

## IPRA Calls for Grassroots Effort To Enhance *Hoosier State* Service

By Phillip Streby

**Editor's Note:** The following article was originally written for the spring issue of the Rail Users' Network (RUN) quarterly newsletter. It is being republished with their permission. Two leading Midwest passenger rail advocates—Ken Prendergast, executive director, All Aboard Ohio, and Steve Coxhead, president, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance—assisted Mr. Streby in providing material or editing assistance.

Members of passenger rail advocacy groups seem to have to approach their local issues at the basic grassroots level on each occasion, reinventing the path to either improving existing service levels or instituting new services. The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) was formed to bring advocates affiliated with several groups together in order to create a more effective voice with which to engage with both the Indiana General Assembly and Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT).

Let us be very clear about why this is necessary. IPRA does not advocate for improved passenger rail service either out of a sense of nostalgia for the old days or for an antipathy to the automobile. Cutting edge, 21st Century passenger rail systems are a vital component driving the economic development of modern societies.

Observation of the present day, real world of the 21st Century demonstrates that societies enjoying the benefits of cutting edge passenger rail systems see a level of economic development that is both greatly enhanced, as well as environmentally sustainable. And they become the kind of places in which the millennial generation wants to live and work. They are our path into the future.

In this regard, there are three elements that are key to Indiana's future. They are the *Hoosier State* corridor from Chicago to Indianapolis, and then extending through to Cincinnati, the northern corridor from Chicago thru Fort Wayne and on into Ohio, and well developed commuter rail systems serving the state's major metropolitan areas.

Let's take a closer look at one of them, the *Hoosier State* corridor. *Trains Magazine* in the March 2016 edition offered its readers a detailed look at what it took to (*continued*)



Two girls enjoy a ride on the *Hoosier State*.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

#### Page Two-Three

IPRA Calls for Grassroots Effort, continued

#### Page Four

Strengthening *Hoosier State* Service Meeting Topic  
INDOT, Iowa Pacific Taking Steps to Boost Ridership  
*Hoosier State* Amenities  
Featured on Two Videos

#### Page Five

February On-Time Performance for *Hoosier State* at 93.9 Percent  
What Business Class Is Like on Amtrak's *Cardinal*

#### Page Six

Wait Nearly Over for Lafayette

#### Page Seven

Framework To Improve "On Time" Performance Deserves a Fair Look  
Riding the Rails

#### Page Eight

How To Effectively Lodge a Complaint on Train Service

#### Page Nine

Muncie City Hall Site of April 26 Transit Meeting  
Amtrak Announces Discount  
Cattle Feed Truck Caused Derailment Near Dodge City  
Contributors  
For More Information...  
Member Discounts

(*"IPRA Calls for Grassroots Effort"* continued from page 1) energize a service that was threatened with discontinuance in 2013. Bob Johnson's article entitled, "**Hoosier State Reflects a New Approach**," spoke to the "advantages and challenges when a private operator replaces Amtrak."

**Iowa Pacific concentrates on marketing the Chicago to Indianapolis service to business people, college students, and tourists. Meanwhile, passenger rail advocates recognize the need to further raise awareness of the service and also build ridership through major changes to the four-day-a-week service.**

### Schedule and Frequency

**Separate Schedules for *Hoosier State* and *Cardinal*** – Think about the two trains as separate operations, running the *Hoosier State* at a later time. If Indianapolis passengers were to board a *Hoosier State* departing the Circle City at 7 a.m., instead of 6 a.m., and arrive in Chicago at 10:30 a.m., it would be a much more desirable travel option.

In this scenario, a late *Cardinal* (originating in New York City) would not affect the *Hoosier State* departure. Ridership would likely receive a boost, as better planning of schedules around on-time departures would be possible.

**Additional Trains (Frequencies)** – In order for the corridor to be economically viable, there really must be eastbound departures from Chicago both in the morning as well as the evening, as well as westbound departures from Indianapolis in both morning and evening. Business travelers, college students, and tourists would benefit from a morning departures east bound out of Chicago, as they would arrive at their downstate, Indiana, destinations with the better part of the day for their activities.

Passengers could return North in the evening or catch the next day's morning train west bound. Face-to-face business transactions would then be possible.

Students could live away from their campus and still participate in academic life. Pleasure travelers could more easily take in events, with an overnight stay when necessary. Local revenues would be enhanced with an increase in the proceeds of local sales, hotel, and restaurant taxes.

**More Beech Grove Equipment Runs** – Amtrak could be encouraged to increase Beech Grove equipment runs, adding coach service to help pay the way. It is thought

by some that two daily trains, even five days a week, might have the potential to as much as triple the ridership between Chicago and Indianapolis.

### Engineering Improvements

**Restore Route Speed to 70 MPH** -- The current top speed of 59 mph could be brought back up to 79 mph (as it once was). This one improvement is thought by some familiar with the operation of the train to have the potential of shaving as much as 20 minutes off the schedule. The following engineering work would have to be done. Each requires funding, but the payoff would be greatly enhanced operation of both passenger and freight operations on the current route, and provide for a less congested and conflicted route on the final approach into Chicago.

▣ **Implementation of Centralized Traffic Control (CTC)** between Ames junction (immediately south of Crawfordsville station) and Munster (immediately north of Dyer station) would save 10-15 minutes by no longer having the crews stop the trains at both locations to copy track authority.

▣ **Implementation of signaling** on the Crawfordsville branch between CP Clermont and Ames junction would allow speed to be brought back up to 79 mph, for another 10-minute savings.

▣ **Re-installing the track** that Conrail removed decades ago between Munster and CP 509 (because Amtrak was the sole user) would cut another 30 minutes from the current schedule. This new routing (former Conrail) would involve negotiating with Norfolk Southern for access onto their property at CP 509 near the Illinois/Indiana state line at Hammond, as well as with the communities, governmental agencies, and property owners along the former route.

**But the payoff would be well worth the effort: In short, with the necessary engineering, a four-hour schedule between Indianapolis and Chicago is attainable.**

### Extension to Cincinnati

**Extend the Hoosier State corridor** -- The Hoosier State corridor would run from Chicago through Indiana to Cincinnati, including the communities of southeast Indiana. Indianapolis should be envisioned as the hub of a potential Indiana network connecting Chicago, Cincinnati, Louisville (and on to Nashville?), and St. Louis. (*continued*)

("IPRA Calls for Grassroots Effort" continued from page 2)  
**Stop at Indy International** -- Offering a daily, 79 mph **Hoosier State** service 100 miles southeast to Cincinnati via tracks now used only by the nocturnal Amtrak **Cardinal**, with stops at Indianapolis International Airport, Connersville, Oxford, Hamilton and downtown Cincinnati (Union Terminal), would benefit Indiana communities currently grossly underserved by transportation facilities.

☐ **Midwest Regional Rail Initiative studies** show that the Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati corridor would be the second-most cost-effective Midwest route in terms of ridership/revenues vs. operating costs (trailing only the Chicago-Milwaukee-Twin Cities corridor).

☐ **Investment in this corridor** to provide multiple daily trains at between 79 and 110 mph could produce **significant economic benefits**, including more than 2,000 jobs at Indianapolis, 700 jobs at Lafayette, and nearly 3,000 jobs at Cincinnati, while increasing property values near stations by an average of more \$300 million.

☐ **An Indianapolis International Airport station** would provide rail access to an airport with domestic airfares at the national average, compared to Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky which has the nation's second-highest domestic airfares (trailing only Anchorage, Alaska).

☐ **Southeast Indiana** has few travel options other than Amtrak, which passes through there in the middle of the night, three times per week.

☐ **Cincinnati-Hamilton-Dayton** area has 3 million people, many of whom travel to Indianapolis and Chicago for business or pleasure.

☐ **Enrollment at the University of Cincinnati**, Miami University, Xavier University, University of Dayton and others is nearly 100,000. Many students come from Indiana, Chicago and other Midwest cities.

## Funding

Funding is always a question. Public-private partnerships should be investigated. However, passenger rail, as any modern form of transportation (or other public infrastructure) requires public investment. This is true for both roads and air transport, as well.

The funding for roads would be a good example of public infrastructure spending. In the Indiana state budget for 2014-2015, \$200 million per year was appropriated from general funds to support roads. That number was \$100 million per year in the 2016-2017 budget. The total road budget for the Indiana Department of Transportation in 2016 alone was \$2.3 billion. It is argued that the 7% sales tax on gasoline purchases (as well as the gas tax) should be dedicated to roads.

Almost \$100 million in federal grants were received for the expansion of the Indianapolis International Airport.

**Lack of trains is Catch 22** -- While it can be argued that more Hoosiers fly or drive than take trains, it must be admitted that they do so, in part, because there are virtually no trains available in Indiana. It is very difficult to choose a mode of transportation which does not exist!

**Indiana has funding capacity** -- Adequate public investment to provide the state with cutting edge passenger rail is not only necessary, but well within the capacity of the state to do.

Re-establishing Indianapolis as a crossroads of rail transportation in the midwest, results in strong economic gains for the entire region. Connecting major Midwestern cities with modern passenger rail enables the formation of a coherent central manufacturing region supplied with a mobile and capable workforce. Indianapolis Union Station could once again be the focal point for redevelopment and economic growth in Indianapolis.

**Seek Federal dollars** -- In addition to its' own investment, Indiana must be positioned to apply for Federal monies at such time as they become available. This requires, at the very least, a master plan for modern passenger rail to be in place at the state level.

## Next Steps

**The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance** would suggest that the next step in providing a modern, cutting edge passenger rail system for Indiana is for INDOT to reach out to Amtrak, Iowa Pacific and the CSX railroad, and request estimates (*cont'd*)



Diners pose aboard the *Hoosier State*.

("IPRA Calls for Grassroots Effort" continued from page 3) of the capital costs and contractual arrangements that would be necessary for a daily **Hoosier State** service, on a different schedule from the Cardinal, with morning and evening departures from both Chicago and Indianapolis.

Once those costs have been determined, the next step would be to work with both INDOT and appropriate parties in the General Assembly to secure the necessary appropriations and authorizations.

## Strengthening **Hoosier State** Service Topic of March 3 Meeting in Lafayette

By Donald Yehle

Passenger rail advocates and community leaders gathered March 3 at Greater Lafayette Commerce to discuss ways to strengthen the Hoosier State passenger rail service. Richard Harnish, executive director of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, and Arvid Olson, transportation chair for Greater Lafayette Commerce, both made presentations.

Olson reported on Greater Lafayette Commerce's annual trip to Washington, D.C., where community leaders met with federal rail officials who explained a 1,300 page "omnibus (funding) bill." Significant federal dollars are available to states wanting to upgrade their rail infrastructure, they learned.

Leaders excitedly left the nation's capital "wanting in" and asking how to go about participating in these government programs. "There's a window of opportunity (to secure federal dollars), Olson said.

Indiana needs to match up transportation goals with funding opportunities as it seeks some direction to improve passenger rail and the economic benefits that come with it, continued Olson.

Expanding the **Hoosier State** passenger rail corridor is going to come "piece by piece by piece," Harnish said. The end result will be ridership and revenue increases from improved service levels and marketing.

Indiana was encouraged by Harnish to first create a (rail) master plan over the next year and then seek political support. To gain political support, meeting attendees were shown a proposed letter to be mailed by passenger rail advocates to Governor Mike Pence.

The letter explains the importance of the Hoosier State Corridor, spells out generally what improvements are needed to make the train service most competitive, and asks the governor "to direct the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to work with CSX Corporation and other railroads to determine what capital investments would be required for faster trains running at fre-

quencies of two, four or twelve times a day."

Meeting attendees live or work in the following Indiana counties – Marion, Miami, Montgomery, and Tippecanoe. Two cities (Lafayette and West Lafayette), one county (Tippecanoe), one visitors' bureau (Montgomery Co.), and one Chamber of Commerce (Tippecanoe) were represented. Five attendees serve on the board of directors of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance.

## INDOT, Iowa Pacific Taking Steps to Boost Ridership

As the calendar marches toward spring, several promotions are in full-swing to bring more passengers on board the **Hoosier State**, which runs four days a week along the 196-mile tracks between Indianapolis and Chicago with stops in Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer, and Dyer.

All students, including those enrolled at colleges and universities, may take 30 percent off coach fares with the Code V805.

One child under the age of 12 may ride the **Hoosier State** for free with the purchase of a coach ticket at full price using the code V416.

"Both discounts require tickets to be purchased at least three days in advance and are good through the end of May," it was announced in a news release by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Tickets are available for purchase at HoosierStateTrain.com, thru Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL, and other sales outlets including Amtrak mobile apps, the state transportation department said.

Coach fares range from \$1 to \$48 each way, with one-way business-class tickets priced at up to \$78.

Amtrak issues paper tickets, eTickets, and takes reservations. Rail passengers may participate in two travel reward programs – Amtrak Guest Rewards and Iowa Pacific's Rail Baron Club," the state continued.

## **Hoosier State** Amenities Showcased on Two Videos

"Two YouTube videos give viewers a glimpse of the **Hoosier State** train and the amenities on board. Delay in Block Productions filmed a (7 minute, 56 second) documentary, which is posted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eoaahocvul>.

"Reporter Michael Atwood joined Visit Indiana executive director Mark Newman on board the **Hoosier State** for a (3 minute, 38 second) Boomer TV segment that aired on (continued)



("Hoosier State Amenities Showcased" continued from page 4)  
WISH-TV in February. It may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcxhUUA14lc>.

"Passengers can stay productive or enjoy the journey with limited free Wi-Fi service and power outlets in both coach and business class. Breakfast on the northbound train and dinner on the southbound train are cooked fresh on board and served with real dishes and silverware. Hot meals and alcoholic beverages are included in business-class fare and are available to coach passengers for purchase on board.

"Social media users may stay updated on the Hoosier State train at <https://www.facebook.com/HoosierTrain> and <https://twitter.com/HoosierTrain>," said the Indiana Department of Transportation in a news release.

## February On-Time Performance for *Hoosier State* at 93.9 Percent

The *Hoosier State's* on-time arrival performance for February was 93.9 percent, significantly better than the 86.2 percent average for the five months beginning October 15. These statistics were announced March 8 by the Indiana Department of Transportation, rail contractors (Iowa Pacific) and five other public communities that contribute operating funds for the Hoosier State – Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer, Tippecanoe County, and West Lafayette.

In a separate announcement from Amtrak, both the *Cardinal* and the *Hoosier State* are showing ticket revenue gains for February 2016 over February 2015.

The *Cardinal's* ticket revenue is up to \$352,568 in February 2016 versus \$235,120 for the same month a year ago. Meanwhile, ticket revenue for the *Hoosier State* jumped to \$50,808 in February 2016 versus \$43,582 in February 2015.

Business class service is now available on both trains.

While ticket revenue improves, February ridership results for

INDIANA TRAINS					
Ridership Numbers	Feb. '16	Jan. '16	Dec. '15	Nov. '15	Oct. '15
Capitol Ltd.	12,293	14,085	18,778	18,190	18,457
Cardinal	5,315	6,205	9,597	8,793	9,889
HOOSIER STATE	1,647	1,863	2,826	2,457	2,294
Lake Shore Ltd.	20,933	24,288	33,203	28,865	29,884
Wolverine	33,359	34,129	40,166	41,319	36,430
	73,547	80,570	104,570	99,624	96,954

both trains is mixed.

The *Hoosier State* carried 1,647 passengers this last February, compared with 1,871 riders a year ago February.

The *Cardinal's* February 2016 ridership was 5,315 compared to 4,118 passengers a year ago February.

Ridership statistics for five trains that operate throughout Indiana is shown in the chart at the bottom of the opposite column.

## What Business Class Is Like on Amtrak's *Cardinal*

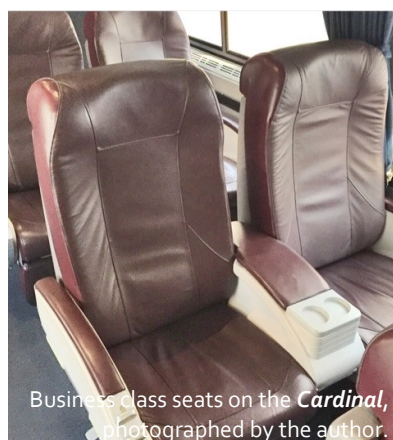
By J. Charles Riecks, Vice Chair--Government Relations, National Assn. Of Railroad Passengers

The *Cardinal* now offers business class service in addition to its reserved coach and sleeping accommodation services. The new seating choice is priced to be between coach and the sleeping option. It's designed to provide a *Cardinal* passenger with an extra-comfortable seat, as well as access to a few amenities such as a selection of non-alcoholic drinks and an extra lounge.

The Business Class car consists of three sections. They are:

The first section offers a seating area of 18 seats, arranged in six rows each with a 2-1 configuration. All seats are bucket-type, covered in leather. Each seat is tall enough to provide a rest for the heads of all, but the tallest of passengers. They recline to about a 45-degree position, and have a calf-rest option. Foot-rests and tray tables are available for all except the seats in the first row. During a recent trip, one passenger was using his tray table for his laptop and appeared to have plenty of room.

When two seats are located side-by-side, there is an elbow-height padded seat divider that includes two shallow depressions for holding drink



Business Class seats on the *Cardinal*, photographed by the author.

cups. Window seats have access to electrical outlets mounted in the wall. The arrangement of the seat allows virtually unobstructed viewing out the window. Above the seats are standard Amtrak overhead luggage holders. They're roomy (continued)

*("What Business Class Is Like..." continued from page 5)* enough to accommodate most carry-on items, such as 21-22" luggage and briefcases. Some room exists behind the last seats for a limited number of larger pieces. On the bottom of the overhead luggage holders are standard reading lamps with push-button operation.

**A non-staffed café drink bar is in the middle section of the business class car. Coffee, bottled water, fruit juices, and soft drinks are provided complimentary.**

**In the final section of the business class car is a lounge section. Six standard-sized tables make up the lounge. Four people can sit around five of the six tables. The sixth table offers bench seating for two people and an open side for wheelchairs. The lounge never closes, as is the case with diner-café cars.**

One unisex restroom serves all 18 business class customers.

The business class car is equipped with Amtrak's Wi-Fi service.\* Customers are able to access the Internet, send and receive messages, including voice, text, e-mail, pictures, and tweets. A map to track the train's progress is available, along with **Arrive Magazine**, several magazines, brief selections – a chapter or two – of various books, apps to other entertainment options, and additional information about the **Cardinal**. (\*Wi Fi service was very limited in the New River Gorge area.)

\*Amtrak's WiFi is branded AmtrakConnect and while on Amtrak's equipment, it combines the signals of up to four cellular carriers. Its signal strength is based on the strength of those four cellular networks. As there are areas that have spotty cellular coverage for phones, the cellular-based AmtrakConnect service is subject to the same conditions.

Some other carriers have coverage based on one or two providers, while Amtrak's makes the best of what is available. But a home, office, or coffee shop Wi-Fi experience is not possible at this time, Amtrak reports.

Disclaimer: This report is based on a business class travel experience of three frequent Amtrak travelers on

January 31, 2016. The author is not a professional travel writer.

## Wait Nearly Over for Lafayette Passengers

By Donald Yehle

Lafayette's Amtrak station is set to re-open in May.

"This is welcome news for passengers of both the **Cardinal** and the **Hoosier State**," says Joe Krause, volunteer station master for Amtrak in Lafayette.

"Our passengers have been improvising to stay warm throughout the winter," he continues.

Once the station reopens, new surprises await railroad passengers.

"The floors in the waiting room lobby and the bathrooms will be polished concrete," explains Dante Wells, general foreman for Mid-States General and Mechanical Corp. of Decatur, Illinois.

"Polished concrete is the fastest growing trend in the industry," he continues.

Stamped concrete, reddish in color, will greet passengers as they enter a vestibule at the north end of the historic train station. The vestibule is a welcome addition for passengers who previously have entered the waiting room directly from the out-of-doors, Wells says.

Other building improvements include new copper gutters and downspouts, new windows and doors, and a complete mechanical upgrade – cooling, electrical, heating, and plumbing, he continues.

*(continued)*



*The Lafayette Station is finally nearing completion.*



*The Lafayette Station is finally nearing completion.*

("Wait Nearly Over for Lafayette Passengers" continued from page 6) Tedious scraping and painting is part of the job, which also includes masonry tuck pointing four feet off the ground, Wells says.

Six Mid-States' employees have been working on the project from 7

a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## Framework To Improve "On-Time" Performance Deserves a Fair Look

As the Surface Transportation Board re-writes the rules "for how Amtrak can press host railroads to honor their legal obligations," the National Association of Railroad Passengers continues to ask consideration be given to four recommendations which would significantly improve on-time performance of America's passenger railroads.

The recommendations are:

**NARP urges regulators to measure on-time arrivals at all stations, not just at end points; to use a single 15-minute standard at each point along a train's route; and to trigger an automatic investigation if trains on a route dip below the on-time performance (OTP) standard more than 20 percent of the time.**

NARP recommends that regulators look more closely at what constitutes an "end point" station, given that there are routes at which intermediate stations constitute end-points for many individual services.

**NARP believes collected and published data should include the effect of degraded OTP on connections, and should require statistical**

**reporting by Amtrak detailing when late trains cause passengers to miss connections or when Amtrak is forced to delay departure of trains for connecting passengers. Collected and published data should also include OTP at key 'chokepoints' where passenger trains are handed off from one host railroad to another.**

NARP believes that while Amtrak-caused delays contribute only a small fraction of the total delays reported, it is fair to use the OTP rulemaking to establish a minimum standard Amtrak must meet to avoid delays caused by equipment failures.

"Going around the intent of Congress as expressed some 30 years ago and consistently reaffirmed in law and court rulings is not acceptable," says NARP'S CEO and President Jim Mathews.

"The law was originally written so that host railroads – rescued by taxpayers in 1970 when Amtrak was created to relieve the host railroads of having to run passenger trains – had to give passenger trains preference unless they could win an exemption by proving that preference for passenger trains would 'materially lessen the quality of transportation provided to freight shippers,'" he added.

## Riding the Rails

By Donald Yehle

**WILL BIG FREIGHT COMPANIES SHINK FROM SIX TO FOUR TO TWO? --** Are there mergers in the future for BNSF, Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Norfolk & Southern? Despite "each (American) citizens' consumption of goods requires moving 36 tons of freight annually," rail companies are seeing "slumping profits." [Click on this link to learn more.](#)

**20 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PROMOTE THE CARDINAL** – Amtrak's *Cardinal* operates three days a week between New York City and Chicago by way of Charlottesville, Cincinnati and Indianapolis. [The National Association of Railroad Passengers \(NARP\) believes the Cardinal should be a daily train and, with your help, we're going to get that message to a great many people.](#)

[NARP is going to produce and distribute 30-second public service radio spots to about 200 radio station located along the Cardinal's route. But to make this \(continued\)](#)



("Riding the Rails" continued from page 7) happen, NARP needs at least 20 volunteers to personally telephone about 10 radio stations to find out if they accept public service announcements and, if so, to compile the necessary contact information.

If you can help in this effort, please respond with your interest to this email at [jploomis@narprail.org](mailto:jploomis@narprail.org)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** – The link below is to an executive summary examining rail ridership and cost estimates of a proposed Coast-to-Coast passenger rail service in Michigan.

[Recent study on passenger rail service between Detroit and Holland](#)

**WHEN YOU BUY A CAR, THINK ABOUT TRAINS** – Auto manufacturers rely on the railroad freight industry to get vehicles to a dealership near you. This information, provided by the Association of American Railroads, appeared in a recent issue of the *Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/brand-connect/aar/when-you-buy-a-car-think-about-trains/>

**THE PROMISE OF PASSENGER RAIL** – Like passengers on the *Hoosier State* or the *Cardinal*, riders on Amtrak's *Vermont* want more than one southbound and one northbound train a day. See the editorial below entitled, "The Promise of Passenger Rail," from *BusinessWest*.com, the business journal of Western Massachusetts.

Editorial on February 23, 2016 in *Opinion*

## How To Effectively Lodge a Complaint on Train Service

By Don Yehle

An Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) board member was among *Hoosier State* passengers delayed nearly three hours in arriving at Indianapolis Union Station the night of February 29. Passengers reported that a CSX freight train blocked their train on the single track just west of Crawfordsville after the freight train crew faced mechanical difficulties and timed out (reached the Federally-mandated 12 hours of operation).

Everyone connected with the *Hoosier State* was more than a little frustrated with the 2:43 a.m. arrival at Indy Union Station. One passenger reported making it to bed at 4 a.m. Amtrak and Iowa-Pacific employees made it to their homes even



later. Officials from the three organizations involved in the public-private partnership (Indiana Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and Iowa-Pacific) weren't happy with the news when they arrived at their offices the morning of March 1.

CSX management knew they'd be receiving questions from passenger rail officials, and they were prepared. Our board member received a prompt response letter, which we would like to share. It read as follows:

"Thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. CSX is committed to being a good partner with Amtrak and we are sorry that you were disappointed with your experience on March 1, 2016.

"We have reviewed the operating conditions that contributed to the delays encountered by the train you were riding and thought you might appreciate learning more about the events that affected your trip.

"CSX local trains provide service to the industries along the Crawfordsville branch. The crew operating the CSX train exceeded their hours of service and a new crew was promptly called. Unfortunately the CSX crew encountered mechanical issues and were unable to clear the mainline which caused the delay to your Amtrak train. Once the relief crew arrived they were able to resolve the issues and clear the main track.

"The safety of the public and our employees is our first priority. CSX's policy is to safely run all trains on our lines and minimize delays to the extent possible in the interests of the passenger services and our freight customers that operate on our rail lines.

"Again, we apologize for the inconvenience you experienced and sincerely hope your future travels on Amtrak meet your expectations."

"When something like that incident happens, possibly the most important thing is that those affected have an effective way of lodging a complaint," said Steve Coxhead, IPRA president. *(continued)*



("How To Effectively Lodge a Complaint..." continued from page 8) "That not only puts the powers that be on notice that we are watching, but puts the problems on record," he continued.

Until IPRA can find out who within Amtrak, INDOT, Iowa-Pacific, and freight railroads like CSX should be the recipients of strong, but civil statements of dissatisfaction, Coxhead wants IPRA members to do as Bill Malcolm did, let him know. Coxhead can be reached at [scoxhead@comcast.net](mailto:scoxhead@comcast.net)

Phillip Steby, an Amtrak conductor and an IPRA board member, is a source for technical knowledge about railroading and as he once wrote, "knows the history of rail as well as what rail is and what it does (and doesn't do)." He welcomes emails at [pstreby@aol.com](mailto:pstreby@aol.com)

Both Coxhead and Steby encourage members to give rail service providers the benefit of the doubt. In your communications, give a concise, factual description of what appeared to happen. Be confident that your concerns will be heard, they said.

## Muncie City Hall Site of April 26 Transit Meeting

The first of two public transportation meetings this year in Muncie is planned for April 26 at the Muncie City Hall auditorium. "Strengthening public transportation throughout Delaware County and increasing commuter service to Indianapolis" are the twin goals of the meeting, says Roger Hollands of the Anderson-Muncie Public Transportation Coalition.

Commuting patterns will be explored as will ways public transportation can grow the economies of both Anderson and Muncie along the I-69 corridor, Hollands adds. The April 26 meeting begins at 7 p.m. The second meeting date is yet to be announced. Two similar meetings are planned for Anderson, as well.

## Amtrak Announces Discount for Students Ages 17 to 25

"Students ages 17-25 can now enjoy 15 percent off the lowest available value fares all year long with the launch of the Amtrak student discount, effective immediately," it was announced March 21 by Amtrak Media Relations.

In a news release, the company said "wherever students choose to go – whether it visiting a college campus, following a favorite team to the next away game, planning a weekend getaway, or visiting friends and family – Amtrak allows students to skip the hassles of the road and enjoy the journey."

"Parents will enjoy that Amtrak offers a safe and affordable way for students to travel back and forth to school," added the company.

The student discount for the *Hoosier State* and Amtrak's national student discount have different percentages and procedures.

## Cattle Feed Truck Caused Derailment Near Dodge City

The National Transportation Safety Board announced that a truck delivering cattle feed caused a train track to shift, resulting in the derailment of Amtrak's Southwest Chief in Kansas in March. The impact of the truck caused the train tracks to shift up to 14 inches. The train derailed as it traveled 60 mph with 131 passengers and 14 crew members. At least 32 people were hurt.

## Contributors

IPRA – Steve Coxhead, Joe Krause, Bill Malcolm, and Phillip Steby.

NARP – J. Charles Riecks, vice chair, government relations.

Texas Reader—David Thomas

## 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](http://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](http://www.amtrak.com) if booked three or more days in advance.