

The Voice of the Railroad Passenger



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from
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

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WHERE ARE THE RAILROAD PRESIDENTS?

Editorial

A rough-and-tough anti-Amtrak lobbying campaign is being carried on by Greyhound Bus Lines.

In 1971, Greyhound personnel in the New York region received a letter which encouraged them to write their Congressmen "to protest the granting of [\$170 million] of Federal taxpayers' money to Amtrak. Your Federal tax money given to Amtrak will be used to unfairly compete with us . . . to take away our business and our jobs and our security."

In 1972, Greyhound mailed a letter to its western employees explaining that Amtrak has had substantial ridership increases throughout the nation. "Without a doubt, some of these gains included passengers diverted from Greyhound," said F. L. Nageotte, President of Greyhound Lines-West. "It is extremely important that we continue to point out the deficiencies of Amtrak to friends, business associates and government officials. A letter from you personally to your elected governmental representative has far more impact than you realize," said Nageotte.

Frankly, we are disturbed with the arrogance of the bus company. It is true that Amtrak is subsidized but it is also true that Amtrak discontinued about half the passenger trains in operation when it took over on May 1, 1971. In many areas of the country (some of them quite large, such as Cleveland) the bus companies have a virtual monopoly on public ground transportation. Thousands of former train passengers are now riding buses, and Greyhound didn't have to indulge in any promotional activities to get this business.

Greyhound's militance contrasts with the lack of any show of strength on behalf of Amtrak by railroad presidents. The general public already holds the railroad industry (not Amtrak) in low esteem, as exemplified by the findings of the recent Harris survey. If an Amtrak funding bill were to fail in 1973 because of inadequate industry support, then every railroad president would have to pay the intangible price of further train discontinuances. More "last runs" headlined in newspapers. More tarnished images in an industry that can least afford it.

When the next Amtrak funding bill comes before congress, railroad presidents should encourage their employees to write their Congressmen to support Amtrak. After all, railroads are saving a substantial amount by virtue of Amtrak having relieved them of passenger service. And if Amtrak fails many railroad employees are threatened with the loss of their jobs and their security.

The issue is more than Greyhound vs. Amtrak. The issue is whether America will enjoy the fruits of a truly balanced transportation system.

NEW DOT SECRETARY

President Nixon announced on Dec. 7 that Claude S. Brinegar, senior vice president of Union Oil Co., will succeed John A. Volpe as Secretary of the Department of Transportation.

**CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO
BUILD HIGH-SPEED RAIL LINE?**

Plan Pushed By
Hartke, Weicker

Legislation providing for a federally financed superspeed railroad passenger line connecting Boston, New York and Washington will be introduced in Congress in January.

The new line would offer less than two-hour service between the cities at average speeds of 150 mph by 1976. Airline time between the three city centers would be surpassed by rail for the first time under the two-phase program drafted by Senators Vance Hartke, (D-Ind.) and Lowell P. Weicker, Jr. (R-Conn.)

Ultimately, the system would employ a feeder network of improved existing *Metroliner* and *TurboTrain* track patched into a new superspeed air cushion or other technologically advanced train.

First phase investment of the overall \$5.5 billion plan calls for \$625 million for track welding, increased electrification, curve straightening and protective fencing to adapt today's 80-100 mph trains to the increased speeds.

Step two would construct and tie in the superspeed line, to stretch along the corridor's shoreline route. The improved *Metroliner* and *TurboTrain* will continue serving all its present cities, providing rapid transport to the nearest superspeed stop.

Hartke and Weicker pointed out that:

— Rail transport is the nation's safest — less than one percent deaths per million passenger miles versus three times as much for buses, twice for scheduled domestic airlines and 15 times as much for cars; and

— Present transportation plans will not accommodate the almost 50 million people expected by 1977 to live in the Northeast Corridor — where almost 70% of the country's metropolitan centers are located.

Construction of the superspeed system would be completed under the supervision of the Army Corps of Engineers and might include the usage of several bankrupt railbeds. The service would be run by Amtrak.

NARP is the only national organization devoted to modernization and expansion of rail passenger service!

ICC COMMISSIONER TELLS BUS OPERATORS:

"I may not be making myself very popular with you, but I feel I should state that I am in favor of the Amtrak concept. Eighty-seven per cent of all intercity traffic is by car. The more you and Amtrak can lure people out from behind the wheel, the better I believe it is for everybody. This is particularly true with regard to the safety of the individual and of ecology."

— Robert C. Gresham, ICC Vice-chairman speaking before the Nat'l. Association of Motor Bus Owners.

AMTRAK NEWS ROUNDUP

WILL SAVE AMTRAK \$1 MILLION: Amtrak officials announced plans on Dec. 5 for a new \$1 million Jacksonville railroad station. It will replace the 50-year-old structure now being used. In a joint announcement, David Watts, Amtrak's Vice President of Planning, and Jacksonville Mayor Hans G. Tanzler, Jr., said construction will begin in late January and Amtrak trains will begin operating through the new station by next summer. Free parking will be provided for 150 autos. According to Mr. Watts, the station's size will permit it to service comfortably several times the volume of passengers now boarding and departing trains at Jacksonville. It will also be staffed 24 hours a day. The station will eliminate a complicated train backing operation required by the old station, saving time for both north and southbound passengers. Amtrak's operating costs in Jacksonville will be cut by more than \$1 million annually.

MORE FAST TRAINS: Amtrak plans to purchase six tubro-trains — two of them are new trains from France — in what would be its first experiment with foreign-built equipment. The French turbos would be similar to trains currently operating between Paris and Cherbourg. They are capable of speeds up to about 125 miles per hour. The other four trains would be purchased from United Aircraft Corp. Two of the trains are currently being operated by Amtrak between New York and Boston under a lease arrangement, and the others were operated for a time by Canadian National between Montreal and Ottawa. One high Amtrak source told Stephen M. Aug of the Washington, (D.C.) Star-News that a midwestern corridor was likely to be selected for turbo service. He specifically mentioned Chicago-St. Louis, Chicago-Milwaukee and Chicago-Detroit. Amtrak officials hope the trains will be in operation by next summer.

REVENUES UP: Amtrak revenues totaled \$46.9 million in the third quarter of 1972, a 13.2% increase over the same period in 1971. July figures showed a revenue increase of 9.8%, August was up 13.4 and September — the first month following the summer peak travel period — was up 17.5%.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC SAYS: The employee bulletin of the SP quotes Robert M. Jochner, SP's liaison man with Amtrak, as saying "Southern Pacific is making every effort to keep the Amtrak trains it operates on schedule, and Amtrak performance records show that we are making good progress in this area."

DO GM EXECUTIVES DRIVE? General Motors sent 700 of its top executives to a conference in White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. on five special Amtrak trains. The GM Specials originated Nov. 15 in Detroit (two trains), Flint, New York and Indianapolis. Amtrak leased cars from Canadian National for the specials.

THEY'RE NOT STEAM ENGINES: Amtrak has ordered 40 new intercity passenger train locomotives at a total cost of \$18 million. The engines, ordered from GM's Electro Motive Division, are to be ready for the 1973 summer travel season. The 40 locomotives — all 3000 horsepower diesel electrics — will replace 74 older 1500 horsepower engines now being leased. The engines will be used exclusively on the lines of the Santa Fe.

FOR THE PASSENGER TRAIN ENTHUSIAST

The Savannah Chairman of the Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers M. Earl Eargle, has written two songs about passenger trains which have been recorded by the Lucas-Harmon Brothers, one of the nation's foremost folk-bluegrass singing groups. Side one is a song entitled *Turbo Train*. Side two is *The Southern Crescent*. The record can be purchased from our dedicated NARP member for \$1.10 postpaid. Address: 701 Maupas Ave., Savannah, GA 31401.

ON-TIME: Amtrak's on-time performance for October improved 4.6% over September, with 79% of its intercity trains arriving at their destinations on time. New York-Washington conventional trains and the Chicago-Minneapolis segment of the *Empire Builder* led the performance charts, with each compiling 97.2% on time records for October. The Los Angeles-San Diego trains were next, with 96.2% on-time.

SPECIAL PROGRAM IN WEST: Starting Nov. 1, Amtrak began offering its riders in and to the West special rates for auto rental at major terminals. Through arrangements with Airways-Rent-A-Car, Amtrak offers the service in major western cities with direct-line telephone operable in most Amtrak terminals. Advance reservations are available through a toll free number anywhere in the US. Phone 800-336-0336. To qualify for the low rates, passengers must show their Amtrak ticket stubs to the participating Airways-Rent-A-Car office at the time of rental.

MORE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW THIS: Amtrak Vice President David A. Watts, Jr. recently said before the Transportation Research Forum meeting in Denver that in Amtrak's first year of operations, ridership systemwide "increased about 15%. Some of this increase comes from the *Metroliner*, but much of it was in long-distance trains. For example, comparing August 1971 to August of this year: the New York-Chicago route was up 32%, Chicago-Houston up 49%, Chicago-Los Angeles up 8%, Chicago-San Francisco up 7%, Seattle-Los Angeles up 75%, Washington-Chicago up 82%."

TAKE-OVER: Amtrak is expected to take over virtually all non-operating employees at Washington's Union Station. It started by making all 78 ticket and reservation employees members of Amtrak. The corporation, which currently has about 1200 employees, took over 40 stations and their employees in the West on Nov. 1. "We believe that by their working directly for a company whose sole concern is railroad travel, we will get an improvement in attitude," said Kenneth Housman, Amtrak Vice President for Personnel.

WOULD IT HAVE BEEN CLASSICAL OR ROCK?

Traffic Minister Jens Kampmann has scrapped a proposal which would have introduced nonstop music in Denmark's state-run trains, according to an Associated Press dispatch. "We're surrounded by enough noise as it is," Kampmann said. "Travelers should be allowed a bit of peace after a long day's work."

REMEMBER THOSE HIGH DINING CAR PRICES? AMTRAK'S CHANGED ALL THAT

Amtrak's food and beverage program is turning into one of its most impressive success stories.

Eric C. Von Schilgen, Amtrak's Food and Beverage Manager, told NARP that Amtrak is upgrading the quality of food, lowering dining car prices, and instituting regional menus.

The result: more people are eating while riding Amtrak's trains. From January to June 1972, gross food and beverage revenue was up 13%. Amtrak originally estimated \$8.2 million in revenues for this period but actually took in \$9.2 million from its hungry and thirsty passengers.

Meanwhile, Amtrak is attacking costs by making significant progress combining commissary facilities in various cities.

In Chicago, for example, Amtrak will save almost \$1 million per year by merging the commissaries of the Penn Central, Santa Fe, Burlington Northern, Milwaukee Road and Chesapeake & Ohio into one Amtrak facility. Labor savings alone will total \$452,000. This in turn will enable another \$22.6 thousand savings by eliminating the 5% commission on salaries Amtrak must pay to railroads under its contract.

Amtrak plans similar consolidations elsewhere in its system.

CONSUMERS PETITION TO INTERVENE IN PENN CENTRAL-AMTRAK NEGOTIATIONS

The Federal court overseeing the Penn Central (PC) bankruptcy was asked on Nov. 20 to allow consumer representatives to participate in contract negotiations between Penn Central and Amtrak arising out of PC's demand for an additional \$32.5 million per year.

PC claims the additional money is needed for its operation of Amtrak intercity passenger trains.

Consumer advocates Reuben B. Robertson III, Jonathan A. Rowe, and Anthony Haswell, together with NARP and the RAIL Foundation, asserted in their petition filed before Philadelphia Federal Judge John P. Fullam that payment by Amtrak of the sum demanded by PC would impair Amtrak's ability to provide modern intercity rail passenger service.

The petitioners pointed out that their intervention "is critical to the public interest primarily as the result of the influence of the PC on the Board of Directors of Amtrak. In this context, it must be remembered that PC now owns 54% of the outstanding stock of Amtrak and that its president, W.H. Moore, is a member of the Amtrak Board of Directors."

Robertson is a staff attorney with Ralph Nader's Center for Responsive Law. Rowe is an associate of the Tax Reform Research Group, an affiliate of Public Citizen, Inc., organized by Nader in 1971.

The consumer advocates charge that PC is basing its demand for additional payments on the faulty "fully allocated" method of determining costs, which overstates the actual cost of operating passenger service.

NEW HAVEN BEING REBUILT

Old facilities on the New Haven line of the Penn Central, such as the station pictured to the left, are being torn down as part of a \$100-million modernization program financed by state and federal governments.



The money is going for the purchase of 144 new "Cosmopolitan" cars, rehabilitation of present equipment, installation of high-level platforms at existing stations, construction of eight entirely new stations, and improvements to the electrification system to meet the increased power requirements of the new high-performance cars.

Recently, an \$11-million grant from the Federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration was approved to help finance the laying of 173 miles of welded rail, modernization of electrical signaling systems and construction of new maintenance and service facilities.

The Federal funds are part of a matching grant available to the N.Y. Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Conn. Dept. of Transportation, both of which put up one-third of the capital funds for the program.

SOUTHERN TO STAY OUT OF AMTRAK

The President of the Southern Ry. says his railroad has decided to remain out of Amtrak for the foreseeable future and to continue operating its own passenger trains. W. Graham Claytor, Jr., Southern's president, said the company continues to lose between \$4 and \$4.5 million a year on its passenger service. Claytor said also that Southern has no plans to buy new passenger equipment, but that "Southern has an ongoing program to do more than merely 'refurbish' its passenger equipment." He pointed out that in the past year the railroad has given heavy general repairs and overhaul — plus new paint, upholstery and carpeting — to 45 passenger cars.

AUTO-TRAIN: THEY SAID IT COULDN'T BE DONE

"For over two years after we were incorporated in 1969," recalled Auto-Train President Eugene Kerik Garfield to the *Washington Post*, "railroad industry people and others kept telling me time and time again, 'You can't do it' or, 'It'll never be a success.'"

"And now, in the past year," Garfield said, "our one major problem has been a demand for space we can't meet."

Garfield's comments came as Auto-Train marked its first year of operations, the company has carried over 52,000 automobiles and 155,000 passengers.

The latest financial figures available indicate that Auto-Train earned a net profit of \$200,039 on gross revenues of \$1,201,125 for August, 1972.

"Through most of the year," Garfield said, "the capacity of our equipment has not been sufficient to meet the demand and our expansion program is moving forward. We plan to add two more trains on our current [Washington-Florida] route and are also examining other routes for possible implementation of Auto-Train service."

The corporation also opened its first city ticket office at 1801 K St., in the Northwest section of Washington, D.C.

IS THIS HOW RAILROADS 'COOPERATE'?

"Under the provisions of [the Amtrak Act], Amtrak has issued nationwide terms and conditions governing free and reduced-rate transportation privileges for railroad and terminal company employees, retirees and widows and for spouses and dependents of employees and retirees. It appears that the railroads are not cooperating in furnishing names of individuals who are entitled to these travel privileges. Consequently Amtrak has found it necessary to use other means of obtaining this information." — *Locomotive Engineer*

NARP FILES PROTEST AGAINST PC LINE ABANDONMENT

A petition has been filed before the Interstate Commerce Commission by NARP and the RAIL Foundation protesting Penn Central's effort to discontinue a freight line between Sunbury and Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

The organizations are concerned that PC would route additional freight traffic between Washington, D.C. and Jersey City which would cause interference with Amtrak passenger trains.

"The profitability of passenger train service in this corridor — a profitability which even now is only marginal — depends heavily upon speed and reliability. These characteristics will be directly impaired if substantial quantities of new freight traffic are diverted to that route," said the petition.

Support NARP — Bring In A New Member

Yes, I want to aid the cause of better rail passenger service. I understand I will receive a membership card and a monthly newsletter to keep me informed of developments.

Enclosed is my remittance for the category checked. I understand that \$3.00 of this amount is for a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

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EMERGENCY TRAIN EXITS NEEDED, SAFETY BOARD SAYS

The National Transportation Safety Board urged stricter procedures to ensure the safety of locomotives and better protection for railroad passengers in case of train wrecks. Reporting on a June 1971 derailment of Amtrak's *City of New Orleans* in which 11 persons were killed, the safety board said it was probably caused by displacement of a rail when a locked locomotive wheel dragged. The locomotive had been allowed to operate despite a breakdown in the wheel-defect warning system, the agency said. The board also reported that the car interiors had sharp edges, hard surfaces, inadequately secured seats and windows that broke or came loose too easily, and said Amtrak should correct these hazards when it rebuilds cars and see to it that new cars don't have them. Amtrak should also require practical emergency exits in new cars, the board said.

THE COST OF AUTO DRIVING: WHICH STUDY IS MORE RELEVANT?

The Federal Highway Administration recently issued a report which claims that "it will cost the owner of a standard size 1972 automobile \$13,552.95 to operate and maintain it over the 10 years of its anticipated life — or 13.55 cents per mile."

Someone else, however, has come up with a different estimate.

Dr. J. Herbert Holloman, former assistant secretary of commerce, says car-conscious urban Americans are paying dearly for their mobility — about a dollar for every mile they travel. He said researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology believe the \$1-per-mile figure is tied to the social costs of transportation by auto. These include the price of pollution and health, changes in property values, land use and traffic safety.

PENN CENTRAL LOSES COMMUTER CASE

A Penn Central commuter, arrested last summer when he refused to pay the \$1.65 fare on a hot, stuffy and overcrowded train, was acquitted by a jury at White Plains, NY. Milton Machlin, a South Seas explorer, described riding the PC as "more hazardous than exploring the territory of the New Guinea head hunters."

FRIENDS OF THE RAILROAD PASSENGER

Senator John V. Tunney

High-speed trains will be running between San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Sacramento if Senator John V. Tunney has his way.

The California Democrat is sponsoring the "California Corridor Feasibility Act" which calls for a study of the feasibility of developing a high-speed network in the west.

"The need for such a study is urgent," said Sen. Tunney. "The dramatic increase in population which is projected for that corridor, combined with the staggering projected increases in demand for transport and travel provides persuasive evidence of the desperate need for some new system linking the cities in that corridor."

The Senator does not specifically endorse any special train technology, such as the



British LRC or the highly-touted TACVs.

"It is uncertain what that system should be, but it is evident that some new system is imperative," he said. "It must be emphasized that all of the alternatives must be evaluated, so that the eventual decision is balanced and wise."

Senator Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Sen. Edward Kennedy are cosponsors of the legislation.

A SOBERING THOUGHT

"Last year more than 59,000 persons died in transportation-related accidents in the United States. The vast majority — 90 percent — over 55,000 — met death on our streets and highways. Preliminary figures for this year are not encouraging. We are in danger of setting a new record in highway mishaps and mayhem, despite a coalition of Federal, state and industry efforts to make our cars, our drivers, and our highways safer."

—Benjamin O. Davis, Jr. Assistant
Secretary of Transportation

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