



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(No. 3 was mailed March 13)

RETURN REQUESTED

AMTRAK IN THE ROCKIES!

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

DC-Atlanta slumbercoach (economy sleeper) service starts Apr. 24.

To improve the usefulness of the Oakland-Bakersfield "San Joaquin" trains, three new stops for connecting buses are planned effective June 1. The Bakersfield-LA buses will stop in Saugus at the Best Western Ranch House Inn near 6 Flags Magic Mountain theme park, with which the inn is linked by shuttle buses, and at the FlyAway Terminal, a remote terminal in Van Nuys for Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). This will open up the San Fernando Valley as a "San Joaquin" market, and provide access between the San Joaquin Valley and LAX for people who don't wish to deal with the third level air carriers that serve the San Joaquin Valley directly.

Finally, the Stockton-Sacramento buses will serve Lodi by way of the Caltrans Park'n'Ride lot at Victor and Beckman Rds., one mile from downtown.

Thanks to the hard work of two NARP members, "Southwest Ltd." passengers are linked with Phoenix by comfortable all-reserved "ClubCars" which operate on the public highways. Arizona Central Lines—Robert H. Bohannon, President; Randy K. Curtin, Operations Supervisor—serves six Phoenix locations (airport, downtown, Amtrak station, midtown, Metrocenter, northwest), Cordes Junction, and two Flagstaff locations (Northern Arizona University and the Amtrak station). Since the service was conceived primarily for the benefit of "Southwest Ltd." passengers, Amtrak's new timetable shows the Metrocenter connecting times right in the table for trains 3 and 4. The service, which offers seats some passengers claim are more comfortable than Amtrak's own, is also available to passengers not connecting with Amtrak. For reservations, call 602/241-9191.

Chicago connection changes effective Apr. 24:

● Eastbound Seattle/Portland-Chicago "Empire Builder" gains connection with westbound Chicago-LA "Southwest Ltd.";

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—Photo by "Chip" Sherman

On Feb. 7, the "Rio Grande Zephyr," operating as a 14-car test train with 12 Amtrak Superliners, heads west into Moffat Tunnel.

Amtrak, effective with trains originating Apr. 24, travels through rather than around the spectacular Colorado Rockies. The newly renamed Chicago-Oakland "California Zephyr" (alias "San Francisco Zephyr") and its Los Angeles and Seattle branches ("Desert Wind" and "Pioneer," respectively) begin operation over the Denver-Salt Lake City mainline of Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad, cresting the continental divide at 9,239 feet in the six-mile Moffat Tunnel. The Rio Grande route was originally selected by the planners who designed the Railpax (Amtrak) system.

(continued on page 3)

LATE FLASH! D&RGW flooded Apr. 18 at Thistle, UT; may be closed 2 weeks to 2 months. "Zephyr" to serve WY stations (all unmanned; no Borie-Cheyenne bus) 'til D&RGW reopens. Amtrak will observe new times E of Denver and W of Salt Lake unless it appears D&RGW will be closed several months. While train runs through WY, Amtrak bus will serve D&RGW stations except Granby/Helper/Bond.



Help Save the "Spirit of California"

Gov. George Deukmejian (R-CA) has marked the joint Amtrak/California overnight LA-Oakland-Sacramento "Spirit" for extinction effective Oct. 1. The Oakland-Bakersfield "San Joaquins" have received a one-year reprieve with service assured through June 30, 1984.

No further "Spirit" promotional work is planned by California or Amtrak. Accordingly, California rail passenger advocates have undertaken their own promotional efforts (just as NARP spent \$13,350 in 1982 to advertise the "Cardinal"). **You can help the citizens' efforts by sending contributions earmarked for "Save the Spirit" fund to: NARP Region 12, PO Box 2768, Riverside, CA 92516.**

32 state legislators have signed a letter to the governor urging restoration of "Spirit" funding. Local "Spirit" supporters are contacting political and business leaders along the route and distributing fliers to warn passengers of the threat to the service.

NARP has urged Amtrak to improve operations, including establishment of through cars to/from San Diego, which would seem to be a logical response to Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor, Jr.'s concern, expressed in a Dec. 29 letter to NARP President John R. Martin, that "as an overnight train the Spirit . . . must rely heavily on end-point passengers, with little appeal to intermediate cities. And, our ability to serve smaller communities between large population centers is a source of strength on most other trains."

Further bolstering the case for through San Diego cars is the statement by Transportation Consultant Carl R. Englund, Jr., in a report prepared recently for the Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers, that pre-Amtrak tests by New York Central at Utica, Syracuse, Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis all showed a *minimum* loss of 25% of affected riders when platform-change connections replaced through cars. When some through cars were restored, ridership returned to prior levels.

The Apr. 24 timetable will make San Diego-Spirit connections still less attractive. The southbound "Spirit" will be shown arriving LA 15 minutes earlier, at 8:15 AM, while the connecting departure for San Diego will be 45 minutes later, at 10:10 AM. The latter move, dictated by the new "Southwest Ltd." 9 AM arrival and by track availability on the San Diego line, means "Spirit" connecting passengers will have to wait about two hours for a train on which most of them will spend less than two hours.

Without through cars, these passengers also will be subjected to the extraordinarily long round-trip walk between trains and waiting room at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal (LAUPT). The above-mentioned report states: "The average seven minutes' walking time required to transit the distance between train side and street curb at LAUPT has, for some years, been a major ridership deterrent." (Over half of that walk is between the platforms and the waiting room.)

Amtrak says it would take too long to turn around a through car at LA, and refuses to run a through car backwards south of LA, which would eliminate the need to turn the car.

Amtrak's Apr. 24 timetable also avoids a possible alternative

NEW DISCOUNTS FOR NARP MEMBERS

NARP members are now entitled to the following special discounts when renting cars from National Car Rental:

United States: 6% off regular unlimited mileage rates; 36% off regular time and mileage rates. Canada & International: 10% off standard time and mileage rates.

Simply present your NARP membership card and/or special NARP/National Car Rental ID card at the time of rental to receive your discount. (To get a NARP/NCR ID card send a self-addressed stamped envelope to NARP.)

National Car Rental which provides this service at no cost to NARP, says its rates are low and invites you to call their toll-free number, 800-CAR-RENT, for information and reservations.

JOBS BILL MONEY FOR AMTRAK

The emergency jobs bill, Public Law 98-8 enacted Mar. 24, includes \$80 million for Amtrak "to provide for labor-intensive capital improvements." Accompanying report language states: "The conferees expect that priority consideration be given to the provision of \$10 million to improve the railroad line between Attleboro and Hyannis." Also, "not to exceed \$1 million shall be available to replace or renovate the Amtrak Station in Jackson, MI, in cooperation with local efforts to redevelop and revitalize the surrounding area. The conferees also direct that not to exceed \$1 million shall be made available to improve the Amtrak station at East Lansing, MI."

Balance of the money is expected to go to the Northeast Corridor. Earlier, the House on Mar. 3 approved \$110 million. On Mar. 17, the Senate approved \$130 million plus \$25 million for Northeast Corridor highway bridges (NARP News, Jan., p. 3). But President Reagan had sought only \$50 million for Amtrak, so the final compromise provided less money than either the House or the Senate had included.

to through cars: the prompt cross-platform connection which would result if the LA departure of the day's first southbound "San Diegan" were set back from 8 (just 15 minutes before the "Spirit's arrival!) to 8:30 AM. Amtrak will consider this for Oct. if the "Spirit" survives. (Currently, the "Spirit" frequently arrives LA before 8 AM, thus permitting you to make the "theoretically impossible" connection.)

Amtrak did secure a \$390,000 express contract effective Mar. 1 under which the "Spirit" hauls military supplies. Amtrak is attempting to secure additional express business from the Department of Defense for the "Spirit" and for other trains.

Overall, however, Amtrak appears to hold little hope for the "Spirit's" survival. Note, for example, this comment in a Mar. 7 Claytor letter to Richard DeGarmo, chairman of the Chico Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee: "While we do not want to see any train disappear that supports the system, it is an unfortunate fact that the Spirit . . . is a victim of bad timing with the recession and airline price wars." The recession, of course(?), is ending, and Amtrak once again is cheaper than the airlines within California, at least for those who buy round-trip tickets.

There was a time when Amtrak management held little hope for the "Cardinal's" survival. NARP disagreed and won. Let's win again!!

Other problems the "Spirit" must overcome:

- the refusal of California to spend just \$5,000 for minor station improvements, which forced Amtrak to shelve plans to add Gilroy as a station stop in Apr.;

- failure to use station facilities at Van Nuys or Simi Valley which have already been constructed and paid for by California taxpayers. Under Gov. Brown, the state had requested that the "Spirit" stop at one or the other. Amtrak said no then and now says that Southern Pacific refuses even to discuss the matter until final resolution of litigation over the defunct Oxnard commuter service;

- Amtrak's claim that the state share of FY '84 operating costs would be \$4.7 million for the "Spirit" alone;

- The refusal of Nevada to help fund a Reno extension, although casino industry members serving on the Traffic and Transportation Committee of the Greater Reno/Sparks Chamber of Commerce have indicated that casinos might pay a commission of \$2/passenger, leaving \$5/passenger unfunded.

San Joaquin and San Diegan Services: The new governor has halted improvements which cannot be completed quickly. Here is a rundown on the projects:

- The long-awaited automatic switch for the San Joaquin route at the Southern Pacific-Santa Fe connection in Port Chicago, already under contract, will be postponed and, if the governor has his way, cancelled along with the San Joaquin trains if they don't recover at least 55% of costs from the farebox in FY '84.

● Station improvements are going forward at Martinez (and Davis on the Sacramento line) and will start soon at Bakersfield and Wasco. Caltrans has asked Amtrak to see if any other station improvements can be completed quickly.

● Promotion of the "San Joaquins" was halted until the administration granted their reprieve, but a "massive" campaign, including improved bus connections (see Travelers' Advisory) is getting underway, according to Warren Weber, Chief of the Caltrans Office of Rail Services.

● On the San Diego line, a \$1.5 million project to improve sidings at Orange and Serra was essentially complete when Deukmejian took office. The project involved installation of high-speed turnouts (switches) and upgrading the siding track to 40 mph standards.

● An Amtrak/Caltrans agreement to spend just over \$2 million (90% of it from the state) retiming grade crossing signals on the LA-San Diego line to permit faster train operation is dead. The state asked Amtrak to put it on hold but Amtrak cancelled it because inflation would make current cost estimates unreliable in future years, and the state concurred.

● Still under contract is a project to straighten three curves at San Juan Capistrano and cut 60 to 90 seconds from the LA-San Diego running time. This is on hold because the total cost has escalated above the \$900,000 the state had earmarked for it. Apparently, the private landowners from whom the needed property adjacent to the railroad was to be purchased perceived an opportunity to jack up the sale price.

Monterey: Prospects are uncertain for restoring passenger trains on the San Francisco-San Jose-Monterey run, served by Southern Pacific's "Del Monte" until Amtrak began operations May 1, 1971. Last year, the legislature provided \$2.5 million for needed capital improvements but SP says over \$4 million would be needed. Caltrans has promised state legislators it will go back to SP and ask what the available \$2.5 million would buy, and how much it would cost to operate a single daily round-trip. (A direct Caltrans/SP operating contract would appear to be needed. Amtrak has refused to cost out operations because Claytor considers the 125-mile run a commuter service and he wants no new commuter responsibilities. This service would put Amtrak into San Francisco and onto SP's 47-mile San Jose commuter line for the first time.) ■

Rep. Jones Addresses Oklahoma Passenger Rail Assn.

House Budget Chairman James R. Jones (D-OK) addressed about 100 people at a Mar. 29 meeting of the Oklahoma Passenger Rail Association in Tulsa. He made clear that he was serious about getting Amtrak back into Oklahoma—and that he preferred the St. Louis-Springfield, MO-Tulsa-Oklahoma City-Texas route. Missouri was well represented at the meeting—about 20 people, including representatives from the chambers of commerce of Joplin and Lebanon.

(A study done for Missouri a few years ago showed that the line Jones favors actually has more potential than the St. Louis-Kansas City line, principally because of straighter track and more populous intermediate communities.)

When NARP Director/OPRA President Ron Coffman asked Jones if he'd sponsor an amendment to require operation of Oklahoma service, Jones said he'd like "to give Amtrak a way to be persuaded by other means," and noted that he would contact members of the Missouri congressional delegation after the Easter recess. But he said he would resort to legislation if that proved necessary.

Also attending the meeting were a Tulsa City Commissioner and representatives of the Oklahoma DOT, a Tulsa senior citizens group, an independent bus company supporting the service, and the offices of Senators David L. Boren (D-OK) and Don Nickles (R-OK) and Reps. Mickey Edwards (R-OK) and Mike Synar (D-OK). OPRA officials received advance regrets and indications of strong interest from the offices of Oklahoma's four other representatives. ■

Amtrak in the Rockies! *(continued from page 1)*

The D&RGW route was shown in Amtrak's first timetable—May 1, 1971—but implementation is twelve years late because D&RGW, to the delight of scenery-loving travelers and connoisseurs of the best dining car traditions (including freshly caught trout), did not join Amtrak in 1971 and continued to operate its tri-weekly domeliner, the "Rio Grande Zephyr," independently of Amtrak.

That independent operation ends after the eastbound "Rio Grande Zephyr" of Sunday, Apr. 24, completes its run, assuming the Interstate Commerce Commission approves D&RGW's plan to legally discontinue its passenger service, thereby permitting the D&RGW/Amtrak agreement for rerouting Amtrak service over the D&RGW to become effective.

Amtrak projects a \$1.6 million/year net reduction in operating costs stemming from the reroute of "S. F. Zephyr/Desert Wind/Pioneer" (Chicago to Oakland, LA, and Portland/Seattle, respectively), and says that the savings will be even greater after taking full account of riders who will be attracted to the route by the scenery. The main section of the train will be renamed "California Zephyr," the name formerly carried by a popular, big Chicago-Oakland domeliner operated jointly until March 22, 1970 by Burlington, D&RGW, and Western Pacific. The new CZ will traverse the same Chicago-Salt Lake City lines as did its private sector namesake but continue west—as Amtrak's "S. F. Zephyr" does now—on the Southern Pacific, serving Ogden and Reno, which WP bypasses, cresting the spectacular Sierra Nevada range at Donner Summit, and running through historic Mother Lode goldmining towns—the trail of the 49ers.

Food service will be Amtrak's "modified, improved" variety

Rio Grande's Exit—End of an Era

26 railroads were eligible to join Amtrak at its inception in 1971, and 20 did so. Of the six which opted for independence, Southern subsequently joined in 1979 and now D&RGW is following suit in 1983, Reading and Georgia were acquired by Amtrak contractors Conrail and Seaboard, respectively, and Rock Island went bankrupt and perished, thus leaving South Shore as the only surviving independent of the original group, though South Shore's passenger service has been funded publicly (by IN-IL transit agencies) for several years now.

and there will be skylight Superliner lounges but no traditional domes. The Superliners offer upstairs coach seating to most coach passengers all the time, and the train will convey through cars to points the old CZ did not—including Pocatello, Boise, Eastern Oregon, and Portland/Seattle ("Pioneer"), Las Vegas, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles ("Desert Wind"), and Reno.

There are some costs. D&RGW is slower than Amtrak's present Union Pacific route across Wyoming, so the new "Zephyr" will miss some connections in Chicago (see Travelers' Advisory). The loss of service in Wyoming has provoked a storm of protest, yet another reminder to politicians and to Amtrak that the removal of any passenger train service is a painful process.

In the long term, we look for restoration of service to Wyoming, as it is included in the route structure approved by the NARP board in Oct. '78. One NARP director has noted that a train heading straight east from Salt Lake City via the UP (Cheyenne-Julesburg, bypassing Denver) could provide an early morning Chicago arrival, and a counterpart late departure from Chicago westbound, so that a full business day (and all Amtrak connections) would be possible. ■

ST. LOUIS-CARBONDALE TEST TRAIN

Amtrak ran a St. Louis-Carbondale test train without serious problems Mar. 17. This indicates Amtrak takes seriously the proposed extension of the Kansas City-St. Louis "Mules" to a Carbondale connection with the Chicago-Memphis-New Orleans "City of New Orleans." Supporters remain optimistic the service may be instituted before next year's World's Fair in New Orleans.

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY (cont. from p. 1)

• The following trains will no longer connect with the westbound "Zephyr/Desert Wind/Pioneer": westbound NY-Washington-Cincinnati-Chicago "Cardinal"; westbound Toronto-Chicago "International"; eastbound "Empire Builder";

• Eastbound "Zephyr/Wind/Pioneer" will no longer connect with westbound "Empire Builder".

Improved relations between Amtrak and Conrail have produced a "Lake Shore" schedule which is 82 minutes faster Chicago-NY, 87 minutes faster Boston to Chicago, and 80 minutes faster Chicago to Boston. The train departs Chicago at 6:20 PM instead of 4:50 PM.

The eastbound "Broadway/Capitol Ltd." departs Chicago at 4:50 PM instead of 8 PM. NY to Chicago is 7 minutes faster; Chicago to NY 5 minutes faster; Washington to Chicago 22 minutes faster; Chi. to Wash. 20 minutes faster.

The Pittsburgh-Philadelphia "Pennsylvanian" is 11 minutes faster in both directions and the eastbound train departs Pittsburgh at 9:45 AM instead of 1 PM, compensating for the new middle-of-the-night "Broadway" departure and permitting direct connection in Philadelphia with a train that arrives Boston at 11:44 PM.

Although the scenic Chicago-Salt Lake City run is slower as a result of the Rio Grande reroute, the "Desert Wind" (Las Vegas/LA) and "Pioneer" (Boise/Portland/Seattle) branches are faster. The Salt Lake-LA run is 5 minutes faster in addition to having a new stop—Delta, UT. The Seattle-Ogden run is 45 minutes faster west and 25 minutes faster east. Look for a schedule adjustment in Oct. which will make the westbound "Desert Wind" departure from Las Vegas somewhat later than the new 6:25 AM time.

New Jersey Transit commuter trains resumed operation Apr. 4; Harlem/Hudson/New Haven commuter trains resumed Apr. 18. SEPTA (Phila. area) commuter trains were struck Mar. 15.

THANK YOU, PRESIDENT REAGAN!

Most observers agree that the Reagan Administration has the best record since Amtrak was created with respect to both the quality of appointments to the Amtrak board, and prompt action to keep the board at full strength.

On Jan. 17, Secy. Lewis reappointed Crete Harvey and Ralph Kerchum to the Amtrak board. They represent DOT, the "preferred stockholder," and serve one-year terms.

President Reagan reappointed Samuel H. Hellenbrand and Frank W. Jenkins, the commuter authority reps whose terms last two years, on Feb. 2. The four-year terms of Presidential Appointees Charles Luna, Indiana Gov. Robert Orr, and Ross Rowland expire in April, 1986.

Elizabeth Hansford Dole, who on Feb. 7 succeeded Drew Lewis as Secretary of Transportation, is an ex officio member of the board and attended its Feb. 16 meeting.

GOOD STATE NEWS!

West Virginia, for the first time, has approved funding for rail passenger service—\$100,000 to pay for the state's portion of the single Washington-Martinsburg Chessie commuter train for which Maryland already pays.

New York has appropriated \$957,000 to cover FY '84 operation of NY-Montreal "Adirondack" and one Syracuse-Niagara Falls train ("Mohawk" west and "Niagara Rainbow" east). Amtrak, however, claims the state owes \$745,000 for "Adirondack" and \$1,475,000 for the other pair of trains, or a total of \$2.22 million. If Amtrak doesn't budge on the numbers, the best guess is that only "Adirondack" will operate after June 30.

Florida Gov. Bob Graham has proposed a 1983-85 budget which includes continued funding for the Miami-Tampa "Silver Palm" plus \$3 million/year for Miami-West Palm Beach commuter train service. If further studies are positive, and an agreement can be reached with a railroad, the commuter train could begin as early as March '85.

Amtrak Seeks Your Views on St. Petersburg Cutback

Amtrak is seeking public comment on its plan to replace train service at Clearwater and St. Petersburg with connecting buses that would meet the trains in Tampa (Feb. Travelers' Advisory). The comment period ends May 16. Send your comments to: M.L. Clark Tyler, Group Vice-President, Passenger Services and Communications, Amtrak, P.O. Box 37631, Washington, DC 20013. If you wish to record your comments orally, use the toll-free number, 800/368-0103, set up for this purpose (in Washington, DC, dial 347-4352).

"At the end of the public comment period, a summary of the substance of the comments received will be presented to Amtrak's Board of Directors for use in making a final decision on whether to implement the proposed service change."

Amtrak claims the proposed change:

- would save Amtrak about \$1.6 million annually; this comes to over \$35 for every passenger who used the trains in either direction in 1982 to or from Clearwater and St. Petersburg;

- would improve by 4 percent the financial performance of the Amtrak New York-Florida route, as measured by loss per passenger mile [from 5¢ to 4.8¢];

- would have no discernible impact on connecting parts of the route system.

Amtrak says it would spend \$1.3 million to replace St. Petersburg maintenance facilities with less labor-intensive facilities at Tampa, and that \$324,000 of the annual savings would result from improved efficiency at the new facility.

In a letter published Apr. 4 in the *St. Petersburg Times*, Amtrak President W. Graham Claytor, Jr., stated: "The bus would pull up directly alongside the train and every passenger would be

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT

"I'D RATHER BE ON THE TRAIN!" bumper stickers (black & white) are now available from the NARP office, 417 NJ Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003. \$1 each.

assisted the few steps from train to bus. All of their hand luggage, as well as checked baggage, would be handled by Amtrak personnel."

Claytor also stated that the dedicated buses "would save 40 minutes travel time for our Clearwater passengers and 75 minutes for passengers going to or from St. Petersburg."

As we see it, the St. Petersburg time-saving would be 30-35 minutes northbound and about 45 minutes southbound. Currently, the "Silver Palm" connecting bus departs St. Petersburg 60 minutes before the train leaves Tampa; the New York trains depart St. Petersburg 90 and 95 minutes before they depart Tampa. Inbound, the "Silver Palm" connecting bus arrives St. P. 35 minutes after the train arrives Tampa. We assume 10 rather than five minutes for transfer of greater amounts of baggage involved in longer trips made on the New York trains, and we discount the 15-20 minutes recovery time shown in the timetable for southbound trains from Clearwater to St. P.

For someone traveling from St. Petersburg to New York on the "Silver Meteor," saving 35 minutes cuts total trip time by 2%, a negligible benefit when offset against the inconvenience of the forced transfer.

The major benefit Amtrak seeks in cutting back to Tampa is the freeing up of one set of equipment by enabling "Silver Star" cars to arrive and depart on the same day. Even now at St. P., however, the schedule allows a turnaround of about five hours, and Amtrak has turned some cars the same day. If the City of Tampa raised Amtrak speed limits as local NARP members are urging, the time benefits of the bus would be reduced further and the St. P. equipment-turnaround time would be increased.

Finally, we look forward to convenient intermodal connections which would result if Amtrak remained in downtown Clearwater, eventually to be joined by the north terminal of the planned St. Petersburg-Clearwater light-rail line (NARP News, May '82).