

ALL ABOARD

INDIANA

The Official Newsletter of the

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Volume 5, Number 6 June 2018

Amtrak from the *Emerald City* to the *Circle City* (Via the *Windy City*)

By Douglas Yerkeson, Board Member, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

In late March 2018, a friend and I retraced a portion of our great passenger train adventure from college, riding Amtrak's *Empire Builder* from the *Emerald City* of Seattle to the *Windy City* of Chicago. My journey concluded with a trip on Amtrak's *Hoosier State*, providing service to the *Circle City* of Indianapolis. First, a brief history of the famous passenger train connecting the Pacific Northwest with the Midwest.

On June 11, 1929, the Great Northern Railway inaugurated the *Empire Builder* passenger train in honor of the company's founder, James J. Hill. Known as "The Empire Builder," Hill formed a transcontinental railroad that reached the Pacific Northwest in the late 19th century.

Amtrak's *Empire Builder* continues the tradition of offering daily passenger rail service between the Pacific Northwest and Chicago, following the footsteps of early pioneers through the rugged terrain of the Cascades, the majestic wilderness of the Rocky Mountains, the plains of North Dakota, and the forests of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Our adventure started on Friday March 23rd in Seattle with a ride on the *Link* light rail system from the *SeaTac* Airport to downtown. *Link* is a clean, comfortable and efficient way of avoiding traffic congestion in Seattle. After a short trip on the *Seattle Center Monorail*, we visited the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP) which featured a special Star Trek exhibit, including many original television and movie artifacts from the collection of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen.

We arrived at the beautifully restored Seattle King Street Station, where we checked in with our conductor. King Street Station is now a bright, clean and welcoming public space. After settling into our sleeping car, the *Empire Builder* departed on time at 4:40 PM. We had dinner around 6:00 PM with an architect from Stuttgart, Germany who was travelling with her family from Seattle to Chicago. I enjoyed the seared Norwegian salmon, while my friend had the grilled flat iron steak. We finished dessert, a southern pecan tart, as we passed through the Cascade Tunnel. Our sleeping car attendant Craig put down our beds around 9:30 PM. (continued)

King Street Station, Seattle, WA



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On Saturday morning, we enjoyed freshly prepared omelets in the dining car, before moving to the Sightseer

lounge car to enjoy the passing scenery from the large panoramic windows. The **Empire Builder** traveled along the southern boundary of Glacier National Park, providing breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains and the Flathead River.



A delicious Norwegian Salmon dinner

After several stops serving Glacier National Park – Whitefish, West Glacier, Essex, and Browning, Montana – the train crossed the Continental Divide at Marias Pass. We had lunch in the dining car with a couple from Salem, Oregon enjoying their first long distance train trip to Chicago. I had a romaine & goat cheese salad with grilled chicken, while my friend enjoyed an Angus cheeseburger. We spent most of the afternoon in the Sightseer lounge car enjoying the scenery as our train travelled through the plains of eastern Montana and North Dakota.

We shared our dinner table with a retired couple from Ft. Wayne, Indiana on the return leg of their Amtrak trip from Waterloo, Indiana to Seattle to visit their children. They were enjoying their time on the train and plan on taking more Amtrak trips. I ordered the land & sea meal (black Angus flat iron steak and seafood cake), while my friend had the roasted chicken breast. We retired around 10:00 PM, waking up to a beautiful Sunday morning as we approached Minneapolis-St. Paul. We arrived almost 40 minutes (7:00 AM) early at the St. Paul Union Depot, giving us enough time to walk around the recently restored station. The St. Paul Union Depot is a large,

clean and efficient multi-modal facility combining intercity passenger rail, city bus, and light rail. The station is an obvious source of civic pride.

Breakfast in the dining car included pancakes and bacon. The freshly grilled pancakes were excellent. After breakfast we again returned to the Sightseer lounge car to watch the scenery change from prairie to forest as the **Empire Builder** traveled through Minnesota. After St. Paul Union Depot, the train crossed the Mississippi River and passed through southeastern Minnesota before crossing the Mississippi again at La Crosse, Wisconsin.

We had lunch around 12:00 noon with a couple from South Bend, Indiana who were returning from a round trip to Seattle. I enjoyed the vegetarian pasta dish, while my friend had a BLT sandwich. The **Empire Builder** passed through rural southern Wisconsin, turned south at Milwaukee, and ended its epic journey at Chicago Union Station (CUS), arriving 15 minutes early.

Following a short visit to the new and improved Metropolitan Lounge at CUS (which is available to passengers traveling same day in sleeping or business class), I boarded the **Hoosier State** headed for the Circle City while my friend boarded the **Wolverine** to Dearborn, Michigan. **Hoosier State** service attendant Joe prepared a nice angus cheeseburger for dinner. After a relaxing trip through northwestern Indiana, I arrived in Crawfordsville only a few minutes late, concluding another memorable Amtrak adventure.

[Editor's note: More **Empire Builder** tidbits (courtesy of the Rail Passengers Association (RPA))

The **Empire Builder**...

- Runs 2,200 miles from Chicago to Seattle/Portland with 45 intermediate stops, but only 9% of passengers travel from end-point to end-point
- Is a lifeline to Native Americans, veterans and the elderly living in the rural Northern Tier and gives them access to larger cities such as Spokane, WA and St Paul, MN
- Tourists can easily access Glacier National Park and the surrounding areas all year
- Direct spending by non-residents in Montana traveling on the **Empire Builder** is approximately \$5.5 million, which creates \$0.5 million in re-spending and 30 jobs
- When Montana mayors were asked to what the effect of losing the **Empire Builder** would mean, all responded: "Devastating"]



Amazing views from the Sightseer Lounge Car

Update on the Nickel Plate

By **Logan J. Day**, Principal & CEO, Navigrade Consulting

Since the time of our last update, Save the Nickel Plate ("STNKP") volunteers have been fairly dormant publicly, but working diligently behind the scenes processing additional public records requests and planning for upcoming summer events.

To date, the organization has connected with nearly 20,000 residents who have indicated support for preserving the Nickel Plate railroad by preserving and continuing use of the existing tracks. By utilizing Facebook, an online petition website, paper petition sheets, an email newsletter list, instant text notifications, yard signs, and other means of communication, STNKP continues to manage an advocacy campaign that maintains a strong presence in the areas of interest.

Two new yard sign designs have been released to the public for the 2018 season in order to allow individuals to more specifically express their support for the railroad.



If you would like to reserve a yard sign, please fill out the form at the following website:

[Reserve a Yard Sign](#)

[Make a Donation](#)

Soon, STNKP will be launching their "Paint the Town Blue" campaign in which they will be actively raising awareness by encouraging more citizens within the "target areas" to display the blue yard signs; the goal being to demonstrate how much support exists for the railroad. All signs distributed from May 2018 forward will be identified on a map for everyone to watch as the map becomes covered in more and more blue icons - representing existing signs.

[Click here to view the map](#) depicting STNKP sign locations.

In much of the recent historical research completed by members of the group, it has become apparent that commuter and light rail was the prospective future for the Nickel Plate line from the moment it was purchased by Fishers, IN and Noblesville, IN. Many newspaper articles, from as early as 1995, touted the benefits a passenger rail line would add to the area. Fast forward 23 years later, and the discussion to augment transit in and around Indianapo-

lis has progressed no further than where it started. Arguably, with the existing legislation banning municipalities from asking a public question requesting the use of transit money for light rail projects, passenger rail is further from fruition than it was in the mid-1990s.

STNKP hopes to continue raising awareness and developing vocal advocates that are willing to outwardly express their desire to keep the railroad in place between Fishers and Noblesville - thereby preserving a continuous connection between Tipton, IN and some day as far north as Kokomo or even Logansport and Indianapolis, IN.

Dining Cars—These Loss Leaders Are a Competitive Advantage

By **Steve Coxhead**, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The following excerpt is from the book *Passenger Terminals and Trains*, by **John A. Droege**, published in 1916. Mr. Droege's role was the General Superintendent, New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. The excerpt here from 1916 doesn't seem as dated as one would expect.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COMMISSARY

Dining cars were first introduced on American railways as more or less of a necessary evil. They were intended primarily to enable fast competitive trains to maintain or quicken their schedules by eliminating the time formerly required for stops for meals. As a secondary consideration they had an advertising value and there was likewise a vague hope that ultimately they would pay, or nearly pay, their own way. It is doubtful, however, if the dining car service as a thing by itself has ever proved profitable. It may, in fact, be stated that as a general proposition it is hardly self sustaining—even omitting from consideration, charges to capital account for the purchase of the car itself¹ and charges for maintenance, depreciation and obsolescence. The last alone cuts no very small figure at this time when so many wooden dining cars

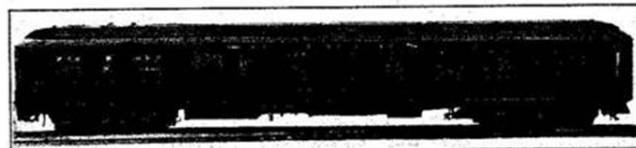


FIG. 210.—Typical modern all-steel dining car.

that otherwise might have had many years of service ahead of them have had to be discarded that they might be replaced by the all-steel cars demanded by the needs of modern transportation.

Dining car service, despite the fact that it very rarely pays for itself, is an absolute necessity to the railroads and so important does it prove that lines have been known to secure business from their competitors purely on the basis of their dining service alone. It is noted of American passenger service that the supreme effort made is toward convenience and service, and that financial considerations are a secondary matter. American dining car service is an epitome of that in every way.

The dining car service on lines like the New York Central, the Pennsylvania and the New Haven is enormous and intensive. On these roads two dining cars are not infrequently operated on one train. The New

¹ A modern steel dining car weighs about 160,000 lb. and costs from \$18,000 to \$22,000. The Pennsylvania now calls them "Restaurant Cars."

Kentucky Derby Patron Car

By John Owen



*After being conveyed from Chicago to Indianapolis via the **Hoo-sier State**, the Louisville and Indiana Railroad crews and locomotive brought the Patron Car to Louisville.*

Here is the Patron Car at Louisville Union Station.



The Derby Day car caretaker remarked how smooth ride was from Indianapolis to Louisville. The Patron Car then departed Louisville at 10:00 PM and arrived back in Indianapolis at 1:00 AM.

Cincinnati Amtrak Station To Lose its Amtrak Station Staff!

By Ken Prendergast, Executive Director, All Aboard Ohio

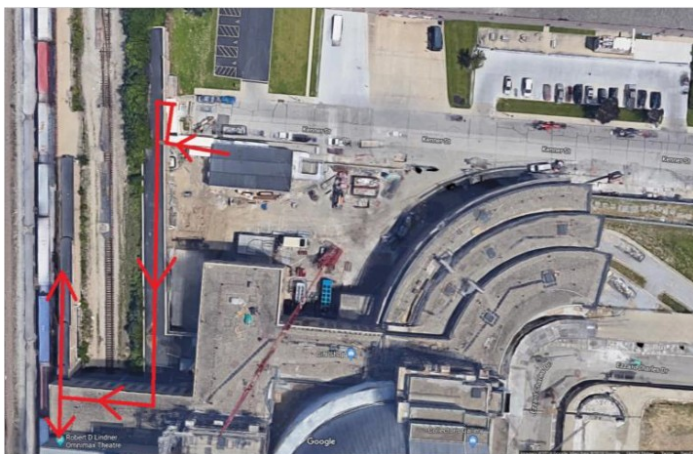
Effective June 1, 2018, Amtrak plans to eliminate the two ticket agent positions at its Cincinnati station. This would mean no ticket sales, checked baggage service or other security associated with a staffed station in the overnight hours that Amtrak serves one of Ohio's largest cities.

Instead, Cincinnati will lose its two ticket agents in favor of what the company calls "Caretaker Plus." While this caretaker will supposedly be on site 24 hours a day, it will be a minimum-wage, untrained, non-Amtrak contract worker.

Passengers will book their bags online, then carry them trackside for the conductor to load it on to the train for you – if they are not busy with other matters.

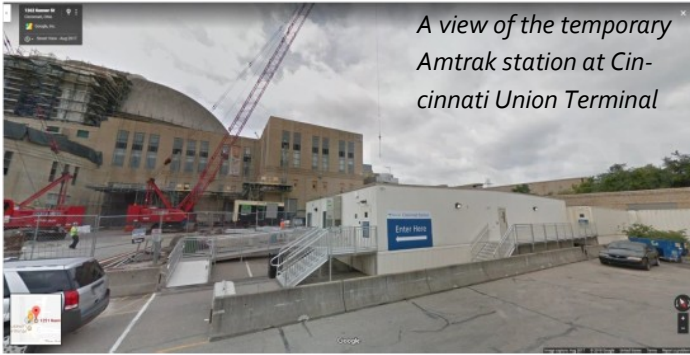
Amtrak in April chose to de-staff 15 stations nationwide with 40 or fewer daily passengers: Charleston, WV; Cincinnati, OH; Fort Madison, IA; Garden City, KS; Hammond, LA; Havre, MT; La Junta, CO; Lamy, NM; Marshall, TX; Meridian, MS; Ottumwa, IA; Shelby, MT; Texarkana, AR; Topeka, KS; and Tuscaloosa, AL. Cincinnati is unlike any other city in this list. It is a major metro area with 2 million people. Cincinnati's station was used by 11,382 passengers in 2017, or 36.4 passengers for the 313 days the station was open in 2017.

Why did Cincinnati fall below Amtrak's 40 passengers per day threshold? Because Cincinnati Union Terminal (CUT), home to the Museum Center, has been under a \$200+ million renovation since early 2017, forcing the Amtrak station to temporarily relocate to 1251 Kenner Street. This is a difficult-to-find site on the north side of the massive CUT complex. During construction, there is very little parking and passengers with luggage or in wheelchairs must travel a long, convoluted path to reach the trackside loading platform.



Cincinnati Amtrak passengers must travel a convoluted path (in red) to reach the trackside platform.

Not only is the Museum Center temporarily closed. A perception by some in the community is that Amtrak service also has temporarily stopped. At best, most know it is even less convenient to use during CUT's renovations. To illustrate this, there were 12,481 passengers who used the Cincinnati Amtrak station in 2016, or 40 passengers per day. In 2015, it was used even more – by 12,503 passengers. Amtrak's inconvenient service to Cincinnati is the primary reason why so few people use it. *(continued)*



A view of the temporary Amtrak station at Cincinnati Union Terminal

("Cincinnati Amtrak Station..." continued from page 4)

We at All Aboard Ohio believe that Cincinnati's usage was and is being artificially depressed by the ongoing CUT renovations. The renovations are due to be concluded by Fall 2018. All Aboard Ohio asks the community to join us in urging Amtrak to retain Cincinnati station agents until the completion of CUT's renovations and beyond, when a joint effort by Amtrak and the community should market the return of Amtrak station facilities to its beautiful and newly renovated home inside CUT.

Please contact:

Senator Robert Portman
312 Walnut St., Room 3425
Cincinnati, OH 45202
513-684-3265

Senator Sherrod Brown
425 Walnut St., Room 2310
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
513-684-1021

Mr. Richard H. Anderson
President & CEO, Amtrak
60 Massachusetts Ave NE
Washington, DC, 20002
richard.anderson@amtrak.com
202-906-3960

Highlights of May All Aboard Ohio (AAO) Meeting in Columbus, OH

By **Phil Streby**, Treasurer, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The 2018 Annual Meeting of All Aboard Ohio (AAO) opened upon a continental breakfast at the Makoy Center in Hilliard, near Columbus, Ohio at 9:30 AM Saturday morning, May 12, 2018.

At 10:00 AM, **Jack Shaner**, Chair, and **Ken Prendergast**, Executive Director, welcomed all attendees, and introduced **Jim Mathews**, President and CEO of the Rail Passengers Association (RPA) based in Washington, D.C.



Jim provided an update on passenger rail issues following an explanation of the question "Who is the RPA?" and "Why the name change?". Like **Amtrak** whose corporate name is the **National Railroad Passenger Corporation**, the **National Association of Railroad Passengers** can be a tongue twister which can lose listeners before the message begins. The **Rail Passengers Association** name flows better and more quickly establishes our mission. He also explained the new logo as symbolizing what travelers see when looking out a train's window. He further explained that we're about the passengers and *their* experience and *their* expectations so this what is important. The rest of his talk concentrated on what we [advocates] know about the current status of passenger rail.

Passenger rail received a huge, by comparison with previous years, appropriation, but we are unclear about how Amtrak intends to spend that money. All indications appear to point to the elimination of long distance service to the benefit of the Northeast Corridor. But, what do we really know?

Amtrak's new CEO **Richard H Anderson**, a successful businessman, was brought in to run Amtrak like a for-profit business (as many have suggested a CEO might do). He made the new Delta Airlines run better and is expected to do the same for Amtrak. Amtrak, government run, does what private business doesn't do, shouldn't do, and won't do – operate passenger rail. With the exception of the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC), Amtrak doesn't exist to make a profit, only operate with the minimum required government subsidy while providing mobility for the *entire country*.

Mr. Matthews stated that in meetings with Amtrak senior management he learned that Amtrak supports Long Distance (LD) trains but is looking at the current *(continued)*

("Highlights of May AAO Meeting..." continued from page 5) European model in which many overnight trains are being discontinued in favor of or because corridors with numerous schedules of various speeds have sprung up everywhere on top of the existing networks. This suggests that the nature of rail travel in this country will be changing to meet the needs of the current, but, more importantly, future generations of travelers.

Mr. Mathews specified four things current 20-year-olds want: (1) Wi-Fi, (2) reclining seats with good coffee, (3) on-time performance, and (4) affordable. They also want connections to transit and one fare for the entire trip no matter the mode. Since **Mr. Anderson** is not talking about his intentions toward Amtrak, this alone has created many problems and much speculation, so much so that even the Congress with some Congressmen who are not even on transportation committees are insisting to be on the sign-on letter demanding transparency from Anderson. So far, he has provided some explanation.

Anderson doesn't want to run private varnish until Amtrak is good enough to do so. He wants a tightly run company with new equipment, focused on the customer, while eliminating that employee distraction caused by broken equipment. He has personally witnessed the experienced passenger traveling with a fixit kit containing duct tape and Velcro. This also partially explains why the Pacific Parlor cars were removed from service. They appeared to be dated, broken, and not paying their way.

Jim Mathews then took questions from the attendees:

Q. What money is lost because of no service or the loss of service?

Amtrak is looking closely at the 400-mile trip market in conjunction with state supported services. [This going back to the "corridor" principle and PRIIA.]

Q. Why can't Amtrak be more proactive in seeking state and local funding?

Amtrak has been adamant they can't do that, but Anderson is bringing in former airline people to rethink Amtrak's approach and culture.

Q. How much longer before Amtrak improves its accounting?

No answer for this very important question, but maybe the Congress will ask that question. RPA is pushing Congress to do so. [This just in: Congress is demanding answers to this and other probing questions determined to seek transparency in Amtrak's business.]

Ken Prendergast next introduced **Thea Walsh**, Director of Transportation systems, and **Dina Lopez**, Principle Planner, Transportation Systems and Funding, both from the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) to talk about rail and transit transportation in central Ohio and to provide an update on the idea of using a new technology known as Hyperloop.



Columbus recently won the **"Smart City Challenge"**, a US-DOT program "to develop ideas for an integrated, first-of-its-kind smart transportation system that would use data, applications, and technology to help people and goods move more quickly, cheaply, and efficiently." Working closely with the Department and their own residents, cities developed plans to put their Smart City visions into action. In the process, cities promoted the idea of using advances in technology to collect, analyze, and apply data to discover **how to move better**, more efficiently, and with more reliability and safety through the use of traffic signals that prioritize freight movements, apps that provide truckers with information about routes and parking, automated low speed freight delivery systems that enable the consolidation of deliveries.

The Columbus, Ohio winning submission: "Columbus will leverage a new central connected traffic signal and integrated transportation data system to develop a suite of applications to deliver enhanced human services to residents and visitors". The City plans to integrate an electronic appointments and scheduling platform for doctor visits with transit tracking so that rescheduling is automated and expectant mothers need not wait weeks to reschedule appointments. These applications include a multi-modal trip planning application, a common payment system for all transportation modes, a smartphone application for assistance to persons with disabilities, and integration of travel options at key locations for visitors.

Columbus will establish a smart corridor connecting underserved neighborhoods to jobs and services. The smart corridor will enhance Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service by installing smart traffic signals, smart street lighting, traveler *(continued)*

("Highlights from May AAO Meeting..." continued from page 6) information and payment kiosks, and free public Wi-Fi along the route. Six electric, accessible, autonomous vehicles will be deployed to expand the reach of the BRT system to additional retail and employment centers." Boiled down, this plan calls for eliminating as much redundant traffic (and parking issues) as possible while enhancing transit as a travel choice for its residents. The effort also involves rethinking planning so that whenever streets are torn up for improvements, other needed services are installed or improved so that the street (and cost of doing so) need not be torn up again! When questioned about rail planning they responded by saying passenger rail is "progressing within given political parameters", and they are closely following Indiana's route study for the Chicago, Fort Wayne to Columbus rail improvement project. Comments about passenger rail continue to be positive, but not within Ohio government offices!

Ohio has jumped into the Hyperloop study as a means to quickly move freight across the Midwest in conjunction with other modes. This two phase \$2.5 million study is looking at connecting the Midwest with ultra-high-speed movement, but its future is very dependent upon finding public/private partnerships.



Next up was Ohio Senate Assistant Minority Leader, **Charleta Tavares**, member Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee who spoke briefly on the politics of public transportation funding in Ohio. Her message is succinct: Remind your elected leaders that the tax money they are spending is not theirs, but yours! Spend it wisely on projects you demand.

Stu Nicholson provided a concise overview of an AAO survey and voter education project, and **Ken Prendergast** gave an informative update and perspective of Ohio's rail passenger progress. **Phil Streby**, Board member from the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (also on the Boards of the RPA and the Rail Users Network (RUN)) provided encouragement to AAO's members present by speaking about the progress made in Indiana concerning the *Hoosier State*, a train now, not only funded by the state of Indiana, but being considered for both daily service and a second daily frequency!

Highlights from May 5th National Train Day in Toledo, OH

By **Phil Streby**, Treasurer, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

In co-operation with the Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG), All Aboard Ohio's Bill Gill and a host of volunteers making up the Train Day Committee successfully planned and executed Toledo's 11th annual National Train Day May 5, 2018 at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza and Amtrak station. The former New York Central Railroad station, the last one built, opened in 1950, and serving four major railroads (New York Central, Chesapeake and Ohio, Baltimore and Ohio, and Wabash) now is host to Amtrak's *Capitol* and *Lake Shore Limited* as well as intercity bus services by Greyhound. Attendance at this event was estimated to be between 6,000 and 8,000 people!



Bill Gill of All Aboard Ohio is an event leader for National Train Day observances in Toledo. The free activities featured more than 40 exhibitors and included an array of children's activities, handcar and motorcar rides, and several freight locomotive displays.

"[Train Day Toledo](#) is all about celebrating and promoting all things rail - especially travel by rail! The goal is to increase community awareness of the critical role of passenger and freight rail in our multi-modal transportation system," organizers said in a statement announcing the event's lineup."

This popular family friendly event included trackside displays, model train exhibits, food vendors, local business and organization displays, and representation from local and national passenger rail advocacy and rail safety groups. Dozens of sponsors and even more dozens of volunteers including the Toledo Police Explorer Post #2028 insured every attendee was safely guided about the facility to see the exhibits and participate in the workshops or other hands-on activities. Activities included numerous operating model-train layouts, display booths and vendors selling railroad books and model train related items, and other train-themed activities such as motor car rides and equipment displays. *(continued)*

(*"Highlights from Train Day..." continued from page 7*)

On hand to open Train Day in Children's Park were:

- **Wade Kapszukiewicz**, Mayor of Toledo
- **Derrick James**, State Relations, Amtrak
- **Richard Rudolph**, Chair, Rail User's Network (RUN)
- **Mike Palumbo**, Midwest High Speed Rail Association
- **Michael Ashford**, State Representative
- **Tim Price**, Chair, Ohio Legislative Board, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET)
- **Sandy Spang**, Toledo City Council

Many words were spoken about the importance and need for intercity passenger rail, and the role that National Train Day events such as this one play in bringing passenger rail to the public eye.



Left: Richard Rudolph, RUN; Ken Prendergast All Aboard Ohio; Tim Price, BLET. **Right:** Toledo Mayor Wade Kapszukiewicz, Toledo Councilwoman Sandy Spang, Derrick James, Amtrak

A round table discussion on the "Future of Rail" ensued with **Richard Rudolph**, Ph. D., as the main speaker. Richard, an educator, organic farmer, activist, and consultant, has co-authored and published *Power Struggle: The Hundred Year War of Electricity*. He is currently focusing more of his time on policy questions related to his lifelong interest in passenger rail issues. He was a founding member of Amtrak's Customer Service Committee serving as Vice-Chair then Chair, currently is the Chairman of the Rail User's Network, and resides in Portland, Maine. Others on the panel included **Timothy Price** who spoke from the viewpoint of railroad conductors and engineers, **Ken Prendergast**, Executive Director of All Aboard Ohio which advocates for vastly improved rail passenger service connecting cities within Ohio and throughout the Midwest, And **Mike Palumbo** who presented the Midwest High Speed Rail Association's Phased Network Approach for high-speed rail connected corridors linking all major cities and many smaller cities into a true system using passenger trains of many types and speeds.

I am concluding "Mission Accomplished" for its stated goals for "an educational event to increase community awareness of the critical role of passenger and freight rail in our multimo-

dal transportation system... providing citizens... the opportunity to realize that passenger rail is a viable option... and promote safety around railroad infrastructure."

Amtrak Ridership Increasing for Summer 2018 Travel

The following release is issued May 21, 2018 by Amtrak Media Relations. It is also available in the [Amtrak Media Center](#).

Customers should book early and save for trips to popular destinations

WASHINGTON – Amtrak is expecting heavy ridership as the summer season kicks off and customers head to the rails for convenient and flexible summer vacations.

Affordable fares and convenient service make Amtrak ideal for summer family travel. Customers are encouraged to book early for the best rates and as advance reservations indicate, there is an increased demand for July travel compared to last summer.

Additionally, in anticipation one of the busiest travel weeks of the year, Amtrak is expecting more than 320,000 customers over the Memorial Day week as customers plan their summer day trips, weekend getaways and longer vacations. During this time, the *Northeast Regional*, *Acela Express*, and the *Pacific Surfliner* have been the most popular trains to travel as customers flock to the beaches and sightsee some of the largest cities in the country.

"On Amtrak trains, customers can visit the most popular cities in the country for their summer travel, whether it's to catch a baseball game, explore a new city, experience a summer musical festival, have an outdoor biking or hiking adventure or take it easy and relax at a beach," said Amtrak Chief Marketing Officer Tim Griffin. "Instead of sitting in traffic to reach these destinations, sit in comfort and enjoy the journey with Amtrak."

Amtrak has upgraded its free Wi-Fi on Northeast Corridor trains, and at select stations, has refreshed its train interiors, and offers the freedom to use phones and electronic devices at all times (no "airplane mode"), the ability to travel with small pets and bikes on many trains, a generous baggage policy, large spacious seats with ample leg room, and no middle seat. (*continued*)

("Amtrak Ridership Increasing..." continued from page 8)

About Amtrak®

Amtrak offers a more comfortable and convenient travel experience with free Wi-Fi on most trains, plenty of leg room and no middle seat. With our state and commuter partners, we move people, the economy and the nation forward, carrying more than 30 million Amtrak customers for each of the past seven years. Amtrak operates more than 300 trains daily, connecting more than 500 destinations in 46 states, the District of Columbia and three Canadian Provinces, and reaches 400 additional destinations via connecting bus routes. Learn more at Amtrak.com.

Bullets from the Board

By Steve Coxhead, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) met on Thursday, May 17, 2018 at 1:00 PM in the 96th Street Offices of Faegre Baker Daniels, in Indianapolis. The following items were among those discussed.

- **Ms. Brittany White (INDOT) joined us for an exceptionally useful briefing on the status of the *Hoosier State*, as well as the ongoing relationship with the CSX railroad (host railroad for most of the *Hoosier State*), and possible PTC (Positive Train Control) issues affecting Indiana. INDOT talks with CSX monthly. She reported that the April 2018 On Time Performance (OTP) for the *Hoosier State* was **86%** and so far in May it's 100%!**
- Treasurer, **Phil Streby**, gave a report on our financial situation and current payables, indicating that IPRA remains in reasonably good shape.
- **The change of editor for the monthly newsletter *All Aboard Indiana* was announced. Tod K Bassler will be taking over for Don Yehle, as Don has relocated to South Carolina, and is focusing his efforts in that direction. The Board extended its hearty thanks to Don for his three plus years of service as editor and looks forward to a continued high-quality newsletter under Tod's editorship.**
- IPRA continues its active participation in the Infrastructure Committee of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce. Next meeting of the Infrastructure Committee will be the end of July, at which time IPRA will suggest additions to the Chamber's statement of legislative concerns, which would have the effect of making it more rail friendly. IPRA continues its effort to bring the Indiana Chamber on board with the idea of passenger rail development as an important 21st Century economic driver.
- **Logan Day briefed the Board on the status of the "Save the Nickel Plate" initiative. It is continuing as a strong grass roots effort. Logan noted that studies and public comment going back to the 1990s have favored some sort of rail-based commuter service on the old Nickel Plate alignment. Our understanding is that many area residents as well as local officials such as Deputy Mayor of Logansport, Mercedes Brugh, have expressed an interest in this initiative.**
- IPRA continues the dialogue with the Indianapolis Department of Public Works concerning the unfortunate condition of Indianapolis Union Station. Attempts to arrange a meeting with appropriate members of the Indianapolis City County Council continue.
- **A subcommittee will be formed to investigate the possibility of Indiana hosting a Midwest Rail Conference in 2019**

The next Board meeting will be in Lafayette on Jul 26, 2018 (**NOTE: the 4th (not 3rd) Thursday this time**). All IPRA members are welcome to attend! Those planning to attend are requested to respond to the meeting announcement so that we may plan for adequate facilities. Please watch your e-mail and "All Aboard Indiana" for details.

A tentative IPRA Board meeting schedule for the remainder of 2018 would be:

September 30

November 15

Don't forget to include the *Hoosier State* (and other services of the Amtrak system) in your travel plans.

Finally, just a reminder that continued development of 21st Century passenger rail services in our state and nation continue to be dependent on legislative action. So, if this is of concern to you, please let your congressmen and state legislators know how you feel about support for The *Hoosier State*, and the Amtrak system as a whole. Let us know, too! Send a message to: info@indianahighspeedrail.org.

New Editor Named for *All Aboard Indiana*

By Steve Coxhead, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Indianapolis resident **Tod K Bassler** takes over this month as editor of *All Aboard Indiana*.

Bassler, who spent eight years of his youth living and riding trains in Europe, has recently been named an (*continued*)

("New Editor Named..." continued from page 9) Indiana representative to the Rail Passengers Association (RPA).

The editorship appointment comes at an ideal time for Bassler, who also just concluded a 16-year IT career with Eli Lilly and Company.



"We are very fortunate to once again have a very capable individual assume the editorship role," said Steve Coxhead, president, Indiana Passenger Rail Association (IPRA).

Board member **Bill Malcolm** launched the publication in 2014. **Donald Yehle**, also a board member, took over as editor in 2015.

Bill and Don will continue to write occasionally for *All Aboard Indiana*, which helps define steps being taken to bring 21st Century Passenger Rail to our state.

Riding the Rails

By **Tod K. Bassler**, Editor

VISIT INDIANA (& CHICAGO) BY TRAIN – In support of last month's announcement, here is the *Hoosier State* advertisement in the Indiana Official 2018 Roadway Map.

Visit Indiana by train!

The Amtrak Hoosier State® train provides exceptional passenger rail service between Chicago and Indianapolis with stops in Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Rensselaer and Dyer.

AMTRAK Hoosier State®

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HOW'S THIS FOR A RAILROAD RELOCATION CANDIDATE TOWN? - *All Aboard Indiana* Editor **Tod Bassler** and his wife **Dawn** were in **La Grange, KY**

on May 19th and we saw this very long double stacked freight train travel the length of Main Street thereby cutting the town in half for at least 15 minutes. [View a short video of this](#) on IPRA's YouTube channel. Brings back memories of Lafayette's Railroad Relocation but this takes it to a whole new level!

RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION – SUMMER BY RAIL –

This summer the RPA's student-intern (**Jacob**, a journalist in training) will be using our country's rail network to visit America's ballparks. <http://SummerByRail.com> has relaunched and it will give you a good summary of why RPA chose baseball as the vehicle to spread the message about a more connected America. Jacob will be in **Indianapolis** on **June 11, 2018** and we plan to connect him with transportation leaders in our area. If you're interested in participating (and joining Jacob at an Indians ballgame), please let RPA Council Indiana representatives Duane Chattin or Tod Bassler know.

FLORIDA'S BRIGHTLINE IS NOW OPEN BETWEEN MIAMI & FORT LAUDERDALE

– The Miami to Fort Lauderdale section of the Brightline Fast Train Service is now in full service! This privately funded rail transport service owned by Florida East Coast Industries offers state of the art comfort in travel between Miami and West Palm Beach (via Fort Lauderdale) in just 1 ¼ hours. The service will soon be extended north to Orlando Airport making this service even more attractive. This is a **hot** (the "other" hot in Florida) opportunity to be a leader in private transportation in North America.

GE TO GIVE UP RAILROAD BUSINESS – General Electric agreed to merge its freight locomotive business with **Wabtec Corp.** (formally known as Westinghouse Air Brake Technologies Corp.) in a deal valued at roughly **\$11 billion**, letting GE raise some cash to fund its turnaround and shed one of its oldest operations. Wabtec makes equipment for transit systems and freight railroads. This deal plans to close in 2019. (This news courtesy of **Thomas Gryta**, *Wall Street Journal*) (continued)

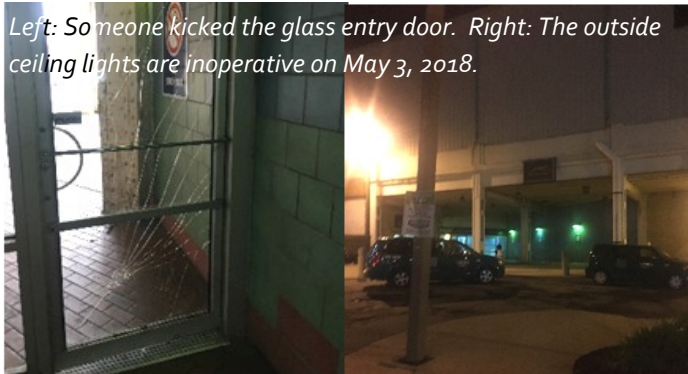
("Riding the Rails" continued from page 10)

HOW THE DETROIT QLINE STREETCAR IS DOING – The 3.3 mile Detroit QLINE streetcar line delivered 1.35 million rides in just under a year of service, but daily ridership was below projections for part of the year. Ridership was higher when the fare was free (due to Kresge Foundation grant) and when the weather was warmer. The wait time averages 10 minutes during peak hours and 2% of service hours were classified as delays of 6 minutes or more. The system has 18 reportable accidents with no streetcar operator citations. (this news courtesy of **Eric D Lawrence**, Detroit Free Press)

FORMER AMTRAK PRESIDENT QUESTIONS MOTIVES OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT – [See the email](#) that former Amtrak President Joseph Boardman sent to elected officials throughout the country. (This news courtesy of **Bob Johnston**, *Trains* magazine)

MOVING FORWARD BY RAIL – TWIN CITIES & UPPER MIDWEST SUMMIT – This summit, sponsored by the Rail Users' Network (RUN) and All Aboard Minnesota, will be occurring June 1, 2018 at the Minneapolis MN Central Library. Look online for details and quickly jump on a train with your \$50 registration fee if you wish to attend. (Online: <http://www.railusers.net/annual-conference>)

THE STRUGGLES CONTINUE AT INDIANAPOLIS UNION STATION (IUS) – Members of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance continue to communicate regularly with the IUS landlord regarding its deplorable condition. Examples here:



Left: Someone kicked the glass entry door. Right: The outside ceiling lights are inoperative on May 3, 2018.

INDIANAPOLIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (IND) DIRECT FLIGHT TO PARIS (CDG) – On Thursday, May 24, 2018, Delta Airlines started their nonstop flights between IND & Paris, France (Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport)! This is the first regular scheduled nonstop flight between Indianapolis & Europe so this will be a game changer for the central Indiana business community. Both the *Cardinal* and *Hoosier State*

Amtrak trains run along the northern perimeter of the airport so we dreamers are already thinking what a multimodal opportunity this is!

RPA FALL 2018 ADVOCACY SUMMIT WILL BE IN SOUTH FLORIDA – The second 2018 Rail Passengers Association (RPA) Advocacy Summit will be held **October 19 to 21, 2018** (Friday to Sunday) at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Miami, FL. Attendees will have the opportunity to see (and ride!) the new *Brightline* train between Miami, Fort Lauderdale & West Palm Beach. For more information please contact your Indiana RPA Council Representatives **Duane Chattin** or **Tod Bassler** or RPA Board Member **Phil Streby**.

Discounts

Amtrak - The *Rail Passengers Association (RPA)* members **save 10%** online at www.amtrak.com if booked three or more days in advance. Select the **NARP** discount on Amtrak's website.

Crowne Plaza Union Station in Indianapolis: Selecting Corporate ID = **6972** will give you the Amtrak rate of **\$129 per night** for either a King or two Double beds. The cancellation policy is 48 hours and this rate will be available until December 31, 2018. You can also call the hotel directly at 317-631-2221 and ask for the Amtrak rate.

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, please visit us on the web
www.indianahighspeedrail.org

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Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

A one year membership in the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is only \$25 (Student) or \$30 (Member)

Join or renew at <http://www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html>

Please mail check to:

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

Name: _____

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