



from the
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

Vol. 24, No. 1  Jan., 1990

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News from the National Association of Railroad Passengers (ISSN 0739-3490), is published monthly except November by NARP, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002. 202/546-1550. Membership dues are \$20/year (\$10 under 21 or over 65) of which \$5 is for a subscription to NARP News. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC.

Postmaster: send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers, 236 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Suite 603, Washington, DC 20002.

(This has news through Feb. 1. Vol. 23, No. 11 was mailed Jan. 16.)

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Wisconsin's First Amtrak Venture

"ENVIRONMENTALIST" PRESIDENT'S BUDGET KILLS AMTRAK, SLASHES TRANSIT, LAVISHES \$'S ON AVIATION

President Bush's budget for Fiscal Year 1991 (which starts Oct. 1, 1990) has a 17% increase for aviation, cuts mass transit 20%, and gives nothing to Amtrak and the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, whose FY '90 appropriations were \$605 mill. and \$24 mill., respectively. The budget hurts the most environmentally sound and energy-efficient modes. (Details on page 4.)

MILWAUKEE MAYOR SAYS IT ALL!

Mayor John O. Norquist's July 24 reply to a June 27 letter from Rep. Frank R. Wolf (R-VA): "I commend your concern for our nation's infrastructure. However, I cannot support your bill [H.R. 961, the Gridlock Relief for Interstates Program (GRIP)] which would provide funding to expand the capacity of the Interstate system.

"America's cities do have a traffic congestion problem, but I do not believe more interstates or expanded interstates will help. The solution to the problem is substantially improved transit. Long ago, Europe and Canada recognized a roads-only approach is counter-productive.

"The interstate system, and those individuals responsible for building it, broke up urban neighborhoods, demolished our residential tax base, spurred the movement of industry from within our borders, put more suburbs and exurbs on the map, fouled the nation's air, and created the gridlock you are concerned about.

"I am fully aware of the I-system's limitations. I would prefer that we turn to public transit and conservation alternatives than to the rescue of the Interstate system. I believe, that in the long run, it would be a much wiser investment. Gasoline tax revenues should be used to build up transit systems and the nation's passenger rail routes. Only then will we see relief from gridlock."

[Editor's note: In 1982, Canada had 77 transit trips per capita, Belgium 85, Great Britain 114, and the U.S. only 28. *Transportation Quarterly*, July 1988.]

Fast Transformation from "Anti-Rail" State

Fast Ridership Increase

Wisconsin's first-ever Amtrak "403b" service began Oct. 29: 2 new Chicago-Milwaukee round-trips for a total of 6—including the long-distance "Empire Builder"—the most in over 10 years and twice the level in early 1984. (403b is the part of the Amtrak law which allows state/Amtrak funding of added services supported by an adequate marketing study.) Gov. Tommy Thompson (R-WI) and Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist (D) get special credit for the new service.

Ridership has risen nicely, as in other corridors where frequency was improved (see chart). Also impressive was the promptness of the increase: Chicago-Milwaukee ridership in Nov. '89 was 39% higher than a year earlier, whereas the Nov. '88 level was only 9% above that for Nov. '87.

In light of Amtrak's equipment shortage, it is lucky this expansion required no additional rolling stock; just better utilization of the 2 train sets already assigned, plus financial support from both Wisconsin (\$500,000) and Illinois (\$175,000) for a 28-month trial period; Amtrak's share of new-service costs will be around \$500,000.

After an up-and-down service history, we hope the latest improvements put this route on a positive trend for good.

Three Corridors' Ridership/Frequencies*

	San Diego- Los Angeles	San Francisco- Bakersfield	Chicago Milwaukee**
CY 1975	355,631 / 3	63,040 / 1	248,904 / 4
FY 1982	1,190,287 / 7	181,074 / 2	142,350 / 2
FY 1989	1,693,786 / 8	362,719 / 2	196,805 / 3
1975-82 change	+235% / +133%	+187% / +100%	-42% / -25%
1982-89 change	+42% / +14%	+100% / 0%	+38% / +50%

* Frequencies = round-trips (i.e., 3 means 3 northbound plus 3 southbound trains)

** Excludes long-distance trains also using this line.

CY = Calendar Year FY = Fiscal Year (Starts Oct. 1)

A Frequency Change Usually Means a Bigger Change in Ridership!



—photo by Sharon Mahoney

New "Hiawatha Service" is officially inaugurated with a banner-breaking ceremony at Chicago Union Station Oct. 30. Standing on the locomotive (from left) are William S. Norman, Amtrak Executive Vice President; Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson; Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist.

Certainly an 85-mile corridor linking 2 metro areas with a combined population of over 7 million deserves nothing less.

In 1959, there were 35 Chicago-Milwaukee round trips a day on 3 different railroads and routes. In Nov. '71, Amtrak had 7 round trips on one route; this declined to 3 by Oct., '81—and rose to 4 in Aug. '84. In recent years, Amtrak also experimented with schedules and introduced discount fares but maintained further improvements required some state support.

The Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers (WisARP) worked long and hard to increase service, but, as long as the anti-rail administration of Gov. Anthony Earl (D) was in power, state funding seemed impossible.

His DOT Sec., Lowell Jackson, thought trains were only for business persons and the affluent and therefore not deserving of state support. (Wonder if he ever rode Amtrak in Wisconsin and looked at the passengers!) He ignored WisARP's pro-rail "level playing field" arguments and did not acknowledge that better service could coax passengers out of their autos.

MAYOR NORQUIST: AMTRAK 'VERY VALUABLE'

"(In Milwaukee) it's not just a question of highways or airport runways—we have a multiple transportation need . . . We have a transit system, and we also have a very valuable passenger railroad connection between downtown Chicago and downtown Milwaukee."

—Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist at Oct. 12 ceremony signing "Hiawatha Service" agreement with Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson (R)

Language in the state constitution was also cited as prohibiting train "subsidies," though other states with similar laws fund 403b trains by defining it as "purchase of service."

In 1986, Tommy Thompson (R) was elected governor of Wisconsin. His administration was willing to talk with WisARP. In fact, Ronald Fiedler in 1988 became the first

WISCONSIN GOV. THOMPSON AND HALEY BARBOUR JOIN AMTRAK BOARD

Pres. Bush on Jan. 3 announced his intention to nominate Gov. Tommy G. Thompson (R) to a 4-year term on Amtrak's Board of Directors; Thompson is a consultant to the Board pending Senate confirmation. In a move not requiring Senate action, Transp. Sec. Samuel K. Skinner on Dec. 7 named Haley R. Barbour, commentator, attorney and prominent Republican, to the Amtrak Board position formerly held by Ralph Kerchum of Oakland, CA.

Thompson was born in 1941 in Elroy, WI and received his B.A. from the U. of Wisconsin in 1963 and an L.L.D. in 1966. Until 1986, he was an Assemblyman in the Wisconsin State Legislature. Thompson replaces former Indiana Gov. Robert D. Orr (R)—now ambassador to Singapore—whose term expired in July '89. (The law reserves one space on the Amtrak Board for a sitting governor.)

Barbour is a Mississippi native and partner in the law firm of Henry, Barbour & DeCell in Yazoo City, MS, and Washington. He was senior advisor for the Bush-Quayle 1988 campaign. He received his B.S. from Belhaven College in Jackson, MS, and his J.D. in 1973 from the University of Mississippi School of Law.

Barbour told NARP Jan. 24 that he had spent the past few weeks preparing for his new position; he said his predecessors obviously have done an excellent job reducing the operating subsidy. He hopes to help Amtrak continue to "close the gap and improve the service."

THOMPSON TO PUSH MORE MIDWEST AMTRAK SERVICE

"Gov. Tommy Thompson says he hopes to be able to make Amtrak passenger rail service more available in Wisconsin and the Midwest through his appointment last week to the Amtrak Board of Directors. 'It's an opportunity for us to really get something for Midwestern states, including Wisconsin,' Thompson said in an interview. 'I want to make darn sure that Wisconsin is in line' to take advantage of Amtrak improvements, which may include lightrail and high speed trains, Thompson said. 'We've already been very, very successful' in increasing ridership between Chicago and Milwaukee, Thompson said. 'We want to build upon those successes.'"

—Wisconsin State Journal, Jan. 8

Wisconsin DOT secretary to address a WisARP meeting.

WisDOT became directly active in rail passenger issues for the first time in 1988 when there was talk of rerouting the "Empire Builder" off Soo Line's ex-Milwaukee Road mainline due to bad track. The crisis was averted, but it allowed DOT, WisARP, Amtrak, Soo Line, Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist (D), Sen. Robert Kasten (R-WI) and others the chance to form important new avenues of contact.

A year ago the events leading toward 403b service began accelerating. In Jan. '89, Mayor Norquist, long a supporter of balanced transportation, formally asked Gov. Thompson to

LAPRELLE NAMED TO NARP BOARD

The NARP Executive Committee on Oct. 3 named Robert H. LaPrelle of Richardson, TX (near Dallas) to the NARP Board of Directors, succeeding Griff Hubbard of Longview, TX, who resigned.

study funding of 2 more round trips; Thompson announced his support for the trips in May and DOT requested a line in the budget for them. The legislature approved and Thompson signed the budget into law in July. The City of Milwaukee agreed to market the new service, to be named "Hiawatha Service" after the streamliners that once followed that route. Amtrak offered to send some of the new Horizon fleet cars to increase the new service's marketability, partially replacing 30-year-old bilevel equipment.

The service began Oct. 29—only 10 months after Norquist set the ball rolling. Inaugural ceremonies were held the next day. Thompson, Norquist, Fiedler, Amtrak Exec. Vice Pres. William S. Norman, WisARP Pres. John Parkyn and others rode the train and spoke at ceremonies at Chicago, Sturtevant and Milwaukee.

Even with the recently-added trains, however, passengers from Milwaukee cannot connect at Chicago to the Toronto train 6 days a week, or to the first Springfield and Detroit departures (6 and 3 days, respectively), and have layovers of over 2 hours connecting to 8 other trains (including those departing between 5 and 6 PM, which require longer waits than before the new trains were added).

Clearly, more trains are needed—probably hourly service. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Watch out! Amtrak service is still thrice-weekly Los Angeles-San Antonio, contrary to what is shown in Amtrak's Jan. 20 "Eagle" timetable. Effective Apr. 1, these trains will operate earlier: "Capitol Ltd." by 75 mins. west, 100 mins. east; "Silver Star" 60 mins. south, 34 mins. north; "Palmetto" 45 mins. north; and "Gulf Breeze" 10 mins. south (Montgomery-Mobile only).

Also Apr. 1, Amtrak's weekday New York-Harrisburg "Valley Forge" will bypass downtown Philadelphia, saving 40 mins. west, 28 mins. east (dpt. Harrisburg 6:05, not 5:35 AM)!

Princess Tours' "California Sun Express" begins daily operation April 1, offering luxury daylight parlor car service Oakland-San Luis Obispo-Los Angeles. Ex-Milwaukee Road Super Domes will be attached to the rear of Amtrak's "Coast Starlight". Fares are \$179 one-way (no stopovers at San Luis Obispo), or \$99.50 with shorter segment. More information: 1-800-835-8907.

Yonkers, NY will become an Amtrak stop for Empire Corridor trains effective April 1, when the next timetable change takes place. Amtrak will use the newly-renovated Metro-North station in Yonkers. "Adirondack" will stop in St-Lambert, PQ, an attractive, staffed station (useful for passengers connecting from VIA's "Ocean/Chaleur").

Amtrak inaugurated one southbound Metroliner (#201) from Downingtown-Malvern-Paoli-Ardmore to Washington Oct. 29, shown in the NE Corridor timetable, not the national.

Port Authority of NY/NJ ferry service began Oct. 16 between Hoboken Rail Terminal (Track 15) and Battery Park in Manhattan. Ferries run every 10 minutes weekdays 7 am-10 am and 4 pm-7 pm. Fare is \$2.00 one way, \$16.00 ten trips. Joint ferry-New Jersey Transit rail tickets available.

New York MTA 63rd St. subway extension (B, Q, JFK) opened Oct. 29 with three new stations, linking Manhattan, Roosevelt Island, Queens.

"Wheels of Progress"

Major rail passenger improvements planned to enter service in 1990-91, and the dates of planned openings (if available).

1990

- Jan. 8—After a long struggle with CSX, Tri-Rail midday Miami-West Palm Beach round-trip.
- Jan. 20—Chicago-San Antonio/Houston "Eagle" changes from thrice-weekly to daily.
- Apr. 1—Richmond, VA-Atlantic City train gives Washington-Richmond segment its 6th daily Amtrak round-trip
- Apr. 2—Los Angeles-San Juan Capistrano rush-hour commuter train (Orange County pays, Amtrak operates).
- Spring—New Haven-Old Saybrook commuter trains (4+ round-trips; Connecticut pays, Amtrak operates).
- Spring—Charlotte-Raleigh-New York daytime train (combines with existing "Palmetto" New York-Rocky Mount), jointly funded by North Carolina and Amtrak.
- Spring—Amtrak hopes to extend Atlantic City-Phila. trains to Philadelphia International Airport.
- July—San Diego Bayside line, the 2nd light rail link between the Amtrak station and 12th & Imperial.
- July 17—Los Angeles-Long Beach light rail (Blue Line) with temporary terminals—12th & Flower (L.A. Convention Center) and Anaheim St. & Long Beach Blvd. in Long Beach.
- Sep. 22—Silver Spring-Wheaton, MD 3.3-mile heavy-rail segment (part of Washington Metro's Red Line).
- Oct. 31—San Jose light rail extension to Alma Ave.
- Dec. 1—Washington Gallery Place-U St. NW 1.5-mile heavy-rail segment (part of Green Line).
- "Late"—Chicago Southwest (Midway) Line.

1991

- "Early"—West Side Connection permits Amtrak to consolidate all New York City service (including Empire Corridor) at Penn Station. Albany-Philadelphia, Syracuse-Miami, etc., passengers no longer have to change stations!
- "Early"—Alexandria, VA King St. (adjacent to Amtrak station)-Van Dorn St. (3.8-mile Yellow Line segment).
- "Early"—Los Angeles Blue Line light rail extension into downtown Long Beach.
- "Mid"—New San Diego light rail terminal at Amtrak/Santa Fe depot.
- Aug.—San Jose light rail extension to S. San Jose.
- "Fall"—Northern Virginia commuter trains (Manassas/Fredericksburg to Alexandria or Washington; Northern Virginia Transp. Commsn. pays, Amtrak operates).
- Nov.—Caltrain extension to San Jose Alma Ave.
- "Late"—Washington L'Enfant Plaza-Anacostia 2.9-mile heavy-rail segment, includes tunnel under Anacostia River (part of Green Line).
- "Late"—Dallas-Irving commuter train, 10 miles.
- "Late"—Los Angeles Blue Line light rail extension to 7th & Flower, shared station with Metro Red Line heavy rail to open in 1993.

(Still no groundbreaking scheduled for a high speed project. Promoters hope to begin Tampa-Miami service in 1995; Ft. Worth-Dallas-Houston and Las Vegas-Southern California, 1998. The Texas consortium's William Agee says "we think an enlightened federal government will allocate some funds" to his project. *Financial World*, Dec. 12.) ■

Amtrak Travel: 17% Above Private-Sector 1970!

Travel on Amtrak as measured in passenger-miles (PMs—a PM is one passenger carried one mile) in Fiscal Year 1989 (which ended Sep. 30, 1989) was 5.858 billion, which was:

- the 7th straight increase since 1982's 4.172 bill.;
- the 4th straight record year for Amtrak; and
- 17% above the 4.999 bill. private railroads generated on a much larger system in 1970, their last full year of operation.

[Jan. '88 News put the 1970 figure at 6.179 bill. PMs, but that was developed by the Assn. of American Railroads from Interstate Commerce Commission reports that lumped commuters not on multi-ride tickets together with intercity riders. 4.999 bill. is our best estimate of 1970 *intercity* PMs.]

'89 also saw the 8th straight rise in Amtrak's revenues-to-operating-costs ratio: it was 72%, vs. 48% in FY '80 and '81. 72% comes from dividing commercial revenues of \$1.27 bill. by costs of \$1.77 bill. (The cost figure excludes \$166 mill. in depreciation.)

Reflecting strong demand for rail travel, Amtrak's fares on average rose almost twice as fast as the consumer price index from FY '81 to '89 (63% vs. 37%) while PM's rose 23%.

Amtrak's Jan. 8 release on its FY '89 results stimulated many calls to the NARP office from U.S. and Canadian reporters and many articles, including those in *The New York Times* Jan. 9, 14, and 16; *The New York Daily News* Jan. 21; and *The Christian Science Monitor* Jan. 24. NARP developed the 17%-over-1970 statistic noted above; it was first reported in *The Times* Jan. 9 and was attributed to NARP. We also tell reporters the sharp fare increases limit Amtrak's ability to relieve airport and highway gridlock and to help in the fight for cleaner air, but management probably has no choice given the limited supply of rolling stock and the White House's attitude. ■

Kinder and Gentler Zero?

There it was again! A transportation secretary praising Amtrak Pres. W. Graham Claytor Jr. to the skies, this time with a graph showing 7 straight years of Amtrak passenger-mileage increases (see separate story), and proposing no funding for Amtrak.

He also proposed big transit funding cuts and aviation increases, and one small but interesting initiative: \$9.6 mill. (including \$3.5 mill. for the Army Corps of Engineers) to study whether the U.S. should have its own public/private magnetic levitation development program and which type maglev would be best. (Pres. Bush also proposed increasing Defense Dept. budget authority from the present \$301.6 bill. to \$306.9 bill.)

Amtrak

Sec. of Transp. Samuel Skinner called Amtrak "an outstanding operation. More people are riding Amtrak than ever before. Amtrak expects to become self-sufficient sometime in this decade. Graham Claytor is truly one of the most outstanding executives that ever served in government. We are delighted to support Amtrak in its move towards self-sufficiency."

Whoa!! Zero funding is not "support"! Amtrak's FY '89 operating subsidy was \$554 mill. Amtrak will be hard-pressed to live within the \$519 mill. Congress earmarked for this year's operations. (The law prohibits Amtrak from using capital funds to cover additional operating subsidy needs.)

Asked how Amtrak could become self-sufficient without subsidies, Skinner said "you have to serve areas that are

President Bush's Proposed FY 1991 Transportation Budget

Administration	NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY (Millions)		
	FY '91	FY '90*	Change
Federal Aviation	\$ 8,578	\$ 7,366	+ 16.5%
U.S. Coast Guard	\$ 3,393	\$ 3,065	+ 10.7%
Nat. Highway Traffic Safety	\$ 243	\$ 229	+ 6.1%
Federal Highway	\$14,221	\$15,278	- 6.9%
Urban Mass Transportation	\$ 2,560	\$ 3,193	- 19.8%
Federal Railroad	\$ 70	\$ 710	- 90.1%
Amtrak & N.E. Corridor	0	\$ 629**	-100.0%

*Enacted **Appropriation

economical to serve" and price the services "optimally." He suggested raising Washington-New York fares, given the "convenience" advantage he said trains enjoy over planes.

He said commuter authorities should pay Amtrak more to use the Northeast Corridor. [Ed.: Amtrak's FY '89 Northeast Corridor operating subsidy was about \$250 mill.—some 46% of Amtrak's total operating subsidy. His "commuters-should-pay-more" reference would cover only \$33 mill. of that.]

Amtrak's corporate goal is to cover operating costs in 10 years. Federal Rail Administrator Gil Carmichael says "I'm trying to sell [Sec. Skinner] on a self-sufficiency program for the year 2000 . . . with declining subsidies" (*Railway Age*, Jan.).

Transit

Pres. Bush deserves some credit for increasing his transit request 64% (almost \$1 bill.) above Pres. Reagan's FY '90 request. But the Bush request is 20% below the finally-approved FY '90 level. Bush calls himself an "environmentalist" and better transit is crucial to reducing growth in highway vehicles-miles-traveled, which in turn is crucial to bringing Americans the cleaner air they want.

Furthermore, transit authority (and Amtrak) costs are expected to rise in the near future to comply with the Bush-supported Americans with Disabilities Act.

Aviation

In return for higher spending levels, the administration seeks to make non-governmental airways users pay their full costs, ending a roughly \$1 bill. a year general-taxpayer subsidy to aviation. Bush would increase the passenger ticket tax (from 8% to 10%) and other user fees.

Mr. Skinner talked of a big "latent demand" for air travel, neglecting "latent costs" likely to be reflected in future air fares (ever-tightening aircraft safety standards, an aging aircraft fleet becoming more costly to maintain, the need to train more new pilots at airline rather than Defense Dept. expense). Mr. Skinner also ignored opportunities for improving Amtrak service to attract more people now flying (and to lower Amtrak's operating subsidy).

What You Can Do

Tell your legislators you favor full funding of Amtrak (\$684 mill.) and transit (at least \$4 bill.). Give Pres. Bush credit for Mr. Skinner's kind words about Amtrak, and for seeking more for transit than "Reagan/Bush" sought last year, but suggest these things indicate awareness within the administration that its budget needs modification by Congress. ■