

3rd Time's the Charm: Enjoy First Class Dining Aboard the *Hoosier State*

By Bill Malcolm



Do you love Asian-infused salmon? I do, and that is just what was being served on my recent trip on the *Hoosier State* train from Chicago. Having just returned from Seattle (where I had Copper River salmon from British Columbia), I was skeptical when they announced that was the special on the train that night. However, I was pleasantly surprised when dinner arrived (see picture). It was excellent.

On the train that night, shoppers from Chicago (mothers and daughters) had picked up dolls from the American Girl store.

The train was full and we were a half hour early. We were so early we got to disembark at Dyer for a brief break.

The Hoosier State arguably is the best train ride in the country. Complete with dome car for premium class riders, you would be hard pressed to find a route with better amenities.

Even the cab ride home from the station went smoothly.

When things work well, the *Hoosier State* is the best way to get from Chicago to Indy. No I-65 congestion and tolls. No standing in the weather waiting for the MegaBus. No mingling at the Greyhound station. No tarmac delays as when flying. Just first class seating, free WiFi, and a great dining car at a reasonable price. (My first two trips were not as wonderful.)

Hats off to Iowa Pacific and Indiana governmental leadership for their bold vision to out-source the train to Iowa Pacific. Yes, I was a skeptic but it has turned out great.

Passenger Rail Critical Resource for Purdue University Students

Data courtesy of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

Survey results on passenger rail are in from Purdue University. They are:

Almost half of those surveyed have taken Amtrak to/from school.

More than three-quarters of those surveyed who have taken the train say passenger rail service is an important resource to attend school. (continued)

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Three-quarters of all respondents say they would ride more frequently if more frequent service was available.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) conducted the on-line survey between December 4 and December 23 of last year. A total of 299 responses were provided. Of respondents who identified themselves, 61 percent are students, 32 percent are staff, and 7 percent are faculty.

Of student respondents, 95 percent say they are full time.

Purdue is one of 30 colleges and universities across nine Midwestern states, to participate in this survey which aims to assess the importance of intercity passenger rail service among college and university students, faculty and staff whose schools are located along current Amtrak routes.

One goal of the survey is to help determine what schools, states and the region can do to boost passenger rail service, says Laura Kliever, MIPRC director.

"These results are very encouraging; not only is there a solid ridership base today, but the survey shows enormous passenger growth potential could result from well-targeted marketing and education campaigns.

"That's as good a 'return on investment' as we could hope to find," says Missouri State Senator David Pearce, chair of the MIPRC University Partnerships Committee.

"We encourage states, schools and Amtrak to work over the summer break so they can begin tapping this market when fall terms begin," he continues.

Among key results from Purdue respondents:

A large majority of respondents (75 percent) say they would be more likely to take the train if more frequent service was available; 41 percent would be "much more likely," and 34 percent would be "somewhat more likely." (Purdue currently is served by one daily roundtrip Amtrak train. Three days a week it is served through the long-distance **Cardinal** route between Chicago and New York. Four days a week it is served by the **Hoosier State** service between Chicago and Indianapolis, which is primarily financed by the state of Indiana and local communities. Both services include a stop in Lafayette each way.)

An even larger majority (80 percent) said they consider passenger rail service important (30 percent) or very important (50 percent) to the United States' transportation future.

Almost half (47 percent) of respondents reported that they have taken the train at least once to get to/from school. Of them, 65 percent have ridden once or

75% of Purdue students would ride trains if more frequent service was available. Photo by Chris Rinker.



twice during the past 12 months. Another 23 percent say they've ridden 3-4 times, 7 percent have ridden 5-9 times, and 5 percent have ridden at least 10 times.

For those who have taken the train to/from Purdue, most (76 percent) indicate that Amtrak service is an important resource for them to be able to attend the school. Asked how important Amtrak service is to their ability to attend Purdue University, 53 percent of these respondents said either "Very Important" or "Extremely Important." Another 23 percent say it's "Somewhat Important."

Among those who had never taken the train to/from Purdue University, a sizable number indicated particular changes that might motivate them to take the train in the future. For example, 48 percent indicated "More/Better Discounts", 44 percent indicated "More Frequent Service" and 41 percent indicated "Information provided by my college/university on how to take the train" might motivate them to use Amtrak to travel to/from the school in the future.

Most respondents, however, are only "somewhat aware" (40 percent) or "not at all aware" (37 percent) of state and federal governments' roles in funding passenger rail, including whether to increase service frequency or add new routes.

Additionally, respondents across all 30 participating schools who said they had taken intercity passenger rail recently were invited to take a second survey about their most recent trip. A total of 1,597 did so. Highlights among their answers include:

1. 55 percent say it is "very easy" or "extremely easy" to get between school and an Amtrak station, and 47 percent say their ticket was either "very" or "extremely" affordable. Furthermore, 71 percent say they enjoyed their experience or enjoyed it a lot.
2. But schedules are a concern; just 34 percent say they had "very convenient" or "extremely convenient" departure/arrival times. Moreover, 49 percent say their train arrived (*continued*)

(*"Passenger Rail Critical Resource..." continued from page 2*) at destination later than scheduled (45 percent say their train arrived on time).

3. **WiFi service is a critical service amenity:** 70 percent say onboard WiFi availability is "very" or "extremely" important, and 60 percent have used it during their rides.

74 percent say they have never used a discount code or card when purchasing tickets, despite Amtrak's "Student Advantage Card" being among available discount programs.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) is a nine-state interstate compact that promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements to passenger rail service.

Social Media Goal Reached by MIPRC

By Donald Yehle

Cries of joy were heard throughout the Midwest as a social media goal was reached in mid-April by the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC). "We've reached our goal for our Thunderclap campaign! As of 10 am Central on April 14, the following announcement was posted on at least 205 supporters' Twitter feeds and/or Facebook pages, announced MIPRC Director Laura Kliewer and Jon Davis, policy analyst.

The Twitter and Facebook announcement, in support of results from a passenger rail survey among Midwest college and university students, read:

"Growth potential for #Amtrak ridership to/from Midwest colleges? #MIPRC survey says yes-share the news #takethetrain <http://thndr.me/QqgkXd>"

"Thank you so much to all of you who have joined – please plan on "retweeting" if on Twitter and/or sharing the announcement with your friends if on Facebook, Kliewer and Davis said.

The social reach of the 206 supporters was 185,106 people.

Hoosier State Corridor Could Potentially Support Four to 12 Daily Trains

By Steve Coxhead, IPRA President

The **Hoosier State** corridor has the potential for supporting from four to twelve trains per day, with a scheduled running time of 3.5 hours, said Rick Harnish, executive director, Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA).



MHSRA met April 2 in Chicago. Photo by Bill Malcolm.

Speaking at the organization's annual spring meeting on Saturday, April 2, Harnish said the first step in achieving this potential is to solicit capital cost estimates from the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and CSX Corporation, one of the nation's leading transportation suppliers.

Capital cost estimates could include:

- Signal improvements including positive train control (PTC) for 80+ mph
- Manual switches replaced by automatic switches
- Additional passing sidings, as needed
- Improved grade crossings to provide greater safety
- Track improvements for 79 mph, including double tracking

The goal is to receive cost estimates from INDOT and CSX for improvements this spring and fall, and then request appropriations from the Indiana legislature next session, he explained.

The status of the Cross Rail Chicago initiative and the upcoming tour of high speed rail infrastructure in Japan were also highlighted by Harnish.

The day's agenda also contained a full complement of speakers, including:

- Toni Preckwinkle, Cook County Board President
- Derrick James, Director-Government Affairs, Amtrak
- Ryan Griffin-Stegink, Assistant Communications Director, Metropolitan Planning Council (*continued*)

("Hoosier State Corridor ..." continued from page 3)

Mark Nakayama, General Manager-Washington, DC, Office, JR Central Railroad

David Burns, a railroad industrial engineering consultant
Luv Sehgal, graduate research assistant, RailTEC, University of Illinois, Champaign

An offering by the **Coalition for a Modern Metra Electric** kicked off the meeting. Metra Electric is the north-south electric commuter line running from the Chicago Loop, along the lake front, down the far south suburbs of Chicago. The coalition explained their proposals for the modernization and improvement of this line, as a spur to economic development in the South Side.

The MHSRA spring meeting's keynote speaker was Ms. Toni Preckwinkle, president, Cook County Board. Cook County is the Illinois County which includes Chicago, and contains more than five million residents.

Ms. Preckwinkle stressed the importance of maintaining a modern transportation infrastructure (including rail) to maintaining the economic viability of Cook County. It was noted that Cook County has had to put its' own money into transportation initiatives due to the lack of support on the State and Federal level.

Realistically, this sometimes means raising local taxes to pay for essential services. This is an issue with which many urban counties (including Marion, Lake, and Tippecanoe Counties in Indiana) face today, Ms. Preckwinkle said.

Next up was Mr. Derrick James, of Amtrak, who described the planned renovation and improvement of Chicago Union Station, currently underway. The modifications, when completed, will result in a station with increased capacity, more user friendly spaces, better links to local transportation, and a greatly improved complement of retail and service offerings.

This will have a direct impact on Indiana travelers, as Chicago Union Station is Hoosierland's primary gateway to the nationwide passenger rail system, it was explained.

Mr. James' presentation was complemented by that of Mr. Ryan Griffin-Stegink, of the Metropolitan Planning Council (Chicago metro area). Mr. Griffin-Stegink described several approaches being taken to provide funding for the improvements in and around Chicago Union Station. Included were innovative ideas for sharing in the increased value of property in the station neighborhood, resulting from the improvements. These are approaches that could have some applicability to Indiana cities in their continuing quest to identify funding for important infrastructure projects.

The day's focus then switched to the future and what is happening in other places.

Mr. Mark Nakayama, of JR Central, gave the gathering an overview of his firm's history of operating bullet train service in Japan, since 1964. He also highlighted the proposed 239-mile, Dallas-Houston high speed rail link, for which the environmental impact study has begun. This line will be equipped with Japanese high speed equipment.

Mr. Nakayama closed by reviewing two interesting projects employing magnetic levitation (MAGLEV) technology. One, covering 320 miles from Tokyo-Nagoya, in Japan, is projected to be completed by 2027. The other is a proposal to build a MAGLEV line from Washington, DC, to New York City.

Next, an overview of the prospects for high speed freight rail was given by Mr. David Burns, a railroad industrial engineering consultant. Mr. Burns' thesis was that freight railroads might be more willing to embrace high speed passenger rail if the same infrastructure could be used to significantly improve the profitability of their freight service.

The day was wrapped up with a report on the implementation of high speed rail systems in India. The presenter was Mr. Luv Sehgal, a graduate research assistant at the University of Illinois, Champaign. The government of India has determined it is important to link the major population centers of India with modern, high speed passenger rail.

Work has already begun on the initial route selected, Mr. Sehgal said.

This was an important meeting for those concerned with the progress of modern 21st Century passenger rail in the Midwest, as attendees were afforded a glimpse of the economic development possibilities associated with the implementation of high speed rail systems.

There was also a cautionary message, in as much as it was clear that the Midwest could, in fact, face economic decline if sufficient attention is not paid to the modernization of the transportation system, many meeting attendees concluded.

MHSRA Among Several Groups Promoting 21st Century Rail

The Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA) is one of a group of organizations concerned with the state of modern passenger rail development. Members of the group (which includes the National Association of Railroad Passengers, the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, and the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association) often work in a mutually supporting fashion to further that goal.

With thousands of members throughout the Midwest, *(cont'd)*

("MHSRA Among Several Groups" continued from page 4)

the MHSRA works to educate the public and increase popular demand for fast, frequent and dependable trains linking Midwestern communities. It is one of the nation's leading advocacy organizations in the effort to bring high-speed rail to the United States. Since 1993, the MHSRA has worked with local governments, federal officials, the railroad industry and other advocacy groups to cultivate the political will and public support needed to drive this process forward. The MHSRA is based in Chicago. Its website is www.midwesthsr.org

Gary Airport Site of May 12 IPRA Board, Member Meeting

Board members of the Indiana Passenger Rail Association (IPRA) will meet Thursday, May 12, at the Gary/ Chicago International Airport, it was announced by President Steve Coxhead.

"We like to move our board meetings around the state, to make it more convenient for board members and others to attend," he said.

The two-hour meeting begins at 10 a.m. Eastern Time.

For a map and directions to the airport, put Gary/Chicago International Airport in your browser and click on "contact – map and directions."

All IPRA members are encouraged to attend, Coxhead emphasized.

NIPRA Working To Strengthen Message, Clarify Its Mission

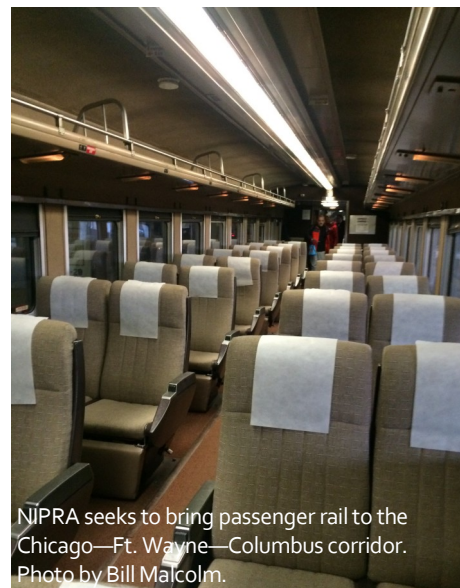
By Dorothy Hagan, NIPRA Secretary

As Spring 2016 arrives, the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA) is busy working on strengthening its message and clarifying its mission. With several new board members starting this year, we are trying to take advantage of their "new set of eyes" to help solidify our role in bringing the Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus Passenger Rail Corridor to fruition.

One critical issue brought up by the newest members is lack of a clear focus of NIPRA's role. Over the past five to 10 years, NIPRA Board Members have acted as fundraiser, lobbyist, corridor developer, cheerleader, meeting organizer and partner.

This varied mission was once necessary, but the newest members feel that this lack of focus is now hurting our successes moving forward.

To continue forward movement on the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), NIPRA has started preliminary data collection on some of the information that will be required in the report. Additionally, the Business Plan commissioned by NIPRA is now five years old and conditions have changed.



NIPRA seeks to bring passenger rail to the Chicago—Ft. Wayne—Columbus corridor.
Photo by Bill Malcolm.

Freight rail traffic on the corridor has been altered, and in some cases track conditions have improved or have deteriorated. Due diligence is needed to ensure that our corridor is primed to progress when state and federal agencies give the green light.

Media Specialist To Update Logo

A Communications and Marketing Committee has been organized within NIPRA to help clarify the strategic mission (or missions). The committee will also work with a media specialist to update our logo and develop meaningful, interesting literature to update the public about the progress we've made and to gather more supporters.

The committee will also review NIPRA's current efforts, including the Strategic Plan last updated in the fall of 2015, and develop suggestions for the future. These suggestions will then be vetted by the full board.

Recent discussions with corridor partners, including the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), produced the recommendation that NIPRA work toward updating and lobbying for support from Indiana State Legislators and Governor Michael Pence.

INDOT staff emphasized it will be very important at budget time to have executive and legislative support for the project. FRA indicated that the federal government is more likely to assist a project if it has strong state support.

NIPRA will work on Indiana legislators and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) will gather support in Ohio. MORPC staff is also coordinating bi-weekly calls with the Ohio partners and encouraging their fundraising efforts.

(continued)

("NIPRA Working to Strengthen ..." continued from page 5)
Rail Rally, Legislator Day Under Consideration

There have also been discussions on holding another "Rally for Rail" to update the community and garner more support. Board members have started to reach out to potential supportive legislators to determine the best way to gain consensus for this corridor at the state and federal level.

Also being considered is hosting a State Legislator Day and serving a breakfast or lunch here in Fort Wayne while legislators are home.

Future work needed includes decisions on a management entity for the corridor itself, discussions on project oversight of the Tier 1 EIS, financing decisions, and even the naming of the Corridor.

Three other ideas moving forward are:

- Conduct lobbying and/or letter writing campaigns to business associations (i.e., Chambers of Commerce, Regional alliances, etc.), State legislators, and U.S. Congress members.
- Build and strengthen relations with INDOT and FRA rail management staff.
- Develop a "toolkit" of promotional products - a primary video, short 1-5 minute media promo, stickers, and other tools to implement marketing.

Passenger Train Build-Out in Midwest Will Generate \$2.3-\$3.5 Billion for Indiana

By Donald Yehle

Indiana's economy benefits from passenger rail.

The goal is a 3,000-mile rail network connecting our state with eight other Midwest states.

Speeds up to 110 miles per hour will result in "significantly reduced travel times, increased train frequencies, and improved on-time performances," says a report from the Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS).

Community benefits include 4,540 permanent jobs and \$86 million of extra household income for Hoosiers.

Existing industries benefit, the growth of new small businesses is fostered, and larger businesses can distribute their operations more widely throughout the state, the report states.

Like with the Old National Bank development project adja-

cent to Lafayette's Big 4 Depot, "increased train operations from the MWRRS will lead to rising property values and significant joint (public-private) development opportunities near train stations," MWRRS says.

The chart below shows the potential property value increases from joint private-public development at 10 Indiana multimodal transportation facilities.

Increased Joint Development Potential in Indiana (in \$ millions):	
Station	Property Value Increase
Indianapolis	\$121-\$182
Lafayette	\$39-\$58
Gary, Airport	\$32-\$48
Fort Wayne	\$26-\$38
Plymouth	\$21-\$32
Hammond-Whiting	\$16-\$25
Michigan City	\$12-\$18
Warsaw	\$10-\$15
Indianapolis, International Airport	\$7-\$10
Shelbyville	\$0.9-\$1.4

Compared to expanding existing highways and airports, expansion of passenger rail furthers the reduction of air pollutant emissions, requires less land, and has fewer habitat and water resource impacts, officials say.

By diverting travelers from air, bus, and automobiles to rail, travel time between destinations is lessened. Costs are reduced as a result of lower congestion levels along with the emission reductions.

The MWRRS estimates the economic impact from reduced travel time, lower traffic congestion, and emission reductions to be a \$2.3-\$3.5 billion benefit for Indiana.

Example train travel times for Indiana routes are below:

EXAMPLE TRAIN TRAVEL TIMES FOR INDIANA ROUTES			
City Pairs	Current Service	MWRRS (EXPRESS)	Auto Drive Time
Chicago-Fort Wayne	(no service)	1hr 43min	3hr 17min
Fort Wayne-Cleveland	(no service)	2hr 40min	3hr 33min
Chicago-Indianapolis	4hr 50min	2hr 41min	2hr 57min
Indianapolis-Cincinnati	3hr 7min	1hr 27min	1hr 55min

More economic information on what 21st Century Passenger Rail can do for Indiana can be obtained by contacting the Indiana Department of Transportation's Rail Office.

The address is: IGCN Room N955, 100 North Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204. The phone number is 317-232-1491. The Multimodal website is <http://www.in.gov/indot/3198.htm>

Riding the Rails

By Donald Yehle

Your Donations Matter – As the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) continues its campaign to request Governor Pence to ask the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to work with CSX Corporation on infrastructure improvements for the **Hoosier State** line, we ask for your financial support to conduct our day-to-day business.

A \$30 annual contribution can make a big difference – not by itself, but collectively from all Hoosiers who want to see the train connecting Chicago and Indianapolis making two, four, six, eight, 10, or 12 daily runs.

"Hopefully, in the year ahead, we will see state funding for the **"Hoosier State"** become more secure, and progress made towards improved performance and these additional frequencies," says IPRA President Steve Coxhead.

"When you come down to the capitol, don't forget that as a benefit of membership, you may save **12 percent** on your next stay at the Crowne Plaza Union Station, Indianapolis. Just use the following corporate ID when making your reservation: 100329414," he continues.

"The Train of the Stars" Inaugural Run was May 12, 1936 – Today's **Southwest Chief**, which connects Chicago with Los Angeles, had its beginnings in the 1930s as **The Super Chief**. **Truck Trends Magazine** showcased the Chief – once known as "the train of the Stars" – in an April issue. To open the hyperlink, right click on <http://a.msn.com/o8/en-us/BBryxGY?ocid=se>

Coxhead, Streby at MARP Meeting – More than 30 passenger rail advocates from the states of Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin gathered on Saturday, April 16, in New Buffalo, Michigan, for a membership meeting of the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers.

Many passenger rail advocates, including Coxhead, took advantage of **The Wolverine's** multiple frequencies – three daily trips, each way – to attend the gathering. Streby and Coxhead were among the presenters at the meeting, which featured reports on passenger rail initiatives in the three states.



Phil Streby and Steve Coxhead in New Buffalo after meeting with Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers. Photo by Donald Yehle.

Women Feel Safer – Some German women feel safer in "women only" train compartments, which have been rolled out on some trains in that Western European country, according to a report from NBC News. For more on this subject, click on the following link: <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/travel/women-only-train-compartments-roll-out-germany-n557581>

23/37/9 – "If you're going to have a world-class city, you have to have a world-class rail line," says Andrew Goetz, a University of Denver geography professor who specializes in transportation issues. Such a rail line opened last month in Denver, Colorado, according to the **Denver Post**. The A-1 line connects Denver International Airport with downtown Denver, a distance of 23 miles. The 37-minute train ride has a one-way fare of \$9. Details are available at http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_29776576/denvers-new-tune-dia-take-train

IPRA Pushes for Upgrades at Indy Station

By Bill Malcolm, IPRA Board Member*

Have you had a chance to visit St. Louis lately? The new Amtrak station also serves as a light rail and Greyhound station in a clean, modern building complete with restaurant.

How about Milwaukee? The intermodal station serves Greyhound, Coach Lines, MegaBus, Lamers, Jefferson Lines, and Indian Trails inter-city buses plus Amtrak and the Milwaukee County Bus System.

Ditto for East Lansing (MI), where the new station serves Amtrak, MegaBus, Greyhound, and the city bus.

Ditto for St. Paul (MN), where you can catch the new light rail to Minneapolis, take Amtrak, or the inter-city bus from the newly remodeled Union Station.

Finally, the remodeled Union Station in Denver serves as an Amtrak station as well as light rail and city (RTD) buses plus the bus to Boulder as well as to Colorado Springs, Grand Junction and Ft. Collins buses.

Plus, the new line to the Denver International Airport opened on April 22.

More importantly, there are numerous restaurants, bars, and restaurants in Denver's Union Station making it a destination even for those not needing to take transit.

In Indianapolis, our Union Station is the oldest building in the City. The station is used for conventions (continued)

("IPRA Pushes for Upgrades..." continued from page 7) and conferences by the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Across the street and a bit south at 350 S. Illinois is the infamous Bus Rail Station. Complete with 1970s era Amtrak sign, the beleaguered facility is owned by the City of Indianapolis but operated by Greyhound. The buzz of the old lighting is problem one. The Indianapolis

bus rail facility is not a welcoming one. The bathrooms are not particularly clean and the janitorial supplies are left by the door at all times even when cleaning is not imminent. Greyhound allows ticketed passengers to sleep on the floor which they do (see picture) giving the place the feel of a homeless shelter.

Seating is circa 1960. In short, it is not a very pleasant place to wait for a train (or a bus). (This is in contrast to the new Indy Go station which opens next month across from the City County Building.)

In response, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance board members are scheduling a meeting with city officials this month to discuss what can be done.

We are attempting to meet with Jeff Bennett and Emily Mack who oversee operation of the facility. We want to discuss better cleaning, lighting, and an end to letting passengers sleep on the floor. (The City—which also owns and operates the Indianapolis Airport—does not allow such for air passengers.) IPRA Board members note that Amtrak officials have in the past noted that the location of Indy's Union Station—just steps from hotels, Lucas Oil Stadium, and the Convention Center—is one of the most convenient downtown train stations in the system.

As Mark Fisher of the Indianapolis Chamber noted (at the April 19 meeting of the Broad Ripple Village Association), it will also allow convenient connections to the new Red Line Bus Rapid Transit.

We need Indianapolis train passengers to let City of Indianapolis officials know that visitors to Indianapolis—whether by train/bus or by air—should have positive thoughts about their arrival.

The Indianapolis Union Station bus rail station has the potential to rival Denver, Milwaukee, St. Paul and St. Louis and again be the envy of the Midwest.



A man sleeps on the floor of Indy's Union Station. Photo by Bill Malcolm.

*Bill Malcolm also writes the Round the Ripple column in the Broad Ripple Gazette and manages the utility advocacy work for a national association. He is an IPRA Board member.

NARP Members Speak of Passenger Rail Virtues

By Phil Streby

A large group of NARP meeting attendees rode Amtrak train #30 from stations between Chicago and Washington, D.C. During the highly enjoyable daylight portions of the trip through Pennsylvania and Maryland, many conversations sprang up among both the NARP members and the rest of the traveling public.

Almost all centered around the virtues of rail passenger travel including great scenery, interesting passengers and their stories, lack of intrusive security scrutiny, relaxing travel, and the desire for even more convenience and travel destinations which could be provided only by taking the train.

During the Council meeting on Monday, Day 1, we heard from several speakers. One, whose remarks were very well received, spoke on the huge amount of private investment within a three-block radius of a train station which was renovated and reutilized with public grant monies into a multi-modal transportation center.

Others spoke on the future of food service on Amtrak, taking bikes and pets on trains, WIFI expansion, how Amtrak copes with "535 bosses on the hill," and how the national rail provider is the "most underfunded and misunderstood railroad in the world."

We later turned our attention to speaking points and discussion to be used while meeting with our legislative representatives. Monday evening was spent dining out in small groups, and discussing the day's events.

Tuesday, following breakfast, we dispersed to Capitol Hill and engaged our representatives in the economic reasons why passenger rail makes greater investment a strong political argument. We discussed the FAST Act, recently passed but, as yet, unfunded, as well as the great disparity of funding among transportation modes. Brought to greater light were various expenditures which are associated with other-than-rail modes as well as the hidden funding sources which give those modes of travel great popularity with the perceived, though mistaken belief of low cost. Remarks were enlightening.

Wednesday, elections to various Council and NARP (cont'd)

("NARP Members Speak of Rail Virtues" continued from page 8) leadership positions took place, followed by our final luncheon and guest speaker. Once again finding many of us gathered at the train station, we engaged in conversations among ourselves as well as fellow travelers about the popular and unique mode of transportation known as the passenger train.

NARP's spring conference was held in Silver Spring, Maryland, April 10-13. Donald Yehle, editor of **All Aboard Indiana**, and this author represented the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance.

Response to Letter to Editor Inquiring About Passenger Rail Service to Richmond, IN

A passenger rail advocate writes:

I am a member of the Midwest Passenger Rail Association. Is there possibly any discussion of a passenger rail line from Indianapolis to Richmond, Indiana, continuing on to Dayton and Columbus, in Ohio? Many of us believe having such a com-

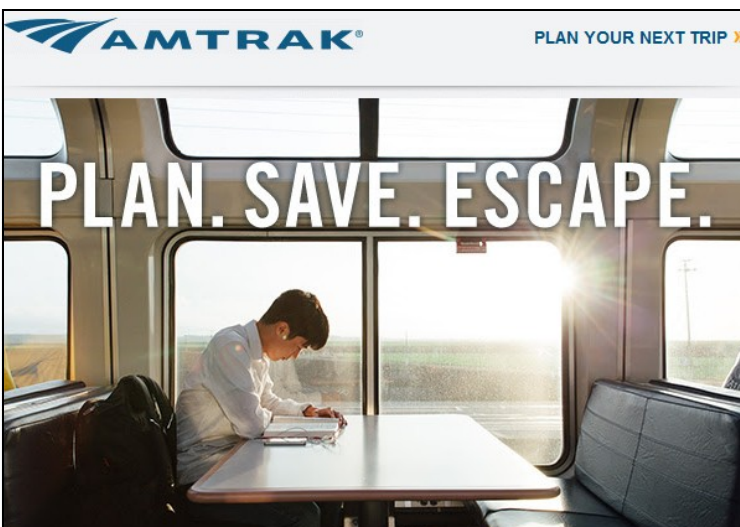
muter line involving these communities has a huge ridership potential as well as numerous business opportunities.

IPRA responds:

This is an interesting idea, and just one more example of the widespread, but unmet, potential demand for modern 21st Century passenger rail services in the Midwest, in general, and Indiana, in particular. Not only would this give Richmond residents an additional option for travel to the state capitol, but combined with the existing "Hoosier State" and "Cardinal" service through Indianapolis, would give central Ohio residents options for travel to Chicago, and a connection with the national passenger rail network.

Like much in modern day America, the establishment of passenger rail services is a political issue. As such, advocates must engage with the political process if anything is to be accomplished. And the process must start at the state, not the federal level.

Okay, how do we do this?



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Children ages 2-12 save 50%. Up to two Children ages 2 – 12 [save 50%](#) on the lowest available adult rail fare on most Amtrak trains with each fare-paying adult.



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The first step is to organize a group of like minded citizens, including as many potential local stakeholders as possible. Some possibilities could include local Chambers of Commerce, municipal governments and local Congressman. The idea is to build an organized critical mass of grass roots support. As a part of this effort, the group would identify the possible operator, develop ball park cost estimates, and identify possible funding sources. An outline plan is developed.

Then, approach the Department of Transportation (INDOT), and request that the freight railroad be requested to supply cost estimates for the work required to get the job done. There can be a great deal of variability here, depending on the nature and/or existence of a potential freight railroad.

Finally, local members of the General Assembly can be approached. Start with members of the House, since spending bills originate in the House. They will need to be presented with the plan and costs, and persuaded that the proposed service would be a worthy project in which the state should invest. And this is important. Ask for a state investment, which results in positive economic returns, and enables the operator to more than cover costs. Work with your House member to identify potential funding sources, and determine if the idea could have any traction in the next budget session. Remember that we have two-year budgets in Indiana.

This can work, and is not without precedent. Currently in our state there are three active passenger rail projects. Their advocates have all had to engage with the political process to move forward. A Fort Wayne based advocacy group has done an initial study and is attempting to fund an environmental impact study for Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus (*continued*)

("Response to Correspondent..." continued from page 9) (Ohio) service. In Northwest Indiana, a major expansion of the South Shore commuter railroad is underway. In the Chicago-Indianapolis corridor, there are active efforts underway to improve and modernize both the existing Amtrak based services ("Hoosier State" & "Cardinal").

Finally, develop good working relationships with the traditional and electronic press, and get as much "buzz" generated, as possible. Public awareness is the key.

Contributors

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance – Steve Coxhead, Fred Lanahan, Bill Malcolm, and Phillip Streby.

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission – Laura Kliewer, director.

Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association – Dorothy Hagan, Fred Lanahan.

Special Contributor – Garrett Cheney and Chris Rinker

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

or contact us at

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance
3951 North Meridian Street, Suite 100
Indianapolis, IN 46208

IPRA President: Steven Coxhead

Newsletter Editor: Donald Yehle

djyehle@gmail.com or 765-418-4097

Newsletter Publisher: Shereen Vinke

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

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