

Ohio Passenger Rail News

Intercity Rail

Public Transit

Commuter Rail

Intermodal

Issue 140

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Winter 2000-2001

Two Ohio corridors get federal rail designations

More than 450 miles of railway lines in Ohio have now been designated by the U.S. Department of Transportation as eligible for federal high speed rail planning and construction funds.

The two latest additions are the Cleveland - Columbus - Dayton - Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor and the Cleveland - Toledo - Chicago (CTC) Corridor. Those are in addition to the Cincinnati - Indianapolis - Chicago Corridor (CIC), which was designated in early 1999 as part of the Chicago-based Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MRRI).

These latest designations, made in October 2000, effectively bring cities like Brook Park, Bryan, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Delaware, Elyria, Galion, Middletown, Sandusky, Sharonville, Springfield, Toledo and Worthington into the MRRI.

The MRRI is a blueprint for developing 110 mph passenger rail service on 12 existing rail corridors, totaling 3,000 route miles and costing \$4.1 billion. The MRRI plan was drafted by



Sharon Bouchonville photo

Despite severe winter weather, an OARP fundraiser trip on Amtrak's Pennsylvanian, from Elyria to Cleveland and back on Dec. 17, went ahead as scheduled. OARP raised money to help advocate for the redevelopment of the historic New York

CTC Campaigns

Transportation Economics & Management Systems Inc. (TEMS) for Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration and nine Midwest state departments of transportation, including Ohio's.

Much of the credit for Ohio receiving these designations goes to a bipartisan list of government officials, namely Federal Railroad Administrator Jolene Molitoris, Ohio Gov. Robert Taft and James Seney, executive director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC). Mrs. Molitoris, a native Ohioan, lobbied Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater intensively for the designations. Only months earlier, Gov. Taft and Mr. Seney had applied for the designations, while making strong cases for both corridors.

In the short-term, little federal funding is available for planning and construction. However, other states have worked closely with their congressional delegations to make funding available for their federally designated rail corridors.

For example, Illinois used \$12 million in state funds to leverage a \$48 million federal allocation to pay for a \$60 million signal system modernization to increase passenger train speeds between Chicago and St. Louis to 110 mph. This route was one of the first in the MRRI to receive a federal high speed corridor designation.

— See "Corridors", page four

Central Depot in downtown Elyria as a transportation center and office building for Lorain County Transit. Here, passengers get ready to board at the current Elyria station, a humble facility east of downtown. A revitalized NYC Depot is needed to handle the growing rail passenger traffic along the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago route, which was recently designated as a federal high-speed rail corridor.

3-C, CTC Campaigns rolling

OARP is proud to announce the formation of two professional campaigns that are uniting many diverse organizations and individuals to advocate for fast, modern passenger rail services along two routes. The two campaigns, which were designed after coalitions in other states that have been successful in encouraging investments in passenger rail, are the Cleveland - Columbus - Dayton - Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor Campaign and the Cleveland - Toledo - Chicago (CTC) Corridor Campaign.

Those who have joined forces thus far include representatives of: the Central Ohio Transit Authority; Columbus City Council; EcoCity Cleveland; city of Elyria; Greater Cleveland Growth Association; Indiana High Speed Rail Association; McDonald, Hopkins, Burke & Haber Co., LPA; Midwest High Speed Rail Coalition; Package Power Corp. in Galion; Talgo Corp.; and the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority.

Participation by more individuals and organizations is needed, especially from Southwest Ohio. Fundraising is underway and campaign staff will be named soon. Note that statements or policies issued by the 3-C or CTC Campaigns are not necessarily made on behalf of the individuals or organizations participating in the campaigns or the advisory boards.

Members of these campaigns will receive the quarterly *Ohio Passenger Rail News*, plus a bi-weekly, interactive *Ohio Passenger Rail News eEdition* via e-mail, a bimonthly campaign newsletter (to begin soon), special updates on concerns for action, use of campaign staff (to begin soon) and other benefits. A new membership dues structure, exclusive to these campaigns, has been instituted (please see page seven for details).

This is a very exciting time for advocates of balanced transportation in Ohio!

What's Inside...

- » Late-breaking news
- » "Train of Thought"
- » U.S. mayors want rail
- » Thinking big in America
- » 3-C, CTC membership info
- » Cleveland Short Tracks
- » OARP Spring meeting



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OARP's Statement of Purpose

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers exists to encourage and coordinate the efforts of Ohio transportation consumers in developing rail passenger service in Ohio.

As a consumer organization, 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.

WANTED

Photos and Articles



Train of Thought

from *Ohio Passenger Rail News* Editor
Kenneth Prendergast

Have you checked the calendar lately? If you're a rail passenger, an Amtrak employee, a member of the U.S. Congress or Senate, a rail industry supplier or some other interested party, then you're probably well aware of how little time remains between now and the end of 2002.

When next year's final days tick away, all of these interested parties will be at a crossroads. It probably isn't overkill to say that end of 2002 will emerge as one of the most important moments in the history of rail passenger service, ranking right up there with April 30, 1971. That was the last day of privately run passenger trains in the U.S. The next day, forever known among wags as May Day, was the first day Amtrak began operations and forever changed the future of rail travel in America.

The closing of the Fiscal Year 2002 federal books on Sept. 30 of that year is the deadline Congress has set for Amtrak to become self-sufficient in terms of its day-to-day operating costs. Federal funding for capital items, such as new trains, station facilities and track projects, would continue. But an increasing number of respected observers, ranging from the federal Government Accounting Office to Kiplinger's news service, are predicting that Amtrak won't arrive the self-sufficiency destination on time.

Unfortunately, there are those in Congress and elsewhere who will look at next year's crossroads as an opportunity to kill Amtrak without caring what, if anything, should replace it. Fortunately, those people appear to be in the minority. There are many more people who view the end of 2002 as an opportunity to improve rail passenger service as a solution to this nation's worsening transportation problems.

But, how do we proceed?

That's where the real problem lies. Gather 10 people who represent a variety of rail passenger interests and ask them what the future of passenger train should be after next year, and you'll probably get 10 different responses.

As users of the rail system, rail passengers represent a major constituency whose opinions should carry a great deal of weight. All of the local, state and national rail passenger organizations need to get their heads together and present a unified message. We must sing together as a choir, rather than sound like a collection of cross-talking arguments. Policymakers in Congress will find the former much easier to listen to, than endure the latter.

There are lots of possible futures to consider. Should Amtrak be left as is, but given more time to reach self-sufficiency? Should Amtrak's three strategic business units (Intercity, Northeast, West) be divided up into more units, or perhaps into separate companies based on geographical

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 3½" disks. Send e-mail submissions to:
kjprendergast@core.com.

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

Always include your name and phone number!

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but given more time to reach self-sufficiency? Should Amtrak's three strategic business units (Intercity, Northeast, West) be divided up into more units, or perhaps into separate companies, based on geographical areas or service types? Should the regulatory and legal freedoms given to Amtrak by its enabling legislation, the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970, be expanded so that they apply to any contract operator that can be licensed by the Federal Railroad Administration? Should the federal government buy rail corridors from railroad companies, then maintain and modernize those routes based on user fees collected from freight and/or passenger carriers who run trains over those routes?

Some of these futures seemed totally out of the realm of possibility just a few years ago. One of the most marked changes came from, of all places, Wall Street. The heart of high finance has put pressure on private railroad companies to accept government funding of railway infrastructure to remedy the rail industry's disappointing returns on capital investment. Railroads are the only major transportation sector which still owns its infrastructure and accepts 100 percent of the burdens that go with it.

Ask yourself this question. Among road, air and rail, which modes have seen the most growth in the last 30 years? The answers are pretty easy to come by. Amtrak's annual ridership went from 16 million to only 22 million passengers during that time, while freight railroads have seen their annual business rise from \$12 billion to just \$36 billion. Trucking companies, by comparison, have grown their annual business from \$62 billion to a whopping \$456 billion during the same period. Airlines have seen their traffic grow from 154 million domestic passengers in 1970 to more than 670 million today. Car registrations grew from 89 million to 130 million, with traffic growing exponentially.

Clearly, things must change. The crossroads facing rail passenger service at the end of 2002 is an opportunity to bring about that change. Moments like this don't come along very often. Let's work together to make this moment something of which we can all be proud.

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.



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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.)

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U.S. mayors seek 21st-century rail policy

Nationwide poll: "Americans want fast trains now!"

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 300 mayors from across the country converged on Union Station Jan. 17, calling for a national rail policy and urging President George W. Bush and the Congress to make passenger rail service a top priority and a solution to the growing crisis of traffic and air congestion. These problems are strangling economic growth and threatening the quality of life in cities and communities from coast to coast.

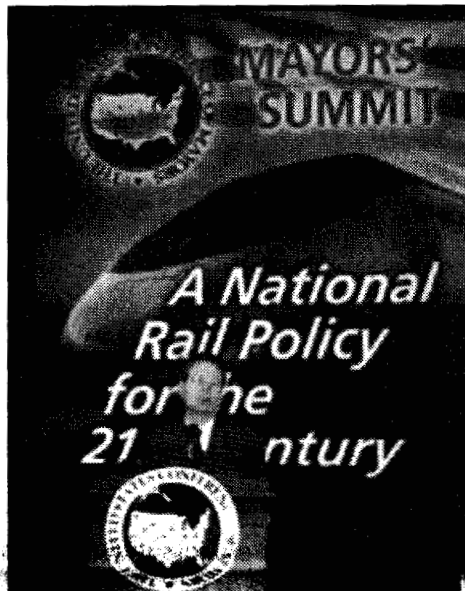
The U.S. Conference of Mayors, which was in the nation's Capitol for Inauguration activities and its 69th Winter Meeting, also released a groundbreaking, nationwide poll. It showed strong public backing from residents living outside the central city for passenger rail investment, with a vast majority of respondents (82 percent) supporting funding for a rail service network as an option to driving their cars.

"The mayors said it today, and the public said it in the poll," said U.S. Conference

policy priorities for the new Administration and the next Congress. The resulting document, entitled "Transition Priorities for the New American City," called on the Bush Administration and Congress to support and invest in a national rail policy that would:

- Include passage of S.1900, providing authorization and funding for High Speed Rail bonds, fixed guideway projects, advanced bus technology, a transit and community revitalization program, a station revitalization program and rural access in the amount of \$3 billion;
- Fortify the nation's inter-city passenger rail network by focusing on high-speed rail corridors and expanding service on non-high speed routes;
 - Deploy more heavy rail, light rail and commuter rail in metropolitan areas to connect the economic viability of communities;
 - Enact tax incentives and other measures to stimulate increased private sector participation in improving crossings, rail stations, and rail infrastructure, acquiring rolling stock, offering commuter benefits and transit-oriented development in support of passenger rail services.

The mayors said the call for a national rail policy comes at a time of growing public support for passenger rail service, as the U.S. Conference of Mayors' poll

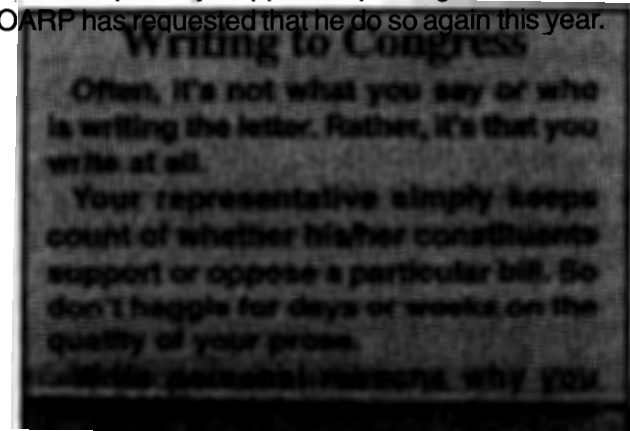


LATE-BREAKING NEWS

On Jan. 31 a new version of the High Speed Rail Investment Act was introduced into the U.S. Senate with 51 senators signing on as initial sponsors. More senators are expected to sign on soon (eventually 67 out of 100 senators co-sponsored a similar bill last year). Once again Senator Mike DeWine (R-OH) is a sponsor.

"Senator DeWine's support and leadership on this essential legislation, which will give Ohioans an alternative to our increasingly congested highways and airports, is greatly appreciated," said OARP President Bill Hutchison.

Please write to Senator DeWine and thank him for his support and to Senator George Voinovich (R-OH) to ask for his. Last year, Ohio Governor Bob Taft publicly supported passage of the bill. OARP has requested that he do so again this year.



said U.S. Conference of Mayors President and Boise Mayor Brent Coles. "We need expanded passenger rail service, not just in inner cities but also in the suburbs and in rural areas, protecting the viability of our metro economies and maintaining the livability of our communities."

Mr. Coles, along with U.S. Senator Trent Lott, Amtrak CEO George Warrington and hundreds of mayors from across the country, participated in a number of activities in Washington, D.C.'s historic Union Station, including a special, roundtrip ride to Baltimore and back on the high-speed Amtrak train, Acela Express.

"We have run precipitously away from rail, as if it were a nostalgic mode of the 1900s," said USCM Vice President and New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial, who led a roundtable discussion with the 300 mayors at Union Station's East Hall. "We want to say to President (George W.) Bush — fuel rail the same way we have fueled airline expansions and highways. It's clear we need other solutions. Ask parents how much time they spend away from their children sitting in traffic. Walk into any major airport. Passenger rail can help us reduce congestion and commuting times."

Also joining the dignitaries was the first popularly elected Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, who is visiting the United States for the first time as a guest of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Livingstone was elected Mayor of London last May from a crowded field of eleven candidates, garnering an impressive 38 percent of the vote as an independent. One of his top priorities has been dealing with the transportation problems facing London.

Through a series of surveys and meetings, the U.S. Conference of Mayors polled its members over a period of several months to determine




photo courtesy of U.S. Conference of Mayors
Mayor Brent Coles of Boise, ID addresses the U.S. Conference of Mayors meeting Jan. 17 in Washington DC. Mr. Coles, who also is president of the mayors' conference, spelled out the organization's pro-rail passenger strategy and urged President George W. Bush to support rail investments.

the U.S. Conference of Mayors' poll revealed. Significantly, almost three-fourths of the poll respondents live in suburban neighborhoods or outside a central city - residents not previously considered strong supporters of rail investments. Additionally, the poll did not survey California and the Northeast, areas of the country that generally have and support rail service.

Highlights of the poll appear below:

- The vast majority of respondents (80 percent) said they supported the idea of building light rail and commuter rail systems serving cities, suburbs, and entire regions to give them the option of not driving their cars. Only 16 percent opposed.
- 68 percent of Americans said spending public funds to build or improve rail systems to reduce traffic congestion was a "convincing reason" to invest in a passenger rail network.
- 69 percent said they "favor" and 41 percent said they "strongly favor" creating high-speed train service to serve their communities and provide connections between major population areas. And, an overwhelming majority (87 percent) said they believe the United States Government currently possesses the resources to build a high-speed rail system.
- Respondents believe that if more roads are built, more people will drive. 66 percent said they do not think that traffic congestion will be eased if more roads are built. The majority (58 percent) "disagree" and 40 percent "strongly disagree" that imposing tolls on highways is a fair and efficient way to relieve traffic congestion.
- A large majority of respondents (68 percent) believe if no new transportation alternatives are offered during the next five-to-ten years, traffic conditions will worsen.
- Not surprisingly, traffic congestion and commuting remain a serious concern, especially in the metro areas of the West and South. The vast majority of people believe that traffic congestion has worsened nationwide, with 58 percent of people "strongly agreeing" with this statement and

want to see the High Speed Rail Investment Act passed and then send the message, immediately!

If you own a company, or know the owner, make sure a letter gets written to Congress on company letterhead... do the same with other organizations you may belong to.

See "Contacting Congress" on page five for addresses and other information.

89 percent in agreement overall.

- When asked if traffic had gotten better, worse, or stayed the same in their areas over the past five years, 79 percent said conditions have gotten worse, while only 6 percent think things have improved. One out of two respondents not only believe that traffic has worsened, but believe that it is currently "much worse" than it was five years ago.

- Only 14 percent think that their commute has improved while 41 percent say that it has gotten worse. One likely reason that commuting has worsened is that access to public transportation has not significantly improved, while traffic has increased. Only 33 percent of respondents claim that they have better access to public transportation than five years ago, while 38 percent say things have stayed the same.

- When asked whether, "during the election campaign that recently ended, the candidates for President, Senate, or Congress gave attention to issues affecting quality of life, such as traffic, affordable housing, or urban sprawl," an overwhelming 72 percent believe that the candidates paid either "a little attention" or "no attention at all" to these quality-of-life issues.

The poll's telephone survey was conducted in late December 2000. The margin of error is ± 3.1 percent. More than 70 percent of the respondents live in suburban neighborhoods or outside a central city. Regions included Seattle, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, Tampa, Charlotte and Atlanta.

Two Ohio corridors get federal rail designations

— “Corridors”, from page one —

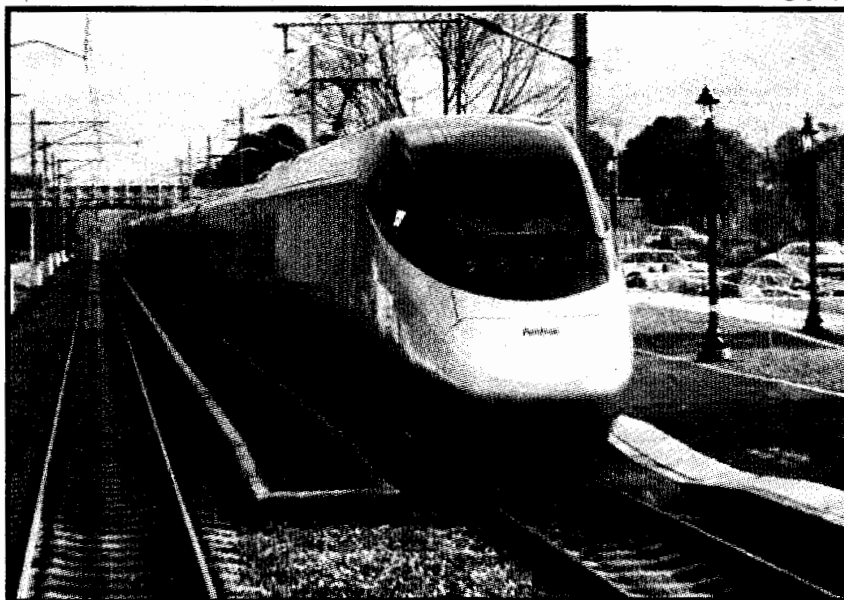
Another route to receive the designation early on was Detroit - Chicago. Michigan has put \$12 million toward the \$35 million cost of modernizing signals between Kalamazoo and the Indiana state line to permit 100+ mph train speeds — the Federal Railroad Administration is providing the balance of funding. The state also has put \$3 million into grade crossing improvements.

Armed with the federal designations, Ohio could put together a similar, step-by-step process to gain fast passenger rail service. Sections of each rail route can be modernized to 100+ mph standards until entire corridors are completely upgraded. That's the intention of the ORDC, which proposes a three-step process to creating, then improving passenger rail service in the 3-C Corridor, as well as improving and expanding services between Chicago and Cincinnati, plus Chicago to Toledo and Cleveland.

But, these designations will become many times more important if Congress passes the High Speed Rail Investment Act (see “**Late-breaking News**” on page three and “**Federal rail bill due back in 2001**” on page five). If passed, this bill will leverage \$10 billion in private sector investment for the development of high-speed rail corridors across the nation. The bill requires that 90 percent of the funding will go to federally designated high-speed corridors. States are required to match at least 20 percent of the federal dollars — the same cost-sharing formula in federal highway spending programs.

Rail corridors had to meet several criteria before they could earn the federal high-speed designations. First, a ridership study had to be performed. Second, letters endorsing the designations were needed from the freight railroad companies which own the rights of way. And, third, there had to be a gesture of commitment by the

Meanwhile, the Ohio Turnpike continues its \$1.3 billion project to add a third lane in each direction along 160 of the turnpike's 241 miles. Both the I-71 and turnpike projects also involve rebuilding the existing lanes and other improvements. Adding a fourth lane each way along these highways would be prohibitively expensive — the turnpike had to increase tolls by 82



Alan Feinstein photo, courtesy of Rail Travel News
On a trial run Oct. 11, 1999, one of Amtrak's new, high-speed Acela Express trains slices through Kingston, RI. Acela Express began regular service in December 2000 after the 19th-century railway from New York City to Boston was brought up to 21st-century standards. Acela Express cruises along this route at 150 mph, putting Manhattan within three hours of downtown Boston. South of New York City to Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington DC, Acela Express putts along at a mere 135 mph, but that still 56 mph higher than the fastest trains in Ohio.

percent just to widen the road within the existing right of way.

The rail services may also help keep some costly and environmentally damaging airport expansion projects in the hangar by putting future short-haul airline travelers into fast passenger trains. This would let airlines focus on what they

670 million passengers today, to 1 billion in 2010. Waiting times at airports are already averaging 70 minutes, according to the Federal Aviation Administration. More than 1/3 of all flights were delayed in 2000, up from 1/4 only the year before. No major new airports are planned, and expansion of existing airports is becoming increasingly problematic as metropolitan areas

have sprawled outward and crowded around airfields.

As costs go up for airport and highway expansions, available dollars go down, and vacant land for expansion becomes increasingly rare. Modernized railroads are an attractive and affordable option to add travel capacity in busy corridors. The 3-C and CTC corridors are two examples, each of which are projected to cost about \$700 million to bring the rail lines up to 110 mph standards.

Travel times by rail would be four hours from Cleveland to Chicago and 3.5 hours Cleveland to Cincinnati. That's downtown to downtown, with trips between suburban stations taking even less time. Maximum rail fares of \$90 between Cleveland and Cincinnati are envisioned by ORDC consultants, compared to round-trip airfares of between \$300 and \$800 (depending on the airline and the amount of advance booking) for the one-hour, 20-minute flight. Between Cleveland and Chicago, Amtrak currently charges less than \$100 round trip, while air fares range from \$146 to \$400. Intermediate distance flights, such as between To-

pared to round-trip airfares of between \$300 and \$800 (depending on the airline and the amount of advance booking) for the one-hour, 20-minute flight. Between Cleveland and Chicago, Amtrak currently charges less than \$100 round trip, while air fares range from \$146 to \$400. Intermediate distance flights, such as between To-

panies which own the rights of way. And, third, there had to be a gesture of commitment by the state that it is willing to be a funding partner with the federal government.

In the year 2010, the 3-C and CTC corridors together would carry more than 2 million people, taking future pressure off the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio Turnpike Commission from having to buy land, demolish structures and push back sound walls to add a fourth lane in each direction along major sections of Interstates 71 and 80/90.

Construction is well underway for a third lane each way along I-71 and the Ohio Turnpike by filling in both highways' medians — a comparatively inexpensive process considering the alternative, which would be to widen the right of way. The 10-year I-71 widening, just between Cleveland and Columbus, is costing more than \$500 million (in 1998 dollars).

short-haul airline travelers into fast passenger trains. This would let airlines focus on what they do most efficiently: medium- and long-distance travel. Trains can also serve airports as "connecting flights," such as at Cleveland, where the 3-C and CTC rail lines pass within 500 feet of Hopkins International Airport's long-term parking deck.

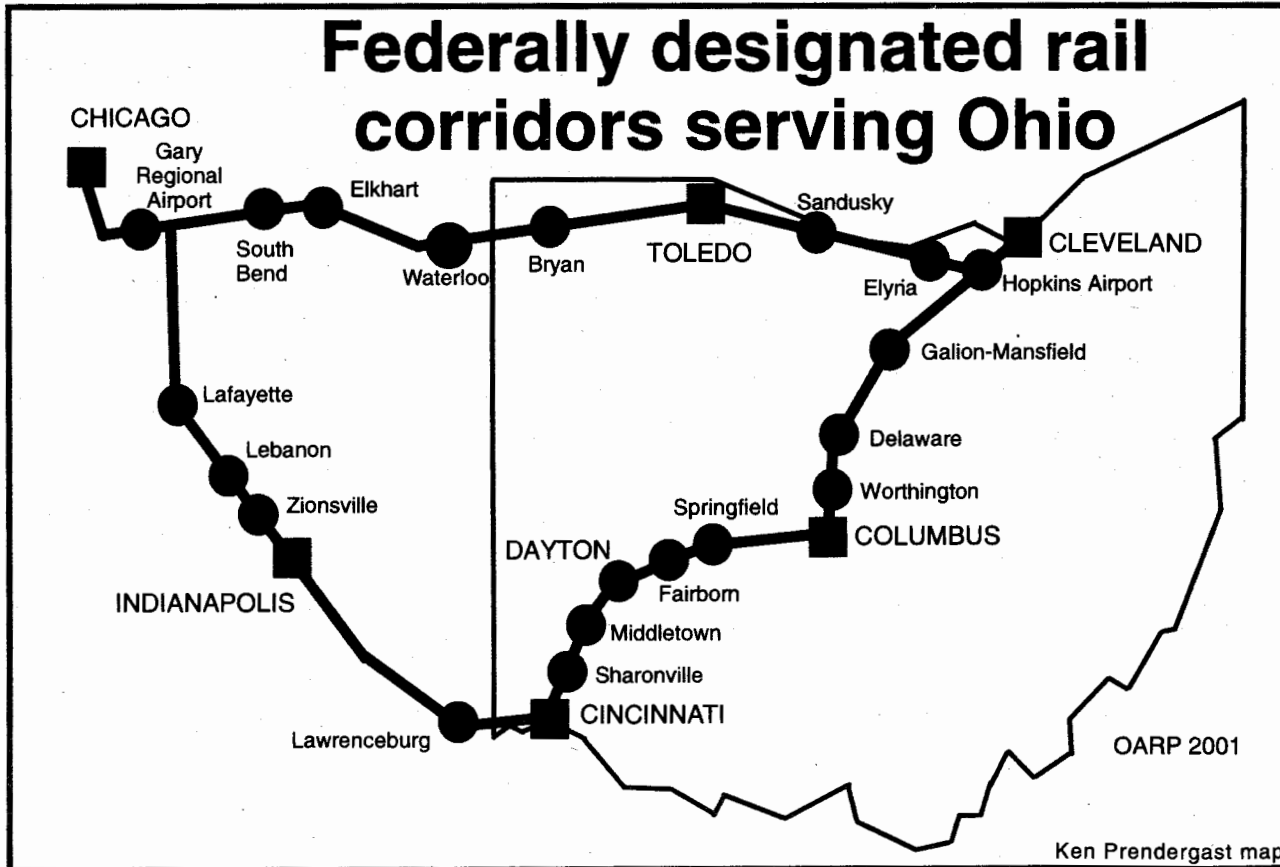
More than \$3.5 billion worth of airport expansions are planned or underway — just in the 3-C Corridor — even though more than 1/3 of all flights at Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus and Cleveland airports go to cities less than 400 miles away. In Dayton's case, where a \$1.3 billion airport expansion is planned, 58 percent of flights are short-distance, and 1/3 go to just four cities — Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh — which are all directly linked to Dayton by rail lines.

Air travel nationwide is expected to rise from

while air fares range from \$146 to \$400. Intermediate-distance flights, such as between Toledo and Chicago, are even more expensive, costing between \$150 and \$350. Amtrak charges \$70 to \$80 for the same round trip.

Of course, this assumes that a flight still exists. Continental Express announced that it will drop all of its flights March 1 between Cleveland and four cities — Toledo, Ft. Wayne, Lansing and Flint. The reason? Too much congestion at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. The four cities which lost air service are markets in which rail can compete. But until state and federal policies which discourage rail development are reversed, and as highways and airports become more congested, Ohio cities and their economies will become increasingly inaccessible and isolated. The time for action is now to bring Ohio's transportation system into the 21st century.

Federally designated rail corridors serving Ohio



The Survey Says...

Ohioans *really* want modern passenger trains! Proving what OARP already believed to be true was WMAN-AM 1400 in Mansfield, a radio station with conservative programs and a conservative audience. The station conducted a poll in late-October, asking the following question:

"Do you think we should be building more lanes onto I-71 for cars, or investing those dollars in a high-speed rail system linking Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati instead?"

An overwhelming 83 percent "favored a rail system", while 8 percent "supported both rail and highway," 7 percent "favored improving I-71," and 2 percent "opposed both projects."

In addition to all the economic, environmental and personal reasons why Ohio should invest in a modern passenger rail system, perhaps the more important reason is because Ohioans want one. Ohio's elected officials should be listening to their constituents in polls like these.

Federal rail bill due back in 2001

By Kevin Brubaker
Project Manager,
Midwest High Speed Rail Network Project
Environmental Law & Policy Center of the Midwest

High-speed rail funding is ripe for consideration when Congress returned to Washington in January. In a last-minute deal before Christmas, Senate leaders agreed to bring high-speed rail funding to the Senate floor before next summer.

The proposed legislation would provide \$10 billion nationwide for high-speed rail —



a figure that would translate to \$2-3 billion for the Midwest and would provide enough money to complete high-speed rail corridors from Chicago to St. Louis, Detroit, Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

The high-speed rail bill received endorsements from more than one hundred organizations, including the National Governors Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the American Public Transportation Association, and the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. It also had editorial endorsements from more than 30 newspapers nationwide, including the *Chicago Sun Times*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *Columbus Dispatch*, and the *Toledo Blade*.

In October, the measure passed the U.S. House of Representatives as part of a larger bill, but never came up for a vote in the Senate.

In early December, President Bill Clinton asked Congressional leaders to include the



Tom Daschle (D-SD) all agreed to include the high-speed rail provisions. Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) objected. Though Lott is personally supportive of high-speed rail funding, he received enormous pressure from Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Phil Gramm (R-TX), both longtime Amtrak critics.

On the final day that Congress was in session, the *New York Times* reported that high-speed rail funding was one of only two remaining issues on which Congressional leaders had not agreed. That afternoon, Senator Biden (D-DE) delivered a rousing call for high-speed rail funding to the Democratic Senate Caucus, asking them to support a filibuster to force Republicans to help pass the high-speed rail funding. This was his first threat of a filibuster in 28 years in the Senate.

Later that night, the Senate leadership cut a deal. Senator Biden backed down from his threatened filibuster in exchange for a strong public commitment by the Senate leaders to move the bill quickly next year. Lott, Daschle, the Chairman of Appropriations Committee (Ted Stevens, R-AK), the Ranking Democratic Member of the Appropriations Committee (Robert Byrd, D-WV), and Ranking Democratic Member of the Commerce Committee (Ernest Hollings, D-SC) all pledged to work to bring the bill to the Senate floor within the next six months.

As Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) observed, "it is not often that you see the two leaders and ... Senator Byrd stand and say they will support a

piece of legislation. I have never seen it happen before."

As pundits across the country have observed, America is deeply divided and it will be difficult for Washington to accomplish anything this year that isn't bipartisan. High-speed rail meets this test, having been endorsed in both the Republican and the Democratic national campaign platforms. The Republican national platform observed that:

"Our national railroad network is a crucial component of our public transportation system. Railroads helped build our country, and our national passenger railroad network remains a precious resource that can play a key role in transportation and economic growth. Republicans support a healthy intercity passenger rail system, and where economically viable, the development of a national high-speed passenger railroad system as an instrument of economic development, and enhanced mobility."

So while it would have been nice if high-speed rail funding had passed before the new year, high-speed rail funding is "on track" for the new Congress.

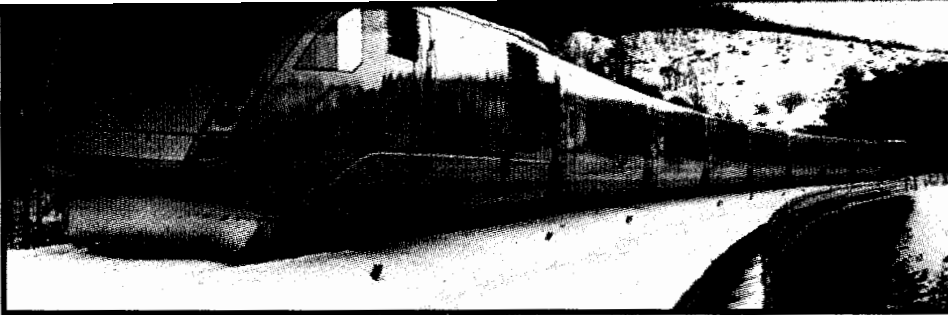
Contacting Congress

You can reach your Senators or Representative by telephone, letter mail, or e-mail.

The Congressional switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121.

leaders to include the high-speed rail provisions in the omnibus appropriations bill that was "must pass" legislation before adjournment.

Hearing from high-speed rail supporters in the Midwest and elsewhere, House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL), Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) and Senate Minority Leader



Talgo Corp. photo

A new, state-of-the-art train, called Talgo XXI, could soon appear in the Midwest. Amtrak has requested bids from manufacturers for 13 high-speed trains for use on Midwest rail corridors. Talgo Corp. officials say their XXI train meets Amtrak's specifications. The Talgo XXI can operate at up to 125 mph, tilt into existing railway curves to reduce centrifugal forces, offer economy- and business-class seating and has a cafe car. Talgo already has 16 of these trains in regular service in Spain.

The Congressional switchboard number is (202) 224-3121.

You may write to Senators Mike DeWine and George Voinovich at:

U.S. Senate
Washington DC 20510

or e-mail at:

www.senate.gov/senator/membmail.html

You may write to your Representative at:

House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

or e-mail at:

www.house.gov/whoswho.html

Winter of discontent

In the first months of this winter, severe snowstorms and below-average temperatures in the Midwest hit all forms of transportation hard. But while we expect highways and airports to be paralyzed by winter's worst, rail usually is less affected.

That has not been the case this winter. The question among rail travelers has been, was Amtrak, the nation's only passenger rail carrier, able to better manage during the severe weather, or was the weather so severe that train delays and cancellations couldn't be avoided?

"When you go a month with cold like this, it (failing equipment) just piles up," said Amtrak spokesman Kevin Johnson said, in a Jan. 4 article in the *Toledo Blade*. The only permanent solution, he said, "is to have the country invest in more rail equipment."

However, many rail advocates note that Via Rail Canada, which operates in even colder weather, hasn't suffered the problems experienced by Amtrak and its passengers this winter. Trains often ran up to 10 hours late, while others were annulled. In Michigan, for example, Amtrak annulled 2/3 of its Detroit-Chicago trains for almost all of January.

Additional insight into Amtrak's problems, including an article by Amtrak Conductor David Smock, can be found at the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers' Web site (www.marp.org). OARP is taking its concerns directly to Amtrak and federal lawmakers.

Amtrak starts Guest Rewards program

WASHINGTON DC — Amtrak has started what is described as "one of the most flexible loyalty programs in the travel industry." Amtrak Guest Rewards enables members to earn points for free travel on board Amtrak, transfer points for free flights on United, Continental, and Midwest Express. Members can also exchange points with the Hilton HHonors program, and earn free stays with Hilton HHonors hotels, Westin, Sheraton, Four Points, St. Regis, Luxury Collection, as well as Marriott hotels, and free car rentals from Hertz.

Additionally, members may redeem their points for scores of retail items from partner stores and restaurants. Members will be able to earn Amtrak Guest Rewards points by purchasing services through select program partners. Members earn two Amtrak Guest Rewards points for each dollar spent on Amtrak travel, making it easier and faster to earn points toward free travel and other program rewards. Between Washington, New York, and Boston, guests on Metroliner and Acela Express services will earn even more — 500 points for each travel segment. In addition to the rail, airline, hotel, and car rental partners, members may redeem their points for gift certificates with retailers and restaurants.

Amtrak customers begin earning points in Amtrak Guest Rewards simply by enrolling. To enroll, guests can call 1-800-307-5000 or pick up a form at select stations. Enrollment forms can be faxed or mailed to Amtrak, and the new member will receive 400 points for enrolling and traveling within 90 days. Guests can also enroll online at www.amtrak.com and earn 500 points.

Cleveland Short Tracks

'Cleveland Short Tracks' appears on an as-needed basis to keep readers informed of all that's happening rail-wise on the North Coast while ensuring that this newsletter retains its statewide content.

Red Line (Airport-Windermere)

West 65th Station, Eco-Village ready to grow

Work has begun on what is easily Cleveland's most creative rail transit station project — a \$4 million replacement of the 45-year-old West 65th/Madison station. This is a city neighborhood station facility which has no parking, and relies on walk-ins and bus transfers. Ridership at West 65th/Madison had fallen to such a level that GCRTA considered closing it.

But as the station and its surrounding neighborhood declined together, they are slated to be reborn together. West 65th/Madison will be the focal point of Cleveland's first Ecovillage, an effort to redevelop the station and its neighborhood using "green" architectural concepts. Walkways will be paved with pulverized glass bottles collected from the area, storm-water runoff from the new station's roof will be directed to adjacent gardens, and a new station plaza linked to Lorain Road is to feature art made from used tires.

The area's community development organization and EcoCity Cleveland is fostering neighborhood redevelopment plans that will add community gardens for growing food, construct bike paths, plus new/renovated houses and apartments will be made more energy efficient. For

dor Improvement Project. A fourth station (East 34th) is to be relocated as part of the Waterfront Line Extension (see below). And, a fifth station, at East 120th/Euclid, was to be relocated to Mayfield Road/Little Italy, but that project has been left in limbo.

OARP believes the Mayfield Road/Little Italy station project is essential to neighborhood redevelopment efforts proposed by University Circle Inc. This station project should be put back into the planning pipeline as soon as possible.

Blue/Green Lines (Downtown to Shaker Heights)

Station reconstruction

Rehabilitation of the Green Road station at the eastern terminus of the Green Line will begin in early 2001. More than \$800,000 in local, state, and federal funds have been secured to replace passenger shelters and make the station handicapped accessible. This project will be nearly identical to one completed last year at the Warrensville station at the eastern terminus of the Blue Line.

The next major station improvement project on either the Blue or Green line is expected to happen by 2003, when the Shaker Square station will be rehabilitated for \$1.9 million. This is the station where the Blue and Green lines join before continuing west on shared tracks to downtown.

LRV fleet overhaul

Over the next several years, GCRTA will spend \$13.3 million to overhaul its light-rail vehicle fleet, which has been in service for nearly 20 years. Each LRV will be disassembled, inspected, and completely rebuilt to its original

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

A SPECIAL TO THE

Ohio Passenger Rail News

Think big, it's OK in America

By James E. Seney
Executive Director,
Ohio Rail Development Commission

We need a high-speed (110 mph) transcontinental rail corridor, and Amtrak is the outfit to operate it.

Where is "America's" railroad? Where is the "Big Picture" commercial thinking that is so typically American? Why are we picking around the edges when the commercial marketplace tells us a long-haul, scheduled, high-speed, transcontinental rail corridor is what will make money and serve the customers?

There are a number of regional, high-speed rail efforts underway in the country, and that's great! However, the current hub-spoke and corridor proposals make no provision for commercial transportation needs. If intercity/interstate passenger rail is to be successful, then 50 percent of its revenue must come from scheduled commercial cargo service.

Most, if not all, elements are in place to implement such a system. Amtrak has already shown that, as a commercial carrier, it can readily compare with long-haul trucking at the 400+ mile range. Amtrak, in cooperation with the Class I railroads, has the authority to operate coast to coast.

Amtrak can regain, for the rail industry, a large portion of the cargo market that operates

paths, plus new/renovated houses and apartments will be made more energy efficient. For more information, contact Manda Gillespie at mgillespie@ecocleveland.org or (216) 932-3007.



Ken Prendergast photo

GCRTA's \$8.3 million Triskett Station was dedicated last fall. This station, next to I-90 on the Red Line, replaced an aging, 40-year-old facility that had a dingy tunnel to reach the trackside platform. In its place is a new station with a handicapped-accessible overhead walkway, brightly lit passenger waiting areas, rebuilt parking lot and a digital news ticker at the bus transfer site.

More improvements coming

More than \$14 million in local, state and federal funds have been secured for major rehabilitations of the West 117th Street station (in 2001), University Circle station (2001), and Puritas station (2002). Financial problems at GCRTA have forced a delay in the Brookpark station rehabilitation project. This station renovation will be scaled back; its redesign is nearly finished.

Those four station projects will round out the Red Line station modernization program. The Red Line was built in the 1950s and 60s, and its original stations were not handicapped accessible. Thus far, eight of the 18 stations have been modernized.

However, this doesn't include stations at East 55th, East 79th and East 105th which will be rebuilt or relocated as part of the Euclid Corri-

which has been used for nearly 20 years. Each LRV will be disassembled, inspected, and completely rebuilt to its original performance.

During the overhaul, GCRTA will install new technologies that have occurred over the last two decades which will improve the performance and reliability of the LRV cars. The overhaul will be conducted in the next three years so as not to cause shortages of equipment in revenue service.

Waterfront Line (South Harbor-Tower City)

Rail extensions

Studies continue on the proposed 2-mile extension of the downtown Waterfront Line, which would likely be pursued in concert with a 3-mile extension of the Blue Line in suburban Highland Hills. GCRTA is considering pursuing these two

projects as a package, estimated to cost about \$200 million combined, to gain a wider base of support among downtown and suburban interests.

However, financial problems at GCRTA and a renewed focus by GCRTA management on improving existing services may delay the two rail extensions. Also Cleveland City Council President Mike Polensek, who represents a northeastern urban enclave called Collinwood, wants to see a rail transit line extended to his neighborhood first.

The Waterfront Line extension would create a rail loop of downtown Cleveland, serving Cleveland State University, Playhouse Square, the St. Vincent quadrangle and provide redevelopment opportunities to the neglected northeast side of downtown. Meanwhile, the Blue Line extension would bring light-rail service to a new park-ride facility, conveniently located next to Interstate 271 in Highland Hills.

Amtrak can regain, for the rail industry, a large portion of the cargo market that operates on a three- to four-day scheduled transcontinental timetable. Each of Amtrak's express cars holds the equivalent of three semi-trucks of cargo, thereby increasing the capacity of the transcontinental, multi-modal, commercial corridor with minimal investment, just as fiber-optics superseded the old copper wire information transportation system.

I would propose we develop a high-speed, transcontinental corridor from Boston, through Buffalo, cutting southwest through Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati — the heart of Ohio — onto St. Louis, and west to Los Angeles. Multi-modal collection and distribution points would serve the regions along the way. A transcontinental, 110 mph, scheduled high-speed corridor would also serve as a practical demonstration of the need for the remaining Class I railroads in our country to form true transcontinental systems on our continent.

If we want to develop intercity and interstate rail that can competitively serve the commercial markets of people and time-sensitive cargos without operational subsidies, then we must bring the United States of America to the table through a grander vision.

The idea is practical. It's exciting! It's big! It's available to the average citizen and small business, and very traditionally American!

James E. Seney is the Executive Director of the Ohio Rail Development Commission. He is a Vice Chairman and board member of DINAMO (The Association for the Development of Inland Navigation in America's Ohio River Valley). He is the former Governor's Regional Representative for the Ohio Department of Development - Region 2, a nine-county area in northwest Ohio. Prior to this position, he was the Transportation Liaison for the Ohio Department of Development. He has served previously as a commissioner on the Ohio Rail Development Commission and as a former board member of Inland Rivers, Ports and Terminals. Mr. Seney is the Founder and Co-chairman of the Ohio Port Authorities' Council.

TRavel Agent Members

PLEASE PATRONIZE THESE AUTHORIZED TRAVEL AGENTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS:

Akron/Stow	Parkside Travel U S A	(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) 606-6080		
Cleveland	Randall Park Mall Travel Agency	(440) 475-8747	(800) 999-2434	Robert Peck
Columbus	Ohio Automobile Club/AAA Travel	(614) 431-7823		
Elyria	Tours & Travel Service, Inc.	(440) 323-5423	(800) 443-7789	Mike McClister
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		
Sandusky	Sandusky Travel Service, Inc.	(419) 626-4633		Roberta Slyker
Solon	Astro Amtrak Tours	(440) 519-7331	(800) 759-7404	"Amtrak AI" Mladineo
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: Dave Shreiner, Treasurer; 9705 Township Road 301; Millersburg OH 44654. 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: Oct. 2000

Directory of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers

OARP 24-hour News and Information Hotline 614 / 470-0334

Visit OARP on the web! www.oarprail.org

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e-mail: narprail.org; Web: www.narprail.org		

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Updated: January, 2001

Join the 3-C, CTC Corridor Campaigns

CORRIDOR CAMPAIGN MEMBERSHIP FORM (please photocopy and mail)

NAME _____
 TITLE _____
 ORGANIZATION _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
 TELEPHONE(____) _____
 E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Checks should be made payable to either the "3-C Corridor Campaign" or the "CTC Corridor Campaign" and mailed with this coupon to: David Shreiner, Treasurer, 9705 Township Road 301, Millersburg, OH 44654

CIRCLE THE CAMPAIGN OR CAMPAIGNS AND CHECK THE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL(S) YOU ARE JOINING:

3-C Corridor Campaign

Associate (\$50-99)
 Benefactor (\$100-249)
 Advocate (\$250-499)
 Patron (\$500-999)
 Leader (\$1,000-4,999)
 Campaign Partner (\$5,000+)

CTC Corridor Campaign

Associate (\$50-99)
 Benefactor (\$100-249)
 Advocate (\$250-499)
 Patron (\$500-999)
 Leader (\$1,000-4,999)
 Campaign Partner (\$5,000+)

Be a part of focused campaigns to bring advanced passenger trains to the Cleveland-Columbus-Dayton-Cincinnati (3-C) Corridor and/or the Cleveland-Toledo-Chicago (CTC) Corridor.

Members of these campaigns will receive the *Ohio Passenger Rail News* on a quarterly basis, plus a twice-monthly, interactive *Ohio Passenger Rail News eEdition* sent by e-mail, as well as a bi-monthly campaign newsletter (to begin soon), special concerns for action, use of campaign staff (to begin soon) and other benefits. An exclusive membership dues structure, identical to both campaigns, has been instituted.

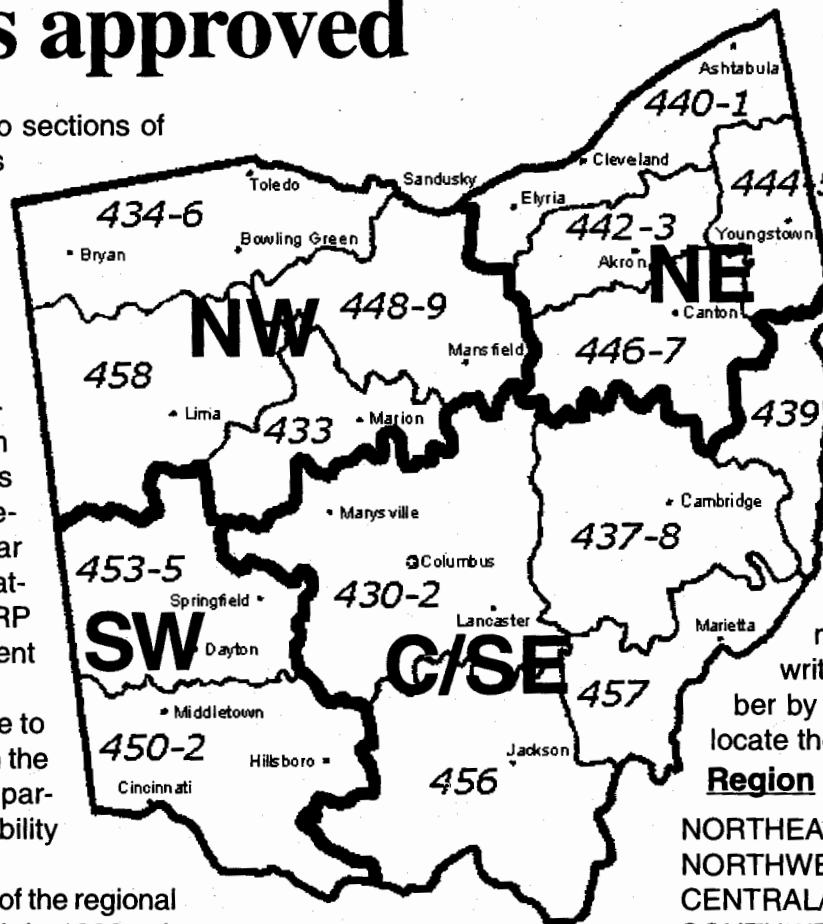
Bylaw changes approved

Several important changes were made to sections of the association's bylaws which address OARP's board of directors. The changes were approved by the membership at the 2000 Fall Meeting and 3-C Corridor Summit in Springfield. These modifications updated and clarified wording in the bylaws.

The first change opened up the two at-large board positions to out-of-state candidates who reside in counties contiguous with Ohio standard metropolitan statistical areas (such as Cincinnati-Covington or Bellaire-Wheeling). It would also waive the one-year membership requirement to qualify as an at-large candidate, as long they become OARP members within 30 days of their appointment or election.

The membership passed the latter change to allow OARP to recruit more candidates from the business community. With their input and participation, OARP can increase its respectability and strength.

Finally, the membership changed the titles of the regional directors and how their regions are defined. In 1988, when



OARP created the board, the regional directors were named and defined by the four telephone area codes in the state. But as the area codes were divided up over the years, the titles became too cumbersome — i.e.: the Area 216/330/440 Director.

Instead, the titles will simply be Northeast Ohio Director, Northwest Ohio Director, Central/Southeast Ohio Director and Southwest Ohio Director. Their regions will also be defined by the first three digits in the zip code, which closely parallel the outline of the original four area codes.

This method also makes it very easy during the mail ballot voting to identify which member resides in which director's area. And, for example, if a director needs to contact members in his or her area to conduct a letter-writing campaign it's much easier to find a member by postal code in OARP's database than it is to locate them based on their telephone area code.

Region	ZIP Codes (first 3-digits)
NORTHEAST	440-447
NORTHWEST	433-436, 448-449, 458
CENTRAL/SOUTHEAST	430-432, 437-439, 456-457
SOUTHWEST	450-455

Calendar of Events/Meetings

February 2001

Date	Event	Time	Location	Address	Contact person & phone number
5	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Kent, Roosevelt H.S.	1400 North Mantua Street	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
6	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Hudson High School	2500 Hudson-Aurora Ave.	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
7	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	4:00 p.m.	Canton, SCATS Offices	201 3rd Street NE Suite 201	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
7	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Twinsburg Government Ctr	10075 Ravenna Road	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
8	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Bay High School Cafeteria	29230 Wolf Road	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
10	Columbus Local Meeting	9:30 a.m.	Red Door Tavern	1736 West 5th Avenue	Bob Boyce 614 / 486-7038
10	Toledo Local Meeting	10:00 a.m.	Toledo Amtrak Station	Central Union Plaza	Bill Gill 419 / 472-6357
15	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Lorain Clearview H.S.	4700 Broadway Ave. off North Ridge	Steve Jones 216 / 241-2414
20	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Medina Cty Career Ctr, Hawley Rm	1101 West Liberty St	

10	Toledo Local Meeting	10:00 a.m.	Toledo Amtrak Station	Central Union Plaza	Bill Gill	419 / 472-6357
15	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Lorain Clearview H.S.	4700 Broadway Ave. off North Ridge	Steve Jones	216 / 241-2414
20	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Medina Cty Career Ctr, Hawley Rm	1101 West Liberty St.	Steve Jones	216 / 241-2414
21	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Mentor Municipal Center	8500 Civic Center Blvd.	Steve Jones	216 / 241-2414
22	Commuter Rail Study Hearing	7:00 p.m.	Aurora Harmon Middle School	130 Aurora-Hudson Rd.	Steve Jones	216 / 241-2414

March 2001

Date	Event	Time	Location	Address	Contact person & phone number
8	ORDC — Committee Mtg.	9:00 a.m.	Riffe Center, 77 South High Steet, 31st Floor, Columbus		ORDC 614 / 644-0306
	ORDC — Full Commission	* 10:45 a.m.	Riffe Center, 77 South High Steet, 31st Floor, Columbus		ORDC 614 / 644-0306
<small>* approximate. Full Commission meeting follow Committee Meetings</small>					
10	Columbus Local Meeting	9:30 a.m.	Red Door Tavern	1736 West 5th Avenue	Bob Boyce 614 / 486-7038
10	Toledo Local Meeting	10:00 a.m.	Toledo Amtrak Station	Central Union Plaza	Bill Gill 419 / 472-6357
24	OARP Spring Meeting	7:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn-Southeast, S. Emerson Ave (I-465, exit 52) Beech Grove		Nick Noe 317 / 846-5371

Joint OARP/NARP Region VI Meeting March 24th

Join OARP, MARP and other passenger rail advocates from across NARP's Region Six for a tour of Amtrak's Beech Grove Maintenance Facility on Saturday, March 24, 2001.

Our private tour will cap off a day of advocacy and informative discussions surrounding train news, information and rail transportation planning throughout the Midwest.

We will meet at the Holiday Inn-Southeast, 5120 Victory Drive on the southeast side of Indianapolis. Use the South Emerson exit (Exit 52) from the I-465 beltway. Meeting

registration will be at the hotel between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. The \$20.00 meeting fee includes a full Hoosier Breakfast Buffet, but does not include lunch.

At 8:30 a.m. we'll leave to tour the Beech Grove shops. After the tour, lunch will be on your own. There is a large variety of nearby restaurants.

After lunch we will re-assemble at the hotel for the remaining session. Our guest speakers include Indiana High Speed Rail Association Vice President Dennis Hodges, IndDOT Senior Rail Planner Tom Beck and

Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson (tentative).

Make checks payable to:

Nicholas Noe
1195 Priority Place
Indianapolis, IN 46227-5962.

The Holiday Inn (317/783-7751) has rooms available at \$74.00 per room; use reservation code: NRA. Rooms at the special rate will be available only until March 9th.

Passenger van transportation will be available for all train arrivals at the Indianapolis Union Station for attendees arriving via Amtrak.

Registration Form — (please photocopy and mail)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP Code _____

Phone number () _____ No. in party _____

Hoosier Breakfast Buffet, tour of Amtrak's Beech Grove maintenance facility and meeting: _____ people at \$20.00 = _____

Mail your registration and check or money order payable to **Nicholas Noe**:

Nicholas Noe
1195 Priority Place
Indianapolis, IN 46227-5962

Registration deadline: **March 19, 2001**