

*“To safely move tons of freight and millions of passengers each day in this country, we need to continually invest in safety. These dollars will help get us closer to that goal. We hope to receive applications that can make these limited funds go as far as possible.”*

FRA ADMINISTRATOR SARAH E. FEINBERG

## Senate Committee Passes Transportation Budget In Support of Commuter Rail

**The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee** passed a transportation budget on April 21 that, if enacted by the full Congress, would increase funding for passenger rail to \$1.7 billion—\$76 million above the FY2016 enacted level. The committee also provided \$525 million for TIGER grants (also known as National Infrastructure Investments), \$25 million above the FY2016 enacted level; and \$2.3 billion for Capital Investment Grants (New Starts). Both programs have been extremely successful in funding investment in rail transit for the U.S.

NARP members pressed hard for these changes; the fact that -- in a year when overall funding for transportation and housing was cut by more than \$1 billion -- there was a positive change in funding for rail and transit is a testament to the work being done by advocates like you! Significantly, all three of the passenger rail grant programs created by the FAST Act that NARP targeted for support during our annual Day on the Hill received funding (for more, see “NARP Hosts Successful ‘Day on the Hill’

With Congressional Offices”).

NARP is tracking concerning language that was added at the last minute that will erode the ambitious scope of the Consolidated Rail, Infrastructure and Safety (CRISI) grant program. While Senate appropriators approved \$50 million in funding for the program, they also stripped eligibility for passenger specific goals, including investment in stations, upgrades to reduce train congestion, and enhancements to facilitate ridership growth. These were some of CRISI’s most exciting features, and NARP needs your help to restore them. NARP is working with Senators to restore passenger eligibility for these funds when the transportation budget bill goes to the full floor.

On a more positive note, the committee struck provisions from the FAST Act’s Restoration & Enhancement grant program that require a new service or frequency to show that it will be neutral or profitable after three years. This is good news for projects like the Gulf Coast rail restoration working group. ■

## NARP Hosts Successful “Day on the Hill” With Visits To Congressional Offices

**NARP Council Members** met with almost 300 congressional offices on its annual “Day on the Hill” advocacy event, held April 12. Over 100 volunteer passenger leaders made the case for a national passenger rail system in the U.S., as well as educating congressional staffers on local needs within the respective communities and states.

The NARP leaders advocated for

robust Amtrak funding and exciting new programs outlined in the FAST Act—advocacy that paid off less than two weeks later with positive action from Senate Appropriators (see front-page story).”

NARP Council Member Rick Arena of Massachusetts scheduled 16 meetings during our Day on the Hill, creating one

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Senators John Thune and Roger Wicker accept the Golden Spike Award

## Summer By Rail

Starting May 15th in New York City, NARP's intern, Elena Studier, will travel 10,000 miles through the U.S. for nearly days utilizing only public forms of transportation including rail, buses and other services, such as her bike. With support from Amtrak, Elena will explore how people travel by rail to see the country's greatest sites and attractions. Through her exploration, key elements of connectivity by rail, and support for rail in various communities, will be shared to her audience via social media channels on Twitter and Instagram at the handle @RailPassengers, and her blog at [www.summberbyrail.com](http://www.summberbyrail.com). People interested in Elena's travels can also follow the hashtags #ElenaAndStevie and #GetReal for regular updates. ■

## NARP Election Results

**On April 13**, NARP's Council of Representatives elected new Board Officers & Directors, along with 10 new 'At-Large' Representatives for the Council.

Peter LeCody of Dallas, TX, was elected as the next Chairman of NARP. Peter assumes the Chair role from the outgoing Bob Stewart who has served for the past six years.

The Council also elected the following Officers & Directors:

■ **Vice-Chairs:** John Delora of Michigan, Carol Haslett of Ohio, Jim Loomis of Hawaii and Chuck Riecks of West Virginia

■ **Treasurer:** Ken Clifford of Ohio

■ **Secretary:** Bill Hutchinson of Florida

■ **Directors:** Ken Briers of Washington, DC, George Chilson of California, Jim Hamre of Washington State, David Randall of Illinois, Steve Salatti of New York, Jim Souby of Colorado, Richard Vavre-Musser of Michigan

'At-Large' Representatives elected were: Richard Arena of Florida, Duane Chattin of Indiana, W. O. Greene of Tennessee, Charles Hamilton of Washington State, Malcolm Kenton of Washington, DC, Dennis Lytton of Washington, DC, Matt Melzer of Minnesota, Jishnu Mukerji of Florida, Ron Schneider of

Kentucky and Daniel Zimny-Schmitt of Colorado.

There are still vacancies for some state representative positions on the Council. If you are interested in becoming more involved with NARP and advancing our goal of 'A Connected America', please visit our website, [www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org) for more information and for a complete list of the positions available. ■

## Amtrak's Next CEO: A Wish List

**With speculation growing** about who will succeed Joe Boardman as Amtrak's CEO, NARP members should know that while we haven't – and won't – endorse any specific candidate, we have shared with relevant decisionmakers the qualities we think are needed at the helm of America's Railroad.

And now we're asking all of you to add your own voices and weigh in with your Representative or Senator to support the kind of leader NARP believes Amtrak needs to move forward in the 21st Century.

NARP agrees with Senators Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), who wrote in February to Amtrak Board Chair Anthony M. Coscia that the new CEO must have "deep understanding of and support for all three of Amtrak's lines of service – state-supported, long-distance, and the Northeast Corridor."

In other words, this is what NARP has been calling "A Connected America."

We think the next Amtrak CEO should be eager to create a truly 21st Century network, with enough capital for safe operations and growth.

The next CEO needs to develop strong partnerships with freight railroads, who have been required to provide their best service at their lowest prices ever since making their deal with the federal government to take over passenger routes.

The next CEO should broker peace among Amtrak's many internally warring tribes – not just labor-management, but interdepartmental sparring.

The next CEO needs the creativity to fight relentlessly for service operated with modern locomotives and passenger cars.

And of course, we think the next CEO should be an evangelist for truly

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#### VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

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of the more aggressive schedules for the day. Arena chose to focus his outreach on the North-South Rail Link, a proposed project that would connect Boston's North and South Stations, joining the Northeast Corridor with Amtrak's Maine services.

"We had some very successful meetings," Arena told Ryan Clark, who was covering NARP's event for MultiBriefs, a leading publisher of association-focused news briefs for industry professionals. "We talked to senators and congressmen; they understand it, they get it, and we're just going to keep pushing forward."

The day wrapped up with NARP's Congressional Reception, where Senators John Thune (R-SD) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) were honored with the prestigious "Golden Spike" Award for their leadership in passing the FAST Act. Industry leaders gathered to honor the two senators' work, including Federal Railroad Administrator Sarah Feinberg and Association of American Railroads President & CEO Ed Hamberger. ■

## NARP Spring Meeting Attendees Learn From Washington Insiders

**Over 120 NARP members** participated in the recent Spring Membership & Council Meeting (an attendance record), learning from a number of Washington 'insiders' how to be more effective advocates. Of particular interest to all was a panel that featured the top two staffers from the Senate Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and the Policy Director for Transportation for America (T4 America)."

Patrick Fuchs (Professional Staff Member for the Majority) and Matt Kelly (Professional Staff Member for the Minority) kicked off the lively session by describing the long and complicated process that led to the inclusion of a Rail Title in the recently enacted FAST Act.

Patrick and Matt were instrumental in crafting the rail title language and both credited NARP's input during the process as being vital to the positive end result. They also elaborated on the ongoing need to build constituencies in Congress for both the northeast corridor and the rest of the Amtrak system. They highlighted that the realignment of Amtrak's accounting and financial reporting systems along these two major business segments (NEC & national system) is designed to help bolster such support in Congress in the coming years."

Joe McAndrew, T4 America's Policy Director, discussed how incrementalism really does work and that the modest gains/improvements which have been made in recent years are very important signs of the slow but steady progress that passenger rail is experiencing.

Attendees also heard an impassioned presentation from the Hon. John Robert Smith, former Mayor of Meridian, MS and now Chairman of the T4 America Advisory Board. Mayor Smith highlighted the need for grassroots support of investment

## NARP Honors Shamonda Jones With Burch Safety Award



Metra's Shamonda Jones receives the Burch Safety Award

**As part of our** Day on the Hill and Congressional Reception, NARP honored Shamonda Jones of Metra with the Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Award. Ms. Jones, a senior manager of Metra Commuter Rail in Chicago, was nominated by Metra's leadership for her dedication to fostering a culture of safety among the 40 dispatchers who ensure the safety of the 300,000-plus passengers who ride Metra every day.

NARP staff led Ms. Jones, along with representatives from Metra's safety and government affairs and safety team, as well as a representative of the American Public Transportation Association, on a tour around the Capitol to visit members of the Illinois delegation. The group met with Illinois Senators Mark Kirk and Richard Durbin, as well as Representatives Mike Quigley and Dan Lipinski. Ms. Jones also met with Federal Railroad Administrator Sarah Feinberg during the evening reception.

"Getting America's rail passengers to and from their destinations safely should be a top priority for any commuter organization, and Shamonda Jones has shown a professional dedication to this ideal that has helped Chicago do so effectively for nearly 1,300 Metra, Amtrak and freight trains each day," said NARP President Jim Mathews. ■

in transportation and that Washington often only listens when the argument for such investment comes from the small towns and isolated regions of the country which increasingly are only served by Amtrak's national network trains. He urged NARP members to continue to educate local officials on the necessity of providing intercity mobility for citizens of all socioeconomic levels and to assist in forming alliances within their areas business communities. ■



**• • • STATES NEWS • • •**

**On Friday**, April 22, Denver opened rail service between downtown and Denver International Airport. The University of Colorado A Line runs 23 miles, runs every 15 minutes, and is expected to change how people travel to and from the airport, which up to now was either via a \$70 taxi ride or on buses. The next day Denver International Airport and community groups hosted parties at the eight stations along the new rail line, with a kite festival, food, music and other entertainment on the open-air plaza between Denver Airport and the Westin Denver International Airport hotel. The hotel opened next to the DIA's main Jeppesen Terminal on Nov. 25, atop the commuter rail station.

**U.S. Senator Michael Bennet** congratulated the Colorado Transportation Committee for its approval of a \$1.5 million grant for reinstating the Ski Train between Denver and Winter Park Resort. The restoration of the train has been a key goal of ColoRail, and tomorrow Winter Park CEO Gary DeFrange, a ColoRail member, will be attending the group's Denver meeting. There, he will accept ColoRail's symbolic matching donation from ColoRail President & CEO Jim Souby, who is also a NARP Council Member, that will go to help restart the service.

**At the request of CSX** in order to accommodate extensive planned trackwork, Amtrak is cancelling one Empire Service round-trip between Albany-Rensselaer and Niagara Falls, NY four days a week starting Sunday, April 24, running through July 13. Westbound train #281 will not operate beyond Albany-Rensselaer Sundays through Wednesdays and eastbound trains #280 and #284 are replaced by a newly-scheduled #282 on Monday through Wednesday mornings from Niagara Falls. Regularly scheduled service across upstate New York will be provided on Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays. The Empire State Passenger Association has questioned this service reduction, which was approved by New York's Department of Transportation, just as the busy spring and summer travel season is getting underway.

**Appropriate funding** and support for passenger rail is critical, and without it, services are often reduced or cut completely. About 77,000 people each year ride the Heartland Flyer, Oklahoma's Amtrak rail service. Despite the fact that thousands rely on

the train service, lawmakers and the Oklahoma Department of Transportation may cut the service due to the state's budget crisis, and the need for the state to save money. Whatever the Legislature decides about the Heartland Flyer, it likely won't affect plans for the Eastern Flyer between Oklahoma City and Tulsa. That project is being designed to run without state support. A six-month trial of that line is expected to begin before 2019.

**To increase funding support** for Metro, Jack Evans, the chairman of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority requested that congress provide \$300 million per year as an equal partner like D.C., Maryland and Virginia. The request was highly contested with members of the hearing calling for another hearing on Capitol Hill in 90 days before decisions are made. Despite funding problems, this week, Metro retired the oldest cars in its fleet - the 1000-series cars from the 1970s - as the agency has been replacing them with the new 7000-series that began service in April of last year.

**The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority** (SEPTA) will begin utilizing Positive Train Control (PTC) technology on its Warminster Regional Rail line. The use of PTC by SEPTA follows the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) granting permission to SEPTA to begin operations with PTC. Along with SEPTA, Amtrak and MetroLink in California use PTC, which is a system that is designed to reduce accidents through the use of GPS and monitoring that can stop a train automatically before certain types of accidents. SEPTA spent seven years and more than \$320 million designing, installing and testing the technology, plus training employees.

**In the recently released plans** for Maryland's Purple Line, it was revealed that the railcars will be the longest used in the U.S. At 136 feet long, the trains built by Spanish company CAF, will be 2 feet longer than other trains used. With the longer railcars, the Purple Line will provide several advantages over multiple short ones: increase capacity by 10 percent, reduction in wasted space between cars, less expense per ride, and ease for commuters to walk through a single car to find a seat. ■

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customer-focused service, with modern amenities, safe and reliable accommodations and nourishing and pleasing food and beverages.

In short, the next CEO needs to believe fervently in a vision for Amtrak worthy of a 21st Century America, and should

be able to inspire the entire team – from the boardroom to the coach cleaners, along with Congress and the public – to embrace it.

What Amtrak needs is a Chief Vision Officer. Let's get to work! ■

## Overheard in The Club Car: A Membership Update

**Because NARP** is foremost a decades-strong venture focused on rail education and advocacy, often many don't realize the breadth of great benefits our members get for their loyalty and commitment to what we do. We always look for useful benefits and the chance to effectively spread our message, which is why we've recently teamed up with Travelers United, the only non-profit membership organization that acts as a watchdog for traveler rights and works effectively to expand consumer protections for all travelers. NARP will draw on their membership base as an audience for pertinent legislative initiatives, while NARP members can take advantage of Travelers United benefits. Be sure to visit <https://travelersunited.org/membership> to get acquainted with your rights.

■ **Amtrak Vacations** accepts the NARP 10% discount on the rail fare portion on the hundreds of wonderful packages available; see page 5 for more details.

■ **Amazon.com** and NARP have reached an exciting agreement; visit [www.narprail.org/get-involved/donate](http://www.narprail.org/get-involved/donate) to learn more.

■ **VSP Individual Vision Care** now offers specially discounted individual and family insurance plans exclusively for NARP members that typically save hundreds of dollars on your exams, glasses and contacts. As a VSP member, you or any family member can also enjoy savings of up to \$1200 per hearing aid through TruHearing®. When you sign up for a VSP plan, you not only help yourself and your family, you help support NARP as well! Enroll today at <http://www.vspdirect.com/narp/get-a-quote>. ■

## Important Membership Reminder...

• Please do NOT use any old envelopes you may have saved from previous NARP mailings for your membership dues renewals or other donation payments. The PO Box address on these old envelopes is no longer in use and your checks will NOT reach NARP. Please only use the new envelopes you receive with our current mailings, which are addressed to: NARP, PO Box 17082, Baltimore, MD 21298-9485.

• If in any doubt, you may always send checks and other payments directly to our office at: NARP, 505 Capitol Ct, NE, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20002-7706.

• Shopping online with Amazon can now benefit NARP, which has just been approved as an AmazonSmile program partner, which means that Amazon will be donating 0.5% of the price of all your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to NARP if you start all your Amazon shopping experiences via the AmazonSmile link now available on the NARP website homepage. This great Amazon donation program costs you nothing and NARP stands to earn a significant new source of revenue in support of our goals! ■

## Discounts On Amtrak Vacations Packages For NARP Members

**NARP is rolling-out** a significant new member benefit in June - a 10% discount on the rail travel portion of all Amtrak Vacation tour packages.

Amtrak Vacations, which operates Amtrak's tour and tour-package program, offers over 300 destination- and attraction-based, all-inclusive, tour packages across North America, which featuring travel by Amtrak trains.

In addition, NARP members will receive a 5% discount on Yankee Leisure Group's (the operator of Amtrak Vacations) Unique Rail Journey packages available for destinations across Europe.

In announcing the new partnership, NARP President/CEO Jim Mathews said, "This is the perfect win-win for all NARP members.

Yankee Leisure Group has over 40 years' experience

offering first-rate travel packages and they specialize in combining great destinations and train travel. NARP also benefits, as our Association gains access to Amtrak Vacations extensive customer base, many of whom are potential new NARP members."

The discount program will launch on June 1 with three on-line, informational webinars exclusively for NARP members. During the sessions, Amtrak Vacations staff will provide an overview of their many tour packages and how NARP members can take full advantage of the new 10% savings. Invitations to these free webinars will be e-mailed to all members.

Complete information on this great new member benefit will also be posted on our website [www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org) starting on June 17. ■

## WEB EXCLUSIVE! NARP Council of Representatives Elects Peter LeCody as New Chairman

**Peter LeCody** was elected as the new Chairman of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) during the April Council of Representatives meeting. LeCody will serve a two-year term and assumes the role from Robert J. Stewart, who served for the past six years.

“I am humbled and honored that the Council has elected me as Chairman of NARP, a vital link that connects the rail-riding public to our elected officials,” LeCody said, who hails from Dallas, TX. “I’m eager to get to work and to continue pushing for the modern, first-class passenger rail network that Americans want and need.”

LeCody, 68, most recently served as Board Vice-Chair of NARP, before being elected Chairman. While in this position, LeCody represented his home state of Texas on the Council for many years and has become an integral part of the association and has helped the organization shape its goals for the future of passenger rail and multimodal transportation in the United States.

“The U.S. is on the verge of something great in rail transportation, following the passage of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act. Increasing funding under this legislation will help cities, states and regions develop rail and other mass transit services and allow for Americans to travel on a truly national

multimodal transportation network,” said LeCody.

In addition to his position with NARP, LeCody serves as President of Texas Rail Advocates (TRA), a grassroots organization covering freight and passenger rail issues in Texas and the Southwest. During this time he served on the steering committee for the Texas Department of Transportation Rail Division for three years, and as a member of the Texas Transportation Commission I-35 Corridor Advisory Committee for five years. Prior to taking over as TRA President, LeCody served as the Subcommittee Chair for the Regional Transportation Task Force for the city of Coppell, TX. He has been a Dallas business owner since 1987.

“Peter brings a wealth of experience and passion to this position,” said Jim Mathews, president and CEO of NARP. “He has been an active member in NARP for years, and he has played key roles in advocating for passenger rail in Texas and on Capitol Hill. We are excited to have his guidance as we move forward.”

LeCody has previously received the Champion of the Rails award from Amtrak President Joe Boardman, an award which recognizes non-Amtrak employees who have successfully completed a project to enhance the quality or safety of passenger rail services. His twitter handle is [@railadvo](https://twitter.com/railadvo). ■

### NARP Traveler’s Advisory

- ❖ **To accommodate a long-term track work project, several Springfield Shuttle trains will be canceled and bus service will be provided. Monday through Friday service changes, effective through July 29, 2016: Springfield Shuttle Trains 470, 490, 493 and 495 will be cancelled on Monday through Friday until July 29, 2016. Passengers will be provided bus service between New Haven, Wallingford, Meriden, Berlin, Hartford, Windsor, Windsor Locks and Springfield. All southbound weekday buses will depart all stations 30 minutes earlier than the respective trains.**
- ❖ From April 24 through July 13, CSX Transportation will perform extensive track work between Albany-Rensselaer and Niagara Falls, NY. To accommodate this work, Empire Service and Maple Leaf schedules will be adjusted. Trip times between Albany-Rensselaer and Niagara Falls will increase by up to 25 minutes. On Sunday through Wednesday, Trains 284 and 281 will not run. Some train numbers will change, however, frequencies between Albany-Rensselaer and New York will not be affected. Some trains will depart earlier.
- ❖ **Effective May 1, 2016 Amtrak will restructure its Transbay San Francisco, CA Thruway bus services. All Amtrak Coast Starlight and California Zephyr, Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin trains will have bus connection between Emeryville or Oakland and the Temporary Transbay Terminal (SFC) at 200 Folsom Street. This location is staffed by Amtrak, with ticketing, checked baggage (where applicable) and customer service. A limited number of trains will also have bus connections to Fisherman’s Wharf (SFW) at Beach and Pier 39, the Financial District (SFF) at the Hyatt at 5 Embarcadero Center, or the Shopping Center (SFS) at Westfield Mall, 835 Market Street. All Thruway service to the following San Francisco bus stops will be discontinued: Caltrain Station (SFP) — last day of service April 30, 2016; Moscone Center (SFM) — last day of service April 30, 2016; Civic Center (SFV) — last day of service April 29, 2016**
- ❖ Amtrak and the Michigan Department of Transportation have modified Wolverine Service schedules from April 25 through September 23 to accommodate track and signal work to result in improved reliability, a smoother ride and an expansion of the Midwest’s first 110 mph Amtrak service. While all Wolverine trains will operate on adjusted schedules, the largest change affects the schedule of Trains 352 and 353, which will operate across the full Pontiac-Chicago route on Sundays only. There will be two Wolverine round-trips Monday-through-Saturday between Battle Creek and Pontiac during this period. Normal service levels of three Wolverine round-trips between Battle Creek and Chicago are maintained. There are no significant changes to the Port Huron-East Lansing-Chicago Blue Water (which also serves Battle Creek and Kalamazoo) or the Grand Rapids-Chicago Pere Marquette schedules. ■