
Subject: Metro-North "Train Had a Warning System, Just Not in the Operator's Cab"!

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

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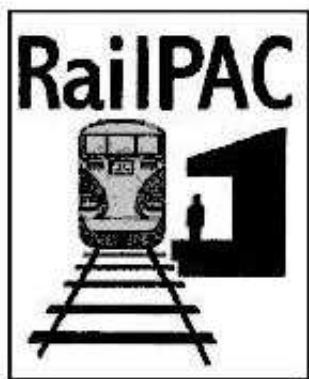
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for December 9, 2013

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California

www.railpac.org

Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



The Dec 1st derailment of a Metro-North Passenger Train in New York has spotlighted the importance of signals for rail safety and the issue of human error. With this debate there is an increased call to have Positive Train Control operational on most railroads by the deadline at the end of 2015. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Could Metro-North train crash have been avoided with federally-mandated positive train control system?](#)

CBS News-Dec 3, 2013

YONKERS, N.Y. -- The revelation that a New York City commuter train derailed while barreling into a sharp curve at nearly three times the speed limit is fueling questions about whether automated crash-avoidance technology could have prevented the deadly disaster.

[Rail Crash Seen Thwarting Plea to Delay Automatic Braking](#)

Bloomberg Dec 4, 2013

The deadly train derailment in New York City may force railroads to install automatic brakes by 2015 and dash industry efforts to put off adding the technology by five years...

“It’s likely to give more strength to the efforts to get positive train control installed sooner and probably to make it more difficult for people who are trying to slow that down,” said Ross Capon, president of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, a Washington-based advocacy group.

[Train Had a Warning System, Just Not in the Operator's Cab](#)

New York Times Dec 4, 2013

The Metro-North Railroad train that derailed on Sunday included a system designed to warn an operator of a potential accident. But such an “alerter,” which can automatically apply the brakes if an operator is unresponsive, was not in the cab where William Rockefeller apparently fell into an early-morning daze at

the controls. It was at the other end of the train.

[Metro-North Ordered to Modify Signal System After NYC Derailment](#)

Wall Street Journal Dec 6, 2013

The railroad must identify all areas where speed limits drop by more than 20 miles an hour. In those spots, including before sharp curves like the site of Sunday's crash, Metro-North will have to add features to its existing signals that will warn engineers if they are speeding and trigger a train's brakes if they don't slow down.

Until the signal system changes are completed, the FRA order said, the railroad must post two crew members in or near the cab of any train when it passes through such hazards, the order says.

[Metrolink On Course For System That Might Have Prevented Deadly NY Crash](#)

CBS Local-Dec 3, 2013

In the Southland, more than 500 miles of Metrolink track are scheduled to be equipped with the technology by next summer, but most other rail agencies across the nation said the scope and the cost of the project will make a 2015 completion date all but impossible.

[Feds deny early approval of Fresno-Bakersfield high-speed rail](#)

Fresno Bee-Dec 4, 2013

In a decision announced Wednesday, the three-member Surface Transportation Board denied the state's request for an expedited decision on the 114-mile Fresno-Bakersfield route before environmental work is completed on the section.

Attorneys for the rail authority indicated that the decision could force a delay in designing and building a five-mile stretch of the route between downtown Fresno and the south edge of Fresno, for which a contract has already been awarded. But a spokeswoman for the agency said no delays are anticipated.

[Bumps in the path of high-speed rail](#)

Editorial San Francisco Chronicle December 1, 2013

California needs a high-speed-rail system to ease traffic, direct growth and to knit a sprawling state and its economy together...

A project this enormous was never going to be easy to build. The cost and planning concerns must be answered - the judge's concerns are legitimate - but there is no escaping the future problems of air and road traffic, pollution and geographic inequities this system will help alleviate.

High-speed rail must go forward, judiciously and expeditiously.

[California High Speed Rail Officials Respond To Setbacks](#)

KPBS - Dec 5, 2013

The board that oversees California's embattled high-speed rail project is responding to recent legal and administrative setbacks and says it will file a new motion seeking blanket authority to sell \$8.6 billion in state bonds. That decision comes after a judge ...

[California to Break Ground on High-Speed Rail by February](#)

Businessweek - Dec 5, 2013

The California High-Speed Rail Authority may break ground for its \$68 billion bullet-train system between San Francisco and Los Angeles in January or February, Chairman Dan Richard said. The state is buying land and rights-of-way for the first high-speed ...

[State seeks to condemn first Fresno sites for high-speed rail project](#)

Fresno Bee-Dec 8, 2013

The fight for the properties — one a small, vacant retail building on Belmont Avenue, the other an office

building leased by the state near downtown — marks the start of a new stage of development for the proposed bullet train that would connect San Francisco and Los Angeles by way of the San Joaquin Valley.

[High-speed rail: Fresno to get \\$28 million to replace railroad crossing](#)

Fresno Bee - Dec 5, 2013

The city of Fresno will receive up to \$28 million in help from the California High-Speed Rail Authority to replace a railroad crossing set for closure because of the bullet-train line. The rail agency, meeting Thursday in Sacramento, authorized a cooperative ...

[A 220-mph NEC? A contrarian weighs in](#)

RailwayAge Magazine (blog)-Dec 3, 2013

But as a contrarian points out, the infrastructure improvement costs of upping maximum Northeast Corridor speeds to 220 mph is equivalent to almost \$1 billion per minute saved, and when one arrives a half-hour earlier at origin to await boarding, and then stands in a cab line at destination for 10 minutes, much of the train-time savings value evaporates. On intermediate trips, the time savings of 220-mph speeds is obviously less. The more stops, the more time at stations, plus time lost decelerating and accelerating....

The contrarian suggests Amtrak scrap its \$117 billion, 220-mph vision for the Northeast Corridor and redirect scarce dollars to eliminating corridor deferred maintenance, expanding its car and locomotive fleet to accommodate growing passenger demand, and rehabilitate and improve track and signaling for long-distance trains—such as in western Kansas.

Travel time is not based on travel speed between 2 stations, but from the time you leave where you are until you get to where you are going. Frequent, direct service to the maximum number of markets is the best way to attract passengers. Also developing train stations as destinations, not just as a transfer point is important for ridership.NB

[Northeast Corridor high-speed-rail plan slows to 160 m.p.h](#)

.Philly.com-Dec 8, 2013

The railroad recently issued draft specifications for new trains to replace its existing Acelas that call for 160 m.p.h. trains, not the 220 m.p.h. versions Amtrak said in January that it was seeking.

But when Amtrak issued draft specifications for the new trains on Nov. 19, gone were the requirements for 220 m.p.h service on the Northeast Corridor. Instead, the requirements were set for 160 miles per hour.

If this is true, it would be a step in the right direction. Will CHSRA also order these trainsets which will likely be tilt trains? NB

[Railroad industry benefits from federal funding for infrastructure](#)

Dallas Business Journal Dec 1, 2013

At least half of the \$600 million in federal funding for railroad infrastructure improvements during the Obama administration has gone to the nation's top four railroads, including Fort Worth-based Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

In this article the trucking industry complains about the money the railroads are getting. But if you look where much of this Federal Money is going, it goes grade-separations. These projects benefit the railroads, drivers and the communities which often have streets blocked by frequent and long freight trains. A good example of this is the recently built Colton Flyover. This will clean up the air in the region with fewer cars and trucks stuck at grade crossing. Oh yes the trucking industry also benefit from grade separations because they waste less time in traffic stuck at grade crossings. These improvements also help the economy with better freight transportation. A major customer of trucking is intermodal containers and trailers on flatbeds with connections

by rail. My only concern is I would like more cooperation from some railroads who benefit from government help on issue of improving rail passenger service. NB

[Amtrak offers flash sale \\$38 one-way fares to New York](#)

Baltimore Sun-Dec 4, 2013

If you're up for planning a post-holiday getaway, Amtrak has a deal that will save you cash - but you must hurry to get in on this flash sale.

This is a good news story! Amtrak is learning from the airlines. These are discount tickets to fill up trains on the NEC during the slow period between Jan 21st and Feb 13. This sale ended on Dec. 5th. But getting advanced sales is always a good idea and I hope Amtrak does more of this. NB

[Amtrak offering bus-train connections to Des Moines, Ames for ..](#)

.DesMoinesRegister.com (blog)-Dec 3, 2013

The fares are each-way and include both the Thruway Bus Connection and the coach rail fare on the Amtrak California Zephyr, a train with wide ...

Another good news story, we need more bus connections to long distance trains and more publicity about them NB

[Louisiana considering Amtrak route across northern parishes](#)

Tuscaloosa Magazine-Dec 5, 2013

Existing Kansas City Southern Railway tracks could connect Amtrak routes in Marshall, Texas, and Meridian, Miss., with possible stops in Shreveport, Ruston and Monroe. Passengers could continue west to Dallas and east to Atlanta.

Yet another good news story! Instead of a short distance train just between Shreveport and Dallas, this could work as a section of the Crescent with connections to Texas Eagle. This would cost less and serve more markets and passengers than a short distance train. There are many other places this could work such as extending the Heartland Flyer to combine with the Missouri River Runner as a section of the Southwest Chief. NB

[Counties unify in Amtrak support](#)

Pueblo Chieftain Dec 6, 2013

Southern Colorado counties have given their collective support to keep Amtrak passenger trains rolling through this part of the state, and to add ...

[Amtrak's Boarding Procedure Brings the Stress of Airports to Trains](#)

Streetsblog Chicago Dec 4, 2013

There was no special knowledge required to get on board, but the process embodied the unpleasantness of most major American train stations. Amtrak has a cumbersome boarding process at Chicago's Union Station (which it owns) that forgoes the international standard — people board the train as they arrive — in favor of airline-style gate checks. The method packs passengers into long lines in a fluorescent dungeon. Despite the logistical difficulty and annoyance for passengers, this serves no purpose — humans have shown a propensity to consistently board the correct train for over a century. Imagine if Metra required passengers to present their ticket before boarding.

[RailPAC PHOTOS of the Month \(November, 2013\)](#)

Here are this month's 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. Russ Jackson, Photo page editor.

[Spain confirms plans to open high-speed rail market](#)

International Railway Journal-Dec 4, 2013

The new regime, whose regulations are still to be issued, will allow a limited number of operators to compete against state-owned train operator Renfe and on selected high-speed routes. New entrants will have to bid for a temporary permit from the government, while Renfe will be allowed to continue to operate its current services without a permit or time limit

[Britain's Cameron says open to Chinese high speed rail investment](#)

Reuters-Dec 3, 2013

Dec 3 (Reuters) - Prime Minister David Cameron said on Tuesday Britain was open to Chinese investment in its planned 43-billion-pound high speed rail project linking London and the north of England after Beijing expressed an interest.

[Bullet trains for beef, a new chapter in Chinese diplomacy](#)

Want ChinaTimes-Dec8, 2013

Since China's Premier Li Keqiang took office, he has played the role of "super salesman" quite a few times. China's diplomacy has entered the era of using high-speed rail networks in exchange for beef to replace the previous model of using clothing in exchange for aircraft, the Chinese-language Beijing News reports.

[China buys 258 new bullet trains](#)

Travel Daily Media-Dec 5, 2013

China's state-run railways operator has placed an order with two domestic companies for 258 new high-speed trains, worth more than US\$7 billion.

[How Utah Decided to Embrace "Quality Growth"](#)

DC.STREETSBLOG.ORG Dec 2, 2013

If you've ever wondered how a deep-red state like Utah has managed to build some of the most ambitious transit expansions in the country, the short answer is: Envision Utah.

Starting in the late nineties, the non-profit Envision Utah brought together an incredibly broad spectrum of interests, including plenty of people without a specific stake in the process, to explore how the 10-county region surrounding Salt Lake City, known as the Greater Wasatch Area, should cope with anticipated population growth.

[More states raise taxes to pay for transportation](#)

Kansas City Star Nov 27, 2013

WASHINGTON — This year, several states have done something that's become politically impossible in Congress: They raised taxes to pay for transportation improvements....

Some conservative groups have grumbled about the tax increases and plan to challenge the lawmakers who supported them. But infrastructure spending is popular with the public, and it's rarely a losing issue.

[Bill would nearly double federal gasoline tax](#)

The Hill Dec 2, 2013

The current tax of 18.4 cents per gallon brings in about \$35 billion per year. The last transportation bill that was passed by Congress included approximately \$54 billion in funding per year, which transportation advocates said was barely enough to cover the repair needs of the current U.S. infrastructure system.

The last time the federal gas tax was increased was 1993.

If the current gas tax were to be indexed to inflation since it was enacted in 1993, drivers would be paying about 30 cents per gallon on their gasoline purchases now.

[Why Does it Take So Long to Get More and Faster Trains?](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

The short answer is money: or rather the lack of money. Things looked much brighter back in 2000. In 2000 the State of California had a budget surplus of 12.3 billion dollars! The Federal Government also had a budget surplus and the Federal Debt was shrinking. Unemployment was low and economic growth was high.

[9 passengers taken to hospital after California rapid transit train](#)

The Republic-Dec 4, 2013

OAKLAND, California — At least nine people were taken to the hospital Wednesday after a San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit train's emergency brakes malfunctioned, stranding hundreds of passengers in a tunnel, officials said.

[BART breakdown just latest problem for aging fleet](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Dec 5, 2013

The beleaguered BART system suffered another high-profile breakdown Wednesday when the emergency brakes on a train speeding through the Berkeley hills tunnel locked up, filling the cars with fumes.

[BART unions sue transit agency over contract that was stripped of provision unions wanted](#)

The Republic-Dec 3, 2013

OAKLAND, California — San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit's two largest unions filed a lawsuit Tuesday against the agency, claiming its board of directors broke state law when it approved a contract without a key provision.

[BART launches Livermore service extension analysis](#)

Contra Costa TimesDec 6, 2013

A five-mile BART extension along Interstate 580 to Isabel Avenue would come with a \$1.2 billion price tag, while constructing an 11½-mile line all the way to Greenville Road would cost \$3.2 billion, according to preliminary estimates.

[Caltrain's holiday train takes off to collect toys for the needy](#)

KTVU San Francisco-Dec 6, 2013

Caltrain's Holiday Train will be setting off from San Francisco Saturday and Sunday in a light-filled event intended to collect toys for needy ...

[Holiday Events Ring in the Season Across San Diego](#)

NBC 7 San Diego - Dec 7, 2013

Also on Saturday, locals got the chance to travel with Santa Claus and his elves in the North County for the eighth annual Coaster Holiday Express, a 90-minute train ride from Oceanside to Sorrento Valley. The event, put on by the North County Transit District, ...

[Gold Line basket bridge over 210 Freeway gets record fifth award](#)

San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Dec 5, 2013

The 584-foot Gold Line Bridge near Baldwin Avenue in Arcadia includes two bulbous structures at each end that are designed to represent woven baskets used by native American people who once thrived in the San Gabriel Valley.

While many who drive underneath the massive concrete train-bridge don't notice the representative art, or appreciate the engineering achievement, a lot of others have. Namely, those in the design and construction industry.

[Train Simulator 2014: Pacific Surfliner expansion heads to California ...](#)

VG247Dec 2, 2013

Train Simulator 2014 is getting a new expansion that blazes a trail across the Pacific Surfliner routes of California. Developer Rail Simulator even sent us a trailer.

The short video of the Surfliners on this link is very good. NB

Highlights from the LOSSAN RAIL CORRIDOR AGENCY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) Meeting agenda for Thursday, December 5, 2013

NOVEMBER 1, 2013, MEETING MINUTES

LOSSAN TAC MEMBER UPDATES

Jay Fuhrman gave an update on the Southern California Regional Interconnect Project (SCRIP) previously known as the Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) Run-through tracks. There will be a request for proposal (RFP) to recertify the environmental documents and perform some design work. This contract will be awarded in February or March. This project includes \$350 million in High Speed Rail money and will allow trains to access LAUS from the south. Jen Labrado (HSR) informed the group that the LAUS master plan was approved at the last board meeting.

December 5, 2013 AGENDA ITEM NO.: 5

POTENTIAL LOSSAN CORRIDOR SCHEDULED CONNECTIONS

Northbound Weekday Potential Connections

1. Metrolink 91 Line Train 703 arrives at LAUS at 8:07 a.m., missing a connection to Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Train 281, which departs LAUS at 8:10 a.m. This potential connection would require a three to five minute adjustment to allow sufficient transfer time between platforms at LAUS...
2. Metrolink Orange County (OC) Line train 685 arrives at LAUS at 9:27 a.m., missing a connection to Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Train 205, which departs LAUS at 9:20 a.m...
3. There are four northbound Metrolink OC Line Trains that depart Oceanside at 4:37, 5:16, 5:45, and 6:34 a.m. before the first northbound COASTER arrives. This connection would require a new northbound COASTER departure out of San Diego. As an example, a new COASTER train could depart San Diego around 5:30 a.m. to connect to Metrolink 607 that departs Oceanside at 6:34 a.m. This connection would allow a LOSSAN passenger in San Diego to arrive at LAUS prior to 9:00 a.m...
4. COASTER Train 653 arrives at Oceanside at 4:48 p.m., missing a connection to Metrolink Inland Empire-Orange County train 808, which departs Oceanside at 4:27 p.m...

Northbound Weekend Potential Connections

5. COASTER train 685 arrives at Oceanside at 1:28 p.m. missing a connection to Metrolink OC Line train 663 which departs Oceanside at 1:20 p.m...
6. Metrolink OC Line Train 600 arrives at Oceanside at 10:00 a.m., missing a connection to COASTER train 644, which departs Oceanside at 9:39 a.m...
7. Metrolink Ventura County Line train 106 arrives at LAUS at 8:30 a.m., missing a connection to Pacific Surfliner 566 that departs LAUS at 8:30 a.m...

Southbound Weekend Potential Connections

8. Metrolink OC Line train 662 arrives at Oceanside at 12:55 p.m. and has a 55 minute connection to COASTER train 688 which departs Oceanside at 1:50 p.m...
9. Metrolink OC Line train 666 arrives at Oceanside at 4:15 p.m. and has a 60 minute connection to COASTER train 692 which departs Oceanside at 5:15 p.m...

[Metrolink bets on new kind of locomotive](#)

Press-Enterprise-Dec 2, 2013

Metrolink has bet \$130 million and a big part of its fleet on a new kind of locomotive designed to run cleaner than anything like it in the soot-smudged history of American railroads...

But Orange County officials, whose confidence in Metrolink has worn thin, see the project as another cause for concern at an agency dented this year by revelations of accounting and management problems. They question the financial footing of the project, the wisdom of going all-in with such new technology.

[LA County Economy Rebounding Faster Than Expected](#)

Los Angeles Daily News Dec 3, 2013

LOS ANGELES Southern California's economy could return to pre-recession levels earlier than expected, but the region and state still face challenges, economists and other experts say...

Housing starts are showing signs of life, the report said, and many existing planned infrastructure projects will come online, employing thousands of workers in highway, transit and other projects.

[This Friday the 13th: Dr. Pinch and the Pinchtones bring swing music to Union Station](#)

The Source Dec 2, 2013

The group will appear as part of Metro Presents' program of arts and entertainment at the iconic station. The performance will take place inside the former Fred Harvey Restaurant, a dramatic space that is usually closed to the public.

The performance is free to the public and open to all. No reservations are necessary.



A view of Metrolink and Coaster Trains meeting in Oceanside. Within LOSSAN there are many potential connections between Amtrak, Metrolink and Coaster. Just between Metrolink trains there are many potential connections. Important LOSSAN hubs include but are not limited to LAUS, Burbank/Bob Hope Airport, Fullerton, Orange, Oceanside and San Bernardino. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

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

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