

# RAILPASSENGERS



## WEEKLY HOTLINE

Issue #1,385–February 21, 2025

### REMINDER!

Starting next week (2/28), we are changing the distribution list that we send the Hotline to each and every week. If you want to remain in the know and continue to receive this newsletter - please click the link below and fill out the short form.

Thank you!

[Click Here to Sign Up!](#)

**Share your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to issues you may have had on a recent Amtrak trip.** Thanks to your support and participation in previous surveys, we have been able to take the passenger's voice straight to Congress and Amtrak Executives. Help us keep hammering the message home by sharing this survey with other passengers!



## Association News

### Secretary Duffy Draws Protests as He Announces “Review” of Federal Grant to California High-Speed Rail Project

[By Sean Jeans-Gail | VP of Gov't Affairs + Policy](#)

Secretary Sean Duffy, flanked by members of California's Congressional delegation, announced that his Department of Transportation (DOT) will be holding up the distribution of federal grant funds awarded to the California High-Speed Rail project at a media event held in Los Angeles Union Station. However, high-speed rail supporters gathered in the wings of LAUS, drowning out prepared speeches with boos and chants of “build the rail”.

In a press release, Secretary Duffy stated that the review will focus in on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA) funding plan as a critical factor in determining whether roughly \$4 billion in federal grant funding should remain committed to the initial operating segment between Merced and Bakersfield, currently under construction in the state's Central Valley.

“I am directing my staff to review and determine whether the CHSRA has followed through on the commitments it made to receive billions of dollars in federal funding,” said Secretary Duffy. “If not, I will have to consider whether that money could be given to deserving infrastructure projects elsewhere in the United States.”

Secretary Duffy did open his statements to the press by clarifying that he isn't against passenger rail or high-speed rail as a mode, pointing to his support for the [Brightline West project](#), which will connect Las Vegas to southern California via 200 mph service.

After reviewing the press release and the media event, it's not clear what precisely the DOT is meant to investigate, since most of the issues raised are a matter of public record. CHSRA's [business plans](#) are all publicly available, its [funding plans](#) are publicly available, and their [capital outlay and budget reports](#) are all publicly available. CHSRA emphasized this fact in its response to the Secretary's announcement.

"Of approximately \$13 billion spent on the project, \$10.5 billion have been funded exclusively by the State of California (not hundreds of billions) and those expenditures have created over \$22 billion in economic impact," state the Authority. "Every dollar of the project is accounted for and has been thoroughly reviewed by the independent Office of the Inspector General [whose] sole focus is improving oversight and accountability of the California high-speed rail project."

The major discrepancy between the two seems to center around one crucial point of contention: CHSRA's funding program assumes that the federal government will act as stable partner that it can continue to work with in future rounds of grantmaking, whereas Secretary Duffy's statement assumes California will receive no federal assistance going forward.

(It's worth taking a moment to emphasize that, for highway projects, states are only expected to cover 20 percent of project costs, with the federal government footing the rest of the bill. This is inverted for California's high-speed rail project, where 80 percent of funding has come from the state. Credit to transit and housing advocate Alfred Twu for [raising this point](#).)

[CLICK HERE TO CONTINUE READING](#)

## Sightseer Lounge Returning To Eagle

*[By Jim Mathews / President & CEO](#)*

Some good news for passengers on the long-beleaguered Texas Eagle – we learned this week that Amtrak's Spring 2025 consist plan includes putting a Sightseer Lounge back on that train after a very, very long absence.

The car should be back on the Eagle consist by March 3.

"That's confirmed," an Amtrak manager told me this week. "That's good news, since it's been such a long-standing request."

It's part of a larger effort this Spring to add as much capacity and as many amenities to the network nationwide as possible, responding to all-time record-high ridership and demand that far, far outstrips supply. The Eagle also got some attention last Summer in time for the Fall schedule, when Amtrak was able to scrounge up a Sleeper and a Coach as dedicated Sunset Limited through-cars.

In Amtrak's five-season schedule, "Spring" runs from March through mid-May.

Another big and very welcome change is coming courtesy of the California Zephyr, which will be operating a third full Sleeper and a third Coach. It's a much bigger consist than Amtrak has been able to operate in previous years, and it should make a difference since last year that train was sold out more often than not.

These and a few other additions are all possible thanks to [Amtrak finally catching up with the backlog of laid-up coaches and Sleepers parked during the COVID pandemic](#). There are still 33 more cars that need to be put back in service, but those are all either coming back now or will be re-entering service during the Spring season. And importantly, Amtrak notes, the COVID-era mothballed cars are all back in play.

In other Spring additions, the Cardinal will get a third coach, the Floridian will get a third sleeper, the Coast Starlight will get a third coach, and Empire Builder gets a fourth coach, and the Southwest Chief will get a second sleeper and a third coach added to the consist. Also, as is typical, the Heartland Flyer will get its third coach as the season begins.

## DOT Nominee and Project 2025 Alum Faces Senate Questions

*[By Sean Jeans-Gail, V.P. of Gov' Affairs + Policy](#)*

Steven Bradbury, President Donald Trump's nominee to be Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation, [faced questions today from the Senate Committee on Science, Transportation and Commerce](#) on the work he performed in prior presidential administrations. Until recently, Mr. Bradbury worked for the Heritage Foundation, and helped to draft the transportation provisions included in Project 2025, which included calls to eliminate several key rail and transit programs.

In response to the series of recent air disasters, many senators focused

their lines of inquiry on Mr. Bradbury's record of decisions on aviation oversight and safety programs during his tenure in the first Trump Administration's DOT.

However, several senators highlighted issues that are affecting key passenger rail programs.

**Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)** spoke about her legislation **requiring the Amtrak's Board of Directors comply with federal open meetings requirements**, while directing Amtrak to disclose certain vendor agreements with its State partners (Rail Passengers Association has endorsed the Amtrak Board transparency provision in both the Senate and the House).

Mr. Bradbury responded that he supports transparency and, given the surge in investment in Amtrak infrastructure via the IIJA, he wants to take a "hard look" at previously approved grants distributed to projects via discretionary grant programs. He also indicated that he would focus on the Amtrak's operating recovery ratio as the primary metric for success.

"You know, just before Covid hit, Amtrak was on the brink of finally being in the black for the first time across their network," said Mr. Bradbury. "Of course, that still... assumes a lot of grant money coming from Congress. It was a real tragedy for Amtrak what Covid did, in terms of hitting it, and it's still coming back, but we really need to take a hard look at the economics."

**[Editor's note:** Amtrak ridership is back! The railroad set [a new all-time ridership record in Fiscal Year 2024](#), carrying 32.8 million passengers, surpassing pre-Covid ridership and ticket revenue levels. It's also worth reading our own Jim Mathews [on the profitability fallacy](#) that plagues so many policymakers (although Mr. Bradbury did appear to briefly acknowledge this fact in his reference to annual Congressional grants).]

[CONTINUE READING HERE](#)

## Confidentiality Snag Delays Late-Trains Case

[by Jim Mathews / President & CEO](#)

A resolution in Amtrak's 2022 STB late-trains case against Union Pacific has hit a snag, with a dispute over the release of what Amtrak says is commercially sensitive information delaying more action in the case until at least mid-March.

Amtrak is accusing UP of releasing proprietary Amtrak information in its final reply brief to the docket on Dec. 23, while UP says the information is UP's to release and not Amtrak's to block. That kind of dispute really isn't in the Surface Transportation Board's scope, [so STB said today it is giving Amtrak until March 13 to go to a Federal court to press its case that UP has no right to disclose whatever it disclosed in that Dec. 23 brief.](#)

If Amtrak files a motion in Federal court to block the information before March 14, STB says it will order Union Pacific to submit a public, redacted version of the Dec. 23 brief by March 17; if Amtrak doesn't go to court, however, "the Board will treat that as an abandonment or waiver of the claim that the protective order restricts UP's ability to publicly disclose the information that is the subject of Amtrak's motion in this proceeding."

I know it's a lot of legalese, and a lot of head-scratching since what precisely is being challenged remains a secret. But one thing is very clear: STB intends to keep pressing on with this proceeding regardless of this dispute: "Any action regarding this confidentiality dispute will not operate to stay, or otherwise delay, the proceeding before the Board," STB said today in its order.

The dispute temporarily held up releasing non-party replies in this case to the public docket – including the non-party reply your Association filed in this case. STB wanted to be sure that none of the nine non-party replies that were filed implicated the confidential information that's in dispute. UP and Amtrak looked over all the filings and concluded that none of them, including ours, touched on those issues so STB released all the replies to the public docket.

[TO CONTINUE READING, INCLUDING A LINK TO OUR NON-PARTY REPLY, CLICK HERE](#)

## Remembering Phoebe Snow

Brian Rosenwald (also known as Phoebe Snow), retired Amtrak VP, beloved innovator in passenger rail customer service, and the executive credited with introducing the [Pacific Parlour Car](#) with its special dining menu and wine-tastings to the Coast Starlight, died Wednesday at 72 following a brief illness.

"Brian... oversaw the rebuilding of vintage cars and created an exclusive club for sleeper car occupants," [the family wrote in an obituary published this week](#). "Brian scheduled on-board wine tastings and entertainment and gave a controversial and characteristically visionary 100% service guarantee. It was all a monster hit. Brian was proud to be an excellent boss who believed in his employees. He retired as a Vice President at Amtrak in 2013."

Following retirement, Brian, known later as Phoebe, "embarked upon a new labor of love," the family said, "becoming co-owner of Taste Food & Wine on Jarvis, where she conducted richly informative and entertaining tastings."

Griff Hubbard, a colleague and video-blogger who was with the Texas Eagle Marketing & Performance Organization revenue-managing the Texas Eagle, did an extensive interview and conversation with Phoebe about Amtrak, trains, customer-service, and Brian's story. [You can find that on YouTube by clicking here.](#)

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## Field Global Notes

### Saudi Arabia is Rapidly Increasing its Rail Network

By Philip Mayer, Association Volunteer

Saudi Arabia has multiple rail projects in the works as it is attempting to greatly enhance its infrastructure. The state-owned Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) is constructing a freight and passenger rail line between Kuwait and Riyadh. SAR is also constructing the first rail line between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Finally, SAR is teaming up with a private Italian luxury brand to create a luxury passenger rail line.

#### Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to build rail connection

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are deep in the planning stage of building a rail line which will extend from Kuwait to Riyadh, and eventually connect to Oman in the south. Late in January 2025, Kuwait awarded the tender to conduct a planning study for the first phase to Proyapi, a Turkish consulting company.

Nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) seek to build more connectivity. Trains on the GCC Railway will depart from Kuwait City and travel south for 111 miles to Al Nuwaiseeb and then connect with the border with Saudi Arabia. The GCC Railway will eventually reach the Saudi city of Damman which currently has connections to Riyadh. Freight and passenger trains will share a single track. The planning stage is expected to last for one year.

The rail line is expected to have the capacity of carrying 3,300 passengers daily across six round trip journeys. The train will have a top speed of 186 miles per hour. The Kuwait-Damman segment is expected to be completed by 2028, while the segment connecting Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman is expected to be completed by 2030.

A two-hour train between Riyadh and Kuwait City is a vast improvement over the current ten-hour drive. Currently, most transport is conducted on the road network, which is very congested and produces far more greenhouse gas than a train would. The rail line will greatly improve travel and logistics between nations in the Gulf Cooperation Council region.

#### ***Dream of the Desert, an upcoming Saudi luxury rail line***

SAR, in partnership with Arsenale S.p.A., an Italian luxury brand, are planning a luxury passenger train called *Dream of the Desert* which is expected to enter service in the third quarter of 2026. The 1,300-mile trip will run between Riyadh and Qurayyat, a city in the northern part of the nation close to the border with Jordan.

*Dream of the Desert* will have 34 suites in 14 carriages. The restaurant car will feature panoramic views of the desert and the menu will be designed by both local and international chefs.

The interiors of the trains will be designed by Aline Asmar d'Amman, an architect known for her work on luxury hotels in Paris, Venice, and other cities. Her vision for the train is to blend heritage with contemporary elegance. The reception lounges are designed to resemble majlis, the room in a Saudi house where guests are welcomed. They feature sculpted lighting, and carved wood. To match the surrounding views, sandy tones are heavily utilized in the interiors. The bedrooms have a more contemporary motif, resembling art deco.

Asmar d'Amman describes her vision as "craft is the most extraordinary bridge," she says, "allowing a seamless blend of tradition and innovation—a quintessential luxury passed from one hand to another."

Dream of the Desert is another example of the rise of luxury train lines. A

sister rail line, Dolce Vita Orient Express, will open in April, and this summer, *Dreamstar*, an overnight luxury train between Los Angeles and San Francisco will open.

### **Saudi Arabia to Construct a Rail “Landbridge” to connect the Red Sea With the Persian Gulf**

While Saudi Arabia has a rail line connecting Riyadh with the northern parts of the nation, there is no rail line traveling from east to west. That will change with the completion of the Saudi Landbridge, which will connect the city of Jeddah, on the Red Sea, with Riyadh, where trains can connect to Damman on the Persian Gulf. The project is expected to cost \$7bn to construct and is expected to be completed in 2032.

Passenger trains are expected to have a maximum speed of 155 mph, compared to 87 mph for freight trains.

Talks of building a horizontal railroad which would traverse the Arabian Peninsula have happened since at least 2004, but it is now becoming a reality, with construction slated to begin very shortly. This project will be designed and constructed by Saudi firms with substantial help from Chinese engineering firms under the name of the Saudi Chinese Landbridge Consortium (SCLC). European and Canadian firms will also be lending their expertise to this project.

**Please email [Joe Aiello](#) if you have any local, state or regional stories/projects that you would like to see get highlighted in the Hotline.**


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## **What’s Your Story?**

**We want to hear from you**

**What does passenger rail mean to you and your community?**

2025 is going to be a big year for passenger rail advocacy, and we want to know why it matters to you. If passenger rail helps you commute to work, see family, get services you need, or anything else, please tell us.



We’re gearing up for a big year of advocacy in 2025, and we want your stories to help us connect to elected officials, government agencies, and local advocates on why passenger rail matters.

We want you to tell us what passenger rail means to you and your community. Whether it helps you commute to work, see family and friends, get services you need, or anything else, please tell us.

[Tell Us Your Story!](#)

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## **RAILNATION:DC 2025**

**RAILNATION: DC 2025**

**Regional Summits  
& Day on the Hill**



March 24th - April 3rd, 2025

## Rail Passengers Office & Conference Room



Come to DC to tell members of Congress **YOUR** passenger-rail story! This year, our Spring RailNation:DC events will expand to include two full weeks of visits to Capitol Hill, and we need you to stand up and be counted! Visits, along with workshops to help you prepare, will take place over a two-week period from March 24th to April 3rd and will be broken into sessions for nine regions around the country.



(Click the links below to view the agenda for each region)

March 24th & 25th - [Northeast and Mid-Atlantic](#)

March 26th & 27th - [Southeast, Southern, and South Central](#)

March 31st & April 1st - [Midwest](#)

April 2nd & April 3rd - [Northwest, Southwest, and Mountains/Plains](#)

**NOTICE!** We have received a number of emails from registrants who have been confused by the date listed on the confirmation email. The system we use is defaulting to the first day of the regional sessions, which is March 24th. We are working with the CRM team to correct this, but for now - if you have registered for any of the other dates, those are the dates you attend in DC. Please email our Director of Community Engagement & Organizing, Joe Aiello at [jaiello@narprrail.org](mailto:jaiello@narprrail.org) if you have any further questions.

**REGISTER HERE!**

Registration ends at midnight eastern on March 14th, 2025

## Council Business Meeting

Saturday, March 29th, 10:30am-5pm.

**Price: \$75 for in-person**

\* Lunch is included

\* Free for those who will be streaming online

**Location:** [Open Gov Hub](#)

1100 13th St NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005

[Additional Info](#)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

**Deadline to register is Friday, March 14th at Midnight eastern. Due to building security, we are not allowed to have "walk-ups" for this event - so you **MUST** register by 3/14.**

## Hotline Links

A curated selection of passenger rail and transportation stories from this week. Check out our social media feeds on [Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#) to read breaking news and join the conversation!

- [Billions in Rail Funding Was Available. Utah Grabbed Almost None of It., Building Salt Lake](#)

ICYMI: Rail Passengers Board Member, Utah Rail Passengers Executive Director, and member of the Salt Lake City Planning Commission Mike Christensen writes this piece to educate on the negative effects that the Beehive State could be facing by not getting involved in federal transportation grants through the IJJA or Corridor ID program.

- [UO research looks at how climate is affecting public transportation, OregonNews](#)

Research by Nicole Ngo, associate professor with the UO's School of

Planning Public Policy and research reveals how climate change reshapes travel behaviors across 48 major U.S. cities over 17 years! Her analysis of extreme weather impacts on public transport highlights national trends that can guide transit agencies.

- [Amtrak gathers private sector partners to discuss future rail projects and endeavors](#), **Mass Transit**

Amtrak pulled together a round table discussion with their many industry partners from around the country, as the railroad enters a "new era of rail". New tunnels, bridges, upgraded ADA stations, and fleet replacement were all on the docket.

- [Canadian advocates back Detroit train route amid tension with U.S.](#), **Axios Detroit**

Part of a larger Chicago to Toronto proposal, advocates in Windsor, Ontario are pushing for more public transit options to neighboring Detroit - especially after the news that a city tunnel bus between the two will soon be cut.

- [NCTD Celebrates COASTER'S 30 Years of Service](#), **North County Transit District**

Celebrate the 30th anniversary of the COASTER commuter rail service in San Diego County as the North County Transit District (NCTD) unveils its new bi-level fleet

- [South Dakota resolution calls for support for Amtrak service](#), **Trains**

South Dakota Rep. Tim Goodwin (R-Rapid City)'s House Concurrent Resolution 6008 takes aim at a "never say never" attitude towards passenger rail support in the Mount Rushmore State.

- [Coastal rail service closure scheduled for routine maintenance](#), **NBC 7 San Diego**

More work is being done to stabilize the Del Mar Bluffs this coming weekend between San Diego and Oceanside in Southern California.

- [MBTA locomotive engineers ratify 5-year pact with Keolis](#), **Progressive Railroadng**

The MBTA Commuter Rail locomotive engineers have struck a new 5-year deal with the operator of the authority's 14 commuter lines in the Greater Boston Area.



**[WE ARE NOW ON BLUE SKY!](#)**

If you aren't following Rail Passengers on social media, you should be! We are covering all the breaking news America's passengers need to stay informed on local, regional, and national issues.

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## Upcoming Events

- [RailNation: DC 2025](#)  
March 24–April 3
- [21st Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#)  
April 7–8



Rail Passengers Association members get a special discounted registration rate for the [21st Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#), April 7-8, in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

Presentations are already scheduled from Rail Passengers Association President/CEO Jim Mathews, the Texas Department of Transportation,

Transportation for America, a Texas Transit Panel, with more to follow. This conference is a unique blend of both important passenger and freight rail issues of the day.

The normal EARLY BIRD registration fee for the two-day all-rail event is \$349, but we have made a limited number of reduced registrations for Rail Passengers Association members at \$199. This includes meals and access to all presentations.

To obtain the reduced \$199.00 registration which includes meals, you must enter "RPA" in the Registration Code field and press enter. The reduced price will not show once the block of registrations is reached.

The conference hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn, which is attached to the Hurst Conference Center. A special rate of \$124 a night is available until the room block is filled.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE - INCLUDING SPEAKERS & HOTEL INFO](#)

**Please contact Joe Aiello ([jaiello@narprail.org](mailto:jaiello@narprail.org)) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and on-line) of upcoming events!**

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## Staff Updates

Your staff is at the table, in the field, having the conversations that make a difference for passengers across the country. Learn what they're up to each week and how you can support your Association's key missions!

- **Jim Mathews, President & CEO**, split his time between Association business and fielding queries from IIJA allies – both inside and outside government – as we work to preserve the passenger-rail investment we all worked so hard over the past six years to secure.
- **Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Policy**, spent the week working with members of our Council of Representatives to prepare for the RailNation:DC advocacy summit, as well as covering USDOT's California HSR announcement, and the nomination hearing of the Deputy Secretary.
- **Jonsie Stone, Chief of Staff**, will be out on leave for the next 2 weeks. For membership or 2024 tax receipt questions, please contact Kimberly Notarianni at [knotarianni@narprail.org](mailto:knotarianni@narprail.org). For donation and partnership questions, please contact Lili Leonard at [lleonard@narprail.org](mailto:lleonard@narprail.org).
- **Joe Aiello, Director of Community Engagement & Organizing**, focused a lot of his attention on DC planning this week - helping Sean with a series of workshop briefings, worked on a Hill meeting submission form and an invite template, and responded to questions from members and attendees.
- **Kimberly Notarianni, Membership Consultant**, has been concentrating this week on the process of transitioning from our NeonCRM to our new CharityEngine CRM. If you joined RPA after September 5, 2024, this update will not impact your constituent portal. For all members and donors (whether on auto-renewal, new, or renewing) who previously had a Neon login and portal, please note that your Neon data has been fully transferred to CharityEngine. As of midnight on February 18, 2025, all transactions and access to the Neon membership portal have been closed. To access your account, please follow the instructions provided below. A direct link is also available on our website. We sincerely appreciate your ongoing support and patience as we navigate this transition. Your understanding is invaluable as we work through any minor issues that may arise in the coming weeks.
- **Lili Leonard, Development Assistant**, continues her work on the Business Advisory Council and corporate offerings, as well as assisting donors with their contributions. Sincerest thanks to our members and donors for your support, now more than ever!

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Starting **Wednesday, February 19th**, all membership, donation, and event registration transactions are being processed through **CharityEngine**. **Neon** is no longer the Association's CRM of record.

If you have the **Neon User Center** bookmarked, please update it to: <https://membership.railpassengers.org/usercenter>.

Your **Neon username and Account ID** have already been transferred to CharityEngine. However, because your **password was unique to Neon**, you will need to reset it when logging in for the first time.

Below is a screenshot of the **CharityEngine Constituent Portal** for reference.

Log in



User Name

Password

Remember me
 [Forgot password?](#)

LOG IN

Over the coming weeks and months, we will continue to enhance the system. If you have any questions or need assistance, please please [email Kimberly A. Notarianni](mailto:Kimberly.A.Notarianni)

As with any upgrade, there may be minor hiccups. Your Association staff is here to help and if necessary, work with CharityEngine to gain the answers. We are excited by the full complement of options and benefits that will be available to our supporters through one system.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation.



## Rail Passengers Webinars

*Miss out on our past events? You can watch them on our [YouTube channel](#) or through our website at [railpassengers.org/webinars](http://railpassengers.org/webinars)*



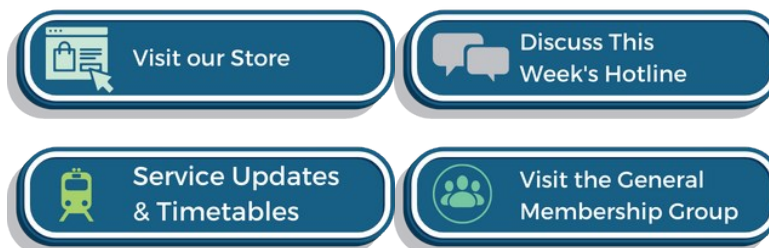
## We Have Merch!

### OUR ICONIC STATEMENT

For years, the “I’d Rather Be On The Train” bumper sticker was a favorite among our members, with many requesting extras, so they could share with their family & friends. Over time, one of the most asked questions whenever we are in the field has been if we are ever going to bring that sticker back (one day!).

We are, **ONCE AGAIN**, dusting off this classic statement for our holiday merch drop - and this year, with a well known historic twist,

**\*\*Do you own Association gear? Show us your selfies and let us know what products you want to see next! Contact [Joe Aiello](#) for merch information and questions about our products.\*\***



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# Rail Passengers Timetables

Updated 1/9/2025

Thanks to a collaborative effort between Rail Passengers NYS Council Member Nathanael Nerode & [juckins.net](http://juckins.net)'s Chris Juckins, we have been able to completely update our timetables resource page.

[CLICK HERE](#)

LOOKING FOR SMARTER  
WAYS TO DONATE?



MAKING A CONTRIBUTION  
HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Do more with your donations. If you have questions about employer match, gifting a membership, or other questions about how to make a bigger impact, let us know! Your staff is here to help with:

- Online Donations
- Donor Advised Funds
- Employer Match
- RPA Signature Visa Card
- Gift of Membership
- and More!

With multiple secure, protected methods of payment, you have more flexibility in the way dues are paid. Skip the hassle and [contact us](#) today for help setting up automatic or online payments.

- Setup ACH or E-Check with your bank of choice
- Use a Debit or Credit Card to pay online, or
- Send a check to 1200 G Street NW Suite 520 Washington, DC 20005

## Other Ways to Make an Impact this Holiday Season

Did you know that individual donors make up more than two-thirds (67%) of charitable giving in the U.S., and that many of those donations are made in the last two months of the year? As you make your year-end giving plans, please consider a contribution to Rail Passengers Association using the methods below – making a meaningful difference for passenger rail in the U.S. while maximizing your tax advantages and fulfilling minimum retirement withdrawal requirements.

### Donor Advised Fund (DAF)

Donor-advised funds are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the United States because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to give to charity. [Click here](#) to learn more and consult with your financial advisor to determine if establishing a Donor Advised Fund is right for you.

### Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are minimum amounts that IRA and retirement plan account owners generally must withdraw annually starting with the year they reach age 73. [Click here](#) to learn more about RMDs and consult with your financial advisor to determine if an RMD is right for you.

### Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a direct transfer of assets from an IRA to a qualified charity. QCDs are a popular way for Americans 70 ½ years or older to donate to charity while also satisfying their RMDs. [Click here](#) to learn more about QCDs and consult with your financial advisor to determine if a QCD is right for you.

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# Member & Donor Notices

- **The Rail Passengers Association is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 36-2615221**
- **To help facilitate dissemination of electronic thank you receipts,** please make sure your contact information, **specifically your email address,** is up-to-date in your Neon profile.
- **If you need assistance with your membership,** please call the Office at 202-408-8362.
- **While our staff continues to work remotely, we are unable to provide permanent membership cards.** You can print a temporary membership card by creating an account at [www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org) (select "My Account" on the homepage).
- **Complete all information!** -- Before sealing your envelope, PLEASE double-check the credit card information on the buck slip!
  - Print credit card information clearly.
  - **Include an expiration date, month and year, as well as the CVV number.**
  - Without **COMPLETE** information, your membership renewal or donation can't be processed.
- **If you have your financial institution send a check on your behalf,** without a buckslip, PLEASE instruct them to add:
  - a notation in the memo field if the payment is for membership dues or a donation, AND,
  - your Rail Passengers Association member ID. If we have multiple members with the same name, i.e., John Smith, it can be hard to identify the correct member to attribute the payment, without the member ID.



Rail Passengers Association members have access to a full service, nationwide federal credit union with extensive product and service offerings. Signature FCU is the exclusive provider of the [Rail Passengers Association-branded Visa credit card](#) with our logo, which supports our work by giving back to our organization, and gives you 1 point for every \$1 you spend to redeem for travel and merchandise. The card has no annual fee, no balance transfer fees, no foreign transaction fees, and has a very low interest rate.



Rail Passengers Association Earns Coveted 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Rail Passengers Association's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Our Charity Navigator profile can be found by clicking [here](#).

**If you have questions, feedback, or submissions for next week's hotline, send us your thoughts! Help us spread the word about your local, regional, and national passenger rail wins.**



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:





# RAIL PASSENGERS

EST. 1967

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[www.railpassengers.org](http://www.railpassengers.org)