

Cadiz Southeastern Railway to operate one of the longest steam train routes in the U.S. as tourist attraction in California's Mojave Desert



Finally it is starting to look like the often rebuilt new double track bridge over the Santa Margarita River Bridge in San Diego County is getting finished and could be in service sometime finally next year. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## We Get Email

### Re: The Surfliner/Coaster

I have some questions/comments on the recent announcement of additional stops on the Pacific Surfliners.

- 1.) LOSSAN JPA represents all the counties along the route of the Pacific Surfliner. Why is it that the North County Transit District (NCTD) seems to be driving critical Pacific Surfliner schedule decisions? Did the other members of the JPA evaluate the impact of this change on the riders from their counties?
- 2.) In addition to the additional North County stops, additional trains are now stopping at Old Town in San Diego;
- 3.) Caltrans developed the California Demand Forecast Model to analyze operational changes to its train routes and forecast estimated changes in ridership and revenues. Why was that not done for the additional North County stops?
- 4.) There is a plan for the LOSSAN Corridor, The LOSSAN Corridor Strategic Implementation Plan. The preferred option for the Pacific Surfliners as outlined in plan is for intercity service to be a faster, limited stop service. The recommended limited stop intercity service maximizes intercity ridership and revenues;
- 5.) Adding schedule time increases labor costs. Was there an estimate of the increase in Amtrak train crew and on-board labor costs plus Amtrak overhead markup when this proposal was being evaluated?

6.) As has been noted, longer running times result in reduced ridership and revenue from longer distance riders. The result will be a combination of lower revenue and higher costs. Who pays for this gap?

7.) Finally, there is a simple metric to measure the value of these additional North County stops. In 2012 the key intermediate stations between Los Angeles and San Diego (Fullerton, Anaheim, Irvine, Oceanside and Solana Beach) generated about 46 riders, on and off, per train. Two other intermediate stops, San Juan Capistrano and Santa Ana, generate about 28 on and off riders per train. That is the metric to measure the productivity of the new stops in 2014.

Steve Roberts

**LOSSAN formally had no role in this project. This was worked out primarily between North County Transit District with Amtrak and Caltrans which LOSSAN will soon take over administration of the Surfliners from. Amtrak is excited over the prospect of larger head counts with the commuter riders and revenues for these short trips. It took over 2 years to get the latest "express" train off of the LOSSAN Corridor which was a failure as I predicted. The question is how long before we get the numbers to see what this does to the Surfliner's revenue and ridership. NB**

### **Redetermining the Preferred Alternative for the California HSR Project.**

Perhaps a reevaluation of the Altamont and Tejon routes would disclose similar large cost increases like those for the Preferred Alternative, but this is doubtful. The CHSR Authority needs to reconsider the reasoning that led it to choose an extremely expensive project. It may not want to change the Preferred Alternative but in fact this is fairly easy to do so, and may be the only option to forging ahead with a project that is simply not financially viable.

John Deeter, Sacramento

**The route is based on who wanted it and where they wanted it. People in the Antelope Valley want High Speed Rail and its population is significant enough to be served. The Tejon Pass is owned by the Tejon Ranch which has said it doesn't want High Speed Rail and few people live in the Tejon Pass so a station isn't needed. The Altamont Pass will be served with expanded and faster ACE service in the near future. But the Altamont Pass doesn't serve San Jose or Palo Alto which the Pacheco Pass does. The cost of the California High Speed Rail project is based largely on the cost of building a railroad for 220 mile per hour speeds not the location of the mountain passes. The only way to significantly lower the costs will be to build for slower speeds and or reduce the amount of tunneling by running at steeper grades in the mountains. The Legislature ordered an independent review by experts of the High Speed Rail planning. This was undertaken by members of the UIC, the International Union of Railways. Their report was published in January 2013 and was written by experts in High Speed Rail from the French, Spanish and Italian National Railways. Their conclusions included that "no fatal flaws were found on the O&M (operating and maintenance) cost process". The UIC report did recommend the project should include yield management of ticketing to increase ridership and revenue. In general the UIC recommend more work was needed to refine the CHSRA plan. They did not recommend any changes to the route. NB**

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

**The RailPAC Mission:** Passenger Rail advocacy, Publications...both print and electronic, Representation at regional meetings, and Rail education.

**Join us!** More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

**You can send your comments to me at [nbraymer@railpac.org](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org)**

**For those who would like an additional copy of the eNewsletter with plain text (minus photos and graphics) just email me at [nbraymer@railpac.org](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org) with your name and email address. NB**

**If you are not a member of go to [RailPAC Membership...Join Us!](#) to get information about RailPAC and a FREE copy of our regular newsletter .**

For information about RailPAC, contact the Membership Office

Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California

1017 L Street, PMB-217

Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at [info@railpac.org](mailto:info@railpac.org)

Call at **(415) 7-TRACK-2**  
(415) 787-2252

[Unsubscribe](#) from this list.

Copyright (C) Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC) All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend

[Update your profile](#)

The MailChimp logo is displayed in a light blue rounded rectangular box. The text "MailChimp" is written in a dark blue, cursive script font.