



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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John R. Martin, Pres.; Eugene Skoropowski, V. Pres.; Robert Glover, Sec.; Joseph Horning, Jr., Treas.; Ross Capon, Exec. Dir.; Barry Williams, Asst. Dir.; Jane Colgrove, Membership Dir.; Harriet Parcels, Transp. Assoc.

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Record-Setting Year!

New Texas Train Begins!

Amtrak achieved a 17-year goal on Nov. 15 when it began direct train service between Dallas and Houston, the nation's 8th and 10th largest metropolitan areas, respectively.

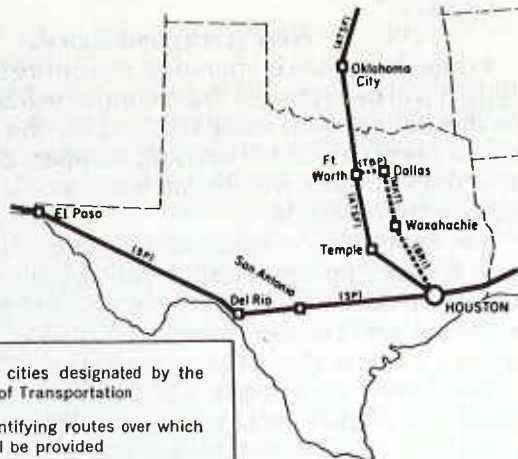
The new train, a section of Amtrak's Chicago-San Antonio "Eagle," is the first passenger train to ply Southern Pacific Railroad's 265-mile Dallas-Houston route in 30 years! (The last passenger train on SP's route, the "Owl," expired in June 1958.) It is the first direct Dallas-Houston passenger train over any route since the discontinuance of Burlington's "Sam Houston Zephyr" in 1966. (Amtrak ran an indirect "Inter-American" via Ft. Worth 1979-81).

In conjunction with the start-up of the new train, Amtrak renamed the "Eagle" the "Texas Eagle" at NARP's suggestion, in honor of the famous Texas train of old.

Amtrak had wanted to offer direct Dallas-Houston service from the beginning in 1971, but was stymied by poor track conditions and hostile railroads. The original plan was to use a combination of Missouri-Kansas-Texas and Burlington lines via Waxahachie, but track conditions were unacceptable. Conditions on parallel SP were likewise unsuit-

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Amtrak's original May 1, 1971, timetable promised direct Dallas-Houston service "as soon as possible," but track problems took 17 years to overcome.



- End point cities designated by the Secretary of Transportation
- Points identifying routes over which service will be provided
- Service from Fort Worth to Houston will be shifted from Temple route to Dallas route as soon as possible after May 1, 1971.

Amtrak Sets All-Time Patronage Record in '88

Fiscal Year 1988 was Amtrak's best year ever in nearly every respect, with ridership, revenue, passenger-miles, and cost-recovery reaching all-time record highs. The traffic records were set even though Amtrak's car fleet and route structure were smaller than in 1979.

Passenger-miles rose for the 6th consecutive year to a record 5.7 billion—almost double the 3.0 billion passenger-miles recorded in 1972, and up 9.3% from 1987.

Revenue also hit a historic high: \$1.1 billion. 1988 was the first year in which Amtrak's revenue reached or exceeded the billion-dollar mark. Revenue has nearly doubled since 1981's \$612 million.

21.5 million people rode America's passenger railroad in 1988, breaking the previous record of 21.4 million set in gasoline-scarce 1979, 30% above the 1972 level of 16.6 million, and 5.4% above 1987's 20.4 million. This increase was achieved even though over 1 million annual commuter trips switched to locally-funded commuter trains (the main cause of the 46% increase 1972-1988 in Amtrak passengers' average trip length—from about 181.5 miles to 264.1).

Amtrak's cost-recovery ratio improved for the 7th consecutive year to a record 69%—surpassing the railroad's own target by 2 points. Only 7 years ago, in 1981, the ratio

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Legislative Update

On Sep. 30, one day before the new fiscal year began, Pres. Reagan signed the Fiscal 1989 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act (Public Law 100-457), which provides Amtrak with \$584 million (a \$3 mill. increase from 1988), the Northeast Corridor with \$20 million (an \$8 mill. decrease), and mass transit with \$3.15 billion (a \$60 mill. decrease).

The 100th Congress adjourned without passing legislation requiring random drug testing of railroad employees. House and Senate conferees were unable to reconcile drug-testing provisions from their respective bills (May News, p. 1).

Amtrak's Next Gem:

Chicago Union Station

In 2 to 3 years, Amtrak's Chicago Union Station may be almost as beautiful as Washington Union Station is today. Although the Chicago station will remain open during its impending redevelopment, some passenger inconvenience will be unavoidable. If all goes as planned, however, the ultimate product will be worth the trouble.

The plan is designed to make passenger circulation as efficient and pleasant as possible, using generally wider corridors and improved lighting. Key elements:

- The clutter of track-level stores in the station concourse will be removed;

- That concourse will be enlarged (extended 22 feet eastward towards Track 19/28) and will be dominated by a ticket office and a waiting area with 900 seats—vs. 120 in Amtrak's present passenger lounge and 400 in the head house. Like Amtrak's current lounge, the new waiting area will be enclosed for proper temperature control and include a separate area for first-class passengers. Many passengers will have a very short walk to their trains, since there will be doors in the lounge's east wall to Track 19/28—one of the station's most heavily used tracks;

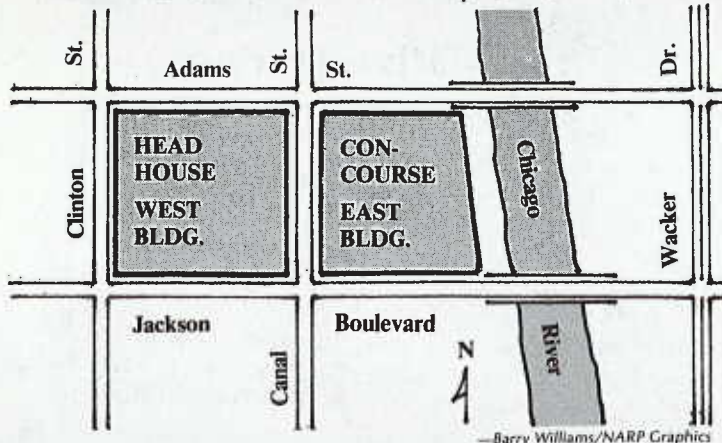
- To minimize conflict between inbound and outbound passengers, most inbound passengers will leave the station directly or via the baggage claim area (to be located in the southwest corner of the concourse) without entering the lounge;

- To reduce the amount of station space taken up by the huge crowds of Metra commuter train riders, the east escalators to Adams and Jackson streets will be relocated closer to the train gates;

- Platform gates will be reconfigured with a passageway as wide as the platform, eliminating the bottleneck caused by today's gates which are 4' narrower. Also, 5'-wide windows will flank both sides of the passageway so those waiting to meet passengers can easily see whether a train has arrived. (The new design has already been installed and tested successfully at the gate to Tracks 14 & 16.)

- Each track is bordered by 2 platforms, but alternating track platforms were built for baggage-handling and lead to a level below the passenger concourse. Those baggage platforms next to tracks used by Metra (6, 8, 10, 12) are idle now but will be put back to use—for commuters. Stairways and possibly escalators will be installed so that doors on both sides of most commuter trains can be used. Commuters using the ex-baggage platforms will thus be able to ascend to street level without even entering the station!

- Stairs from the station's north platforms will lead to



street level near North Western Terminal, Metra's principle terminal. Also, the city is working on a pedestrian tunnel ("pedway") that will enable passengers to walk to North Western without braving the weather at all. The city is also studying construction of a "South Loop" pedway in an old trolley tunnel to allow "weather-proof" walks from Union Station to a Lincoln Properties development at Jackson Blvd. and Wacker Drive. It may someday be possible to walk all the way to Randolph Street near Lake Michigan without going outside!

- The Canal Street escalators will become the main entrance. Red Cap and curbside check-in facilities will be outside the Canal St. entrance, and Amtrak is working with the city to establish a taxi lane next to the sidewalk, to be flanked on the other side by a new traffic island to be used by private cars receiving and discharging passengers.

- Amtrak has already reversed the traffic flow in the station tunnel to northbound, to avoid tunnel backups caused by traffic signals adjacent to the south portal, which had been the tunnel exit until recently.

- U.S. Equities, a private developer, will control the head house much as LaSalle Partners controls the Main Hall in Washington—and, also as in Washington, the development will be "upscale" shops. Much of the space on the head house main floor will be open and available as an "overflow" area for Amtrak passengers. To harmonize with the head house, the Amtrak concourse facility will have terrazo floors—not plainer quarry tile; marble walls—not aluminum-covered; and easy-to-clean aluminum-slat ceilings. Amtrak will use the same contractor as the developer. Platform lighting will also be improved.

- The developer will raze the head house's top 5 office stories and build 24 new ones. (The station's original 1920s design called for 20 stories, but only 8 were built.) The new stories will match the old building architecturally.

Moving Pains

The first major disruption will begin soon, when the east escalators are removed from service and relocated. Starting around February, the head house (West Building) will become the only passenger-waiting area, as construction begins in the concourse (East Building). That means passengers will have a long hike between waiting area and trains, probably shepherded in groups for each train by Amtrak personnel. NARP has urged Amtrak, at all major terminals and stations, to load families and handicapped and elderly passengers early so they can sit together, and has repeated the suggestion in the context of Chicago's "upheaval."

New Tracks and Signals

While the station is upgraded, the entire track and signal system will be replaced. Train control will be consolidated in the station, with costs reduced by the elimination of signal towers at Lake, Harrison, Lumber, and 21st streets. The track project will be far less traumatic than that at Boston South Station.

The entire Boston layout was changed, but studies indicate Chicago's present track layout is optimum; tracks will simply be renewed in place—all with 132-pound rail. The only changes: 3 crossovers will be added, and tracks will be moved 2 inches closer to the baggage platforms.

The 2-inch track move will benefit Metra commuters using those platforms, as well as Amtrak's "Southwest Chief" passengers. Currently, that train is parked several car-lengths from the bumper post because its locomotives carry Automatic Train Stop detectors (for 90 mph running

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Senate Votes on Amtrak, Transit Items

In October, Congress passed the Technical Corrections Act, to make various corrections to the landmark Tax Reform Act of 1986. During consideration of the bill, two amendments affecting Amtrak and mass transit were introduced in the Senate. The Senate strongly reaffirmed its commitment to Amtrak by rejecting an amendment to eliminate its funding. But it refused, by a narrow margin, to consider a tax code change to encourage the use of mass transit. The roll call votes are below.

Column A indicates the Oct. 6 vote on an amendment by Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX) to transfer all of Amtrak's 1989 funds (plus funds from 4 other programs) to drug enforcement programs. **The Gramm amendment was defeated 72-22.**

Column B indicates the Oct. 7 vote on a motion by Sen. Donald Riegle (D-MI) to table (put aside) a pro-transit amendment by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY). D'Amato's amendment sought to encourage use of transit by increasing the federal tax-free, employer-provided benefit to transit users, from \$15 to \$38/month. (Federal tax law does not limit the employer-provided auto parking benefit—whatever the amount, it's tax-free!) D'Amato would have paid for his transit benefit by doubling the "gas-guzzler tax"—a tax levied on fuel-inefficient autos. **The Riegle motion was passed 43-41, thus tabling D'Amato's transit amendment.**

The Technical Corrections Act was signed by Pres. Reagan on Nov. 10.

● indicates a pro-Amtrak (Column A) or pro-transit (Column B) vote.

A blank indicates an anti-Amtrak or anti-transit vote.

indicates "not voting."

ALABAMA	A	B	HAWAII	MASSACHUSETTS	NEW MEXICO	SOUTH DAKOTA
Heflin (D)	●		Inouye (D)	Kennedy (D)	Bingaman (D)	Daschle (D)
Shelby (D)	●		Matsunaga (D)	Rerry (D)	Domenici (R)	Fressler (R)
ALASKA			IDAHO	MICHIGAN	NEW YORK	TENNESSEE
Murkowski (R)	●	●	McClure (R)	Levin (D)	D'Amato (R)	Gore (D)
Stevens (R)	●	●	Syrens (R)	Riegle (D)	Moynihan (D)	Sasser (D)
ARIZONA			ILLINOIS	MINNESOTA	NORTH CAROLINA	TEXAS
DeConcini (D)	●	#	Dixon (D)	Boschwitz (R)	Helm (R)	Bentsen (D)
McCain (R)	●	●	Simon (D)	Durenberger (R)	Sanford (D)	Gramm (R)
ARKANSAS			INDIANA	MISSISSIPPI	NORTH DAKOTA	UTAH
Bumpers (D)	●		Lugar (R)	Cochran (R)	Burdick (D)	Garn (R)
Fryor (D)	●		Quayle (R)	Stennis (D)	Conrad (D)	Hatch (R)
CALIFORNIA			IOWA	MISSOURI	OHIO	VERMONT
Cranston (D)	●	●	Graessley (R)	Bond (R)	Glenn (D)	Leahy (D)
Wilson (R)		#	Harkin (D)	Danforth (R)	Metzenbaum (D)	Stafford (R)
COLORADO			KANSAS	MONTANA	OKLAHOMA	VIRGINIA
Armstrong (R)		●	Dole (R)	Baucus (D)	Boren (D)	Trible (R)
Wirth (D)	●	●	Kassebaum (R)	Meicher (D)	Nickles (R)	Warner (R)
CONNECTICUT			KENTUCKY	NEBRASKA	OREGON	WASHINGTON
Dodd (D)	●		Ford (D)	Exon (D)	Hatfield (R)	Adams (D)
Weicker (R)	●	●	McConnell (R)	Karnes (R)	Packwood (R)	Evans (R)
DELAWARE			LOUISIANA	NEVADA	PENNSYLVANIA	WEST VIRGINIA
Biden (D)	●	#	Breaux (D)	Hecht (R)	Beins (R)	Byrd (D)
Roth (R)	●		Johnston (D)	Reid (D)	Specter (R)	Rockefeller (D)
FLORIDA			MAINE	NEW HAMPSHIRE	RHODE ISLAND	WISCONSIN
Chiles (D)	●		Cohen (R)	Humphrey (R)	Chafee (R)	Kasten (R)
Graham (D)			Mitchell (D)	Rudman (R)	Pell (D)	Proxmire (D)
GEORGIA			MARYLAND	NEW JERSEY	SOUTH CAROLINA	WYOMING
Fowler (D)	●	●	Mikulski (D)	Bradley (D)	Hollings (D)	Simpson (R)
Nunn (D)	●	#	Sarbanes (D)	Lautenberg (D)	Thurmond (R)	Wallop (R)

—Barry Williams/NARP Graphics

TEXAS (continued from page 1)

ble for many years, until a rehabilitation project was recently completed.

The Dallas-Houston section is projected to reduce the "Texas Eagle's" annual operating subsidy by about \$16,000. That Amtrak is investing \$529,000 in capital improvements to make this service possible is an encouraging sign of the railroad's willingness to forego short-term financial payoff to permit strategic service expansion. Amtrak's long-term survival may well depend on the system becoming more relevant to Texas and the Southwest, where population and population growth are both huge and current Amtrak service is so limited.

SP's "Sunbeam" once made the Dallas-Houston run in 4:25—265 miles in 265 minutes, with 1 stop and 1 flagstop! Amtrak agreed to a slow 6:50 schedule (stops: Corsicana, College Sta.-Bryan) to avoid "arguing about it forever" with SP (Amtrak Pres. Claytor's words). Now, however, Amtrak and SP hope to negotiate an incentive contract with

a faster schedule. Also underway or planned are some Amtrak-funded signal improvements to permit higher speeds at several locations, including Ennis and Hearne. The first schedule speed-up will hopefully occur in May.

Enthusiastic crowds greeted a Nov. 14 inaugural train, which received tremendous media coverage throughout Texas. (Also see *Travelers' Advisory*.)

TRAIN CREW TAKEOVERS—PHASE VII

On Nov. 9, Amtrak assumed direct employment of train and engine personnel operating its trains on Southern Pacific: Los Angeles-Houston; on Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe: Ft. Worth-Temple (TX); and on Union Pacific: St. Louis-Ft. Worth, Temple-San Antonio. Employees operating Amtrak's new Dallas-Houston train on SP are also Amtrak's. Only one segment of Amtrak's 24,000-mile system is still operated by contract railroad employees: Washington-Indianapolis ("Cardinal") on CSX.

