Major expansion of Amtrak?

Increases may affect the region

More Amtrak train and bus service is due to arrive in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, perhaps as early as this year. This expansion is being sought to handle sharp increases in passenger travel, as well as enormous growth in mail and package express shipments.

Residents, tourists, city officials, and business leaders in these states ought to welcome the new transportation services with open arms. For too long, travelers have had to deal with the frustrations of road construction, bad weather and the increasing complexities of airports. This surely has held back economic growth in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

Most of the new services being sought would add to existing routes. However, one would serve an important travel corridor that has lacked passenger rail service for nearly 30 years. First on the horizon is the Pennsylvania International and

STOPPING FOR PASSENGERS, NOT FOR SNOW. A strong rail passenger market exists in this region, as evidenced by the popularity of recent, special trains. This train shown above, stopping November 1997 in Painesville OH, must satisfy the market's interest. Despite 10 inches of snowfall in a few hours time, this train was able to maintain 79 mph speeds.

Amtrak prez answers MARP complaints on scheduling

About a week before his surprise Dec. 10 resignation, Amtrak President Tom Downs replied to MARP's complaint against the company's Oct. 26 schedule changes to its Michigan services. The following is from identical letters written Dec. 2 to MARP Chairman James Riley and Executive Director John DeLora.

"As you know, Amtrak is facing a severe financial crisis that requires difficult, but necessary business decisions affecting both system and state supported trains such as Amtrak Intercity's International and anticipates assuming $100 million in borrowing during fiscal year 1998. In addition, the Presidential Emergency Board overseeing the dispute with the BMWE [Brother-
travelers have had to deal with the frustrations of road construction, bad weather and the increasing complexities of airports. This surely has held back economic growth in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio.

Most of the new services being sought would add to existing routes. However, one would serve an important travel corridor that has lacked passenger rail service for nearly 30 years.

First on the horizon is the Pennsylvanian extension. The Pennsylvanian is an existing service between New York City, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Altoona, Pittsburgh, and a dozen smaller cities en route. Amtrak is looking at extending the service west to Cleveland, Toledo, South Bend, and Chicago. Meanwhile, it would shorten the other end by making Philadelphia the train's eastern terminus.

According to Amtrak's business plan, the company wanted to extend the Pennsylvanian in May. However, delays in implementing its package express program have forced Amtrak to postpone that desired start-up date. A new start-up goal has not been determined. Amtrak has not yet gotten permission to route the service over Conrail's Pittsburgh-Chicago tracks. Because no agreement exists with Conrail, Amtrak of-

---See “AMTRAK” page Five---

STOPPING FOR PASSENGERS, NOT FOR SNOW. A strong rail passenger market exists in this region, as evidenced by the popularity of recent, special trains. Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Until then, special demonstration trains shown above, stopping November 1997 in Painesville OH, must satisfy the market's interest. Despite 16 inches of snowfall in a few hours time, this train was able to maintain 79 mph speeds.

NARP Region 6 meeting set for March 7 in Detroit

NARP’s Region 6 (IN, MI, OH) meeting will be held at 8:30 am, Saturday, March 7 in Detroit. See article on page four for details.

What's Inside...

- "Train of Thought"
- Clinton's Budget to hurt Amtrak
- Michigan station profile
- Tragic transit happens
- Cincy transit happenings
- Fostoria station opens, Akron next
- OARP loses three friends
Train of Thought
from OARP Executive Director
Kenneth Prendergast

Someone said to me a few years ago: “Wouldn’t it be great if Amtrak did not have to wait around for financial support from states before it could expand rail passenger services?”

My response was something like: “Yeah, it would be great. So would winning the lottery.”

Folks, it appears our winning number has come up.

The lottery winnings, in this case, are revenues from mail and package express hauled by Amtrak passenger trains. Not only are they helping these trains to vastly improve their financial performance, but they are permitting Amtrak to consider expanding service, as noted in the lead stories of this newsletter.

The Pennsylvania could be extended to Chicago via Cleveland, Toledo and South Bend in May. The Lake Shore Limited might become two separate trains. Even sooner, the Cardinal, between Cincinnati and Chicago, may be carrying package express and a new sleeper service.

Most amazing – and welcome – is that the Ohio Rail Development Commission and Amtrak are talking about acquiring a large sum of mail/express cars. This would be done in exchange for 3-C Corridor services that are free of operating subsidies from the state.

This is not to say that coming up a winner doesn’t have its drawbacks. Lottery winners complain that every door-to-door solicitor in the world seems to have descended on their front porch. Their mail boxes are suddenly stuffed with mail from friends they never knew they had. And, the media and telemarketers have somehow gotten hold of their newly unlisted telephone numbers.

With trains, not everything is rosy with boxes of mail or soup being carried behind the same locomotives as college students, business travelers, and tourists. Passenger trains laden with mail and express shipments are already requiring slower schedules, as longer dwell times are added at stations which contribute large amounts of package shipments.

Some of it can be excused. The rest can be avoided.

At Chicago, for example, arriving trains stop short of Union Station in a rail yard while crews spend a half-hour uncoupling express cars from the train. Never before have I seen this as a standard practice at any train’s endpoint city. It’s time for change.
WANTED
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 5¼" or 3¼" 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!

The Passenger Rail News
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Lakewood OH 44107-2161

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Region loses a great advocate of passenger rail

By Mark Carlson
OARP President

It is with great sadness that I must report OARP has lost one of its most dependable members and friends. On Jan. 26, Larry George of Toledo, died suddenly of congestive heart failure.

Too often, you realize what someone meant to you after they’re gone. During Larry’s funeral, however, I realized just how much he meant to Northwest Ohio. The outpouring of sadness from the entire community was nothing short of awesome. I am proud he considered me as one of his friends.

First, let me tell you what happened. In Feb. 1997, Larry sent to me a letter when he was OARP’s Area 419 Director. With much regret, he stated he must resign from the board of directors due to health problems. Larry didn’t elaborate on his medical condition. Later, he told me his doctor ordered him to stop all stressful activities — including OARP.

Funny thing is, Larry couldn’t stay away from “The Cause” he loved. In fact, the issues of the Amtrak prez answers MARP complaints on scheduling

— “ANSWERS”, from page one

performance while allowing the Chicago/Detroit trains to remain part of our national system. A number of considerations were factored into this decision including positive impacts on marketing, operating, scheduling, on-time performance, revenue and overall responsiveness to ridership. Minimal time changes have been made in the International and Pere Marquette schedules.

day caused Larry to actually increase his activities. He was calling Executive Director Ken Prendergast and me more often than ever. Actually, he became more involved after resigning his post...and we were concerned.

I once asked him about his medical condition. “Oh that?, that’s over with,” he replied. “It was a misdiagnosis.”

A few months ago, Larry decided he wanted to get officially involved again by running for vice-president. On Monday, Jan. 26, after getting signatures for his nominating petition, Larry became ill and was rushed to Toledo Hospital where he died. He was only 54.

I came to know Larry over 10 years ago during OARP meetings, when he would encourage us to take a stand on the increasingly sorry state of Toledo’s aging Central Union Terminal. During lulls in those meetings, he would telephone his friend Hank Harvey, now retired as a reporter for the Toledo Blade, to satisfy Hank’s news deadlines.

Larry and Hank started the drive for what eventually became a $9 million renovation of a rusty fossil into Central Union Plaza — easily Ohio’s most attractive permanent garden and memorial at the station has been suggested by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Ohio Rep. Sally Perz, and OARP.

However, for those who knew Larry only through OARP is to know only a part of him. I’d like to share a few more personal details of the man.

Larry is survived by his first family: wife, Rosemary; daughter, Helen Webb; sons, Lawrence, Jr. and Michael; father, Thomas; sister, Barbara Keyser; brother, Thomas, Jr.; nine grandchildren, and a great-grandson.

And, he is survived by an association of railroad passengers, many of whom know from Larry George just how strong his heart really was, and how great a man can be. We will miss you, my friend...

Unfortunately, two other notable deaths occurred in recent months. Barbara A. Brown, an OARP member who was a planner for the Ohio Rail Development Commission, passed away in December. She was ORDC’s passenger rail specialist.

churches. Also, Larry was a volunteer at Maumee Bay State Park, where he once proudly took me to show the exhibits, facilities, and the boardwalk where he had once walked off 140 pounds. A retired police and fire dispatcher for Oregon OH, Larry was also a former volunteer firefighter. Most importantly, he was a devout family man.

Such family and civic involvement drew a funeral procession that was nearly a half-mile long. The procession rolled past much of his life — crossing a railroad, passing his high school, his employment, the former site of local OARP meetings, and the firehouse where the flag was at half-staff with the volunteers’ siren singing in his honor.

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— "ANSWERS", from page one —

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The State of Michigan has invested heavily in the Pontiac/Detroit corridor to reduce running times. Unfortunately the industry has changed and on-time performance dropped from 60% to 40% after service was extended to Pontiac. The original Chicago/Detroit schedule did not accurately reflect real running times and the Pontiac extension compounded the problem.

Other considerations affecting the increased running times include the following: change in assigned locomotive power from F40's to Dash-8 locomotives (the Dash-8 locomotives are more reliable and more economical to operate) and FRA Emergency Order # 20 (delayed-in-block rule at station stops) have created a noticeable increase in running times.

In addition, as most of the railroad is single track, the schedules have been designed to better utilize the number of control sidings on the Amtrak line. The new schedule makes the necessary adjustments to reflect a realistic achievable schedule, which will result in improved customer satisfaction.

Greenfield Village remains an important stop which all Chicago/Detroit trains will still serve. Unfortunately, we cannot afford the excessive operating losses associated with this corridor in relation to actual and anticipated revenue. We will lose some revenue in Michigan as a result of implementing these changes, but overall, we will benefit by better use of this equipment in other areas of our system.

"For example, under the schedule that was in effect prior to October 26, 1997, one set of equipment consisting of four coaches and a cafe car operated for approximately 6-7 hours per day, waiting 20-21 hours for turns. With better equipment utilization we can increase revenues generated by that same equipment by as much as 33%, while improving the financial performance of the Michigan service.

"The running time from Pontiac to Detroit is approximately 60 minutes, while the drive time is about 30 minutes. The number of people moving by train from Pontiac to Detroit over last year is negligible, consisting of 231 passengers on train 350 and 226 passengers on train 355.

"Under the current schedule we have too many cars chasing too little revenue. By reducing the number of cars, we reduce the maintenance costs, increasing revenue and ultimately meeting the needs of most of our customers.

Larry and Hank started the drive for what eventually became a $9 million renovation of a rusty fossil into Central Union Plaza—easily Ohio's permanent garden and memorial at the station has been suggested by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur, Ohio Rep. Sally Perz, and OARP.

However, for those who knew Larry only through OARP is to know only a part of him. I'd like to share with you the Larry George that I knew. Through his other volunteer activities, we learn of the man he really was.

He was busy with model railroad activities. He was a Eucharistic minister at two Toledo-area parishes and a parishioner of St. Peter's Catholic Church. He was a past president of the National Railroaders Association and a past member of OARP who was a planner for the Ohio Rail Development Commission, passed away in January. She was ORDC's passenger rail specialist.

Also, OARP member Robert L. Yahn, of Columbus, passed away in January. Our sympathies go out to the friends and families of Barb Brown, Rob Yahn, and Larry George.

"Amtrak is most appreciative of the State's past and ongoing capital contributions to the corridor. The State's financial assistance is helping us improve the corridor's overall performance, but ultimately more immediate measures such as these schedule changes are necessary if these trains are to remain part of Amtrak's national system.

"I know you appreciate the hard business decisions that Amtrak must make in order to improve our financial condition while delighting our passengers. I appreciate your interest and support," Mr. Downs concluded.

MARP replies to Mr. Downs

Mr. Downs' letter is riddled with errors. For starters, the schedule change does not affect equipment turns at all. Secondly, even though Greenfield Village remains in the schedule, it is highly unlikely any group will use the stop for a 1 hour, 40 minute visit. MARP is preparing a full response for Mr. Downs' successor.
Traficant seeking more Amtrak service through Youngstown

By Kenneth Prendergast
OARP Executive Director

Youngstown will unfortunately be left out of Amtrak's Pennsylvanian extension. As noted in the lead story of this newsletter, the Pennsylvanian could be extended west of Pittsburgh to Chicago via Cleveland as early as May.

The service is slated to bypass Youngstown, using the route of Amtrak's Chicago-Washington DC Capitol Limited through Alliance, Ohio. Until a track connection linking Conrail and CSX mainlines in Ravenna is built, no Pittsburgh-Cleveland train can run via Youngstown.

Cost of restoring the so-called Ravenna Connection was estimated in 1996 by the Ohio Rail Development Commission to be $4 million. The Ravenna Connection was ripped out by Conrail during the recession of the early-1980s. Conrail still owns the land.

While OARP has wanted to have the Pennsylvanian routed via Youngstown, we do not wish to delay the train's extension until the Ravenna Connection can be built. OARP supports keeping the Capitol Limited operating through Alliance, which has about 25,000 people and is close to Canton. However, the Youngstown-Warren-New Castle area boasts more than 600,000 people, which is why the Pennsylvanian should serve it.

Recently I wrote to a number of state, federal, and Amtrak officials, asking that they locate funds to restore the Ravenna Connection. First to respond was U.S. Rep. James Traficant, Jr. (D-Youngstown).

"I appreciate the benefit of...the excellent work the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers continues to do. I have long recognized the importance of the Ravenna Connection to the expansion of passenger rail service to the Youngstown area," Congressman Traficant wrote.

"In fact, prior to Amtrak's decision to resume daily service to Youngstown in May (1997) via Amtrak's Three Rivers train, I had been working closely with Amtrak, Conrail, CSX, the Federal Railroad Administration and the Ohio Rail Development Commission on the Ravenna Connection. I was able to get an initial appropriation in 1996 of $200,000 for an FRA study feasibility study of the project. However, once Amtrak resumed service to Youngstown, those funds were reprogrammed.

"In my view, the potential takeover of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern presents an opportunity to have the Ravenna Connection financed largely by the private sector. If the merger is approved by the Surface Transportation Board, I intend to work closely with CSX on a plan to build the connection. One scenario would involve CSX financing most of the cost of the project, with the Ohio Rail Development Commission and the FRA providing the remainder. I also intend to closely examine other possible ways to finance this important initiative," Congressman Traficant said.

NARP Region 6 meeting set for March in Detroit

The NARP Region 6 (IN, MI, OH) meeting will be held in Detroit on Saturday, March 7 at the St. Regis Hotel. It will run from 8:30 a.m. to about 4:30 p.m.

The St. Regis Hotel is at 3071 West Grand Boulevard, at Woodward Avenue, two blocks from the Detroit Amtrak station. MichARP (MARP) will provide free transportation from the Detroit Amtrak station to the hotel for anyone arriving Friday night or Saturday morning. Please indicate on your reservation whether you will need transportation, and if so, on which train or Thruway bus you will be arriving.

Registration fee of $25.00 includes lunch. Checks should be payable to MARP, and mailed to: P.O. Box 594, St. Clair Shores, MI 48080. Reservations must be received by March 3, 1998.

The theme of the meeting will be "Developing Intermodal Service." We have an outstanding list of speakers:

- Al Martin, Director of the Detroit Department of Transportation. Mr. Martin has wide experience at the local, regional and statewide levels in planning and operating local transit. He will discuss the issues involving in linking local transit to intercity service.
- Sally Billups, representative of the Michigan Environmental Council. She will discuss the economic and environmental importance of being able to make easy connections among transportation modes.
- Philip Kazmierski, Deputy Director of the Michigan Transportation Department. Mr. Kazmierski is responsible for all local transit, regional transportation, rail freight and rail passenger services, as well as non-motorized transportation. He will discuss the issues involved in trying to provide integrated transportation.

We will then be transported downtown for a private tour of Detroit's Trolley line and then onto other transportation opportunities.
Derail Amtrak, Vranich asserts

By Ed D'Amato, OARP Member

Should we get rid of Amtrak? Joseph Vranich's recent book: Derailed: What Went Wrong and What to Do About America's Passenger Trains harshly indict Amtrak. It also argues for completely shutting it down, liquidating its assets, and replacing it with something new.

To Mr. Vranich's credit, he does want more and better passenger rail service in America, and he argues passionately for it. What he questions, however, is whether or not Amtrak should be the vehicle for accomplishing that goal.

I am sure it can be agreed upon that Amtrak has not been a well-managed endeavor. But Mr. Vranich feels that it has been a colossal failure. Although he notes that chronic, abysmal underfunding and congressional interference has plagued Amtrak since its inception, he feels that Amtrak has been its own worst enemy.

His basic solution has several elements. First of all, the Northeast Corridor should be owned and maintained by the states it serve, and its operations should be privatized. Similar arrangements should replace other existing corridors like Detroit-Chicago and Seattle-Eugene. The fact that the Guilford Rail Corporation offered to buy the Northeast Corridor in 1997 suggests to Mr. Vranich that there is room for some level of privatization.

(Editor note: Amtrak has been involved in a bit-
ter dispute over the use of Guilford's tracks into Maine, a route over which Guilford has never sought to run passenger trains. Guilford has traditionally viewed passenger trains as a hindrance).

Secondly, Mr. Vranich feels that running conventional, long distance, common-carrier passenger trains on freight lines is an outdated notion that isn't worth the public expenditure anymore. He argues that Amtrak's long distance trains are chronic money losers and serve only an infinitesimal share of the travel market, but he acknowledges their usefulness for leisure travel.

What he suggests is that Amtrak's long distance service should be replaced by "land cruise" trains operated by private companies like American Orient Express and Rocky Mountaineer Rail Tours. In the few areas where long distance trains are necessity (for example, winter travel between North Dakota cities and Minneapolis), their management should be replaced by state initiatives, he said. Amtrak's equipment could be sold off for all of these purposes as well as for state-run commuter trains.

That pretty much eliminates what Amtrak does. So, what involvement does Mr. Vranich believe there should be at the national level for passenger rail? He said he feels federal money should be spent on public-private partnerships to development high-speed TGV and Maglev corridors. Also, he said he believes there are several corridors in the U.S.
Major expansion of Amtrak?

"AMTRAK", from page one

Officials say the extension is not yet a done deal. There are signs that suggest it may be approaching, however. For example, training classes were scheduled in January and February for employees to work the Pennsylvanian extension. Also, Amtrak has sent to employees preliminary sales information about the new service, such as that it will be an all-reserved train.

Neither MARP nor OARP have heard of specific plans for a Michigan bus connection to the Pennsylvanian extension at Toledo. Still, we would be very surprised if this was not in Amtrak's plans. Currently, Amtrak runs connecting buses, complete with through ticketing, between existing Amtrak trains at Toledo, and Michigan Amtrak stations in Detroit, Dearborn, Ann Arbor and East Lansing.

Amtrak has come up with a model schedule for the Pennsylvanian extension, and is very similar to the one printed in the last issue of The Passenger Rail News. Bear in mind that only a few of the cities to be served by the extension are mentioned in this article.

Being considered are dawn departures out of both Chicago and Philadelphia. Eastbound, this would have the train serving both Toledo and Cleveland during the mid-day hours. Arrival in Pittsburgh would be during the afternoon rush hour, and Philadelphia around midnight.

Westbound, following a morning departure from Philadelphia's 30th Street Station, it would leave Pittsburgh in the mid-afternoon, Cleveland at supper time, Toledo in the evening, and arriving Chicago at 10:15 a.m.

At present, the westbound Cardinal leaves Cincinnati Union Terminal for Chicago at 1:55 a.m. on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings, stopping in Indianapolis for 30 minutes, from 5:35-6:05 a.m. It arrives downtown Chicago at 10:15 a.m.

Eastbound trips depart Chicago at 7:40 p.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, pausing in Indianapolis from 1:25-1:55 a.m., and arriving Cincinnati at 5:25 a.m. on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. The Cardinal then continues on to Charleston WV and Washington DC.

Arriving the Queen City, the sleeper, with its passengers still tucked safely aboard, would be

Expanded passenger service on Ohio's 3-C Corridor may depend upon more than just the passage of time and economic changes. CSX's double-tracking of 40 miles of track from Toledo to Cleveland is expected to be completed by the end of 1998.

Two other expansions are being considered, but Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari cautioned that these are far from becoming a reality. Thus, he said he would only be speculating if he were to give any details on them at this time.

Amtrak and the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) continue to discuss ways that passenger rail service can be introduced in the Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati (3-C Corridor). While discussions between Amtrak and the state of Ohio have been continuing intermittently for almost 30 years, innovative funding scenarios now being reviewed offer a glimmer of hope.

Seeking 3-C Corridor passenger rail service was listed as a specific goal in the ORDC's enabling legislation. Thus, OARP members should find some solace that the ORDC is sticking to its legislative mandate.

Finally, a split of the Lake Shore Limited has been rumored for more than a decade. Currently, the Lake Shore consists of a single train between Chicago, South Bend, Toledo, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Albany. At Albany, the train now splits into two sections. One train heads for Boston while the other heads south along the Hudson River into New York City. Westbound, the process is reversed, with the Boston and New York sections combining into a single train at Albany for the 800-mile trip to Chicago.

Theoretically, the Lake Shore split would create two separate trains, all the way from the East Coast to Chicago. If it ever does happen, it would have to be scheduled to accommodate more business. CSX's double-tracking of 40 miles of track from Toledo to Cleveland is expected to be completed by the end of 1998.
Being considered are dawn departures out of both Chicago and Philadelphia. Eastbound, this would have the train serving both Toledo and Cleveland during the mid-day hours. Arrival in Pittsburgh would be during the afternoon rush hour, and Philadelphia around midnight.

Westbound, following a morning departure from Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station, it would leave Pittsburgh in the mid-afternoon, Cleveland at supper time, Toledo in the evening, and arriving Chicago close to midnight.

Next step for expansion could be Amtrak’s thrice-weekly Cardinal, linking Chicago, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Charleston, and Washington D.C., which could soon be getting a boost. A railroad company is developing a sleeper service to piggyback on to the Cardinal’s overnight run between Cincinnati and Chicago. An official for the company ask that they not be named.

- “Vranich”, from page four —
ticians possess, and he never mentioned the power which highway interests have had in keeping our transportation dollars away from trains.

Those flaws aside, I believe that at least some of what Mr. Vranich says is legitimate and his book should not be dismissed. There is one thing that we all must keep in mind. Even with the reprieve Amtrak was given last autumn, its troubles are far from over. This may very well be its last chance, and if it doesn’t succeed in the next few years, we could see it shut down. If that happens, some new thinking such as Mr. Vranich’s may be necessary. Personally, I don’t care where our trains come from, as long as we get reliable, usable service.

Mr. D’Amato is an OARP member in Columbus, OH. Book reviews do not necessarily represent the stated policies of OARP’s Board of Directors.

Switched out of the Cardinal. Sleeping car customers could rest for a couple more hours in their beds, long after the train has left for Washington.

Westbound passengers could board the sleeping car about midnight. When the Cardinal comes into town, the sleeper and its snoozing passengers could then be picked up by the train and taken to Chicago. Package express shipments may also be hauled by the Cardinal in the coming months.

At 5:30 p.m., with the plane going nowhere, passengers can see empty airport gates; at 9:53, the ailing passenger (heart attack victim) is taken off the plane; at 10:20, the pilot tells passengers they will be able to get off via a ladder, but 41 minutes later says no one is around to operate the necessary equipment.”

“After midnight, passengers were still at the airport getting vouchers for overnight stays in hotels,” the AP said. Another 250 were stranded overnight at O’Hare. Some Christmas present. Perhaps Mr. Vranich should have taken Amtrak?
Why the sudden expansion?

By Ken Prendergast
OARP Executive Director

Several months ago, congressional leaders and special interest groups were wrangling over the future of Amtrak. Many wondered aloud if passenger trains had a future. But, while all that was going on, outside of Amtrak's control, something fascinating was going on inside.

Mid-level management at the financially strapped railroad were being instructed to go out into the hinterlands and find new business. They had to hustle in finding more revenue sources, and ignore the fact that the company might fail if they failed.

The reasoning was simple. It's called acting like a business. Amtrak was already being left for dead, anyway. So, if those managers came up with new passenger and mail/package express business, only to see the company pulled out from under their feet, the end would still be the same.

This philosophy was borne out in the fact that, while Amtrak's grave was being dug by political pundits, the company was buying or leasing hundreds of mail handling cars, express boxcars, and Roadtrailers (truck trailers with removable steel wheels).

More evidence of Amtrak's hoping for the best came in November, when mail/express manager Ed Ellis was promoted to a newly created post—vice president of mail and express. A team of managers was appointed to work alongside him. Mr. Ellis came to Amtrak from RailTex only a year before. His experience from freight railroads, motor carriers, or intermodal units.

Of course, there was still a chance Amtrak might survive. If Congress came through with a proposed $2.3 billion rescue package, complete with

would be like pouring water on rich, seeded soil. With $2 billion now in hand and new business already blossoming, the stage was set for Amtrak's operations to expand by an order of magnitude unseen since its creation 27 years ago.

For much of the past year, the goal has been to acquire as much mail and package express business as possible. To keep costs low, the new shipments were being hauled by existing passenger trains. This plan, now almost fully realized, has
More evidence of Amtrak's hoping for the best came in November, when mail/express manager Ed Ellis was promoted to a newly created post—vice president of mail and express. A team of managers was appointed to work alongside him. Mr. Ellis came to Amtrak from RailTex only a year before. His management team also is comprised of people with experience from freight railroads, motor carriers, or intermodal units.

Of course, there was still a chance Amtrak might survive. If Congress came through with a proposed $2.3 billion rescue package, complete with reforms to free Amtrak of many regulations, it could help boost the prospects for building light-rail transit in the capital city.

Mr. Barnes was the #2 man for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, where one of his last big projects was to oversee the construction of the $55 million light-rail Waterfront Line. Mr. Barnes left behind in Cleveland a transit system which carried 61 million people in 1997, for COTA which carried 18 million. Also, while Cleveland RTA has a permanent, countywide, 1-percentage sales tax, COTA has a temporary, 1/4-percentage sales tax.

In Columbus, the transit agency is seeking permanent, local funding, but the community hasn't yet decided what the future of COTA should be. Should it include light-rail, commuter rail, community circulator buses, or other features? Central Ohio OARP members are continuing to make their voices heard on these important developments.

COTA gets new chief

Ron Barnes, 48, was recently named general manager of the Central Ohio Transit Authority, and could help boost the prospects for building light-rail transit in the capital city.

Mr. Barnes was the #2 man for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, where one of his last big projects was to oversee the construction of the $55 million light-rail Waterfront Line. Mr. Barnes left behind in Cleveland a transit system which carried 61 million people in 1997, for COTA which carried 18 million. Also, while Cleveland RTA has a permanent, countywide, 1-percentage sales tax, COTA has a temporary, 1/4-percentage sales tax.

In Columbus, the transit agency is seeking permanent, local funding, but the community hasn't yet decided what the future of COTA should be. Should it include light-rail, commuter rail, community circulator buses, or other features? Central Ohio OARP members are continuing to make their voices heard on these important developments.

It would be easy to criticize Amtrak management for taking so long to realize the importance of hauling mail/express. But, times were very different during the 1970s and, like a welfare recipient, the complacent company became dependent on federal grants.

Amtrak is now being forced to fight for revenues, or else it won't survive past 2002. There is no way Amtrak can generate the kind of revenues it needs to break even by relying on just one train a day on most routes. Similarly, it cannot continue to ignore important markets like the 3-C Corridor, routes south and east from Detroit, and routes east from the St. Louis gateway.

If many of the proposed expansions take place (see lead article), the role of the passenger rail advocate will probably have to change. We have been preservationists for too long. Now, we may have to become more analytical, critical, and forward thinking. Those are roles we should happily embrace.
Cincinnati transit happenings

Much rail transit-related activity is occurring in Cincinnati, most of which surrounds the Interstate 71 Corridor Study. As many OARP members know, this study is looking at what transportation investments should be made in the 33-mile corridor between the Cincinnati International Airport in Covington, KY and King’s Island.

Conducting the study is the consulting firm Burgess & Niple Ltd., for the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Council of Governments (OKI). Light-rail transit generally is considered to be the favored transportation investment by many OKI officials, but a couple other modes are still in the running. More study results are due this spring.

In preparation for a mass transit investment (either a busway or light-rail alignment), the Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority (SORTA) continues to acquire right-of-way on the Ohio side of the river.

Its latest purchase totalled 10 miles of the Blue Ash Line, once a property of the Pennsylvania Railroad, running northeast of downtown Cincinnati. Total mileage now under SORTA ownership is 13 miles—or about one-third of the I-71 Corridor’s mileage. The Cincinnati Enquirer editorialized in support of the land acquisition.

Another bit of good news is that, on the Kentucky end of the I-71 Corridor, the main proponent of building a monorail (instead of light rail) has gotten himself into legal hot water.

Seems that Bill Butler, head of bid packages for building a new multi-million-dollar courthouse a day before the bids were to be opened. Butler’s company won the construction contract, and his competitors are suing.

Hopefully, Butler will be too pre-occupied with the lawsuit to worry about pushing his billion-dollar monorail on the wary public. According to OKI surveys, light rail is preferred by 69 percent of residents in Greater Cincinnati.

Finally, Citizens Transit Alliance, a new association representing the public’s interest in Cincinnati-area light rail, has released a full-color brochure. While those on the Ohio end of the I-71 Corridor are favoring light rail, Kentuckians still are battling Butler and his monorail idea to link Greater Cincinnati with the airport.

Membership in CTA is open to all, not just Kentucky residents. To request a limited supply of these brochures, contact Citizens Transit Alliance, Inc. at P.O. Box 17605, Covington, KY 41017-6305.

Clinton’s budget to hurt Amtrak

Is the fight never over? President Bill Clinton’s 1999 Budget proposal looks to be a bad one for Amtrak. The National Association of Railroad Passengers, along with MARP and OARP are complaining that the president’s budget request would break an agreement made with rail passengers, Amtrak, labor and the Congress only several months ago.

The Budget Request would fund Amtrak’s operating grant entirely from out of the $2.3 billion in capital funding in the Taxpayer Relief Act passed in 1997. This would short-change Amtrak by depriving it much needed capital funding, which the Clinton Administration acknowledged last fall was so important. Despite President Clinton’s recent support for Amtrak, the budget request would create yet another crisis for Amtrak.

Perhaps the only good news from President Clinton’s budget is that it calls for increasing from $60 to $165 the monthly transit fare that an employer could provide tax-free.

But, the Amtrak amount is totally unacceptable. Please send letters to these four people—the president, your two senators, and your representative! Urge them to honor last year’s budget agreement on Amtrak, which barely provides for adequate capital and operating funding of Amtrak. Tell them President Clinton’s budget proposal would unravel that agreement and possibly kill Amtrak.

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

The President
of the Blue Ash Line, once a property of the Pennsylvania Railroad, running northeast of downtown Cincinnati. Total mileage now under SORTA ownership is 13 miles—or about one-third of the I-71 Corridor’s mileage. The Cincinnati Enquirer editorialized in support of the land acquisition.

Another bit of good news is that, on the Kentucky end of the I-71 Corridor, the main proponent of building a monorail (instead of light rail) has gotten himself into legal hot water.

Seems that Bill Butler, head of Corporex Companies, peeked at some

CINCINNATI GETS LIGHT-RAIL TRANSIT! Thanks to computer imagery, a Dallas Area Rapid Transit light-rail train can be seen traveling northbound on Main Street at 6th Street in downtown Cincinnati. Dallas’ system opened in 1996, with ridership above projections. Hopefully, Greater Cincinnati will be equally as successful in getting light-rail transit rolling in their town.

Fostoria’s Amtrak station reopens, Akron coming next

By Robert Boyce
OARP Columbus Area Coordinator

OARP helped celebrate the return of Amtrak service to the Fostoria station on Dec. 17. Eight members from central Ohio with “Welcome Back Amtrak” signs and banners were on hand for the noon celebration conducted by Mayor Jim Bailey and Tom O’Leary, Executive Director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

Amtrak’s Three Rivers trains began Fostoria stops on Monday, Dec. 15 at 2:47 a.m., eastbound, and 4 a.m., westbound. First aboard was a Tiffin couple bound for California to visit their daughter.

OARP member Harold Zweifel, who was invited to join speakers at the microphone, told the group of 300 or so persons that “ridership is what will keep this train going.” Fostoria Safety Director Ron Reinhard joked that he awoke every day wondering what Mr. Zweifel would be calling to see what was happening to the station’s renovation.

Lang, manager of government affairs for Amtrak Intercity; Paul J. LaClair, Eastern Business Group service manager, and sales manager Frank Stoy. Central Ohio OARP members in addition to Mr. Zweifel were Karl Gelfer, Larry and Meg Grey, John Manning, Pat Paterson, Bob Rietz, and myself.

The CSX-owned depot, which was opened in 1907 by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, underwent some 1,500 hours of renovation by 50 volunteers to serve as a stop for Amtrak’s Broadway Limited from Nov. 1990 to Sept. 1995.

The original station included a general waiting room, ladies’ waiting room and men’s smoking room. When Amtrak discontinued the Broadway, CSX occupied the passenger area for its own use. Upon resumption of service with the Three Rivers trains last year, CSX agreed to lease a small adjoining unused utility room to the city for a passenger stop.

The rail commission granted $12,500 for the

latest renovation, which resulted in a clean, pleasant place to wait with restrooms and telephone service. A convenient lighted parking lot is across the tracks from the station. Evert Pruitt, owner of Fostoria Cab, staffs the station at train times and keeps it cleaned and maintained.

Meanwhile, in Akron, the city has approved bids to establish a modular station facility (ie: trailer) at the site where the Fostoria station stood from 1990-95.

Construction of the foundation and utility work should begin once spring arrives, and trains should begin stopping in Akron again by summer’s end. The trackside platform, which remains from when the Broadway served Akron until 1995, will need only minor sprucing up to be ready for the Three Rivers’ passengers.

Ken Prendergast contributed to this story.
Ohio Rail Development Commission happenings

By John Manning
OARP Area 614 Director

Chairman James Betts announced the reappointment to two-year terms of Larry Sowers, Don Yerks and Charles Brown, all original commissioners. Also, he noted the new appointment of Pat McCune (regional vice president of Norfolk Southern). The appointments were all by Governor George Voinovich.

In his executive director’s report, Thomas O’Leary stated that the commission’s opposition to the acquisition of Conrail’s assets by CSX and Norfolk Southern will be supported by increasing information to the Ohio congressional delegation. Also, procedural rules of the Surface Transportation Board (a federal body which regulates railroads) require Ohio to be a continuing litigant, and that the commission will continue to rally community support, especially in the Cleveland area, for this issue.

Mr. Yerks congratulated the staff for the commission’s “white paper”, which details ORDC’s stance on the CSX/NS/Conrail merger. Mr. Betts commented that U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Lakewood) has also filed as a party of record with the STB on the merger.

Mr. O’Leary also noted that the Conrail breakup might adversely impact short-lines, specifically the Ohio and Indiana and that the commission may have to take action in the future to assure the continued operations of the few short lines that now exist to serve the interstate carriers.

On the Amtrak Express proposal, Mr. O’Leary expressed optimism that Ohio can put together a comparable proposal for J-C. Consideration is also being given to a hybrid passenger service between Cincinnati and Chicago.

Indiana HSR group wants federal approval

By Deborah L. Cohen

GARY — It’s full steam ahead for the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (IHSRA). The Highland-based advocacy group has been pushing since 1994 to win federal approval for a corridor for high-speed passenger trains between Chicago and South Bend or between Northwest Indiana and Indianapolis.

In its letter to the Surface Transportation Board, the IHSRA emphasizes the need for a new transportation infrastructure that would allow commuter trains to operate faster than the current standards. The group also argues that the corridor would serve a significant population and economic base, and that the cost of construction is estimated to be $2.5 billion.

The federal government has been accelerating the development of high-speed rail service since it passed the High Speed Rail Development Act in 1993. Already, five corridors nationwide have been designated, said Tim Gower, a spokesman for the IHSRA. The federal government has been accelerating the development of high-speed rail service since it passed the High Speed Rail Development Act in 1993. Already, five corridors nationwide have been designated, said Tim Gower, a spokesman for the IHSRA.
ORDC’s stance on the CSX/NS/Conrail merger. Mr. Betts commented that U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Lakewood) has also filed a party of record with the STB on the merger.

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On the Amtrak Express proposal, Mr. O’Leary expressed optimism that Ohio can put together a workable proposal for 3-C Corridor service. Commissioner Tom McGowan remarked that this proposal poses “very little risk for commission and the state.”

Concerning the Midwest Rail Initiative, an alternative route between Cincinnati and Chicago is being evaluated. This route would save 2 1/2 hours of travel time, and the final analysis should be completed soon. Mr. O’Leary commented that the Midwest Rail Initiative was at an important juncture, and that political support at participating statehouses must be achieved. Ohio Rep. Sally Peru (R-Toledo) had attended a meeting in St. Louis recently concerning the Midwest Rail Initiative, and cost allocations to the states.

Commission Treasurer William Tampas then reported an October, 1997, balance of $5.7 million, with $2.1 million appropriated, in the commission’s budget.

MARP by-law change approved by members

At the December meeting, MARP’s By-laws were changed, extending the terms of officers and directors from one year to two. The next election of officers and directors will be in the fall of 1998.

Indiana HSR group wants federal approval

By Deborah L. Cohen

GARY — It’s full steam ahead for the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (IHSRA). The highland-based advocacy group has been pushing since 1994 to win federal approval for a corridor for high-speed passenger trains between Chicago and South Bend or between Northwest Indiana and Indianapolis.

To do so, Indiana must meet four criteria, said W. Dennis Hodges, association president. The criteria involves demonstrating advocacy, conducting a feasibility study, upgrading rail safety, and winning the governor’s support. Mr. Hodges, whose group presented a progress report before the Indiana Department of Commerce in November, said he has already fulfilled some of the goals. But the IHSRA has yet to win support of Governor Frank O’Bannon.

“He pretty much is a highway governor at this point,” Mr. Hodges said. “He needs more information. The public meeting will review what we’ve done to this point and where we hope to go in the near future. Because we’re meeting at the chamber, we hope business groups will support us.”

Mr. Hodges said the group has invited transportation planners, politicians, railroad manufacturers and union groups to attend the meeting in Indianapolis.

Citing increased congestion on Indiana’s highways at a Gary Chamber of Commerce meeting earlier this week, Mr. Hodges stressed the importance of developing improved rail passenger service throughout the state.

“You do another car to the Borman (highway) is nonsense,” he said.

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, high-speed trains are those traveling at speeds of 90 to 150 miles per hour. The federal government has been accelerating the development of high-speed rail service since it passed the High Speed Rail Development Act in 1993.

Already, five corridors nationwide have been designated, said Tim Gower, a spokesman for the Washington, D.C.-based Federal Railroad Administration. The corridors run between Chicago and Detroit; Chicago and St. Louis; New York and Washington, D.C.; Miami, Orlando and Tampa; and Houston and Dallas.

“In many of these corridors, high-speed rail is already a reality,” Mr. Gower said. “In 1999, we’ll be seeing speeds in the neighborhood of 150 mph.”

The government has appropriated $20.4 million for high-speed rail development in 1998, he said. With the exception of a few local commuter lines, Amtrak controls the passenger trains running on those corridors.

“We’re very interested in working with state departments of transportation and other interested groups to be their partner in operating high-speed trains,” said Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari.

Magliari said an Amtrak representative will be attending the Indiana Chamber meeting. “Just north of Porter, Ind., we’re already involved in a project with the state of Michigan and the Federal Railroad Administration to increase speeds on the Chicago-Detroit corridor,” he said. Mr. Hodges said the federal government is expected to select three more corridors in 1998.

This article appears courtesy of Knight-Ridder Tribune Business News
Amtrak Intercity tests food service changes

In what could be a most disturbing development, Amtrak’s Intercity business unit is conducting a test of possible food service “changes” to partially reduce a $74.2 million shortfall. The goal in fiscal year 1998 is to reduce this by $6.2 million.

Amtrak Intercity, in a memo to employees, has identified a five-point action program, plus a review of the current pricing structure, which would result in price increases and service cuts. The five-point program includes:

1. Reducing inventory in the commissary;
2. Use of different products in the diner to reduce preparation work;
3. Substituting plastic ware for china;
4. Developing more consistent menus among the long distance trains; and
5. Testing non-traditional methods of serving in the dining car.

This five-point program is being tested on several routes, including the California Zephyr and Silver Service trains (which link the northeast to Florida). Reports indicate that most food is pre-prepared and pre-cooked, coming in a tray meal format and that only one item or so will be made on train.

The second action, which Amtrak Intercity hopes will have the greatest impact, would use “value added products” such as pre-cut vegetables, some fruits, individual containers of sour cream and cheese and pre-prepared chicken and salad mix containing red cabbage, carrots, etc...

The third point, substituting plastic for china, will also result in staffing reductions and “adjustments” to the menu for a test period of several months. Vinyl tablecloths are being used for all meals.

On point #4, which details developing more consistent menus, the memo states that “by mid-January 1998, Amtrak Intercity trains will have more consistent menus. Each menu will contain the same number of items per meal...for example, five dinners, four lunches, etc. There will be standard core items, steak (we may change from strip to filet), chicken, etc. Each train will have a ‘signature’ item which is unique to that train...” which will be the decision of the product line.

The memo, from AI Edelston, Vice President of Customer Service for Amtrak Intercity, notes that a survey would be conducted to assess customer satisfaction and that employee input would be sought. This information will be presented to the Amtrak Board of Directors.

RoadRailers assigned to region’s trains

Revenue service of RoadRailers has begun on the Lake Shore Limited. Amtrak projects as many as 5-6 trailers/day coming into Albany-Renssalaer. This will provide Amtrak’s Intercity Strategic Business Unit with some much-needed additional revenue.

The schedule for the westbound Lake Shore has been lengthened by the train. Since the RoadRailers must be on the rear, this means that private cars can no longer be handled on the end of the train.

Meanwhile, the Three Rivers has been carrying as many as many as 25 mail and package express cars, in addition to the usual 4-6 passenger cars. Amtrak officials say this train is the company’s most financially successful.

Other changes include

- Restrictions in the sale of “passenger” tickets, which only give you a seat without a guaranteed place to sleep or dine.
- The sale of “limited accommodation” tickets, which give you guaranteed seating on a train and the possibility of a roomette or berth.
- A prohibition of passengers sleeping or dining in different parts of the same train.

These changes are intended to control Amtrak’s high levels of cancellations and no-shows.

Railway safety improvements in Royal Oak

The Royal Oak City Commission has approved a series of safety upgrades for the Canadian National (ex-Grand Trunk) rail line through the city.

The improvements expected to be implemented include:

- Stabilizing the embankment along the tracks.
- Installing floodlights for night-time visibility.
- Installing crossing arms at all grade-crossings.
- Elevated barriers at selected locations.

These improvements were prompted by the Royal Oak City Commission’s desire to ensure the safety of residents and visitors.

TravelAlerts

One, Two, Free fares

Amtrak, in conjunction with its “Where in America is Carmen Sandiego? The Great Amtrak Train Adventure,” promotion is offering their spring discount fare package. When a full fare ticket is bought, a companion rides for half price, and a third person rides for free.

Reservations must be made by May 9, for travel March 1 thru May 21, 1998. Seats are limited. Call Amtrak for details.

Amtrak, Broderbund Software, and Carmen Sandiego; the cunning crook who has taught millions of kids geography, have partnered to develop the special edition interactive educational CD-ROM game. Designed for kids ages 7-12, the game showcases geography and train travel by featuring Amtrak destinations, routes, and its fleet. The $9.95 game must be bought thru the mail. Brochures are available at all Amtrak stations.

A reservation tip

Want to reserve a sold-out sleeper or that hard-to-find accommodation? Call Amtrak reservations at (800) USA-RAIL after 3:00 a.m. (ET). That’s when Amtrak purges its computers of expired reservations.

New schedules in May

Amtrak’s Spring/Summer time-
**RoadRailers assigned to region’s trains**

Revenue service of RoadRailers has begun on the *Lake Shore Limited*. Amtrak projects as many as 5-6 trailers/day coming into Albany-Rensselaer. This will provide Amtrak’s InterCity Strategic Business Unit with some much-needed additional revenue.

The schedule for the westbound *Lake Shore* has been lengthened by 20 minutes to allow for extra time to add the RoadRailers to the rear of the train. Since the RoadRailers must be on the rear, this means that private cars can no longer be handled on the end of the train.

Meanwhile, the *Three Rivers* has been carrying as many as 25 mail and package express cars, in addition to the usual 4-6 passenger cars. Amtrak officials say this train is the company’s most financially successful. Amtrak employees call it, simply, “the freight train.”

**North America Rail Pass for sale**

Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada’s new North America Rail Pass is now on sale. It is the first pass designed for travel in both the United States and Canada for one low price.

The 30-day pass with unlimited stopovers allows travel along 27,000 miles of scenic railways in the U.S. and Canada, with more than 900 destinations from which to choose. Connecting terminals are in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver.

The introductory off-peak fare for the North America Rail Pass is $450 ($625 Can). Those prices are good until May 31. Peak season fares (June 1-Oct. 15) will be $645 ($895 Can). Fares apply to all customers ages two and over. No other discounts will apply.

The North America Rail Pass is for coach/economy class travel and can be purchased at any Amtrak or VIA ticket office, through travel agents (especially OARP member travel agencies)—See Page 11—or through Ticket By Mail (800) USA-RAIL in the U.S.; (800) 561-8630 in Canada.

Travelers may upgrade to first-class sleeping accommodations (Amtrak/VIA), Custom Class, Club Service (Amtrak) and VIA 1 (VIA) for an additional charge. All segments of travel will require a reservation. To minimize the chance of encountering sold-out trains, it is recommended that all reservations be made when the pass is purchased. Some restrictions apply.

For more information about the new North America Rail Pass, call (800) USA-RAIL from the U.S. or (800) 561-8630 from Canada.

Details are also available on the web sites: www.amtrak.com or www.viarail.ca.

**Railway safety improvements in Royal Oak**

The Royal Oak City Commission has approved a series of safety upgrades for the Canadian National (ex-Grand Trunk) rail line through the city.

The improvements are expected to cost about $400,000 and be completed within 18 months. One pedestrian crossing will be eliminated, and additional gates and warning devices will be added to crossings at Main and Fourth streets. Also, crossing circuitry will be improved to eliminate excessive gate downtime when Amtrak is stopped at the Royal Oak station.

In addition, Royal Oak police announced they were beginning a concerted enforcement effort to ticket people who were ignoring warning lights or gates. They were also citing pedestrians crossing at any place other than a legal crossing. Minimum fines will be $80.00.

In the first three hours of the crackdown, 23 people were ticketed, including five motorists, for violating crossing lights, crossing at unauthorized places, or trespassing.

Since 1990, Royal Oak police have investigated 12 traffic or pedestrian accidents with trains. Ten of the cases were fatalities.

**A reservation tip**

Want to reserve a sold-out sleeper or that hard-to-find accommodation? Call Amtrak reservations at (800) USA-RAIL after 3:00 a.m. (ET). That’s when Amtrak purges its computers of expired reservations.

**New schedules in May**

Amtrak’s Spring/Summer timetables will be valid effective May 17, 1998.

**College visitation discounts on Amtrak**

Amtrak has provided approximately 50,000 high school guidance counselors nationwide with discount coupons for students and their family who visit college campuses prior to enrollment.

Each coupon offers a 50% discount off the lowest available round trip rail fare for one student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). Offer is valid through June, 1998.

**Lake Shore Limited’s schedule adjusted**

To accommodate the switching of Roadrailers on to train 49 at Albany NY, Amtrak has adjusted its schedule. All departures west of Albany are now 20 minutes later than what appears in published timetables. This includes all stops in Ohio and Indiana on trains 49/449 and in Michigan on Thruway bus 6049.
Does less government mean more transportation?

By Bill Hutchison
OARP Vice President

I recently read an op-ed piece by Patrick Cowell called “Privatized Airports Ready For Takeoff” in USA Today. It talks about the move by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to approve the privatizing of five airports and the way managements are seeking to enhance revenues by adding new amenities like on-site, top-rank hotels and restaurants.

If this is successful, we could see a wave of this sort of thing—a move toward spinning off of these facilities which are in the hands of government. One could carry this a step further and envision the entire transportation system off the dole and standing on its own, at least with intercity transportation.

Imagine the FAA charging carriers for the use of the air traffic control system, or interstate highways charging tolls, which would not only make a profit for the operator, but pay taxes and cover debt.

This “user-pay” concept is where Amtrak has been heading, mainly because it must play by a different set of rules than the competition, which hides behind powerful lobbies. Amtrak has no really powerful lobby to represent its interests, so it bumps along year after year on a pittance while highways and airways get fat.

Still, the idea has enough merit to interest the FAA in trying a new approach, and is fascinating since one would think a government agency would be loath to welcome the private enterprise which might replace many of its functions.

This is nothing new—I remember writing a letter of rebuttal to columnist James Kilpatrick after he wrote an anti-Amtrak piece a few years ago. In my rebuttal, I said I would not be afraid to let Amtrak stand alone, without subsidy IF the same applied to other forms of transportation and that we should be moving toward a user-pay system.

It seems to me that a conservative would see the sense in this and really exploit it to his or her advantage because of the many groups that could connect with this approach. In one fell swoop, you appeal to others...

- Conservatives- since it is advocating elimination of big government and those evil subsidies;
- Liberal urban groups- who will see their constituents gain mobility they don’t presently have;
- Environmentalists- since the long-term effect will be that people will drive less;
- Pro-transit groups- since public transportation will be better;
- And, groups representing seniors, disabled, and others who may not be able to drive.

In fact, everybody but highway types who like the status quo, with its universal auto ownership with no real choice, would be the only voices of dissent. Heck, even truckers might like this approach since it will get cars off “their” highways!

Unfortunately, past Republicans of national stature either attacked Amtrak’s subsidies, while ignoring the far larger support enjoyed by other modes, or remained silent on the subject. The time is ripe for somebody to take advantage of this issue. Any takers?

Sandusky depot gets $100,000 gift

Will the anonymous rich man please take a bow?

After two years on the shelf, plans for renovation of the city’s Sandusky depot, announced by the city’s director of engineering services, in a recent Sandusky Register article.

In addition to Amtrak, prospective tenants include:...
letter of rebuttal to columnist James Kilpatrick after he wrote an anti-Amtrak piece a few years ago. In my rebuttal, I said I would not be afraid to let Amtrak stand alone, without subsidy if the same applied to other forms of transportation and that we should be moving toward a user-

Unfortunately, past Republicans of national stature either attacked Amtrak’s subsidies, while ignoring the far larger support enjoyed by other modes, or remained silent on the subject. The time is ripe for somebody to take advantage of this issue. Any takers?

ARTICLE VII-ELECTION PROCEDURES

SECTION 2 - MAIL BALLOT. Each member in good standing [as of January 1 of each year] shall be entitled to vote for each state-wide office and any regional office within that member’s telephone area code quadrant, whose office is up for election in a given year. Voting for all elected positions shall be conducted by mail ballot. All ballots shall be anonymous, but each member voting shall be required to set forth that member’s telephone area code on the face of the ballot. The Secretary shall cause an official ballot and candidates’ statement to be mailed to each member in good standing at such member’s last known address at least sixty (60) days prior to the Annual meeting. A ballot may be mailed to the election committee at least ten (10) days prior to the Annual meeting, or personally delivered to the designee of the Election Committee at the Annual Meeting.

May Election

Deadline for appearing in this year’s OARP election has now passed. Statements of candidacy and letters of endorsement were received by Election Committee chairperson Howard Harding prior to the February 20 deadline.

Who are the declared candidates? The Elections Committee will release those names once it has determined who has met all the requirements of candidacy, as prescribed in the bylaws. The first word of who is running will be learned when the mail ballots are mailed out in mid-March.

Sandusky depot gets $100,000 gift

Will the anonymous rich man please take a bow?

After two years on the shelf, plans for renovating the 106-year-old Sandusky train station were given a huge boost by a $100,000 donation from an anonymous, albeit generous donor. The depot, located on State Route 4, is used daily by Amtrak’s Lake Shore Limited.

A great deal of repairs need to be made to the old depot. In fact, the station’s reconstruction turned out to be more expensive than the city thought. The lowest of three bids received for the project was $734,215, while the city had budgeted only $655,915.

Much of the funding is comprised of a $520,000 grant from the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA—pronounced iced-tea). ISTEA is being renewed this year by Congress. According to Sandusky city officials, the anonymous donation has rescued the station project, which was feared dead. No groundbreaking date has been set.

“It looks like it’s going to be a go,” said Brent Smith, the city’s director of engineering services, in a recent Sandusky Register article.

In addition to Amtrak, prospective tenants include Sandusky Transit System and North Central EMS. STS is seeking to build a garage for 12 buses, while North Central would have their dispatching operations at the site. This would provide a 24-hour presence at the station, and therefore, offer better security for rail travelers.

Of course, Amtrak officials are looking forward to expanding its rail services to Sandusky, which is home to the sprawling Cedar Point amusement park and ferry boats to the Lake Erie islands. The Pennsylvanian extension (see front page article) is tentatively scheduled to serve Sandusky at about 12:30 p.m. eastbound and 7:30 p.m. westbound. Service could begin later this year.
PLEASE PATRONIZE THESE AUTHORIZED TRAVEL AGENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS:

Akron/Stow  Parkside Travel USA  (330) 688-3334  Joel Brown
Alliance  Alliance AAA Travel  (330) 821-2323  (330) 456-6315
Canal Fulton  Massillon AAA Travel  (330) 854-6616
Cleveland  Ohio Motorist Association/AAA Travel  (216) 361-6080
Cleveland  Randall Park Mall Travel Agency  (440) 475-8747  (800) 999-2434  Robert Peck
Columbus  Accessible Travel Agency  (614) 792-3555  (800) 837-2822  Jude Cuddy
Columbus  Ohio Automobile Club/AAA Travel  (614) 431-7823  (800) 443-7789  Mike McClister
Elyria  Tours & Travel Service, Inc.  (440) 323-5423  (800) 759-7404  “Amtrak” Al Mladineo
Mansfield  Mansfield Travel Center  (419) 756-8747  Jay Gilbert
Massillon  Massillon AAA Travel  (330) 833-1034  Cheryl Anderson
Piqua  Miami County Auto Club/AAA Travel  (937) 773-3753  Roberta Slyker
Sandusky  Sandusky Travel Service, Inc.  (419) 626-4633
Solon  Astro Travel Service  (440) 248-7740  (800) 759-7404
Troy  Miami County Auto Club/AAA Travel  (937) 339-0112

Authorized Amtrak travel agents who wish to join OARP, maintain current membership status, and be listed in the TRAM DIRECTORY should send a $50 check, made payable to OARP, to: 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: Sept. 1997

Directory of the region's association of railroad passengers

Ohio

PRESIDENT  Mark D. Carlson  479 Hurstison Dr.  440 / 331-3161  Bay Village  44140-3017
PAST-PRESIDENT  J. Howard Harding  489 Overwood Rd.  330 / 867-5507  Akron  44313-5327
VICE-PRESIDENT  Bill Hutchison  202 Oak Park Avenue  614 / 262-7398  Columbus  43214
SECRETARY  Vacant
TREASURER  Tom Allen  752 Braumiller Road  614 / 369-5804  Delaware  43015-3110
AREA 216/330/440  Ron Bergen  2966 Park Drive North  330 / 922-9923  Stow  44224-3744
AREA 419  Mark Buckley  4411 N. Lockwood Ave  419 / 476-4569  Toledo  43612-2352

Michigan

CHAIRMAN  James Riley  3017 Lowell  Kalamazoo Mi 49001
VICE-CHAIRMAN  Alan Gebauer  2705 Warwick Dr  Bloomfield Hills Mi 48304-1861
SECRETARY  John DeLora  20707 Edgewood  St. Clair Shores Mi 48080-1862
TREASURER  Terrance Donnelley  910 Highland Dr  Marquette Mi 49855-9319
DIRECTOR  Clark Chametski  2646 Traver Blvd  Ann Arbor Mi 48105
DIRECTOR  Jeff Godshall  406 Oakland  Royal Oak Mi 48067
DIRECTOR  Robert KinKead  506 Lakeshore Ln  Grosse Pointe Woods Mi 48236
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAST-PRESIDENT</td>
<td>J. Howard Harding</td>
<td>489 Overwood Rd, Akron 330 / 867-5507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE-PRESIDENT</td>
<td>Bill Hutchison</td>
<td>614 / 262-7308</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ron Bergen</td>
<td>330 / 922-9923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 419</td>
<td>Mark Buckley</td>
<td>419 / 476-4569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 513/937</td>
<td>Frank Gordiner</td>
<td>937 / 435-6094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREA 614</td>
<td>John Manning</td>
<td>614 / 443-8742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT-LARGE</td>
<td>Dan Roberts</td>
<td>614 / 899-7848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT-LARGE</td>
<td>William Schuler</td>
<td>614 / 927-8808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT-LARGE</td>
<td>Bob Wickens</td>
<td>513 / 877-3330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast</td>
<td>216 / 529-7677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVT AFFAIRS</td>
<td>Bill Hutchison</td>
<td>see listing above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEWSPAPER EDITOR</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast</td>
<td>see listing above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Presidents</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>Paul Arden</td>
<td>219 / 874-8909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Phil McGeath</td>
<td>317 / 546-7218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe Krause</td>
<td>765 / 743-8853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Patrick</td>
<td>812 / 448-3061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tom Wood</td>
<td>812 / 988-2419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NARP Region 6 Directors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan Gebauer</td>
<td>248 / 338-8447</td>
<td>2705 Warwick Dr, Bloomfield Hills MI 48304-1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John DeLora</td>
<td>810 / 772-7842</td>
<td>20707 Edgewood, St. Clair Shores MI 48080-1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrance Donnelly</td>
<td>313 / 561-9319</td>
<td>910 Highland Dr, Marquette MI 49855-9319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark Charnetski</td>
<td>Ann Arbor MI 48105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Godshall</td>
<td>Royal Oak MI 48067</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Kinkead</td>
<td>Grosse Pointe Woods MI 48236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Schlaepfer</td>
<td>Livonia MI 48154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NARP Passenger Rail News**

- Hotline: 900 / 988-RAIL
- Executive Director: Ross Capon 202 / 408-8362
- Assistant Director: Scott Leonard fax-202 / 408-8287
- e-mail: narp@worldweb.net, Web www.worldweb.net/~narp

**NARP Regional Office**

- 5017 Lowell Blvd, Metairie LA 70002-5004
- Executive Director: Ross Capon 202 / 408-8362
- Assistant Director: Scott Leonard fax-202 / 408-8287
- e-mail: narp@worldweb.net, Web www.worldweb.net/~narp

**NARP Regional Representatives**

- **Metropolitan Detroit**
  - Chair: John DeLora 810 / 772-7842
- **Western Region**
  - Chair: David Vanderbee 616 / 452-3495
- **East Central Region**
  - Chair: Richard Pekarek 810 / 695-1091
- **Yooper Region**
  - Chair: Terrance Donnelly

- **Indiana**
  - President: Paul Arden 219 / 874-8909
  - Director: Phil McGeath 317 / 546-7218
  - Director: Joe Krause 765 / 743-8853
  - Director: John Patrick 812 / 448-3061
  - Director: Tom Wood 812 / 988-2419

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  - Director: Phil McGeath 317 / 546-7218
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GETTING THE PUBLIC INVOLVED. Commuter rail feasibility studies are underway in Northeast Ohio, and funded by metropolitan planning organizations in Greater Cleveland, Akron, and Canton. Consulting firm Parsons Brinckerhoff conducted seven public hearings in the region. One of the last hearings was Feb. 4th in downtown Cleveland (photo at left), where business people perused informational displays and gave mostly positive feedback to consultants. Hopefully, the results of the analysis will translate into actual commuter service—a demonstration of which along the Lake Erie shore routes drew standing room-only crowds last November.

Regional Calendar of Events/Meetings

March 1998

<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>7</td>
<td>NARP Region 6 Annual Mtg</td>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>St. Regis Hotel-Detroit MI</td>
<td>3071 West Grand Blvd.</td>
<td>John DeLora 810/772-7842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ORDC — Committee Mtg.</td>
<td>* 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Riffe Center</td>
<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>Lynda Nelson 614/644-7176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ORDC — Full Commission</td>
<td>*10:45 a.m.</td>
<td>Riffe Center</td>
<td>77 South High Street</td>
<td>Lynda Nelson 614/644-7176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*approximate. Full Commission meeting follow Committee Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<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>18</td>
<td>Cleveland Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Max &amp; Erma’s</td>
<td>1106 Old River Rd (The Flats)</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216/529-7677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Amtrak Station</td>
<td>Central Union Plaza</td>
<td>Mark Buckley 419/476-4569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

April 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<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>15</td>
<td>Cleveland Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216/529-7677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Amtrak Station</td>
<td>Central Union Plaza</td>
<td>Mark Buckley 419/476-4569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
April 1998

Date  Event         Time       Location            Address
11    Columbus Local Meeting 9:30 a.m.  Red Door Tavern  1736 West 5th Avenue
15    Cleveland Local Meeting 6:30 p.m. TBA  TBA
17    Toledo Local Meeting  7:30 p.m.  Amtrak Station  Central Union Plaza

May 1998

Date  Event         Time       Location            Address
9     Columbus Local Meeting 9:30 a.m.  Red Door Tavern  1736 West 5th Avenue
15     Toledo Local Meeting  7:30 p.m.  Amtrak Station  Central Union Plaza
16      OARP Annual Meeting 9:30 a.m.  Holiday Inn “On the Lane” — Columbus OH
20    Cleveland Local Meeting 6:30 p.m. TBA  TBA

All meetings are subject to change. We firmly suggest that you confirm dates, times, and locations for all meetings.

Anyone wishing to have their meeting or event listed in this directory, please send the information to:

Ken Prendergast, Editor
12029 Clifton Boulevard #505
Lakewood OH 44107-2161
216 / 529-7677
Internet:72764.2020@Compuserve.com.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the even numbered months

NARP Regional Six Meeting (Indiana-Michigan-Ohio) Saturday, March 7 – 8:30 a.m.
The St. Regis Hotel is at 3071 West Grand Boulevard, at Woodward Avenue, two blocks from the Detroit Amtrak station.

Name ______________________ Phone ______________________
Address ______________________ State ________ Apt ________
City _______________ ZIP ________________

Number in Party _____ @ $25.00 each = $ ______ Enclosed, payable to “MARP”, P.O. Box 594, St. Clair Shore MI 48080.

Questions? Call MARP Executive Director John DeLora at (810) 772-7842, or send an e-mail to sfna@mich.com.

MARP will provide transportation to members who request a ride when they register.
My party will need transportation from the Detroit Amtrak Station. We will arrive on:
Saturday’s connecting Amtrak bus from the: ____________________________
Friday night on Amtrak train: ____________________________

Business sessions for each state will be in the morning; a luncheon will be served, and guest speakers will be in the afternoon. The registration fee is $25.00, which also includes free transportation downtown, a tour of the Detroit Trolley line, and the Detroit People Mover.