Rail projects and plans abound in Ohio

While it's a certainty that the 3C passenger rail project will resurface, to say that there's nothing else happening rail-wise in Ohio in the meantime would neglect an almost-countless list of rail projects and emerging rail plans. The reason why it's near-countless is because it depends on what should or should not be included on the list. So for All Aboard Ohio's members and friends, we present this list of passenger rail (intercity, regional or local transit) projects that could see construction or service startup in the next five years:

- Amtrak's Cardinal route (Chicago - Indianapolis - Cincinnati - Charleston - Washington DC - New York City) could be expanded in 2011 from thrice weekly service to daily trains. Amtrak board approval is pending for this daily service, which would be the first along this route since 1981. A station should be added at Oxford to serve Miami University. Another Amtrak budget fight between Republicans and Democrats in Congress could determine whether this and the next project will happen.

- Amtrak's Capitol Limited route (Chicago - Toledo - Cleveland - Pittsburgh - Washington DC) could be united in 2011 with the Pennsylvanian service (Pittsburgh - Harrisburg - Philadelphia - New York City) with through cars from Chicago to Pittsburgh to New York City. If approved by Amtrak's board, it would offer a second daily round trip between Northern Ohio cities and the Big Apple and the first from Ohio to central and eastern Pennsylvania since 2005.

- Schedule or service changes are possible from Michael Harding photo

Ridership growth on Ohio's trains doubled the national average in 2010, as travel to/from Ohio Amtrak stations grew 14 percent last year to 147,000 riders. That was twice the 7 percent growth in the rest of the nation, and Ohio's second consecutive year of double-digit growth rates. Train ridership rose 10 percent in 2009 while driving in Ohio fell 1.5 percent. Also, ridership on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad grew 20 percent to 189,000 trips in 2010. On Nov. 11, 2009, Amtrak's westbound Lake Shore Limited prepares to depart Toledo's station in a pre-dawn fog.

- Construction is due to get underway this winter for Phase 1 of the Cincinnati Streetcar system, as 90 percent of the funding for the $128 million project is in hand. The first segment will extend four miles from The Banks riverfront development between the two sports stadiums, on Main and Walnut

City/Boston). As part of this change, All Aboard Ohio is recommending an Empire Corridor train be extended from Buffalo to Cleveland to connect with a rescheduled Capitol/Pennsylvanian. That train would catch all Chicago connections for eastern cities, allowing the Lake Shore to serve intermediate

City/Boston). As part of this change, All Aboard Ohio is recommending an Empire Corridor train be extended from Buffalo to Cleveland to connect with a rescheduled Capitol/Pennsylvanian. That train would catch all Chicago connections for eastern cities, allowing the Lake Shore to serve intermediate
3C dies again – Is eighth time the charm?

By Ken Prendergast
Executive Director, All Aboard Ohio

In hindsight, the stimulus braked, not accelerated 3C ‘Quick Start’ project

had he instead been defeated in the November election by then-Gov. Ted Strickland, there was little chance this 3C project was going to move forward.

We as rail advocates need to understand why projects fail. And the simplified reason for the latest failure was that we failed to stay the course. There were three major strikes against 3C this time around:

1. It was the Obama Administration who pulled back the funding and ultimately killed 3C. Transportation Secretary Ray Lahood yanked the unspent 3C funding (about $398 million) and redirected it to states that were likely to spend it immediately on passenger rail projects. The Obama Administration acknowledged the new Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as a growing bipartisan atmosphere of concern over the size of the federal budget deficit (although Gov. Kasich wanted to use the federal 3C rail money to build more roads!). As a result of possible budget austerity measures, unspent federal stimulus funds may be pulled back into the treasury. Of more than $10 billion in federal funds pledged for passenger rail development, less than $5 billion was spent as of January 2011 by states for their rail projects.

Ohio wouldn’t have been ready to start building anything relating to 3C rail until mid- to late-2011 (if at all, see #2 on page seven) – that was when preliminary engineering was due to be completed. Indeed, Ohio was late to the rail development game. Had Ohio started federally compliant planning for 3C just one or two years earlier, the project might have been so far advanced that Gov. Kasich could not have killed it. But that’s the benefit of hindsight.

Seeing the rising calls for budget austerity measures, Obama Administration officials wanted to protect

— See “3C dies” on page seven
Ohio Passenger Rail News

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Train of Thought

Executive Director Ken Prendergast

Our opponents ask: who cares if Ohio won’t accept federal money to run several daily round-trip passenger trains? The state, they say, has much bigger problems it should be worrying about than developing passenger rail in the Cleveland – Columbus – Dayton – Cincinnati (3C) Corridor.

No, actually Ohio’s transportation system is one of the most imposing dilemmas confronting the state today.

Our highway-dependent transportation system was built for a state that hasn’t existed in 50 years. Back then, Ohio’s population was still growing, America produced much of its own oil and the latest portable technology was a transistor radio. With taxpayer support limited to highways, travel choices have all but vanished. Today Ohio’s concept of transportation options is what kind of car you have to buy. While our transportation policy hasn’t changed, Ohio and the rest of the world have. And our biggest challenges are right around the corner.

A major shift in our population is starting thanks to the young and old – the two largest demographic groups in American history. The largest is Generation Y (ages 21-30), more than 80 million strong. Yet it comprises only 14 percent of vehicle-miles driven compared to 21 percent in the 1990s for the previous, smaller generation, according to business research firm Kiplinger.

Many in Gen Y want to spend their time and money on smart phones, computers and productive activities, not be handcuffed to steering wheels. The private sector will not meet the transportation needs of this group as long as 95-100 percent of taxpayer funds for transportation go to highways. This will continue as long as the highway builders, petroleum companies and truckers have the State House on lockdown. And, sadly too many of our young people do not vote – except with their feet.

In 2011, the Baby Boom generation begins turning 65 years old. This second-largest population group in American history needs to stay mobile and fully involved in Ohio’s economy. Anything less will have serious economic consequences. Yet as people age their ability to drive longer distances and/or at highway speeds diminishes. Stamina fades, awareness of surroundings falters, reaction times slow, and eyesight blurs. In Ohio, if you cannot drive, you are placed under house arrest.

And, according to many global energy experts ranging from military hawks to environmental doves, every age group will soon be affected by the third change. Starting in the years 2011-15, oil shortages with declines in global production of up to 10 percent are forecast. From there, an irreversible, steady decline from a 2006 peak is anticipated. For comparison, the months-long shortages in 1973 and 1979 were the result of production declines of only 5 percent. America’s economy was ruined. Today, American motorists burn 11 percent of the world’s oil, according to Petroleum Intelligence Weekly.

Ohio is in the middle of a transportation revolution. And Ohio’s transportation system needs to transform into a competitive global player.
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We reserve the right to edit all non-published submissions. Original photos should be sharp, bright prints—avoid negatives.
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4/14
Rail projects and plans abound in Ohio

"Abound" from page one

The University of Cincinnati, the hospitals and the zoo. Developers of the Cincinnati casino are willing to pay for a streetcar branch to their site at Broadway Commons on the east side of downtown.

- The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority has one of its largest-ever five-year capital budgets for rail – $168.2 million! This includes five rail station projects totaling $91 million. Each is part of station-area real estate development plans. Two stations on the Blue Line (downtown-Shaker Heights via Van Aken) will be relocated: to the other side of Lee Road and a new Warrensville station – part of a $50 million first phase of extending the Blue Line to North Randall or Chagrin Highlands. GCRTA’s Red Line (Airport-Windermere) will get three stations: East 55th, University Circle-Cedar and University Circle-Little Italy. The first two stations will be replaced; the third will be relocated from Euclid-East 120th. Other projects include rebuilt bridges, tunnels and rail cars.

- Construction is due to start soon on Alliance’s new, $1.5 million Amtrak station facility at the site of the current platform on the east side of downtown. It is part of Amtrak’s nationwide upgrade of stations to meet federal accessibility laws. Other Ohio stations to see new platforms and site improvements are Bryan and Elyria. Meanwhile, the Lorain County Transportation Center (former New York Central depot) in Elyria opened in December and could add Amtrak station facilities sometime within the next five years.

- Cincinnati Union Terminal (CUT) is the subject of two planning initiatives. One is a city-funded feasibility study being conducted by URS Consultants to expand the station track area for the display, storage and layover of historic rail cars, private cars and any future expanded Amtrak services. The second planning is preliminary engineering by the Port of Greater Cincinnati Development Authority for constructing a fourth main track in the Mill Creek valley to relieve congestion of freight and passenger trains to Queensgate Yard and CUT.

Project is not likely to produce any rail service within five years. It may, however, produce an interim bus service between Downtown Cleveland, Lorain, Sandusky and intermediate points.

The project is in alternatives analysis, with the most-cost effective option being commuter rail between Lorain and the West Boulevard Rapid transit station. Tower City Center (former Cleveland Union Terminal) is recommended as the WestShore’s downtown destination (as it is for Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad). All Aboard Ohio is urging WestShore, CVSR and Cleveland casino interests to unite for a Tower City station project.

Several more projects might get started within the next five years. These are:

- Gaining momentum is a possible refurbishment of the MLK Plaza in Toledo, which could include relocating the Amtrak station to the concourse above the tracks so that more than one train can use the station at one time. The Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers also is proposing regular bus service between MLK Plaza and Detroit Metro International Airport, which All Aboard Ohio supports.

- Business leaders in the Cleveland – Youngstown – Pittsburgh TechBelt corridor are trying to keep funding intact for environmental studies for developing a hybrid commuter rail/high-speed passenger and modernized freight rail services. The rail investments would ensure TechBelt labor force mobility and low-cost access by businesses to goods and raw materials.

- All Aboard Ohio also urges that two recent regional rail projects be revived. One is a frequent commuter service on one of the two rail corridors linking downtown Cincinnati, Greater Dayton and intermediate cities, proposed as part of the I-75 Corridor studies. That project was mothballed when the state moved forward on 3C. The other is a variation of Columbus’ North Corridor light-rail project. Instead of light-rail, All Aboard Ohio argues for lower-cost regional commuter rail on lightly used rail corridors that form an "L" shaped route between Delaware, Downtown Columbus and Newark.

Ken Prendergast photo

A northbound CVSR train approaches the State Route 82 bridge in Brecksville.
The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) could be extended northward to Cleveland within five years if all goes well. The extension could be extended to Columbus, Downtown Columbus and Newark.

Lastly, All Aboard Ohio is joining forces with the Midwest High Speed Rail Association to advocate for 220-mph high-speed rail service from Chicago to Cincinnati, Toledo and Cleveland with future extensions to the East Coast. Considering the impending oil shortage crisis, planning must get under way now in order to have something built and operational in 10-20 years. But we also recognize the importance of having an interim 90 mph passenger rail service within the next five years as an essential part of the high-speed rail planning and engineering costs.

While you have every right to be disappointed if not angry about what happened to the latest effort at getting 3C train service, don’t get too depressed. It’s impossible to stop the worldwide progress of passenger rail expansion from infiltrating our state. Winter doesn’t last forever.

**ALLABOARDOHIO!**

**2011 WORK PLAN**

*Intercity, regional or local transit passenger rail projects that could see construction or service startup in the next five years.*

- Expanded Amtrak service on existing route; existing station/proposed station
- High-speed rail planning
- New commuter rail
- Scenic rail improvements
Why rail? Why now? Of all the questions being asked about developing passenger rail in Ohio, the most important questions are not being asked:

How will Ohioans stay mobile and/or how will Ohio stay attractive to residents and businesses when:

- our competitors are investing for the future while Ohio is not?
- oil production falls by more than 10 percent between 2012-15, as the Pentagon predicts, and continues to slide thereafter (compared to 5% drop over only a few months in 1973)?
- the largest population group in US history, GenY, is driving far less than the preceding, smaller generation (Source: Kiplinger)?
- the second-largest group, the Baby Boomers, started turning 65 years old this year?

Ohio is changing. Its transportation system is not. Yes, investing for the future always carries some risk, but standing still always guarantees failure.

Generation Y: not driving the car industry

Unlike their parents and grandparents, young adults don’t have the same enthusiasm for cars as their parents did. Many still find new cars appealing, and many cars are still being bought. But they aren’t being bought as much, driven as much or revered as much by Generation Y (ages 21-30) as their ancestors did.

The reasons are a mix of fascinating studies of sociology, marketing, urban planning, environmental and transportation policy, and urban degradation. Many other young people have spent so much time in cars as children they don’t view cars as a means of escape, but something to escape from.

“The great American romance is over. The automobile has gone from being the joyous emblem of what made this nation great to being the symbol of its social, political, environmental, and economic, well, car wreck,” wrote Boston Globe contributor Irwin Gove.

What others are saying

“Race is but one example of ‘highway discrimination,’ we could easily argue investments in auto-centric infrastructure also discriminate against the poor, the elderly and those with both mental and physical disabilities.”
The reasons are a mix of fascinating studies of sociology, marketing, urban planning, environmental and transportation policy.

One of the most amazing statistics, compiled by business research firm Kiplinger, is that motorists aged 21 to 30 now account for just 14 percent of miles driven, down from 21 percent in 1995. That statistic is even more remarkable when one realizes that the 80-million-strong GenY is the largest demographic group in American history. The prior generation was smaller yet drove more.

Increasingly, younger adults don’t view the big house in the suburbs with the white picket fence and two cars in the garage as their American dream. Instead, they are increasingly opting for an apartment or townhouse in the city where they can walk, bike, take transit and use car-sharing services. Instead of buying two cars, young families are buying one or none, and spending the savings on computers, smart phones or other Personal Digital Assistants, software, video games, and widescreen, high-definition televisions.

Since the State of Ohio spends 97 percent of transportation tax dollars on roads (ODOT in 2010 spent only $80 million of its $2.6 billion budget on trains and transit), it cannot offer the kinds of transportation choices and other amenities that young people want. Sadly, young people do not vote as much as older citizens, so Ohio’s political leadership is less likely to accommodate the transportation wishes of GenY. So instead, young people vote with their feet and are leaving Ohio.

“(GenY) views commuting a few hours by car a huge productivity waste when they can work using PDAs while taking the bus and train,” says William Draves, president of Learning Resources Network, an association that studies consumer trends and provides education and training services. He was quoted in a Sept. 14, 2010 article “Generation Y giving cars a pass” by Jim Ostroff, associate editor of The Kiplinger Letter.

The article also noted that selling cars to young adults younger than 30 years is proving to be a big challenge for car manufacturers. Unlike their elders, GenY is less likely to see car as a sex or status symbol and more likely to see cars as a source of pollution.

“The great American romance is over. The automobile has gone from being the joyous emblem of what made this nation great to being the symbol of its social, political, environmental, and economic, well, car wreck,” wrote Boston Globe contributor James Carroll in a March 8, 2010 opinion piece “A love too fast, then the crash.”

The cultural shift doesn’t seem to be ending with GenY. Teenagers don’t go cruising around in cars on weekends like their parents did in the 1970s and 80s, or their grandparents did before them. Instead, they are more likely to be at the skate park, or biking on the rail trail or shopping for and enjoying cool new apps on their smart phones. Many don’t rush to get their driver’s license on their 16th birthday anymore and instead are waiting a couple of years. Many simply can’t afford cars.

Highway builders dependent on ever-greater gas tax revenues from more driving and automakers don’t have answers for these changes. Nor do they have answers for the fact that the second-largest population group in U.S. history – the Baby Boomers – started turning 65 years old in 2011. Retirement means a sharp drop in driving and car buying, and aging makes driving more tiring, even dangerous (see article “From Baby Boom to house arrest” on page five).

The nation’s two largest population groups represent more than just one half of America’s population. They represent the largest demographic, marketing, sociological and political change in America’s transportation history. And Ohio is getting left behind at the station.

Investments in auto-centric infrastructure also discriminate against the poor, the elderly and those with both mental and physical disabilities...

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Why now?

From Baby Boom to house arrest?

Not every Ohioan will be poor. Not every Ohioan will be disabled. But every Ohioan will get old and will share in the sad immobility of the disabled and the poor. And as the second-largest generation in American history starts turning 65 years old in 2011, the effects from the increasing immobility of the Baby Boomers won’t just be a personal hardship for those born between 1946 and 1964. Ohio’s drive-everywhere transportation system will sentence more and more Ohioans to house arrest. The effects from the isolation of so many people will ripple throughout Ohio’s economy.

Currently, 13 percent of Ohioans are 65 years and older. By 2030, that number will jump to 20 percent of the state’s population, according to Census predictions.

As we age, our bodies prevent us from being able to drive safely and, for many, won’t let us take part in highway driving at all. Consider:

- Our reaction times diminish to avoid fast-moving vehicles, to make quick turns or stops, and to avoid hazards that might suddenly appear.
- We need more light to see where we’re going, and it’s not just the elderly who are affected. A 40-year-old needs 20 times more light to see at night to see than a 20-year-old, according to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s AgeLab.
- We can’t judge speed as well as we used to, or see as far ahead to respond to approaching road signs or brake lights, or we simply become confused.
- Our bodies become less flexible, affecting our ability to turn to look to the side or behind us. The effect is that the size or number of blind spots increases.
- And, for trips between cities, our stamina diminishes to the point that a two-hour drive in heavy traffic, such as on I-71, will exhaust a 60-year-old.

Many of us know someone who has seen their mobility diminish with age, and know that if Ohio had good passenger rail services, they might not have lost as much of that mobility. For example, All Aboard Ohio Executive Director Ken Prendergast’s 82-year-old father James had a diabetic blackout while driving and crashed into two cars while exiting I-77. Fortunately no one was seriously hurt. Ken’s 80-year-old mother Edith could not attend the funeral of her own brother Harry “Pat” March in October in Cincinnati. Several years earlier she drove alone to Indianapolis, fell asleep at the wheel, and side-swiped a guardrail. She wanted to drive to Cincinnati, but her children objected. Her only option to driving was to take a 6-hour-long Greyhound trip departing downtown Cleveland at 4:30 a.m. She wasn’t comfortable with that, so she missed her brother’s funeral.

Based on the Ohio Department of Transportation’s plan, one of Ohio’s 3C trains could have picked up Mrs. Prendergast at 7 a.m. at a Southwest Cleveland station, near her Middleburg Heights home, and delivered her in safety and comfort to Cincinnati at noon.

Many other trips made by elderly end up involving funerals for another reason. Fatal crash rates for older drivers compared with other age groups begin to increase starting at about age 75, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Drivers over age 85 have a worse fatality rate than teenagers and drivers in their early 20s. Older drivers primarily kill themselves in housebound and they don’t move at all,” said University of Arizona professor Sandra Rosenbloom, an authority on transportation and aging. She was quoted in the same AP article.

Improved car design and technologies, as well as better-designed roads can help make local travel safer, but that does not address the lack of transportation alternatives to highways across metropolitan regions and between metro areas. That is where intercity passenger rail service can excel. Compared to buses, trains offer more interior space, greater handicapped accessibility and more stability while in motion so elderly passengers may rest better or get up from their seats and move around more safely.

In the absence of trains, an increasing number of

UrbanOhio.com photos

House arrest is the fate for many of the 75 million Baby Boomers in America who will lack access to a car, senior vans or quality public transportation. Their isolation isn’t just a crisis of denying their full involvement in the nation’s economy, it’s a moral issue of how to treat human beings with dignity. Yet Ohio ranks near the bottom in public transit spending.
Industry experts: expect major global oil shortages by 2015

First comes the bad news: if you thought the 1970s oil shortages were difficult, you ain’t seen nothing yet. The good news? There may be a lot fewer traffic jams by 2015.

According to the International Energy Agency’s 2010 World Energy Outlook issued on Nov. 9, 2010, the world passed peak oil in 2006. That means that no matter what mankind does, it cannot reverse declining global production of oil – even as worldwide demand for oil is at historic highs and climbing. Peak oil does not mean the planet is about to run out of petroleum. But it does mean we’re running out of cheap oil.

The IEA, a watchdog group established by the world’s largest energy consumers, is not known for making bold statements. In fact, several whistleblowers from inside the IEA went to the press last year to disclose that the U.S. Department of Energy was putting pressure on IEA officials to water down its oil-supply predictions or they might cause a panic in financial markets.

But another part of the U.S. government, the Pentagon, wasn’t so willing to ignore the military and security implications of peak oil. In its 2010 Joint Operating Environment report, a periodic analysis by the U.S. Joint Forces Command, the Pentagon estimates that rising global oil demand will surpass flat or falling global production capacity by 2012. And, the Pentagon estimates that the shortfall in output could reach 10 million barrels per day as early as 2015. That’s a supply shortage that’s 11 percent below the current worldwide consumption of oil of about 90 million barrels daily.

“The potential of future energy supplies nearly all present their own difficulties and vulnerabilities,” the JOE reports. “None of these provide much reason for optimism. ... The implications for future conflict are ominous.”

To put that potential shortage in perspective, let’s look back at America’s worst energy crisis. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries led by Saudi Arabia placed an oil embargo on nations that supported Israel in the Yom Kippur War. From October 1973 to January 1974, global oil supplies fell 5 percent. In the U.S. it caused lines of cars and fights at gas stations, voluntary rationing, and a severe recession.

America responded by opening up Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico to oil development, expanding its highway system, rapidly building more sprawling car-centric suburbs, abandoning its industrial capacity in favor of imported goods, and transporting food an average
All Aboard Ohio’s President
Never give up on the cause for more and better trains & transit!

By Bill Hutchison
President, All Aboard Ohio

You just never know how things are going to turn out. As we sift through the debris of the election and the kill-the-train stance of Gov. John Kasich, some things are happening that may be a silver lining in a very dark cloud.

At the same time, I won’t sugarcoat things: We are in for a very rough ride for the next four years and maybe beyond. Gov. Kasich is dead set against passenger trains in the 3C+D corridor and he is backed by complete Republican control of the state legislature. Unless something unforeseen happens, most of Ohio is destined to be a backwater when it comes to our issue.

Despite that, I urge you to not lose faith and to persevere. Passenger trains are happening elsewhere and people are riding in droves. You’ve seen it. You’ve heard it. This tide will eventually reach Ohio, regardless of what naysayers might have us believe. We are on the right side of history.

There might also be creative ways to avoid state involvement in rail passenger service or other urban issues which are not being addressed by a rural- and suburban-dominated legislature. New urban coalitions might form. New local authorities might look at ways to assume the role abdicated by the state on rail transportation.

Southwest Ohioans are fighting against Citizens Against Virtually Everything (CAVE) people who actually claimed that supporting the Cincinnati Streetcar will “cost lives.” Yet other cities have streetcars and also have better city services than what Cincinnati offers. How? Because streetcar systems attract more business, more employers, more residents and more tax cincinnatiansforprogress.com) in their fight for the streetcar.

Columbus is a mixed bag. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) has shelved the Columbus streetcar/light rail project and that’s more of a bow to the reality at the Statehouse and the fact that local leaders are not stepping forward in support. At the same time, there are locals who are interested in transit and commuter rail and we should work with them. We’re urging the development of regional commuter trains on high-quality, lightly used freight tracks between Delaware, downtown Columbus and Newark. Just because we suffer a setback is no reason to stop.

Meanwhile, across northern Ohio, several congresspersons are leading the cause for a Lake Erie corridor for high-speed rail, between Chicago, Toledo and Cleveland east to Erie/Bufalo and/or Youngstown/Pittsburgh. Reps. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo), Steve LaTourette (R-Bainbridge) and Tim Ryan (D-Youngstown) met with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Federal Railroad Administrator Joe Szabo on Feb. 10.

It is possible that federal planning dollars may be forthcoming to make the idea a funding-ready project. But a state-based project sponsor, such as the Ohio Department of Transportation, is needed. Gov. Kasich, although admitting he knew little about the idea, was interested in it because of Rep. LaTourette’s involvement.

“But if LaTourette thinks we ought to look at it, we’ll take a look at it,” Gov. Kasich was quoted as saying in a Feb. 10, 2011 Cleveland Plain Dealer article.

That’s politics for you. Most Republicans don’t like 3C simply because passenger trains are a signature issue for President Obama and Ted Strickland was for it. They spread false information about it to justify their anti-3C stance and succeeded in killing the project. Ironically, Gov. Kasich is now interested in the Lake Erie Corridor because it’s an idea of fellow Republican Rep. LaTourette. Go figure.

Other projects are moving ahead as well, so don’t give up the train. Instead, stay with us as we move forward!

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### 12 Month Average U.S. Retail Price per Gallon of Regular Gasoline

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Industry experts: expect major oil shortages by 2015

— from page five

of 1,000 miles to each grocery store. Meanwhile Europe built nuclear reactors and renewable energy systems, electrified its older rail lines, built new high-speed rail and public transit systems, and made its cities more bicycle and pedestrian friendly.

Before and since the Pentagon issued its April report to the ignorance of American media and its public, many others have issued their own warnings: the German military think tank Bundeswehr, Goldman Sachs, the United Kingdom Energy Ministry, French energy giant Total, American energy giant Chevron, the UK Industry Taskforce on Peak Oil and Energy Security and others.

Once upon a time, America was the world’s largest producer of oil. And it wasn’t for just a brief period. America’s days of growing oil supplies lasted 110 years, from 1860 to 1970. We dismantled our densely developed cities and the rail and transit systems that nurtured them, in exchange for an energy-intensive car-oriented suburban lifestyle fueled by oil which, 150 years after its discovery, still has no equal in terms of its energy density, affordability and portability. But oil, which takes millions of years to pressure cook, is finite and a dirty energy source.

First we drained most of the oil fields in Pennsylvania. Then we depleted the much larger fields in Oklahoma, Texas and California. Now, after just 30 years, Alaska is in terminal decline. The U.S. Geological Survey in October 2010 lowered Alaska’s untapped oil reserves estimate by 90 percent. In other words, less than 900 million barrels of untapped oil remains in Alaska. That sounds like a lot, but not when America burns 7.3 billion barrels of oil per year – triple that of China, the Earth’s second-largest oil consumer.

For America, that leaves the off-shore continental shelf regions of the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf of Mexico where production growth may happen. But the U.S. Energy Information Administration says that’s not enough to offset production declines elsewhere in the nation, let alone worldwide. And, as we learned from BP’s Horizon well, deepwater drilling is expensive and risky. So are the environmentally destructive and less prolific oil sands in Canada or the Bakken shale in the Dakotas. Those are the kinds of hail-Mary projects a nation undertakes when it is trying to protect an energy-intensive lifestyle, including all of the entrenched special interests that have benefited from it for decades.

Meanwhile, our competitors in Europe, China, Pacific Rim, Canada, South America and even in the Middle East are investing hundreds of billions of dollars building major rail and transit systems, while securing renewable and other long-term energy supplies. The next five years may reveal what nations, and states within those nations, are investing most wisely for the future.

World Oil Production by type

Unconventional oil
Natural gas liquids
Crude oil: fields yet to be found
Crude oil: fields yet to be developed
Crude oil: currently producing fields

Source: International Energy Agency
Directory of All Aboard Ohio

All Aboard Ohio Office
309 South 4th St, Suite 304
Columbus, OH 43215-5428
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www.allaboardohio.org

Local Meeting Contacts

NORTHEAST
Cleveland          Carole Cohen       216 / 235-3719
Elyria             Phil Copeland     440 / 365-7970

NORTHWEST
Toledo             Bill Gill         419 / 536-1924

SOUTHWEST
Cincinnati         Beau Tuke        513 / 721-0776
Dayton             Linda Leas        937 / 253-9448

CENTRAL/S.E.
Columbus           Larry Robertson   614 / 459-0359

National Association of Railroad Passengers

NARP National Office
President             Ross Capon
Dir. of Communications Sean Jeans-Gail
Transportation Assistant Malcolm Kenton

505 Capitol Court, NE Suite 300
Washington DC 20002-7708

e-mail: narp@narprail.org   Web: www.narprail.org

NARP Council of Representatives from Ohio

Kenneth Clifford 937 / 879-4750  Phil Copeland 440 / 365-7970
Medway, OH                           Elyria, OH

J. Howard Harding 330 / 867-5507  Bill Hutchison 614 / 882-1716
Akron, OH                              Columbus, OH

Kenneth Sislak 216 / 910-1926
Shaker Heights, OH

Italics denotes member of NARP's Board of Directors

Directory updated: Sept, 2010

3C dies again – Is eighth time the charm?

"3C dies" from page one

those expenditures to be approved. Such a vote was not
could it be redesigned in time to gain its support and

Barack Obama’s legacy as the president who finally got the United States riding high-speed trains. So administration officials redirected the funding pledged to Ohio (in addition to $800 million pledged to Wisconsin) to states that had advanced their planning and project development far enough to where they could immediately get those funds obligated and not pulled back. "Obligated" means the funds are contractually committed to private firms that are developing rail projects. Ohio, Wisconsin and Florida may not be the last states to lose their federal rail funds; other states that don’t get their funds obligated soon may lose them too.

2. Even if there was no election in November and/or all of the political players had remained unchanged (including Gov. Strickland, a Democratic Congress, and a Democratic Ohio House of Representatives in Columbus), 3C faced an uphill climb. The reason is that the Ohio Senate had (and still has) a Republican majority that was opposed to many of Gov. Strickland’s policies, including 3C.

Ohio uniquely has an extra (and some say unnecessary) layer of funding oversight called the State Controlling Board. The seven-member panel oversees the approval of contracts involving state expenditures. It is comprised of two majority party members and one minority party member from each of the Ohio Senate and Ohio House, plus a designee to vote on the governor’s behalf. Last year, because the governor was a Democrat and the Ohio House had a Democratic majority, there were four Democrats and three Republicans on the State Controlling Board.

Under state law, rail operating expenditures (such as planning and engineering) could be approved by a 4-3 simple majority. But state law turns punitive against passenger rail when it comes to capital costs, which requires a 5-2 supermajority vote in the affirmative by the Controlling Board. For all other forms of transportation, only a simple majority in the affirmative is needed for those expenditures to be approved. Such a vote was not possible as long as the Ohio Senate kept its Republican majority. Indeed, the chances grew slimmer when the Ohio House went Republican. So even if Gov. Strickland had won re-election, his chances of getting approval from the Controlling Board to spend federal funds on 3C were between slim and none. Given that, the Obama Administration probably would have pulled back its funding pledge to Ohio regardless of whether Gov. Strickland was re-elected.

3. The final reason why 3C failed is because it was hurriedly pieced together at the last minute when federal stimulus funding for passenger rail appeared likely. Unlike other states, Ohio had no federally compliant planning underway or completed for 3C in early 2009 when Congress and President Obama approved $8 billion in stimulus funds for high-speed rail. Depending on who you ask, Strickland Administration officials either did not have the time, or they did not use their time wisely to cultivate enough grassroots and business community support for a 3C rail project. No boards of trustees at the chambers of commerce in any of the 3Cs endorsed the state’s favored passenger rail project. The project was not shaped by the business community, nor could it be redesigned in time to gain its support and still have a shot at stimulus funds.

Between 2002 and 2007, under the Republican leadership of then-Gov. Bob Taft and Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) Director James Seney, the ORDC slowly put together a feasibility study of a 110-mph network of passenger trains and modernized freight rail infrastructure called the Ohio Hub System. The program would have started out with 79 mph trains on vastly improved freight rail corridors, just as Gov. Strickland’s 3C project would have done. Using public-private partnerships, the Ohio Hub System would evolve by shifting passenger trains over to dedicated high-speed tracks next to their old tracks, or to tracks built on abandoned or lightly used freight rail rights of way, also as Gov. Strickland’s ORDC sought to do.

But not enough of the general public, the media or the business community supported or understood that the stimulus-funded 3C project was the first step in that evolutionary process to reach high-speed rail. The reason is that a federally compliant planning effort (called a Program-level Environmental Impact Study, or PEIS) to clearly lay out the steps in that process had yet to be carried out. Gov. Strickland’s desire to get 3C funded by stimulus funds took that planning process out of order and, by pulling 3C out of the PEIS process, it gave many people the false impression that 79-mph 3C trains would be end-all, be-all of passenger rail development in that corridor. It wasn’t until 2010 that ORDC had reached agreements with international consulting firm AECOM to conduct the PEIS. But those contracts were suspended by the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) only weeks before Gov. Kasich was sworn in. It is now up to Gov. Kasich’s ODOT, run by highwayman Jerry Wray, to decide whether to reinstate the PEIS contracts or cancel them.

So, in the strange worlds of politics and passenger trains, and with the benefit of hindsight, the federal stimulus may have actually set back Ohio’s dreams of passenger rail for an undetermined period of time. Seeking stimulus funding probably had to be tried, but it ultimately proved to be risky. Ohio can get back on track by restarting the PEIS process, as it originally had intended to do before the promise of quick rewards by stimulus funding. Sometimes the accelerator turns out to be the brake.
ODOT’s budget request risks more ‘economic blood-letting’ for Ohio

All Aboard Ohio is urging the Ohio Department of Transportation to increase its public transportation budget for operating and capital assistance to $250 million per year to help ensure half of Ohio’s population will have access to jobs, health care, education and shopping. Instead, it appears ODOT wants to reduce its already token-level transit budget to far meager levels that will further isolate Ohioans from jobs, worsen the state’s “Brain Drain” and sentence the poor, disabled and elderly to house arrest.

The current administration wants ODOT to step backwards to serve the Ohio of 1950s and 60s when driving was increasing and fossil fuel was cheap. In late-2010, ODOT’s Transportation Review Advisory Committee recommended spending $646.2 million for Tier I new-capacity highway projects over 2012-13. All Aboard Ohio urges a fiscally responsible moratorium on highway expansions and pulling back the public’s tax dollars to help communities expand public transit and maintain existing roads and bridges rather than build more roads which ODOT cannot afford to sustain, and return the Ohio Highway Patrol budget from the deficit-ridden general fund back to the gas tax.

In the past year, ODOT used $10 million in non-gas tax state funding to leverage $40 million in federal funds for transit. However, All Aboard Ohio points to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics which estimates 4% of gas taxes come from non-highway users (agriculture, marine, state, county, and municipal activities, industrial and commercial use and construction vehicles, etc.). In Ohio, where taxes collected from motorists must, by law, be spent on highways, that could mean that more than $40 million of state gas tax revenues may be flexible for use in non-highway transportation. Combined, the $50 million would be enough to leverage another $200 million in federal funds for Ohio’s transit needs.

That fiscally responsible investment strategy would acknowledge 21st-century transportation priorities and realities:

- That would raise Ohio, the 7th-most populous state, to 12th in the nation in per-capita investment in transit (SOURCE: American Public Transit Association).
- Ohio ranks 12th in the nation in transit use (SOURCE: ODOT).
- Hundreds of Ohioans jammed ODOT statewide public hearings in 2008, with requests for increased transit investment being a dominant theme (SOURCE: ODOT).
- More transit investment will respond to citizens’ basic needs as 8.5% of Ohio households have no car (SOURCE: Census).
- To meet that need, 8.5 percent of ODOT’s biennial budget should go to transit, or $210 million per year (SOURCE: ODOT).
- A more robust figure of $250 million per year for transit operating and capital assistance would acknowledge that nearly 3 million Ohioans must share cars (living in 1.2 million one-car households), and 2 million Ohioans are 65 years or older (SOURCE: Census).

Yet this does not account for dramatic changes in the transportation sector. Technology and improved gas mileage will have a dramatic effect on the number of cars on the road, with the number of young adults turning 65 years old in 2011 and will become less physically able to drive as often or as far. They will represent 20% of Ohio’s population in 2020 (SOURCE: Census).
- America imports two thirds of its oil, and an equal amount is used for transportation. U.S. motorists’ fuel consumption alone accounts for 11% of global oil production (SOURCE: USDOT, Bureau of Transportation Statistics).
- Global oil use outpaces new oil discoveries, with the world using about 12 billion more barrels per year than it finds (SOURCE: International Energy Agency).

“When I travel to small- and medium-sized towns throughout Ohio that I’ve visited in decades past, I notice something very disturbing,” said All Aboard Ohio President Bill Hutchison. “I see a lot of old people and I see a lot of poor people. I see fewer young people and middle-class families which are the lifeblood of communities. Although Ohio’s metropolitan areas have experienced net losses of young adults, the effect of Ohio’s ‘Brain Drain’ is more clearly visible in the rest of Ohio. It is also an economic blood drain. Our state’s highway-dominated transportation policies are a major factor in this by not offering the kinds of travel choices young people want. They have no choice but to move and leave a weaker Ohio behind.”

Mr. Hutchison noted that young adults are attracted as much to a community’s quality of life as they are to jobs. Many will work lesser jobs if their location can offer a quality of life they want, according to “Creative Class” researcher Richard Florida. That includes having choices in how to travel other than just by car. Many young people view driving as a waste of time, preventing them from using smart phones or reading.

“Ohio must respond to the needs of its people who need to get to work, the doctor to school and to shop. But that means spending transportation dollars on a variety of ways to get there and not just the easiest or cheapest.”
More Ohioans use public transit than fly. Yet Ohio continues to disinvest in public transit at a time when population demographics among the young and old are changing in favor of more transit service, and as supply/demand issues cause petroleum prices to rise again. Ohio is the nation’s 7th most populous state, its transit use is the 12th highest in the nation but its level of state investment ranks near the bottom. If Ohio invested $250 million in transit each year, such support would rank 12th in the nation and likely boost Ohio transit use into the top 10 among all states.

All Aboard Ohio Spring Meeting

Saturday, May 21st – 10 a.m.
(The library opens at 10:00)
Upper Arlington Public Library
Lower level Friends Theater (ADA accessible)
2800 Tremont Road, Upper Arlington, Ohio

Speakers: TBA

Registration fee includes meeting, continental breakfast and lunch at the Old Bag of Nails:
Lunch selection: various sandwiches (Fish, Grilled Chicken, Burgers, Reuben), various salad

For more information/last minute registrations call Ken Prendergast at (216) 288-4883

Calendar of Events/Meetings

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

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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Cincinnati Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>CUT, Tower “A”, 1301 Western Avenue, Cincinnati</td>
<td>Beau Tuke <a href="mailto:beautuke@yahoo.com">beautuke@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youngstown Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Cassese’s MVR, 410 North Walnut Street, Youngstown</td>
<td>John Fahnert 330-565-5699</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
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<td>Toledo Amtrak Station, Dr. MLK Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave, Toledo</td>
<td>Bill Gill 419-536-1924</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Cleveland Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Franklin Circle Christian Church 1688 Fulton Rd., Cleveland</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Akron Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>Uncorked Wine Bar, 22 N. High St., Akron</td>
<td>Chris Niekamp 330-608-2503</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Columbus Local Meeting</td>
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<td>Larry Robertson 614-459-0359</td>
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March 2011

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