Capital Budget: Good & Bad News

COLUMBUS — With Governor George Voinovich’s capital budget just days away from being announced, ORDC Executive Director Tom O’Leary had the difficult task of announcing to OARP on May 18 that rail passenger funds weren’t in the 1996 capital bill.

Actually, Mr. O’Leary had warned OARP and its allies several months ago that it would be very difficult to squeeze the rail dollars into the bill.

The reason? As reported in OARP’s April newsletter, the ORDC made its capital budget request two years too late. The capital budget was pretty well set when, on March 14, "ORDC came in at the seventh inning."

— Thomas M. O’Leary
ORDC Executive Director

ORDC asked for $34 million in capital funds to help start rail passenger service on three routes.

The three routes include: Cincinnati-Dayton-Columbus-Cleveland (C-A-C); Pittsburgh-Youngstown-Cleveland-Toledo (P-C-T); and Canton-Akron-Cleveland (C-A-C).

“ORDC came in at the seventh inning,” Mr. O’Leary said at the annual meeting. “The capital budget is a crowded elevator.”

Since the capital budget comes out every two years, and since there are a lot of state projects in need of money, the ORDC should have made its request much earlier to put itself near the front of the waiting list.

But detailed plans for the three rail routes weren’t completed until late-1995, thus ORDC did not know how much money to ask for until it was too late. Mr. O’Leary has been alluding all along that the last few months work was a play for 1998’s capital bill, not 1996’s.

That should suit OARP better, too. Our campaign, while turning a few heads at the governor’s office and in the General Assembly (more on this in future issues!), became a hurried effort. Better organizing, conducting outreach for the long-term, and comprehensive planning on OARP’s part is a more productive way to go.

Does this mean that nothing will happen until 1998? Thankfully, no.

Because of the low capital costs of extending Amtrak’s New York City-Pittsburgh Pennsylvania west to Youngs-

See “BUDGET”, Page Three

OARP Annual Meeting Happenings

COLUMBUS — Even though it was one of the first warm, sunny Saturdays of spring, 40 directors and members attended OARP’s Annual Meeting in Columbus on May 18. The highlights of the day’s agenda were guest speakers Thomas M. O’Leary, executive director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission, and long-time OARP friend H. Cooper Snyder, who recently retired from the Ohio Senate.

Of course, the Annual Meeting is when OARP’s election is held. Most directors were returned to their posts. We welcome Tom Allen of Delaware, OH as OARP’s new treasurer, replacing Steve Klipfel.

Reports were given on Ohio Amtrak station improvement projects and on national issues. There also was discussion on OARP’s second Festival of Stations seminar, to be held in Galion this October.

Lastly, a progress report on the construction of Cleveland’s new light rail Waterfront Line was given, as was information on OARP’s next meeting. This will be a Summer Family Outing, to be held in Cleveland July 20, one week after the Waterfront Line’s ribbon cutting.

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New Chicago-East Coast Train?

WASHINGTON — At the National Association of Railroad Passengers’ Directors meeting, Amtrak President Tom Downs admitted—in so many words—the error of eliminating the Chicago-New York City Broadway Limited which served the Ohio cities of Fostoria, Akron, and Youngstown.

Amtrak is trying to make up for the loss of the Broadway Limited by running through coaches and mail cars between the Chicago-Pittsburgh-Washington Capitol Limited and the Pittsburgh-New York City Three Rivers trains.

On some days, the Capitol west of Pittsburgh carries 11 mail cars—slightly more than the number of passenger cars.

The inherent problems of running a joint—Three Rivers / Capitol Limited is now harming the economic and on-time performance of the Capitol Limited.

In response to this problem, OARP understands that Amtrak is considering its options in running a train between Chicago and eastern Pennsylvania that will have many mail cars and also carry coaches and perhaps a food service car.

While the U.S. Postal Service dispatches the mail around the clock, it generally prefers to dispatch mail in the early morning hours. Morning departures from Chicago and Philadelphia would mean daylight service across Ohio.

There is no word from Amtrak about which route the new service, if begun, would take across Ohio.

OARP should not be put in the position of stating its preference of which route the train should take through Ohio. It is more important for us to focus on pursuing new quality passenger train services through Ohio.

“We will fight long and hard for expanded Amtrak services for Ohioans, regardless of whatever route might be selected,” said OARP President Mark Carlson. “There are advantages and disadvantages to all potential routes, but it makes no sense to divide OARP along parochial lines.”

We hope to have more information soon on this proposed service.

Election Results

COLUMBUS — At the May 18 Annual Meeting, all four officers and two at-large board members were up for election. Re-elected were President Mark Carlson of Bay Village, Vice-President Bill Hutchison of Columbus, Secretary Meg Grey of Pickerington, along with at-large board members Ron Bergen of Kent and Bob Wickens of Maineville.

Tom Allen of Delaware was elected treasurer. Mr. Allen has more than a decade of bookkeeping for non-profit organizations experience. “OARP will be well-served by him, much as we have by [out-going treasurer] Stephen Klipfel,” said President Mark Carlson.

Mr. Klipfel’s tight-ship approach to managing our treasury brought much professionalism to the job. If a proposed expenditure was in doubt, OARP’s directors could expect a phone call from Mr. Klipfel. He also kept after organizations which had pledged grants to OARP, and dutifully sent thank-you notes to members who made large donations.

Due to an omission, the nominating committee report in the April newsletter did not include a second board position up for re-election. Only one at-large board seat was listed.

This oversight was corrected by taking nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting for the two at-large seats to be voted upon, in accordance with OARP’s by-laws.

Four OARP’s directors represent regions identified in the by-laws by telephone area codes. Because the 216 and 513 area codes are being split, the by-laws needed amending.

The amendment as accepted by the general membership will not create a new board position. It gives a 216 director the new title of Board Member 216/330/440, and changes the 513 director to Board Member 513/937.

With six head-end mail cars from Washington and three rear-end mail cars from New York, Amtrak’s combined Capitol Limited / Three Rivers is too long for one photo. This photo, taken on June 2, also shows an unfinished Cleveland RTA Waterfront line East 9th Street platform. The RTA station is adjacent to the Amtrak station. M. Carlson photo
"BUDGET" from page one
town, Cleveland, and Toledo, Mr. O’Leary believes there may be a good chance of getting state and federal dollars for it.

Of all the outpourings of support from around the state for ORDC’s rail passenger program, the most energetic push came from Toledo and Youngstown, according to Mr. O’Leary. Corporate leaders and elected officials in those cities are fighting for money to extend the Pennsylvanian.

Could Cleveland help push it? No, according to Mr. O’Leary. “In Cleveland, there’s so much going on, intercity passenger trains aren’t even on their radar screens.”

On the state’s radar screen are other rail passenger projects which should see activity, and possible construction, by 1998. Commuter rail is planned from Cincinnati to Wilmington; Columbus to Newark and Dresden; Cleveland to Lake County; and Cleveland to Akron and Canton.

It would seem reasonable that these services, which have generated strong political interest, could be a stepping stone to services having a statewide reach.

Of course, OARP’s main goal for new service has been, and will continue to be on the 3-C Corridor. To suggest that this is a dead project couldn’t be any farther from the truth. But the old ways which OARP has sought political support for 3-C must change.

To get 3-C Corridor trains, a more sophisticated political approach is needed. Stronger alliances with those who back state legislators is one possible route. What we have done in the last few months has become what amounts to an appetizer for the courses that lie ahead in the coming year.

However, the volume of letters and expressions of support from along the route thus far has gotten the governor’s office talking about ways in which 3-C trains could be started while bringing a direct financial return to Ohio’s treasury.

It may well be that the 3-C Corridor could become a rail version of the Ohio Turnpike, in which the state backs an initial investment to start service, repaid with user fees and development-related revenues.

Also, to get 3-C Corridor and other rail passenger services up and running, the ORDC will need to resolve the issue of running passenger trains on the freight railroads’ private property. Mr. O’Leary is confident this can be done, but it is clearly a complex issue.

As noted, there will be much more on this in future issues. Mr. O’Leary did not sound defeated at our Annual Meeting. Quite the contrary. The state’s and ORDC’s desire to start 3-C service is unheralded in OARP’s history. Mr. O’Leary’s level of candor was welcomed and necessary if we are to iron out the best way to reach our long sought after goals.

Thank-you to a Friend
COLUMBUS — H. Cooper Snyder represented rural southern Ohio for 17 years in the Ohio Senate. But during that time, he had sponsored many rail passenger funding bills affecting the entire state, including several bills written by OARP. He retired from the senate in March.

That friendship to OARP, commitment to rail, and effort did not go unnoticed. At OARP’s Annual Meeting on May 18, Mr. Snyder was presented with a beautifully engraved plaque from this association and accepted a lifetime membership in OARP.

“In this state, we need to get rail where we can.” — H. Cooper Snyder
Ohio Senate, retired

While the former senator is known for his terrific, humorous, and poignant stories, he seemed at a loss for words when given the plaque and membership.

Before being presented with the awards, he encouraged OARP and offered some insight for our members. He noted that the political preferences for starting commuter rail ahead of intercity routes like the 3-C Corridor wasn’t necessarily a negative.

“In this state, we need to get rail where we can,” Mr. Snyder said. “It is important to understand politics and to become politically sophisticated in what you do.”

In looking to the future, he believed some encouraging trends point to rail gaining greater favor. One of the trends he noted was the decay of highways and the lack of funds to pay for their improvement, pointing an increase in the cost of driving by putting it to motorists up front.

“With the recent passage of Issue 2, we’re borrowing on our children’s future to pay for highways,” he said. “There will be an increase in tolls and an expansion of their use.”

Last year’s Ohio Issue 2 reauthorization increased the amount of debt which the Ohio Department of Transportation could incur for road projects, but did not include an increase in revenues (gas taxes, tolls, etc.) to pay for them. Sooner or later, motorists will have to pay for that free ride.

Mr. Snyder’s vision was a rarity among elected officials. His voice in the Ohio Senate will be missed by OARP, though he says he has every intention of helping us in future efforts. His record in fighting for OARP’s goals is unquestioned. We extend our sincere appreciation to the retired senator for his supportive work and will follow his guiding words.
Travel Alerts

No Smoking in L-S-L Sleepers

The New York section of Amtrak’s Lake Shore Limited (trains 48/49) is equipped with Viewliner sleepers. To keep them clean and odor-free, smoking is not allowed in the sleepers. The Boston section (trains 448/449) has a Heritage sleeper which will soon be replaced with a Viewliner. To be consistent, the no smoking policy will also apply in the Boston sleeper.

Smoking is only permitted in the lounge car.

Kids Ride Free with Disney Offer

Kids ages 2-15 can ride free on Amtrak this summer with a special certificate included in Disney’s “The Aristocats” home video. The certificate, promoting family travel, is good for one free child’s ticket when the child is accompanied by a full-fare paying adult.

Tickets must be purchased by Aug. 31 with travel completed by Sept. 30. They are valid on all Amtrak trains except Auto Train, Metroliner and trains operating in Canada.

Cut Amtrak Fare with AAA Card

To capitalize upon the massive promotional abilities of the AAA, Amtrak offers a 10% railfare discount to Auto Club members who present their AAA card. The “Show Your Card & Save” program places Amtrak alongside Hilton, Hyatt, Universal Studios, Hertz, and Days Inn as part of the promotion.

Did You Know?

That while advocates of highway and airport construction tout their modes’ ability to generate new jobs and development, rail projects can also produce amazing economic growth?

Case in point: Cleveland RTA’s new $69 million, light rail Waterfront Line has already produced $144 million in new building construction and redevelopment along its route, and the trains aren’t yet running!

Senate Supports Amtrak Half-Cent

WASHINGTON — On May 23, the U.S. Senate approved on a vote of 57-43 a “sense of the Senate” resolution offered by Sen. William V. Roth, Jr. (R-Delaware). The resolution was in support of depositing one-half cent of the existing federal gasoline tax into a trust fund for Amtrak. This would make available at least $600 million per year to improve intercity rail passenger services.

The vote merely expresses the Senate’s endorsement of a trust fund for Amtrak. However, it is an important gesture of the widespread support for long-term investments in a national railroad passenger system, Amtrak President Tom Downs said.

Amtrak believes that expressions of strong support from Amtrak passengers, partners, and employees throughout the country helped senators understand the survival of Amtrak.

The process of putting Amtrak on equal footing with other forms of transportation through the creation of a capital trust fund will allow Amtrak to make necessary investments in modern facilities and equipment.

With Ohio rail passenger projects in need of funding, a federal contribution from the Amtrak half-cent would be most welcome. Ohio Sen. Mike DeWine (R) voted for the resolution; Sen. John Glenn (D) voted against it. Their votes are consistent with decisions they made on a 1995 amendment to a bill which would have made Amtrak eligible for ISTEA funds.

Please write to your senators. Sen. DeWine should be thanked for his “correct” pro-passenger rail vote. Convey to Sen. Glenn your disappointment. Sen. Glenn, in past letters to OARP members, claimed to support Amtrak, but his recent votes were contradictory.

Indiana & Ohio Rail System Sold

CINCINNATI — RailTex, Inc. of San Antonio announced June 3 it has signed an agreement with the Indiana & Ohio Railcorp (I&O) to purchase 100% of the I&O stock for $9 million.

The I&O was founded in 1979 with one 26-mile line and is headquartered in Cincinnati. Today it operates 230 miles of track in southwestern Ohio and southeastern Indiana.

RailTex is the largest operator of short line railroads in North America with more than 3,300 miles of track in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

The RailTex philosophy of operating locally managed and centrally supported short line railroads, suggests that I&O operations and marketing will continue to come from the local offices. Speaking of RailTex’s resources, I&O management said, “we expect to see new opportunities in marketing and improved car supply.”

It is expected that the current management and employees will remain in their present employment.

While the I&O is primarily a freight operator, it presently provides passenger service through a wholly owned subsidiary. The passenger service operation will be retained by one of the sellers, I&O President Thomas McOwen.
Ohio Amtrak Station Improvement Programs

TOLEDO—Renovations at Toledo’s Central Union Terminal are proceeding briskly. Amtrak is scheduled to move into their permanent station at track level July 15.

The four-level station complex will include the Amtrak passenger facility, a crew base, as well as private offices suites, food services, a station for the Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority, and other potential tenants.

The entire building is to be air-conditioned, with individual tenant controls. In recent years, the station seemed to be air conditioned in winter and heated in summer.

Formal rededication ceremonies for the station complex will be held Sunday, Sept. 22, exactly 46 years after the station opened to passengers traveling on trains of the New York Central, Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake & Ohio, and Wabash railroads.

Actually, the entire weekend will feature activities celebrating the station’s rebirth. Public tours of nearly every nook and cranny of the complex will be offered on Sept. 21-22. Also, on those two days, Amtrak will have an equipment display of Superliner and Viewliner cars and a new Genesis diesel locomotive.

OARP will hold its fall meeting in Toledo, coinciding with the station’s rededication.

OARP’s participation will not end there. We have been invited to serve as guides for the station tours and equipment display. If you would like to volunteer, call OARP Board Member Larry George at (419) 698-2167.

SANDUSKY—Restoration of the existing Amtrak station facility, a former Lake Shore & Michigan Southern railroad depot, should start this fall and be completed by mid- to late-1997, according to Gary Boyle, chief planner for the city’s community development department.

Final design of the $650,000 renovation project is nearly finished. Those plans must be submitted to the state for approval before bids can be sought. Much of the funding is from a $520,000 ISTEA grant approved in 1994.

Community Development Director, Rita McMahon, says that historic accuracy is very important to the restoration of the limestone structure which opened in December of 1892.

There will be parking and a waiting room for Amtrak passengers. But most of the old station will be occupied by North Central Dispatch, the emergency medical service for nearby communities.

At the site will be an ambulance station, the dispatching center, and the offices for North Central EMS.

Additionally, another building will be constructed next to the Amtrak depot to house the Sandusky Transit System’s offices. Their building will include a garage for 12 buses. North Central also dispatches STS services.

This translates into having a 24-hour presence at the station site, which is served daily by Amtrak’s Chicago-New York City/Boston Lake Shore Limited.

Currently, Amtrak station agents at Toledo alert Sandusky police of approaching trains. This allows local police the opportunity to be present before and at train arrivals.

STS’s proximity may lead to shuttle service from the station to Cedar Point Amusement Park and Lake Erie Island ferries for Amtrak passengers.

ELYRIA—Unfortunately, the prospects aren’t as encouraging for getting a truly attractive station facility for Elyria. The city wanted to renovate for $2.5 million a former New York Central station, now vacant, making it Amtrak’s new depot and a site for offices and restaurants.

City officials were downcast after they had learned their request for $1.9 million in federal historic enhancement funds from the Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was rejected. This has put the project in limbo, and may have killed it altogether.

Adding greater sting to the pain was that fact the application was highly touted by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency and the local ODOT District office. The grant ranked tenth out of 34 funding applications statewide. Only the top nine applications were funded.

Will the city try again? Jon Kiner, Elyria’s community development director, said he wasn’t sure whether he and other city officials had the energy to repeat the amount of work that went into the grant application.

He also questioned whether the property’s owner would be willing to put on hold other potential development plans for the 71-year-old depot which the city wanted to buy.

“It was a good application. The city knows it was a good application,” OARP President Mark Carlson said in the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram. “I was stunned. The nine winning applications were mostly covered bridges.” The most expensive covered bridge restoration project was $600,000.

Amtrak had agreed to stop its trains at the downtown NYC station on East Avenue, assuming the station is renovated. Amtrak’s present depot in Elyria is a mobile trailer fastened to a concrete-block foundation at East Bridge Street, just east of downtown.

In addition to the $1.9 million federal grant, other funding partners were to include the city of Elyria, which pledged $500,000, the Ohio Rail Development Commission, offering $54,000, and Amtrak, pledging $18,000.
Yes Virginia, it’s that time of the year again…the OARP Family Outing! For our next adventure, we’ll be heading to Cleveland to tour RTA’s new light-rail Waterfront Line!

We will hear from speakers and see first-hand how rail transit is serving and redeveloping an Ohio city! This outing will be fun, educational, and hopefully inspirational to members from other Ohio cities that have considered building light-rail lines.

You will soon receive a special edition of the newsletter featuring the Waterfront Line. It will detail the line’s importance in redeveloping the city, and what the new rail line means to future Ohio rail passenger services.

The special newsletter will also list hotels and attractions, most are a short walk from RTA rail stations.

You are encouraged to bring your family and make a weekend out of your visit to Cleveland. While you are at the meeting, your spouse and kids may visit the many things to do downtown, which, after an amazing renaissance, is a safe, dynamic place to enjoy.

OARP’s Cleveland meeting will be held on the weekend when the city celebrates its 200th birthday. It will be an opportunity to see first-hand how trains move crowds of people, avoiding parking woes and road congestion.

OARP will provide passes for July 20, good for travel on all RTA trains and buses all day—a $4 value. If requested, one pass per registration will be mailed before the meeting.

Day passes will also be distributed at the meeting, and at the West 150th/Puritas Red Line station. OARP Executive Director Ken Prendergast will distribute the passes there until 9:00 a.m. While heading to the meeting on the Rapid, he’ll answer members’ questions about RTA’s rail system.

**Meeting information:**
Saturday, July 20; Refreshments - 9:30
Shaker Heights Public Library
Community Rooms A/B
16500 Van Aken Blvd. (at Lee Rd.)

NOTE: late registrants should arrive at the West 150th/ Puritas station before 9 a.m. to receive their free RTA rail pass or you will have to pay the $1.50 fare to reach the Shaker Heights Public Library.

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**RTA’s Waterfront Line**

Fee: $7.50 per registrant. Fee includes meeting, continental breakfast, speakers, and an RTA all-day transit pass.
Send registration and check payable to OARP:
OARP Family Outing
c/o Ken Prendergast
80 Emerson Ave. #13005
Berea, OH 44017
Deadline July 16
late phone: (216) 891-6277

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- [ ] Mail RTA day pass to me before July 18
- [ ] Mail RTA rail timetables to me before July 18

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- Cleveland: Ohio Motorists Assoc/AAA Travel (216) 361-6080
- Columbus: Randall Park Mall Travel Agency (614) 837-2828
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- Solon: Astro Travel Service (800) 759-7404
- Troy: Miami County Auto Club/AAA Travel (513) 339-0112

Authorized Amtrak travel agents who wish to join OARP, maintain current membership status, and be listed in the DIRECTORY should send a $50 check, made payable to OARP, to Stephen Kiebler, Treasurer: 825 South Tecumseh Rd.; Springfield OH 45506. The TREM annual listing fee of $140 entitles you to list your CITY, the NAME OF YOUR AGENCY, ONE LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, one LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, and the name of the one CONTACT at the agency. Renewals will be billed by the Treasurer. Updated: March, 1996

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Help OARP Meet the Challenges of 1996!

An introductory one year membership in OARP cost only $15.00 and includes a subscription to OARP's newsletter, the Ohio Passenger Rail News.

Mail your order to OARP's Treasurer:
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Delaware, Ohio 43015

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Contributions to OARP may be tax-deductible

Please save this updated directory, it contains the latest changes!

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers
UPCOMING OARP MEETINGS...

Next OARP Membership Meeting — The summer-1996 Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers Family Outing will be on Saturday, July 20, 1996 at Cleveland. We will meet at the Shaker Heights Public Library in the morning where a presentation by RTA and others will be made. In the afternoon we'll ride the RTA Shaker Rapid (Blue Line) to downtown to the newly dedicated RTA Waterfront Line. All meeting registrants will receive a free RTA all-day pass.

See page Six of this issue of the Ohio Passenger Rail News for meeting and registration information.

Columbus Area Local Meetings are on the second Saturday of each month, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, at the Red Door Tavern, 1736 West 5th Avenue. Next meeting: July 13

Toledo Area Local Meetings are on the third Friday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Oregon Municipal Building, 5330 Seaman Road. Next meeting: June 21

ORDC MEETING SCHEDULE

Responsible public observation of the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) is encouraged, and OARP members are invited to attend.

ORDC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETINGS
Second Thursday of each month

Next meeting: June 13, 1996

Tentative location:
Riffe Center
19th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH

9:00 a.m. Committee Meetings
10:00 a.m. Full Commission Meeting

If you have any questions about the meeting times, agendas, or locations, call the ORDC at 614/644-0306; or 614/644-7176.

Your Contributions Make the Ohio Passenger Rail News...

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 appearing in the Ohio Passenger Rail News reflect the opinion of their authors, and not necessarily the views and positions of OARP and its officers.

Send your newsletter items to:
OARP Newsletter
c/o Ken Prendergast
80 Emerson Ave #13005
Berea, Ohio 44017
Phone 216/891-6277
Deadline for Next Issue: July 15, 1996

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS
825 South Tecumseh Road, Springfield, OH 45506
RAIL TRANSPORTATION ADVOCATES

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