

May 2015

Vol. 49, No. 5



NARPnews

“With Amtrak not knowing what its funding is until a few months into the budget year, that’s no way to run a major transportation company.”

FRA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR PAUL NISSENBAUM AT NARP’S SPRING COUNCIL MEETING

NARP Spring Council Meeting Emphasizes Continued Need for “A Connected America”

Volunteers representing some 28,000 NARP members nationwide visited more than 200 congressional offices April 21 during NARP’s annual Day on the Hill, pressing Congress to support and improve the multi-year rail authorization legislation currently taking shape in the Senate.

These members paid their own way to Washington to attend the Spring Council Meeting and to sit down with their legislators to advocate for what NARP calls “A Connected America.” This initiative invests in links between intercity trains and airports, intercity buses, local transit, cycling and walking, and car rental and sharing service to create a seamless 21st century multi-modal transportation network, coast-to-coast – connecting “flyover country” to the nation at large.

Paul Nissenbaum, associate administrator for railroad policy and development for the Federal Rail

Administration, outlined details in the Obama administration’s Grow America Act, a \$478 billion, six-year transportation reauthorization proposal that provides increased and stable funding for highways, bridges, transit and a dedicated stream of funding. With Amtrak not knowing what its funding is until a few months into the budget year, that’s no way to run a major transportation company,” he said. “The key message is that it needs steady, reliable funding.”

As the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act bill goes to the Senate, this is a critical point on the legislative timeline, said Joe McHugh, Amtrak’s senior vice president for government affairs and corporate communications. “The House of Representatives passed a bill back in March, and that bill reinforced the national system of Amtrak,” he said.



NARP Council Member Tom Girsch with Sen Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) at the Spring Council Meeting

Continued on page 3

NARP Urges Senate to Protect Passengers From House Cuts to Amtrak in Wake of Deadly Crash

In the wake of the House Committee on Appropriations May 13th decision to reject two positive amendments that would have provided much-needed capital funds for transit and Amtrak, NARP called on the Senate to step in and protect America’s passengers from these ill-considered, irresponsible cuts.

The Appropriations Committee voted down two pro-passenger amendments along party lines. The first would have provided \$1.3 billion for capital investment grants and restored the budget for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. The second focused solely on providing an additional \$1.3 billion for Amtrak. Instead, the committee approved \$1.14 billion for Amtrak for Fiscal Year 2016 – a \$262 million cut from \$1.39 billion enacted in FY 2015.

The cuts are all the more indefensible coming only a day after a deadly Amtrak accident on the Northeast Corridor that claimed the lives of seven passengers.

The NTSB is currently investigating the cause of the accident.

“It is true that we don’t know the specific cause that triggered yesterday’s tragedy,” said NARP President Jim Mathews. “But several things are certain: Amtrak’s Northeast corridor—the busiest rail corridor in the Western Hemisphere—faces a \$52 billion maintenance backlog that is hindering the efficient movement of trains, the average age of Amtrak’s equipment is 28 years old, and its fleet is rapidly aging beyond its usable lifespan,” he said.

Transportation providers all across the U.S. are struggling to find enough funds to implement Positive Train Control and sufficiently protect grade crossings, said Mathews. “We don’t need to wait to hear from the NTSB to know that we are failing to invest at sufficient levels. This House Appropriations bill is a disservice to America’s passengers.” ■

NARP Thanks Its Corporate Sponsors



— A Message from NARP President & CEO Jim Mathews:

On behalf of the America's Passengers, I want to extend our appreciation and thanks for your commitment to developing a seamless national transportation system that improves the quality of life for millions of individuals. Your generous contributions provide the resources needed to support NARP's vision for "A Connected America."

The ad to the right is an example of how our corporate sponsors are supporting our efforts by providing NARP with the funding to find innovative ways to increase awareness and resources to assist in accomplishing NARP's mission to link states and regions together with a high-quality, balanced intermodal and multimodal transportation system.

As we continue to grow as an association, please know that partnerships with our sponsors are vital to the success of our shared mission. You are truly appreciated, and I urge our members to support our sponsors wherever they can. Thanks again. See the complete list of sponsors on page 6. ■

VACATIONS BY RAIL™
The Trusted Authority on Rail

Proud Supporter of

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vacations By Rail® offers the largest selection of independent rail vacations, escorted rail tours, luxury rail journeys and custom train vacations to destinations throughout North America, Europe and beyond.

Mention NARP2015 at time of booking and Vacations By Rail® will donate \$50 to NARP

877-929-7245 | www.vacationsbyrail.com

www.facebook.com/vacationsbyrail

www.twitter.com/vacationsbyrail

NARP Mourns Loss of Doras Briggs

NARP member and former employee Scott Leonard recently informed us of the passing of Doras Briggs. In her 96 years, Briggs rode trains for 91 of them. After retiring in Emeryville, California, she found purpose living immediately adjacent to the Amtrak station as she began engaging with passengers as an unofficial ambassador and member of Amtrak's Customer Advisory Committee. "My first train ride was on the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern, in Iowa. My dad gave me that train ride for my fifth birthday, in 1923, and it stuck with me," she told SF Gate in an interview in 2008. That started her lifetime love of trains.

Briggs eventually became a Station Host in Emeryville. Realizing the value that passengers got from a local helping hand, Briggs founded the California Station Host program, working with Amtrak and Caltrans to create a credentialed volunteer regiment of friendly faces to greet and assist passengers as a supplement to Amtrak staff.

This program has expanded to several stations over the years. Serving as a model for other states, the program was officially adopted by North Carolina.



Briggs, a long-time NARP board member, was honored with the organization's Golden Spike Award in 2002. She was lauded for her untiring efforts to expand citizen efforts to support the national rail passenger network, and for her efforts spearheading the creation of the California station host program. ■

NARPnews

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

Volunteer Leadership

Robert J. Stewart	Chairman
Bruce Becker	Vice Chair
Carol Haslett	Vice Chair
Jim Loomis	Vice Chair
J. Charles Riecks	Vice Chair
Stephen J. Salatti	Secretary
Kenneth T. Clifford	Treasurer

Staff

Jim Mathews	President & CEO
Lawrence Scott	Special Assistant to the Chairman
Sean Jeans-Gail	Vice President
Logan McLeod	Director of Resource Development
Benét J. Wilson	Communications Director
James Abram Zumwalt	Office & Projects Coordinator

This issue has news through May 13, 2015.
Vol. 49, No.5 was mailed May 15, 2015.

FOLLOW US FOR THE LATEST



Ball State Student Project Advocates For Better Indiana Transit Options



Photo: Courtesy of Indianacrossrails.org

Students at Ball State University have released a study, "Indiana Crossrails," that looks at how the state can overcome challenges in connecting populations. The students began working closely with the Indiana Citizens Alliance for Transit (ICAT) and Amtrak to produce an advocacy campaign focusing on the growth and development of mass rail transit in the state. The campaign was designed to raise awareness about rail transit options, including rapid transit in dense urban areas, commuter/light rail connections between large cities and suburbs and an expansion of regional/intercity service.

"Looking at the map, Indiana sits at a crossroads between Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Louisville. Highways and state roads vein this landscape connecting

small towns and remote populations with cities and urban centers," said the report. "Throughout its history Indiana has met transit challenges with innovation and determination. It truly is the Crossroads of America."

The students researched issues including: multimodal transportation; transportation in America; Indiana in Transit; and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). TOD is a development pattern that is focused on its proximity and reliance on high-frequency transit. TOD is medium-to-high density, and typically features a mix of uses, such as apartment units, retail space and offices.

Portland, Oregon, has had great success with TOD. Its light rail and streetcar routes have seen more than \$9 billion of development related to the existence of transit, said the report. "Portland has needed to make partnerships, change the mindsets of residents, and change policy. Parking requirements have had to be lowered, density limits raised and a lot of work with developers has been made in order to make new projects transit-friendly."

The project also includes a link to an infographic that breaks down Indiana's transportation by the numbers. Key numbers from 2012 (the latest available) include: 4075 miles of freight rail; 34.1 million transit passengers; and 1.1 percent of commuters using public transportation to get to work.

Echoing NARP's theme of "A Connected America," the Indiana Crossrails project emphasizes the importance of all public transit. "We believe it represents an investment, not an expense. We believe mobility is a catalyst for advancement, not a public burden," said the report. "We believe that a population with choices is a population with greater freedom and opportunity. Indiana sits at a crossroads geographically and historically. It has a chance right now to invest in its future by connecting its people." For more information, go to www.indianacrossrails.org. ■

Spring Council, A Connected America

Continued from page 1

"Ridership numbers have risen steadily between 1972 and 2014, and federal subsidies are down to the lowest numbers they've ever been. These continued gains help build support."

Karen Torrent of the Environmental Law Policy Center applauded the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to vacate a lower court ruling, thus reinstating metrics and standards for Amtrak service designed to protect the rights of rail passengers, but warned that the battle was not over. "The parties could go back and fight the issues again. But Congress can fix all of the issues under the PRRRA bill" under consideration, she said.

NARP presented its Golden Spike Award to Joseph Szabo, the Federal Railroad Administration administrator from May 2009 to November 2014. During his term at FRA, he focused on improving the safety of freight and passenger railroads by implementing rules designed to improve fatigue management and training requirements for workers, change rail inspection procedures and heighten awareness around trains.

He also championed the agency's High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, attending a groundbreaking ceremony to start construction of California's high-speed rail just days before leaving FRA. He is currently a senior adviser on transportation policy at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



NARP members at the Spring Council Meeting

Finally, NARP presented its Youth Passenger Citizenship Award to representatives from Sam Houston State University and University of North Texas for their grassroots support of the Texas Central Railway, a proposed high-speed rail project that will run between Dallas and Houston. The award is given on occasion to students and young people who demonstrate exceptional leadership, initiative, or passion in making meaningful improvements in the train travel experience or in citizen advocacy for an expanded and improved passenger train network. ■

• A perfect storm of opponents to the privately held Texas Central Railway -- which wants to build and operate high-speed rail between Dallas and Houston -- is converging, reports the CityLab blog. They include the groups No Texas Central and Texans Against High Speed Rail, along with local legislators. Opponents say TCR's plans take funding away from needed road projects, could potentially misuse eminent domain to get land for the tracks. The bill to approve the effort is sitting in the Texas House Transportation Committee. Meanwhile, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram's editorial board is supporting TCR's rail project, saying that "Railroads are common carriers built to fill the need to transport goods and people." The newspaper accused opponents of the project of being "all over the map" and being "logically inconsistent."

Southwest Airlines hasn't decided whether or not to oppose Texas Central Railway's high-speed rail project, but the carrier previously opposed a bullet train in the state with French partner TGV back in 1989, reports City Lab blog. The blog cites a 2014 article in the Texas Tribune that recounted how the airline lobbied hard against the Texas TGV plan, fearing that the service would hurt its travel base.

"The American reality is that high-speed rail will be viable in Texas only by destroying the convenient and inexpensive transportation service the airlines now provide, and only by absorbing huge public subsidies," Southwest Airlines said in a brief filed with the authority back in 1991.

Of course, TCR will be constructed using private funds put up by a private business. Thus, consistency requires Southwest Airlines to remain neutral on the project. Texans will get a chance to see whether the airline's stance in the 1990s was protectionism or principle.

• A second Hudson River rail tunnel is closer to reality after President Obama's transportation undersecretary said the administration wants to put a funding plan together to build it, reports NJ.com. Obama has referred to Amtrak's Gateway tunnel project as the most important rail project in the nation, said Peter Rogoff, the U.S. Department of Transportation's undersecretary for policy. "The Obama Administration is anxious to reach a funding agreement with this region to get the tunnels built." While state officials praised the announcement, Jeff Tiitel, NJ Sierra Club director, asked if his state could fund its share of the project, with New Jersey's Transportation Trust Fund running out of cash to finance projects. "Our biggest concern is the New Jersey Transportation Trust Fund is broke and may stay underfunded for years to come. The failure of NJ to raise the gas tax or come up with other funding for transit needs hurts our economy and commuters."



• Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y) announced \$3 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to fund the Intercity Passenger Rail Grade Crossing Improvements, Positive Train Control (PTC) Implementation, and Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan Grant program in New York state. The money will advance safety precautions on railways and provide engineering assistance to implement the PTC system on the Hudson Line from Poughkeepsie to Hoffmann's, N.Y., for the Empire and Adirondack corridors.

• Federal, state and local officials in Illinois announced \$7 million in federal funds to help improve rail service at Chicago's Union Station, reports Progressive Railroading. The city will use the money for two projects: conduct a terminal planning study and create a plan to boost capacity at the 90-year-old station. The project is needed as Union Station, the third-busiest rail terminal in the nation, is already operating at near-full capacity.

• The key to improve service on Indiana's Hoosier State passenger rail line is good marketing, said Ed Ellis, president of Iowa Pacific Holdings, which operates the line. A story on JOnline reports that his other plans include offering travel packages on the Hoosier State, hiring a marketing manager who will package trips around collegiate and professional athletic events and eventually running 12 passenger trains a day, contingent on installing side tracks and upgrading existing CSX Corp. tracks so passenger and freight trains can run concurrently.

• Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee used a speech at a future University of Washington light rail station to emphasize the need for \$15 billion to expand the region's light-rail network, reports the Seattle Times. But the state Senate, controlled by Republicans, approved a gas tax increase to fund highways, but only approved a separate \$11 billion tax measure for

light rail that will go to voters in 2016. Meanwhile, the Bellevue City Council voted unanimously to approve a revised agreement with Sound Transit, which operates the light rail system in the region, that will allow construction of the East Link light rail project to start in early 2016, reports KIRO-TV.

• The privately held North American High Speed Rail Group, which hopes to build the Zip Rail between Rochester, Minnesota, and the Twin Cities, made its case during the U.S. High Speed Rail Association conference in Washington, D.C., last month, reports the Post-Bulletin. Olmsted County Commissioner Ken Brown noted that the train is able to travel up to 225 mph, cutting commute times for Rochester riders. He noted that nearly 35,000 employees at Mayo Clinic in Rochester who could benefit from high-speed rail service and avoid a glut of cars on the U.S. 52 corridor as the facility expands.

• Virginia Railway Express's new \$3.4 million terminal in Spotsylvania County will open this summer, reports the Washington Post. It will be the first major expansion for VRE in its 23-year history, and marks an effort by the system to meet the region's long-term transit needs. The new service will go south of Fredericksburg to capture riders in an area that is ripe for growth and development. The eventual goal is to double VRE's ridership by 2040.

• The Winter Park ski resort celebrated its 75th anniversary in April by bringing back the Ski Train that ceased in 2009, reports the Denver Channel. Nearly 1,000 passengers rode on the train during the weekend. The demand has raised hopes that Amtrak and Winter Park officials may bring back the Ski Train for three months next winter.

"There's a huge difference between running this for a weekend and running it for three months," said Winter Park spokesman Steven Hurlbert. "There's a lot to go over logistically." ■

Millennial Promotes Passenger Rail Advocacy

By Daniel Cohen



Science, education, technology, infrastructure: these are the leading challenges for America not just today but also in the future. Our country finds itself at an important crossroad in history, a crossroad that is in dire need of becoming a train track. I live in Houston, which has limited transportation options for its size. Automobiles rule. To leave, you either drive or fly. Two airports and four major freeways – that's it.

Yet over the last decade, Houston has experimented successfully by putting in its first ever rail line.

Even more exciting, Texas Central Railway is planning a high-speed rail system between Houston and Dallas, an endeavor that will solve a major travel issue for commuters and open up new business opportunities between the two cities within the next 10 years.

I learned about TCR's project at the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) conference in Houston last October, where I had the honor of judging the Ignite Houston-APTA Transportation Showcase with TCR President Robert Eckels and APTA Chair Peter Varga. This is also where I met Logan McLeod and discovered NARP.

I knew immediately the importance of NARP and its Millennial movement, recognizing it as a chance to upgrade infrastructure in every major city. That

is when I decided to make the commitment to be a voice for American passenger rail, and become a Silver Rail member. I also am now a proud member of the NARP membership development committee.

Around that time, I also started a discussion group called Agree, Disagree, or Qualify (ADQ). ADQ is dedicated to rigorously testing claims in accordance with the values of free expression, eager education, and utmost respect. It comprises a diverse audience discussing various issues and expressing their ensure respectful exchanges.

ADQ worked with NARP at the Southwest Railway Conference in Dallas, Texas last January, broadcasting the Millennial panel at that event live online and collecting data about their thoughts on transit issues.

Soon after, I became a Silver Rail member and signed on for the 2015 national conference. Today, I am more committed than ever to the mission of NARP, and ADQ has ballooned from its initial 60 members to 1,340. These members have tested more than 4,200 claims and provided more than 70,000 comments worth of interaction on topics serious, sentimental, political and scientific.

ADQ supports a higher level of discourse. This should lead to media and data for good, as well as a better world, a world with faster, more robust trains. For more information on ADQ and to join the Facebook forum today, visit www.adqtalk.com. ■

Heritage Circle at the Spring Council Meeting: A Night To Remember

On the first day of the 2015 Spring Council Meeting, members of the Heritage Circle, NARP's recognition program for planned estate giving, gathered at 8407 Kitchen Bar to be recognized for their commitment to leaving a legacy of a connected America for generations to come.

The night began with a few specialty cocktails Kitchen Bar prepared for the group, with familiar names like The Gulf Wind and the 21st Century Limited. Heritage Circle Co-Chairs Lynn and Steve Salatti addressed the group about why estate giving is so important to NARP and its ongoing efforts to expand and preserve passenger trains in the United States.

The evening ended with a special thanks given by President and CEO Jim Mathews to members present at the reception.

NARP would like to recognize the following Heritage Circle members: Stephen Sayles, Ken Burbach, Linda Nelon, W.O Green III and Wilbur R. Johnson. We would also like to extend a special thanks to 8407 Kitchen Bar for their in-kind support and hosting this event.

Members of the Heritage Circle recognize that the next generation will face many more hard-fought political battles in the years and decades ahead as work continues to establish a truly functional and competitive national rail system."



If you are not a member of the Heritage Circle and would like more information on how to plan for the legacy of passenger rail, please contact our Director of Resource Development, Logan McLeod at (202) 408-8362 ext. 3202 or email him at lmcleod@narprail.org. ■

NARP Expands Volunteer Opportunities

Have you seen the expanded opportunities to volunteer for NARP? Whether you're looking to build your resume, to add to your creative portfolio, to develop new expertise in preparation for a career change, or just looking for a way to make a difference, NARP now has dozens of immediate volunteer openings available nationwide. These are meaningful, ongoing roles which you can use to jump-start your professional life or to contribute in a hands-on way to our work for more and better trains.

It's also a great way to contribute your professional talents to your association. We need volunteers in administrative, communications, advocacy/programs and technology.

While these positions are unpaid, the results they produce -- for you as well as for NARP -- are real. You'll make a difference while generating work products, references and networking opportunities. It's a win-win!

You can read more about these opportunities by clicking through the Volunteer menu to find each job listing page. If you think you're up to the challenge, apply by sending your resume and a cover letter by email to volunteer@narp-rail.org.

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Office Manager (Washington, DC)
- Data Entry Assistant
- State Support Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS

- Blogger (multiple positions available)
- PR And Marketing Associate
- Email Marketing Associate
- Graphic Design Associate

ADVOCACY/PROGRAM WORK

- Routes Spokesperson
- Certified Citizen Advocate
- Millennials Evangelist

TECHNOLOGY

- Web Content Assistant

Read a full description for each volunteer position by heading over to <http://www.narp-rail.org/volunteer/>

NARP Spring Council Corporate Sponsors

