



RAIL PASSENGERS

FRIDAY HOTLINE

#1405

AUGUST 8TH, 2025



Take Action

Association News

Amtrak Announces Aug. 28 Launch of NextGen Acela

By Rail Passengers Staff

Amtrak [announced \[yesterday\] it will begin passenger service on its new NextGen Acela fleet starting Thursday, August 28](#), introducing the new trainsets onto the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., New York City, and Boston.

The rollout marks the first phase of a fleet modernization initiative that will introduce 28 new trainsets over the next two years. The new NextGen Acela trainsets provide a 27% increase in seating capacity per departure while allowing Amtrak to offer expanded weekday and weekend schedules. Onboard, passengers will have access to upgraded amenities, including a smoother ride and faster Wi-Fi (which will still be free).

Five trainsets will enter service initially, with additional trainsets phased in over the coming months. During the transition, Amtrak will operate both current Acela equipment and *NextGen Acela* trains.

The *NextGen Acela* fleet was assembled at Alstom's Hornell, NY facility by Machinists Union workers, incorporating components from over 180 suppliers across 29 states and supporting approximately 15,000 U.S. jobs.

The *NextGen Acela* trainsets were originally scheduled to go into service in 2021, but faced years of manufacturing and testing delays. Today's announcement will come as a great relief for passengers, who—in addition to enjoying a more comfortable onboard experience—can look forward to better service reliability and increased capacity. With new Amtrak *Airo* trains scheduled to debut on [corridors across the nation](#) in 2026 and a contract for new long-distance equipment expected shortly, we may look back on August 2025 as a significant date in the battle to renew America's aging passenger rail fleet.

Passengers interested in experiencing the new trainsets in person will need to stay tuned—Amtrak says it will be updating its reservation system soon with information on how to "locate and select the *NextGen Acela* train options."

STB Dismisses Amtrak's Late-Trains Case Against Union Pacific

By Jim Mathews / President & CEO

As Union Pacific [gears up to merge with Norfolk Southern](#), the Surface Transportation Board yesterday took a significant step toward clearing the decks for the deal by [dismissing Amtrak's 2022 late-trains claim against Union Pacific](#).

Amtrak itself asked STB to dismiss the case, after the passenger railroad [secured a settlement with UP](#) involving on-time performance guarantees,

unspecified penalties for missing those on-time markers, additional and continuous compliance training for UP employees, and a process to certify – finally – the *Sunset Limited*'s schedule.

"The Board has long encouraged the private resolution of disputes through voluntary negotiations whenever possible," STB said in its order and decision closing the proceeding. "No necessary parties object to Amtrak's request to dismiss the proceeding, which was initiated by the Board on Amtrak's complaint."

Although CPKC, the recently merged Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern railway, did not object to the dismissal, it made a point of filing to the docket a letter to note that "CPKC wished to avoid any implication that its consent constituted assent to the undisclosed terms of Amtrak's confidential arrangements with Union Pacific."

STB Chair Patrick Fuchs praised the settlement in a prepared statement yesterday.

"I want to recognize the excellent, expert work of Board staff to evaluate the extraordinary amount of evidence in the *Sunset Limited* proceeding, and I am confident that this work has positioned the agency to deliver strong results for the public in any future passenger rail proceeding," Fuchs said. "More broadly, this case shows that parties can privately settle even the most complex and extensively litigated matters, and I continue to encourage parties to Board proceedings to intensify their efforts to collaboratively resolve disputes."

The Board accepted Amtrak's proposal that the case be dismissed "with prejudice," a legal term which only means that the case is now closed and can't be brought again. It also means that while the settlement itself can probably be seen as a guide for handling future disputes, the STB won't really get a chance to rule on the overall merits of the case.

After a half-century of the law – [49 U.S.C. § 24308\(c\)](#) – being on the books, there will still be no precedent set for what it actually means when it says Class I hosts must give Amtrak "preference over freight transportation in using a rail line, junction, or crossing."

Rail Passengers Congratulates New FTA Administrator Molinaro

by Jim Mathews / President & CEO

Former New York congressman Marc Molinaro was confirmed by the Senate as the new Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, and we're looking forward to working with him.

This Spring, we offered an enthusiastic endorsement of Molinaro for the role, noting his consistent support for surface transportation and his clear understanding of how communities rely on transit and transportation – something he knows well from his time in local New York government.

Moreover, during his time in Congress, Molinaro provided important leadership on passenger rail and transit issues that affected the services our members depend on, defending important public transportation services during critical budget votes. His experience as a county executive in New York State and Member of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will serve him well as our nation looks to address the many challenges facing U.S. transit systems and reassert our role as a global leader in safe and efficient transportation infrastructure.

The FTA Administrator will likely be charged with implementing the next Surface Transportation Authorization Act, currently in the preliminary phase of stakeholder outreach. Rail Passengers Association looks forward to working with Molinaro to ensure that rail and transit plays a central role moving Americans moving safely and efficiently and supporting a robust economy.

Congratulations, Marc!

Field Notes



We are excited to take part in
All Aboard Ohio's **"Race to Chicago"**
happening this weekend.

Please stay tuned to our social media channels for more!

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Calling All Readers!

Do you have a favorite transit/train photo (or photos) you have taken from your travels around the country, or even around the world? Would you like to see them featured in our Hotline social media post each week (with credit, of course)?

Send them to Joe Aiello @ jaiello@narprail.org with the subject "HOTLINE PHOTO"

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Please email [Joe Aiello](#) if you have any local, state or regional stories/projects that you would like to see get highlighted in the Hotline.

Hotline Links

A curated selection of passenger rail and transportation stories from this week. Check out our social media feeds on [Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#) to read breaking news and join the conversation!

[Muffuletta on the train? Amtrak unveils menu for Gulf Coast route from New Orleans to Mobile](#), NOLA.com

Passengers on the Mardi Gras will have a little local flair to enjoy on their trip.

[Locally owned businesses react to Amtrak launch nearing](#), WXXV News 25

More local reaction to the long awaited launch of Amtrak's Mardi Gras service along the Gulf Coast

[VIDEO] [Amtrak Mumford & Sons Railroad Revival Tour Private Car Special Walk By!](#)

English rock band Mumford & Sons grabbed some friends and took to the rails over the last week for a limited [Railroad Rival Tour](#). YouTuber [Mr. Miz](#) was lucky enough to catch the full consist while in Pittsburgh.

[Zivarts: How 'Week Without Driving' Is Having An Impact](#), Streetsblog USA

In this piece for Streetsblog USA, Anna Zivarts reflects on how the #WeekWithoutDriving has evolved from a local advocacy effort into a nationwide movement with over 500 hosting organizations across all 50 states

[Metra cancels some UP-NW trains for 2 months of rail construction, Chicago Sun-Times](#)

The four trains, two round trips between Chicago and Crystal Lake on the UPN Line, are being shelved until Sept. 20th to help prevent other trains being delayed while work is done to replace ties along a 24-mile stretch.

[Metro Transit slated to end Northstar train service in January](#), FOX 9 Minneapolis-St. Paul

The commuter line, which runs about 40 miles from Target Field in Minneapolis to Big Lake, served less than 450 passengers per day last year after service cuts.

[New boarding platform opens at Washington Union Station](#), **Trains Pro**

Originally planned in 2018 thanks to an FRA grant, the former Washington Union Station lower level storage track has now been opened for VRE and Amtrak passenger boarding

[Corneanu to become Amtrak's CFO](#), Progressive Railroading

Costin Corneanu has been named Amtrak's new EVP & CFO, effective August 4, 2025. He will be tasked with overseeing the railroad's financial strategy during a time of record ridership and investment.



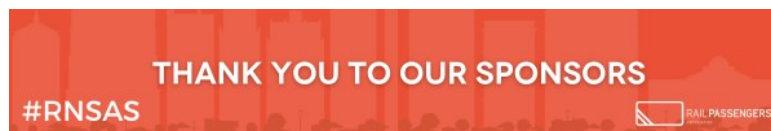
If you aren't following Rail Passengers on social media, you should be! We are covering all the breaking news America's passengers need to stay informed on local, regional, and national issues.

Upcoming Events

RailNation: San Antonio



[Click Here for the RN:SAS Event Page](#)



Individual Sponsors:

Bruce Ashton
Tom & Christy Compson
Gary Moline
J.R. Price
Michael Robinson
Miles Schulze

Please contact Joe Aiello (jaiello@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and on-line) of upcoming events!

Staff Updates

Your staff is at the table, in the field, having the conversations that make a difference for passengers across the country. Learn what they're up to each week and how you can support your Association's key missions!

- **Jim Mathews, President & CEO**, took part in stakeholder and partner meetings this week, including sessions of the STB Passenger Rail Advisory Committee and meetings with coalition partners in DC, while also preparing for the launch of Amtrak's new Mardi Gras in the Gulf Coast. He also recorded a guest appearance on the StreetsblogUSA podcast.
- **Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Policy**, spoke with reporters about the launch of Amtrak's new NextGen Acelas, worked with state-

level elected officials on advancing Corridor Identification Program projects, and continued to refine statutory language for the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

- **Jonsie Stone, Chief of Staff**, continued working with our accounting Team to close June financials, met with CharityEngine to discuss future enhancements, collaborated with Jim upcoming solicitations, processed donations and membership dues sent to the DC office and tended to the administrative and operational needs of the Association.
- **Joe Aiello, Director of Community Engagement & Organizing**, has been gearing up to assist our friends at All Aboard Ohio with their "[Race to Chicago](#)" event taking place this weekend. Joe continues to plan our fall meeting and talk to fellow advocates from around the country.
- **Kimberly Notarianni, Membership Management Consultant**, had the pleasure of assisting a number of our members with renewing their memberships and updating their accounts. It's always rewarding to connect with you directly and ensure your information is accurate, so you can continue to enjoy uninterrupted access to your benefits. Kimberly works closely with our Team and the CharityEngine software developers to explore ways we can make our new portal even more user-friendly and give you the most functionality possible.

Keep Your Contact Info & Preferences Up to Date

We want to be sure you never miss important updates, membership news, or your transaction receipts! You can easily update your email address, phone number, mailing address, and communication preferences anytime through the CharityEngine Constituent Portal:

<https://membership.railpassengers.org/usercenter> (we recommend bookmarking this link for easy access)

Getting Started

1. Visit the Login page and enter the User Name and Password associated with your CharityEngine account.

Log in

User Name

Password

☒ Remember me [Forgot password?](#)

LOG IN

2. Once you're logged in, you'll see your account dashboard. Click "Update Your Info."

Making Updates

On the Edit Contact Info screen, you can:

Update your personal details like email, phone, and address.

Adjust your communication preferences—switch the green "Yes" button to red "No" (or vice versa)

Click **UPDATE** to save your changes.

Home

EDIT CONTACT INFO

First Name: Tom

Middle:

Last Name: Train

DOB: MM/DD/YYYY

Email:

Phone: (703) 555-5555

Address: 1200 G St Nw Washington DC 20005

Enter Unit Number or Other Details

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

☒ Receive Email?

☒ Receive Phone Calls?

☒ Receive Mail?

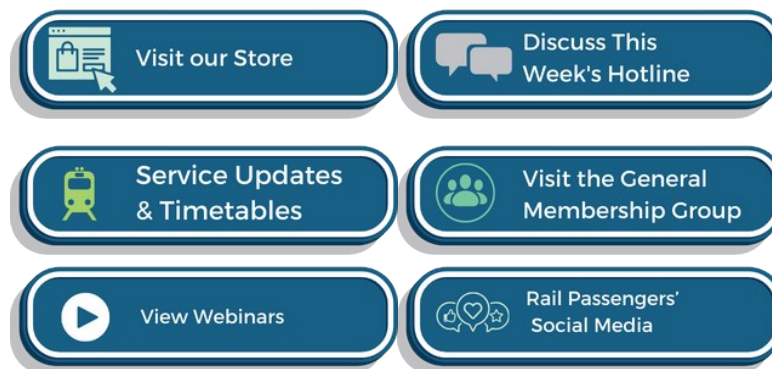
☒ Receive SMS?

UPDATE CANCEL

A Quick Tip

Since transaction receipts are sent by email, having your current email address on file will ensure you receive everything without delay.

We Have Merch!



Rail Passengers Timetables

Thanks to a collaborative effort between Rail Passengers NYS Council Member Nathanael Nerode & juckins.net's Chris Juckins, we have been able to completely update our timetables resource page.

**WE HAVE A FULL SUMMER UPDATE,
INCLUDING THE NEW MARDI GRAS SERVICE**

[CLICK HERE](#)

NOTE: Because we do update the links on our website - please bookmark **the main page** and not the individual schedules

Donate Online with Confidence

You can donate to the Rail Passengers Association online with confidence, knowing your credit card information is secure. Charity Engine uses industry-standard SSL technology to keep your information secure. Don't wait for a paper appeal to donate, support the Association today by donating here. When the web browser shows a lock next to the URL, it

means that it's an HTTPS, and it's secure:
<https://donate.railpassengers.org/Default.aspx?tsid=30734>

You Will Make a Difference

The Rail Passengers Association is the only organization that acts as a voice for train passengers - Amtrak, commuter rail, and rail transit riders - on Capitol Hill, before the US Department of Transportation, and before Amtrak management.

**Please note use of this form will result in a donation. If you wish to renew your membership, please go through the member center (you will need to log in) or call us at (202) 408-8362.*

GIFT

☒ One Time ☐ Recurring



Do more with your donations. If you have questions about employer match, gifting a membership, or other questions about how to make a bigger impact, let us know! Your staff is here to help with:

- Online Donations
- Donor Advised Funds
- Employer Match
- RPA Signature Visa Card
- Gift of Membership
- and More!

With multiple secure, protected methods of payment, you have more flexibility in the way dues are paid. Skip the hassle and [contact us](#) today for help setting up automatic or online payments.

- Setup ACH or E-Check with your bank of choice
- Use a Debit or Credit Card to pay online, or
- Send a check to 1200 G Street NW Suite 520 Washington, DC 20005

Use Your Donor Advised Fund (DAF) to Donate, Renew or Join Online

You can now donate or join/renew your membership, online, through your donor advised fund using DAFpay. All Rail Passengers forms now include a "Donor Advised Fund" button under Payment.

Donation Form:

Phone Number (not required)

Phone Number

Email Address

*Email Address

☐ Yes, I would like to receive email communications.

PAYMENT

☐ Credit Card ☐ Bank Account ☐ PayPal

☒ Donor Advised Fund ☐ Google Pay

DAF pay | Donor Advised Fund

☐ Dedicate this donation?

Membership Form:


☐ Other

☐ Yes, I prefer communication by email rather than by mail.

PAYMENT

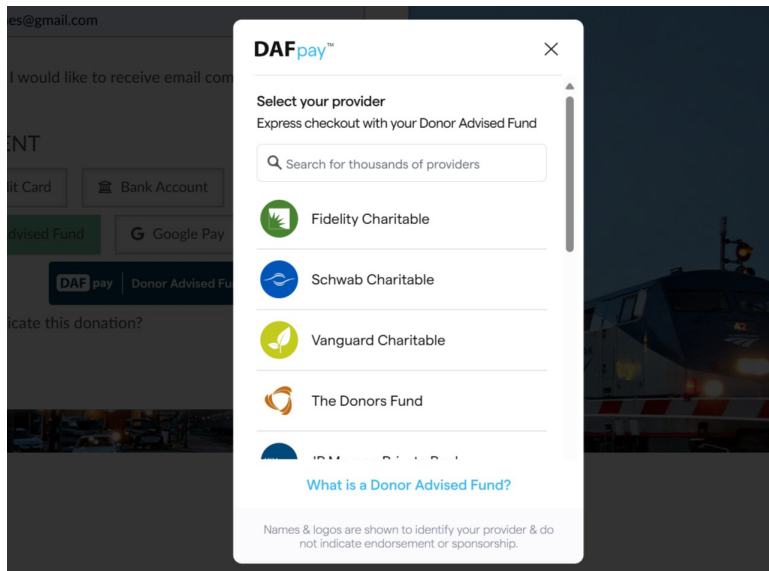
CAPTCHA

☐ I'm not a robot



Donor Advised Fund

After selecting Donor Advised Fund as your payment preference, you will be taken to a DAFpay screen to select your donor advised fund provider, ie., Fidelity Charitable, Vanguard Charitable, Daffy, etc.



Select your provider, then follow their prompts. If you need to provide information on Rail Passengers Association, please use the below:

National Association of Railroad Passengers, Inc.
dba Rail Passengers Association
1200 G Street, NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20005
Contact: Jonsie Stone, jstone@narprail.org
Tax ID: 36-2615221

Member & Donor Notices

- **The Rail Passengers Association is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 36-2615221**
- **To help facilitate dissemination of electronic thank you receipts,** please make sure your contact information, **specifically your email address**, is up-to-date in your Neon profile.
- **If you need assistance with your membership**, please call the Office at 202-408-8362.
- **While our staff continues to work remotely, we are unable to provide permanent membership cards.** You can print a temporary membership card by creating an account at www.railpassengers.org (select "My Account" on the homepage).
- **Complete all information!** -- Before sealing your envelope, PLEASE double-check the credit card information on the buck slip!
 - ◊ Print credit card information clearly.
 - ◊ **Include an expiration date, month and year, as well as the CVV number.**
 - ◊ Without **COMPLETE** information, your membership renewal or donation can't be processed.
- **If you have your financial institution send a check on your behalf,** without a bucksliip, PLEASE instruct them to add:
 - ◊ a notation in the memo field if the payment is for membership dues or a donation, AND,
 - ◊ your Rail Passengers Association member ID. If we have multiple members with the same name, i.e., John Smith, it can be hard to identify the correct member to attribute the payment, without the member ID.



Rail Passengers Association members have access to a full service, nationwide federal credit union with extensive product and service offerings. Signature FCU is the exclusive provider of the [Rail Passengers Association-branded Visa credit card](#) with our logo, which supports our work by giving back to our organization, and gives you 1 point for every \$1 you spend to redeem for travel and merchandise. The card has no annual fee, no balance transfer fees, no foreign transaction fees, and has a very low interest rate.

Charity Navigator



✦ FOUR-STAR ✦

Rail Passengers Association Earns Coveted 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Rail Passengers Association's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Our Charity Navigator profile can be found by clicking [here](#).

If you have questions, feedback, or submissions for next week's hotline, send us your thoughts! Help us spread the word about your local, regional, and national passenger rail wins.



Contact Us

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:



RAIL PASSENGERS

EST. 1967

Rail Passengers Association
1200 G St. NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20005

P 202.408.8362
F 202.408.8287

www.railpassengers.org