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**Subject:** Spend a dollar on rail service- you can get \$2.90 back!

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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, March 24, 2014 9:33 AM

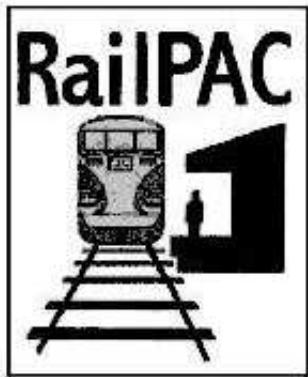
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for March 24, 2014**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
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**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



The Information Booth at LAUS is covered up while it is being restored. This is part of a major restoration project underway now. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [Amtrak calls for new way to fund Northeast Corridor repairs](#)

Philly.com-Mar 19, 2014

Amtrak wants to use operating profits from the Northeast Corridor for major construction projects on the corridor, instead of subsidizing long-distance trains elsewhere in the nation...

Boardman asked that Amtrak be allowed to use that operating surplus to help pay for \$735 million in capital costs on the corridor, including new railcars, station improvements, and rail and signal upgrades. He said the full operating deficit of long-distance trains - expected to be \$618 million this year - should be paid from the federal budget.

### [Amtrak FY 2015 budget: "Something has to change"](#)

RailwayAge Magazine - Mar 18, 2014

For its Fiscal Year 2015, which begins Oct. 1, 2014, Amtrak is requesting \$1.62 billion in federal capital and operating support, an increase of approximately 16% from FY 2014 federal appropriations.

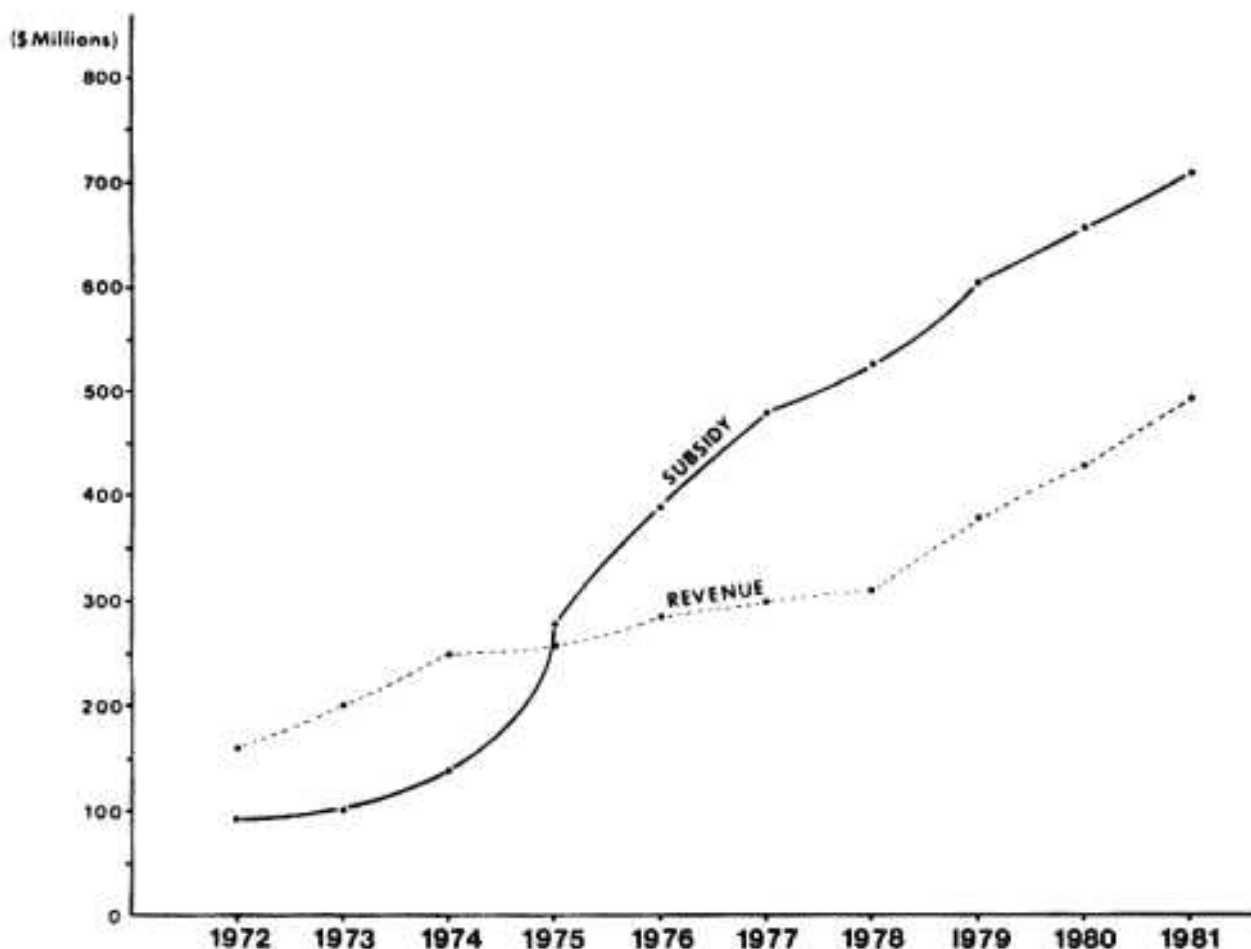
### [Amtrak budget request hits the Long Distance trains with a cost shift that doesn't make sense](#)

#### **Report and Commentary by Russ Jackson and Andrew C. Selden, URPA**

In the words of Amtrak CEO Joe Boardman, "Amtrak's fifteen long distance routes are the backbone of our system.... We certainly agree with that. Mr. Boardman recognizes, at least on paper, that the long distance trains are important. But then he goes on to totally change the picture for their future. "Long Distance service costs have been offset in recent years by revenues from our Northeast Corridor services, Amtrak is proposing in FY 2015 that the Federal Government provide for the totality of their

operating need, \$618 million, as part of our FY2015 operating need....Where are the proposals for growth of the Long Distance trains to help offset the "costs" he describes? All he wants is more Government money! And, he is not likely to get it from a frugal Congress. So, where are the growth plans for new cars for the western trains? All we have seen is the order for new low-level cars that will only be run on the eastern Long Distance trains. Where are the plans for increasing revenues by adding additional cars to already sold out trains?

**The problem isn't the trains. The heart of the problem is the cost to Amtrak of owning the Northeast Corridor. Neither Amtrak nor the commuter railroads using the NEC bring in enough revenue to pay the costs of running it . Most of the "losses" from the Long Distance Trains are due to the overhead costs of the NEC being charged to them. The NEC Amtrak trains "make money" only because they are not charged overhead on the same basis as non-NEC trains. This also a major factor in the costs charged to States for short haul trains.NB**



**This is a graph of the early days of Amtrak showing revenue and subsidy. It can be clearly seen that after 1975 costs jumped way up. What happened at this time was Amtrak was "given" the NEC. In 1979 in an attempt to reduce costs Amtrak cut out 5 trains, 4 of them Long Distance trains. As this chart shows cutting trains did nothing to reduce costs.**

**This graph is from a paper written in 1982 by Dr. Ronald Scheck called "Amtrak 90: A Route to Success". What Dr, Scheck showed was Amtrak's problem wasn't that it was losing money running trains. Unlike most passenger rail services in the world which broke even or made money even in 1982, Amtrak didn't then and still doesn't have enough trains to carry enough passengers to bring in enough revenue to cover overhead. The solution is many more trains, with longer trains to carry more passengers to generate enough revenue to cover overhead. The best way to do that is to expand Long Distance service. NB**

## [Bill Passes To Connect Amtrak To Pueblo](#)

KKTV 11 News-Mar 20, 2014

A bill just passed in the state House that will extend the Amtrak train to go through Pueblo. Right now, Amtrak starts in Chicago and passes through La Junta to Trinidad. The bill allows the train to re-route through Pueblo and Walsenburg, eventually ending in Los Angeles.

## [New Mexico to study cost-sharing for Amtrak route](#)

Albuquerque Journal-Mar 19, 2014

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — New Mexico plans to study whether to help pay part of the cost of keeping Amtrak's Southwest Chief on its current route.

A state budget signed by Republican Gov. Susana Martinez allocates \$50,000 to the Legislative Council Service to study a proposal by Amtrak for New Mexico, Colorado and Kansas to share the costs of maintaining and improving more than 600 miles of track through their states.

## [Re-opening date set for Denver Union Station](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Mar 21, 2014

The station has been the focus of a redevelopment project, sometimes contentious in nature, that seeks to integrate Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail transit, new electric regional rail service, and bus operations. Amtrak also will return to the station in May, with its California Zephyr long-distance train service. Union Station and Denver International Airport is scheduled to be linked by rail service in 2016.

## [Can we get a family discount for travelling on US trains?](#)

The Independent-Mar 18, 2014

Take the journey between Los Angeles and San Diego – a 120-mile trip, equivalent to Bristol to London. It takes nearly three hours. And even if you book several months ahead, the same fare applies for every train. The total of \$129.50 (£85) for your family group is about twice as much as you might pay for an advance-booking trip of the same distance in Britain. It's also double what a rental car for a day would cost in California, even taking into account the drop-off fee and a few gallons of "gas".

**There is the California Rail Pass which allows 7 days of travel in California on Amtrak Trains and Buses over 21 days. It costs \$159 per adult and \$79.50 per child. It requires train reservation at the time the Pass is issued and it must be bought either on the Amtrak 1-800 phone line or through a travel agent. NB**

## [California energy official says state wasn't aware of crude by rail ...](#)

Sacramento Bee (blog)-Mar 16, 2014

A California Energy Commission official Friday said the agency wasn't aware that the state had become a destination for crude oil shipments by rail, even though Gov. Jerry Brown's budget proposal made note of it two months ago.

## [Huge increase in crude oil by rail to Bay Area concerns local leaders](#)

Contra Costa Times-Mar 17, 2014

RICHMOND -- Bakken crude oil from North Dakota is part of the mix of increased crude-by-rail shipments into Contra Costa County, raising concerns from local leaders about whether current regulations are sufficient to minimize risks of transporting the volatile fossil fuel.

## [Bruce Maiman: Priorities are not on infrastructure repair](#)

Sacramento Bee-Mar 18, 2014

California especially suffers in the latest report by the American Society of Civil Engineers, which regularly grades the state of the nation's infrastructure – currently a D-plus, if you're wondering.



California structures ranking dead last included the I-10 span over Normandie Avenue in Los Angeles, crossed by 321,000 vehicles daily; the runways at San Francisco International Airport; and the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, where goods routinely pile up, awaiting shipment by trucks and trains.

### [Investing in freight network pays off for Southern California: Tim Spohn](#)

San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Mar 18, 2014

Investing in our freight network isn't just about reducing congestion. It's about preserving and creating jobs, fortifying our economy, reducing pollution and making sure our children and grandchildren have the opportunity to enjoy the same Southern California we all appreciate...

The payback can be seen in employment numbers, as well — protecting 634,000 jobs related to goods movement in the San Gabriel Valley alone.

Add it all up — improved mobility and productivity, reduced pollution, increased business opportunity — and the return on investment, according to the Regional Transportation Plan, is \$2.90 for every dollar spent on transportation infrastructure.

### [Visalia forum to pitch rail contracts](#)

Fresno Business Journal-Mar 18, 2014

Businesses interested in working on the next phase of California's bullet train can learn how during an industry forum and pre-bid conference being held April 8 in Visalia. The event, being put on by the California High-Speed Rail Authority, will last from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center at 303 E. Acequia Ave.

### [U.S. Highway Trust Fund headed into the red within months](#)

The Source Mar 18, 2014

Below is the latest from Metro's government relations staff on efforts to keep the federal Highway Trust Fund from going into the red; the fund supports road projects and mass transit across the United States. This has been a problem for many years but no solution seems imminent, particularly in an election year.

### [Growers demand changes to environmental rules](#)

Hanford Sentinel-Mar 20, 2014

"If California had its priorities straight, we'd be building water storage instead of a train that may never come," Denham said in a reference to high-speed rail that drew huge applause from the packed audience. The whole scene mirrored a similar effort in 2011 that produced HR 1837, a bill offered by Nunes that passed the House but went nowhere in the Senate. Like HR3964, it would have fundamentally altered the Endangered Species Act to give more priority to human uses and require more proof of success before environmental restrictions can be continued.

Larry Starrh, a farmer from Kern County, wondered whether Tuesday's hearing would lead to the same dead end.

"Three years ago, I sat in the audience and listened to a lot of these same things," he said.

**Droughts are a part of nature. Local Southern California Water agencies have worked for years to prepare for drought by having people conserve water, including raising water rates to get people to conserve water, finding ways to reuse water and building additional water storage. More of this needs to be done throughout the State. What the San Joaquin Valley also needs is better rail service to improve its economy and not be so dependent on Farming. NB**

### [Tough task for Ripon to lure retailers](#)

Manteca Bulletin-Mar 19, 2014

The Jack Tone Road interchange and the Mistlin Sports Park could be ideal places to bring in new businesses considering the large volume of traffic, according to Parks.

"We also learned that transit centers have become hubs for bringing in businesses," he added. "A lot of

people filter through them each day.”

Back in December, Council heard from the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission about possibly expanding the Altamont Corridor Express train and rail service to Ripon.

The prospect of that happening could be promising. “An ACE train station would be a boom to our downtown,” Parks said.

### [Rail Passenger Projects in the San Joaquin Valley](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

In an article published in the Fresno Bee on March 4, 2013, it was reported that in the 2013 Draft of the California State Rail Plan that \$560 million dollars was proposed to be spend on the San Joaquin Train route independent of High Speed Rail. Overall \$2.7 billion dollars was being proposed over the next 20 years. The following is what is planned up to 2020 as it effects both the San Joaquin Trains as well as ACE which are the two passenger rail services in the San Joaquin Valley.

### [Caltrain and California High-Speed Rail: A partnership to improve rail service along the Peninsula](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Mar 20, 2014

Funding for these benefits is coming in part from local, regional and federal sources, but almost half of it has been committed by the California High-Speed Rail Authority. The authority is helping to create these local improvements because eventually, after further study and the completion of a separate environmental analysis, this modernized rail corridor will be part of a new transportation network that connects Bay Area residents to the rest of the state with high-speed rail.

### [Transportation Priorities Jostle for CA's Cap-and-Trade Revenue](#)

Streetblog LA Mar 32, 2014

At a Senate Transportation Committee hearing Wednesday, a long line of public advocacy groups spoke up for reshuffling the cap and trade funds, mostly in the direction of the respective group's preferred emissions-reduction strategy (better transit, for example, or forest fire prevention given this dry year).

**Cap and Trade is on track in California to meet the 2020 goals for CO2 emissions. The hard part will be meeting the 2050 Cap and Trade goals which are only 20 percent of the 2020 emissions. This will require moving many more people by rail by then which will need to be electrified with power from renewable sources to meet the 2050 levels. NB**

### [NIMBYS oppose privately owned new Passenger Rail Service](#)

CBS 12 NEWS Mar 21, 2014

The mighty Florida East Coast Industries' Railroad finds itself up against small grass roots groups trying to stop an already approved project.

"Do you think you guys can stop this?" we asked.

"Absolutely. You can stop anything," said Alex Larson, opposed to the project.

Today, residents from West Palm Beach to Vero Beach came to Indian River State College to give elected officials at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council an earful.

### [Caught On Video: Caltrain Rider's Near-Fatal Close Call](#)

CBS Local-Mar 18, 2014

REDWOOD CITY (KPIX 5) — Video showing a man nearly being killed as he ignores numerous warning signs and runs across the tracks at a Caltrain station as a train passes at full speed is prompting train managers to beg the public for better awareness.

### [Caltrain dispatching system causing major delays](#)

abc7news.com-Mar 19, 2014

Caltrain is experiencing major system-wide delays this morning following a failure in its computerized dispatching system,

### [Squirrel Blamed for San Jose Power Outage](#)

NBC Bay Area - Mar 19, 2014

One of the customers affected was Caltrain's San Jose dispatching center, according to Tell. The outage caused the dispatching center to fail and led trains to stop, causing major system-wide delays.

### [Santa Cruz County transportation 2.0: \\$2.7B plan begins redesign of local transportation](#)

Santa Cruz Sentinel-Mar 21, 2014

The RTC also is studying commuter rail along the 32-mile Branch Rail Line, something Bustichi questions. There's no room for trains to pass each other, costly track upgrades likely are required and even then the train would run at very low speeds, he said.

### [SanBAG in favor of Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink paid parking plan](#)

Inland Valley Daily Bulletin-Mar 17, 2014

The Rancho Cucamonga station ranks among the top 10 for daily boardings in the region and could become the first in San Bernardino County to charge for parking. Some agencies in the region already impose parking fees.

### [California's Most Dangerous Train Crossing Shut Down](#)

NBC Southern California-Mar 21, 2014

Some 52 trains and 40,000 cars a day pass over this train crossing on Nogales Street in Rowland Heights. There's been an average of one crash a year at the crossing the last 10 years, data shows. Starting Saturday, the crossing will be closed, so crews can begin building an underpass. It is expected to be closed for two years.

### [Main entrance to Union Station closed for restoration work now through April 4](#)

The Source Mar 17, 2014

The main entrance to Union Station will be closed for painting and metal restoration work starting today through April 4. During this time, visitors should use the South Breezeway entrance, which is just around the corner to the right of the main entrance.



One of the changes at LAUS are station service employees dressed in bright red sports jackets and yellow ties. Their job is answer passenger questions about station services and finding help for people. They are also security guards. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## We Get Emails

**Re: Yes people will ride when we build it!**

I TAKE IT BACK AND FORTH ACROSS COUNTRY TO DC> !!!!

Shelby Jean Kaplan

**Re: Yes people will ride when we build it!**

I've taken the Train for 70 years because I was afraid of flying. I Keep telling them they should have a Frequent Rider plan. Now that I don't travel much, its here!!!How frustrating!!!

So now, when will you get a train from LA to Vegas???It was great when you had it!!

Rose Good

**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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**Join us!** More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

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