
Subject: No fooling, lots of news and Video links too!

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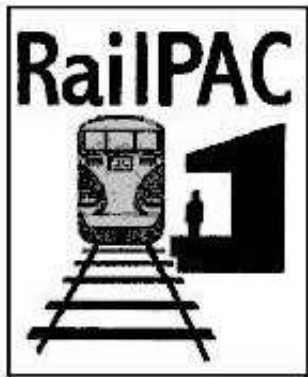
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for April 1, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Big projects Finishing this year! On the left is a view from the train of the new double tracked bridge designed for 90 mph speeds being built over the Santa Margarita River in Camp Pendleton. This \$40.6 million dollar project will include creating a continuous 4.5 miles of new double tracking. This project is scheduled to be finished by mid-year. It is over a year behind its original schedule due to major flooding from one of the few remaining wild rivers in California. On the right is the view at Colton Crossing from the BNSF looking east down the UP next to the new \$202 million mostly taxpayer funded flyover which by the end of this year will carry UP trains over the BNSF. This should open the way for additional Metrolink trains between San Bernardino and Riverside. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Here's a good Powerpoint doc on early findings of Union Station Master Plan process](#)

Posted March 21, 2013 by Steve Hymon

L.A. Union Station Master Plan

This powerpoint mostly goes over the issues at LAUS such as over crowding in the pedestrian tunnel and the future need to build additional access to the platforms as well as a more direct connection between the Gold Line to the Red/Purple Metro Lines. NB

[High-speed rail's strongest backers now express reservations](#)

Los Angeles Times-Mar 26, 2013

First, headline is a little misleading: as the story makes clear, there are other 'strong' backers of the project who don't have reservations. Nonetheless, some project proponents have taken issue with the so-called 'blended' approach that would allow bullet trains to share tracks with commuter trains in Northern California. The concern is that will prevent trains from traveling between Los Angeles and San Francisco in the state-mandated two hours, 40 minutes and that slower trains will need to be subsidized because they can't compete with airlines.

Of course, there are probably many motorists and people who take planes who would be more than happy to take a train between the Bay Area and Los Angeles in five hours or so — instead of the 10- to 12-hour journey now required on Amtrak (when trains are on schedule). But the state Legislature chose to pursue the fast, most expensive option for high-speed rail, leading to the kind of controversies

described in the preceding paragraph. Comments by Steve Hymon on **The Source** about the Los Angeles Times article of the 26th at Metro.net the Website of the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

I believe the voter's priority is for fast, economical rail passenger service that serves the entire State not spending billions extra to insure that one train an hour can run between Los Angeles and San Francisco with only one stop in under 2 hours and 40 minutes. NB

[California's High-Speed Rail Authority Sues Everybody, Invites You To Argue Case In Court](#)

Silicon Valley Mercury News Mar 28, 2013

The lawsuit, titled "High-Speed Rail Authority v. All Persons Interested," is meant as a pre-emptive strike so the state can confirm that it's definitely legal to issue some of the bonds needed to begin bullet train construction this summer. By citing a somewhat obscure California civil code, the state can use the "sue now or forever hold your peace" strategy to prevent a string of future lawsuits and, instead, deal with the legal issues in one fell swoop

[U.S. Report Backs Bullet Train Revenue Forecasts](#)

Los Angeles Times Mar 29, 2013

The GAO study says that the project's ridership and revenue forecasts are reasonable but it renews concerns about future funding

[GAO Report Validates HSR Ridership and Revenue Projections](#)

Mar 29th, 2013 | Posted by Robert Cruickshank

In an attempt to undermine the California high speed rail project Congressional Republicans, led by the Central Valley's Kevin McCarthy and Jeff Denham, sought a review of the project by the federal General Accounting Office. Their hope was that the GAO would find all kinds of major problems with the project that they could use to continue their attack on the project.

Well, that's not what the GAO found. Instead [the GAO concluded](#) that the ridership and revenue estimates were "reasonable" and that the California High Speed Rail Authority followed all laws and best practices in designing and planning the project. Here's how the Authority described the GAO findings:

The lesson from this is you may not like what your asked for. The GAO admits that the current Cal HSR project is not perfect. But it is much more realistic than it was before public scrutiny and the 2012 business plan rewrite supervised by the Legislature appointed California HSR Peer Review Group. There is still room for more improvement of Cal HSR plan, but the most vocal critics of it discredit themselves if they don't know what they are talking about. High Speed Rail works in many places around the world as an engine for economic growth not as a parasite of it. NB

[What CNN Is Missing About High-Speed Rail](#)

Media Matters for America (blog)-Mar 28, 2013

CNN has repeatedly portrayed stimulus funding for high-speed rail as a "boondoggle" because much of the money has gone to upgrading existing rail lines rather than new bullet trains. But the untold story is that Republican obstructionism has halted progress on new high-speed rail lines, which require a long-term investment of time and money.

[Amtrak escapes short-term budget cuts](#)

International Railway Journal-Mar 25, 2013

THE United States House of Representatives approved the 2013 Financial Year Budget Bill on March 21, which will maintain Amtrak's budget ..

[East Lansing-bound Amtrak train derailed in Port Huron](#)

Lansing State Journal- Mar 27, 2013

PORT HURON — Crews are investigating the scene just south of 22nd and Railroad streets in Port Huron where an Amtrak locomotive derailed ...

[Illinois to lead procurement of 200km/h passenger locomotives](#)

International Railway Journal- Mar 26, 2013

THE United States Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has selected the Illinois Department of Transportation (Idot) to lead the multi-state procurement of at least 35 200km/h (**125 mph**) diesel locomotives for passenger operations, Illinois governor Mr Pat Quinn announced on March 21. The new locomotives will be operated on routes in Illinois, California, Michigan, Missouri and Washington state with the federal government allocating \$US 808m to build the locomotives together with 130 double-deck coaches which are currently under construction at Nippon-Sharyo's plant in Rochelle, Illinois.

[Massachusetts Plan Starts Small for Big Upgrade to Rail System](#)

New York Times- Mar 25, 2013

BOSTON — Later this spring, Bostonians eager to flee to Cape Cod for the weekend will have an option other than sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic for 70 miles and fuming along with everyone else. Starting May 24, they can hop a train to Hyannis, where regional buses, ferries and rental cars will await to whisk them out to the beaches, islands and wind-swept dunes.

[Amtrak train adds stop in Bill Clinton's hometown](#)

Belleville News Democrat-Mar 25, 2013

CHICAGO — Amtrak's Texas Eagle has added a stop in Hope, Ark., birthplace of former President Bill Clinton. Starting April 4, passengers can ...

[Amtrak Touts National Train Day in May, Event at Historic Suisun](#)

Patch.com-by Guy McCarthy-Mar 27, 2013

The event is scheduled 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday May 11 at the Suisun City Depot, 177 Main St.

[Amtrak Asks U.S. for \\$2.1 Billion to Buy Trains, Improve Tracks](#)

Bloomberg-by Angela Greiling Keane- Mar 27, 2013

Amtrak, in a letter today to Vice President Joe Biden and House Speaker John Boehner, asked for \$2.1 billion in U.S. funds for its capital budget and \$212 million for debt service for the 2014 fiscal year. In the 2013 fiscal year, Amtrak is receiving \$905 million for those expenses...

Amtrak is looking for more money in legislation to expand service and increase speeds between Washington and Boston, where its share of the rail-air market has doubled in the past decade.

What is missing is capital spending to expand ridership on trains outside of the NEC particularly the long distance trains which often have shorter consists than 20 years ago. Amtrak has less equipment now than it did 20 years ago. You can't earn income selling rides on seats if you don't have enough seats. NB

[Amtrak Reduces U.S. Operating Aid Request After Smaller Loss](#)

Bloomberg-by Angela Greiling Keane- Mar 26, 2013

Amtrak will seek \$373 million in operating support, compared with the \$443 million it's getting this year. It didn't specify how much it will seek for capital improvements. The Washington-based railroad will submit to Congress today its budget request for its 2014 fiscal year, said Steve Kulm, a spokesman.

[12 Things You Don't Know About Amtrak](#)