Current Improvements: $2.2 billion; Yearly Riders: 1.6 million; And Growing!

Passenger Rail
Chicago-NYC

Booming!
Amtrak's eastbound Lake Shore Limited meets the dawn while streaking through Ashtabula, Ohio at 79 mph on its daily dash between Chicago, Toledo, Cleveland, Buffalo, New York City and Boston, plus other enroute station stops. Ridership on the Lake Shore has risen to a record 400,000 per year. To put that number into context, see the graphic on Page 8 of this newsletter. When combined with other trains traveling on at least 100 miles of this route, there are 1.6 million Amtrak riders per year in the Chicago-New York corridor. See also the centerspread for a list of capital improvements planned, underway or recently completed in this corridor.

There are more than 1.6 million reasons why passenger rail is very much alive between the Midwest and East Coast rail hubs. That's how many people rode trains in the 960-mile Chicago-Toledo-Cleveland-Buffalo-Albany-New York City travel corridor – one of the world's most populous.

Or, we could have bragged there were 2.2 billion reasons, pointing to the dollar value of rail infrastructure safety and performance improvements built since 2010, underway or in detailed engineering – today.

Either way, All Aboard Ohio is committed to encouraging Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, Congress, en route communities and host railroads Norfolk Southern and CSX Transportation to keep partnering, working, improving, building and expanding.

The need is there. A decade of growth in rail travel is due to the rising cost and growing inconvenience of car and air travel, more young people preferring public transportation over driving, aging baby boomers lacking the stamina for long-distance driving and improved rail service quality.

There are nearly 4,500 people per day riding on trains that traveled on at least 100 miles of the Chicago-Cleveland-Buffalo-New York City route. That ridership includes 613,640 passengers in 2011 on long-distance trains (Lake Shore Limited and Capitol Limited), a 5.2 percent rise over 2010.

And it includes 1,023,690 riders in one-day on short- and medium-distance trains (Empire Service and the Maple Leaf), a 4 percent increase over 2010. This does not include Amtrak’s Chicago-Michigan trains which use the westernmost 40 miles of the Chicago-New York City route and carried 797,017 riders in 2011.

Unlike government-owned and financed airports and highways, the Chicago-New York City rail corridor is owned mostly by private interests, namely Norfolk Southern Corp. west of Cleveland and CSX Transportation Inc. east of Cleveland. NS and CSX operate about 150 freight trains per day on substantial portions of this route.

If this rail facility did not exist, at least 40,000 trucks per day would be added to a highway system whose physical condition consistently receives poor grades by the American Society of Civil Engineers in its annual report cards. Thus All Aboard Ohio is committed to creating win-win situations for passengers and freight when advocating infrastructure improvements that accommodate growth for both modes.

— Continued on page four
Executive Director Ken Prendergast

Some time in the next 5-15 years, a remarkable event could occur. The first section of Interstate or interstate-quality highway will be abandoned somewhere in this country due to a lack of funds.

It will probably be a short, lightly used section of road with a decaying, expensive bridge in the middle of it. The highway department responsible for closing that section of road will try to minimize the significance of the event by calling it a temporary closure. They themselves may not even realize at that moment the closure is permanent. But it won’t be the last abandonment. Ohio’s stagnant population growth makes it a likely place for this momentous event to happen here first.

What’s even more remarkable is that it may be inevitable. There are many reasons why this will occur: rising construction costs, stagnant gas tax revenue from more fuel-efficient vehicles, high gas prices, a declining middle class, retiring Baby Boomers (75 million Americans) and car-apathetic young people (80 million Americans) that drove 23 percent fewer miles 2001-09 than did the prior generation.

Why could it be inevitable? Legislators and voters refuse to increase road taxes, institute vehicle-mile fees or convert “freeways” into toll roads. Even if they did, the higher user costs might cause people to drive even less. The effects of this unprecedented situation, especially for those of us interested in advocating for more trains and transit, are profound.

Foremost, highway agencies are trying to hoard all the taxpayer dollars they can, including $51.5 billion in federal subsidies since 2008 to bail out the Highway Trust Fund and $29 billion in federal stimulus dollars to expand roads they can’t afford to maintain. But it kept road builders busy during the recession.

Hoarding taxpayers’ dollars is one reason why rail and transit projects are being killed by governors – so the politically active highwaymen can continue feeding at the public trough. A spokesman for Ohio Department of Transportation Director Jerry Wray (a former asphalt industry association executive) confirmed this remains an issue for ODOT when he was asked recently if his department would support plans for Columbus-Chicago passenger rail service.

“As I am sure you are aware, Ohio, like many other states, has limited transportation funds that do not cover the existing commitments for infrastructure investment,” Wray’s spokesman said. “This financial reality makes the needed capital investment as well as the on-going operating subsidy that would be required for a passenger rail route very difficult.”

This is all the more ironic as ridership has risen nationwide on trains and buses by 30 percent in the 21st century while miles driven have fallen to their lowest levels since 1949. This decade has seen the largest reduction in people’s auto miles driven in 60 years. The American Society of Civil Engineers’ 2012 infrastructure rankings have found most of America’s roads to be “structurally deficient.”

While all of this is going on, a new kind of highway is in the works: high-speed rail. What if a structural collapse of infrastructure were used to build the high-speed rail included in the proposed Ohio Turnpike? It would be a revolution in how people travel in the state. Just as the interstate highway system eliminated the passenger train, a high-speed rail could eliminate the car, the toll road and the gas tax. It’s a momentous event when a road is abandoned. This is a momentous event when a transportation system is born.
WANTED

Photos and Articles
Clippings from newspapers and magazines must include the publication's name and date. Your articles and news briefs should be typed and double-spaced, though very short items may be legibly written. Preferably, send hard copy with IBM-compatible text files on CDs, or send e-mail submissions to:
kprenegast@cox.net

We reserve the right to edit all non-published submissions. Original photos should be sharp, bright prints—avoid negatives.
Always include your name and phone number!
Editor, Ohio Passenger Rail News
12029 Clifton Boulevard, #505
Lakewood OH 44107-2189

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.

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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.)

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This is all the more ironic as ridership has risen nationwide on trains and buses by 30 percent in the 21st century while miles driven have fallen to their lowest levels since before 2004. So funding is being denied to trains and transit which people are using more often in an attempt to keep people driving, which they are doing less.

The primary goal of government agencies like ODOT is survival. Under current laws, the only way ODOT can survive is to keep people driving and the gas taxes flowing. Meanwhile, ODOT has no way to capture the value from people riding trains and transit to support those new activities and transition into a multi-modal transportation agency.

Alas, ODOT spends only 1 percent of its budget on public transportation, even though 9 percent of Ohio households have no cars – that’s 1 million people. Even more households have multiple wage earners sharing one car per home. These numbers are growing as Ohio gets poorer - median family income has fallen to its lowest levels in 27 years. Yet Ohio spends less on basic public transportation than it does to cut the grass along its interstates. Ohio legislators need to find a way to capture value from Ohioans traveling by trains and transit.

Furthermore, well-funded and organized civil rights activists, environmentalists and fair housing advocates see transportation agencies taking money from public transit to save an aging, overbuilt highway system from insolvency. They recently won a federal action against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for failing to include transit improvements as part of a $1.7 billion highway interchange in Milwaukee.

One could argue that ODOT’s policies do that every day by spending so little on transit compared to the number of Ohioans who have no access to cars. Physical access to basic services is a human right in a civilized society. Whether Ohio chooses to remain one will depend on its actions in the coming years.

So that first section of abandoned interstate will be symptomatic of the sweeping changes occurring in America’s transportation system. It’s why the highwaymen are trying to postpone it for as long as they can. It’s a tough pill for them to swallow. But it’s inevitable. The only questions are where and when.
Cincinnati City Council voted 6-3 to use $15 million from the $37 million sale of the Blue Ash Airport for building the streetcar project. It also approved using $14 million in tax-increment financing to pay for utility relocations that will allow the $110 million streetcar project to stay on track for its planned 2015 opening.

Duke Energy has refused to pay for utility relocations, even though utilities are required by law to pay to relocate their own infrastructure to make way for city- or state-sponsored projects. It is unclear why Duke has uniquely singled out this streetcar project to play hardball, as it has moved its utility infrastructure out of the way the Charlotte light-rail project. Some have speculated that Gov. John Kasich has put pressure on Duke, something which Duke officials have denied. The $15 million from the airport sale will be recovered from Duke Energy once it conforms to federal law.

“Under the traditional common-law rule, utilities have been required to bear the entire cost of relocating from a public right-of-way whenever requested to do so by state or local authorities,” wrote Michael L. Stokes in the Winter 2011 edition of the Valparaiso University Law Review. He said this was reaffirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1983 and recognized by the Court as far back as 1905.

One does not have to look far for an example. Duke has already agreed to pay $34 million out of its own corporate pocket to clean up the West End Gas Works plant to make way for a highway project that dwarfs the Cincinnati Streetcar. That project is the state-sponsored replacement of the Brent Spence Bridge over the Ohio River for $3 billion in taxpayer expense. Worse, relocation of the Duke gas plant for Interstates 71/75 will cause rate hikes for Duke Energy customers.

Streetcar opponents cranked up the hyperbole machine again, claiming the airport funding was promised for neighborhood improvements — not recognizing that the Streetcar project IS a neighborhood improvement.

Like most fixed-guideway transportation investments, the streetcar is a proven economic development tool whose permanence attracts dense, mixed-use housing, shops and offices. Such transit-oriented land uses enable low-mileage lifestyles that young professionals seek. In short, it brings jobs to the city, rather than forcing Cincinnatians to have to travel hours on several bus connections to reach distant suburban jobs.

All Aboard Ohio encourages its members to thank Cincinnati council members Roxanne Qualls, Laure Quinlivan, Yvette Simpson, Cecil Thomas, Wendell Young and Chris Seelbach for their continued support of the streetcar project. Contact them via the Council clerk’s office at (513) 352-3246, clerkofcouncil@cincinnati-oh.gov or by writing directly to each council person at City Hall, at 801 Plum St., Cincinnati, OH 45202.

On the downside, U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-1, Cincinnati) and many of his right-wing colleagues in Congress flexed their federal muscle to bully the locally-driven streetcar project. Rep. Chabot’s measure would prohibit the use of any new federal surface transportation funds for a Cincinnati streetcar for one year. This will not affect a $25 million federal grant previously awarded to the project.

A similar effort was undertaken in the 1990s by since-imprisoned Rep. Tom DeLay of Texas to block federal funds for Houston’s then-planned light-rail system. Instead, that rail project used local funds to start service in 2004. It has since been extremely popular, carrying 75 million riders in seven years — four years ahead of projections. In response to its popularity, Houston’s rail system has three new or extended lines under construction and two more in advanced planning — with federal funds.

Ironically, Rep. Chabot’s poorly researched amendment would affect more than just the streetcar. The amendment to the 2013 federal transportation budget bill read: “None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to design, construct, or operate a fixed guideway project located in Cincinnati, Ohio.”

According to Title 49, Sec. 5302 of the U.S. Code, a “fixed guideway” is an exclusive or controlled right-of-way used in whole or in part for transportation. It can include any separate right of way for trains, buses or other high-occupancy vehicles — including cars and even ferry boats.

Such “inverted earmarks” subvert a fair and professional administrative-level evaluation and exercise of due process. It is also intended to deny the empowerment of urban Cincinnatians by preventing compact, mixed-use, mixed-income neighborhoods that would improve access to jobs, shopping, education and health care and reduce driving, pollution and poverty.

This may explain why the streetcar project has been the subject of venomous opposition, as the project promises to help rejuvenate Cincinnati’s urban core while eroding the anti-urban, exclusionary status quo in which regressive voices are so deeply invested.
Columbus-Chicago rail benefits study starts

All Aboard Ohio and the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA) have jointly worked to secure funding for a feasibility study that will build a business case for the return of rail service from Chicago to Fort Wayne, with plans to extend service to Lima and Columbus, OH. That study officially got underway in early August.

Fort Wayne City Councilman Geoff Paddock, a founding board member of NIPRA and Fred Lanahan, President of NIPRA’s Board of Directors announced that $80,000 has been raised to launch the Northern Indiana/Ohio Passenger Rail Corridor Study and Business Plan. This study will be conducted by Transportation Economics and Management Systems, Inc. (TEMS) which has experience in analyzing the potential benefits of transportation systems in the United States, particularly passenger rail.

“This is the next step for NIPRA in its efforts to see passenger rail return to Fort Wayne and Northern Indiana,” said Mr. Paddock. “State officials, including Governor (Mitch) Daniels, have urged those interested in promoting rail service to substantiate its economic benefits to the state.

“The TEMS study will highlight the economic impact rail has and the number of jobs that could be created. The business plan will go far beyond previous studies to develop financing and funding arrangements that could sustain rail service into the future. The study will also lay groundwork for an assessment of potential public/private partnerships, including freight, that could work to implement rail service,” Mr. Paddock added.

The bar has been set high to reestablish passenger rail service in this corridor,” said Mr. Lanahan, also the board president of Citilink, Fort Wayne’s transit agency. “We are mindful that ridership and revenue numbers need to be strong to help sustain operation of a rail system. This includes working closely with freight lines.”

Half ($40,000) of the funding was secured by Fort Wayne Mayor Tom Henry, and Allen County Commissioners Linda Bloom, Therese Brown, and Nelson Peters. All have shown strong support for returning rail service and all believe rail development will bring hundreds of jobs to this area. Other funding for the study was secured by grants from the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne, Indiana and Michigan Power, Steel Dynamics, Inc., the City of Lima, Ohio, and the Greater Lima Community Foundation.

The TEMS study will concentrate on the economic development advantages for Fort Wayne and the cities along the route to Chicago. TEMS will also look at economic advantages to adding service from Fort Wayne to Lima and Columbus, Ohio, and then connecting to Pittsburgh and other eastern cities. The study is to be completed by year’s end, in order to present to the next governor of Indiana, who takes office in January.

This study will update a previous one made by TEMS in 2002 and provide fresh economic data. We hope it will convince the state to look more favorably at rail development, particularly here in an area that has been underserved for over two decades. Fort Wayne can support passenger rail service,” Mr. Paddock said.

Hoosier State to Cincinnati?

All Amtrak trains on routes of 750 miles or less must have their operating costs and capital charges funded by affected states and in the same manner by Sept. 30, 2013, according to Sec. 209 of the U.S. Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. But, only two of 18 states haven’t approved the cost methodology – Indiana and New Hampshire. The Amtrak-funded Chicago-Indianapolis Hoosier State is at risk unless the Indiana Department of Transportation (IndOT) pays the estimated $3.8 million annual cost.

In the absence of IndOT support, All Aboard Ohio urges communities along the route to unite and sponsor this train. This is done with joint powers authorities like Texas’ Lone Star Rail District (united cities), Minnesota’s Northern Lights Express (counties), and the Las Vegas-based Western High Speed Rail Alliance (metropolitan planning organizations).

Regardless of the train’s sponsor, All Aboard Ohio further urges these improvements to improve the train’s performance: a Cincinnati route extension, schedule it to leave Cincinnati at dawn and return by midnight, a faster route in/out of Chicago, lengthen grade-crossing circuit “triggers” to raise train speeds from 60 to 79 mph Indianapolis-Cincinnati, and make the train daily. More details in the next issue of the Ohio Passenger Rail News.

Hundreds of Fort Wayne residents showed up for a Rally For Rail in 2010 at Baker Street Station. That energized efforts for restoring passenger rail service west to Chicago and to points east as well.
BOOMING: Chicago–New York

The following significant rail infrastructure improvements (planned or underway) are important for accommodating the growth of passenger and freight rail services in the busy Chicago-New York City corridor.

Information is presented in this format: (LOCATION – Project title – dollar amount – lead sponsor – status – description). Links to source documents are at allaboardohio.org.

CHICAGO, IL-NEW YORK, NY – Viewliner II railcar order – $298.1 million – First railcars due for delivery Winter 2012-13 – Amtrak in 2010 ordered 130 Viewliner II railcars from CAF USA in Elmira, NY including 25 sleeping cars, 25 diners, 55 baggage cars and 25 baggage/dormitory cars for use primarily on long-distance trains including Amtrak's Chicago-New York/Boston Lake Shore Limited plus potential future expanded services on this growing passenger route.

CHICAGO – Union Station renovations – $25 million – Amtrak – Completed 2012 – Restoration of Great Hall, offices, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and safety systems.

SOUTH BEND, IN – Amtrak Station expansion/ADA – $434,323 – Amtrak – completed in 2011 – Built second platform on south side of mainline tracks, added tactile edges to existing and new platforms and improved station building on north side of tracks. Second platform allows station processing of trains from both main tracks.

MISHAWAKA, IN – Grade separation of Capital Avenue/SR331 – $42 million – City of Mishawaka/Michiana Area Council of Governments – Under construction – Roadway underpass below the NS/Amtrak mainline is part of converting SR331 into an urban expressway project.

ELKHART, IN – Grade separation of Prairie Street – $29.7 million – City of Elkhart/Michiana Area Council of Governments – Planned for construction in 2014 – An underpass of the NS/Amtrak mainline is planned with more than $14 million in hand.

WATERLOO, IN – Amtrak Station expansion/ADA – $5.8 million – Town of Waterloo – Construction due to start in early 2013 – Construct new station building, replace existing concrete platform, add second concrete platform on south side of mainline tracks and pedestrian walkway to allow station processing of trains from both main tracks.


SWANTON, OH – Grade separation of Hallet Avenue/Fulton-Lucas Road – $18.7 million – Village of Swanton – Construction due to start in 2012 – A new bridge over the existing CSX/Amtrak mainline with grade separations of street crossings.

ERIE, PA – Railroad crossing improvement per year – Erie County – ongoing – PennDOT have flexibility to prioritize funds following their establishment of the benefits of this program.

RIPLY, NY – Ripley Grade Separation – $14 million – NYSDOT – Environmental impact statements completed – Grade separation of CSX/Amtrak and NS crossings as well as four other at-grade crossing projects.

Chicago Union Station's Great Hall sparkles after Amtrak's $25 million renovation of the overall facility. However much of the rest of the station is overcrowded and needs expansion to handle more rail travelers, especially to Ohio and the East Coast.

CHICAGO – Union Station improvements - No dollar amount yet - Chicago Department of Transportation - Master plan completed 2012 - Medium- and long-term improvements to ease track, platform and street access capacity constraints.

CHICAGO – Englewood Flyover – $146 million – Illinois Department of Transportation – Fully funded, construction due to begin by end of 2012 - Separates the busy at-grade crossing of Metra Rock Island commuter tracks and Norfolk Southern/Amtrak tracks by elevating the Metra tracks.

CHICAGO-PORTER, IN – South of Lake Bypass – $1.2 billion (approximate) - Michigan Department of Transportation - Alternatives Analysis completed. Preliminary Engineering funded at $4 million – Planning for building a 40-mile-long, two-track, high-speed passenger rail line from Chicago to Porter.

ILLINOIS/INDIANA STATE LINE-PORTER – Indiana Gateway – $75.5 million – Indiana Department of Transportation - Fully funded, construction due to begin by end of 2012 – Provides a third track along more than half of the 25-mile NS right of way to relieve rail traffic congestion.

SWANTON, OH – Grade separation of Hallett Avenue/Fulton-Lucas Road – $12.7 million – Village of Swanton – Construction underway – New overpass on a new roadway alignment over NS/Amtrak tracks on the east side of town.

HOLLAND, OH – Grade separation of McCord Road – $35.2 million – Lucas County Engineer – Construction due to start in 2014 as $29.9 million is in hand – New underpass of NS/Amtrak tracks as well as nearby roundabout with temporary tracks and roadways.

TOLEDO, OH – Airline Junction Rail Project – $12.3 million – City of Toledo – Completed in 2012 – New switches and signals at three locations west of Airline Yard to improve traffic flow and train speeds on the mainline.

NORTHWOOD, OH – Grade separation of Wales Road – $15.8 million – Ohio Department of Transportation – Construction underway – New overpasses of NS/Amtrak and CSX tracks, plus relocations of Wales and Drouillard roads.

ELYRIA, OH – Amtrak Station ADA improvements – $161,446 – Amtrak – Construction completed in 2011 – New wheelchair lift, walkways and facilities that are ADA-compliant.

ELYRIA, OH – Lorain County Transportation Center – $7.6 million – Lorain County – Construction on third phase completed in 2010 – Renovation of the historic New York Central Railroad depot into a multi-modal transportation and community center. Funding and railroad agreements for the $1.3 million fourth phase (Amtrak station facility) are not yet in hand.

CLEVELAND, OH – Downtown Lakefront Multimodal Project – $46.7 million – City of Cleveland – Preliminary Engineering complete, local funding of $26.7 million in hand, $20 million sought from local port authority, Amtrak pledges another $4.25 million for station facility improvements not accounted for by the city – Construction of outdoor and enclosed walk/bikeway linking Medical Mart/Convention Center with North Coast Harbor, parking deck, bike station and potential linkages to or accommodations for Amtrak and RTA Waterfront Line stations.

BUFFALO/DEPEW, NY – Station improvements – Amtrak/New York State Department of Transportation – ADA improvements to station parking, building and platform.

BATAVIA, NY-ROCHESTER, NY – Project – $58.27 million – CSX/NS – Federal grant was awarded to NYS DOT – no agreement exists yet among NYS DOT – This is the initial 11-mile of the CSX right-of-way to reduce congestion and passenger trains and increase grade crossing warning device systems.

ROCHESTER, NY – Intermodal Transportation Center – $26 million – City of Rochester – Construction underway – About $25.8 million from several sources.

It's all about the people! All of the projects shown on these pages exist to make travelers' journeys more enjoyable.
New York City passenger rail

enough to begin construction on replacing the 1978-built Amtrak station with a new, larger facility that allows passenger trains to do their station processing from more than one track.

SYRACUSE, NY – Syracuse Area Congestion Relief – $23.2 million – CSX/NYS DOT – An 80-percent federal grant (matched by $4.6 million in state funds) was awarded to NYS DOT but not obligated as no agreement exists yet among Amtrak, CSX, FRA and NYS DOT – Work includes 13 miles of improvements near De Witt Yard and Amtrak station including new crossover tracks and rebuilt through-tracks to allow higher speeds.

SCHENECTADY (HOFFMANS)-ALBANY, NY – Albany-Schenectady Second Main Track – $92.2 million – Amtrak/NYS DOT – Construction on second main track, interlockings and crossings for 110 mph passenger trains is due to start following the start of Amtrak’s lease of 94 miles of CSX tracks from Hoffmans, NY to Poughkeepsie, NY, which is slated to occur as early as Fall 2012.

SCHENECTADY, NY – Intermodal Station and Track and Platform Improvements – $14.15 million – Capital District Transportation Authority – Construction due to start in early 2013 – Replacement of existing station, addition of new platforms and reconfiguration of track layout at the Schenectady station. This work is part of the overall project to construct a new intermodal station on the site, which is now fully-funded and is expected to open in 2014.

It’s an impressive list. But it’s one that needs to keep growing to accommodate the ongoing growth and expansion of passenger rail service. All Aboard Ohio will join with railroad officials to educate local, regional, federal and railroad officials on the need for continued expansion and improvements to meet the changing mobility and economic development demands in this heavily populated, heavily trafficked travel corridor.
Construction underway - Replacement of 60+ year-old electric signal system on CSX's main line at Buffalo Terminal Subdivisions - ADA and state-of-good-repair (SGR) begun.

ALBANY-RENSSELAER, NY - First phase of Third Main Line and Related Projects - $37.7 million - Construction to begin in 2013 - Several sources have been gathered, some of which will be utilized to fund this project.

ALBANY-RENSSELAER - Fourth Track at Rensselaer Station - $35.4 million - Construction due to start in 2012 - Project includes addition of a new track at the station, extension of the current platforms for longer trains, a reconfiguration of the station's track layout and a new signal/interlocking system to increase speeds of trains moving in and out of the station.

RENSSELAER-POUGHKEEPSIE, NY - Hudson Line Signal Pole Replacement - $28.6 million - Construction on final phase due to start in 2012 - Pole-mounted signal cables along 67 miles of rail line operated at 110 mph are extremely susceptible to weather-caused damage, causing costly delays and delays. Cables on the northernmost 48 miles of rail line are being buried and the remaining 19 miles are set to be buried.

RENSSELAER-POUGHKEEPSIE - Hudson Line grade crossing improvements - $2.45 million - Construction due to start in 2012 - Enhanced grade crossing warning device systems in a section operated at 110 mph will replace outdated devices at 13 road crossings and other improvements as identified.

NEW YORK, NY - Moynihan Station Phase I - $267 million (Phase I) or $1.184 billion (total) - Construction to start in 2012 - Phase I improvements include two new entrances into the Penn/Moynihan Station complex through the corners of the old Farley Post Office building, the extension of the West End Concourse to serve eight additional tracks, the doubling of the width of the concourse, and new staircases, escalators and elevators from the platforms up to the station to meet ADA requirements.

New York City's Moynihan Station will be developed in phases in the existing, historic Farley Post Office next door to Amtrak's subterranean Penn Station. When complete, this will provide an appropriately grand entrance for long-distance rail travelers to America's largest city.
The Chairman's Corner
Let's work to continue passenger rail’s growth

By Ron Sheck
Chairman, All Board of Directors

I’m honored to be selected by my fellow board members to serve as the first Chairman of All Board of Directors. I look forward to working with the other board members, our regional coordinators and all of our members across Ohio and those who are members from other states and even from Canada. You have my commitment to use my knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to help All Board of Directors in its effort to improve passenger and freight rail and public transportation across the Buckeye state.

We are frustrated with Gov. John Kasich’s decision to reject $400 million in federal funding for the historically bipartisan-supported rail passenger plan to link Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati. But there is a lot going on across the U.S. in passenger rail to excite us, much of it in neighboring states, yet even some here in Ohio.

Amtrak, ridership is surging again this year and will exceed the record of 30.2 million passengers set in Fiscal Year 2011. From FY 2002 to FY 2011, Amtrak ridership increased 44 percent. Two significant public policy changes have contributed to this growth in intercity passenger rail travel.

The first is a growing partnership between states and Amtrak to improve passenger service. Fifteen states support intercity trains and have invested in track and signal improvements, stations, rolling stock and other capital projects in addition to contributing to operating costs. These partnerships are supported by governors and legislators from both political parties.

The second is at the federal level where, since 2008, passenger rail has taken on a new importance. The national administration has improved passenger rail service by increasing capital investment in Amtrak’s conventional intercity system and also by introducing high-speed rail investments for the first time to bring the U.S. rail program up to a level enjoyed in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world. Since 2008, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has made available $10 billion to upgrade intercity passenger services primarily on corridors designated by the Federal Railroad Administration for incremental upgrading as potential high-speed corridors.

Illinois and Michigan are upgrading track and signal systems and building new stations or renovating existing ones between to allow 110 mph speeds to reduce the 5½-hour travel times in the Chicago-St. Louis and Chicago-Detroit-Pontiac corridors by nearly an hour each. Michigan’s Republican Gov. Rick Snyder accepted nearly $500 million in federal funds for these improvements. Both corridors will benefit from 130 new bi-level passenger cars that USDOT will order later this year.

Ohio will benefit in 2013 as Amtrak takes delivery of 130 new passenger cars for the Chicago-New York Cardinal, Chicago-New York/Boston Lake Shore Limited and other trains. Station platform improvements were completed at Bryan, Elyria and Alliance for the Lake Shore and Capitol Limited routes across northern Ohio.

However, all of this progress is threatened by disturbing political events which may derail Amtrak and severely cut federal aid to public transit. The use of public transit is at the highest levels since World War II. For 30 years a penny of the federal gas tax has been dedicated to public transportation as a result of Republicans and Democrats working together in Washington.

The recently released GOP party platform would discontinue federal subsidies for Amtrak and disallow the use of federal gas tax money for local public transportation. In 2012 this totaled over $7 billion. This action would seriously damage public transportation in many cities, towns and rural areas in Ohio. It is sad to see that the bipartisan, pragmatic support for federal funding of intercity rail and local public transportation is being replaced by ideological policies of extremely right-wing politicians.

Sadly, too, we are losing key supporters of rail and public transit in Congress: Ohio Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-Bainbridge) plus Sens. Olympia Snowe (R-Maine), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) and Jeff Binghamham (D-New Mexico) are all retiring.

At no time in my memory, and I’ve been riding Amtrak since its inception in 1971, has there been such a strong movement to curtail federal funding. GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney and the Republican platform argue that intercity passenger rail should be turned over to the private sector. They have apparently forgotten that Amtrak was created during the Nixon administration because the private railroads had failed as for-profit passenger train operators.

Passenger rail throughout the world is subsidized as are highways, airways and waterways. In the past few years freight rail in the U.S. has also benefited from public investment. Ohio short line railroads and even Class I mainline freight railroads have received federal funds to improve capacity and safety.

All Board of Directors is committed to educating the public and providing information to our elected officials about the value of passenger and freight rail and public transportation to Ohio and its citizens and visitors. We will continue to do this through our newsletter, in public meetings and through other outreach efforts. We will focus on ways to grow our membership including attracting high-school and college students and young professionals who have shown growing preferences for public transportation options whether it be for intercity rail or local transit.

We will work closely with local community leadership and business to improve transportation alternatives. We will continue to partner with other organizations including the National Association of Railroad Passengers, the Northwest Ohio Passenger Rail Association, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association and our counterparts in Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania and New York.

We will develop new programs for our members that will increase our own knowledge of rail and other transportation modes and make us more effective in telling our story. And we will sponsor more events to celebrate the history of rail in Ohio including visits to many of the wonderful rail museums and excursion train operations across the Buckeye state.
Hutchison thanked for his decades of advocacy and volunteerism

Shortly after being named as All Aboard Ohio’s first chairman, Ronald Sheck began working to position the association for the future. One of his first moves was to set a regular board meeting schedule and seek ways to engage more young people. He has also scheduled a board retreat Nov. 17 to gather input provided by the general membership at the Oct. 27 Fall Meeting & Workshop in Delaware to chart a course for All Aboard Ohio’s future (see meeting notice on page eight).

Departing as president was Bill Hutchison who retired and moved to Florida. Mr. Hutchison, a charter member in the 39-year-old association, served as president from 1998 to 2002 and again from 2005-2012. He previously served as vice president and Ashtabula regional coordinator. Today he continues to advocate for passenger rail and All Aboard Ohio on the board of directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers.

Mr. Hutchison was thanked by members at the 2012 Annual Meeting held in May 19 at the Golf Depot in the Columbus suburb of Gahanna. He was given a commemorative plaque, railroad history books signed by members, and a $300 voucher to ride Amtrak round-trip between Florida and Ohio so he can come back and visit!

“When I was a student at Kent State University in 1988 and starting to get involved in passenger rail advocacy, Bill was taking a two-day seminar at KSU,” said Executive Director Ken Prendergast at the meeting. “Bill called me up and asked me to show him some of the rail infrastructure in the Kent-Ravenna area. We’ve been doing rail inspections throughout Ohio ever since and plotting new ways to make better use of rail infrastructure. I am going to miss having Bill around and making those trips with him.”

“I am not going to fade away quietly into the sunset,” Mr. Hutchison pledged to the members at the Annual Meeting. “I am going to stay involved. We’ve had some tough fights and we’ve lost many fights, but we’ve also won some, too. Amtrak is still around and is experiencing record ridership. We need to strengthen and expand what we have, improve our transportation choices and get more victories, no matter how small.”

Mr. Sheck of Sylvania (Toledo area), along with Ken Sislak of Shaker Heights (Cleveland area), were named by the board of directors as All Aboard Ohio’s first chairman and vice-chairman, respectively. Returning as officers were Treasurer Ken Clifford of Medway (Dayton area) and Secretary Jack Shaner of Columbus. The appointments were made at the 2012 Annual Meeting.

“We have some real challenges ahead, but also some real opportunities,” said Mr. Scheck, who has a Ph.D. in geography and 30 years experience in transportation planning, research and policy. He recently retired from the Washington State Department of Transportation where he last served as Urban Rail Program Manager. “Look at where Ohio is, geographically,” Mr. Scheck added. “We are right in between the growing rail hubs of Chicago and the Northeast Corridor. Improving the rail links between those hubs means better train service for Ohioans. That will grow the constituency for passenger rail statewide. We also have promising transit projects in Cleveland, Cincinnati and other cities that will only whet the appetite for more.”

At the 2011 Fall Meeting, the membership approved bylaw amendments that replaced the president and vice-president positions with a chairman and vice-chairman. The amendments also gave the board the authority to select the officers from their own ranks of the board of directors. The board continues to be elected by the association’s membership.

One new board member was added at the Annual Meeting — At-Large Director Charles Horn of Kenton. He and his wife Beverly have been members since 1981 and have regularly attended meetings, written letters to newspapers and elected officials over the years and communicated the benefits of rail service to local leaders. His knowledge of rail issues and access to local officials are valuable to the emerging Chicago-Columbus passenger rail project.

The board continues to meet the history of rail in Ohio including visits to many of the wonderful rail museums and excursion train operations across the Buckeye state.
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 Fahnert  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
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  Carol Haslett
Akron, OH  Chagrin Falls, OH

Kenneth Sissak  216 / 910-1926  Geza John Vamos
Shaker Heights, OH  Cleveland, OH

Italic denotes member of NARP’s Board of Directors

Italics denotes member of NARP’s Board of Directors

Directory updated: Sept., 2012

Road/air subsidies: huge, growing & safe;
Amtrak subsidies: small, shrinking & attacked
Amtrak subsidies: small, shrinking & attacked

The above graphic from the Northeast Business Alliance shows how tiny our nation's federal funding support is for rail and how out of control federal spending is for highways and aviation. Yet rail is constantly under attack by so-called budget hawks who claim we're spending too much on trains. This year has seen a new assault. Why? For several reasons...

1. Because Amtrak is subsidized (its operations) differently from how its competition is subsidized (their infrastructure), making Amtrak vulnerable to attack.

2. Because of slight-of-hand misinformation by highway/aviation special interests to keep you focused on the flea instead of the elephant. Every bit of pavement, from "free" parking lots to streets to highways to airport terminals and runways is massively subsidized to encourage their utmost use even when trains and transit might carry many trips more effectively and efficiently.

3. Because in this highly partisan era, any public investment (like rail) that one political party supports draws immediate opposition from the other party. Sadly, as recently as 2000, support for more passenger rail investment was a plank in both major parties' political platforms.

By special interest or ignorance, Amtrak is painted as a huge consumer of subsidies. Not only are the total amounts for rail much less, but so is the overall subsidy per trip — especially as annual miles-driven by Americans in 2010 (2.97 trillion, the most recent data) have fallen below 2004's data (3.05 trillion), according to the Federal Highway Administration.

The Pew Research Foundation found that, of each trip taken by highway (cars or buses), users paid only 51 cents on the dollar to use the federal highway system. The federal government provides the remainder. This is a decline from 50 years ago when motorists paid 72 cents of every dollar of cost for using the highway system.

This does not include $29 billion in federal stimulus funding for roads. Nor does it count local streets and roads, the use, maintenance, drainage and emergency response — all sustained by property and income taxes, not by user contributions.

If motorists paid the full costs of their trips when making them, rather than every April 15th, more Americans would likely choose more diverse ways of traveling (which can be privatized with fewer subsidies sustaining their competition) as well as pursue more transit-friendly, walkable lifestyles. Roads constitute one of the biggest tax burdens we face.

Aviation also receives significant taxpayer benefits in many forms:

- $1 trillion worth of airports, air traffic control and other foundations of commercial aviation were established before 1971 when the first federal aviation user fee was instituted;
- Subsidies continue with tax-free municipal bonds to finance airport improvements, the amounts for which are almost impossible to measure.
- The Transportation Security Administration spends $5+ billion more per year on aviation security than it takes in from passenger and airline user fees;
- The nation's air traffic control system receives more than $3 billion per year from the federal treasury;
- The Essential Air Services subsidy is about $200 million per year;
- Airlines received $15 billion in bailouts after the attacks of 9/11.

Even with these subsidies, the airlines are in a nose-dive. Between 2000-2009 (the last year for which the Air Transportation Association provided data, the U.S. airline industry lost a combined $55.5 billion!

"If capitalists had been present at Kitty Hawk when the Wright brothers' plane first took off, they should have shot it down," said famous investor Warren Buffett.

Meanwhile Amtrak's financial performance has been on the upswing:

- Amtrak has broken ridership records in nine of its last 10 years (including 2012, estimated);
- If Amtrak were an airline, it would be the nation's fifth-largest by use;
- Amtrak carries 150 percent more riders than Greyhound, the nation's largest intercity bus company, which relies on a federally subsidized highway system (Amtrak relies on privately owned rails);
- In 2012, Amtrak covered 85 percent of its costs from fares up from 56 percent a decade ago, an inverse trend compared to highways and aviation in the same period.
- Amtrak's $466 million operating grant in 2012 cost federal taxpayers half as much as it did in Amtrak's first full year ($845.46 million in 1972, inflation adjusted);
- Meanwhile, Amtrak carried twice as many riders in 2012 (31.2 million est.) as it did in 1972 (15.8 million).

Yet, so-called budget hawks claim to want passenger rail 100 percent privatized — a unique scenario in the operations-infrastructure transportation relationship of today. Only half of this relationship is privatized for aviation, highways and passenger rail. For aviation and highway users, privatization exists above the pavement — the operations. For passenger rail, privatization exists below the wheels — the infrastructure.

When some members of Congress ask only Amtrak to privatize 100 percent of its operations, it is an unfair double-standard intended only to shut down the railroad. Ironically, it comes at a time when the financial performance of its heavily subsidized competition is dwindling and Amtrak's is on the ascent. And perhaps that's why highways and aviation interests, as well as their Congressional mouthpieces are so jealous of Amtrak that they want it dead?

Time for you to speak up. Contact your Congressperson or Senators today and tell them to reward Amtrak for its performance, not dismantle it in the pretense of privatization.
Fall is the season of colorful leaves, crisp nights and fundraisers for nonprofit groups like ours. But this year, despite starting it strong, now adds extra urgency to have a successful Fall Fundraiser....

Between All Aboard Ohio and our new rail infrastructure educational/research/advocacy project called RESTORE, we are developing strong partnerships. But lots of opportunities to receive grants, carry out research activities and do other work have been put on hold until December or later due to a variety of circumstances beyond our control. One opportunity is delayed by local politics. Another is delayed by a project sponsor learning how to bid rail projects. Another is delayed due to a committee chair not holding meetings. There’s others. Stuff happens. But those have put us in a serious bind, as we were counting on those resources to carry us at least until the Dec. 1 start of our fiscal year when membership renewal notices go out.

So I ask you to participate in our Fall Fundraiser at any amount you can to reach the goal of at least $5,000 by the end of October.....

And a tasty carrot has been offered to help us reach that goal: A donor has offered to match your donations totalling up to $2,500. So, for example, if the sum of all your donations is $1,000, the donor will match it with $1,000, giving All Aboard Ohio $2,000 total. Or, if your donations total $2,500, then the donor will match that and bring the total to our $5,000 goal. If your donations are $3,000, the donor will give $2,500, or $5,000 total. See how we can get to our goal quickly?

What do you think? Can you participate in our Fall Fundraiser? If 125 of our generous members give $20, we’ll reach our goal. If 50 of you give $50, we’ll get there a little quicker. If just 25 of you give $100, we’ll get there even faster! Please make checks payable to:

“All Aboard Ohio”
850 Euclid Ave., Suite 1026
Cleveland, OH 44114-3357

You can also donate online at:
allaboardohio.org (click the “Pay on Line” link)

Thanks for your help!

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The City of Cincinnati is hosting an open house to seek public feedback on the draft Railroad Improvement and Safety Plan (RISP). The open house runs from 5-8 pm on Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012 in the Losantiville dining room at the Cincinnati Museum Center, 1301 Western Ave.

The RISP brings all of the railroad related work conducted by the city into one planning document. This will assist in coordination with the railroads as well as regional and state partners. It will also assist the city in prioritizing projects for funding opportunities. The RISP goals are to:

- Identify railroad improvements that will ease rail congestion and enhance the on-time freight deliveries to local companies.
- Assist new companies/developments to obtain freight rail service.
- Reduce the impediments at the interface of roadway and railroads - safety and efficiency.
- Identify rail improvements for enhanced Amtrak service to the city.
- Identify rail improvements for the Midwest Regional Rail System (intercity passenger rail) and commuter rail service.

The Amtrak Station (not normally open during daytime hours) and Tower A will both be open for public viewing. Tower A, the former train control tower, overlooks Norfolk Southern’s Gest Street Intermodal Facility.

Complimentary Cincinnati Museum Center parking is available. Indicate that you are attending the RISP Public Meeting. This location is accessible from Metro bus route #1.

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**Meeting Registration Form**

**Name:**

**Address:**

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**Railroad Improvement & Safety Plan for Cincy**

**All Aboard Ohio Fall Meeting & Workshop**

**Sat. Oct. 27th  8:30 am - 3:30 pm**
Meeting Registration Form

Name:__________________________________________
Address:__________________________________________
City:________________________State:____ZIP:__________
Phone:__________ Email:______________________________

Register me for the All Aboard Ohio Fall Meeting & Workshop:
____ $10 All Aboard Ohio members

Sorry, this meeting is a members-only meeting!
Clip or photocopy form. Mail with check or money order to:
All Aboard Ohio
850 Euclid Ave., Suite 1026
Cleveland, OH 44114-3357

or email: info@allaboardohio.org or call (216) 288-4883.

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

All Aboard Ohio Fall Meeting & Workshop

Sat., Oct. 27th – 9:30 am-2:30 pm
Orange Branch of Delaware Library
7171 Gooding Blvd., Delaware, Ohio

Please note, this is NOT THE DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

The Orange Library is off of U.S. Rte 23, 6 miles north of I-70 and 8½ miles south of Delaware. Take U.S. Rte 23 to Corduroy Road, turn west. Turn right on Gooding Blvd. The Orange Library is ½ mile on the right.

This will be a MEMBERS-ONLY, BROWN-BAG LUNCH WORKSHOP MEETING on organizational issues, activities and strategies. The input you provide here will be utilized by the Board at its retreat in November.

Cost includes meeting, continental breakfast and distribution material. Bring your own lunch. There are numerous take-out food places (Panera, Skyline Chili, Subway, etc.) south of the library near Wal-Mart.

Calendar of Events/Meetings

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

October 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Akron Local Meeting</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Akron Metro RTA Transit Center, 631 S. Broadway St., Akron</td>
<td>Paul Woodring 301-580-4536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Youngstown Local Meeting</td>
<td>12:00 noon</td>
<td>4th Floor, The Youngstown Club, 201 E. Commerce St., Youngstown</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cleveland Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>10th Floor Conference Rm, City Club Bldg, 850 Euclid, Cleveland</td>
<td>Larry Robertson 614-459-0359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Columbus Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Grandview Public Library 1685 W. First Ave., Grandview</td>
<td>Bill Gill 419-536-1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Toledo Local Meeting</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Toledo Amtrak Station, Dr. MLK Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave., Toledo</td>
<td>NOPRA 419-241-9155 ext.117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Passenger Rail Forum</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>The Toledo Club, 4th Floor, 235 14th St., Toledo</td>
<td>Beau Tuke <a href="mailto:beautuke@yahoo.com">beautuke@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Cincinnati RISP Meeting</td>
<td>5:00 pm</td>
<td>See meeting notice at top of this page for details Cincinnati</td>
<td>Ken Prendergast 216-288-4883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>All Aboard Ohio Fall Meeting/Workshop</td>
<td>9:30 am</td>
<td>Orange Public Library, 7171 Gooding Blvd., Delaware</td>
<td></td>
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November 2012

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<td>Bill Gill 419-536-1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cincinnati Local Meeting</td>
<td>6:30 pm</td>
<td>CUT, Tower “A”, 1301 Western Ave., Cincinnati</td>
<td>Beau Tuke <a href="mailto:beautuke@yahoo.com">beautuke@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

December 2012

All Aboard Ohio local meetings are tentatively scheduled as follows, see the October listings (above) for meeting location, time and contact: