

---

**Subject:** Empire Builder getting new schedule: more padding and no Starlight connection.

---

**From:** Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)

---

**To:** ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

---

**Date:** Monday, March 31, 2014 9:32 AM

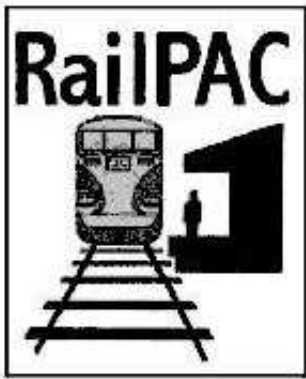
---

## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for March 31. 2014**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

**Feel free to forward copies of this E-Newsletter to your friends or someone who can use this information.**

**If you would like to subscribe to the E-Newsletter just send me your name and email address to [nbraymer@railpac.org](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org)**



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



This is a recent view from Metrolink of the BNSF Mainline crossing over the I-215 Freeway between Riverside and Colton. As part of the reconstruction of the freeway, the BNSF is getting new bridges over the freeway which will allow for a third track replacing the current double track in the future. In the photo are the new supports in the middle of the freeway for the replacement spans. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [GRAND TERRACE: Crews prepare for massive bridge move over I -215](#)

Press-Enterprise-Mar 26, 2014

Ironworkers are tightening the last of 98,000 bolts on a massive railroad bridge, and riggers are putting the final touches on a complex plan for moving the steel span into place over Interstate 215 next week. Commuters have witnessed the rusty metal structure taking shape for the past several months as workers assembled it alongside the freeway at Barton Road in Grand Terrace, not far from the BNSF railroad bridge it will replace.

Finally, beginning April 2, the span will be moved and positioned above the freeway by the same company that transported the space shuttle Endeavour across Los Angeles in 2012. Three more bridge sections will be built and wrestled into place in the coming weeks.

### [NTSB: Operator in O'Hare crash had fallen asleep at controls before](#)

Chicago Tribune Mar 26, 2014

The operator of the CTA train that jumped the platform and climbed an escalator at O'Hare has admitted dozing off at the controls, and had been admonished last month when she also fell asleep and missed a stop, officials said today.

### [Train at Chicago's O'Hare airport tripped emergency brake before crash](#)

Reuters March 25, 2014

(Reuters) - A passenger train that slammed through its end-of-the-line barrier at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this week tripped an automatic emergency stop system and was not speeding when it entered the station, a federal investigator said on Tuesday.

## [Derailed train removed from O'Hare, station to reopen this weekend](#)

Chicago Sun-Times-Mar 28, 2014

A Blue Line train has been removed from the O'Hare International Airport station where it derailed early Monday, and the station is expected to reopen this weekend, the Chicago Transit Authority announced Thursday afternoon.

## [Riding Amtrak Cross-Country: 6 Myths Debunked](#)

Gothamist-Mar 24, 2014

I took Amtrak cross-country from Sacramento, California to New York via the California Zephyr and Lake Shore Limited. Reactions ranged from "that sounds...interesting" to "you are a goddamn fool." But the four-day trip proved surprising in more ways than one. Here, a few misconceptions about train travel, debunked for the curious.

## [A Trip On The Nation's Most Unreliable Train](#)

Here And Now - Mar 25, 2014

And now, let's go on what's being called the most unreliable train ride in America. I know, based on where you live you may see that as a challenge, but Amtrak's famed Empire Builder, shuttling passengers between Chicago and Seattle and Portland since the early 20th century, is now being slowed down by the sudden rise in freight traffic in and out of North Dakota's oil fields.

## [Tracks now clear after freight train fatally hits pedestrian in St. Cloud](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune- Mar 27, 2014

Amtrak's eastbound Empire Builder also came to a halt as the passenger train waited for the freight train to start moving again, said Amtrak ...

## [Amtrak stretches Empire Builder schedule in response to BNSF ...](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Mar 27, 2014

To help deal with this situation until BNSF is able to improve capacity, Amtrak Empire Builder trains will operate on a modified schedule, starting April 15, with most of the change affecting operation between St. Paul, Minn., and Portland, Ore., or Seattle.

Eastbound Empire Builder trains leaving Seattle (Train 8) and Portland (Train 28) and combined at Spokane, Wash., will originate three hours earlier, at 1:40 p.m. and 1:45 p.m., respectively.

**Great, now the Builder has hours more padding and loses its connection to the Starlight. NB**

## [Amtrak boss stresses higher speeds on Northeast Corridor](#)

Philly.com- Mar 27, 2014

WASHINGTON - Amtrak's planned new Acela Express trains will carry more passengers and be more reliable than the current ones, even if they won't travel much faster, Amtrak president Joseph Boardman said Thursday....

Proposals from train-builders are due by May 17. A builder will be selected by the end of the year, Boardman said.

The first of the new Acela trains are supposed to be in service between Washington and Boston by 2018. The specifications for the new trains call for many different requirements for Amtrak and for California, but Boardman said he was optimistic that train manufacturers could come up with a common design that could be modified to fit both.

"We're going to get a train set that operates for us. We hope it's useful to California . . . but California is not my problem," Boardman said in an interview.

## [Rental truck gets stuck under Amtrak bridge](#)

WRGB - Mar 27, 2014

SCHENECTADY -- A portion of Liberty Street was closed on Thursday after a rental truck became stuck under an Amtrak bridge.

**Amtrak is leasing but doesn't own the CSX railroad in upstate New York. NB**

### [East Bay and South Bay passenger rail corridor proposed to move crude oil](#)

Contra Costa Times-Mar 25, 2014

BERKELEY -- The tracks that carry Amtrak Capitol Corridor trains through about a dozen heavily populated East Bay and South Bay communities could become a rail superhighway for potentially explosive crude oil transports to Central California under a plan by the Phillips 66 oil company, Berkeley officials warn.

### [Richmond and Berkeley Oppose Fracked Oil and Tar Sands Rail Shipments](#)

East Bay Express-Mar 26, 2014

The city councils of both Berkeley and Richmond unanimously passed resolutions last night calling for tighter regulation of the shipping of crude oil by rail through the East Bay. The Berkeley resolution went further, committing Berkeley to oppose all shipment of crude oil by rail through the city until tighter regulations are in place.

### [Car crashes through crossing arm, hits Amtrak train in northeastern ...](#)

Columbus Dispatch-Mar 24, 2014

ASHTABULA, Ohio — An Ashtabula man was injured yesterday when his vehicle went through a railroad crossing arm and hit an Amtrak train ..

**For once a news story gets it right. When people drive past crossing gates into a train they are the ones hitting the train. NB**

### [Pasadena is a Great Rail Destination](#)

Story and Photos By Noel T. Braymer

Most modern train stations are little more than parking lots with platforms far away from someplace people want to go to. Your busier stations are transportation centers with good connections to other trains and other travel modes like bus and rail transit. Few train stations today are destinations. People often travel for fun to go to places that are interesting with things to see and do; not because they have to go there. More people will ride the train when it is the best way to go to popular destinations.

### [Is this train the "little engine that could" for clean energy storage?](#)

Grist-Mar 26, 2014

In Greek mythology, the story of Sisyphus endlessly rolling a boulder uphill is meant to be a cautionary tale. Gravity, in this case, worked against the poor chump. But the smart folks at Advanced Rail Energy Storage North America (ARES) asked: Why not make gravity your friend?

ARES has pioneered a train full of rocks that climbs up a hill, only to roll back down again and repeat the process, Sisyphus style. But instead of a metaphor of futility, this new train technology offers a breakthrough opportunity in clean energy storage.

### [Support for high-speed rail increases slightly](#)

Sacramento Business Journal-Mar 27, 2014

In a development that may give the California High-Speed Rail Authority a boost, a new poll suggests that growing numbers of Californians approve of the bullet train project. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, 53 percent of adults favor the train.

**When Prop 1A passed in 2008, it passed by a margin of 52.62 percent. 2008 was a Presidential election year with a higher than average level of voter turnout. This poll strongly suggests that**



despite years of misleading attacks on High Speed Rail, that there has been no decrease in support for High Speed Rail service. Results from polls often vary by who gives the poll and by the questions that are asked. The following is the summary of this poll by the Public Policy Institute of California. NB

## Public Policy Institute of California

### PPIC Statewide Survey March 2014

SLIM MAJORITY OF ADULTS FAVOR HIGH SPEED RAIL

LIKELY VOTERS LESS SUPPORTIVE

Californians were asked about another big project: a high speed rail system.

In 2008, voters passed a \$10 billion state bond for its planning and construction.

Today, when read a description of the system and its \$68 billion price tag, 53 percent favor it and 42 percent oppose it.

Likely voters are less supportive (45% favor, 50% oppose)

Majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (63%), Central Valley (57%),

Orange/San Diego (54%) and Los Angeles (52%) are in favor. Inland Empire residents are divided (45% favor, 46% oppose).

When opponents of high speed rail are asked how they would feel if the cost were lower support rises (69% adults, 60% likely voters).

Asked about high speed rail's importance 35 percent of adults and 29 percent of likely voters say it is very important to the future quality of life and state's economic vitality

**These results show that if High Speed Rail is economical and serves most of California it will have public support. It also suggests that it won't be a major issue with voters. NB**

### Patterson bill to tighten high-speed rail spending falls in committee

Fresno Bee-Mar 25, 2014

The Assembly Transportation Committee turned down a bill by Assembly Member Jim Patterson to prohibit spending federal grant money on a high-speed train project until the state's High-Speed Rail Authority has approved matching funds.

Patterson and his fellow Republicans on the committee were outvoted 8-4 on Monday afternoon. Several committee members were absent, but not enough to catch up to the "no" votes on Assembly Bill 1501. Patterson had urged the committee to allow the bill to move on to the Appropriations Committee, which oversees the state's spending.

### Bullet train won't meet target travel time, lawmakers told

Los Angeles Times Mar 27, 2014

But Louis Thompson, chairman of the High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group, a state-sanctioned panel of outside experts, testified that "real world engineering issues" will cause schedules for regular service to exceed the target of two hours and 40 minutes. The state might be able to demonstrate a train that could make the trip that fast, but not on scheduled service, he told lawmakers.

**This story doesn't define what is meant by "regular service." Planning before 2008 of the HSR project called for express, semi-express, suburban-express and local service. The only trains that could hope to run LA to San Francisco in 2 hours 40 minutes would be express trains. If only one train a day ran non-stop between LA and San Francisco each way in 2 hours 40 minutes the service should comply with the Prop 1A requirements. RailPAC President Paul Dyson also spoke at this State Senate Committee meeting on the 27th. NB**

### High-speed rail gaining momentum in Texas

Fort Worth Star Telegram- Mar 27, 2014

Support for 220-mph bullet trains in North Texas is on the fast track.

On Thursday in Austin, appointees from Fort Worth, Arlington and Dallas were approved as members of a high-speed rail commission, which is led by former Fort Worth Councilman Bill Meadows. And in Houston, Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price, Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings and Houston Mayor Annise Parker gathered to show unified support for high-speed rail.

### [DART will launch service to D/FW Airport 4 months early on Aug. 18](#)

Dallas Business Journal - Mar 25, 2014

Dallas Area Rapid Transit will open the Orange Line into Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport on Aug. 18, the transportation authority announced Tuesday. The 4.7-mile extension will open four months earlier than originally anticipated.

### [Fitch Ratings: Failure to Invest in Transit Could Hurt the Whole Economy](#)

StreetsblogUSA Mar 27, 2014

"Public transportation investment strategies will need to transform if trends toward increased multifamily housing, declines in driving, and increasing public transportation usage continue over the long run," Fitch said

### [More trains, buses and highways across region will ease traffic ...](#)

Los Angeles Daily News-Mar 26, 2014

Saying no one in Southern California is immune to traffic nightmares, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti vowed Wednesday to work alongside independent cities in the county to raise money for more trains, buses and highways that will ease gridlock.

### [Miracle Milers Don't Want Any Trees Uprooted for Purple Line](#)

Curbed LA-Mar 27, 2014

Residents of the Miracle Mile are worried about possible disruption regarding two periods of possible 24-hour subway work and now other Milers are freaking over tree removal that'll be required to build the subway tunnel and stations

### [Two grade separation projects advance in LA area](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Mar 26, 2014

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) recently approved a \$48 million allocation to the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority (ACE) for the Puente Avenue grade separation project in Industry, Calif...The \$99 million project also includes a loop connector road west of Puente Avenue and south of Valley Boulevard to re-establish the connection between the two roads, and the elimination of a grade crossing at Puente Avenue that averages 31,110 vehicles and 20 trains per day....

Meanwhile, ACE has issued a request for proposals seeking a consultant to provide construction management services for the Fullerton Road grade separation project in Industry. Proposals are due by May 6.

### [Dodgers exhibition games against Angels Thursday and Friday](#)

Los Angeles Dodgers-Mar 26, 2014

LOS ANGELES -- The Dodgers will face off against the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim for two exhibition games at Dodger Stadium Thursday, March 27 and Friday, March 28 at 7:10 p.m. Thursday will mark the return of the Dodger Stadium Express, a complimentary shuttle service from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to Dodger Stadium. Thursday and Friday, Metrolink will also offer its Rail Series service from Orange County to Dodger Stadium. Dodger fans can take Metrolink train 609 or 689 for \$7 round trip on the Orange County Line to see the Dodgers take on the Angels. A special late night train departing L.A. Union Station heading back to Orange County will depart one hour after the last pitch. Fans can visit [www.metrolinktrains.com/railseries](http://www.metrolinktrains.com/railseries) for complete details..

### [Skepticism dogs Santa Ana streetcar plan](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Mar 26, 2014

Not all OCTA directors are opposed to the project. OCTA Director Lori Donchak, a supporter, described the plan as an "incredibly well-managed project."

The proposed route would link the Santa Ana's train station, served by Amtrak and Metrolink trains, with downtown Santa Ana, the county seat, and the Orange County Civic Center, before reaching its western terminus at Garden Grove.

**The potential for property development of Streetcar service is much greater than with Bus Rapid Transit. NB**

### [RT wants to add buses, light rail trips during Highway 50 fix](#)

Sacramento Business Journal-Mar 25, 2014

No one is calling it "Carmageddon" just yet, but state and local officials are expecting significant traffic backups beginning in May when Caltrans begins its rehabilitation of the W-X portion of the Capital City Freeway -- the elevated portion of Highway 50 between Interstate 5 and Highway 99.

### [BART's new reality: longer, more frequent delays](#)

SFGate-Mar 28, 2014

Word of the proposed new hires comes as BART is preparing to put in place sweeping new safety rules that could mean passengers will face longer waits between trains and reduced service hours.

### [Visualizing the Bay Area's Transit Systems by Commute Time](#)

The Atlantic Cities-Mar 19, 2014

Dunn's latest creation, launched for pre-orders today via Kickstarter, maps the public transit systems of the Bay Area based on a useful but deceptively difficult to render metric: how long it takes to get downtown.

### [Capitol Corridor Monthly Report \(February, 2014\)](#)

**Reported by David B. Kutrosky, Managing Director**

Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority Service Performance Overview

Capitol Corridor ridership and revenue for February 2014 were slightly below last February's results: -1.6% and -2.7%, respectively. A total of 104,308 trips were made on the Capitol Corridor in February 2014 vs. 105,964 in February 2013. I attribute this decline in ridership to night-time track work performed by Union Pacific Railroad between Richmond and Martinez...

### [Woman falls asleep, gets trapped on Caltrain](#)

abc7news.com-Mar 24, 2014

SAN JOSE, Calif. (KGO) -- A San Jose commuter went through a scary ordeal on Caltrain -- 23-year-old Jessica Method fell asleep on the train, missed her stop and woke up alone in an empty train in the Caltrain maintenance yard.



Passenger waiting to board Metrolink at Fontana going west mid-day in March 2014. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

**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](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org)**

**For those who would like an additional copy of the eNewsletter with plain text (minus photos and graphics) just email me at [nbraymer@railpac.org](mailto:nbraymer@railpac.org) with your name and email address. NB**

**If you are not a member, go to [RailPAC Membership...Join Us!](#) to get information about RailPAC and a FREE copy of our regular newsletter .**

For information about RailPAC, contact the Membership Office

Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California

1017 L Street, PMB-217

Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at [info@railpac.org](mailto:info@railpac.org)



Call at **(415) 7-TRACK-2**

(415) 787-2252 (415) 787-2252

[Unsubscribe](#) from this list.

Copyright (C) Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC) All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend

[Update your profile](#)

MailChimp