



# NARPnews

*"Amtrak's fifteen long distance routes are the backbone of our system. Their principal mission is connectivity, and it is an increasingly important one to communities that have been losing their bus and air connections at a steady pace over the last decade."*

JOE BOARDMAN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, AMTRAK

## Representative Paul Ryan Proposes Cutting Amtrak from Budget Proposal

In a disappointing move, leading House Republican Paul Ryan of Wisconsin has called for the complete elimination of federal funding for Amtrak's operations in his budget proposal.

Rep. Ryan explicitly identifies eliminating funding to Amtrak's operating budget, which he claims has "been insulating Amtrak from making the structural reforms necessary to start producing returns." However, he fails to require a "return" from federal highways, though—in a move that will provide no comfort to passenger train advocates—he has moved to bring highway and transit spending in line with current Highway Trust Fund revenue.

Practically, this would mean cutting \$11 billion annually from highway and transit spending. The government has subsidized highway construction with more than \$53 billion in general revenue since 2008—more than has been spent on Amtrak in its entire 40 year history. This deficit is primarily a result of a stagnant gas tax, which hasn't been raised—or even indexed to inflation—since 1993.

"A cut of this magnitude would force states and transit agencies **(continued on page 2)**

## NARP Thanks Ross Capon for 39 Years of Work

After 39 years of heading up the National Association of Railroad Passengers, Ross Capon recently announced that he would be moving on from his role as president. While he is playing a key part in advancing NARP's mission in his role as President Emeritus, Capon will be sorely missed—for his experience, his deep reservoir of knowledge about the passenger rail industry and for the earnest and unwavering resolve that never failed to earn NARP a place at the table here in Washington, D.C.

We struggled to come up with a tribute worthy of nearly four decades of work. Thankfully, Gene Skoropowski, who currently serves as Senior Vice President of Development at All Aboard Florida, wrote eloquently about his relationship with Capon in a tribute he penned for Railway Age. A former member of the NARP Board of Directors, Skoropowski first met Capon in the 1970s when Capon was Special Assistant for Railroad Operations in the administration of Massachusetts Governor Francis Sargen. With Mr. Skoropowski's permission, we've included a brief excerpt of his tribute:

*Perhaps the most telling moment revealing Ross Capon's knowledge and respect on Capitol Hill came at a NARP Board of Direc-*



Capon shaking hands with Senator Bill Roth (R-DE), former chairman of the Finance Committee.

*tors meeting in the late 1980s. The National Legislative Director of the United Transportation Union (UTU) came to speak to the NARP Board. During his remarks, he commented that Ross Capon, functioning on NARP's "shoestring budget" from a collection of individual citizens, had achieved more credibility and effectiveness in Washington and with congressional members that he had with his well-funded PAC and multi-million-dollar annual budget to represent UTU interests. This was an enormous tribute to Ross, coming from one of the largest rail labor organizations in Washington.*

*People in Washington know Ross Capon. They know that Ross knows what he is talking about when he **(continued on page 2)***

## NEW MEMBER BENEFIT

NARP members now receive a 5% discount on most car rentals at AVIS.\* Log in to your NARP member account for more details.

\*For dues-paying members only. Not a dues-paying member yet? Consider joining and get all of the NARP member benefits. Visit [www.narprail.org/donate/join](http://www.narprail.org/donate/join)

# Texas Mayors Come Together for High-Speed Rail



Photo courtesy of Chron News

On March 28, the mayors of Houston, Dallas and Fort Worth announced their joint support of high-speed rail service between Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth, a project led by Texas Central High-Speed Railways. They cited numerous reasons to seize the opportunity for a high-speed route, including stimulating the economy, reducing travel time, reducing congestion and cutting harmful emissions. "With Houston and Dallas-Fort Worth being two of the largest and fastest growing metropolitan areas in America, we are both faced with many of the same challenges: growing

traffic congestion, ever-increasing commutes and limited public transportation dollars from the state. It is imperative that we give our residents an innovative alternative. If successful, Houstonians will have a reliable, private alternative that will help alleviate traffic congestion and drastically reduce travel times," said **Mayor Annise Parker of Houston**. The mayors said they look forward to working closely with state and federal partners, along with Texas Central Railway, which hopes to make the project a reality within the next 10 years.

## Ryan from P1

to cancel thousands of projects putting hundreds of thousands of jobs at risk," said Jim Tyron of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Ryan's budget is not only an attack on the 32 million passengers who depend on Amtrak each and every year, but on the millions and millions of passengers who took more than 4.3 billion trips on transit rail in 2012. Distressingly, it moves the argument over the proper role of Amtrak into the extreme fringe. Amtrak has support from across the political spectrum, including powerful Republicans such as Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA), who has long supported Amtrak's national network; Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), who received the NARP Golden Spike for the integral role she played in initiating the Downeaster service; and many more. By trying to solve the deficit problem by focusing on Amtrak, which accounts for 0.0004% of the annual federal budget, Rep. Ryan shows he's more interested in playing to a fringe base than practical solutions.

## Capon from P1

speaks about passenger rail issues. They know that Ross has nothing personal to gain from being an advocate for the tens of millions of rail passengers across our country. NARP as an organization has been associated with the name Ross Capon, and NARP's credibility has been established and enhanced by Ross's tireless work and dedication to the cause of representing the interests of passenger rail, in all its various forms. For many in the industry, NARP is Ross Capon, and Ross Capon is NARP. This is an accomplishment few can achieve, at any price.

NARP will be honoring Capon during our annual Capitol Hill Reception held later in April.



facebook.com/narprail



@narprail



**NARPnews**

© National Association of Railroad Passengers  
505 Capital Court, NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002-7706  
202-408-8362 / 202-408-8287 (fax)  
www.narprail.org  
narprail@narprail.org

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Robert J. Stewart   | Chairman  |
| John Delora         | Vice Chair  |
| Albert L. Papp, Jr. | Vice Chair  |
| Arthur Poole        | Vice Chair  |
| David Randall       | Vice Chair  |
| Stephen J. Salatti  | Secretary   |
| Kenneth T. Clifford | Treasurer   |
| Lawrence E. Scott   | Acting President                                    |
| Ross B. Capon       | President Emeritus                                  |
| Sean Jeans-Gail     | Vice President                                      |
| James Abram Zumwalt | Coordinator of Resource Development                 |
| Logan McLeod        | Director of Resource Development                    |
| Jenna Jablonski     | Coordinator of Outreach, Marketing & Communications |

This issue has news through April 4, 2014.  
Vol. 48, No.3 was mailed March 20, 2014.

# April Council Meeting Preview

NARP's annual gathering in Washington, D.C. is fast approaching, and months of hard work by staff and Council to prepare for the big week will finally bear fruits.

The Council Meeting, which will take place April 28 through 30, will cover a wide range of activities. NARP Representatives will hear presentations from Amtrak's Mark Murphy on plans to develop and market the long-distance services, Amtrak's Joe McHugh on policy developments impacting passenger rail, Michigan's Rail Director Tim Hoeffner on plans to improve train service in Michigan and the Midwest, among others.

NARP Council Representatives from Texas, Arizona and Colorado will also give updates on

regional organizing initiatives. With Washington in the grip of partisan gridlock, these local grassroots campaigns are increasingly important catalysts for developing the national network.

There is also NARP's Day on the Hill, where our members will descend on the Capitol to speak about the importance of federal support for passenger trains. This effort will have added consequence in the wake of Rep. Paul Ryan's assault on Amtrak's operating budget (page 1). NARP's Capitol Hill reception will honor Ross Capon's four decades of work, with scheduled appearances by Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-ND), recipient of the 2014 Golden Spike Award.

# Amtrak Adds Three Hours to Empire Builder Schedule

In an attempt to recover reliability and account for extreme freight congestion, Amtrak announced that the Empire Builder will now leave three hours earlier from Seattle (Train 8) and Portland (Train 28). The timetable will be adjusted for three segments of the route: Minot–Rugby, Grand Forks–Fargo and St Cloud–Minneapolis/St. Paul, while the schedule between St. Paul and Chicago will remain largely unchanged.

NARP has previously affirmed the strategy of lengthening the schedule as a temporary solution, but only if concrete measures were

being taken to permanently expand the capacity on the corridor.

"I'm cautiously optimistic about the new schedule but only time will tell if the connections to Train 30 and Train 50 are achieved," said Dave Randall, NARP Vice-Chair of Service Delivery. "There is also the concern about the potential ridership loss on account of the missed connection from and to the Starlight at Portland. I think Amtrak is making the best of a tough situation but NARP has to keep an eye out for the passenger's best interest."

## National Train Day 2014



Join us for National Train Day 2014 to celebrate this year's theme, "Trains Matter," highlighting the numerous ways that trains connect the communities across the U.S. On Saturday, May 10, dozens of National Train Day events will take place across the country. Find the one closest to you using the search tool at [NationalTrainDay.com](http://NationalTrainDay.com). Better yet, be the voice of NARP at your local event by signing up as a NARP volunteer. It's not too late to register – just call us at 202-408-8362 or email Jenna at [jjablonski@narprail.org](mailto:jjablonski@narprail.org). See you on May 10!

## Thank you for your feedback

More than 150 of you responded to the survey on the newsletter's new look and we have carefully read and recorded each response. We value your feedback and will use your suggestions in making NARP News the best it can be for you —our dedicated members.

# Don't forget, you can donate your unneeded vehicle to NARP



NARP would like to thank Garry and Alison Lingel for their generous donations of a motorcycle and car. Their contributions will go towards building what all American's desperately need: a better and more efficient modern national passenger train network. If you're like the Lingels, and are trying to figure out what to do with that car, motorcycle, boat, or RV taking up space in your garage or yard, please consider giving it to NARP to help us fulfill your mission for more passenger trains in America. NARP thanks all its members for their steadfast support and dedication.

# The University of Illinois Releases 220-mph High-Speed Study

*Contributed by Julius Parod  
of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association*

The University of Illinois released a study of a 220-mph high-speed line linking Chicago, Indianapolis and St. Louis this past fall. The study was commissioned by the Illinois Department of Transportation and is the first midwestern state to sponsor a true high-speed rail study of this detail. It suggests the state can increase job growth by 50% and accrue billions of dollars in benefits just by investing in a single high-speed rail line.

The feasibility study looked at a potential 220-mph high-speed rail line from O'Hare Airport and Downtown Chicago to Champaign, St. Louis and eventually Indianapolis. Considering the wild success of similar projects across the world, the results were not surprising. After a reasonable initial investment, the new service would generate an operating surplus. The line would also attract an astounding 8-15 million riders

each year, connecting millions of people in Illinois to opportunities that are currently inaccessible.

The study outlines a number of benefits that would justify the project's cost. Beyond the 13,000 additional permanent jobs, there would also be 100,000 new temporary construction jobs infusing money into the state's economy. The line would also divert automobile trips, saving users time and reducing highway congestion. Diverting plane and car trips will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 1.5 million tons over a 10-year period.

Quick trip times would make previously impossible business meetings happen. A 1h 15m trip time would integrate Chicago and Springfield, the state's economic and political capitals. Connecting the University of Chicago and Northwestern University to the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in 45 minutes, would bring the region's best minds together and increase the

state's ability to innovate. Cities and towns across the region would gain fast, convenient access to international flights at O'Hare Airport.

There would also be tremendous benefits, which were not measured in the study, for communities beyond the high-speed line if trains continued on conventional track in blended service.

This feasibility study is an important first step towards bringing true high-speed rail to the Midwest. The Midwest High Speed Rail Association is building support for the initial Chicago-area segments with its CrossRail Chicago campaign.

With Illinois policy-makers struggling to find ways to create jobs and accelerate economic development, this proposal presents a huge opportunity to achieve many of the state's goals. If built, it would also provide a model for other projects in the region.

---

## NARP Member Spotlight: John DeLora

John DeLora has been a member of NARP since 1969, a Board Member since 1974, and during that time he says he has served on literally every committee that NARP has ever had.

DeLora has also led passenger rail efforts in his home state of Michigan, founding the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers in 1973 and serving in leadership roles within the association until his retirement three years ago. In 1977, he formed a MARP subsidiary, the Michigan Passenger Foundation, which increased ridership from 1977-1982 through an MDOT-contracted program that put 13 employees on trains



and had them assist passengers and report on the condition of the equipment.

DeLora says the work to improve passenger rail in Michigan has been more than he ever expected when he began decades ago, but substantial progress has been made. He cites Detroit-Chicago as a success story, noting how much the equipment has improved. He says that additionally, in just the past three to four years, the state government has assumed a very supportive role and will be key in future successes.

For more information on the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers, visit [www.marp.org](http://www.marp.org).

# NARP Member Spotlight: Rick Harnish

Longtime NARP member Rick Harnish has served on the NARP Board since 2004 and as the Executive Director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association since February 2001. He outlines MHSRA's three working areas as: additional frequency on all Amtrak routes, construction of at least 120 miles of 220-mph track, and a strong focus on building a core network within the Chicago metropolitan area.

MHSRA is currently focused on building support for **CrossRail Chicago**, a proposed high density dedicated passenger trunk line that would connect the different commuter rail lines in the Chicago metropolitan area and link key locations such as Chicago



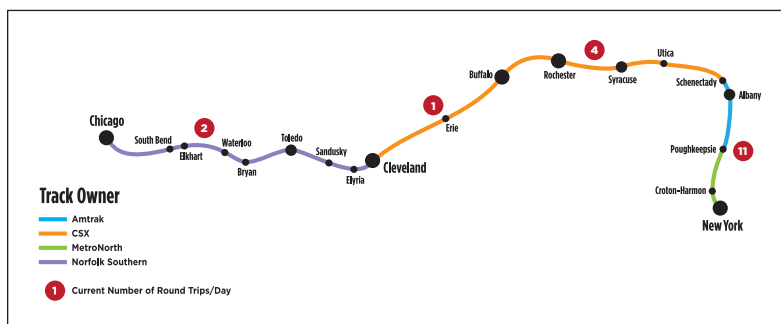
O'Hare, McCormick Place and the University of Chicago. Though the project is in its beginning phases, it just celebrated receiving its first letter of support from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association. Harnish says CrossRail Chicago is important for two reasons. First, the projects become more useful when they're linked together and it becomes easier to fund them. Second, from an organizing perspective, unifying the seemingly disparate projects will create a more powerful advocacy force to get the project the support it needs.

To read more about the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, visit [www.midwesthsr.org](http://www.midwesthsr.org).

## NARP and MHSRA Call for Major Improvements of the Lake Shore Limited

NARP and the Midwest High Speed Rail Association are calling for a major overhaul of the Lake Shore Limited, the Chicago-Cleveland-Buffalo-New York corridor that serves one of the nation's most economically productive regions. Though ridership on this route has grown more than 33% since 2000, the train offers infrequent and inconvenient service to many of its stops.

NARP and MHSRA have proposed several improvements to the passenger service and have co-sponsored a study that will look at increasing frequency to four times daily to the major cities on the route. NARP and MHSRA hope that this expansion would allow for productive business trips to each major city that will further strengthen economic ties in the region. You can support this plan by visiting [midwesthsr.org/lakeshore](http://midwesthsr.org/lakeshore).



Graphic courtesy of MHSRA

## Michigan Groups Push Feasibility Study for Detroit-Holland Passenger Service

The possibility of a train between Detroit and Holland, Michigan gained its first endorsement from local planning body, the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council's Policy Committee, shortly after it was proposed by the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers and the Michigan Environmental Council.

The "Coast-to-Coast," a proposed rail service in its initial stages, would link businesses and universities in Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing and Holland. Michigan by Rail, a combination of community stakeholders, sees the project as an opportunity to make a significant economic impact on the region and also to provide a comfortable way to travel across Michigan without using a car.

"This is an opportunity to get started," John Langdon of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers **told the Grand Rapids Press**. "It's a long-term issue. The feasibility study will only tell us whether it makes sense to move ahead to the next level."

WEB EXCLUSIVE

## Travel Green on Earth Day

More and more Americans are choosing the train over other transportation options as a way to reduce the harmful emissions associated with their journey and lessen their overall environmental impact. According to Amtrak, its trains are 16% more efficient than planes and 34% more than cars. Beyond amazing fuel-efficiency, trains are a smart use of our land. Consider this: A two-track railroad can carry as many people in an hour as a 16-lane highway (if each person drove solo). And one commercial airport uses more land than 300 miles of railroad. As we celebrate Earth Day on April 22, let's recycle, clean up our outdoor spaces – and spread the word about how we can make a positive environmental impact with our travel choices.

## NARP Traveler's Advisory

**The Coast Starlight Train 14** will depart Klamath Falls, OR and Chemult, OR 37 minutes earlier from April 16-23, May 1-8 and May 16-17 due to track work being performed by Union Pacific railroad.

**The Empire Builder Train** 7/27 from Chicago and 8/28 from Seattle and Portland will operate on a modified schedule from April 15 through May 31. The most up-to-date departure times for all trains can be found on Amtrak.com under the "Schedules" tab, our free mobile apps and at 1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245).

**The discount for Student Advantage (SA) and International Student Identity Card (ISIC)** members has changed from 15 to 10 percent for reservations made on or after April 2. The student discount for Amtrak Express Shipments will also change from 15 to 10 percent.

# Siemens Wins Locomotive Contract

Siemens announced March 18 that it had been selected by a five-state consortium to manufacture 32 diesel-electric passenger locomotives, with an option in the contract for an additional 225 locomotives. The order was placed by the Departments of Transportation for Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington. The locomotives will be manufactured in Siemens Sacramento factory, which hosts hundreds of jobs and is one of the area's largest employers (it is the same factory that produced Amtrak's new Cities Sprinter locomotives). Job creation will spread



Photo courtesy of Deutsche Welle News

across a supply chain, which includes Cummins, Inc. of Columbus, Indiana, which will provide the diesel-electric engines for the locomotives. This is a formula NARP has been pushing since its inception: investment in U.S. passenger rail is an investment in jobs.

"For Siemens, this order marks our entry into the U.S. diesel-electric locomotive market and strongly underscores our long-term vision for the U.S. passenger rail market," said Jochen Eickholt, CEO of the Siemens Rail Systems Division. It's clear that this is also a long-term bet on U.S. workers.

WEB EXCLUSIVE

## CREATE Continues to Improve Flow of Goods and Passengers through Chicago



Photo courtesy of Chicago Tribune

Upon completion in fall 2014, the Englewood Flyer project will alleviate congestion and reduce delays at one of the Chicago's worst bottlenecks. The new rail bridge will allow 78 weekday Metra Rock Island trains to bypass their current interlocker which they share with 60 daily Amtrak and freight trains. The new flow of train traffic is also expected to diminish the many negative effects of idling trains currently afflicting locals, including air and noise pollution.

The Englewood Flyer is one of 70 projects under the extensive Chicago Regional Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE), which reached its quarter-way mark for completion of all projects in 2013. CREATE aims to untangle rail infrastructure in Chicago, the country's unofficial rail capital, and facilitate an efficient flow of goods and passengers through the Midwest and throughout the country.