

Subject:	Shakeup at Metrolink, Ground Breaking for CA HSR next month, ARTIC opens
From:	Rail Passenger Association of California (noelnoelt@cox.net)
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RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for December 15, 2014

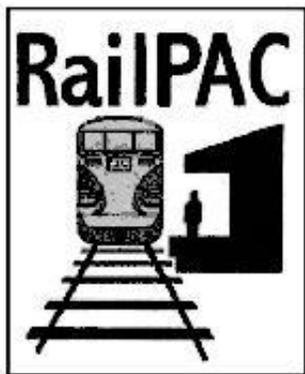
Edited by Noel T. Braymer

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Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!



Metrolink Trains at Riverside. Train #800 is arriving in the background and Trains #851 is standing by for departure. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[Metrolink chief Michael P. DePallo quits after two years](#)

Los Angeles Times-Dec 12, 2014

Metrolink's chief executive officer resigned Friday amid ongoing scrutiny of the six-county commuter railroad's operations, governance and financial controls. Michael P. DePallo, a former transit leader from New York, stepped down two years after he replaced John Fenton, who left the top post unexpectedly in 2012 to head a Florida-based freight railroad...

DePallo's resignation comes less than a month after the railroad's chief auditor, Barbara Manning, was placed on leave. Jeff Lustgarten, a railroad spokesman, said the board terminated her Friday. Three chief financial officers have also left the railroad in the last year.

[Metrolink to Get New Ticket Vending Machines](#)

SCVNEWS.com-Dec 12, 2014

With antiquated ticket vending machines consistently breaking down leaving passengers without means to purchase appropriate fare to ride the train, the Metrolink Board of Directors unanimously approved a motion by Directors Antonovich and Krekorian to expedite the purchase of new ticket vending machines to better serve rail passengers.

[Metrolink awarded \\$1.7 million for fare enforcement program](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Dec 9, 2014

The additional allocation will be used to ensure 100 percent fare enforcement on the line through June 30, 2015. The funding will help continue and augment Metrolink's pilot program, which began Oct. 31, to beef up fare enforcement, Metrolink officials said in a press release.

[Gleaming new transportation hub reflects OC's embrace of public transit](#)

Los Angeles Times-Dec 10, 2014

But this week, commuters got their first view of an enormous, airy transportation hub that reflects Orange County's growing embrace of public transit.

The \$188-million transportation center in the heart of Anaheim, not far from Disneyland, is designed as a central hub where trains, buses, cars and bicycles will converge. Officials hope it ultimately will be the final stop for the state's proposed high-speed bullet train.

[Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center – ARTIC](#)

Grand Opening December 13, 2014

Report by Carl Morrison -Trainweb

Double-click any photo to see it with a black background. Click BACK in your browser to return to this page.

Photos from opening day, December 6, 2014, at the end of this report.

[Bullet train's eventual link to LA rail system far from clear-cut](#)

Los Angeles Times-Dec 13, 2014

Paul Dyson, president of the Rail Passenger Assn. of California and a member of the Burbank Transportation Commission, has asked California High-Speed Rail Authority board chairman Dan Richard and Metrolink board chairman Larry McCallon to consider electrifying a portion of the Metrolink line.

[Winning bid for next piece of high-speed rail comes in under cost](#)

Fresno Bee - Dec 11, 2014

Dragados/Flatiron/Shimmick submitted a bid of \$1.23 billion to design and build the 65-mile stretch from the south end of Fresno to near the Tulare-Kern county line and was deemed the “apparent best value” bidder by the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

The consortium includes Dragados USA Inc., a subsidiary of Spain’s Grupo ACS and Dragados S.A.; Flatiron West Inc. of San Marcos; and Shimmick Construction Co. of Oakland. Their bid came well below the range of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion that was forecast by engineers and consultants working for the rail authority.

[Officials present route options for high-speed rail](#)

Burbank Leader-Dec 9, 2014

“It’s a game-changer,” said Burbank City Manager Mark Scott, looking over one of the video animations of a proposed route, noting that it has the potential to make the airport the best transportation hub in the state.

That route, a 45-mile line proposed years ago, would follow along the curving path of the Antelope Valley (14) Freeway. It was refined based on public feedback received earlier this year, officials said, moving the path farther from the Lake Palmdale Dam, for example, and adjusting where it crosses the freeway in Acton.

An alternative through what is called the “east corridor” was developed after feedback called for a more direct route, officials said. It would cut a 35-mile path from Palmdale to Burbank by tunneling under the national forest, with three possible approaches to Burbank.

[Bakersfield's lawsuit to stop bullet train could be resolved](#)

Bakersfield Californian-Dec 10, 2014

Talks between the California Attorney General's office and city officials could resolve Bakersfield's nearly six-month-old lawsuit to stop the bullet train, the city attorney said Wednesday.

During council comments at Wednesday's City Council meeting -- members' final remarks at what was supposed to be the council's last gathering of 2014 -- newly appointed Vice Mayor Harold Hanson asked City Attorney Ginny Gennaro to look into holding a special closed-session meeting to talk settlement before Dec. 31.

[California High-Speed Rail: It's Happening](#)

The Atlantic-Dec 12, 2014

A little less than a month from now in Sacramento, on January 5, Brown will be sworn in to begin that fourth and final term. Term limits will keep him to four, and will hold his successors to two. The very next day, Brown's first full day of his final term, he will go to Fresno. There, according to an announcement a few hours ago, he will conduct—ta da!—a groundbreaking ceremony on the first leg of the HSR system. This is the way politicians indicate causes that matter to them. I think I have to be in D.C. on January 6, but I would give anything a lot to be in Fresno on that day.

[High-speed rail test will close one lane of Highway 99](#)

Fresno Bee-Dec 12, 2014

The work, called “cone penetration testing,” will be done in the freeway median south of Cedar Avenue, about where elevated tracks will eventually carry trains over the highway as they head south toward Hanford along the BNSF Railway freight tracks.

[Five issues to watch with high-speed rail in 2015](#)

Silicon Valley Business Journal-Dec 10, 2014

Construction crews finally started work in the Central Valley, and rail firms from across the globe stepped up to compete for building the bullet train.

Next year promises to be just as exciting. Here are five critical issues to watch:

[Nearly 200 small businesses working on high-speed rail](#)

Sacramento Business Journal-Dec 11, 2014

Among those subcontractors, 40 small businesses have active contracts on the authority's first 29-mile construction segment from Madera to Fresno. Those small businesses include MGE Engineering, a Sacramento-based civil and structural engineering firm, and JRP Historical Consulting, a Davis-based land-use consultant.

[Canada's Bombardier bows out of Amtrak's Acela procurement](#)

Reuters UK-Dec 8, 2014

A request for proposals closed Oct. 1, but Amtrak has not made the identities of the bidders public. The railroad is looking to buy 28 trains, up from 20 last time, with capacity for at least 425 passengers, up from about 300.

Bombardier spokeswoman Maryanne Roberts said Amtrak changed its technical specifications during the proposal stage.

"Unfortunately, the time remaining before the due date for the technical proposals was not sufficient for us to make the necessary adjustments to our proposal," she said in an e-mail.

[How rail fares in spending bill](#)

Railway Track & Structures-Dec 11, 2014

The House and Senate's effort to keep the federal government operating through the end of fiscal year 2015 was revealed late Tuesday in the form of a trillion-dollar-plus spending bill, Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015.

The \$1.01-trillion bill provides a total of \$53.77 billion in discretionary budget authority for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and related agencies for FY15.

[Court considers whether Amtrak's self-created standards are federal 'regulations](#)

'Washington Post - Dec 8, 2014

The government created the for-profit corporation in 1970 and in 2008 told it to work with government agencies to develop “metrics and standards” to better judge its performance in providing passenger rail service.

The rub is that Amtrak runs on freight train rails, and the new standards gave Amtrak a tool with which to force freight railroads to delay their own traffic to benefit Amtrak’s on-time performance.

[The 5 Key Moments from Amtrak's Supreme Court Hearing](#)

CityLab-Dec 12, 2014

The Supreme Court's ruling is expected in June. In the meantime, with some guidance from SCOTUSblog, we've reviewed the hearing with an eye for key moments that might reveal which way the court is leaning. (From a lay perspective, it seems fairly split, with Justices Kennedy, Ginsburg, Kagan, and perhaps Sotomayor inclined toward Amtrak's side, and the others either against Amtrak or undecided.) Something to read as you wait for the train.

[Amtrak struggles with delays in NW Montana](#)

The Western News-Dec 9, 2014

Eight months after Amtrak adjusted its schedule through northwest Montana to curb delays, the long-distance passenger train is still struggling to stay on time during trips between Chicago, Seattle and Portland.

Passenger rail advocates have blamed the delays on an increase in freight rail traffic across the northern part of the country, particularly oil trains coming out of North Dakota. Freight and passenger congestion in Chicago are other contributing factors.

[Over 150 Protesters Arrested After Halting Amtrak Train, Traffic On I-80 In Berkeley](#)

CBS Local-Dec 9, 2014

While demonstrators blocked traffic on both sides of Interstate 80, another group stood and sat on tracks, forcing an Amtrak train to stop at its Berkeley station last night around 8:30 p.m. As of 3:45 a.m., Capitol Corridor trains and San Joaquin trains are again operating, Amtrak officials said.

[Amherst loses Amtrak Vermonter service](#)

wwlp.com-Dec 9, 2014

In less than three weeks, that service will come to an end, replaced by a new high speed service that runs straight up the valley.

[Amtrak suspends service from L.A. to SLO due to weather](#)

The San Luis Obispo Tribune - Dec 12, 2014

Amtrak has temporarily suspended service from Los Angeles to San Luis Obispo because of severe weather conditions.

The suspension was as of 5 a.m. Friday.

[West Wendover planning new train station for Amtrak passenger service](#)

Deseret News-Dec 12, 2014

"We originally started working on it back in 2000 and were turned down. Then we were turned down another time," said Carter.

Three years ago, city leaders approached Amtrak with another proposal. It took Amtrak three more years, but, finally, it said yes.

[Last call for sleeper trains linking Berlin, Paris](#)

KLKN-Dec 12, 2014

German railway company Deutsche Bahn is ending the sleeper service between Paris and Berlin this week, citing unsustainable losses. The service - a dinosaur in the era of high-speed European trains - has been running since before World War II, and used to go all the way to Moscow.

Fierce competition from budget airlines has lured passengers away from night trains that were once a mainstay of cross-border travel in Europe, explains Deutsche Bahn spokeswoman Susanne Schulz.



The nearly completed section of the Gold Line near the City of Hope Hospital in Duarte. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

[First train car pulled across Foothill Gold Line tracks in Arcadia ...](#)

The Pasadena Star-News-Dec 8, 2014

Walt Mancini — Staff photographerFor the first time, a light-rail train car rode the tracks of the Gold Line Foothill extension Monday, successfully crossing the 210 Freeway and navigating stations in Arcadia, Irwindale and Monrovia.

[Go for a \(video\) ride on the Gold Line Foothill Extension from Arcadia to Azusa!](#)

The Source Dec 11, 2014

Our friends at the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority just released this new video of a ride along the new light rail tracks from Arcadia to Azusa.

[Video: aerial view of excavation and decking work of future Crenshaw/Expo station](#)

The Source Dec 11, 2014

The city of Los Angeles' Economic and Workforce Development Department recently released a video of the excavation and decking work being done at the future Crenshaw/Expo underground station for the Crenshaw/LAX Line. Check out the above video.

[With 2024 Transit Connection, LAX Hedges Bets, Expects Travelers Will Park](#)

Streetsblog Los Angeles (blog)-Dec 10, 2014

"We have to deal with reality," L.A. World Airports (LAWA) Chief of Planning Christopher Koontz stated at last week's Metro Board of Directors meeting: even after the LAX rail connection opens in 2024, LAWA expects air travelers will keep driving. LAWA is the city of L.A. department in charge of LAX and a couple smaller airports. Responding to Metro Boardmember Jackie Dupont-Walker's questioning, Koontz confirmed that connecting LAX to the under-construction Metro Crenshaw Line will mean "an expansion of parking."

[Rail Connection to LAX Will Open By 2024 With Six Stops](#)

CURBED LA Dec 5, 2014

The long-fuzzy plan to finally build a rail connection to LAX is starting to come into focus—we now have a construction schedule for the automatic people mover that will link Metro to the airport, and a decision on how many stops it'll have inside the airport (three, more on that in a minute).

[Rail Connections to California's Major Airports](#)

By Noel T. Braymer

California now has some connections by rail at its airports. This will improve over the next 10 to 20 years. The two airports now with the best rail connections are San Francisco International Airport (SFO) and Bob Hope Airport in Burbank near downtown Los Angeles..

[Options for rail crossings are met with skepticism](#)

Glendale News Press-Dec 11, 2014

Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials were met with consternation on Tuesday from business owners and residents concerned about future work at two railroad crossings at the Glendale-Los Angeles border.

[Editorial: Four Ways To Encourage Transit-Friendly Affordable Housing](#)

Streetsblog Los Angeles (blog)-Dec 10, 2014

A new report this week, joins previous reports with similar findings: Los Angeles is one of least affordable places to live in the U.S., second only to Honolulu.

So, I figure it is time to offer some of my sage advice. I don't know that Garcetti, O'Farrell, Metro, or city departments need my advice, but I'll go ahead and offer four suggestions on how Southern California can foster transit-oriented affordable housing. None of these are easy. They would involve different governmental agencies operating on different timelines. But perhaps a number of these measures could combine over time to overcome some of our systemic biases for sprawl and against infill transit-oriented development (TOD) and make a dent in L.A.'s affordable housing shortage.

[Tired of being bumped, Caltrain bike commuters push for more space](#)

Peninsula Press-Dec 10, 2014

The Peninsula's growing biking commuter ridership — tired of getting bumped off peak-hour trains because of inadequate bike storage — is pressing Caltrain to expand bicycle capacity. Bike ridership on Caltrain has more than tripled in the past decade, according to research from the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. In both 2009 and 2011, Caltrain increased bike capacity; but bike ridership is still on the rise, up 19.6 percent from last year. Roughly 13 percent of passengers bring a bicycle on the train.

[Downtown Sacramento, West Sacramento streetcar vote set](#)

Sacramento Bee-Dec 11, 2014

A remarkable vote is about to take place in downtown Sacramento. The central business district's property owners will be asked next month whether they are willing to pull \$30 million out of their pockets to help build a \$150 million streetcar system.

[All aboard the Holiday Train](#)

San Mateo Daily Journal-Dec 6, 2014

This weekend marks the 12th year Caltrain will be sending its special holiday train down the line to spread holiday cheer at nine stations. A Christmas-themed train will stop at several stations Saturday and Sunday to put on a performance for spectators and families at each platform.

[Santa Claus leaves the reindeers home, takes F&W train for special visit](#)

Santa Paula Times-Dec 10, 2014

There were cries of "Santa!" Saturday evening when Fillmore & Western Railway makes its traditional stop at the Santa Paula Depot with their famous passenger to delight local children and pick up toy donations to ensure needy kids have Christmas cheer.

Santa left the reindeers home to take the train for a special visit to communities from East Ventura to its hometown of Fillmore.

[New vision offered to spruce up SMART platforms](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat-Dec 8, 2014

The new proposal advanced by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority includes cast iron benches, decorative street lights, platform shelters with pitched roofs that reflect the surrounding architecture and signs that compliment the other platform amenities.

[Underground London revealed in images of Crossrail train line](#)

Relaxnews Dec 11, 2014

Stunning images of underground London have been released, showing the progress being made on Crossrail, the UK capital's new high capacity train line.

With over 23 miles (37 km) of train tunnels now complete, the project, which is set to be finished in 2018, is almost 60 percent finished. Tunnelling is due to finish in spring 2015.

[Shrinking spread erodes Bakken's competitiveness](#)

Argus Media-Dec 11, 2014

Receipts of North Dakota crude in California fell to 60,529 bl in September after averaging 132,115 bl per month from March through August.

[U.S. Oil Rigs Drop Most in Two Years, Baker Hughes Says](#)

Bloomberg-Dec 12, 2014

U.S. oil drillers idled the most rigs in almost two years as they face oil trading below \$60 a barrel and escalating competition from suppliers abroad.

Rigs targeting oil dropped by 29 this week to 1,546, the lowest level since June and the biggest decline since December 2012, Houston-based field services company Baker Hughes Inc. (BHI) said on its website yesterday.

[North Dakota oil production hits a lull](#)

Minneapolis Star Tribune-Dec 13, 2014

North Dakota's steep climb in oil production growth is hitting a lull as oil drillers retrench amid

plummeting crude oil prices.

State officials said Friday that oil production in October declined by about 4,000 barrels per day to 1.18 million daily barrels compared with September, the first decline in eight months. Drilling for new wells also declined and is expected to decline even more in 2015.

[US oil settles at \\$57.81 per barrel, the lowest since May 2009](#)

Reuters with CNBC Dec 12, 2014

Crude closed under \$58 today. Consumers are said to be saving \$375 million/day on fuel costs.

Oil fell to fresh lows not seen since May 2009 on Friday with U.S. crude prices slipping below \$58 a barrel on concerns over a global supply glut and weak demand.

It is clear that the Shale Oil Boom has peaked and we will be seeing fewer oil and fracking sand trains congesting the railroads and holding up passenger and other freight trains. This is bad news for the oil companies. Even once the bottom is reached on oil prices and prices start to go up, oil will face increasing competition from renewable energy. The cost of producing oil will only increase, while the cost of renewable energy will continue to drop. This will affect transportation which increasingly will switch from oil to renewables. NB



Surfliner cabcar at Los Angeles Union Station with some flora caught near the coupler. Photo by Noel T. Braymer

We Get Emails

Re:Stabbings on Amtrak train, Niles, MI

This unfortunate event could happen almost anywhere these days. When it happens on planes, trains, buses, it gets more publicity. The media is good for this type of reporting. Too much, I say.

All I will say it's unfortunate this man is free and moving about, with no one to monitor him properly. Most of us don't know where he's been, what he was doing on Amtrak and where he was going although he lives in Saginaw, Michigan.

No one to supervise his medications, activities. No mental hospitals or enough places for the mentally disabled these days. Especially when it comes to helping our vets, other than the VA Hospitals. And how many are free to roam about, while doctors have treated him, or supposedly have treated him and others, what's the level of insanity these people are on today?

It's a major problem and it surfaces when something like this takes place. Fortunately the train was pulling into the Niles station. Police were called prior to its arrival and when the police were seen by this man, he went into a protective shell of some kind, doing what a person with an illness has, to act out in some unusual way.

Fortunately according to today's news, the 4 victims are in stable condition. Their lives will resume, when, that's a good question. The conductor needed surgery and according to another conductor I spoke with aboard train 352 last Saturday evening, he will return to work, but not for some time. His life and the others attacked I'm sure will survive, but their lives won't be the same.

What's needed is for you and the rest of us to simply email your elected official, both in State and the Federal levels to push for better handling of those who need mental assistance. Sure, we cannot monitor everyone's movements 24-7, but there's many of whom we speak to on this subject that agree, more needs to be done to help those who are mentally disturbed.

Closing of many mental institutions over the years certainly hasn't helped the situation. What's needed are modern facilities that will give those that want help a decent environment to heal and live at. Many of the old facilities I'm sure were outdated and didn't do much good. Fine, they were shut down. But now, what's next? Do we just mourn those who have died and move on or do we do something about it such as my wife and I did. Contact our elected people and make it known what needs to be done.

Season's Greetings,
Steve Sobel

This is outside of the normal scope of this eNewsletter, so this is just my personal opinion and doesn't reflect the position of RailPAC. When I was in college I had 2 majors, one in Mass Media and the other in Psychology. I remember Psychology had several sub-groups that rarely agreed with each other. I think this is normal with most groups. I am saying that even among the professionals it will be difficult to find a consensus of the best way to protect the public and people needing help with behavioral problems. My personal opinion is the best and most economical way to help the most people is to control the environmental and nutritional factors that impact brain chemistry and behavior.

Before World War II pellagra was a common mental illness which was found to be caused by a deficiency of Vitamin B-3 or niacin. During World War II the government ordered that small amounts of niacin be added to flour which is still done today. In a short time pellagra became a rare disease and thousands of patients were released from mental hospitals. In the 1960's and 70's crime was at a record high. This brought out calls for being tough on crime which still exists. Yet crime started dropping in the 90's and is much lower today than 40 years ago. While many credited the crack down on crime for reducing crime, it is hard to find a correlation between anti-crime measures and reduced crime. There is a correlation between crime rates and the amount of

lead in the air. In the 1940's and 50's there was a large increase in gasoline consumption which had lead. The kids born at this time came of age in the 60's and 70's and more of them got in trouble than previous generations. In 1974 lead was banned from gasoline. It took about 18 years for the generation who had less lead to come to age and fewer of them caused problems resulting in the lower crime rate of today. Heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and mercury are know to have a negative effect on behavior and are commonly found in prisoners . There have been several studies that have found changes in diet and use of nutritional supplements reduces violence between inmates and to staff in several institutions.

There is need for more research along these lines. The problem is the greatest support is not for what works, but what is more expensive. Vested interests are good at promoting their "solutions". There is money to be made putting more people in prison. The money in mental health is in drugs, often with many side effects which is how most "mentally ill" people are treated .These drug mask symptoms, but don't cure anything. In almost every case that gets in the news of major violence, the person had a long history of being "medicated". NB

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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Write:

Rail Passenger Association of California

1017 L Street, PMB-217

Sacramento, CA95814-3805

Email us at info@railpac.org

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