



## California, Midwest: New Cars, Locomotives!

*Over Three Quarters of a Billion Dollars Obligated*

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced Aug. 3 that California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri will receive \$336.2 million to purchase new, American-made trains to run on rail corridors in those states and in Oregon and Indiana.

California and Illinois reached cooperative agreements with the Federal Railroad Administration to begin the multi-state procurement.

Previously awarded rail dollars mean that these five states and Washington State are spending \$782 million for 33 quick-acceleration locomotives and 120 bi-level passenger cars. The federal funds are \$628.5 million Recovery Act dollars plus—for California—\$100 million from the regular, FY 2010 appropriation.

Manufacturers will compete for contracts beginning this summer. The new equipment will be designed to travel

more than 110 mph and meet standards developed by the Next Generation Corridor Equipment Committee led by states, Federal Railroad Admin. and Amtrak.

"Today's announcement is all about jobs. Thanks to the leadership of the Obama Administration, these orders will pump more than three quarters of a billion dollars into the domestic manufacturing industry," LaHood said. Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph C. Szabo: "Building a nationwide rail network is critical to America's long-term economic success. More people are choosing to take the train and this year Amtrak is projected to set an all-time record by topping 30 million annual riders."

Previous federal and state grants supported procurement of six locomotives and 42 cars for California; 19 locos/ 78 cars for the Midwest. ■

## NARP Board Resolution Defends Calif. High-Speed Rail

NARP's Board unanimously passed a resolution July 21 supporting the California High Speed Rail Authority's overall project and the decision to build the first segment between Fresno and Bakersfield. It backs the Authority's desire to move forward to seek funding for electrification and trainsets.

Some have criticized the "Central Valley first" decision because of the area's relatively light population. But this is a key part of the state's planned north-south link. It will have lower construction costs and require taking less already-developed property.

Compared with the north and south segments, the Valley will produce more miles of high-speed railroad per dollar in-

*(continued on p. 3)*

## Rear-end Collisions: Signal Problems in China, Here; Not France, Japan



- Left: Martin Abegglen on Flickr. Right: Matt Thorpe on Flickr

Japan's Shinkansen (left) and France's TGV (right) high-speed trains have run 44 and 27 years, respectively, without a fatality. TGV shares track with conventional trains for parts of its runs. As NARP Member Walter Zullig wrote to *The Washington Post*, the Chinese "tragedy is not a valid justification to oppose a properly constructed and operated high-speed rail system in the United States."

On July 23, a rear-end collision involving two Chinese high-speed trains on the Huangzhou-Shanghai line killed at least 40 people and injured almost 200.

The tragedy "emerged as a focal point for public dissatisfaction at central government, and the quality of life delivered by breakneck economic growth." On July 29, the day after Premier Wen Jiabao "visited the crash site and pledged

transparency in investigating the disaster...propaganda authorities issued an order to newspaper and internet editors telling them not "to publish any reports or commentaries, except positive news or information released by the authorities" (*Financial Times*, Aug. 1).

The Chinese signaling system apparently does not have a "fault-tolerant" architecture.

Meanwhile, U.S. freight trains recently have been in three rear-end collisions:

- April 17, near Red Oak, IA, BNSF (*California Zephyr* route), coal train hits rear of standing maintenance of way equipment train, engineer and conductor in coal train's lead locomotive died.

- May 24, Mineral Springs, NC, CSX, two freight trains, again engineer and

*(continued on p. 3)*

## Dueling Surface Authorization Visions

While debt ceiling debate raged, the future of roads, transit—and potentially intercity trains—was contested in the wings. In one corner: a six-year House bill that assumes no additional revenues and thus a 35% reduction from currently inadequate spending levels. In the other, a two-year Senate bill that maintains current highway and transit spending levels.

The House and Senate plans are championed by Chairman John Mica (R-FL) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and Barbara Boxer (D-CA), who chairs the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee. Boxer's bill is "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21).

In one sense, the choice is between inadequate spending (House) and a further departure from "user pay" (Senate).

**House:** Mica unveiled an outline of his six-year bill July 7. He said the bill "maximizes the value of our available infrastructure funding through better leveraging, streamlining the project approval process, attracting private sector investment, and cutting the federal bureaucracy. Most importantly, this six-year proposal provides the stability states need to plan major transportation improvements and create long-term jobs." The T&I outline sets up mechanisms to encourage more private sector involvement in passenger rail and transit.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce on July 17 ([www.bit.ly/coctomica](http://www.bit.ly/coctomica)) lambasted Mica's draft, saying its 35% cut to highways and transit "will be devastating to construction and related industries—materials, equipment, design and engineering" and that it "will affect the availability and condition of infrastructure, the quality of service, and the capacity to handle future growth." The Chamber also praised the then-anticipated Senate bill.

Mica wrote a blistering July 13 response to Chamber Pres. & CEO Thomas J. Donohue ([1.usa.gov/micatococ](http://1.usa.gov/micatococ)), saying the Chamber's main purpose is "to lead the lobby for tax increases."

Mica's bill has a passenger train component but it:

- calls for 25% reductions of Amtrak's operating grant in 2012 and 2013 (setting up a potential collision with the House Appropriations Committee),
- places limits on how Amtrak can use federal funds, and

- decimates the High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail program of capital grants for states and Amtrak, which NARP has strongly supported, by limiting it to trains that go 125 mph or more. This contrasts with *greater* flexibility given states for how they spend highway funds.

Indeed, Mica envisions streamlining many SAFETEA-LU programs out of existence, including Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, which has been used to fund passenger trains.

**Senate:** Boxer unveiled an outline for her two-year bill July 15. "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century" (MAP-21) maintains current funding levels, but increases funding for the TIFIA loan program for large projects.

Spending offsets of \$12 billion are needed to support the proposed funding. Senate Finance Chair Max Baucus (D-

MT) endorsed MAP-21 and announced Aug. 3 that a source for the money had been found. The bill likely will be on the Senate floor after Labor Day.

Peter Ruane, President of the American Road & Transportation Builders Association, on July 20 told the Senate Commerce Committee, "If there is no action in this Congress...there will be a major, major dislocation in every segment of the construction industry...630,000-plus jobs [lost]...has been cited by multiple Senators, and it is a valid number."

**User Fees:** Few politicians support a gas tax increase or a vehicle-miles-traveled fee, so the highway program is veering away from the "user pays" principle. Funded primarily by the federal gasoline tax, which hasn't been raised since 1993, the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) has been

*(continued on p. 4)*

## Positive Coverage in *American Conservative*

The August *American Conservative* features an article by senior editor Lewis McCrary arguing that a more robust intercity passenger train network would "bring a lost dignity back to intercity travel."

NARP President Ross Capon was interviewed for the story. "NARP and its leadership—who were lobbying for passenger rail even before Amtrak's formation in 1971—have the confidence of a regime-in-exile..." McCrary writes.

McCrary ends: "Railroads have both created and been shaped by varied landscapes and places, including stations built to dignify their surroundings. ... Most of us drive tin-can cars around tinhorn suburbia. Rail once unified the nation, and a revived rail infrastructure might again restore the patchwork of particularity that made the country great in the first place." ■

*The full article is at [www.bit.ly/mccrall](http://www.bit.ly/mccrall)*

## Sen. Kirk's Multimodal Finance Bill

U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL), the first Republican member in the Congressional Bicameral High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus, on June 29 introduced S. 1300, the "Lincoln Legacy Infrastructure Development Act."

It seeks to mobilize \$100 billion in private investment in new railroads, roads and airports. Kirk sees it as an alternative to raising the gasoline tax.

The bill would remove restrictions on the use of public-private partnerships and

allow states to develop new ways to raise revenues for transportation.

The bill would make high-speed rail projects eligible to have their construction and development costs paid for by the federal Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement loan program, allowing use of future revenues or user fees as collateral for construction loans.

It would create a public-private experimental program to creatively finance rail and bus transit projects. ■

## Grant Agreement Will Mean Faster Keystones

An agreement between the US Department of Transportation and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania signed July 22 means that the three road-rail grade crossings on the Philadelphia-Harrisburg line will be closed in 2012. They are in Lancaster County. This will let top train speeds rise from 110 to 125 mph.

After train speeds were increased to 110 mph with the line's 2006 re-electrification, ridership rose more than 37%.

The grant also includes engineering and environmental work for the redesign of crossovers between tracks and improvements to train control signal systems. ■

## JOIN NARP IN DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES

The fall meeting of NARP's Council of Representatives, with members from each state, will be at the Wilshire Grand Hotel October 14-15. NARP members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

The agenda will include informative and engaging speakers and panels, including an in-depth discussion about California's high-speed rail project.

**Registration is \$225 per person by Sept. 15, \$245 thereafter, and**

includes breakfast, lunch and meeting breaks both days and Friday evening's reception, and a Thurs. tour of Los Angeles-area rail lines.

NARP's room rates at the hotel—two subway stops from Union Station—are available from Sat., Oct. 8 to Wed. night, Oct. 19: \$139/night for a King Room for one person; \$145/night for a King Room for two. Junior Suites with two double beds and 2 bathrooms are \$145 for either one or two persons.

## Getting Projects Built Faster

"Streamlining" approval of transportation infrastructure investment has become a buzzword for making projects progress more quickly from plan to reality.

A Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) analysis shows that "faster" can happen without compromising environmental protections. Projects have advanced faster where parallel or dual permitting under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other en-

vironmental laws reduces duplication of effort. Funding availability and popular support also are important.

Project sponsors should transfer resources to review agencies to ensure adequate staff capacity to produce a timely decision. Long-range state and regional plans should include rail options, to help address environmental, economic and social issues in sufficient detail to satisfy NEPA. ■

## California High-Speed Rail

vested. It also means near-term speed and reliability improvements—potentially to 125 mph—for the *San Joaquin* trains (Feb. *News*). Also, after future electrification this line would be a good test track for new trains.

Once Fresno-Bakersfield is built, it will be relatively easy to extend the line north

to San Jose. The biggest challenge will be tunneling through the mountains between Bakersfield and Los Angeles.

The planning work here has been done. The money is there to build Bakersfield-Fresno and likely would be lost if California tried to redirect the federal funds. ■

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## North Carolina Locomotive Inaugurated



- North Carolina Department of Transportation

Miss North Carolina 2011 Haley Best breaks a champagne bottle over coupler of the NC DOT's state's newest rehabbed locomotive, No. 1869, *City of Durham*, at the Durham Amtrak station July 25. It will lead Raleigh-Charlotte *Piedmont* trains. A fourth daily round-trip is due to start next year. Looking on (l to r) are NC Transportation Director Chuck Watts, NCDOT Secretary Gene Conti, Durham Mayor Bill Bell, U.S. Rep. David Price (D) and Amtrak Asst. V.P. Jeff Mann. ■

## Handling Service Disruptions

From July 24 through August 2012, CSX will be performing major tunnel work east of Cumberland, MD, that will affect Amtrak's eastbound Chicago-Washington *Capitol Limited* when it leaves Cleveland after 3:30 AM (over 82 minutes late).

Such trips will terminate at Cumberland and deadhead to Washington later. Passengers bound for Washington, Rockville, Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg will ride buses from Pittsburgh. Some may be routed by train via Philadelphia.

On these days, no service will be provided for passengers *boarding* at points east of Pittsburgh. The BayRunner Shuttle now serves Cumberland and other Maryland communities (June *News*). MARC weekday commuter trains serve Martinsburg/Harpers Ferry/Rockville.

NARP suggested that Amtrak offer taxis to passengers boarding train 30 east of Pittsburgh. Amtrak's response said in part that it is "a high priority to dispatch Train 30 out of Chicago on schedule" to minimize the number of trips affected.

NARP also addressed the aftermath of a July 6 CSX railroad bridge collapse east of Indianapolis, which blocked the route of Amtrak's tri-weekly New York-Cincinnati-Chicago *Cardinal*. The bridge was rebuilt in time for the westbound *Cardinal* to resume normal operation July 20.

Amtrak offered no alternate transportation after July 10. Some passengers learned this after they boarded the train. NARP suggested Amtrak consider taxis or vans for riders affected by last-minute cancellations. ■

## Rear-End Collisions *from page 1*

conductor in following train are killed.

- July 6, DeWitt, NY, CSX (Amtrak Empire Corridor), two freight trains, two crew members injured.

Positive Train Control (PTC) is mandated to be installed on most U.S. rail lines by the end of 2015. The intent of the 2008 law was to prevent train-to-train collisions.

However, since PTC is being installed ancillary to legacy signal systems, and since those systems permit movement past red signals, PTC as planned will not reliably prevent rear-end collisions.

NARP has raised this concern with appropriate authorities. ■





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Ross B. Capon, President & CEO; Sean Jeans-Gail, Vice President; Malcolm M. Kenton, Director of Outreach & Engagement; Mary Beth McCall, Coordinator of Resource Development; Lawrence E. Scott, Special Assistant to the Chairman.

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*our mission: a modern, customer-focused national passenger train network that provides a travel choice americans want.*

## NARP Members to Elect New State Leaders

*Apply now to accelerate your passenger train advocacy!*

Early 2012 will see the first full election to our Council of Representatives since it was created. We look forward to new folks stepping up to be part of our leadership. Every current State Representative who wishes to run will be up for re-election; some slots are currently vacant.

The Council is the advisory body that elects the Board of Directors, amends NARP's Bylaws, and establishes general goals and directives for NARP. It meets twice yearly: in spring at or near Washington, DC and in fall at another location. Serving on the Council is a wonderful chance to experience first-hand involvement with others who have a common interest in passenger train service. Representatives serve two-year terms and are responsible for travel costs and meeting registration fees.

There is at least one Representative from each state (including DC; excluding other countries and US territories), with most states getting more based on population and NARP membership. In

early September, the number of slots for each state for this election will be at [www.narprail.org](http://www.narprail.org). For the current roster, see [www.narprail.org/council](http://www.narprail.org/council).

Any legal U.S. resident who is at least 18 years old and has been a NARP member in good standing for at least one year is eligible to run.

If you would like to serve or want more information, visit [www.narprail.org/council](http://www.narprail.org/council). **Candidate Information Statements are due Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011.**

In states with contested races, every NARP member will receive a ballot in the mail in January. To be counted, a ballot must be in our office by Feb. 15, 2012. ■



- Malcolm Kenton

Southbound *Adirondack* at Rhinecliff, NY, with the Catskill Mountains behind, July 9.

## Reauthorization Bills

struggling as people drive less, have more fuel-efficient cars, and are making greater use of ethanol (partially exempt from the gas tax) and electricity (no transport tax), and as inflation has reduced the dollar's value.

Expect more general-fund bail-outs of the HTF and/or continued declines in investment. The current surface transportation law expired Sept. 30, 2009; there have been short-term extensions since then. The gasoline tax expires Sept. 30.

If a new law is not enacted by then, the Congressional Budget Office might consider later restoration of the tax a "tax increase" requiring budgetary offsets—a nightmare scenario for highways and transit.

If the HTF gets more general fund revenues, under the Budget Act of 1974, roads and transit might lose their "guaranteed" status (contract authority) and be forced to compete with other domestic spending. ■

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## TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

**Eastbound Capitol Ltd. bus substitutions possible through Aug. 2012:** See page 3 ("...Disruptions").

**CSX trackwork in the Carolinas:** *Palmetto* passengers bussed Richmond-Fayetteville Mon-Thurs Aug. 8-30; *Palmetto* canceled Sept. 6-8 & 12-15. Details: [www.bytrain.org](http://www.bytrain.org).

**Westbound Pere Marquette runs 90 minutes earlier Aug. 15-Sept. 1** due to CSX trackwork.

**Lynchburg-Roanoke-Blacksburg:** Daily "Smart Way Connector" buses link Roanoke area points with Amtrak's Lynchburg *Regional*, and serve Blacksburg Friday-Sunday. One-way fare: \$4, payable on-board. Required reservations: [www.smartwaybus.com](http://www.smartwaybus.com) or call 540-982-6622.

**New! Saratoga and North Creek Railway** runs two daily round-trips Thursday-Monday linking Amtrak's Saratoga Springs, NY, station and 7 intermediate stops along the Hudson River to North Creek. [www.sncrr.com](http://www.sncrr.com) or call 877-726-7245 for details.

## DEBT CEILING DEAL

The spending caps in the Budget Control Act of 2011 enacted Aug. 2 mean we have to work harder to protect train and transit investments. The law contemplates big spending cuts, though heavily backloaded to 2017-21 and requiring support of those elected in 2016-20. A 12-member, bipartisan (50-50) House-Senate committee is to propose cuts by Nov. 23, which Congress must vote up or down by Dec. 23.