
Subject: Amtrak "makes money" on State subsidized Trains report says

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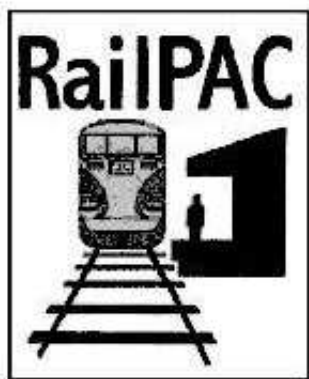
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for March 4, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
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Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Will the Capitol Corridor be extended to a renovated Salinas Station and new stations between it and San Jose by 2017? Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Salinas to San Jose commuter rail service may be a possibility by ...](#)

Santa Cruz Sentinel- Feb 27, 2013

On Wednesday, the Transportation Agency for Monterey County unanimously approved principles of agreement with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority to establish a rail service extension south from Santa Clara County by 2017.

[High-speed rail project on track](#)

KGET 17-Feb 25, 2013

The CEO of California's high-speed rail project says the controversial \$68 billion dollar project is still on track. High speed rail CEO Jeff Morales says he expects to break ground on the first phase of the project this summer.

[Calif. lawmakers scrutinize high-speed rail plan](#)

San Francisco Chronicle- Feb 26, 2013

Tuesday's joint Senate hearing was billed as an opportunity to safeguard the public's interest as lawmakers evaluate whether the agency charged with building the nation's first bullet train has addressed a series of organizational problems, including whether it has sufficient staff and expertise to handle the project.

[Farmers learn about eminent domain process](#)

California Farm Bureau-Feb 26, 2013

Public works under consideration range from water and flood-control projects to utility upgrades to major transportation projects such as California High Speed Rail, a statewide train system for which

construction is slated to start in the Central Valley.

[Madera Co. leader suggests new bullet-train route](#)

Fresno Bee- Feb 28, 2013

Supervisor David Rogers, who represents the Chowchilla area, wants to convince the California High-Speed Rail Authority to use about 30 miles of partially abandoned freight railroad right of way between Merced and Mendota and to enter Fresno from the west along a short-line freight railroad. Doing so, he suggested Thursday, would enable the rail authority to almost entirely bypass Madera County -- which is suing to stop the high-speed train project -- and save the state a pile of money.

This is a route I have recommended for some time. This route would go west instead of north out of Fresno for a future HSR connection to San Jose through the Pacheco Pass. This would avoid the expense of using farmland for a new right of way in Madera County turning west between Fresno and Merced. This is being opposed by the High Speed Rail Authority since they have already invested a great deal of work into the Madera County route. NB

[Fresno County joins Amtrak management agency](#)

Fresno Bee-Mar 2, 2013

Fresno County became the ninth of 11 counties along Amtrak's San Joaquin passenger train corridor to sign on with a new agency to take over the day-to-day management of the line from the California Department of Transportation...

Kings County and Kern County have declared that they don't plan to join, said Thomas Reeves, a spokesman for the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission.

[San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee meeting report](#)

Report by Bruce Jenkins

I attended the SJVRC Meeting on Thursday, 2/28 in Fresno. Some of the more important items are as follows:

Caltrans Division of Rail Chief, Bill Bronte reported :

a) The San Joaquin trains are sporting a 64.5% Fare Box Recovery, the highest in the country...

[Peninsula cities lose bid to half high-speed rail](#)

Fresno Bee- Mar 1, 2013

SACRAMENTO, Calif. -- The cities of Atherton, Menlo Park and Palo Alto have lost a bid to block the California high-speed rail line along the peninsula's Caltrain corridor.

[In France, A Truly Low-Cost High-Speed Rail Option](#)

The Transport Politic Feb 24, 2013

This dedication to opening up speedy trains to people across the income spectrum is unique compared to most other European and Asian countries. In Germany, for instance, train service between major cities is often available at two speeds — fast Intercity-express and slower InterCity, at very different prices. In the U.S., too, a trip on Amtrak's Acela "high-speed" service in the Northeast is routinely \$50 or more than a similar journey on the slightly slower Regional.

[Four Of China's HSR Lines Profitable](#)

Systemic Failure Feb 23, 2013

According to a report late last year, four of the country's high-speed rail lines achieved break-even since the bullet trains started running full-speed, intercity services — with ticket revenues matching costs, including debt payments — on several routes, including Beijing to Tianjin, Shanghai to Nanjing, Beijing to Shanghai and Shanghai to Hangzhou lines.

[Former Amtrak President David Gunn Still Hates Moynihan Station](#)

New York Observer- Feb 27, 2013

“From a transportation point of view,” Mr. Gunn said, “it makes no sense.” For passengers coming from the 1/2/3 trains, “what the Farley Building does, is make you walk from Seventh Avenue all the way across Eighth Avenue.

[Amtrak to provide updates on Gateway Tunnel and NEC Corridor ...](#)

NJ.com- Feb 26, 2013

Petra Todorovich Messick of Amtrak will provide updates on the Gateway Tunnel Project and the NEC Vision Plan for the Northeast Corridor. Todorovich is Amtrak’s senior officer, Outreach and Communications North, NEC Infrastructure & Investment Development.

[How Amtrak Could Become Profitable](#)

Business Insider- Mar 1, 2013

But many of Amtrak’s recent success stories, the report argues, can be attributed to a new model through which states take increased responsibility for funding – and management – of their own train lines. Some states, particularly California and Illinois, have contributed hundreds of millions to their own passenger service since 2007. Direct state funding for the 24 routes shorter than 400 miles was responsible for turning those lines, taken as a whole, from the red into the black.

The conclusions of this report is based on the old computer programers term GIGO: garbage in garbage out. Basing profitability of passenger rail service on Amtrak Accounting is always an exercise in futility. The report by the Brooking Institute that this story is based on concludes that Amtrak can make "money" by running corridor trains and having the States subsidize operations instead of the Federal Government. So where is this State Money suppose to come from and what will keep the States from running these services themselves and saving money?
NB

[All aboard the LOSSAN Express?](#)

Opinion by Noel T. Braymer

Since 1996 Amtrak has spent \$200 million dollars in capital improvements in Southern California. During this same time the Federal Government has granted 24 million dollars. However the State has spent 1 billion dollars and the LOSSAN counties an additional 600 million to increase rail traffic and to reduce running times for passenger trains with more spending planned in the future. Yet running times on Amtrak between Los Angeles and San Diego are still slower today than they were in 1979. Of Amtrak’s 623 million dollars for capital funding from Federal Dollars in the 2012 budget, most of that has gone to the Northeast and that rate of spending of Federal Tax dollars is expected to continue for several years. What Amtrak charges California for rail service has jumped from a few million in 1990 to now about 100 million with little improved service. So now Congress is ordering Amtrak to charge even more?

[State to spend \\$9M on Amtrak PR](#)

U-T San Diego-Mar 1, 2013

Noel T. Braymer of the Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada said he hopes the PR push bolsters Amtrak’s efforts to promote longer trips such as those from San Diego to San Luis Obispo, which are more cost-effective for the rail service. (The trip takes almost eight hours and costs \$59.) “There’s nothing wrong with advertising as long as you get a return on your investment,” said Braymer, of Oceanside. “The only way to make it viable is to make it grow. You can’t cut your way to make it break even.”

[The Coast Starlight and the Coast Line are Just Coasting](#)

Report and Commentary by Russ Jackson