

SAVE THE DATE FOR RUN'S NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE

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

Join us in Boston, the nation's first city with a subway, for "Who's Looking Out for You? The State of Rail Advocacy in New England." The conference, sponsored by the Rail Users' Network, will take place Friday, April 29, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Boston Foundation, 75 Arlington St. (Green Line, Arlington stop; Orange Line, Back Bay stop), and will examine current actions in New England regarding passenger rail/transit issues. The focus will be on how transit/commuter rail riders can have a greater voice in planning new

services as well as improving the quality and level of services currently provided. The morning program will feature several invited speakers including Gerald Francis, General Manager, Keolis Commuter Rail; Frank DePaola, General Manager, MBTA; and Stephanie Pollack, Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation.

During lunch, participants will be afforded an opportunity to share information and experiences regarding their efforts—and those of their organizations—to promote passenger rail and rail transit in their local areas. Our luncheon speaker will talk about how transit-oriented development

can promote greater equity and good health.

The afternoon session will feature three panels. The first subject is the status of passenger rail/transit advocacy and plans for expanding passenger rail/rail transit in New England. The focus will be on the Green Line Extension to Union Square and Medford, the Indigo Line, the College Corridor, the South Coast Rail Project and expansion of rail service in Maine.

The second panel will explore the current state of advocacy in the Greater Boston area, who the major players are, the impact

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COLORADO NEEDS FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL

*By Jim Souby
and Gary Sprung*

*ColoRail's Vision Statement for
Front Range Passenger Rail:*

- Fast, frequent and safe passenger rail services;
- Connect Front Range communities;
- Promote economic development; and
- Enable single-day round-trips for business and pleasure

Colorado needs to supplement its road network with passenger railroad trains running between Ft. Collins, Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo. A Front Range passenger rail system, with connecting transit services, would provide much needed capacity growth, while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the mobility of Coloradans, and providing major economic stimulus to the cities and communities served. It could significantly relieve congestion on highways, making them work better for automobile and bus drivers and future smart vehicles.

Colorado is one of the fastest growing states in terms of population and economic opportunity. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs predicts that the state's population will increase from five million in 2015 to about eight million people in 2040. 6.2 million of these people will live along the Front Range. Today, only Interstate 25 links the cities. It often gets severely congested, and therefore slow. I-25 will be insufficient to meet the projected population growth in the decades to come.

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IMPENDING OPENINGS OF NEW RAIL EXTENSIONS CREATE EXCITEMENT IN SOCAL

By Dana Gabbard

Southern California in the coming months will be experiencing something rather unique: the opening of the extension of three rail lines. This unprecedented expansion of our rail network puts an exclamation point to the regional rail revolution in the Southland that our annual conference held in Los Angeles earlier this year heralded.

The first opening is slated for the end of this year. This will be an extension of the Metrolink commuter rail system's 91 Line. From the current terminus in downtown Riverside, the extension stretches 24 miles and includes four new stations in Riverside Hunter Park, Moreno Valley/March Field, Downtown Perris and South Perris. The Riverside County Transportation Commission is the lead agency for the project, in partnership with the Federal Transit Administration, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (Metrolink), March Joint Power Authority, County of Riverside, City of Perris, City of Riverside and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. The estimated cost of the project is \$248.3 million (excluding the 1993 purchase price of the San Jacinto Branch Line, which is the right-of-way being used).

While initially this will be a weekday-only service, many rail activists hope it will eventually provide weekend service to access the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, which has electrified track for the operation of the historic streetcars in its collection (which include several PE Red Cars and LA Railway Yellow Cars), at least during special events like its annual Spring festival. As this issue went to press, a specific date for the opening had not been announced.

It has been announced that passenger service on the extension of the Gold Line light rail line between Pasadena and Azusa will

begin on March 5, 2016. This 11.5-mile extension includes six stations in the cities of Arcadia, Monrovia, Duarte, Irwindale and Azusa. The extension also features a new yard/maintenance facility in Monrovia. Construction and design was overseen by the Foothill Gold Line Construction Authority (an independent agency created by state legislation), while the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) will operate it. Cost of the project is \$957 million.

The right of way being utilized for the extension was purchased in the early 1990s by Metro from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (ATSF). Until 1994, this alignment was served by Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* (until it was rerouted via Fullerton). A further extension along the right of way is being planned, extending the Gold Line 12.3 miles and adding six further stations in Glendora, San Dimas, La Verne, Pomona, Claremont and Montclair.

The terminus in Montclair will actually extend the line a mile or so into San Bernardino County and thus entails cooperation in planning and funding with the Metropolitan Planning Organization for that county, SANBAG (San Bernardino Associated Governments). Currently the project is undergoing advanced conceptual engineering, with it being ready for design-build procurement in approximately a year.

Funding for the approximately \$1-billion cost of constructing the Glendora to Montclair segment has not been identified. Most activists anticipated it will be among the projects included in a proposed 0.5% transportation sales tax to put before Los Angeles County voters next November, the details of which are being worked out under the leadership of Move LA and its politically savvy leader Denny Zane. Once funded, design and construction of the project should take about five years.

Like the Gold Line extension, the extension of the Expo Line light rail is being constructed by an independent state created entity, in this case the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority. The 6.6-mile extension will have seven stations and extend the line from the current terminus in Culver City to Santa Monica. The cost of the project is approximately \$1.5 billion, which includes a new yard/maintenance facility. The Expo Line mainly utilizes a right of way purchased in the 1990s from Southern Pacific and which from 1909 to 1953 had been served by PE streetcar passenger service (known as the Santa Monica Air Line).

Train testing along the alignment has already begun (as with the Gold Line, Metro will be operating the Expo Line) but the actual start of operations will likely be delayed until next summer. This is due to an unfortunate situation involving the availability of rolling stock. In 2009, controversy engulfed Metro's procurement of light rail cars (known as the P2550) from the Italian firm AnsaldoBreda. Metro claimed the cars were overweight and delivery was years behind schedule. As a consequence, Metro's then-CEO, Roger Snoble, recommended to the Board of Directors that the agency not exercise an option for an additional 50 cars. Given its plans for expansion, additional cars would be needed but Snoble felt that instead of exercising the option, a competitive bidding process should be undertaken for the building of the additional cars.

AnsaldoBreda vigorously fought to instead have the option exercised and even dangled the possibility that a manufacturing plant in the Los Angeles area would be built to construct the vehicles. This inducement drew support for exercising the option from then-Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

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FINALLY—THE MTA HAS A 2015-2019 CAPITAL PROGRAM

By *Andrew Albert*

It's been a tough struggle, made all the tougher by the long-running feud between New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. But at long last, largely by the Governor's snipes at the Mayor, much of it brought on by the Mayor's intransigence and initial unwillingness to kick in an appropriate amount of money to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Capital Program, the largest public transportation system in the nation now has a Capital Program. While the final vote has yet to be taken by the Capital Program Review Board in Albany, there appears to be—pending any last minute “deals” that get thrown in—a blueprint for rebuilding, upgrading, and expanding New York's expansive (and expensive) transit system.

For the system that moves something in the area of 4/5 of all mass transit users in the US, this shouldn't have been so difficult. Yet, politics, one-upmanship, and turf was,

is, and continues to be, the way things get done in New York State. Caught in the middle of all the tumult was the Chair of the MTA, Tom Prendergast, who I'm sure has earned his salary during all the tense negotiations. When you have a system that includes the city, the Long Island suburbs and the northern suburban areas, including West of Hudson counties such as Orange and Rockland, every area (and their representatives) is looking for their piece of the pie, and deservedly so. Unfortunately, not everyone can get what they want, so compromise is the name of the game.

The negotiations took much longer this time than they normally do, so some projects—such as phase 2 of the 2nd Avenue subway—will likely be delayed, a situation that is not lost on the elected representatives of East Harlem, who are still trying to get additional money dedicated to this important project. Because the City of New York did not produce the \$3.2 billion the MTA was looking for, but rather \$2.5 billion, something had to “give” in

the expansion plans, and apparently, it was actual construction of phase 2 of the 2nd Avenue subway. Engineering and other non-construction work will proceed, however. The State of New York will kick in \$8.3 billion, the City of New York will kick in \$2.5 billion, federal funds will be \$6.4 billion, MTA bonds and PAYGO Capital will be \$7.7 billion, Bridges & Tunnels & PAYGO Capital will be \$2.9 billion, and MTA local funds, as well as design/build for several of the projects will total \$1.2 billion, for a total Capital Program of \$29 billion, the largest in the history of the MTA.

There's a lot in this Capital Program to like, too. These include: completion of the Positive Train Control installation; Expansion of Select Bus Service; new “contactless” payment technology; beginning of phase 2 of the 2nd Avenue subway; continuing work on the Long Island Rail Road East Side Access plan, including Penn Station access for Metro-North Railroad, with four new Bronx

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NEW JERSEY TRANSIT RIDERS SUFFER

By *David Peter Alan*

It has been a difficult year for rail riders on New Jersey Transit (NJT) and, from all indications, their troubles will not be over anytime soon. Rail service in and out of New York's Penn Station suffered from serious reliability problems last winter and this past summer. Commuters and other riders suffered through the delays, which occurred with frightening and disheartening regularity.

The situation improved for bus riders at the Port Authority Bus Terminal one-half mile north of Penn Station, as NJT took steps to alleviate backups of bus traffic and the departure delays resulting from it. There was no comparable improvement for rail riders. NJT blamed Amtrak for its riders' difficulties. Amtrak has its own problems dealing with an 80-year-old signal system and an equally-old electrical system for powering trains, as well as capacity constraints at Penn Station during peak-commuting hours, but NJT also drew criticism from riders for not doing more to make their commutes less difficult.

NJT's answer to all of its riders was to require them to pay higher fares. Fares rose on Oct. 1, mostly by 9% or slightly more. NJT claimed that the fare hikes were necessary to close a budget gap of \$58 million left after NJT devised its own cost-cutting plan. In addition to the fare increases, NJT eliminated several late-evening trains and several bus routes. NJT reported that 690 people attended nine hearings held around the Garden State in May concerning the fare hikes and announced service cuts, but the entire plan was adopted, with no significant give-backs to address riders' concerns.

It appears that part of NJT's cost-cutting plan was to eliminate several late-evening trains, in addition to the ones discussed at the hearings, without notice to the public or even to the advocates who represent the riding public. The service cuts went into effect on

Sunday, Sept. 13. The last train was eliminated on the Boonton Line west of Montclair (the last Penn Station connecting departure moved from 12:40 to 9:51; the line does not run on weekends) and on the Pascack Valley Line (the last departure from Hoboken moved from 12:45 to 11:15 on weeknights, although the 12:45 still runs on Fridays and on weekend nights). Those were the announced cuts. NJT did not give actual notice on its web site, www.njtransit.com, of the elimination on the other lines until the preceding Thursday, less than three days before the cuts went into effect. The new schedules were available the night before that, but with no printed warning that riders on the affected lines were about to lose their last train.

In response to complaints from this writer about the unannounced cuts, NJT managers replied that they were not required to give any notice, because they considered the cuts in question to be a "service adjustment." The applicable New Jersey statute calls for hearings in the event of a proposed "elimination or substantial curtailment" of service on a route. Transit riders now had a new curfew that was at least 45 minutes earlier than it had been until mid-September, which some advocates consider a "substantial curtailment" of their available mobility. Since the New Jersey statutory provision comes from the Transportation Act of 1979, a remedial piece of legislation that established NJT, it is customary to construe remedial statutes broadly, for the public good. Under that construction, advocates including this writer believe that NJT should have given the public and their representatives the opportunity to find a way to keep those trains running.

NJT has a history of construing service reductions to be "service adjustments" and refusing to allow potentially-aggrieved persons a hearing. When the agency cut mid-day service on the M&E Line from half-hourly to essentially hourly in 2008, it was done without public notice, and the trains that were cut were never restored

to the schedule. When a private short-line operator wished to operate an independent service over a line that NJT had abandoned in 2002, NJT refused to allow a hearing over the actual elimination of the three stations at issue. He eventually got his hearing, but he had to litigate for it, and all the court order did was get him a hearing. He never ran the service that he had proposed.

One state senator has proposed a bill that would require NJT to give public notice and hold a hearing before any service cuts. Riders and their advocates like the idea, but it is doubtful that New Jersey's politicians do. Much of the blame has gone to Gov. Chris Christie, a Republican candidate for President who has pledged not to raise the user fuel on gasoline and diesel fuel, which is the second-lowest in the nation and reached its present level in 1988. Transit fares have risen nine times since then. For its own part, the legislature, which is controlled by Democrats, failed to appropriate more money for the operating side of NJT, which might have averted the fare hikes and saved the trains that were eliminated. Legislative funding for NJT has declined by about 90% since Christie took office.

The cuts that went into effect in September were severe for late-evening rail riders on several lines, although NJT made some positive adjustments in November. Riders on the Morris & Essex Line from New York to Dover had a train at 1:19, the last one left Penn Station at 12:34 under the September schedule, and it now leaves at 12:56. NJT had given back 22 minutes of the 45 that were taken from the service day in September. The 12:34 train had a connecting train on the Gladstone line, but the last connecting train to that line left New York at 11:35 under the September schedule and now leaves at 11:56. NJT took 59 minutes from the service day in September and gave back 21 of them. Inbound, the last train used to leave Dover at 11:37 (historically it had left Dover at 12:30), and it left at 10:32 under the September schedule. It now leaves at

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MTA FINALLY GETS NEW CAPITAL PROGRAM

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stations for the New Haven line; completion of the Long Island Rail Road double track program for the Ronkonkoma branch; improved customer communications with real-time train arrival information for the "B" division of the subway; purchase of hundreds of new subway cars to replace the aging R-32, R-42, R-46 fleet; improved signals and installation of communications-based-train-control (CBTC) on several lines, which will allow more frequent and reliable service; rebuilding of stations, including making more ADA-accessible stations; replacement of elevators and escalators throughout the system; replacement of track & switches in the subway system; investment in line structures, especially the elevated lines of the subway system; replacement & upgrading of bus depots and train yards; upgrading of substations on the LIRR; new

locomotives, switches, and track for the Metro-North Railroad; and many new decks, toll plazas, and electronic toll collection for the bridges and tunnels owned and operated by the MTA.

Clearly, this is a lot of renewing, rebuilding, and expansion, and as always when major work is being undertaken, there is some pain to riders and motorists who will be using these facilities while the rebuilding and upgrading is taking place. Even now, work is still being done on subway tunnels and stations that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy. If you ride the subway on any weekend, there are likely to be at least 12 of the 22 lines undergoing some type of re-routing. In a system as big and in service 24/7, work must be done, so the overnight and weekend periods are the ones that will be impacted the most.

A tremendous part of the MTA's Capital Program is devoted to keeping the system in a state of good repair—which alone can

account for over \$10 billion a year! But just keeping the system up is not good enough for a dynamic and growing city like New York—we must have expansion, improved service, and equipment that won't break down. We are averaging six million subway riders a day now—but our aging signal system won't allow us to provide the frequency that our riders need and deserve, hence the installation of CBTC on several lines.

A system such as New York's magnificent transportation system is always needy - Capital, Operating, and other funding is essential for the system to meet the needs of a growing, international city. Kudos to our elected officials for finally putting aside their differences and getting the MTA's 2015-2019 Capital Program off and running. New York's 12 million daily riders deserve no less.

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

A TRIBUTE TO DELORES GRAYNING OF RAILS INC

By J.W. Madison

On Oct. 29, Dolores C. Graving, 86, suddenly left this Earth. She was the Vice President, editor, and brilliant common-sense advisor to Rails Inc. She played a large role in our efforts to midwife what became the *Rail Runner* (she called it the Dust Devil when it was merely the fantasy of our group and of some other New Mexico visionaries).

She was born in Chicago in 1929 to a working class family, making her a Depression baby. She lived and worked in Pasadena, CA, Fargo, ND, and Albuquerque before commencing a successful 31 year career at Sandia Corporation in Albuquerque. She was a teen-age secretary in the Pasadena Planning Dept in the late 1940s, during which time she used to politely (I think) ask her bosses why they didn't put tracks in the medians of the new Freeways

instead of ripping up the damn things without replacing them.

She raised two good men, one of whom pre-deceased her by eleven years. She was an excellent actress and makeup expert on the Albuquerque stage, with a five-state regional acting award to her credit. Later, she became a gifted Zoo docent and volunteer teacher.

She was independently spiritual, could do almost anything very well, was Mediterranean-beautiful in the bargain, and more people will miss her deeply than she (or even I) ever guessed.

I first met her at the Albuquerque Little Theatre in 1981. She became my "life partner" for 33 years. I'll never get over how "lucky" or "blessed" I have been to have been her Other Half for so long.

The Rail Runner:

The *Rail Runner* has been under the same

predictable and Flat-Earth attacks that we're all entirely too familiar with. This time somebody (I don't care who) wants to sell it off to some private company. The head of the NMDOT, Tom Church, said in a recent interview that this was not going to happen, citing both the benefits of the train and its lack of desirability to an ordinary buyer. He seemed to think the idea was funny. It's not, but I hope he continues to laugh it off.

The Southwest Chief:

Some good news here via Rick Klein, City Manager of La Junta CO, dated Oct. 26:

Washington, DC – Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO) announced today that the Department of Transportation has awarded a \$15.2-million grant to the City of La Junta to add approximately 39 miles of new railway and rehabilitate an additional 20 miles of rail along the *Southwest Chief* Amtrak line.

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A FOCUS ON BRITISH TRANSPORT

By *Anthony Smith*

“Put transport users first”—the clarion cry of the independent watchdog for Britain’s transport users, Transport Focus. Speaking to more than 100,000 rail passengers, 50,000 bus passengers and almost 5,000 tram passengers was just part of the work we carried out this year. The organization has been making a difference for passengers under various names since 1947. Since February of this year, it has also represented users of the strategic road network—a sign of the government’s confidence in its abilities.

The work began with research into road user experience, which you can see on our website (www.transportfocus.org.uk). As well as this, we continued to make a difference for passengers of public transport—trains, buses, trams and coaches. Everything we do is evidence-based, providing the data needed to prove to the transport industry and government that change is necessary. A key tool for making life better for rail passengers is the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), now in its 20th “wave.” We seek the views of passengers by producing this survey twice a year. More than 50,000 rail passengers across a representative sample of journeys complete the questionnaire. We also carry out smaller ad-hoc work on rail, to inform and sit alongside this work.

This ability to track changes over time, to a very detailed degree, is what makes NRPS so valuable. It has played a vital role in bringing about the changes that passengers want to see. Over the years it has become highly regarded in the industry and is now used as part of targets within franchise contracts and, in some cases, as targets for management bonuses.

The most recent NRPS highlighted a drop in passenger satisfaction. Overall satisfaction is 80% (down from 82% in spring 2014), satisfaction with punctuality is down to 75% (from 77% in 2014)—this figure drops to 65% for commuters—and value for money ratings



continue below the half-way mark, at 45%.

Some of this was put down to issues around the rebuilding of a major station in London. We’re working with industry and government to develop ways to get instant feedback to sit alongside NRPS and help us monitor whether improvements are being felt by passengers. Results also showed that only just over three in 10 passengers—and less than a quarter of commuters—are satisfied with the way their train company dealt with delays.

We continue to press the industry to manage disruption properly, and gets services back up and running as quickly as possible. We also looked at how people’s perceptions of lateness compared to actual performance. Passengers expect “on time” to mean a train arriving within one minute of the scheduled time, not the current industry standard of five minutes (or 10 minutes for long-distance trains). We also found low awareness of the current performance measures and a lack of trust in how the rail industry measures train punctuality. We’re now using this work to press operators to improve the information provided to disrupted passengers, and to be more open about punctuality.

The GB rail network is a series of franchises specified by Government and delivered by private sector bidders after a competition. As well as providing data from the NRPS, we provide bespoke work for each new franchise contract to make sure that passengers’ needs

for that particular service route or area are considered. For example, long-distance services usually have more emphasis on comfort than commuter type services, which are all about reliability.

Following heavy snowfall during the winter months that saw transport grind to a halt a few years on the run, we began research into the effect of extreme weather—snow, wind, ice, rain and fog—on the railways. We asked passengers what they expected from their train service during these times. The results were published this summer in time for train operators prepare and plan for any bad weather this winter, in a way that better suits passengers.

Our research isn’t always focused on the things that immediately spring to mind when you think about improving the rail network. This summer saw us investigating lost and found and not because we were looking for something we’d forgotten. We found that all 23 train companies across the country have their own individual lost property system. They don’t communicate with other train companies. This means that passengers who have traveled on two different services first have to find the right company before they can even think about finding their belongings again. We called for a national database of lost property to make the whole system simple and efficient. We’re now working with train companies to set up a better scheme.

As well as general research, we are a statutory appeals body, meaning that we take on cases where passengers are unhappy with the service they have had and resolve it for them. You can read about some of our case studies of passengers we have helped at <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/help/case-studies>.

It has been a very successful summer for Transport Focus and the work continues—using social media and sentiment analysis to boost our understanding of passengers’ experiences of their journeys, work on smart ticketing, what passengers expect from High Speed 2 and delay compensation schemes. See more on what we have coming up here: <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/coming-soon>.

Anthony Smith is Chief Executive of Transport Focus.

NEW CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ELECTED—QUESTIONS REMAIN



GO Transit is now taking delivery of these new bi-level, cab-end cars from the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay, ON for its push/pull trains of up to 12 cars, serving passengers in the Greater Toronto/Hamilton area. Improved, European-style external cosmetics, better quality seating and other interior appointments will further improve passenger appeal.

By Ken Westcar

Oct. 19 saw a new federal government elected in Canada, largely as a result of the increasingly anti-democratic, smaller-government-at-all-cost stance of the then-incumbent Conservatives under Stephen Harper. Light and heavy rail passenger transportation has never been a priority under the Harper or previous federal governments, regardless of political stripe. Considered “subsidized services,” they received very sporadic funding, usually to support members of parliament in their ridings with ribbon-cutting photo-ops. Attempts to get VIA Rail Canada protected by a legislative framework, similar to Amtrak, failed this year when a private member’s bill was defeated by a Conservative majority against the onslaught of full support by all opposition parties.

Industry sources suggest that both Canadian Pacific and Canadian National lobbied hard to get the bill thrown out, as it would have required them to treat VIA better by working harder to keep passenger trains on schedule. VIA’s on-time performance continues to decline on many CN- and CP- owned routes, notably the legendary “Canadian” transcontinental service, thereby frustrating passengers and driving up operating costs. CN and CP have already fired additional warning shots across the bows of the new federal government by

insisting on being left alone to get on with their business as they see fit.

This does not bode well for VIA or for route abandonment that those, with an eye to the future, see as critical national infrastructure being dismantled. In other words, shareholder value comes first and national interest a very distant second.

While the new Liberal government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has pledged another C\$10 billion annually for the next three years for infrastructure investment, it is too early to say whether his party will work to halt and reverse the tragic decline of VIA’s intercity and transcontinental services. Canada’s leading rail passenger transport consultant, Greg Gormick, puts it succinctly: “No new rolling stock investment—no VIA.”

Greg has proposed a detailed historic and forward thinking perspective on VIA for Transport Action Ontario (TAO) titled “VIA 1-4-10.” It was launched on Nov. 6 in St. Marys, ON and is expected to be widely endorsed by communities across Canada and brought firmly to the attention of the new federal transport minister. *RUN Newsletter* readers can check the report out at <http://www.transport-action-ontario.com/>.

At the provincial level, there’s lots of activity on transit issues as just about every major

Canadian city tries to catch up on half a century of inadequate investment and poor decisions on urban transportation. Larger, more progressive communities are pursuing the LRT option with effective intermodal connections. Others, where either bus or LRT are both viable options, seem to be willing to trade off the higher operating cost of bus systems against the much lower overall life-cycle cost of LRT.

Critics watch carefully for politicized decisions on modal choices and routes, under- estimates of capital cost and other such boogeymen that seem to haunt public investments. The jury also remains out on public/private partnerships for transit infrastructure. More on this in future articles.

The Province of Ontario remains committed to a 320-kph/200-mph high-speed rail line on new route from Toronto to Windsor but has observers scratching their heads over the 60- to 72-month environmental assessment period. Whether this is realistic or a delay tactic remains to be seen. Meanwhile, VIA Rail is seeking private money to build a new high-speed line between Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, largely to escape the clutches of CN.

Hope is that Canada’s well-heeled pension funds will step up to both projects but they may hesitate due to government bureaucratic churn and perhaps a shortfall of indigenous HSR expertise. Rumbblings of high-level lobbying by the Chinese to finance and build either or both projects are likely not without cause but, whether this would be acceptable when Canada needs to diversify its economy away from “rip and ship” resource extraction back to high, value-added manufacturing, is the key question.

So, the next 12 months or so will be interesting times in Canada for intercity and urban transportation. The Paris Climate Change Summit later this year will see a strong Canadian delegation, possibly intending to repair Canada’s international pariah status on greenhouse gas emissions. If this results in carbon-weighted transportation policies and strategies, then intercity passenger rail could be a beneficiary. If not, it’s bye-bye VIA, and come-on-down more highways and short-haul flights.

Ken Westcar is a Board Member of Transport Action Ontario.

RUN REACHES OUT TO RIDERS AND ADVOCATES IN CLEVELAND

By *David Peter Alan*

On Friday, Sept. 25, a contingent from RUN's Board of Directors and other RUN members began their RUN to Cleveland for a look at the local rail transit, an outreach meeting with local riders and their advocates and an opportunity to explore the only city in Ohio that has rail transit.

The visiting members met in the middle of the night at Cleveland's Amtrak station, since all trains to or from the Northeast or Chicago arrive then. After exchanging some sleepy greetings and finding coffee downtown, the visitors assembled at downtown Cleveland's Tower City Center. The location was known as Terminal Tower from its opening in 1930 until trains stopped going there in the 1970s. It is now a three-level shopping mall, but it is still a transfer point for local rail transit lines.

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit

Authority (GCRTA, known locally as the "RTA"), runs the city's transit. It includes the Red Line, a line featuring heavy-rail equipment, which runs from east of downtown Cleveland, through downtown and west to Hopkins Airport. It also includes two light-rail lines to Shaker Heights; the Green Line on Shaker Boulevard and the Blue Line on Van Aken Boulevard. Locals still refer to those lines collectively as the "Shaker Rapid" (or simply the "Rapid"), and they run on the same track from downtown Cleveland to Shaker Square. There is also the Waterfront Line, an extension along the lakefront from downtown.

The day started with a tour of the Central Rail maintenance facility, the RTA shops. The agency uses the shop to maintain both the Red Line cars and the streetcars that go to Shaker Heights on the Blue and Green Lines. Casey Blaze, RTA's Rail District Equipment Manager, led the tour. He noted that it is difficult to maintain the

cars, since they are more than 30 years old and must last for another 10 years. He said that there are efforts to design a car that will operate on the entire system.

The tour group included RUN members, members of the RTA's Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) and advocates who belong to All Aboard Ohio (AAO), the statewide organization that is pushing for more trains and rail transit in the Buckeye State. After the shop tour, the group went to Shaker Square to inspect the area, including the farmers' market which is held there on Saturday mornings. Shaker Square was a busy place, with plenty of "locals" shopping and otherwise enjoying the beautiful weather. Everyone from RUN enjoyed watching and hearing the streetcars stop there, too. Advocates and some planners consider Shaker Square to be the first transit-oriented development (TOD) project, to use today's expression.

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RUN'S NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL MEETING

(Continued from page 1)

they are having on the MBTA and transit service, and what can be done to insure greater rider representation to improve and expand service.

The third panel, "The Great Missed Opportunity—The North/South Rail Link" will examine why the "Big Dig" was a highway-only project, and did not include a rail link between North and South Stations. Panelists will present a case study on efforts underway today to correct it, featuring advocates on the front line of these efforts.

Attendees will also have an opportunity to sample public transportation in the Boston area, with an optional inspection tour on Saturday, April 30. We will ride

a number of transit modes running in and near Boston, inspect some of the transit facilities that provide mobility for hundreds of thousands of Bostonians, and take a close look at how neighborhoods and their residents are benefiting from the opportunity to get around Boston and go to other nearby towns on transit.

Who should attend: civic, business and non-profit leaders; real estate developers, planners and environmentalists; rail advocates; and intercity rail & rail transit riders who want to know about the efforts underway to expand passenger rail & rail transit in New England, how to give riders a greater voice in planning new services, as well as improving the quality and level of services currently provided. The registration fee is \$45 until March 15, \$55 until April 28 and \$65 at the door. This

includes a continental breakfast, lunch, a refreshment break, and all conference materials/handouts. If you wish to stay in Boston before or after the conference, we suggest that you look at Boston's official tourism website to learn about hotel accommodations in the area.

Please join us at what promises to be a very exciting, worthwhile event. Participants can register and make payment on RUN's website: railusers.net or via regular mail. Send checks to RUN, Box 8015, Portland, ME. 04104.

More details will be announced on our website as arrangements are made, and will also appear in the Spring issue of the RUN Newsletter. For more information, call Richard Rudolph, Chair, Rail Users' Network at 207-776-4961.

RUN REACHES OUT IN CLEVELAND

(Continued from page 8)

The lines have been running since 1914, and Shaker Square opened as a shopping center, surrounded by apartment buildings, in 1930. The rail line bisects the property, and the shopping center remains a busy place, after 85 years in operation. People still take the "Rapid" to get there, too.

The next destination was the new Red Line station in Little Italy, known officially as the "Little Italy—University Circle Station." Project manager Matthew Marotta gave the group an orientation about the new station, and then it was time for lunch.

The meeting began at 1:30 at RTA Headquarters downtown. RUN Chair Richard Rudolph started the meeting with some background about RUN, mentioning RUN's core mission, which is to help transit advisory committees and advocacy organizations to advocate more effectively for better transit. He also talked about how younger people are choosing to live in places where there is good transit, and about how transit improves those neighborhoods by fostering social inclusion. "We have a better public transportation system with rail," Rudolph said.

RUN Vice-Chair Andrew Albert noted that "New Yorkers are flocking to the subway" at the rate of six million riders per day. Albert is Chair of the NYC Transit Riders' Council in New York and can participate in MTA Board meetings. "We don't have a vote, but we have a voice," he said. RUN Secretary Chuck Bode, a Philadelphian, explained the virtues of RUN membership, especially the exchange of information between advocates that happens at RUN. "You don't have to start from Ground Zero and re-invent the whole wheel," he said, adding: "This is grassroots democracy in action."

Steve Albro is Vice-Chair of the RTA's Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) and

also a member of the RUN Board. He introduced the CAB, which was founded in the late 1970s. An ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Advisory Committee was later formed and merged into the CAB. Albro noted: "We ride and we have a presence in the community." There is also a Volunteer Action Council at the RTA.

Joseph A. Calabrese, CEO and General Manager of the RTA, presented an overview of his agency, which carries about 200,000 riders on a typical weekday. The RTA Board contains representatives from the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County and some suburban towns in the RTA service area. He mentioned the RTA's unique Student Advisory Board and the "U-Pass" program sponsored by the colleges and universities in the area. Students do not have to pay for their rides; the money comes from their student fees.

Calabrese mentioned a number of projects that RTA was undertaking but, like many other transit managers, he stressed the agency's need for money. Ohio is not a transit-friendly state, and Calabrese said that his agency was "trying to downsize and still serve more people." Calabrese described himself as "a passionate advocate for BRT" (busways, called "bus rapid transit"), but also said that he was not anti-rail. Still, he warned: "there's a real possibility that rail may shut down without more money."

Kenneth J. Prendergast, Executive Director of All Aboard Ohio (AAO), detailed this grim prospect in a feature posted on the organization's website, www.allaboardohio.org. The article began: "In the next few years, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) may be compelled to shut down one or all of its three rail lines just as millennials and real estate developers are repopulating city neighborhoods and making rail more cost-effective here. That bright future may be derailed by multiple factors converging at the same time." The article also reported on the RUN event.

Prendergast was the next presenter at the meeting. He started his talk by saying: "Yes, there is a future for rail here in Ohio." He introduced the organization, which was founded in 1973 and has members throughout the state. He stressed the need to "work around a rail-hostile state government." According to his figures, the State of Ohio spends only 68 cents per person on public transportation annually; far less than every other state in the region. Still, Prendergast suggests that cities and counties can get together to promote new rail initiatives, and avoid the need to get approval from an anti-rail state government. He expressed hope that there would be a viable passenger-rail network in Ohio again someday, and said that it is feasible to bring trains back into the old Union Terminal, which is now Tower City Center.

The final presenter was Jeanne Cantu, Business Controller for Amtrak's Long-Distance Services. She stressed Amtrak's funding difficulties, asking rhetorically: "How do we reduce our financial footprint to run our long-distance trains?" and noted that the trains rest on a "three-legged stool" of funding, safety and customer satisfaction. She spent much of her presentation describing changes at Chicago's Union Station, including the new "Legacy Lounge" where customers not riding in sleeping cars could hang out, wait for their trains and enjoy priority boarding for a \$20.00 charge. Not all of the attendees were as enthusiastic about the new lounge as she was.

The meeting concluded with a Public Forum. Some questions concerned transit in Cleveland, although most of them were about Amtrak. The most popular topic was Amtrak's food service, which has been roundly criticized, by both riders and some politicians, often for different reasons. There were also suggestions about how Amtrak could improve its marketing and promotion, and about connectivity with local transit in Cleveland.

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INDIANA ADVOCATES PUSH FOR PASSENGER RAIL

By *Donald Yehle*

Most passenger rail advocates know of the ongoing effort to retain and improve ridership on the *Hoosier State* line, jointly operated by Iowa Pacific Holdings with Amtrak engineers and conductors, and funded by the Indiana Department of Transportation. What isn't known is the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance's (IPRA) largely behind the scenes efforts to support that train, participation in other Indiana rail projects, and overall vision for passenger rail in the state.

IPRA welcomes this opportunity to inform Rail Users' Network members about us. We seek your support when necessary on our projects. Largely through our monthly electronic newsletter, we pledge to keep you informed by asking you to go to www.indianahighspeedrail.org and click on the pdf for *All Aboard Indiana*. Persons interested in receiving a complimentary copy of our electronic newsletter should email info@indianahighspeedrail.org. Please include your name, email address, home mailing address, and telephone number.

A diversified board of directors, representing passenger rail advocates throughout Indiana, governs the Association. The board holds open monthly board meetings, rotating them among four quadrants of the state—Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Lafayette and Northwest Indiana. Meetings are held on either Thursdays or Saturdays, presided over by President Steve Coxhead (SC), a Northwest Indiana resident.

Please find below a series of questions addressed to Coxhead about the Association. The first question tackles the organization's vision for 21st Century Passenger Rail.

SC: 21st Century Passenger Rail refers to the use of "state of the art" passenger rail systems in the national transportation network, including Indiana. This can mean true high speed rail (220 mph); higher speed rail (110 mph), or conventional rail (80 mph).

Would you be specific about the existing national transportation network in Indiana?

SC: Business and leisure travelers ride a number of passenger trains in and through our state, including the *Blue Water*, the *Cardinal*, the *Capitol Limited*, the *Hoosier State*, the *Lake Shore Limited*, the *Pere Marquette* and the *Wolverine*. The Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District operates the South Shore line between South Bend, IN and Chicago, as well. Through Greyhound Lines, Amtrak provides "thruway bus connections" to and from Nashville, Tennessee; Louisville, Kentucky; Cincinnati, Ohio; Indianapolis, and Chicago.

How does "state of the art" technology factor into the definition of 21st Century Passenger Rail?

SC: The overall system in place in Western Europe is a great example of 21st Century Passenger Rail. It incorporates service speed, propulsion, computer-based command, and passenger amenities. What we have in this country, today, is a skeletal system, not even as good as the mid-20th Century system that could be found around, say, 1948-1952.

IPRA members, and for that matter, most Hoosiers, know our state and our country are "light years" behind our European and Asian friends when it comes to passenger rail. What can be done to change that reality?

SC: 21st Century Passenger Rail needs to be our target to optimize choice, comfort and convenience for the traveling public. We're working on creating the awareness

of what's needed. The decision by the Indiana legislature to provide funding for the next two years for the *Hoosier State* is a significant step in moving awareness to something tangible. True high speed rail would be the ultimate, as it has the additional property of changing how we think of time and space (e.g., Indianapolis becomes a suburb of Chicago).

Speaking of passenger rail along the Chicago-Indianapolis corridor, what's the latest on the private-public partnership involving Amtrak, Iowa Pacific, and the Indiana Department of Transportation?

SC: Significant ridership gains haven't yet been realized since Iowa Pacific's takeover of the *Hoosier State* in August. Many individuals, including IPRA members, have worked hard and continue to labor to realize an improved train between our state capital and the Windy City. Passengers now have a train that offers Wi-Fi, food and beverage services, and the safe access as always provided by Amtrak. Iowa Pacific has added a fourth coach which is ADA-compliant. The company has a sales and marketing manager working to bring on board millennials in an effort to drastically boost ridership on the line in the next 18 to 24 months. The next step will be to add bus coach service to the Hoosier State corridor to/from Bloomington (home to Indiana University) and Gary.

Where does Indiana stand with other passenger rail initiatives, particularly the proposed Chicago to Columbus, Ohio, passenger rail line being developed by the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA)?

SC: Revival of passenger rail service on this corridor that would serve Warsaw and Fort Wayne hit a snag earlier this year when funding wasn't secured for its Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement.

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INDIANA ADVOCATES PUSH FOR PASSENGER RAIL

(Continued from page 10)

They're working on new funding plans, which makes me excited about the possibilities for that service. I'm equally proud that our organization is working with NIPRA on rail development across the state and am confident that they'll execute the proper strategy at the right time to gain the needed funding.

Drums are beating loudly from folks in the Cincinnati area with the desired end condition to bring daily, modern, 21st Century Passenger Rail to the Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati corridor. Would you share with our readers how that effort is progressing?

SC: Ohioans announced a major campaign in recent weeks to expand Hoosier State service to Cincinnati. (See the November issues of All Aboard Ohio and All Aboard Indiana.) I attended a June meeting in Cincinnati, which was a preliminary discussion about conducting an economic and feasibility study for expansion of rail service on this corridor. Discussion participants included a councilwoman and staff members from the City of Cincinnati; a Hamilton County, Ohio, commissioner; the CEO and executive director of the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana Regional County of Governments; Transportation Consultant Rich Davis of Fort Wayne, and Derek Bauman of All Aboard Ohio, who is excited about the recently

approved Oxford, OH stop on the Cardinal. As with all rail initiatives, these efforts take time and never move nearly as fast as rail advocates would like.

Thinking economic vitality, IPRA's board of directors have had discussions with Anderson and Muncie residents to advance the case for commuter rail to and from Indianapolis. Would you tell us a little more about that project?

SC: A meeting took place among a few IPRA members and East Central Indiana commuter rail proponents to define broad outlines of the project, identify prospective stakeholders, and to determine appropriate political support. IPRA is encouraging the need to organize a local committee, the need to "time" the project so as to secure funding to study the project, and how to tie current project enthusiasm with a 2008 "Final Report of the Central Indiana Commuter Rail Feasibility Study."

The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) held its annual fall conference in Indianapolis in late October. What significance can be placed on that meeting being held in Indiana?

SC: As you know, NARP is America's largest advocacy group in support of passenger rail. Like RUN and like us, NARP desires a 21st century passenger rail system. Those of us from Indiana

were thrilled to have the national rail advocacy spotlight pointed at the "crossroads of America," particularly since it came a few months after the private-public partnership involving Amtrak, Iowa Pacific, and INDOT was launched. We hope comments from speakers like Ed Ellis of Iowa Pacific resonated among the nearly 200 participants. A panel discussion involving millennials and traditional rail advocates about future rail passengers left an imprint. The tour of Amtrak's Beech Grove maintenance facility the Friday before the education and advocacy meeting showcased the potential for expansion of that facility and a walk-through of "for sale" Talgo trains created a stir.

IPRA is the newest member of the Rail Users' Network. Why did your organization join with us and how does your organization think it will benefit your passenger rail advocacy activities?

SC: Phillip Streby, a longtime IPRA member and an Amtrak conductor, recommended our participation with RUN. Many of you know Phil. He can be very convincing, especially when it comes to advancing passenger rail. Phillip has frequently lobbied congressmen and senators as one of Indiana's two NARP council members. The board became convinced information gained at your meetings and contacts made will be helpful as Indiana moves toward the dream of 21st Century Passenger Railroading.

Donald Yehle is editor of All Aboard Indiana.

Your Help is Needed!

By now you should have received our annual appeal letter. While it is always difficult to ask for financial help, your generosity will help us to continue and deepen our work in the coming year. Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution before the end of this tax year. Rail advocacy is important to a balanced national transportation system.

Each organization is stronger working together rather than individually; RUN can make a stronger case for rail service with a geographically diverse, larger membership base. Your contribution will strengthen our impact and broaden our reach as we continue to represent all rail passengers, including long distance, commuter, and transit riders. You can donate online using your credit card or PayPal account on the Rail Users' Network website or make a check out to RUN and mail it to Box 8015, Portland, ME. 04104.

We thank you in advance for your support and hope you have a great holiday season and new year.

COLORADO NEEDS FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL

(Continued from page 1)

We need to plan to meet this transportation challenge. In order to help launch this urgent planning effort for Colorado, ColoRail has developed a vision and strategy for a rail component. Given the extensive lead times for projects of this magnitude, history tells us the outreach and planning must begin now!

Why Passenger Rail?

Most other industrialized countries have come to understand these principles:

1. Steel wheels on steel rails have enormous capacity. A dedicated two-track rail service has the same capacity as 14 lanes of highway.
2. Passenger rail is less subject to disruption by weather compared to highways and air travel.
3. Passenger rail is potentially much faster than rubber tires on pavement.
4. Trains move more people and more goods using much less energy than cars and trucks, and far less than airplanes.
5. Passenger rail is safer than car travel.
6. Trains create immense economic benefits in nearby communities.
7. Trains "leave the driving to us," which means passengers can watch the scenery instead of the road, accomplish job tasks, read a good book, play a video or game, socialize, and eat and drink.

A beautiful history and a critical economic and mobility choice for the future

America, including Colorado, once had an excellent passenger rail system. It took you where you wanted to go, at reasonable

speed, with good reliability, at competitive prices. Those trains were run by private railroad companies who competed with each other for travelers' dollars. In Colorado, you could catch several trains a day from Denver to Ft. Collins and Cheyenne, to Colorado Springs and Pueblo.

In the mid-20th century, America's federal, state, and local governments decided to spend vast amounts of public money on highways and airports. This created severe competition with the private railroads and killed the profitability of passenger trains. The private railroads got out of the business and Congress created Amtrak in 1970 to maintain what was left of the passenger rail system. Unfortunately, Congress has never funded Amtrak at a level high enough to create an efficient, quality nationwide service.

While everyone today appreciates the convenience and comfort of our modern automobiles, and we expect to be able to fly across the continent in mere hours, these benefits have come with significant economic, social, and environmental costs. Other nations who invested in highways, airports, AND railroads gained significant benefit from the better balance.

In recent years, many U.S. states and cities have implemented new commuter and intercity rail systems and are upgrading their existing services with higher speeds and expansion. Some have been able to leverage funding for the services by tapping into the increased property values from development surrounding stations. Their leaders have recognized the twin values of rail to citizen mobility and economic development.

Colorado faces a critical choice: Will we try to meet the challenge of our growth through expansion of I-25 to six, eight or 12 lanes? Or will we invest in a more diverse transportation system?

The Market

Beyond the simple fact of our rapidly increasing population, other factors point to a need for Front Range travel options. The number of individuals in Colorado who are 65 and over will increase from 555,000 in 2010 to 1,243,000 in 2030. Many of them cannot or will not drive cars.

The cost of a car, its fuel and maintenance is a significant burden to lower-income people. Public transit can serve them better. For college students and military personnel, the equation is often similar. Furthermore, the transit option is safer for all concerned. Business people who use the good train system of the Northeast Corridor appreciate the opportunity to work while moving. Many people who daily ride RTD buses and trains do the same.

Another trend favoring rail is changing choices by young adults. The "millennial" generation is much less interested in driving than were "baby boomers." It's possible that America's love affair with the car is waning just a bit.

These factors indicate that there will be a large population in need of more diverse mobility options.

What About Money?

In a recent study, the Colorado Department of Transportation has estimated that building a feasible passenger rail corridor from Ft. Collins to Denver would cost about \$1.2 billion. This is a huge amount but it is not out of order when you think of the \$1-billion upgrade that is planned for a short stretch of Interstate 70 in eastern Denver.

CDOT's assessment of transportation options from Denver north to Ft. Collins estimates that passenger rail costs are about \$25 million per mile. That's a lot, but it is not more than highway expansion

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NEW JERSEY TRANSIT RIDERS SUFFER

(Continued from page 4)

11:30, but skips a number of intermediate stops and terminates in Hoboken, rather than New York.

Riders on the North Jersey Coast Line south of Long Branch were hit even harder. Their last train used to leave Penn Station, New York at 1:00; now it leaves at 11:18, one hour and 42 minutes earlier. The Friday night schedule is the same as on Monday through Thursday nights. There is no late departure on Friday evenings, except on the Pascack Line. The last trains on Saturday and Sunday evenings did not change from the pre-September schedule.

This writer and other members of the Lackawanna Coalition complained to the media and to elected officials about the cuts, and especially about the secrecy with which they were implemented. This writer credits that campaign with NJT's act of restoring some of these services only eight weeks after they were cut; a rare concession from NJT to riders.

In the final outcome, only people who depend on transit have lost mobility and find themselves paying more for the mobility they still have. Motorists can still go anywhere they want, and at any hour. Some New Jerseyans point to the fact that the legislators, the NJT Board and senior managers are all motorists.

None depend on transit for their mobility, so none of them feel the pain that they inflict on transit-dependent riders. This may be a symptom of the recent politization of transit in this country, now that transit is part of the public sector. New Jersey's transit riders do not like the situation, or the current condition of the transit they ride, but it does not appear that they can do anything about it, at least not in the foreseeable future. Gov. Christie does not leave office until the beginning of 2018, and there is no guarantee that the next governor will be any better for transit riders than he has been.

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

A TRIBUTE TO RAILS INC'S DELORES GRAYNING

(Continued from page 5)

Gardner, along with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), had previously written a letter to the Secretary of Transportation advocating for the grant.

"The grant announced today will allow for critical maintenance and upgrades to the *Southwest Chief* line to move forward," Gardner said. "This line is deeply important to the economies of many communities in southeast Colorado, and keeping it well-run and well-maintained will help ensure that those communities continue to benefit from the *Southwest Chief's* operation. I'm pleased that the Department of Transportation awarded this grant, and I look forward to continuing to advocate for the *Southwest Chief*."

Also, there is an excellent article by Andrew Breiner, posted May 19, 2015, titled, "Why We Should Spend Billions More On Trains". This piece is in an online periodical called "Portside" (www.portside.org). It focusses heavily on rider safety and on Rail spending comparisons among several countries. Also try: www.thinkprogress.org

Rail Transit For Albuquerque:

Here's a lightly edited letter to me from Isaac Benton, the Albuquerque City Councilor who's with us:

I very much support the concept of the Yard Bird, an electric light rail connecting the historic Railyards (RY) to Alvarado Transit Center. It could run in 1st Street, and in a future phase might connect to National Hispanic Cultural Center.

Such a conveyance would foster redevelopment in the Railyards and Downtown without choking the area with cars. It would fit neatly with the proposed 400-car garage and mixed-use redevelopment at 1st and Copper; the Innovate ABQ project, and a less car-oriented development at the Railyards.

Meanwhile, RY master developer Samitaur is moving quite slowly and includes no rail features in their master plan other than the Wheels Museum and BNSF's right to use the existing turntable. Per the master development agreement with the City, Samitaur's clock could run out next year and other options could open up for the City. The operators of our Mid-Region Regional Transit District

(RTD) are bullish on *Rail Runner* maintenance going onto the Railyards, a perfect fit for a small part of the acreage.

Another alternative is being discussed: the City and RTD could run an hourly "heavy rail" passenger train between the RY and Old Town via the Sawmill spur, opening up potential for more high-density infill housing and commercial redevelopment north of Downtown. This option also could be good for business in the old center city!

Why should such a system be operated by RTD and not ABQ Ride? The RTD already owns the right of way and already are licensed to run heavy commuter rail (but not light rail). As part of a cooperative deal with the City, the Rail Runner would gain a needed indoor maintenance facility.

Note: Part of what might make this latter proposal possible is the recent proliferation of small breweries and "brew pubs" around Albuquerque.

J.W. Madison is a RUN Board Member and president of Rails Inc, based in Albuquerque, NM.

THE STATUS OF PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCACY IN THE PINE TREE STATE

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

A lot has happened during the past 12 months, even though passenger rail isn't on the bucket list of Republican Gov. Paul LePage's Administration. Due to the efforts of Tony Donovan, the founding member of the Maine Rail Transit Coalition, and co-chair of the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Maine State Legislature overrode the governor's veto of a \$400,000 funding bill for a Feasibility Study and Service Development Plan for Train Service from Portland to Lewiston-Auburn. This funding is contingent on the twin cities, the second largest community in Maine, contributing an additional \$50,000 each to help pay for the initiative. Both city councils agreed to appropriate the matching funds required. Connecting the two cities with Portland is the immediate goal, while the long term goal is to revive rail service to Montreal, utilizing the right-of-way of the St Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad.

On another front, a \$25-million dollar bond proposal which was introduced this year in

the State Legislature will be voted on in the upcoming second session of the legislature in the coming year. This would provide \$5 million for Lewiston-Auburn, \$7 million for the state-owned Mountain Division rail line from Portland to Fryeburg, \$8 million for building a five-mile siding at Royal Junction in Yarmouth to increase the frequency of *Downeaster* service to Brunswick, and \$5 million for other state-owned rail lines.

Trainriders/Northeast, which was instrumental in restoring passenger service between Boston and Portland, is now also actively pursuing a new plan to promote direct service from Maine to New York City. The *Downeaster* would go to Worcester, connecting passengers to existing Amtrak service there. The proposal would require the upgrade of the existing Pan Am freight line from Lowell to Worcester. From Worcester, passengers would continue on to Springfield, Hartford, New Haven and then NYC.

A more detailed look at the endeavors of The Maine Rail group illustrates the challenges facing those in Maine who wish

to extend passenger rail. This organization has been actively building support for the restoration of rail service to Augusta and beyond. Last year, the Augusta and Waterville City Councils passed resolutions calling for a study to determine the feasibility of restoring rail passenger service to their cities. This was an important first step. The next logical step is a comprehensive plan integrating all parts of this vision. It would include a definition of the level of rail service and connections, ridership and revenue projections, capital and operating cost projections, funding sources for capital and operations, and an agreement with Pan Am railroad to sell or utilize track east of the Kennebec River bridge.

The state currently owns the rail line called the "lower road." It runs from Brunswick, ME to downtown Augusta and then over the Kennebec River to the Pan Am rail line running along the east side of the former Statler Paper mill site to Waterville. While acknowledging that much would need to be done to restore rail service, the Maine Rail Group believes

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COLORADO NEEDS FRONT RANGE PASSENGER RAIL

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to achieve the same capacity. So a conservative cost estimate puts the price tag for Front Range passenger rail at \$4.4 billion. Widening I-25 would cost roughly the same, but with far less reliability, much higher energy consumption, lower safety, and ultimately the same problems with highway traffic congestion, with or without smarter cars.

Certainly, Colorado and America are not going to give up on cars and roads. But to meet the growth in our desire and need for intercity travel, rail effectively competes financially. So a \$5-billion Front

Range passenger rail system would be a manageable, worthwhile transportation cost for Colorado, particularly with federal, innovative state and local, and possibly private sector investment.

In addition to the mobility options a strong rail and transit alternative offers citizens, the personal economic benefits can be large. The American Automobile Association estimates that owning a car costs between \$8,000 and \$11,000 per year. Most of that money leaves the community in payments for energy, insurance, financing and repair parts. Removing one car from each owner with two or more cars returns a great deal

of that money to the individual and the regional economy. When you couple this possibility with the very probable commercial benefits from train stations, it becomes easy to understand why local and regional economies with passenger rail service thrive.

Front Range passenger rail is not only an attractive alternative for travelers, it is an economy booster by increasing productivity and value in the corridor. With lead times of 15 to 25 years for large rail projects, the time to begin serious planning is now!

Jim Souby is President and Gary Sprung is a member of ColoRail.

PASSENGER RAIL ADVOCACY IN THE PINE TREE STATE

(Continued from page 14)

it is a worthy project, given the economic development potential in the downtown area of the city, as well at the city-owned Statler Paper mill site in east Augusta and in downtown Waterville.

The Maine Rail Group's vision includes extending passenger rail service to an East Augusta terminal with stops for all passenger trains in downtown Augusta and on to Waterville, which is 20 miles north of the state capital. An existing downtown parking garage in Augusta would need to be expanded to accommodate cars that are currently parked on the graveled over right-of-way. A regional transportation center should be built in East Augusta on the former Statler Paper mill property that the city owns. This site is an excellent location for a rail station for this facility, as it would provide easy access from Rt. 3 & Rt. I-

95, enabling drivers from surrounding communities to take advantage of the extended passenger rail service.

MRG board members recognize restoring rail passenger service to Augusta and Waterville is not a high priority of the present state administration. With information and public support, however, it believes attitudes can be changed. It plans to build a coalition of supporters who will persuade decision makers at the state and local level. The coalition should be representative of the various constituencies that exist not only in Augusta and Waterville, but also in other communities that would benefit from the restoration of passenger service. This could include downtown business associations, chambers of commerce, local business owners, the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, real estate developers, civic leaders, government officials, state legislators,

tourist industry officials, college and university officials and other interested citizens who would utilize the service.

The MRG is planning to hold a visioning session in March to elicit ideas about the type of service needed or wanted and to build additional support for the project. Ultimately, members from these different constituencies should meet regularly to develop promotional materials and to begin reaching out to other organizations and constituencies to build support for the project. Representatives from this group should also meet with state representatives and with members of the State Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee to build support and to obtain funds to pay for a rail feasibility study for the proposed service to Augusta and beyond.

In all of the cases noted, the challenges are great but the intended results will benefit the citizens of Maine for years to come.

RUN REACHES OUT TO RIDERS AND ADVOCATES IN CLEVELAND

(Continued from page 9)

One attendee, who had worked as a trainmaster, suggested a plan for restoring service to the old Union Terminal, which he believes is feasible.

A number of advocates in Cleveland joined RUN that day, and everybody at RUN considered the meeting a success.

On Sunday, a group of RUN members rode the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSRR) to Akron and back, although the line is not transit-accessible on weekends. It is now a tourist railroad, and it provides service to Akron, along with a shuttle bus to take riders to attractions in that city. The railroad operates along the scenic

Cuyahoga River and the Ohio & Erie Canal, which ran parallel to it. From its opening in 1880 until the last scheduled passenger train ran on it in 1963, the railroad connected the cities of Cleveland, Akron and Canton,. There were excursions beyond Akron to Canton for a few years, but those ended in 2012. Everybody who took the ride enjoyed it. Today, the line operates in partnership with the National Park Service.

Everyone concerned with the RUN meeting said it was successful, and RUN members who came from the East or from Chicago said it was worth the trip. Cleveland has some well-preserved historic buildings downtown, and some interesting and lively neighborhoods. There is no

doubt that the rail transit now running in the city has contributed to the downtown revitalization that is happening today. Only a decade ago, almost nobody could be found in downtown Cleveland at night. Today, downtown Cleveland is a lively, busy place with plenty of restaurants and clubs. Rail advocates in Cleveland and elsewhere in Ohio hope that there will be more trains and more cities in their state with rail transit someday. In the meantime, though, if you want to ride some rail transit in the State of Ohio, you need to RUN to Cleveland!

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

RIDING THE RAILS IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY: SOME LESSONS FOR NORTH AMERICA: PART I

By F.K. Plous

Sometime back in early July, my 32-year-old daughter, Eliza, got an idea.

“Hey, Dad, I’ve got 175,000 United Airlines miles. Why don’t we all go to Europe?”

Eliza works as a foreign-student recruiter for a local community college, a job that has taken her multiple times to China, Japan, Vietnam and Korea, and once to Turkey. The miles keep piling up, and now she was offering to share her bounty with the family. In return for Eliza’s free airline tickets, I volunteered to pay for hotels and train tickets.

For a family that lacks the money for foreign travel, Eliza’s offer was irresistible. Nevertheless, my wife, April, did resist; she’s been busy settling her late mother’s estate and clearing out her mom’s house in the suburbs to ready it for sale. And Eliza’s 27-year-old sister, Julia, turned the trip down as well. She’s afraid to fly and is generally uncurious about foreign countries.

That narrowed the cast down to me, Eliza and her fiance, Bob Magala, who had never traveled abroad before. Eliza laid down the basic itinerary. We were heading for Hungary, where Eliza had done her junior year of overseas study in Budapest in 2004. Three years later she returned to Hungary to spend a year teaching English at the public high school in Koszeg, a town of 7,000 at the far western end of the country within miles of the Austrian border.

Eliza’s plan was to spend three days reconnecting with her old friends in Koszeg, then move on to Budapest and spend another three days there—where other friends awaited—before flying home. We briefly considered adding Prague to our itinerary but dropped the idea when it became clear we just wouldn’t have time. Because there are no direct flights from

O’Hare to Budapest, the closest we could get was a United non-stop to Munich. But that was fine, because it meant that once on the ground we could work our way across south-central Europe by a series of trains, sampling the railroads in three countries and using a variety of train types.

- We would ride the Munich S-Bahn, or suburban service, from Munich airport to our Air BnB apartment near the city center.
- On our third day in the Bavarian capital, we would take a mainline train 70 miles to Salzburg just across the border in Austria.
- After an overnight stay in the birthplace of Mozart, we would continue east on the same route 200 miles to Vienna.
- At Vienna we would transfer to an Austrian Federal Railways regional train for the 60-km. trip just across the Hungarian border to Sopron (pr. SHO-pron—the Hungarians use the “s” for our “sh” sound).
- At Sopron, we would switch to a Hungarian train for another 60-km leg to the regional seat of Szombately, where Eliza’s friends would meet us with a car and take us the last 20 km. to Koszeg.
- After three days in Koszeg, we would return to Szombately and catch a train for the 250-km (155-mile) trip to the storied Hungarian capital.

The Munich airport station is underground and feels like a regular subway station, but the train we stepped into was a step up from rapid transit: big, wide cars with huge windows and pantographs on the roof instead of a third rail on the tracks. The permanently coupled 4-car train had no bulkheads at the end of each car, just a full-width diaphragm that turned the whole car into one continuous chamber. We bought our tickets from a machine on the platform and—this was new to us—pushed a button on the outside of the door to open it and admit us to the car. A few minutes later the train slid out of the station, ran for a minute or so in a tunnel, then burst into sunlight

onto what I quickly realized was a main-line electrified railroad. Only later did I learn that we were not on the Munich subway, but on the *Stadtschnellbahn*, or S-bahn, a network of high-speed commuter trains dating from the big infrastructure expansion Munich carried out for the 1972 Olympics.

The train screamed across the cornfields—yes, the farmers were raising American-style corn—at what seemed to be about 85 miles per hour, stopping at several suburbs before entering Munich proper. Suddenly, three huge men ranging in age from about 25 to 50 entered the car and began inspecting tickets. The S-bahn uses the honor system, and these plainclothes ticket inspectors looked serious. Fortunately, we had the necessary paper. After pausing at the *Ostbahnhof* on the east side of downtown, the train plunged into a tunnel and stopped beneath the city’s central square, the Marienplatz, where we left and went to our accommodations.

Although we had no train riding planned for our second day in Munich, I insisted we walk over to the Hauptbahnhof, the city’s main station, to check the place out and buy our tickets for Salzburg. I had already checked the timetables and found 24 daily trains in each direction between Munich and Salzburg (and onward to Vienna), so reservations were not necessary. What I saw seriously affected me. The stub station featured 16 tracks coming in from the west, nearly every track had a train on it, some tracks had two trains poised to leave in succession, and the platforms were at least twice as wide—perhaps 30 or 35 feet, a virtual promenade—as any platform I’ve ever seen in North America. A train shed covered the entire expanse, and in a sight calculated to reduce the Amtrak police department to hand-wringing, there was no platform control whatsoever: Anybody could stroll right off the concourse and onto any platform at any time—and I did,

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RIDING THE RAILS IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

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inspecting an InterCity Express high-speed train just in from Essen, a couple of Austrian Railjet trains from Vienna and Salzburg and both single- and double-deck commuter trains, most of them electrified. I believe I saw one idling diesel locomotive that must have come in off a non-electrified branch line.

To make this train-watchers paradise even more paradisaical, a mezzanine speckled with every imaginable sort of food concession is suspended just above the concourse. Climb up one flight and you can get yourself a beer and sausage or a coffee and pastry and feast your eyes and your inner man at the same time. Here, at last, I said to myself, I have found civilization. We bought our tickets and prepared for the next day's trip to Salzburg.

Our train was the standard equipment used on the Munich-Salzburg-Vienna main line, a Railjet operated by the Austrian Federal Railways. The red-and-gray Railjets are not true high-speed trains. A big Taurus-type electric locomotive pulls a seven-car fixed consist with a tail car tipped with a streamlined cab to permit push-pull operation. The cab car also has a first-class section and a small bistro with a curving standup refreshment bar and booth seating for 14. The red-and-gray color scheme is replicated inside the trains, especially in the bistro car, which has red booths. Coach interiors are mostly gray.

We got aboard our coach with a few minutes to spare, and I immediately noticed a couple of departures from standard North American interior-design practices. The seats, while very roomy and comfortable, did not recline, and there was no carpeting on the floor or on the sidewalls below the windows.

The reason for these omissions became clear shortly after our on-time departure. The Railjet is so fast that most passengers reach their destination before they need a nap, and the ride is so quiet that installing a carpet would be like putting sugar in honey. With a firm but gentle tug on the consist, the big Taurus got hold of its train so decisively that our car seemed to be going 35 miles per hour by the time the end of the platform slid past.

And we just kept accelerating. Unlike American stations, where interlockings, turnouts and yard traffic restrict speed for the first three or four miles, our Railjet was off like a shot right from the highball on dedicated passenger track. A mile out of the station we seemed to be doing close to 100 mph. The train climbed a flyover and leaned to the left for a long, continuous high-speed curve. Because the Munich *Hauptbahnhof* is a stub station entered only from the west, our eastbound train had to do a complete 180 to get itself pointed toward Salzburg. It did so with no diminution in speed on superbly designed and maintained track. Factories, apartment blocks, houses and boulevards flew past as the train followed the circumferential route taking it over to the *Ostbahnhof* for a final pickup on the east side of downtown. We were doing more than 100 mph without even leaving the city limits.

But then we did leave the city limits, very aggressively, with a big, smooth surge of acceleration from the Taurus on the point. The digital readout on the ceiling over the aisle read 200 kmh—about 125 miles per hour—and we were climbing and curving, for Bavaria is sub-alpine country. Pretty country towns flew by, but alas, we didn't see much of them because the Germans treat their railroad much the same as Americans treat their Interstates. Airport-style "blast fences" are erected along the right of way to protect residents along the tracks against the noise of passing trains. The fencing material can be

wood, plastic or aluminum, and in addition to blocking rail passengers' views of the passing communities it contributes a shabbiness all its own that is not mentioned in the travel brochures.

And the train noise must be substantial, because so is the number of train movements. About every seven or eight minutes, another train flashed past on the other track. Some were Railjets, some were commuter and regional trains and, to the surprise of this observer, a fair number were freights. Most of them seemed to be moving at a clip not much slower than the passenger trains. Certainly they were moving faster than a typical American freight train. And why not? They all were powered by electric engines, their cars were much lighter than the 286,000-lb. behemoths now standard in North America—and they were short, usually no more than 25 cars.

Still, the freights were substantially slower than the Railjets. How, I wondered, could the dispatchers mingle so many different kinds of trains, without letting fast trains get backed up behind slow ones? Passenger-train slots are longer than freight-train slots, and commuter trains fit somewhere in between, but the fast trains did not seem to be intruding on the slow ones. What made it all work?

The mystery began to clear up when we made our first stop at a pretty little country town up in the hills—I think it may have been the lake resort of Chiemsee. As we approached the station the double-track main line fanned out to become four tracks—two passenger tracks accessing the station platforms and two more tracks without a platform—obviously for freight trains. Since German freight trains are short, not a lot of real estate was needed to create this bigger footprint. As we progressed eastward I saw this same configuration at every rural station: two passing tracks into which the dispatcher could route a freight train in advance of a passenger train meeting or overtaking it.

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ALL ABOARD THE ST. KITTS SCENIC RAILWAY

By Bill Engel

On the island of St. Kitts in the eastern Caribbean, there is an interesting railroad operation called the St. Kitts Scenic Railway. How many places in the world are you going to find double-decked narrow gauge passenger cars? The unique cars and island hospitality make riding this line a most enjoyable experience.

Growing sugar cane and producing raw sugar was long an important part of the economy in the Caribbean islands and the island of St. Kitts was no exception. Early sugar production involved relatively small plantations using wind powered machinery to squeeze juice from the harvested sugar cane. The juice was then boiled to make raw sugar. But by the early twentieth century more efficiency was needed to stay competitive. On St. Kitts, a central sugar processing factory was established in 1912 and 30 miles of 2'6" gauge railway was constructed, circling the island to transport the harvested sugar cane to the factory.

But even this more efficient system could not keep St. Kitts sugar competitive in world markets forever. By the early 2000s, the government made the decision to close the sugar factory in 2005. But what to do with the railway? A private operator was found to make an investment to operate it as a tourist attraction!

New passenger cars were purpose built with large windows on an enclosed lower level. The lower level is air conditioned and has the restroom. Open-air seating was provided on the upper level which has a canvas cover to shade passengers from the sun and protect against any rain showers. At one end of the upper level is a station for the car host to provide complimentary beverages to the passengers. Second hand European built diesel hydraulic locomotives were acquired to provide the motive power. Since the passenger cars are equipped with Westinghouse air brakes, the locomotives had to be retrofitted with them as well. A power car provides electricity for the PA system and other needs.

My wife Sandy and I first became aware of this railway during a November 2002 visit to St. Kitts. While on a general bus tour of the island, I noticed the rail right of way and some of the special cars used to haul sugar cane. Since it was not sugar cane harvest season, the rails were not active.

Then in July 2003, during a conversation with a White Pass & Yukon employee in Skagway, AK, he stated he had been sent to St. Kitts in January that year to train the island enginemen on using air brakes so they could operate the new passenger train. The sugar cane cars did not have air brakes.

On a late winter cruise to the Caribbean in 2004, our ship was scheduled to visit St. Kitts. We could not turn down the offered shore tour to ride the St. Kitts Scenic Railway! We signed up and had a most enjoyable experience.

Although the railway circles the island, the scenic train only uses 18 of the 30 miles of track. Turning loops have been constructed at the terminals of the passenger train for ease of operation. Our trip started at the main terminal, not far from the port at the capital city of Basseterre.

Most of the passengers chose the upper level open air seating, which really does offer better viewing. Our car host introduced herself, and began using the large "industrial strength" blender at her service station to mix the drinks.

Traveling from this terminal, the train first runs along the Atlantic Ocean side of St. Kitts. Stunning views of the Atlantic are visible, unspoiled by the high rise buildings found on our Atlantic shores. Since the railway is 2'6" gauge, some of the curves are rather sharp. Tropical vegetation grows close to the right of way, another reason to choose the upper level seating. Since it was sugar cane harvest season, we would pass small yards where workers were loading cane cars from trucks. At these yards, a signalman would emerge from a small building and change a green flag to a red

one after our train had passed, evidently a crude manual block signal system!

In addition to the car host offering both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, entertainment was provided. A trio of singers would visit each car in turn, offering mostly gospel-style music. In between songs, the narrator kept us aware of the sights we were seeing. A common sight was the cone-shaped base of one of the windmills that had powered the machinery used to squeeze the juice out of the sugar cane in the past.

St. Kitts is a volcanic island, so the railway is squeezed in between the shoreline and the somewhat steep slopes of Mt. Liamuiga. Over the centuries rainwater runoff has eroded ravines in the sides of the hills known locally as "ghuts." The railway builders were obliged to cross several of these on high steel trestles, definitely a scenic highlight of the ride. At the northern end of St. Kitts, views of a neighboring island become visible, and the shoreline below becomes that of the Caribbean Sea instead of the Atlantic Ocean.

After 18 scenic miles, the train pulls into the turning loop and passengers board mini-buses for the 12 mile road journey back to the port. The train boards other passengers for their train ride in the reverse direction.

For the passenger rail advocate, the St. Kitts Scenic Railway is a positive example of recycling a former freight railway to passenger use. It is also an example of a public/private partnership. It provides different activity than water sports, golf, or shopping to visitors to the island. The cruise lines do most of the marketing through their shore tour desks. If you take a Caribbean cruise that calls at St. Kitts, this tour is a must do! For more info, visit www.stkittsscenicrailway.com.

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

RIDING THE RAILS IN GERMANY, AUSTRIA AND HUNGARY

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Obviously, this extra infrastructure costs extra money—especially since it involves not just track but electrification—but it keeps the railroad extraordinarily fluid and enables it to handle far more movements than would be possible on a double-track North American railroad. The electric engines don't hurt either. Their whiplike acceleration far exceeds that of the most powerful diesel locomotives, giving the freight trains a nimbleness we just don't see on this side of the pond.

As we accelerated out of Chiemsee toward the Austrian border, I began to notice something else about our Railjet: The ride was not just fast but extraordinarily smooth and silent. The Railjets are conventional single-deck trains, and Eliza, Bob and I were seated directly over the truck, yet the noise level in this uncarpeted coach interior was substantially lower at 125 mph than on the upper deck of one of Amtrak's Superliners doing 70. It seemed we were hardly on rails at all. What was going on?

I had a hunch. We certainly were on rails, but we didn't seem to be on them very much. I suspected that the wheel/rail contact area—the actual dimensions of the wheel surface in contact with the rail surface—was considerably smaller than the

contact area on an American train. I once read that the wheel/rail contact area under a typical North American heavy freight locomotive is about the size of a quarter (for each wheel), while the contact area under a 286,000-lb. freight car is about the size of a nickel and the contact area under a passenger car is about the size of a dime.

The contact area under our Railjet coach seemed to be about the size of pea. How could that possibly be achieved? Probably by using a rounder railhead—and maybe by rounding the wheel surface as well.

I immediately e-mailed my European railroad authority, Andrew Sharp, retired director-general of the International Air Rail Organisation in London. Andrew shot back, "Right you are, Fritz. European rail does have a rounder profile than American rail. That's what makes the ride so quiet. The new California high-speed rail system is designed to use a rounded, Euro-style rail profile. But that's causing a bit of trouble, because the federal funding for California HSR says that all materials used on the railway must be made in the U.S., and not one American steel mill knows how to roll that type of rail."

A few minutes later we slowed for Salzburg, a stop I was eager to check out because I had

read that it recently replaced its old railroad station with one of more modern and functional design. I love stations and always try to keep up with changes in station design and technology. Still, how exciting could the station be in a city of only 154,000 people—about the size of Peoria?

Imagine my surprise when our Railjet slid to a stop in an 11-track elevated station covered by a stunning, barrel-shaped aluminum-and-glass train shed that seamlessly melded classic 19th-century station architecture with the best practices in crowd control, rail-traffic flow and passenger comforts and service perfected in the 20th and 21st. Although I had been in Europe for three days now, it was not until Salzburg that I began to realize just how different Europe is in the way it thinks about and uses passenger trains—and how much we have to learn before we can have a passenger-train system of our own.

It took me a couple of beers, a dinner of wiener schnitzel and another Railjet ride to Vienna before it started to become clear.

To be continued: Onward to Vienna...and east.

EK. Plous is vice president, communications at Corridor Capital LLC.

NEW RAIL EXTENSIONS OPENING IN SOCAL

(Continued from page 2)

The situation became a stalemate but eventually it looked like the option would be exercised. Then inexplicably at the eleventh hour, AnsaldoBreda declined to sign a contract to build the cars. Metro at that point had no choice but began the lengthy process of procuring the cars with the contract eventually awarded to Kinkisharyo for the needed light rail cars (dubbed P3010).

The new cars are currently being delivered, but it will not be until at least six months from now that enough

will have arrived for Metro to be able to operate both extensions. Since the Gold Line has already had an opening date announced, the new cars will first be used for it and only after it is functioning can any of the new cars be allocated to the Expo Line. The intrigue and machinations that cloud railcar procurement can boggle the mind.

Of course, once both extensions are up and running by next summer, all the political shenanigans and nonsense will be forgotten as the region exalts in the continued growth of a burgeoning urban rail network with further additions

(the Crenshaw and Regional Connector light rail lines and Purple Line heavy rail Wilshire extension) currently under construction. If the aforementioned ballot measure passes next November, its avowed purpose is to accelerate the construction of rail projects region wide such that what was thought would take 30 years to build could be done in as little as 10. If nothing else, the year ahead for rail in Southern California promises much excitement and drama.

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

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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!

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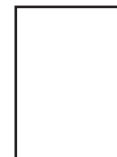
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