
Subject: Record Rail Ridership! Yes people will ride when we build it!

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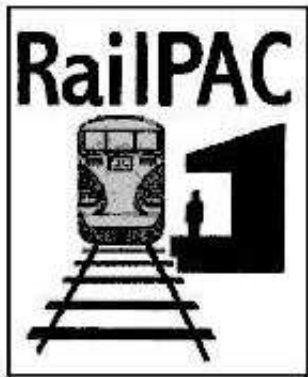
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for March 17, 2014

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 by the Los Angeles River from Metrolink train 602 from Union Station to Oceanside of train 316 to San Bernardino on a February afternoon. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Americans riding public transit in record numbers](#)

Deseret News-Mar 11, 2014

LOS ANGELES — Americans are boarding public buses, trains and subways in greater numbers than any time since the suburbs began booming.

Nearly 10.7 billion trips in 2013, to be precise — the highest total since 1956, according to ridership data reported by transit systems nationally and released Monday by the American Public Transportation Association.

[The Numbers Behind America's Mass Transit Resurgence](#)

The Atlantic Cities-Mar 10, 2014

Overall, rail ridership grew the most, at a rate of 2.8 percent. However, commuter rail appears to be gaining the most momentum — seven commuter rail systems across the country posted double-digit increases, while only three light rail systems and one heavy rail system saw double-digit increases. The biggest jump for buses was 3.45 percent, in Washington, D.C.

[We Can Learn From The Success Of Japanese High-Speed Rail](#)

CleanTechnica-Mar 12, 2014

Japan's Shinkansen high-speed rail line network of bullet trains began operation in 1964, and it is the oldest and safest high-speed rail line in the world. So how'd they do it?...

For starters, Shinkansen is not just a train, it is indeed an entire system. Yes, England has bought a few of the trains, but that's not what makes the Shinkansen the best in the world. The Shinkansen system is constantly updated with the latest technology, from the basic signaling systems to the development of automated trains.

[High-speed trains to drive India's growth story](#)

Economic Times-Mar 11, 2014

NEW DELHI: Linking India's growth to high-speed trains, chief of a Japanese rail company today said quicker movement will help the country in realising its ambition of pushing development and progress.... "High-speed railways makes travel time between cities shorter by several hours. Due to this, different cities are integrated into a single economic lifezone," he said while addressing a seminar here. To buttress his argument that India can achieve higher growth with the help of high-speed trains, he highlighted Japan's experience in this aspect. "Japanese high-speed railway system is designed to minimise travel time for commuters, which has a great economic benefit," Kasai said.

[Train travel overtakes the plane in Spain](#)

NewsWest9.com-Mar 13, 2014

MADRID (AP) - The train in Spain is more popular than the plane.

The National Statistics Institute said Thursday that more people travelled domestically by high-speed train than by plane in January for the first time since monthly records began.

[Study dispels the myths of high-speed economics](#)

International Railway Journal (blog)-Mar 7, 2014

One of the myths dispelled by Civity concerns the widespread belief that operating costs rise in line with the maximum speed. Civity says this is inaccurate: "On corridors suitable for very high speed travel, operation costs of modern purpose-built trains are lowest at design speeds of between 250km/h and 300km/h and only increase gradually beyond 300km/h." Civity says this is mainly due to the higher train and staff productivity made possible by short journey times which means labour and capital costs decrease with higher speeds. Energy costs increase gradually above 300km/h but, as we have reported before, improvements to train design, aerodynamics, and traction equipment are helping to mitigate this.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS ARE NEEDED

- **8th Largest Economy in the World**
- **Population continues to grow**
- **Airport Congestion**
 - **LA to SF the busiest US short-haul market**
 - **5 Million Passengers Every Year**
 - **One in Four Flights Delayed by an Hour+**
- **Roadway Congestion**
 - **Six of Top 30 Congested Urban Areas in US Located in California**
- **Population Growth**
- **Air Quality/Sustainability**
- **Alternatives are Costly**



This is a graphic from the California High Speed Rail Authority used in a Power Point presentation given at the LOSSAN Board Meeting on March 14, 2014

[High-Speed Rail Authority prepares to solicit bids on Fresno-Kern stretch](#)

Fresno Bee-Mar 11, 2014

The authority's board will meet Tuesday in Sacramento to consider issuing its request for proposals for the project, which is estimated to cost between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion. Five teams of contractors were recently deemed pre-qualified to submit bids for the work in anticipation of awarding a contract late this year.

[State agencies OK water permits, land condemnation for high-speed rail](#)

Fresno Bee - Mar 14, 2014

A pair of state agencies announced actions Friday to advance the California High-Speed Rail Authority's efforts to begin construction of its bullet-train line in the central San Joaquin Valley. The state Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento said it ...

[California's Cap and Trade and its Impact on Rail Service](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

In effect since 2013, California's Cap and Trade program uses market forces to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) by having those who release too much buy "credits" which are sold by those who come under their "carbon budget". Cap and Trade is on track to meet its 2020 goals of cutting back GHG's to 1990 levels in California. But a recent study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that meeting California's Cap and Trade goals for 2050 which are 80 percent lower than the 1990 levels will be difficult to achieve. One reason for this is the State's population now of roughly 38 million is expected to top 50 million by 2050. To achieve the 2050 goals of reduced GHG's will require major changes in transportation and energy production. Rail service, both passenger and freight can be a major part of this. But even rail will need to make major changes to reduce its emission of GHG's .

[California electric grid sets solar generation record](#)

Reuters-Mar 10, 2014

(Reuters) - California set back-to-back solar power records last week, the state grid operator said on Monday.

The amount of electricity produced from carbon-free solar facilities connected to the grid reached 4,093 megawatts on Saturday, surpassing the day-earlier record of 3,926 MW, the California Independent System Operator (ISO) said in a statement....

The record solar generation accounted for about 18 percent of the state's 22,700-MW demand on Saturday, the ISO said, with the ability to supply about 3 million homes.

[Oil mars Ala. swamp months after crude train crash](#)

KFMB News 8-Mar 15, 2014

As the nation considers new means of transporting fuel over long distances, critics of crude oil trains have cited the Alabama derailment as an example of what can go wrong when tanker cars carrying millions of gallons of so-called Bakken crude leave the tracks

[Paris offers free public transport to reduce severe smog](#)

BBC News 14 Mar 2014

Authorities in Paris have taken the rare step of making public transport free for three days to reduce severe smog caused by unusually warm weather.

The French capital region and 30 other departments have been on maximum pollution alert for several days.

Landmark buildings like the Eiffel Tower were barely visible after a white fog settled over Paris.

[Now Boarding: Amtrak Writers Residency](#)

New York Times (blog) - Mar 10, 2014

The wheels have begun moving on Amtrak's plan to offer writers a rolling residency aboard their trains. On Monday the company announced that up to 24 writers, chosen from a pool of applicants, will be given a round-trip ticket on a long-distance train, ...

[250 Amtrak Passengers Stranded on Tracks for Hours](#)

NBC Connecticut-Mar 11, 2014

More than 250 Amtrak passengers were stranded on the tracks for hours with no power or bathroom access after their train lost power and got stuck near Greenwich, according to the railroad. Railroad officials said a mechanical problem stalled the train around 2:35 p.m. and left passengers with no bathroom or electrical services for nearly five hours.

[Group of Amtrak passengers feared](#)

Daily Inter Lake-Mar 10, 2014

Whitefish Police had a request from Amtrak Sunday to check on a large group of passengers who would be significantly delayed at the train depot while they waited for a bus to Shelby. Officers were asked to make sure everything stayed calm.

[Another New River Gorge eagle hit by train](#)

Charleston Gazette - Mar 13, 2014

CHARLESTON, W. Va. -- The mate of a bald eagle struck by an Amtrak locomotive passing through the New River Gorge last March was struck by another Amtrak train on Friday, near the site of last year's incident. Both of the passenger train-eagle collisions ...

[Amtrak outlines 2014 infrastructure plans](#)

International Railway Journal-Mar 10, 2014

THE expansion of Positive Train Control and upgrading of a key section of the Washington DC – New York – Boston Northeast Corridor (NEC) for 257km/h operation are among the highlights of Amtrak's 2014 infrastructure programme, which was announced on March 10.

[Mayor offers Amtrak Auto Train passengers whirlwind tours of Occoquan](#)

Washington Post-Mar 9, 2014

When Susan Burbridge pulled into the Lorton Auto Train station, ready to take the train to Florida, she had no plans to visit Occoquan on the way. An hour later, she was calling the small Prince William County town “paradise.” Burbridge and hundreds of Amtrak passengers like her have discovered Occoquan’s charms thanks to a new bus service that whisks travelers to Occoquan for an hour of lunch and shopping when they would otherwise be waiting in the train station.

[I Spent 36 Hours On Amtrak's Sunset Limited Train To Break Out Of.](#)

..xoJane-Mar 14, 2014

My decision to take the train from Houston to Los Angeles came from out of nowhere. One day I looked up train prices, and three days later I bought a ticket, boarding the train only four hours later. In fact, the reality that I would be on a train for 36 hours and 1,995 miles only truly hit me the next day when I woke up on the train.

[Railroad West: Amtrak along the Santa Fe Trail](#)

KRCC-Mar 12, 2014

In the coming weeks, you'll hear a series of stories and conversations from Maggie and Martha, as well as capitol reporter Bente Birkeland and others, about the Southwest Chief, what it means to the depot towns in Colorado and Northern New Mexico, and efforts to save the route.

[House floor next stop for Amtrak's Southwest Chief](#)

Pueblo Chieftain-Mar 15, 2014

A bill to save Amtrak's Southwest Chief rail line continued to climb the legislative hill Friday by passing through the House Appropriations Committee.

[Railwork in Oakley should speed up Amtrak service](#)

Contra Costa Times-Mar 13, 2014

The project is the third of five that Caltrans is doing in East Contra Costa County between Oakley and Port Chicago, all of them designed to improve service on Amtrak's San Joaquin Line, Dinger said. With double tracks in place, the state -- which subsidizes 100 percent of Amtrak's operations in California -- eventually might add another Amtrak train to the six that now pass through the area every day, he said.

[Springtime Vintage Railcars Daytrip!](#)

Santa Ynez Valley News-Mar 11, 2014

Presented by the South Coast Railroad Museum, the Central Coast Flyer is a regional treasure! We offer the unique opportunity to enjoy day trip travel on two privately owned railcars pulled by Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner train #1761

[Ten of the world's best train journeys to experience](#)

Herald Sun-Mar 15, 2104

Mark Smith is a British train buff and travel writer known as 'The Man in Seat 61' who has travelled the world's finest trains, always in seat 61.

"A great train ride is that triple combination of the scenery outside the train, the experience inside the train and the people you meet and things that happen on that specific trip which make it memorable," Mark Smith says.

"Flying has lost its glamour, it's time to rediscover real travel by train where the journey itself is an adventure."

[Federal report: Metro-North lets passenger safety lapse](#)

USA TODAY - Mar 14, 2014

The nation's second-largest commuter railroad, Metro-North, let passenger safety lapse, a federal review released Friday says.

[Clearing path for bridges: Caltrain work begins on outdated San Mateo bridges...](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Mar 13, 2014

Caltrain has big plans for the majority of its 77 miles of track and replacing four bridges in San Mateo is necessary before it can move forward with electrification, officials said.

The bridges at Tilton, Monte Diablo, East Santa Inez and East Poplar avenues are more than 100 years old and their low clearance often causes large trucks to become stuck or further damage the bridges, Caltrain spokeswoman Jayme Ackemann said.

[Continued Caltrain growth could depend on system improvements](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Mar 16, 2014

While 70 percent of commuters headed from the South Bay toward San Francisco in the 1990s, in recent years the growth of Silicon Valley has resulted in a more even 60-40 split in commute destinations.

[BART, Caltrain report record-high ridership](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Mar 10, 2014

“The main driver for our ridership is the local economy,” he said. “When we see people coming back to work, we see them coming back to BART as well.”

Caltrain also had a record-breaking year. The system had more than 1.3 million trips in January, a 9.5 percent jump from the previous January, and has seen 40 consecutive months of increasing ridership, said spokeswoman Jayme Ackemann.

[BART extension to San Jose is moving right along](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Mar 9, 2014

There's one project sailing right along, and it's a biggie -- bringing BART to San Jose in the largest, most expensive public works project the South Bay has ever seen.

It's due to open in late 2017, a full year ahead of schedule and on budget to meet its \$3.2 billion price tag.

[Rare albino redwood faces removal due to decree by federal ...](#)

Manteca Bulletin-Mar 12, 2014

Standing 52-feet tall, the tree features a unique mixture of normal green leaves and white, albino sections. It's believed to be the largest of its kind on the planet.

But Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) officials say the decision to remove it is out of their hands.

Federal regulators have determined the tree must come down for safety reasons. The genetically mutated redwood is apparently too close to a proposed set of new tracks.

[SMART to conduct additional analysis on Coast Redwood within Right-of-Way](#)

Press Release Mar 13, 2014

Petaluma, CA - Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) announced today that it is suspending the scheduling for the removal of a chimera coast redwood located within the railroad right-of-way at the intersection of East Cotati Avenue and the tracks, pending additional verification of expert analysis, as well as investigation of options.

[Nearly 1 in 4 California Household Trips Involve Walks, Bikes, Buses or Trains](#)

LA Weekly-Mar 11, 2014

If it seems like everyone is hiking, biking or using L.A.'s expanding light rail system these days, your sense of reality is not that far off.

The just-released Caltrans California Household Travel Survey reveals that almost one-quarter (about 23 percent) of our household trips statewide now involve non-car transportation, a figure that's more than double what it was (11 percent) in the futuristic year 2000.

[Coaster, Amtrak rail service suspended this weekend](#)

fox5sandiego.com-Mar 14, 2014

OCEANSIDE, Calif. — Rail service along the North County coastal corridor will be suspended this weekend because of construction work, according to the North County Transit District.

The NCTD's Coaster will not run, and Amtrak and the Metrolink will not come south into San Diego County.

[Looming train shortage at Metro](#)

Zev's Blog Mar 12, 2014

As two Los Angeles light rail lines race toward completion, there's trouble ahead on the tracks. Unless train car production can be significantly accelerated, there won't be enough vehicles to serve both new lines—Phase 2 of the Expo Line to Santa Monica and the Gold Line Foothill Extension to Azusa—if they

open as scheduled in late 2015 and early 2016 respectively.

Metro is so concerned about the problem that it's dispatching a delegation to the manufacturer's headquarters in Japan later this month in hopes of finding a way to speed up production—a tall order for a company that the agency acknowledges is on track with the aggressive schedule mutually agreed to under its contract.

[A bird's eye view of the exploratory shaft for the Purple Line Extension](#)

The Source Mar 14, 2014

Above are a collection of photos of the exploratory shaft near the intersection of Wilshire and Odgen that has been built for the Purple Line Extension project. All the photos were taken from a workbox hoisted by the crane being used to lift excavated soil from the shaft; the first photo was taken this morning, the remainder over the last several weeks.

[Signage project to improve way-finding at Union Station is set to begin March 11](#)

The Source Mar 10, 2014

Among our stakeholders, it was noted that many people get lost in Union Station. Some of the common complaints: it's a big place and it's often hard to know where you are — and where you're supposed to go to reach buses and trains and places such as Olvera Street, which is only a block away from Union Station's frontage on Alameda Street.



One of the changes coming to Union Station will be the end of Gates E and F at the mouth of the tunnel to the platforms. Amtrak passengers now wait in line behind these gates for their trains. Amtrak passengers will be encouraged to sit in the waiting room until their train is called. This will reduce congestion in the tunnel. Also large electronic signs displaying train arrivals and departures will be placed in the waiting room, so passenger won't need to use the ones at the mouth of the tunnel which also makes congestion worse. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: "Can L.A Kick its Driving Habit?"

Whenever I see headlines like the one in Politico Magazine, I cringe because it makes it sound like we drive because we prefer it or its an addiction. Truth is we haven't had good choices for many years. Now that we are expanding our choices, we will leave our cars parked more often. I liked the essence of David's article and implications that downtown LA is realizing that fixing the urban planning nightmare foisted the area in the late 1960s and early 1970's is the right thing to do. Many people who have lived and worked in cities like Chicago, New York and even Washington D.C. where commerce and transportation go hand in hand are convincing our planning and political leaders that this is the way to go. Obviously there is still much work to do. I hope someday soon we can get the Greenline connected at both ends giving Orange County commuters more choices. I hope that we can get a reality based rail connection between LA and Las Vegas and finally, hookup our airports with fast rail.

Great job on this week's newsletter.

Richard Bent

Thank You NB

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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