

New Long-Distance Cars Unveiled

Amtrak Car Order Employs Hundreds



Ross Capon

This CAF-USA plant in Elmira, NY, empty two years ago, has over 500 workers—mostly building Amtrak’s long-distance cars—and soon will have 570. A Houston light rail car contract is also under way here. The Amtrak order is generating work for 125 vendors in 90 cities and 25 states.

CAF USA, subsidiary of Spanish-based CAF company, is making 130 new cars primarily for Amtrak’s single-level long-distance trains at its Elmira, NY plant. One of each of the four types—baggage, baggage/dorm, sleeper and diner—was unveiled there on Oct. 24.

In an Amtrak release, Board Member Tom Carper said, “The long distance routes represent the most attractive business improvement opportunity for Amtrak and the new equipment will

help us achieve cost reductions, more efficiency, revenue growth and better service.”

The release quoted Chemung County Executive Tom Santulli: “This contract ... is having a significant positive impact on our region’s economy by creating hundreds of much needed manufacturing jobs.” He compared CAF favorably with Sikorsky Aircraft, which leased rather than purchased its Elmira plant, which closed in 2012, eliminating 570 jobs.

Amtrak Pres. Joe Boardman called his company “a major driver in the rebirth of an American rail

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Clockwise from top left: Visitors tour a bag dorm car; bedroom in daytime configuration; dining car.



Top photo: Ross Capon. Bottom two: Robert Stewart

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

All Short-Distance Trains Saved!

Indiana Gov’s Favorable Decision

After months of pressure from the grassroots and from the Crawfordsville and Lafayette mayors, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence (R) announced Oct. 15 that previously appropriated state funds would let the Chicago-Indianapolis *Hoosier State* run another year, with an option for four additional months.

Indiana was the last of 18 states (19

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Anthony Perl Honored for High Speed Rail Scholarship

“Why is it so hard for the United States to get on board with high-speed rail?” Dr. Anthony Perl, professor of urban studies and political science at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC and author of two books on comparative passenger rail policy, addressed this question in speaking to NARP’s Council of Representatives Oct. 20 in Jacksonville, FL.

NARP honored Perl, who in 1976 was our first intern, with our Academic Award, honoring his scholarly efforts to broaden public understanding of issues impacting North American travelers.

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NARP's Vision for a New Rail Law: Part 3

This continues our report on the policy recommendations the NARP Board would like to see in the next passenger rail reauthorization:

8. Create a new federal program that shares capital and operating costs for new routes crossing state boundaries. Relax current restrictions in the rule requiring states to fund nearly 100% of service under 750 miles. Allow Amtrak and states to partner on mutually beneficial arrangements that increase service.

It is a tribute to the advocacy work of NARP members, train supporters in general, local officials, and the responsiveness of state governments that all services threatened by Section 209 of the 2008 rail law are still running. Nonetheless, Section 209 is an impediment to giving the American people higher-quality mobility for more trips to more places. NARP believes the federal government should become a permanent partner with the states in funding both capital and operating costs—especially where routes cross state lines.

Current law prevents Amtrak from starting any service under 750 miles, even on a pilot basis. Let's dedicate state payments to service expansion instead of returning them to the US Treasury by reducing Amtrak's operating grant.

9. Establish a national program to encourage expansion of intercity bus services in coordination with the national high-performance rail net-

LIBERATE AIRPORT DOLLARS!

NARP believes the next aviation law should permit use of federal airport improvement funds, passenger facility charges and other revenue streams to help plan, construct, and operate train and bus stations at airports.

For starters, the Amtrak/NJT Newark Airport station would get higher and more efficient use if a developer could build at the station without the absurd burden of policing it to restrict use of trains to airline passengers and airport employees.

work.

Even with aggressive expansion of rail service, many communities will need connecting buses to access the rail network. Federal policy should encourage Amtrak and bus operators to work together to establish feeder services similar to those that California has pioneered so successfully.

10. Set a clear policy goal that a segment of 200 mph+ track be in operation by 2025.

NARP remains committed to pushing for funding that will build a world-class high-speed rail line to prove that the concept, demonstrated throughout most of the industrialized world, will work in America.

11. Strengthen the partnership between freight railroads and Amtrak (and other passenger operators) to incentivize the railroads to provide faster transit times, better reliability and more frequent service.

We seek ways to make passenger trains financially attractive to the nation's profit-driven railroad industry. We will work with railroads, the Administration, Amtrak and Congress, to

Anthony Perl

Asked how to advocate for passenger train investment in the face of Tea Party opposition, Perl stated that the Tea Party seems to favor economic development. Therefore, train supporters should emphasize how trains promote economic development. That, indeed, is also the best emphasis to gain the support of the business community.

"I would say investing in modern trains for a more mobile America (NARP's first slogan), not cutting, is the way to grow the economy."

The U.S. adopted some foreign technologies early: cars and jet aircraft (both from Germany). U.S. laggardness in high-speed rail is most evident in our infrastructure, which holds back even the most advanced trains like *Acela* from running at their design speeds.

While we're not running out of oil, the remaining supply is more difficult to extract and thus permanently more expensive, said Perl. Cars and aircraft that can run without oil aren't ready for

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This has news through November 1.
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develop ways that enhance the willingness of railroads to operate more passenger trains over their infrastructure. Federal funding of this effort is in the national interest. ■

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Ken Briers

Dr. Anthony Perl (center) holding "The Fourth NARP Academic Award," with NARP Pres. Ross Capon (L) and Chairman Bob Stewart.

prime time, but electrified rail is.

Aside from greater investment in rail, what remains is to figure out how electrified passenger railroads can share corridors with freight railroads, Perl said. He expressed full support for the incremental improvement approach. ■

Perl, most recently, is co-author with Richard Gilbert of Transport Revolutions: Moving People and Freight Without Oil (available at the NARP Bookstore: www.narprail.org/book).

NARP Council Hears All Aboard Florida Presentation

“All Aboard Florida (AAF) will connect Florida’s key cities in a new way to spark social and economic opportunities,” Florida East Coast Industries’ (FECI) Executive V.P.—Corporate Development Husein Cumber told NARP’s Council of Representatives meeting in Jacksonville on Oct. 19.

He and Eugene Skoropowski, AAF’s Senior Vice-Pres. Passenger Rail Development, briefed NARP on the progress of AAF, an FECI subsidiary, towards creating frequent three-hour service linking downtown Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Orlando International Airport.

The private AAF initiative would be the first new US intercity passenger service to be financed and operated independently. The project is estimated at \$1.5 billion infrastructure plus \$400 million for rolling stock. AAF promises 45,000 construction jobs and 8,000 direct permanent operations jobs.

Nearly 600 million trips a year are made in these markets. For success, AAF needs just a small share of the 55-60 million candidate trips that are potential train users.

The environmental review process for AAF’s Miami-West Palm Beach segment and agreements on the new

Cocoa-Orlando right-of-way are complete. Remaining environmental review is to be finished in early 2014. Miami-West Palm Beach track construction and grade crossing work will start late this year. Many firms are expected to bid on Cocoa-Orlando design-build contracts.

AAF plans “advanced conventional” trains running at up to 79 mph Miami-West Palm Beach, 110 mph to Cocoa and 125 mph to Orlando (over new, dedicated tracks with no grade crossings next to Highway 528), for an overall average speed of 90 mph. ■

Miami Intermodal Center Takes Shape

A major project, 20 years in the making, to bring all of the ground transportation modes serving America’s 7th-largest city together within easy reach of Miami International Airport is finally coming together. The \$1.7 billion Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) will bring together the second-biggest car rental facility in the US, Miami-Dade Transit’s MetroRail and MetroBus, Tri-Rail commuter service, Amtrak and Greyhound, all within a 2-minute rubber-tired “people mover” ride of the airport terminal. Also part of the project are major roadway improvements.

The existing Amtrak terminal is 3.5 miles from the airport. Greyhound, while closer, is not within walking distance. Tri-Rail, a little closer still, requires a bus connection to the airport. Soon, all these services will be at the MIC along with plenty of parking and other airport-related amenities. Indeed, train platforms will be closer to the rental cars than is the airport—just like the MBTA platform at the Providence airport.

The MIC is a quick one-seat rail transit ride to downtown Miami and has an express bus connection to Miami Beach.

The “Miami Central Station” half of the MIC, will have two island platforms (2 tracks each)—one for Tri-Rail and one for Amtrak (which Tri-Rail trains can also use), plus intercity bus bays. Both platforms will be covered by gi-

ant, ultra-modern arched white steel canopies.

Both platforms and the intercity bus terminal will be connected to a overhead walkway that leads directly into the Rental Car Center and the MetroRail and airport people mover terminals. Separate station facilities for Tri-Rail and for Amtrak will be at the south end of the platforms, connected by a walkway. NARP Outreach Director Malcolm Kenton toured the construction site with FDOT representatives on Oct. 22.

FDOT has set aside 1.4 million square feet to lease or sell to a developer for office space, a hotel/conference center, restaurants and/or ancillary retail, which should make the MIC an attractive destination in its own right.

The NW 25th St. grade crossing just north of the new station is a problem for Amtrak’s trains, which are longer than Tri-Rail’s. FDOT is implementing what we called “one economic solution” (August News, p. 4): A run-around road—to be completed in early 2016—will let motorists easily detour to NW 28th Street when the NW 25th Street cross-



Image: FDOT

Rendering of the MIC as it will look after completion late next year. The Rental Car Center is at top (west) and Miami Central Station is at center. Bus terminal at east end (right).

ing gates are down. Electronic displays will direct motorists to the alternate route across the tracks at times when the crossing gates are down. ■



Both photos: Malcolm Kenton



Above: Metrorail station towers over future Amtrak/Tri-Rail station, viewed from the NW 25th St. crossing. Left: Looking north on future Amtrak platform, with escalator to concourse.

NARP IN THE PRESS

NARP Vice President Sean Jeans-Gail's appearance at All Aboard Erie (PA)'s Oct. 5 meeting received mention in the *Erie Times-News* that morning. "Jeans-Gail's presentation will show how federal spending for rail has been mostly flat for decades, while spending for highways and aviation has soared," the *Times-News* editorial points out.

A widely-published Oct. 28 McClatchy News Service article quotes NARP Pres. Ross Capon dismissing the idea that states pay for trains like the *Southwest Chief*: "Someone is always going to be served in the middle of the night. It's a federal responsibility." ■

Become a NARP Leader!

December 1 is the deadline for us to receive—electronically or via USPS—your candidate information statement (CIS) to run to represent your state on NARP's Council of Representatives. The two-year term begins March 1, 2014. Go to www.narprail.org/join-council See also October *NARP News*, page 6. ■

Amtrak's "Autumn Express" Excursions Sell Out



Ross Capon

Amtrak's "trains to nowhere" did a Philadelphia-Perryville MD-Enola Yard-Harrisburg circle including a picturesque ride along the Susquehanna River and much track that is normally freight-only. After the Nov. 2 trip sold out in five days, the Nov. 3 trip was added, selling out in eight minutes—over 1,100 riders per trip. Amtrak pronounced the trips successful and plans more in the future.

The energy and enthusiasm of Amtrak managers who volunteered as coach attendants was impressive. Here, Attendants Floneva Moore (L) and Sheila Marlow sell souvenirs on the Nov. 3 trip.

It was announced that the average age of the train's cars was 30 years, which may have served as a subtle reminder of the need to invest in modern equipment.

All Short-Distance Trains Saved

agencies) to reach agreement with Amtrak to continue service in compliance with Section 209 of the 2008 law that forced most states with Amtrak routes under 750 miles to pay more for those services.

That all services were saved is a tribute to the work of citizen advocates and the responsiveness of local officials and state governments. Indeed, the work of NARP and others over many years helps explain why many states handled the new law with relative ease.

In April, 2006, we gave our Youth Rail Citizenship Award to a group of Crawfordsville high school students who cleaned, refurbished and landscaped their station and promoted train travel (*NARP News*, May, 2006).

Their project and our award helped lay the foundation for this year's success. Their teacher, Helen Hudson (now retired), wrote to me Oct. 31: "We lobbied [Pence] as a Representative when we came out for the NARP conference in 2006. Thanks to social media, I've

kept lots of our graduates, now young professionals, sending letters and calls and texts through the entire process...

"This fall, I rounded up our mayor, our economic development director, and the head of the chamber of commerce to ride the train with me to Lafayette for the Public Transportation Rally. We blasted in full color with an excellent feature on the front of the *Crawfordsville Journal Review* the next morning.

"We are so grateful to all of you [NARP] over this nearly a decade: you let the students know in so many ways that their work here in our little town was valuable and of national consequence."

NARP News will have more on this in the next issue, including our award to Purdue University students.

— Ross Capon

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Gov. Pence

NARP PART OF CAPITOL LIMITED BICYCLE TRIAL

Amtrak plans to expand the number of trains that carry unboxed bicycles, a goal that NARP supports. Most recently, this service was added to the Chicago-Port Huron *Blue Water*. The idea of providing this service on the Chicago-Washington *Capitol Limited*, which parallels a very popular bike trail between Pittsburgh and Washington, has long been discussed.

No long-distance train has had roll-on bicycle carriage since the *Cardinal* was converted from Superliners to single-level equipment in 1999. Before this, *Cardinal* passengers stowed their bikes in vertically-mounted racks in Superliner coach lower-level luggage compartments.

On Superliner trains that also carry baggage cars (all except the *Texas Eagle*, *City of New Orleans* and the Spokane-Portland *Empire Builder* leg), the lower-level baggage area has been unused space. Six bicycle racks were re-installed in each of three of these on a trial basis.

On Oct. 15, a group of bicyclists, including NARP Outreach Director Malcolm Kenton, were invited to bring their bikes on the eastbound *Capitol Ltd.* for portions of the ride east of Pittsburgh. Kenton boarded at Rockville and rode to Washington. He easily figured out how to secure his bicycle vertically.

There are a few operational and safety concerns to be addressed, along with funding, before bike racks can be installed in all Superliner baggage compartments.



Malcolm Kenton

Bikes in a Superliner baggage room Oct. 15.

First Four New Long-Distance Cars Unveiled

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manufacturing and supplier base that is strengthening our national economic health. ... Amtrak long distance service connects America and so, too, does this equipment order in the form of jobs and economic opportunity in communities across the country,” he proclaimed.

The initial four cars, which NARP Chairman Bob Stewart, President Ross Capon and reporters toured Oct. 24 will be tested soon on the Northeast Corridor, with revenue service planned for summer 2014.

After successful testing of the pilot cars, completion of the rest of the cars should proceed rapidly, with final delivery by the start of 2016. Baggage cars will be made throughout, alongside diners, bag dorms and sleepers in that order.

The new cars have red, white and

blue stripes harking to Amtrak’s earlier days. The diners will be named after Eastern state capitals; sleepers will bear the names of rivers that Amtrak routes cross east of the Mississippi River.

Baggage cars will be used system-wide, replacing all but the best Heritage baggage cars. The other new cars will permit retiring the elderly single-level diners and growing sleeping-car capacity on Eastern trains.

Baggage cars have good lighting and wide clearance to facilitate trucks loading express. They can also accommodate up to 16 unboxed bicycles, secured vertically.

Dining cars have 11 tables seating four each, and one table at the end with two seats removed for wheelchairs.

Bag dorms can accommodate up to eight unboxed bicycles and have crew accommodations—nine roomettes, two

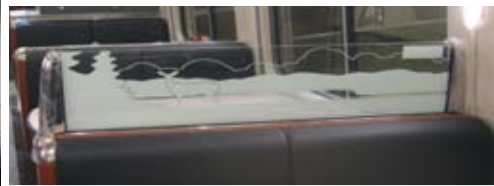
toilets and one shower.

Sleeping cars have 12 roomettes with folding sinks; two “public” toilets and one shower are for roomette passengers. Each sleeper also has two deluxe bedrooms and one accessible room with private facilities. ■

Right Roomette photo: Robert Stewart. Others: Ross Capon



Clockwise from top right: “Amtrak America” logo on the new cars; Roomette with sink folded down; hinged doors in baggage car to insure climate control; vertically mounted bike in baggage car (note two levels of pull-down racks; suitcases will not need to sit on the car floor); art on dining car glass partition; steps to upper Roomette berth in place of toilet, with folding sink.



CrossRail Chicago: More Through Services, More Convenient Transfers

Taking a page from London, the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MWHsRA) has applied the moniker “CrossRail Chicago” to their “game-changing plan for transforming transit in our area.”

The plan is strategically incremental, designed to become exponentially more effective with each step completed. It includes work that is already being planned separately, but will become very powerful if linked together.”

The heart of the plan is a trunk line carrying electrified express trains linking the University of Chicago, McCormick Place, Union Station and O’Hare Airport.

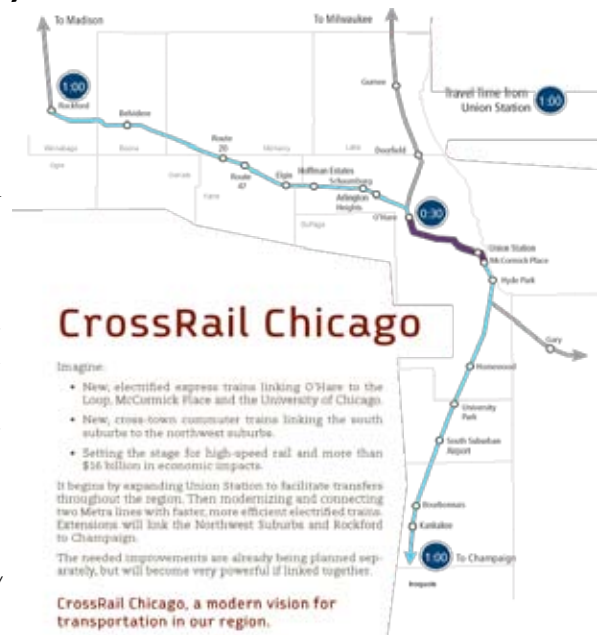
New, cross-town commuter

trains would link south and northwest suburbs. The stage would be set “for high-speed rail and more than \$16 billion in economic impacts.”

The plan, which MWHsRA unveiled Oct. 30, “begins by expanding Union Station to facilitate transfers throughout the region.” Union Station would be linked with Metra’s Electric and Rock Island corridors, by reconstructing the St. Charles Air Line (elevated tracks along 16th Street).

“Extensions will link the Northwest Suburbs and Rockford to Champaign.” ■

Details at www.midwesthsr.org/crossrail-chicago



OUR MISSION: A MODERN, CUSTOMER-FOCUSED NATIONAL PASSENGER TRAIN NETWORK THAT PROVIDES A TRAVEL CHOICE AMERICANS WANT.

MEMBERS' CORNER

Amtrak Guest Rewards Drawing Winner Announced

To encourage NARP members to sign up friends and family for memberships, NARP held a drawing where each new member who joined within a certain time frame earned an entry, existing members got one entry for each new member they referred, and others could enter by simply sending us a postcard.

The winner was Christopher Cassetta, a New York City resident who joined NARP in July, 2012. The prize was 120,000 Amtrak Guest Rewards points—enough for a cross-country round-trip in a Bedroom.

Cassetta responded by upgrading to NARP's Family Membership. He

wrote: "Obviously I was thrilled to win the drawing. My wife and daughter are new NARP members. As carless New Yorkers, we are frequent rail travelers for work and leisure. We're planning to use Amtrak points for a family vacation to DC next month to celebrate my wife's new US citizenship.

"Amtrak is ideal for family travel as we really have time to connect and relax. My wife grew up in Sweden, where intercity rail travel is the norm, so it's



Chris Cassetta

A Patron of American Passenger Trains and an Ambassador Abroad

Mary C. Francis was a dedicated American patriot who served her country abroad and at home. NARP is honored by her charitable consideration in naming NARP as a beneficiary in her Will and Testament. Mary helped to sustain and further strengthen NARP's work to improve choices for America's travelers.

Her longtime friend, Patricia Regalo-Warren, describes Mary as a world traveler and train enthusiast. Mary was a Foreign Service Secretary in the State Department, which allowed her many visits to various countries. She met her husband George in Bonn, Germany. The two began extensive train and auto travel throughout Europe. Mary particularly loved England and its trains.

In South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Indonesia, Mary observed the many advantages rail systems granted the people living in these places. Her travels on rail systems worldwide led her to believe that similar structures, if applied in the US, could give Americans the same conveniences she noticed overseas.

This wonderful woman and her loyal husband believed in the passenger's cause. We applaud Mary for her dedication and honor her memory by heeding the call to action. Mary has passed on, but her legacy lives on through preservation and expansion of America's passenger train system. NARP will continue to serve her and every train

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY
The seasonal Boston-Hyannis Cape Flyer will be back next year, likely with increased service, Massachusetts DOT officials said. The new service had a \$100,000 operating surplus and averaged 1,000 riders per weekend.
Amtrak eVouchers now can be redeemed at Amtrak.com or over the phone at 1-800-USA-RAIL.

a small reminder of home each time we 'Go Amtrak.' Thanks for the work you and your NARP colleagues do on our behalf, although until we win Powerball, our family membership is probably the best support we can offer." ■

passenger's wish in pressing for a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice Americans want.

— Logan McLeod



Courtesy of the Francis Family
Mary and George Francis in 1955.