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**Subject:** Finally a Californian on the Amtrak Board again!

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

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**To:** ntbraymer@yahoo.com;

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**Date:** Monday, January 7, 2013 11:57 PM

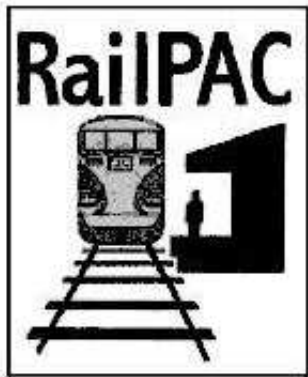
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## **RailPAC Weekly E-Newsletter for January 7, 2013**

**Edited by Noel T. Braymer**

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

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**Rail Passenger Association of California**  
**[www.railpac.org](http://www.railpac.org)**  
**Traffic? Gas Pains? We need more Trains!**

# New High-Speed Rail “Blended” System Concept

- CHSRA Revised 2012 Business Plan calls for “integrating or blending of California High-Speed Rail improvements with existing and upgraded rail systems”
- The State Rail Plan describes a blended system plan, early improvements, and incremental development of CHSR.



On February 8, 2013 Caltrans will release the Draft of the revised State Rail Plan which will reflect the changes expected after 2018 with the construction for High Speed Rail in California of projects that had funding approved last year.

## [Senate confirms two Amtrak board members](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jan 3, 2013

The U.S. Senate confirmed Christopher Beall and Yvonne Brathwaite Burke as new members of Amtrak's board, Amtrak announced today. They will serve five-year terms.

**The addition of Ms. Burke, who is also a member of the California Transportation Commission and former member of Congress as well as Mr. Beall of Oklahoma with a background in transportation investment should add depth to the Amtrak Board and greater representation of the Western States. NB**

## [San Joaquin rail line losing money despite rise in riders](#)

Merced Sun-Star-Jan 1, 2013

FRESNO -- Amtrak's San Joaquin line, the valley's only passenger train service, posted record ridership in 2012, attracting more than 1.1 million passengers last year.

The number of people riding the rails comes even as controversy continues to boil over plans to run high-speed trains through the region from San Francisco to Los Angeles.

**Once again misleading headlines due to Amtrak's accounting. The problem with Allocated Accounting is every train is allocated a share of Amtrak's losses regardless of the degree it is responsible for those losses. Most of Amtrak's costs comes from running the NEC of where commuter trains dominate. The issue isn't making the NEC States pay for the NEC when they already pay more in Federal Taxes then they get back. The issue is we shouldn't claim major**

## **losses for intercity passenger trains for costs they are not responsible for. NB**

### [Valley Agencies Confident In Bid For Amtrak Lines](#)

Modesto Bee Jan. 01, 2013

CENTRAL VALLEY -- The Central Valley is on the cusp of forming a regional rail authority with a goal of taking control from the state over Amtrak commuter trains.

Five transportation agencies, including those in Stanislaus, San Joaquin and Merced counties, signed on in December. That's one shy of the required six to officially form a joint powers authority; a single positive vote among four in January and February would seal the deal.

So sure are leaders of a sixth partner joining that the future authority has scheduled a March 22 public kickoff meeting in Merced.

### [Amtrak service resumes north of Seattle](#)

The Seattle Times-Jan 2, 2013

Amtrak says it has resumed its Cascades passenger train service between Seattle and Everett. Sound Transit says Sounder commuter train ...

### [Amtrak Seeks Safety Changes To Allow U.S. Bullet Trains](#)

Bloomberg Jan 1, 2013

Safety standards for passenger trains operating at more than 150 mph are being developed, Kevin Thompson, a spokesman for the Federal Railroad Administration, said in an e-mail. Amtrak is "working with FRA and other members of the Railroad Safety Advisory Council to better define the car strength criteria for higher-speed passenger equipment," he said.

### [Rail lines adding safety technology](#)

USA TODAY- Jan 4, 2013

The technology is designed to stop or slow a train automatically to prevent accidents.

### [RailPAC: Who and what are we?](#)

By Russ Jackson, Marcus Jung and William Kerby

Just what is RailPAC all about?

### [Location looms large in pump prices at California gas stations](#)

Los Angeles Times-Jan 1, 2013

Such price strategies aren't common in other retail businesses. When buying a sweater from a department store, for instance, a shopper can expect to pay the same price at the chain's other stores in a region.

In fuel retailing, however, "location can affect prices," said Tom Kloza, chief oil analyst for the Oil Price Information Service in New Jersey. "If you have few competitors and are near an airport or a rail terminal, you can price more aggressively."

### [Congress Makes Public Transit Commute Benefit Equal To The Parking Benefit](#)

APTA Press Release Jan.2,2013

Under the new "fiscal cliff" legislation passed by Congress this week, the parity between public transit and parking benefits are now up to \$240 a month and are retroactive from January 1, 2012. This will expire on December 31, 2013. APTA urged Congress to permanently extend the transit commuter tax benefit to the same level as the parking tax benefit....

The bill also extends through 2013, the alternative fuels tax credit refund that many public transit systems utilize to offset costs associated with using natural gas and other alternatively-fueled vehicles.

### [Fiscal Cliff Deal Leaves Big Questions On Transportation](#)

StreetsBlog DC Jan 3, 2013

Meanwhile, the fiscal cliff agreement between Congress and the White House postponed the day of reckoning for the “budget sequester” two more months. The cuts in the sequester included an 8 percent reduction in all discretionary spending, which would have taken a bite out of new transit construction and Amtrak funding. The threat of those cuts still hangs over the next round of budget negotiations, which face a March 1 deadline.

### [N.Y. MTA Metro-North Railroad turns 30](#)

Metro Magazine Jan 2, 2013

In fact, the railroad dropped the word “Commuter” from its name in 1994 in recognition of the fact that the railroad was carrying more people in the off-peak, nights, weekends, in the reverse peak, and those making intermediate trips between stations not in Manhattan than it was the traditional “Man in the Grey Flannel Suit” morning commuter from suburb to central business district. The railroad had become a truly regional transportation resource.

### [Caltrain sets lofty goals for operating efficiencies](#)

San Francisco Examiner- Jan 3, 2013

With ridership growing steadily, Caltrain has outlined ambitious operating goals that could make the regional rail operator one of the most efficient transit agencies in the country.

### [BART To Airport Connector Is On Track](#)

San Francisco Chronicle Dec 30, 2012

After years of hoping, planning and fighting, BART's long-awaited and controversial Oakland Airport Connector is taking shape. Construction crews have been working on the 3.2-mile link between the Coliseum/Oakland Airport BART Station and the airport since late 2010.

### [BART elects president and VP, adds new board members](#)

Progressive Rail Roding-Jan 2, 2013

Saltzman is a public transit and public policy advocate who works as a government affairs manager for a California environmental organization.

### [Down by the station](#)

Pacific Sun-Jan 3, 2013

Talk about making lemonade from lemons. Rather than threatening to sue SMART over possible construction obstruction at the downtown San Rafael station, Whistlestop now envisions a new building that would be the first transit-oriented development for seniors and people with disabilities in Marin along the SMART rail line.

### [Supervisors Taking Issue With OCTA Board Majority](#)

Voice of OC Updated: Jan 3, 2013.

Ongoing tensions within the Orange County Transportation Authority have begun to bubble over in recent weeks as several county supervisors, who also serve on the OCTA board, are going public with their discontent regarding how the \$1-billion agency is being run.

### [NCTD tries to fix spotty WiFi coverage on Coaster trains](#)

Jan 3, 2013

North County Transit District (CA) officials have shut down WiFi service on Coaster commuter rail trains for a few months while they try to improve the free but spotty service. “We hope to amplify reception and have more consistency,” said spokeswoman Deborah Castillo.

## [LA Metro's Expo Line Draws Partiers Downtown For Growing Social Scene](#)

KPCC Southern California Public Radio Dec 31st, 2012

For the first time, the New Year's Eve crowd at L.A. Live will include partiers who rode in on the Metro Expo Line. Since the light rail line opened in April, it's pumped crowds into entertainment spots in downtown Los Angeles.

## [Monrovia's Gold Line maintenance yard work in full swing](#)

San Gabriel Valley Tribune-Jan 4, 2013

The yard, a necessary component of the \$735 million, 11.5-mile Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension from Pasadena to Azusa, will do light and heavy maintenance and repair while accommodating up to 100 light rail cars, said Habib Balian, chief executive officer of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority.

## [Big Steam over Donner](#)

Pacifica Tribune-Jan 1, 2013

The Union Pacific 150th Anniversary Rail Fair celebrations took place two days later at the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento. It was a grand gathering of rail fans from all over the state. Not only did I get to see 844 again, I also toured vintage 1940's era passenger cars and rode the Sacramento Southern excursion train along the Sacramento River.

## [What will be in the California State Rail Plan?](#)

Opinion by Noel T. Braymer

What makes this edition of the State Rail Plan special is that it will cover the plans for future service made possible by the funds approved last year to start construction of High Speed Rail in the State. ... At this time it is hard to get the facts of what is being planned to connect the State Corridor Rail Services with future High Speed Rail, commuter rail, rail transit and bus services. For this we need some idea of when trains will be scheduled, how frequent they are and how fast they can be run. Even the question of what or where the stations will be is not certain. Hopefully these issues will be resolved in the coming months. But for all we know there may not be any clear idea what is in store in the next 5 to 10 years.