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**Subject:** How can we get more Long Distance Passenger Trains which Americans want?

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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, November 4, 2013 9:33 AM

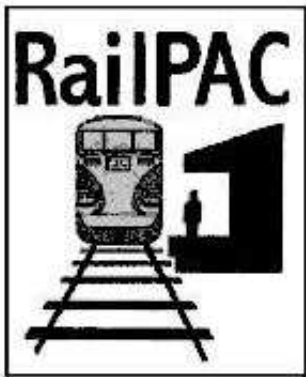
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for November 4, 2013**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**

### Amtrak Fiscal Year 2013

The Pacific Surfliner finished federal fiscal year (FFY) 2013 (October 2012 through September 2013) with 2,705,823 passengers, an increase of 2.5 percent over FFY 2012 maintaining its rank as the second busiest rail corridor in the nation. Revenue on the Pacific Surfliner was up 6.8 percent over last year which ranks as the third best corridor in terms of revenue. The Amtrak California services continue to be among Amtrak's best performing corridors in terms of ridership generating 18 percent of Amtrak's total ridership. State-supported Amtrak services continue to represent more than half of Amtrak's overall ridership.

Top 10 Amtrak Ridership Corridors FFY 2013			Top 10 Amtrak Revenue Corridors FFY 2013	
Ridership Rank	Corridor	Ridership (Millions)	Revenue Rank	Corridor
1	Northeast Corridor	11.4	1	Northeast Corridor
2	Pacific Surfliner	2.7	2	Empire Builder
3	Capitol Corridor	1.7	3	Pacific Surfliner
4	Keystone	1.5	4	California Zephyr
5	San Joaquin	1.2	5	Southwest Chief
6	Empire (NYP-ALB)	1.1	6	Empire
7	Hiawatha	0.8	7	Coast Starlight
8	Cascades	0.8	8	Silver Meteor
9	Chicago-St. Louis (Lincoln Service)	0.7	9	San Joaquin
10	Washington-Newport News	0.6	10	Keystone

This is an informational item from the agenda for the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee for November 1st. This shows that for all the talk about Amtrak ridership, the Long Distance Trains individually produce the most revenue.

### [Amtrak routes through western Kansas and elsewhere are in jeopardy](#)

Kansas City Star - Oct 28, 2013

States have shown they're willing to pay for popular Amtrak corridors within their borders, but it's less than certain that they could assume responsibility for more than a dozen cross-country trains that date to the 1970 creation of Amtrak by Congress.

### [Editorial: Amtrak's record ridership shows support for system](#)

Longview News-Journal- Oct 30, 2013

We know some question the need for it, but Amtrak is playing an increasingly important role in helping Americans get from here to there.

### [Without aid, Amtrak could exit rural America](#)

Appeal-Democrat- Oct 29, 2013

One of those trains is the Southwest Chief, which clicks off 2,265 miles between Chicago and Los Angeles. With the exception of Kansas City, Mo., Topeka, Kan., and Albuquerque, N.M., the backdrop is mostly prairie, mountains and desert. But the train also serves dozens of small towns, including several in western Kansas.

### [Amtrak route across Kansas appears threatened](#)

Wichita Business Journal-Oct 28, 2013

Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico likely will have to come up with \$100 million over the next few years to keep the Southwest Chief Amtrak ...

### [Americans' appetite for Amtrak service growing](#)

DesMoinesRegister.com- Oct 28, 2013

No wonder a new poll of Iowans conducted by St. Paul, Minn.-based DFM Research shows that more than seven out of 10 residents in Polk County and the southwestern counties of the state want to increase federal government investment in Amtrak, or at the very least keep it the same.

### [Political party labels aside, Americans want to ride Amtrak](#)

Osceola Sentinel Tribune- Oct 4, 2013

In a poll conducted by DFM Research of St. Paul, Minn., from February to September 2013, eight districts in Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri were polled and 70 percent of respondents said they support a robust federal government role in funding Amtrak. And in Illinois' 3rd District, which includes the Chicago Amtrak hub, the percentage jumped to 80 percent.

### [West Lafayette could pony up \\$200K to keep Amtrak rolling](#)

Journal and Courier-Oct 31, 2013

West Lafayette City Council likely will approve an ordinance Monday to fund the city's portion of the agreement reached with Amtrak to continue ...

### [Without federal aid, Amtrak could leave rural areas behind](#)

Fort Worth Star Telegram-Oct 28, 2013

And as some states and cities have discovered, once you lose a train, it's even more expensive to get it back.

Wichita, Kan., lost Amtrak service during the Carter administration. This past year, the city applied for a \$12 million federal Department of Transportation grant to conduct environmental studies and design work to extend the Heartland Flyer, from Fort Worth and Oklahoma City to Wichita and ultimately Kansas City. The application wasn't approved.

### [Is It Time to Franchise the Long Distance Passenger Trains?](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

What's the answer for America's Long Distance Passenger Trains? Since W. Graham Claytor retired as Amtrak President in 1993 the Long Distance Trains have been slowly decaying. New and more equipment is needed now just for current demand. The equipment is now not being properly maintained which often causes problem on the road and delays. The railroads are increasingly unhappy with Amtrak because they don't get paid enough to make money with Amtrak's trains and often deal with its breakdowns. How can we turn things around to create a growing, vibrant and self-supporting Long Distance Passenger Rail service in this Country?

### [Italy's train wars: The long, winding road of competition](#)

Washington Post-Oct 28, 2013

Italy's rail wars have become a litmus test for efforts to inject more dynamism into ailing European economies. For Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori (NTV), the company that operates Italo trains, the results so far have been tragicomic, a reminder of how hard it can be to wrest power from state-run companies — a process that economists say is essential to putting the continent on firmer ground.

### [High-Speed Rail: the future of freight](#)

World Finance-Oct 30, 2013

There is considerable demand throughout Europe for governments to spend money developing high-speed rail (HSR) to alleviate congestion in busy city centres and improve trade links between the 28 member states. China on the other hand continues to outspend the rest of the world with a \$300bn (€224bn) investment to lay 17,000 miles of new HSR, which it claims will be fully operational by 2020. With all the obvious benefits for both trade and passenger transport, rail looks to be the solution to bridging the gap across Eurasia and reviving the historic Silk Road trading routes of the past.

## [Calif. High-Speed Rail seeks east route through Kings County -- again](#)

Fresno Bee-Oct 31, 2013

Additionally, if a train station is ever built for residents in Kings and Tulare counties, the eastern alignment would be closer to Highway 99 and the cities of Hanford and Visalia, the report said.

## [High Speed Rail moves closer to Tulare County](#)

Visalia Times-Delta-Nov 1, 2013

In a move that drew positive reviews from Visalia City Council members, a California High Speed Rail Authority representative announced Thursday afternoon that the rail authority staff now supports the eastern track alignment, which would place the proposed train station closer to Visalia and Tulare.

## [Stage set for HSR courtroom rumble](#)

The Sentinel Oct 28, 2013

HANFORD — The legal stage is set for a Nov. 8 court hearing that could decide the fate of California's high-speed rail project.

Kings County plaintiffs, including a farmer, a homeowner and the Kings County Board of Supervisors, filed a document this week arguing that the California High-Speed Rail Authority is breaking the law by spending Proposition 1A money without having secured funds to finish the project's first functional section.

**What is often ignored is Prop 1A called for Public and Private Financing for California High Speed Rail. Opponents claim the taxpayers will pay the full bill. Getting private financing for transportation projects is done all the time including passenger rail projects around the world. California needs to get to the point where they have enough HSR built first that can operate at a profit before lenders will get involved to complete the system. The California High Speed Rail Project will serve several major markets comparable to other successful High Speed Rail Projects which should produce an operating profit to pay future financing cost for much of the project. NB**

## [Egypt mulls selling shares to fund high-speed rail line](#)

Reuters-Oct 24, 2013

CAIRO, Oct 24 (Reuters) - The Egyptian government is considering selling shares to the public to help finance a high-speed passenger rail project extending up the Nile valley, al-Mal newspaper quoted the transport minister as saying.

The railway would run from Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast to Cairo and then to the tourist centre of Luxor in the far south, a distance of 800 km, minister Ibrahim El-Demiri told the financial daily.

## [Six RailPAC PHOTOS of the Month \(from October, 2013\)](#)

Here are this month's 6 photos by RailPAC photographers. Click on each photo to see it full size! Contributions to this page are welcome. Send your jpg rail photos to RailPAC Photo Editor, at [info@railpac.org](mailto:info@railpac.org). Russ Jackson, Photo page editor.

## [Amtrak Investigates Possibility Of Second Train Between Twin Cities ...](#)

Wisconsin Public Radio News-Oct 30, 2013

Amtrak, along with the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin, is looking into a second passenger train to travel between the Twin Cities and Chicago.

## [Officials look at faster Amtrak service through St. Louis-Alton ...](#)

STLtoday.com-Oct 28, 2013

Like many other Amtrak riders, Costello looks forward to the completion of a high-speed route through Illinois that could cut travel time to just about four hours, with trains capable of speeds approaching 110

mph in places.

But there is a significant impediment: The urban stretch from the station at the edge of downtown St. Louis to the station in Alton is slow going on rails shared with a high volume of freight.

### [Open Bridge Halts Amtrak Service Between Penn Station](#)

CBS Local-Oct 27, 2013

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork) — Amtrak service between Penn Station and New Rochelle was delayed Sunday night due to bridge problems.

### [Britain braces for massive storm](#)

KFMB News 8-Oct 27, 2013

Eurostar said it would not be able to run any cross-Channel rail services until 7 a.m. on Monday to allow for train lines to be inspected.

### [More Than 1,000 Southern California Leaders Gather In Support of Transportation Investment at Mobility 21 Summit](#)

Business Wire Oct 29, 2013

During the Summit, Hon. Diane DuBois, Chair of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, emphasized the role of leveraging local funds.

"Metro and other Southern California transit agencies are stepping up to the plate to support our mobility infrastructure — as are our taxpayers, who have voted time and again to tax themselves for mobility," said DuBois. "But we simply don't have the money we need to deal with all the issues. We must convince Congress to update the gas tax and perhaps create an infrastructure bank that we can use to leverage the transportation taxes our voters have been generous and farsighted in supporting."

### [Chart of the Day](#)

Wonk Wire Nov 1, 2013

A Sharp Drop In Government Infrastructure Spending.

**This is just for spending in the last 8 years. This doesn't even compare spending 40 or 50 years ago adjusted for inflation. NB**

### [New Wave of Development Follows Streetcar Construction in Mid-Sized Cities](#)

DC.STREETBLOG.ORG Oct 28, 2013

Kansas City hasn't even begun construction yet on the 2-mile, \$103 million streetcar project. But the project is already spurring the kind of development that promoters hoped for. In addition to the apartment complex, the streetcar line also attracted a new, 257-room hotel. In what locals tell us is a rarity for downtown projects, the hotel received no subsidies.

### [Sham of 'free parking' just one of the hidden costs associated with urban sprawl](#)

The Globe and Mail Oct 28, 2013

When we compare the cost of urban and suburban living, we mainly look at the cost of housing. But in your report you say when we do number crunching for the long-term, there are other things we should consider.

The real cost is transportation.

### [Portland swapped 163 on-street car parkings spaces for 1,644 bike spots! \(video\)](#)

TreeHugger Oct 29, 2013

Milestone: 100 bike parking corrals and they can't keep up with demand

Why are bike corrals so great? Because in a dense urban environment, they are very space-efficient; where 1 or 2 cars could park, dozens of bikes might fit. The Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) said

that their bike corral program "has helped Portland businesses increase on-street customer parking ten-fold."



A recent view of the Caltrain Station in San Francisco with a view of the new tall building seen behind it. Economic growth and construction often follows transportation improvements. The combination of improved Caltrain service and expansion of the Muni Metro N and T lines near Caltrain and the new Giant's Baseball Stadium are clearly having an impact. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [A Wireless Electric Bus That Charges Instantly At Every Stop](#)

Fast Company Oct 25, 2013

The system is now being commercialized by the Wireless Advanced Vehicle Electrification (WAVE), a Utah State University startup, according to Wired. Prototypes are only in Utah for now, but WAVE is reportedly in discussions with New York, Seattle, and Monterey, California, to introduce the buses by the end of 2014.

### [Expo Line Phase 2 reaches the halfway point](#)

Culver City Observer Oct 31, 2013

Phase Two of the Expo Line construction reached its halfway point at the beginning of October. According to project manager Brian Freund, Skanska-Rados Joint Venture (SRJV), the contractor for the Expo Line construction, has worked one million hours on the project since its beginning in June 2011 and has not recorded any shifts lost due to injury.

### [Here is the latest presentation on the Purple Line Extension's first phase, including a construction timeline](#)

The Source Oct 31, 2013

There isn't anything dramatically new in the presentation, but it does provide a nice summary of various activities taking place as the project gets ready to start construction next year for its first phase between Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/La Cienega.

### [More parking available for Metrolink riders in Orange County](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Oct 31, 2013

Metrolink riders in Orange County, Calif., now have more options for parking their cars as the result of a new, 176-space lot at the Laguna/Mission Viejo Station.

### [Caltrain: two broken-down trains cause delays](#)

Mountain View Voice-Oct 28, 2013

Caltrain is reporting delays of up to half an hour this morning because of two broken-down trains on the Peninsula.

### [Caltrain's Real Problem](#)

The Almanac Online (blog)-Nov 1, 2013

Which reminds me of an old joke. Nursing home residents are discussing the food. "It's awful," one says, "and the portions are so small."

### [Track Caltrain online](#)

The Almanac Online-Oct 28, 2013

Caltrain has launched a website as well as a smartphone application to let people track train departures in real time, thanks to GPS units mounted on the trains and the operating control system.

### [Caltrain Construction to be Performed During the Day](#)

Patch.com-Nov 1, 2013

The \$155 million project will elevate the Caltrain tracks above three existing at-grade street crossings at San Bruno, San Mateo and Angus ...

### [CPUC orders new safety rules for rail transit trackside workers](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Oct 31, 2013

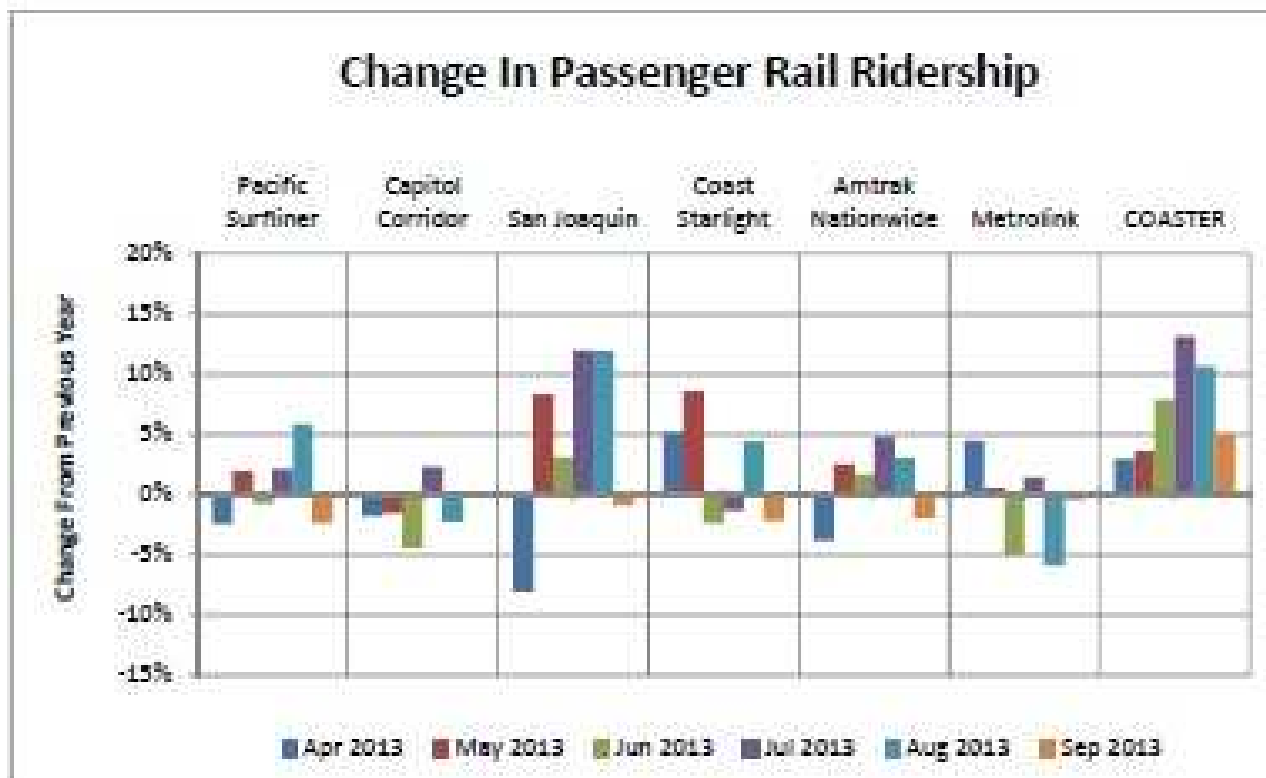
Among other rules, transit agencies in California must immediately create a procedure for three-way communication among train operators, central controllers and workers doing maintenance on the tracks.

### [Meanwhile in NYC, train operators have to point at signs](#)

The Source Oct 31, 2013

NYC subway operators have to follow a somewhat strange rule: when they pull into a station, they have to point at a black and white striped sign to show that the train is stopped at the right place. Well, a few New Yorkers decided to do a little experiment and have some fun with this rule.

**This has been used for years on the railroads of Japan. It is claimed this reduces accidents. By pointing and saying out loud what you need to do next the theory is this forces the operator to pay attention to what they are doing. This process is also used in Taiwan for operators of their High Speed Rail service. NB**



Note in July 2013 Metrolink raised fares to close a budget shortfall. While this then proposed fare increase was in the news during June of 2013 ridership went down. Since June except for small rise in ridership in July which is a peak travel month ridership has continued to drop. The question is has revenue increased enough to cover Metrolink's budget shortfall with falling ridership? Graph from the agenda of the LOSSAN Technical Advisory Committee for November 1, 2013.

## We Get Emails

### Re: HSR taking money from existing California Passenger Trains

Amtrak California had its genesis in the early 1970s, from the formation of Amtrak with 4 round trip trains with an annual ridership of 450 thousand. With modest investments to increase speeds and improve reliability, it has grown in forty years to 32 round trips with a ridership of 5.5 million. High speed rail to some extent is diverting money that could be more productively invested in conventional rail system. These improvements can be implemented incrementally using mainly state funds, compared to the very large (and unlikely) federal grants required to complete the immensely expensive high speed rail system. Re: Your proposal to finance crossing the Tehachapis without a federal grant. It comes down to what the backers of the current high speed rail plan are willing to do. In four years the project is probably going to be dead in the water without any prospect of federal assistance, and its backers may be scrambling for alternatives.

John Deeter

Sacramento

**One thing that needs to be made clear; much of the funding recently approved for projects such as Caltrain electrification, run through tracks at LAUS, the LA Metro Regional Connector, track upgrades for ACE and Capitol Corridor among others were part of the package for High Speed Rail. Last year the legislature approved 13 Billion dollars in rail passenger funding of which 6 billion was for High Speed Rail. Half of that \$6 billion was matching Federal dollars only for High Speed Rail. Some politicians and CHSRA board members understand that we need conventional and high speed rail to work together to get a system up and running. As for Federal Money the California High Speed Rail Authority is not counting on additional Federal Dollars. I heard that from Dan Richard, the Chair of the CHSRA at the RailPAC/NARP meeting in San Francisco on**



**October 5th. The CHSRA needs to build a fast connection between Bakersfield to Palmdale before they can get lenders to to invest in California HSR. That would cost about \$10 billion and there is \$4 billion left in the existing State HSR bond money. That leaves \$6 billion the CHSRA needs to find. Dan Richard and other members of the CHSRA board have backgrounds in finance. It won't be easy but raising the \$6 billion shouldn't be impossible. NB**

### **Re: Rant about problems with Caltrain by Thomas Travers**

As a member of the Caltrain Citizens Advisory Committee and consulting with RailPAC's Vice President and Caltrain Board Member Arthur Lloyd I thought I would try and shed some light on some of the complaints by Tom Travers in last weeks RailPAC Enews.

1. Caltrain's main and biggest problem is the lack of MONEY. Caltrain does not have "Dedicated Funding". It has to go "hat in hand " yearly to the three counties that it serves and "beg" for it's operating funds.
2. Caltrain is a victim of it's own success. Ridership is going through the roof (over 50,000/day). Weekend trains are seeing record ridership also.
3. The rolling stock is worn out. With lead time of about three years and electrification coming soon, purchasing new equipment now would be most unwise.
4. On Time Performance (OTP) is difficult to maintain with old equipment and the projects on the line e.g. San Bruno grade separation etc. However, in spite of all the equipment failures etc, the OTP is averaging about 95%. These figures are presented at the monthly Caltrain Joint Powers Board and Citizens Advisory Committee meetings in San Carlos.
5. Fatalities on the ROW require investigation by local authorities and deaths require a coroner which may cause lengthy delays (you first must locate him then wait till he can get to the sight of the fatality and then he must make his assessment). Caltrain is experiencing an unusual amount of suicides. PA announcements have been lacking in the past but are now improving.

Bruce Jenkins

RailPAC Director

### **Re; Where are the orders for more equipment for the Western Long Distance Trains?**

I just read and watched the video about the manufacturing of new Amtrak equipment featuring Mr. Boardman.

As a long distance traveler on Southwest Chief from LA to Chicago, I resent the fact that upgrades and new equipment seem to go to the Northeast Corridor and not out west.

The SW Chief could certainly use new sleeping cars and dining rooms. Why do you think the Northeast only benefits from upgrades???

Rosemary Green

**In fairness to the Long Distance Trains east of the Mississippi, much of their equipment is older and in worse shape than the Superliner Fleet. But in terms of revenue the cash cows of Amtrak remain and always have been the Western Long Distance Trains. The time to order is now with the start up of construction of bi-level corridor cars for the States. The car shells for these cars can be used if production is extended for a new generation of Superliners. New and more Superliners translates into more passengers and revenue for Amtrak. Why does Amtrak pay so much attention to the NEC? Perhaps because most of the jobs at Amtrak are on the NEC. That's were the jobs for managers are. NB**

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

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