



Florida Gov. Bush: Trains “Just the Ticket”

Establishment of Amtrak service along the Florida East Coast route (FEC) took a jump forward December 20, 2001, as Gov. Jeb Bush (R) told on-line mayors that he had asked the Florida DOT to fund the plans fully. He said, “The September attacks on our country showed us that we must fully



Gov. Jeb Bush

develop alternative modes of transportation in and out of Florida. This restored passenger rail service is just the ticket.”

A total of \$82.5 million is needed. Of that, a first phase would use \$23.5 million in state DOT funds—of which the legislature still must provide \$8 million in fiscal 2002/03—to allow one daily train in each direction, starting in May 2003. This includes 23 miles of second

track, a new track connection from the FEC to the current Amtrak/Tri-Rail route at West Palm Beach, and eight new stations—St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Titusville, Cocoa, Melbourne, Vero Beach, Fort Pierce, and Stuart.

A second phase amounting to \$37.6 million and two daily trains would wait until fiscal 2005/06.

Amtrak likely will return to the old practice of splitting some trains at Jacksonville, sending one section down the FEC to Miami, and the other over today’s routes. This will be the first passenger rail service on the FEC since 1968 (and first through-service from the Northeast since 1963). n

AMTRAK’S STRONG DECEMBER

December figures show the air-to-rail shift continuing. For airlines, domestic passenger-miles fell 13.2% from a year ago; ridership fell 14.7%. Amtrak passenger-miles rose 3.8%, while ridership fell 0.8%. (Ridership rose 1.6% if one excludes the New York-Philadelphia Clockers, a handful of peak-hour trains.)

Strong demand for Amtrak’s nationwide sleeping-car network continued, with passengers, passenger-miles, and revenues up, respectively, 3%, 7% and 13%.

But Amtrak’s consistently strong passenger revenue increases since 9/11 have not offset increased security costs, primarily associated with guarding tunnels, bridges and tracks in the Northeast Corridor.

CORRECTION—In the article about Rocky Mount, NC (Oct.-Nov. ‘01), we should have referred to the Wilmington and Weldon (not Western) Railroad.

STRONG START FOR AMTRAK DOWNEASTER

Ridership for the first 17 days, December 15-31, was 14,071, for a healthy daily average of 828, and trains were 98% on-time. In his January 22 state of the state message, Gov. Angus King (I) said, “And don’t forget our newest piece of transportation infrastructure, the fabulous Downeaster, the first passenger train serving Maine for almost 40 years.”

Wheels of Progress

Here is our annual list of major rail passenger improvements planned to enter service and the dates of planned openings (if available). Dates and projects subject to change. NARP News regularly reports actual start-up dates.

2002

- **Feb. 4**—New Everett, WA, station (see photo, p. 3).
- **Early**—Dallas McKinney Ave. car line extended one mile northeast to DART Cityplace light rail station (opened 2000).
- **Spring**—Burlington-Charlotte Champlain Flyer extended south to Vergennes, VT (9 mi.).
- **Spring**—New Jersey Transit (NJT) Montclair Connection, allowing direct access to Manhattan from Boonton Line commuter rail stations (includes electrification existing Montclair Branch and Boonton Line out to Great Notch).
- **Spring**—NJT City Subway (light rail) extension Franklin Ave. (Newark)-Bloomfield Ave. (Bloomfield), ½ mi.
- **Apr.**—Denver RTD light rail Central Platte Valley spur (1.8 mi.), West Auraria-Broncos stadium-Pepsi Center arena/Six Flags Elitch Gardens-Union Station. This results in two route designations, both starting at Mineral (Littleton) in the south: Green on the existing route to 30th/Downing (Denver); Orange on the new spur to Union Station (Denver).
- **May 6**—Dallas DART light rail Blue Line extension, White Rock-LBJ/Skillman (at I-635).
- **May 6**—Metrolink’s Los Angeles-Fullerton-Riverside commuter line expands to three daily round trips each way (including one mid-day; this in addition to a couple of revenue trips there now, oriented to equipment positioning).
- **June**—New Albany-Rensselaer station built by Capital District Transportation Authority. Directly south of the current, 20-year-old building, the \$43-million station will have four times the floor space with high-level platforms, retail space, and a new street and sidewalk bridge over the tracks. A new parking garage with 1300 spaces opened in 2001.
- **Summer**—Capitol Corridor (San Jose-Oakland-Sacramento) adds business class. California state budget problems are delaying train-service additions between Oakland

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Reform Council Proposes Continued Operating, Capital Support

Would Fragment Amtrak into Three Pieces

The Amtrak Reform Council voted January 11 to recommend replacing today's Amtrak with these three structures:

- A new independent oversight organization that—among other things—would disburse federal funds, plan corridor development, manage any franchising of train operations, implement a plan to bring the Northeast Corridor (NEC) to a state of good repair, and hold the statutory franchise to access freight railroad rights-of-way.

- A new government-owned infrastructure company would maintain and manage the NEC, with “operating shortfalls covered by track use fees” and capital funds coming from “a mix of federal and state funds.”

- For train operations, the Council endorsed “competition for all intercity passenger markets. After a transition period, all passenger operations franchised through competitive bidding...Operating shortfalls on long-haul trains funded by the federal government; after transition, states responsible for funding losses on existing and new corridor trains. Train operators responsible for privately financing new equipment. If necessary, federal funding of long-haul equipment and state financing of corridor equipment.”

The Council approved two changes from the staff documents: “franchising” would be optional; current workers could follow their jobs, in seniority order, with existing contracts intact, and with subsequent contracts developed through normal Railway Labor Act bargaining. Bruce Chapman and Wendell Cox voted against both changes; Nancy Connery abstained on the labor change.

The Council then voted 8-1-2 for the overall package. Labor representative Charles Moneypenny voted no; James Coston abstained; U.S. DOT was absent.

It is not clear how seriously this proposal will be taken. The freight railroads likely would object to transfer of Amtrak's right of track access to others. States in financial crisis will object strongly to the ARC plan for them to cover more corridor-train operating shortfalls. Many will wonder how fragmenting an already-small system will improve things.

In public comments at the meeting, and in talking to reporters, NARP's Ross Capon emphasized that ideas about how to insure Congress gets “value for money” and provides the

right incentives to Amtrak—and ideas about funding sources—are far more valuable than ideas about restructuring. n

STATES FAVOR NATIONAL, CONNECTED SYSTEM

“[The States for Passenger Rail Coalition] believes that the success of a rail corridor structure will be severely limited if the corridors are not connected by a national system framework. The states believe that regional corridors offer the best opportunity for passenger rail development in the United States.

“However, a series of unconnected corridors, while serving regional needs, will not form a coherent, national system. Connectivity has been the basis of success for the interstate highway system and, as the events of September 11 have so clearly demonstrated, the security and resilience of our national transportation system require that such connectivity and redundancy exist within and between modes.

“A national intercity rail network should be supported by the federal government, as the federal government has supported such investment and operation of the interstate highway, aviation, and maritime systems.”

—SPRC, January 10 letter to Amtrak Reform Council

SO DO MAYORS

“We support the idea of Amtrak being the primary passenger rail system in America. I don't see that any of the other alternatives would offer better service or more efficiency.”

—New Orleans Mayor Marc Moriel, President, U.S. Conference of Mayors, commenting January 24 on the ARC report

“An airline president confided to me the other day that he always takes the train between New York and Washington. ‘Why would I go through all that hassle for such a short flight?’”

—Don Phillips, in *Trains* magazine, February 2002

MORE TRAILS & RAILS TO COME

The National Park Service has provided \$150,000 for fiscal 2002 for its Trails & Rails partnership with Amtrak. The program provides guides who ride trains over certain Amtrak segments, who educate passengers about historic and natural features. The funding, the first the program has ever gotten, should allow for expansion.

UPSTATE S.C. RENOVATION COMPLETE



—Scott Leonard

The Amtrak station in Clemson, SC, got a much needed renovation in 2001. The station was moved back from the Norfolk Southern mainline in February, and work on the building, parking area, and landscaping was done for a November 26 grand opening. Unwitting, arriving passengers were treated to a party that day. The Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce moved from nearby Central to the station, and their area includes a welcome center and community room.

Crescent passengers have a small, but attractive and comfortable, waiting room, with restroom. The station looked gray and shabby in 2000, but now stands out in its historic yellow-and-green colors, clearly visible from US 76/123.

Wheels of Progress

(from page 1)

and Sacramento that were planned for 2002.

- **July 1**—Dallas DART light rail Red Line extension, Park Lane-Galatyn Park (Richardson) (12.5 mi.).
- **Sept.**—Tampa-Ybor City streetcar circulator line (serving convention center, Florida Aquarium, and other attractions).
- **Fall**—BART extension Colma-Millbrae (Caltrain connection), with spur to San Francisco International Airport (8.7 mi.).
- **Fall**—Miami Metrorail extension, Okeechobee-Palmetto Expressway (1.5 mi.).
- **Fall**—San Juan Tren Urbano light metro (10.7 mi.), Sagrada Corazon-Guaynabo-Bayamon.
- **Fall**—New Jersey Transit Secaucus Transfer station, allowing for connections between NJT's Hoboken lines and NJT's Northeast Corridor services.
- **Fall**—NJT Hudson-Bergen light rail extension, Newport/Pavonia (Jersey City)-Hoboken rail terminal.
- **Nov.**—Dallas DART light rail Blue line extension, LBJ/Skillman-Garland.
- **Nov.**—New York City Transit reopens segments of subway (1-9) closed since September 2001 terror attacks.
- **Late**—Port Authority AirTrain light rail line, Kennedy Airport-Howards Beach (connect with A subway), in Queens, New York, 3.3 mi.
- **Dec.**—Phase 1, Richmond (VA) Main St. Station intermodal terminal project. Amtrak Acela Regional trains to and from Newport News begin calling there (they pass by now without stopping), in addition to Richmond Staples Mill.
- **Dec.**—Dallas DART light rail Red Line extension, Galatyn Park (Richardson)-Parker Rd. (Plano).
- **Sometime**—Remaining additions to Northeast Corridor Acela Express service.
- **Sometime**—Amtrak and California's second Sacramento-Bakersfield *San Joaquin* train. This is sixth frequency south of Stockton. The two Sacramento trains switch over to former Sacramento-Stockton Southern Pacific line, allowing service to Lodi to begin.
- **Sometime**—A joint Amtrak/Vermont train extended from Albany to Schenectady, North Bennington, Manchester, VT.

2003

- **Early**—NJT South Jersey diesel light-rail line, 34 miles, connecting Trenton Amtrak station on the north with downtown Camden in the south (with PATCO connection).
- **Early**—Amtrak's *Kentucky Cardinal* extended from Louisville, KY, south 186 miles to Nashville, TN, pending agreements between all concerned parties. This is the first service on that segment (and to Nashville) since the Carter Administration cuts of 1979.
- **Early**—PATH reopens its Exchange Place station in Jersey City, closed since September 2001 terror attacks.
- **Spring**—Completion of a double-tracking project allows three more San Jose-Oakland Capitols frequencies (bringing the total to seven daily on that segment).
- **May**—Amtrak service between Jacksonville and West Palm Beach over the Florida East Coast line (see p. 1).
- **Mid**—St. Louis MetroLink light rail extension, Belleville Area College to Shiloh-Scott (3.5 mi.).
- **Mid**—New Tacoma rail station (Tacoma Dome); Sounder

commuter rail extension Tacoma-Lakewood (9 mi.).

- **July 1**—Los Angeles MTA light rail Gold Line, Union Station-Pasadena, 13.7 mi. Formerly designated the Blue Line, the name was changed in 2001 as there are no longer current plans to link it with the "other" Blue Line from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach (opened in 1990/91). Gold Line uses right-of-way used by Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* until 1994.
- **Sept.**—Sacramento RTD South light-rail line to Meadowview Rd. (6.3 mi.).
- **Sept.**—NJT Hudson-Bergen light rail extension, Hoboken-Weehawken.
- **Fall**—Tacoma Link light rail, downtown-Tacoma Dome (connection to commuter rail, Greyhound), 1.6 mi.



—Jim Hamre

The City of Everett, WA, and Sound Transit are nearly finished building a new intermodal station there (above, in 2001), to open February 4. Amtrak will move in this summer; Sounder commuter rail arrives in 2003. It also serves as a bus station, and has room for career development center on the upper floors.

- **Fall**—Salt Lake City TRAX University (East-West) Line extension, Rice-Eccles to University of Utah Health Sciences Center. (1.5 mi.).
- **Fall**—New Orleans Canal streetcar line, abandoned in 1964, is restored from downtown to Cemeteries, connecting to both existing Riverfront and St. Charles car lines (5 mi.).
- **Late**—River Rail heritage trolley, Little Rock-North Little Rock, 2.1 mi.
- **Late**—Hiawatha Light Rail first segment, Nicollet Mall (downtown Minneapolis)-Fort Snelling.
- **Late**—Pittsburgh Port Authority Transit completes its Stage II Light Rail Transit Reconstruction Program. This includes rebuilding segments of the Overbrook streetcar line that closed in the 1990's.
- **Late**—PATH opens a temporary station in Lower Manhattan, replacing World Trade Center station severely damaged in 2001.
- **Sometime**—Los Angeles-Las Vegas Talgo train service, operated by Amtrak and Nevada DOT.
- **Sometime**—SEPTA restores 15/Girard line with PCC streetcars (8.2 mi.); last regular service was in 1992.
- **Sometime**—Sounder commuter rail extension Seattle-Everett (33 mi.).
- **Sometime**—Port Authority AirTrain light rail line extension, Kennedy Airport-Jamaica (connect with Long Island Rail Road and three more subway lines), in Queens, New York, 3.1 mi.
- **Sometime**—NJT Hudson-Bergen light rail extension, Bayonne 34th St.-22nd St.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Sunset Limited—The westbound schedule, west of New Orleans, changed January 13. It runs 30 minutes earlier New Orleans-San Antonio, 10 minutes later San Antonio-El Paso, 60 minutes later El Paso-Maricopa, 65 minutes later Maricopa-Pomona (no change at Los Angeles).

International—Amtrak's Chicago-Toronto train has been taking a beating from U.S. Customs at Port Huron, MI, apparently so agents can spend more time dealing with highway back-ups. Westbound passengers (and luggage) are forced off at Sarnia, bussed to Port Huron and processed by Customs, then reboarded. This takes the same amount of time (which already was too long), but is a great inconvenience. Cross-border ridership has suffered.

Southwest Michigan—Regular 90-mph Amtrak service began January 14, using an experimental positive train control signal system (Sept. '96 News, installation completed in 1999). The Federal Railroad Administration approved a waiver allowing this on a 40-mile segment (between Niles and Kalamazoo) in early January.

Northeast Corridor—Schedules change January 28, with the addition of further Acela Express schedules. New York-Albany loses one daily round-trip (the earliest one).

Passengers again may purchase tickets on Northeast Corridor trains, if boarding at an unstaffed station or one closed at train time. Photo identification required. If a Quik-Trak machine is available, Amtrak prefers—but does not require—its use instead.

Stations—The Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center, at 9th & Jones, opened January 12 to TRE commuter trains and local buses. Amtrak service should begin in February.

Thruways—Augusta-Savannah began January 14, connecting at Savannah with the *Silver Star* and *Silver Palm* in both directions.

Transit—Shore Line East began a temporary, two-year expansion of service on December 17. Limited weekday service lets commuters from east of New Haven travel through into Metro North territory (Bridgeport, Stamford), without transfer.

Joint Airline-Rail Tickets Now Available Through Newark Airport Station

Continental Airlines and Amtrak have announced a code-sharing arrangement centered on Continental's hub at Newark, N.J., where an airport-rail station opened this fall. The plan will take effect in March, and will involve four Amtrak stations—Wilmington, Philadelphia, Stamford, and New Haven. Air passengers making reservations through Continental can ticket travel to those four cities via Newark airport all on one reservation, set of tickets, and fare, just as if the train were a connecting flight.

This sort of thing is increasingly common in Europe, but rare here. It was attempted ten years ago, when Amtrak and Midway Airlines had an arrangement to use Amtrak trains from Philadelphia airport to Atlantic City—but neither that airline nor Amtrak's Atlantic City trains exist today.

Travel will involve Acela Regional and Keystone trains.

Travelers on segments using Continental tickets will be able to earn Continental OnePass miles or Amtrak Guest Rewards points (but not both). n

NEW OPERATIONS OFFICIAL AT AMTRAK

New Jersey Transportation Commissioner James Weinstein is Amtrak's senior vice president responsible for Northeast Corridor operations, starting February 4. He has been in his state post, which includes acting as chairman of the New Jersey Transit board, for three years. He replaces Stan Bagley, who was the Northeast Corridor business unit president until 2001, but who now is national Executive Vice President for Operations.



News from the
**National Association of
Railroad Passengers**

Vol. 36, No. 1

January 2002

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News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490) is published monthly except November by NARP; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, e-mail narp@narprail.org, web www.narprail.org. ©2001 National Association of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues are \$28/year (\$15 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. For the latest passenger rail news, visit our on-line Hotline, changed at least weekly.

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

(This has news through Jan. 25. Vol. 35, No. 11 was mailed first-class Dec. 20.)

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