

Subject:	More Empire Builder woes, National Train Day happenings, High Speed Rail California to China?
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for May 14, 2014

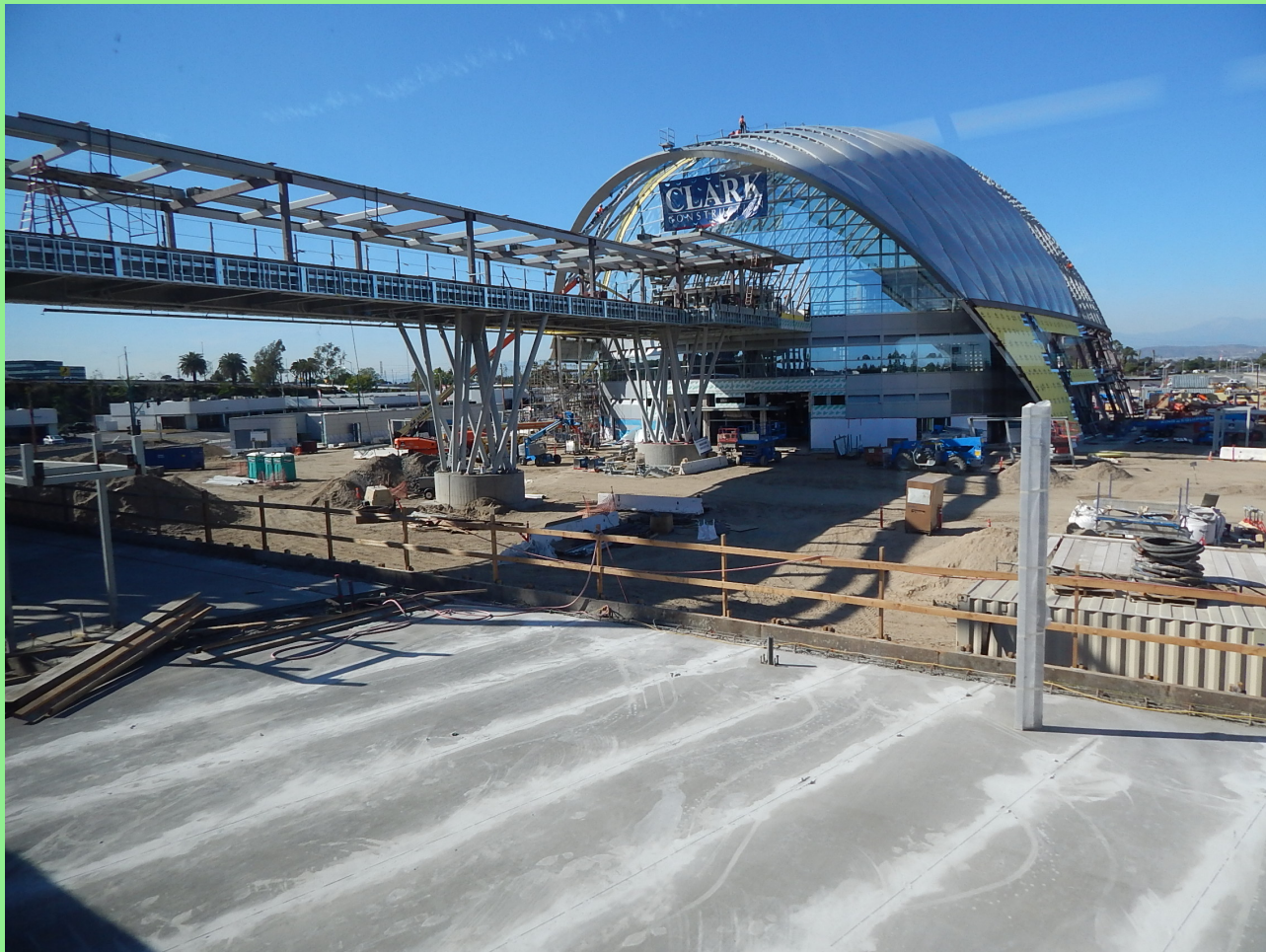
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Rail Passenger Association of California
www.railpac.org
Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Construction is well along for the new ARTIC Transportation Center in Anaheim. The roofing is being installed and the new platforms are being built and extended to connect with the existing ones at Anaheim. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Amtrak service suspended to ND cities for repairs](#)

Bismarck Tribune-May 6, 2014

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Amtrak says it is suspending westbound rail service from Fargo on its Empire Builder line for four months and that passengers traveling on to Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby will have to complete their journeys on buses.

[Amtrak: Chronic delays result in passenger decline](#)

In-Forum-May 5, 2014

GRAND FORKS – A decline in Amtrak riders on the Empire Builder can be blamed on BNSF Railway, an Amtrak spokesman said.

From October through March, Empire Builder ridership was down 15 percent compared with the same period a year earlier, said Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari. During that six-month span, the number of passengers fell from 255,642 to 216,435.

More than ridership is down, the Builder also brought in the most revenue of any of Amtrak's trains. NB

[Winter damage slows, cancels Downeaster runs in Maine](#)

Press Herald-May 6, 2014

Amtrak Downeaster passenger service has been delayed or canceled this week because damage along the track has forced trains to slow down dramatically in some places, said the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's top official.

[NARP Resolution in Support of Returning Passenger Rail Service Between New Orleans & Florida](#)

The new NARP board has unanimously approved the following resolution in support of returning passenger service between New Orleans and Florida:

[Union Station to host National Train Day on Saturday](#)

Washington Post (blog)-May 7, 2014

A reminder that this Saturday is National Train Day — an event that will be celebrated at rail stations across the country and here in D.C. at Union Station...

The festivities will begin at 10 a.m. and run through 4 p.m. Saturday. There will be model train displays, train-related crafts and even a chance to take a quick trip on one of Amtrak's Acela Excursion trains (but you'll have to buy your tickets in advance).

You might want to plan ahead. Last year, more than 11,000 people were at the Union Station event.

[National Train Day in Santa Barbara](#)

May 10th, 2014 [National Train Day Celebration!](#)

Theme: Why should everyone be stuck in traffic? With 101 construction to last over a decade, the obvious solution is waiting at the station. Ventura to Goleta commuter rail is needed NOW!



This is the RailPAC table for National Train Day at the Santa Barbara Train Station organized by Dennis and Peggy Story. In the picture visiting our table is Das Williams of the California State Assembly. Also visiting RailPAC in Santa Barbara last Saturday were State Senator Hannah Beth Jackson who also rode the train to Carpinteria and back. Other visitors were Santa Barbara County Supervisors Janet Wolf and Salud Carbajal who is also a LOSSAN Board member, along with many others.

[National Train Day comes steaming into Tucson Saturday](#)

Arizona Daily Star-May 9, 2014

The Southern Arizona Transportation Museum hosts National Train Day to promote rail safety and intercity travel. At 1 p.m., Anthony Haswell of the Arizona Rail Passenger Association will discuss Amtrak.

[4 private companies bid on Hoosier State Amtrak route](#)

The Herald Bulletin-May 6, 2014

Bidders include Iowa Pacific Holdings Inc., which operates specialty passenger railroads including the Pullman Rail Journeys between Chicago and New Orleans, The (Munster) Times reported. The other bidders were Corridor Capital LLC of Los Angeles; Railmark Holdings Inc. of Wixom, Michigan; and a partnership between Herzog Transit Services Inc. of Irving, Texas, and Passenger Transportation Specialists Inc. of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

There are 3 issues to be addressed before the railroads will allow a replacement of Amtrak: 1) more money than what Amtrak pays, 2) the railroads be clear of any liability with passenger service and 3) any alternative intercity passenger service would need to pay into the Railroad Retirement Fund to replace Amtrak's contribution. NB

[Bombardier Launches Crewing Services for West Coast Express](#)

Marketwired (press release)-May 5, 2014

Rail technology leader Bombardier Transportation today launched its crewing services for TransLink's highly successful West Coast Express commuter rail system in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia.

Bombardier will provide crews for the West Coast Express BOMBARDIER BiLevel commuter rail fleet of 44 vehicles. Nearly 1,200 BiLevel cars are already in operation across the United States and Canada.

[Hudson Rail Tunnels Have Up to 20 Years Left, Amtrak Says](#)

Businessweek - May 6, 2014

Century-old rail tunnels beneath the Hudson River have at most two decades of service remaining and Amtrak lacks funding to replace them, according to Joseph Boardman, president and chief executive officer of Amtrak.

"I'm being told we've got something less than 20 years before we have to shut one or two down,"

Boardman, the top executive at the U.S. national rail operator, said last month at a conference of the Regional Plan Association in New York.

[House GOP unveils bill slashing highway grants, cutting Amtrak and ...](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune-May 6, 2014

The so-called TIGER grant program dates to Obama's 2009 economic stimulus bill and was funded at \$600 million this year. Obama wants to nearly double the program's budget, but the newly released spending bill covering federal transportation and housing programs offers the administration just \$100 million, an 83 percent cut from current levels.

[NCTD seeks TIGER grant for new station](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-May 6, 2014

California's North County Transit District (NCTD) said Monday, May 5, 2014 it has applied for a \$5 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant, for use in establishing a transit facility on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton is the largest employer in North San Diego County, NCTD said, with an "average daily base population of approximately 70,000.

[High-speed rail plan attracts foes, supporters at Fresno hearing](#)

Fresno Bee - May 7, 2014

Members of the California High-Speed Rail Authority were alternately scolded and encouraged -- and even threatened with arrest -- for more than three hours Tuesday in a hearing on plans for the Fresno-Bakersfield section of its proposed bullet-train network.

[Bullet train construction could stop at city limits -- for now](#)

Bakersfield Californian - May 6, 2014

That's because in addition to certifying the final Environmental Impact Report for the train line segment, the board will also consider a resolution saying the train won't come into Bakersfield....

There's a good reason rail staff recommends approving the EIR and resolution, CHSRA Central Valley Regional Director Diana Gomez said in a briefing memo.

It's money -- or the lack of it.

[California High-Speed Rail Authority approves Fresno-Bakersfield section](#)

ABC30.com - May 7, 2014

"In the years between 2000 and 2008 the counties of Fresno and Kings converted 33,000 acres of land to development that's almost ten times the amount of land we are talking about for the high-speed rail land."

He noted that while the high-speed rail authority ...

[High-speed rail board approves Fresno-Bakersfield segment](#)

Fresno Bee - May 7, 2014

Over the objections of residents and farmers in Kings County, the route diverges from the BNSF corridor with a bypass east of Hanford that sweeps diagonally across farms and dairies. It also has bypasses that skirt the towns of Corcoran and Allensworth.

[Next section of high-speed rail route approved while state waits for bond sale appeal](#)

CBS Sacramento May 7, 2014

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) – The board that oversees California's \$68 billion high-speed rail project voted Wednesday to unanimously adopt a planned route for its second and most substantial section to date, a 114-mile stretch between Fresno and Bakersfield...

Engineering work has started on the first, much shorter section, a 30-mile segment from Merced to Fresno.

[Twenty years later: How the Chunnel plans to stay on track](#)

The Globe and Mail - May 5, 2014

Eurotunnel already leases part of its capacity to Eurostar, the French high-speed train that links London to Paris. Its greater ambition is to lure rail competitors into the tunnel, linking London by fast trains to cities far afield: Amsterdam, Geneva, Cologne and Frankfurt....

A colossal debt burden left Eurotunnel with big financial losses. It staggered on until 2006, when it sought bankruptcy protection in the French courts, re-emerging a year later with a restructured balance sheet and much less debt.

Thanks to the restructuring, Eurotunnel is today stable, profitable and eager for growth. Last year it succeeded in carrying 20 million passengers, a level that it was originally forecast to attain within a few years of launch. But its tunnels still operate at half of their capacity and the opportunity to lure trains and passengers beckons.

[Chinese experts 'in discussions' over building high-speed Beijing-US railway](#)

The Guardian - May 8, 2014

China is considering plans to build a high-speed railway line to the US, the country's official media reported on Thursday.

The proposed line would begin in north-east China and run up through Siberia, pass through a tunnel underneath the Pacific Ocean then cut through Alaska and Canada to reach the continental US, according to a report in the state-run Beijing Times newspaper.

What would it connect too on this sided? NB

[Union Station's complexity grows 75 years down the line](#)

Los Angeles Times May 6, 2014

In the decade after Union Station opened in 1939, it handled about 13,000 rail travelers a day. Today that number is roughly 75,000.

It will keep climbing in the next few years as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which bought Union Station in 2011, expands the subway and light-rail network in L.A. County and remakes the station and the surrounding area under a new master plan. And the figure will jump again if high-speed trains begin running between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

[Los Angeles Union Station 75th Anniversary event](#)

Report and PHOTOS by Robert Manning, Executive VP, RailPAC

The combination National Train Day and 75th anniversary for LAUS was a success even though the temperature hit 91, which made for a very hot day. In spite of this thousands attended making it very hard to move about. The photo below shows the main waiting room, with its new video arrival/departure screens on the far wall.

[Video of Union Station's 75th! \(And she's as beautiful as ever\)](#)

The Source May 3, 2014

The celebration is wrapping up for the day but here's a quick video of the Official Ceremony this morning. Lots of speakers. Lots of spectators. Lots of fun.

[Union Station turns 75: the video](#)

The Source May 6, 2014

Here's another video from Saturday's festivities for the 75th anniversary of Union Station. There's some nice footage that gives you an idea of the flavor of the day and the seriously big crowds that descended upon Union Station.

[The first wave of photos from today's Union Station 75th anniversary celebration](#)

The Source May 3, 2014

A little warm weather on Saturday didn't keep crowds at bay as thousands of people descended on Union Station for the building's 75th anniversary celebration that featured live music, train exhibitions, speeches from dignitaries and a lot of folks who apparently wished it was 1939 all over again.

[More photos from Union Station's 75th anniversary celebration](#)

The Source May 3, 2014

Another set of photos from Union Station this morning and afternoon; here is another set of photos from earlier. Click to see a larger version of a photo. All photos by Juan Ocampo for Metro.

[Amtrak arrives at Union Depot in St. Paul for first time](#)

Progressive Rail Roding - May 9, 2014

Amtrak earlier this week marked the debut of service to Union Depot in St. Paul, Minn., with the arrival of the Empire Builder. Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer Joe Boardman was among