

Subject:	Test Run RailPAC Enewsletter
From:	RailPAC (info@railpac.org)
To:	ntbraymer@yahoo.com;
Date:	Thursday, November 6, 2014 5:59 PM

RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for November 3, 2014

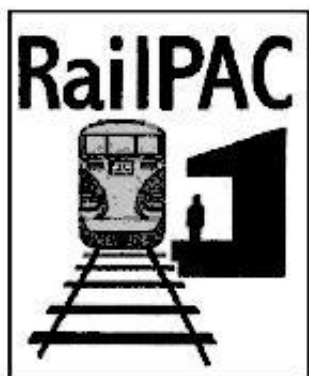
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

Feel free to forward copies of this E-Newsletter to your friends or someone who can use this information.

If you would like to subscribe to the E-Newsletter just send me your name and email address to nbraymer@railpac.org

**If you'd like to see expanded and improved Rail Passenger Service-
[Join Us!](#)**

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



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



This picture is about 10 years old of a unguarded crossing in Vista, California. This crossing has since been upgraded for the Sprinter service. However there are still many crossing like this around the country. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[24 hurt as Amtrak train, semi collide](#)

Indianapolis Star-Oct 28, 2014

"I went across the tracks, then I seen that train coming, and it was too late," Hatfield said recalling the morning's accident. "That's about it."

In a cloud of powdered cement, Hatfield, 55, of Bedford, and his cab spun 90 degrees, facing south, while the back of his trailer spun 90 degrees in the opposite direction. The locomotive and its three passenger cars were caked with gray cement powder, as were trees just north of the tracks and the tracks around the accident.

There were 56 passenger on this Hoosier State. The crossing didn't have warning lights or gates: see photos in this story. NB

[Iowa leaving \\$53 million for Amtrak service sitting on the track](#)

The Gazette-Oct 26, 2014

If Gov. Terry Branstad and the Iowa Legislature had come up with the \$20.6 million needed to match a federal grant awarded to Iowa and Illinois four years ago, a new intercity railway eventually could have run through some of the bigger cities in the eastern half of the state. Rail passengers could get from Chicago to Iowa City in less than five hours. And the line potentially could be extended to Omaha.

[Amtrak seeks solutions for midwest rail gridlock](#)

Philly.com-Oct 28, 2014

In an effort to reduce major delays on many of its train routes, Amtrak is asking a panel of transportation experts to help solve the midwestern bottleneck caused by burgeoning shipments of crude oil and other freight.

The panel will be asked "to identify infrastructure and operational improvements to address the rail traffic gridlock in Chicago," Amtrak said.

[Amtrak zeroing in on train delays, cites Chicago-to-Cleveland ...](#)

The Plain Dealer -Oct 28, 2014

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Amtrak said Tuesday it's stepping up efforts to relieve rail traffic gridlock in Chicago, the effects of which it described as radiating out nationwide.

Amtrak specifically cited delays of four hours or more between Chicago and Cleveland that it said have become a near daily experience.

[It's the oil, stupid!](#)

Posted by Fred Frailey

Sunday, October 26, 2014

Who shot BNSF Railway? What's the disease eating away at Norfolk Southern? Why is Chicago so screwed up? Whose knife is sticking in the back of CSX Transportation? The answer to all four questions is the same, and so obvious I am embarrassed. We have been in denial about oil.

[California's Pro-HSR Political Consensus](#)

California High Speed Blog Oct 28, 2014

There are two things that should come as no surprise to anyone reading this blog. First, Californians support high speed rail. Second, Ralph Vartabedian does not.

Vartabedian has a rather whiny article up at the LA Times today complaining that high speed rail is not a factor in this fall's statewide election:

[China trainmakers CSR, CNR in talks to merge: state media](#)

Reuters-Oct 27, 2014

(Reuters) - China's top trainmakers, China CNR (601299.SS)(6199.HK) and CSR Corp (601766.SS) (1766.HK), are in merger talks to create a giant able to compete globally with the likes of Siemens (SIEGn.DE) and Bombardier (BBDb.TO), state media reported on Tuesday. ...

CNR board secretary Xie Jilong said at a shareholder meeting in Beijing on Tuesday that the merger "is not up to us, it has become a national strategy, to be determined by the government," the semi-official China Business News (CBN) reported.

[China rail reps visit California](#)

Chinadaily USA-Oct 31, 2014

A delegation of Chinese government officials and representatives of Chinese high-speed railroad companies met with their California counterparts and the California High-Speed Rail Authority during a reception hosted at the Bay Area Council in San Francisco on Thursday.

[3 firms bid on second phase of high-speed rail](#)

News & Observer-Oct 30, 2014

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Three firms are bidding to build the second leg of California's \$68 billion high-speed rail system, which will run from Fresno to Bakersfield.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority says three joint construction ventures submitted sealed bids by Thursday's deadline.

The contract to design and build the second, 60-mile phase is expected to be worth \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion. But the cost of each of the bids submitted Thursday will be kept secret while state officials review

their technical merits.

[State rail agency seeks to avoid bullet-train injunction battles](#)

Fresno Bee-Oct 29, 2014

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is facing seven lawsuits over its approval of the Fresno-Bakersfield segment of its statewide bullet-train line. Now the agency is asking the federal Surface Transportation Board — which oversees rail lines in the U.S. and gave a green light to the project over the summer — to declare that those lawsuits should not be able to seek a California judge's order to block construction.

[Amtrak posts ridership growth, but long-distance lines lag](#)

The News Journal-Oct 27, 2014

WASHINGTON — Amtrak's ridership and ticket revenue increased in fiscal 2014, buoyed by continued growth in the Northeast Corridor, the rail service reported Monday.

But the numbers also indicate flagging activity on long-distance lines and regional services that rely partly on support from taxpayers in some states.

[Amtrak Ridership Numbers Were Flat in 2014, Polar Vortex Didn't Help](#)

Skift-Oct 28, 2014

Amtrak reported yesterday that its total ridership for fiscal 2014, ending September 30, was 30.9 million. Fiscal 2013's total ridership was initially tallied at 31.6 million, but the rail line recently began using a different methodology and has since revised its 2013 ridership numbers to 30.8 million.

[Amtrak worker killed by train](#)

Albany Times Union - Oct 29, 2014

The accident happened at about 11 a.m. near the border of Columbia and Dutchess counties, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

Train No. 280, traveling to Penn Station in New York City from Niagara Falls struck the worker, a signal maintainer who was on a section of track between Germantown and the town of Clermont near Dutchess County, said NTSB spokesman Peter Knudson in an email.

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

Here are this month's photos by RailPAC photographers!

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.



The **Caltrain Commuter Coalition** was announced at a celebration for the 10th Anniversary of the Caltrain "Baby Bullet" held on the 27th in San Francisco. On the left behind the sign is State Senator Mark Leno, to the right is Tom Nolan, Chair of the Caltrain JPB and next to Tom Nolan is Representative Jackie Speir. She secured Federal Funding and coined the name "Baby Bullet" for the new Caltrain service 10 years ago. Photo by Bruce Jenkins

[Major businesses form coalition to support Caltrain's modernization](#)

Progressive Rail Roading-Oct 28, 2014

As Caltrain officials yesterday marked the 10th year of the "Baby Bullet" service, major employers that have grown their companies along the Caltrain/Highway 101 corridor joined other business groups in announcing a new coalition that will advocate in favor of funding efforts to expand Caltrain's capacity and service.

[So long Google bus? Silicon Valley tech giants back new Caltrain upgrades](#)

Silicon Valley Business Journal-Oct 27, 2014

"This is the result of conversations we have had for years with these companies," Seamus Murphy, Caltrain's director of government and community affairs, told the Chronicle. "They realize that they can't continue to rely on shuttles or expand shuttles, and they've been frustrated, frankly, that they can't rely on Caltrain or public transportation."

[Caltrain needs more frequent trains](#)

San Francisco Examiner-Oct 29, 2014

Yet the only railroad that connects each of those train systems pokes along at hourly intervals, sludging up much of Bay Area residents' trip planning for huge parts of the day. Of the 19 hours that Caltrain serves the Peninsula each weekday, a full 8½ hours -- or 45 percent of the time -- it offers hourly or

longer-than-hourly frequencies. Even though it has never had more business, it has actually cut the number of noncommute hour trains during the past decade.

[Business should get on board with Metrolink: Editorial](#)

LA Daily News-Oct 27, 2014

Couldn't the Southern California private sector also partner with Metro in order to create better rapid transit alternatives for us? Of course it could, and we encourage such a coalition to form in these parts. We have our own versions of the 49ers, Oracle, LinkedIn, Stanford University, HP and other institution and firms with bucks and clout. Their group is dubbed the Caltrain Commuter Coalition. We can have the Metrorail Backers' Association — the MBA. And it should be Metrorail rather than just Metrolink, as heavy rail isn't the only transit option that could use the smarts and lobbying clout of business and higher education. But lobbying in Washington, D.C., and Sacramento for extra funding that would allow the Metrolink diesel engines to be replaced by electric ones in a speedy manner, as the CCC will do, would be an excellent start for the MBA as well.

Annual Steel Wheels Conference Steel Wheels in California- Saturday, November 15th California State Railroad Museum Auditorium, Sacramento

From Paul Dyson:

There's still time to register for Steel Wheels in Sacramento, your chance to meet and question railroad officials and advocates and to learn about the state of the passenger rail state here in California. I have been told that Jeff Morales, CEO of CHSRA will be the presenter for High Speed Rail, and Chad Edison, Deputy Secretary for Rail of California DoT will update us on the state intercity rail program and passenger rail in general. These are the top two state officials for passenger rail.

In addition this is your chance to meet the new NARP President, Jim Mathews, who is coming from Washington DC for this maating. This is a not-to-be-missed event. Take advantage of the 15% Amtrak discount on travel to Sacramento and bring a friend. See you there!

[Register Today](#)

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

[20-year-old ticket machines taking a toll on Metrolink](#)

OCRegister-Oct 27, 2014

Most of the ticket machines are 20 years old, but their useful life is only 12 years, according to the report. A recent rash of break-ins has also added to the problem: 18 incidents in the last 50 days, said Russ Case, director of fare collections for Metrolink. "It's embarrassing, and we're losing a lot of fares," said alternate board member Carolyn Cavecche, former mayor of the city of Orange, who called for replacement of the system. "We can't keep band-aiding these machines."

[ACE train service extended to here?](#)

Ceres Courier-Oct 24, 2014

Within five years, Stanislaus County residents can expect the chance to hop on an ACE train in downtown Modesto or Turlock to zip over to the Livermore BART station, to Levi Stadium to watch a 49ers game or to work in the Silicon Valley...

If Stanislaus County can get the half-cent sales tax passed in November 2016, the ACE train extension into the region is much more likely.

[Stanislaus, Merced leaders hope ACE rail comes south](#)

Modesto Bee-Oct 31, 2014

Modesto could get service as early as 2018 and Merced by 2022, with Turlock somewhere in between. The planners do not yet know how to cover the capital cost, estimated at a few hundred million dollars, but that did not daunt the people riding Thursday.

“I think the ACE train is fabulous,” said Cecil Russell, chief executive officer of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce, as he waited for the 7:24 a.m. departure. “It think it’s a boon for our economy, for people who have to commute day in and day out.”

[County economic outlook bright, says expert](#)

Petaluma Argus Courier-Oct 31, 2014

Sonoma County’s economic outlook continues to shine bright, based on a strong job numbers, a growing housing market and infrastructure investments such as the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit commuter train, a noted economist said Friday.

[Giants parade: Fans cramming BART, Caltrain, ferries](#)

SFGate-Oct 31, 2014

Giants fans heeded warnings and took public transportation Friday morning to take part in the Giants World Series parade and celebration in downtown San Francisco.

But the surge in riders and, in the case of BART, an equipment problem, didn’t exactly make for smooth, comfortable rides, with ferries and trains packed to the gills — even though transit agencies had added extra service.

[Oakland Airport BART Connector Might Be Open By Thanksgiving](#)

SFist-Oct 30, 2014

Right on schedule, BART's Oakland Airport Connector light rail is set to open to the public either by the end of next month, or by early December. The project has been controversial because of how expensive it's been, but it will no doubt improve the travel experiences of everyone trying to get to OAK by BART — removing the pain-in-the-ass step of getting on an AirBART bus and sitting in traffic.

Like the AirTrain at SFO, the Oakland Airport Connector is driverless, operated entirely by computer, and will hit every stop on a continuous loop about every 4 minutes.

[Why A Subway&Building Binge Could Transform L.A.'s Tech Culture](#)

Fast Company-Oct 31, 2014

According to estimates by the American Community Survey, the median earnings of Los Angeles public transit riders are only 54.7% that of the public at large. But in Cambridge, Massachusetts, public transit commuters earn 110.5% more than the public at large; in New York, MTA commuters come in at a respectable 96%. As subways prepare to weave their way underneath the office towers of Wilshire Boulevard and a mass transit terminal is built blocks from Santa Monica’s iconic amusement pier, urban planners are trying to learn how to teach Angelenos how to love mass transit.

[Gold Line an economic catalyst for San Gabriel Valley:](#)

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Oct 29, 2014

Too often lost — but not forgotten by planners, economists and the business community — is the economic impact an investment such as this will have on our region as a whole.

Throughout the San Gabriel Valley, signs of this economic transformation can already be seen in the form of transit-oriented and related developments.

[Shoe shine stand opens in Union Station](#)

The Source Oct 27, 2014

The shoe shine stand is located at the west end of the Union Station passageway near the Famima convenience store. It will be open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. A shine costs six dollars. Customers will be seated in a beautiful four-seat historic replica of an early 20th century shoe shine stand while their scuffed and dull shoes are buffed, brushed, polished and rejuvenated.

[A Look at the Architects Who Are Planning Union Station](#)

Archinet News

The master plan development program consists of 3.25 million sq. feet of the Union Station property. The plan includes the preservation of the historic station, renovations to the station's perimeter, and adding new commercial developments like retail, hotel, and housing.

With today's approval, Metro can begin its initial implementation strategy for near-term projects, which includes a programmatic environmental review of the recommended transit improvements and the commercial development program. Metro will also be able to form partnerships with city, county, and real estate in searching for funding opportunities to improve the station's perimeter.

[Historic Lankershim Depot gets extreme makeover](#)

The Source Oct 30, 2014

Metro today announced that it has completed a \$3.6-million restoration of the historic Lankershim Depot near the Metro Orange and Red Lines in North Hollywood. The train depot, originally built in 1896 and historically known as Toluca Southern Pacific Train Depot, has undergone a major transformation.

[Metro and Caltrans hold public hearings on High Desert Corridor draft EIR/EIS](#)

The Source Oct 31, 2014

The public comment period, open until December 2, 2014, seeks input on the HDC, a 63 mile corridor connecting SR-14 in Los Angeles County with US-395, I-15 and the SR 18/Bear Valley Road in San Bernardino County. HDC aims to improve travel safety and reliability while connecting residential, commercial and industrial areas in the Antelope Valley and Victor Valley, with major elements under study including a new highway/ expressway, tollway, high speed rail feeder service, potential green energy production and/or transmission facilities and a bikeway.

[Nogales Street railroad underpass half way complete](#)

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Oct 29, 2014

With construction nearing the halfway point on the Nogales Street railroad underpass, the Alameda Corridor East Construction Authority awarded a new construction contract this week for another underpass on nearby Fairway Avenue...

The head of ACE led a tour of the work on the Nogales Project. The \$117 million project began in May of 2013.

[The Future Passenger Rail Connections at San Diego's Airport](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

By 2016, there will be a shuttle bus connection from the Washington Street Trolley Station and the terminals at San Diego International Airport. This is part of a much larger project over the next 20 years to move the main entrance of the airport to the North Side right along the I-5 Freeway, the Trolley and rail lines.



This is Washington Street in San Diego by the San Diego Airport and next to a Trolley Station. In the near future this area will become the busiest Intermodal Transit Center in San Diego. This will combine Trolley, Amtrak, Coaster, High Speed Rail and bus service with connections to the airport.

Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re: Amtrak Response to Kalamth Falls Thruway bus service

I find Mr. Von Nordeck's response to the KFS Thruway bus service issue to be typical of current Amtrak response to anything. Whatever the problem or issue, Amtrak always says it is someone else's fault and there is nothing Amtrak will do about it. Any inconvenience is the passenger's problem and not Amtrak's. Unfortunately this attitude has led to an overall deterioration of Amtrak's product. The American public deserves better and from my view Amtrak needs a complete top-down change in management. Amtrak needs leadership who really want to make something good of Amtrak instead of just running trains whenever convenient.

Doug Kerr

Amtrak's reply to the situation at Kalmath Falls is typical of most bureaucracies: "we can't, because." Leadership has to come from the local level, it rarely starts from inside and at the top. NB

Re: What's wrong with this picture. Oct 27th Newsletter.

What's wrong with this picture is that people are allowed to cross the tracks at all. Either there should be a bridge or a subway. In all fairness it looks as though they have some time to make it.

Cheers,

Mark Fowler

A good start would be to put a fence between the tracks at the station and post security at the crossings at train time. If a passenger line is busy enough to need double tracking, the passenger crossings should also be grade separated. NB

Re: The Orange Line Busway

About ten years ago when the Orange Line opened up, and I went on a tour of the line prior to its opening with fellow members from Southern California Transit Advocate, of which I cofounded, I correctly predicted that the Orange line will need to be converted to light rail and should have been built that way in the first place.

The NIMBY's who opposed the construction of any portion of this light rail line in the first place will now have to hold the collar for any and all cost overruns. Elected officials need to listen more to the transit riders and folks who will use the systems instead of those who won't and are opposed to such construction.

These NIMBY's just won't listen and now, when the rebuild takes place on the Orange Line, they will have nobody but themselves to blame if they have complaints about traffic delays on the route. During the rebuild, Chandler Blvd. should be closed off to auto traffic completely and allow the busway to temporarily use Chandler Blvd. to keep transit services running until the rail line is ready to go into operation. That ought to be a fair payback to the NIMBYs for the problems they created of their own making.

Steven Crosmer

Re: The Orange Line

Reference is made to your comments on the ORANGE LINE to Chatsworth. The day that I "Highrailed" the Burbank Branch as S.P.'s Engineer-Plant Rationalization, this branch was to become a passenger rail line!

A quarter of a century ago, there was still a couple of industries on the branch. We designed a Team Track at Chatsworth to handle them, which were mostly lumber shipments-in bound.

Bob Mac Donald

The "Retired" Plant Rat

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

The RailPAC Mission: Passenger Rail advocacy, Publications...both print and electronic, Representation at regional meetings, and Rail education.

Join us! More memberships increase our strength in presenting the case for rail to policymakers at all levels!

You can send your comments to me at nbraymer@railpac.org

For those who would like an additional copy of the eNewsletter with plain text (minus photos and graphics) just email me at nbraymer@railpac.org with your name and email address. NB

If you are not a member, go to [RailPAC Membership...Join Us!](#) to get information about RailPAC and a FREE copy of our regular newsletter .

For information about RailPAC, contact the Membership Office

Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California
1017 L Street, PMB-217
Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at info@railpac.org

Call at **(415) 7-TRACK-2**
(415) 787-2252

[Unsubscribe](#) from this list.

Copyright (C) Rail Passenger Association of California (RailPAC) All rights reserved.

[Forward](#) this email to a friend

[Update your profile](#)

MailChimp