



Addressing NARP, LaHood Says Commitment to Rail is Firm

US Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, flanked by Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo and Deputy Administrator Karen Rae, addressed NARP's annual Capitol Hill Reception May 3 in the Rayburn House Office Building.

"We would not be in the position we're in if it weren't for the advocacy of so many of you, over a long period of time, who have believed in passenger rail, and believe that passenger rail should really be a part of America's intermodal transportation system.

"We've invested \$11 billion. And we're not going to let an election or two dissuade us from our idea that we're going to connect 80% [of Americans via high-speed and intercity passenger rail].

"It's just so important that we continue the momentum, and we *will* continue the momentum. There's just no stopping us now.

"People like riding [Amtrak's] trains. The passenger loads are way, way up. In some instances...

"We could not have made the kind of



Secretary LaHood addressing NARP members and supporters at the annual Capitol Hill Reception on May 3.

DOT: \$2.1 Billion to CA, NJ, Other Rail Projects

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced the last \$2.1 billion of High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail grants on May 9—82 days after Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) rejected those funds.

The biggest share (\$450 million) will create a 24-mile stretch of 160-mph track between Morrisville, PA, and New Brunswick, NJ, by installing modern overhead catenary (wires) and improving tracks

investments we're making without the freight [railroads]. There's not enough money to build all the track we need to be building [for passenger trains] if we didn't have the opportunity to use the freight rail system.

"It's so important that [passenger rail] is included in the [surface transportation authorization] bill. That's what Americans want...They're looking for other ways to get around this country.

"Some of us will never ride on [a high-speed train in America]. But our predecessors...built an Interstate system.

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and signals.

New, US-built rail cars and locomotives are coming. Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Missouri will get \$268 million total for 48 cars and seven locomotives. California will get \$68 million for 15 cars and four locomotives.

Here are the other awards:

- \$295 million for a bypass at the busy

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Amtrak CEO Addresses NARP's Council of Representatives

Amtrak President & CEO Joseph Boardman told NARP's Council on May 4 what Amtrak needs most from its supporters is that they "understand what the issues are and help Amtrak stop taking cheap shots. That doesn't mean you shouldn't criticize Amtrak when we don't get it right."

Here are some of his key points:

- "For every operating dollar we spend, we only depend on the [federal government] for 15 cents. We are the most profitable [passenger] railroad in the United States."
- A system without the long-distance trains is "totally unacceptable. If it's not

connected, it doesn't work....Amtrak is a network." The direct and indirect costs of abolishing the long-distance trains far outweigh the cost of continuing their operation.

- "Even if you cut costs, you still won't see profitable long-distance services. They have to be provided as a public policy decision. Sleeper passengers pay a lot of money to ride our trains, and sleepers and diners are essential to successful long-distance services."

- Funding for long-distance equipment must come from Congress, but we can finance NEC equipment with debt "because we see more money over cost in the future....But we've taken risks because we've said it's time to get it done."

- Amtrak needs to "walk the talk" when it comes to on-board cleanliness.

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- Amtrak/Doug Riddell

NARP Chairman Bob Stewart (r) presents Amtrak Pres. Boardman with a plaque saluting the people of Amtrak for 40 years of service to the American travelers, at a May 2 ceremony at Washington, DC Union Station. A cross-section of Amtrak employees gathered for the occasion, visible in background.

Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo also addressed the NARP Council. See page 2.

Ex-Florida Grants

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"Harold" junction in Queens just east of New York City to separate Amtrak and Long Island Rail Road trains;

- \$22 million to complete engineering and environmental work to replace the Susquehanna River bridge in Maryland;
- \$28 million to build 1.5 miles of third track at Kingston, RI, and begin work to improve the Providence station.
- \$30 million to double-track the New Haven-Springfield line;
- \$20.8 million to double-track 10.4 miles of the *Downeaster* line;
- \$59.4 million to replace the Schenectady station and build a fourth station track at Albany/Rensselaer, and do preliminary work for a new Rochester intermodal station.
- \$186.3 million to support 110-mph operation over 220 route miles between Chicago and St. Louis;
- \$199.3 million to support 110-mph operation on 235 miles of the Chicago-Detroit line and do preliminary work for a new Ann Arbor station;
- \$5 million for preliminary work for 110-mph Minneapolis-Duluth trains;
- \$13.5 million to advance the design of a new bridge over the Mississippi River at St. Louis;
- \$4 million for further engineering

Snowe, Collins and Slaughter Receive Golden Spike Awards

NARP's 2011 Golden Spike Awards went to Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe (both R-ME) and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY).

Snowe and Collins were honored for their work to restore Boston-Portland, ME passenger service after a 35-year absence. The *Downeaster* is now one of Amtrak's most successful corridors, with five daily round-trips.

Slaughter was recognized as a long-time Amtrak supporter and for co-founding a bi-cameral Congressional caucus supporting increased investment in high-speed and intercity passenger rail.

"To me, it's a piece of national security," Rep. Slaughter remarked. "It's extremely important that we have a good, well-ordered, up-to-date rail system in this country. It troubles me that, when we're spending money everywhere else in the world, we don't develop high-speed rail in the United States." ■

and environmental analysis for 110-mph service on the state's portion of the Richmond-Raleigh line;

- \$15 million for preliminary work for high-speed Dallas/Fort Worth-Houston corridor.
- \$300 million to extend by 20 miles the initial Central Valley segment of the California High-Speed Rail system;
- \$1.5 million to analyze building new tracks at Eugene, OR, for parking passenger trains overnight;
- \$15 million for a flyover at the Port of Vancouver, WA, to let passenger trains bypass freight congestion. ■

FRA's release on the grants, with a link to video of LaHood announcing them, is at <http://1.usa.gov/exfla>.

NARP President Capon and Amtrak V.P. Stephen Gardner were on a Baltimore public radio call-in show May 17. Listen at www.bit.ly/narponair



- Office of Sen. Snowe/ Official Photo

Sen. Olympia Snowe holds NARP Golden Spike Award presented to her May 3 by NARP Chairman Bob Stewart (r) and TrainRiders/Northeast Pres./NARP Council Member Wayne Davis.



Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) receives the Golden Spike Award from NARP Board Member and Empire State Passengers Assoc. President Bruce Becker.

California: New Rolling Stock

US DOT on April 27 announced a **\$100 million grant** for California for new, US-made equipment for the *Capitol Corridor* and *San Joaquins*—27 new cars and two locomotives.

This is in addition to California's May 9 grant (see page one).

More at <http://1.usa.gov/calcars>.

AHSRA Head On Catching Up to Gulf States

Mary Ellen Curto, Executive Director of the American High-Speed Rail Alliance (www.americanhsra.org), told the NARP Council May 2 of her trips to Qatar and its neighbors. They have built in one generation what it took the U.S. two centuries to build. She called her trips "a life-altering experience," both "beautiful and horrific."

Curto emphasized that our younger generation is "better educated and better traveled than their parents," wants to live a less car-dependent lifestyle, and doesn't understand why the U.S. hasn't caught up to the rest of the developed

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FRA's Szabo Credits NARP for Amtrak's Longevity

Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo, addressing the NARP Council May 4, said: "If anybody recognizes the critical need for high- and higher-speed rail, it's the 20,000 plus members of the National Association of Railroad Passengers...Frankly, [NARP deserves] a substantial share of the credit for Amtrak reaching its 40th anniversary, for your steadfast advocacy over the last several decades.

"We need those blockbuster true high-speed rail lines: they're the backbone of what we're proposing and will play a key role in America's transportation future. But only investing in high-speed rail lines would be like investing only in [Interstate highways] with no county roads or arterials connecting and feeding into them.

"So we need you to keep innovating, but most importantly, to keep spreading the word about why this matters." ■

Amtrak CEO

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• 60,000 people work for the US DOT. 50,000 of those are in the Federal Aviation Administration. “Is that not a subsidy to the aviation industry?...The failure of balance is huge, [but] it doesn’t capture the understanding of policymakers that it needs to be fixed.”

Boardman is proud that Amtrak will have **positive train control** (PTC) installed before any other railroad in the country. He does not believe PTC will diminish capacity if combined with electronically-controlled pneumatic brakes.

Regarding **rolling stock**, Boardman touted that almost every car Amtrak owns has been rebuilt. The Council applauded his statement that, “While I’m here, I’m not selling any [cars]...that I know I potentially could use for the future.”

On the proposed daily service along the New Orleans-Los Angeles route: “[Host railroad Union Pacific] was so far out in left field on what it would cost us to go to daily service...that literally there aren’t any negotiations right now.”

On restoration of **New Orleans-Florida service**: “If Congress pays that cost, which is doubtful these days, we’ll restore that service, but right now I don’t think that’s anywhere in the reality.”

“I believe in long-distance trains, but the reality [for adding new] services is real low-level until we resolve where the country really wants to go with rail policy.”

Boardman anticipates **new Thruway bus routes** in coming years. “These buses have to be dedicated to Amtrak passengers only to make them work.”

Asked why Amtrak waited so long after Obama’s inauguration to order new cars, Boardman said there was no money, no procurement process and no specifica-

Amtrak’s Blair Slaughter Wins Safety Award



Amtrak’s J. Blair Slaughter (center) receives the award from Bette and Michael Burch.

The Burch family presented the Dr. Gary Burch Memorial Safety Award to Amtrak Chief Industrial Designer J. Blair Slaughter for developing a transfer bridge, the G2, to enable wheelchair passengers to transfer from a disabled train to a replacement train.

The G2 is now installed on all Northeast Corridor trains.

At NARP’s Capitol Hill reception, Slaughter’s U.S. representative, Pat Meehan (R-PA), spoke with tenderness about the wounded soldiers he had visited at Bethesda Naval Hospital. He said those soldiers would be among those to benefit from Slaughter’s work.

The Burch Award advisory committee was impressed with the quality of this year’s 13 nominations. The others:

tions. He urged advocates to put aside pet issues and understand the big picture.

“We need a solution for the future and

• Two (the first!) from Canadian intercity passenger operator VIA Rail Canada—locomotive engineer Daniel Villemure and a seven-person team that presents safety workshops: Locomotive engineers Jack Strachan, Marcel Boulet and Steve Mitchell; Train Operations Managers Marc Lavallee and Jeff Whelan; Senior Officer, Operating Practices Brent Fernuik; and Chief of Transportation (Team Leader) Marc Beaulieu;

• From UTU Local 1687—Denis J. Baca, a BNSF switchman in Albuquerque;

• From Union Pacific—Chicago signal projects manager Dan Corcoran; and

• From Amtrak—Police Inspector Martin Conway; Train Conductors Laura Drogan and Dalton Parker (both



Rep. Pat Meehan (R-PA), who represents both Slaughter and Vukan Vuchic (p. 2), at NARP reception.

Los Angeles); Locomotive engineer and engineer trainer Ed Hobbs (Fort Worth); Hanford/Fresno Ticket Agent Joe MacDougall; Police Inspector/K9 Program Leader William Parker; Security Awareness Strategist Barbara Petitio; Carman Charles “Joe” Stull (Seattle). ■

More on the Burch Award, including list of past winners, is at www.bit.ly/burchaward

Prof. Vuchic Gets NARP’s First Academic Award

NARP presented its first-ever Academic Award to Dr. Vukan Vuchic, for lifelong work making a strong case for rail’s importance to a healthy nation. A member of NARP member since its inception, he retired from the University of Pennsylvania. His work was described in July, 2010, *NARP News*, and is at www.seas.upenn.edu/~vuchic/

He has known every US DOT Secretary since 1967, but says none comes close to Ray LaHood for commitment to rail. At our Capitol Hill reception, Vuchic said, “We should continue with vigor be-

cause we have one thing for us: the facts, the truth, and picture of the world, the needs of the country are on our side.” ■



Dr. Vukan Vuchic (center), recipient of NARP’s first Academic Award, with President Capon (left) and Chairman Stewart.

capacity for growth. A strategy to safeguard our mobility and conserve oil. Rail is the progressive, high-tech, energy-efficient solution for tomorrow.” ■

LaHood

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What we’re going to do for our kids and grandkids is build a class one, state-of-the-art passenger rail system.”

Noting that NARP Council members had spent the day on the Hill, he said, “Talking to your Representative and Senators about the importance of high-speed rail...is the most important thing you could have done.” ■

Read or listen to LaHood’s talk (MP3 audio) at www.bit.ly/lahoodnarp



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

NARP Kiosk Greets Passengers at Washington Union Station



- NARP Council member Christina Anderson (TX)

Some NARP Council members and staff at our new Washington Union Station kiosk. L to R: Resource Development Coordinator Mary Beth McCall, Council member Christopher Parker (VT), Board member James Churchill (VA), Outreach Director Malcolm Kenton, Council member Dennis Lytton (CA).

A NARP kiosk opened at Washington (DC) Union Station April 29. It has images evocative of the superior travel experience modern passenger trains offer.

Our goal is for a NARP volunteer to be available most evenings and weekends to answer questions, including those related to public policy, and to encourage

people to join NARP or sign up for our email list. We plan to have NARP literature available at all times.

Kiosk volunteer coordinators are NARP Mid-Atlantic Division Leader James Churchill and Maryland Council member Melvyn Sacks. **To volunteer, email narp@narprail.org or call 202-408-8362.**

Curto

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world in terms of infrastructure.

Curto lamented the extent to which high-speed rail has become a partisan issue. The U.S. "is perceived internationally as unstable" as a place to invest private capital in modern infrastructure, given politicians' ability to cancel projects with the snap of a finger. She cited Wisconsin as the most glaring example.

Rail advocates' job is "to educate Americans about what they don't know and what they need that they don't realize they need," Curto concluded. ■

TRAVELER'S ADVISORY

New Thruway connections in MD: Five daily BayRunner motor-coach round-trips between Baltimore-Washington International (BWI) Airport Rail Station and Ocean City, MD became Amtrak Thruway connections in Oct.

From May 1, BayRunner's hourly vans between BWI (airport and rail station) and the MARC Frederick, MD,

transit center, plus two round-trips to/from Grantsville, MD—stopping at Frostburg, Cumberland, Hancock and Hagerstown—are Amtrak Thruways.

This adds five new cities to the Amtrak network. BayRunner service is designed to connect with Northeast Corridor trains at BWI with through ticketing to all Amtrak points.

FRA's Rail Program Factsheets

New Federal Railroad Administration PDF factsheets detail the positive impacts of High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail grants made so far. There is a national factsheet, as well as four regional ones—great resources to share with friends and family and to use when writing elected officials. They are at <http://1.usa.gov/railgrants>