

Opinion: Editorial

Delays Challenge Ardent Rail Backers

By Bill Malcolm*

Editor's Note: Amtrak was made aware of Bill Malcolm's account of this trip and will take up the issue with the crew and their manager.

On July 25, I took the *Cardinal* from Chicago to Indy. Like my trip 2 weeks earlier on the *Hoosier State*, I spent almost 6 hours on the train. However, unlike the trip 2 weeks earlier, no explanation for the many delays and glitches was given by the Amtrak staff.

Everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

We stopped for 30 minutes just outside of Chicago waiting for Norfolk Southern to clear us to cross their tracks. This typically involves a phone call of all things. Apparently, they were not answering.

Then we crawled through the Union Pacific maintenance yard.

Another stop or 2 and we finally arrived in Dyer 30+ minutes late.

It took 90 minutes to go 30 miles.

Just outside of Dyer we stopped again.

For 30 minutes.

No explanation.

Later they (Amtrak) announced a cable broke which caused a loss of all power, including air conditioning, toilets, and engine power.

A close call. Being stuck in the middle of nowhere could have turned into a nightmare.

We arrived Lafayette at 10:30 pm or so, a half hour late.

Things were going well until just outside Crawfordsville when we stopped again for no apparent reason.

We arrive Indy at 12:23 a.m., 40 minutes late so I spent 6 or so hours on the train.

The good news -- I had dinner, got a lot of work done, slept, read, drank, etc.

Plus, they had 11 cars on the train. So, we were full although only about 15 people (continued)

The new transportation center in Meridian, Mississippi is a model Indianapolis would do well to consider. Photo courtesy of John Robert Smith.



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were going to Indianapolis.

The station in Indy wasn't a mess and no one was sleeping on the floor.

The bad news -- I got to bed at 1:30 a.m. and was tired and cranky for work the next day.

Also, the folks normally sleeping on the Indy train station floor were sleeping just outside of the station.

Can they put the mops and buckets away inside of having them sit in front of the rest rooms?

We need an intermodal station like they have in Milwaukee, Kalamazoo, Champaign-Urbana, East Lansing, Bloomington Normal, Denver, St. Paul, and many other cities.

In short, 6 hours CHI-IND is a challenge and the train arrives too late and leaves too early.

We need to follow the model of other cities like Chicago-Milwaukee, Chicago-Port Huron, and Chicago-Detroit.

- *Build new inter modal stations
- *Fund track improvements
- *Find a route that does not go through maintenance yard
- *Find a route that does not involve crossing other rail lines or train them to expect us
- *Upgrade the tracks so we can go 110 mph like in Michigan (from Kalamazoo to Porter, Indiana)
- *Run the Cardinal 7 days a week so Indiana state funding is not needed.
- *Upgrade the equipment to avoid break downs. Amtrak needs new locomotives and passenger cars. Cummins can help.

I love rail travel but sometimes it is a challenge.

And Amtrak needs to explain what is happening to passengers.

*Bill Malcolm writes a travel column now published on line by the Windy City Times in Chicago and by the Midwest Eagle in Indy. He also writes the Round the Ripple column for the Broad Ripple Gazette. These are hobbies. For his job, he is a consumer advocate for a DC-based association where he advocates for fair and affordable gas and electric rates. You can contact him at billmalcolm@gmail.com

CSX Problems Delay *Hoosier State* in June

By Donald Yehle

Horrid on-time performance has characterized southbound *Hoosier State* trains in June. Both dispatching decisions and freight-train interference de-prioritized Amtrak's trains, said company spokesman Marc Magliari.

IPRA has learned that the CSX railroad (host railroad for most of the Chicago-Indianapolis route) has been experiencing operational problems leading to service disruptions during this time. The problems appear to be ongoing. Freight service has been affected, and of course there has been a ripple effect resulting in disruptions to Amtrak passenger service. The problem is serious enough that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has made inquiries of CSX, seeking to learn the cause(s) of the problems.

Hoosier State trains leaving Chicago at 5:45 p.m. arrived on-time only 35.3 percent of the time in June. *Hoosier State* trains leaving Indianapolis at 6 a.m. arrived on-time 88.2 percent of the time in June.

According to an early August article in the *Journal and Courier* of Lafayette, INDOT and an engineering firm are looking at ways "to shorten the travel time along the *Hoosier State* corridor." Rerouting the train over different freight lines is an option being examined.

The *Hoosier State* is operated by Amtrak and funded by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) along with Tippecanoe County and four cities – Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer, and West Lafayette.

For more on this subject, right click and open hyperlink to [view the jconline story](#).

State to Lose Potential Commuter Rail Corridor

By Logan Day

A nearly complete and expanded history of the events that may have caused the permanent loss of yet another potential commuter rail corridor will be published soon by the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA). For now, read below:

The old Nickel Plate railroad alignment from Indianapolis to Tipton, via Noblesville and Fishers, was originally preserved (as the Hoosier Heritage Corridor) so as to provide for a possible, future, commuter rail link from central (continued)

At its July 29th meeting, the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) voted unanimously to support grassroots efforts to Save the Nickel Plate rail corridor connecting Tipton with 22nd Street in Indianapolis. As another sign of its support, IPRA has scheduled its next meeting -- Thursday, September 28th -- in Tipton. Pictured above are (l to r) IPRA President Steve Coxhead and board members Doug Yerkson, Phil Streby, and Donald Yehle.



("State to Lose Potential Commuter Rail Corridor" continued from page 2) Indianapolis to those northern suburbs. Such commuter rail systems have often spurred economic development of the host communities. However, local authorities in Hamilton County are moving to remove the existing rails, thus making any development of a commuter corridor much more problematic. A summary of the developments, as IPRA understands them, follows.

Hamilton County -- A large grassroots coalition of passenger rail supporters has banded together to oppose the efforts of local government leaders to demolish the historic railroad alignment between Indianapolis and Tipton. Members of the group range from concerned residents to railroad professionals, business owners, and members of local government. As support for the potential commuter rail route has grown, local municipal leaders have become more energetic as they seek to move forward with the removal of the rail line. Passenger rail supporters have engaged in a variety of outreach events, awareness actions, and freedom of information requests in an attempt to reverse the current flow of events, which would ultimately lead to a situation where it is unlikely that a commuter rail system would ever be implemented.

In support of preservation of the rail line for eventual commuter rail development, the Save the Nickel Plate organization has had a fair amount of success in building support. The organization notes that it has collected 7100 signatures on a petition to preserve the rail line, seen 1956 "likes" on their Facebook page, and has had 700+ citizens agree to display "Save Our Train" yard signs.



Those who would like to contact the Save the Nickel Plate organization have the following options:

Website: www.savethenickelplate.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/savethenickelplate

Online Petition: www.change.org/ (Save the Nickel Plate)

Donations: www.savethenickelplate.org/donate

In late breaking developments, on Tuesday August, 1st, Fishers, Noblesville, and Hamilton County filed with the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to begin the process of obtaining approval to remove the existing rails.

Those who are concerned with this issue, and would like to express an opinion regarding removal of the rails are encouraged to do so by filing a comment with the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Refer to Docket#: FD-36137-0 in all communications with the STB.

- There is a sample comment here: <https://goo.gl/DKW7pbj>.
- One may visit STB website and leave a comment. The STB website is at <https://goo.gl/pT6Pnq>.
- Compose one's own individual letter. Address all letters to Ms. Brown just as in the sample letter and include the first paragraph of that letter in your own.

Some relevant points to mention are:

- Concern about the lack of public input regarding the trail plan.
- Concern for the ultimate lack of rail service.
- Concern for the impediment to rail service caused by the Port Authority's suspension of rail operations.
- Concern for the process of selecting a new rail operator for only the northern portion of the railroad.

Mail signed letter to P.O. Box 48 Fishers, IN 46038, and if possible, also e-mail a copy to info@savethenickelplate.org.

NIPRA, Amtrak Hold Discussions on Chicago-Ft. Wayne Train

Preliminary discussions have been launched between Amtrak and the Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association (NIPRA) pertaining to restoring passenger rail from Chicago through Fort Wayne to Columbus, Ohio, says Fred Lanahan, NIPRA president.

Meanwhile, the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) required study of the rail project continues. The FRA is monitoring the ongoing Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study. NIPRA has contracted with the HNTB group to do the study, which is expected to be finished by late this fall.

Indianapolis Family Takes *Empire Builder* To Explore Montana's Glacier National Park

By Doug Yerkeson

The history of Glacier National Park, on Montana's border with Canada, is closely intertwined with that of the Great Northern Railway. The railway was a major force in the creation, promotion, and development of the park, and helped promote legislation that established Glacier National Park in 1910.

James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway, not only built a railroad, but created an empire of towns and ranches along the tracks from St. Paul, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington, earning him the nickname of "The Empire Builder." His legacy, and that of the Great Northern Railway, continue today via Amtrak's *Empire Builder* which travels daily between Chicago and Seattle, and through the spectacular scenery of Glacier National Park.

Our family vacation this year was inspired by the Great Northern Railway's promotional campaign to "See America First." The railway promoted Glacier National Park as "America's Switzerland."

Our trip started on July 1st in a less than grandiose manner by departing from Indianapolis Union Station (IUS), which is in desperate need for an overhaul. A world class city deserves a gateway that feels clean, safe, and inviting.

With no desire to linger at IUS, we quickly boarded business class on Amtrak's *Cardinal* for an on-time departure. Shortly after passing the Indianapolis International Airport, our train stopped for two hours as we waited for a CSX freight train to clear the path ahead of us.

Some of the capacity enhancements being made by CSX along the *Cardinal* route, along with improved dispatching, will hopefully reduce similar delays in the future. After having breakfast on the train, we made up some time, arriving in Chicago around 11:45 am.

After a quick lunch in Chicago Union Station, we enjoyed a visit to the new and improved *Metropolitan Lounge* (which is available to passengers travelling same day in sleeping or business class).



The Yerkeson family poses on the platform in St. Paul-Minneapolis.



Train cars, including this red cabooses, make for exciting cabins at the Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana.

We soon boarded our sleeping car on Amtrak's *Empire Builder* for an on-time departure. We enjoyed a delicious dinner in the dining car as we viewed the passing scenery of the Wisconsin Dells.

After stepping off the *Empire Builder* for some fresh air and to view the beautifully restored St. Paul-Minneapolis train station, we retired to our roomettes for a good night's sleep. (Note: Indianapolis should take note of the excellent work by our peer cities (including Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Denver, Seattle, etc.) in renovating their train stations.)

The next day, we enjoyed incredible scenery from the Sightseer Lounge car as we travelled across North Dakota and Montana. Shortly after enjoying another excellent dinner on the train, we arrived in Essex, Montana, around 8 p.m.

For two nights of our visit to Glacier National Park, we stayed at the Izaak Walton Inn. The Izaak Walton Inn was built in 1939 next to the Great Northern Railway yard at Essex for the use of railroad service personnel.

It was also intended to serve as an entrance to Glacier National Park between East Glacier and West Glacier, but this plan never materialized. Relatively recent additions to the Izaak Walton Inn include standalone cabins and cabooses.

We stayed in the "red cabooses", which included a queen bed in a master bedroom, two twin beds in the cupola, a private bathroom, and a kitchenette. An attached deck featured views of mountains, and the nearby BNSF Railroad passing between our cabooses and the main lodge.

Glacier National Park is a treasure, featuring spectacular mountain and lake scenery, great hiking trails, whitewater rafting, and diverse plant and wildlife. After a couple of days based in Essex, we celebrated July 4th in the Lake McDonald area within Glacier National Park.

During our visit, we traveled the full length of the Going-to-the-Sun Road over Logan Pass, hiked the Scalp (*continued*)



This photo of the Empire Builder in Essex, Montana provides just a taste of the stunning scenery visible on this journey.

(*"Indy Family Takes Empire Builder..." continued from page 4*) Lock Mountain trail and the Hidden Lake trail, and enjoyed a boat cruise on Lake McDonald. After several days of hiking, we all looked forward to returning to the relaxing accommodations on board Amtrak's **Empire Builder**.

We boarded our westbound train at Essex around 8:25 pm for an on-time arrival in Seattle the next morning. While in Seattle, we visited the Space Needle, the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum, the flagship Nordstrom store, and Pike Place Market.

Our vacation continued with trips to Mount Rainier National Park and to Victoria, British Columbia. An overnight flight from Seattle to Indianapolis concluded our great adventure.

Bullets from the Board

By Steve Coxhead

The Board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) met on 7/29/17, at noon, in the 96th Street offices of Faegre, Baker, Daniels, in Indianapolis. The following items were among those discussed.

IPRA will be sending a representative to the upcoming Midwest Rail Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It was noted that a presentation by INDOT is on the conference agenda.

There was some thought that IPRA should have a presence at the 2018 Purdue Road School. This could either be by having one or more members in attendance and/or giving a presentation. More information will be gathered before determining if this would be a useful endeavor.

IPRA will, once again, renew its' membership in the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. It was noted that the

Chamber has supported the idea of double tracking the South Shore commuter railroad from Gary out to Michigan City.

A publicity kit is being developed to contain information that would be useful in making presentations to local organizations, including local government bodies. The kit could include a PowerPoint presentation.

A report was given on preliminary discussions that have been made with the principal of a venture capital firm in Louisville, Kentucky. The object of the discussions was to explore the concept of recruiting private venture capital to fund the development of modern, 21st Century, passenger rail development in Indiana, and surrounding states.

The status of the "seven-day **Cardinal**" initiative was reviewed. Enabling legislation for an interstate compact to manage the "Cardinal Corridor" has been passed by the West Virginia State Legislature, and it would now be appropriate for Indiana to reach out to West Virginia on a government-to-government basis.

The Boy Scouts got from Indianapolis to the Jamboree in West Virginia, and back, by means of the "Cardinal". One major, perceived problem with the movement was inadequate baggage handling arrangements.

On time performance on the Hoosier State corridor has deteriorated as of late. The CSX railroad (host railroad for most of the route) has been having serious operational difficulties (impacting freight as well as passenger traffic), which have resulted in delays to both the "**Cardinal**" and "**Hoosier State**". The Federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) has taken an interest in the operational problems.

The IPRA Board was brought up to date on the attempt of the towns of Fishers and Noblesville to take up the old Nickel Plate tracks in the Hoosier Heritage corridor in favor of a trail. There is an active movement to retain the tracks with a view to using the corridor for a future rail commuter line linking Indianapolis and Tipton.

It was noted that the next steps in support of the **Hoosier State** corridor would be to double the frequency from one, to two trains each way, each day. This would need to be reflected in the next biennial state budget.

There have been discussions between Amtrak and NIPRA regarding future service on the Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus route.

(continued)

("Bullets from the Board" continued from page 5)

The next meeting of the Board will be at noon, local time, on Thursday, 9/28/17, in Tipton (at the public library). All members are welcome to attend! Please send us a note at info@indianahighspeedrail.org for details.

Finally, don't forget that it's still not too late to pay your 2017 IPRA dues, a bargain at only \$30. The simplest way is through the website, at www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html. Otherwise, checks can be sent to Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, 2017 Dues, 7032 Olcott Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46323.

Special Amtrak Eclipse Express to Carbondale Sells Out Quickly

By Amtrak Media Relations

As we go to press: As expected, the Amtrak Eclipse Express is sold out. (See paragraph 9.)

CHICAGO - If you want to be in Carbondale, Ill., the best place in the U.S. to see the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, Amtrak has a new option: nap your way from Chicago or Champaign and back on the Amtrak Eclipse Express.

There's no need for expensive lodging or driving. Instead, you can spend the day enjoying the cosmic event, thanks to an Amtrak partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and Canadian National (CN) railway, which owns the route.

Early in the morning of Aug. 21, for \$153 adult round-trip from Chicago Union Station or \$90 per adult round-trip from Champaign, we will dim the lights as you recline in a comfortable coach seat, enjoy cellular-based AmtrakConnect® Wi-Fi or have a snack or a beverage from the café car.

Both the main entrance at Chicago Union Station (225 S. Canal St.) and the café car will be open prior to the 3:00 a.m. departure. The Champaign departure is at 5:05 a.m.

Each customer will receive eclipse viewing glasses, compliments of Amtrak and Carbondale Tourism, before arrival in Carbondale at 8:30 a.m. The Amtrak Eclipse Express will leave Carbondale at 5:15 p.m. to return to Champaign at 7:55 p.m. and to Chicago at 10:45 p.m., after a full day of fun (all times Central). A souvenir timetable (also attached) is available for downloading Monday.

Amtrak, a sponsor of the Carbondale Eclipse Celebration, invites everyone to visit vendors at the Eclipse Marketplace or take in the tunes at the Family Fun Zone and Shadow Fest, all within walking distance of the Carbondale Amtrak Station at 401 S. Illinois Ave.

Amtrak customers can get a discounted ticket to enjoy Eclipse Day at Southern Illinois University's Saluki Stadium by purchasing from the university's website (<http://bit.ly/2ujY7l6>) and entering the promo code TRAIN.

This is the first North American coast-to-coast total solar eclipse in about a century. It is predicted to have the longest duration near Carbondale at 1:28 p.m. for 2 minutes, 38 seconds.

The Amtrak Eclipse Express is expected to quickly sell out on Amtrak.com, the Amtrak mobile apps, by calling 800-USA-RAIL or from a station ticket window.

Some of the six other daily Amtrak trains between Chicago and Carbondale, via Champaign, still have space during the eclipse celebration weekend and are the only Amtrak trains taking reservations for customers traveling with pets or bicycles.

Other ways to use Amtrak to witness history in Carbondale:

If you want to go between Chicago or Downstate Illinois and Carbondale in the days leading up to the 21st or after, you can save 30 percent. Just make sure to book before Aug. 21, to take advantage of these impressive savings on those trains with remaining space.

There is also space still available to arrive in Carbondale early on Aug. 21 from Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi or Louisiana, with a return to the south early the morning of the 22nd, on Amtrak "City of New Orleans" trains.

Equipped with sleeping cars or reclining coach seats with leg rests and foot rests, the famous train functions as its own lodging and restaurant as it travels to and from Memphis, Jackson, New Orleans and intermediate stops, with a sample adult fare of \$42 each way between Memphis and Carbondale.



Thursday, November 2 through Sunday, November 5, 2017
In Chicago, IL - NARP's Birthplace In 1967
Host Hotel: Historic Millennium Knickerbocker

Click the image above for more information or to register!

Riding the Rails

Courtesy, rail industry reports

Beech Grove employee earns safety award -- An Amtrak Beech Grove employee is a 2017 winner of the president's safety and service award. Wallace "Wally" K. Pulley, a carman-welder in Operations, works the first shift in the Beech Grove Maintenance Facility's hoist, which de-trucks and trucks cars. "If Wally sees someone about to do something unsafe, he shuts everything down, calls attention to the problem and helps troubleshoot," says Foreman II Rob Hodge.

According to an article in Amtrak's July-August employee publication, Pulley noticed a car's light turned green, and its air brakes released. "Because it had passed inspection earlier, the train was scheduled to depart. But Wally kept the car behind and discovered that one of the diaphragms had a small leak that had led to the brakes' release.

"Because of Wally's insistence on safety, the shop now holds the brakes on cars for one hour to ensure there are no leaks," Hodge wrote of the Beech Grove, Indiana, employee.

Peru man on NARP board -- A Peru, Indiana, resident now serves on the board of directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP). This Rail Passengers Association, as it is now being known, is a national organization acting as a voice for train passengers.

Phillip Streby also serves on the boards of the Rail Users Network (RUN) and the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA). RUN is also a national organization which represents long distance, commuter and transit rail riders in the fight to not only maintain the national passenger rail system, but also to enhance and expand rail service in North America.

IPRA, of which Streby serves as its treasurer, is calling for increasing the speed on the Indiana rail corridor serving two Amtrak trains – the *Hoosier State* and the *Cardinal*. IPRA wants daily service for both trains, thus providing twice daily service between Indianapolis, Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer, Dyer, and Chicago, Streby explains.

"We also are calling for daily service from Indianapolis to Louisville and Cincinnati, and Chicago through Fort Wayne to the East," he continues.

Our goals further call for the implementation and improvement of commuter rail in various parts of the state, and, along that line, we applaud the funding to add a second track between Gary and Michigan City to the South

Shore route from South Bend to Chicago which will increase both the speed and schedules along that route, the Peru resident says.

For more information, visit the following websites – www.narprail.org, www.railusers.net, and www.indianahighspeedrail.org.

Latest on federal infrastructure bill – White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee repeated claims that the Trump Administration is focused on creating an infrastructure bill with Congress, reports the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP).

"Reassurance from the Trump administration that roads, bridges and railways are still a priority is great to hear, but actionable steps need to be taken sooner than later," said NARP President Jim Mathews. "We have provided the administration with a list of shovel-ready projects that would truly benefit from federal support, and in turn, provide much-needed benefits to the people who will use those public transit services."

"With the White House slow to move on the infrastructure bill, members of Congress have moved ahead with transportation funding legislation. Only last week (week of July 31-August 4) the Senate Appropriations Committee approved an FY2018 transportation budget that would provide \$1.6 billion for Amtrak and \$12.1 billion for transit. The committee's action established a bipartisan, bicameral consensus on the necessity of increasing investment in intercity rail, which hasn't existed in recent years. Overall, the plan included:

- **Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement:** \$92.5 million (\$24.5 million more than fiscal year 2017, \$67.5 million more than the President's budget request, but \$137.5 less than authorized by the FAST Act) to support implementation of positive train control, station improvements, and rail grade crossing projects.
- **Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Grants:** \$26 million (\$149 million less than authorized and \$424 million less than the House bill) to upgrade aging infrastructure, a "key concern on Amtrak's network".
- **Rail Restoration and Enhancement Grants:** \$5 million (\$16 million less than authorized and \$5 million more than the House bill) to connect more communities to better service on the national rail network.

Restored \$550 million for the popular Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants cut by the House, and funded New Starts at \$2.133 billion—\$380 million higher than House levels.

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee has also been discussing the possibility of drafting an (*cont'd*)

(*"Riding the Rails"* continued from page 7) **infrastructure plan before the end of the summer.**

In addition, Republicans are discussing with the administration ways to approach infrastructure, but they have noted the party's desire to move forward with a plan, quickly. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) said, "If Donald Trump fails to demonstrate leadership, Congress is just going to have to grab the rope. There's already been discussions among us, both Republicans and Democrats, about coming together [on infrastructure.]"

Courtesy, National Association of Railroad Passengers

Rail Rangers ride the South Shore -- On Saturday, August 26, on two Saturdays in September, and on three more in October, the history and landscape along the South Shore Line will be highlighted by representatives from the American Passenger Rail Heritage Foundation.

"Travelers will be able to hear live informative narration about trackside landmarks as the train travels through the south side of Chicago; the historic steel-producing areas of Hammond, East Chicago and Gary, the scenic Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore; Michigan City; and the 'breadbasket' farming regions of LaPorte and St. Joseph counties," says the Foundation.

Talks by Rail Rangers will be offered in one car of trains leaving South Bend International Airport at 1:05 p.m. EDT August 26, Sept. 9 and 23, and Oct. 7, 21 and 28. South Shore passengers leaving Millennium Station at 8:40 a.m. on the same Saturdays will also be treated to the narrations – again, on one car only.

The American Passenger Rail Heritage Foundation, a Missouri-based organization, has also published a 120-page book, "Outside the Rails: A Rail Route Guide from Chicago to South Bend Airport. Cost of the book is \$20, available at dunetrain.com.

4,000 miles of active rail lines – The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) empowers a transportation network that is second to none. The agency builds and maintains more than 28,000 lane miles of highway and 5,600 bridges, and provides oversight for 117 public aviation facilities and more than **4,000 miles of active rail lines.** Indiana ranked as the #1 state in the U.S. for infrastructure in CNBC's 2016 "Top States for Business" ranking.

Indiana Boy Scouts travel to/from West Virginia – Nearly 300 Indiana Boy Scouts traveled Amtrak's *Cardinal* to and from the Hoosier State to West Virginia's New River Gorge National River area for the 2017 National Jamboree, July 19 – 28. The Jamboree was held on 10,600 acres of Scout-owned



Boy Scouts board the train in Prince, West Virginia.

property at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve. Scouts climbed aboard the *Cardinal* in both Indianapolis and Lafayette. The Summit is to host the 2019 World Jamboree.

October-June Ridership Numbers Up FY '17 vs. FY '16

By Donald Yehle

Amtrak route ridership numbers are favorable for passenger trains crossing through Indiana, according to numbers released by the National Passenger Rail Corp (Amtrak).

Ridership numbers by train are as follows:

Hoosier State – 22,240 vs. 20,867 (up 6.6 percent)

Wolverine – 330,480 vs. 319,309 (up 3.5 percent)

Cardinal – 80,086 vs. 75,483 (up 6.1 percent)

Capitol Limited – 166,859 vs. 160,963 (up 3.7 percent)

Lake Shore Limited – 273,958 vs. 272,349 (up 0.6 percent)

Reporting periods being contrasted are October 2016 – June 2017 vs. October 2015 – June 2016.

System-wide, Amtrak carried 23,501,044 combined passengers in the nine-month period ending June 2017. This betters by 2.1 percent the passenger count of 23,016,868 people who rode Amtrak from October 2015 to June 2016.

Amtrak reports ridership numbers in three separate categories: Northeast Corridor Spine (up 1.7 percent); State-Supported trains (up 2.7 percent); and long-distance trains (up 1.5 percent). (*continued*)

("October-June Ridership Numbers Up..." continued from page 8) **The Hoosier State**, running between Chicago and Indianapolis, is Indiana's only state-supported train. **The Wolverine**, connecting Southeast Michigan with Chicago, is a Michigan state-supported train.

Three other Amtrak trains crossing the Hoosier State are all classified as long-distance trains. They are: the **Cardinal**, traveling from New York City to Chicago; the **Capitol Limited**, operating between Chicago and Washington, D.C., and the **Lake Shore Limited**, another Chicago train that terminates in New York City.

Tell Congress To Pass a Budget Before September Deadline!

By the National Association of Railroad Passengers

Last month the Senate and House Appropriations Committees both approved positive transportation budgets, providing increased funding for Amtrak and passenger rail. However, with the end of the current fiscal year only a few weeks away, Congress is quickly running out of time to turn these bills into law.

Act now to ensure that congress passes increased funding for Amtrak and transit!

You can help get these bills over the line by:

1. [Writing your elected officials.](#)
2. Attending a [town hall event](#) held by your representative or senator and letting them know "I depend on Amtrak's network!"

NARP is asking every Amtrak, subway, and commuter passenger to write their elected officials today!

With the White House proposing deep cuts to Amtrak service, the work being done by advocacy groups, local officials, and members of the public has never been more important!

Write your member of Congress today!



Contributors

Friends of the Cardinal – Chuck Riecks, John Riecks

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance – Steve Coxhead, Bill Malcolm, Phil Streby, Doug Yerkson

National Association of Railroad Passengers – Staff reports
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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

or contact us via USPS or email:

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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.