

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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ECONOMIES OF SCALE!

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

NORTH STAR RISES! Amtrak's Minnesota-supported
Chicago-St. Paul "North Star" made its "last trip" as planned
on Labor Day, but it was back in service on Sep. 17 and is
planned to continue as a Friday-Saturday-Sunday opera-
tion into January, when the legislature reconvenes and
hopefully will consider additional funding.

The weekend "North Star" runs on the same schedule
and remains an all-reserved train. It uses Superliners which
also provide added Chicago-St. Paul coach capacity on
the "Empire Builder" runs (northbound Thursdays and
southbound Mondays).

Due to Pittsburgh's extensive light-rail rebuilding pro-
gram, the trolley tour itinerary suggested in the Fall 1982
GETTING THERE article, "Discovering Pittsburgh," is no
longer feasible. Car route 49 has been discontinued while
(continued on page 2)

Dr. Sheck Tells How to Get Them

Amtrak can be transformed into an efficient, profitable opera-
tion within eight years, according to Dr. Ronald C. Sheck, who
recently completed a three-year study of Amtrak. Sheck is Asso-
ciate Professor of Geography and Planning at New Mexico State
University in Las Cruces, and wrote the lead story in the Oct.-Nov.
'81 NARP News.

In Amtrak 90: Route to Success, Sheck argues that "the market
for rail passenger service in the United States has been grossly
underestimated and badly misinterpreted." He cites an unantic-
ipated ridership increase from 16 million in 1971 to a present 21
million "on a system that experienced scant change" in either
route miles or numbers of trains.

His study indicates a vast untapped rail passenger market if
services were expanded to meet convenience, comfort and eco-
(continued on page 4)

MORE JOBS/FEWER WORK RULES

"Greater flexibility in function is necessary for both on-
board-service personnel and station staff. . . . Labor produc-
tivity of train crews and on-board staff could be increased
by at least 20% by work rule adjustments achieved through
contract negotiations.

"Railroad labor in the U.S. has declined from more than 1
million in 1940 to less than 400,000 today. Implementation of
Amtrak 90 would provide for about 36,000 new jobs at
Amtrak by 1990. . . . Considerable employment growth
would also take place among car and locomotive builders,
subcontractors, suppliers, etc."

—Dr. Ronald C. Sheck

MORE RAIL CARS

"The addition of almost 3,000 new and rebuilt cars to the
system in a short eight-year period can be compared with
purchasing programs of European railroads. Since 1976,
French National Railways has taken delivery of more than
3,400 modern design, locomotive-hauled Corail passenger
cars built to some 17 different interior plans. The French
have also received about 40 of an 87-set order of articulated
trains for the new TGV line. . . . Italy has announced plans to
purchase 1,200 new intercity coaches over the next few
years. British Rail is now receiving an order of 210 sleeping
cars for overnight trains. East Germany, the leading nation
in production of passenger rolling stock, produces about
8,000 cars per year, mostly for railways in Soviet block
countries."

—Dr. Ronald C. Sheck

Amtrak to Bring Back Dome Cars

The Pittsburgh-to-Washington run over the Allegheny
River is one of Amtrak's most scenic rides, especially during
the fall. It may be even more exciting next spring when dome
cars are expected to return to both the Washington-Chicago
route and the Chicago-New Orleans "City of New

Orleans" operation on these routes was a feature of pri-
or Amtrak operation until about the last year before Amtrak's
formation. Since Superliners ousted domes on Amtrak's
eastern routes, NARP has urged Amtrak to put domes on eastern
routes. Nothing happened until the arrival of Mr. Claytor, with
whom NARP also raised the issue. (See, for example Oct.-Nov. '81
NARP News, p. 3: "[Marketing VP] Norman feels priority in con-
verting old cars [to electric] must remain with revenue cars

Amtrak's new chairman and president explained to his
staff on Sep. 15, the seven dome cars he is converting to head-
end cars each have 46 revenue seats downstairs (two more than
standard coaches already converted!) in addition to 24
seats offering 360° vision (your opportunity to be a "back-
seat" passenger!) plus roof windows.

Mr. Claytor indicated that seven ex-Northern Pacific dome coaches
(built 1954 and later) will be enough to cover the "Capitol" and
"Empire Builder" routes. He said Amtrak may look at other options for deploying
dome cars before they go into service.

"I think this [the dome project] is clearly cost effective"
Mr. Claytor said. "It's a sheer unadulterated guesswork" to project a
revenue increase attributable to the domes. The work,
which is expected to cost about \$450,000/car, will be performed at Beech

What YOU Can Do

NARP members frequently ask what they can do to "further the cause" in addition to corresponding with members of Congress and newspaper editors. Here are some suggestions.

Station Signs. Request your city government to erect directional signs indicating the location of your Amtrak station. Signs are inexpensive and serve to improve access to the station and to increase Amtrak's visibility in the community. Make your request to the mayor, city manager, or public works director.

Station Improvements. Volunteer to improve your station. Various stations have been cleaned, repainted, weatherized, landscaped, or otherwise improved by volunteers. Discuss improvement ideas with the local station agent. Permission must be received either from Amtrak or a contracting railroad, depending upon station ownership.

WANT TO BE ON THE NARP BOARD?

Any NARP member who wishes to be listed in NARP News as a candidate for election to the 1983-84 NARP Board of Directors should notify our office by Nov. 1. Directors will be elected at meetings held in each of our 12 regions. Most meetings will be in February or March, and all will be listed here in advance.

Station Displays. Seek permission from the local station agent to post NARP and train-related literature in the station waiting room. NARP bulletin boards and display cases are up in some depots.

State Maps. If your state publishes a highway-only map, request the state to "broaden" it to include intercity rail and bus routes and stations. Several states now print "transportation maps" which even list names and phone numbers of common carriers. Make your request to the governor and the state transportation department.

Speed Ordinances. Urge your city to relax or eliminate municipal train speed restrictions where safety permits, in order to allow faster train speeds. If the city is reluctant about faster freights, then urge faster speeds for passenger trains only. Lifting of local speed ordinances allows Amtrak to tighten schedules, improve equipment and crew utilization, improve fuel efficiency (acceleration/deceleration wastes fuel), and raise average speed. Make your request to the mayor, city manager, and city council. Remind them that a more efficient Amtrak is in everyone's best interest—especially taxpayers. The involved railroad may be willing to assist you, particularly if prospects are good for winning faster freight speeds. If the governor or state transportation department regulates local speeds, deal directly with them.

Grade Crossings. Urge your city to close (eliminate) unneeded grade crossings. Such crossings pose a hazard to road and rail users alike, and they frequently restrict train speeds. Closure of unneeded crossings enhances public safety and permits faster Amtrak schedules. Make your request to the mayor, manager, and city council.

Multimodal Stations. Where practical, encourage the development of train stations into multimodal stations, serving intercity trains and buses, local transit, and taxis. To be considered for such development, train stations must possess good street access and ample space. Work with city officials, the chamber of commerce, Amtrak, intercity bus companies, the local transit authority, state legislators, and the state transportation department.

Trolleys. In urban areas, where appropriate, promote the conversion of abandoned or little-used rail branchlines into trolley transit (light rail) lines. Work with the mayor, manager, city council, city planners, transit authority, state legislators, and perhaps the U.S. representative.

State Legislators. Get to know your state senator and representative/delegate. Make them aware of the value of rail passenger service (e.g. safety, land-use, downtown revitalization, energy, etc.) Their support could help considerably in efforts to gain 403(b) train service, a multimodal station, or a relaxation of local speed restrictions.

Community Meetings. Speak to local community groups, and

introduce them to NARP's cause. Whether you realize it or not, you, as a member of NARP, probably know a great deal about transportation in general than do most Americans. Don't be shy—spread the word about the value of trains. Contact groups as the local chamber of commerce, service organizations (Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary), environmental groups and recreation clubs, the PTA, League of Women Voters, etc. Many such groups are in search of meeting speakers, and would even provide you with a free meal!

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

Track and streets are renewed (some observers fear the route won't return). Also, to facilitate rail construction, service has been discontinued south of Castle Shannon Loop and is expected to resume in the fall of 1983. The downtown street loop has been altered and trolleys no longer pass the Wm. Penn Hotel. The weekend transit pass will increase Oct. 3 to \$3.50, the regular base fare to \$1. The Monongahela Incline has been dismantled for rebuilding which will include restoration of many original design features; it's expected to reopen next May.

NEW METROLINER ROUTE: On Oct. 31, Express Metroliner service will commence on the 232-mile Boston-New York City segment of the Northeast Corridor. Two frequencies, offering a morning and afternoon departure from each endpoint, will make the trip in 3:55—the fastest rail schedule on this route since the turbotrain was slowed in 1975. Three stops, including New Haven and Providence.

Also on Oct. 31: NY-Florida schedules will be tightened to 54 minutes, Washington-Pittsburgh 10 minutes, and NY-Albany 7 to 16 minutes; and a through Seattle-Ogden-Chicago Superliner sleeper will be added to the "Pioneer" and "San Francisco Zephyr."

After an absence of several decades, street cars have returned to Seattle along a 1.6-mile segment of historic downtown waterfront. The southern terminus of the car line (designated Metro Route 99) is at S. Main & Alaskan Way, 4 blocks from the Amtrak station. Fare 60¢; service operates weekdays 7 AM-11 PM, Saturdays 9 AM-11 PM, Sundays/Holidays 10-11 AM.

Among the many Oct. 31 schedule improvements reported here in the last three newsletters, two won't occur. The westbound "Builder" will continue to depart Chicago at 2:30 P.M., though times will change at intermediate stops west of St. Paul. The "Sunset Ltd." will not switch from Pomona to Ontario Airport. Amtrak is taking Southern Pacific to arbitration over cost responsibilities relating to this move, and hopes the relatively minor question will be resolved in months rather than years.

VISIT THE STATION IN OCT.! Orlando equipment display, 9th; Family Days: Albany (a change) 9-10th, Boston 16-17th.

Beech Grove To Assemble Transit Cars

Breda Costruzioni Ferroviarie, an Italian manufacturing firm, recently awarded Amtrak a \$9 million contract to assemble the 250 rail transit cars it is manufacturing for the Washington (DC) Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

The contract, which represents Amtrak's first venture into transit-car assembly, is an important step in the carrier's revenue diversification plan aimed at reducing dependency on federal subsidies. Said Amtrak President Graham Clayton, "The idea is that we can do the work and make a good profit. We're not looking down on money we have to ask Congress for."

Car shells are being built in Italy and shipped to Amtrak's Beech Grove, IN, plant by boat and rail. Breda is subcontracting almost 60% of the car component parts to U.S. firms, who will send them to Beech Grove where final assembly will take place. Applicable federal regulations require that the cars be assembled in the United States.

WMATA expects to take delivery of the first completed car next spring.

Good News from Amtrak's New President

Clayton Claytor, Jr., had some nice things to report at the Amtrak board meeting:

"Amtrak will definitely make a little bit better than" the 50% revenue-to-cost ratio in FY '82, an achievement for which I take no personal credit: "Most of this was set before I came here." August revenues were 18% above last year's, while operating costs were under budget by \$19 million or 14.7%.

The 1982 supplemental appropriations bill which Congress passed over the President's veto permanently exempts Amtrak from state and local taxes. This exemption probably would have been included in the substitute bill if Congress had sustained the

bill. Stainless steel silverware will be returning to the dining cars. The broken glass will not return because washing it and replacing broken glass is too costly.

Micro-wave cooking of sandwiches will be eliminated systematically. "When you heat the water molecules in bread" by microwaves, bread turns into something which tastes like "wet paper." In trying to make [food service] cheap, we made it inedible.... We'll get toaster ovens so you can do it more decent."

UPDATE ON LEGISLATION

Several passenger provisions were included in the Rail Safety and Improvement Act which passed the House Aug. 12. The Administration had wanted to cut \$310 million from the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project authorization of \$1.2 billion, partly to make sure that electrification would not be dropped to Boston. Since so many other NECIP improvements were dropped from the project, Rep. James J. Florio (D-NJ) has a detailed list of \$310 million of those dropped improvements which were included in the present bill.

In addition, \$80 million is authorized for upgrading Philadelphia-City tracks, linking Amtrak's Albany-Buffalo service to the Northeast Corridor at New York's Penn Station via a line on Manhattan's west side which joins the Empire corridor at Spuyten Kill and improving the Amtrak station at Syracuse. To unlock the money, the states of New Jersey and New York must notify Amtrak by June 1 that they have approved plans for the projects. Amtrak says the bill doesn't contain enough money to make all suggested NECIP improvements and do the extra New York and New Jersey work. In a separate action, the Amtrak Board has approved \$575,000 for a consulting analysis of the Penn State connection.

The bill establishes a Northeast Corridor Coordination Board, made up of two Amtrak members and one each from Conrail and various NEC commuter authorities. It designates \$100 million of suspended Conrail funds for commuter rail service—\$25 million for Chicago's RTA and \$75 million more for implementing the transfer of NEC commuter rail services from Conrail to various commuter authorities.

The Secretary of Transportation is directed to issue "regulations and standards as may be necessary to insure that the construction, maintenance, and operation of railroad passenger equipment maximize safety to rail passengers" and such "as may be necessary to require initial and periodic subsequent training of railroad operating and service personnel in evacuation procedures and the use of emergency equipment."

The bill orders that the Alaska Railroad be sold to the state by October 75% of the railroad's net liquidation value, either in cash

PUEBLO TEST TRACK SAVED

The Association of American Railroads will acquire the Transportation Test Center in Pueblo, CO, from the Federal Railroad Administration. AAR is assured a certain amount of government contract work to be performed at the Center.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation has reported a rail safety bill which is silent on NECIP provisions, and a separate administration-supported bill providing

for the free transfer of the Alaska Railroad to the state.

For Amtrak's FY '83 funding, the House Appropriations Committee on Aug. 19 voted \$788 million (the full authorized amount, but with \$25 million earmarked for upgrading Indianapolis-Shelbyville-Cincinnati track), and the Senate Appropriations Committee on Sep. 16 approved \$735 million, a continuation of the '82 level adequate for all operations but for less capital than Amtrak requested. The report accompanying the Senate bill directed Amtrak not to discontinue service to Clearwater and St. Petersburg without the approval of "this committee and the appropriate authorizing committees." The famous FY '82 supplemental directs Amtrak and FRA to report by Oct. 15 on feasibility of extending "Hoosier State" to Cincinnati.

INDIANA GROUP FORMED

Hoosiers now have a state rail passenger group, the new Indiana Association of Railroad Passengers, whose president is Charles E. Short. Membership is \$10/year to Indiana, P.O. Box 744, Lafayette, IN 47902.

Adam Benjamin Jr.

Congress lost one of its most dedicated and respected members over the Labor Day weekend, with the death of Indiana Democratic Rep. Adam Benjamin Jr., 47. We who seek a balanced transportation system for the United States lost a valued friend.

Rep. Benjamin was a hard-working, conscientious, and personable man who spent many evenings and weekends working in his congressional office. Those who phoned his office after 6 or 7 PM were often startled to find the congressman himself at the other end of the line. Said Republican Indiana Lt. Gov. John Mutz, "No one worked as many hours for his constituents." Such praise from the GOP side comes as no surprise, for his devotion to his work won him respect from all quarters. Upon learning of Benjamin's death, Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN) said, "Adam Benjamin was a distinguished Hoosier legislator whose mastery of detail and faithfulness to duty produced solid achievement. . . I will miss him deeply as a strong legislative ally and as a gracious friend."

Benjamin had a genuine interest in seeing Amtrak and mass transit succeed. As a member, and later as chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, he provided invaluable help to public transportation.

Primarily because of Adam Benjamin, Amtrak stations exist today in Hammond and Michigan City; major capital improvements have been completed for Amtrak's Chicago-Valparaiso commuter service (which is attracting ever-increasing passenger loads); and America's last interurban rail transit line, the 88-mile Chicago, South Shore & South Bend, is now receiving desperately needed new equipment. A founder of the U.S.-Japan Rail Congress, Benjamin was a strong proponent of Amtrak's Emerging Corridors, and his particular interest in the Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati corridor may yet rescue Conrail's Shelbyville line for future passenger service. Benjamin shared NARP's belief in the "Cardinal," and played an important role in the train's restoration. The congressman elevated the importance of Amtrak's recent labor agreements by personally attending, along with Rep. Norman Lent (R-NY), the signing of the new contracts. Benjamin worked for rail improvements not only in Indiana, but across the land, and largely because of his work earlier this year, Amtrak is off to a good start in the FY '83 appropriations process.

Congressman Benjamin suffered from high blood pressure and apparently died of heart failure. Many who knew him well concur with East Chicago, IN, Mayor Robert Pas-trick (D), who lamented that Benjamin "worked himself to death."

Like his constituents and congressional colleagues, we feel a tremendous loss and sadness.



AMFLEET II UPDATE: As of Sep. 10, Amtrak had received 83 Amfleet II cars from the Budd factory: 71 (of 125) coaches and 12 (of 25) cafe-lounges. Once the order is completed, the new cars should be running on the "Broadway," "Capitol," "Lakeshore," "Silver Star," "Silver Meteor," and the Miami-Tampa "Silver Palm." Look for Heritage cars to remain on the "Crescent" and "Cardinal" and to replace Amfleet I equipment on the "Palmetto," "City of New Orleans," "Night Owl," and "Montrealer."

Economies of Scale *(continued from page 1)*

economic requirements. A three-step strategy is proposed: increase capacity of existing trains by adding cars; place additional trains in service on the present network; and expand the network by linking existing terminals not now connected.

Thus, not only does he support NARP's claim that Amtrak's major problem is its need to realize economies of scale (see Aug. '82 NARP News), he provides a detailed blueprint on how Amtrak might expand to achieve such economies.

Sheck described the Amtrak 90 plan as "designed to meet two major goals": to show that Amtrak can become economically profitable and that it can become "national in deed as well as in name." He contends implementation of the plan would eliminate government funding by 1990.

To place a nationwide intercity rail passenger network in profitable operation, Sheck sees the need for an eight-year capital investment total of \$4.7 billion. He says this is "on a par with investment levels planned by British Rail." It's only slightly more than twice what American High Speed Rail Corporation proposes to spend for a 160-mph train on a single route, LA-San Diego.

Sheck's multi-phase plan includes acquisition of substantial numbers of passenger service cars (new and refurbished), additional locomotives of several types (including new designs which don't need to be turned around because they have cabs at both ends), and additional fixed base facilities throughout the U.S. Rolling-stock accounts for 73% of Amtrak 90 capital dollars; stations/yards/shops and related track/signal work 14%; and intercity track and signal upgrading and improvement (primarily Joliet-Omaha; Indianapolis-Dayton; Waco-Bremond, TX) 10.6%.

By 1990, Amtrak's present 24,000 route miles would be expanded to nearly 39,000 serving 47 of the lower 48 states. Locations served could be increased from 525 to nearly 800 and an additional 35 million Americans would have the option of rail travel.

Defenders of Amtrak's present fledgling network will be pleased to know that all existing routes are included in Sheck's plan; only between five city-pairs (counting Texas triangle as one) does he recommend alternate rights-of-way. For example, he would increase intermediate populations served by shifting Chicago-Milwaukee and -Omaha services to the Chicago and North Western and ex-Rock Island, respectively. He suggests that Iowa and Illinois acquire the Joliet-Omaha RI line and assist Amtrak in rehabilitation funding; he proposes that Amtrak contribute \$120 million to the effort. The line would be leased to Amtrak, who would subcontract local freight operations to private carriers.

Sheck notes approvingly "a breakthrough in new [labor]

agreements. . . . For example, road crews can now handle switching of the New York and Washington sections of the 'Broadway' at Pittsburgh, eliminating the need to bring in a third man switching crew for the job." If road crews could also subtract cars at more intermediate stations, the public would get better service (more through cars between trains), and Amtrak more mail and express revenue and better passenger fleet utilization (no longer would it be "cheaper to haul empty cars to the end of the route").

We hope Amtrak's Marketing Department will look seriously at the discount passes Sheck proposes "to attract repeat riders." Sheck suggests "route-specific monthly, quarterly, and annual passes . . . to encourage travelers making frequent trips on the same route; regional passes good for unlimited travel within a particular area of the country for 15-day, 21-day, 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day duration; and a national pass good for unlimited travel systemwide on a 15-day, 21-day, [etc. as above] basis."

Except for the USARail Pass, available only to those who don't reside in North America, Amtrak steadfastly avoids the "pass approach even as it has grown rapidly on European railways, such as VIA Rail Canada has maintained its nationwide and four regional "CANRAILPASSES" (Edmonton/Calgary-West; Winni-

MORE STATIONS

"The [14 major new stations: St. Louis/Syracuse/Columbus/Memphis/Richmond/Des Moines/Mobile/Oakland/Atlanta/Chattanooga/Louisville/Jacksonville/Tulsa/Houston] are expected to be constructed as joint development projects with Amtrak, local metropolitan governments, and private funds. Where possible, they would be intermodal transportation centers and closely tied into local transit systems. Hotels, shops, offices, and multifamily residences would be constructed in association with station facilities. Amtrak funding would not exceed 50% of total costs. . . .

"Transfer of existing stations throughout the U.S. to Amtrak ownership could be facilitated by new laws suggested in Amtrak 90 that would allow railroads to donate such facilities to cities, counties, transit authorities, or state agencies and to receive a tax credit for doing so. These government agencies could then lease such facilities to Amtrak and/or other intercity and local transportation operators, but Amtrak would have guaranteed access. Provision could be provided for direct donation to Amtrak with the same tax credit benefits."

—Dr. Ronald C. Sheck

peg-West; Winnipeg-East; Quebec-Montreal-Sarnia/Windsor Corridor).

Similarly, Sheck recommends group fares for groups of 15 or more. The Amtrak minimum is 15, while VIA's is three!

Noting that "Cadillacs and Volkswagens illustrate the automotive industries' response to . . . different tastes and incomes," Sheck sees a two-class service on all corridor trains, and maintenance of the coach/economy sleeper/deluxe sleeper approach on long-distance trains.

Amtrak may not get the prescribed \$4.7 billion within eight years to give the Sheck profitability thesis a fair test. But the report contains a wealth of ideas that can improve Amtrak's revenue-cost ratio, some—like fares policies—requiring no capital investment. And, if the report helps Amtrak get more capital than it might otherwise have gotten, or helps cut down the amount of effort Amtrak managers must devote to defending continuation of the existing services, then it will have served a valuable purpose.

As we noted last month, even U.S. DOT is on record in support of the fact that subsidy-per-passenger-mile is inversely proportional to system size!

A limited number of copies of the 75-page "Executive Summary" of Amtrak 90: A Route to Success are available. Send a 9"x12" self-addressed envelope with \$1.05 postage to Dr. Ronald C. Sheck, Dept. of Earth Sciences, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM 88003. (Plans are underway for publication of a 300-page final report.)

NEWS

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