Subject: Sunset in Jeopardy! No Eagle service south of Ft Worth for 2 months
From: Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
Date: Monday, July 14, 2014 9:30 AM

RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for July 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!
This is the most recent report this year from the California High Speed Rail Authority on the state of planning between Los Angeles and Palmdale. The existing Palmdale Transportation Center and Bob Hope Airport will be the sites of High Speed Rail stations. The final route between Palmdale and Sylmar has yet to be chosen. There are 2 alternatives on the table, one subway and the other elevated between Union Station and along the Los Angeles River. The Union Station segment will be built after the segment between Burbank and Palmdale since it is not part of the Initial Operating section (IOS). NB.

**Amtrak disrupted from Fort Worth to San Antonio**

Fort Worth Star Telegram-Jul 7, 2014

Amtrak has shut down its Texas Eagle train service between Fort Worth and San Antonio for two months and is using buses to ferry passengers through Central Texas because of massive construction at the Tower 55 railroad intersection near downtown Fort Worth.

**Amtrak CEO to make Kansas whistle-stop tour**

Kansas First News-Jul 9, 2014

NEWTON, Kan. (AP) – Top executives of Amtrak and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway will make a whistle-stop trip on the passenger railroad’s Southwest Chief in Kansas. Friday’s event takes place amid efforts to preserve the current route between Newton, Kansas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. The route is in jeopardy because the track, which is owned by BNSF, needs to be upgraded for passenger service, but BNSF doesn’t require the upgrades for its freight operations.

**Amtrak CEO to stop in New Mexico about train route**

Albuquerque Journal - Jul 10, 2014

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Amtrak’s top executive plans to meet with New Mexico officials about keeping the Southwest Chief on its current route. Amtrak announced that CEO Joe Boardman is taking a
special train along the Southwest Chief route from Kansas ...

**Martinez administration may skip Amtrak CEO's whistle-stop tour**
Santa Fe New Mexican.com Jul 10, 2014
“We’ve been in touch with the New Mexico Department of Transportation, and thus far they’ve been unable to get someone to attend,” said Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari.

**Service suspended on SEPTA's Trenton and Chestnut Hill West lines**
Philly.com - Jul 8, 2014
Power issues have disrupted service on New Jersey Transit, SEPTA and Amtrak trains this morning. N.J. Transit said service on the Northeast Corridor and North Jersey Coast lines was operating with delays of up to an hour due to Amtrak overhead-wire ...

**MBTA commuter rail trains delayed due to power outage**
Boston Globe-Jul 11, 2014
The power outage was caused by a problem with an Amtrak interlocking tower’s power inverter, said Craig Schulz, a spokesman for Amtrak. The power outage occurred at South Bay Interlocking, located near the intersection of Beacon and Tremont streets. Amtrak officials are still unsure what caused the problem, Schulz said, but fixed the inverter temporarily and will keep an eye on it throughout the day.

**The sorry state of Amtrak's on-time performance, mapped**
Washington Post (blog)-Jul 10, 2014
Eight of the 33 routes, including most of the long-distance cross-country lines, experienced on-time arrivals less than 50 percent of the time over the past 12 months. The Empire Builder, running from Chicago to Washington, ran on time only 21 percent of the time in the past year. Only one in three California Zephyr trains made their trips between Chicago and San Francisco on time.

**Our schizophrenic relationship with Amtrak**
Washington Post (blog)-Jul 10, 2014
Emily: My, Chris, people have a lot to say about your Amtrak story!
Chris: That's because everyone hates Amtrak.
Emily: No they don't. I feel like everyone I know loves Amtrak.
Chris: Really? I don't know anyone who loves Amtrak.

**Sunset Limited in jeopardy is serious business: Part 1,**
Comments by RailPAC member Steve Roberts
I wanted to emphasize that the comments made by Russ Jackson and Paul Dyson on the seriousness of the Sunset Ltd. amendment are not overstated. (Note: See their commentaries also on railpac.org) The whole long-distance network is at risk. Also this is a battle unlike any we have seen in the past for the following reasons:

**Sunset Limited in jeopardy is serious business: Part 2,**
Comments from the Texas Rail Advocates
NOTE: Reprinted with permission of Peter LeCody and the TRA, from their website: [www.Texasrailadvocates.org](http://www.Texasrailadvocates.org)
(Washington) In a last minute voice vote on the House appropriations bill for transportation, Texas Representative Pete Sessions (R-District 33-Dallas) succeeded in his efforts to kill an Amtrak route that has been a financial target of the long distance trains. This came after an amendment failed that was authored by Sessions to kill six long distance routes that have the highest cost to maintain service to small to larger size communities.
Union Station as Amish transit hub
WBEZ-Jul 7, 2014
Paul Vaccarello of LaGrange, Illinois, sees Amish people when he passes through downtown Chicago’s Union Station — the nexus of several Amtrak and Metra commuter rail lines.
“I’ve just always been curious about where they’re going, why they’re here, if they’re actually coming to Chicago or if this is a stop on their way to somewhere else,” he said.

Map: These three cities account for half of Amtrak ridership
Vox-Jul 7, 2014
This map shows Amtrak stations by ridership; the bigger the circles, the more riders the station serves. Rail usage is dominated by the New York to DC route, which connects the two highest-ridership stations and has #3 Philadelphia in between them. Those three cities accounted for over 18 million boardings in 2013, over half the system's total ridership.

What would be more useful would be maps comparing stations passenger miles produced and revenue generated with ridership and see how they match. It is no secret that most of Amtrak's ridership is short distance on the NEC NB

CAF USA Completes First Three Amtrak Cars
TWC News-Jul 8, 2014
ELMIRA, N.Y. -- CAF USA in Elmira completed its first three rail cars as part of a $300 million contract with Amtrak. They were shipped from the plant Tuesday.
The Elmira factory is building 130 passenger rail cars for the company.

Ferrari designer creates super luxurious Japanese train
CNN-Jul 7, 2014
What happens when you ask a super-car designer to create a super luxurious train? Magic, judging by the above images released by Japanese rail company JR East....
Holding a maximum of 34 passengers, the Cruise Train will have 10 carriages made up of five suites, one deluxe suite, two glass-walled observation cars, a dining car and lounge.

Capitol Corridor hope: 10 passenger trains a day between Roseville and Sacramento
Sacramento Bee Jul 8, 2014
Capitol Corridor has launched plans for a $200 million track construction project that would allow it to increase passenger rail service tenfold between Sacramento and Roseville.
The intercity rail line, which runs from Placer County to the Bay Area, has long operated one round-trip commuter train a day between the two cities,...
This is the schedule as of this year for the planning yet to be done for High Speed Rail construction between Burbank and Palmdale.

Joe Matthews: The Year of the San Joaquin Valley
Fresno Bee-Jul 8, 2014
This is the real question of high-speed rail, even though it's obscured by debates over the project's cost and whether it will ever get people from Los Angeles to San Francisco in less than three hours. High-speed rail is less about connecting north to south — and more about connecting the San Joaquin, where rail construction is to begin, to our coastal mega-cities, and boosting the San Joaquin economy by attracting new people and jobs to the region. That's why so many California leaders are still backing the train despite the collapse of public support for it.

A fresh GOP voice from the San Joaquin Valley
Los Angeles Times-Jul 13, 2014
She advocates expanding train service from the Bay Area to Stockton ... ambitious — seems to represent the wave of the future for California ...

The California High-Speed Rail Debate—Kicking Things Off
The Atlantic-Jul 9, 2014
The Erie Canal. The transcontinental railroad. The Interstate Highway system. Big, expensive, controversial—and indispensable. Is the next one in this series a new rail network in our most famously freeway-centric state?

Old bar in Fresno will be first building to fall for high-speed rail
Fresno Bee-Jul 11, 2014
An old bar on a rundown section of Golden State Boulevard in central Fresno will be among the first buildings to fall to make way for construction of California's high-speed rail project.

**Plenty of precedent for passenger rail through Tracy**
Tracy Press-Jul 11, 2014
Having a dedicated rail line over the Altamont Pass (which qualifies for state high-speed-rail bond funds) that could also serve Altamont Corridor Express trains could be a real plus for regional commuter rail and for the ol' tank town, too.

**Gov. Brown signs legislation backing light rail in San Fernando Valley**
Progressive Rail Roading-Jul 10, 2014
Business groups have been advocating to bring light rail to the valley for years. LACMTA currently operates dedicated bus service on the Orange Line, which is overcrowded, according to the Valley Industry & Commerce Association (VICA), a nonprofit business advocacy group.

**It's Now Legal to Build Light Rail in the San Fernando Valley**
Curbed LA-Jul 8, 2014
...light rail trains can carry about 400 people, almost five times as many as a bus—the Orange Line carries about 30,000 people on an average workday and is basically at capacity. An Orange Line conversion to rail would have to wait along with other projects clamoring for money, like the Gold Line extension to Montclair and rail through the Sepulveda Pass. The bill, though, is good news for a proposed train along Van Nuys Boulevard.

**Metro Regional Connection Subway Officially Under Construction**
The Source Jul 9, 2014
It’s official: there are now four Metro Rail projects currently under construction after the Metro earlier this week gave its contractors — the Regional Connector Constructors, Joint Venture — the official “notice to proceed” on building the line. Until recently, Metro never had more than two rail projects underway at the same time.
The Regional Connector will be a 1.9-mile underground light rail line that will connect the Gold Line to the Blue Line and Expo Line in downtown Los Angeles.

**Exciting new video: work on joining Expo Line Phase 1 to Expo Line Phase 2**
The Source Jul 10, 2014
It may not quite be the Golden Spike, but it’s still a nice sign of progress: above is a short video taken this week from the Culver City Station platform showing welding work where tracks from the existing Expo Line meet tracks from the second phase of the Expo Line. There is a lot more to be done to truly join the two projects — work is expected to be completed late this year — but it’s still exciting to see the present meet the future.
Below are a couple of nice photos in West L.A. of the Expo Line alignment taken by Darrell Clarke (who founded Friends4Expo and currently advocates for transit on behalf of the Sierra Club) from the top of the parking garage for Bed, Bath & Beyond in West L.A.

**Los Angeles: For rail, and for real**
RailwayAge Magazine-Jul 8, 2014
The idea of LA as a car-only metropolis is in fact "very dated," says Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) Executive Officer-Regional Rail Don Sepulveda. "If you look at the number of people who take Metrolink, and you start talking about people taking the Red Line or Expo Line, all those folks would be on the freeway. Our freeways would be that much more crazy. You can't ignore the data or the facts."
This is a blow-up of the current planning between 2 routes to Los Angeles Union Station for High Speed Rail. The Reddish line is for a tunnel, the blue/green line is a combination of elevated and surface running.

Commuting headaches: What are other cities doing to alleviate traffic?
The Weather Network-Jul 8, 2014
3. Southern California Housing Bubble – Southern California
   What it’s accomplishing: Taking young Californians out of the suburbs and into the city.
4. BART Expansion – Warm Springs and San Jose, California
   What it will accomplish: Connecting San Jose to San Francisco and Oakland, adding 5.4 miles of commuter rail.

VTA says BART To San Jose Will Open In 2017 Despite Judge’s Ruling
CBS Local-Jul 8, 2014
The VTA’s expansion project would lengthen the BART rail system by 10 miles south from the planned Warm Springs train station.
BART is now building the Warm Springs station in Fremont. The VTA has jurisdiction over the 10-mile
extension from Warm Springs to San Jose and BART will run its trains on it once it is completed.

**Why BART has Faster, more Direct Service than LA Metro**
By Noel T. Braymer
I am not a big fan of BART. One of my biggest complaints about BART is their less than ideal connections to Caltrain, Muni Metro and Amtrak. But between BART routes, the connections are excellent. I can’t say the same about LA Metro.

**Caltrain approves fare, fee increases**
Progressive Rail Roading-Jul 7, 2014
Caltrain's board last week approved changes to its fare policy that will alter certain ticket prices and fees.

**49ers Express: Stockton to Santa Clara Train Caters to Football ...**
SF Weekly (blog)-Jul 8, 2014
Now, it seems, the Bay Area will have a football special of its own. Fans of the 49ers living in the Stockton area can now buy tickets for a homegrown football special on the Altamont Corridor Express line.

**Delayed T-Third loop project still has future**
SFBay-Jul 8, 2014
The Mission Bay Loop would be particularly important when there are service delays, gaps in service, bunching of trains or special events, said SFMTA transportation director Ed Reiskin....
Reiskin said the loop was partially built during the construction of the first phase of the T-Third, which opened in 2007, but was never completed. Now the transit agency has the opportunity to finish the project before the Central Subway opens for service in 2019.

**Fairway Drive rail-underpass in Industry gets funding $71 million ...**
San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Jul 5, 2014
This will mark the seventh underpass project running consecutively. The others under construction are: Ramona Street, Mission Road, Del Mar Avenue and San Gabriel Boulevard in San Gabriel; Baldwin Avenue on the border of El Monte/Temple City and Nogales Street in Rowland Heights. Completed underpasses include: Brea Canyon Road in Diamond Bar/Industry, Sunset Avenue in Industry, Ramona Boulevard in El Monte, Nogales Street in West Covina and Reservoir Street and East End Avenue in Pomona, according to ACE.

**Crude oil train protests planned in Sacramento, Davis**
Sacramento Bee-Jul 8, 2014
“Our goal is to stop the oil trains,” said Litman of 350 Sacramento, a new local environmental group. “We are talking about 900-foot fireballs. There is nothing a first responder (fire agency) can do with a 900-foot fireball.”

**INFLUENCE GAME: Shaping railroad safety rules**
San Jose Mercury News-Jul 13, 2014
WASHINGTON (AP) — A string of fiery train derailments across the country has triggered a high-stakes but behind-the-scenes campaign to …

**Crews pulling plane fuselages from Montana river after train derailment**
CBS News - Jul 7, 2014
"The progress is going extremely slow," Montana Rail Link spokeswoman Lynda Frost said. "If we get one up today, it would appear it will take one day each to get them out."
She said a crew of 50 with eight heavy-equipment machines was working together to hoist up the three Boeing 737 fuselages, the large, central portions of planes that hold passengers.

**Pacific Electric rail system connected Inland Empire with coast**
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin-Jul 7, 2014
On July 11, 1914, the Pacific Electric rail system formally opened a route for its electric trolleys — often called the Red Cars — from San Bernardino, across the previously isolated areas along the foothills and into Los Angeles....
This new route would link us to the 1,000 miles of mass transit taking passengers to nearly every corner of Southern California. It was a system that deteriorated and was abandoned by 1961, only to be revived in the 1990s in the form of our now-512-mile Metrolink transit system.

**Petitioning Ventura County Transportation Commission**
Petition by Paul Tirado, Oxnard, CA
change.org
Allow Fillmore & Western Railway to continue public operations.

**Short-Term Highway Fund Boost Gets Both Parties’ Support**
Bloomberg Jul 10, 2014
Separate bills approved by the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committees yesterday would provide almost $11 billion to avoid a shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund next month that would slow construction.
While the measures have some differences, both would be financed by higher customs fees and by letting companies delay contributions to employee pension plans.

**Talks scheduled to resume this week to avert LIRR strike**
WABC-TV - Jul 10, 2014
NEW YORK (WABC) -- Contract talks resumed at noon Thursday for union officials and MTA brass in the hopes of avoiding a looming Long Island Rail Road strike.
On Wednesday, Congress told MTA chairman Thomas Prendergast that federal lawmakers will not get involved in what they say should be a state matter. Members of the New York delegation were blunt, telling Prendergast that he should be negotiating around the clock to reach a settlement before the July 20 deadline.
San Diego is expanding its Rapid Bus service with more lines opening soon. These include improved stops on Broadway in downtown San Diego and a terminal across the street from the Santa Fe Depot on Kettner Blvd. The location for this terminal is seen above. Work on the Kettner terminal will start in the Fall of 2014. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

Opinions expressed in this eNewsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rail Passenger Association of California.

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