One of the warmest winter in recorded history has helped workers make significant progress on the construction of the Cincinnati Streetcar right of way since ground was officially broken on Feb. 17.

Ironically, construction has started on Elm Street in the Over-The-Rhine district where one of the few stretches of track from the old streetcar system is still visible. It was preserved to remind residents of the comfortable, non-polluting, city-building transportation system that Cincinnatians once enjoyed. And they will enjoy it once again, greatly modernized, once construction is finished in about two years.

Greater Cincinnati Water Works is replacing the water main on Elm between 12th Street and McMicken Avenue to provide a clear zone for track construction. The work is proceeding northward on Elm one block at a time to limit the impacts on residents and business owners. Vehicular and pedestrian traffic is being maintained at all times as one lane of traffic and the sidewalk will remain open. Typical work hours are between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays. Some weekend work may be required. Track construction is due to start this Fall once the sewer relocations are completed.

Cincinnati officials said the 3.8-mile streetcar route will run 18 hours a day, 365 days a year. There will be 18 streetcar stops along the route. Streetcars are used less by commuters and more as an urban circulator and pedestrian accelerator, supporting “walkable urbanism” within downtown and adjoining neighborhoods.

Weekday ridership in the first year of operation is estimated at 3,700 ($1 fare) to 5,600 (fare-free), rising after five years to 5,000 ($1) to 7,900 (free). The economic benefits – mostly economic development along the route – were estimated in 2007 to be $430 million over 35 years, or 2.7 times the return on investment compared to the project's cost.
Long-distance rail growth policy overdue

For the first time in decades, Amtrak officials are considering new policies to guide decisions regarding the expansion of long-distance train services. For far too long, the only policy regarding long-distance trains was to help Amtrak decide when to cut one. Instead, if a pilot federal program for expanding long-distance train services were to be tested, a good place to try would be a heavily traveled long-distance market like Chicago-East Coast.

A number of factors are coming together to spur strong ridership growth in passenger rail services – including on long-distance trains. It's why Amtrak and other interested operators are seeking guidance on expansion. According to Amtrak officials, they are seeking internal policies and some federal programs to aid in the expansion. For private operators, they are seeking help from Congress to compete equally with Amtrak for new routes and funding.

Pushing up passenger rail ridership are high fuel prices, 75 million aging Baby Boomers, 80 million train-friendly Millennials, and more state/federal investment in intercity passenger rail in the last two decades ($14 billion) than in possibly the previous 16 decades combined. It's also why some credible private passenger rail operators are coming forward with proposals for new services.

One is Pullman Sleeping Car Co. LLC run by Iowa Pacific whose CEO is former Amtrak Mail/Express Vice President Ed Ellis. Pullman wants to start operating luxury sleepers and diners this Fall on the back of Amtrak's Lake Shore Limited (Chicago – Toledo – Cleveland – New York – Boston) and the City of New Orleans (Chicago – Memphis – New Orleans). Accommodations in those cars would be available for purchase by the public, much like the Pullman cars of old or the American-European Express of the 1990s. See travelpullman.com for details.

Another is Florida East Coast Industries' (FECI) proposal for a $1 billion passenger rail service called All Aboard Florida linking Miami and Orlando. FECI is a real estate company that also owns Florida East Coast Railway, a Class II freight railroad. Leading FECI's passenger rail project is Eugene Skoropowski who led California’s Bay Area-Sacramento Capitol Corridor for 10 years, helping it become Amtrak’s third-most popular route. See allaboardflorida.com for details.

However, federal policies discourage private passen-
Train of Thought

Executive Director Ken Prendergast

Does Ohio’s transportation policy, which leaves just 1 percent of its transportation budget for non-highway modes like transit, rail and complete streets, violate the federal Americans with Disabilities Act?

This question needs to be asked with greater frequency and urgency as 9 percent of Ohio households are without cars. The Census says that number is growing as Ohio’s population ages and as the cost of driving rises.

Yet more transportation tax dollars are used for roads that cause Ohio’s metropolitan populations to sprawl over ever larger geographic areas, making options to driving difficult and sentencing more Ohioans virtually to house arrest.

Any type of transportation development must include accommodation for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). However, Ohio’s transportation policy itself fails to accommodate growing numbers of aging Ohioans as the Baby Boomers started turning 65 years old in 2011.

The cumulative effect of the lack of accessible, affordable and integrated transportation has created a social, economic and medical crisis for Ohioans and their state.

Ohio’s policymakers, be they in Ohio’s General Assembly or in Ohio’s metropolitan planning organizations, are failing to acknowledge this new reality. Legislators continue to devote only 1 percent of the state’s transportation budget to anything other than more roads. And metropolitan planning organizations like the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) fail to provide more than bare-bones (ie: dial-a-ride vans) transportation alternatives to their citizens.

MORPC recently announced $6.6 billion in new and improved roads for Columbus and its hinterlands. Yet its plan offers no transportation alternatives to congested roads or for those who will not drive, or cannot drive due to financial or physical disabilities.

ADA is a civil rights law which says any facility or building must be equally accessible to a disabled person as it is to an able-bodied person. But if you’re disabled, you can’t get to all those ADA-compliant buildings as well as an able-bodied person can.

As I wrote in a press release posted April 3 at www.allaboardohio.org, Ohioans lack of access to employment and volunteer opportunities, health care, shopping, social activities and even the voting booth tells me Ohio’s entire transportation system and the laws which shaped it are not ADA-compliant. Ohio needs a mobility policy, not outdated laws designed to move more vehicles without consideration of alternatives.

At issue is Ohio’s Constitution (Article XII, section 5a) which prohibits spending any state gas taxes on anything other than more roads (about 10 percent of federal gas taxes are spent on transit, rail and complete streets that are ADA-compliant and also have safe bike routes for children and commuters alike):

No moneys derived from fees, excises, or license taxes relating to registration
Sign me up! I WANT BETTER RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES!

A one-year membership in All Aboard Ohio includes a subscription to the Ohio Passenger Rail News, plus action alerts, notice of rail-oriented events, and local meetings. (Dues and contributions to All Aboard Ohio may be tax deductible.)

Mail this application with a check or money order to:

All Aboard Ohio
850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1026
Cleveland, OH 44114-3357

Enclosed is a check or money order for selected membership level...

☐ $100+ Club Car - Includes an All Aboard Ohio polo shirt or sweatshirt. Please circle your size: S M L XL

☐ $ 50 First Class - Includes an All Aboard Ohio logo pen

☐ $ 35 On Board

☐ $ 25 On Track (limited income, Military or Student)

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The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (dba All Aboard Ohio) 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 may be tax-deductible in accordance with the IRS Code.

No moneys derived from fees, excises, or license taxes relating to registration, operation, or use of vehicles on public highways, or to fuels used for propelling such vehicles, shall be expended for other than costs of administering such laws, statutory refunds and adjustments provided therein, payment of highway obligations, costs for construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of public highways and bridges and other statutory highway purposes, expense of state enforcement of traffic laws, and expenditures authorized for hospitalization of indigent persons injured in motor vehicle accidents on the public highways.

(Approved November 4, 1947; effective January 1, 1948.)

"With the constitutional prohibition on using gas taxes and registration fees for anything but more roads, what other outcome can there be than to pour billions more tax dollars into an already overbuilt highway system while we can't afford to maintain what we've got?" asked All Aboard Ohio President Bill Hutchison in the April 3 press release. "We are trapped into doing the same stupid things over and over and can't change even if we want to. This is the stranglehold that prevents other solutions to traffic problems."

Mr. Hutchison notes that if the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) spent a percentage of its annual budget equal to the percentage of households without cars, it would be providing about $250 million total in state and federal funding for non-highway transportation. Instead ODOT spends less than $20 million per year in state and federal funds on transit and rail modes.

Consider that about $50 million per year in state gasoline taxes come from non-highway uses such as recreation, construction, landscaping and others (based on Federal Highway Administration statistics). ODOT could use those funds for non-highway purposes – which might be possible even without amending the Ohio Constitution. But if they used those dollars to leverage an 80 percent federal match, Ohio could provide a total of $250 million per year in state and federal funds for much-needed transit and rail development projects and services. That $250 million would be equal to about 9 percent of ODOT's budget. Ironically, that's the same percentage of Ohio households that don't have cars.

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Cincinnati Streetcar underway

“Streetcar” from page one

District, past Fountain Square, to Findlay Market in Over-The-Rhine. The project is creating more than 300 construction jobs and will need 25 permanent jobs for ongoing operations.

A future, northward extension will take the streetcar up Clifton hill to the University of Cincinnati, hospital, zoo and the densely developed Uptown neighborhood. City officials continue to seek about $57 million directly from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for the Uptown extension after the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) denied federal funds to the project. The Cincinnati Streetcar was ODOT’s highest-ranking project in terms of cost effectiveness and economic development.

Estimated construction cost for the first segment is about $110 million. That includes acquisition of modern streetcars which must be built in America. Bids are due to be awarded soon to a streetcar manufacturer for about a half-dozen electrically powered streetcars. Each streetcar will carry between 170 and 209 passengers and will easily accommodate wheelchairs and bicycles.

Although construction will continue unabated, one issue remains unresolved at press time. The issue is how far the city should move Duke Energy’s utility infrastructure. These were moved to between the rails of streetcar tracks. Most others were moved 3-5 feet away from the tracks.

In Cincinnati, the city has offered to pay $6 million to relocate Duke’s sub-surface conduits, vault boxes and about 50 manhole covers 3-5 feet from the streetcar tracks, following the best practices nationwide. City officials have said that relocations any farther than that are a cost that should be borne by Duke. But Duke says 8 feet is a safer estimate, and argues that the city should pay for it. Some have alleged that Duke is under pressure from Gov. John Kasich to make the unusual demand on the city. Duke has denied the allegation.

Funding is coming from numerous capital accounts which cannot legally be used for city operating costs such as police and fire protection. These include $25 million from a USDOT Urban Circulator Grant, $11 million from a USDOT TIGER grant, $4 million from the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments, $64 million from the city’s capital fund, and $6.5 million from private sources. Annual operating funding is coming from casino revenue ($3 million), parking meter revenue ($400,000), fare box ($465,000 to $675,000), and naming rights/-sponsored stops ($200,000).

The project has survived numerous threats against its life, including two ballot initiatives sought by right-wing extremists — many of whom do not even live in the city. Leaders of these opposition groups have claimed “Islamic extremists love streetcars” and “The streetcar will be worse than 9/11” on Twitter. The streetcar has also survived despite intense media hype with little time.

A groundbreaking party of 500 people was held Feb. 17 outside Memorial Hall on Elm Street. City, state and federal officials used shovels to pluck cobblestones from Elm Street to start construction on the initial streetcar route from The Banks north to Findlay Market.

Jeffrey Jakucyk photo

Yet the streetcar project continues to move forward thanks to the strong leadership of Mayor Mark Mallory who may be a Democratic candidate for Ohio governor someday. His potential ambition is a big reason why his political opponents want to see his signature streetcar project fail.

But the streetcar’s project should be built on its own merits, of which there are many. It will create a stronger, more viable urban core, and create lifestyles that are no longer dependent on the car. That apparently is a threatening, dangerous idea to some car-dependent and/or suburban interests.

“The biggest barrier to redeveloping the core of our region is the burden of accommodating the automobile,” said streetcar advocate John Schneider. “Building two garage parking spaces for a new downtown spot, podcasts) about the streetcar. Of those, 110 (61 percent) podcasts featured anti-streetcar guests while only 13 (7.2 percent) had pro-streetcar guests of on-air talk-show hosts.
structure that's located below city streets. Similar issues are occurring in other U.S. cities that are building streetcars where infrastructure below streets must be moved. Duke is a corporation franchised by the City of Cincinnati to be the sole provider of electrical, gas and chilled water services to the city's families and businesses, including to operations owned by the city. When Duke has to relocate its utility infrastructure to make way for public works projects, it typically pays the tab.

An example is the $3 billion Brent Spence Bridge replacement over the Ohio River for which Duke must relocate a substation at its expense. Another is in Duke's hometown of Charlotte, NC where Duke is paying to move a main electric power line one block away from a 1.5-mile streetcar line now under construction. In Charlotte and other cities, some manhole covers are streetcars. Consider:

- One hit piece after another was published by the Cincinnati Enquirer and its staff writer Barry Horstman. He once wrote that Cincinnatians could walk the route faster than the streetcar would travel. Mr. Horstman claimed, with his editor defending him, he walked the route to prove it, keeping a 6+ mph pace for nearly 4 miles! The newspaper also published numerous letters to the editor without fact-checking them for the false information and sometimes outright absurd claims they contained.
- Since 2010, nearly 200 hours of airtime at 700 WLW-AM was devoted solely to bashing the Cincinnati Streetcar, including misinformation and conspiracy theories. As of Feb 20, the WLW website had 180 known recorded segments (called similarities). It's a menacing, dangerous idea to some car-dependent and/or suburban interests.

"The biggest barrier to redeveloping the core of our region is the burden of accommodating the automobile," said streetcar advocate John Schneider. "Building two garage parking spaces for a new downtown apartment add at least $50,000 to the price of the apartment. If some or all of that cost can be eliminated, the unit can be sold for much less.

"Plus, the average Cincinnatian spends about $8,000 per year on his or her car," he adds. "If some of this money can be diverted to housing, then the condo buyer or renter would have more disposable income to purchase more or better housing. So the streetcar reduces the cost of the housing while the purchasing power of the resident goes up.

"But there's more. As people begin living and working along the streetcar route, they will tend to shop and entertain themselves within a smaller footprint. Earned income that now leaks out of the city will instead be spent more locally. Restaurants, grocers and other retailers will spring up to meet this demand. The Cincinnati Streetcar is all about creating a climate to capture more spending in the places where paychecks are earned," Mr. Schneider concludes.

Toledo’s National Train Day is May 5

Event features Amtrak’s 40th Anniversary Train

Already one of the largest National Train Day events each year, Toledo in 2012 may break last year’s attendance record of more than 6,000 people thanks to a very special guest. Toledo’s National Train Day event is being held May 5 - one week before the rest of the nation’s because it allowed the Glass City to get Amtrak’s 40th Anniversary Train. In fact, Toledo has the tradition of being the country’s first National Train Day event each year since it began in 2008.

The event will again be hosted at the Amtrak station, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave. south of downtown Toledo off I-75. Opening ceremonies are at 9:30 a.m. with the day’s festivities wrapping up at 4 p.m. Extra parking is available to accommodate the overflow crowds, but if you want close-in parking, visitors are urged to arrive early.

Please do more than just attend - more volunteers are urgently needed for only a couple of hours of your time. From teens to seniors, please help greet and direct visitors, set up/take down displays and provide other help. All volunteers get a free T-shirt and pizza. To volunteer, e-mail TrainDay@Toledo@aol.com today!

In addition to Amtrak's 40th Anniversary Train, there will be a Norfolk Southern locomotive, lots of model trains, food, music, Freight rail displays, rail art/history, drawings for Antrak train trips, other prizes, vendor booths, kids train ride around the parking lot and other kids activities including a kid’s safety workshop with Engineer Steve.

All Aboard Ohio is a proud sponsor of Toledo’s National Train Day. Many All Aboard Ohio members participate in the event, but none are more instrumental to its success than Beth and Bill Gill. The couple organized the first event in 2008 and has led a large cast of volunteers ever since. Beth is a former board member and Bill is the association’s coordinator of Toledo activities. To find out how best to help All Aboard Ohio in Toledo, please contact Bill Gill at (419) 536-1924.

Amtrak’s 40th Anniversary Train is a special guest at the fifth annual National Train Day event May 5 at Toledo’s Amtrak station.
It's the first signs of life for expanding Amtrak service in Ohio in two years. But instead of state officials taking the lead, it's the leaders of several cities which have stepped up to the plate. Local officials in communities along a route between Ohio and Chicago have started plotting ways to develop passenger rail service, starting with a feasibility study.

While the study may be the first step forward, the need for transportation is immediate. Federally compliant planning for dramatic, 100+ mph trains will take a decade or more to be realized. So All Aboard Ohio suggests that the first new service over this route should involve extending an existing service. This would also get around onerous federal rules (see “Long-distance rail growth policy overdue” on Page One) and unresponsive state officials in Ohio and Indiana (see the last 40 years and counting) that have kept our region isolated.

All Aboard Ohio, Ohio Higher Education Rail Network and the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association have begun uniting local officials to work together on developing plans for passenger rail services from Columbus and East Coast – Columbus are frequently requested by prospective rail travelers. Both of those markets could be served by the same train.

So All Aboard Ohio is advocating extending Amtrak's Pennsylvanian as a separate train from its current terminus in Pittsburgh to Chicago. But instead of hitching a ride on the back of the Capitol Limited through Cleveland, Toledo and South Bend – as Amtrak proposes to do starting in 2013 – All Aboard Ohio proposes routing it separately over existing tracks via

Columbus and East Coast – Columbus are frequently requested by prospective rail travelers. Both of those markets could be served by the same train.
Long-distance rail growth policy overdue

"Long Distance" from page one

rail investment by having states and the federal government serve as the infrastructure banker for competing highway and aviation modes, pouring tens of billions of tax dollars into them per year. No similar infrastructure trust fund exists for rail. And considering the rail industry’s unique ownership of its rights of way, a trust fund financed by new taxes may not be the best approach anyway. Instead, tax credit incentives for making private capital investments might be preferable, as is already done for short-line and regional railroads.

The last time the federal government had a policy for expansion of long-distance routes was in the 1970s when Amtrak was permitted to add an experimental train service each year. The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers (doing business today as All Aboard Ohio) asked Congress to get Amtrak service restored to Toledo and Cleveland. Back then, Cleveland was the nation’s largest city without Amtrak service (today, Columbus is the largest metro area without any passenger rail service). Ohio was rewarded with the Lake Shore Limited – Amtrak’s experimental route of 1975. It has been a popular train ever since, carrying its second-highest ridership of 387,043 in 2011 (tops was 387,968 in 1986).

Federal law clearly defines how to determine what passenger train routes should be discontinued if they fail to meet certain criteria. But the law does not clarify what operating or market conditions should be present for establishing new or expanded long-distance routes. Consider these drawbacks:

- Amtrak cannot initiate new services on its own. It has to receive a written request for service from a mayor, group of mayors or a governor. If Amtrak believes the request has merit, it conducts a feasibility study.
- Amtrak, on its own, may pursue lengthening, rerouting or otherwise restructuring an existing service. A daily Cardinal or extending the Pennsylvania route from Pittsburgh to Chicago are examples of restructured services Amtrak may pursue on its own.
- Amtrak cannot initiate new service that will increase its federal operating subsidy.
- All train services of 750 miles or less are considered short-distance and must have their operating costs and certain capital charges funded by the state(s) through which they travel. The Northeast Corridor and routes longer than 750 miles are funded by the federal government.

The sum of the above is that Amtrak probably cannot add long-distance train services. The exception may be if Amtrak lengthens an existing route that does not cause its overall federal operating subsidy to increase. That is highly unlikely to happen unless some operating cost offsets are found elsewhere in the national system.

Ironically, Amtrak’s federal operating subsidy may drop when it hands off federally funded, short-distance trains (ie: the Chicago – Detroit/Pontiac Wolverine Corridor and New York City – Buffalo/ Niagara Falls Empire Corridor) to the states for them to support. When all short-haul routes nationwide are counted, that hand-off will transfer about $120 million per year in cost responsibilities from Amtrak to the affected states. But Amtrak officials claim that money is needed to adequately fund the rest of its national system – assuming that federal budget cutters in Congress don’t chop it first.

Rather than look for loopholes, an increasing number of Americans need policies at the federal level which clearly spell out when, where and how passenger train services – especially interstate trains – should be expanded without the involvement of state governments. These could include the following:

- USDOT-approved marketing and multi-year operating plans which show the proposed service would meet minimum performance standards including passenger-miles per train-mile and cost-recovery ratio.
- Operating and capital investment plans endorsed by the track-owning host railroad(s) and lending institution(s) demonstrating sufficient fiscal capacity to sustain their shares of capital costs.
- A multi-year operating license from the USDOT including federal liability protection and eligibility to seek federal “public benefit” tax credits to offset operating costs including equipment leases (subject to “Buy American” provisions).
- Federal rail infrastructure tax credits similar to the short-line/regional railroad credit which allows a company to claim a credit of 50 cents on each dollar it invests on constructing, improving or maintaining track and structures subject to an annual cap of $3,500 per track-mile owned or leased by the railroad.

Incentives such as these might be just the ticket to encourage more private operators to compete for and provide passenger rail services. And this could happen without the annual budget fights in Congress, although the tax credit components would have to be reviewed, refined and renewed every few years, as is the case with the short-line/regional railroad tax credit.

A net fiscal impact study would have to be conducted to measure how much tax revenue from increased business activities supported by the tax credits would offset the cost of the credits. Even if the direct tax revenues aren’t sufficient to cover the costs, there are public benefits (increased mobility, energy savings and environmental improvement) to warrant the public’s expanded investment in America’s long-distance passenger rail network. It’s been neglected for too long.
Columbus, Lima and Fort Wayne. This could be accomplished in as little as four years.

Of the 519 new route miles, 431 would be over tracks that are already rated as Class 3 or Class 4 by the Federal Railroad Administration, meaning passenger trains could safely travel at 60-80 mph. That includes the state-owned Panhandle Route between Columbus and Mingo Junction, OH which has been rebuilt over the past 20 years into a high-quality railroad but lacks a traffic control signaling system.

The Pennsylvania could run intentionally slow overnight between Columbus and Pittsburgh so that it serves both cities at more reasonable times. That would also allow Ohio travelers to connect at Pittsburgh with the Capitol Limited to/from Washington DC.

All Aboard Ohio estimates that about $60 million in track, station and signal improvements would be needed to raise speeds and provide nine enroute station facilities. Improvements to bring track up to Class 3 or 4 standards are needed on the Chicago, Fort Wayne & Eastern RR (CFE, or former Pennsylvania RR mainline, used by Amtrak as recently as 1990) from Dunkirk, OH west to at least Fort Wayne. West of Fort Wayne, either the high-quality Norfolk Southern RR (former Nickel Plate, which is rumored to be double-tracked soon) or the CFE could be used. The former may require capacity enhancements if NS doesn't double-track it. The latter will require improvements to existing track to bring it up to Class 3 or 4.

Very little additional train equipment is anticipated as Amtrak already plans to run a Viewliner sleeper, a food-service car and two Amfleet II coaches through to Chicago on the back of the Capitol Limited starting in 2013. Two or three more locomotives and a half-dozen Amfleet I and/or Horizon coaches (including for the Cincinnati section) may also be needed, but locomotives and coaches are not hard for Amtrak to come by in its fleet, especially as new equipment starts to appear on Chicago-based short-distance trains in the next few years.

These new services would be less expensive than driving, and as fast as and as affordable and as fast as the bus. Of course, many communities have no ground transportation alternatives at all. Consider that the train would be faster than Lakefront's Columbus - Fort Wayne - Chicago bus schedule and faster than some Greyhound and Megabus schedules between Columbus and New York City. The train is certainly more comfortable than the bus and, if standard Amtrak fares of 14 cents per miles applied, it would be more affordable than Lakefront or Greyhound and comparable to Megabus fares.

Please do what you can to help make this happen. Help develop and coordinate support among stakeholders in this order of approach: local businesses, chambers of commerce, city councils,}

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Norfolk Southern's Kentucky Derby Special travels through Columbus from Altoona, PA to Louisville, KY on April 24, 2010. Next is Dayton and Cincinnati. NS could have traveled directly from Pittsburgh to Columbus, but stayed on its own rails via Canton.
The modest start-up cost could be paid by a federal TIGER grant leveraged by communities' collective investments in their train stations and state investments in grade crossings. Annual operating costs are estimated at up to $15 million per year, which are proposed to come from the federal government considering the route is longer than 750 miles.

We also propose a section of the train operating from Columbus to Cincinnati via Dayton to provide overnight service without a change of trains between those cities and destinations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Capital improvements for this section are estimated at $15 million, mostly for stations as well as longer circuits at grade crossings so flashers/gates are triggered earlier to account for the passenger train's higher speed. Operating costs could be about $3 billion per year — again proposed to come from the federal government since this would be a section of a long-distance train.

"Quote"

In an interview in a 1955 dining car aboard the BNSF's Holiday Express, (Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad) CEO Matt Rose said the future of passenger rail in America depends on gas prices. If gasoline were priced to reflect the true costs — such as military campaigns to protect access to foreign oil — Rose said roads would return to hauling passengers. With $3.50 a gallon gas, he said, it's not likely.

"Unquote"

— LaCrosse (WI) Tribune
December 4, 2011
All Aboard Ohio’s President
A Time For Change

By Bill Hutchison
President, All Aboard Ohio

As I look back at the history of All Aboard Ohio, I am struck by one thing: resilience. Starting from a small meeting way back in 1974, we have persevered through good times and bad, through successive administrations and legislators, successes and some bitter setbacks.

Guess what? We’re still here and we will continue to be here, bearing witness to the need for Ohio to have a public transportation system that meets the need of its citizens and businesses. As I said in an earlier column: the goal remains the same. People may come and go, but we will press on.

Speaking of people coming and going, this will be my last column as your president. I will be stepping down at the end of my current term at the annual meeting on May 19, 2012. This will mark the end of my time as an active leader in the Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers which now uses the tradename All Aboard Ohio.

Along the way, I have served as a coordinator, director, vice president and finally as your president from 1998 on, with a few breaks when Ed D’Amato and Dominic Liberatore served. I’ve made a lot of friends, shared the sacrifice, sweat and energy and laughed during the good times and shared the pain in bad times. One thing shines through, though: our camaraderie is unique and it’s the glue that holds us together.

We know we are right, that our cause is just. We should never forget that. I am very proud to have served with each and every one of you and I wish you well as All Aboard Ohio moves ahead. Don’t worry though. I may be stepping down, but I’m not going away and though I will live in another state, I will still be keenly interested in what’s going on in Ohio.

One thing I am also very proud of is that I leave All Aboard Ohio in the very capable hands of Ken Prendergast, our executive director. Ken and I go back to the mid 1980s when I was at Kent State University for a seminar and he and I connected for a sightseeing tour of nearby railroads. We’ve been close friends ever since and I am continually impressed by his breadth of knowledge on a wide variety of subjects, rail or otherwise. We are very lucky to have him.

Others who I count as friends and helped make All Aboard Ohio what it is today should be mentioned, including Mark Carlson (famous for his all-night marathons to get the newsletter out), Tom Pulsifer (a real hero who did so much as president for years and as newsletter editor), Howard Harding (a major influence on me and a huge figure in OARP history), Ed D’Amato, Ben Farah, the gang at Toledo, the Columbus group and many, many others (apologies if I missed anyone).

Likewise, we have what is probably the best board of directors and officers of nearly any rail advocacy organization in the country, the best newsletter bar none, a terrific web site and a national reputation as an innovator and trendsetter among our peers. We are very highly regarded and that is a legacy I am proud to have been a part of.

Where to go from here? Like I said, I’m not going away. I’ll remain active within All Aboard Ohio, but will also play a greater role at the national level as a part of the leadership team at the National Association of Railroad Passengers, among other things. One of the initiatives NARP is working on that I hold near and dear, is the effort to add service between Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland and the East Coast. I hope to play a role in this and may be back in Ohio to promote it.

And so my friends, the time has come step aside and let others pick up the banner. Now go get ‘em! This fight isn’t over yet.

Bill Hutchison looks back in his last column and in this 1990 scene along the abandoned Lake Erie & Eastern in Youngstown when he sought a better route for passenger trains. In leading All Aboard Ohio, he was always looking for a way through various barriers to achieve improved rail services.

Board candidates for Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting to be held May 19 in the Columbus suburb of Gahanna (see back page for details), members will be asked to approve a Board of Directors to new terms by voice vote. There will be no mail ballot election since there are no contested races. This will be the first time in many years the Board is keeping OARP alive through proper management. I pledge to continue my life’s work to move OARP into a sound future through good management via progressive leadership, financial oversight, governance, membership services and, of course,
For the Annual Meeting to be held May 19 in the Columbus suburb of Gahanna (see back page for details), members will be asked to approve a Board of Directors to new terms by voice vote. There will be no mail ballot election since there are no contested races. This will be our first new board under the amended bylaws, in which dues-paying members elect 10 persons to the regional and at-large seats on the board. There are 10 persons running for the new board, one for each available seat. The bylaws were amended at the Fall 2011 regular membership meeting (see last newsletter for details).

More than 80 people attended the 2011 Fall Meeting in Cleveland and amended All Aboard Ohio’s bylaws.

After the new board is seated, the board must name additional persons to fill as many as five at-large, appointed-only seats and then choose the officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) from amongst its own ranks.

If you wish to be considered for an appointed-at-large board position, please contact Executive Director Ken Prendergast at kenprendergast@allaboardohio.org or 216-288-4883 and/or a member of the board (see the Directory on Page Seven for contact information).

Here are the candidate statements, presented as they were received by Election Committee Chair Ed D’Amato. All candidates were verified by the chair as being in good standing as of the Feb. 20 filing deadline. These candidates are seeking the coming two-year term on the All Aboard Ohio Board of Directors:

**Ken Prendergast photo**

**Eric Davies, Central/Southeast Director**

I am running for a second term on the OARP (AAO) board. Most recently I have led the start-up, and also served as board chair, of Transit Columbus, an organization formed to champion the growth of public transit in the Columbus and Central Ohio region. As a director for OARP, I will continue to facilitate linkages between the local and statewide entities as we work to better connect Ohio’s communities.

**Kenneth G. Sislan, Director, Northeast Ohio**

Fiscal realities provide Ohioans an opportunity to reshape transportation policies that promote wider travel choices, more balanced investment and greater equity in funding transportation investments. All Aboard Ohio should seek ways and means to remedy the transportation investment imbalance and build the business case of the wider economic benefits of improved public transportation and intercity passenger and high-speed rail services in Ohio. The economic vitality and future competitiveness of Ohio hangs in the balance.

**Richard Straub, Director, Northwest Ohio**

I submit my name for Board Member of Northwest Region OARP. Attended 80% of regular board meetings, worked three Toledo National Train Days, spending entire day each time, promoted Amtrak on radio and newspaper, Marion, Ohio, rode Amtrak 7500 miles in 2011. Amtrak travel articles published in local paper. Encourage people to try a short trip on Amtrak. Encourage restoration of local train service connecting major cities and college towns.

**Beau Tuke, Director, Southwest Ohio**

I have served on the All Aboard Ohio Board for 2 years and led the Cincinnati Chapter meetings for 3 years. It is important now more than ever to focus on transit projects in all corners of the state, and an active director from each region is imperative. I am willing to continue to be the steward of SW Ohio by supporting local projects and continue our message.

**Dave Burns, Director-at-Large**

I am submitting my name for re-election to the position of At-Large Director of All Aboard Ohio. It is my intent to continue the work of All Aboard Ohio and to improve membership and representation in Southwest Ohio.

**Mark Carlson, Director-at-Large**

Obviously the Board of Directors advocates improving and expanding passenger rail and transit services in and through Ohio. However, during my two dozen years on this board I’ve learned the real important task before the Board is keeping OARP alive through proper management. I pledge to continue my life’s work to move OARP into a sound future through good management via progressive leadership, financial oversight, governance, membership services and, of course, advancing advocacy.

**Charles Horn, Director-at-Large**

As a 30 year member of AAO and NARP I have worked for improved and expanded passenger and freight service in Ohio and my community. Serving on the board could help me do such work better. I have supported various rail projects like 3-C and HUB and have helped with Toledo’s National Train Day. We especially need the help of local business and political leaders in promoting rail development.

**Jack Shaner, Director-at-Large**


Personal: Train and transit user. Bicyclist. History lover. Like my friends and colleagues at All Aboard Ohio, I have a burning desire to make intercity passenger train travel and public transit not just an alternative mode of transportation, but a truly viable, primary mode of transportation. I am committed to using my skills...

(statement exceeded 75 words)

**Ronald C. Sheck, Director-at-Large**

I am a candidate for re-election to the All Aboard Ohio board of directors. I have served actively on the Board since 2009. I will continue to use my talent, knowledge and experience to support AAO’s effort to promote passenger rail and public transportation in Ohio, in neighboring states and around the country. My 30 years of professional experience in transportation have included working on intercity rail, commuter rail, light rail and streetcar projects in...

(statement exceeded 75 words)

**Jerry Wicks, Director-at-Large**

To continue the work of integrating transit and passenger rail with higher education in Ohio and the region. There is much to be gained by both education and transportation if they work together. Both sides need to realize those potential gains and that can be accomplished best through ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the benefits while attempting to create a pilot project that connects several universities and cities via rail and city transit.
**Directory of All Aboard Ohio**

**All Aboard Ohio Office**

850 Euclid Avenue, Suite 1026
Cleveland, OH 44114-3357
(216) 394-0012
www.allaboardohio.org

**Local Meeting Contacts**

**NORTHEAST**
Cleveland
Carole Cohen
216 / 235-3719

Elyria
Phil Copeland
440 / 365-7970

Mahoning Valley
John Fahrent
330 / 565-5699

**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
202 / 408-8362

Vice President
Sean Jeans-Gail
fax-202 / 408-8287

Dir. of Outreach & Engagement
Malcolm Kenton

505 Capitol Court, NE Suite 300
Washington DC 20002-7706

Web: www.narprail.org

**NARP Council of Representatives from Ohio**

**Kenneth Clifford**
Medway, OH
937 / 879-4750

**Phil Copeland**
Elyria, OH
440 / 365-7970

**J. Howard Harding**
Akron, OH
330 / 867-5507

**Bill Hutchison**
Columbus, OH
614 / 882-1716

**Kenneth Sisak**
Shaker Heights, OH
216 / 910-1926

**Italics denotes member of NARP's Board of Directors**

Directory updated: Jan., 2012

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**Midwest travel – a family misadventure**

By Ed D'Amato
Former President, All Aboard Ohio

Earlier this year, I was reminded in an unpleasant way that early wasn’t going to be necessary.

It took over 30 minutes to get through security, which has gotten slower due to the full body scanning machines. (February 2011), congestion cost the U.S. economy $115 billion in 2009, up from $24 billion in 1982. Traffic jams cause American motorists to lose 70 hours
Earlier this year, I was reminded in an unpleasant way of how difficult travel in the Midwest is because of our lack of transportation choices. All I wanted to do was go to Nashville, TN to meet my family, who had driven down there a week earlier. A car wasn’t an option for me because it would have been a hassle to drive two vehicles back.

Because I’ve grown to dislike flying for a variety of reasons like declining airline customer service and security hassles, and because Ohio and Nashville lack decent rail service, the only other option I could consider was Greyhound. But I quickly found out many of their schedules in Ohio are as bad as Amtrak’s. It would have taken almost 12½ hours, including a 2½-hour layover. Plus, I would have had to leave Cleveland at 4:30 AM to get to Nashville at a decent hour that would have allowed me to enjoy dinner with my family.

As much as I hated to, flying was my only option. Although I have a public transit option to get to Cleveland Hopkins Airport, the schedules required that I get there over 2 hours early. It turned out that arriving early wasn’t going to be necessary.

It took over 30 minutes to get through security, which has gotten slower due to the full body scanning machines. The overall security experience continues to be degrading. I even had to remove the nylon belt I was wearing, which I had chosen so it wouldn’t set off the metal detectors. To top it off, one of the TSA screeners was rude.

After the security check, I thought I’d grab a quick bite and wander around the airport before my flight. But about the time we should have boarded came an announcement that our flight would be delayed an hour due to weather: thunderstorms in Chicago, where the plane originated.

It turned out to be the roughest flight I’d ever been on. Those thunderstorms in Chicago had drifted into our flight path creating a lot of turbulence. The flight attendants had to cancel the snack service. The roughest Amtrak ride I ever experienced was smoother than this flight. From the time I left my house to the time I de-planed in Nashville was 5½ hours. Driving would have taken eight hours under good circumstances.

The drive back to Ohio was worse. We left in what we thought would be plenty of time to get through the Greater Cincinnati area before the afternoon rush hour, but it wasn’t to be. Shortly after leaving Nashville, construction slowed traffic to a crawl at least three times in Tennessee and Kentucky. When it was my turn to drive we were about 60 miles south of the Ohio River, we hit thunderstorms and heavy rains. I drove white-knuckled in torrential downpours for over an hour.

Just as the rain stopped, we hit Greater Cincinnati at the height of rush hour. To make matters worse, there was more construction that was squeezing traffic down into one lane and had traffic moving more slowly than a camel caravan.

I attempted to go around the snarl on side roads, including a failed attempt to take a ferry across the Ohio River, but it turned out to be a wash. As we got back on I-71 in downtown Covington, KY, we ended up right behind the same semi truck we were behind when we exited I-71 for our attempted detour. It had taken us three hours to go 60 miles.

Then it hit me. We weren’t the only ones being delayed by the construction and weather mess – so were millions of dollars in freight. According to the Urban Mobility Report by the Texas Transportation Institute (February 2011), congestion cost the U.S. economy $115 billion in 2009, up from $24 billion in 1982. Traffic jams cause American motorists to lose 70 hours per year and waste 3.9 billion gallons of fuel. In monetary terms this equals about $800 in wasted fuel per year per motorist.

The American Transportation Research Institute estimates that the marginal cost of operating a semi truck is $83.68 per hour and, according to the Federal Highway Administration the trucking industry endures 243 million hours per year in freight delays from recurring bottlenecks. This means that these freight delays are an additional $20.3 billion annual drain on the US economy. Recurring bottlenecks are known delays where heavy traffic slows things down on a daily basis, so this figure does not take into account intermittent bottlenecks from construction or weather. It is unknown how many more billions of dollars in delay intermittent bottlenecks cost.

It’s one thing to read statistics. It’s entirely another to experience first-hand what’s behind them. A trip that should have taken us 8 hours took 12. We arrived home stressed and exhausted. We also had very little quality family time during the trip because driving just isn’t conducive to that. You’re stuck in a small space for hours on end. Bad weather or traffic jams reduce even further what little interaction you can have.

By comparison, my family and I recently rode the Auto Train from Virginia to Florida and back. It’s an overnight, 17½-hour trip. Unlike in an airline terminal, you start relaxing as soon as you turn your keys over to the attendants who load your car onto the train. The stations offer pleasant waiting environments with Wi-Fi. There are play areas for kids. Once on board, you don’t have to think about anything except whether you want red or white wine with dinner. The crew was professional and courteous at all times. Kids always seem to make new friends and almost never ask “when are we going to get there?” Adults strike up pleasant conversations with total strangers. We arrived in the morning ahead of schedule (both ways), stress-free and totally relaxed.

It’s unfortunate that such positive travel experiences seem to be so few and far between in America. It’s also unfortunate that our leaders lack the maturity, foresight and resolve to recognize the problems we have in our transportation system and fix them.
Making tracks in the Valley

A sister organization of All Aboard Ohio, created to promote freight rail infrastructure improvements, got its first client Feb. 15 when the Board of Trustees of the Western Reserve Port Authority (WRPA) approved a contract with RESTORE.

The Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, which promotes passenger rail and public transit under the tradename All Aboard Ohio, began promoting rail freight infrastructure under a new project called RESTORE, an acronym for Rail Enhancements—Sustainable Transportation, Opportunity, Revitalization and Employment. The OARP Board approved a contract with WRPA and with subcontractor consultant Michael Connor who recently retired after serving in executive positions at Conrail; Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad; Ohio Central; and Livonia, Avon & Lakeville/Western New York & Pennsylvania.

WRPA promotes economic development in the Youngstown-Warren area where earth-shaking industrial development is almost making locals forget their economy had rusted for 35 years since the end of its steel industry heyday. RESTORE was hired for $10,000 to conduct an “immediate needs” rail infrastructure assessment for the Mahoning Valley (Youngstown-Warren) and surrounding areas. RESTORE will then recommend up to five, small-scale projects that can be built in two years or less and which WRPA may choose to sponsor.

The WRPA wants to promote their region to more new businesses, but decades of deindustrialization have left many marketable sites without sufficient rail access. At a March 8 public input meeting, participants identified numerous rail needs: more access to ports on Lake Erie and the Ohio River, links to more transload facilities and industrial parks, enhanced rail competition, direct rail access to the industries of Cleveland and more. The Mahoning Valley and Greater Cleveland are the only two Ohio metro areas without a direct rail line connecting them. Four decades ago there were three high-quality, interconnected mainlines between these industrial centers.

A side benefit of this work is that it is providing a single-source inventory of rail freight infrastructure needs, including estimated capital construction costs. Granted, this is just for one corner of the state, but the early estimates suggest that $150 million or more in capital funding could allow the region, its shippers and its railroads to attract new industrial development opportunities over the next five years. While much of that can be financed privately, many infrastructure projects will likely require some public funding.

Consider that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, only 10 miles east of Youngstown, dedicates $30 million per year to freight rail development; the State of Ohio dedicates only $2 million per year. Increased public attention to this shortcoming by demonstrating not only the need but the successful implementation of rail infrastructure projects can encourage policymakers to respond.

RESTORE will present its draft recommendations at a public meeting at noon, May 10 at the Youngstown Club, 201 East Commerce Street, downtown Youngstown. Kindly order your own lunch from the menu. Please RSVP to restore4rail@gmail.com or by calling 216-288-4883. The final report will be delivered to WRPA by May 31.

Youngstown never expected this! Tens of millions of dollars in new track construction restores Ohio Central's former Erie-Lackawanna Brier Hill Yard. It's the start of many more jobs-producing railroad projects needed to serve billions of dollars in industrial development in this long-suffering region.
All Aboard Ohio Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 19th – 10 a.m.
Registration starts at 9:30

The Golf Village at Central Park
789 Science Blvd., Gahanna, Ohio

Agenda: All Aboard Ohio board election, RESTORE project, TransitColumbus report, Ohio-Chicago rail study, Hutchison presentation, guest speakers

Registration includes meeting, continental breakfast and a build-your-own-sandwich buffet lunch.

Exit I-270 at Broad Street (Exit 39). Go East towards Newark. Turn left onto Taylor Station Road, turn left onto Claycraft Road, and turn right onto Science Boulevard. The Golf Village at Central Park will be on the left.

Calendar of Events/Meetings

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

April 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact information</th>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Cleveland Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>10th Floor Conference Rm, City Club Bldg, 850 Euclid, Cleveland</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Columbus Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Grandview Public Library, 1685 W. First Ave, Grandview</td>
<td>Larry Robertson 614-459-0359</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Toledo Amtrak Station, Dr. MLK Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave., Toledo</td>
<td>Bill Gill 419-536-1924</td>
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May 2012

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>National Train Day-Toledo</td>
<td>9:30-4:00</td>
<td>Toledo Amtrak Station, Dr. MLK Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave., Toledo</td>
<td>Bill Gill 419-536-1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Akron Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
<td>The Lockview, 207 South Main St, Akron</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cincinnati Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>Tower &quot;A&quot; at Union Terminal, 1301 Western Ave, Cincinnati</td>
<td>Beau Tuke <a href="mailto:beautuke@yahoo.com">beautuke@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Youngstown Local Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon</td>
<td>Powers-Gibson Room, 4th Floor, The Youngstown Club, 201 E. Commerce St, Youngstown</td>
<td>RSVP (required) to: <a href="mailto:restore4rail@gmail.com">restore4rail@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
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June 2012

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