

the 6:53

Ohio Rail Passenger News

August 1994

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Issue #112

"It is the intent of the General Assembly to pledge a continuous source of funds each year to.....demonstrate its commitment to the development of rail transportation." With these words the legislature passed two landmark bills, which will change the face of Ohio's transportation system by implementing new rail services. With the creation of the Ohio Rail Development Commission in Substitute House Bill 250 and a dedicated source of funding through Substitute House Bill 790, a long standing goal of OARP has been achieved.

The first bill, Sub. HB 250, was an outgrowth of a high speed rail franchise bill passed last year by the House but which was still to be acted upon by the Senate. This bill was modified to create the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) after negotiations between the Voinovich Administration, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Ohio High Speed Rail Authority (OHSRA). The goal is to streamline state agencies in order to maximize the ability of the state to improve rail service by merging the duties of ODOT's Rail Division with OHSRA.

This legislation was supported by the freight railroads, rail labor and OARP. The bill passed the legislature by a two to one margin and was sent to the Governor, who signed it into law on July 21st, 1994. The law goes into effect 90 days from that date.

In the days just before the final vote, OARP was busy faxing alerts to other groups and making calls to our own members, urging them to call their legislators. Despite short notice, OARP was able to do much to help assure passage of the bill, adding our voice to those already raised in support of Sub. HB 250.

While the bill establishing the Ohio Rail Development Commission was drawing most of the attention, a key provision was tucked into Sub. HB 790, the state capital spending bill. Language in this bill established the dedicated revenue stream for improved rail passenger and freight services we have long advocated, through use of the corporate franchise tax on railroads.

This revenue will likely amount to about \$6 million annually to be used for both freight and passenger projects and comes in addition to the \$12 million already in the rail development fund. While the level of funding is modest, it permits the state to move forward with projects very rapidly by leveraging matching federal funding through ISTEA and other sources.

Is OARP done, since the bills passed? Hardly. In fact, our work is just beginning, since we will be intimately involved with the whole process of implementing rail service. OARP has been named as a key player in the Access Ohio planning process and has been providing input to ODOT over the past several years. That involvement will likely deepen with time.

OARP would like to thank Governor Voinovich and his staff; John Platt, Assistant Director for Modes at ODOT; Jim Betts, Chairman of OHSRA; Cheryl Worley of ODOT; Bill O'Brien of Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; and Art Arnold of the Ohio Railway Association. Without the dedication, expertise, and energy of these persons we would not have an Ohio Rail Development Commission or the funding to go with it. Sincere thanks to all!

AT LAST - A PROGRAM IN PLACE TO GET THE RAIL SERVICES OHIO SO BADLY NEEDS!

**The
Revolution
Has Come
Legislature
Votes Pro-Rail**

**On The
Rails...**
with
Ken Wilt



Aboard
the
Talgo
tilt-train
in
Washington
State.

First of all, I'd like to apologize for the delay in getting out this issue of **the 6:53**. Most of the delay was caused by a hard drive crash on my *new* computer, which ended up taking much longer to correct than it should have, because I didn't have a backup of my hard drive. It was a hard way to learn a lesson - a month's worth of work was gone just like that. Now things are working again, and I'm keeping a backup of my hard drive on diskettes.

I was one who thought that something like that could never happen to me, but I now realize that even with a fancy new computer things can go wrong, and you need to be prepared. I hope that those reading this will learn from my experience, and save themselves a lot of grief.

I had originally planned to include in this issue a detailed report about my nationwide & month long Amtrak adventure, which took place in May. However, because of the delay and the time and space crunch it has caused with this issue, I decided to give other folks' contributions priority. Articles about my trip will appear in the next issue.

Speaking of upcoming issues, you will notice some changes, beginning with this issue. The name of the newsletter will gradually be changed from **the 6:53** to **Ohio Rail Passenger News**. This will make it easier for those who are unfamiliar with our group to understand what the newsletter is about at a glance.

Also, beginning next month there will be a second newsletter, which will be exclusively for OARP members. The new bi-monthly newsletter will be called **The OARP Member's Journal** and will be sent to OARP members in addition to **the 6:53/Ohio Rail Passenger News**. The newsletters will be published on alternate months to facilitate more regular contact with the membership and better publicize meetings and events.

Finally, there are two new features making their debut in this issue of **the 6:53/Ohio Rail Passenger News**. The first is *Letters We've Seen* - short summaries of OARP members' letters to officials and news publications. The second feature is this column, where I'll be putting in my two-cents-worth in the months ahead.

We hope that both you and the entire group will benefit from the improvements that we're trying to make, and that you will continue to support OARP in our effort to promote and improve rail passenger service throughout Ohio.

Letters We've Seen... compiled by Ken Wilt

Tom Allen (Delaware) wrote a letter to the editor of the *Columbus Dispatch* criticizing the paper's May 14th editorial in support of a new Interstate (I-73/74) proposed to run between Toledo, Columbus and Cincinnati & Portsmouth. The letter was run in early June. (Bob Boyce)

Karl Gelfer (Columbus) wrote a letter to the editor of the *Columbus Dispatch* praising the papers' editorial supporting the creation of the Ohio Rail Development Commission. Karl's letter ran on June 10th. (Dave Lebold)

Mike Weber (Cincinnati) wrote a letter to John Glenn earlier this year regarding federal funding for Amtrak. Senator Glenn sent him the same form letter many of us received, but Mike was unimpressed. In fact, Mike dubbed it "another poorly crafted oxymoron John Glenn letter". (Mike Weber)

Al Wolf (Dayton) wrote letters to US Senator John Glenn and US Representative Tony Hall, expressing support for the High Speed Ground Transportation Act. Both legislators responded and pledged their support for passenger rail transportation. (Al Wolf)

Bob Young (Worthington) is apparently not yet an OARP member, but you'd never know it after reading his recent letter to the editor of the *Columbus Dispatch*. Mr. Young correctly states that it is a disgrace that Columbus remains the only major city in the United States without passenger rail service, and that despite all the hype about how great Columbus supposedly is, we are far behind in the area of transportation amenities. He points out that the closest rail service available to Columbus area residents is in Fostoria or Cincinnati - 87 miles and 100 miles away respectively. (Mike Melfi)

Light Rail Line Could Both Serve and Snag Cleveland Amtrak Services

By Kenneth Prendergast, *Director, Special Projects*

Much of the \$47.5 million has been secured and most of the survey work has been done for a new light rail rapid transit line along two thriving Cleveland waterfronts. A 1.5-mile extension of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority's (GCRTA) Blue and Green light rail lines will run north from Tower City Center along the Cuyahoga River's east bank before turning east at the lakefront to North Coast Harbor.

The extension is aptly dubbed the Waterfront Line, and construction should begin later this year, with service beginning mid-1996. The line will be double-tracked throughout. Rapid transit trains from Shaker Heights will serve five new stations in the midst of busy activity centers: the Flats entertainment area, the gentrified Warehouse District, Cleveland Stadium, North Coast Harbor, and the north end of the Financial District.

Depending on determinations made during the design phase, which is now underway, the Waterfront Line will, at the very least, have station platforms within a short walk of Amtrak's Cleveland station. It is also quite possible that the new transit line would share a station facility with Amtrak.

That's the good news. The timing for the Waterfront Line couldn't be better as more passenger trains are surely due from the state's recent approval of a permanent funding source (see "The Revolution Has Come" on the front page this issue). The prospects for intermodal transfers are tremendous.

The potential bad news is that space for an Amtrak expansion at the lakefront will now be at a premium. The Waterfront Line will pass between the Amtrak station building/parking lot and the Conrail mainline which Amtrak's trains use. This grassy strip of land has been

proposed for use as additional Amtrak station capacity. There is enough room for a second platform and station track, or the Waterfront Line, but not both.

Conrail freight activity here is heavy - about 80 trains daily. Track 44, the track north of the existing Amtrak platform, is off-limits for regular Amtrak service, Conrail officials have stated. Widening the existing platform to service passenger trains from this track should not be considered an immediate option. Building a new platform and a passenger siding between Conrail's Chicago and Cleveland Lines would require a new or modified pedestrian bridge, with a elevator and stairwell to the platform. This would be very expensive. Another option is to service and store terminating passenger trains at a location away from the Amtrak station.

A third design option is to remove the southern one-third of the Amtrak station's parking lot and route the Waterfront Line in its place. The parking lot is oversized for the number of cars which park there. With the Waterfront Line, there is greater reason for people to take transit to the train, and vis-a-versa. Rerouting the Waterfront Line only 25 feet to the north would give Amtrak enough room to add a second track and platform for new trains and still be able stay out of Conrail's way.

OARP officials have initiated preliminary discussions with the GCRTA regarding the third design option. Regardless of this option's acceptance, OARP welcomes this excellent opportunity to gain direct intermodal connections to GCRTA's transit system. Cleveland will become a transfer point unique among Ohio's Amtrak stations, and one that should serve to enhance ridership for both transportation modes.

Ohio Festival of Stations To Be Held This Fall in Columbus

Planning for the Ohio Festival of Stations has moved into high speed now that the Ohio Department of Transportation is aboard. The Festival Steering Committee met June 7th with John Platt, Assistant Director of Transportation Modes at ODOT, and set the dates and site for the event. Two sessions will be held at the historic Toledo & Ohio Central passenger station, located at 379 West Broad Street in Columbus. The workshop for mayors will be held on Thursday, September 29th, and the public session of talks and displays will be held on Sunday, October 2nd. Lunch before the mayors' workshop will be at the Spaghetti Warehouse next door to the station. An ODOT official will address the mayors' workshop about procedures for obtaining federal funding to renovate old railroad stations. Attending will be mayors from Ohio communities with stations having potential for enhancement grants.

The public session will feature displays of Ohio stations in the T&OC grand lobby, a series of historical talks about Ohio stations, continuous showings of selected passenger rail videos, and tours of the station. Admission to the event, which will run from 10am to 5pm on Sunday, October 2nd, is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children under 12.

Built in 1895, the T&OC building was an active passenger station until the late 1920's, when the railroad became part of the New York Central System and passenger operations were moved to Columbus Union Station. The Volunteers of America moved into the former T&OC station, purchased the building in 1930, and still occupy it today. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Festival planning areas and committee members heading them are: coordination with state officials, Bill Hutchison; historical lecture program, Jeff Darbee; station research, Alex Heingartner; marketing, Harold Zweifel; publications, Ken Wilt; and photography and displays, David Petry.

The Steering Committee of the Ohio Festival of Stations expresses its sincere thanks to the Volunteers of America and Executive Director Graham LeSturgeon for offering space in the Volunteers' Headquarters building to hold the events on September 29th and October 2nd.

Council of Citizens Urges Light Rail for Dayton

by Linda Leas, Marian Simmons, and Al Wolf

The Council of Citizens of the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission met in Dayton on April 20th, 1994. The purpose of the meeting was to accept the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 1995-98. The plan consists of projects currently in the process of being moved forward to construction. This TIP is short range, and comments of the COC members and the general public relevant to this plan were in order.

Marian Simmons, President of Aviation Trail, spoke about that groups' interest in light rail to recreate the line that formerly ran down Third Street to Huffman Prairie. Aviation Trail restored the Wright Brothers' last remaining bicycle shop, which is now a part of the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park. Huffman Prairie is where the Wrights learned to fly, and they traveled there via the interurban line then in existence.

Jerry Sharkey, Secretary of the 2003 Committee and Chair of its National Park Committee, also endorsed the rail corridor. The system would serve three main sights in the National Park, and would provide a valuable transit link between Trotwood, Dayton, and Wright-Patterson AFB. Sharkey said the line would cover 12 miles - the same distance as the first light rail line proposed for Columbus.

Presently, light rail is only in the MVRPC's Vision Statement. A project has to be on the Vision in order to make the Long Range Plan, and until it is on a TIP, there will be no funding. Simmons and Sharkey presented their comments because the Ohio Department of Transportation is making bridge repairs and expressed a desire to know if any groups were interested in light rail. If light rail were to operate on some of the bridges, they would have to be strengthened.

Editor's Note: In early May the MVRPC passed a 20 year plan which envisions \$2.6 Billion worth of funding for transportation facilities in the Dayton region (Montgomery, Greene and Miami counties). The plan foresees about half the money being spent on roads and half going to the Miami Valley Regional Transit Authority. Plans include updating electric trolley bus service, extending some trolley routes, and pursuing passenger rail service linking Dayton with other major Ohio cities. The plan remains a living document, and public input may have significant impact. The MVRPC held a series of public hearings on the plan in mid-May. OARP Board Member Al Wolf testified at the May 18th hearing, and excerpts from his testimony appear below. Also, OARP's Vice-President George Bayless has served on the board of the Miami Valley Regional Transit Authority since January. He has a 3 year term representing Kettering, a suburb of Dayton.

Excerpts from

Al Wolf's Testimony before the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission May 18th, 1994

"Encourage development of regional light rail system as proposed in the late 1970's... The plan developed through citizen input in 1975-76 proposed as many as seven light rail lines. The three main corridors were Dayton-Centerville-Spring Valley, Dayton-Trotwood, and Dayton-Fairborn (serving Wright-Patterson AFB). Right-of-Way for the Centerville/Spring Valley line is no longer available, but the other two are still feasible. The proposed Aviation Trail line from Trotwood through Dayton to Wright-Patterson AFB would fulfill one portion of the earlier plan."

"Continue to support 3-C&D Conventional Amtrak Service... The state constitution should be changed to permit the use of state gasoline tax monies for rail passenger service as is done in numerous other states."

"Continue to support "high-speed" rail passenger service... High-Speed rail is an outgrowth of good conventional rail service and other states such as New York, Michigan and California are aggressively proceeding in this direction."

"Support restoration of the Dayton-Indianapolis rail line... This line (part of the former Pennsylvania Railroad's Pittsburgh-St. Louis main line) was the only direct rail link between Dayton and Indianapolis, and was the route of the NATIONAL LIMITED, which served Dayton until late 1979. The corridor appears to be largely intact, although tracks were removed in the early 1980's."

"Expand the RTA Trolley Bus Network... Trolley bus service should be extended to the Salem Mall, Wright State University, the Dayton Mall, and other heavy-use lines."

Ohio Amtrak Facts

RIDERSHIP: FY-93

CITY	RIDERSHIP
Akron	9,083
Alliance	2,904
Bryan	5,632
Cincinnati	19,030
Cleveland	45,829
Elyria	6,381
Fostoria	5,881
Hamilton	2,299
Sandusky	2,836
Toledo	101,622
Youngstown	5,790
TOTAL OHIO	207,287

PROCUREMENT/CONTRACTS: FY-93 AMTRAK

CITY	EXPENDITURES
Cleveland	\$560,268
Columbus	5,468,207
Dayton	475,138
Elyria	681,705
North Lima	269,296
Sharon Center	744,400
Sub-Total	8,199,014
Other approx	300,000
TOTAL @	\$ 8,500,000

EMPLOYMENT: Amtrak employs 24 Ohio residents whose annualized earnings total about \$771,000 (avg @ \$32,125).

Source: Amtrak Government Affairs

OARP Election Results

President.....Mark Carlson
Past-President.....J.Howard Harding
Vice-President.....George Bayless
Secretary.....Ken Wilt
Treasurer.....Stephen Klipfel
At-Large Director.....Ron Bergen
Area 216 Director.....James Dingus
State Govt. Liason....Bill Hutchison

Congratulations to those who were elected and many thanks to those who served before them!

"Help Wanted"

If you have training or experience in graphic arts, your help is needed in designing informative pamphlets promoting the cause of rail passenger service in Ohio, for distribution to the general public. Contact board member Ronald Bergen, 120 Luther Avenue, Kent, Ohio 44240. 216/673-9263

Columbus Area Update

by Robert Boyce,
Columbus Area Coordinator

Passage of Substitute House Bill 250, which creates the Ohio Rail Development Commission, may be the biggest news for Ohio passenger advocates since the creation of Amtrak! Our Columbus area activists are to be commended for playing a large part in creating the political climate which lead to the bill's passage. Notable was the final petitioning effort which was reported to key legislators and state officials just before the Senate vote. Larry and Meg Gray collected 760 signatures at two sites in April -- at Springfield and at Brice Mall in Columbus -- and Pat Patterson filled several signature sheets at the Delaware County Fairgrounds. Thanks go also to all members who called their state senators just before the vote!

The April 9th Red Door meeting featured a talk on Columbus' plans for bikeways by the city's new Bicycle Coordinator, Dale Hooper, and a talk by at that time OARP President, Howard Harding. Howard traced OARP's activities over the past several years and discussed the potential for Ohio passenger service resulting from the General Assembly's passage of the Rail Development Fund.

At the Red Door Meeting of May 14th local members voted to join the Capital City Transit Coalition. The featured speaker was Roger Sanzo, a product engineer at the Buckeye Steel Castings Company. Roger explained the manufacturing process of railroad trucks at the Columbus firm.

The July 9th Red Door meeting had no scheduled speaker, but was visited by Cynthia Ruccia, a democrat running for the US Congress in Ohio's 12th district. Ms. Ruccia admits that she still has much to learn about the passenger rail situation in Ohio, but she seems eager to learn and asked some excellent questions.

Columbus Area Local OARP Meetings are held on the SECOND Saturday of every month, 10am - noon, at the Red Door Tavern, 1736 West 5th Avenue.

MEDIA WATCH... news clips compiled by Ken Wilt

July 12, 1994 *Sandusky Register* - The State of Ohio has awarded Sandusky a \$520,000 grant to go towards their \$800,000 project of renovating the Sandusky Amtrak Station. The station was purchased by the city last year for \$35,000 and is to be renovated for use by the city's transportation system and the North Central Emergency Medical Services Co. Sandusky's project was one of 50 chosen to receive Transportation Enhancement funds. (Steve LaConte)

June 14, 1994 *Medina County Gazette* - The federal government has announced a new rail-highway crossing safety program which emphasizes closing as many of the country's 280,000 grade crossings as possible. The federal initiative includes new legislation, rules, and incentive programs, but no additional money. It does, however, raise federal funding on crossing closing projects to 100% and provide cash incentives to local governments. Education is also an emphasis, with increased funding for Operation Lifesaver and assistance for states in changing rules of evidence to allow use of photographic and video evidence in traffic citations and enforcement. (Harold Wolff)

May 25, 1994 *Akron Beacon Journal* - A profile of J. Howard Harding, who had just handed over the reigns of the OARP Presidency after serving for six years. The article mentioned OARP's annual meeting, and noted Howard's continuing enthusiasm for pushing programs that would make better rail service a reality in Ohio. (Patty Harding)

May 24, 1994 *Sandusky Register* - Sandusky city officials and Consolidated Rail Corporation are close to approving a deal in which a grade-crossing at George Street would be closed in exchange for the installation of a rubberized surface at the Remington Avenue crossing. (Steve LaConte)

May 20, 1994 *Dayton Daily News* - Dayton-based Electric Transit Inc. wants to build a factory in the Dayton area to manufacture electric trolley buses, and perhaps one day, electric cars. The company is hoping that its' offer to locate the factory in Dayton will help it win the contract for as many as 91 new electric trolley buses for the Miami Valley Regional Transit Authority. Potential sites for the factory include the General Motors Harrison Radiator factory in Dayton and a building at the Defense Electronics Supply Center in Kettering. (Al Wolf)

May 12, 1994 *Norwalk Reflector* - "The Ohio Supreme Court ruled that railroads, not the state, are responsible for placing warning signs at railroad crossings. The court also ruled unanimously that state law takes precedence over federal law in railroad crossing negligence cases...The Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970 gave the US Secretary of Transportation authority to make rules governing railroad operations safety, and the Highway Safety Act of 1973 gave states federal money to upgrade railway crossings. Federal law also requires states to monitor crossings requiring safety improvements and give railroad companies a schedule for making improvements... Chief Justice Thomas Moyer, in writing the opinion, said Ohio law does not intend to put sole responsibility for warning signs on state agencies." (Steve LaConte)

April 17, 1994 *Columbus Dispatch* - Two federal grants worth \$1.25 million will go to railroad rehabilitation projects in Muskingum and Perry counties. The state-owned Ohio Southern Railroad will receive \$750,000 to upgrade the segment between Zanesville and New Lexington. An additional \$500,000 will be provided to improve a 14.8-mile segment between Avondale and Glass Rock. (Ken Wilt)

Many Thanks to those who have been contributing news clips! Please note that while space doesn't allow summaries of all the clippings we receive, the others aren't going to waste. They are being catalogued and filed for historical reference. We will soon offer listings of the compiled articles, from which members can order photocopies of specific articles.

OARP MEMBER NEWS

Allen Wolf, son of OARP members Al & Malinda Wolf, graduated from New York University on May 12th, 1994 with a degree in film and television production. While a student at Wright State University in Dayton, Allen (himself an OARP member), produced a documentary film entitled "Trains and Tradition". The film was based on the history of passenger rail service in Lima, Ohio. Filming was done at Lima, and on board the CAPITOL LIMITED between Lima and Warsaw, Indiana in October 1990, shortly before service was terminated on the line. Allen was also aboard the ICE train last August when it traveled from Toledo to Dearborn, Michigan.

Our sincere condolences to the family and friends of longtime OARP member Jonathan E. DuBert of Cleveland, who passed away on June 26th, 1994.

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Updated: June 1994

JOIN US!

Become a dues paying member of OARP and help us sustain our voice for rail passenger concerns! The first year costs only \$15, and includes a subscription to the 6:53. Membership dues are \$20/year thereafter. All contributions to OARP are tax-deductible. To join, simply fill out and mail this coupon, along with a check or money order payable to OARP to: Stephen Klipfel, Treasurer, 825 S. Tecumseh Rd, Springfield, OH 45506.

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Aug '94

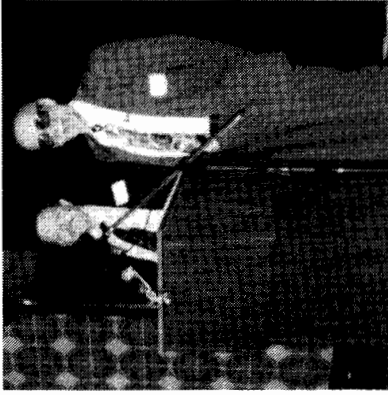
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OHIO NARP Region 6 Directors: J. Howard Harding, James Stevenson, and Mark Carlson (addresses above)	
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OARP'S OFFICIAL BUSINESS PHONE - (equipped with answering machine).....	614/898-9774

Updated: June 1994

Major Changes Here... Please clip out this updated directory!



Outgoing OARP President Howard Harding (r) with new President Mark Carlson at the Annual Meeting in Akron.

**OARP Salutes
J. Howard Harding for
his SIX years of service
as President!**

Thank You, Howard!



Howard traveled all the way from Akron in order to attend the Columbus-area local meeting in April.

**The Ohio Association of
Railroad Passengers**

August 1994

Issue #112



**"Dedicated to Promoting and Improving Rail
Passenger Service In and Through Ohio"**

JEFF SKEMING 461-0734 OFPC
461-0730

4-8 pm to 8
RAM INN 2124 HAMILTON

Your Contributions Make The 6:53...

Your passenger rail related articles, clippings, letters, and photos are welcome! We may edit and we can't guarantee that we'll use everything you send. But we'll try...

Please note that all signed articles in the 6:53 reflect the opinion of their authors, and not necessarily the views and positions of OARP and its officers.

Send your newsletter items to:

**OARP News/the 6:53
c/o Ken Wilt, Editor**

**5315 Stonemeadow Ave #E
Columbus, Ohio 43220-6209**

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Deadline for the October 6:53

via postal mail & fax: Sept. 10th
via electronic mail: Sept. 15th

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