

RailNation Miami—Rail Passengers Association's Autumn Meeting in Florida

By Phil Streby, IPRA Treasurer, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

RailNation is the second Rail Passengers Association (RPA) meeting of the year, which is held at various locations around the country in order to bring passenger rail information and people networking to its members and other groups involved in passenger rail advocacy. This year the meeting was held in Miami, FL (and next year it will be held in Sacramento, CA). The event convened Friday, October 19, 2018 and ran until midday Sunday, October 21st. In addition to planning sessions and guest speakers, tours and other events were scheduled to be able to enjoy the Miami area.



Former Amtrak President **Joe Boardman** with RPA President & CEO **Jim Matthews**

Friday evening kicked off with a "fireside" chat moderated by **Jim Mathews**, CEO of RPA, and including **Joe Boardman** immediate past President of Amtrak, **David Gunn**, also past President of Amtrak, former governor of Massachusetts, **Michael Dukakis**, and **Fred Frailey**, *Trains* magazine columnist. The topic was "Envisioning the Future of the US Rail Network". One of the highlights was Mr. Boardman suggesting that the RPA take over the task of organizing and running **National Train Day**. Amtrak has been, until the past year, conducting this celebration of the driving the gold spike, which completed the first transcontinental railroad. This historic moment connected the West Coast with the rest of the country on May 10, 1869. Visit the website of the National Park Service at <https://www.nps.gov/gosp/planyourvisit/2019-150th-anniversary-of-the-completion-of-the-transcontinental-railroad.htm> for more information concerning the 150th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike, and follow additional links for even more information on the history of the railroads and towns involved.

RailNation Saturday events included six concurrent sessions, three each in the morning and afternoon.

(1) "Why the Swiss Can Build Big Projects Cheap and We Can't..." facilitated by RPA's Vice-President-Policy, **Sean Jeans-Gail** with **Gene Skoropowski**, a noted and acclaimed passenger rail expert with more than 40 years of railroad industry experience in both the private and public sectors.

(continued)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page Four

RPA Members Ride **Brightline**

Page Five

Taking the Amtrak to/from
RailNation Miami

Page Six

The Joliet Rocket to
Downtown Chicago

Page Seven

New Bars, Museums Make DC
a Perfect Vacation Choice

Page Nine

Amtrak Day Trip to a Chicago
Cubs Game
MIPRC - 2018 Annual Meeting

Page Eleven

NIPRA Tweaks Name, Seeks
Support for Ft. Wayne
Passenger Rail Corridor

Page Twelve

Bullets from the Board

Page Thirteen

Riding the Rails

Page Fifteen

Discounts
For More Information...
IPRA Membership Form

("RailNation Miami..." continued from page 1) Gene was responsible for establishing Brightline, the nation's newest and best passenger railroad now operating between Miami, Ft Lauderdale and West Palm Beach in Florida, developing the service plan (train operations), selecting the rolling stock (trainsets), designing of the rolling stock maintenance facilities, hiring and training of operating crews (engineers & conductors), projecting operating costs and revenues and preparing the company's passenger rail operations program. Brightline is building toward Jacksonville, and intends to provide service to Orlando and Tampa. Thanks to Forbes contributor Doug Gollan for this good article: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dougcollan/2018/10/26/the-future-of-high-speed-rail-travel-in-florida-is-bright/#303c1088ae7f>.

(2)"How to Pay for Infrastructure; Unlocking the Value of Real Estate" moderated by **Abe Zumwalt**, RPA Director of Policy Research, included on the panel **Albert Hernandez**, Assistant Director for Planning and Development for Miami-Dade County and **Jose Gonzalez**, Senior VP Business Development at Florida East Coast Industries (FECI).

Mr. Hernandez led the efforts in completing Miami-Dade Transit's (MDT) Metrorail AirportLink (a.k.a. Orange Line) project, which involved extending Metrorail from the Earlington Heights station to the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) at Miami International Airport (MIA). The project budget was over \$500 million and was completed in 2012 under budget and on schedule. He was also responsible for several other transit projects, such as upgrades to several Metrorail and Metrobus maintenance and operation facilities, construction of new

The Metrorail platforms at fantastic Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) at MIA Airport



The reason why Amtrak can't use the new station at MIC is because the platforms are 200 feet too short!

park and ride lots and aggressively pursuing public private partnerships through Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) at several existing rail and bus stations.

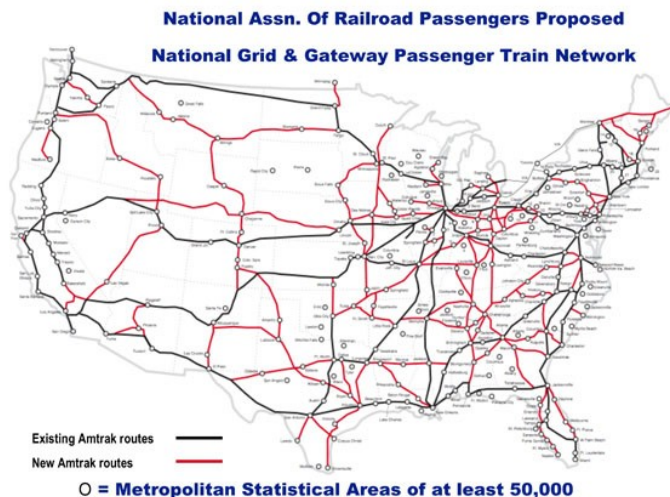
Mr. Gonzalez is responsible for pre-development project issues including land use, environmental, traffic and general governmental regulation, as well as property acquisition and seller issues. Mr. Gonzalez's involvement spans across projects for FECI and its subsidiary companies including Flagler, Brightline, and Flagler Global Logistics.

(3) This session, titled "RPA's Envisioning of the Future of the US Rail Network" led by Jim Mathews described how the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), RPA's former name, researched and developed the (cont'd)

*Miami's Metromover is a 4.4-mile 21-station **free** people mover that just plain works!*



("RailNation Miami..." continued from page 2) national network plan known as "Grid and Gateway". Jim described the comprehensive interconnectivity of core routes developed from the work by NARP volunteers, unifying state passenger rail plans into a true national plan, and described the benefits, both economic and social, of that intensified connectivity.



During lunch, **Stephen Gardner**, Executive Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer –Amtrak, addressed us. His message, boiled down, was that Amtrak is interested in operating trains throughout the country providing there is sufficient funding and equipment to do so. He spoke of Amtrak's focus on safety and how Positive Train Control (PTC) is operational on all Amtrak controlled routes as well as many of the host railroads' routes. He continued with Amtrak implementing a safety management system to identify risk across the network. They wish to overcome any public perception of danger riding Amtrak, and reduce accidents which cost Amtrak \$50 million in the last year. Amtrak is re-investing in track structure and bridges in the Northeast Corridor, which he stated has suffered from decades of under-investment. They are working on a station improvement program to provide travelers with better conditions including seating, ADA accessibility, signage, restrooms, etc. Amtrak is also refurbishing their fleet of single level cars, with the Amfleet I equipment nearly finished. Locomotives need to be replaced since the P42s are nearly worn out, and don't meet even the minimum emissions requirements. Equipment replacement is at the top of the list because what they have is old and, in some cases, beyond repair or refurbishment. They are looking at state partners to take advantage of large-order cost reduction for off-corridor service, and they are preparing to replace the also-aging Acela equipment.



Amtrak's Executive VP & CCO Stephen Gardner

Shifting focus, Stephen promoted the idea that Amtrak is preparing for growth in the coming decade as the Federal government dictates to Amtrak what it wants from the company. Amtrak is essentially working from the 1970s era skeletal system. While the US demographic is shifting southward and westward, and re-urbanizing the cities therein, such re-urbanization continues to occur throughout the entire country as people chose to work and recreate nearer to where they live. Rail's natural fit is to connect those 400 to 500 mile corridors with multiple frequencies serving the core business district and new population

centers to meet the travel demand those centers generate. Amtrak wants to be positioned to provide the levels of service required, providing improved trip time and reliable service with new equipment. Expansion into new markets is a goal, and will require Congress to greatly improve funding for the third leg of a national transportation network.

Following lunch, we enjoyed three more concurrent program sessions.

(4) **Joe Aeillo**, RPA Northeast Field Coordinator, moderated the panel "Miami SMART Plan's First Mile/Last Mile Opportunities" which concentrated on plans and opportunities for "getting there" from the train station to one's final destination. **Aileen Bouclé**, Executive Director of the Miami-Dade Transportation Planning Organization (MDTPO), joined him. Ms. Bouclé is responsible for conducting the planning for Miami-Dade's complex transportation network, which includes implementing policies established by the MPO governing board, as well as directing, managing, and planning for projects and programs that enhance the county's transportation. Also joining the discussion was **Alfred Lurigados**, a board member with **Friends of the Underline**, which is an ambitious plan to utilize the space under the south "leg" of Miami's Metrorail system as a 10-mile long by 100-foot linear park with walking/bicycling paths. Go to www.theunderline.org and see some great [before] photos and [after] depictions.

(5) This session with moderator **Carolyn Cokley**, RPA Customer Advisory Programs, **Patrick Kidd**, Government (cont'd)

("RailNation Miami..." continued from page 3) **Affairs-Amtrak, Bryan Sawyer, District Station Manager-Amtrak, and Carey Maynard-Mooney, Station Redux** in Lawrence Kansas spoke about Amtrak's volunteer Station Host Program which RPA endorses as an interim solution to the widespread lack of Amtrak station agents at most location around the country. While roles may vary, station hosts are trained uniformed volunteers whose role is to meet and greet passengers, provide local community information, distribute appropriate Amtrak literature, and be familiar with emergency procedures all while volunteering a mandatory number of hours and times each month.

(6) This session concerned Amtrak's annual reauthorization and how we might better push this agenda toward consistent and improved funding. **Richard Harnish**, Executive Director of Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA), presented a detailed study utilizing the Chicago to Indianapolis route as an example of what true high-speed rail could offer a region. Using PowerPoint slides, he demonstrated the potential, which could be unlocked with a core high-speed service between the two major cities, supplemented with standard speed service from nearby outlying cities near both. In the case of Indianapolis, those cities would mainly include Cincinnati and Louisville, but also smaller nearby cities such as Anderson and Muncie. Other trains as well as buses would feed the core as a true corridor route. **Art Guzzetti**, VP Policy at American Public Transportation Association (APTA), lent a very credible presence to the conversation. *He is a 39-year veteran of public transportation at the local, state, and national levels.* Among other things, Guzzetti is responsible for APTA's extensive policy research agenda, policy analysis and development, transportation information, and statistics. He and the APTA team work with the legislative and executive branches of all levels of government and with other national associations, think tanks, and interest groups to cultivate the ideas, relationships, and advocacy initiatives that will propel public transportation forward.

Sunday morning was devoted to RPA internal business with reports from Chairman of the Board Peter LeCody, President Jim Mathews, Treasurer Ken Clifford, Mark Colucci on resource development, and Bruce Becker for next year's event in Sacramento, CA. Resolutions were discussed and voted on and committee business was attended to separately. After lunch, some of us traveled to the Gold Coast Railroad Museum, while others took a ride on the new Brightline train to Ft Lauderdale & West Palm Beach and back.

See you next year! Remember, all passenger rail advocates are encouraged to attend the RPA RailNation meetings.

RPA Members Ride Brightline

By Phil Streby, IPRA Treasurer,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance



Rail Passengers Association (RPA) members treated themselves to a ride on America's new passenger rail experience known as **Brightline**. We experienced the brightly appointed and expansive Miami Central Station with its snack bar and gift shop, and thanks to a wonderful staff we were able to sample the Select class lounge with its complimentary snacks and beverages. (cont'd)



(Top) A 4-passenger car **Brightline** train at the Miami Central station with each end having a Cummins-powered locomotive. (Middle) RPA members wait to check in through modern turnstiles and state of the art security.. (Bottom) This **Brightline** [Good-To-Go] shop at Miami Central Station had many items available at reasonable prices.

("RPA Members Ride Brightline" continued from page 4)

An unfortunate occurrence, however, delayed our trip. A careless individual drove around operating railroad crossing warning devices and was struck by *Brightline* train. For those of you unaware, this triggers a time-eating response involving a large number of emergency personnel. Unlike in the movies where the train strikes a vehicle (or a person) and continues its travel, in reality, the train must stop and the railroad effectively shuts down that portion of track (which can be a substantial area) until the authorities have completed their investigation of the incident. Depending upon the violence of the incident, the train or engine and/or its operator (engineer) may need to be replaced. This can also be very time consuming, and is very expensive for the railroad. About two hours passed before we were able to board the next northbound train.

Since all passengers have an assigned seat, *Brightline* personnel had to adjust their seating on the train we were next to board. Even so, there were some additional adjustments on board where several individuals were ticketed for the same seats. The rearrangements were made by happy travelers, everyone was quickly seated, and we were on our way.

*The **Brightline** seats in Smart Service (a.k.a. Coach) are roomy, comfortable and have cool trays & regular + USB plugs.*



*The **Brightline** [West Palm Beach] station is modern and easy to find.*



The ride was very smooth, and the view through the very large and clean windows was great. The on-board staff, many former airline attendants, were very pleasant and all smiles. They appeared to really like and appreciated their jobs, and the people on the train.

To say, "no one rides the train" in this country, I say look around. In every city tens of thousands ride trains every day, and not just for work. Amtrak intercity trains also carry hundreds of thousands every year. Properly funded, these interstate trains could multiply into a true system of interconnected routes and schedules making travel throughout the US a pleasant, civilized experience. It is long past the time to stop thinking of interstate rail as an alternative to the auto or airplane, and to believe it to be, once again, the primary means of travel connecting cities and towns. A vastly expanded interstate passenger rail network should include the longer distance trains traveling endpoint to endpoint at a significantly higher speed than we currently experience. Additionally, these routes would include shorter, medium distance trains along the established long-haul corridors as well as, perhaps, what used to be known as the "local" train, which made many stops providing service to most of the cities and towns along a route. Since the federal, state, and even local governments, using what seemed to be unlimited taxpayer dollars to fund highway and airport construction effectively killed the passenger train, it is time to plan the train back into the transportation policy in this country, and return it as the economic driver for communities that it should be.

Taking the Amtrak Train to/from RailNation Miami

By Phil Streby, IPRA Treasurer,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Members of the Rail Passengers Association (RPA) formerly known as the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) converged in Miami, Florida October 18-21, 2018 for several days of events, speakers, tours, and fun. Traveling from South Bend, Indiana to Washington, DC on Amtrak train No. 30, the *Capital Limited*, I met up with more RPA members traveling south on train No. 97, the *Silver Meteor*. Most of us traveled with sleeper accommodations allowing us to enjoy the dining car fare on the *Silver Meteor*. The meals were cooked to order and quite delicious, and much conversation ensued since we, for the most part, dined together.

(continued)

("Taking the Amtrak Train..." continued from page 5) Too bad the same thing could not be said for the *Capital Limited*, which did not have a functioning dining car. Cold, boxed lunches are the normal fare on this train, and from my observation, while it included yogurt with granola topping, fruit, and juice, did not appear to be satisfying. I spoke with one couple who thought the packages would be quite troublesome for those with arthritis or any other restrictive use of hands. The resulting mound of trash appeared to be discarded rather than recycled. About 7:00 AM the next morning, a group of us were sitting in the Sightseer Lounge (often mistakenly referred to as an observation car) when the car got very cold. I found the conductor in the lower lounge with several other employees and complained that several of us upstairs were cold. Further questioning and commenting only garnered an "Okay" as a response. No apologies for the situation or any effort to correct the situation were offered. Instead, he suggested that I contact the train manager, Linda Anderson, if I wanted more information. She did not appear to be any more conversive.

At Cumberland, a passenger became irate because he was unable to get off to smoke, and started swearing. I forgot my place as a passenger, and ordered him to cease his outburst with a curt "That will be enough of that language!" He immediately settled down.

The *Silver Meteor* (No. 97) departed Washington, DC on time. Our group enjoyed a nice dinner in the diner, and retired to our accommodations for additional conversations.

I awoke several times during the night. At one point we had stopped because of a Positive Train Control (PTC) fault. At least we know the fail-safe is to shut off the locomotive, and it works. Too bad a multi-billion-dollar system took the place of the fireman (second engineer) on our trains both passenger and freight. I'm guessing the railroads aren't too happy about having to spend the money they just saved by reducing crew forces. Another issue involved a passenger pulling out the emergency window.

We arrived in Miami that evening after a long train ride, and took rental and Uber cars to the hotel, about seven miles distance. Yes, there is another train station, brand new even, that Amtrak doesn't utilize because when it was under construction, Amtrak failed to reply to many requests for input. Because of this failure, the station tracks and platforms would allow Amtrak train to block a street crossing (see photo in

previous story, page 2). Now additional time and money needs to be spent to correct this situation before Amtrak will be allowed to park its trains in the new station!

Returning to Indiana the following Monday, many of us retraced our journey on the northbound *Silver Meteor* (No. 98). This time I traveled via coach. I should have gotten a sleeper. Some of us are just too tall to stretch out comfortably in the coach seat; I felt as though I was sliding out of my chair all night. Except for an air hose problem, which was quickly repaired, the trip to Washington DC was uneventful. Arriving the next morning, Duane Chatten and myself went out to see the city, touring several sights. Heading westbound on No. 29, the *Capital Limited*, we were "entertained" for about 1 ½ hours by an unruly, intoxicated passenger who was taken off the train in Meyersdale, PA. While easy to "Monday morning quarterback", I believe, when they were notified the police would be 1/2 hour arriving, the train should have continued about 40 miles on to Connellsville, PA, the next station. I realize they had their hands full with this miscreant, but they should have isolated and restrained him away from the rest of the coach passengers who were subjected to his vulgar and crude rantings. We lost even more time from that point on, and left Pittsburgh over 3 ½ hours late! We were further delayed by both freight and passenger trains from the time we arrived Cleveland until I disembarked at South Bend.

Infrastructure needs vast improvement to replace what the railroads ripped out from the '50s through the '80s to avoid both taxes and maintenance costs. It makes no economic sense from the passenger standpoint to have delays caused by this lack, but I understand that the railroads had to do it since the nearly bottomless bucket of public money built the infrastructure allowing us to be "in love with the automobile". That love affair is over, but we still don't have an adequate alternative. More and better train service would cause the auto to become the alternative, save for the trip to the train station.

The Joliet Rocket to Downtown Chicago

By Douglas Yerkson, Board Member,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

For the second year in a row, this September the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society hosted multiple roundtrip passenger train excursions from Joliet, Illinois to LaSalle Street Station in downtown Chicago behind a 1940s steam (*continued*)

The Nickel Plate 765 at Chicago's LaSalle Street Station



("The Joliet Rocket to Downtown Chicago" continued from page 6) locomotive, the Nickel Plate 765. Early in the morning of Sunday September 16, 2018, my wife and I drove to the Joliet Transportation Center for the 7:45 am departure of the Joliet Rocket. The Joliet Transportation Center is a multimodal passenger facility linking passenger bus routes, Metra commuter trains, and Amtrak passenger trains. Notably, it is the terminus of Metra's Rock Island District. We found the center to have plenty of nearby parking, a nice large waiting room, clean restrooms and a coffee shop.



The Joliet Rocket passenger cars at the Joliet Transportation Center

Our train consist included deluxe coaches, first class lounge cars, and observation dome cars. Billed as a living history event, many excursion volunteers dressed in 1940s era costumes. While assigned seats in a comfortable deluxe coach, we spent much of our time riding in the open vestibules watching the passing scenery and the hundreds of

people standing trackside to view our majestic steam powered passenger train.

Upon arriving at LaSalle Street Station, we enjoyed breakfast train side. Passengers had an opportunity to walk around the steam locomotive, take photos, and climb up to the locomotive cab. During a photo run-by, our train backed out of LaSalle Street Station and then made an impressive return as passengers lined the station platforms.

After returning to Joliet, we had the opportunity to tour historic Union Depot Tower which has been incorporated into the Joliet Transportation Center. We then drove to Mokena, IL to watch the afternoon trip of the Joliet Rocket steaming back toward Chicago. After a quick lunch, we drove home to Indianapolis with great memories of riding behind a historic steam locomotive into downtown Chicago.



The Joliet Rocket passing through Mokena, IL with Nickel Plate Road clearly visible

Additional details on the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society are available at: <https://fortwaynerailroad.org>.

New Bars and Museums Make Washington, DC a Perfect Vacation Choice

By Bill Malcolm*, IPRA Board Member
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Washington, D.C. is perfect any time of year for a visit. Late fall and early winter are especially good times to visit. The tourist traffic is light, hotels are reasonable, and there is a lot to do.

WHAT TO DO

I walked up Rock Creek Park to the National Zoo. (*continued*)

("New Bars and Museums..." continued from page 7)

Be sure and visit the Wharf in the newly renovated Southwest DC complete with Boardwalk. They feature a fish market, kayak rentals and more. You can even catch a ferry to Georgetown or Alexandria from there. The newest location of the Politics and Prose Bookstore can also be found in Southwest.

Museum options abound. I like the National Portrait Gallery (which has a nice cafe in the courtyard).

The National Museum of Women in the Arts (1250 New York Avenue NW) also looked interesting.

Note all the Smithsonian Museums are free. However, private museums like the Spy Museum and the Newseum (the news museum) charge a fee.

The National Building Museum at 401 F Street is very nice as is the new nearby National Law Enforcement Museum. I also visited the National American Indian Museum (which has a cafe with related fare including the Northwest smoked salmon). Across the street, the U.S. Botanical Garden is another must. It has a great orchid display as well as a nice collection of plants of the region. The new National Museum of African American History is another must although you have to reserve your (free) tickets in advance.

There is also a lot to see nearby including Alexandria. Take the Metro to King Street Station and hop on the free trolley to explore Old Town. The historic village has great views along the Potomac River and bike rentals where you can ride south to Mt. Vernon (home of George Washington).

Nearby Mt. Vernon also has a great restaurant with a colonial theme. Peanut soup anyone? You can get to Mt. Vernon by taking the Yellow Line Metro to Huntington and then hopping on the Fairfax Connector 101 bus.

Movie buffs will want to take in the John Waters exhibit, King of Trash, at the Baltimore Museum of Art (a quick MARC commuter train ride away).

WHERE TO EAT

Sweetgreens is my favorite. They are around town including on P Street off 14th Street NW. They are a DC based salad chain featuring healthy low-calorie dishes.

Shake Shack has great burgers and fries and has 3 locations including on 14th Street NW. It is a New York chain that also has a location in Chicago's River North.

Compass Coffee is the local coffee place. There is one on F Street near the Gallery Place Metro, 1335 7th Street NW. Try the vanilla flavored, nitro infused cold brew.

Zaytina's has great Mediterranean Food. You will find them on 9th Street NW.



Alexandria's King Street is a joy to walk

In Old Town Alexandria, The Warehouse (214 King) had great salmon while nearby Magnolia's had great Southern cuisine.

GETTING THERE

I took American Airlines to Reagan National (DCA) which is a quick

Metro ride into DC. On the way back, I took Southwest out of BWI which is a short MARC or Amtrak ride from Union Station. Avoid the Southwest terminal at DCA as it is noisy and over-crowded (and not near the Metro).

WHERE TO STAY

I like the Comfort Inn on 13th Street NW (near Mass Avenue). It's near the restaurants and bars on 14th and 17th Streets. It is a bargain and very handy. The Streets Market nearby has everything you could need for a quick bite or snack. The nearby Washington Plaza Hotel is another bargain as is the Beacon House.

I also stayed at the Alexandrian in Old Town Alexandria. It too was handy to all the attractions.

The Line Hotel in DC is also getting rave reviews as is Kimpton's Hotel Monaco.

*Bill Malcolm is an IPRA Board member and also writes the Round the Ripple column in the Broad Ripple Gazette.

Chicago Cubs Wrigley Field – what a majestic place!



Amtrak Day Trip to a Chicago Cubs Game

By Douglas Yerkson, IPRA Board Member,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The combined schedules of Amtrak's trains the **Cardinal** and the **Hoosier State** offer daily roundtrip service between Indianapolis and Chicago, and intermediate stops. On Saturday September 29, 2018, my son and I boarded the **Cardinal** at Indianapolis Union Station for a trip to watch the Chicago Cubs battle the St. Louis Cardinals at Wrigley Field. About an hour or so after our 6:00 am on-time departure from Indianapolis, we walked to the dining car for a hot breakfast. My son enjoyed Classic Railroad French Toast with bacon, while I enjoyed the Breakfast Bowl including scrambled eggs and sausage. We made excellent time heading north, arriving at Chicago Union Station around 25 minutes early.



The author and son Nathan – it was cold that day!

After a short trip on the CTA Red Line, we arrived at the friendly confines of Wrigley Field. The Cubs offense was cold, just like the weather, scoring only a single run in the first inning. St. Louis prevailed over the Cubs by a score of 2 to 1. After the game, we returned to Chicago Union Station to enjoy the comforts of the **Metropolitan Lounge**, including com-

plimentary beverages and snacks. After a short wait, we boarded our business class car on the **Cardinal**. After waiting for passengers connecting from western Amtrak trains, we departed Chicago about 30 minutes late. We had dinner in the café car, where my son had a cheeseburger and I had a buffalo chicken wrap. Our train made good time, arriving in Indianapolis 5 minutes early, concluding a long but enjoyable day trip to Chicago.

The Chicago Union Station Amtrak Metropolitan Lounge is very comfortable



Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission—2018 Annual Meeting

By Steve Coxhead, President,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) meets annually. The 2018 meeting was held October 3-5, 2018 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) has observer status at these meetings as an "allied organization". IPRA was represented at this year's meeting by President, Steve Coxhead, and Treasurer, Phil Streby.

Indiana's official delegation consisted of Representative Sharon Negele and James Stark, Director, Multimodal Division, INDOT (representing INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness).

MIPRC is a nine-state interstate compact commission that promotes, coordinates and supports regional improvements to passenger rail service. Member states include Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, (continued)

("Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission..." continued from page 9) **Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Also Iowa, Ohio and South Dakota are eligible to join.**

Enacted in 2000, MIPRC brings together state leaders from across the region to work towards developing and implementing a 21st Century passenger rail system. Accomplishing that goal involves adding the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (a 3,000 mile, Chicago hubbed system to connect the region with fast, frequent passenger rail service) network and additional state supported corridors to the region's existing passenger rail infrastructure. MIPRC has taken a primary role in advocating for the federal government to develop collaboration with states for passenger rail development similar to the partnership it has with states for other modes of transportation. MIPRC also works to ensure that Midwestern states have the support and interstate coordination they need to move forward with the region's passenger rail improvement plans.

A Milwaukee Streetcar - *The Hop*



Highlights of the 2018 meeting are described, below.

- Attendees were given a briefing and tour of the on-going renovation at Chicago Union Station, followed by travel to Milwaukee on Amtrak's Hiawatha service
- Meeting sessions were held in the Milwaukee Intermodal Station, in downtown Milwaukee. Dave Simon, Director, Transit, Local Roads, Railroads & Harbors, WDOT, extended greetings from the host state of Wisconsin.**
- An overview of the preceding year was given by **Laura Kliewer, Director, MIPRC:**
 - Progress of the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) was noted.
 - The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) led Midwest Planning Project, to develop a 20 to 40 year plan for a high-performance regional rail network, has progressed. This project will determine the priorities, studies and investment needs to advance projects within a multi-state context.
 - A group of Midwestern states has received federal grants to buy Next Generation rail cars and locomotives to modernize the region's passenger fleet. The locomotives are currently being delivered, with railcars to follow. Indiana, unfortunately, had not chosen to be a member of the group.
- Congress has approved FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation) funding for fiscal year 2019 above the level authorized for fiscal year 2018
- DOT representatives from each state present discussed the status of passenger rail projects and planning in their states. While not being the least active, Indiana lagged behind activity in such states as Illinois, Missouri, Wisconsin and Minnesota.**
- MIPRC commissioners and representatives from partner organizations expanded the DOT discussion to provide updates on legislative and other passenger rail related activities in their states
- Melissa Hatcher, Midwest Regional Manager, Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), provided a briefing on the FRA's priorities, funding opportunities and initiatives, including an update on the FRA led Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study**
- There was a tour of the maintenance facility for the Milwaukee Streetcar known as *The Hop*, which is brand new and scheduled to go into revenue service in early November (see accompanying photo)
- MIPRC sent a delegation to Washington, DC, in May, to discuss MIPRC priorities with Congressman. A briefing on that activity was provided. This is similar to the round of Congressional visits conducted by the Rail Passenger Association (RPA) in April.**
- An update on the activities of the Next Generation Equipment Committee was given by **Bryan Ross, Railroad Operations Manager, Missouri DOT.** The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) directs Amtrak, States, the FRA and industry to establish the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Pool Committee (NGEC) to standardize and streamline the process for designing and obtaining next generation passenger rail equipment purchased with federal funding.
- Derrick James, Midwest Senior Manager, Amtrak, provided an update on Amtrak's vision and priorities for the future, including an overview of policy changes since the 2017 MIPRC annual meeting, ideas for making the national network stronger, and the role of the states in developing and implementing new services.**
- There was a tour and presentation of the Milwaukee Intermodal Station, highlighting work recently completed.
- Russell Roberts, Vice President, Government (cont'd)**

("Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission..." continued from page 10) Affairs, Brightline, provided an overview of Florida's Brightline service. Brightline is the USA's only privately owned, operated and maintained passenger rail service. Mr. Roberts touched on how it came to be, and what lessons states could take from its development to improve passenger rail service in the Midwest.

To wrap it all up, I would conclude that the MIPRC involvement continues to be very useful to IPRA, in as much as it gives us a realistic window into what is happening in the Midwest region, which is encouraging. Important things are taking place. There are other States from which Indiana can, and should, learn. However, we seem reluctant to do so. Finally, while it is encouraging to know that planning and coordination is taking place at the MIPRC level, it is frustrating to know that state membership in MIPRC does not imply any commitment to fund or act. We might all want to think about reaching out to our members of the General Assembly and discuss how we move from planning/ coordinating to actually acting. There is much that Indiana could do if it were determined to move ahead.

NIPRA Tweaks Name & Seeks Public Support for Bringing Back Ft. Wayne Passenger Rail Corridor

By W. Dennis Hodges, Vice President Business Relations,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Valparaiso – The **Northeastern** Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (NIPRA) is now the **Northern** Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (NIPRA). The change was made to reflect on the proposed Chicago – Fort Wayne – Columbus passenger rail route (a.k.a. corridor), which is to traverse through all of Northern Indiana and will include stops in Warsaw, Plymouth, Valparaiso and Gary.

In this regard, the new NIPRA hosted three public hearings in Indiana – one in Fort Wayne on Oct 23rd, another in Warsaw on Oct 24th and the last in Valparaiso on Oct 25th to rally public support for the project.

Armed with a battery of informational placards, NIPRA's consulting firm, HNTB, represented by **Randy Wade** and **Caron Kloser**, both associate vice presidents of the firm, presented a fluent and inspiring message as to why the public should support the rail alignment.



(Top) **Fred Lanahan**, former NIPRA Chairman and Board Member of IPRA
(Bottom) **Dave Strietelmeier**, Valparaiso Mayor talks with HNTB Associate VP **Caron Kloser** about the Corridor
(Both photos courtesy of the Post Tribune of Northwest Indiana)

With the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study completed, NIPRA is looking for funding to start the next levels of funding and has applied, though the City of Fort Wayne, to the Federal Railroad Administration for a grant to do that.

Kloser said that the Fort Wayne-based organization is looking to a study being done by the Michigan Department of

transportation to identify the infrastructure between Gary and Chicago that will be used by both the Chicago to Detroit and the Chicago to Columbus route.

The studies done by the consulting firm are being funded by municipalities and other government agencies along the corridor as well as a few manufacturers. The City of Valparaiso and Valparaiso University are among the contributors.

Kloser proposed that passenger trains travelling 79 MPH, two to four times a day, will have a significant impact on the number of travelers taken off the highways and expressways, but that trains going 110 MPH, four to six times a day, will have an even greater number of automobiles taken out of the highway and interstate systems. Those times would be "very competitive" with car travel, Kloser said, noting the frequently clogged Chicago interstates.

"This service is very competitive with auto travel on this corridor," Kloser said during her presentation on the proposed rail service. She added that the existing right-of-way that the railroad would follow is relatively straight, which "means the train can run this at higher speed."

Communities would take the lead in choosing their station locations and designs. Gary's would potentially be at the Gary -Chicago International Airport

(continued)

("NIPRA Tweaks Name..." continued from page 11)

Out of a perceived need to bring passenger rail service back to Fort Wayne, the effort to revive the Amtrak service that had stops in Gary, Valparaiso and Fort Wayne – and ran on the former Pennsylvania Railroad line through the region -- was organized by NIPRA about a decade ago. Amtrak ended its commuter service between Valparaiso and Chicago, with stops in Gary and Hammond/Whiting, in 1991.

The former train station in Fort Wayne has been restored, said **Fred Lanahan**, former NIPRA chair. "We need to convince politicians that there needs to be a balance in transportation," he said, contending that the cost of building a mile of interstate highway is higher than building a mile of new railroad.

"This (passenger rail system) is going to bring back a lot of options for people," said Lanahan, and added that public contributions would be worthwhile. "Drawing public interest in the service was a reason for NIPRA's hosting such meetings in Ohio and Northern Indiana".

Bullets from the Board

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

The Board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) did not meet in October. See below for November's Board Meeting details.

- Currently, Indiana supports one **Hoosier State** train, each direction, four days per week. In order to make this transportation option a serious consideration for more people, we need to at least double the daily frequency (i.e. two trains, each direction), and increase the weekly frequency from four to seven days per week. This would expand ridership and move us to the point where fare box revenue could cover operating expenses. A change like this depends on additional support being included in the next biennial Indiana budget. Much of what goes into the budget depends on the **House Ways & Means Committee**. So, if your district is represented by one of the following committee members, then we recommend that you reach out to them. After each name listed here, you'll see in parenthesis their party affiliation and district number.
 - Tim Brown (R-41)
 - Bob Cherry (R-53)
 - Mike Karickhoff (R-30)
 - Holli Sullivan (R-78)
 - Jim Baird (R-44)

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is a not for profit organization of concerned citizens, working to bring modern, 21st Century passenger rail systems to Indiana. We believe such systems are one of the keys to Indiana's economic success in the new century.

Goals for Indiana:

- Improve the Chicago-Indianapolis-Louisville-Cincinnati corridor (The Hoosier State)
- Build the Chicago-Fort Wayne corridor
- Expand the NW Indiana South Shore commuter system
- Develop light rail commuter systems for Central Indiana

Modern transit systems are demanded by the work force now coming of age, and expected by 21st Century businesses considering locations for expansion.



- Dan Leonard (R-50)
- Jeff Thompson (R-28)
- Ed Clere (R-72)
- Steve Davisson (R-73)
- Bob Heaton (R-46)
- Dave Heine (R-85)
- Todd Huston (R-37)
- Peggy Mayfield (R-60)
- Sharon Negele (R-13)
- Sally Siegrist (R-26)
- Hal Slager (R-15)
- Greg Porter (D-96)
- Mara Candelaria Reardon (D-12)
- Ed Delaney (D-86)
- Sheila Klinker (D-27)
- Earl Harris (D-2)
- Cherrish Pryor (D-94)
- Steven Stemler (D-71)
- Melanie Wright (D-35) (continued)

("Bullets from the Board" continued from page 12)

- The **Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Proposal** (linking Chicago with Columbus, Ohio, via Fort Wayne) would also benefit from an infusion of Indiana State support. If this is important to you, and you are represented by a member of the House Ways & Means Committee, we recommend that you share your thoughts with them. An article about this appears elsewhere in this issue.
- The **Save the Nickel Plate** initiative is ongoing. Please consider lending your support to this effort. For information, send a message to info@savethenickelplate.org. See **Riding the Rails** elsewhere in this issue for more detail.
- IPRA was represented at the 2018 annual meeting of the **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)**, in Milwaukee. IPRA is an "allied" organization, and as such attends MIPRC meetings as an observer. An article about this appears elsewhere in this issue.
- IPRA was also represented at the **Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA)** Fall meeting at which attendees were briefed on the current state of the **2018 California State Rail Plan**. See **Riding the Rails** elsewhere in this issue for more detail.
- The Rail Passenger Association (RPA) **RailNation Miami** Summit also took place in October in Miami, Florida. IPRA members were at that meeting (one of our Board members is also an RPA Board member). Look for a full report elsewhere in this issue.

The next Board meeting will be at a location TBD on **Thursday, November 29, 2018 (i.e. the 5th Thursday)**. All IPRA members are welcome to attend!

What: **IPRA Board Meeting**

When: **Thursday, November 29, 2018 at Time TBD**

Where: **Location TBD**

Food: **Sandwiches will be brought in so that we may start with a working lunch**

Those planning to attend this board meeting are requested to respond to the meeting announcement so that we may plan adequately. Please watch your e-mail for more details as this meeting's date approaches.

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

The level of support for the ***Hoosier State*** and the **Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Project** in the next budget is dependent on legislative action. Please let your state representative know if you agree with IPRA that it is important to increase


the level of support for these two important projects. This is particularly important if your representative serves on the **House Ways & Means Committee**. Please talk with them; they do listen. Let us know, too! Send a message to: info@indianahighspeedrail.org.

Riding the Rails

By **Tod K Bassler** Editor – *All Aboard Indiana*,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

HOOSIER STATE Update– (Courtesy of the **Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)**)

- The On-Time Performance (OTP) of the ***Hoosier State*** train for the most recent six months (with a 6-month average of **91%**) is:
 - May 2018 – 97%
 - June 2018 – 91%
 - July 2018 – 87%
 - August 2018 – 94%
 - September 2018 – 91% (*continued*)



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f t w i y

("Riding the Rails" continued from page 13)

- October 2018 – 83%
- Ridership (up 8.6%) and revenue have been trending **up** every month since [start of fiscal year] July!
- Radio advertisements for the **Hoosier State** will start mid-November in Indianapolis & Lafayette

CALIFORNIA'S RAIL PLAN IS SO COMMON-SENSE IT'S REVOLUTIONARY – On October 11, 2018 IPRA members **Phil Streby** and **Tod Bassler** took the **Cardinal** up and back in one day to Chicago to attend a luncheon organized by the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA). **Chad Edison** visited from California to update us on the **2018 California State Rail Plan**. For details, see Phil or Tod and: <https://www.midwesthsr.org/remind-register-learn-how-california%E2%80%99s-rail-plan-so-common-sense-it%E2%80%99s-revolutionary>.



READ [ROUND THE RIPPLE] FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR – Go to <https://www.broadripplegazette.com/read.htm> and read IPRA Board Member **Bill Malcolm's** updates on the continuing saga of the plans for the Nickel Plate rail corridor. You can read all articles online and while Bill has written much about this topic, this editor recommends that you read Bill's column in the Broad Ripple Gazette Volume 15, Numbers 19, 20, 21 & 22 in order.

NICKEL PLATE PLAN IGNORES PUBLIC WILL – Mike Corbett wrote a very good letter in the **Indianapolis Business Journal** that deserves a read. If you have an IBJ subscription, go to <https://www.ibj.com/articles/70933-nickel-plate-plan-ignores-public-will>. If you don't, this is another article showing that an overwhelming majority of people want to leave the rails intact and build the trail next to it. [Editor's note: As is now with the Monon Trail at 25th Street in Indianapolis]

MORE SUPPORT FOR RAIL+TRAIL ON THE NICKEL PLATE CORRIDOR – On Tuesday, October 30, 2018 IPRA members **Phil Streby**, **Logan Day** and **Tod Bassler** attended a meeting in Fishers held by the City of Fishers and NBBJ, the architectural company Fishers is using to propose a redesign of the Nickel Plate corridor. During the NBBJ presentation, one of the slides shows that only 4% of 1200 people asked (yes, a very low sample size) support Rail+Trail. Most of the 50 people

attending that meeting support Rail+Trail so something doesn't add up. Please go to <https://www.playfishers.com/284/Track-to-Trail>, read the FAQs and sign up for email updates so you know the information that Fishers is disseminating. Note that the [I WANT 4.5 MILES OF...] button has been recently removed from this website. **It is important that the true wishes of the residents of Indiana's Hamilton & Marion counties with regards to this corridor are heard by the local governments!** Anyone interest in the most recent and upcoming activities of **Save the Nickel Plate** is encouraged to join our email list at http://eepurl.com/cU_FxH and follow us on Facebook at <fb.com/savethenickelplate>.



THE NEXT NICKEL PLATE REGIONAL RAIL CORRIDOR PRESERVATION MEETING IS SCHEDULED – Rail Advocates will gather **Monday, November 19, 2018** to organize to pre-

serve the 40-mile regional rail corridor (a.k.a. The Nickel Plate (or State Fair) tracks). Contact **Bill Malcolm** for details or join **Save the Nickel Plate** on Facebook. The rail and trail can co-exist. The City of Indianapolis put in this fence at 28th Street to separate the Monon Trail from the regional rail corridor (a.k.a. The Nickel Plate or State Fair Train route). The corridor runs from 10th Street all the way to north of Noblesville.

INDIANAPOLIS-CHICAGO AMTRAK ROUTE IS BIKE FRIENDLY – Don't forget that bicycles are accepted between Indianapolis and Chicago aboard both the Amtrak **Hoosier State** and Amtrak **Cardinal** trains. Read this article at: <https://media.amtrak.com/2018/08/indianapolis-chicago-amtrak-route-now-bike-friendly>. (This news courtesy of Amtrak Media Relations)

WARNING!!! THE KOCH BROTHERS ARE NOT OUR ALLY – The Koch brothers are killing public transit projects around the country with a recent target being Nashville Tennessee – Read this New York Times article at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/19/climate/koch-brothers-public-transit.html> so you know how to respond truthfully.

FOR YOU AAA HOOSIER MOTOR CLUB MEMBERS – Please see the last [Nov/Dec 2018] issue of **Home & Away** for a good article about Florida's **Brightline** train! Next year (*continued*)

("Riding the Rails" continued from page 14) the AAA will have a new publication replacing **Home & Away**.

NIPRA PRESIDENT RICH JURAM WAS INTERVIEWED BY NPR'S LAKESHORE PUBLIC MEDIA – If you wish to listen to a good discussion about the **Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Proposal**, please go to <http://www.lakeshorepublicradio.org/post/regionally-speaking-monday-october-22-2018#stream/o> (the interview starts at about 24:20 through the interview)

WARNING!!! RANDAL O'TOOLE'S BOOK HAS NOW PUBLISHED – The book *Romance of the Rails: Why the Passenger Trains We Love Are Not the Transportation We Need* is now available. Read it so you know how to respond truthfully.

AMTRAK MIDWEST SERVICES IMPROVED FOR FALL TRAVEL – Amtrak and the state sponsors of the [Amtrak MidwestSM Network](https://media.amtrak.com/2018/08/amtrak-midwestsm-services-improved-fall-travel) have worked through the summer to make several service improvements in time for back-to-school and other fall travel. Please go to <https://media.amtrak.com/2018/08/amtrak-midwestsm-services-improved-fall-travel> to learn more!

AMTRAK PREPARES FOR INCREASED THANKSGIVING TRAVEL – Amtrak is preparing for a surge of holiday travelers with extra trains and capacity on several routes. **Book Amtrak holiday tickets early!** See details at: <https://media.amtrak.com/2018/09/amtrak-prepares-increased-thanksgiving-travel>.

IPRA Membership

Membership can be purchased online at <https://www.indianahighspeedrail.org>. You are also welcome to print and mail this form:

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.

Rail Passengers Association (RPA) members now have a new benefit... **MemberDeals**. Current RPA members will find details on RPA's website. **If you're not a RPA member, this is a great time to join!**

STUDENTS CAN SAVE ON AMTRAK MIDWEST TRAVEL – If you're a traveling student, please go to <https://media.amtrak.com/2018/05/students-can-save-amtrak-midwest-travel/> and learn how you can save money travelling on Amtrak!

Crowne Plaza Union Station in Indy: Select Corporate ID = **6972** or call the hotel directly (317-631-2221) for the Amtrak rate of **\$129 per night** for a King or two Double beds. (48 hours cancellation; rate available through 12/31/18).

For More Information

All Aboard Indiana is a monthly publication of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), formerly the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (INHSR). To learn more about IPRA, please visit on the web: <https://www.indianahighspeedrail.org>

...or contact us at **our new mailing address:**

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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)

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