Ohio to Join Midwest Direct

Chicago-based hub to include Cleveland, Cincinnati, Toledo

A number of Midwest states banded together last summer with Amtrak to promote improvements to regional rail passenger services. After months of waiting, Ohio has finally stated its intention to join this collective effort called the Midwest Rail Initiative, dubbed “Midwest Direct” by some.

The effort in many ways imitates the Coalition of Northeast Governors’ (CONEG) endeavor to secure federal funds for the Boston-New York City high speed rail project, now under construction.

For years, Ohio leaders have done more talking than doing when it came to its role of improving rail passenger service. Ohio now appears ready to put its money where its mouth is. It hasn’t been an easy—See “MIDWEST”, page eight

Three Rivers Runs Without Ohio Stops

On Nov. 10, Amtrak reintroduced its former Broadway Limited route across northern Ohio as an extension of the New York City-Pittsburgh Three Rivers service. Trains carrying mail cars, coaches, and a food service car will run daily on an overnight schedule between Chicago and New York.

However, one thing is missing from the new service — Ohio. None of three Ohio stations proposed for the Three Rivers were ready in time for the Nov. 10 startup of service. Stops in Fostoria, Akron, and Youngstown were sought by Amtrak, which served those cities with its Broadway Line.
the Coalition of Northeast Governors' (CONEG) endeavor to secure federal funds for the Boston-New York City high speed rail project, now under construction.

For years, Ohio leaders have done more talking than doing when it came to its role of improving rail passenger service. Ohio now appears ready to put its money where its mouth is. It hasn’t been an easy - See “MIDWEST”, page eight
Train of Thought
from OARP Executive Director
Kenneth Prendergast

Unlike past Train of Thought columns which dealt with just one issue, this time there’s a number of issues on which to comment.

If you want to see a shining example of how a decrepit train station can be brought back to life, take a trip to Toledo. See the photo spread “Toledo Central Union Plaza Rededicated” in this issue for a glimpse of the terrific job done by the Toledo/Lucas County Port Authority.

The revival of Central Union Plaza includes a spacious, comfortable train station and transit bus stop on the ground floor, and various offices on the upper floors. The facility is an attractive, functional, and financially self-supporting model for cities across the nation to emulate.

As I’m sure many of you have heard by now, a bidding war has developed among CSX and Norfolk Southern railroads for Conrail. Regardless of who gets Conrail, the merged company will become one of the largest transportation companies in the world. This will have a large impact on Ohio, and on current and future passenger rail services here.

Between CSX, NS, and Conrail, they have many duplicate, parallel routes across Ohio. But unlike past mergers around these parts, this one doesn’t mean that thousands of miles of rail will be melted down and railroad ties sent to Ohio landscapers.

CSX and NS may both end up buying Conrail, then divvy up the lines each wants most. Also, nearly every CSX, NS, and Conrail mainline in Ohio is at capacity. According to statements by the railroad companies, the merged company will use many of these parallel lines for specialized traffic. Those routes getting the fast freights will likely be where the merged company will accept passenger trains.

Neither CSX, NS, nor Conrail have historically shown affection for passenger trains. These three companies have stated that passenger trains should mix with the fast freights or, ultimately, run on passenger-only tracks.

In any event, the variables of who gets what routes and where passengers fit in are mind-boggling in their number. They are as countless as the railroad industry watchers who are burning out crystal balls trying to predict what the rail map in the eastern U.S. will look like five years from now.

Last year, the Cleveland Indians made it to the World Series. If that wasn’t strange enough, this past September Columbus Mayor Greg Lashutka actually had some nice things to say about light rail transit. Has anyone checked the alignment of the planets lately?
As a consumer group, we regard the public rail transportation mode as essential for many reasons. Rail has a superior potential for congestion relief, comfort, resource conservation, and compatibility with the newest technologies.

OARP seeks to preserve, expand, and improve existing Amtrak services as well as urban rail transit by educating the general public, interested groups, plus federal, state, and local officials.

We also support improvements to non-rail forms of transportation. OARP agrees they too should be enhanced to improve their safety and connectivity with a developed rail passenger system.

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers is incorporated in Ohio as a non-profit association and exempt from federal income tax under the IRS Code, Section 501(c)(3) as a publicly supported educational organization. Dues and donations to OARP may be tax-deductible in accordance with the IRS Code.

YES! I WANT BETTER RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES!
An introductory one-year membership in the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers includes a subscription to the Ohio Passenger Rail News, plus action alerts, notice of rail-oriented events, and local meetings. Contributions to OARP may be tax-deductible.

Enclosed is a check or money order for...

☐ $15.00 for an Individual Membership.
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Send me ___ copies of the newsletter (up to 10).
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c/o Tom Allen, Treasurer
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Photos and Articles
Clippings from newspapers and magazines must include the publication’s name and date. Your articles and news briefs should be typed and double-spaced, though very short items may be legibly written. Preferably, send hard copy with IBM-compatible text files on 5 1/4" or 3 1/2" disks. Submissions via e-mail to:
Internet:72764.2020@Compuserve.com.

We reserve the right to edit all non-published submissions. Original photos should be sharp, bright prints—avoid slides and negatives.

Always include your name and phone number!
Columbus sees light rail at tunnel’s end

In a city with highway-only tunnel vision, the two forces that helped kill a 1995 proposal for light rail service between Worthington and downtown Columbus may be seeing the light at the end of that tunnel. And yes, it could be a train.

Mayor Greg Lashutka said a lack of quality mass transit to downtown Columbus is a major reason why there needs to be a sea of parking lots surrounding the downtown area. To develop those lots into usable, attractive offices, retail, housing and parks, there needs to be another way for commuters and others to reach the downtown area than by car.

“Yes there are a lot of parking lots out there,” Mr. Lashutka said in a Sept. 13 edition of the Columbus Dispatch. “It argues for better public transportation—light rail. That system should link Columbus with the surrounding county seats.”

The edition of the Dispatch that quoted Mr. Lashutka was actually a special issue that dealt extensively on the problem of urban sprawl in central Ohio.

In general, urban sprawl occurs when developed areas grow outward from a city center at a rate faster than the urban region’s population and job base is growing. The result is that previously developed parts of the metropolitan area, usually located closer to the urban core, are drained of all but the poorest residents and jobs. Those older areas were developed in a more dense, pedestrian-friendly manner, which public transportation can serve more effectively than newer, sprawling suburbs.

The Dispatch reported that, after talking about light rail for three years and spending $1.7 million on studies, the Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) in 1995 dumped a $522 million strategic plan.

In that plan, COTA was to build a $276 million, 11-mile light-rail line between downtown and Worthington. The newspaper noted: “By contrast, a single new freeway interchange at I-270 and Morse and Stelzer roads, now under construction, will cost $233 million.”

A lack of support among civic leaders, notably Mayor Lashutka and the owner and editors of the Columbus Dispatch, prompted COTA to drop the proposed light-rail line from its plans and instead seek to increase bus service for $249 million. That cost was to be funded out of a November 1995 operating levy. Voters rejected the levy and service shrank.

“There’s something wrong here,” said Ralph W. Smithers, executive director of the Development Committee for Central Ohio and a senior vice-president of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce. Smithers also was quoted in the Dispatch article. “COTA is shrinking at a time when the region is growing.”

Smithers recently was named as Mayor Lashutka’s executive assistant.

Unfortunately, state transportation officials who spend over 98 percent of Ohioans’ transportation dollars on more and more roads, are skeptical that anyone will use trains.

“Everybody likes mass transit, but they want other people to take it,” said Pieter Wykoff, spokesman for the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Perhaps Mr. Wykoff and his We-Pave-The-World friends should visit Cleveland’s Waterfront Line, St. Louis’ MetroLink, Chicago’s Metra system, and other well-planned rail lines that are exceeding their ridership expectations.

“Highways do make it possible for urban sprawl and there are critics who say we should spend money on mass transit,” but the department builds what the public wants, Mr. Wykoff said to the Dispatch reporter.

Of course, Mr. Wykoff has already forgotten that a majority of Ohioans testified against more highways in the 1992 state-wide Access Ohio hearings. Instead, 70 percent of Ohioans who testified asked for more non-highway transportation such as intercity passenger trains, light rail, urban bus, pedestrian access and bike paths.

The Word From Washington

Projects in three Ohio cities will be the beneficiaries of federal transportation funds appropriated by Congress this autumn. Affected cities are Cincinnati, Canton, and Ravenna. While new rail lines are not included in the projects, the $123 million in federal funds will support the development of intercity passenger trains, light rail, urban bus, pedestrian access and bike paths.

At public meetings, OKI has received overwhelming support for light rail as opposed to HOV and busways. Interestingly, a busway system is projected to cost only about 40 percent less than light rail, but the public rejected the busway option. Perhaps Mr. Wykoff’s friends can find a way to modernize our transportation system with the public’s help.
Projects in three Ohio cities will be the beneficiaries of federal transportation funds appropriated by Congress this autumn. Affected cities are Cincinnati, Canton, and Ravenna. While new rail service would not be a direct result of the funding, the federal dollars are needed to carry out planning required prior to the start-up of service.

For Cincinnati, $3 million was budgeted to continue the progress of the I-71 Corridor Study. The study's ultimate goal is to find a transportation solution to auto congestion along a 33-mile segment of I-71, from the airport to King's Island. Communities along the corridor leveraged the federal contribution by providing $1 million of their own money.

The $4 million total would allow the study to proceed to its next level—to complete engineering studies on a “locally preferred alternative,” which is to be selected by April. There are three alternatives: light rail, busway and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes within existing, congested highways. Highway widenings were rejected due to a lack of public support.

Fully one-fourth of all vehicle trips made in Greater Cincinnati are along the I-71 Corridor. With the $4 million in hand, planners at the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI—the metropolitan area’s planning organization) can bring designs up to the point of construction. Depending on what alternative is selected, construction costs could total more than $1 billion.

At public meetings, OKI has received overwhelming support for light rail as opposed to HOV and busways. Interestingly, a busway system is projected to cost only about 10 percent less than light rail.

For Canton, Congress budgeted $3.5 million to pay for final planning and a small portion of capital costs of starting commuter rail service between Canton, Akron, and Cleveland. Originally, $5.5 million was requested by U.S. Rep. Ralph Regula (R-Navarre).

Meanwhile, Stark County voters in November rejected a local tax levy to continue the operations of their bus transit system beyond next year. A similar tax levy will likely appear in the spring 1997 primary election to keep the buses running.

For Ravenna, funding was appropriated for a Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) study of the feasibility of restoring a track connection linking Conrail and CSX mainlines which cross here. The Ravenna Connection, as the proposed link is called, would allow an extension of Amtrak's New York City-to-Pittsburgh Pennsylvanian to serve Youngstown and Ravenna. The route would pass through Cleveland on its way to Toledo.

The FRA’s study would be conducted in conjunction with Amtrak, the State of Ohio, and freight railroads Conrail and CSX. Congress made available $200,000 for the study, which will address reinstating the connection and the closure of, or other safety enhancements to a highway-rail grade crossing located at the site.

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OARP to ODoT:
“We Told You So”

The Nov. 26 Columbus Dispatch carried an article, titled “Highway Building Funds Could Dry Up”, which says that highway funds could shrink from the present $400 million per year to $150 million within three years.

This is the result of the passage of Issue 2 in 1995, which increased the Ohio Department of Transportation’s (ODoT) borrowing authority by $120 million annually.

The authority to increase borrowing was tacked on to an extremely popular infrastructure measure that had the support of many communities throughout Ohio. The reason for this action was that there was little support in the legislature for a gas tax increase or other action at that time.

Over the next couple of years, debt servicing will consume a greater and greater share of the ODoT budget. The implication is clear: The highway interests will probably try to pass a new gas tax hike and/or an increase in auto registration fees within two years. ODoT is already greasing the skids for this by making the public aware of this situation through articles such as the one that appeared in the Dispatch.

Last year, officials in state government and OARP were warning ODoT that it would quickly run out of money to adequately maintain highways if the higher debt limit was approved.
Riding virtual reality rails

By Bill Pietrucha
Newsbytes Staff Writer

WASHINGTON DC — Rail travelers can now plan a complete train trip aboard Amtrak, or take a virtual train ride through Amtrak’s redesigned “station” on the World Wide Web.

Greeting visitors with an audio “all aboard,” the web site, at http://www.amtrak.com, offers rail travelers the opportunity to plan a complete train trip aboard Amtrak, check out their onboard accommodations and even see sights they will enjoy on their planned rail journey.

“One image lets users take virtual rail trips with the help of Trakrouter, Amtrak’s new point-and-click interactive scheduler,” Amtrak spokesperson Rob Borella told Newsbytes. “Just choose any two cities served by Amtrak trains and/or Amtrak Thruway buses to build a complete travel itinerary.”

Another image leads users to an online travel planner with a clickable national system map detailing Amtrak’s routes and 650 destination options. The travel planner section highlights each train’s route, scenic highlights, on-board amenities, and accommodations.

“Pick an origin and destination point, with up to two connections, and you’ll be able to plan your complete itinerary,” Mr. Borella said.

The itinerary includes train status, services aboard the trains, layover times, total trip time, additional scheduling options, and connecting rail service. A separate promotions section offers information on special discounts, travel bargains, Amtrak Vacations packages, and Amtrak merchandise.

“Members of the press will also appreciate the news section for the latest company information and press releases,” Mr. Borella told Newsbytes. “While train buffs will welcome the train photo gallery which will have images ready to download.”

Train schedules currently are available online and, by early next year, users will be able to check fares and availability, make reservations, and purchase tickets online.

In addition to online reservations and ticketing, Mr. Borella said further improvements are planned for next year, including train status information and online ticketing for travel agencies. The redesigned web site was developed by Proximal Inc.

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Everyone Deserves a Whistle-stop
— “RIDE”, from page one —

names.

Ride weaves General Motors promotional films, congressional archives and interview with Truck (which also built buses), Phillips Petroleum and Firestone joined GM’s support of NCL. If you’ve inched through traffic on a city bus or followed one for any distance, you know why people abandoned NCL’s buses for cars whenever they could. It doesn’t take a rabid conspiracy nut to see the benefit to GM, Firestone and Standard Oil.

Ride is most compelling when it documents

Helping keep the driving spirit alive, Dow Chemical, producer of asphalt, entered the industry-sponsored PR campaign with a film featuring a staged testimonial from a grade-school teacher standing up to her anti-highway neighbors. With quiet indignation she asked, “Can’t you see this highway means a whole new way of life for the children?”

Citizens might agree that highways meant a
Everyone Deserves a Whistle-stop

— "RIDE", from page one—

names.

_Ride_ weaves General Motors promotional films, congressional archives and interview with citizen activists into a compelling pattern that makes it clear: We didn’t get into the traffic we’re in today by accident.

For example, _Ride_ explains, the oft-scorned highway lobby was not born of fuzzy environmentalist folklore. The “most powerful pressure group in Washington” began in June 1932, when GM President Alfred P. Sloan created the National Highway Users Conference, inviting oil and rubber companies to help GM bankroll a propaganda and lobbying effort that continues to this day.

Sloan, seeing a huge automobile market if he could get people out of streetcars and trains, bought out Omnibus Corp., the nation’s largest bus-operating company, and Yellow Coach, the largest bus manufacturer. With these, he began a campaign to “modernize” New York City’s (surface) railroads with buses.

With New York as an example, GM formed National City Lines (NCL) in 1936, and the assault on mass transit across America began with a vengeance.

Within 10 years, NCL controlled transit systems in more than 80 cities. GM denied any control of NCL, but the bus line’s director of operations came from Yellow Coach, and board members came from Greyhound, a company founded by GM. Later Standard Oil of California, Mack Truck (which also built buses), Phillips Petroleum and Firestone joined GM’s support of NCL.

If you’ve inched through traffic on a city bus or followed one for any distance, you know why people abandoned NCL’s buses for cars whenever they could. It doesn’t take a rabid conspiracy nut to see the benefit to GM, Firestone and Standard Oil.

_Ride_ is most compelling when it documents how, in 1946, the U.S. Justice Department prosecuted NCL, General Motors and others for combining to destroy America’s transit systems.

Brad Snell, an auto-industry historian who has spent 16 years researching GM, said key lawyers involved with the case told him there wasn’t a “scintilla of doubt that the defendants had set out to destroy the streetcars.”

For eliminating a system “worth $300 billion today,” Snell lamented, the corporations were eventually found guilty and fined $5,000. Key individuals, such as the treasurer of GM, were fined $1.

The postwar boom in housing, suburbs and freeways is a familiar story. Not so familiar are the highway lobby’s high-level efforts to determine our transportation future.

In 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower appointed then-GM President Charles Wilson as his secretary of defense. Wilson relentlessly pushed for and won a system of interstate highways. Francis DuPont, whose family owned the largest share of GM stock, was appointed chief administrator of federal highways.

Funding for this largest of all public works programs came from the Highway Trust Fund’s tax on gasoline, to be used only for highways. Its formula assured that more highways meant more driving, more gas taxes, and ... more highways.

Helping keep the driving spirit alive, Dow Chemical, producer of asphalt, entered the industry-sponsored PR campaign with a film featuring a staged testimonial from a grade-school teacher standing up to her anti-highway neighbors. With quiet indignation she asked, “Can’t you see this highway means a whole new way of life for the children?”

Citizens might agree that highways meant a whole new way of life, but not necessarily for the better. The wrecking ball cleared whole neighborhoods for the interstate highways, and public protest grew accordingly. One Washington D.C. activist recalled, “This was a brutal period in our history; a very brutal period.”

_Taken for a Ride_ concludes with a peek into the future, interviewing corporate sponsors of the Intelligent Vehicle Highway System (IVHS), a computer-controlled vision of travel currently receiving 90 percent of all transportation research funding.

Back to my present-day transportation dilemmas and wondering if common citizens might ever be able to take a train between Toledo and Columbus, I called Scott Leonard of the National Association of Railroad Passengers in Washington D.C. He did not sound hopeful:

“The Clinton Administration does not support giving Amtrak a half-cent of the gas tax to upgrade its system, but it has joined the group that wants Amtrak to be self-sufficient by 2002. Without the (half-cent) help, we will not have an Amtrak in five years.”

I imagine Clinton enjoyed his whistle-stop tour of my state. I hear it’s a pretty trip between here and Columbus.

Ferner, a former Toledo City Councilman, is a columnist for the Toledo Herald.
Congress acts against Amtrak’s ax

WASHINGTON — Due to recent Congressional action, Amtrak will temporarily continue operating the four long-distance passenger train routes that had earlier been slated for discontinuance on Nov. 10. But, as a result Congress' action, Amtrak must delay restoration of daily service and amenities on other long-distance routes.

Prior to adjourning, the 104th Congress appropriated an additional $22.5 million to temporarily continue operating all trains through May 10, in order to allow states to explore possible permanent funding sources.

Amtrak Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Thomas M. Downs said of the change, “We are gratified by the outpouring of public support across the country and in Congress for a national rail passenger system, but regret delaying the benefits that would result from implementing our business plan. My greatest concern is that we will overwhelm our customers with the confusion these changes generate.”

In August, Amtrak announced proposed schedule changes as part of its Fiscal Year 1997 (FY97) business plan to reduce costs and significantly increase revenues. That plan would have eliminated segments of four routes and redirected the company’s resources to its best market opportunities. The four routes that had been slated for discontinuance were the Texas Eagle, the Pioneer, the Desert Wind, and the Boston-Albany section of the Chicago-New York City Lake Shore Limited.

These services will now operate until May 10, 1997. The Lake Shore’s New York and Boston sections operate as a single train west of Albany, stopping daily in the Ohio cities of Bryan, Toledo, Sandusky, Elyria, and Cleveland.

But while the Pioneer and Desert Wind experienced low ridership on long runs, the often sold-out Lake Shore’s Boston section was to be sacrificed just to avoid switching costs at Albany. It also would have allowed use of standard train-sets that could run on all routes interchangeably, thereby maximizing equipment utilization.

Implementing this plan would have deprived the Lake Shore of much of its revenue, as nearly half its passengers come from the Boston section on some days. But since the standard consists would be limited to 9 cars instead of the Lake Shore’s current 16-19 cars, the train would not be able to handle these passengers anyway.

Keeping the threatened routes in operation will require equipment and operating resources that would have been used to increase service frequency and amenities on other routes.

Thus, plans to restore New York-Pittsburgh-Chicago service had to be modified. The New York-Pittsburgh Three Rivers was extended to Chicago, but will not offer sleeping-car and dining-car service. Its renaming as the Broadway Limited is postponed until these first class services can be offered.

Proposed daily operation of the Empire Builder, California Zephyr, and City of New Orleans has been postponed. The plan to inaugurate a third New York-Florida round-trip, the Silver Palm, will go ahead unchanged.

This year’s Congressional battle involved much more than just Amtrak funding. It was a contest between wealthy suburbanites with easy access to low cost air service versus small cities and towns which have lost affordable air service and much bus service as well. Deregulation has forced airlines and even some bus operators to improve profits by focusing on high volume routes—to the detriment of small towns and cities far from major airports.

The political influence this year came from rural areas, as towns served by the Texas Eagle and the Pioneer were threatened with total loss of their train service. Suddenly, long-standing Amtrak opponents became supporters. Having been abandoned by the privately operated carriers, rural places turned to the only carrier—Amtrak—they could influence through the political process. In an election year, some of the most conservative Republicans responded.

OARP gratefully acknowledges the Empire State Passenger Association and Amtrak, both of which contributed to this article.
President Clinton Needs Your Letters

As President Clinton prepares his next budget it is time to write him and let him know of our support for Amtrak. We should urge him to support a dedicated source of capital funding for Amtrak and to submit a budget to Congress that meets Amtrak's request for at least $245 million in operating funds for fiscal year 1998.

You can write President Clinton at:
The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
You can e-mail the President at: <president@whitehouse.gov>

It is important for the President to support Amtrak's budget request. Congress is unlikely to increase funding beyond it. The 1996 elections resulted in a new chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Senator Ted Stevens (R) of Alaska, which is not served by Amtrak, will replace the retiring pro-Amtrak Mark Hatfield (R) of Oregon. Hatfield had been instrumental in increasing Amtrak's funding after the House had gutted it in their 1997 authorization.

In addition, the Transportation subcommittee chairs will be either Richard Shelby (R) of Alabama or Connie Mack (R) of Florida. Both supported the House cuts! This makes our appeals to the President that much more important.

So please take a few moments to urge the President to:

1. Support the half-penny of existing federal gas tax for Amtrak's capital funding.
2. Support giving states the choice to spend some of their federal transportation funds on intercity passenger rail service. States can use these funds for local transit, light rail service, highways and even bike paths. Why not allow them to use the funds for Amtrak?

To submit his budget to Congress the President must act soon. We must do likewise.

Please send a copy of your letter and any responses you receive to:
Ken Prendergast
OARP Executive Director
12029 Clifton Blvd., Suite 505
Lakewood, OH 44107
You can e-mail Ken at:
Internet:72764.2020@Compuserve.com

OARP gratefully acknowledges the Empire State Passenger Association and Amtrak, both of which contributed to this article.

Illinois May Seek Bids to Run Passenger Trains

United Press International reports that Illinois may end state subsidies to Amtrak and open Amtrak routes in the state to competitive bidding.

The Chicago Sun-Times quoted a Metra spokesman who indicated the commuter railroad's possible interest in running the passenger rail service between Chicago and St. Louis, Carbondale and Macomb-Quincy. The three routes carry approximately 300,000 passengers a year.

According to the UPI, Amtrak has responded saying that it is working out a long term plan with Illinois to operate 40 trains a day at a fixed price.

1997 OARP Calendars

They're back! Thanks to Mike Weber and Champion Screen Printing of Cincinnati, a limited quantity of these attractive calendars are available. They show OARP and NARP information, and make nice gifts for family, friends, and associates.

They're also a great tool for recruiting new members. Call Mike Weber (513) 891-9251 for more information.
Three Rivers Runs
Without Ohio Stop

— "BROADWAY", from page one—

burgh, Pa.," wrote OARP President Mark Carlson. "This service slips through Ohio with its doors sealed to commerce and travelers' needs."

"We are not pleased with this situation developed. Had Amtrak not cut the train in the first place, we wouldn't be addressing these issues today. Last year, Amtrak admitted to its mistake and now three Ohio communities and their rail passengers are being asked to pay for it. Since we are interested in seeing this situation resolved, I believe it would not serve anyone to belabor who is at fault," Mr. Carlson said. "Let's get these cities' trains.

Of the three Ohio cities, Youngstown appears to be the closest in getting the new train to stop. The Three Rivers could be serving Youngstown's rebuilt B&O Station by the end of the year. A restaurant at the station which had fallen into bankruptcy has been using the former Amtrak waiting room for office space and storage. Negotiations between the restaurant, the city, and Amtrak for the reuse of the waiting room appear to be close to resolution. Eastbound, the Three Rivers would stop in Youngstown at about 5:40 a.m., with its westbound run stopping at 1 a.m.

Fostoria isn't far behind. A former B&O depot was rebuilt several years ago for the Broadway Limited by the city and the Ohio Department of Transportation's Rail Division. The city's lease for the depot expired in 1993. CSX has since taken the building as a maintenance base. A plexiglass "bus stop"-type shelter may be erected if the depot cannot be used by passengers.

The wild card is Akron, where city officials have stated they will not fund any station work.

### Table: Three Rivers

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a.m., with its westbound run stopping at 1 a.m.

Fostoria isn’t far behind. A former B&O depot was rebuilt several years ago for the Boulevard Limited by the city and the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Rail Division. The city’s lease for the depot expired in 1993. CSX has since retook the building as a maintenance base. A plexiglass “bus stop”-type shelter may be erected if the depot cannot be used by passengers.

The wild card is Akron, where city officials have stated they will not fund any station work for Amtrak unless the railroad signs a guarantee that it won’t end service to Akron for 12 years. Amtrak said there’s no way any transportation carrier can agree to such terms, much less one that lives or dies at the whim of the U.S. Congress. Amtrak is hoping that Akron officials will eventually agree to have the trains back.

In the meantime, leaders in nearby Ravenna have contacted Amtrak about getting the Three Rivers to stop in their town of 12,000 people. Ravenna is located about 20 miles east of Akron, and is five miles from Kent State University’s 30,000 students. As suggested by OARP, the city has kept $15,000 in reserve for when Amtrak might extend its New York-Pittsburgh Pennsylvania west to Cleveland and Toledo. Ravenna Mayor Paul Jones has indicated that the city might put up additional funds to build a station facility.

New Castle, PA, 18 miles east of Youngstown, also has been lobbying for a stop on the Three Rivers (and an extended Pennsylvania). OARP and the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers several years ago rounded up support among community leaders in New Castle for the Pennsylvania extension. It appears that, for now, local funds will provide a temporary bus connection to the train station in Youngstown while New Castle officials decide how and where to build its own station.
Amtrak and Greyhound Unite

On Nov. 10, after a 17-year absence, Amtrak has finally come back to Columbus with the institution of 3-C Corridor service—well, sort of.

While Amtrak passengers are now riding between Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland, they aren’t doing so on trains. Instead, Greyhound is providing feeder bus service to connect with Amtrak trains at Cleveland. A new joint venture between the two former arch-rival transportation companies use existing Greyhound schedules on six routes nationwide, operate them via Amtrak stations, and Amtrak sells tickets on those buses as if they were part of the Amtrak system.

Tickets are being sold at Amtrak fares. Greyhound gets paid a negotiated amount for each Amtrak ticket it honors. What this means for Ohio travelers heading from, say, Columbus to Boston, is they pay a single Amtrak fare for their entire trip. The first part of their journey is by bus, with the remainder by train (vice-versa for the return trip).

When arriving Cleveland by bus, you pull into Amtrak’s Lakefront station after a brief stop at the Greyhound terminal. Conversely, when arriving Cleveland by train, the connecting bus picks up passengers at the Amtrak station before heading over to the Greyhound terminal. The bus then hops on Interstate 71 towards Columbus and Cincinnati. See the 3-C Corridor Amtrak/Greyhound bus schedule, shown in Timetable #1 below.

The Greyhound station in Columbus is located downtown at 111 East Town Street, at Third Street. In Cincinnati, the Greyhound station is downtown at 1005 Gilbert Avenue.

Also, Amtrak passengers will be carried on a Greyhound bus between Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and Chicago on the days that Amtrak’s thrice-weekly Cardinal does not operate. This bus operates on a schedule which closely resembles that of Amtrak’s Cardinal. The schedule is shown in Timetable #2 below.

At Indianapolis, both Amtrak and Greyhound serve Union Station. For now, buses from Chicago and Cleveland do not operate into Cincinnati’s Amtrak station at Union Terminal. Most of the terminal is used as a museum. Officials at the museum say they are concerned about security, buses interfering with museum patrons, and traffic from buses pulling into the driveway circle in front of the main entrance. However, these concerns appear to be based more on false perceptions.

The Greyhound bus station and Cincinnati Union Terminal are several miles and a $4 cab ride apart. For Chicago—Cincinnati passengers taking the train one way and the bus the other, it is terribly inconvenient to not have the two service using the same station facilities in the Queen City.

It is OARP’s hope that an agreement can be worked out between Amtrak and the museum. Further, we trust that the Cincinnati-Chicago bus is not an attempt to replace the Cardinal. Rather, OARP hopes that this agreement can also help to improve the service that is available to Ohio travelers.

At 11:15 a.m. on Nov. 10, 1996, OARP welcomed the first Amtrak train to the new 3-C Corridor service between Columbus and Cleveland. We urge our members to support this service, which has been a long time in coming.

Travel Alerts

Ohio-Pennsylvania connection remains

Despite the loss of through-coach service between Amtrak’s Capitol Limited and Three Rivers, travelers from Toledo, Elyria, and Cleveland will still be able to reach Pennsylvania and New Jersey cities via Pittsburgh.

Coaches from Chicago were delivered to and from Pittsburgh on the Capitol, then taken from Pittsburgh to New York City and return on the Three Rivers. Connecting passengers didn’t need to exit the train at Pittsburgh.

With the Nov. 10 extension of the Three Rivers to Chicago via Akron, Youngstown, and Fostoria, the through-coach service came to end. However, the schedules of the Capitol and Three Rivers still permit transfers at the Steel City between these trains. Connecting passengers must now exit their trains at Pittsburgh’s Penn Station.

Cleveland RTA extends day pass

For tourists, business travelers, and other Cleveland rail transit riders, RTA has extended the sale of its popular all-day passes indefinitely. The all-day pass program was due to expire Sept. 30.

For $4 per passenger, the all-day pass provides unlimited access to RTA’s rail system, the Red Line, and the RTA bus system. The pass is good for use on the Blue Line and the RTA RapidBus service for an additional $1.
Amtrak® will now serve Columbus and Cincinnati, OH with a brand new motorcoach service connecting to the Capitol Ltd. and Lake Shore Ltd. starting November 10, 1996.

Enjoy state-of-the-art, upscale motorcoach service.

For information and reservations call Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL or your local travel agent.

Cleveland RTA extends day pass

For tourists, business travelers, and other Cleveland rail transit riders, RTA has extended the sale of its popular all-day passes indefinitely. The all-day pass program was due to expire Sept. 30.

For $4 per person, the all-day pass permits unlimited travel on all RTA trains and buses, as long as the travel does not continue past 3 a.m. the next morning.

For more information, call the RTAnswerline at (216) 621-9500.

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Ohio to Join Midwest Direct

“MIDWEST”, from page one

The task to get the state to commit a paltry sum of $50,000 to the Midwest initiative. The state still hasn’t contributed a nickel. That decision won’t be made until Dec. 12, when the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) next again. At the ORDC’s Nov. 14 meeting, the commission merely decided to join the Midwest initiative. In December, the ORDC will fill in the blanks on how much money it will commit.

The Midwest initiative is the creation of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to develop a business plan for the implementation of a Midwest regional rail system. States that have contributed funding—about $50,000 from each—include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. Amtrak has contributed $100,000. Additional funding from the Federal Railroad Administration is being sought.

Midwest Direct’s business plan, to be completed a year from now, will have short- and long-term objectives. In the short term, the plan will focus on improving service efficiency, scheduling connections, and marketing for existing services in the region. The long-term focus will define what type of rail system is desired for the Midwest, and how to finance and manage it. Routes under consideration all focus on Chicago. Two of these lines include Ohio—Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland and Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati.

By developing rail passenger service through a multi-state, collective approach, the participants hope to gain a number of advantages. These include: operating and cost efficiencies, services tailored and responsive to regional needs, create competitive service between Midwest city pairs, and garner a fair share of federal funding via regional influence. Two consulting firms were hired to conduct the study: COMSIS of Silver Spring, MD and TEMS of Frederick, MD.

The process of developing faster, more frequent trains, as envisioned in this effort, appears more realistic than others that have come and gone over the last two decades. Why?

The Midwest plan for developing higher speed trains is predicated on existing rail passenger services. This is the “building-block” approach which OARP advocates. In short, existing rail passenger services are improved and sped up, creating more travel demand, which in turn creates pressures to further expand services and increase speeds.

While Ohio is a late-comer to the Midwest initiative, ORDC Executive Director Tom O’Leary felt confident that if the ORDC formally approved the $50,000 expenditure at the commission’s Dec. 12 meeting, this would get Ohio involved in time to play a meaningful role. The Nov. 14 meeting was the second time that the ORDC took a stand on their participation in Midwest Direct. In September, an ORDC committee shot down the idea before it even got to the full board for a vote.

Interestingly, motivation for the Nov. 14 vote favoring the Midwest initiative did not come from within commission. Rather, it came from the Toledo/Lucas County Port Authority, which offered to pay the $50,000 if the ORDC hadn’t. The port authority said their intention was not to give an ultimatum to the ORDC.

“It wasn’t our finger to their chest,” said James Hartung, president of the Toledo/Lucas County Port Authority. “Toledo is on a natural line, an east west line (linking Cleveland with Chicago). Our position was that we consider it important enough to invest the $50,000.”

That kind of vocal grassroots support, emphasized with dollars, is greatly appreciated by OARP. We also appreciate ‘yes’ votes cast in the Nov. 14 decision by ORDC Board members James Betts, Monsignor Kenneth Grimes, Charles Gerhardt of the Ohio Department of Development (he has resigned due to a change of occupation), Donald Yerks, and Carla Ceffaratti. Mrs. Ceffaratti, deputy director of ODoT’s mass transit division, will discuss the Midwest initiative at the next Columbus local OARP meeting, at 9:30 a.m. Dec. 14 at the Red Door Tavern, 1736 West 5th Avenue...
Routes under consideration all focus on Chicago. Two of these lines include Ohio—Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland and Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati.

By developing rail passenger service through a multi-state, collective approach, the participants hope to gain a number of advantages. These include: operating and cost efficiencies, services tailored and responsive to regional needs, create competitive service between Midwest city pairs, and garner a fair share of federal funding via regional influence. Two consulting firms were...
Toledoans buy train, then Cleveland

By Kenneth Prendergast
OARP Executive Director

Over 265 passengers boarded an Amtrak train for a 9 a.m. departure from the station at Toledo’s beautifully restored Central Union Plaza. That may not seem strange, since Amtrak’s Lake Shore Limited departs Toledo for Chicago near that time.

But it is strange. This train, a four-car Superliner, was instead headed east to Cleveland carrying tourists and shoppers.

The Northwest Ohio Passenger Rail Task Force on Saturday, Oct. 19 sponsored a one-day only special train from Toledo to Cleveland and return. The purpose of the trip was two-fold—to serve as a fundraiser for the association and to promote the addition of more trains to Toledo.

The train was sold out several weeks in advance, despite that there was no advertising—only word of mouth. Tickets went for $69-79 round trip, with five corporate sponsors giving $1,000 each for 10 tickets. While some on board the train appeared to be true railfans, most were families, retired persons, or young couples eager to see the new Great Lakes Science Center, Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame, Tower City Center, and other Cleveland attractions.

After departing Toledo, those aboard the packed train could see the weather deteriorating, but had no idea how miserable a drive it would have been. Gusting winds in excess of 30 mph, horizontal rain, and temperatures in the 40s made for white-knuckle driving. But the passengers could watch the scenery and relax while the train maintained its two-hour schedule between Toledo and Cleveland, cruising along at 79 mph.

OARP supplied a special newsletter to the passengers, detailing the Pennsylvanian extension project, the new light-rail Waterfront Line and things to see and do in Cleveland.

Arriving Cleveland’s Amtrak station in weather more suited for ducks, people scattered in all directions to the things they wanted to see and do.

The blustery, wet weather was no issue as the Amtrak special approached Cleveland on-time.

Trains as Vehicles of Tourism

by Kenneth Prendergast
OARP Executive Director

When you look up and down the 3-C Corridor, most people see Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland. Or, looking at the proposed route for the Pennsylvanian extension, they might think about the huge interstate routes, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, and the state’s investment in better rail service can increase wealth.

Rail can certainly do that, as OARP discovered earlier this year when it conducted an economic impact analysis of two daily round trips on the 3-C Corridor and the extension of Amtrak’s Pennsylvanian west to Toledo (see...
Trains as Vehicles of Tourism
by Kenneth Prendergast
OARP Executive Director

When you look up and down the 3-C Corridor, most people see Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, and Cleveland. Or, looking at the proposed route for the Pennsylvania Extension, they’ll see Youngstown, Cleveland, and Toledo.

While there’s nothing wrong with that, a campaign to promote development of these rail passenger services needs to look at more sources of passenger traffic. The reason for this is that any potential source of ridership should be viewed as a potential advocate of passenger trains.

When it comes to tourism, there’s the Tall Stacks festival and the Cincinnati Observatory in the Queen City, the new downtown art center in Dayton, the Air Force Museum in Fairborn, COSI and the state fair in Columbus, and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the Flats in Cleveland. Those are just a few examples from along the 3-C Corridor’s tracks.

Then there is the Pennsylvania extension’s route. The extension of this New York City-Pittsburgh service would serve the Museum of Labor and Industry in Youngstown, a mecca of antique stores in Ravenna, Cleveland’s tourist destinations, Cedar Point and ferries to the Lake Erie islands in Sandusky, and the excellent art museum and zoo in Toledo.

However, both of Ohio’s seasons—winter and road construction—are a factor in hindering the full potential of our tourism economy. Because trains are guided by rails, they permit reliable travel in the worst that Ohio’s winters can dish out, and they bypass those frustrating orange construction barrels. Trains can help make Ohio’s tourism economy a year-round activity.

How big is tourism in Ohio? According to the Ohio Department of Travel and Tourism, its direct impact on Ohio’s economy was $9.4 billion in 1994, employing 337,000 Ohioans. Our state ranks sixth in the nation in the number of leisure visitors, with more than 71 million visits to Ohio. And tourism continues to grow.

Much the same economic engine exists with conventions, and rail can tap it. Did you know that, in every major city along the 3-C Corridor, the tracks are within sight (if not within a few feet) of their convention centers? There is a tremendous opportunity to move hundreds of conventioners by train to the doorsteps of events, while leaving the weather forecast and orange barrel alerts out of their travel plans.

OARP in the past has touted several benefits of expanded rail service, including more energy efficiency, safety, cleaner air, and less highway congestion. However real those benefits may be, they have not stirred the blood of State House lawmakers who have as much say in Ohio getting more rail service as Amtrak does.

What stirs the blood of our elected leaders? Money. Generally, if an investment by the state won’t create an “acceptable” amount of jobs, business activity and other kinds of wealth, don’t expect the state to make that investment. OARP’s message to lawmakers must demonstrate how the state’s investment in better rail service can increase wealth.

Rail can certainly do that, as OARP discovered earlier this year when it conducted an economic impact analysis of two daily round trips on the 3-C Corridor and the extension of Amtrak’s Pennsylvania west to Toledo (see page 5 in the April 1996 edition of Ohio Passenger Rail News).

Analysis showed those services would annually generate $11.5 million (1994 dollars) in new business activity. Of that, 39 percent, or $4.5 million, would be tourism-related spending at hotels, restaurants, taxis, and travel agencies.

That’s a lot of money from only six daily trains.

The Greater Cleveland Growth Association—the region’s chamber of commerce—has been advocating non-stop Cleveland-London airline service, citing its economic benefits. But the benefits of the 3-C Corridor and Pennsylvania exceed those of the proposed London flights. The Growth Association only recently learned of the trains’ impacts.

In Toledo, once their beautiful Central Union Plaza was rededicated, the Toledo Convention and Visitors Bureau began promoting passenger rail travel to their city. They also began working with OARP to advocate passenger train projects such as the Pennsylvania extension.

So when we talk about developing modern rail passenger rail service, elected officials and business leaders need to hear what trains will do for increasing wealth and the local tax base. This won’t be a full-scale toy train for Ohioans’ amusement, but an economic engine that should be put on the state’s fast track.
Conrail the Prize of Two Railroads

Conrail, once known as a government-assembled collection of failed freight railroads, has rebuilt itself. In fact, it has become such an attractive property that two giants in the railroad industry have engaged in a fierce takeover brawl to win Conrail.

CSX and Conrail first announced their intention to merge as part of a $8.5 billion takeover bid by CSX. Before the dust settled, Norfolk Southern (NS) upped the ante, offering $10 billion for Conrail. Far from unexpected, the battle is now being waged in the courts, with Conrail's stockholders caught in the middle—an enviable position.

While the legal fight will probably drag on for many months—if not longer—it is interesting to consider the implications and possibilities of a merger. Even though NS is the hostile bidder, and assuming it loses in its bid, it will probably win concessions. Where CSX and Conrail are now the only rail competitors, the merger partners are willing to agree to grant competitive access. This would be particularly welcome to NS. For example, in the New York City area, Conrail has almost total control over rail access to ports there. However, in cities like Dayton and Youngstown, the merged CSX/Conrail company would be the only major railroad serving those cities.

The merged company expects to seek operating efficiencies, facility consolidations, overhead rationalization, and other activities, and new traffic volumes earned by enhanced service. CSX and Conrail say there will be some job losses as a result of consolidations and the elimination of

A Banner Day in Galion

GALION—Officials from communities, development agencies, and other interested groups met in Galion as part of OARP's biennial Festival of Stations event. Issues relating to the expansion and modernization of rail passenger services were discussed by a panel of those officials at the Oct. 5 event.

City leaders and residents in this small town west of Mansfield are excited about the economic development potential of 3-C Corridor trains which would pass through and serve the town.

Participating in the panel was James Betts and Tom O'Leary from the Ohio Rail Development Commission, Cleve Ricksecker of Columbus' Hocker and John Renock of Main Street Galion, Inc., who put in months of working out meeting details and sending out invitations with electronic train sounds. OARP Secretary Meg Grey and her husband Larry spent the entire weekend in Galion staffing OARP's information table at the Big Four railway depot. And, of course, OARP's Columbus Regional Coordinator Bob Boyce, who came up with the idea for the first Festival of Stations held in Columbus in 1994, developed plans for this year's meeting.

This and other OARP activities are bringing a great deal of attention to improving passenger rail service. However, they do come with a
I would be the only major railroad serving those cities.

The merged company expects to seek operating efficiencies, facility consolidations, overhead rationalization, and other activities, and new traffic volumes earned by enhanced service. CSX and Conrail say there will be some job losses as a result of consolidations and the elimination of redundancies. This means that some parallel line segments will be threatened, though probably not to the extent of previous rail mergers affecting Ohio.

"With a greater diversity of routes serving key markets, particularly in the high-traffic regions of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Illinois, different categories of traffic—manifest and intermodal—can be directed to different routes, reducing delays and creating substantial new capacity," CSX and Conrail said in a press release.

From a passenger rail perspective, this could be welcome news, depending on which routes are selected for intermodal and manifest freight traffic. If the faster intermodal traffic is focused on heavily-populated routes where passenger trains would perform best, then rail passengers could benefit.

Conrail and CSX did have something to say about their merger's impact on passenger trains. "More passenger trains use the combined Conrail and CSX rail system than any other in the U.S.," the press release said. "These passengers include not only Amtrak riders, but also commuters in the Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. Freight and passenger trains share the same routes in these areas. Coordination of freight traffic in these areas will reduce delays and increase service quality.

"And—for the first time since the creation of Conrail 20 years ago—it will be possible to begin to separate freight and passenger trains on different lines in some of these congested urban centers," the release continued. "Similar options may exist in other parts of the combined system, as hard-pressed urban centers turn to rail transportation to relieve highway congestion, save scarce public resources and improve air quality."

Both CSX and Conrail have stated in the past their desire to get passenger trains off their tracks and onto dedicated, passenger-only lines. If the merger goes through—in whatever form—CSX, Conrail, and NS will have more tracks to play with, and more routing choices where different forms of traffic can be segregated.

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Tom Allen, Treasurer; 752 Braumiller Road; Delaware OH 43015. The TRAM annual listing fee entitles you to list your CITY, the NAME OF YOUR AGENCY, one LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, one LONG DISTANCE PHONE NUMBER, and the name of one CONTACT at the agency. Renewals will be billed by the Treasurer.

Updated: November, 1996

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513 / 677-3330

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Tom Allen, Treasurer; 752 Braumiller Road; Delaware OH 43015. The TRAM annual listing fee entitles you to list your CITY, the NAME OF YOUR AGENCY, one LOCAL PHONE NUMBER, one LONG DISTANCE PHONE NUMBER, and the name of one CONTACT at the agency. Renewals will be billed by the Treasurer.

Updated: November, 1996
OARP Calendar of Events/Meetings

December 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact person &amp; telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Columbus Local Meeting</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Red Door Tavern</td>
<td>1736 West 5th Avenue</td>
<td>Bob Boyce 614 / 486-7038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ORDC -- Committee Mtg</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Riffe Center</td>
<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>614 / 644-0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORDC -- Full Commission</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Riffe Center</td>
<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>614 / 644-0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Oregon Municipal Bldg.</td>
<td>5330 Seaman Road</td>
<td>Larry George 416 / 698-2167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

January 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact person &amp; telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ORDC -- Committee Mtg</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Riffe Center</td>
<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>614 / 644-0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORDC -- Full Commission</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>614 / 644-0306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Columbus Local Meeting</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Red Door Tavern</td>
<td>1736 West 5th Avenue</td>
<td>Bob Boyce 614 / 486-7038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Oregon Municipal Bldg.</td>
<td>5330 Seaman Road</td>
<td>Larry George 419 / 698-2167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>OARP Board Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Westerville Public Library</td>
<td>126 South State Street</td>
<td>Mark Carlson 216 / 331-3161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Toledo Central Union Plaza Rededication

Toledo Central Union Plaza and Amtrak Station shows off its glimmer during its rededication weekend Sept. 21-22. The facility was rebuilt by the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority using a mixture of funds totalling $8.3 million.