhance a feasibility study for a 'French TGV-type' high-speed rail service from Montreal to Albany and New York

The Real People Express

When George Schlatter, producer of NBC-TV's "Real People," was planning the show's Chicago visit, he decided they'd go by train partly because he was upset at CBS's "60 Minutes" for always knocking Amtrak, including their recent unfavorable comparison of our Northeast Corridor with the French TGV.

He was impressed that "Sunset" did 80 mph and that Amtrak had 110 mph trains.

The cast was deeply moved by the crowds that turned out all along the "Sunset/Eagle" routes to see the stars, usually for very brief station stops—1,200 at Alpine, TX, for example.

What was conceived as a 60-minute season premiere became 2½ hours (1½ on the Sep. 22 opener; 1 on Sep. 29) of the best free publicity Amtrak could want. Plans are underway for a second Amtrak/"Real People" trip—east from Chicago, perhaps to Miami.



NARP Exec. Dir. Ross Capon and "Real People" Producer George Schlatter at Washington reception agreeing "60 Minutes" coverage of Amtrak is unfair and misleading.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

bound "International," Canadians can make a circle-tour without staying overnight in Chicago—going west via Denver and returning via New Orleans.

Also Oct. 31, eastbound "Cardinal" and "Crescent" will be faster: #50 will run about an hour earlier Chicago to Washington but arrive New York about 75 minutes earlier; #20 will lv. New Orleans at 7:30 AM, arr. NY 12:45 PM. West "Cardinal" will lv. NY 4:30 PM, be unchanged Wash.-Chi. Faster "Crescent" west: lv. NY 2:35 PM, arr. N.O. 6:20 PM.

In late Oct., Caltrans plans to start three bus routes for Amtrak connecting passengers only: Sacramento-Marysville-Chico and Glendale-Pasadena-Pomona-San Bernardino buses will serve "Spirit of California" riders and Hanford-Visalia-Tulare-Lindsay-Porterville buses will connect with all "San Joaquins" (for travel to/from the north only). Buses serve train stations in cities which have them. Through ticketing available.

now being conducted by French and Canadian engineers."

Other States and Activities: Pennsylvania recently enacted legislation to establish a High Speed Rail Commission. Michigan is studying Chicago-Detroit service aided by an FRA grant of \$150,000 to Michigan State University. The Budd Company, licensed as the American representative for the German magnetic levitation system, has announced a study for high speed service between Chicago's O'Hare Airport and Milwaukee.

Last year the Japan-United States Rail Congress was formed to promote development of Japanese-style bullet train service in the U.S. Its membership includes representatives of both Houses of the U.S. Congress and both houses of the Japanese Diet. U.S. members include Senators Andrews, Cannon, Cranston, Durenberger, Hayakawa, Quayle, and Weicker; and Reps. Conte, Florio, Glickman, Gore, Madigan, Mikulski, Mineta,

Pease, and Reuss.

On July 28, 1982, the High Speed Rail Association was formed at a meeting in the Army-Navy Club in Washington. The organizing committee consists of ORTA's Casey, former Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup, and L. Fletcher Prouty, also formerly of Amtrak. The Association will have corporations, consultants, associations and other groups as its members. Temporary headquarters of the Association are at 4201 Peachtree Place, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Clearly, interest in supertrains has grown substantially. Casey, for example, notes that when he testified on Capitol Hill in 1980, the "audience" consisted of the 4 or 5 other witnesses. This year, the hearings chaired by Rep. Dan Glickman (D-KS) played to a packed room with heavy media coverage. Similarly, he notes, the first Compact meeting in Columbus drew only a few observers besides the official state delegates. At the next meeting held in Harrisburg, the number had increased dramatically and included representatives of leading consulting firms. At the June 11, 1982, meeting in Toronto and Montreal, as well as on a moving VIA train between the two cities, more than 100 observers were present.

Few rail passenger advocates would question the importance of supertrains to the future of the U.S. The only questions seem to be: can we successfully introduce them before rather than after development of adequate feeder rail networks?; can we do it without public funds as AHSR proposes? AHSR Chairman Alan S. Boyd put it this way: "You've got to have a lot of faith to do anything. If we didn't have that faith there are obstacles that could have killed it before we got this far. Whether we're right or not, I don't know." ■

Legislative Update

The full House passed a FY '83 DOT appropriations bill on Sept. 21 which included the full authorized \$788 million for Amtrak. Before this was done, however, senior White House advisers were indicating that they could not recommend to the president that he sign the bill in its present form.

In an attempt to accommodate the White House, Rep. Lawrence Coughlin (R-PA) offered an amendment which would have cut \$320 million, two-thirds involving Amtrak and mass transit, from the bill. The amendment would have reduced Amtrak to \$700 million, and cut Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) funding by \$122 million, including \$100 million in operating subsidies, and \$10 million each in Section 3 discretionary grants for Los Angeles and Santa Clara "new systems." The amendment involved only \$50 million in highway funds (interstate transfer grants-highways).

The amendment clearly reflects strong White House desires to cut as much Amtrak and mass transit spending as possible. The 221-154 vote rejecting Coughlin's amendment suggests the president might win if he resorts to a veto.

The White House is more relaxed about big spending in other areas: "The House voted . . . to approve a \$25.3 billion agriculture appropriations bill, which the administration also opposed as too costly but has not threatened to veto. . . . The White House has indicated it can live with the \$47.5 billion bill for the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and 17 independent agencies, even though it exceeds Reagan's request by more than \$6 billion." (*The Washington Post*, Sept. 22 and 25).

The Senate is expected to consider FY '83 DOT appropriations during the lame-duck session likely to begin Nov. 29. Meanwhile, **write to your legislators (The Hon. _____, House of Representatives, Washington 20515; The Hon. _____, U.S. Senate, Washington 20510) urging them to work to keep Amtrak funding as close as possible to \$788 million so that an adequate capital program can help reduce future operating subsidy needs.**

While the government-wide continuing resolution is in force from Oct. 1 to sometime in Dec., Amtrak expects to be funded at an annual rate of \$735 million.

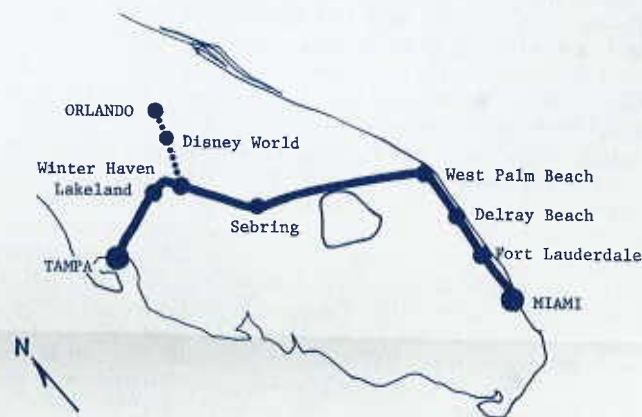
Diners Saved: Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor, Jr., worked hard and successfully to preserve management's right to provide the type of on-board food service needed to attract

passengers. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees both included report language accompanying their FY '83 DOT appropriations bills which make clear that Congress is primarily concerned with the cost-effectiveness of the total Amtrak system and not with on-board food service in isolation.

The House report language: "The committee recognizes the progress Amtrak has made to meet the legislative goal of reducing its food and beverage deficit by 50 percent in fiscal year 1982 and expects a continuing effort to eliminate the deficit in fiscal year 1983. Amtrak has responded to the Committee's concern over increasing food and beverage costs by modifying its food service, reducing its on-board crews, and establishing an inventory cost control system which will allow the development of a profit/loss statement for each train and enable Amtrak to pinpoint and resolve problems more quickly. These cost savings are reflected in Amtrak's food cost per passenger of \$1.51, which compares favorably with the food cost per passenger reported by major air carriers of \$3.94 during the first three quarters of 1981.

"The Committee urges Amtrak to continue to explore the possibility of further innovations to eliminate this deficit in fiscal year 1983, perhaps by attributing some percentage of transportation revenues to the food and beverage account. The Committee agrees that on-board food and beverage service is an integral and indispensable part of intercity rail passenger service, and it is clear that substantial revenues would be lost if this service were eliminated. The percentage of transportation revenues which might be attributed to the food and beverage account should be less than 10 percent." (from report 97-783, Aug. 19)

The language in the Senate report (97-546, Sept. 16, legislative day: Sept. 8) is identical except as follows: It opens, "The Committee joins the House in recognizing the progress Amtrak has made . . ."; Near the start of the second paragraph, after the word innovations, the phrase "including bakery and snack-type foods," is inserted; and the final sentence in the House version is dropped. The report language was necessitated by language in the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1981 (Sept. '81 News). ■



Florida's New Train

After an absence of 26 years, through Miami-Tampa passenger train service is expected to return on Nov. 20, when Amtrak and the State of Florida inaugurate the "Silver Palm."

Running on a 256-mile Seaboard Coast Line route, the new train with its 5:10 schedule will offer the fastest ground transportation between Florida's two largest cities. Motorists require nearly 6 hours to make the trip (281 miles primarily on I-75 and U.S. 41), while the fastest intercity bus schedule requires 6:55 (the majority of bus schedules range from 8 to 9 hours).

A 403(b) train, the "Silver Palm" will be jointly funded by Amtrak and the state. Dedicated connecting buses will link the train at Winter Haven with Orlando and Disney World. The train will consist of Amfleet II equipment and will be operated by one crew over the entire route, thanks to an interdivisional labor agreement. ■