



A banner seen here at the City of Orange Station. These banners are at most Orange County Metrolink Stations for a discount to the Orange County Fair (July 12-August 11) when riding Metrolink and using the connecting bus shuttles. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Coast Line better for ridership than the San Joaquin Valley

I read with considerable interest your blog entry, “It’s Hard to get Around California by Train”, July 27th, 2013.. As a rail enthusiast who travels frequently between SF and LA, I’ve often thought about why we don’t have better standard rail service on this trip, a trip that is such a good candidate for rail service that we’re in the process of spending upwards of \$100 billion to bring high-speed rail service to it. I think your post really misses the mark though. I don’t think standard passenger rail service that involves a bus transfer will ever get any traction, no matter how much faster the rail segment is. I also think the Central Valley will never be a good destination. Basically, walking off the train or having to transfer to a bus in Bakersfield, Madera or Fresno is never going to be an attractive proposition for a significant number of people. High speed rail is obviously appropriate there because it’s the faster route and that’s where the growth is going, and can be directed, but I fail to comprehend why we can’t have a fleet of four trains, two sleeper car night trains, and two regular daytime trains, running up and down coastal area of the state from San Diego to Sacramento, hitting most of the major cities and destinations along the way. Assuming we can improve the timetables just a bit, if we had schedules that looked something like this, I think we would get a lot more ridership.

D. Malcolm Carson

Los Angeles

You won't get an argument that the Coast Line isn't an excellent candidate for more and better

passenger service from me. One major problem with the Coast Line is the UP which owns it shows no interest in allowing more passenger service on it. For over 15 year the State has been trying to extend the morning train out of Los Angeles for San Luis Obispo to San Francisco without success. The other problem is the State doesn't have money at the moment to start up more service on the Coast Line than what is planned even if it got an agreement for more trains from the UP tomorrow. What we do have is money for faster rail passenger service in the San Joaquin Valley and for additional trains and locomotives for expanded and faster service there. Direct service is always better than connecting service. But the San Joaquin Trains have seen ridership grow greatly over the years with a system of connecting buses to the rest of the State. The San Joaquin Valley is the only game in town for the next few year so we have make the best of it.

Re:Runaround for Coaster and Trolley passengers at San Diego Depot

After not being able to get an answer from the Coaster or Amtrak, I happened on your website and thought perhaps you might have an answer to our question. We often take the Coaster from Oceanside to San Diego. It is cheaper than driving. However, recently the station has been put off limits for Coaster and Trolley passengers. They have inconvenienced a lot of people I would imagine. You have to go around the station to board the Coaster. A surly employee told me there was a restroom somewhere across the street. Do you know why they have closed off the station?

Thanks for your input.

Name withheld for privacy

Amtrak is responsible for the operation of the Santa Fe Depot which it leases. Amtrak generally has a policy of keeping people off of platforms for their trains until just before departure or arrivals. In this they are unique in California and much of the world for passenger rail service. Coaster and Trolley Trains and passengers have easements rights to use the area around the Depot. Passengers should join RailPAC and direct their complaints about this issue to the operators of the Coaster and Trolley who deal directly with Amtrak on the use of the station. NB



This is Amtrak's "Welcome Sign" (**Walk Around**) for Coaster and Trolley Passengers to the platform entrance of the Santa Fe Depot at San Diego. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

Re:Reporting the facts

Your comment in the latest news letter that "If that wall hadn't been there it is likely no one would have been killed." is very irresponsible and just not true. A train traveling at that rate and derailling would have left people fatally wounded regardless if a wall was there or not.