

with my bike from Old Town to Oceanside. I had begun to suspect that the train would be the single-level equipment, and sure enough when it pulled in, all us "Sunday bikers" were told to move to the dummy Cascades "engine", which contains the cab controls and also serves as the baggage car in the space where the engine was. Bikes were hauled up, and then, at every stop, more would be hauled up and some would be handed down. It was a GREAT deal of effort all around, and could easily create a stop taking many valuable minutes. From what I could gather from chatting with the conductors, the bikes were a big issue. The crew were also truly concerned with being on schedule, for which I laud them. But, coming up with a \$5 fee and limiting the number of bikes per train is perhaps not a good solution. We want to promote discretionary mass-transit use, and this policy does not serve that purpose. We need more service, and using the single-level equipment is a 1950's-era experience that is laughable in one of the most densely populated regions of North America.

We need more non-road-based infrastructure investment, and we need a lot of it. In the meantime, I hope the good folks at the bike coalitions raise hell about this.

Your experience confirms what I had heard that what was behind the fee and reservations on bikes on the Surfliners were because of problems running on-time with the low-level equipment and problems loading and unloading bikes on the Cab/Baggage Car. The Surfliners only have one low-level trainset but it is a major cause of Surfliners being late and is preventing running times being reduced on the the Surfliners. There is a simple solution to this problem. Metrolink is now storing many of its older cars that have been replaced by newer cars. These can be leased and added to low-level equipment trainsets. One or two to theses bi-level cars added to low level train sets will speed up loading and unloading of these train sets at stations. Metrolink has already converted some of these cars as bike cars by pulling out some seats on the lower level. Not only bikes but luggage could be stored on such cars reducing the hassle of using the Cab/Baggage Cars. Also these bi-level cars are easier to use for people with disabilities and have handicap toilets. They also allow groups to sit together facing each other with tables which is very popular with passengers and not available on the low-level equipment. NB

Re: Amtrak President Joe Boardman then and now

My wife and I rode the California Zephyr from EMT to Reno on Monday 13 May and were surprised to see Joe Boardman's 2 cars added to the rear of Train 6 at Sacramento. I understand he was in Sacramento for Train Day but I know no details other than what one of the docents who narrate trip highlights between Sac and Reno told me. I didn't get to talk with anyone from his party like I did when he had his car on the Coast Starlight several years ago (just after he became head of Amtrak). On that occasion we were traveling from San Jose to LAX for a Railpac meeting. He didn't invite us to his car then either but he came into the San Jose station and introduced himself to the Amtrak employees and we had our picture taken with him and his wife and others in his party.

The only impact of having Boardman on the train was we left Sacramento 25 minutes late getting his cars added. We were only 10-15 minutes late into Reno and I am sure they could make that up enroute to Chicago.

How many lifetimes does one have to live to have the President of Amtrak share a train with you? Well, in our experience it can happen twice in a lifetime and maybe more if you travel by train around Train Day.

Roger Baird



Well here is the Amtrak portrait of Mr. Boardman when he first became Amtrak President in late 2008 on the left. On the right 5 years later is the current Amtrak portrait of Mr. Boardman. This is just one of the many changes we have seen with Mr. Boardman over the last 5 years.

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