



# NARPnews

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U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ANTHONY FOXX AT NARP'S CAPITOL HILL RECEPTION

## North Dakota's Cramer Receives Golden Spike Award

NARP presented Representative Kevin Cramer of North Dakota with the prestigious Golden Spike Award for his strong support of passenger trains and transit, both locally and across the U.S. Only having been in office since January 2013, Cramer has already played an outsized role in keeping America's trains on track. The North Dakota native helped shine a spotlight on the oil-by-rail freight train congestion that was causing serious delays to Amtrak's Empire Builder, which serves as a critical transportation connection to tens of thousands of North Dakotans.

"I am honored to receive such a prestigious award," said Representative Cramer. "The Golden Spike carries a rich history in our nation and state. North Dakota is in the eye of the storm as growing demand for rail to move industrial products, commodities and the most precious cargo, people, is highlighting safety concerns like never before. I join my colleagues in insisting on transparency as the industry and the government work together to ensure safety is the highest priority on the tracks."

## Foxx to NARP Members: "You're Doing a Great Job!"

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx attended NARP's 2014 Capitol Hill Reception to honor the advocacy work of NARP Council Members, and promote the Obama Administration's plan for improving and expanding America's national train network.

"You can literally go around this country and see the impact of NARP. You can see it in how many people are coming into train stations today," said the Secretary. "Last year Amtrak carried nearly 32 million passengers, setting its 10th ridership record in eleven years. So if anybody doesn't think folks want to get on the train these days, take a look at those statistics—it proves itself. You guys are doing a great job of getting the word out and helping the country understand that rail is part of our national transportation vision."

"Now, we have some important work ahead of us. You know that if we fail to do what we need to do to push this country even further, to expand on our passenger rail vision, that this kind of thing won't happen as much in this country, we won't have the resources and we won't have the ability to do it. And that would



Representative Kevin Cramer (R-ND), winner of the NARP 2014 Golden Spike Award, with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx at the NARP Capitol Hill reception.

be a problem because over the next 35 years America will have another 100 million people by 2050. And so the traffic jams, like those that exist between Durham and Raleigh, will happen all over the country. But rail travel times can be consistent and they can be reliable. And that's what we need to help our country understand."

The DOT head's visit was well timed, as earlier that day he had sent the GROW AMERICA Act—or Generating Renewal, Opportunity, *(continued on page 2)*

**NEW MEMBER  
BENEFIT**

**AVIS**

NARP members receive up to 25% off on most car rentals at AVIS.\* You can now claim your discount by visiting [www.avis.com/narp](http://www.avis.com/narp).

\*For dues-paying members only. Not a dues-paying member yet? Consider joining and get all of the NARP member benefits. Visit [www.narprail.org/join](http://www.narprail.org/join)

# Legislative Update

The debate over the future of America's transportation network has intensified this month, with three very different proposals advancing through Congress. The Obama Administration sent the GROW AMERICA Act (or Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America Act) to Congress on April 29th. The bill provides passenger trains with \$19 billion over four years, which would allow Amtrak and state DOTs to make critically-needed investments in the national network and equipment. Just as importantly, it includes rail in a unified surface transportation fund, providing trains with a predictable, dedicated funding source, an essential element for driving the next generation of rail development and safety.

The GROW AMERICA Act relies on \$150 billion in revenue that would come from corporate tax reform. That is an idea with bipartisan support, and Representative David Camp (R-MI), Chairman of the powerful House Committee on Ways and Means, has proposed something very similar.

Meanwhile, appropriators in the Republican-controlled House, are focusing on

the Fiscal Year 2015 budget, and have proposed preserving highway funding by making cuts to transit and intercity rail. The Appropriations Committee on Transportation & Housing moved a bill on May 21 that would provide \$340 million for Amtrak operations (the same as enacted in fiscal year 2014), and \$850 million for capital grants and debt service (a \$200 million reduction from FY 2014).

The Senate, meanwhile, has sidestepped the question of a passenger rail authorization entirely. The Environmental & Public Works Committee released a surface transportation reauthorization that maintains the status quo. With the Highway Trust Fund set to go bankrupt before September, Senate leadership is intent on moving the bill this summer, and they are avoiding anything that could be deemed as too big of a change. NARP is working with its members to educate Members of Congress—in both bodies and from both parties—on the absolute necessity of robust investment in passenger trains. Join NARP in telling your representative that fast, frequent and dependable trains are the best, most cost efficient way to provide the mobility that supports America's quality of life!

## In Memoriam: James Oberstar, Legendary Passenger Rail Advocate



Photo by StarTribune

James Oberstar, former U.S. congressman from Minnesota and a legendary figure in passenger train advocacy, passed away May 3 at the age of 79.

NARP honored Oberstar with our Golden Spike Award in 2005, for his staunch defense of Amtrak and the national network.

"Representative Oberstar has one of Capitol Hill's most extensive records in support of a modern transportation system," said then-Chairman George Chilson during the 2005 NARP Board Meeting in Minnesota. "He has worked tirelessly both in defending Amtrak and in promoting development of world-class high speed rail."

### Foxx from P1

and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America—to Congress. [Read "Legislative Update" for more on the GROW AMERICA Act]

"[T]oday our department sent a bill [to Congress] that will advance the conversation about how we're going to tackle these problems," Foxx told the audience. "It increases the level of federal investment in our rail system, and puts rail on par with other surface transportation modes."

The Secretary also paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of Ross Capon, who was a guest of honor at the reception.

"I want to acknowledge Ross Capon, and I want to wish him luck as he transitions from NARP President and CEO to NARP President Emeritus," said Secretary Foxx. "He's a great guy and he's done a lot of great things."



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# NARP Members Take to Capitol Hill

On April 29, NARP members took to the halls of Congress for NARP's largest annual advocacy event: NARP's Day on the Hill. Altogether, 80 participants visited al-



Kathleen Stupski, Senator Flake (R-AZ) and George Stupski

most 200 Congressional offices over the course of the day to ask their senators and representatives to act in favor of train passengers everywhere. NARP's Day on the Hill participants pushed three primary policy recommendations: the enactment of mandatory, multi-year funding of at least \$5 billion

per year over the next four years for the national passenger rail network; inclusion of a passenger rail account in the Transportation Trust Fund (renamed from the Highway Trust Fund) as part of the multi-year reauthorization of MAP-21 with funding not less than that requested by U.S. DOT; and appropriation of at least \$4,775 million that the U.S. DOT has requested for passenger rail in FY 2015. NARP members told Congressional offices that the American people are already voting for more trains with public use of



Hon. Danny Davis, staff member and Dr. Eugene Thomas, NARP council member, Chicago at NARP Reception



From L, Donald Leap, David Arnold, Rep. Greg Walden (R-2nd, Oregon), Mike Morrison, Andrew Sihler and Art Poole

trains growing far faster than population, air or road travel. In FY 2013, Amtrak carried 31.6 million passengers – the tenth year of record ridership in the last 11 years. Amtrak covered 89% of operating costs with non-federal dollars and is projecting it will reach 91% by FY 2015. NARP informed offices that all forms of transportation enjoy some form of federal support, and Amtrak has proven to be a conscientious steward of taxpayer dollars.



**Dennis Lytton** @DennisLytton - Apr 29

Thank you @nancyPelosi & Adela Amador for mtg with @narprail & continuing to support @Amtrak @CaHSRA & trains in America! #narprdayonthehill

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Day on the Hill participants reinforced the messages they took to Congress by tweeting at their representatives and Senators

## NARP Board Unanimously Pledges to Support Study to Return Passenger Trains Between New Orleans & Florida

NARP has consistently endorsed the re-introduction of passenger rail service along the southern route linking New Orleans, Louisiana to Orlando, Florida, which we view as vital to promoting economic development across the southeastern U.S. So we're pleased to report that, through the excellent work of Council Representatives Christina Anderson and Paul Nelson, NARP was able to team up with the Southern Rail Commis-

sion which has made application to the Federal Railway Administration for the funding of a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to perform a feasibility study to restore this missing link. On April 30, the freshly elected NARP Board of Directors strongly endorsed the Commission's application for the TIGER grant, pledging to assist the Commission with monetary or "in-kind" contribu-

tions. These contributions include staff communication and outreach, administrative support for public meetings, and assisting the Commission with the required "matching funds" necessary to successfully procure the federal funding. This resolution is just the first step, and NARP will keep you apprised of opportunities to get involved and support this critical campaign.

# All Aboard the Cannon Ball for a Night to Remember

Cheers to one of the most successful and exciting years at NARP! At this year's Spring Council Meeting in DC, Heritage Circle and Silver Rail Society members gathered on the Cannon Ball, a private rail car, to commemorate the accomplishments made possible by NARP members' ongoing grass roots efforts around the country. Valerie Stillman, owner and operator of the Cannon Ball, and George Chilson, former NARP chairman, graciously



Former NARP Chairman George Chilson and Valerie Stillman, Owner of the Cannon Ball

hosted the event and were gratified by the passion and dedication shown by the attendees. Eyes lit up as members were welcomed on board, and people enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvres aboard the gorgeous private varnish as they got to know one another. This was a diverse crowd, but there was a clear consensus among the group that this country desperately needs a better, more efficient modern national train network. This shared desire is why NARP is so dedicated to accomplishing its mission. It's something that will benefit every American, no matter who you are or where you come from. The party was a success, and every member that attended the celebration walked away satisfied knowing that their contributions of time, talent, and money were making a difference. NARP members are the driving tool that creates results, so we thank all of you for your support.

We appreciate all those that were able to attend, and we look forward to honoring your service and contributions to



NARP Chairman Bob Stewart, Joshua Coran of Talgo, and Rick Hamish of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association

America's passengers again next year. We invite all our members who are interested in becoming Heritage Circle and/or Silver Rail Society members to please contact Logan McLeod, Director of Resource Development, at the DC office. NARP is already looking ahead to next year's celebration, and we hope to see some new faces on board.

## NARP National Meeting a Great Success

NARP's 2014 Spring Council meeting took place in Silver Spring, Maryland on April 28-30, featuring a Board of Directors election. Robert Stewart was successfully reelected as Chairman. Bruce Becker of New York, Ken Briers of Washington, DC, George Chilson of California, John DeLora of Michigan, Rick Harnish of Illinois, Jim Loomis of Hawaii and Dave Randall of Illinois were re-elected to the Board. New faces include James Churchill of Virginia, James Hamre of Washington, Carol Haslett of Ohio, Peter LeCody of Texas, and J. Charles Riecks of West Virginia. Notably, Carol Haslett became the first woman



Left: Mark Murphy, General Manager of Long Distance Services at Amtrak, answering questions after his presentation in Silver Spring; Right: Borden Black, Executive Director of AARRCO, accepting NARP Speaker Award.

elected to the NARP Board since it was reformed in 2008.

Speakers included Mark Murphy, Amtrak's General Manager of Long Distance Services; Frances Bourne, Amtrak's Chief of Federal Relations; Tim Hoeffner, the Director of the Department of Rail within the Michigan Department of Transportation, and Chair of the Midwest Intercity Passenger Rail Commission; and Borden Black, the Executive Director of the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners. NARP presented each speaker with an award to thank them for their contributions to the meeting.

## NARP AT NATIONAL TRAIN DAY

*A young passenger enjoying a NARP brochure on the Fillmore & Western's 1928 parlor car "Powhatan" on National Train Day. Photo by Ryan Stern*



National Train Day on Saturday, May 10 brought out the train-hugger in everyone: from diehard fans to those stepping on a train for the first time. Event participants enjoyed every kind of train-related activity, from boarding excursion trains and equipment displays to meeting their favorite talking train, Chuggington.

NARP volunteers recruited new passenger train advocates in over 40 communities nation-wide. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers, and everyone else who joined the celebrations, Amtrak reported that the seventh annual National Train Day was the biggest one yet. With this kind of turnout, no one can deny the theme of this year's event: Trains matter.

## Longview Unveils Restored Station on National Train Day



*Restored Longview Station. Photo by Bill Pollard*

**By Bill Pollard, NARP Council Member**

A ribbon cutting ceremony on National Train Day marked the reopening of the Longview Texas train station, now the Longview Transportation Center. Amtrak

facilities have moved from a small annex added in 1974 and now occupy the main part of the building. One of the busiest Amtrak stations in Texas, Longview serves as the transfer point for Houston and Shreveport Thruway buses.

The City of Longview purchased the station from Union Pacific in 2009, carefully restoring historic architectural details during the conversion into a multimodal transportation center. The project was funded by a \$2.17 million Transportation Enhancement Grant with \$450,000 in local matching funds. Amtrak, Longview Transit and a police substation are located in the depot,

and Greyhound's bus station is conveniently located across the street.

As part of the ceremony, the City of Longview and the Texas Eagle Marketing & Performance Organization (TEMPO) unveiled four plaques honoring people who were instrumental in advancing the need for station restoration: Amtrak agent Griff Hubbard, community activists Natalie and Mendy Rabicoff, retired Union Pacific official Bob Tippit, and Passenger Rail Task Force chairman Tim Vaughn. The newly renovated structure was originally opened in May 1940, serving Missouri Pacific and Texas & Pacific railroads.

## NATIONAL TRAIN DAY IN TUCSON

**By George Stupski, NARP Council Member**

NARP members in Arizona got organized for National Train Day. In Tucson, member Rodney Pratt, with lots of help from Ken Karrels, Earl Van Swearingen, Ted Willis and Armand Lapotin, hosted Train Day at the Amtrak Depot. NARP Acting President Larry Scott was there as well, with NARP founder Anthony Haswell present to give a talk about the history of Amtrak.

The Southern Arizona Transportation Museum, led by Ken Karrels, had steam engine #1673 ready to board. There was a table of NARP information, model



*NARP members Earl Van Swearingen, Ted Willis, Rodney Pratt and Armand Lapotin at National Train Day in Tucson*

trains, a diesel simulator, and free goodies from Amtrak and Operation Life-saver. There were bilingual railroad exhibits as well as exhibits in the Amtrak

lobby, and an open gift store. Ken Karrels also had a movie for parents and kids, and free rides on a tractor-pulled kid-sized train.

Dozens of visitors signed up for Associate Memberships, and a few current NARP members came by to introduce themselves. The local Amtrak agent stayed all day. Several of the participants are also members of the Arizona Rail Passenger Association (ARPA).

Farther north, Council member George Stupski and wife, Kathleen, had a table at the Flagstaff Train Day event, with Mayor Jerry Nabours on hand to give them a nice introduction to the crowd.

WEB EXCLUSIVE

# Hickenlooper Signs Colorado on to Chief Effort

Colorado has officially joined Kansas and New Mexico in the fight to save the Southwest Chief. On May 14, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper signed a bill to create a commission that will work to preserve the route that currently runs through Southern Colorado – and add a stop in Pueblo. According to Governor Hickenlooper, the nine-member commission will partner with state and local officials in New Mex-

ico and Kansas, as well as Burlington Northern Santa Fe, to come up with a solution for carrying out the track upgrades and maintenance necessary to keep the train running. Pueblo is not on the current route, and adding service would extend the train's schedule by roughly an hour. "This bill," said Governor Hickenlooper, "allows us to contemplate a full future for rail in Southern Colorado."

## A Note from Larry Scott, Acting President of NARP

I recently had the opportunity to meet several NARP members in Tucson at National Train Day. The first thing that many of them mentioned to me was their dissatisfaction with Amtrak's recent announcements to reduce the services on long-distance trains.

As many of you know, amenities such as wine and cheese receptions, complimentary champagne and non-alcoholic cider, complimentary newspapers, amenity kits, flowers and vases on dining car tables, and Astor Chocolate Squares have been or will soon be discontinued on certain trains.

I agree with our concerned members. I believe that anyone who pays for first-class service should receive a first-class experience. Just because airlines are cutting back on the services they offer passengers doesn't mean trains should follow suit. The repercussions will not

only affect first-class passengers, but all passengers. This kind of mentality poses a threat to every class of service.

I want to ensure that our members have an avenue to express their agreement or disagreement with the scale back of amenities. Please send your written comments to [acac@amtrak.com](mailto:acac@amtrak.com) or the mailing address listed below and your comments will be reviewed by both NARP and the Amtrak Customer Advisory Council. We will be monitoring Amtrak's response.

*--Larry Scott, Acting President, National Association of Railroad Passengers*

Mail comments to:  
[acac@amtrak.com](mailto:acac@amtrak.com) or  
ACAC, c/o NARP  
505 Capitol Court NE, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20002

## Amtrak to Offer Daily Service to Rockford

Another city celebrates restored passenger train service – this time in Rockford, Illinois. Beginning in 2015, Amtrak will offer daily service between Rockford and Chicago for the first time since 1981. Governor Pat Quinn of Illinois announced on April 10 that the state will invest \$223 million to introduce the service, which is projected to create hundreds of jobs. "Next year, rail service between Rockford and Chicago will finally be a reality," Governor Quinn said. "This funding and a new route are the final pieces of the puzzle to restart this critical rail service, which has been dormant for more than three decades. This is just the beginning – reliable, intercity passenger rail will create jobs and drive economic development in these cities, the region and the state for years to come." (See hotline 857 at [narprail.org](http://narprail.org) for more information.)

## NARP TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

Amtrak and the state of Illinois permit the transport of pets on the Carl Sandburg Train 381 and 382 and Illinois Zephyr Trains 380 and 383 Chicago-Quincy. The six-month Carry-on Pet pilot program (running from May 5, 2014 to November 2, 2014) allows cats and dogs under 20lbs on board for a \$25 fee. See [Amtrak.com/alerts](http://Amtrak.com/alerts) for important details before taking your pet on a trip.

Newark Airport Station AirTrain service will be suspended from May first to July 15 to allow for critical track work on AirTrain. Passengers can utilize a substitute bus service available in both directions between Newark Penn Station and the airport.