

STEEL WHEELS

PASSENGER RAIL IN CALIFORNIA AND THE WEST

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Photo by Joel Hawthorn
Coast Starlight at Klamath Lake
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PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY

President's Commentary

Governance issues –

Boring stuff maybe, but if you want more trains you'd better watch who holds the purse strings.

I spent some time earlier this month at the State Capitol talking to senators and assembly members about RailPAC and our objectives. In the short term our focus is on the intercity rail program and the change to the funding whereby Amtrak bills the State of California for the Surfliner, San Joaquin and Capitol Corridor services. In truth this conversation should not have been necessary had our federal legislators, prompted by NARP and RailPAC, (yes, we share the blame) taken care to insert an amendment into the PRIIA legislation in 2008 exempting the San Diegan services which have been paid for by Amtrak since 1971. San Diego, 8th largest city in the USA, deserves to have at least a part of its rail service paid for as part of the national system just like say Wilmington, Delaware. The distance between San Diego and Los Angeles should not be a factor in determining which cities' rail service is paid for by Amtrak, the status and size of those cities should.

One factor I intend to bring up during my next Sacramento visit is a theme I have written about before; **California pays twice for Amtrak**. We pay federal taxes to support what is supposed to be a national system. Amtrak admits that 95% of their capital budget goes to the NEC. We also pay state taxes to reimburse Amtrak for the state program, a large chunk of which pays for Amtrak's overhead costs. Something for all those Senators and Assembly members to think about!

Are Joint Powers Boards the solution?

Once again the issue of the governance and management of the state rail program corridors arises. As we go to press there is still no agreement between North San Diego County and the rest of the LOSSAN county agencies regarding the formation of a JPB. In a letter to the other LOSSAN members Matt Tucker, CEO of NCTD points out some very real issues that need to be addressed in terms of management and financing of the proposed LOSSAN JPB. At the same time we have just heard that the CFO of SCRRA (Metrolink) has resigned after a sub-committee reported irregularities and poor financial record keeping at the five county agency.

If we use Metrolink (SCRRA) as a model, it's not surprising that Mr. Tucker and his board have qualms about joining a JPB. Metrolink has taken 20 years to capture the very low hanging fruit of ridership potential but totally failed to provide a regional network. It has lost its CEO, COO and CFO in the last year. It is becoming increasingly less reliable as years of deferred locomotive maintenance are now exacting in price in in-service failures. I could go on.

RailPAC shares many of these concerns. In a nutshell, will counties invest in regional rail systems, including spending some of their money in other counties, or will they fill potholes? No matter how vital a project may be to the success of a regional system, and the run through tracks at Los Angeles Union Station are a perfect example, would say Ventura County and Orange County be prepared to pay a share of the cost? How many county politicians would do that? Counties take care of counties first and foremost. That's why I believe that we need a super-regional or state level authority.

Fuel for Trains – Electrification or hybrid?

Put yourself in the shoes of the General Manager of a commuter railroad in California, with the need to add to or replace some or all of your diesel locomotive fleet. It's not such an easy task, given the paucity of choices and the pressure from agencies such as Air Quality Management District. They seem to expect your locomotives to suck in dirty air and exhale pure oxygen the way the regulations are going! Your marketing people are telling you that if you could reduce journey time you would sell more tickets, your purchasing manager is looking with horror at the fuel bill, and your chief mechanical officer wants reliability and ease of maintenance.

Readers of my columns will know that I am an avid proponent of electrification and an electric railway fulfills most of these criteria. But the realist in me reminds me that we will not see extensive electrification for almost another generation (with the possible exception of the Caltrain route). We need a major improvement in traction performance long before we have had a chance to electrify a meaningful mileage of North American rails. For that reason I have given a lot of space to Dave Cook and his concept of hybrid natural gas powered locomotives. I am not an engineer and cannot critique his design, but I can say that individually most of the components of his system exist and are proven technologies and it should not be beyond engineering ingenuity to put them together as a successful and cost effective alternative to the types of diesels currently available.

Metrolink's tired fleet of under-maintained diesels would appear to be a great candidate for this idea. As soon as we admit that tender cars are in our future, the transition will start. A modest sum, less than \$8 million (5 months of future fleet fuel savings), should be more than enough to start a pilot program with 3 natural gas powered locomotives. Let's do it NOW!

Save the Date...

Friday May 17th Rail summit in Los Angeles followed by members meeting. Details to follow.

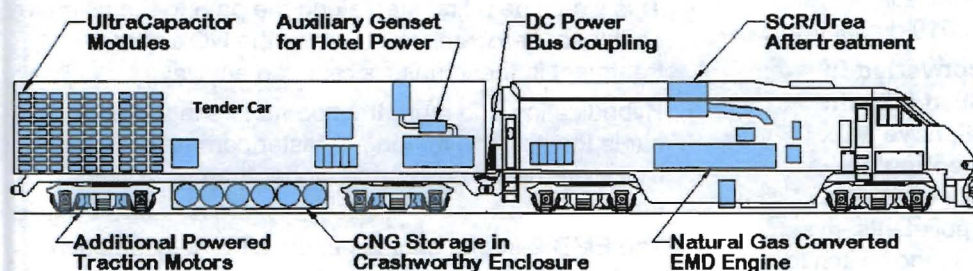
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Comments and criticism always welcome.

CNG/Hybrid Commuter Locomotives Faster, Cheaper, Cleaner and Soon!

By **David Cook**, Senior Engineer, Energy Conversions, Inc.

The combination of compressed natural gas (CNG) as a fuel, and onboard electrical hybridization, offers a new paradigm in commuter rail operations. By synergistically combining off the shelf old technologies (CNG conversion) with a few new developments (banks of ultra-capacitors), it makes possible a commuter locomotive that accelerates twice as fast, at less than half the fuel cost, while emitting pollution at near zero levels.



The above illustrates the system. The locomotive's existing engine is overhauled and converted to CNG. The tender car has traction motors the same as the locomotive and it holds banks of ultra-capacitors and additional engine fuel. This is a combination of well-known technologies that have been maturing in different areas of transport. CNG locomotives exist in niche markets – The Napa Valley Wine Train has operated a passenger locomotive on 100% CNG since 2001. Hybridization of transit buses with ultra-capacitors is well known – Maxwell alone has their ultra-capacitor modules in over 4000 buses. Emissions control systems have been developed for passenger rail – Metrolink recently tested a selective catalytic reduction (SCR) system on one of its locomotives for over a year.

Faster

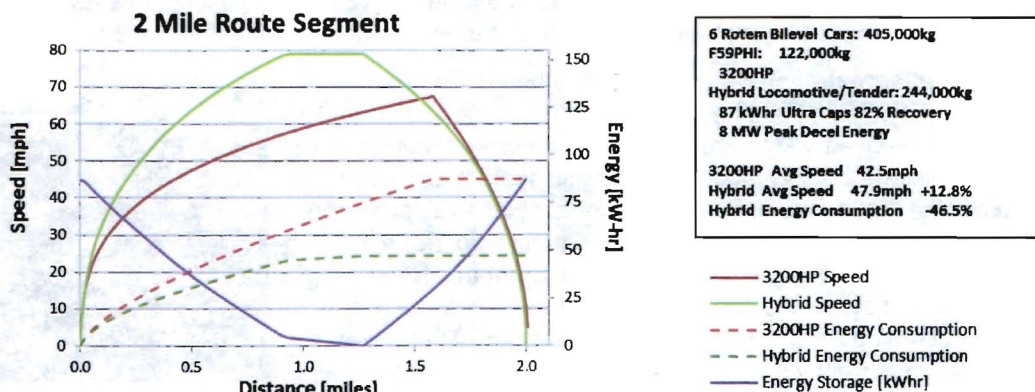
One psychological hurdle of this concept for commuter rail executives is reverting to the tender car. But this concept puts the tender to work. Not only does it provide the space needed for the ultra-capacitor banks and alternative fuels, but the four additional traction motors doubles the locomotive's traction on the rails. That is how the acceleration can be doubled. And those ultra-capacitors are why most of the braking energy can be recycled and used to produce those super accelerations. Faster accelerations mean faster trips between stops. The graphic below demonstrates this for a typical commuter rail route segment.

The chart at right indicates the radical performance increase due to hybridization of the locomotive with a powered tender car. For a 2 mile route segment, using the equivalent of a typical 6 car commuter train as a baseline, the standard locomotive (solid red) would reach a top speed of 67 mph before it had to decelerate. The hybrid locomotive (solid green) actually reaches the rail line top speed of 79 mph and maintains that speed for over ¼ mile before it has to start decelerating. The purple line illustrates the energy flow into and out of the ultra-capacitor modules. The dashed green and red lines indicate the energy consumed by the two different locomotives. Frequent starts and stops are a hybrid's friend. In a 2 mile route the hybrid locomotive reduces the energy used by 46%. On a 4 mile segment this energy reduction drops to 36%. We have established 35% as the average energy reduction for this system in commuter rail applications.

Cheaper

Commuter rail organizations consume significant amounts of fuel. For example, Metrolink consumed 6.7 million gallons of diesel fuel in 2012 at \$3.63/gallon. Using natural gas as a fuel will reduce fuel cost by an estimated 55% and regenerative braking and accelerating using ultra-capacitors will reduce energy consumption 35%, combining for a savings of 75% in fuel cost. For Metrolink that would mean an annual savings of \$18.2 million or \$1.5 million a month!

Yet the current thinking on near-term reduction of commuter rail emissions focuses on the conventional, higher cost option of continuing with diesel. Not only does that option cost more overall, it also needs significant development and it offers no performance improvements. For example, Metrolink is currently purchasing prototype Tier 4 diesel locomotives that will cost \$6.3 million each. They are expected to be fully



developed by 2016. A fully updated and remanufactured CNG/Hybrid locomotive would cost nearly \$7.5 million and could be ready in the same time-frame with an aggressive development program. That CNG/hybrid cost premium for one locomotive could be paid for with one month of fleet fuel savings!

Cleaner

Most North American commuter rail locomotives have little or no emissions upgrades. Over half of Metrolink's locomotives have no emissions upgrades at all. The 15 newer locomotives meet Tier 2 standards which emit 27 times the NOx and 10 times the PM emissions per horsepower as a 2010 diesel truck. Of course, the rest of the fleet has even higher emissions. When some of them are replaced with a Tier 4 locomotive sometime after 2016, they will still put out 6.5 times the NOx and 3 times the PM as a 2010 diesel truck.

On the other hand, if their engines were converted to natural gas and had an SCR system installed (like the new diesels will most likely have), they will have NOx emissions 75% lower than the diesels – meeting policy maker's definition of 'near zero' locomotive emissions. In addition to the drastic reduction in criteria pollutants, this system will reduce GHG emissions 48% due to the switch to CNG and the improved fuel efficiency. Converting from diesel fuel to natural gas will reduce CO2 emissions 20% and the hybridization further reduces CO2 emission by another 35%.

Soon! (Phase 1)

Sticking with the Metrolink example, it won't be until 2016 that the first 3 Tier 4 Metrolink diesel locomotives begin service. Their current fleet has 15 F59PH locomotives with over 1 million miles since their last overhaul. There are an additional 14 F59PHI locomotives with over 700,000 miles that should be overhauled before 2016. All 29 of these locomotives have minimal emissions upgrades and require high maintenance rates that impact Metrolink's performance.

Starting almost immediately, as the first phase in a CNG/Hybrid locomotive program, these old polluting locomotives could be rebuilt as locomotives that meet CARB's Ultra-Low Emitting Locomotive guidelines (ULEL). With the simple addition of a current technology NOx aftertreatment system (SCR), modern low oil consumption piston rings and updated electronic injectors these locomotives could reduce NOx emissions to below Tier 4 levels and PM emissions below Tier 3.

These ULEL rebuilds could start happening in a matter of months and would be one third the price of the new

The NOx aftertreatment system described here (Compact SCR™ by EF&EE in Rancho Cordova, CA) was tested in commuter service by Metrolink for a year on one of Metrolink's 15 high mileage F59PH locomotives. This system, on a very tired engine that consumed large amounts of lube oil, achieved ULEL emissions levels and was close to achieving Tier 4 NOx and Tier 3 PM levels. A third generation of this NOx aftertreatment system is now available that will fix several of the short comings in the Metrolink tested system. These new systems are currently in service on a fleet of Ferries in the S.F. Bay area.

locomotives that won't be in service until 2016. The fact that this isn't happening is an example of 'The Perfect being the Enemy of the Good' as it is politically difficult to fund these rebuild updates with Carl Moyer funding because the PM emissions are not below Tier 4 and the system has not been CARB verified yet. Yet Carl Moyer funding is available to purchase nonexistent locomotives that won't be here for 3 years because they fit the conventional mold.

It is preferable to rebuild and hybridize the current locomotives instead of buying new ones for several reasons.

- Lower emissions will start immediately – not in 2016.
- The cost for these preliminary ULEL reductions for the entire fleet (52 locomotives) would be less than the price of 20 new locomotives.
- This would be a first step along the path to the ultimate goal 'near zero' emissions, since the NOx after-treatment in these units is required anyway.
- Hybridization and more traction motors in a tender car is the solution for longer, faster commuter trains (not more diesel power and higher than necessary emissions).
- The EMD 2-stroke engines in the current locomotives are the only current high power engines that can be converted to natural gas without a loss in power. This will not be the case with the currently ordered 4 stroke engines – they are a dead-end.

From Prototype to Full Production

In parallel with the ULEL rebuild plan there would be parallel development programs for the hybrid energy system, CNG storage system, and an improved gas engine conversion system with higher efficiency and lower emissions.

After 2 years of aggressive development, a CNG converted F59PHI with NOx aftertreatment would be integrated with a Hybrid/CNG tender car and tested at the Transportation technology Center, Inc (TTCI) test track in Colorado. This durability shakedown at TTCI would be the last step before the full system could go into revenue service with a commuter railroad. With the right team of small flexible companies and a private/public partnership with CEC and SCAQMD development funding support, these could be going into service the same year that the currently proposed Tier 4 diesels show up.

Energy Conversions Inc. converts high horsepower diesel engines to natural gas operation. The company has over 20 years of experience and currently has converted natural gas locomotives operating in six countries.



Figure 1: Compact SCR catalyst assembly installed in SCAX 865

ACE

ALTAMONT CORRIDOR EXPRESS



The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC) is the owner/operator of the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) passenger rail service. For nearly 15 years, ACE has served commuters from the San Joaquin Valley, Eastern Alameda County, and the Silicon Valley. With our recently added 4th daily round trip, ACE ridership is at an all-time high. This October, SJRRRC will celebrate both ACE's 15th year of operation and the opening of our new \$63 million state-of-the-art maintenance facility. We are quite excited about the new maintenance facility which is critical to our current and future operations. In terms of our ability to maintain trains, it allows us to expand from our 4-daily round trips today to up to 10 daily round trips in the future (with enough extra space available to eventually double that capacity when needed). Moreover, our new track which extends about 1 mile north from our downtown Stockton (Cabral) terminus station to the new maintenance facility also enables us to improve safety and convenience for ACE and San Joaquin passengers at our Stockton Station. All passenger trains using our Stockton station will stop north of Weber Street utilizing a platform which will be completely grade-separated the full length of the trains.

While we are very proud of what we have accomplished in the last 15 years, this is only the beginning. The possibilities for expanded intercity/commuter rail in our region in the next 15 years are truly remarkable.

Last year we changed the name of our rail service. We are still "ACE", but it now stands for "Altamont Corridor Express" rather than the "Altamont Commuter Express". It is a small change, but one that is very important for our future. For the last 15 years ACE has been exclusively a commuter rail operation (trains leaving Stockton in the early morning and returning in the evening). While we will always serve commuters, in the not so distant future ACE will become an intercity/commuter service with trains

The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission: Moving Passenger Rail Forward

By Dan Leavitt,
Manager of Regional Initiatives
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission

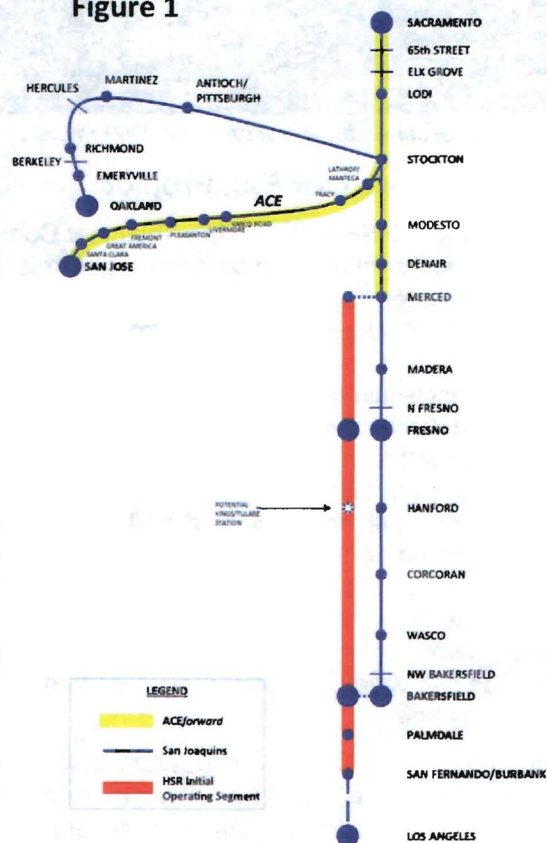
traveling in both directions throughout the day. ACE will also expand – first to downtown Modesto, then to Merced, and then to Sacramento. Opening up new commuter and intercity markets and allowing for ACE to play a critical role as a "feeder" service to the phased implementation of High Speed Rail (HSR) in California. These future improvements will also enable expanding the Amtrak San Joaquin intercity service by utilizing the ACE corridor to bring passengers from Bakersfield to San Jose via the Altamont Pass (please see Figure 1).

In the more distant future, when high-speed rail is ultimately built to Sacramento, we are working to ensure that this future extension will be a joint-use infrastructure where regional rail will share tracks with high-speed trains.

Our efforts are being coordinated with

agencies throughout the Northern San Joaquin Valley and the Bay Area. We staff and represent the "Central Valley Rail Working Group" which is comprised of twenty agencies (including all the transportation agencies, RTPAs, Counties, and major cities) between Sacramento and Merced to pursue

Figure 1



expansion of ACE/regional rail in this corridor. We are also working as part of the Northern California Unified Service effort (with the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA), Caltrans, Capitol Corridor JPA, Caltrain, and Sacramento RT) to ensure that there is an improved, coordinated network of conventional rail services that will support the phased implementation of high-speed rail.

It is an exciting time for rail transportation in the San Joaquin Valley and for the SJRRC. A couple of key areas where the SJRRC is making progress towards improving the rail service that should be of great interest to you are: the Altamont Corridor Rail Project and the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.



ACE Great America station, April 2009 Photo by Carl Costa

Altamont Corridor Rail Project

Since 2008, CHSRA has led the "Altamont Corridor Rail Project," which focuses on carrying out a Project-level EIR/EIS process to get environmental clearance for a joint-use infrastructure between San Jose, Stockton and Modesto via the Altamont Pass. When completed, the Altamont Corridor Rail Project would be completely new double-tracked, electrified, fully grade-separated infrastructure that would not be shared with conventional freight services, and would be compatible with future high-speed rail trains. This effort was part of a commitment made by the CHSRA to the Altamont Corridor as part of their Bay Area to Central Valley Program EIR/EIS document. The CHSRA's commitment to lead the environmental work for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project was essential for getting support from the Bay Area and Northern San Joaquin Valley (Sacramento-Merced) for the high-speed train proposal.

The Project-level ER/EIS process for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project began in October 2009. It has gone through scoping and a "Preliminary Alternatives" analysis to narrow the route alternatives under investigation that was completed in February 2011. This fiscal year, \$40 million of Proposition 1A funding was allocated to the CHSRA for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project in the state budget. Nevertheless, work on the Altamont Corridor Rail Project has stalled primarily since the CHSRA

must focus so much of its attention on its primary task – construction of the Initial Operating Segment in the Central Valley – which is the largest transportation construction project in the state.

While the CHSRA has been doing the Altamont Corridor Rail Project work in partnership with a number of agencies through the Altamont Corridor Working Group, its primary regional partner has been SJRRC. SJRRC is identified as a responsible agency for the Altamont Corridor Project EIR/EIS, and CHSRA has signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with SJRRC in regards to this effort. The second MOU with SJRRC is a funding agreement which made several million dollars in funding from SJRRC available to the CHSRA for the Altamont Corridor Project EIR/EIS process.

To expedite progress in the Altamont Corridor, we expect that the CHSRA will turn the leadership and management of the Altamont Corridor Rail Project to SJRRC later this spring. Our focus will be on delivering near-term incremental improvements to the existing ACE service that can be achieved by 2018 (when the initial high-speed rail construction segment is completed) and by 2022 (when the high-speed rail initial operating segment is to be functional). This work will be completely consistent with the CHSRA 2012 Revised Business Plan and include planning to connect the ACE service to the northern terminus of CHSRA's initial operating segment in Merced by 2022.



Passengers alighting on Weber Avenue, Stockton, from a northbound San Joaquin train. The new platform extension will solve this problem. Photo by Thomas Reeves, February 2013

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority

California's Intercity Passenger Rail Program is an indispensable economic and environmental asset to our state. Improvements in California's conventional intercity rail services and increases in ridership will result in more jobs, improved air quality, and will help promote sustainable development. Moreover, improving conventional intercity rail services in California is critical to the phased implementation and success of California's future high-speed rail system.



Track construction at Stockton Cabral station to extend and connect the platform track, photo by Thomas Reeves, February 2013.

To protect the existing San Joaquin service and to promote its improvement, in 2012, the SJRRC partnered with the Central Valley Rail Working Group, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, and Sacramento Regional Transit to sponsor Assembly Bill 1779 (AB 1779). AB 1779 reauthorizes regional government agencies' ability to form the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) to take over the governance/management of the existing San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service between Bakersfield-Fresno-Modesto-Stockton-Sacramento-Oakland.

AB 1779 (Galgiani) follows the model of the Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail service. Over the last 15 years, without direct financial contribution by member agencies, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) has successfully managed the Capitol Corridor between Auburn and San Jose. In addition to more cost effective administration and operations, the CCJPA has shown that there are several other potential benefits to local authority administration of intercity passenger service including:

- The ability to have a stronger voice in advocating for service improvements and expansions;
- Local decision-making that is more responsive and adaptive to passenger issues;
- The ability to take better advantage of joint marketing and partnerships with local agencies; and
- More engagement by local communities to support the service.

Under the provisions of AB 1779, the state will continue to provide the funding necessary for service operations, administration and marketing. Furthermore, Caltrans Division of Rail will remain responsible for the development of the Statewide Rail Plan and the coordination and integration

between the three state-supported intercity passenger rail services. We believe that AB 1779 enables a better, stronger partnership between the local and regional agencies within the San Joaquin Corridor and the state to support and improve the existing San Joaquin intercity rail service.

AB 1779 was supported by a number of local and regional agencies and organizations throughout the San Joaquin Corridor. It was passed by the Legislature on August 30, 2012 with bi-partisan support, and was signed by Governor Brown on September 29, 2012. The first San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority Board meeting will be held on March 22, 2013 at the Merced Civic Center Board Room (678 W. 18th Street, Merced) at 1:30 pm. It would be great to see RailPac well represented at this meeting.

While the SJJPA can't take over administrative responsibility of the San Joaquin service until at least July 2014, we believe that benefits from SJJPA have already begun. The supporters and sponsors of AB 1779 are working together to advocate for conventional intercity rail service improvements in California. This is particularly important this year. Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008 requires that all Amtrak service on routes of 750 miles or less in length become the funding responsibility of the state, so California will be losing the portion of the Pacific Surfliner funding that is federally subsidized. To preserve and improve current levels of conventional intercity service in California we are advocating for increasing state funding for FY 13/14 by as much as \$25 million to offset the loss of federal funds and potentially provide additional funding for more service. We encourage organizations such as RailPac to submit formal letters of support to the Governor and Legislature for increasing state funding for California's Intercity Passenger Rail Program.

Conclusion

This is truly an exciting time for rail transportation in California and the future for improved conventional commuter and intercity services in California is looking very bright. We believe the time is right for substantially improving the existing ACE and San Joaquin rail services. We look forward to working with you to make a better, more sustainable California.

For more information on the SJRRC, ACE and the SJJPA, please visit our website (www.acerail.com). To help convey our vision of the future for ACE to our riders and the public, we developed a short video. We encourage you to view it at: <http://youtube.com/LS03nd8DXY>

A Special Thank You to

SIEMENS

for their continued support of RailPAC



The Coast Starlight and the Coast Line are Just Coasting

Report and Commentary by Russ Jackson

Amtrak's Coast Starlight still travels daily between Los Angeles and Seattle.

Should we take it for granted? Well, let's look at its performance lately. From Amtrak's December 2012 Performance Report, now posted on Amtrak.com, we know the train's end-point "on time performance" (OTP) for the fiscal year since October 1, 2012, has deteriorated compared to the same period in 2011, from 85.9% to 73.9%. That's down 12%. The good news is that on February 11, 2013, train 11 arrived at Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) 3 minutes early having not been later than 51 minutes enroute, which was at Santa Barbara, so the early LA arrival was due largely to using up schedule padding. Train 14 on the same day arrived in Seattle 38 minutes early, not having been late more than 19 minutes at any station enroute.

While that is good news and represents what happens on most days with the Starlight, when there is a bad day it can be really bad. An example is train 14 that departed LAUS on January 24. RailPAC VP South, James Smith, was on board. Everything was great until they were on Vandenberg AFB, where one locomotive conked out because of a coolant problem, and they limped into San Luis Obispo where the Union Pacific attached its two helper engines to get them up Cuesta Grade as far as Santa Margarita. At Oakland Amtrak put on "protect" locomotive 510, a P-32, and it had more problems as the alerter kept going on and off, delaying the train for hours at Redding. James Smith was not unhappy with this totally, as he saw Mt. Shasta from the train in the morning for the first time on his many journeys. At Portland that evening it was time for a full inspection, which delayed the train over an hour with the power shut down on a cold night with passengers on board. They reached Seattle at Midnight rather than the

scheduled 8:37 PM. What this shows again is Amtrak has too many problems with its locomotives. On January 31 another train 14 lost an hour at Eugene, Oregon, because a passenger barricaded himself in a sleeping-car restroom and set fire to the paper-towel dispenser. Eugene police forced open the restroom door and arrested the fighting suspect.

How is the Starlight performing at the intermediate stations?

Only a few stations on the route are served only

by trains 11 and 14. According to Great American Stations, in FY 2012 Chemult, Oregon, had 10,304 passengers who paid \$761,216 into Amtrak's revenue. Klamath Falls, Oregon had 32,881 who paid a whopping \$2,202,627. Four stations are served by the Starlight and Amtrak California buses: Paso Robles had 11,728 riders who paid \$653,472, Redding had 23,059 for \$892,612, and Salinas had 19,879 who paid \$1,311,849. Other stations on the route were also served by Surfliner or Cascades trains and the buses. There is more to travel on Amtrak than serving only the end point cities.

Is the Coast Starlight still a great traveling

experience? Yes, and No. The Pacific Parlour Car, which was added by Amtrak West's Gil Mallery and Brian Rosenwald in the 1990s is still there in those 50 year old cars. The trains are largely sold out every day and the dining cars are still serving tasty meals. As USA Today writer Laura Bly said on August 24, 2012, "Amtrak's Coast Starlight sells the joy of slow travel." One "railbuff" told Laura Bly that the "Coast Starlight includes three meals a day, comparable to a good Dennys," in the cost of sleeping-car accommodations. RailPAC's James Smith says his trip taught him that "the experience" of riding the Starlight which we all celebrated in the beginning is just not the same. "The soul of the train isn't what it used to be," Smith says, because there has been so much standardization it is just not as unique. On his trip "the crew did a good job, the food was ok, but chefs don't have the tools to be creative." His return trip on # 11 went smoothly, and on time. He noted upon Seattle departure the train was packed with students returning to the many colleges and universities along the route. That shows there should be additional frequencies or more added cars at peak demand times.

What needs to be done on the Coast Line?

For one thing, the proposed Coast Daylight train that is supposed to serve downtown San Francisco and close the gap between San Jose and San Luis Obispo with a second frequency on the route needs to get going, since it represents the extension of the present Surfliner trains beyond San Luis Obispo. Meeting after meeting of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council still has not resulted in 1) the Union Pacific agreeing to run the service, saying they need \$500 million for upgrades, 2) the arrival of new California owned equipment, which is not due until 2016 although cars are available now, and 3) the state still must allocate operating funds of up to \$7.5 million a year. All we know is they continue “working on it.” RailPAC has been told that there are concerns that there would be a negative effect on the Starlight ridership and some don’t want to toy with that, but that’s not what happens when there are additional frequencies on a train route.

Ideas... Have we got some ideas for the Coast Line.

1) RailPAC member Bob MacDonald, Oakland, says “Have the California Zephyr ‘make a left turn’ at Oakland, and continue on to Los Angeles as the coastal night train.” He says it would take only one additional trainset to do this, making it “the night train connection between the two regions.” The train’s West Coast terminal would then be Los Angeles, and would move its maintenance base from the very busy Oakland facility to Amtrak’s facility at 8th Street in LA saving money. If this proposal sounds familiar, it is one that RailPAC heavily advocated for some time. The idea of a “rolling overnight hotel” between the north and south has great possibilities, as it did to the Southern Pacific when it ran the Lark. Having the dining car open overnight would lend many attracting features. RailPAC’s Noel Braymer says, “Dr. Adrian Herzog (first) dreamed up this idea maybe 20 years ago. It was floated to Amtrak at the time and many people were interested then, the problem was the Chicago maintenance people objected to moving the base from Chicago to LA, and they found political clout that caused Amtrak to set aside this logical idea. I have no idea whether the UP would agree to extension of this national system train,” but, Braymer says, “I wish it would happen sooner than later.”



Exhibit 6.7: Class I Main Line FRA Density, 2006

2) Up to now 30% of the Surfliner trains are funded as part of the national system, but as RailPAC President, Paul Dyson, says, “This is supposed to go away under PRIIA because these trains run less than 750 miles.” That means 30% more must then be paid by the State of California. “So, let’s extend the Starlight, Sunset Limited, and Southwest Chief to San Diego.” Not by sending the actual trainsets down there, just extend ticketing of the three trains onto Surfliners with passengers changing in Los Angeles. Dyson says, “It’s a way to hold onto 30% national funding for the Surfliners, as long as local travel between LAUS and San Diego is still permitted. This idea makes San Diego part of the national system.”

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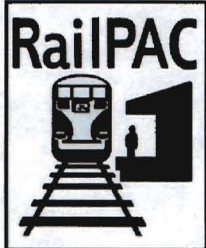
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A statewide membership organization working for the improvement and expansion of passenger rail service.

Organized in 1977 by a group of passenger rail supporters, RailPAC has been working for over 30 years to establish a network of rail services that will provide service to and throughout California and Nevada.

We need your support to improve and expand passenger rail service in the west!

Your Membership includes...

- **STEEL WHEELS:** Passenger Rail in California and the West
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Representation and Advocacy

RailPAC presents a strong case to federal, state and local governments for reliable rail services from long-distance trains to commuter operations. Your organization gains strength with a growing membership base and members are invited to review and reflect on proposed changes in budgets, routes and service frequencies.

Cooperative Alliances

RailPAC works closely with other rail organizations and transit advocacy groups.

Volunteer Efforts

Members work with local rail passenger groups including Station Hosts at several Amtrak stations, attend and report on meetings of regional and transit boards and write letters to editors of newspapers. Members also submit personal reports of on-board service levels for distribution in Steel Wheels and the weekly e newsletter.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

about RailPAC and how you can help expand and improve passenger rail, visit our website **RailPAC.org** or fill out and return the form on the back page of this newsletter.

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Our website includes a complete listing of our current positions, as well as frequent articles and reports from around the state. Visit RailPAC.org to learn more about these and other regional passenger rail projects we support.

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RAILPAC'S WORK AT-A-GLANCE

RailPAC is working with Amtrak, Caltrans and all agencies involved in achieving the following goals for expanding and extending safe and reliable rail passenger service. We support adequate funding for these services and vigorously promote them.

Coast Corridor

Reduce travel times. Continue to enhance onboard amenities. Restore connections to Long-Distance trains at Los Angeles Union Station. Reestablish the Coast Daylight between Los Angeles and San Francisco. New stations at Gilroy, Watsonville, Soledad and King City.

Pacific Surfliner Corridor

Campaign for run through tracks at Los Angeles Union Station to improve punctuality and travel times for Amtrak and Metrolink. Extend service to the Coachella and Imperial valleys.

Sunset Corridor

Introduce daily service and reestablish service to Florida.

San Joaquin Corridor

Increase service to and from Sacramento, as well as a new station in Elk Grove. Extend daytime and overnight service to Los Angeles.

Capitol Corridor

Increase frequency to hourly service between Sacramento and Oakland. Increase frequency of service to San Jose. Extend service to Reno and Redding and Salinas.

Las Vegas

Reestablish service between Los Angeles and Las Vegas.

High Speed Rail

Incremental improvements to prepare for High Speed Rail, including a link to Las Vegas.



RAIL PASSENGER ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA & NEVADA

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

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