



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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RETURN REQUESTED

60 Minutes Covers Anti-Transit Conspiracy, Light Rail Progress

AMTRAK SETS MORE RECORDS IN FY '87

In Fiscal Year 1987 (the 12 months ended Sep. 30), Amtrak again broke 3 key records: revenue-cost ratio—up for the 6th straight year—65% (vs. 62% in '86); passenger-miles (PM's)—up for the 5th straight year—5.221 billion (vs. 5.013 in '86); and passenger ticket revenues—up 5.2% from '86.

In 1970, the last full year of private-sector operation, intercity passenger trains handled 6.179 billion PM's. Thus Amtrak in FY '87 handled 84% of 1970's PM's with only about 51% of the route miles and with far fewer trains. With more rolling stock, 1987 Amtrak PM's would have been even higher. As its creators hoped, Amtrak has replaced an uncoordinated network, many of whose trains were duplicative and/or poorly-patronized, with a coordinated network of heavily-used trains.

FY '87 Amtrak ridership was 20.4 million, up slightly from '86. In recent years, Amtrak and commuter agencies have cooperated to divert many low-revenue daily commuters from Amtrak to non-Amtrak trains on the Northeast Corridor. This has kept Amtrak's total ridership count stable, while obscuring growth in total Northeast Corridor ridership and the increasing use of Amtrak by those making longer trips in the Northeast and elsewhere. For example, FY '86 ridership on Amtrak's long-distance trains was 24% above the '82 level.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Service enhancements (Jan. 1987 News) were added to Chicago-San Antonio "Eagle" and Los Angeles-New Orleans "Sunset Limited" in Oct. Thus, all western long-distance trains now offer video movies, route brochures, taped music, "Hospitality Hour" (free snacks and specialty drinks), bingo and trivia games.

Union Pacific has raised maximum Amtrak speed from 70 to 79 mph on Portland-Salt Lake City segment of "Pioneer" route. In addition, on Barstow-Salt Lake seg-

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Below are excerpts from Harry Reasoner's report, broadcast Dec. 6 on CBS-TV's 60 Minutes. For more background on the conspiracy, see "The Plot to Kill Rail Transit," July '81 NARP News, including excerpts from Harper's Feb. '81 article on the same subject.

"Most people thought [the decline of the trolley] was an inevitable sign of progress. On the contrary, it was largely a result of a criminal conspiracy. General Motors, Firestone Tire, Standard Oil of CA, and some others wanted to see cars and buses burning gasoline and rubber on a lot of new highways. . . . [These companies] moved in dozens of cities to wreck the old electric transit systems. We picked Los Angeles. . . to show what they wrought.

"Los Angeles freeways. . . have a kind of functional, stark beauty—if you're looking at them from the air. Of course, you can't see them from the air a lot of days, because of the smog. Since the first one was opened on Dec. 30, 1940, every one has been obsolete on the day it was dedicated. . . . Last year, some drivers began dealing with their stress by shooting other drivers. Drivetime was not significantly reduced. The people out there who still believe in the automobile have now quite seriously proposed double-decking all of LA's freeways.

"Wouldn't it be nice, some people thought, if Los Angeles had some streetcars? LA used to have . . . the biggest and best streetcar system in the United States. [By 1944], the trolleys had begun to disappear. It wasn't progress, and it wasn't suicide. It was murder by conspiracy. That was the decision of a federal jury, upheld on appeal.

"The way it worked was that General Motors, Firestone Tire, and Standard Oil of CA, and some other companies—

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—Photo by CBS

Harry Reasoner

NARP Board on High Speed Surface Transportation

The NARP Board of Directors unanimously passed the following resolution in Chicago on Oct. 10. The resolution was crafted by an ad hoc committee which the board formed last April. Eugene K. Skoropowski (PA) served as chairman; other members: Ronald P. Boardman Jr. (IL), James R. Churchill (VA), Kevin J. Gregoire (MA), and J. Howard Harding (OH).

WHEREAS, the National Association of Railroad Passengers is a consumer organization concerned with the preservation, improvement and expansion of rail transportation and mobility by public transportation; and

WHEREAS, the success of mobility in North America by public transportation rests almost exclusively on the ability of various public transport systems to provide convenient connections between them in order to encourage use; and

WHEREAS, it is obvious that high speed surface transport development is about to come to the United States and Canada, and can be an effective investment to stimulate and sustain economic growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the opportunity exists to establish the criteria for integration of such high speed systems (regardless of technology) into the existing transport networks; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for public policy, federal or state, regarding guidelines or criteria for the construction of such high speed systems;

THEREFORE, the National Association of Railroad Passengers resolves to establish as one of its goals to work for establishment of the following criteria by federal and state departments and agencies concerned with transportation and, in particular, with the development of high speed surface transportation systems:

1. That high speed surface service should interconnect major market areas, penetrating to the commercial centers of the major cities served;

2. That where existing rail transit, regional/commuter rail and/or Amtrak service exists, high speed surface systems should provide convenient connections, preferably at a common station in the commercial center;

3. That, wherever possible, high speed surface systems should serve the airports of the major cities with which it interconnects;

4. That the primary objective of high speed surface transport is to provide the fastest possible trip between market areas, thereby generating benefits relative to air quality, airport and airway traffic congestion, reduced need for highway expansion, improved safety, etc.;

5. That for uniformity and future integration, high speed surface transportation development should not employ technologies which, by their very nature, are mutually exclusive or incompatible with each other.

AND, be it further resolved that copies of this resolution be distributed to all federal, state and local agencies concerned with such matters, and also to all state and local associations affiliated with the National Association of Railroad Passengers, and to Transport 2000-Canada. ■

NARP DIR. LARRY BATTLE DIES

We regret to report that NARP Director Lawrence B. Battle, 71, of Arlington, VA, died of cancer Sep. 6. A retired Army colonel, Battle had once served as a general services manager at Amtrak, and had been a member of the NARP Board since 1983 (except in 1984).

AMTRAK'S CAB-CONTROL-CARS



—Photo by Jim Hamre

One of Amtrak's "new" Amfleet cab-control-coaches. The car was created from a Metroliner self-propelled car which had been in retirement for years. Amtrak is converting 21 idle Metroliner cars into Amfleet cab-coaches in order to operate push-pull trains on 3 routes: 10 cars for Santa Barbara-Los Angeles-San Diego, 6 cars for Philadelphia-Atlantic City, and 5 cars for Chicago-Detroit/Grand Rapids. A cab-car is placed at the end of a train opposite the locomotive and serves as the engineer's "control room" when the train is pushed from behind by the locomotive. Because push-pull trains don't require turning at their terminals, time and labor expense are saved. Reconstruction, which costs about \$750,000 per car, is being performed by Amtrak forces at the railroad's Wilmington and Bear (DE) Shops. The states of California, New Jersey, and Michigan are bearing a substantial amount of the project's costs. Coach 9631, seen here passing through Seattle Oct. 12, is one of 5 cars completed as of late December.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (continued from page 1)

ment of "Desert Wind" route, which already had 79 mph top speed, UP has raised Amtrak speeds on speed-restricted curves, resulting in time-savings. On Oct. 25, "Wind" schedules were cut by :25 eastbound, 1:10 westbound.

Amtrak began using Metro-North Railroad's new \$40 million Stamford station Nov. 23. The station, built with funds from Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, State of Connecticut, and Urban Mass Transportation Administration, is located at same site as old station.

San Luis Obispo, CA, Amtrak station has been renovated, at a cost of \$1.1 million. Rededication was Dec. 10. Funding came from city, state. Station is multimodal, serving Amtrak trains, city transit buses, taxis.

Martinez, CA, Amtrak station has been renovated, at a cost of \$630,000. 2-year project was funded by Amtrak and federal, state, and city sources. Station is multimodal, serving Amtrak trains, transit buses, taxis.

Lincoln, IL, has new \$43,000 Amtrak shelter as of late Dec., funded by State of Illinois, city, and Amtrak.

Chicago-Springfield "Loop" was converted from bilevel gallery cars to Amfleet I cars during December. State of Illinois, which helps underwrite 403(b) "Loop," requested this change to accommodate handicapped passengers.

In late Oct., Amtrak eliminated station agents at Kankakee, IL, and Plattsburgh, NY, and assumed Delaware & Hudson's agent at Saratoga Springs, NY. Kankakee also lost checked baggage service. Agent at Dunsuir, CA, was eliminated Sep. 30.

Legislative Update

Finally, on Dec. 22, Congress passed and President Reagan signed a comprehensive Fiscal 1988 continuing resolution, providing appropriations for all federal programs for the 12-month period which began Oct. 1. Amtrak is allocated enough funds to run all existing services, but receives almost no federal dollars for capital improvements.

The continuing resolution, Public Law 100-202, provides the Department of Transportation with \$25.08 billion, versus \$25.19 billion last year. Amtrak receives \$580.8 million—down 3.5% from last year's \$602 million, and nearly \$50 million below the 1988 authorization of \$630 million.

\$580.8 million is the smallest appropriation Amtrak has received in nominal (face-value) dollars since 1976; in constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars since 1974.

The Northeast Corridor Improvement Project is to receive \$27.6 million, up 62.5% from last year's \$17 million. The increase stems from last January's "Colonial" crash and will fund a number of safety-related improvements, including installation of luggage-rack restraints, seat-back guards, and seat-lock devices on 348 cars "operating within the Northeast Corridor."

Funding for the Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) is \$3.21 billion, down 7% from last year's \$3.45 billion. ■

TRENT REPLACES ROWLAND ON AMTRAK BOARD

Darrell M. Trent became an Amtrak director following his July 31 confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Trent, 49, is chairman of Rollins Environmental Services Inc., Wilmington, DE, the nation's oldest full-service hazardous waste treatment company. Prior to joining Rollins, he served as deputy secretary of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation from Jan. 1981 to Apr. 1983. Trent replaces Ross Rowland.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) told the Senate July 30: "In hearings before the Commerce Committee, Mr. Trent satisfied the committee that he is committed to a strong rail passenger network . . . Mr. Trent has stated his support for a viable Amtrak . . . We are taking [him] at his word . . . I urge Mr. Trent to be true to his words, and to support the national rail passenger system that is Amtrak."

At the Commerce Committee hearing, Trent responded to a question from Sen. James Exon (D-NE) by saying, "I'm definitely pro-Amtrak . . . It's important in America to offer a balance in transportation."

Also July 31, the Senate reconfirmed Amtrak directors Charles Luna of Dallas, and Gov. Robert Orr of Indianapolis, to serve new 4-year terms. Trent's term is also 4 years.

Bus Industry In Transition

The U.S. intercity bus industry is undergoing a major restructuring in the wake of bus and air deregulation. In March, Greyhound Corp. exited the bus business after 72 years when it sold its bus subsidiary, Greyhound Lines Inc., to an investor group headed by Dallas entrepreneur Fred G. Currey for \$350 million. Then in June, Currey's Greyhound (GLI Holdings Inc.) announced its intention to buy Trailways Lines for \$80 million, a move which would leave the U.S. with only

one nationwide intercity bus carrier. The Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) is expected to okay the merger, and in the meantime has granted Greyhound interim authority to assume financially-weak Trailways' operations. (Greyhound is only seeking to acquire Trailways Lines—the old Continental Trailways—not the 34 regional Trailways affiliates.)

Both Greyhound and Trailways, the nation's largest and second-largest bus carriers, respectively, "have been battered by airline deregulation, which spurred passenger defections to lower-cost air travel, and by the preference of many Americans to travel by car in an era of lower gasoline prices" (*New York Times*, June 20).

In 1969, Greyhound logged 9.3 billion passenger-miles. By 1985, it had fallen to 5.2 billion.

But perhaps the industry's fortunes are beginning to turn around. The summer of 1987 was Greyhound's busiest in five years, and that excludes the ridership gained from the annexation of Trailways in early August. Aug.-Sep. Greyhound-proper ridership was up 5% over the same period last year. Greyhound credits its recent patronage growth to reduced fares, a larger advertising budget, an overall increase in U.S. travel (all modes), and a public perception that the bus industry is stabilizing after a period of turmoil.

Since Aug. 5, Greyhound and Trailways operations have been consolidated into a single station in most cities which had had separate stations. If you wish to know which station was retained and which was closed in a particular city, please telephone or write us.

Incidentally, the ICC reports that between Nov. 1982—when bus deregulation took effect—and Jan. 1986, a total of 3763 U.S. communities lost all intercity bus transportation.

But there is hope for some communities which no longer see the "big bus." Greyhound has begun paying some publicly-funded rural transit systems commissions for connecting passengers they deliver. The first service in Greyhound's "rural connection" program began in November in Dunlap, TN. There should be services in Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Alabama, and Texas by February. Southeastern Tennessee Human Resource Agency has long been running a van between Dunlap and Chattanooga four times a week. Now, the van enters Greyhound's Chattanooga terminal, and Greyhound is financing a publicity campaign and paying the agency from 50 cents—for connecting passengers traveling less than 50 miles on Greyhound—to \$6 for those traveling over 1,000 miles. ■

NARP: 'LET THERE BE LESS LIGHT!'

In 1983, NARP began urging Amtrak to reduce the level of illumination in its coaches during the nighttime hours. We receive many complaints from passengers about the difficulty of trying to sleep under bright ceiling lights. The problem exists in Superliner, Amfleet, and some of the Heritage (depending on ancestry) cars.

As a result of NARP's efforts, Amtrak experimented for a time with blue night bulbs in some Superliner coaches, but discovered that the bulbs would not retain their blue coating. Bulbs from about 18 manufacturers worldwide were tried, but all proved unsatisfactory. As a result, Amtrak is now looking at changing the wattage of the current lighting to reduce its brightness.

Amtrak's "new" Amfleet cab-control cars (ex-Metro-liners rebuilt for push-pull service) feature floor-level aisle lighting, which may, in time, be installed in all existing cars. Amtrak's new Viewliner sleeping cars have near-floor-level aisle lighting (as in movie theatres).

depending on the location of the target—would arrange financing for an outfit called National City Lines, which cozied up to city councils and county commissioners and bought up transit systems like LA's. Then they would junk or sell the electric cars and pry up the rails for scrap, and beautiful modern buses would be substituted: buses made by General Motors and running on Firestone Tires and burning Standard's gas. . . .

"The conspiracy didn't hit Los Angeles until the end of World War II. A month after the new owners took over the transit company, 237 new buses arrived. This followed a year in which the electric lines had made \$1.5 million and carried over 200 million passengers. By the end of GM's motorization campaign in 1955, almost 90% of the streetcars were gone from America's cities.

"William Dixon put together the criminal conspiracy case that the federal government brought against GM and the others in 1947. . . . The conspirators had managed from 1936 to 1946 to dismantle streetcar lines in 45 cities. The key to the federal case was intent: did the defendants just go along with a national trend or did they destroy electric mass transit on purpose? The juries and judges said they were big boys and they knew what they were doing, but Dixon thinks the punishment was ridiculous. The government had asked that individual corporate officers be sent to jail.

"[Dixon]: 'The government did not get that, much to my surprise and personal disgust. The judge said this was nothing more than a traffic violation. He imposed a \$1 fine on the individual defendants.'

"The corporations, on the other hand, were given the maximum penalty: a \$5,000 fine. General Motors sold something like \$25 million of equipment to National City Lines. They paid \$5,000 penalty. That's not a bad deal.

"Not all the trolleys are in museums. A few cities like New Orleans and Philadelphia never gave theirs up. They're feeling pretty smug about that now. More dramatically,

SAN DIEGO MAYOR: WE CAN'T BUILD LINES FAST ENOUGH!

"Everybody in San Diego loves the trolleys. The only problem now, Harry, is we can't get them into the neighborhoods [ed. build new lines] fast enough. They're a clean, efficient system and they're very cost-effective. People are giving up their second cars and they are commuting to work on the trolleys. We have statistics that show that. It's not just the senior citizen and the low-income household but it's the professionals as well that are using the trolley. In the South Bay area, there's no question: if we didn't have a trolley, there'd be gridlock. [Reasoner: 'So you'd recommend them to any other mayor looking for an issue?'] I absolutely would because, bottom-line, not only they're good for the city and they're cheap, they're fun!"

—San Diego Mayor Maureen O'Connor

some other cities have bitten the bullet and resumed service—gone 'back to the future.' Like San Diego: they've been running trolleys since 1981 and adding new routes constantly. It seems to work unbelievably well. [Ed.: San Diego's Metropolitan Transit Development Board is planning a light rail network totalling 113.5 miles to serve a metro area population of 1.6 million.]

"At last count, 19 other American cities are following San Diego's lead. After repeatedly turning down mass transit

NEW BACK BAY STATION



For many travelers, beautiful new Back Bay Station (Oct.-Nov. News, p. 3) will be the most convenient Amtrak station in Boston. The building, designed by Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), is located at 145 Dartmouth Street. In addition to Amtrak intercity trains, the station is served by MBTA commuter and transit (Orange Line) trains. The station's waiting room is dedicated to A. Philip Randolph (1889-1979), civil rights leader and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters union.

plans at the polls, LA's laid-back citizens finally approved. They started digging a central subway line which will connect to a lot of trolleys. They call them 'light rail lines' now.

LOS ANGELES MAYOR: NEW RAIL ROUTES FOLLOW OLD!

"The interesting thing is that the very routes—the 1,100-mile system that the old 'Red Cars' used to run—are almost the precise lines where they want to put the Metrorail and the light rail system. [Reasoner: 'As late as 1955, streetcars used to run up the middle of the Hollywood Freeway.'] That right-of-way has been destroyed, taken out, closed down, sold off, and so we now have to buy property along those routes at very high cost. [R: 'Los Angeles and the country as a whole are progressing rapidly backwards.'] Yes, we're reaching a point where we used to be, 20, 30, 40 years ago. [R: 'Just possibly, the idea of clean, efficient mass transportation is an idea whose time has come—again.'] It's clear that they will have to get out of the automobile. They simply won't be able to move unless there is a rapid transit system. Yes, I think they're going to quickly adapt to that 'new' means of transportation."

—Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley

In left-behind spots around Los Angeles are evidences of what the city is now slowly trying to replace. This tunnel downtown carried streetcars roughly to where the new tunnel will, when it's finished—at a cost of unimaginable hundreds of millions of dollars. They can't use this one because supports for buildings and freeways were drilled into it along the route. It just sits here. The cars and buses crawl slowly overhead.

"Those buses, by the way, are still mostly GM buses. But GM declined to comment on this story because it sold its bus division last summer making the question of GM's past activities, they say, moot."

(For video cassette of program, send written request and \$300 check to Holt, Reinhart & Winston [Attn: Debby Wilcox], 1627 Woodland Av., Austin, TX 78741. Indicate: 60 Minutes, "Clang Went The Trolley," Dec. 6, 1987, format [VHS; Beta I, II, III; U-Matic], intended purpose [personal, educational, etc.]