

**Subject:** Starlight Discounts? Hoosier State contract goes to Corridor Capital

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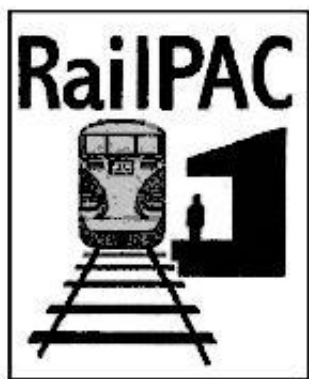
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for June 30, 2014**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**



The Coast Starlight southbound at a long stop in Santa Barbara in 2008 after arriving early. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

### [AMTRAK Coast Starlight Drops Price for Summer Travelers North of Santa Barbara](#)

KEYT-Jun 25, 2014

The Coast Starlight passengers traveling from areas north of Santa Barbara can get a 15 percent discount. They will also be qualified for an array of bargains when they arrive in Santa Barbara under -what's called a - "Car Free" program as they go on tours, whale watching, visit museum or take bike rides. That's coordinated through the Air Pollution Control District.

### [Riders react to plan for Tucson's only passenger train](#)

Tucson News Now-Jun 24, 2014

TUCSON, AZ (Tucson News Now) -Travelers through the Old Pueblo say they can't believe that Congress would consider stopping federal money from supporting the only passenger train in Tucson. Marie Hoppe relies on Amtrak for her trips from Washington state to visit her family in Southern Arizona. She doesn't enjoy flying and brought her children this time.

### [Amtrak to Begin Welcoming Bikes on Long-Distance Routes](#)

Streetsblog Capitol Hill (blog)-Jun 24, 2014

Amtrak announced last week that it is installing new baggage cars — equipped for bike storage — in all trains on its long-distance routes by year's end. The change will allow Amtrak riders to "roll on" their bikes, rather than disassembling them and transporting them in boxes. The new baggage car equipment is being tested in Chicago, New Orleans, Miami, and the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak officials said in a blog post.

## [Only Republicans can save the Long Distance Trains](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Long distance rail passenger service has been in decline in this country since the mid-1990's. Without a major overhaul, sooner or later long distance rail service in this country will collapse. If the long distance trains fail, this will bring down Amtrak and create problems for the Northeast Corridor. Passenger rail service in this Country depends on long distance trains both economically and politically.

## [Corridor Capital](#)

The Indiana Department of Transportation on June 24, 2014 selected Corridor Capital as its preferred vendor to manage and operate the current Amtrak Hoosier State route between Indianapolis and Chicago. Indiana DOT and Corridor Capital are now in discussions towards an agreement for a changeover in operations commencing October 1, 2014.

Press Release (PDF, 4 pages):

[Corridor Capital Wins Indiana DOT Contract for Hoosier State Route](#)

## [Three killed in Amtrak wreck](#)

Indiana Gazette-Jun 24, 2014

MANSFIELD, Mass. (AP) — An Amtrak train hit an SUV that was apparently driving on train tracks in Massachusetts, killing three people in the vehicle and derauling the train, authorities said Monday.

The crash also disrupted and delayed train service along the busy Northeast corridor.

**This is why many of the grade-crossing in California have gates to keep unauthorized vehicles off of the right of way. NB**



Barriers and gates to discourage unauthorized vehicles on the right of way in San Clemente . Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Supreme Court to consider USDOT vs. AAR re: Amtrak](#)



RailwayAge Magazine - Jun 24, 2014

In 2008, Congress passed PRIIA (Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act). Among its many provisions, it allows Amtrak to work with the Federal Railroad Administration to set metrics and minimum standards for assessing passenger rail service performance....

Freight railroads can be penalized if Amtrak fails to meet its own performance standards, particularly if Amtrak trains have not been given priority on the freight rights-of-way it uses. The Association of American Railroads strongly objected...

### [Rail backlog has ripple effect](#)

AG Week-Jun 27, 2014

The Surface Transportation Board ordered the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Canadian Pacific rail companies to provide plans by today on how they plan to ease the backlog.

The rail companies have said a harsh winter slowed shipments and created some of the delays.

Customers have complained that rail companies are concentrating too much on filling shipments from the oil fields in North Dakota.

**It's not just the Empire Builder running late because of the oil trains. NB**

### [Revealed: Routes for Trains Hauling Volatile Crude Oil in California](#)

KQED (blog) - Jun 25, 2014

The newly released information reveals that tank cars loaded with oil from the Bakken formation, a volatile crude that has a history of exploding, rumble through downtown Sacramento and through Stockton about once a week. Before they get there, they travel along the Feather River, a major tributary of the Sacramento and a key source of drinking water. They pass through rural Northern California counties — Modoc, Lassen, Placer, Plumas, Yuba and Butte — before reaching their destination in Contra Costa County.

### [Lawmakers urge change to carbon emissions plan](#)

Los Angeles Times Jun 24, 2014

The expected price hike would weaken the economy "just as California is recovering from the last recession," wrote Assemblyman Henry T. Perea (D-Fresno), the group's leader, in a June 16 letter to Air Resources Board Chairwoman Mary Nichols.

**This smells like a back handed way to defund Cap and Trade money for High Speed Rail and other rail funding. NB**

### [You're paying more for gasoline, and here's why](#)

McClatchy Washington Bureau Jun 26, 2014

WASHINGTON — Think you're paying more than you should be for gasoline right now? You are...

Despite no apparent hit to Iraqi crude production, and near-record levels of U.S. oil production, fears about the Middle East conflict have allowed financial speculators to bid up oil prices....

While reports out of Iraq suggest production and export are, for now, unaffected, big global oil companies won't discuss their production there.

"We don't have any comment," said Richard D. Keil, a spokesman for ExxonMobil in Irving, Texas.

There's little incentive for Keil to discuss production, since the fear gripping financial markets is tantamount to free money for the oil companies. ExxonMobil and other large players reap a windfall from higher oil prices and suffer if prices collapse, as they did during the Great Recession.

### [Groups hold rally in support of California high-speed rail](#)

Bakersfield Now-Jun 24, 2014

OILDALE, Calif. (KBAK/KBFX) - Amid a growing effort by several groups to put a stop to the state's high-speed rail project, advocates for the bullet train gathered on the railroad tracks off Robert's Lane to

show their support for the multibillion-dollar plan....

Smith was joined by the group "I Will Ride," which is made of Fresno State University students who say the bullet train would attract more employers to the Central Valley, which would in turn provide more jobs for graduates.

Members of the group said many graduates are forced to head to the coast to find job opportunities and that the new rail system would attract more jobs because the transportation would be faster.

### [Op-Ed High-speed job creation for California](#)

Los Angeles Times Jun 23, 2014

But despite the qualms voiced about the high-speed rail line, it's reasonable to expect that if the project sticks to its core commitments, it could become one of the greatest economic development programs in the state's history, providing both a train system that will benefit Californians for generations and tens of thousands of new, good U.S. and California jobs.

### [Crews build test piling near Madera to advance high-speed rail design \(video\)](#)

Fresno Bee-June 24, 2014

It's not actual construction, but the appearance of a large crane and workers assembling steel rebar marks a significant test as high-speed rail engineers design a major bridge near Madera.

### [Report: Global HSR trends could apply to California](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 24, 2014

Author Peter Haas, Ph.D., examined the evidence concerning HSR and modal shift in a large variety of HSR systems, time periods, data sources, and means of analysis.

"Essentially, the literature affirms that HSR has resulted in dramatic or significant transportation mode shifts where it has been introduced and systematically evaluated," said Haas. "In both Europe and Asia, HSR systems have greatly reduced or even curtailed air service when serving the same routes. The most dramatic effects of HSR ability to attract market share have been frequently observed under specific circumstances. It is reasonable to conclude that these factors will likely apply to the California HSR system, as well."

### [Caltrain officials hail California state budget's impact on transit](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jun 26, 2014

Caltrain officials yesterday applauded the California Legislature's passage of a \$108 billion state budget that includes \$1.7 billion for public transportation improvements and future transportation initiatives. The 2014-15 budget appropriates funding to transit-related programs, including \$25 million for transit operations, \$25 million for transit and intercity rail, \$130 million for housing and sustainable communities, \$200 million for low carbon transportation, and \$250 million for high-speed rail, Caltrain officials said in a press release.

### [Next Senate leader Kevin de León wants Brown to rethink bullet train](#)

Los Angeles Times-Jun 22, 2014

De León, who will become the Senate leader in October, says he supports the concept of high-speed rail, but with the caveat that track-laying begin in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas...

**This will go nowhere. Construction is beginning now in the San Joaquin Valley. Also it is very expensive to build HSR in urban areas and the distances are too short to generate much revenue. This was one of the reasons RailPAC opposed the LA-San Diego Bullet Train in the 80's, too expensive and too short to make money. If you built a HSR commuter line between Palmdale and LA, you would have to bypass most of Saugus, Newhall and Santa Clarita which are major commuter markets. What will be needed are new faster trains, more double tracking and upgrades around Los Angeles as well as north of Merced to Santa Clara and Sacramento. For**

## **HSR to work it will need fast connections to Southern California, the Bay Area and Sacramento in less than 10 years. NB**

### [California Bullet Train Clears Federal Environmental Approval](#)

Bloomberg - Jun 27, 2014

The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration has approved an environmental review needed to begin building a portion of a \$68 billion California high-speed rail line that has been mired in lawsuits.

The agency, part of the Transportation Department, said in a release that it cleared a 114-mile (183-kilometer) stretch of the project in the Central Valley.

### [Approval of plan puts rail expansion on track](#)

#### **Sacramento commuter routes part of proposal**

Stockton Record Jun 28, 2014

STOCKTON - Commuters to Sacramento would be able to take the train from San Joaquin County and back on a typical workday, according to the goals laid out in a new business plan approved Friday by a recently created panel poised to take over management of the San Joaquin Valley's intercity rail service.

### [Calls Grow for Expanding Rail Service](#)

VoiceofOC-Jun 24, 2014

OCTA Chairman Shawn Nelson called for expanding rail service to Los Angeles International Airport and elsewhere, citing benefits to freeway traffic along with convenience for OC residents.

A two-mile gap prevents the passenger train system from connecting to LAX, Nelson said...

**This refers to the 2.5 miles in Norwalk between the Metrolink and Green Line Metrorail stations. NB**

### [JLP/STV on call for Metrolink](#)

RailwayAge Magazine-Jun 24, 2014

The JLP/STV team will collaborate on various Metrolink capital and rehabilitation transportation projects in Southern California over a three-year period. Potential projects include grade crossing safety improvement, rehabilitation of track and structures, main line track and siding extensions, station construction and expansions, Los Angeles Union Station reconstruction to accommodate high speed rail, grade separations, Perris Valley Line expansions, Redlands first-mile extensions, a Raymer to Bernson double-track project, and third-party projects.

### [FRA awards grants for trackwork projects in California, Oklahoma](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jun 23, 2014

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on Friday announced it awarded a \$3 million Rail Line Relocation and Improvement Capital Program grant to the Port of San Francisco to improve a nearly mile-long track.

### [U.S. Conference of Mayors backs America Fast Forward](#)

The Source Jun 24, 2014

The bond program has been garnering support, but Congress still hasn't made it part of a multi-year transportation funding bill. In a nutshell: those who invest in transportation bonds receive federal tax credits instead of interest, a good way for investors to lower their tax burden and a good way for transportation agencies to save on interest costs.

### [A stowaway on Expo 2 \(video\)](#)

ZevWeb Jun 18, 2014

I had a chance to ride the rails last week, going behind the scenes of one of L.A.'s most eagerly

anticipated transit projects.

The vehicle transporting me was a bouncing truck, not a sleek light rail train. But my imagination was moving full speed ahead as I traveled a major chunk of the Expo Line Phase 2 route now taking shape beside the 10 Freeway. (I even shot some iPhone footage along the way. I'm probably not going to be winning any cinematography Oscars, but I hope you'll click on the above link to share a condensed and accelerated video version of my off-road voyage.)

### [First Look at Crenshaw's LAX-Adjacent Station Plan](#)

Curbed LA Jun 24, 2014

Behold the future Century/Aviation station for the Crenshaw Line, which Metro will begin working on next month.

### [Metro Board Approves Rail to LAX Connection Station](#)

NBC Southern California - Jun 26, 2014

The station's success would depend on a proposed LAX "people mover" train, which would take travelers from the station to airport terminals. The people mover would run on an elevated rail above traffic and could be completed as early as 2022, according to an MTA report.

### [Detour map for closure of Aviation and Century boulevards July 25-28 for Crenshaw/LAX Line bridge demolition](#)

The Source Jun 23, 2014

As we posted recently, the old railroad bridge over Century Boulevard needs to be demolished to make way for the Crenshaw/LAX Line and the Aviation/Century station. That means there will be a 57-hour closure of the intersection of Aviation and Century from the evening of July 25 through early morning July 28. The detour map is above.

### [Metro projects helping improve commuter rail service in San Fernando Valley](#)

The Source Jun 26, 2014

There has been a nice variety of commuter rail projects in the San Fernando Valley on Metro Board agendas in recent months, including one that was approved today to add a new pedestrian bridge for the Metrolink station at Bob Hope Airport in Burbank...

A new station to serve Bob Hope Airport along Metrolink's Antelope Valley Line...

A second track for 6.5 miles approximately from Woodley to DeSoto streets along the Ventura County Line...

A new center platform between the two tracks at Van Nuys station and a pedestrian under-crossing to help passengers reach the new platform....

Metro's Regional Rail team is looking at other projects in the SFV that will better serve Metrolink customers increase safety and mobility. More projects are planned for the area such as additional double tracking and grade crossing enhancements.

### [New transportation hub at Burbank airport designed](#)

Los Angeles Daily News - Jun 27, 2014

Passengers at Bob Hope Airport can now fly in and out of Burbank via the first transportation hub in Southern California to serve trains, buses, cars and bikes.

The \$112 million Regional Intermodal Transportation Center opened Friday in what transportation officials hope will be a national model for airports encouraging travelers to leave their cars at home.

### [S.F. Central Subway's big dig done](#)

San Francisco Chronicle Jun 25, 2014

The digging is done on the Central Subway, though the first Muni Metro train won't carry passengers to



the Chinatown Station until 2019.

**I know there are still questions whether this project was worth building. NB**

## [Futuristic elevated transport system to be built in Israel](#)

Reuters-Jun 24, 2014

SkyTran is a rapid transit system in which lightweight two-person vehicles are suspended from elevated magnetic levitation tracks. The skyTran vehicles in the pilot will cruise at speeds of up to 70 km an hour but that will jump to 240 km an hour at the commercial phase, Sanders said.

**Reinventing the monorail again, it's the transportation of the future and always will be. NB**



This is a view from a few years back of the platforms at Van Nuys and the need for more platforms and grade separated crossing between tracks. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

## **We Get Emails**

### **Re:LAX People Mover**

Regarding your RailPAC story today about the LAX, “But this still doesn't answer how passengers will get around LAX with only 2 People Mover stations which will be a half mile apart.”:

The general idea is moving walkways from the people mover stations to the terminals on each side. You see them diagrammed in yellow on the “Spine Alignment” slides in the presentation posted at Curbed LA. Darrell Clarke

### **Re:The Fallout from PRIIA 2008**

I am writing regarding Mr. Dyson's editorial regarding Section 208 of PRIIA. While Mr. Dyson correctly concludes that the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1981 creates a de facto subsidy from Amtrak to some (but not to railroads who started using the NEC after 1981 such as Rhode Island and Connecticut) the



commuter railroads that use the Amtrak owned NEC. What Mr. Dyson completely ignores is that Section 212 of PRIIA requires the development and implementation of a standardized methodology for the entire Northeast Corridor spine from Washington DC to Boston. This methodology will apply to both Amtrak's use of Metro-North and MBTA trackage as well as commuter railroad usage of the Amtrak owned portion of the Northeast Corridor. Most importantly the statute requires fully allocated costs be paid by all users to the respective host railroad. While there is no implementation deadline for the standardized methodology that must be developed under Section 212 (and the STB is empowered to create one if one cannot be negotiated by the end of PRIIA later this year), unlike Section 208 it will no doubt increase the amount of money commuter railroads pay Amtrak.

Regards,

Dharm Guruswamy, AICP CTP, ENV SP  
Arlington, Virginia

### **Re: Sunset Limit**

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. The whole long-distance network is at risk. Also this is a battle unlike any we have seen in the past.

Because of the perceived "regional" nature of this proposal this is a battle that will have to be fought and won primarily by rail advocates in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana. Another key ally are the Texas Eagle supporters since, without connecting revenue from the Sunset Ltd.'s through cars, the Texas Eagle will be third on the discontinuance list (after the Cardinal). Californians have just one key point of influence. The 23rd Congressional District, (near Bakersfield and Tehachapi) the district of Rep. Kevin McCarthy, House Majority Leader. RailPAC members in the 23rd District need to go the "extra mile" in pointing out the true motivation of this amendment (the ultimate discontinuance of all long-distance trains by increasing costs and reducing revenues).

Steve Roberts

**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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