

Subject:	Amtrak fights to keep Hoosier, Cal HSR ordering trains, RailPAC photos of the month.
From:	Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
To:	ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for October 6, 2014

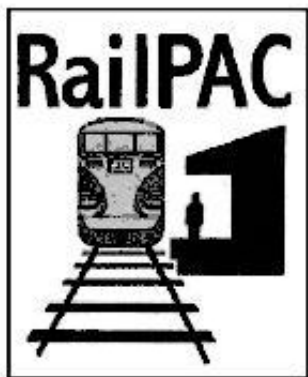
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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



An evening San Joaquin Train arriving in Stockton headed for Bakersfield. Just one of the 3 California trains operated by Amtrak under contract for local California Authorities. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[UPDATE: Amtrak angles to keep control of Hoosier State route](#)

Indianapolis Business Journal - Oct 1, 2014

A little-used, delay-plagued passenger rail line from Indianapolis to Chicago has become a battleground, as Amtrak tries to fend off competition invited by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Amtrak CEO Joe Boardman was at Indianapolis Union Station Wednesday morning to announce that Wi-Fi would be added that day to the Hoosier State line, which also will get light food and beverage service and business-class seating. Boardman departed Indianapolis on the Hoosier State with plans to meet with officials along the route.

[Amtrak CEO in Lafayette to lobby for continued service](#)

Journal and Courier-Oct 2, 2014

Boardman made "whistle-stops" in Lafayette and other communities that have literally been paying the freight to operate the 196-mile route since Oct. 1 last year when the federal government terminated funding for routes shorter than 750 miles.

[Private Operator Responds to Amtrak](#)

Inside Indiana Business (press release)-Oct 2, 2014

Coston refutes comments made to Inside INdiana Business by an Amtrak spokesman that Corridor Capital will not be prepared to operate the service.

He says the process was delayed by Amtrak on several occasions.

Coston says Corridor Capital wants to eventually increase passenger capacity, speed, dependability and the number of trips throughout the day between the two hubs.

Don Phillips:Boardman fiddles while Amtrak burns

With a bureaucratic knowledge of railroading, he plays the blame game at headquarters

One of the sad truths about current Amtrak management is that CEO Joe Boardman pushes out those who disagree with him. At Washington headquarters, experienced managers with railroad operating knowledge are rare. For the first time in Amtrak's 43-year history, its transportation department is led by an individual with no operations expertise.

Read more of Don Phillips column in this November's issue of Trains Magazine

[Amtrak Empire Builder detour continues](#)

Prairie Business - Sep 25, 2014

GRAND FORKS, N.D. - Amtrak's Empire Builder detour will continue at least until late this year through eastern North Dakota, the result of construction delays along BSNF Railway tracks.

Amtrak has been using chartered buses since May to make connections for westbound rail passengers traveling to and from stations in Grand Forks, Devils Lake and Rugby, N.D.

[Search is on for Minn. rail congestion cure](#)

AG Week - Oct 1, 2014

ST. PAUL — A soybean farmers from southwest Minnesota and an official of a taconite mine in the northeast, and more than a dozen others, came to the same conclusion: Significant railroad delays throughout the Upper Midwest are hurting nearly everyone.

[New Hudson River rail tunnels needed so old tunnels can be repaired](#)

The Star-Ledger - Oct 2, 2014

Amtrak's 104-year old Hudson River tunnels are running on borrowed time and need to be shut down for a year each to repair the damage received from Hurricane Sandy flooding, according to transit officials.

To avoid any commuting nightmares during these major repairs, Amtrak officials say two new "Gateway" tunnels must be built.

Amtrak loves to draw attention away from their massive costs from commuter service on the NEC with stories about the money they "lose" on food service on the Long Distance Trains. It was the costs of commuter service on the NEC that brought on the bankruptcy of the Penn Central in 1970, not the long distance trains. NB

[NJ Transit, Amtrak officials talk about improvements at NJ Chamber event](#)

NJBIZ-Sep 30, 2014

Amtrak Chairman Anthony Coscia also spoke Tuesday, shedding light on how the rail service is dealing with improving its aging infrastructure while at the same time crafting a strategic vision for its future.

[Amtrak experiencing "system-wide ticketing problem"](#)

WTOP-Oct 5, 2014

Amtrak announced late Sunday morning that its online reservations program is not working at this time. An Amtrak spokesperson tells WTOP that passengers will not be able to book tickets online, nor at self-serve automated kiosks at stations, and instead must call Amtrak (1-800-USA-RAIL) to make their travel arrangements.

[Amtrak honors 40 years of Blue Water train line during special celebration](#)

The Flint Journal-Sep 29, 2014

FLINT, MI – Amtrak is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its Blue Water line Wednesday, Oct. 1, at each of the stops along the route that runs from Port Huron to Chicago.

[Bike shop owner will convert Oregon City's Amtrak station into a center for bicycle tourism](#)

The Oregonian - Oct 2, 2014

Meier plans to convert the unused depot into a jumping-off point for cyclists who want to explore Oregon City and Clackamas County.

Meier, owner of First City Cycles, envisions a laid-back lounge where cyclists can relax, sip a microbrew or espresso, check out maps or talk to a bike expert.

[RailPAC rail PHOTOS of the month \(September, 2014\)](#)

Here are this month's photos by RailPAC photographers from everywhere!

Click on each photo to see it full size!

Contributions to this page are welcome. Send your jpg rail photos to Russ Jackson, RailPAC Photo Editor, at info@railpac.org.

[High-Speed Rail Authority takes first step toward buying trains](#)

Sacramento Business Journal - Oct 2, 2014

The California High-Speed Rail Authority took its first formal step Thursday to procure trains, asking rail manufacturers to submit interest letters for an initial order of up to 95 sets of engines and cars. The trains must be capable of transporting passengers from San Francisco to Los Angeles in less than three hours.

[Sacramento manufacturer Siemens to compete for California bullet-train contract](#)

Sacramento Bee Oct 2, 2014

Siemens is expected to be among a handful of international train companies, including some from Japan and China, responding to an invitation issued Thursday by the state rail authority to companies to discuss a billion-dollar-plus contract to build train sets and maintenance facilities.

[California Rail Project Pursues Deal With Las Vegas Train](#)

Bloomberg-Oct 2, 2014

A public partnership with private operators would help build segments of the system, Dan Richard, chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, said in an interview...

Authority officials want to cooperate with DesertXpress Enterprises to make it happen. The company, operating as XpressWest, plans a 150 mph train that would connect Palmdale, about 70 miles north of Los Angeles, with Las Vegas, Chief Executive Officer Tony Marnell said in a telephone interview.

[Fresno finally accepts \\$1 million to plan high-speed rail station](#)

Fresno Bee-Oct 2, 2014

It took two months, but the Fresno City Council finally decided there's little downside to accepting a free million bucks.

The decision wasn't unanimous.

The council on Thursday voted 5-2 to spend \$1 million in grants for a consultant who will dig into all sorts of planning details connected to the proposed high-speed rail station in downtown.



Looking north, at the future right of way for California High Speed Rail in Fresno. Just to the left will be the site of the future Fresno High Speed Rail Station. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[A Tour of the Futuristic Roof on California's High-Speed Rail Station](#)

Gizmodo-Oct 2, 2014

On a tour of the almost-finished Anaheim Regional Transportation Intramodal Center (ARTIC) this week, I saw how the station hopes to connect the 16-acre plot between Angel Stadium and the Honda Center with transit services and local businesses. And I got to get up close and personal with ETFE, the polymer named ethylene tetrafluoroethylene that arcs over its puffy exterior.

[Intermountain states seek to keep hope alive for high-speed rail](#)

Salt Lake Tribune-Oct 2, 2014

One message was that if high-speed rail is ever to connect Salt Lake City with Las Vegas, Reno, Phoenix and Denver, it probably depends on California first having success with a now-underway project to connect its cities.



[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

[Japanese Bank Offers \\$5 Billion To US For Northeast Maglev](#)

CleanTechnica-Sep 29, 2014

The specific aim of the \$5 billion is to build a high-speed (up to 311 mph) maglev train route between Washington DC and Baltimore. The said route would — quite impressively — cut the travel time between the two cities down to about 15 minutes. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation is the ultimate origin behind the \$5 billion in capital referenced in the filing to state regulators that an investor group recently submitted.

[World's 1st bullet train, made in Japan, turns 50](#)

seattlepi.com-Oct 1, 2014

The Oct. 1, 1964, inauguration ceremony was re-enacted at Tokyo Station on Wednesday at 6 a.m., complete with ribbon cutting. The first bullet train, with its almost cute bulbous round nose, traveled from Tokyo to Osaka in four hours, shaving two and a half hours off the 513-kilometer (319-mile) journey. The latest model, with a space-age-like elongated nose, takes just two hours and 25 minutes.

[High Desert Corridor draft environmental study is released](#)

The Source Oct 1, 2014

Caltrans and Metro today released the long-awaited draft environmental study for the High Desert

Corridor project, which contemplates a new 63-mile freeway between Palmdale in Los Angeles County and the town of Apple Valley in San Bernardino County — along with a possible high-speed rail line, bikeway and green energy transmission corridor.

[Oil, rail industries want 7 years to fix tank cars](#)

News On 6-Sep 30, 2014

Associated Press WASHINGTON (AP) - The oil and railroad industries are urging federal regulators to allow them as long as seven years to upgrade existing tank cars that transport highly volatile crude oil, a top oil industry official said Tuesday. The cars have ruptured and spilled oil during collisions, leading to intense fires.

[Oil falls as bearish trend continues, Saudi lowers prices](#)

Reuters-Oct 1, 2014

But gains were erased and bearish sentiment returned after Saudi Arabia announced a bigger-than-expected cut in its official oil sales price (OSPs) to Asia in November, the clearest sign yet that the world's largest exporter is trying to compete for crude market share and keep oil markets well supplied. "Prices came off, quite literally, after the OSPs came out," said Amrita Sen, chief oil analyst at Energy Aspects in London.

[Crude Oil Price Tumbles Below \\$90 on Saudi Price Cuts](#)

24/7 Wall St. Oct 2, 2014

While a price below \$90 a barrel is good for consumers, it also has a few downsides. The main one is that producers will be forced to cut capital expenditures in order to pay dividends to investors or watch their stock prices drop like a stone. The example of heads rolling in the mining industry when big projects displaced dividends has not been lost of oil company executives.

The reason I'm following this drop in oil prices is because it could bring an end to the oil train boom in this country. Unconventional oil going by rail cost more to produce, so oil companies need prices over \$100 dollars a barrel for it to be worth refining . The oil companies won't pump oil at a loss for long. In the long term we need the railroads more for economical transportation than for a short lived oil boom. NB

[Car Commuting Still Rules, But New Census Data Reveals Important Shifts](#)

StreetsBlog USA Sep 30, 2014

The share of national commuters traveling by private vehicle is edging down for the first time in decades — from 86.5 percent in 2007 to 85.8 percent in 2013. Meanwhile, other transportation modes have grown in relative importance. Public transportation, which just recorded the most passenger trips since 1956, saw its share jump to over 5 percent, reaching levels not seen since 1990. The share of those bicycling and walking to work also continued to rise, now representing nearly 4 percent of all commuters. The biggest gain, however, came from those workers who didn't technically commute at all. With the help of burgeoning broadband coverage, nearly as many people now work from home as ride public transportation to their jobs.

[Transit Can Cut Car Traffic Much More Than Ridership Alone Suggests](#)

StreetBlog USA Oct 1, 2014

Why was this effect so much larger than the effect directly attributable to new transit trips? Partly because households living near the light rail walked more and traveled shorter distances when they did drive. Walking increased 151 percent among people living in the transit-oriented communities, Ewing and Hamidi found.

That was possible because, following the addition of light rail, city, regional, and state agencies took steps to encourage walkable development around the transit line. And it worked. According to Ewing and

Hamidi the “activity density” of the light-rail neighborhoods — a measure of how many households and jobs are located in a given area — rose 100 percent between 1994 and 2011.

[Why California needs some Publicly Owned Railroads](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

California already owns hundreds of miles of railroad, particularly in Southern California. From Lancaster to Los Angeles down to San Diego most of the railroad is partially or wholly owned by the public

[Ground is broken for Regional Connector project to link Blue, Expo and Gold Lines](#)

The Source Sep 30, 2014

The project will also eliminate the need to transfer for many light rail riders. Riders on the Expo and Blue Line will be able to continue north on light rail from 7th/Metro Center to other downtown neighborhoods such as the Financial District, Civic Center and Little Tokyo. Likewise, Gold Line riders will no longer have to transfer to the Red/Purple Line subway at Union Station to reach the heart of downtown.

The project is currently forecast to be completed in 2020. When done, Metro plans to run trains between Long Beach and Azusa on a north-south light rail line and east-west between Santa Monica and East Los Angeles. Metro continues to work on potential naming and color schemes for its light rail lines to be used in the future.

[Metro becomes first transit agency in U.S. to apply flywheel technology for rail energy savings](#)

The Source Oct 3, 2014

Officials met at the Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro Red/Purple Line Station to see firsthand how the Wayside Energy Storage Substation works. The pilot project started in August and is now saving Metro up to 18 percent of the energy normally used to power subway trains entering and leaving the station. That, in turn, helps lower Metro’s electricity bills.

[Actions taken today by the Metro Board of Directors](#)

The Source Oct 2, 2014

A few highlights from the meeting (agenda here) of the Metro Board of Directors on Oct. 2, 2014:

- Item 7: The Board approved a lease with Eric Needleman and Cedd Moses for a new gastropub for the Fred Harvey Room at Union Station. Staff report and earlier Source post.
- Items 5 and 6: The Board also approved leases for two kiosks in Union Station’s East Portal. One will serve bento boxes and the other kiosk will offer coffee.
- Item 23: The Board approved moving ahead with the design and environmental review of a new portal and pedestrian passageway between 7th/Metro Center Station and the shopping center across 7th Street now known as The Bloc. In plain English, this project will add an entrance to the busy 7th/Metro Center from the south side of 7th Street. Staff report

[FiDi's The Bloc Mall Could Get Its Own Subway Entrance](#)

CURBED LA Oct 1, 2014

The additional access point would be the only subway entrance/exit on the south side of Seventh Street, ideally cutting down on street crossings and reducing the congestion inside the busy station, which is only expected to increase with the opening of the Expo Line extension in 2016.

[Metrolink to provide train service after Angels ALDS game Thursday](#)

The Pasadena Star-News-Oct 2, 2014

ANAHEIM - Metrolink will provide special train service following American League Division Series

games at Angel Stadium, beginning tonight.

A southbound train bound for Oceanside will leave from Anaheim at 10:09 p.m. or 30 minutes after the conclusion of the game, whichever is later. A northbound train bound for Union Station will leave 30 minutes after the end of the game.

[Heads Up: No Added Bicycle Capacity on Metrolink For Sunday's CicLAvia](#)

Streetsblog Los Angeles (blog) - Oct 3, 2014

Anyone who thought they will be able to take their bicycle to CicLAvia with them on Metrolink's trains this upcoming Sunday will likely be in for an unwelcome surprise.

Metrolink has decided that they will no longer be adding bicycle cars to their trains, nor will they be adding any extra trains to their pared-down Sunday schedules despite the common knowledge that CicLAvia is a very popular event, with lots of cyclists riding Metrolink trains to attend:

[Tips for Families and for Keeping Cool At CicLAvia #StreetsR4Families](#)

Streetsblog Los Angeles (blog) - Oct 3, 2014

CicLAvia has always been an all-ages event. It's one of those rare festivals that families can enjoy together. There are lots of young kids riding bicycles much further than we parents expect. Take away the cars, and streets become safe, more like parks than anything else.

[How Transbay Transit Center deal's collapse would alter S.F.](#)

SFGate-Sep 25, 2014

The most damaging impact of any lawsuit — two or three are being considered — is expected to be to the \$2.6billion plan to extend the rail tracks from the Caltrain station at Fourth and King streets to the new \$1.9billion Transbay Transit Center under construction along Mission Street. "What's really threatened is not Transbay, it's the Caltrain extension," said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of the urban think tank SPUR. "There is no point to having built the Transbay terminal if we don't get Caltrain there."

[Sunnyvale's BPAC considers bike share program](#)

San Jose Mercury News-Oct 1, 2014

The Sunnyvale Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission unanimously approved further exploring a bike share program at its Sept. 18 meeting...

Possible bike share station locations could include the Caltrain stations, near downtown, the civic center, Peery Park, Moffett Park, and El Camino Real.

[Caltrain launches suicide-prevention web page](#)

Palo Alto OnlineOct 2, 2014

As part of Railroad Safety Month, Caltrain launched a special page on its website dedicated to suicide-prevention information and outreach. The page includes a crisis hotline number and links to local, regional and national resources.

[Is Mike Scanlon irreplaceable?](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Sep 29, 2014

No one is indispensable, but Mike Scanlon comes pretty close. Under his watch since 1999, SamTrans and especially Caltrain have been revitalized. Under previous leadership, Caltrain had slipped from being a viable to an almost forgotten form of transit in the Bay Area. Today, it is a national success story and Scanlon deserves much of the credit.

[Passing Prop. A will keep The City's transit moving](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Oct 2, 2014

Proposition A is a \$500 million bond on the November ballot that would improve Muni and transportation

in The City if approved.

[Court ruling could clear path for North Coast freight rail extension](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat-Oct 2, 2014

The decision opens the door for the North Coast Railroad Authority and its partner Northwestern Pacific Railroad to expand freight service along the North Coast. Environmental groups Friends of the Eel River and Californians for Alternatives to Toxics, which sued the rail operators, have not decided whether to appeal the ruling to the state Supreme Court.

[Santa Fe Southern ceases passenger service](#)

Albuquerque Business First Sept 30, 2014

The luxury excursion service took passengers to and from the Santa Fe Railyards. Recently, the company signed an agreement with X Train Holdings Corp. of Las Vegas, Nevada, for X Train to run an innovative luxury service on the company's trains.

Karl Ziebarth, the chairman of the board of directors for SFSR, said on Tuesday that the company was notified on Friday that X Train would no longer run passenger service.

[Denver bank robbery suspect hams it up in mug shot](#)

FOX6 WBRC - MyFoxAL.com-Sep 29, 2014

DENVER (AP) - The mug shot of a man captured after trying to flee a bank robbery in Denver shows him flashing a broad, toothy grin.

The photo was taken after 45-year-old Michael Whittington's Sept. 23 arrest. Police say he robbed a bank on Denver's 16th Street pedestrian mall and then tried to get away on a light-rail train. Officers stopped the train a few blocks away and arrested him.

Light rail is great for many things, but not for a get away from a bank robbery. NB



A graphic from the City of Anaheim of how the new transportation center will look when it opens in December.

We get Emails

Re:Opposition to the current plan for High Speed in California

There was a good article this morning in the SacBee by Michael D Setty. Seems like his approach makes

more sense than the present one we're following. I am a huge fan of rail travel; I think it's the most comfortable way to go. Buses are the worst.

But I am not in favor of the existing approach. I think most people feel this way, too. "No one" will want to use it to go from Madera (or wherever) to Bakersfield. And that is precisely what Mr. Setty states in his last paragraph...that "it will fail miserably, making it politically impossible to ever improve rail service in CA". And that will be a sad shame.

I believe it should start from the centers of the major inner cities, and be built out as far as money allows toward the ultimate destinations. Then as more financing is obtained, eventually the entire connections can be completed. At least that way, some parts of it can be useful for improving commuting into the major metro areas, while the rest of it is being completed. Mr. Setty's points are perhaps even better.

Main point is, rail travel cannot compete with air for long trips, until high speed is completed. The max distance suitable for rail, even high-speed, is probably only so far as Sacramento/Bay Area to Los Angeles. The one point Mr. Setty makes which I question is the 110 mph goal. I don't think that makes rail competitive with air for a trip from say Bay Area to LA.

Thank you.

H. David Knepshield

On behalf of myself and RailPAC, we have to respectfully disagree. Mr. Setty and his friends have been saying these same things about the California High Speed Project for years which has gotten them nowhere. Major changes in the route as suggested by Mr. Setty. would require throwing out the voter approved 10 billion dollar bond measure which the High Speed Project is based since the bond measures calls for the route now being built .

The current plan calls for the first 300 miles between Burbank and Merced with connecting trains at both ends by 2022. By 2029 the plan is for 500 miles of service between Anaheim and San Francisco. Granted it is preferable not to have to transfer on a trip. But having rail connection to Southern California, the Bay Area and upper San Joaquin Valley to the first leg of High Speed Rail will be a major improvement compared to the rail service we have now.

The reality today is most travel by air require transfers. Airlines are getting out of the short haul markets for more profitable longer distance service. Airlines often offer corridor travel primarily to feed their longer distance flights. The airlines and airports are interested in California High Speed Rail as feeders to their long distance flights to free up resources to expand their long distance services.

The point is California High Speed Rail is now funded, getting ready to order trains, signing construction contracts and buying land. The High Speed Rail project has broad political support. The opponents of High Speed Rail despite their claims of major opposition have failed to muster any effective effort against it. The High Speed Train has left the station with Mr. Setty and his friends waiting at the wrong station. NB

Re: End of Line for Conductors

Seeing your link to the article "End of the line for railroad conductors" brought to mind something that bugs me during my daily commute: seeing two "conductors" along for the ride on every Caltrain run. I can't imagine how anyone can justify in an honest way the presence of TWO highly-paid people who serve little purpose. They only check tickets on one car per run, I believe, and not even that if it's one of the increasing number of sardine-packed overcrowded trips during rush hour. They manually have the doors open and close--something the engineer could actually do after a glance in a mirror. One person is more than enough.

If the best reason is for security, then OK they can hire a security guard for the few late-night runs. Criminally under-funded Caltrain could save a few million dollars annually if they eliminated half of these people, and it would help to show the taxpaying public that the agency actually wants to improve itself. Do you know if other commuter rail lines are still paying the big bucks for excessive "conductors"?

Tommy Travers

Any readers wish to respond? NB**Re: 1968 Vision of BART**

That 1968 promotional video for BART, 'Along the Way', didn't envision the large number of homeless lying around Powell St and Civic Center, as well as other, stations.

Yorkman Lowe

The difference between today and 1968 is that many homeless people back then were often hidden from sight in mental hospitals and jails. Many homeless people, particularly the more annoying ones often have psychological, alcohol, and or drug problems. In the 60's they were kept in mental hospitals and "medicated" to make them easier for staff to handle. In the 70's the plan was to save money by emptying the mental hospitals and have community treatment centers for the former hospital patients to go to get their medication. The problem with this plan was the former patients often didn't want to be medicated because they hated the side-effects from these drugs. By the early 80's because of these recently released mental patients and higher unemployment from a major recession at the time, we witnessed an explosion of homelessness that remains. What agencies and communities have discovered is the cheapest way to deal with homelessness is to find housing for people. It is expensive to jail the homeless. Homeless people often have serious health problems as a result of poor diet and exposure. These health problems are often treated at hospitals emergency rooms which is very expensive and which the homeless can't pay for. Most of these costs can be saved with shelter and food. NB

Re: Ben Pease's response to my original post.

Actually, it's the other way around. Uneven joints, located on different levels, cause an extremely rough ride - especially at high speeds - and the train to sway from side to side. Some Amtrak routes (e.g. Southwest Chief in, or around, New Mexico) unfortunately still have this type of track - on old railroad segments. The ride is anything but pleasant (or safe)! This "different-level joints" technology is antiquated, and was built mostly in North America. Most (if not all) other countries use an evenly-spaced rail joint technology, making the train ride much more even and smooth. The train may sometimes gently rock, but I've never heard of "sagging into the ballast" or "galumphing" along the track.

Alek Friedman

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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