Despite being faced with several challenges over the past winter, prospects for moving the Ohio Hub System plan forward appear much brighter. However, a few unknowns remain, the most prominent of which is the federal government’s undecided policy toward the operation and development of passenger rail services nationwide (see “Federal solutions to Amtrak emerge” on this front page).

Most recently, the Ohio Rail Development Commission got a written commitment March 30 from the Ohio Department of Transportation for $500,000 in planning funds over the next 5 years. These, and additional environmental impact studies, will allow Ohio Hub analyses to advance to a point where the project should become eligible for federal construction dollars.

ODOT Director Gordon Proctor proposed that ORDC receive $100,000 per year for five years in federal planning dollars. These dollars would be matched by ORDC at a minimum of 20 percent and up to a maximum of $100,000. ORDC Executive Director Jim Seney accepted the proposal.

“ODOT’s support, for the first time, gives ORDC a consistent level of planning funds to work with and we appreciate that,” Mr. Seney said. “A successful partnership with ODOT means ORDC can achieve its goals for the Ohio Hub. This allows us to begin the much-needed, detailed economic impact study of the Ohio Hub Plan yet this year. This study is necessary to nail down what we believe to be very positive preliminary economic impact numbers in the initial Ohio Hub Study.”

Initial analyses show those economic impacts could estimated to include the addition of 6,600 construction jobs, 6,000 indirect jobs at retail outlets, restaurants and business will Ohio’s steel, concrete, aggregates and heavy construction industries get from this project? What Ohio communities along the proposed routes will benefit from economic development and new jobs created around stations and in their community as a whole?”

The results of this study will help determine how the
— See “Ohio Hub” on page three
Like having an airport downtown, stations served by fast, frequent passenger trains will create thousands of good-paying jobs in the hearts of Ohio's cities. New jobs won't be limited to the construction, operation and maintenance of fast passenger trains and their infrastructure. Employment will also be generated by new restaurants, shops, hotels, office buildings, housing and tourism around stations, creating a new economy for Ohio that can't be exported overseas or constrained by rising oil prices. That has been the experience with new passenger train services in other developed nations around the world, such as South Korea's KTX high-speed trains, seen here a few days before they began service in 2004.

Federal solutions to Amtrak emerge

Best features of each proposal may be combined

In recent months, as the debate in Washington D.C. heats up over the future of U.S. intercity passenger trains, three proposals have been offered to finally make passenger rail a more dynamic mode of transport. The only option that most observers consider unworkable is the status quo, in which Amtrak is forced to limp along from year to year, barely surviving on handouts from Congress.

Instead, a new federal policy toward intercity passenger train travel is sought, one which offers federal funding mechanisms that are similar to aviation, highways and even waterways. Policies addressing those modes provide models for passenger rail, given that each of those transportation modes are interstate in nature. The interstate nature of intercity passenger rail requires a strong federal funding role to mediate disagreements between states through which passenger trains travel. Nearly all passenger rail services, be they existing or proposed, long- or short-distance, cross state lines.

First to be presented was the Bush Administration's Amtrak reform proposal, which contained a zero budget for Amtrak in 2006. U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta said the zero budget was proposed to spur Congress into taking action on needed reforms for Amtrak. Among the administration's proposed reforms include Amtrak shedding its ownership of tracks, stations and other facilities, including the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak would become a pure operating company and be subject to competition from possible new passenger rail carriers.

Also, the federal government would provide an undisclosed amount of capital funding to passenger rail projects. However, the federal rail funding share would be limited to 50 percent of a project's cost, with states, local governments or private interests providing the remaining 50 percent. By comparison, the federal funding share is 80 percent for modes with which intercity passenger trains must compete.

Plus, under the Bush Administration plan, the federal government would no longer provide operating subsidies to intercity passenger rail. Instead, it would force states to reach agreements with each other on how to subsidize rail services. If a state failed to provide operating subsidies for a particular service, then the service would travel through that state nonstop.

Critics pointed out numerous problems with such a proposed policy, which wouldn't be limited to long-distance trains. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to get multiple states to agree on a funding formula for a single route. There is an example of that close to home.

Days after Amtrak started on May 1, 1971, Ohio and New York state agreed to fund a Chicago-New York City route, called — See "Federal solution" on page five
Ohio Passenger Rail News

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Train of Thought

from Ohio Passenger Rail News Editor
Kenneth Prendergast

One of these years, a presidential administration and Congress are going to break
the deadlock between those who would rather see Amtrak go away, and those
who see it as a place-holder for something bigger and better. Among the three
basic, possible outcomes — no passenger trains, the status quo and a brighter new future
— there is only one worthwhile choice.

Could this be the year we start to achieve that bright future? One would hope so, after
34 years of watching Amtrak limp from year to year without an ongoing source of federal
capital funding. We’ve also watched Amtrak be saddled with antiquated work rules,
the fixed costs of a transportation carrier holding title to its rights of way, and other
issues. There are solutions now pending to cause passenger rail to flourish, and those are
outlined starting on the first page of this newsletter.

There are worthwhile aspects to each plan, aside from the fact that the Bush
Administration has made it clear it doesn’t know much about intercity passenger rail
services, or transportation in general (by arguing that passenger trains should join the rest
of the free market!). The last place anyone will ever find the free market is in the trans-
portation sector. Nor do those at the Federal Railroad Administration seem to understand
that a dominant federal funding role is essential to developing passenger train services,
even on intrastate routes where their competition enjoys the same benefit.

The basic problem in deciding the future of passenger trains is the measure of their
costs and benefits. Because America’s passenger rail network is so skeletal, it lacks
economies of scale, keeping benefits low and per-passenger costs high. Thus, govern-
mental policy makers lack domestic results of successful passenger rail policies on which
they base their decisions. Government officials must ultimately rely on their imaginations
to decide our nation’s new rail policy. Forgive me if that last sentence made you nervous.
Fortunately, there is another option.

This could be the year that policy makers fully consider how other modes of trans-
portation are treated by all levels of government. In most cases, the policies for nurtur-
ing roads, aviation and even waterways were created in the 20th century, as the federal
government grew exponentially in size. Railroads matured while government was still
small and, when it did flex its muscles, government sought to regulate the 19th-century
robber barons’ powers. Only 25 years ago did this policy start to change.

Federal policies toward railroads still have a lot of catching up to do to compare with

OARP's Statement of Purpose

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers is a non-profit,
member-based organization dedicated to promoting passenger
and freight rail service throughout the state.

We regard railroads as vital to the economic health of Ohio
because they can move passengers and goods efficiently and
because they will offer people and businesses greater choice
when the state develops a more balanced transportation system.

OARP seeks to preserve, expand and improve existing passen-
ger rail services by educating the general public, interested
groups, and federal, state, and local officials. We believe it is
appropriate to invest public dollars in private railroad infra-
structure when it leads to public benefits such as job creation,
economic development and mobility through the development
of passenger service.

We also support improvements to non-rail networks of trans-
portation, which should be enhanced to improve safety and to better
connect them with a passenger rail system.
Federal policies toward railroads are controversial. Some small towns hope to have passenger trains, but others have concerns about safety and competition. Although the Bush administration is promoting railroads, it is unlikely that those addressing other modes, so railroads can better compete with them. Fortunately, that doesn’t take imagination, but it does take some effort by government officials to take stock of all the transportation policies that have been implemented over the years. How much effort?

Some policies, while not directed at transportation, directly affect it. Consider, for example, annual federal subsidies for the oil industry, in the form of tax credits and depreciation allowances. These keep gas prices artificially low for motorists and airlines.

According to the International Center of Technology Assessment, these subsidies range from $4.07 billion to $10.47 billion per year and are provided by taxpayers every April 15th. American motorists, who account for two-thirds of our oil guzzling, are the prime beneficiaries. To eliminate this subsidy for motorists, it would take a federal gas tax of at least $2.64 per gallon, and as much as $6.91.

Could this be the year that government officials take issues like these into account while debating the future of passenger trains, and indeed the future of this nation? This is especially important since the average rail traveler is seven to eight times more energy efficient than their automotive counterpart, and our nation’s thirst for oil contributes to our record-high trade deficit.

Creating long-term policies that foster quality passenger train services isn’t just about adding jobs from each new rail project. We can get many of those jobs by continuing to limit our choices to expanded airports and widened highways, although their returns are diminishing. But by adding passenger rail as a serious third choice, we Americans can protect our investments in highways and aviation. We can keep them from getting overwhelmed by traffic congestion, or suffering service interruptions from bad weather, or burning up all the cheap oil. We can safeguard the nation.

Passenger rail advocates have long pointed to the future as the reason for better trains. We’ve had to. We’ve lacked domestic examples of quality passenger trains and governmental policies. But, we can no longer say that someday we’ll need them. We need Congress and the Bush Administration to provide them now.

Could this be the year?

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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.)

Mail this application with a check or money order to:

Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers
9705 Township Road 301
Millersburg OH 44654
ORDC and Ohio Hub have brighter futures

"Ohio Hub" from page one

ORDC will move into the environmental impact phase for the Ohio Hub, where elements like routes, station stops and infrastructure needs will be determined. It is this phase that will get the Ohio Hub to a level where the federal government will consider it to be a "funding-ready" plan, and where ORDC can identify and preserve critical rail infrastructure.

The Ohio Hub Plan envisions an 860-mile system of intercity passenger trains, serving 32 stations and over 22 million people in Ohio, five neighboring states and Southern Canada. Up to eight trains a day will provide a fast, frequent and cost-effective travel option that connects people with major downtown centers, international airports, and suburban areas with access to interstate highways as well as major sports, arts and entertainment attractions.

Total build-out of the nine-year plan would cost approximately $3.32 billion, but would not require a tax increase. ORDC plans to use state, local and private funds that have been spent on railroad grade crossing improvements or grade separations in the very rail corridors outlined in the Ohio Hub. Thus far, more than $50 million dollars has been expended and can be used to leverage funds from an as-yet unidentified federal capital funding program for rail development.

"It is the second-greatest ground transportation system planned for Ohio since the birth of the Interstate Highway System," Mr. Seney said.

Exactly one week before ODOT made its financial commitment, a new Blue-Green Alliance of labor and environmental groups backed the Ohio Hub System proposal and asked Ohio Gov. Bob Taft to fully fund it. The Blue Green Alliance represents 635,000 Ohioans and coalition members include the Ohio AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, United Steelworkers of America, Ohio Farmers Union, Ohio League of Conservation Voters, Ohio Environmental Council, Policy Matters Ohio, Ohio Public Interest Research Group, and Apollo Alliance.

"The choice between good jobs and the environment is a false one," said Dave Caldwell of the United Steelworkers of America and Central Ohio AFL-CIO President. "In a state where we've lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, we need to find real solutions to put Ohioans back to work, protect the environment, and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. The Ohio Hub would do all three."

Earlier this past winter, Gov. Taft decided not to pursue a staff budget proposal to divide up the ORDC's responsibilities into three existing governmental agencies. While this might have led to some cost savings, the move would have caused the demise of the Ohio Hub Plan.

When word of the proposal became public, the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, labor groups, railroads, numerous community leaders and citizens contacted Gov. Taft's office and asked that the proposal not be included in his budget. Less than a month later, Gov. Taft announced he would not split up the ORDC.

The Ohio Hub System plan was rolled out for the public to review and provide input starting last November. A number of public meetings have been held in different cities throughout the state, including Toledo, Columbus, Cincinnati, Lima, Springfield, Galion-Mansfield and Youngstown. Most public meetings have attracted large gatherings of community leaders, from both business and government.

Thus far, the largest gathering was Nov. 19, 2004, at the Columbus Metropolitan Club's "Growing Smarter" Luncheon. Over 120 business, government and community leaders got not only a presentation of the Ohio Hub Plan, but a detailed look at what the states of Pennsylvania and California are already doing to assist passenger and freight rail.

Upcoming public meetings will be held in Dayton and Akron-Canton, but exact locations haven't been decided as of this writing. Check ORDC's Web site at www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/ for updates or call the ORDC at (614) 644-0306 for more information.

Legislative Summit sends rail message

By Brian Williams
OARP Policy Analyst

The Ohio Hub and the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers have a higher public and political profile after OARP's first Ohio Rail Legislative summit on May 18 in Columbus.

Because there is no statewide intercity passenger rail service in Ohio, rail advocates rode chartered buses from Cleveland, Cincinnati and Dayton, while others drove to jobs, as well as jobs operating the trains, and others related to development in and around railroad stations or with railroad manufacturers and suppliers.

Mr. Burga represented the "blue" in the Blue-Green Coalition — a new partnership of labor and environmental interests. Ellen Hawkey, conservation coordinator for the Ohio Chapter Sierrra Club, represented the "green." She spoke as much about jobs and transportation options as she did about the environmental benefits of rail travel.

Amtrak. Both were introduced by Northeast Ohio Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-Painesville).

Mr. Hutchison and OARP Executive Director Dominic Liberatore said they were happy with the turnout and the attention that the first Ohio Rail Legislative Summit generated. Mr. Hutchison credited Mr. Liberatore and volunteers John Manning and Bill Allman for their attention to the details that made the summit a success. OARP officials and board members already are talking about plans for a

...
Because there is no statewide intercity passenger rail service in Ohio, rail advocates rode chartered buses from Cleveland, Cincinnati and Dayton, while others drove to the downtown Columbus YWCA from Toledo, Akron, Youngstown, Lima and elsewhere in the state. About 60 people attended all or parts of the day-long summit, press conference and lobbying effort.

The event got statewide media coverage from Ohio Public Radio. Reporter Jo Engels interviewed OARP President Bill Hutchison after a noon press conference in the Ohio Veterans Plaza at the Statehouse. WBNS Channel 10, the CBS affiliate in Columbus, also covered the press conference, as did Hannah News Service, an agency that closely covers state issues and is read by legislators, lobbyists and newspaper reporters.

"The Ohio Hub plan is one of those rare opportunities for Ohio to better itself at a moderate cost and will create high-paying, non-exportable jobs," Mr. Hutchison said at the press conference. "We owe it to ourselves and our children and their children to create a brighter future for this state."

State Rep. Larry Flowers, a Republican from the Columbus area and State Sen. Marc Dann, a Democrat from Warren, brought enthusiastic bipartisan and bicameral support for the Ohio Hub. At the press conference, both emphasized the jobs and economic development that the Ohio Hub would bring to Ohio cities.

Tim Burga, legislative coordinator of the Ohio AFL-CIO, said it is clear there would be railroad construction

"After starving the patient (Amtrak) for the last four years, Secretary Mineta is now complaining that the patient is malnourished. Secretary Mineta and the Bush Administration should have been thinking about Amtrak’s ability to sell tickets and control other costs before they proposed zeroing out Amtrak’s budget and pushing the railroad into bankruptcy.”

— U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash.)

"Quote"

Ranking Member of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee responding to Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta letter to Amtrak President David Gunn urging immediate cost-cutting measures.

May 26, 2005

John Manning and Bill Allman for their attention to the details that made the summit a success. OARP officials and board members already are talking about plans for a 2006 summit, and turning it into an annual event.

OARP Board gains Sislak, transportation specialist

At its April 30 meeting, the OARP Board of Directors unanimously accepted Kenneth G. Sislak to fill a vacant at-large position on the board.

The addition of Mr. Sislak will further enhance the board’s professionalism and improve its managerial capabilities. Mr. Sislak, based in Cleveland, is Associate Vice President and Midwest public transportation practice leader for DMJM-Harris.

He has more than 30 years of public transportation management and consulting experience. Prior to joining DMJM-Harris, Mr. Sislak held senior management positions in the public transportation industry in both the private and public sectors.

He has worked on projects as far away as China and the United Arab Emirates, or as close as Dayton, Toledo and Cleveland.

Mr. Sislak is a former director of rail operations of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority where he had responsibility of managing rail transit services and the acquisition of two fleets of rapid transit railcars in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In addition, he serves on the Planning and Policy Development Committee of the American Public Transportation Association and the Transportation Research Board's Commuter Rail and Light Rail Transit committees.

Kenneth Sislak
Good news, bad news in Elyria, Sandusky

Prospects for restoring Elyria’s historic depot got a boost from the federal government, shortly before Elyria and Sandusky lost one-fourth of their daily passenger train service.

Thanks to U.S. Rep. Sherrod Brown (D-Lorain), Lorain County will receive another $1 million in federal surface transportation funds for the 80-year-old New York Central depot in Elyria, once Congress passes a long-delayed, six-year transportation program reauthorization.

That funding will add to $2.5 million already committed to the $7 million project that will unite Lorain County Transit buses, Greyhound buses and Amtrak trains at a single facility. Lorain County bought the vacant station in 2000 to preserve it and eventually renovate it as part of a plan to boost downtown Elyria. Until the historic depot is renovated, Amtrak trains will continue to stop in Elyria at a station just east of downtown.

In April, however, Elyria and Sandusky lost stops from one of their four daily trains — Amtrak #29, the westbound Capitol Limited from Washington D.C. and Pittsburgh to Toledo and Chicago. The eastbound Capitol Limited, train #30, continues to serve Elyria and Sandusky, as do both the eastbound and westbound Lake Shore Limited trains.

Phil Copeland, Elyria coordinator for the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, protested the reduction in service. In his April 12th letter to Amtrak President David Gunn, Mr. Copeland said Elyria and Sandusky are now getting “only half of a Capitol Limited.” He noted that Amtrak ridership at the two cities has increased in the past year, ever since Rep. Brown successfully fought to restore the Lake Shore’s station stops at Elyria and Sandusky.

Elyria is a hopping-off point for nearby Oberlin College, where the student population has a large number of East Coast residents. And, of course, Sandusky is home to Cedar Point, one of the largest amusement parks in the United States. It is also home to ferries and other boat services board passengers for the Lake Erie islands, which see millions of tourists each year.

Amtrak says it has to run #29 nonstop through both towns due to worsening scheduling conflicts with Norfolk Southern (NS) freight train traffic and the lack of a second station platform at both Elyria and Sandusky. If those cities had platform stations that allowed passenger trains to serve them from either of NS’s two main tracks, Amtrak trains could dodge freight traffic more flexibly and stop at their stations.

Ironically, Elyria’s New York Central depot renovation project would let passenger trains serve the station from either main track. Unfortunately, it will be at least a couple of years before all the funding is in place and the depot is fully renovated.

In the meantime, Amtrak’s new schedules require westbound travelers for Elyria and Sandusky on train #29 to get off at Cleveland at 2:21 a.m. They would have to transfer to Amtrak’s westbound Lake Shore Limited train #49, departing Cleveland at 3:20 a.m., arriving Elyria at 3:53 a.m. and Sandusky at 4:30 a.m.

Offering trains at that hour of the morning doesn’t encourage rail ridership. Nor does forcing travelers to make transfers at any time of the day. Combining the two inconveniences is a sure way turn away even the hardiest traveler.

OARP hosts Rail Day in Toledo

By Beth McGraw

Four former members of the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (OARP) got the ball rolling for our annual Rail Day, held at the Transportation Museum in Sandusky on April 30th, four months prior to the day.

Mark Carlson photo

Amtrak's Capitol Limited (train #29) is a blur as it roars pass the Elyria station. Scheduling conflicts with freight trains dispatched by track-owning railroad Norfolk Southern was the stated reason Amtrak was forced to eliminate westbound station stops at Elyria and Sandusky. But on out of five days in late May OARP observed train 29 using the station-adjacent track at Elyria causing OARP to question why the train couldn't stop anyway at one or both of these stations.

OARP members Strawfin, Copeland, Bund, and E. Rinehart, Jr. ran down a list of meetings and activities scheduled for the day.

Tours of the museum were planned for the afternoon. OARP coordinator Dan Hecht also had speaking engagements arranged for the day.

Hecht said he was looking forward to the meeting because he knew they would have good discussions and that some members would be able to talk about their work and the railroad industry.

Hecht's talks were scheduled to be on the history of railroads and the history of the museum.

At the end of the day, a group of OARP members will be on hand to discuss the day's events and what they have learned.
OARP hosts Rail Day in Toledo

By Beth McCray
OARP Northwest Ohio Director

"All Aboard!" was heard from little children during the Discover Rail Day Open House May 15 in Toledo, and again during the following Saturday as excited passengers boarded Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited bound for a fun day in Chicago.

Toledo-area members of the OARP, working with the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), provided leadership again this year for their annual alternative transportation week's emphasis on passenger rail.

The week's activities (May 15-21) this year were entitled "7 Days, Different Ways -- Explore New Ways to Get There." During the Open House Sunday, Amtrak Ticket Agent John Edminson was scheduled to be on hand to take questions from prospective travelers. Thanks to the cooperation of Amtrak District Supervisor Ted Craig, Mr. Edminson was able to keep the Amtrak ticket office open through the afternoon when it is usually closed. An estimated 400 people attended the Open House.

In addition to our OARP display, other organizations represented by exhibits were the National Association of Railroad Passengers, Indiana High Speed Rail Association, Midwest High Speed Rail Association, Ohio Rail Development Commission, Rail Users' Network, Operation Lifesaver, Greyhound Lines, Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, Amtrak and the Toledo Lake Erie & Western Railroad.

About 200 people registered for two pairs of tickets for trips on either the Lake Shore Limited or the Capitol Limited, donated by Amtrak. Paintings and prints by area artist Willis Willis drew much attention. A working display of model trains showing off modern Amtrak equipment was provided by Boo Coo Trains, a popular local train group. Thanks to OARP member Jim Parsons, we also had a working display of a G-scale passenger train.

On the upper level of the Amtrak facility (Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza), TMACOG under the direction of Diane Reamer-Evans, had arranged for their annual Bicycle Rodeo and Ozone Action Day activities including Gas Cap Testing and Replacement. Radio station K-100 was on hand broadcasting throughout the afternoon.

OARP Toledo Regional Coordinator Bill Gill and ORDC Public Information Officer Stu Nicholson were both interviewed on air about passenger rail activities in Northwest Ohio and around the state.

Events through the week included Try Transit Day, Celebrity Walk Day and Bicycle Day. Saturday saw a group of 74 people (there was a long standby list) travel to Chicago under the guidance of Mr. Gill, Mr. Parsons, OARP members Dick and Betty Kemp, Norma Mihailoff, John Rose and I.

The excursion was made especially enjoyable by the presence of Amtrak manager Steve Matson. He smoothed the way for us on several occasions. The Lake Shore Limited to Chicago was a little late, but the Capitol Limited returned us home a few minutes early. On the way home, Mr. Gill took a few minutes to explain to the group the importance of passenger rail to our country and the role OARP is playing in bringing the message to our legislators and the public.

Many of the passengers asked to be signed up for next year's trip and the phone calls are still coming in from people hoping that there will be more such trips this year.

OARP member Norma Mihailoff makes the rounds on Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited during the May 21 Discover Rail Day excursion from Toledo to Chicago and return. Mrs. Mihailoff, like other Toledo-area OARP volunteers, helps to make passengers more comfortable and informed.

Jack Slanina photo

Amtrak's Three Rivers service, with daily trains between Chicago, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and New York City, made their last runs March 7. The day before, the eastbound Three Rivers train #40 paused at Youngstown's B&O Station to serve area travelers. Two other Ohio cities — Akron and Fostoria — also lost daily train service when the Three Rivers route was ended. Amtrak continues to serve the Pittsburgh - New York City market, but with only one daily train in each direction. Development of the proposed Ohio Hub System would restore train service to regions of Ohio that have lost it, but will take at least several years to happen.
Ohio Passenger Rail News, Spring 2005

OARP meets ODOT, renews Mobility efforts

By Brian Williams
OARP Policy Analyst

A meeting between Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers representatives and top Ohio Department of Transportation officials may lead to a renewed emphasis on the Ohio Mobility Partnership.

In the April 5 meeting between OARP At-Large Board member Kimberly Gibson, myself, ODOT Director Gordon Proctor and three of his top lieutenants, ODOT leaders made it clear they are not enthusiastic about intercity passenger rail in Ohio. And while the officials were receptive — in theory — to transit and other alternative modes of transportation, they said there was little money and little prospect of much future funding.

The meeting grew out of a conversation in January among OARP President Bill Hutchison, Ohio Rail Development Commission Public Information Officer Stu Nicholson and I after Gov. Bob Taft proposed folding the ORDC into ODOT and two other state agencies. The goal was to promote passenger rail in case the Ohio Hub plan fell under ODOT jurisdiction.

When it became clear the rail commission would remain independent, OARP decided to pursue the meeting anyway in hopes of enlisting Mr. Proctor as a rail supporter — or, at the very least, presenting our views and letting him know that we would be around a long time as a transportation watchdog.

The one-hour meeting was constructive and valuable, but not altogether satisfying. The message Mrs. Gibson and I got from ODOT on prospects for passenger rail and alternative transportation was what we expected — but not what we hoped for.

Still, it was worthwhile if only because it occurred. OARP was given a full hour to discuss its goals not only with ODOT’s director, but also with top aides Howard P. Wood, deputy director of ODOT’s Division of Planning; Cash Misel, assistant director for planning and production management as well their chief engineer; and Andrew I. Gall, chief of staff.

During that hour, OARP was able to demonstrate it is not a bunch of foothers pining for the days of steam locomotives, but a modern organization of professionals committed to promoting freight and passenger rail as essential to Ohio’s economic future.

ODOT now knows a little more about what OARP is, that it’s here to stay, that it’s willing to help ODOT meet its diverse needs — and that OARP will be watching.

Mr. Proctor made clear that he is not very enthusiastic or optimistic about intercity rail — which he seems to think would be expensive and have limited ridership. Pointing out that ODOT came up with Ohio Hub planning dollars after the State Controlling Board tabled the request last year, he said he is not standing in the way of rail. And, he appears to be very supportive of transit in general and intracity rail in particular — because land-acquisition and construction costs for new urban highway lanes are cost prohibitive.

“There’s a cost benefit in dense areas,” he said. “There’s only so much capacity on the urban highways — so it’s more cost-effective to do rail.”

It would be nice if Mr. Proctor were more aggressively pro-rail and more receptive to other modes of transportation. But let’s be realistic: He is probably more aware of the big picture in Ohio transportation than any other director of what, until not too long ago, was the “Highway Department” in name as well as practice. And even a director who was more closely aligned with our vision would have to tread carefully — serving the pleasure of a governor who may not share those views, and having to deal with a legislature not noted for imagination and bold ideas.

And there are planners within ODOT who understand the very real challenges Ohio faces and share OARP’s frustration at the political climate and the cautious culture that dominates. Some are in ODOT’s central office and some are out in ODOT districts.

The enthusiasm of some ODOT insiders suggests that OARP needs to continue building the Ohio Mobility Partnership, a coalition of diverse transportation interests, even as it concentrates most of its energies on the Ohio Hub.

Mr. Hutchison and the OARP Board agreed at its April 30 meeting. He has begun meeting with Mrs. Gibson and I to create an OMP Committee that would include people not on the OARP board. This approach is intended to reach out to new potential supporters and partners — especially business leaders and chambers of commerce, but also metropolitan planning organizations and nonprofit groups such as Greater Ohio, IKCO (One Thousand Friends of Central Ohio) and others.

That, in turn, could lead to an independent coalition with a voice in changing the transportation policy culture in Ohio — and to broader support for passenger rail and the Ohio Hub.

Federal solutions to Amtrak emerge

"Federal solution" from page one

and Nevada haven’t been able to come to an agreement on project funding. A strong federal funding role would remove

The plan has many valuable components, including:
"Federal solution" from page one

the Lake Shore. Ohio failed to make operating subsidy payments, so Amtrak ended the service six months later. Amtrak, using federal funds, restarted the route in 1975 as the Lake Shore Limited. It is quite likely that, without federal operating funding for Amtrak, Ohio would have zero intercity passenger rail service.

But, the Bush Administration argues their policy makes more sense where the need for intercity passenger rail is greatest — in shorter-distance, high-population travel corridors. Critics questioned their policy for those markets, too. For example, New York state would have little or no incentive to help fund the Northeast Corridor. New York City is the largest city in the middle of that route and it is highly unlikely that any train would pass nonstop through the Big Apple if New York state failed to provide operating subsidies.

Another is the very busy Los Angeles - Las Vegas travel market, the western portion of which is in a state that is a decade ahead of every other in the union when it comes to passenger rail development. Yet, this 330-mile route still doesn’t have any passenger rail service because California and Nevada haven’t been able to come to an agreement on project funding. A strong federal funding role would remove barriers to starting this and other services across the country.

Thus, another proposal was offered by a bipartisan group of leaders from the House of Representatives, including Transportation Committee Chair Don Young (R-Alaska). This proposal is House Resolution 1631, called the Rail Infrastructure Development and Expansion Act for the 21st Century, or RIDE-21. Another initial sponsor of the bill was Northeast Ohio’s own U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-Painesville), chair of the U.S. House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Railroads. HR 1631 would provide $60 billion for passenger and freight rail development projects in the following manner:

- up to $2 billion per year in federal operating grants for Amtrak;
- $24 billion from the sale of federal high-speed rail construction bonds to fund 80 percent of project costs (the remaining 20 percent, or $6 billion, would come from state, local and/or private sources);
- $100 million in federal grants for high-speed rail projects, including for the acquisition of locomotives, rolling stock, track, signal equipment etc.;
- $35 billion in expanded loan guarantees from the Railroad Rehabilitation & Infrastructure Financing program, currently funded at $3.5 billion, for high-speed rail projects, major freight rail facility investments and short-line freight rail improvement programs.

“RIDE-21 will pump $60 billion into new and improved rail infrastructure across the country,” Rep. LaTourette said. “It will help create thousands of new jobs while preserving the rights of rail workers under existing collective bargaining agreements. It’s clear from the size and scope of the bill that we recognize the vital role railroads play in our national transportation system.”

“If the United States is serious about maintaining our status as the world’s leader in transportation, then we must tap into the potential of our rail system,” said U.S. Rep. James Oberstar (D-Minn.), ranking Democrat on the House Transportation Committee. “Even with continuing investments in highways and aviation, we cannot depend on those modes of transportation alone. We must strengthen our rail system by expanding capacity and improving reliability for freight and passenger services. RIDE 21 will enable us do that.”

The third, and most recent proposal is the “Laney Plan,” named after Amtrak’s Chairman of the Board David Laney. The plan has many valuable components, including:

- having the federal government provide 80 percent of capital funding costs;
- increasing federal operating subsidies and capital grants to $2 billion in each of the next three years to rebuild the railroad and add more services;
- establishing performance criteria for long-distance routes;
- opening up routes to competition from non-Amtrak operators, subject to approval by the affected railroad’s owner.

However, the Laney Plan also contains some controversial features:

- having the federal government assume Amtrak’s $3.5 billion debt, which costs the railroad more than $200 million in annual interest payments;
- contracting out certain services, such as food and sleeping car services;

Amtrak’s reform plan is significant, in that differs from the Bush Administration’s, even though the Amtrak Board of Directors, including Mr. Laney, were appointed by President Bush. However, labor union leaders objected to the Laney Plan, claiming it was too similar to the administration’s reform plan.

“This is shameful, anti-union rhetoric one expects from Wal-Mart — not Amtrak management, which should celebrate the loyalty of their employees given the conditions under which they work,” said Paul Thompson, president of the Cleveland-based United Transportation Union.

However, most members of Congress said they would not accept more funding for passenger rail service, including high-speed rail, without Amtrak reforms. During committee debate on each of the three proposals, it is likely that members of Congress will seek to merge portions of each plan into a single proposal for the entire Congress to pass.

OARP hopes Congress will be successful this year. In past years, attempts to merge different rail reform proposals failed. Continuing the status quo will kill passenger rail service in this country just as thoroughly as the Bush Administration’s zero budget for Amtrak in 2006.

For rail passengers and their communities, be they big or rural, the consequences of inaction couldn’t be any more dire.
OARP President’s Column
He’s “Back in the Saddle Again!”

By Bill Hutchison
OARP President

“The more things change, the more they stay the same” is an old French proverb that might apply, since I am now serving again as your OARP president, as I did from 1998-2002. This came about out of the recognition that things were developing so rapidly and on so many fronts a change had to be made.

Simply put, it was becoming impossible for one person to fill the shoes of both executive director and president, even for a whirling dervish like Dominic Liberatore. He recognized this and approved the change that, with board consent, resulted in myself filling the rest of his term as president.

We are being pulled in many different directions simultaneously. First, we have the now-unfolding Amtrak battle, and second we are gearing up to push the Ohio Hub plan. In addition, we acted to save the Ohio Rail Development Commission from an ill-advised budget cut, went to bat for ORDC with the State Controlling Board for an economic development study and fought to keep light rail alive in Columbus.

A lot of this was done by Dominic Liberatore, who has made numerous trips near and far, rallied the troops, put together our first office, with full time and volunteer staff. The office is of particular importance and the realization of a goal I set for us many years ago. We now have a rallying point for volunteers to gather to do the work that languished for so long.

The office, full-time staff and the new ability to instantly alert members and friends through our phone banking system has given us a revolutionary ability to react to issues. Likewise, we now have the ability to fight brush fires on more than one front and we can mount sustained activity that was not possible before.

In short, we have become one of the most progressive rail advocacy organizations in the country, to the point where others, including the National Association of Railroad Passengers are asking for our input.

OARP will continue with aggressive outreach efforts to bring back old members into the fold and recruit new ones. We have stopped a two year decline in membership and are now increasing members daily. More needs to be done, but we are heading in the right direction.

Look for many new and creative approaches to increase our visibility and push our agenda. We have become a respected voice for those of us who believe in rail passenger service and are poised to really push the issue.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, we now have our first full-time paid staff person in Dominic Liberatore, our Executive Director. This was made possible, in large part, through generous grants from the George Gund Foundation and the Dayton Foundation. Because of this, our reach will be greatly extended.

Many challenges remain. We have to win the Amtrak battle and force a change that assures a long-term solution to annual budget fights over what little rail service there is. We must win the fight to pass the Ohio Hub Plan, which will be like running a full-blown political campaign. We must help our counterparts in other states build their organizations.

At the same time, we have to continue to strengthen the OARP organization. We have to build on our strengths, such as the newsletter and Web site. We must look at available avenues for fundraising, since nothing will happen without funding. It’s a daunting challenge, but it must be met.

I am proud to again be president of such a forward-thinking organization. Together, we will win!

New report offers drastic options to save oil quickly

By Ken Prendergast
Editor, Ohio Passenger Rail News

The International Energy Agency (IEA), an information clearinghouse and advisory body comprised of member nations including the United States, has proposed major cutbacks to oil use. The drastic options in the report are highly unusual for the normally conservative IEA.

Most of the options, issued in a draft report April 28, target the use of cars. U.S. motorists account for a staggering 10 percent of global oil use, according to Bloomberg. The International Energy Agency for the Study of Peak Oil & Gas contend that total global oil supplies will start to decline as early as 2007 or 2008, causing significant fuel shortages and price "super spikes."

While the IEA wouldn't say whether those predictions influenced the release of their draft report, it does state that the

“Quote

“Our oil challenges — aging fields, rising levels of water, and complex formations,” said geologists for Saudi Arabia's Aramco Oil Co., in a 2003 presentation in the Saudi oil city of Dhahran.

“This was like a basketball coach saying: I got the world-class imagination, interest, talent, buy. But I don't have the funds. So I thought, I don't have the funds, but I can make the funds,” said UW-Madison Chemistry Professor Robert Grubbs, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry last fall for his work in developing a new type of catalyst.
Most of the options, issued in a draft report April 28, target the use of cars. U.S. motorists account for a staggering 10 percent of global oil use, according to Bloomberg News.

Among the proposed cutbacks are carpooling, greater telecommuting, having optimal air pressure in car tires, reducing highway speed limits and increasing subsidies for mass transit to reduce or eliminate fares.

The most draconian option proposed is a police-enforced ban on driving, determined by the day of the week and motorists' license plate numbers. The IEA said bans could be one day in every 10, or more stringently on cars with odd- or even-numbered plates. They would be banned from the roads on corresponding odd or even days of the month.

But the IEA points out the difficulties associated with some of its options. The driving bans, for example, probably wouldn't work in the U.S. Many families own more than one car and persons would probably end up driving different cars depending on what the day of the week it was. Also, the IEA estimates that an additional 1,380 police officers would have to be hired throughout the U.S. to enforce the driving bans.

The options are outlined in an IEA report “Saving Oil in a Hurry: Measures for Rapid Demand Restraint in Transport.” It is available at the IEA's Online Bookshop at www.iea.org for a small fee, but a report summary, press release and some charts can be viewed for free. A final report may be issued later this year.

“Our study shows that a number of measures could provide substantial reductions in transport oil use quickly and cheaply — if countries are well-prepared and act aggressively during an emergency,” said IEA Executive Director Claude Mandil.

The report was issued as oil prices have more than doubled since the late 1990s, and turned upward even more sharply since 2003. Some oil industry observers contend that global oil consumption is outstripping the ability of known reserves to satisfy it. And, worse, most of those oil supplies are from reserves discovered more than three decades ago.

Former oil industry geologists who formed the

whether those predictions influenced the release of their draft report, it does state that the cutbacks could be implemented in times of fuel “emergency supply disruptions and price shocks.” A U.S. Department of Energy report, also released this spring, said oil conservation measures could be implemented without harming the nation's economy, but would take up to 20 years for such a smooth transition.

Interestingly, the report’s proposals, if approved by the IEA, would be binding on member nations. This is according to the IEA’s little-known emergency treaty, the Agreement on an International Energy Programme.

“Measures to achieve demand restraint fall into three main classes — persuasion and public information, administrative and compulsory measures, and finally, allocation and rationing schemes,” the treaty states.

The IEA says that if its proposals are implemented by many member countries, certain combinations of measures could reduce world oil demand by a significant amount, possibly a million barrels per day or more. Such actions could be used to complement supply-side measures (such as use of strategic oil reserves) to help countries cope with oil supply disruptions, and avoid physical shortages and associated price spikes.

Some of the assessed measures may make sense for many situations, others primarily during emergencies. All of the options can be implemented quickly, but only if governments are prepared, the IEA notes.

“These measures are by no means a substitute for careful transportation planning, promoting efficiency improvements and other medium-term and long-term strategies,” according to an IEA statement.

OARP and others strongly contend that such strategies should include building high-speed rail and urban rail transit, which are

seven to eight times more energy efficient per passenger-mile than cars. Also, governments should consider creating higher-density land use patterns that mix housing, retail and office uses to encourage more walking or biking, and require shorter car trips.

The IEA says the report is intended to “raise awareness that transport demand response is an important aspect in dealing with supply disruptions, apart from oil supply management.” Oil demand in transport is indeed very “price inelastic” in the short run. But the measures outlined can help change that, by giving travelers more options for coping, and giving countries an important tool for lowering the duration and costs of petroleum supply disruptions.

“Our main conclusion,” the IEA report says, “finds that those policies that are more restrictive tend to be most effective in gaining larger reductions in fuel consumption. In particular, driving restrictions give the largest estimated reductions in fuel consumption.”

### THE GROWING GAP

Between Discovery and Production

Past discovery based on ExxonMobil (2002).
Revisions backdated

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Updated: June 2005

Rail Ohio, the key to Ohio's rail future...
Central Ohio – the key to Ohio’s rail future

By Dominic J. Liberatore
OARP Executive Director

Last year, while serving as OARP president, I requested that our board of directors pose for a group photo in front of the State House. We gathered on the steps of the State House, positioned ourselves for the photo and then went on our way.

The goal of the photo was to express that the key to bringing quality, daylight passenger rail service to all parts of Ohio involved two simple things: Columbus and Washington. One year later, we now know this statement to be truer than ever.

With this in mind, let us envision a possible situation on Election Day 2006:

“After two previous failed attempts to bring rail service to the state capital, Central Ohio voters today overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure to bring light rail to Columbus. Speaking from the steps of the State House on election night, U.S. Reps. Pat Tiberi and Debra Pryce, the fourth-most powerful legislator in Congress, told reporters that, because Central Ohio residents made it clear they want to see rail transportation in Columbus, they will advocate more openly for the development of the Ohio Hub Plan, which will connect Ohio’s major cities by passenger rail service.”

While this idea may seem to be a bit far fetched, take into account what a congressional staffer said last week to various rail advocates in Washington D.C. as we made the rounds in support of House Bills 1630 and 1631: “Why should congressman ‘X’ support the Ohio Hub Plan when the voters of Columbus have turned down rail transportation plans in our state capital twice in the past 15 years?”

While most rail advocates know the difference between light rail and intercity passenger rail, it is obvious that the political argument for one hinges on the successful development of the other.

Realizing what we said, I would request that all members of our organization join us in spending some time in Columbus and helping to persuade the powerful Republican officials at the State House and in Washington about the need for improved passenger rail service for all Ohioans. When we win in Columbus, victories at the congressional, state and local level will become much easier everywhere in other parts of our state.

OARP’s Corporate Supporters

Give Smart!

Let us help you plan your charitable giving to assist OARP in bringing improved passenger rail service to Ohio while maximizing your tax benefits.

- Gifts of Cash, stocks and bonds and other property
- Charitable gift annuities
- Trusts
- Bequests

For more information about “Give Smart” please contact OARP Executive Director Dominic Liberatore at (614) 228-6005.
The OARP family suffers two recent losses

In recent months, OARP lost Harold Wolff, an OARP board member from 1989 to 1991, and Willard B. Edson, one of the first members of OARP in 1973. Mr. Wolff, of Medina, passed away at the age of 91 on April 18, 2005. Mr. Edson, of Toledo, left us on Nov. 22, 2004 at the age of 96. Both men were valuable contributors to the association over the years.

Mr. Wolff, with his brother Norman, started Wolff Bros. General Contractors in the 1950s, and later added Wolff Bros. Supply Inc. in 1965, now employing more than 250 people at nine locations in Northeast and North Central Ohio. Despite the demands of his business, Mr. Wolff continued to advocate for better rail service, including arranging meetings with late OARP member and Congressman Donald Pease of Oberlin.

Mr. Wolff is survived by his widow, Lillian, plus numerous other family members. Mrs. Wolff informed OARP Northeast Ohio Director Howard Harding of her husband’s passing. Mr. Harding, of Akron, was OARP president when Mr. Wolff served on the OARP board.

“For many years, Harold was one of OARP’s most generous contributors,” Mr. Harding said. “In addition to cash, Harold twice opened his very large place of business to us for distributing information about OARP and Amtrak during huge open houses that attracted hundreds, perhaps thousands, of customers, suppliers and friends. In more recent years, Harold’s declining health kept him from participating in OARP — or much else.”

In Toledo, Mr. Edson was an active member of OARP’s local meetings and activities in Northwest Ohio. He also was one of the organizers of the Waterfront Electric Railway and builder and owner of the Toledo Electric Railway, located in his Reynolds Corners back yard.

OARP supplied flowers at his service, at the Neville Funeral Home Reynolds Corners Chapel. Attending and representing OARP were NW Ohio Director Beth McCray and Toledo Coordinator Bill Gill.

Greeting Mrs. McCray and Mr. Gill were daughters Rose Edson and Elsie Edson White. Rose Edson said her father’s advancing age kept him from going to OARP meetings, and said he told her how much he missed attending them. At his wake, Mr. Edson’s tie had a train on it and his casket lining was embroidered with a train rolling through pines — a railroad supporter to the end.

“Willard will be greatly missed by his family, friends and, of course, by his OARP family,” said OARP President Bill Hutchison. “His enthusiasm for trains and trolleys never waned.”
huge supporters of passenger rail development in general and the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers in particular. Initial production of the Ohio Passenger Rail News would not have been possible without the computers they donated to us.

Register on-line at: www.oarp.com or with the coupon below.

OARP Annual Meeting Registration Form
(Please Print)

Name(s) ____________________________________________
Address ____________________________________________________________________________
City ___________________________________________ State ___________ ZIP ___________
Telephone(__________) ____________________________ Email ___________________________

$30 for OARP members
$45 for non-members (includes one year membership)
Please pre-register by June 20!

Make check or money order payable to: OARP Annual Meeting
____ members ____ non-members 309 South 4th St, Suite 304
$____ total enclosed Columbus, OH 43215-5428

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

June 2005

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July 2005

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<td>Riffe Center; 77 S. High Street, 31st Floor</td>
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August 2005

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