

SAVE THE DATE FOR RUN'S ANNUAL MEETING / PUBLIC FORUM!

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*By Richard Rudolph, Ph.D.
Chair, Rail Users' Network*

Please join us at the Rail Users' Network's Annual Meeting / Public Forum taking place at the Greater Cleveland's Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) headquarters at 1240 W. 6th St. on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015.

This event, which is free and open to the public, will provide an opportunity to learn more about RUN's history and current activities, the role that the local Citizen Advisory Committee plays at the GCRTA, and the services that the local transit agency and Amtrak provide and their

plans for the future. In keeping with our shared vision and past precedents, time will be set aside so that attendees can share their ideas about how transit and passenger rail services can be improved.

The morning program will begin at the Tower City Rapid Rail Station. We will meet in the Rapid train lobby at 7:30 a.m. and then take the 7:37 a.m. train to the Central Rail Facility and the newly built Little Italy Station via the Red Line and eastbound on the Blue/Green Light Rail line to Shaker Square or Tower City for lunch and then walk back to the CCRTA headquarters.

The afternoon program will take place between 1:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. It will include a brief RUN annual meeting and several featured speakers including: Joseph Calabrese, Chief Executive Officer, Cleveland Regional Transportation Authority; Don Hill, Chair / Steve Albrow, Vice Chair, RTA Citizen Advisory Board; Ken Prendergast, Executive Director, All Aboard Ohio; and Mike Murphy, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Amtrak Long Distance Services. Time will also be provided for members of the audience to ask questions and to express their concerns and ideas.

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BUILD NEW HUDSON RAIL TUNNELS—NOW!

By Andrew Albert

There's a rail crisis building underneath the Hudson River that—pending immediate action—could affect the economies of not only New York and New Jersey, but the entire Northeast, and by extension, the entire country. There was a crisis even before Superstorm Sandy hit the tri-state region, and dumped copious amounts of water throughout the tunnels under the East and Hudson Rivers. On something of a regular basis, a breakdown of a regular train either in or immediately adjacent to the Hudson River tunnels causes massive delays to commuters of both NJ Transit and

Amtrak. Depending on where the breakdown occurred, it could also affect the Long Island Rail Road.

The problem is due to the fact that when these tunnels were constructed over a century ago, no back-up was built. One tunnel with two tracks—one for each direction—and that was it. If something happened in one direction (or heaven forbid both directions), then rail gridlock occurred. It was imperative that we needed another rail tunnel 50 years ago, but now the situation is much more critical.

Superstorm Sandy flooded the existing tunnels, and work must be performed—as it has been and will continue to be—in various East

River subway tunnels. Closing one rail tunnel for repairs will reduce the amount of hourly trains to around six trains—a nearly 80% drop in service, and a catastrophe for the Northeast.

It's not as though there haven't been plans for new tunnels. Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey killed the "Access to the Region's Core" project, asserting that New Jersey would have been the only state to pay for cost overruns, a claim the Feds deny. A new plan, known as the Gateway Plan, was an improvement over the ARC plan, especially in regard to where it would have landed in New York City, immediately adjacent to the existing Penn Station.

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WE CAN'T HANDLE IT—YOU CAN'T GET THERE

By *Chuck Bode*

A bit of history from the days when America could do it. In the 1920s, a large congress was held north of Chicago. 500,000 attendees got there by rail. The ingenious solution: use the L cars on the interurban railway. As late as the Atlanta Olympics in the '80s, we rose to the occasion. With the help of the FTA, new bus orders for many cities were sent to Atlanta to bolster the local fleet. After their Olympic duty, the buses went on to their new owners for their 12 years of service.

Plan ahead, look for solutions, provide the transit service needed. Unfortunately that was the old America, the “we can do it” America. Today's almost colonial, banana republic of America can't do it. Public schools do not educate. Infrastructure is inadequate. The political system has ground to a halt. Transportation—what is that?

This year, a World Meeting of Families is being held in Philadelphia, a weeklong event. Projected attendance is about 40,000. That seems manageable. Then it was decided that the Pope should come. Earlier this year that was arranged for the closing weekend. Hotels for miles around were completely booked months ago. Organizers project four million people to come for the two days, apparently two million per day. The Philadelphia Inquirer described it as the most massive planned event in Philadelphia history. Now comes the need to transport them.

The Philadelphia region has one of the country's larger rail transportation networks: Amtrak in three directions, 13 SEPTA commuter rail lines, two rapid transit lines, and nine light rail lines. PATCO operates another rapid transit line. NJ Transit operates one commuter rail line. SEPTA, NJ Transit and DART in Delaware also run well over 1,000 buses in the area. Altogether, hundreds of stations and capacity for moving perhaps several hundred thousand people, if a well-organized bus service was set up to get people to the stations.

The crunch period is on a weekend. Within 150 miles of Philadelphia are several major

cities with large commuter rail and bus systems. There were months to plan and make arrangements. Surely buses and trains, along with crews, could have been borrowed. Several months is ample time for training. The fixed-capacity facilities that are most limited are parking spaces near the rail stations. Many suburban churches have large parking lots. Some suburban employers also have large parking lots that are empty on weekends. The opportunity was there to implement a system of feeder buses from those parking lots to the stations. The opportunity was there to design schedules to maximize entry points to the transportation system so that traffic congestion was minimized at all locations. The opportunity was there to set up bus only streets to and near the event in the city so that buses could move urban dwellers to the event.

First comes the great silence, the “we cannot tell the public anything.” Supposedly the Secret Service is involved. As one person reported they said, “Of course there is no news, we are the Secret Service.” Then the rumors. Then slowly come the announcements: almost all of the transit service will be closed; people should expect to walk miles to attend.

Amtrak, as usual, has little capacity and requires reservations. Until after our newsletter's deadline, there was not one word of any additional cars or trains—or even if Amtrak would operate. On Friday, August 21 we learned that Amtrak will operate. However, there will be some complications. For instance at 30th Street, where all Amtrak and many SEPTA passengers will arrive and depart the rest rooms will be closed and there will be no taxis. Facilities will be available outside, whatever that means. The food court will only be accessible from outside the station. The only water fountain in the station is in the corridor to the small toilets in the food court—will it be in the closed area?

Amtrak projects normal service through Friday September 25 with extra coaches added to “some trains.” Special timetables were issued for the weekend. Two extra trains to and from Washington were added

Saturday and one was added Sunday. What more could we expect from the company that prioritized baggage cars over coaches?

The first announcement was that most SEPTA rail service would not be operated. Eventually, 18 commuter rail stations were selected. Passengers could only ride inward in the morning and out in the evening. There is limited parking at the stations, the largest lot is 1,600 spaces and most have much less capacity. 175,000 tickets were to be sold for each day—only on the Web. Note that normal fares cannot be used; those paying for weekly and monthly tickets are out of luck. The first attempt failed when the website crashed with hundreds of thousands of people trying to buy tickets. The next attempt was a lottery. Initial reports were that about 20,000 tickets were not sold.

Now SEPTA reports that more are unclaimed because everyone with each party applied in hopes of getting tickets, but only one person needed to claim their tickets. Is the public beginning to give up on this event because of the difficulty getting there?

The only SEPTA Commuter Rail stations to be open for boarding are:
Airport Line: Airport Terminals A, B, and C/D plus Eastwick
Chestnut Hill West Line: Chestnut Hill West
Fox Chase Line: Fox Chase
Lansdale/Doylestown Line: Pennbrook and Fort Washington
Manayunk/Norristown Line: Norristown Transportation Center
Media/Elwyn Line: Media, Promos
Paoli/Thorndale Line: Paoli, Radnor
Trenton Line: Levittown, Croydon, Cornwells Heights
Warminster Line: Warminster
West Trenton Line: Woodbourne
Wilmington/Newark Line: Wilmington, Marcus Hook

Notice that Trenton is absent. No one from the New York City area can come; there will be no connection to NJ Transit! Residents living near the few open stations are beginning to realize they are trapped for the weekend.

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NJT RAISES FARES, CUTS SERVICE DESPITE GROWING OPPOSITION

By *David Peter Alan*

Nobody was surprised when the Board of Directors of New Jersey Transit (NJT) voted unanimously to raise fares and cut service. It happened on July 15. The fare increase was modest compared to previous fare hikes; about 9% for most riders. There are also service cuts. A few bus routes and portions of other bus routes will be eliminated, while service on others will be reduced. On the rail side, the 12:32 a.m. train from Hoboken west of Montclair on the Montclair-Boonton Line will be eliminated, as will the 12:45 a.m. train from Hoboken on the Pascack Valley Line Sunday through Thursday nights. In the future, the last connecting trains will leave New York at 9:51 and 10:35p.m., respectively.

According to NJT reports, 690 comments were received, opposing the fare increases and service cuts. Many of the people who made statements complained about the poor quality of transit service they already have, even though the existing fares are already high. Despite this strong outpouring of rider frustration, NJT's

management and Board ignored the riders and will implement the original proposal with no modifications. The service cuts will begin in September, and the new fares will start on Oct. 1. In prior fare-increase processes, management often granted a "give-back" to riders by modifying at least one feature of the proposed fare-increase and service-reduction plan. In 2007, the original plan called for eliminating "off-peak" discounts for rail travel outside peak-commuting hours. The discount was saved. It was eliminated in 2010, when most fares went up by 25%, but "off-peak" rail fares increased by 48% for most trips, and as much as 64% for some. Local bus fares were slated to increase from \$1.35 for the first zone to \$1.70, with commensurate increases for longer trips. Instead, the one-zone fare was only increased to \$1.50. The new one-zone bus fare will be \$1.60.

Not all of the comments during the nine hearings held in May at various locations around the State addressed the fare increases directly. Many riders complained about the lack of good service on NJT generally, especially the sort of problems that

commuters going to and from Penn Station, New York experienced. These difficulties have been an ongoing problem, and they flared up again at the end of July, when Garden State commuters experienced service outages and lengthy delays.

Some riders complained that members of NJT's Board of Directors did not attend any of the hearings, so they did not hear the voices of the riders whose mobility they control. This writer received reports that Flora M. Castillo, a Board member who lives in the Atlantic City area, attended a hearing, but none of the other six voting members did. Castillo has been observed riding transit, but the other six voting Board members have not.

There seems to be a new cast of characters among the people who opposed the fare increases and service cuts. While a number of members of the Lackawanna Coalition (including this writer, who made five statements) showed up at the hearings and Board meetings when the changes were announced or considered, only one member

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The Rail Users' Newsletter is published quarterly by the Rail Users' Network, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation.

Current board members include:

Name	Location	Affiliation
Richard Rudolph, Chair	Portland, ME	NARP / TrainRiders Northeast, Maine Rail Group
Andrew Albert, Vice-Chair	New York, NY	New York City Transit Riders Council
Chuck Bode, Membership Secretary	Philadelphia, PA	Tri-State Citizens' Council on Transportation
Gary Prophet, Treasurer	Ossining, NY	Vice President, Empire State Passengers Association
David Peter Alan, Esq.	South Orange, NJ	Lackawanna Coalition
Steve Albro	Cleveland, OH	Cleveland RTA Citizen Advisory Board
Mela Bush-Miles	Boston, MA	Greater 4 Corners Action Coalition (MBTA)
James E. Coston, Esq.	Chicago, IL	Corridor Capital LLC
Bill Engel	Clinton, OH	Ohio Rail Tourism Association
Dana Gabbard	Los Angeles, CA	Southern California Transit Advocates
Steve Hastalis	Chicago, IL	National Federation for the Blind
J.W. Madison	Albuquerque, NM	Rails Inc.
Dave Mitchell	Virginia Beach, VA	Hampton Roads for Rail
Andy Sharpe	Philadelphia, PA	SEPTA

Please send comments, letters to editor or articles for possible publications to the Rail Users' Network at:
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Layout/design editor: Paul Bubny

BI-LEVEL CARS FOR MIDWEST, CALIFORNIA WILL BE LATE—NOBODY'S TALKING



Rendering of a Section 305 bi-level; none have been delivered and it's unclear when they will be.

By F.K. Plous

Remember those 130 Next Generation bi-level coaches that Congress funded in Section 305 of the 2009 Stimulus Act?

The first Section 305 bi-levels were supposed to be here by now, rolling off the assembly line at Nippon Sharyo's new 435,000-square-foot assembly plant at Rochelle, IL and going into service on state-sponsored Amtrak corridor trains in California, Missouri, Illinois and Michigan.

But the cars aren't here. No cars have been delivered so far, and it's not clear when they will become available to expand seating capacity and improve passenger comfort on the 10-fast-growing corridors slated to receive them—three each in California, Michigan and Illinois, and one in Missouri.

And because of a little-known provision in the Stimulus Act, the states may never get the cars at all unless they pay for them with their own funds.

Silence surrounds the backlog—what happened (or failed to happen)? The reasons for the delayed

deliveries are not clear because nobody associated with the procurement is talking publicly (and also because no transportation reporter has asked—so much for media interest in passenger trains in this country).

But based on information from insiders close to the project, here's what we know so far:

- Section 305 of the Stimulus Act established a Next Generation Equipment Committee made up of representatives from Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, the railroad-supply industry and state departments of transportation with passenger-train programs to develop specifications for a new generation of passenger-rail equipment. Next Gen included diesel locomotives, electric engines, single-level coaches, bi-level coaches and Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) trainsets.

- Management of the bi-level car procurement was awarded to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), while procurement of the

Next Gen diesel locomotives that would pull (and push) the Next Gen bi-levels was given to the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

- In 2012, Caltrans awarded the bi-level car procurement to Tokyo-based Nippon Sharyo, which beat out the Spanish builder CAF and Kawasaki Heavy Industries with a bid of \$352.3 million—\$140 million lower than the second-place bidder, CAF, and \$199 million less than Congress had appropriated for the order. The suspiciously low bid set tongues wagging, but the award was not contested, and some state DOT officials began talking about spending the remaining \$199 million in the appropriation on a follow-up order.

- NS said the first cars would be delivered to the states in the fall of 2015.

- But NS had never before built intercity passenger cars for the North American market and did not have a basic design capable of adaptation to the specifications developed by the Section 305 Committee. The company had built commuter cars successfully for several U.S. customers, but the cars were built in Japan as kits and only underwent final fitting out in the U.S. The company had never built a car order entirely with U.S. labor as specified in Section 305, and the new Rochelle plant did not have its own engineering staff. All engineers associated with the project remained in Japan.

- The Crash Energy Management (CEM) technology designed to protect passengers with a “crumple zone” at the end of each car failed its computer simulation and had to be redesigned.

- The roofs of the prototype cars could not be joined to the side and end walls because of an alignment problem.

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GLIMMERS OF LIGHT IN NEW MEXICO

By J.W. Madison

The Southwest Chief

The latest of the many obstacles to the survival of the *SW Chief* concerns Positive Train Control (PTC). At issue is about \$30 million to install PTC in the Kansas City Terminal (KCT) area. Amtrak is supposed to fund at least a part of this (I don't know how much), and says it can't afford it.

Meaning that after years of heroic, and for the moment successful, efforts to save the *Chief* and keep it where it is, suddenly we're hit with the real possibility that the upcoming deadline for installing PTC will do to the *Chief* what all its enemies haven't pulled off so far; namely, forcing a reroute or termination.

But the rollercoaster seems to be heading back up—again. According to Chad Frey at the *Newton Kansan* newspaper, Amtrak and the KCT are sitting down to try to work something out. Another swing from anxious despair to cautious optimism.

The *Kansan* article may be found at:

<http://www.thekansan.com/article/20150707/NEWS/150709632> .

Stay tuned, ladies and gentlemen. Possibly forever.

Albuquerque

1) The "ART" initiative is moving into the fund-seeking phase, with a target opening of service in 2-3 years. "ART" stands for Albuquerque Rapid Transit, the name chosen for what we call BRT. This would operate along Central Ave (old Route 66), the artery we couldn't get a streetcar on in 2007.

John Perry of Rails Inc, an actual transportation planner, states that BRT can only work as it should if it's full-on; dedicated right of way, and light rail-style speeds and distances between stops. Unfortunately, there's already talk of trimming some of the more solid (and expensive) features required for a successful BRT line. More later.

2) The City Council recently received a pitch letter from a company that makes low floor streetcars and "heritage style" trolleys. The pitch is that their system can be built without overhead lines, substations, and the like. The cars are powered by the latest battery technology, with optional hydrogen back-up propulsion. They say this will save about 50% of the cost of construction.

My own primary question is: Are these cars suitable for future expansion to the

Rapid Streetcar mode; that is, service at light rail speeds and distances with multiple-car consists?

A couple of experts I greatly respect are concerned about producing and delivering the hydrogen back-up fuel, and about whether these cars are more suitable as a tourist-oriented amusement ride than they are as true working transit. This last question is to me the Big One, since it goes to whether Albuquerque embraces the touristy goal, the transit goal or both.

City Councilor Isaac Benton, whom I also greatly respect, supports rail transit for Albuquerque and remains interested in a Streetcar line between the Alvarado Transportation Center and the Rail Yards (the "YardBird"), and hopefully South and West to the Hispanic Cultural Center. The concept has received positive response from stakeholders he's talked to, and if it makes the project "more viable fiscally," he is "agreeable to a self-propelled system as opposed to a catenary type."

Having just poured my glass half full, I declare that the prospect of some form of rail transit for Albuquerque still exists.

J.W. Madison is president of Rails Inc, based in Albuquerque, NM.

2015 Schedule of RUN Board Meetings:

Meetings for the remainder of 2015 are scheduled for September 26 (Cleveland, OH) and December 12.

Board meetings take place at the MTA headquarters in New York City from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

For more information, contact Richard Rudolph, Chair, at 207-776-4961.

AMTRAK'S ALBANY AREA UPGRADES CONTINUE

By Gary Prophet

As passengers can vividly see from an Empire Corridor train or from the *Lake Shore Limited*, track and platform work are in full swing at the Rensselaer Amtrak Station. This includes \$154 million in HSR funding which was granted under the ARRA HSIPR program. In combination with other funding to support the Hudson Line Improvement Program, about \$180 million of infrastructure improvement will be completed from 2013 through 2017, through a mix of federal and state funds.

The signal system is being replaced from Poughkeepsie to Schenectady (about 100 miles), which will be buried instead of wires on poles, which are old and constantly damaged by wind and rain, resulting in slow operation until repairs are made. The new signal system will be more reliable, as new underground power cables and electronic track circuits are installed. Also, the long awaited second track will be installed between Albany and Schenectady, eliminated a current 18-mile bottleneck. The ballast has already started to be set and the actual second track will be laid in the Spring of 2016.

The fourth station track at Albany will be built and a new layout of the station switches will be built, which will move several of the interlockings. Back in 2002, a new Albany-Rensselaer station was built, but the planned track improvements were never completed, nor even started, as the actual station building was over budget. Once this project is complete, both the high level platforms (each serving two tracks) will be lengthened to handle 10 to 11 cars on the platforms at once, instead of the current limit of six-car-length platforms. Also, with the fourth track, more efficient operation will occur; as this station handles trains coming from and going to the yard, trains proceeding west to Schenectady, south to NYC, and east to Boston. In addition, engines and empty trains head north about one half mile to



The Rensselaer Amtrak station, now undergoing track and platform work.

a wye to turn trains around. And the *Lake Shore Limited* is combined and separated here into its Boston and NY sections, and other trans have engine changes here as dual mode engines are required for trains going to New York Penn Station. Currently, the *Adirondack* train also has a coach added here for the trip south and in the fall, the dome car is added here for the *Adirondack's* trip to Montreal.

During the major track construction currently ongoing through the late fall 2015, various station tracks are removed from service and in fact, completely removed and replaced. This has resulted in the Boston section of the *Lake Shore Limited* to be canceled on some days, while on other days a stub train operates from Boston to Albany and then passengers must transfer to the full *Lake Shore* from New York. During this time, the Boston sleeper is operated from NY, so the sleeper capacity (three sleeper cars) is the same when the train operates Albany to Chicago. On days when no train operates from Boston to Albany, passengers have been switched to ride on an Acela Express from Boston to New York and board the *Lake Shore* in New York. These changes are

scheduled, and thus known about, a month in advance as the track work proceeds, so passengers are notified well in advance.

In addition, as part of a \$15-million project, the Schenectady station will be completely demolished and a new station will be built in the exact same footprint. The Schenectady station has one platform that serves two tracks and that will remain the same and in fact, since there is a curve at the station location, the new station will continue to have low-level platforms.

Safety improvements will be made at about 10 grade crossings between Poughkeepsie and Albany, and three grade crossings between Albany and Schenectady are likely to be eliminated. Once all of the above is completed, Amtrak will be able to operate higher speeds (more area of 110-mph operation), with a new, reliable signal system and enough station capacity at Albany that trains will not routinely have to wait 30-60 minutes outside of the station, and the 20-minute bottleneck between Albany and Schenectady will be a distant memory.

Gary Prophet is RUN Treasurer and Vice President of the Empire State Passengers Association.

COMMUNITY RAIL IN SWEDEN: BENEFITS TO BUSINESS AND SOCIETY



A train along Sweden's 1,300-kilometer Inlandsbanan line.

By Ken Westcar

In North America, the Inlandsbanan would be an entry in railway history books. Its existence is not about profitability but, rather, an acknowledgement that communities are as important as balance sheets and that infrastructure, once lost, is likely to be lamented by future generations.

This 1,300-km (812-mile) standard-gauge line runs along the inland spine of Sweden from Kristinehamn on Lake Vänern in the south to Gällivare in the north and well above the Arctic Circle. Seasonal passenger services extend as far south as Mora where a connection to SJ (Swedish State Rail) is available. At Gällivare, SJ also offers scheduled passenger services to the port of Narvik in Norway on a line shared, from Kiruna northward, by big-power taconite hauls operated by international mining giant LKAB.

Information on the history and current operations of this line is available at www.inlandsbanan.se and other Web resources, but riding the actual rails provides a much deeper perspective. It's easy to see why the Swedish government saw this long line as a liability after freight volumes, mainly harvested trees, declined and, in 1992, decided to cease operations. Unlike most of North America, where immediate dismantling follows abandonment, the infrastructure was left largely intact. In Europe and Scandinavia, where tracks are generally in public ownership, there's little or no commercial imperative to realize the cash value of scrap or redevelop the land and this often provides for future reinstatement.

Communities along the entire route understood that, if the line was lost, it would be lost forever and a potential tool for mobility and future economic development would disappear. While adjacent highways and secondary roads along the route

are adequate for current transportation needs, some higher level of local thinking has concluded that roads could have limitations on future resource development and tourism. And so they teamed up and purchased the line in its entirety from the Swedish government and restored operations between Mora and Gällivare. The southern-most portion from Mora to Kristinehamn is currently mothballed.

1982-vintage, Swedish-built, diesel multiple units (DMUs), based on a Fiat design, operate in single or two car consists to provide service for local passengers and an increasing number of international tourists during the summer season. The jointed track, exceptionally well maintained, allows operating speed of up to 100 kmh (60 mph) in comfort.

Inlandsbanan is also working hard to bring back the freight business and some success is evident from the occasional locomotive-hauled timber train that competes with trucking in the forest products sector. Climate change issues, driver shortages and limited highway maintenance budgets could eventually tilt the cost balance strongly in favor of the railway. Under globalization, keeping resource industries competitive in a high-cost country, while maintaining the quality of life for rural people, is no mean feat as we know only too well in North America.

Clearly, communities along this fascinating rail route are prepared to pay the price of keeping it as a viable asset. They perceive it as part of their history and future. Although one can argue whether the cost is justifiable, it certainly stands out as a prime example of what people are able to achieve when they challenge more-distant powers with vision and determination. Perhaps a beacon for all of us who advocate for passenger rail?

Ken Westcar is a board member of Transport Action Ontario.

BUILD NEW HUDSON RAIL TUNNELS—NOW!

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New tunnels are essential to cope with the increasing number of people commuting between New York and New Jersey, as well as people commuting from further away, via Amtrak. Indeed, more NJ Transit lines now have a one-seat ride to Penn Station than ever before, including the Northeast Corridor (NEC), North Jersey Coast, Raritan Valley, Morris & Essex and Montclair-Boonton branches. Many thousands more use the Hudson River tunnels who transfer at Secaucus Junction from the Main Line, Bergen County Line and Pascack Valley Line. Of course, all Amtrak trains in the NEC from Washington, Philadelphia and Richmond use the tunnels as well. Having any ONE of these lines down for extended periods of time causes chaos, and the bus service that would be necessary to substitute for any combination of these lines would simply clog the Lincoln Tunnel all by itself.

A healthy trans-Hudson rail service has benefits that far exceed the cost of building a new tunnel for the trains. The Regional Plan Association has a study which shows that property values for New Jersey homes within a half-mile radius of a train station rising \$3,000 for every

minute knocked off the commuting time. These benefits accrued out to a radius of two miles, potentially adding \$18 billion to the assessed property values—a good deal more than the cost of the proposed new tunnels. Employers in both states need fast, frequent rail service to deliver their residents to jobs and services, not to mention entertainment, families, etc.

These facts are not unknown by all the players in the proposed Gateway Plan, such as Governors Cuomo and Christie and the federal government. To their credit, the Obama administration has pushed the Gateway Plan, and Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, hoping to jump-start negotiations on the long-stalled plan, has sought meetings with both Governors to try to work out an agreement. Governor Christie has said he would meet on the plan, but Governor Cuomo has declined, saying the Feds need to pick up a larger share of the tab for the project. Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York has also sounded the alarm, saying the federal government needs to pick up a larger share of the cost of the Gateway Plan. The Feds and Amtrak have discussed financing tools that could get the vital project started—but the clock is ticking. Vice President Joe Biden, a frequent rider on Amtrak, also sounded

the alarm—and cited the need for definitive action, NOW!

The truth is, a new Hudson Rail Tunnel is vital for the region and the economy of the entire country. The partisan bickering has to stop, and action must be taken now to find a way to begin the construction of new tunnels which are vital to the survival of both states and the entire Northeast Corridor. If employers can't quickly get their employees to and from their jobs, they'll locate somewhere that WILL provide those important facilities. Rail service is an essential part of the transportation picture, throughout the country, but especially here in the Northeast. It's time it was treated that way.

Update: Governor Chris Christie, Senator Bob Menendez, and Senator Cory Booker have met with Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, and all emerged from the meeting saying they have a plan to work together to raise the \$14 billion needed to fund new trans-Hudson rail tunnels. Absent from the meeting was New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Andrew Albert is Vice-Chairman of RUN, the Chair of the NYC Transit Riders Council, and Riders' Representative on the MTA Board.

SAVE THE DATE FOR RUN'S ANNUAL MEETING / PUBLIC FORUM!

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Attendees are also invited to join RUN members who are planning to stay an extra day to ride the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad on Sunday, September 27. This tourist railroad runs from Rockside, south of Cleveland to Akron, through the scenic Cuyahoga River Valley. We had originally hoped to take the #35 bus that runs hourly from downtown

Cleveland to Rockside to catch the 9:00 a.m. train departure but have recently learned that the service isn't available on weekends. Instead, we plan to organize a car pool and if that fails we can hire a cab – it is approximately an 8-10 mile journey. We will meet at the corner of West 3rd Street and Superior Ave at 7:45 a.m. and will leave from that location shortly after. As an extra added attraction, Engine #765, a Berkshire-

type steam locomotive will be pulling "Steam in the Valley" excursions that weekend, which will run in addition to the regularly-scheduled trains. Engine #765 once ran on the Nickel Plate Road (NKP), a railroad that ran between Buffalo and Chicago, serving Cleveland, until 1965.

We look forward to seeing you in Cleveland—the "heart of it all" when it comes to rail advocacy!

RUN TO CLEVELAND!

By *David Peter Alan*

RUN to Cleveland! That is what RUN's Board of Directors and other members will do on Saturday, Sept. 26 for our Annual Meeting. Cleveland is the only city in Ohio that has rail transit; a strong factor in the recent revitalization of the city's downtown area. In addition to our meeting, RUN members will take a tour of local transit facilities operated by the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and ride the rail lines. We will also see some of Cleveland's sights.

John D. Rockefeller got his start in Cleveland, and so did Bob Hope. There is an apocryphal story that Alfred P. Sloan did too. It is said that Sloan, who was Chair of the Board of General Motors for many years, saw the crowds using the local streetcars in Cleveland one day in 1922, and decided then and there that GM could not sell enough automobiles if so many people used transit. So he then started on his highly-successful campaign to kill as much rail transit as he could.

Fortunately for Cleveland and its residents, rail transit survives in the city. There is a single heavy-rail line, the Red Line, which runs on an east-west alignment, with the downtown "Tower City Center" station in the middle. The line provides direct access to Hopkins Airport; the first such line in the nation to include direct airport service. The normal headway is 15 minutes all day. The line operates with 85-foot subway-type cars, run in pairs. There is also streetcar service, on a physical

line with two branches, although RTA considers them three lines. The Blue and Green Lines run together from "Tower City Center" downtown to Shaker Square. There, the Blue Line continues east on Van Aken Avenue and the Green Line continues east on Shaker Boulevard. The latter line has the flavor of an old-style interurban line. The standard service pattern is half-hourly on each branch, with service every 15 minutes between Shaker Square and downtown. On the other side of Tower City Center, the newer Waterfront Line runs through the Flats, a nightlife district that jumped during the 1990s and has since quieted down, to some areas where transit-oriented development (TOD) maintains a newly-felt presence. Until a few years ago, the Waterfront Line ran only on weekends and only from mid-morning to late afternoon. Today, it again runs every day, thanks in large measure to the TOD that is bringing new residents to the neighborhood.

The Blue and Green Lines are still known as the "Shaker Rapid" by locals and, ironically, they are among the few rail transit lines that survived Sloan's onslaught. Only seven cities in the United States, plus Toronto in Canada, have any streetcar lines that survived from the former Golden Age of streetcars. The line and its branches were originally part of a 1920s-vintage TOD plan by the Van Sweringen Brothers, local developers at the time. Shaker Square, named after the Shakers (a now-extinct religious cult who practiced celibacy, which probably helped speed their extinction) who once lived nearby, was a planned, transit-oriented community.

The brothers also built the Terminal Tower, which housed Cleveland Union Terminal from its opening in 1930 until the 1970s. The showcase building, 55 stories tall and the tallest between New York and Chicago, is still in operation. The former Union Terminal is now a three-level mall. The *Lake Shore Limited* stopped there for the last time on Jan. 5, 1972 (this writer was on that train), and moved to the present station when its current incarnation began in 1974. There was a commuter train on the Erie Railroad to Youngstown until 1977. Today, all local rail transit lines still stop there.

There is also an extensive bus system in Cleveland, with some routes that run all night. A day pass is \$5.00; \$2.50 for seniors and persons with disabilities. Single-ride fares are \$2.25 and \$1.00, respectively.

A decade ago, downtown Cleveland was dead; there was hardly anybody on the streets. Today, those streets are active again. Some of the best buildings in downtown Cleveland are preserved as the Warehouse District. The original Arcade Building from 1890 and the Colonial Arcade are especially worth seeing. Playhouse Square, the nation's largest theater district outside New York, is located within walking distance of the downtown center. Numbered streets run on north-south alignments, with numbering going east or west of Superior Avenue. For example, West Ninth Street is west of it, while East Ninth Street is east of it.

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SHORT RUNS

With this issue of the RUN Newsletter we are launching SHORT RUNS, a monthly roundup of important news items affecting passenger rail and rail transit in North America which is being sent out electronically to RUN members who have provided an up-to-date email address. The news items will be compiled from a variety of sources including APTA, Progressive Railroading Daily News, Railway Age, RAIL News, VIA Rail and Amtrak websites, local and regional newspapers and items sent in electronically by our members. Deadline for news items will be the fifteenth of each month. To be part of this new endeavor, please send us your email address to staff@railusers.net.

BI-LEVELS FOR MIDWEST, CA WILL BE LATE

(Continued from page 4)

- Labor protests broke out as workers complained of high injury rates and improvised scaffolds that forced employees assembling the roof to the sidewalks to stand on shaky plywood flooring panels.
- The Caltrans official in charge of the procurement was replaced with a woman of Japanese ancestry, suggesting that there may have been a communication problem between Caltrans and the all-Japanese engineering staff that designed the cars and the manufacturing process.

Production resumes—Nippon Sharyo claims the production problems have now been addressed and that three prototype car shells have been assembled—a coach, a business-café car and a cab-baggage-coach. The company says two of the cars have passed the 800,000-lb. buff test while a third is being re-tested to check

an ambiguous strain-gauge reading. When buff testing is finished, the cars will be mounted on trucks and taken to the Transportation Test Center's Facility for Accelerated Service Testing (FAST) in Pueblo, CO for field testing at different speeds and different track configurations. If the prototypes pass their tests, the design will go into serial production and will be delivered—late—to the recipient states.

...but way behind schedule—NS is saying all 130 cars will be delivered by the fall of 2017. Observers caution, however, that this accelerated timetable is unrealistic. The build is simply too far behind for the factory to make up all the time already lost.

And that could be a problem—Not finishing the build in time may mean not finishing the build at all. The Stimulus Act mandates that all of the cars must be delivered by Sept. 30, 2017, or any unspent funds will be “clawed back” from the appropriation and returned to the federal

treasury. States are forbidden to pay the manufacturer in advance of delivery or to escrow funds for disbursement after Sept. 30, 2017. If their cars are not delivered by the deadline they must return the federal money and use their own funds to pay for cars delivered after the deadline.

There may be an escape strategy. Congressional observers say Congress has ways of resetting such clawbacks and allowing a federal procurement to continue beyond the deadline in the original appropriation.

But that's assuming that the Congress asked to extend a deadline is friendly to the original legislation.

That's not the kind of Congress we have now, and it's probably not the kind of Congress we're going to have in 2017.

F.K. Plous is vice president, communications at Corridor Capital LLC.

THE WHISTLE STOP SAFETY TRAIN

By Bil Engel

From August 4 through August 6, Norfolk Southern operated what it called the Whistle-Stop Safety Train along a 354-mile route from Cincinnati to Alliance OH. The same consist also operated elsewhere on the NS system prior to visiting Ohio. The four car train staffed by NS grade crossing personnel and Operation Lifesaver staff carried invited guests of Operation Lifesaver in the various states where it operated. These included first responders (EMT, fire, and police), as well as elected officials, media, and members of the general public.

The four-car consist included two coaches equipped with flat screen TV monitors fed by a camera mounted on the locomotive. The NS Exhibit Car and NS Research Car #32, an open platform car, which was at the rear of the train, completed the consist. The Conference/Dining Room in this car was excellent for checking in passengers for the different legs of the trip. The rear facing seating at the end

of Car #32 was an excellent venue for media interviews and other private meetings

Powering the train was Norfolk Southern's newest member of their commemorative fleet of locomotives, number 911. It has a unique paint scheme to honor all first responders who would be called upon in the unlikely event of a rail incident. NS, as other railroads, is extremely safety conscious. A booklet handed out to passengers on the train cited the following statistics. In 2014 there were 2,290 collisions between trains and vehicles at crossings in the U.S. This represented a 9% increase over 2013. These collisions resulted in 267 fatalities, an increase of 16% over 2013. Another area of concern is trespassing. In 2014 there were 945 trespassing incidents resulting in 526 deaths and 419 injuries. Both of these numbers represent double digit increases over 2013. It is evident why NS and other railroads want to increase public awareness to be safe around train tracks.

As well as being passenger rail service advocates, this writer feels RUN members should also be

rail safety advocates. Perhaps we could help prevent a repeat of the early part of 2015 when between Feb. 5 and March 9 there were three serious incidents involving grade crossing crashes between vehicles and passenger trains.

A valuable resource for educating the public about grade crossing safety is Operation Lifesaver. To learn more, visit their website at www.oli.org. Here you will find valuable statistics of grade crossing collisions and trespassing incidents in your state and other states. You can also request a free Operation Lifesaver rail safety presentation be made to your school, civic club, or other organization through the website.

In closing, when you are driving a vehicle and you approach railroad tracks, please remember two Operation Lifesaver slogans. The first is “See Tracks? Think Train!” The second is “Look, Listen, and Live.”

Bill Engel is a RUN Board Member based in Clinton, OH.

RAIL RESHAPING THE LANDSCAPE OF LOS ANGELES

By *Dana Gabbard*

Our recent annual conference had the theme of Los Angeles making the transition from roads to rail. This is not just a theory. In my daily life, I am witnessing how the landscape of where I live is being transformed. My current job entails in the wee hours going to a building in downtown L.A. Recently, while walking by the construction site adjacent to where I work, I was startled to note a sign on the fence that announced it was being used to stage construction of the regional connector (and eventually be the site of a station).

This is the federally funded project to construct an underground connection through downtown Los Angeles to link the Gold and Blue/Expo light rail lines that currently skirt the edges of downtown from opposite ends. Upon opening, service from Azusa, Long Beach, East Los Angeles and Santa Monica will run through downtown Los Angeles. While riding the Expo line recently, I mentioned this will open in a few

years (likely 2020) to a fellow passenger and she expressed appreciation at the news, as she currently has to take three trains (Gold, Red and Expo) to travel from Pasadena to USC. Instead, in a few years she'll be able to ride into downtown and seamlessly transfer to the line that serves the branch that goes to her destination. Not a one-seat ride, but far more convenient than what she does now.

Recently, I was on the bus on La Brea on the Westside and discovered the southbound stop at Wilshire was closed. I had forgotten that this was because the building on the corner (which formerly housed a Metro Customer Center) was demolished for staging of the construction of the Purple Line heavy rail westward extension. This will also be the site of a station. Like the connector, this line is underground (with phase one due to open in 2023 as far west as La Cienega). This project not too many years ago was thought a pipedream, and now it is actually being built!

When coming from work a few weeks ago, I ended up taking a bus on Crenshaw

in the mid-city area and witnessed that several stretches have construction fencing besides the auto lanes, as a light rail line (which will have some segments underground and others at grade) that will serve that corridor and LAX commences construction (it is slated to open in 2019).

In August, the Los Angeles City Council approved a new Mobility Element for its General Plan that is supportive of a vision of livability. It includes a multi-modal network to de-emphasize automobiles and encourage transit, bikes and walking. There were a few bumps along the way to adoption as some stakeholders and elected officials betrayed outmoded car-centric thinking, but vision and practicality in the end triumphed.

It is indeed a new L.A. that is emerging, and rail is a key element that will only grow in importance in the coming years.

Dana Gabbard is a RUN Board member and executive secretary of Southern California Transit Advocates.

RUN TO CLEVELAND!

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There are some interesting destinations served by Cleveland's transit. Ohio City, one stop west of downtown on the Red Line, was once an independent town that joined Cleveland. It has plenty of historic houses along its streets, and its signature building is the West Side Market. Clevelanders have been going there to buy food since 1912. For a taste of Cleveland, try a corned beef sandwich (corned beef in Cleveland is slightly spicier than the New York and Chicago varieties) with "stadium mustard" (a local style of mustard, similar to Gulden's brown). Tremont, located within walking distance of Ohio City, is another interesting neighborhood that keeps its historic and multi-ethnic flavor. If you happen to be in town on a Friday or Saturday evening, go to Sokolowski's University Inn at 1201 University Rd. for dinner (the only nights it is open, although it is open weekdays for lunch).

To explore east of the city, take the Red Line to the newly-opened stop in Little Italy. There is plenty of good food there. For a local specialty, go to Corbo's Bakery at 12210 Mayfield Rd. for cassata cake, a sheet cake that can best be described as strawberry shortcake with a layer of custard added. The next stop toward downtown Cleveland is University Circle, home to Case-Western University. It is also home to many of the museums in the city, including the Western Reserve Historical Society (the northeastern part of Ohio was the "Western Reserve" of Connecticut during the 18th Century) and the Cleveland Museum of Art. There is no charge for admission to the art museum. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is not there, but is located near the Amtrak station on the Lakefront.

The worst feature about rail transportation in Cleveland is that the Amtrak trains arrive and leave in the middle of the night. Still, Amtrak serves Cleveland from New York, Chicago

and Washington, D.C. Many of us will RUN to Cleveland on Friday, Sept. 25, and spend an extended day in the city, leaving very early Sunday morning. Some of us will stay an extra day to ride the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, a tourist railroad that runs from Rockside, south of Cleveland (unfortunately, not downtown) to Akron, through the scenic Cuyahoga River Valley. As an extra added attraction, Engine #765, a Berkshire-type steam locomotive will be pulling "Steam in the Valley" excursions that weekend, which will run in addition to the regularly-scheduled trains. Engine #765 once ran on the Nickel Plate Road, a railroad that ran between Buffalo and Chicago, serving Cleveland, until 1965.

So we invite you to RUN to Cleveland with us at the end of September, and visit the only city in Ohio where transit still runs on the rails.

David Peter Alan is a RUN Board Member of Chair of the Lackawanna Coaliton in Millburn, Nj.

WE CAN'T HANDLE IT—YOU CAN'T GET THERE

(Continued from page 2)

Expecting massive traffic jams and parking shortages, they realize that if they try to move their car they will be unable to park upon return. Those who work weekends look at the lost pay. This also applies to weekend workers who commute by train: no reverse commute service and no service to most stations—tough if your boss takes it out on you for being absent.

Arriving in Philadelphia, only three stations will be available, one per line: Jefferson (Market East) for Fox Chase, Lansdale/Doylestown, Manayunk/Norristown, Warminster and West Trenton lines; University City for the Airport and Media/Elwyn lines; and 30th Street for the Chestnut Hill West, Paoli/Thorndale, Trenton and Wilmington/Newark lines.

The PATCO Lindenwold rapid transit line reports that only four stations will be open: Lindenwold, Woodcrest, Ferry Avenue and Walter Rand. As on SEPTA, tickets must be purchased in advance and service will only operate inward in the morning and outward in the evening. Apparently morning trains will only serve one station with a 16-minute service, which means a train every four minutes arriving in Philadelphia at the only open station, 9/10th Streets, the farthest station from the event. This is the only transit from New Jersey. Bus service is cancelled because vehicles are banned from the Benjamin Franklin Bridge used by the few NJ Transit bus routes still serving Philadelphia.

Next, a lottery for tickets for the suburban light rail lines 100, 101, and 102 was held August 12. To date, SEPTA has not reported what happened. Only two stations will be open for boarding on each line as follows:

Route 101 Media: Springfield Mall, Leamy Avenue, Route 102 **Sharon Hill:** North Street, Clifton, Aldan **Norristown High Speed Line:** Gulph Mills, Villanova

All service will be one-way inbound in the morning and outbound at night. The only terminal will be 69th Street for transfer to the Market Street rapid transit line, which will only operate as far as 30th Street Station.

SEPTA has two rapid transit lines which cross at City Hall, effectively four lines to Center City. Again, only one or two stations (Frankfort Transportation Center and Girard on the Frankford line, 69th and 52nd Streets on the Market Street line, Fern Rock and Cecil B Moore on the North Broad line and AT&T (Pattison Avenue) on the South Broad line), and will be open on each line and service will only be inbound in the morning and outward in the evening. The Market Street line will terminate at 30th Street. Other Center City terminals are not yet public.

Reports on the Subway Surface lines seem conflicting. The most recent information is a city press release from June 15. Apparently there was to be some service on Routes 11, 13, 34 and 36, although more recent news reports tell of complaints from some of these areas because apparently SEPTA has since decided not to operate Route 13. Route 10 is not shown. It operates through the recently announced no traffic area, which suggests that contrary to the public pronouncements this area was known back in June. Route 15 on Girard Avenue seems to be operating. With the large area closed to traffic, the trolleys may be unable to operate because of potential traffic gridlock surrounding the closed area. There is no word on any bus service, but successful operation is unlikely in the probable traffic congestion. A vast area—three square miles from the Delaware River to 38th Street, from South Street to Spring Garden Street and then along the Schuylkill River to Girard and Ridge Avenues—will be closed to vehicles from at least Friday evening until some time on Monday. Also closed will be the major expressway from the west (Schuylkill

Expressway) and City Avenue, the major road along the city's western boundary. With minimal rail service, the only way most of the attendees—like about 1.5 million per day—can go is by automobile. Most Philadelphia streets are three lanes one way—two parking lanes with one center traffic lane. Nearly every parking space is normally occupied. At three people per car, that is still 500,000 cars. How far the gridlock will extend is completely unknown, especially if the streets are occupied by thousands of pedestrians walking to the event. Most likely there will be no useful bus service in the city.

On August 14, some information about NJ Transit's limited effort became available. Although NJ Transit has hundreds of train cars that could be brought from North Jersey, only 4,140 tickets will be sold each day for the Atlantic City Line, which will only serve Atlantic City with one train an hour. The River Line will only serve Trenton, Bordentown, Florence, Burlington South, Route 73, Pennsauken Transit Center and Walter Rand in Camden. 7,500 River Line tickets will be sold for each day. For both lines, special tickets must be purchased in advance—those with monthly passes are out of luck. NJT also announced extra service on bus Routes 403, 406, 419, 450 and 554 as far as Camden. Paratransit service to Philadelphia will be suspended from 3 p.m. Thursday until Tuesday. No paratransit service will be available in Camden County on Saturday and Sunday. Will the FTA require bus and rail service to be suspended because paratransit will not operate?

Reports are that many people are planning to come on charter buses, but how close those buses can get is still unknown.

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GREATER RAIL SAFETY: A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, BUT A LONG WAY TO GO!

*By Richard Rudolph, Ph.D.
Chair, Rail Users' Network*

Much attention has been given to the new regulations that were recently announced by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to enhance the safety of mile-long trains carrying volatile crude oil. We applaud the Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) for issuing a final rule which calls for the retrofitting or phasing out of the DOT 111 Tank Cars and the new industry sponsored CPC 1234 cars constructed since 2011, prior to the 2013 disaster at Lac-Mégantic. We believe, however, much more needs to be done to insure the safety of the general public.

Unfortunately, the new regulations only apply to "high-hazard flammable trains," defined as a continuous group of 20 or more tank cars loaded with a flammable liquid, or 35 or more tank cars loaded with a flammable liquid dispersed throughout a train. The older DOT 111 cars that have weaker shells and valves and lack protective shields can still be used, but not on the mile-long "unit trains" with hundreds of tank cars. The new rule also requires electronically controlled pneumatic (ECP) braking systems for all high hazard flammable unit trains traveling over 30 mph as of May 1, 2023.

Stronger tank cars are certainly an improvement, but they are only a partial answer to the need for greater safety on the nation's railways. In preparing its rule, the PHMSA acknowledged the presence of track integrity issues and their status as the leading cause of derailment. "Broken rails or welds, track geometry, and human factors such as improper use of switches," it maintains, are the leading causes of derailment, but its regulatory reach with respect

to rail is limited to specific regulations pertaining to the transportation of hazardous materials. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has direct safety responsibility over the nation's rail infrastructure.

A new study titled "Back on Track: Bringing Rail Safety into the 21st Century," which was recently released by the Alliance for Innovation and Infrastructure, yields similar findings. A detailed review of FRA accident statistics for 2011-2014 revealed that track and roadbed deficiencies accounted for the largest number of derailments: 42% or 2,238 were caused by track and roadbed deficiencies. Derailments resulting from operational errors, designated by the FRA as "human factors," accounted for 31%, or 1,653, of accidents over the four-year period.

The new tank car standards will undoubtedly help improve the overall safety of transporting hazardous materials, but will have little if any impact on improving the safety of passenger trains or trains carrying other commodities. USDOT and the FRA need to focus more on mitigating the leading causes of derailment.

There are a number of new technologies and operational recommendations which could be employed. Among them are track and ballast integrity sensors, autonomous track geometry and gage restraint measurement systems, and ultrasonic and induction rail testing. Although these systems are commercially available, they are not required by statute or regulation. Some of these technologies are currently employed, but improving best practices could make their use more effective. For example, "to ensure defects are spotted, all surface defects on rail should be removed prior to ultrasonic testing." The FRA has also recommended that "plug rail be immediately inspected prior to reuse," but chooses not to require such testing despite National Transportation Safety Board recommendations that such testing be required.

The NTSB has also taken a stand calling for improved track inspection policies. The board has pointed out that inspecting multiple tracks simultaneously seriously compromises the integrity of the inspection. Currently, an inspector in a vehicle can inspect up to two tracks at a time, as long as the inspector's vision is not obstructed, and the second track is no more than 30 feet from the track the inspector is riding. It also believes there should be speed restrictions on high rail track inspection vehicles, stating "if track inspectors are required to find only defects that occur rapidly, a discretionary speed would be appropriate, but if inspectors are expected to detect gradual degradation patterns, the inspectors need to travel more slowly."

There are also a number of technologies for preventing accidents caused by human error that need to be employed. While most Class I railroad mainlines and lines carrying passenger trains are required to have PTC systems in place by Dec. 31, 2015, many have stated that they will miss the deadline. It is unclear how this regulation will be enforced. A new firm deadline needs to be set and penalties imposed on rail owners who fail to meet the deadline. Installing inward-facing cab cameras would assist railroads in monitoring rules compliance and identifying fatigued engineers. This could help prevent accidents and provide evidence in the investigation of accidents. Finally, requiring two-person crews in freight train cabs could significantly improve safety.

Many in the rail industry argue that there is no evidence that a two-person rule will improve the safety record of railroads; however, the FRA has thought otherwise. We were delighted when then-FRA Commissioner Joe Szabo announced FRA's intention in 2014 to issue a proposed rule requiring two-person train crews on crude oil trains and establishing minimum crew size standards for most main line freight and

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NJT RAISES FARES, CUTS SERVICE DESPITE GROWING OPPOSITION

(Continued from page 3)

of the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers (NJ-ARP) made a statement, and nobody from the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition did. Rail labor kept a low profile with only one statement, but the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), which represents NJT's bus drivers, showed up in force. At several hearings, every time somebody made a statement opposing the fare increases, ATU members chanted "Fight the Hike!"

Several legislators and mayors of cities in Northern New Jersey showed up to announce their opposition to the fare increases, too. All were Democrats, although there were reports that some Republicans in the legislature also criticized the fare increases and service cuts. The presence of the Democrats added an element of political theater to the proceedings. Gov. Chris Christie's popularity has plummeted in recent months. He was re-elected by a landslide less than two years ago, and his approval rating had reached 72% after Hurricane Sandy devastated the state in October, 2012. Today, his approval rating hovers between 30% and 36%, as he faces mounting criticism for spending so much time outside New Jersey, as he campaigns for the Republican nomination for President. Christie will leave office at the end of 2017, unless he becomes President; an event that appears highly unlikely at this writing. Democrats, who control both houses of the Legislature by narrow margins, sense that Christie is vulnerable, and believe that his unpopularity will hurt other Republicans at the local level.

While Democrats are stepping up their attacks on Christie, hoping to gain momentum for the legislative election this November, the Democrats in the

Legislature chose not to assist the transit riders who are facing higher fares and less service. In late June, legislators sent Christie a budget with a number of items that they expected he would not like. In New Jersey, the Governor can line-item-veto a particular budget item, but such an action would give the opposition a potential campaign issue. The Legislature did not add to NJT's budget, which would have averted the fare increase unless Christie vetoed the budget item, and would have given Democrats and transit riders such an issue.

Christie and his appointees on the NJT Board placed the blame on Amtrak for the problems faced by NJT riders who go to Penn Station, New York. This has re-ignited the debate about what to do about the 105-year-old tunnels under the Hudson River, which must be taken out of service within the next several years, because of damage sustained when they were flooded during Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Amtrak continues to call for its Gateway Project, of which two new tunnels are only a single component. Nobody knows where funding might be secured for the \$18 billion estimated cost for Gateway, but Amtrak has thus far been unwilling to declare new tunnel capacity to be top priority. Some advocates, including this writer, have called for construction of a single new tunnel immediately, so the existing tunnels can be taken out of service for rebuilding, without a massive service disruption.

Meanwhile, nothing has changed at NJT. The Board vote was unanimous, as has been the case with every vote taken since April, 2003. Even though Castillo mentioned that she did not believe the voice of the riders had been heard, she nonetheless joined her fellow Board members and voted for the new policies.

Raymond Greaves, ATU State Chair and Labor's representative on the Board, voiced his strong opposition to the fare hikes and service cuts. His opposition did not prevent the unanimous vote, because he is not permitted to vote on issues before the Board. Elise Young of Bloomberg News reported on July 27 (on www.bloomberg.com) that the NJT Board had voted on more than 800 resolutions without a single "no" vote being cast concerning any issue.

The current fare increase marks the ninth time that transit riders were singled out by the State of New Jersey to pay more for mobility since the user fee on gasoline and diesel fuel reached its current level in 1988. The "gas tax" (actually a user fee, and not a tax) is the second-lowest in the nation, while NJT fares will be the highest of any commuter-rail provider. In terms of the number of potential voters, there are more motorists than transit riders in New Jersey. In addition, two members of the NJT Board are involved with the trucking industry (plus a third until May, 2014). So it appears that hiking transit fares, while keeping fees for motorists and truckers low, is considered "good politics" in New Jersey, especially for Christie, as he and other Republicans campaign on promises of "no new taxes."

Maybe some of the opposition expressed by Democratic office-holders to the fare increases and service cuts will translate into a genuine political force that will address the plight of New Jersey's transit riders some day. It will be a long time before that can happen, though.

David Peter Alan is a RUN Board Member of Chair of the Lackawanna Coaliton in Millburn, NJ.

WE CAN'T HANDLE IT—YOU CAN'T GET THERE

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What Happens Now?

Many issues arise from this limited transportation service. First, what happens to the multitude that took their vacation, bought plane tickets, made hotel reservations and now find they cannot get to the event? Will the airlines and hotels give refunds? What of their vacation time?

Next, nothing has been announced about what to expect while walking. Will there be port-a-johns along the way? Food and water? Charging stations for electric wheelchairs? Many of those likely to come can be expected to be old or infirm. What happens to those who collapse along the way? And no mention if people will be allowed to bring food and water, or if airport/stadium type security will prohibit such items.

The vast majority of attendees must walk or drive because they cannot get tickets or because there is no service. Recall that they are expected to walk miles. Even within the city, it is several miles from some of the closed rapid transit stations. No service on the Chestnut Hill East commuter train means people may attempt to walk 10 miles. Maybe some will make it in the morning. After standing all day, how many will be able to walk home? There are rumors that the city does not expect to reopen streets until Tuesday. Are people still expected to be walking home Monday? Can people survive walking for days? Will

there be any stores open along the way or will all the stores be closed because owners and employees can not get there? Even if stores manage to open, will there be anything to buy? Not to mention that not all Philadelphia neighborhoods are problem free. A normal weekend has several murders. Will the bad guys have a field day with millions of tired walkers passing through? Or will people even be able to walk—with the streets clogged with cars?

Residents of the greater Philadelphia area are beginning to realize that they are trapped in one giant mess for the weekend. Those that have to work are coming to realize that they cannot get there. Nor can they get to the store, the doctor or recreation. Are we to expect the young to behave with nowhere to go Friday, Saturday and Sunday?

Also to be determined is how SEPTA and Amtrak employees will get to work. Is it realistic to expect them to walk miles before and after their shift? Will the FRA give an exemption from duty hour regulations to allow for this? 30th Street Station and all Center City SEPTA facilities are within the no traffic zone. There is minimal parking near 69th Street and near Fern Rock. All western suburban buses go into service using a narrow street that is the only northern access to the 69th Street terminal. Will the rapid transit lines and buses operate if gridlock develops around the terminals from early birds?

If the employees cannot get through, the lines cannot operate. Another issue: will police cars, fire trucks and ambulances be able to move in the gridlock?

Remember the Mass Transit, or was it transit mess, Super Bowl. A purpose-built rail line to the stadium was unable to handle even part of the crowd at one stadium. Come October, we expect that will look like a great success compared to the Pope's visit to Philadelphia.

The Hard Reality

Unfortunately, it is time to recognize the hard facts. America is no longer able to do what it could. In addition, the terrorists have won; fear of terrorists seems to be the reason for the minimal service. Time for Washington to get its act together and pass some legislation. For starters, limit crowds to a size that can be accommodated. As was learned from the Mass Transit Super Bowl, that may be less than a stadium of people. And recognize that we are rapidly declining, so reduce the allowed crowd size annually so that within a few years it is down to 5,000. Reality is that we have passed the point of no return. Beyond hope for rail service. Beyond even hope for any infrastructure. Failed government has failed the country; all that remains is to see what country takes America under its wing as a colony.

Chuck Bode is RUN Membership Secretary and a member of the Tri-State Citizens' Council on Transportation.

GREATER RAIL SAFETY

(Continued from page 13)

passenger rail operations. Unfortunately, the FRA has not put forward any such mandate to date. We will never know whether a two-person crew might have made a difference in regard to the Lac-Mégantic rail disaster, but it is certainly worth considering. An on-board conductor could have helped set hand brakes on additional tank cars and might have called

attention to the mistake that the engineer made when he conducted the hand brake test with the locomotive air brakes left on. This second person may have also offered a different opinion regarding whether it was safe to leave the train, given the apparent lead engine difficulties.

Since 70% of miles traveled by Amtrak are on tracks owned by freight railroads and many of these tracks are utilized to

ship highly volatile crude oil and other hazardous substances, more needs to be done to insure the safety of train crews, rail passengers and the general public who live nearby. As passenger rail / transit advocates, we need to put our Congressional delegations on notice that we are aware of the danger, and they need to be more proactive in helping to reduce railroad accidents caused by rail defects and human error.

PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER OF RUN...

FROM THE RUN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We invite you to become a member of the Rail Users' Network, which represents rail passengers' interests in North America. RUN is based on the successful British model, which has been serving passengers since 1948. RUN networks passengers, their advocacy organizations, and their advisory councils. RUN is working to help secure an interconnected system of rail services that passengers will use with pride. RUN forms a strong, unified voice for intercity, regional/commuter, and transit rail passenger interests. By joining together, sharing information, best practices, and resources through networking, passengers will have a better chance of a vocal and meaningful seat at the decision making table.

Rail Users' Network Newsletter is published quarterly by the Rail Users' Network, a 501 (c) (3), nonprofit corporation.

RUN members enjoy newsletters, international conferences, regional rail forums, and other meetings to share information while working to improve and expand rail passenger service.

Membership is open to passengers, official advisory councils, advocacy groups, public agencies, tourist and convention bureaus, carriers and other profit-making organizations.

We welcome your thoughts and comments about our newsletter. Please write to us: RUN, P.O. Box 8015, Portland, ME 04104

We hope you will join — vital decisions and legislation affecting the North American rail transportation system are being made daily. Don't be left behind at the station!

Please register me/us as a member of RUN today

Advocacy or Advisory Group or Agency Name (affiliation if appropriate)

Name of individual Applicant (or group, Agency, or Company Contact Person's Name)

Street Address	City	State/Province	Postal Code
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Phone number	Fax Number	E-Mail
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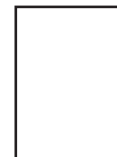
Enclosed are dues of:

- \$40 (individual/family)
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- \$250 (Public Agency or Bureau)
- \$250 (Private Carrier or For-For-Profit)

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