
Subject: "Cuts in luxuries may save Colorado Southwest Chief stops, Amtrak says" What???

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To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for February 18, 2014

Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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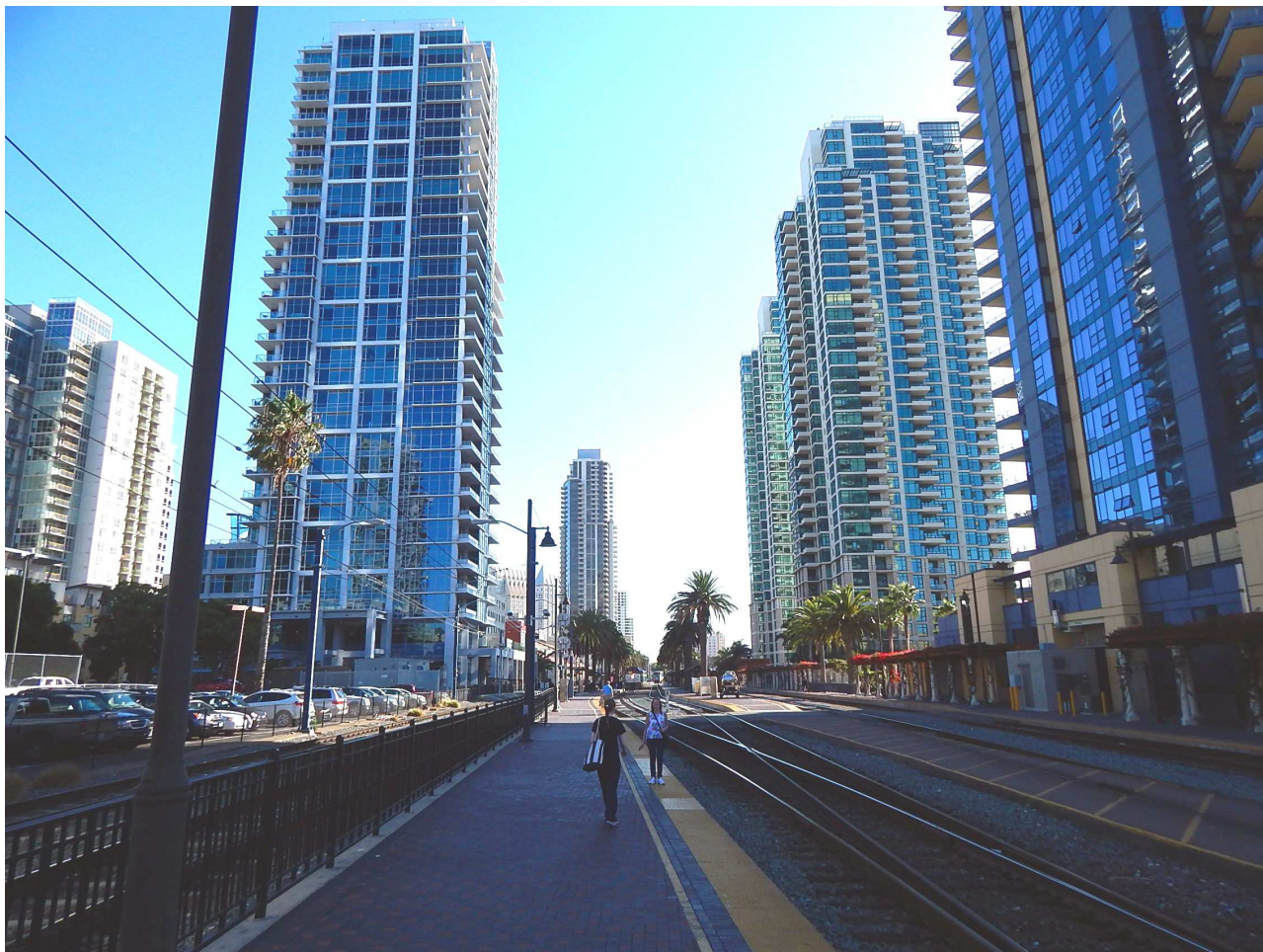
Rail Passenger Association of California

www.railpac.org

Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



The view from the northern end of the platforms at the Santa Fe Depot in San Diego in the 1980's. Photo by Noel T. Braymer



The view looking south from the northern end of the Santa Fe Depot in San Diego in fall of 2013. Passenger trains are good for local economies. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Amtrak suspends service before snow storm W*USA 9-](#)

Feb 11, 2014

WASHINGTON (WUSA9) -- Amtrak has suspended service in the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic regions ahead of the snow storm that is expected to hit the District Wednesday night.

[Canceled Flights Reach Most Since Sandy on Northeast Storm](#)

San Francisco Chronicle- Feb 13, 2014

About 7,154 flights in the U.S. had been scrubbed as of 3:30 p.m. New York time, the most since Sandy forced airlines to drop 7,400 flights on Oct. 29, 2012, MasFlight reported today. Tomorrow's total may fall, with only 592 flights scrapped so far, according to Bethesda, Maryland-based MasFlight.

Geography and meteorology are converging to make the travel disruptions extensive, whether by road, rail or plane.

[Massive winter storm taking toll in power outages, canceled flights ...](#)

CNN-Feb 14, 2014

And it's not like the end is near. Another round is expected to wallop the same area overnight, coming down 1 to 3 inches an hour at times. And Massachusetts' Berkshires could see 14 to 24 inches of snow before the storm runs its course.

For some, the issue isn't just the fact that there's snow: This is winter, after all, in the Northeast. But it's more that people there haven't gotten much of a reprieve.

[Amtrak train stuck for 5 hours with no heat](#)

7Online.com-Feb 14, 2014

RHINECLIFF, N.Y. (WABC) -- An Amtrak train with 190 passengers was stuck for five hours, with no power, south of Rhinecliff.

[Storm's Aftermath: Monster 100-Car Crash Clogs Pennsylvania ..](#)

.NBCNews.com-Feb 14, 2014

A massive traffic pileup shut down part of the Pennsylvania Turnpike on Friday morning, as an estimated 50 to 100 vehicles crashed, flipped or ...

[Amtrak to run full Keystone schedule on Saturday](#)

The Patriot-News-Feb 14, 2014

Amtrak plans to operate all Keystone Service (New York - Harrisburg) trains on regular schedule Saturday and other Northeast Regional service Saturday between Boston and Washington will also run as normal.

[Metra's cold performance steams lawmakers](#)

Chicago Tribune- Feb 11, 2014

At the height of the storm Jan. 6, Metra dramatically slashed service. Ridership that day was only about one-third of normal weekday ridership. Yet of the diminished service offered, only 30 percent of trains operated on time, according to Metra data released at the hearing. The CTA, although a different type of transit rail operation, suffered nowhere near the degree of stuck switches and other frozen equipment

[Amtrak 'Empire Builder' freight disruptions to continue until March](#)

Pioneer Press-Feb 11, 2014

GRAND FORKS, N.D. -- Westbound Amtrak trains service will continue to bypass Grand Forks and Devils Lake through North Dakota until at ..

[Thousands of gallons of crude spill in latest oil train mishap](#)

allvoices-Feb 13, 2014

More than 20 railcars carrying oil from Canada derailed Thursday, spilling thousands of gallons of crude and forcing evacuations in the western Pennsylvania borough of Vandergrift.

No one was killed or injured in the derailment, according to Reuters.

But the derailment is certain to add fuel to safety concerns raised by environmentalists about the increasing amounts of oil shipped by train, primarily fracked crude from Montana and Canada to US refineries in Texas and California.

[Study Finds Methane Leaks Negate Benefits of Natural Gas as a Fuel for Vehicles](#)

New York Times Feb 13, 2014

WASHINGTON — The sign is ubiquitous on city buses around the country: “This bus runs on clean burning natural gas.”

But a surprising new report, to be published Friday in the journal Science, concludes that switching buses and trucks from traditional diesel fuel to natural gas could actually harm the planet’s climate.

And Trains too? NB

[Cuts in luxuries may save Colorado Southwest Chief stops, Amtrak says](#)

Denver Post-Feb 11, 2014

"From my perspective, the Southwest Chief is so critical for south and southeast Colorado ... that if it fails, it will be hugely detrimental to the state," said Rep. Leroy Garcia, D-Pueblo.

Garcia said he was heartened that Amtrak CEO Joe Boardman promised to help rescue the line by cost-cutting measures, including eliminating complimentary wine and cheese, as well as pillow chocolates,

flowers and vases, and newspapers on three of its routes.

That is going to take a lot of chocolates, wine, cheese, flowers and newspapers to save \$10 million by 2016 and \$100 over the next ten years or so. NB

['Train' lovingly tracks rail travel history](#)

Los Angeles Times-Feb 14, 2014

Tom Zoellner enters this time machine again and again in his highly entertaining, lucid and perceptive travelogue "Train: Riding the Rails That Created the Modern World — From the Trans-Siberian to the Southwest Chief." It's an account of Zoellner's travels on six legendary rail lines, but it's really much more than that: It's a train lover's celebration of the great epic story of rail travel itself.

[Eastern Flyer brings passenger service](#)

Sapulpa Daily Herald-Feb 11, 2014

Early Sunday morning about 300 passengers boarded the sold-out maiden voyage of the Eastern Flyer for an excursion to Oklahoma City, bringing passenger rail service back to Sapulpa which ended in May, 1967.

“The Chamber has been working with Passenger Rail Oklahoma for about two years,” said Sapulpa Chamber President Suzanne Shirey. “When we first heard we would possibly be the starting point, we were excited to be part of the journey.”

[Passenger Trains are Good for Business](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

All cities are economic centers. As such they are also major hubs of transportation. Cities are always found at ports, major rivers, rail and road junctions as well near mountain passes: anyplace where there is transportation by water, surface or air. In the 19th century, towns fought to have railroads built in their towns so “grass wouldn’t grow in their streets”. We are again seeing towns and cities fighting to get rail passenger service and stations. They understand what a difference rail service can make to their local economy.

[Transformation of downtown Oceanside moves into high gear](#)

Seaside Courier - Feb 9, 2014

The next piece in downtown Oceanside’s transformation from a backwater into a regional tourist destination is set to open Feb. 11....

The hotel’s proximity to the Oceanside Transit Center allows visitors from Orange County or Los Angeles to take the train south for a “carless vacation,”

Oceanside's Transportation Center was the centerpiece of the city's redevelopment plans going back to the 1970s. NB

[Union Pacific Says Non-Executive Chairman Jim Young Has Died](#)

Bloomberg-Feb 15, 2014

James R. Young, who advanced to become Union Pacific Corp. (UNP) chairman, president and chief executive officer after starting with the railroad company in an entry-level finance position, died today. He was 61 years old.

[Court of appeals stays judge's bullet train bond ruling pending review](#)

Los Angeles Times - Feb 14, 2014

The action by the 3rd District Court of Appeal does not reverse the lower court decision but could give rail officials some hope that they can escape from a legal situation that could jeopardize the project.

[Fresno firms land rail contracts](#)

Fresno Business Journal-Feb 11, 2014

Two Fresno engineering firms were among five awarded contracts with the California High-Speed Rail Authority today to perform surveying and mapping work on properties the bullet train needs for its right of way.

[Details emerge on blending Caltrain with future high-speed rail](#)

San Francisco Examiner - Feb 11, 2014

The agencies will ultimately run on two tracks through the Peninsula, with Caltrain operating six commuter trains per hour on its new electric system and the High-Speed Rail Authority running four trains per hour.

[Excavation Complete at Transbay Transit Center in South Beach](#)

Curbed SF-Feb 11, 2014

More than three years after first breaking ground, the future Transbay Transit Center has officially completed excavation....Dubbed the "Grand Central of the West," the transit center will house 11 regional transportation lines when it opens and (fingers crossed) both Caltrain and California High Speed Rail in the future.

[CHSRA Releases Draft 2014 Business Plan](#)

California High Speed Rail Blog Feb 7, 2014

The business plan did not break much new ground on the question of funding the HSR system. A new financing plan is due later this spring. The draft business plan does indicate the following about using cap-and-trade funds for HSR:

The following is from the draft of the 2014 HSR business plan on the planned use of Cap and Trade funds for High Speed Rail construction. This will bridge the gap between Bakersfield and Los Angeles. NB

"First, combined with the remaining Proposition 1A bond funds, it will allow the Authority to proceed without delay and continue construction past the initial Madera to Bakersfield segment – to tunnel through the Tehachapis to create the first dedicated passenger rail connection between Northern and Southern California. Connecting to the multi-modal transit center in Palmdale, connecting rail service will be available throughout Southern California initially via the Metrolink commuter rail system.

Second, a committed, long-term source of funding will allow the Authority to leverage both public and private financing and, depending on the level of commitment, potentially finance the completion of the IOS.

Third, establishment of a committed revenue stream will allow the Authority to immediately engage the private sector in the delivery of the system, bringing both investment and significant cost savings. Other international high speed projects have proven that significant cost savings can come from having long term strategic partners with investment in the project, that are responsible for designing the most cost effective solutions and responsible to build, install and operate major portions of the system."

[Capitol Corridor trains delayed Tuesday morning](#)

Sacramento Bee-Feb 11, 2014

Capitol Corridor trains between Sacramento and the Bay Area were delayed– sometimes more than an hour– by a track signal outage near ...

[Site clearing work begins on Caltrain's San Mateo Bridges ...](#)

Railway Track & Structures-Feb 12,2014

The four rail bridges in San Mateo's North Central neighborhood are more than 100 years old and no longer meet seismic safety standards. The bridges, located at Tilton, Monte Diablo, Santa Inez and Poplar avenues, will be replaced with single-span structures.

[Commuting Couple Meets on Caltrain, Falls in Love](#)

NBC Bay Area-Feb 14, 2014

In what is a first - and definitely cute - marketing gimmick, Caltrain unveiled a commuter's romance story on Valentine's Day, touting the benefits of riding its sleek trains while dangling the possibility of falling in love.

[Stanford faculty to create art installation in Caltrain tunnel](#)

The Stanford Daily-Feb 10, 2014

The Palo Alto Public Arts Commission recently approved an interactive art installation that will display colorful gradations of LED light and ...

[Passengers stop Amtrak bus safely on Santa Maria River Bridge ...](#)

KSBY San Luis Obispo News-Feb 14, 2014

The driver of an Amtrak bus is dead after apparently suffering a heart attack while driving on the Santa Maria River Bridge Friday morning, California Highway Patrol officials tell KSBY News.

[L.A. County's I-5 named 'most congested freeway' in California](#)

Los Angeles Daily News Feb 13, 2014

Indeed, the county owned six of the top 10 slots. The first outside of L.A. County, coming in fifth, was Interstate 5 in Orange County. Rounding out the list were the 405 through Orange and two in Alameda counties. **Sounds like a good reason to expand Metrolink NB**

[Metrolink picks up additional funds for new low-emission locomotives](#)

Progressive Rail Roading-Feb 11, 2014

The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) late last week approved \$17 million in funding to help Metrolink purchase three ...

[We're Gonna Do WHAT with the Direct LAX-Union Station Rail Corridor?](#)

City Watch-Feb 13, 2014

So with apologies to the two supervisors for not weighing in until now (but with the understanding that other transit advocates really didn't have this too high on their priority lists either), it should be noted that the LA Curbed article describing the conversion of this unused Harbor Subdivision rail right of way to a parkway and a bike path was responded to with an army of responses decrying this land use ...
.. because this portion of the rail right of way should be studied for, and converted into...a rail line!

[Extra tasty new aerial photos of Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension construction as project surpasses 50 percent complete milestone!](#)

The Source Feb 12, 2014

Below are an awesome collection of aerial photos taken in recent days by the Construction Authority. The news release — with a lot of good info — follows the photographs.



Almost 3 years before the Gold Line would serve this development it was being advertised on the Gold Line Trains in December 2012. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re:Southwest Chief reroute

I have mixed feelings over the reroute of the Southwest Chief. First, I would prefer that the train stay on its current route..But don't expect any favors if Suzanne Martinez is re-elected as governor of New Mexico this year. On the other hand, Amtrak has the potential to tap a better population market, the city population of Amarillo exceeds that of all of the intermediate cities' populations combined, where the Southwest Chief stops at on the existing route between Newton, KS and Albuquerque, NM. Even Wichita comes close to that combined figure.

However, my main concern about the reroute is service directly into the city of Albuquerque. If the train is rerouted, I see NO EXCUSE for Amtrak to not retain service to downtown Albuquerque. To make an existing comparison, take a look at Amtrak's Silver Star that serves Tampa, FL. Albuquerque, like Tampa, has a high turnover ratio of passengers, and both rank close to the top of that for intermediate stations stops. Albuquerque, like Tampa, is a layover stop, with connecting bus services, serves a point for crew changes, and is also a service stop for the train. More important so in Albuquerque, are also the fueling of the locomotives and filling up water tanks in the passenger cars

Steven Crosmer

In a perfect world we would have LA-Chicago service via Albuquerque and Amarillo. The real question is if we will have any service after 2016. The BNSF has made in clear they want to be paid to maintain their tracks for passenger rail service. As Fred Frailey of Trains Magazine has pointed out the BNSF has said rerouting the Chief through Amarillo will cost Amtrak about as much in track upgrades as it will be to fix the tracks on the current route. NB

Re:Jerry Brown scores record approval ratings

You're right. Not everyone reading this newsletter agrees (probably on anything come to think of it). In any event, ascribing opposition to HSR as mainly due to "partisan spite" is both inaccurate and misleading. You were probably referring mainly to House Republicans, but your words sounded as if they were directed to all opponents.

In the case California HSR, one can be both a strong supporter of HSR and a strong opponent of the current fatally-flawed plan. I know at least as many Democrats...including very liberal Democrats...who feel this way as Republicans....

Jerry Cauthen

Well we both agree that you can't get everyone to agree on everything. But the key to human survival is cooperation. Cooperation is needed for successful marriages, friendships and governments which all depend on negotiation, give and take and compromise. In other words learning to to play well with others. All politics is based on compromise. The High Speed Rail project is a political creature so it is a product of compromise. You can't please everyone, but you need to please more people than you upset to get anything done in politics.

As things stand there is \$9.95 Billion dollars in Bonds for High Speed Rail as well as \$3.4 Billion from the Federal Government. From the Bond money \$1.9 billion is for projects outside of the San Joaquin Valley including transit projects, positive train control and track upgrades to existing rail services. The Cap and Trade funding the Governor is talking about for High Speed Rail would go towards the \$10 billion needed to extend track construction south of Bakersfield to Palmdale and "bridge the gap" between Northern and Southern California by passenger rail. There is \$4 billion left for this in the Bond money which leaves \$6 billion that might come from Cap and Trade.

So what would happen if we cancel the High Speed Rail Project tomorrow? We would throw away the Federal Funding for starters. The Bond money would be gone too. We would have to start all over again to where we were in 2008. Would the the route of High Speed Rail be any different if we started over again? No, the same political forces that shaped the existing route would still be in play.

So who would win if we scraped High Speed Rail? The forces of no-compromise and not playing well with others. Many of the problems that have delayed this project are from people who's idea of negotiation is demanding unconditional surrender. This causes gridlock and prevents anything being accomplished:which is their goal. 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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You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

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