

THE CROSS-TIE

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Good News, Changes for Amtrak

WASHINGTON — Following the successful introduction of revenue management on many of its Northeast Corridor trains last year, Amtrak will expand the practice in the Northeast to Acela Express and Metroliner service, beginning with trains departing Feb. 6.

The benefit of revenue management for passengers is that those with flexible travel times can take advantage of reduced fares on lower-demand trains. To take advantage of lower fares — up to 15 percent less than the current lowest fare — passengers are encouraged to purchase tickets early and travel during off-peak hours.

Revenue management is the fare system begun by airlines based on passenger de-

mand and seat capacity. Put simply, the average fare is lower on departures with lower demand and higher capacity, and higher on departures with higher demand and lower capacity.

Amtrak is not implementing any across-the-board fare increase at this time, and unlike most airlines, does not charge a fee for exchanging tickets for different trains or times of departure (passengers are required to pay only the difference in fare, if any). The number of Acela Express and Metroliner fares that will be 15 percent higher or lower than existing fares today will be limited and based on demand and capacity.

(Continued on page 3)

A 'HIGH-PERFORMANCE' RAILROAD TEXAS ADVOCATES WANT FEASIBILITY STUDY

DALLAS – What would happen to jobs, real-estate development and highway congestion if travelers could ride passenger trains that went 110 mph and shippers could route their freight on intermodal containers trains that did 90 mph?

That's the issue railroad executives, state government officials and managers from some of Texas's biggest corporations planned to address Jan. 27 when Texas Rail Advocates held its second annual conference on the South Central High Speed Rail Corridor at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport Hyatt Regency Hotel.

"In the autumn of 2000 the federal government designated nearly 1,000 miles of main line in Texas and two neighboring states as eligible for upgrade to a 'high-performance' railroad," said TRA Executive Director Paul Mangelsdorf. "But today, five years later, nothing's been done to upgrade these tracks."

That mileage, which can qualify for federal funding, included the Union Pacific Railroad's 730-mile main line connecting Little Rock, Ark., Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, Texas, San Antonio, Texas, and Laredo, Texas, plus the BNSF Railway's 200 miles of track connecting Fort Worth and Oklahoma City, Okla., rail advocates say. The Y-shaped rail system became the 11th route to be designated a High Speed Rail Corridor by the Federal Railroad Administration.

"All of the other ten corridors have started development, using state funding, federal funding or a mixture of both," Mangelsdorf said.

"The Jan. 27 meeting will address the question of how we can get the three state legislatures – and their congressional delegations – to vote the funding for a feasibility study that will quantify the economic growth that a track upgrade will generate for the states on the South Central Corridor."

States along the other 10 corridors already have funded studies, and some have moved on to investing in additional track capacity, signaling and safety features,

Mangelsdorf said.

"Single track is being supplemented with double track or with longer passing sidings in California, Washington state, Virginia, North Carolina and Illinois," he added. "Dangerous highway grade crossings are being replaced with overpasses.

"In Illinois and Michigan, the old-fashioned block signals are being replaced with Positive Train Control (PTC) signaling that uses satellites to track the position of each train," Mangelsdorf said. "The PTC system automatically overrides the engineer's control and stops the train if it violates a speed restriction. It's so safe the Federal Railroad Administration allows passenger trains equipped with PTC to travel 110 miles per hour or more. The old system allows a top speed of only 79 miles per hour."

If the South Central Corridor were equipped with similar capacity and safety enhancements, it would be able to carry far more trains than it does now, enabling passengers and freight to avoid crowded highways and airports and travel in total safety and with total reliability regardless of weather, Mangelsdorf contends.

"Obviously, that kind of mobility would be a long-term shot-in-the-arm to the economy of the region – perhaps as important to economic development as the Interstate highways were in the 1950s and 1960s and as the development of DFW Airport was a generation ago," Mangelsdorf said.

"The problem is, we won't know what kind of payoff to expect until we have a study, and we won't have a study until our state and federal legislators earmark some money for one. It will take about \$1 million."

A Texas DOT representative will address the recently passed Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund, which could be a source for part of the funding. Amtrak Board Chairman David Laney is expected to address the future of regional and national passenger service.

BNSF Railway Vice President D.J. Mitchell will explain how state-sponsored

capacity enhancements on the Cascade Corridor in Washington state are improving both passenger and freight-rail performance and helping to grow the region's economy. David King, Deputy Administrator, North Carolina Department of Transportation, will explain how his state is benefiting from a similar program of rail improvements.

The future of public-private partnerships for growth and expansion of railroads will be addressed by Scott Moore, Vice President of Public/Private Partnerships Union Pacific Railroad.

Dallas City Councilman Bill Blaydes will discuss the plans for the DFW Inland Port project and the benefits of a direct extension of the South Central Corridor from Dallas to Houston. Emilio Sacristan, director general of the Association of Mexican Railroads, will discuss the importance of high-performance railroads connecting Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

Closer coordination of rail and air passenger service will be addressed by Andrew Sharp, Director General, of the London-based International Air Rail Organisation.

"Texas railroads are suffering from too many trains and not enough track," Mangelsdorf said. "Our railroads are mainly single track with some passing sidings, which severely limits capacity for improved freight service and for the development of fast, frequent passenger service.

"Our railroads were built more than a century ago to service a cow-and-cotton economy, not the kind of economy that blossomed in the Sun Belt during the last generation," Mangelsdorf added.

"A robust, high performance South Central Rail Corridor will allow the free flow of goods between the major producing and consuming areas of Mexico, Texas, the Midwest and Canada and will relieve our congested highways of large volumes of passengers that could be traveling comfortably by rail if the speed, capacity and reliability were there."

— PRWeb

GOOD NEWS FOR BELEAGUERED AMTRAK

(Continued from page 1)

Amtrak introduced revenue managed fares to its Regional trains in the Northeast in October 2005, and they have been popular among passengers who have used the opportunity to travel at lower fares.

DISCOUNT ON MONTHLY FARES

REDUCES: Completing the second of a two-phase fare change for monthly commuter passes in the Northeast Corridor, the Smart Pass discount will be adjusted from 60 percent to 50 percent beginning Feb. 16.

The 50 percent discount continues to be the largest discount offered commuter railroad passengers in the Northeast (based on 18 monthly roundtrips). Smart Pass tickets are good for unlimited travel on designated Amtrak trains during the month for which they are purchased.

Adjustment of the fare, first announced in September 2005, is intended to cover increases in current and anticipated expenses across the board, including the cost of fuel. Amtrak serves about 2,000 Smart Pass monthly passengers in the Northeast Corridor, most of whom commute between

Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

Passes purchased prior to February 16 are available at the current 60% discount, and passengers may purchase passes up to three months in advance.

RECORD YEAR FOR AMTRAK

CALIFORNIA TRAINS: A record 4.6 million passengers rode Amtrak California trains in 2005. Passenger traffic on all intrastate Amtrak trains in California showed strong gains nearly every month during the year. The combined ridership on Amtrak's three state-supported routes, the Pacific Surfliner, Capitol Corridor and San Joaquin was up 4.9 percent in 2005 over the previous year. Amtrak attributes the increase to a strong economy, rising gasoline prices and continued growth of the San Joaquin valley.

Amtrak Pacific Surfliner trains provide 12 daily roundtrips between San Diego and Los Angeles, with five roundtrips extending to Santa Barbara and two continuing to San Luis Obispo. In 2005, Pacific Surfliner ridership was 2.5 million passengers, a 4.6 percent increase over the previous year.

More than 312,000 passengers rode between Angeles and San Diego, an increase of 6 percent.

Amtrak San Joaquin trains offer four daily roundtrips between Bakersfield and Oakland and two daily roundtrips between Bakersfield and Sacramento. Ridership during 2005 was 771,409 passengers, a 3.2 percent increase. Ridership between Bakersfield and Fresno was up 17.6 percent over the previous year with 82,064 passengers.

Amtrak Capitol Corridor trains provide service between Sacramento and the Bay Area (San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose) with 12 daily roundtrips. In 2005, 1.3 million passengers rode Capitol Corridor trains, an increase of 6.5 percent. More than 110,000 passengers traveled between Richmond and Sacramento, an increase of 9.4 percent over the previous year.

Through a \$73 million-per-year annual state operating assistance program, the California Department of Transportation partners with Amtrak to provide service on three intercity rail corridors in California.

— Staff and Wire Reports

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE PRAISES INCREASE IN TRANSIT CAPITAL SPENDING

BALTIMORE — Greater Baltimore Committee President Donald C. Fry and the Baltimore Transit Alliance commended Maryland Transportation Secretary Robert L. Flanagan and Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., for significantly strengthening planned capital spending for Baltimore-area mass transit during the next six years.

The changes were part of Maryland's final version of its Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) released last week by Governor Ehrlich.

The Greater Baltimore Committee and the Baltimore Transit Alliance argued last year that transit funding in the earlier draft plan was inadequate to support the development of a safe, reliable and attractive transit system that is needed in the Baltimore region. Such a system is a top priority for the GBC, the region's most promi-

nent organization of business leaders, and the Baltimore Transit Alliance, a diverse group of transit advocates that is housed at the GBC.

"We want to commend you and Governor Ehrlich for the strong, positive changes you made in the final CTP," Fry wrote in a Jan. 27 letter to Flanagan posted on the GBC web site.

Fry noted that of a \$600 million increase in overall funding from the draft to the final budget, the majority of it went to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), which operates mass transit in the Baltimore metropolitan area.

"We understand the challenge of supporting a diverse set of statewide transportation needs with limited funding," Fry wrote.

The final Consolidated Transportation

Program budget contains \$360 million in added funding for the MTA, compared to the draft long-term transportation budget that was previewed last fall by the Maryland Department of Transportation. The budget includes \$29 million in track improvements for the MARC commuter rail system.

Additional funding in the final transportation spending plan includes an 87 percent increase in MTA funding for maintenance. Funding for bus replacement and MARC track improvements have also been increased substantially from the draft budget.

While the final budget, totaling \$9.2 billion, reflects a 1 percent decline in overall planned capital spending on transportation between fiscal 2006 and 2011, it increases capital funding for MTA by 4 percent.

— PRNewswire



NEWS FROM THE RAILS

QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE FREIGHT RAILROAD INDUSTRY

R. J. Corman Railroad Leases Memphis Area Industrial Switching From BNSF

NICHOLASVILLE, Ky. — The R. J. Corman Railroad Co./Tennessee Terminal will add 36.6 miles of industrial track in the Memphis, Tenn., and Olive Branch, Miss., area, the company announced Jan. 16.

The company will lease the industrial switching trackage from BNSF Railway. Operations began Jan. 15.

“We have an excellent relationship with the BNSF Railway that is built upon mutual respect,” said Pete Petree, president of R. J. Corman Railroad Co. “We very much appreciate the opportunity to do business with one of America’s great railroads, and to continue the excellent customer service that BNSF has been providing its customers.”

The R. J. Corman Railroad Co.’s marketing team has already started introducing the services it can provide to those in the service area, along with the team members who will support the services, the railroad said. A team has already successfully met most of the customers along the new line, face to face.

“Our goal is to provide quality transportation solutions to customers in the Memphis area. The only way to do that is to meet with the customers and define what quality service means to them,” Petree said. “Our core goals of improved customer satisfaction, improved profitability, and doing both for the long-term, lays the founda-

tion for our focus — providing the best transportation package we can.”

R. J. Corman Railroad Company is a subsidiary of the R. J. Corman Railroad Group LLC which is the owner of several business entities providing a full array of services to the rail industry. Based in Nicholasville, Kentucky, R. J. Corman Railroad Company operates 12 short line railroads with over 600 miles of track in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

Cryo-Trans Buys Refrigerated Cars From Greenbrier

OWINGS MILLS, Md. — Cryo-Trans Inc., a leasing company specializing in the development and leasing of railroad freight cars for transporting frozen and perishable products, has placed an order for 429 new refrigerated boxcars.

These state-of-the-art railcars, ordered from The Greenbrier Companies Inc., have an interior length of 72 feet and have the highest cubic capacity in the industry — 7,765 cubic feet. The cars, ordered in November 2005, will be delivered later this year.

Cryo-Trans officials cite Greenbrier’s expertise in building these highly specialized cars and its reputation for innovative, quality products as reasons for placing the recent order with Greenbrier. Greenbrier has built or modified over 1,000 railcars for the frozen foods market since the mid-1980s.

Shells for the 429 new railcars will be provided by Greenbrier’s railcar facility in Sahagun, Mexico. The railcars will be outfitted at Greenbrier’s Gunderson Rail Services locations in Springfield, Ore., and Finley, Wash.

The outfitting includes the installation of insulation, refrigeration units, satellite sensors, the application of side plug doors and painting of cars. Installation of the newest and most advanced two-way satellite Global Positioning Systems on the railcars will allow Cryo-Trans to operate and manage its high-tech temperature controlled railcars remotely via the internet.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*

CN and CSX Transportation Sign Haulage Agreement For Sarnia, Ont., Freight Traffic

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Canadian National and CSX Transportation Inc. announced a long-term agreement for CN to haul CSXT traffic to and from Sarnia, Ont., and CSXT connections in Buffalo, N.Y., and Toledo, Ohio.

“Under this agreement, CSXT will retain a vital commercial presence in Sarnia — a major petrochemical production region — while using CN’s trains and network for efficient long-haul transportation of our Sarnia traffic to the rest of the CSXT network in the United States,” said Dean Piacente, vice president-chemicals and fertilizer for CSXT.

CN will also transport long-haul CSXT traffic destined for

Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd. (CPR) to London, Ont., for interchange with CPR, improving transit times for CPR. This traffic is currently interchanged between CSXT and CPR at Chatham.

CSXT will retain track and continue to serve its customers in Sarnia, and maintain operations on 27 miles of its line between Sarnia and Wallaceburg, Ontario. CSXT plans to discontinue about 26 miles of track between Wallaceburg and Chatham in accordance with the Canada Transportation Act.

CN will purchase 12.5 miles of CSXT track between Chatham and Blenheim, Ontario, acquiring control of trackage connecting CN’s network to its Windsor classification yards and the Detroit-Windsor rail tunnel.

Implementation of the agreement is scheduled for Jan. 31, 2006.

— *PRNewswire*

Florida East Coast Railway to Purchase New Locomotives

ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — Florida East Coast Railway announced an agreement with Electro-Motive Diesel, Inc. to purchase four new SD70M-2 diesel locomotives.

FEC expects to take delivery of all four locomotives in the 3rd quarter of 2006.

The new locomotives are rated at 4,300 horsepower, meet strict Environmental Protection Agency emission standards and meet all current safety requirements, the railroad said.

— *PRNewswire-FirstCall*



NEWS FROM THE RAILS

QUICK HITS FROM AROUND THE PASSENGER RAILROAD INDUSTRY

Amtrak and Cianbro Corp. Announce \$76 Million Conn. Bridge Span Replacement

WASHINGTON — The nearly 100-year-old Thames River Bridge between New London, Conn., and Groton, Conn., will undergo a \$76 million replacement of its aging bascule lift span under a construction contract between Amtrak and Pittsfield, Maine-based Cianbro Corp., the parties announced.

The construction project will take two years to complete and is the largest single capital improvement Amtrak will make to the Northeast Corridor during this time. Work on the project begins this month on the installation of seven new underwater communications and signal submarine cables.

In the most dramatic phase of the construction project to occur over 12 days during fall 2007, the bascule lift or movable center portion of the bridge will be removed, a 188-foot long, 35-foot wide, and 1,250 ton vertical lift will be floated into place on barges from Long Island Sound and attached to the bridge. This will result in a four-day outage of this section of the railroad, during which Amtrak plans to establish a “bus bridge” in Connecticut connecting passengers to trains in the direction of New York and Boston; details will be released in 2007.

Constructed in 1919, the Thames River Bridge is located between New London and Groton. The bridge lift is currently operated by machinery

parts that have reached the end of their lifespan.

The project is the first of three major movable bridge replacements in Connecticut planned over the next 10 years. Virtually all work will be done while the railroad continues to operate, with minimal interruptions during the multi-year job.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

Metro Begins Testing Limited Eight-Car Train Service on the Orange Line During the Morning Rush Hour

WASHINGTON — Starting Jan. 30, Metrorail riders on the Orange Line will notice eight-car trains pulling into Orange Line stations.

The implementation of limited eight-car train service is part of a six-month pilot program to run longer trains on the line to improve service reliability.

During the six-month test, 114 rail cars, 11 six-car and six 8-car trains will run during the busiest hours on the Orange Line, roughly 6 to 9 a.m. Normally the same 114 rail cars made up of 19 of the 6-car trains travel the Orange Line during a single morning rush hour.

“Eight-car train service on the Orange Line will mean a faster and smoother trip for passengers because we’ll be reducing the bottleneck situation that exists now at Rosslyn,” said Jim Hughes, Acting Assistant General Manager of Operations. “Right now, trains from both the Orange and Blue Lines pass through the same portal or

tunnel at Rosslyn. They back up, which means trains have to stop frequently in tunnels on the way downtown, because operators have to wait for the train in front of them to leave the station.”

Twenty-nine Orange and Blue line trains are scheduled to pass through the Rosslyn portal, during a typical morning rush hour, but on average only 26 actually pass through. Twenty-seven would pass through the portal during the test period. Because there are two fewer trains during the hour, passengers will wait an extra 15 seconds for a train.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

2005 CTA Ridership Reaches Highest Level in 13 Years

CHICAGO — Combined bus and rail ridership on the Chicago Transit Authority reached the highest point since 1992.

CTA provided 492,405,118 rides in 2005, an increase of 17,454,157 rides, or 3.7 percent, over 2004. Gains were especially evident on the CTA’s rail system which recorded its highest ridership since 1985.

CTA has achieved ridership increases in seven of the past eight years.

Although CTA started 2005 with the potential for significant service cuts, layoffs and a fare increase due to insufficient funding, customers continued their support for public transit by increasing their ridership. The CTA’s bus and rail systems both experienced ridership gains on weekdays and weekends.

The CTA’s rail system recorded 155 million station entries and another 31.8 million rail-to-rail transfers, for a total of 186.8 million rail boardings for the year, an increase of 4.5 percent over 2004.

The most notable growth on the system for 2005 was on Sundays, a 6.7 percent increase compared to 2004.

“The growth in 2005 ridership shows that more customers are choosing the CTA for discretionary trips as well as their workday commutes, which reflects the important around-the-clock nature of the service we provide and sends a clear message that there is a real demand for public transit in the city and the suburbs,” said CTA President Frank Kruesi.

“The healthy growth of ridership in 2005 reflects the fact that our customers know a good value when they see it and is a testament to the hard work of each employee to provide quality service despite the atmosphere of uncertain funding,” Kruesi added.

— *Special to The Cross-Tie*

Amtrak Trains Disrupted by Mudslides North of Seattle

SEATTLE — Due to a mudslide north of Seattle, BNSF Railway in late January imposed a curfew on passenger trains between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

As a result, service on Amtrak’s Cascades, Coast Starlight, Empire Builder — Pacific Northwest was interrupted, the railroad said.

— *The Cross-Tie*

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CSX RE-OPENS GULF COAST RAIL LINE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — CSX Transportation is resuming local freight rail service on its Gulf Coast line, a vital transportation artery to New Orleans, railroad officials announced Jan. 18.

Service through the entire area is expected to be restored beginning in early February.

"We are incredibly proud of our employees and contractors for their tireless efforts to help bring the railroad and its economic benefits back to the region," CSXT Chief Operating Officer Tony Ingram said. "Many of them contributed to the rebuild straight through the holidays while dealing with their own storm-related issues at home."

Over the past five months, the company has been working to restore six major bridges, more than 40 miles of track, and its major rail yard in New

Orleans. The largest engineering challenge was the nearly two-mile bridge at Bay St. Louis, Miss.

During construction, CSXT employed several solutions to continue rail service to its customers. These include re-routing trains on other railroads, where possible, and the construction of temporary transload facilities.

In New Orleans and the broader Gulf region, CSXT handles or interchanges with western railroads more than 1,000 freight cars per day. The company also serves more than 20 industries and ports, delivering products ranging from plastics and resins to building supplies and apparel.

"Industries and communities throughout the Gulf region depend on free-flowing rail service," Ingram said.

"It was critically important

that we get the railroad back up and running as soon as possible."

CSXT, like other companies, is participating with public and private groups to identify ways to best serve the Gulf Coast region's economy in the future, railroad officials say.

"We have been a proud citizen of this region for generations. Our recent rebuild of the Gulf Coast line restores vital service and underscores our commitment, but does not foreclose other long-term alternatives for the rail line," Ingram said.

More than 300 CSXT employees in the Gulf region were affected by Hurricane Katrina, and many took advantage of assistance offered by the company. Many transferred employees will be returning to the area as operations resume.

— PRNewswire-First Call