



This picture from October of 2010 shows construction of a second new 1st Street Bridge as part of the construction of the Gold Line to East Los Angeles. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

Re: Nevada semi hitting the Zephyr

The issue is not, Did the truck driver see the train? Of course he saw the train. The problem is that, after having seen it he did not take appropriate action to avoid hitting it.

I would guess that the great majority of crossing accidents do not involve drivers who did not see the train, but drivers who saw it and did not draw the correct conclusions from what they saw.

Michael Mahoney

Re: Questions on Traveling on Amtrak's Long Distance Trains

I am planning a trip to the Midwest in late September and will go on the Southwest Chief out of Fullerton and return on the Texas Eagle/Sunset limited to LA. My question is that in years past before Amtrak all the top passenger trains had toilets in all the Roomettes and bedrooms. Now only the deluxe bedrooms have toilets. I find this a very inconvenience for a older person traveling alone in a Roomette to walk down the hall in the middle of the night to use the toilet. When they build new Pullman coaches will there be any consideration to placing toilets in all the bed rooms?

Secondly my daughter and daughter-in-law considered traveling with me, and wanted a bedroom with a toilet and some 45 days in advance all bedrooms are sold out? It would seem that Amtrak should consider more Pullman cars be added when they sell out that far in advance to get more revenue.

Tom Lorden

Tustin, Ca

I asked RailPAC's expert and frequent Long Distance Train rider Russ Jackson to reply to Mr. Lorden's questions NB

On the two trains you will be traveling the cars are the bi-level Superliners. Only the "deluxe" bedrooms have a toilet in the room, in a closed door facility that is also a shower. Downstairs are the "family" room and the "handicapped" room. See the Amtrak description of these rooms on www.amtrak.com. The smaller bedrooms require use of the common facilities: There is one on the upper deck across from the staircase, the others are downstairs, and there is a shower room downstairs also. On the eastern trains that use low level "Viewliner" cars there is a facility in each bedroom, but it is not isolated as it is on the Superliner deluxe bedrooms. There are no current plans for new Superliner type cars, but they are buying 130 Viewliners, some of which will be bedrooms. Those cars will be used on the eastern trains. They are rebuilding Superliner cars, but those will be exactly like they are configured now. Much of that

fleet has already been rebuilt.

You have hit one of Amtrak's problems right on the head: Why aren't cars added to trains that are already sold out. We have been pounding that issue at them for years, and they are only willing to add a car at the beginning of a season. They claim that it screws up their crews, costs, etc., but ignore what the additional revenue added to a train already scheduled to run would bring in.

Thank you for your note.

Russ Jackson

Re: Amtrak's future plans for Long Distance Trains?

I like to know. Does Amtrak currently have enough equipment to extend the California Zephyr from Emeryville to Los Angeles overnight?

And second, Has there ever been any discussions about a Los Angeles to Denver Train, via Albuquerque?

And or even having a section of the SW Chief to make a run to and from Denver?

I was just wondering. Thanks for your time and wonderful insights

Jerry Martin

It will take only one additional trainset to extend the Zephyr to Los Angeles along the Coast. Amtrak currently has just over 100 unassigned Superliner Cars. Extending the Zephyr is held back from people in Chicago opposing it because it might move the maintenance from there to Los Angeles and it will provoke a fight with the UP which will oppose it. In theory Amtrak has the legal right to run more trains on any Class I railroad if it wants too but isn't willing to fight the railroads to expand service. Amtrak isn't looking to expand any of the Long Distance Trains. They have convinced themselves that the more people they carry on the LD Trains the more money they lose. They are more interested in running short distance heavily subsidized local services with local state money. The progress made in California has mostly been from local efforts at the State (Legislature and Caltrans) and city and county level to push Amtrak to change. The same will be true for Long Distance service if it is to survive and thrive. NB

Opinions expressed in this enewsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

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