

Subject: Harvey House at LAUS reopening. Rail service to Phoenix? Boy we got email!

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

To: ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for September 22, 2014

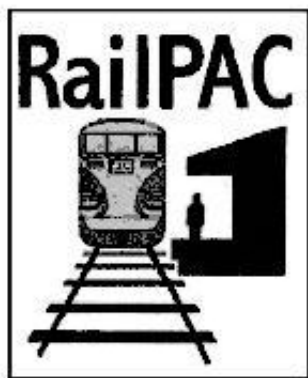
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Membership increases our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!



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Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!

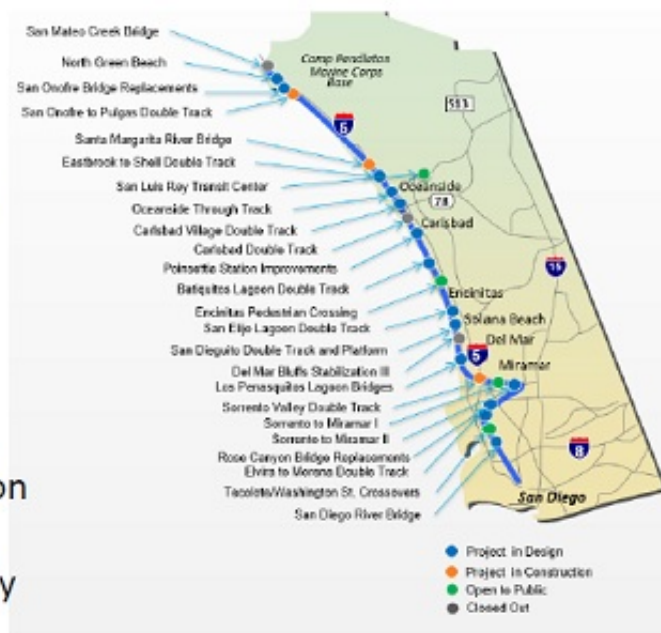
LOSSAN Progress Report Fiscal Year 2015 Program

Funding:

- Total funds required: \$1.01B
- Available funds: \$634M
- Schedule currently projected through 2019

24 Total Projects:

- 8 near/at completion
- 11 funded through construction
- 5 funded through design/environment study only



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This from a recent presentation to the LOSSAN Board shows the status of track upgrades underway in San Diego County.

[Gastropub proposed for Fred Harvey Room at Los Angeles Union Station!](#)

The Source Sep 15, 2014

If the lease is approved by the full Metro Board at its Oct. 2 meeting, the new restaurant would be the first to occupy the Fred Harvey Room at Union Station since the original Harvey House restaurant closed in 1967. The space, which has been very well preserved (see the above photos), has since been used for special events and filming. Fiona Apple's video for "Paper Bag" does a great job of showing off the Fred Harvey Room:

[Cedd Moses Taking Harvey House Space at Union Station](#)

Eater LA - Sep 15, 2014

Cedd Moses (Cole's, Seven Grand) and partner Eric Needleman are taking over that massive Harvey House space at Union Station with the intent to maintain the historical ambiance of the room while stalling a brewpub vibe. Though the former restaurant had been shopped around for over a year, it's finally come into some financially capable hands. According to this release, the 20 year lease is expected to bring \$7.75 million in revenue to the station.

[Metro seeks OK to move Union Station Master Plan from planning to implementation](#)

The Source Sep 17, 2014

The staff recommendations set a path for short- and long-term projects and future commercial development at the station. Metro purchased Union Station from a private firm in 2011 and wants to turn the facility into a world class transit hub that can better handle a growing number of transit riders, protect

the historic core of the station and accommodate high-speed rail and some development in the future... The environmental work will also enable Metro to begin the first stage of near-term improvements to Union Station's perimeter. Specific improvements include the removal of the surface parking lot on the northern side of Union Station's forecourt and the creation of a public plaza.

[Rumors of the death of the train station have been greatly exaggerated](#)

Grist-Sep 18, 2014

In more remote areas, where train travel has dropped to almost nil, it's common to pass an ornate boarded-up train station. Sometimes it will sit next to a cinder block hut that serves as the working station; sometimes there is no station at all. In the wake of de-institutionalization and the erosion of low-income housing programs, train stations, like a lot of other public spaces, became de facto homeless shelters, and more than a few cities decided that it would be simpler to close the stations than to fix homelessness.



This is the latest addition at Los Angeles Union Station, serving baked goods with recipes from Armenia and the Republic of Georgia. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Colorado panel working on plan to add Pueblo stop for Amtrak ...](#)

The Denver Channel-Sep 18, 2014

PUEBLO, Colo. - A commission created by the Colorado Legislature has begun looking into funding to upgrade the route of Amtrak's Southwest Chief and keep the passenger train running through the southeast corner of the state...

The commission is also examining what it would take to alter the train's route and add a stop in Pueblo.

[Don't Look Now, But the House Amtrak Bill Actually Has Some Good Ideas](#)

STREETBLOG USA Sep 16, 2014

Tomorrow, the House Transportation Committee will consider a bill that changes the nation's policies on passenger rail. The proposal, while it includes some cuts, is a departure from the senseless vendetta many House Republicans have waged against Amtrak in the past. The National Association of Railroad Passengers, NARP, says the plan contains "commonsense regulatory and governance reforms.".. The Republicans' talking point that the House bill cuts Amtrak funding by 40 percent is being widely reported, but the reality isn't so draconian. The bill does reduce the amount authorized for Amtrak, but Congress wasn't appropriating nearly that much in recent years anyway. Congress was authorized to spend \$1.96 billion on Amtrak in 2013, for instance, but the House only appropriated \$1.41 billion. The authorized amount in the PRRIA bill is actually a slight increase over what Amtrak got in 2013.

[Amtrak overhaul approved by House panel](#)

Poughkeepsie Journal - Sep 17, 2014

WASHINGTON – A House panel unanimously approved legislation Wednesday that would split Amtrak's operations into two accounts — one for the profitable Northeast Corridor and one for its money-losing national network...

Under the bill, Amtrak would be required to seek out requests for proposals from private investors to redevelop its train stations and the rights-of-way along its tracks.

And the bill sets a deadline for ending losses on the rail system's food and beverage service.

Of course if this legislation doesn't get passed by the Senate and on the President's desk by the end of the legislative year, its back to square one next year for this bill. NB

[Let Us Start Now for Rail Service to Nevada](#)

Commentary by Robert MacDonald, RailPAC member, Oakland

On September 11, 2014, the media announced that the Nevada State Legislature had passed the approval of TESLA's constructing its "gigafactory" at Union Pacific's station of PATRICK, which is about 13 miles east of the station of Reno....

The estimated population in the three county area around the new plant is 473,000 in 2013. This new plant and its satellites, will add about another 100,000 people to this total. It is hoped that the new plant will be operating circa 2016-'17.

Now is the time to get the paper work done to get additional passenger rail service established between the Cities of the Capital Corridor and Reno /Sparks area. This expanded Capital Corridor route could add two California communities, i.e., Colfax and Truckee! Another stop might be Norden, CA, especially in Winter.

[Amtrak service disrupted between Washington, DC, and Philadelphia](#)

Reuters - Sep 16, 2014

(Reuters) - Downed wires and debris on the tracks resulted in the suspension of Amtrak service between Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia on Tuesday morning. The problem began overnight when a Norfolk Southern Corp freight train came into contact ...

[Accident snarls service on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor](#)

Boston Globe-Sep 16, 2014

Amtrak suspended service between Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia and warned customers traveling between Philadelphia, New York, and Boston of possible delays, Schulz said. Acela Express service was also suspended between Wilmington, Del., and Washington, D.C.

[Train stuck on tracks delays Amtrak](#)

WTNH - Sep 19, 2014

MERIDEN, Conn. (WTNH) — Authorities spent the overnight hours Thursday working to get a car off

the train tracks in Meriden. It happened along the Amtrak line between Springfield and New Haven.

[Truck Firm Faces Paying Millions in Amtrak Crash](#)

ABC News-Sep 17, 2014

A federal jury in Reno awarded \$4.5 million to Amtrak and \$210,777 to Union Pacific Railroad for damages resulting from John Davis Trucking ...

[Amtrak's Detroit-Chicago trip to get faster, plusher with upgrades](#)


The Detroit News-Sep 15, 2014

State transportation officials want to buy two sets of cars and engines, built in the United States by an affiliate of Spanish train maker Talgo Inc., as part of an Amtrak upgrade. The updates would allow trains to reach 110 miles an hour and, in a few years, get passengers from one city to another two hours faster than they can today.

[Wisconsin's high-speed trains ready to roll... in Michigan](#)

Capital Times (blog)-Sep 18, 2014

Meanwhile, the two high-speed Talgo train sets originally built for high-speed rail service to connect Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago have finally found a home — in Michigan. The trains are part of improvements that are expected to shave two hours off the current Detroit-Chicago run.



XW, CHSRA and the Southwest Rail Network

XPRESSWEST.COM

- FRA has released its Draft Southwest Multi-State Rail Planning Study that validates the need for CHSR, XpressWest and the viability of high speed rail in the Southwest
- Identifies the top performing corridors in the network that show the strongest demand as stand-alone corridors and also enable significant increases in ridership on the other corridors in the network. The three Core Express corridors that form the backbone of the Southwest Rail Network are:
 - San Diego–S.F./Oakland
 - Las Vegas-Greater Los Angeles
 - Greater Los Angeles–Phoenix
- Recognizes significant passenger volume and trips between Las Vegas and Greater Los Angeles and recognizes immense economic activity and value in connecting Southern California and Southern Nevada.
- Identifies the Inland Empire as a potential large interstate rail hub
- Recognizes the exponential value in connecting XpressWest with California High Speed Rail at Palmdale

9/15/2014 _// 8

This is from a PowerPoint presentation from XpressWest to the California High Speed Rail Authority's Board meeting held on September 16th. The prospect of California HSR spine service with connections to Las Vegas and Phoenix is interesting. NB

[High speed rail board considers farmland in Fresno County](#)

Fresno Bee-Sep 15, 2014

More than 70 parcels of Fresno County farmland now under Williamson Act agricultural preservation contracts will be addressed Tuesday by the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

The rail board, meeting in Palmdale, is expected to certify that the pieces of property -- which are along the approved right of way within the county of the state's proposed bullet-train line -- are necessary for the railroad route and were not selected just because of lower property values.

[Abandoned Downtown Fresno building being demolished for high-speed rail](#)

ABC30.com-Sep 18, 2014

FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN)

A piece of Fresno's past came down Wednesday. For years, the Del Monte building in Downtown Fresno employed hundreds but now it's all coming down to make room for the high-speed rail...

So far, 10 buildings have already been taken down and the project will continue. This construction phase one is a 29-mile stretch of the project from Avenue 17 in Madera to East American Avenue in Fresno. In the next month, crews will start relocating utilities.

[Comments mixed for possible high-speed rail route through San Gabriel Mountains](#)

Santa Clarita Valley Signal-Sep 16, 2014

Comments in support of the alternative, a summary of which was presented at Tuesday's meeting of the High-Speed Rail Authority in Palmdale, note that the route would likely be shorter and "has the potential to reduce community and environmental impacts."

Other comments urge the authority to examine the potential impacts of the rail project on conservation areas, wildlife corridors, natural habitat and quality of life.

[Level of Detail Adequate in California High Speed Rail Authority's Program EIR for Central Valley to Bay Area Rail Corridor](#)

The National Law Review-Sep 18, 2014

The appellate court upheld the California High-Speed Rail Authority's Program EIR for the Central Valley to Bay Area portion of the route, concluding that (1) the Authority properly limited its environmental analysis to a program level when it deferred site-specific analysis of the vertical profile options for alignment, (2) the Town's experts could not show the Authority's revenue and ridership model was inadequate or unsupported, and (3) the Authority's Program EIR considered an adequate range of alternatives despite rejecting an alternative proposed by one expert consulting company.

[Mobile Booking and High-Speed Rail Are Killing the Eurail Pass](#)

Skift-Sep 16, 2014

Then, in a quick eight years, the pass went from 100 percent to 25 percent of Rail Europe's sales. The majority of Rail Europe's sales today are point-to-point tickets.

Baby boomers are now the primary customers for the rail pass. Millennials are booking closer to departure, often with an eye for mobile tickets and a specific set of cities to explore. They are also using low-cost airlines to travel around the continent for cheap.

[Annual Steel Wheels Conference](#)

Saturday – November 15th

California State Railroad Museum Auditorium, Sacramento

[Register Today](#)

Members: \$35 / Non-members: \$45

Keynote Speaker: California Assembly Member Dickinson
Here's your chance to meet the new NARP President Jim Mathews.
Further speaker information to follow.
Save 15% on Amtrak travel to Sacramento
Additional details to follow.

[California leads the nation in preventable train deaths](#)

Contra Costa Times-Sep 18, 2014

In fact, California leads the nation in railroad casualties, with almost 700 train-related injuries in 2013, and 119 fatalities, the overwhelming majority of which are preventable. Railroad officials say about 20 percent of these happen in the Bay Area specifically, which has more than its fair share of railways traveling through highly populated areas.

[Dangerous Oil-by-Rail Is Here, but Railroad Bridge Inspectors Are Not](#)

AllGov-Sep 18, 2014

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) estimates there are about 5,000 railroad bridges in California, but doesn't really know for sure. They are privately owned and inspected and were off the public radar until oil companies started shipping dangerous crude by rail to California refineries in increasingly large quantities....

But help is on the way. In March, the CPUC requested funding for seven inspectors to specifically handle oil-by-rail, and two of them would focus on bridges. The Contra Costa Times reported last week that the two inspectors have not yet been hired, but when they are, they will be the only two inspectors checking out the bridges. They will be assisted in their task by the sole federal inspector assigned to the area—an area that includes 11 states.

[LOSSAN Highlights from the September Board Meeting Agenda](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

Much of the time reading agendas can be rather boring. Much of the material is either technical or legalistic. But like digging for gold if you dig in the right places you can hit paydirt in the LOSSAN Board Meeting Agenda. The latest meeting was held on September 15th. The minutes for the meeting held in August was included as well as informational items which gives an idea of what is planned in the future for the Surfliners as well as the Metrolink Orange County Line and the Coaster.

[TRANSPORTATION: Perris Valley Line taking shape](#)

Press-Enterprise-Sep 14, 2014

But a Southern California commuter train's first major expansion in more than a decade is moving forward, as work cranks up at several locations along the 24-mile Perris Valley Line...

At this point, the line is 21 percent complete, said Edda Rosso, capital projects manager. The commission anticipates customers will hop on the train for the first time in December 2015.

[Survey reveals downtown demand for LA bike-share locations](#)

Los Angeles Register-Sep 17, 2014

Metro plans to construct 250 bike-share stations in Los Angeles County by 2017. By the Tuesday, the regional transportation agency got a better idea of where the demand for those stations is highest...

With hours left to vote Monday afternoon, the top votegetters were Union Station, Pershing Square Station, the northwest corner of Seventh and Flower streets, an Arts District stop at Third Street and Traction Avenue, and a Little Tokyo station outside the Japanese American National Museum – all five in downtown. **These proposed bike-share stations are all also train and or rail transit stations. NB**

[Roads, transit handle 49ers crowd relatively well](#)

SFGate-Sep 14, 2014

There's no fast and easy way to get 70,799 people in and out of any stadium, but the 49ers gave it their best try Sunday night for their first regular-season game at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara...

"We're doing pretty good, pretty much as we expected," said Colleen Valles, spokeswoman for the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority.

About 9,300 people took VTA buses and light-rail vehicles to the game.

[Development slated for Hayward Park station](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal Sep 16, 2014

Another transit-oriented development is in the works near the Hayward Park train station in San Mateo and this time, Caltrain's at the helm of building in the booming area.

Approximately 2.7 acres of Caltrain's surface parking lot at Concar Drive and Pacific Boulevard is available for development and the transit agency is in the process of finding a builder with which it will offer a long-term lease, Caltrain spokeswoman Jayme Ackemann said.

[Caltrain begins collecting public feedback on modernizing car interiors](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Sep 14, 2014

At the first of a series of preliminary meetings on future Caltrain cars in San Carlos Monday, the public was invited to meet with SamTrans representatives to provide feedback specifically on the interior of the new cars that will be part of the electrification and modernization of Caltrain. Community members are encouraged to weigh in on various features such as the number of seats per car versus the number of bathrooms, as well as luggage racks and bike racks, said Caltrain spokeswoman Christine Dunn.

[Caltrain to hike paper fares, adjust schedule](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Sep 15, 2014

Starting Oct. 5, Caltrain plans to raise the cost of tickets purchased at rail station machines for one-way fares and day passes, and adjust its schedule to improve reliability and accommodate upcoming construction work.

Riders purchasing one-way tickets can avoid the 25 cent increase by using Clipper cards for their travel rather than purchasing tickets at the station ticket machines, Caltrain officials said in a press release. Day passes will increase by 50 cents.

[San Francisco Orders 175 Light Rail Cars from Siemens](#)

Rock Hill Herald (press release)-Sep 19, 2014

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has awarded Siemens a contract to deliver an initial 175 light rail cars for its Muni transit system at a value of US\$648 million. With an option for an additional 85 cars, this is the biggest Siemens order ever for light rail cars placed in the U.S.

[Upfront: Station to station](#)

Pacific Sun-Sep 19, 2014

SMART critics have never been hesitant to point out their displeasure at the concept, creation and design of the rail line that's set to run between Marin and Sonoma counties. The latest target of criticism in Marin is the design of the stations, especially the one proposed for downtown San Rafael.

[Shirtless man walking on Green Line tracks forces 105 Freeway shutdown](#)

KPCC Sep 19, 2014

The exchange between Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies and the man caused the closure of several lanes as well as the Green Line itself. The man was waving his arms and intermittently walking and

jogging in the fenced railway section in the middle of the eastbound and westbound lanes of the freeway.

[Testing on Expo Line to the Beach Starts in Just a Few Months](#)

CURBED Los Angeles Sep 18, 2014

The Expo Line light rail extension from Culver City to Santa Monica is now 70 percent complete,...Track installation along the entire line will be finished this fall and the remainder of this year's work will center around train control and traffic control installation, street improvements, and the installation of poles, wires, and station elements; testing should start at the beginning of 2015 and an opening could happen sometime next year or, more likely, in early 2016.

[Union ploy may throw Kinkisharyo off track](#)

Antelope Valley Press Sep 17, 2014

Say you are a Japanese company that manufactures light rail cars for urban transportation routes. Let's also say you have \$891 million in contracts to build 235 railcars for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. You would be kind of a big deal, right?...

But now, there's a hitch. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 11 and several Palmdale residents have retained an attorney from a South San Francisco law firm. They are asking that the plant's construction be delayed until a full environmental report can be completed. That could take six months or longer.

These cars are needed for the extensions of both the Expo and Gold Lines, construction for both lines should be finished by the end of next year. NB



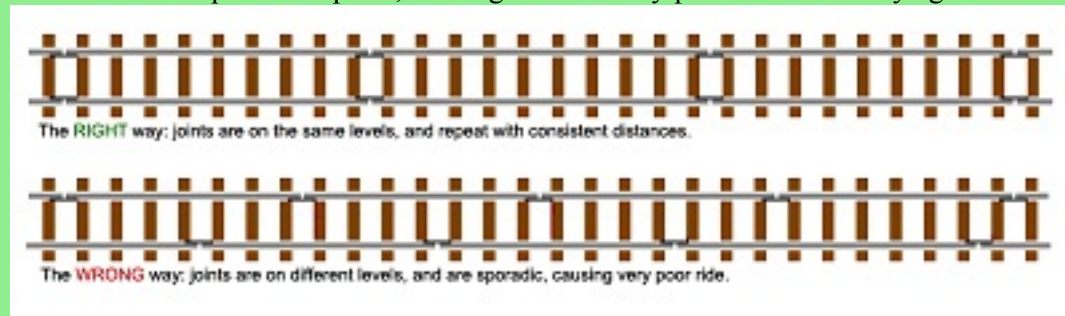
A photo this September of the work on Colorado Blvd in Santa Monica for the extension of the Expo Line to downtown Santa Monica. This is the median for the Expo Line's tracks in downtown Santa Monica near the terminus now under construction. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

RE: MTA Is Installing Welded Subway Rails To Avoid Derailments

Welding an old railway - especially for New York subway - is generally a step in the right direction. However, is "welded rail" always a good thing? And how safe is it, knowing that metal expands from heat, and contracts from cold?

On the other hand, in America jointed railways - including passenger railways and subway systems - have been jointed with an extremely outdated, awkward method. Instead of placing rail joints at the same level (for both right and left track) and repeating at consistent distances, joints have been placed on different levels and with sporadic repeats, causing an extremely poor ride and swaying of a train car.



As another example, in Washington DC (WMATA) subway system there have been numerous instances of track damage and even derailment due to welded track; again, severe cold (or extreme heat) caused the track to bend, having no space to compensate.

Another alternative would be to apply modern technology of welded rail - where additional metal (connecting to rails) is installed and is grounded, to compensate for track expansion. But this is much more expensive than just keeping simple jointed track. Perhaps MTA should consider all options, including cost to weld rails with application of modern technology - prior to making a decision of welding all subway rails.

Alexander Friedman

Re: Misleading coverage of the Amtrak Bill

You picked up the September 11th "Hill" story on **(the Amtrak funding bill in Congress)** 2014 PRRIA. It's wildly inaccurate as I indicated last evening on the NARP legislative teleconference call.

Albert L. Papp, Jr.

New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers (NJ-ARP), Director

I chose that story because it was representative of most of the media stories about this bill with the typical "spin" found on Amtrak stories from Washington. That is why I also posted a link on the RailPAC website to the press release for the PRRIA legislation from the Congressional Transportation Committee which gave a much more balanced report of what was proposed for the Amtrak Bill. NB

Re: Rail Service to Phoenix?

I am writing this aboard the Sunset Limited from Maricopa to LA.

I'm doing this more out of curiosity than anything else. I live in a suburb of Phoenix 43 miles from the Maricopa station! With no shuttle or other device to Maricopa and only once-every-other-day westbound service to LA, departing at 9pm and arriving at 5:30am (this one departed at 10pm), this is hardly a serious substitute for the airlines or driving oneself.

Phoenix, as you may know, is far and away the largest US market without intercity rail service. It's 4.5 million population is more than twice that of the #2 unserved market, Las Vegas. I'd bet Phoenix is the largest city in the world without rail service. It is bigger than the metro area of Rome, Berlin, Athens, Melbourne, etc.

Anyway, as I understand it, the rails need to be reinforced west of Phoenix to meet passenger standards. That is why service was discontinued in the late 90s.

Is anything being done on this matter? Phoenix to LA would be a huge city-pair. One would think a consortium of interests of the two cities could get something going on this needed alternative service. (PHX-LAX is one of the busiest air routes in the world.)

Thank you for whatever information you can lend. I make this commute regularly and would, along with with thousands of others, find rail a better option.

Thanks,

Phil Motta

Paradise Valley, AZ

From the railroad's viewpoint, service to Phoenix has always been a branch line in terms of freight. Yuma to Tucson is a more direct and cheaper route than through Phoenix. As I understand it the Phoenix branch line has a short break currently making it impossible to run trains from Yuma to Tucson via Phoenix. The main reason the UP hasn't abandoned the entire line is because it is needed for the Palo Verde Nuclear Power Plant. It wouldn't be difficult to restore the line between Yuma-Phoenix-Tucson, but someone has to pay to do it and the UP won't. There has been interest in Arizona for local rail passenger service between Phoenix and Tucson for years. Despite growing congestion on I-10, so far funding to buy and rebuild the railroad hasn't happened yet. If there was local ownership and operation for this rail line for local service, it would be possible to reroute the Sunset to Phoenix. But for decent corridor service between Southern California and southern Arizona, High Speed Rail service largely on I-10 in open country is the most logical solution. NB

Re: Trains don't chug anymore

We need to get the media to stop saying trains "chug" It just makes them sound dated. The Southwest Chief doesn't chug through Colorado, it "glides."

Dick Spotswood

Terms like chug-chug or choo-choo refer to the sounds make by reciprocating steam locomotives which haven't been in major use in freight or passenger service in this Country for about 60 years. Do computer printers go clickety clack like typewriters? Does anyone under 20 know what a typewriter is? NB

Re: Confusing Metrolink Ticket Machines and Connections

About your remark, that one can not purchase a through ticket, unless connection within two hours.

Program may have changed, but when I last worked Metrolink in Riverside, all one had to do was to go ahead and hit purchase ticket. We used it many times.

But how do the passengers know this?

I do agree when it says no connection, a lot of folks are turned off, resulting in lost ridership.

Ed Von Nordeck

Re: Limiting access on LAUS Platforms

You wrote that one must have a ticket just to be on the platform at LAUS. That's not good news for railfans. I remember that was also the rule when I lived in LA, 1956 to 71.

Yorkman Lowe

The issue is creating smooth pedestrian flows at trains stations. When LAUS opened in 1939 it had gates which allowed only passengers to the platforms at boarding time. This year the last 2 gates (used only by Amtrak) were removed by LA Metro. There are many more people taking trains now at LAUS than in 1939! The gates were adding to the congestion at LAUS. The reason for inspecting tickets at the platforms for Metrolink was suppose to increase revenues by making fare evaders pay to ride who otherwise wouldn't pay. But despite this (or maybe because of it)

ridership and revenue have continued to decline since last Summer on Metrolink. NB**Re:Caltrain Electrification**

With Caltrain moving closer to total electrification on its Peninsula Route, what will ultimately happen to its current fleet of Diesels & Coaches? Here's an idea, rather than sell them off Caltrain should push towards expansion & study commuter service in the East Bay (i.e. San Jose-Oakland or even Martinez) using the Diesel & Coach Fleet.

Kelly Walton-Harper

The problem with expanding Caltrain with diesel equipment is the bottleneck south of Redwood City which for the foreseeable future will be limited to 2 tracks. This railroad will be at capacity with High Speed Rail, additional electric Caltrain and diesel Caltrain trains from south of San Jose. With additional tracks between Redwood City and 4th and Townsend and a restored Dumbarton Rail Bridge it could be possible to extend Caltrain diesel service to the East Bay and extend ACE service to San Francisco. For that to happen, it will need funding, and that will need public support . But this will be much cheaper than building a second Bay tunnel for BART or a new bridge across the Bay. NB

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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