

ALL ABOARD

INDIANA

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Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

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Ridership Numbers Matter, Truitt Says

By Donald Yehle

"From a distance, it (the *Hoosier State*) seems to be running smoothly," said Randy Truitt, an Indiana House of Representatives member representing a portion of Tippecanoe County. The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) signed a two-year contract last August to oversee this PASSENGER TRAIN SERVICE, with Amtrak responsible for providing train engineers and conductors and managing reservations and ticketing. Iowa Pacific is furnishing the engines, rolling stock, maintenance, food and beverage services, and marketing.



Business class passengers relax aboard the *Hoosier State*.

"Ridership is a focus for everyone.

It's important that ridership continues to grow," Truitt said. (See Indiana Trains ridership chart on page 2.)

When the Indiana legislature considers funding proposals for the *Hoosier State* in the next biennial budget, ridership will be the main component examined, he continued. State legislators, from both the house and the senate, will be asking three questions: Did ridership increase? Did the frequency of service increase? Is it (the train) being used like everybody thought it would?

To be fair, the West Lafayette lawmaker understands the service needs enough time to prove itself. A better timetable and more frequencies are critical. At present, the *Hoosier State* departs at 6 a.m. from Indianapolis (for Chicago), arriving back in the Circle City (from Chicago) at 11:59 p.m. Rail advocates know significant ridership boosts will come only with frequency increases (at least two trips, both ways, daily). An increasing number of people want to see the *Hoosier State* operating seven days a week, with daily connecting service to Cincinnati, as well.

The state's contract for the *Hoosier State* continues through June 30, 2017, with a four-year extension possible. The current biennial budget ends June 30, 2017.

State lawmakers budgeted \$6 million for the *Hoosier State* through the end of June 2017. Four cities (Crawfordsville, Lafayette, West Lafayette, and Rensselaer), along with Tippecanoe County, are also paying a combined \$21,000 monthly to help keep the train (*continued*)

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(*"Ridership Matters" continued from page 1*) running. (Iowa Pacific is paid \$255,000 each month for its work.)

Back taxes collected this fall are providing the state's share of **Hoosier State** operating funds. Going forward, a different state funding source will be needed, train advocates believe. (See related tax amnesty story.)

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) wants Hoosiers to know that the clock is ticking to build ridership, train frequencies, and improve the train's timetable. "Consider Truitt's words to be a warning," said Steve Coxhead, IPRA president.

Tax-Amnesty Pays for Hoosier State

An 11th hour plan to fund the **Hoosier State** last summer was creative, to say the least. It involved a two-month state tax amnesty program, which has "collected enough money" to do much more than provide \$6 million of funds for the state's 196-mile railroad connecting Indianapolis with Chicago.

The tax-amnesty program – that started September 15 and concluded November 16 – will pay \$84 million toward Governor Mike Pence's new Regional Cities grant program, as well. Individuals and businesses with overdue state tax liabilities have paid more than \$100 million since September 15 "with agreements for about \$22 million in additional payments by next summer," the State of Indiana announced in early December.

Monies collected over \$90 million will go to the state's general

revenue fund, the state said.

People and companies were allowed to pay overdue state tax liabilities dating from before 2013 without penalties, interest, and collection fees. "The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) salutes legislators who formulated and voted on the plan, the State Department of Revenue that put the plan in place, plus taxpayers who took advantage of the program," said IPRA President Steve Coxhead.

"You've given a gift to rail passengers across our state; for that, we are grateful," Coxhead

City Pairs Key to Building Passenger Train Ridership

By Donald Yehle

What do the following pairs of Indiana cities and towns have in common with each other – Indianapolis-Crawfordsville, Crawfordsville-Lafayette, Lafayette-Rensselaer, and Rensselaer-Dyer?

If you guessed they are city pairs along the passenger train corridor between Chicago and Indianapolis, you are correct. All told, the cities of Indianapolis, Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer, and Dyer represent 20 city pairs, which (*cont'd*)



INDIANA TRAINS

Ridership Numbers	Nov. 15	Oct. '15	Sept. '15	Aug. 15	July '15
Capitol Ltd.	18,190	18,457	16,693	20,276	22,709
Cardinal	8,793	9,889	8,388	9,448	10,845
HOOSIER STATE	2,457	2,294	1,663	2,120	3,287
Lake Shore Ltd.	28,865	29,884	29,105	37,637	40,981
Wolverine	41,319	36,430	33,363	43,989	45,366
	99,624	96,954	89,212	113,470	123,188

(*"City Pairs Key to..." continued from page 2*) are served better by the **Cardinal** and the **Hoosier State** than any other form of public transportation.

Jeff and Christin Bramlage of Monticello understand that people don't necessarily have to take Amtrak/Iowa Pacific trains to Chicago to receive benefits from these passenger train services. "The short trip from Lafayette to Rensselaer was just right for Ashtin," Christin said.

Last November, Ashtin Bramlage's present for his 4th birthday was a train trip. The night before the trip, the family had dropped off a second car in Rensselaer for Christin Bramlage to drive home to Monticello upon their arrival in Rensselaer. Early the morning of the trip, Jeff Bramlage had dropped off his wife, infant son, Liam, and Ashtin at the Lafayette train depot on his way to work. Mr. Bramlage then went to work in Lafayette, while his family boarded the **Hoosier State** for an hour-long train ride to Rensselaer.

Christin wished Jeff could have gotten the day off from work, but that wasn't to be. But Ashtin, complete with a back pack full of his prize possessions, smiled, ate breakfast, and climbed around the business class coach during his train trip.

The **Hoosier State** took Ashtin, Christin, and Liam past their former home in Monon, as well. "Mom" pointed out the brown house to her son, who looked out the train windows with excitement.

The quantity and quality of the breakfast was amazing. She and her son enjoyed a short stack of pancakes -- that morning's "Blue Plate" special -- along with eggs, bacon, sausage, orange juice, and coffee.

"It was all you can eat. I liked the sausage the best; it was moist. The bacon was flavorful; pancakes were fluffy, and eggs delicious," Christin said, while



Penny Lulich is much happier on her travels to visit her grandchildren in Indiana now. (See story, right.)

also enjoying looking at the fresh, yellow rose on the table.

Riding America's railroads isn't new to Christin. Growing up, "it's the only way we vacationed," she continued. Railroad excursions with her mother and grandparents have taken her to California, Florida, South Carolina, and Texas.

While not saying so, anyone listening to her conversation would suspect Ashtin, Liam, and their older siblings, Aedreanna and Aneelia, are destined for additional train rides in the months and years to come.

Business Class Service Makes Big Difference

A Pacific Northwest resident with three grandchildren in Bloomington, IN, has changed her mind about the train trip from Chicago to Indianapolis -- and back. (See picture, left.)

"It used to be the most dreaded part of my trip -- no longer," said Penny Lulich, who visits Indiana every two months and stays for six weeks to see her grandchildren -- Ezekiel, Nehemiah, and Elizabeth.

"I am a very happy person at this moment. I am very happy with the new train," Lulich said, reflecting on the **Hoosier State** dome car that is reminiscent of the parlor car on Amtrak's **Coast Starlight** that travels between Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles.

A West Coast native born and raised in Oregon, Lulich most recently traveled the **Hoosier State** in November with another trip coming the first of the new year. She connects to Amtrak's **Empire Builder**. (Lulich was also happy to learn that there are plans for connecting bus service between Bloomington and Indianapolis' Union Station.)

Lulich watched lots of students on the **Hoosier State** on their phones, playing games, and using Netflix, taking advantage of Wi-Fi that has been added since the train was put into place last August 2.

"I like it when people put their electronics away, so we can talk," she continued.

Little things and people -- young and grown -- have hooked Lulich on trains. "I meet the most interesting people on the train; most recently it was an inspector from the Central Intelligence Agency with a patch on his eye," Lulich said.

When she travels back to Indiana in January, there will be three grandchildren providing incentive for Lulich to board the **Hoosier State** again.

Train Chefs Must First Find Sea Legs

Paul Zirkle is an experienced chef.

Mornings, *Hoosier State* passengers traveling northbound to Chicago might catch a glimpse of Paul flipping pancakes, cooking eggs to order, making breakfast burritos, dishing up old fashioned oatmeal, or preparing bagels or cinnamon rolls for waiters to take to tables.

Evenings, look for many business and leisure train travelers to order up a “Blue Plate” special, a chef’s special entrée served with side dishes and rolls and butter. Special holiday dishes were created from Christmas through New Year’s.

Dinner selections always include personal cheese or pepperoni pizza, turkey club sandwiches, farm fresh salads, chicken caprese panini, and a “daily selection” of desserts.

Picture yourself preparing any of these food items on a moving train. “I don’t think about it now -- that is, the motion of the train,” Chef Paul said.

“My focus is providing an upscale, fine dining experience complete with waiters, stewards, real plates, real ‘non-plastic’ silverware, and linen service – plus exceptional culinary delights on a train that averages 65 miles an hour as it travels through the Indiana countryside.

“All the food is fresh, including produce – loaded in Indianapolis. There isn’t a microwave on board the train. The oven is small. There’s a freezer, pie case, and food warmers,” Zirkle said.

“It’s fun to improvise,” said the chef who has a sauté pan at his disposal.

A quick survey of the kitchen shows Zirkle has a wide selection of food products available to him – butter cream, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, cream cheese, shredded cheese, Greek Yogurt, and lots of fruit, including strawberries, pineapple, and blueberries.



Chef Paul displays a masterpiece in the making.

Interested in working a shift for Chef Paul? Make sure your sea legs are ready before you start. And be ready to do dishes as you travel through Dyer, Rensselaer, Lafayette, Crawfordsville, and into Indianapolis.

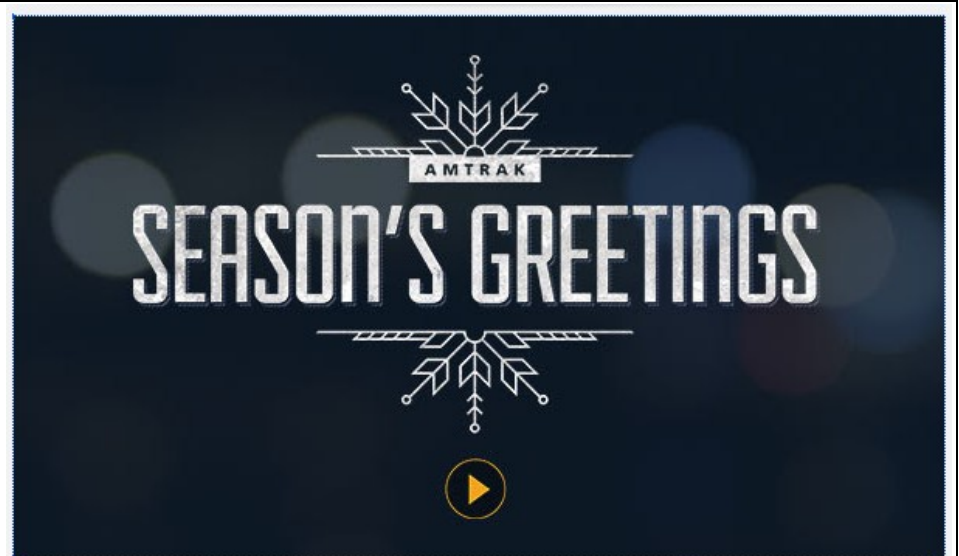
Concessions, Beverages Available on *Hoosier State*

One way that Iowa Pacific is building ridership is by providing beverages and concessions on a train that once had none.

“In past years, it was always a stop at a favorite fast food establishment just prior to boarding the *Hoosier State* or at Union Station’s many food shops before departing Chicago,” said a regular *Hoosier State* passenger. “That cup of coffee had to last for three and one-half hours.”

Six items are available on Indiana’s train for just \$2 – soda, tea, coffee, juice, granola bars, and candy bars. Milk can be bought for just \$1, while potato chips are available for \$1.50 – all from the lower level of the “domed” dining car if traveling coach class.

Individuals over 21 may purchase a variety of (continued)



Bringing you the best gift of all

Connecting you with your most important destinations—loved ones—is what the holidays are truly about. This season, we celebrate those meaningful connections with family and friends, the moment they arrive. Thank you for choosing Amtrak® and letting us share in the joy with you all year long.

Season's greetings, from all of us at Amtrak. We look forward to continuing to connect you with the people and places you love most in 2016.

[WATCH NOW](#)

 **AMTRAK**

("Concessions, Beverages Available" continued from page 4)
spirits, beer, and wine on the southbound **Hoosier State**.
Drinks and their prices are: Spirits, \$7; mixed drinks and wine,
\$6; imported beer, \$5, and domestic beer, \$4.

Most items are available to business class customers at no
extra charge.

"So ride the **Hoosier State**, it's a train and a watering hole,"
the passenger said.



Hoosier State Named as one of Top Ten Stories of the Year by *Trains* Magazine

Trains magazine recently named the **Hoosier State** as its #8
story for 2015. [Click here to read what they had to say.](#)

Rail Baron Club a Pleasant Surprise

Passengers on the **Hoosier State** are eligible for Rail Baron
Club rewards.

To earn Rail Baron Club points, a guest may sign up in one of
three ways.

Sign up on board the train

Go to www.railbaronclub.com

Go to www.hoosierstatetrain.com and click on the Rail
Baron Club tab in the upper right corner.

For every roundtrip ride in coach on the **Hoosier State**, a Rail
Baron member will receive 50 points. Business class passen-
gers earn 100 points. It requires 200 points to upgrade to
business class from a coach ticket on the **Hoosier State**.

Points are not automatically added to members' accounts.
Iowa Pacific staff on board the train must be notified to en-
sure that your points are added to accounts and to upgrade
from coach to business class. Upgrades are not available prior
to departure.

Purdue Faculty, Staff, and Students Being Surveyed on Rail's Importance

A passenger rail survey is seeking to gain a better understand-
ing of how important passenger rail service is to Purdue Uni-
versity students, faculty, and staff. Survey participants were
able to enter a drawing to win a \$150 Amazon gift card.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRA)
is sponsoring this survey, which kicked off in early December
and ended on December 19. Indiana State Representative
Randy Truitt of West Lafayette and IPRA Board Member Fred
Lanahan of Fort Wayne are members of MIPRA.

Fourteen questions are on the survey, with the last question a
request for survey participants to provide their names and e-
mail addresses if they want to become "more involved in
helping improve passenger rail service." Individuals who had
traveled on Amtrak trains within the last 12 months were
asked to answer 15 additional questions.

MIPRC is a nine-state interstate compact commission that
promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements
to passenger rail service. Participating states, along with Indi-
ana, are: Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ne-
braska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Students, staff, and faculty were asked to provide answers to
the following questions:

My permanent residence is:

How often do you travel back and forth between your
permanent residence and your school in a typical
year?

What do you consider to be your primary mode of trans-
portation between your permanent residence and
your college/university?

Have you ever used passenger rail service (Amtrak) to
travel to or from your college/university?

In the past 12 months, how many times have you used
passenger rail service (Amtrak) to travel to or from
your college/university?

Why did you decide to use passenger rail service to/from
your college/university?

How important a resource is Amtrak service (*continued*)

("Purdue Faculty, Staff, and Students Being Surveyed..." continued from page 5) for you to be able to attend college/university?

How likely are you to use Amtrak for travel in the future?

If Amtrak provided more frequent service to and from your college/university, would you be more likely, less likely or equally likely to travel by Amtrak as you do now?

How important do you consider passenger rail service to the United States' transportation future?

How aware are you of the role that state and federal government play in funding passenger rail, including increasing the number of trains and route options?

At the college/university, you are (check one): Student, faculty, staff.

Would you be interested in helping advocate for an improved passenger rail system in our region/country?

Please provide your name and e-mail address and you will be sent information on ways you can become more involved in helping improve passenger rail service.

Amtrak passengers in the last 12 months were asked about accessibility to the train station from your college/university; affordability of a train ticket; ease of purchasing a ticket; convenience of train departure times; convenience of train arrival times; train comfort; how courteous was the staff on Amtrak trains; on-time train performance; satisfaction with their Amtrak experience; technology owned (laptop, smartphone); method used to purchase a train ticket; use of discount code/card to purchase a ticket – AAA, active military, NARP, student advantage card, or international student identity card, and importance of WiFi service.

Indianapolis Should Follow Denver's Lead

By Bill Malcolm

A tale of two cities -- Denver's remodeled Union Station vs. Indianapolis bus rail hub.

It's been just over a year since Denver's re-habbed Union Station re-opened. Owned by the City of Denver, the station was re-done to include not only Amtrak but light rail and bus connections. It's a one stop shop for transit users. Although there are only 2 trains a day (eastbound



Inside Denver's redone Union Station



The platform at Denver's Union Station.

and westbound to Chicago and San Francisco), the station also has 3-4 full service restaurants, several take out places, bars, and a hotel. It has become a destination into itself for residents and visitors alike whether or not they are using transit.

Compare Denver's Union Station with Indianapolis bus rail station also owned by the City. The beleaguered Indianapolis bus-rail station -- operated by Greyhound -- is a civic embarrassment. The actual Union Station of course (operated by Crowne Plaza) is a gem for conventions and the like but is not used by transit. The city of Indianapolis also runs the airport which -- by contrast -- is an award-winning gem. The new transit center is a half mile away making connecting to local bus service from regional bus/Amtrak/Iowa Pacific difficult.

Indianapolis can do better. Denver should be the guide.

Indianapolis Resident Asks for Upgrade at Indy Depot

Editor's Note: The attached letter was received by Bill Malcolm, former editor of All Aboard Indiana and board member, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance.

Dear Mr. Malcolm:

After a recent trip to Chicago by Greyhound, I decided my next trip will be by train as you suggested in your "Holiday Travel Ideas" in the "Round the Ripple" column (in *Broad Ripple Gazette*).

However, with so much talk about making Indianapolis a first-class city where people from all over the world come for sports events and major conventions and not everyone wants to drive or fly, don't people deserve to be welcomed into a bus/train terminal that reflects the first-class image we claim to be striving for?

I was very disappointed and even shocked at the (continued)

("Indianapolis Resident Asks for Upgrade..." continued from page six) condition of our terminal on Illinois. It's dark and dreary without any pleasant eating situation, but most of all, the bathroom (women's and probably the men's, too) was totally disgusting and disgraceful. I found one toilet pulled out of the wall on to the floor and the tile floors and walls so stained they are beyond cleaning!

Since you, Mr. Malcolm, are on the board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance and a member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, can't some pressure be applied to invest in the upgrading of the Amtrak/Greyhound Terminal on Illinois? Surely you or someone you know can get the ball rolling on this!

Sincerely,
Indianapolis Resident

Riding the Rails

By Donald Yehle

\$57.6 BILLION IN TRANSPORTATION FUNDS – A [lead story in Hotline](#), reprinted with permission of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) shows how Congress surprised us with a \$1.1 trillion omnibus budget bill that's been signed by President Obama. NARP VP Sean Jeans-Gail went through the 2000+ page document and summarized the rail provisions [here](#).

INDIANA'S PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PRAISED -- A story from *Trains Magazine* cited the public-private partnership involving Amtrak, the Indiana Department of Transportation, and Iowa Pacific with the *Hoosier State* as an example of what new transportation legislation allows. A pilot program will allow passenger rail operators to bid on up to three long-distance routes for four years with the option to renew for another four years, wrote Chase Gunnoe in a story entitled, "Congress' transportation bill opens Amtrak to competition."

ALL ABOARD OHIO WORKING FOR DAILY SERVICE BETWEEN CINCINNATI AND CHICAGO – All Aboard Ohio hopes that the new transportation bill, which included money for expanded intercity rail service, will lead to funding for daily Amtrak service between Cincinnati and Chicago, reports the *Cincinnati Business Journal*. The group wants to go after a grant under a provision that offers \$20 million a year to re-establish discontinued rail service or expand existing service. It says it will cost \$2 million to re-establish daily service along the *Cardinal* route – which runs from New York City to Chicago – through Cincinnati, said Derek Bauman, southwest Ohio director of the group. (Courtesy of NARP.)

AMTRAK'S BOARDMAN TO RETIRE IN SEPTEMBER 2016 – In a letter to employees, Amtrak President Joe Boardman

announced his retirement from the rail corporation. He will leave in September 2016 after nearly eight years on the job.

"One of the reasons why I gave our board notice so far in advance of my planned retirement is because I want them to have the time to think about the next leader they will select and have a chance to think about the kinds of qualities this leader will need as we move forward," Boardman wrote.

"Having served on the board prior to my time as CEO, I know the selection of a president and CEO of Amtrak is perhaps the single most important decision that a Board can make."

Boardman also said he had things he still wanted to get done, including placing an order for the next generation of high-speed trainsets in North America; overseeing the delivery of new ACS-64 electric locomotives; and advancing the implementation of Positive Train Control technology on the tracks that Amtrak owns outside the Northeast Corridor.

In its media release on the announcement, the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) noted it has worked with Boardman from his days as head of the New York State Department of Transportation, though his service as chief of the Federal Railroad Administration, to his nearly eight-year stewardship of Amtrak.

"We don't see eye-to-eye on every issue, but Joe has always been willing to listen to passengers and respect their right to have a voice in the process," said NARP President and CEO Jim Mathews. "NARP has greatly valued working with an Amtrak president who understands that for the railroad to thrive, it needs to be a national service, and that long-distance trains are – as Joe said himself – the 'backbone' of America's national network." (Reprinted with NARP's permission.)

PURDUE STUDENTS SPEAK FAVORABLY ABOUT CARDINAL SERVICE – Two Purdue University students talked very favorably about the *Cardinal* train service that connects the Windy City with the East Coast in an early December issue of the *Purdue Exponent*, the university's student newspaper. Assistant Features Editor Jillian Ellison said the students ride the *Cardinal* to Washington D.C. and Baltimore, respectively, due to its affordability, scenic views, opportunities to meet people, and the Lafayette Depot's accessibility to the University's West Lafayette campus. The need to support both the *Hoosier State* and the *Cardinal* – in and out of Greater Lafayette -- was mentioned.

RAILINGS BEING INSTALLED ON JOHN T. MYERS' BRIDGE – Railings are being installed on both the north and south sides of the John T. Myers' bridge – that spans the Wabash River connecting West Lafayette and Lafayette. It's hoped bicyclists and pedestrians will soon be able to use the bridge, which has been closed. While the Lafayette Depot has heat, Amtrak passengers have no access to the waiting lobby as (continued)

("Riding the Rails: Railings Installed..." continued from page 7)
ceiling, flooring, and restroom work remains. Heavy train ridership is expected in December from Purdue students whose fall semester wraps up just before Christmas, says Joe Krause, an Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance board member and Amtrak station volunteer.

IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO CHICAGO UNION STATION

— Passenger capacity, accessibility, and mobility will be improved as a result of the changes planned for Chicago Union Station. The 13, Phase 1 improvements include "new and expanded entrances, widened platforms with direct access to street level, concourse expansion, and pedestrian tunnels to the Ogilvie Station and Clinton Blue Line," according to a weekly newsletter published by the Midwest High Speed Rail Association.

An engineering firm and/or architect are to come up with the necessary designs. Those designs are to be completed in 2017. Organizations involved are Amtrak, the City of Chicago, Metra, and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). Amtrak is also seeking development partners "to explore value capture around the station," it was reported.

WELCOME TO "FRIENDS OF THE CARDINAL" — Fifty-eight members of the "Friends of the *Cardinal*" are new monthly e-subscribers to *All Aboard Indiana*. "The Friends of the *Cardinal*" is a local community action group that is dedicated to improving the passenger train service in West Virginia with an ultimate goal to get a daily train running through the Mountain State. **Welcome Friends of the Cardinal!**

NEWSPAPERS PAINT A VISION FOR THE HOOSIER STATE

-- "Imagine arriving at Union Station Downtown (Indianapolis) to catch an Amtrak train to Chicago. You sprint to the platform, and the train has just pulled out. But instead of cursing traffic and rescheduling the trip for the next day, you simply wait an hour — and catch the next train," wrote *Indianapolis Star* reporter John Tuohy, whose story was also picked up by the *Journal & Courier* of Lafayette. Iowa Pacific President Ed Ellis was among five notables quoted. Others interviewed were Indiana Department of Transportation spokesman Will Wingfield, Indiana State Representative Randy Truitt, Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski, and U.S. Rep. Andre Carson (through a spokesperson).

JOURNAL REVIEW TOUTS HOOSIER STATE — The *Hoosier State* is gaining steam, said a November news report out of Crawfordsville. "Hoosier State planning busy holiday schedule" was the headline out of that town, which is one of five Indiana stops for this state-funded railroad. Other Indiana cities with *Hoosier State* stops are Indianapolis, Lafayette, Rensselaer, and Dyer. The train runs on 196 miles of track, connecting Chicago with Indianapolis.

NARP'S INDIANA MEMBERSHIP IS 392 STRONG — Indiana has 392 members in the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), as of August 31, 2015. The state's two Council of Representatives members to the NARP board are Steve Coxhead, president, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), and Phillip Streby, IPRA treasurer. NARP is the largest national membership advocacy organization for train and rail transit passengers, says the organization. Its website is www.narprail.org

FLYING LIKE AN EAGLE: NEW ROUTE BETWEEN FORT WORTH AND DALLAS TO IMPROVE AMTRAK RELIABILITY

Amtrak *Texas Eagle* now uses publically-owned Trinity Rail Express corridor

FORT WORTH, Texas — Amtrak has successfully concluded negotiations and changed the route of the *Texas Eagle* train between Fort Worth and Dallas. There are no missed stops or public schedule changes at this time for the daily service of Trains 21 & 22 between Chicago and San Antonio via St. Louis; Little Rock, Ark.; Dallas, Fort Worth and Austin, Texas, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation said.

"This change puts Amtrak *Texas Eagle* passengers on a better route shared with Trinity Rail Express (TRE) commuter trains and avoids the freight train operations that were challenging our trains every day on the previous routing," said Mark Murphy, Amtrak Senior Vice President and General Manager of the business line that includes the *Eagle*. "This route simplifies our movements through the Fort Worth Intermodal Transportation Center and will improve reliability for more than 100,000 Amtrak passengers who use our Fort Worth gateway every year."

Mike Chandler, Amtrak Deputy General Manager responsible for the *Texas Eagle*, attended an event in Fort Worth to thank the team that worked through the complicated talks involving TRE, its parent agencies in Fort Worth and Dallas, Union Pacific and other carriers. Murphy and Chandler credited constant support for this improvement from TEMPO, the *Texas Eagle* Marketing and Performance Organization, and Texas Rail Advocates.

The Big Picture: The Environment

By J. Charles Riecks, Vice Chair--Government Relations, National Assn. Of Railroad Passengers

For me, and I hope you, another key concept that is included in "The Big Picture" of Passenger Rail Advocacy is what I refer to as a concern for the Earth. What do I mean by this? To me, it means that we must insure that in our Passenger Rail Advocacy efforts we retain a sensibility for issues concerning the Environment: the land we live on, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. (*continued*)

("The Big Picture" continued from page 8)

The Earth is many things to many of us: "The creation and a manifestation of the Almighty;" "Our Spaceship, our lifeboat, carrying us through a Universe that at its core will not support human life." I have heard many others use the terms: "A Concern for the Environment;" or "A Stewardship for our Planet." All these phrases, and many more, express the same concept.

As with the concept of the sanctity of people, there are many ways of expressing our concern for sanctity of the Earth in our Passenger Rail Advocacy efforts. However, it is important to remember, that we must express our concern for the environment BOTH as a reason for supporting a more robust Passenger Rail System AND, as a reason to actively support the building/expansion/retention of service of a Passenger Rail System that is "Earth-friendly" from the start-up of the project to the full implementation of the system. In other words, just as we are more than ready to criticize officials who are promoting building a new 8 Lane "Super Highway" through an area that has sensitive wetlands, so too we must be ready and able to advocate AGAINST a passenger rail project built through the same area if proper environmental precautions are not in place.

Once the passenger rail advocate has this Earth Preservation concept firmly in hand, then you are ready to address the issues raised by the transportation planner who cannot fathom why folks are objecting to making a four lane divided highway into an eight lane ribbon of congestion and confusion. Once the Environment becomes part of your "advocacy message" you are ready to drive home the point, "More Pavement means More Traffic and More Congestion." Once you have considered the Environmental aspects of the situation, you can suggest, for example, that the recently completed "Route 9 Connector" that had been touted as "the solution for the traffic woes of East Puddlejump", has instead become a gridlocked mess of malls and turns and traffic lights that no one wants, or likes to use. And it has only been open for 5 years. And once you have made that point then you can suggest that the solution is not to replace more apple trees with asphalt. For one day, there may be no apples. Then what? Ah, sir/ma'am, have you considered a Public Transit option?

And thus I suggest, just as a concern for People is one part of The Big Picture; a second concern should be for the Earth. Both of these issues are vital parts of The Big Picture.

Contributors

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National Association of Railroad Passengers—Chuck Riecks

For More Information

All Aboard Indiana is a monthly publication of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), formerly the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (INHSRA).

To learn more about IPRA, visit
www.indianahighspeedrail.org

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Member Discounts

Crowne Plaza Union Station Indianapolis: Ask for discount 100329414 and receive 12% off the best flexible rate.

AAA and NARP members save 10% off Amtrak tickets at www.amtrak.com if booked three or more days in advance.

Holiday Bonus: Model Railway

As a Christmas bonus, we hope you'll enjoy [a link to the YouTube video of the world's largest model railway](#), located in Germany.

