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**Subject:** Long Distance Trains delayed by Oil and Coal trains as well as the weather.

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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, February 3, 2014 9:33 AM

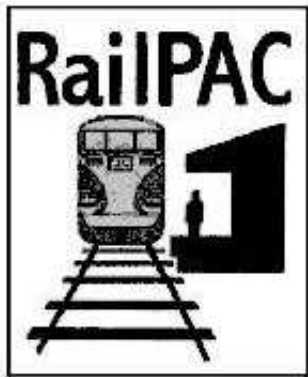
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for February 3, 2014**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
**[www.railpac.org](http://www.railpac.org)**  
**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



One of the many remodeling and restorations projects going on now at Los Angeles Union Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Plains oil shipments disrupting Amtrak trains](#)

Uniontown Herald Standard - Jan 29, 2014

The National Association of Railroad Passengers wrote to U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx this week urging him to intervene.

Amtrak's Empire Builder service runs along a BNSF Railway route that has seen an increase in oil shipments from the Bakken region of North Dakota and Montana.

Winter weather has exacerbated several months of disruptions. Westbound Amtrak trains this week have had to bypass several stops stretching across much of North Dakota, forcing the railroad to use buses to get passengers to those destinations. Delays have reached up to 10 hours.

### [Crowded tracks put westbound Amtrak on hold](#)

WDAZ-Jan 29, 2014

Devils Lake Mayor Dick Johnson received the news late Monday afternoon in an email from Amtrak's government affairs office in Chicago.

Westbound Amtrak train service on the Empire Builder is being switched to buses until Sunday for passengers in Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby, N.D.

### [Union Pacific train cars derail near Redding, affecting Amtrak Coast ...](#)

The Register-Guard- Jan 28, 2014

No one was hurt, but Amtrak's northbound Coast Starlight service was affected. The train had been scheduled to arrive in Eugene at 12:29 p.m..

### [Amtrak train delayed 6 hours by coal train; passengers irked](#)

The Seattle Times-Jan 28, 2014

Apologizing for an unplanned six-hour stop Sunday on Amtrak's Cascades line, Washington state's passenger-rail director says he'll look for ...

### [Mudslide shuts down Amtrak and Sounder service between Everett ...](#)

The Seattle Times (blog)-Jan 30, 2014

A mudslide onto railroad tracks between Seattle and Everett this afternoon has shut down Amtrak and Sounder service for 48 hours, according ...

### [Puebloans show support for Amtrak bill](#)

KOAA.com Colorado Springs and Pueblo News- Jan 26, 2014

Leroy Garcia, of Pueblo introduced the Amtrak Southwest Chief bill last week, that's intended to save the Southwest Chief route which is a line ..

### [Amtrak Limits Service Due to Weather](#)

WICS-TV- Jan 26, 2014

Amtrak Limits Service Due to Weather. Extreme weather conditions prompted Amtrak to cancel some of its trains today. In all, four trains through ...

### [Amtrak to operate full schedule to Chicago on Wednesday](#)

KSDK-Jan 28, 2014

CHICAGO, Ill. (KSDK) – Amtrak plans to operate a full schedule of trains to and from Chicago on Wednesday, according to a news release.

### [Kawasaki attracted to new high-speed train requests](#)

Lincoln Journal Star - Jan 28, 2014

Kawasaki's train-car manufacturing division in Lincoln has an eye on new opportunities: combined requests for cars from Amtrak and California's High-Speed Rail Authority....

California's High-Speed Rail Authority wants 15 train sets with the capacity to carry at least 450 passengers and the ability to travel at least 200 mph, to operate between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area.

### [Fresno City Hall to host high-speed rail open house](#)

Fresno Bee-Jan 28, 2014

The city of Fresno will hold an open house Wednesday to discuss the guidelines for the high-speed rail project and gather public comments.

### [Taking California's bullet train to a greener future: Op-Ed](#)

Los Angeles Times - Jan 28, 2014

High-speed rail has the same potential to change the way people travel in California. By 2040, it could reduce car miles traveled in the state by 3.6 billion miles a year, the equivalent of taking 317,000 cars off the road daily. And by 2020, the project is estimated to eliminate between 278,000 and 674,000 net metric tons of greenhouse gases from voluntary emissions reductions, electrification of local rail and other efforts. High-speed rail will be constructed with net-zero emissions and operate 100% from renewable energy.

### [Lower court told to expedite high-speed rail funding case](#)

San Francisco Chronicle-Jan 29, 2014

The state Supreme Court rejected Gov. Jerry Brown's request Wednesday to grant immediate review of a

ruling against his administration's plan for first-stage funding of California's high-speed rail project. While refusing to bypass a lower court and take up the case itself, however, the high court issued an unusual, unanimous order to the state appellate court in Sacramento to "expedite its consideration of this matter," with written arguments due by Feb. 10.

### [High-speed rail court woes could spill over to other public works ...](#)

San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Jan 31, 2014

The High Speed Rail Authority and the state filed a 49-page petition late Wednesday arguing the ruling on bond validation is overly broad. The state asked for the California Supreme Court to take up the case but it refused. Instead, it expedited an an appellate court review. Arguments from the plaintiffs are due by Monday and the state will have a week to respond.

Deputy Superintendent Art Revueltas of the Montebello Unified School District said the court rulings may expose school district building projects to last-minute challenges.

### [High-speed rail plan gets back on track](#)

San Diego Community Newspaper Group - Jan 27, 2014

San Diego residents will have the chance to weigh in on the three proposed routes for the California High-Speed Rail line that is expected to run from Los Angeles to San Diego by 2019.

### [Head of bank bailout runs for California governor](#)

Yahoo News-Jan 21, 2014

(AP) — Neel Kashkari, a former U.S. Treasury official who was the architect of ... the \$68 billion bullet train that Kashkari called the "crazy train."

### [Jerry Brown scores record approval ratings](#)

News10.net-Jan 30, 2014

The Wednesday night survey from the nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California finds Brown with a 60 percent job approval rating among likely voters – his highest marks since taking office in 2011 – and even broader support for the overall path he's chosen for a proposed state budget....

This survey shows the steep hill ahead for Kashkari and fellow GOP gubernatorial challenger, Assemblyman Tim Donnelly, R-Twin Peaks.

### [High-speed rail project reaches new milestone](#)

Your Houston News- Jan 30, 2014

It may not be moving at high-speed yet, but Texas Central Railway has reached a new milestone with federal and state regulators to advance its plans for a privately-funded bullet train between Greater Houston and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

TCR plans to integrate rail system technology by JR Central Railways of Japan, including its N700 bullet train. At 205 miles per hour, the train could travel between Dallas and Houston in 90 minutes.

### [TxDOT Approves Creation Of High-Speed Rail Commission](#)

Texas Public Radio-Jan 31, 2014

The Texas Transportation Commission has given the green light to forming a high-speed rail commission to oversee a bullet train project ...

### [Where there's a will](#)

The Economist (blog)-Jan 31, 2014

RECESSION or no, France is pushing ahead with the extension of its high-speed rail network. The biggest of the three projects currently under ...

## [China's high-speed trains will soon receive wi-fi](#)

South China Morning Post-Jan 29, 2014

Passengers on the mainland's high-speed train network will soon be able to enjoy wi-fi access on their journeys, thanks to a network built by ...

## [Notes on the February 1st RailPAC/NARP Conference in Los Angeles](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

On my way to Los Angeles on the train I could see much progress recently on the railroad. It looks like the long delayed bridge over the Santa Margarita River in Camp Pendleton is now almost finished. I recently rode the train to San Diego and found the new mile of double tracking south of Sorrento Valley also seems to be in service. I remember over 30 years ago trains to San Diego use to back out of LAUS and take a 15 mile an hour curve near the LA River crossing. This was a mostly single tracked railroad on bolted rail. Slowly but surely the tracks are being improved. The Surfliners today were generally on time though no faster than trains 30 years ago. It was odd when we arrived at LAUS that the Starlight was not sharing the platform with our train for passengers to make connections. It wouldn't have helped anyway because connecting passenger now need to enter the station to get a boarding pass before going back to the platform to get on the Starlight.

## [The day we lost Atlanta](#)

Politico Jan 29, 2014

What happened in Atlanta this week is not a matter of Southerners blindsided by unpredictable weather. More than any event I've witnessed in two decades of living in and writing about this city, this snowstorm underscores the horrible history of suburban sprawl in the United States and the bad political decisions that drive it. It tells us something not just about what's wrong with one city in America today but what can happen when disaster strikes many places across the country.

**Most of the problems with stranded motorists were not in the City of Atlanta, but outside of it in the metro area of Atlanta. NB**

## [CalTrain--Trends and Implications](#)

Palo Alto Online (blog)-Jan 30, 2014

Average weekday ridership has grown from 24,000 in 2004 to 53,000 in the second half of 2013. Most of these are in the peak hours in the morning and evening. To get a rough comparison of how this relates to traffic on 101, Caltrans reports that peak hour volumes are between 14,000 and 17,000 cars on the most congested parts of 101. So the CalTrain ridership and especially the growth are important traffic demand management tools into the communities near the stations.

## [Take a romantic journey on the Napa Valley Wine Train](#)

Stockton Record-Jan 27, 2014

There is an undeniable romance in trains, and that heart-pounding scene of a couple at a steamy station can only be even more charming if that station is tucked in a valley of grapevines basking in the golden glow of a California sunset.

## [X Train takes delivery of first two 'luxury' rail cars](#)

Progressive Rail Roading- Jan 30, 2014

X Train takes delivery of first two 'luxury' rail cars ... to launch its passenger-rail service between Southern California and Las Vegas this year.

## [Las Vegas Railway Express seeks passengers for private rail cars](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal-Jan 31, 2014

The company in recent days parked a pair of early 1950s vintage cars, one a first-class lounge and the

other a diner, on a local siding terminating at Martin Luther King Boulevard. The company has said it would start running the cars, leased from Mid-America Railcar Leasing LLC in Greenwood, Ind., in February hitched to the back of Amtrak trains running between San Diego and Los Angeles. The company hopes to expand the geographic scope, much like other dozens of other private car owners.

### [California Transportation Commission allocates nearly \\$27 million ...](#)

Railway Track & Structures-Jan 31, 2014

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) has allocated \$27 million in new funding to three projects that it says will improve passenger rail and further strengthen the state's economy.

### [Light rail for Las Vegas?](#)

Las Vegas Review-Journal (blog)-Jan 26, 2014

Imagine if Las Vegas were to become a hub of even regional tourism: Visitors could land at McCarran on a direct flight from Europe or Asia, and then travel by train through the desert to Los Angeles, San Diego or Anaheim. But even if those big dreams don't come to pass right away, what about improving the way we move tourists around within Las Vegas, or help employees get to their jobs along the Strip?

### [Are people really going to take the train to LAX?](#)

LA Weekly Jan 30, 2014

A couple years ago, Los Angeles World Airports did a comprehensive survey of 23,000 LAX passengers, showing how they get to the airport and where they come from. Here's a map from that report that shows where people start their trips to the airport, by ZIP code:...

For the typical airport passenger, then, the ideal train route would go from Hollywood to Santa Monica, and then hug the coast to LAX.

### [Gold Line Construction Authority Considering Extension to Ontario](#)

Daily Bulletin Jan 23, 2014

A request for organizations to analyze whether to extend the Gold Line to LA/Ontario Airport will be sought soon by the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority Board.

### [Gold Line extension gets low priority from SanBag](#)

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin Jan 24, 2014

The Commuter Rail and Transit subcommittee has agreed to give the Redlands Passenger Rail Project priority, followed by plans to double-track portions of Metrolink. The panel's recommendation now goes to the SanBAG board for final approval.

### [Historic Big Boy locomotive on display in Colton:](#)

San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Jan 30, 2014

The steam locomotive left Fairplex and after a short stop in Covina headed to Union Pacific's Colton yard where it will be on display this weekend and next. Work will then begin to prepare it for the journey to Wyoming, set to begin in March or April, said Aaron Hunt, Union Pacific spokesman.



Los Angeles City Council member Tom LaBonge presenting RailPAC President with a Los Angeles City Proclamation honoring the holding of the joint RailPAC/NARP Rail Passenger Conference at the LA Metro Boardroom on Feb 1, 2014. Matt Melzer of NARP was also presented with a similar proclamation. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## We Get Emails

### Re: What to ask Amtrak at the February 1st RailPAC/NARP Conference

1. What is the current status of negotiations for the Southwest Chief?
2. What is the chance Amtrak and the UP will get together to make the Sunset Limited daily, once the UP-Amtrak 2 year agreement expires? Double tracking in CA and AZ is almost done.
3. Is there any chance Amtrak will order new Superliner cars for the west? If not, why not?
4. Restoring Service Gulf Coast service -Sunset Limited East-Orlando/MIA(Midwest-FLA) and
  - a) Extending Crescent to Mobile/Ft.WorthDaily Cardinal/Extending the Cardinal to St.Louis/ improving timekeeping into Chicago
  - b)Improving Midwest-NEC connections- i.e Restoring the Three Rivers/ improving the Pennsylvanian connections at Pittsburgh
  - c)Restoring service to Las Vegas-Desert Wind North Coast Hiawatha and the Pioneer
  - d)Deployment of Viewliner Sleepers- any plans for Viewliner coaches and lounges?
5. I would also ask or make a statement that the Parlor Car not be sacrificed thus killing the Starlight.
6. What is the current availability of roadworthy P40/P42 engines at Chicago, and at Los Angeles?
7. What is being done to regain operational control on the Empire Builder route?

Russ Jackson

## **Re: Rail transit extensions needed in Los Angeles County**

Glad to see that the future Crenshaw Light-Rail (Rail-Transit) line broke ground this past week, too bad though that plans couldn't be worked out to have direct service to the LAX Terminals but oh well.

Meanwhile, here are some ideas that Metro should consider to expand its Rail-Transit System.

- Extend the Green Line from its current eastern terminus at the end of the 105 Freeway & go further east to connect w/Metrolink at Santa Fe Springs/Norwalk station.

- Implement the South Bay Green Line extension from El Segundo/Torrance area into Both San Pedro & Downtown Long Beach (yes, create a run-thru connection to the Blue Line & establish rail service to San Pedro)

- Reincarnate the old PE San Pedro Line from LA to San Pedro from Dominguez Jct. to San Pedro.

- Establish 2 extensions of the Red Line Subway: 1st extend from N. Hollywood terminus & proceed West to Canoga Park area via current Metro Orange Line bus route (replace w/Rail-Transit), bring Red Line Trains to the Surface & run at-ground level to Canoga Park, study potential rail-extension from there to Chatsworth Metrolink station. If Light-Rail is ever built to this part of San Fernando Valley area, then make the rail line compatible to handle both Subway Type trains & conventional Light-Rail trains. 2nd extend Red Line from N. Hollywood terminus & proceed North to Burbank-Bob Hope Airport (this may be done via underground routing).

Kelly Walton-Harper

**There are many places that would benefit from extended rail service. The limiting factor as always is funding. The 8.5 mile Crenshaw Line is costing 2 Billion dollars. What would greatly improve this line as a service would be to extend it south of Imperial Highway on the existing Green Line. In the future this could be extended to Torrance. To the north if the Crenshaw Line were extended west on the Expo Line it could serve more of the Westside for travel to LAX and reduce traffic on the I-405 freeway. This won't be easy now to do since the Crenshaw Line will go under the Expo Line. Instead passenger are expected to transfer at the joint station at different levels. 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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