

RAILPASSENGERS



WEEKLY HOTLINE

Issue #1,383–February 7, 2025

REMINDER!

Starting in later this month we are changing the distribution list that we send the Hotline to each and every week. If you want to remain in the know and continue to receive this newsletter - please click the link below and fill out the short form.

Thank you!

[Click Here to Sign Up!](#)

Share your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to issues you may have had on a recent Amtrak trip. Thanks to your support and participation in previous surveys, we have been able to take the passenger's voice straight to Congress and Amtrak Executives. Help us keep hammering the message home by sharing this survey with other passengers!



Association News

We're On A Mission...Are You With Us?

[By Jim Mathews / President & CEO](#)

There's a lot of chaos right now involving anything within a reasonable radius of the U.S. government – and that includes Amtrak, transit funding, and research and development. Some of the newspapers are covering it, but many aren't, and if you rely on television for your news you're getting very little of it, or only the most surface bits.

Nonetheless, wholesale cuts to rail services in nearly every community are on the table, along with just ceasing payment on projects already approved, under contract, and with dollars obligated. It's the kind of thing we've never seen before, and it's a huge challenge to anyone who cares about passenger rail, transportation, or indeed many other efforts with significant government involvement.

Here's my promise to all of our 127,000 members, donors, and direct supporters: **no matter what happens, we will stay focused on our mission of bringing more trains, and better trains, to more places, for more people, everywhere.** We've done this since 1967, helping to create Amtrak, pushing back on 1980s and 1990s passenger-rail funding cuts, and then in 2021 helping to create the historic \$66 billion passenger-rail investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

It's not about partisanship. It's about supporting communities through passenger rail and access to public transportation, it's about prosperity for those communities and the places around them – whether they're cities or America's Heartland – and it's about fairness, ensuring that we invest everywhere and not just in the country's power centers or financial capitals.

Next week, the Surface Transportation Board will convene the first of three

2025 meetings of the brand-new [Passenger Rail Advisory Committee](#), of which I am a member. The STB is the economic regulator for railroads and Amtrak, and we've have been working this week on finalizing our agenda for our Feb. 11 all-day session. That meeting will be as good a place as any to continue to fulfill our mission and begin building the case – again – for a robust and well-funded passenger-rail network.

A few things are top-of-mind for us going into next week. First is finding ways to speed project delivery. As I alluded to in my remarks last week to the AASHTO Council on Rail Transportation annual Winter Meeting, we have a broken and inadequate process for adding more frequencies or starting new service in this country. It just takes too long, imposes too many hurdles and obstacles and, in the end, fails to produce either the service we want or even the safety and surety we think we're getting by making it so hard to do.

And speeding project delivery is about more than just starting new train routes. Whether it's building big, complicated things like tunnels and bridges, or small-scale things like platforms, or even creating the industrial base we need to start supplying railcars at the scale and speed that our growth demands, we must find a way to make things faster, easier, and cheaper to do. As a staff, we've been working for more than a year on proposals around creating a national equipment pool for long-distance and intercity passenger cars. It's a pretty simple idea: make it so the car builders will have a market large enough, and sure enough, to commit to building at the pace and volume we need here in America.

We also plan to wave the flag for reforms in liability, insurance cover, and especially indemnification. These issues are enormous barriers to entry for anyone hoping to do something even moderately new in the passenger rail world; my colleague and RPA member Henry Posner III (of Iowa Interstate and Railroad Development Corp fame) describes it as "decriminalizing passenger rail." I'm not sure I'd go **THAT** far, but it's clear that we need an answer to this problem if we're going to create the service everyone wants, needs, deserves, and has repeatedly voted to provide.

On-time performance will also be very high on our to-do list. Passenger trains in this country run too late, too often. Equipment issues don't make up anywhere near the largest share of the reasons for late trains, but they're there, and it's time to look harder at the entire support ecosystem for this equipment to understand why cars and locomotives can't be cared for well enough to run like they do on any other railroad.

Likewise, working out a realistic path so that Amtrak's half-century old legal right to preferential dispatch on the host railroads gets recognized will also be a huge agenda item for us, because that's the number-one reason Amtrak trains run late nearly everywhere. Norfolk Southern was disingenuous when they argued in Federal court recently that Amtrak is looking for the equivalent of a Presidential motorcade across the nation's freight network. A nice rhetorical flourish, but a misrepresentation both of preference as spelled out in 49 U.S.C. § 24308(c) and of what Amtrak wants in its relationship with host railroads.

Nationalizing passenger service under the Amtrak banner in 1971 was a taxpayer-funded bailout of the private railroads, and every year Amtrak exists is effectively a taxpayer subsidy to the freight railroads, who would otherwise have the legal burden of supplying passenger service as a common carrier. Running Amtrak trains like top priority intermodal Z-trains in exchange for that publicly funded largesse – especially when we're generally only talking about one train a day in each direction – seems a fair exchange.

And yes of course we're **STILL** working every day, every hour, with our allies in and out of government to make sure that dollars already obligated for kick-starting vital investment in our long-neglected passenger-rail infrastructure don't get clawed back – especially if it's done in an extralegal way with no precedent or statutory authority.

It's a lot of work, and we have a very small team to do it. That's why I'm asking what I asked at the very top of this piece. Are you with us? Will you help? Will you engage your local and national leaders as a regular citizen? Will you add your voice to these efforts? Will you volunteer? I think I already know the answer, based on the many thousands of responses we saw to our digital Call to Action from engaged members, donors, and supporters when the funding freeze was first announced. I hope you'll keep it up, because we're going to need that kind of response again and again and again.

WE'RE ON A MISSION - DONATE NOW!

DOT Directive Raises More Questions Than It Answers

By Sean Jeans-Gail | VP of Gov't Affairs + Policy

As one of his first official actions, recently confirmed Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy issued a "[Department of Transportation \(DOT\) Order](#)" to administrative offices last week, calling for a complete overhaul of the USDOT's economic analysis of transportation policies, programs, and activities. Unfortunately, the order contains many provisions that are so

broad as to leave transportation industry analysts confused as to the true scope of the order. Additionally, the order includes several caveats that USDOT officers comply with existing statutes and avoid adding unnecessary delays, directives seemingly in contradiction with the main thrust of the Secretary's order.

Focus of Order Unclear

Secretary Duffy's order focuses on denying that the "the social cost of carbon" is a valid metric for evaluating projects, while centering "benefits for families and communities". Putting a renewed emphasis on families and communities is a laudable goal, and *Rail Passengers* can certainly think of ways that USDOT policies can be better tailored to support these objectives. To name only a few of the metrics we would support:

Health costs of car pollution: [researchers have found](#) that "children who live within a block of major roads are one and a half times more likely to report asthma or wheezing than those living four or more blocks away."

Cost of motor vehicle deaths: NHTSA projects that an estimated 40,990 people died in motor vehicle traffic crashes, while the [Governor's Highway Safety Association](#) estimates that drivers struck and killed 7,318 people walking over that same period.

Cost to communities severed by super-long freight trains: ProPublica released shocking footage in 2023 of children in Indiana having to [scramble under stationary trains at blocked railroad crossings](#) just to get to school, a problem that has only gotten worse in the intervening years.

Benefits of Amtrak service to small and rural communities: [Rail Passengers Association's modeling](#) suggests that Amtrak's interconnected services in the Northeast Corridor, the long-distance National Network and the dozens of State-supported Amtrak routes together return between \$7 billion and \$8 billion each year to our Nation's GDP, much of which flows to rural communities with few transportation alternatives.

These are all potential costs and benefits the USDOT could consider, and we would be eager to work with them to advance passenger rail and transit projects that address these problems to create a better transportation network for America's families.

So far, however, the provision that has garnered the most media attention has been a line directing DOT administrators to preference projects to communities with "marriage and birth rates higher than the national average, (including in administering the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant program)". It is unclear how this provision would impact grant selections.

Key Caveats Suggest Limited Scope

It's important to note that the orders contain language that these directives shall be carried out "to the extent practicable, relevant, appropriate, and consistent with the law". This suggests that the USDOT's General Counsel was given the opportunity to review the order to ensure it complies with existing statutes, and that the Trump Administration is learning from early stumbles with Executive Orders that were rushed out the door.

Of course, *Rail Passengers* understands that Secretary Duffy and the USDOT will have discretion in administering grants. This is the nature of "discretionary grants", and anyone who thinks professional DOT staff ought to act as a horde of grant application-sorting robots is fooling themselves.

However, Congress was clear in establishing the metrics for evaluating grant applications in the IIJA. To the extent that the USDOT is complying with the law—which the order takes care to say it will—these new directives would presumably serve as nothing more than a tiebreaker for otherwise equally ranked applications.

Secretary Duffy also seems unsure whether he wants a complete overhaul of USDOT programs or the speedy advancement of infrastructure projects. The order calls on USDOT administrative offices to "update and revise all NOFOs, grant agreements, loan agreements, and other program documents" and review "existing grant agreements, loan agreements, and contracts". However, Secretary Duffy also says his order "should be implemented in a simple, transparent manner that avoids adding unnecessary procedural or regulatory steps or causing undue delay." There is an obvious contradiction between these two directives, and we can only speculate as to which will win out.

In closing, it's worth highlighting the following passage from *Rail Passengers'* President and CEO Jim Mathews' [letter to President Trump](#) in the wake of his first executive order freezing grant disbursements:

"These rail projects have been thoroughly vetted by career Department of Transportation staff and enjoy broad support from Members of Congress from both parties.

"In tracking the implementation of the IIJA, Rail Passengers has identified more than \$28.6 billion in discretionary intercity passenger rail grants issued by the USDOT across 158 passenger rail projects. These grants are

located in almost every state in the nation, from Florida to Alaska. They will benefit millions of Americans, in big cities and small towns, urban neighborhoods and rural communities, Red States and Blue.

“The vast majority of the rail projects in question required state and local governments to provide local funding matches to secure these grants. Delaying disbursements will not only endanger tens of thousands of construction jobs, it will introduce costly delays, which will likely be borne by local governments.”

Continue To Make Your Voice Heard



With the news that the White House has rescinded the OMB memo to halt payments of federal grants and loans but still plans on following the Executive Orders signed by President Trump, **it is more important now than ever to keep the pressure on and continue to make our voices heard.**

There has been a bit of chaos this week, but one thing is for certain: we **MUST** protect the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding for ongoing job-creating and economy-boosting transportation and infrastructure projects.

Click the action alert button below and join us in sending this message to both the White House and Congress

Take Action

NOTICE: We are aware of issues with the alert form showing up blank on with certain browsers/settings. Please make sure whatever browser you use is up-to-date with the latest version.

We have been talking to our CRM vendor for a resolution to this issue.

Field Notes

Rail Round-up

By Philip Mayer, Rail Passengers Volunteer

MARTA Unveils New Trains

On January, 30, MARTA, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transportation Authority, gave the public their first look at their new trainsets, built by the Swiss firm Stadler. 56 CQ400 trainsets with 224 total cars were ordered in November 2019. The trains are still being tested with full deployment happening later this year.

MARTA CEO Collie Greenwood presided over the event held at the Lindbergh Center Station in Atlanta's Buckhead district, telling the crowd, "Your chariot has arrived at last." After riding the train, Greenwood said in a press release, "When I stepped onto that new train this morning, it felt like

stepping into the future. These new railcars are an inspiration to everyone at MARTA and to our customers who will get to experience a cleaner and safer ride – and hopefully one that shows them how transit can make their lives easier and their trip more enjoyable.”

The new trains feature an open-gangway design, along with upgraded lighting and seating, digital displays, and charging ports.

Central Oklahoma Given Federal Grant to Explore a Commuter Rail Line

The US Department of Transportation has awarded the Regional Transportation Authority of Central Oklahoma (RTA) a \$400,000 grant to evaluate 52 at-grade crossings along a proposed commuter rail corridor between Norman and Edmond. Currently, the only transit between the two cities are infrequent buses which can make the 40 mile journey take over three hours.

“This grant will allow us to evaluate and determine which crossings will need upgrades so we can improve traffic patterns across the metro and continue to advance planning for Commuter Rail,” RTA Executive Director Jason Ferbrache said. “Reducing rail congestion will help us create better pedestrian and automobile traffic flow for our residents.”

“One of the benefits to being the last metro of our size to develop a regional transit system is that we get to look at what other cities have done and emulate their success, as well as learn from their mistakes,” RTA Vice Chair Marion Hutchison added. “Commuter Rail service between Norman and Oklahoma City and Edmond would be transformational for those cities, from both a quality of life and economic development perspective.”

RTA and freight railroad BNSF who owns the tracks are still finalizing the exact route for the commuter line.

Utah to Expand TRAX Light Rail Line

UTA, the Utah Transit Authority, has finalized their plans to expand the TRAX light rail line to connect Salt Lake City International Airport with the University of Utah’s Research Park. This new Orange Line will open by 2032, two years before the region will host the Winter Olympics.

“The transit agency selected a plan that it says will make the whole system faster and slightly better for the environment than other proposed options, according to a final report on the project,” the Salt Lake Tribune reported on February 3.

Eight new stations will be built on the new rail line, and existing rail lines will also be altered.

The Tribune reported that “the “new routes will be far cheaper to create than the other options UTA was considering, with a one-time capital cost of about \$400 million to make the changes, plus a roughly \$17 million increase in the annual operations and maintenance costs of the TRAX lines.”

Transit Agencies Honor Rosa Parks

Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks was born on February 4, 1913, and transit agencies across the nation honored her on her birthday. Rosa Parks Day was first proposed by a network of labor unions in 2017. It became Transit Equality Day or Transit Equity Day in 2021 under then US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg.

Parks, who died in 2005, is most well known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956. She is more commonly honored on her birthday with free bus rides for all and with a single bus seat reserved in her memory.

Increasingly, rail transit has been offering free rides and reserving a single seat in her memory as well. The Maryland Department of Transportation offered free rides on all forms of public transit. Denver’s Regional Transportation District (RTD) also waived all fares on February 4.

In the capital region, the Washington Metropolitan area Transit Authority (WMATA) has in the past hung a sign on a single bus seat to commemorate Rosa Parks, did the same on their trains for the first time in 2025.

TriMet, which serves the Portland, Oregon, area waived all bus and rail fares on February 4. “Rosa Parks is an inspiration to me,” said Sam Desue Jr., general manager of TriMet. “Seventy years ago, she had the courage to defy injustice and segregation. By keeping her seat, she took a stand. As the first black person to serve as TriMet general manager, my life has been shaped by Rosa’s legacy, and I’m proud to say that on TriMet, all are welcome. Please, join us, and ride with Rosa!”

Please email [Joe Aiello](#) if you have any local, state or regional stories/projects that you would like to see get highlighted in the Hotline.

What's Your Story?

We want to hear from you

What does passenger rail mean to you and your community?

2025 is going to be a big year for passenger rail advocacy, and we want to know why it matters to you. If passenger rail helps you commute to work, see family, get services you need, or anything else, please tell us.



We're gearing up for a big year of advocacy in 2025, and we want your stories to help us connect to elected officials, government agencies, and local advocates on why passenger rail matters.

We want you to tell us what passenger rail means to you and your community. Whether it helps you commute to work, see family and friends, get services you need, or anything else, please tell us.

Tell Us Your Story!

RAILNATION:DC 2025

RAILNATION: DC 2025

Regional Summits
& Day on the Hill

March 24th - April 3rd, 2025

Rail Passengers Office & Conference Room



Come to DC to tell members of Congress **YOUR** passenger-rail story! This year, our Spring RailNation:DC events will expand to include two full weeks of visits to Capitol Hill, and we need you to stand up and be counted! Visits, along with workshops to help you prepare, will take place over a two-week period from March 24th to April 3rd and will be broken into sessions for nine regions around the country.

RailNation DC Regional Gatherings

Midwest
March 31 - April 1

Northwest,
Southwest, Plains
April 2 - 3



Northeast, Mid
Atlantic
March 24 - 25

South, Southeast,
South Central
March 26 - 27

March 24th & 25th - Northeast and Mid-Atlantic

March 26th & 27th - Southeast, Southern and South Central

March 31st & April 1st - Midwest
April 2nd & April 3rd - Northwest, Southwest and Mountains/Plains

NOTICE! We have received a number of emails from registrants who have been confused by the date listed on the confirmation email. The system we use is defaulting to the first day of the regional sessions, which is March 24th. We are working with the CRM team to correct this, but for now - if you have registered for any of the other dates, those are the dates you attend in DC. Please email our Director of Community Engagement & Organizing, Joe Aiello at jaiello@narprail.org if you have any further questions.

REGISTER HERE!

Registration ends at midnight eastern on March 14th, 2025

Council Business Meeting

Saturday, March 29th, 10:30am-5pm.

Price: \$75 for in-person

* Lunch is included

* Free for those who will be streaming online

Location: [Open Gov Hub](#)

1100 13th St NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005

[Additional Info](#)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Deadline to register is Friday, March 14th at Midnight eastern. Due to building security, we are not allowed to have "walk-ups" for this event - so you MUST register by 3/14.

Hotline Links

A curated selection of passenger rail and transportation stories from this week. Check out our social media feeds on [Twitter](#) & [Facebook](#) to read breaking news and join the conversation!

- [Are passenger trains entering a golden age or reaching the end of the line?](#), **Montana Free Press**

"We are trying to reverse 50 years of neglect, and you just can't do that in a year or two," said Jim Mathews, president and CEO of Rail Passengers Association

- [Amtrak Cascades Line Breaks Ridership Record](#), **Planetizen News**

While it was a record-breaking year for the entire Vancouver-Portland line, the 142-mile trek between Vancouver & Seattle also saw an all-time ridership mark.

- [Bill to decrease Amtrak Cascades travel time introduced in Olympia](#), **My Bellingham Now**

The story above talks about the record-breaking ridership on the Cascades and now, if a group of State Reps have their way, that trip could be about 45-mins faster - with more round-trips.

- [Lt. Governor Flanagan makes stop in Red Wing, meets with business owners](#), **republicaneagle.com**

Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan made a stop in Red Wing, MN to check in with locals on what the Borealis has meant to businesses in town. The train has not only meant more visitors from out of state, but more residents from the Twin Cities are getting out of their cars and making the 45-mile journey.

- [Following the route of Brightline West](#), **Trains**

Trains Magazine's Bob Johnson gives a fantastic and comprehensive "real world" view of the current plans for Brightline West - including the ongoing work and potential hang-ups.

- [Gov. Kehoe requests \\$40.5M to help Kansas City get ready for 2026 World Cup](#), **Missourinet**

Money from this request would go towards funding a 3rd daily roundtrip of the Missouri River Runner between St. Louis & KC.

- [All aboard! Amtrak ridership out of Burlington outpaces expectations](#), **WCAX**

After a 70-year absence in Burlington, riders continue to show that the demand is there.

- [Metro Transit ridership up 6% in 2024, crime down 6%, CBS Minnesota](#)

There is a direct correlation between public transportation ridership numbers going up, and crime going down. The more they ride, the safer it becomes.

- [Bill calls for Connecticut to establish rail service to Hartford-area airport, Trains](#)

CT State Rep. Christopher Rosario (D-Bridgeport) has introduced a bill that would require the state DOT to create a plan for service between Hartford and Bradley Airport in Windsor Locks, using a section of track already nearly completely owned by the state.



[WE ARE NOW ON BLUE SKY!](#)

If you aren't following Rail Passengers on social media, you should be! We are covering all the breaking news America's passengers need to stay informed on local, regional, and national issues.

Upcoming Events

- [RailNation: DC 2025](#)
March 24–April 3
- [21st Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#)
April 7–8



Rail Passengers Association members get a special discounted registration rate for the [21st Annual Southwestern Rail Conference](#), April 7-8, in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

Presentations are already scheduled from Rail Passengers Association President/CEO Jim Mathews, the Texas Department of Transportation, Transportation for America, a Texas Transit Panel, with more to follow. This conference is a unique blend of both important passenger and freight rail issues of the day.

The normal EARLY BIRD registration fee for the two-day all-rail event is \$349, but we have made a limited number of reduced registrations for Rail Passengers Association members at \$199. This includes meals and access to all presentations.

To obtain the reduced \$199.00 registration which includes meals, you must enter "RPA" in the Registration Code field and press enter. The reduced price will not show once the block of registrations is reached.

The conference hotel is the Hilton Garden Inn, which is attached to the Hurst Conference Center. A special rate of \$124 a night is available until the room block is filled.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE - INCLUDING SPEAKERS & HOTEL INFO](#)

Please contact Joe Aiello (jaiello@narprail.org) to have a local, state or regional meeting added to the Rail Passengers calendar (print and on-line) of upcoming events!

Staff Updates

Your staff is at the table, in the field, having the conversations that make a difference for passengers across the country. Learn what they're up to each week and how you can support your Association's key missions!

- **Jim Mathews, President & CEO**, spent the week working with staff and allies on responses to potential cuts in Federal rail and transit funding, as well as fielding press questions about the state-of-play. He also continued to prepare for next week's Passenger Rail Advisory Committee meeting and attended to RPA business matters.
- **Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President of Policy**, worked with staff and the Rail Passengers' Council of Representatives on planning for our Spring RailNationDC advocacy summit, while also working with Congressional offices on several legislative research requests.
- **Jonsie Stone, Chief of Staff**, worked on fundraising solicitations, processed membership dues and donations and tended to the operational and administrative needs of the Association
- **Joe Aiello, Director of Community Engagement & Organizing**, spoke to a number of our supporters on the Association's work to fight back against potential transportation cuts from the new administration. Joe also has been hard at work preparing for the RailNation workshops coming up at the end of March and working with members of the Council & Board on a vote for the 2025 fall meeting location.
- **Kimberly Notarianni, Membership Consultant**, would like to remind everyone that 2024 Tax Statements* are now available. Members or donors with AUTOPAY enabled in Neon should have received a tax receipt in their inbox as of January 31, 2025. Additionally, all Neon users can access a downloadable tax statement through CharityEngine. On a separate note: For those renewing their membership by mail instead of using our online portal, please ensure that it is clearly indicated as a *membership* rather than a *donation*. This can be done by including a note or specifying this directly on your check. If a check is sent with one of our donation forms and no clarification is provided, we are unable to determine that the transaction is intended for a membership renewal. Please remember that donations and Rail Passengers Association memberships are processed as separate transactions.
- **Lili Leonard, Development Assistant**, continues outreach to rail industry businesses to support the Association. We will soon be rolling out a new and improved Community Partners program aimed at engaging tourism bureaus, chambers of commerce, and city/town entities who understand and appreciate the value of passenger rail in their communities! If you live in a community that might be interested in becoming a Community Partner, please send me an email at LLeonard@narprail.org. I would love to hear from you!

****How to DOWNLOAD your 2024 Tax Statement via your Charity Engine Constituent Portal***

As previously communicated on our website, we undertook a CRM upgrade in 2024. As a result membership, donor and event transactions have been housed in two different CRMs. Because of that, tax receipts are being made available to you through both Neon and CharityEngine. If your membership or donation was set to **AUTOPAY** in Neon, you should have received a tax receipt in your inbox as of 1/31/2025. All Neon users can access a downloadable Tax Statement via CharityEngine.

Donations, Event Registrations, New Memberships and Renewals of Lapsed Memberships on or **after September 5, 2024**, are housed in CharityEngine. However, December Neon AUTO-PAY transactions have not yet migrated to CharityEngine. Your Neon Username and Account ID information is already in CharityEngine. Your password was unique to Neon, so you will have to reset that when you first log into CharityEngine.

Charity Engine DOWNLOADABLE Tax Statement Instructions

Your 2024 Tax Statement is available to download in CharityEngine. You can access CharityEngine to review your information by using this link:

membership.railpassengers.org/usercenter/

Log into your Charity Engine Portal:

membership.railpassengers.org/usercenter/ Be sure to check your information and make any updates as needed. There are two ways to access your 2024 Tax Statements in the CE Platform: At the top of the screen, click on **REPORTS AND STATEMENTS**. This will take you directly to the Statement Dashboard. Click on Summary for 2024 and your downloadable 2024 Tax Statement will then be available for you to view **OR** you can scroll down to the bottom of your Constituent Portal and you will see the link Summary for 2024 that you can click on to have it downloaded.

Keep in mind, we are still working in both systems and there are bound to be some hiccups. If you have any questions or need assistance, please email Kimberly Notarianni at Knotarianni@narprail.org or call direct 202-408-8362 ext: 3202



Rail Passengers Webinar Series

Miss out on our past events? You can watch them on our [YouTube channel](#) or through our website at railpassengers.org/webinars



We Have Merch!

OUR ICONIC STATEMENT

For years, the “I’d Rather Be On The Train” bumper sticker was a favorite among our members, with many requesting extras, so they could share with their family & friends. Over time, one of the most asked questions whenever we are in the field has been if we are ever going to bring that sticker back (one day!).

We are, **ONCE AGAIN**, dusting off this classic statement for our holiday merch drop - and this year, with a well known historic twist,

Just as with past holiday designs, this offering is limited, so get your orders in now!

Do you own Association gear? Show us your selfies and let us know what products you want to see next! Contact [Joe Aiello](#) for merch information and questions about our products.





Service Updates
& Timetables



Visit the General
Membership Group

Rail Passengers Timetables

Updated 1/9/2025

Thanks to a collaborative effort between Rail Passengers NYS Council Member Nathanael Nerode & juckins.net's Chris Juckins, we have been able to completely update our timetables resource page.

[CLICK HERE](#)

LOOKING FOR SMARTER
WAYS TO DONATE?



MAKING A CONTRIBUTION
HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER!

Do more with your donations. If you have questions about employer match, gifting a membership, or other questions about how to make a bigger impact, let us know! Your staff is here to help with:

- Online Donations
- Donor Advised Funds
- Employer Match
- RPA Signature Visa Card
- Gift of Membership
- and More!

With multiple secure, protected methods of payment, you have more flexibility in the way dues are paid. Skip the hassle and [contact us](#) today for help setting up automatic or online payments.

- Setup ACH or E-Check with your bank of choice
- Use a Debit or Credit Card to pay online, or
- Send a check to 1200 G Street NW Suite 520 Washington, DC 20005

Other Ways to Make an Impact this Holiday Season

Did you know that individual donors make up more than two-thirds (67%) of charitable giving in the U.S., and that many of those donations are made in the last two months of the year? As you make your year-end giving plans, please consider a contribution to Rail Passengers Association using the methods below – making a meaningful difference for passenger rail in the U.S. while maximizing your tax advantages and fulfilling minimum retirement withdrawal requirements.

Donor Advised Fund (DAF)

Donor-advised funds are the fastest-growing charitable giving vehicle in the United States because they are one of the easiest and most tax-advantageous ways to give to charity. [Click here](#) to learn more and consult with your financial advisor to determine if establishing a Donor Advised Fund is right for you.

Required Minimum Distribution (RMD)

Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are minimum amounts that IRA and retirement plan account owners generally must withdraw annually starting with the year they reach age 73. [Click here](#) to learn more about RMDs and consult with your financial advisor to determine if an RMD is right for you.

Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a direct transfer of assets from an IRA to a qualified charity. QCDs are a popular way for Americans 70 ½

years or older to donate to charity while also satisfying their RMDs. [Click here](#) to learn more about QCDs and consult with your financial advisor to determine if a QCD is right for you.

Member & Donor Notices

- **The Rail Passengers Association is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. Our federal tax identification number is 36-2615221**
- **To help facilitate dissemination of electronic thank you receipts,** please make sure your contact information, **specifically your email address,** is up-to-date in your Neon profile.
- **If you need assistance with your membership,** please call the Office at 202-408-8362.
- **While our staff continues to work remotely, we are unable to provide permanent membership cards.** You can print a temporary membership card by creating an account at www.railpassengers.org (select "My Account" on the homepage).
- **Complete all information!** -- Before sealing your envelope, PLEASE double-check the credit card information on the buck slip!
 - Print credit card information clearly.
 - **Include an expiration date, month and year, as well as the CVV number.**
 - Without **COMPLETE** information, your membership renewal or donation can't be processed.
- **If you have your financial institution send a check on your behalf,** without a buckslip, PLEASE instruct them to add:
 - a notation in the memo field if the payment is for membership dues or a donation, AND,
 - your Rail Passengers Association member ID. If we have multiple members with the same name, i.e., John Smith, it can be hard to identify the correct member to attribute the payment, without the member ID.



Rail Passengers Association members have access to a full service, nationwide federal credit union with extensive product and service offerings. Signature FCU is the exclusive provider of the [Rail Passengers Association-branded Visa credit card](#) with our logo, which supports our work by giving back to our organization, and gives you 1 point for every \$1 you spend to redeem for travel and merchandise. The card has no annual fee, no balance transfer fees, no foreign transaction fees, and has a very low interest rate.



Rail Passengers Association Earns Coveted 4-Star Rating from Charity Navigator

Rail Passengers Association's strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Our Charity Navigator profile can be found by clicking [here](#).

If you have questions, feedback, or submissions for next week's hotline, send us your thoughts! Help us spread the word about your local, regional, and national passenger rail wins.



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS:





RAIL PASSENGERS

EST. 1967

Rail Passengers Association
1200 G St. NW
Suite 520
Washington, DC 20005

P 202.408.8362
F 202.408.8287

www.railpassengers.org

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