



Rail Freight Congestion: Growing Problem

"It's a bit like having an Interstate highway that goes one way at a time."

—Railroads Subcommittee Chairman Steve LaTourette (R-OH), observing map showing that most U.S. rail lines are single-track

Education on obstacles to needed rail investment got an impressive jump start with a House hearing on the "The U.S. Rail Capacity Crunch."

Growing awareness of the need for more investment in rail infrastructure stems from congestion on highways and railroads, and from general knowledge of rail's relevance to energy cost and availability issues and to global warming.

Polls show strong support for public policy emphasizing more reliance on freight and passenger rail.

The House Railroads Subcommittee's April 26 hearing was valuable for anyone who attended it, or who has read the witnesses' prepared statements (<http://www.house.gov/transportation>).

The hearing had a freight focus, but two witnesses spoke at length about passenger rail—Wisconsin DOT Secretary (and States for Passenger Rail Coalition

Chair) Frank Busalacchi and American Public Transportation Association President William Millar.

Literally hanging over the hearing were monitors displaying a map (from the January 2006 Trains magazine) of the U.S. rail system, with colors indicating double-track lines. The only significant double-track routes (other than Midwest-Northeast links) were Chicago to the Twin Cities, the Bay Area, and Los Angeles.

Small wonder, then, that factors escalating rail freight demand—energy

prices, truck driver shortages, highway congestion—have backfired, leading to unsatisfactory transit times for many shippers, inability of some shippers to get rail service, and decisions by others to remove time-sensitive traffic from the rails.

UPS Vice President—Transportation Burt Wallace testified that rail congestion "puts at risk our nation's worldwide competitiveness. This is underscored by the fact that a month ago UPS initiated a new 'fast lane' service for truck transport-

(continued on page 3)

NARP Honors Lott, Byrd, LaTourette, Corrine Brown with Golden Spike Awards

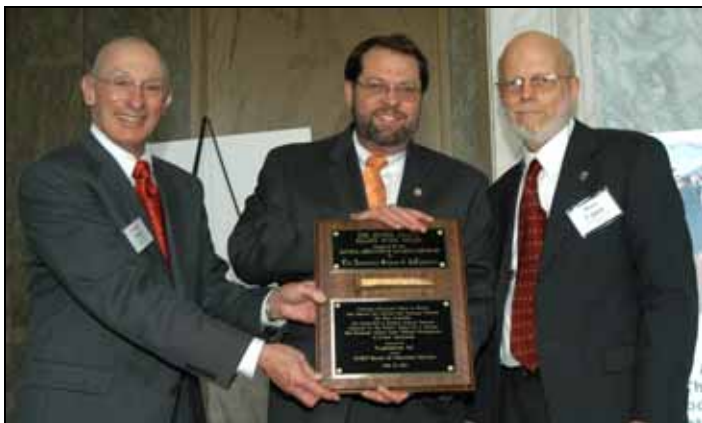
The National Association of Railroad Passengers presented its George Falcon Golden Spike Awards this year to Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and Robert Byrd (D-WV), and Reps. Steve LaTourette (R-OH) and Corinne Brown (D-FL).

LaTourette and Brown accepted their awards at the Association's Annual Congressional Reception on April 27. For the second year in a row, the reception was held in the Foyer of the Rayburn House

Office Building in Washington, D.C.

After receiving the award, LaTourette—chairman of the House Subcommittee on Railroads—thanked NARP and rail advocates, saying, "The national rail passenger system in this country needs a lot of help and it needs a lot of help from Republicans and Democrats, so I think it is great that you are honoring a bipartisan

(continued on page 3)



(Left photo) House Railroads Subcommittee Chairman Steven C. LaTourette (R-OH, center) receives his Golden Spike Award from NARP President George Chilson (l.) and Executive Director Ross Capon. (Right photo) Chilson and Capon give Golden Spike to Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL), ranking member of the Railroads Subcommittee. Each 2006 Golden Spike Award winner also received individually autographed copies of J. Craig Thorpe's painting of an idealized, future Seattle-Tacoma Airport rail station with both light rail and intercity trains, and Alfred Runte's book *Allies of the Earth: Railroads and the Soul of Preservation* (published in 2006 by Truman State Univ. Press, Kirksville, MO). Rep. Jim Oberstar (r. of Brown) thanked NARP for his 2005 Golden Spike and congratulated Brown.

Indiana Students Honored for Station Work and Passenger Train Advocacy

For cleaning, refurbishing and landscaping the Crawfordsville Amtrak station, and for promoting rail travel in their community with letters to the editor and public presentations, Dr. Helen Hudson's Crawfordsville High School English classes received NARP's second-ever Youth Rail Passenger Citizenship Award. The Award was presented during the students' four-day trip to Washington, DC; they made the trip on Amtrak.

On their trip, they contacted about 40 senators and representatives and their staffs and also met with DOT officials.

NARP donated \$500 to the students'

trip, and hosted the students at our Capitol Hill reception and two luncheons.

The project was supported by a federal TechKnowBuild grant, an Indiana Learn-and-Serve Grant and various other grants and donations. The federal grant provided each student a laptop and stipulated that students be involved in an authentic community problem. This is called problem-based learning, hence the project name "PBL: Amtrak."

Crawfordsville Superintendent of Schools Kathleen Steele did a presentation on the project in Chicago at a national convention of school superinten-

dents in early April.

When Rep. Corrine Brown (D-FL) accepted the Golden Spike Award at the NARP Reception (page 1), she summoned Sarah Howland, one of the students, to the podium. Brown was so moved by the project, which the students explained to her shortly before she received her award, that she wanted to publicly recognize and thank them.

On April 29, the students gave a creative PowerPoint presentation on the project to the NARP Board of Directors, noting that Amtrak ridership at Crawfordsville has increased markedly in recent years. A total of 11 students made the Washington trip along with Dr. Hudson and chaperone Elizabeth Justice. Students Elizabeth Helling and Ellen Miller addressed the Board, and then—joined by their nine colleagues—took questions.

NARP Board Member John Mills of Topeka, KS spoke for the Board when he told the students that their work and presentation were the most inspiring he had seen in almost 30 years of coming to NARP board meetings. NARP President George Chilson announced that the students have been made members of the association.

The project involved 34 students, both this year's seniors and juniors. Five freshmen also helped with landscaping.

Amtrak Acting President/CEO David Hughes helped NARP honor the students.

A grand opening for the cleaned station was held May 7. The Mayor of Crawfordsville helped the students cut the ribbon on the station to symbolically return it to the community. ■



Students from Crawfordsville High School pose for a photo at the NARP Congressional Reception. They were presented with the NARP Youth Citizenship Award the next day for their efforts to refurbish the "Am Shack" in their town. Students are (l. to r., starting with first row) Alix Hudson, Anne Santa Maria, Liz Helling, Natalie Davis, Jess Meyer, Sarah Howland, Ellen Miller, Grey Castro, Courtney Cotton, Dr. Helen Hudson (teacher), Matt Kelsey, Brian Burns. In the far back are NARP President George Chilson and Executive Director Ross Capon. Class members who could not make the trip: Laura Sands, Kendra McPheeters, Adam Stout, and Stephanie Holmstrom.

Happy Birthday Amtrak!



Rail advocates nationwide celebrated 35 years of Amtrak May 1. A Jacksonville party was hosted and organized by National Railway Historical Society's North Florida Chapter. (NARP's Ross Capon addressed this chapter in Jan., 2005.) Attendees were greeted with cake and NARP literature. Many thanks to NRHS and NARP Members Jerry Sullivan (front-center, holding box) and George Bollinger (left, behind Sullivan) for organizing this event! Among the other places with similar events: Meridian, MS, and the Iowa stations.

NARP Reception (from page 1)

group tonight...Passenger rail in this country not only needs to survive—which is what last year's discussion was about—but it needs to thrive. You can't build that third, fourth, fifth, sixth lane on the Interstate highways anymore; we need to move people by rail."

Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN), ranking Democrat on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and a 2005 Golden Spike winner (December *News*), expressed thanks again for his award and congratulated Brown. With his usual enthusiasm, he extolled the virtues of reliable, full funding for passenger rail: "This third world country called America is figuring out that passenger rail service is a good idea, and as gasoline prices escalate we are figuring it out ever more."

"When are we going to catch up [to France's TGV and other European high speed rail systems]? We develop the technology; the rest of the world uses it. But thanks to [NARP], you have kept the hope alive for Amtrak, kept the spirit of

railroading alive in America. You are the cutting edge of technology and of hope, and of encouragement, and of policy formation in America...In Corrine Brown you have...a fighter, a courageous fighter who says what she thinks and means what she says."

In accepting the Award, Brown—ranking member of the Railroads Subcommittee—said, "When you go to Europe, or Russia, or China, or anywhere, it is just so convenient how you can get off a plane, go downstairs and get on a train and go anywhere you want in the world...We need to be doing the same thing here in the United States."

On April 25, NARP President George Chilson and Executive Director Ross Capon presented the award to Lott, who had a schedule conflict on the reception evening. Byrd, as a leader on the emergency funding bill which was on the Senate floor during the reception also was

NARP's Capitol Hill reception received generous support from several NARP Board Members, and from corporate sponsors. NARP President George Chilson thanks Bombardier's Oakley Brooks (left photo, center), WABTEC's Bill Slater (left photo, right) and Nora Friend of Talgo (right photo).

unable to attend; Capon and NARP Assistant Director David Johnson presented the award to Byrd May 10.

Lott's award focused on his efforts to secure a bi-partisan reauthorization bill for Amtrak. In a January press conference, Lott said, "Part of my goal, hopefully, is to put a little pressure on the administration, because I don't think their proposal has any credibility at all."

At the reception, Capon spoke briefly about Byrd's work for the national network and the *Cardinal*, noting that, "the *Cardinal* is not just important to West Virginia, but it's also [why] we have passenger rail in Cincinnati, in parts of Kentucky, and in Indianapolis...Also, over the past few years, *Cardinal* ridership growth has outstripped just about every other long distance train. We say long live passenger rail, long live the *Cardinal*, and long live Senator Byrd!" ■



Capacity (from page 1)

tation, between key city pairs throughout the country, to meet the demand for time sensitive shipments that had previously been sent over the rails."

Busalacchi said "75-80% of my [Wisconsin transportation] budget is spent on highways. I don't think we need to do that any more." But the hearing clarified that **congestion may worsen dramatically before public policy changes.**

- Too many lawmakers don't know the issues, and the issues are complex.
- The deficit-ridden federal government is reluctant to undertake major new investment programs (unless related to top White House priorities).
- There is a widespread assumption

that profitable railroads don't need government aid. But the *Freight-Rail Bottom Line Report* (NARP News, Feb. 2003) by American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO) showed a \$53 billion gap between what the private sector likely will invest in rail freight infrastructure over 20 years, and what would be needed just to maintain rail's existing share of a growing transportation market.

Because rail managements seek profits at reasonable risk, railroads do not invest in new infrastructure they think might become excess in an economic slowdown.

- Some powerful, "captive" shippers are angry at what they consider unreasonably high railroad rates.

- Most railroads are leery of any government-controlled, freight-oriented rail investment program. It would alter the competitive balance among railroads.

BNSF Chairman/President/CEO Matt Rose, another witness, expressed fear that public-agency decisions would not be "market-based." He also said that, by year's end, BNSF will have double-tracked all but 50 miles of its 1,800-mile Chicago-Los Angeles line.

Imagine what BNSF would say about use of public funds, for example, to speed double-tracking all of UP's congested UP New Orleans-Los Angeles line!

- Railroads *do* want a 25% investment tax credit to encourage infrastructure investment; legislation may be introduced in the Senate soon. ■

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Zephyr detour dates set—The east and westbound Zephyrs originating in either Chicago or Emeryville on July 9-12, July 16-19, July 23-26, July 30-August 2, and August 6-7, will detour through Wyoming on July 10-13, July 17-20, July 24-27, July 31-August 3, and August 7-8. Bus service provided from Denver to Glenwood Springs and Grand Junction only.

Interactive Route Map at Amtrak website—You can use this tool to zoom and pan across the country and choose a routing to be “drawn” on the screen. You can get to the route map from Amtrak’s homepage.

New Western Thruway Buses—An overnight Santa Barbara-San Francisco bus (connecting to/from Pacific Surfliners at Santa Barbara); an extension of Sacramento-Redding service to Medford, Oregon; and a new connection to the Southwest Chief at Riverside from Hemet, Sun City, Perris, and Moreno Valley took effect April 25 with the timetable change.

Free Wi-Fi in Chicago Metropolitan Lounge—Passengers who are in the lounge can set their wi-fi software to find <Amtrak_Met>.

NARP to Amtrak: Restore New Orleans-Orlando!

The National Association of Railroad Passengers’ Board on April 28 approved a resolution urging Amtrak to restore the New Orleans-Orlando segment of the Los Angeles-Orlando *Sunset Limited*, since CSX tracks have been restored to a better-than-pre-Katrina standard.

NARP sees New Orleans-Florida as vital—the only east-west link between Florida and the West not requiring detours through (and transfers in) Washington and Chicago. In FY 2004, 41% of *Sunset* revenue came from passengers using the New Orleans-Orlando segment, that is, people whose trips were confined to that segment plus people traveling between points east and west of New Orleans. Thus, a segment that accounts for only 28% of *Sunset* train-miles generated 41% of the route’s revenues.

NARP President George Chilson wrote to Amtrak Chairman David Laney in detail on this subject March 2.

The resolution and letter are at

<<http://www.narprail.org>>. Resolution coverage has included Cox News Service (May 3), the Miami Herald (May 5), and the Mobile Press-Register (May 21).

Meanwhile, the full Senate on May 4 approved a \$106.9 billion emergency funding bill with \$700 million intended as a major first installment on a plan to abandon the CSX New Orleans-Mobile line, improve parts of Norfolk Southern’s *Crescent* route and other CSX lines (to handle displaced CSX freight), and put a highway on the existing CSX alignment. At press time, fate of this funding in a House-Senate conference was uncertain. ■

NARP’s April 14 comments (on passenger rail funding) to a House Appropriations subcommittee are at www.narprail.org; subcommittee approved \$900 million on May 25. More on-line and next issue.

Marvin Daniel Monaghan

Dan Monaghan, a long-time rail advocate from Dallas, Texas died April 5. His Dallas Morning News obituary said, “A railroad man’s son, Dan developed a lifelong interest in trains and acquired an encyclopedic knowledge of railroad history, economics and operations. He...served twice on the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Board of Directors representing Garland.”

In a message to NARP Board Members, NARP Executive Director Ross Capon said, “no one could doubt his commitment to a national passenger rail network, as well as to the Dallas light rail system, and the energy he poured into both over the years.”

A memorial service was planned for June 3 in Dallas Union Terminal, a building Monaghan helped to save.



National Association of Railroad Passengers

NARP News

Vol. 40, No. 5

May 2006

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

George Chilson, President; Wayne Davis, Arthur Poole, David Randall, Robert J. Stewart, Vice Presidents; Albert L. Papp, Jr., Secretary; Robert W. Glover, Treasurer;

Ross B. Capon, Executive Director; David R. Johnson, Assistant Director; Douglas Kidd, Director of Finance and Administration, Tiffanie H. Childs, Office Manager

National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News* (ISSN 0739-3490), published monthly (except Nov.) by NARP; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557; 202/408-8362, fax 202/408-8287, <narp@narprail.org>, <www.narprail.org>. ©2006 National Assoc. of Railroad Passengers. All rights reserved. Membership dues \$35/year (\$20/under 21, \$25/over 65), of which \$5 is a subscription to *NARP News*. Periodicals Postage Paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to National Association of Railroad Passengers *NARP News*; 900 Second St., NE, Suite 308; Washington, DC 20002-3557.

(This has news through May 26. Vol. 40, No. 4 was mailed second-class April 13.)