
Subject: Hope for the Chief, more problems for the Builder and way too many people wanting the train to the Superbowl

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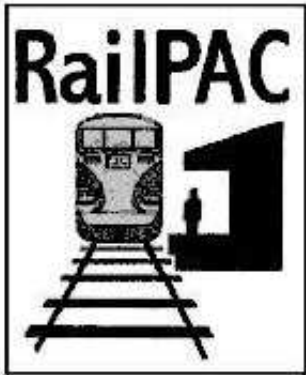
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for February 10, 2014

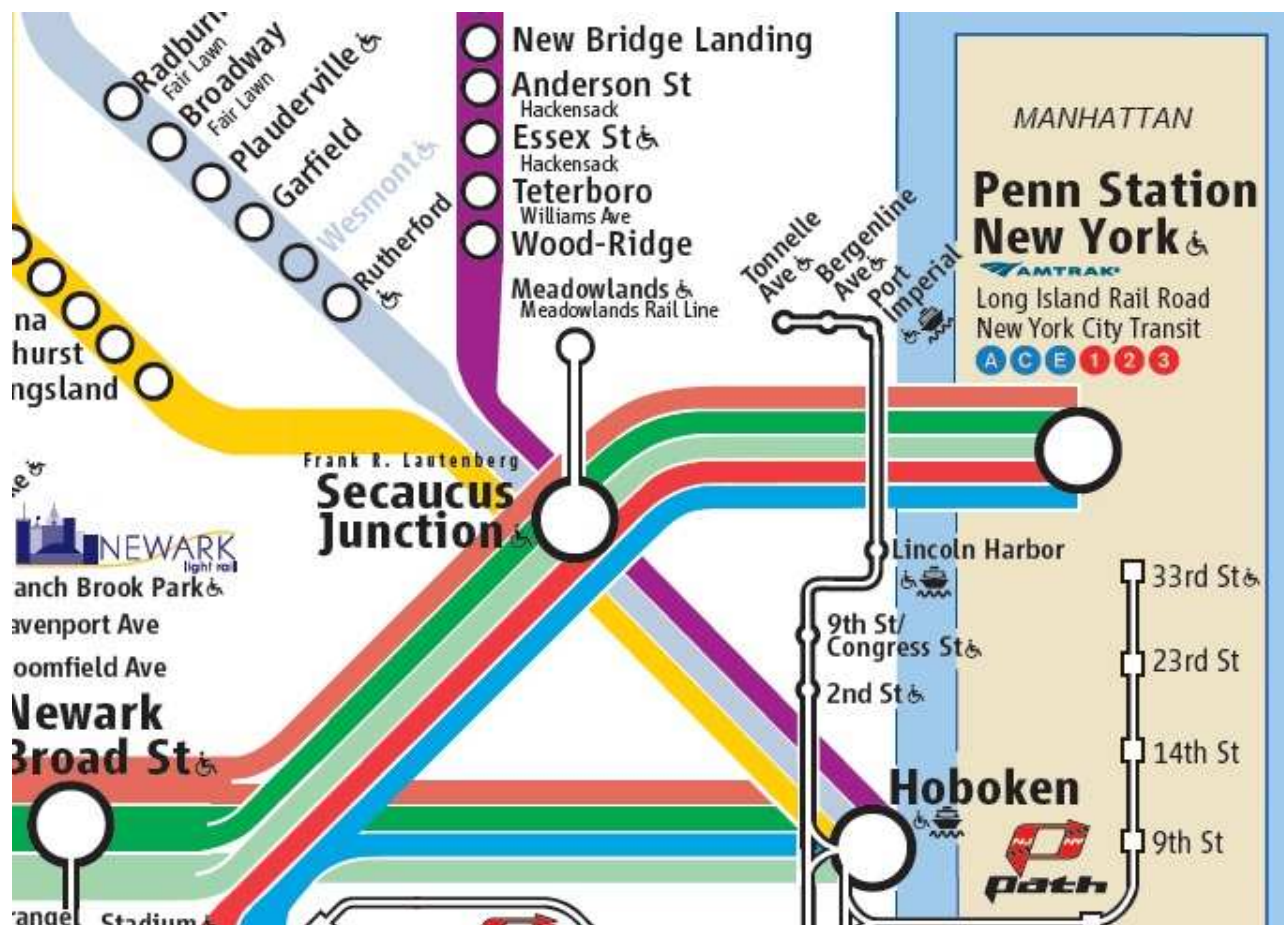
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



This is a graphic from the New Jersey Transit website of its route system. In the center is Secaucus Junction which is the rail hub connection for all of New Jersey Transit. Just above Secaucus is a short rail line to Meadowlands, the stadium site for this year's Super Bowl. Train ridership to the game was the highest to Meadowlands in history and almost double what was expected. No major problems were reported for fans arriving to the game. The problems happened after the game and everyone wanted to leave at the same time. This caused major congestion at both the Meadowlands and Secaucus stations.

[Transit troubles, unseasonable temperatures make New Jersey -New York Super Bowl memorable](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune-Feb 3, 2014

That far surpassed New Jersey Transit's previous record of 22,000 riders in 2009 for a U2 concert, and nearly doubled optimistic pre-game ..

[Super Bowl transit nightmare: fans pan hellish commute to and from ...](#)

The Star-Ledger-Feb 3, 2014

More than 28,000 people bought train tickets to the Meadowlands, breaking a record set more than four years ago. It was far more people than officials had expected, and it proved too much for the transit system to handle.

By midnight, after the game, dozens of charter buses were brought to MetLife Stadium to help disperse the crowd, which had been waiting in massive lines for trains to the Secaucus transfer station.

[Bad Weather Snarls Air Travel for 3rd Straight Day](#)

ABC News-Feb 5, 2014

U.S. airlines have canceled about 2,900 flights because of snow and freezing rain in the Northeast and the Midwest.

Wednesday was the third consecutive day bad weather snarled air traffic. The flight tracking website

FlightAware says Wednesday's disruptions followed 1,600 cancellations Tuesday and 2,100 Monday.

[Flight Weather Disruptions in January Cost Americans \\$2.5 Billion](#)

ABC News (blog)-Feb 4, 2014

January 2014 was the worst month for flight disruptions in recent history. An airline cost tracking group estimates that severe weather flight delays last month cost Americans \$2.5 billion in lost business and productivity.

[Amtrak service shows minimal delays; airport cancellations growing](#)

Penn Live- Feb 3, 2014

Amtrak is not experiencing any weather-related delays on the Keystone service through Harrisburg currently, but some are cropping up on the ...

[Amtrak not sure when Keystone service will be back on line](#)

Penn Live - Feb 5, 2014

Whether Amtrak will have Keystone service restored for the Wednesday evening rush hour isn't yet known. Amtrak suspended service around 8:30 a.m. between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, said spokesman Craig Schulz. The causes include downed tree limbs on the railroad property, electric power interruptions and switch issues, he said.

[Train delayed for hours as Amtrak hauls in new crew](#)

Lincoln Journal Star-Feb 3, 2014

The train left the Denver station around 11 p.m. Sunday, after an accident at a switch near there pushed back their scheduled 7:30 p.m. departure, said passenger Adam Goodman of Lincoln.

Scheduled to reach Lincoln at 3:20 a.m. Monday, Amtrak Train No. 6 is now to arrive at 3:37 p.m., according to Amtrak's website.

Much of the delay is the result of California Zephyr conductors and engineers hitting their federally mandated cap of 12-hour work shifts.

[Rerouted Amtrak disrupts Devils Lake business](#)

Prairie Business-Feb 4, 2014

Some in Devils Lake say the lack of reliable rail service is forcing them to stop using the service. For 19 years, Woodland Resorts has offered a Perch Express fishing package, bringing in anglers on Amtrak, but trains haven't been reliable this year.

[Cold, stranded and fuming: Passengers on Amtrak, Northstar line ..](#)

.Minneapolis Star Tribune-Feb 6, 2014

North Dakota's oil boom is helping to make some Twin Cities commuters late for work.

And it's making some Amtrak passengers regret booking tickets for travel on the Empire Builder, the popular rail link between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest...

The rash of associated delays on the Northstar Commuter Line this winter has forced some users to form impromptu car pools or drive solo to get to their jobs. Metro Transit handed out letters of apology Thursday, after one morning outbound train was canceled and passengers ended up taking a bus.

[Panel OKs study of cost-sharing for Amtrak route](#)

Las Cruces Sun-News-Feb 4, 2014

SANTA FE >> A legislative panel agreed Tuesday to commission a study on whether New Mexico should pay part of the cost for keeping Amtrak's Southwest Chief route....

Amtrak has warned that the Southwest Chief's route might be changed, causing some communities to lose passenger service, if the rail operator can't reach a new deal with Burlington Northern Santa Fe,

which owns the track used by Amtrak across Kansas, Colorado and into New Mexico. Amtrak's operating agreement with BNSF expires in January 2016.

[Gov. Martinez could derail Amtrak partnership](#)

ABQ Journal-Feb 3, 2014

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A proposal to bring Amtrak's Southwest Chief train through New Mexico and two other states could get stopped in its tracks by Gov. Susana Martinez.

The New Mexican reports that proponents fear the plan to run Southwest Chief on tracks owned by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway will hinge on the Republican governor's support.

[Colorado proposal to extend Amtrak route could add \\$31M to price ...](#)

Las Cruces Sun-News-Feb 6, 2014

Colorado State University-Pueblo released the economic-impact study focusing on the idea of extending the Southwest Chief route to include a Pueblo, Colo., stop before the route bends south to New Mexico, a proposal currently pending in the Colorado Legislature.

The report, commissioned by the Pueblo Area Council of Governments, projects Colorado would reap \$57 million in new economic activity over the course of one decade if the Pueblo stop was added.

[Region's existing Amtrak line used by 6300 out-of-state visitors per year](#)

Pueblo Chieftain-Feb 7, 2014

The study estimates the current economic impact from food, hotel and tourism spending of the 6,300 out-of-state visitors who use the line each year at \$5.7 million a year, or \$57 million over 10 years, based on a multiplier effect. Overall, about 13,000 passengers a year use the stops.

[Amtrak train upgrade brings more convenient schedule between ...](#)

The Oregonian-Feb 3, 2014

Oregon's two new Spanish-made series 8 Talgo trains bring a significant upgrade to the Amtrak Cascades passenger line, allowing for a better ...

[Caterpillar protests Illinois' award of \\$1.3 billion high-speed train contract to rival](#)

Crain's Chicago Business-Feb 7, 2014

In December, an intense competition for a seven-year agreement to supply 35 diesel-electric locomotives went to Siemens Industry Inc., a Washington-based subsidiary of the German conglomerate Siemens AG.

[RailPAC rail PHOTOS of the month \(January, 2014\)](#)

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 Russ Jackson, RailPAC Photo Editor, at info@railpac.org.

[Exploding Oil Trains Push States to Create Response Plans](#)

Businessweek-Feb 4, 2014

Crude-by-rail accidents climbed to 108 last year from nine in 2010, according to data from the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, an arm of the Transportation Department. On Jan. 2, the department issued a safety alert that said the type of oil pumped from North Dakota shale may be more flammable -- and therefore more dangerous -- to ship by rail than crude from other areas.

[Tank-car safety woes date back decades](#)

The Idaho Statesman-Feb 2, 2014

The type of general-service tank car involved in recent incidents with crude oil trains in Quebec, Alabama and North Dakota — the DOT-111-A — has a poor safety record with hazardous cargoes that goes back

years, raising questions about why it took so long for the railroad industry and its federal regulators to address a problem they knew how to fix.

[Shuster rules out gas tax hike CBO paints bleak trust fund picture ..](#)

.Politico-Feb 5, 2014

Lawmakers have mostly kept an “all options on the table” approach to funding this year’s highway and transit bill. But with less than eight months until that measure (or an extension) is due, House Transportation Chairman Bill Shuster is taking one big idea — a gas tax hike — off the table.

“Economically, it is not the time,” he said at a Bloomberg Government event, ...

JUST HOW BAD IS THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND’S OUTLOOK? Very very bad. The CBO’s new budget outlook shows the beleaguered fund has a \$77 billion deficit through 2019 and is short a whopping \$172 billion through 2024

[Avoid an infrastructure disaster with transportation reforms, former elected officials warn](#)

UPI.com-Feb 7, 2014

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. should spend more money to increase high-speed rail systems as part of a long-term transportation bill because the country is facing an “infrastructure disaster,” former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said Tuesday at a panel discussion America on the Move organized by Bloomberg Government.

[Keeping the trains running, barely](#)

Al Jazeera America-Feb 3, 2014

Regional transit systems need massive investment, not minimal repairs. But where will the money come from?

There are similar state-of-good-repair backlogs in transit systems all over the country. In 2010 the Federal Transit Administration estimated a national mass transit repair deficit of almost \$80 billion.

[At high or low speed, a safety need](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Feb 7,2014

As the U.S. bolsters its passenger rail options, from high speed rail startups to streetcar revivals, those designing the safest land transport mode seek to make it safer still.

New Schedule Takes Effect February 17

On Monday, February 17 (Presidents’ Day), the Capitol Corridor will introduce its new winter timetable. The majority of the changes are minor schedule adjustments; however, there are several more significant changes designed to improve overall service:

Train 529 will no longer stop at Oakland Coliseum, and instead terminate at Oakland Jack London Square.

Train 548 will originate from the Oakland Coliseum station instead of Oakland Jack London Square. This will better accommodate Oakland A’s fans during weekday night games.

Train 549 will depart 20 minutes earlier from Sacramento, at 6:50 p.m. instead of 7:10 p.m.

Train 549 will also extend to the Oakland Coliseum station instead of terminating at Oakland Jack London Square.

Train 748 on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays will depart San Jose Diridion later, at 9:10 p.m. instead of 7:50 p.m. This will better accommodate Sharks fans during weekend night games.

[Muni Metro moving faster, breaking down less](#)

SFBay-Feb 6, 2014

John Haley, director of transit operations, said several factors contributed to the light-rail system

improvements, including operation changes, replacing vehicle parts, infrastructure changes and better communication with Muni riders:

[Caltrain service disrupted after truck hits rail underpass in San Mateo](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Feb 6, 2014

Caltrain officials reported that about 2:15 p.m. a truck struck the crash bar on the underside of the Santa Inez Bridge, a fixture installed to help prevent cars from clipping the "very low" overpass. Trains were slowed to 10 mph as inspectors probed the bridge for safety concerns, and were allowed to resume normal speeds at 2:52 p.m.

[Palomar bridge delayed](#)

U-T San Diego-Feb 6, 2014

SAN MARCOS — A pedestrian bridge connecting Palomar College with the Sprinter will cost roughly twice as much as expected and open about two years later than scheduled, a San Marcos city official said Tuesday.

The goal of the bridge is increasing safety and creating a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood at the southern edge of Palomar's 200-acre main campus, where two large housing developments and a new community park are planned.

[Alternatives for Doran rail crossing considered](#)

Glendale News Press-Feb 7, 2014

Los Angeles County transportation officials presented several alternatives this week for a new overpass and other road work in the San Fernando Corridor that would pave the way for the closure of one of the most dangerous street-level crossings in the area and prepare for the planned California High-Speed Rail.

[Metrolink to airport gains steam](#)

Santa Clarita Valley Signal-Feb 8, 2014

A new Metrolink station that will allow rail passengers to take a direct route between the Santa Clarita Valley and the Burbank Bob Hope Airport ...

Opening for new station planned for 2015. NB

[Repeal of Orange Line Rail Ban Clears Assembly](#)

Building Los Angeles Feb 4, 2014

While a light rail conversion has become a popular cause amongst San Fernando Valley transit users, the reality is that the LA City Council has no power to overturn state law. However, it appears that Sherman Oaks Assemblyman Adrin Nazarian has successfully taken the fight to Sacramento.

[Vice President Joe Biden visiting Philadelphia to unveil new Amtrak engine](#)

Penn Live Feb 6, 2014

He'll use the event at 30th Street Station to stress the need for infrastructure investment.

Thursday's news conference will feature a look at Amtrak's new Cities Sprinter electric locomotive. The U.S.-built engine will power trains along the Northeast Corridor from Boston to Washington and on Keystone Service from Harrisburg to Philadelphia and New York City.

[Amtrak's New 8600-Horsepower Locomotive Reports to Work ...](#)

Popular Mechanics (blog)Feb 6, 2014

No less a locomotive enthusiast than Vice President Joe Biden traveled to 30th Street Station in Philadelphia this morning for the inauguration of the ACS-64. (ACS stands for Amtrak Cities Sprinter.) Built by Siemens, 70 of these locomotives will go into service to replace their aging predecessors on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor line that connects Boston to Washington D.C. and many cities in between.

The 64 in the name refers to the locomotive's output of 6.4 megawatts, which works out to about 8600 horsepower. With that much get-up-and-go, Amtrak promises, the ACS-64 will get its 217,000-pound weight, plus the weight of all those cars it pulls, up to the Northeast Corridor speed limit of 125 miles per hour faster than anything they've ever had. That should keep the trains running on time.

[What's up with California High Speed Rail?](#)

Analysis by Noel T. Braymer

In almost a matter of hours this January there were 2 news stories about the California High Speed Rail Authority. First that they would soon order High Speed trainsets with Amtrak. The second that the Authority and the Governor were seeking an appeal to the California Supreme Court to overturn the lower court ruling which is currently blocking bond sales for the State's funding of construction of High Speed Rail.

[Fresno's high-speed rail plans move forward](#)

ABC30.com-Feb 7, 2014

FRESNO, California (KFSN) -- Plans for high-speed rail through Fresno are moving forward. The city council unanimously approved plans for the design of the system through Fresno. Plans call for the concrete bridges and supports to be designed attractive and modern.

[Watchdog Accuses Congressman of Conflict on High-Speed Rail ..](#)

AllGov-Feb 4, 2014

Congressman David Valadao (R-California) is an unabashed foe of high-speed rail in his home state... One month later, the watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) filed an ethics complaint against him because the rail route he was fighting skirted hundreds of acres owned by his family's dairy farm.

[Capitol Alert: California Republicans seek to redirect high-speed rail ...](#)

Fresno Bee-Feb 6, 2014

In addition to redirecting the high-speed rail money, the Republican package of four bills would dedicate up to \$2.5 billion of a new found state surplus to paying off transportation loans; ensure billions in fuel tax money flows annually into local infrastructure projects, per the terms of Proposition 42; and compel the state to repay \$2.5 billion in gasoline tax revenue diverted elsewhere during lean budget years.

This is not a serious plan. The Republicans have less than a third of the seats in the legislature and there is no way this proposed legislation is going anywhere. This is more about exciting the supporters of these politicians and getting free publicity to raise money.



This is the view of the original E St San Diego Trolley Station in Chula Vista with platforms at rail height used on the original Trolley Line built in 1981. This original station was still in service as of January 2014. Photo by Noel T. Braymer



These are temporary platforms at the E Station Station which will be used while new permanent platforms are built where the old platforms are. With raised platforms, new low-floor Trolleys can be used for easier and faster access for all passengers. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Jerry Brown scores record approval ratings

This is the best news I've read in years, not because it potentially screws the current virulent strain of Republicans (though that is, indeed, good news), but because it shows that politicians don't have to be spineless panderers to succeed. Doing the hard thing can get you respect - and elected.

Maybe there is hope for our Republic (and high speed rail) after all.

Donald F. Robertson

San Francisco

Well I would be surprised if all of the readers of this eNewsletter agreed with you. RailPAC for the record is non-partisan. Before 2009, High Speed Rail and transportation in general were also non-partisan issues. The bill creating the California High Speed Rail Authority was signed by Republican Governor Pete Wilson. Prop 1A with the bond money for the High Speed Rail Project was put on the 2008 ballot by Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The Federal Program for funding High Speed Rail nationally had been around long before 2009 and most of the planning for it was done during the administration of Republican President George W. Bush. Strong supporters in 2008 for High Speed Rail projects in their States were the then Republican Governors of Wisconsin and Florida. The opposition to High Speed Rail, or rail passenger service in general is driven more by partisan spite than anything else. Their attacks are often misleading and unsubstantiated. These partisan attacks are motivated largely by the desire to undermine the current elected officials supporting rail passenger service. Even if air quality and energy supplies were not issues; the roads and airports of California can't handle current let alone future population growth. This extreme partisanship is caused by a small, but well financed minority. This is behind much of the government gridlock which High Speed Rail is also a victim, This is how Speaker of the House John Boehner explained it on a recent interview on "The Tonight Show, "I like to describe my job as trying to get 218 frogs in a wheelbarrow long enough to pass a bill. It's hard to do." NB

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