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**Subject:** The Grim Prospects ahead for our Long Distance Trains

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**From:** Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)

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**To:** ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

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**Date:** Monday, July 15, 2013 9:30 AM

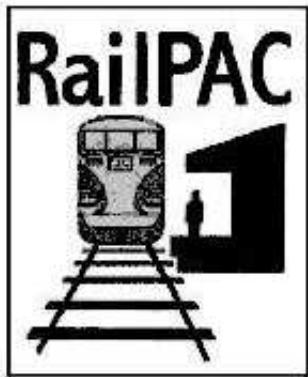
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for July 15, 2013**

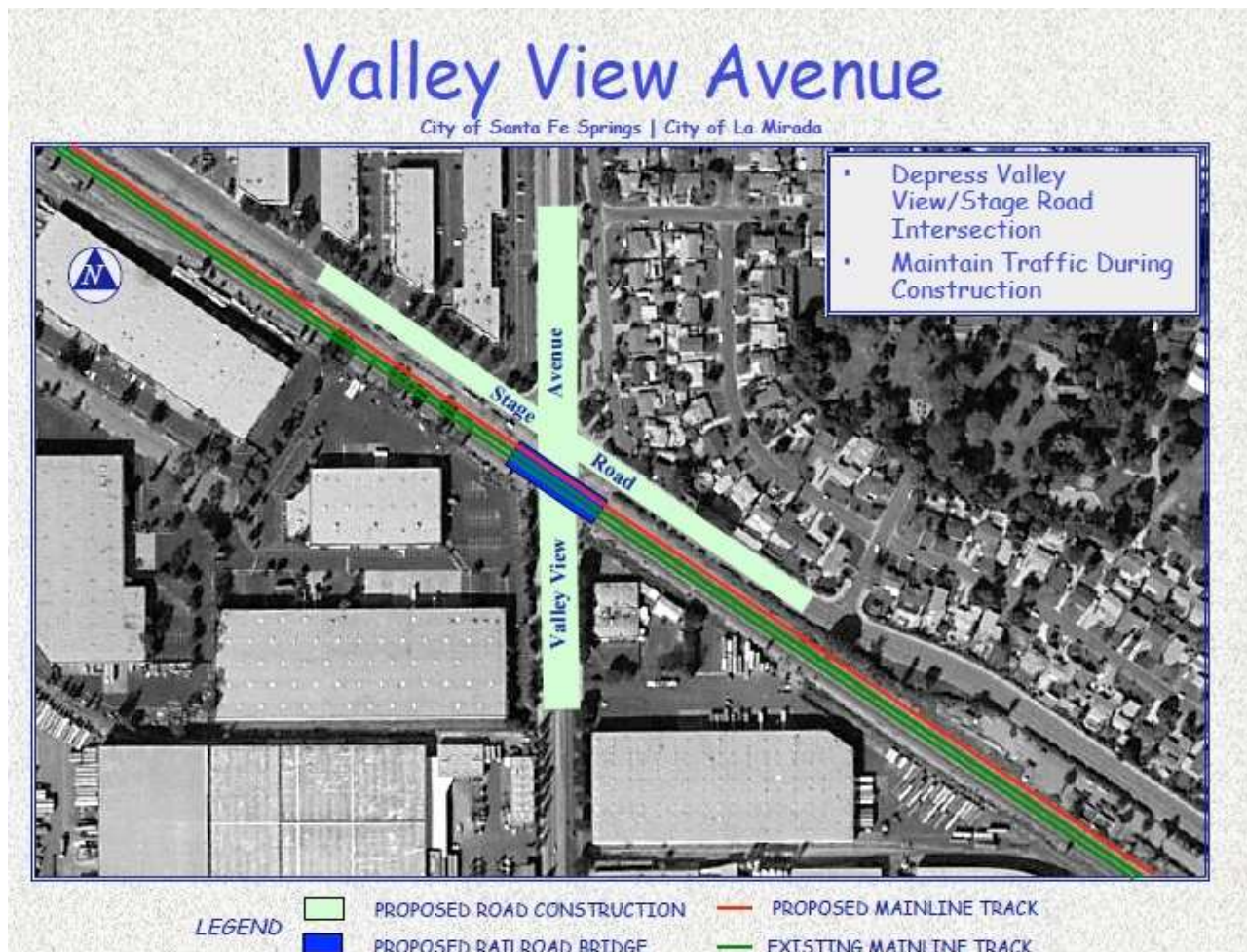
**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
**[www.railpac.org](http://www.railpac.org)**  
**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



Graphic from Caltrans of the latest grade separation project now underway on the BNSF between Los Angeles and Fullerton.

### [Train delay is ordeal for riders](#)

They were kept aboard overnight just 2 miles from Henrico station  
Richmond Times Dispatch - Jul 8, 2013

Amtrak's Train 91, with 261 passengers aboard, pulled into Staples Mill nearly 14 hours late Monday after the dining car became disabled, an Amtrak spokesman said. The Silver Star, running from New York to Miami, departed Washington's Union Station at ...

### [The Grim Prospects ahead for our Long Distance Trains](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

The recent court decision to throw out a part of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008 means that the railroads no longer have to give priority to Amtrak Trains on their tracks. This overturns years of precedent which has given passenger trains priority over freight. Since the 19th Century railroads were expected to operate passenger service and give them priority for the public good.

### [Lac-Mégantic disaster: Engineer blamed for Canada blast](#)

BBC News Jul 10, 2013

A train operator's boss has blamed a local engineer for a runaway train that derailed and exploded in a Quebec town, killing at least 20 people.

Rail World head Edward Burkhardt said he did not believe the last engineer had set a series of hand brakes, despite his protestations.

### [Lac-Mégantic vigils mark one week of mourning](#)

Globe and Mail - Jul 13, 2013

The bells of a Lac-Mégantic church chimed 50 times today in memory of the 50 people who are believed to have died after a horrific train derailment a week ago. The chimes at the Ste-Agnès Roman Catholic church were followed by a minute of silence.

### [Tanker Cars in Fatal Quebec Rail Crash Had Drawn Scrutiny](#)

Bloomberg- Jul 9, 2013

U.S. and Canadian regulators have warned for years that the type of rail tanker involved in a fatal explosion in Quebec is prone to rupturing during derailments.

### [Shipping Oil by Train is Increasingly Common, Despite Safety Risks](#)

FairWarning- Jul 9, 2013

U.S. rail shipments of oil have gone from 9,500 carloads in 2008 to 233,811 in 2012.

### [Amtrak's Boarding Process Madness](#)

Slate Magazine Jul 10, 2013

Here's how boarding a train works. Once you have your ticket and you've ascertained what track the train you want to ride on is coming to and you're more-or-less ready to board, you walk to the appropriate platform.

### [How To Board at Penn Station](#)

Slate Magazine Jul 12, 2013

Yesterday I wrote about the bizarre boarding process that Amtrak uses at Union Station in Washington, which naturally prompted many people to comment to me about the situation at Penn Station in New York, which is also weird. But something a lot of people don't know is that at Penn Station there's actually a loophole that lets you avoid some of the terribleness of Amtrak.

**At LAUS and San Diego Amtrak wants passengers to wait behind a barrier until called to board their trains. This despite anyone who knows these stations can walk past the Amtrak barrier and walk right to the the platforms at these stations. Both Metrolink and Coaster allow passengers to go right to their platform and wait for their train while not blocking the area around the station. Most passenger railroads around the world do this. NB**

### [Amtrak Foe Mica Meets His Match in John Robert Smith](#)

Streetsblog Capitol Hill Jul 10, 2013

Mica railed against Amtrak's "Soviet-style operations" and the money losses on food service aboard the trains and asked Smith if he should "go back and tell that mother [of the soldier not getting hot breakfasts], 'You know, we need to put this money into Amtrak; we can't take any cuts out of Amtrak.'" To which John Robert Smith firmly replied: "That's a false choice, Congressman."

### ["Soviet-Style" Rail Is Actually a Model of Productivity](#)

streetsblog.net Jul 10, 2013

But as Network blog Systemic Failure points out today, "Soviet" rail is actually a model of success:

If only Amtrak were as efficient as the Soviet railways! The Soviet Union is widely regarded as having one of the best railway systems in the world. The Moscow Metro is the most heavily used rapid-transit system outside Asia. And during the Soviet era, the post-war era saw a gigantic expansion of the national rail network.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the railway sector was privatized, and is now one of the biggest infrastructure companies in the world.

### [Amtrak's Fat, Expensive and Slow New Northeast Corridor ...](#)

New York Observer- Jul 10, 2013

Other countries use high-quality signaling to prevent collisions from happening in the first place, and crumple zones to protect light trains in case it does happen. The FRA, on the other hand, insists that American trains be bulked up to survive crashes with minimal deformation, with all of the inefficiencies that heavier trains that must be specially ordered entail.

### [Parallel Infrastructure exec tells Congress how to fund Amtrak](#)

Business Journal-Jul 10, 2013

The U.S. government could build and lease assets on railroad right-of-way in order to fund Amtrak operations, a local land management company executive said this week.

### [Police investigate early morning robbery at Davis Amtrak station](#)

Sacramento Bee-Jul 9, 2013

Davis police are looking for two men who robbed the Amtrak station and tied up an employee early this morning. The men confronted the ..

### [Amtrak: No discussions on LV Railway attaching lounge cars](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal- Jul 8, 2013

An Amtrak spokeswoman said that there are no plans or even discussions to have the Las Vegas Railway Express attach luxury lounge cars to trains running between Houston and New Orleans.

### [San Francisco to L.A. in 30 Mins](#)

Yahoo News Jul 9, 2013

ET3's Hyperloop-like project already has a number of schematics and plans already in place. They claim an automobile-sized, six-passenger capsule constructed for "outer space" travel conditions could easily reach speeds of 4,000 miles per hour on longer journeys across the country or across continents. In theory, this elevated tube system could be built for a tenth of the cost of high-speed rail and a quarter the cost of a freeway. The projected cost for a passenger to travel from Los Angeles to New York is \$100.

**What is being proposed are elevated tubes 5 feet in diameter. In them a pressurized mag-lev pod weighing 400 pounds carrying 6 passengers and luggage would travel in a vacuum with almost no friction and needing little energy for propulsion. A single High Speed Train can easily carry 600 passengers with between 6 to 20 such trains running in one direction per hour. To just carry 600 passengers on the Hyperloop would require 100 carloads an hour. That's a pod every 36 seconds. The closest separation allowed between trains is 90 seconds for roughly 2 blocks of separation. At up to 4,000 miles per hour how quickly can one of these pods stop and how much distance is required to do so? There is also the problem of finding right of way. If you build on top of the surface how sharp a curve can you take at such high speeds in a tube. No available right of way exists without some sharp curves. Then there is the problem to getting to and from your final destination to and from where ever the stations are for Hyperloop. For now ET3 is planning to build a 3 mile test track. NB**



# 2013 Steel Wheels Conference Joint RailPAC-NARP members meeting

**Saturday, October 5, 2013**  
**Port of San Francisco Community Room**  
**Pier 40 • Embarcadero, San Francisco**

**10:30 am-3:00 pm** with a break for lunch (*not provided*)

Doors Open 10:00 am

RailPAC members business meeting 3:00 pm

## 2013 Conference Program Includes

**High Speed Rail** – Dan Richard, CHSRA

**Northern California Regional Rail** – Dan Leavitt, SJVJPA

**Caltrain Modernization** – Marian Lee, PCJPB

**Amtrak and the National Network** – Robert Stewart, Chairman, NARP

[Click here for the latest informaton](#)

### [Metrolink Shut Down After Fire in Industry](#)

NBC Southern California - Jul 9, 2013

A three-alarm fire in the City of Industry left three firefighters with minor injuries and prompted the closure of two Metrolink lines on July 9, 2013

### [Perris Metrolink extension back on track](#)

Inland Empire News- Jul 10, 2013

RIVERSIDE – (INT) – State Senator Richard Roth has brokered an agreement that will extend Metrolink service to Perris.

### [TRANSPORTATION: Rail link to Ontario airport studied](#)

Press-Enterprise- Jul 10, 2013

The ultimate goal is to provide rail connections within walking distance to the airport terminals, a staff report states.

### [Concepts for High Desert Corridor unveiled](#)

Los Angeles Daily News- Jul 10, 2013

Transportation officials unveiled Wednesday various concepts for a proposed High Desert Corridor from the Antelope Valley to San Bernardino County that would allow travelers to bypass some of the busiest freeways in Los Angeles County, and potentially link the California High Speed Rail project to Las Vegas.

### [Feds halt loan review for Las Vegas-to-California high-speed train"](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal- Jul 12, 2013

The XPressWest application for a \$5.5 billion loan has been backed by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., who spoke recently with President Barack Obama about it.