

Ohio Passenger Rail News

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Special points of interest:

- National Train Day, B&O Roundhouse; Cleveland, West Third Street, Lodi Outlet Mall; and Cincinnati Union Terminal; Saturday, May 9, 2009.
- All Aboard Ohio Annual Meeting; May 30, 2009; The Palmer House; Galion, Ohio
- APTA Rail Conference; Chicago, IL; June 14-18, 2009

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Obama Releases Strategic Rail Plan ARRA Stimulus Funding for High-Speed Rail

The Obama Administration has set aside federal stimulus dollars and voiced support for developing high-speed rail systems nationwide. The Administration released a strategic high-speed rail plan that identifies the potential beneficiaries of the \$8 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and an additional \$1 billion annually for the next five years. The Administration plans to follow up with detailed guidance for state and local applicants. By late summer, the FRA will begin awarding the first round of grants.

The strategic plan identifies 10 high-speed rail corridors as potential recipients of federal funding, which includes the Midwest Regional Rail Initia-

tive centering on the Chicago Hub Network. The network includes higher speed train corridors linking Chicago – Cincinnati; Chicago – Toledo – Cleveland; and Cincinnati – Dayton – Columbus – Cleveland. Other corridors include the Keystone Corridor in Pennsylvania (with stops in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, Pa.) and the Empire Corridor (with stops in New York City, Albany and Buffalo, N.Y.). With a few more links between Cleveland—Buffalo and Cleveland—Pittsburgh the U.S. could have a comprehensive system of high-speed train services linking the Midwest to the East Coast.

“My high-speed rail proposal will lead to innovations that change the way we travel in America. We must start developing clean, energy-efficient transportation that will define our regions for centuries to come,” said President Obama. “High-speed rail is long-overdue, and this plan lets American travelers know that they are not doomed to a future of long lines at the airports or jammed cars on the highways.”



Annual Legislative Summit a Success

The 5th Annual All Aboard Ohio Legislative Summit held on April 30th in Columbus was successful. Over 60 attendees, many of who were walk-up registrants, heard Ty Marsh, CEO of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce

discuss the Transportation Priorities Task Force Report and its recommendations for improved transit and rail passenger service. Matt Dietrich, Executive Director of ORDC discussed the status of the 3-C Corridor study and PEIS .

Joe Calabrese, CEO of the Cleveland RTA gave a very positive report on transit in Ohio. State Senator Capri Cafaro stole the show with her lunch time discussion on what we need to do to advance passenger rail in Ohio through advocacy.

New York, Vermont and Wisconsin Invest in Rail Passenger Rail Services Continued and Improved in 3 States

Full state operating support was restored for Amtrak's *Adirondack* service from the Capital Region to Montreal, ensuring the train operates for another year according to the Empire State Passengers Association. The funding was part of the 2009-10 state budget.

Vermont also agreed to continue operating support for the *Ethan Allen Express* passenger train, scrapping an earlier plan to use a bus to connect Albany and Rutland instead.

The two states' actions ensure that Saratoga Springs, which faced the loss of all train service, will continue to have daily connections to New York City, Montreal and Rutland.



New York State *Empire Corridor* train

Wisconsin does not have enough money to pay for the estimated \$500 million Milwaukee-Madison high-speed rail line, but the state might kick off the project anyway. But before focusing on the Milwaukee-Madison line, WisDOT must consider

capacity upgrades to its Milwaukee-Chicago service, which Wade said sets ridership records every month.

Gov. Jim Doyle put \$80 million in the state budget to spark Wisconsin involvement in the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative, a multi-state effort to coordinate and expand high-speed rail use. WisDOT will use that money for upgrades to the Chicago-Milwaukee line and the Milwaukee-Watertown portion of the line to Madison.

The state agency also asked for \$137 million in federal stimulus money for high-speed rail projects. Although Wade said that money could pay for track and signal improvements along the Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison

Texas is Investigating High-Speed Rail Feasibility

The Texas Department of Transportation formally requested funding for a feasibility analysis for expansion of the rail corridor from Fort Worth to Killeen/Fort Hood, Houston and San Antonio. Fort Worth is part of a federally designated South Central High Speed Corridor, which envisions speedy trains connecting not only Texas cities but also Little

Texas is just one of many states investigating the feasibility of high-speed rail services in response to the Obama Administration's funding initiatives.

Rock and Tulsa. For more than a decade, Congress provided scarcely any funding for high speed rail but in October it set aside \$1.5 billion for high speed rail and invited states and private developers to bid for the

funding. Rail advocates say trains could travel up to 110 mph on existing rail corridors running parallel to freight lines or up to 200 mph on elevated or fenced tracks. Amtrak operates daily service from Fort Worth to San Antonio and from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City. But the trains can travel no more than 79 mph. A trip from Fort Worth to Austin is 3 1/2 hours by road or four hours 20-minutes by Amtrak.

Amtrak Cascades Service Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary

Washington and Oregon are celebrating the 10th anniversary of Amtrak *Cascades* service. The agencies will commemorate the milestone with a celebration to be held during the National Train Day event on May 9 at Seattle's King Street Sta-



Amtrak *Cascades*

tion. Operated by Amtrak in partnership with the Washington and Oregon DOTs, the *Cascades* service debuted in 1999, providing inter-city passenger-rail service between Vancouver, B.C., and Eugene, Ore. Today, the *Cascades* features

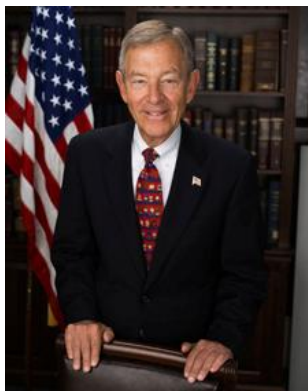
four daily round trips between Portland and Seattle, with connecting service between Portland and Eugene, and Bellingham and Seattle. The service also includes one daily round trip between Seattle and Vancouver. The *Cascades* service has carried more than 6 million passengers during the past decade, and ridership has shot up 71 percent since 1999. In 2008, the service registered an all-time-high 750,000 riders.

Voinovich Recommends Increase in Gasoline Tax

Obama Administration Opposed to Increasing Federal Gasoline Taxes

The U.S. Transportation Secretary, in an acrimonious exchange with Sen. George Voinovich (R – Ohio) at a Senate hearing, pledged not to raise the federal gasoline tax, the funding source for repairing America's roads and bridges.

"This administration -- in these hard economic times, with so many people out of work -- can ill afford to tell people we're going to raise the gasoline tax," Secretary Ray LaHood said after



Senator George V. Voinovich

Sen. George Voinovich suggested raising the tax to fund highway repairs. Voinovich said, "But we have to be honest with people. It's time to level with them."

Revenue generated by the tax of 18.4 cents on each gallon of gas sold in the country goes into the Highway Trust Fund to fix U.S. roads and public transit. That fund has already been depleted once and Congress had to pass emergency measures last summer to replenish it from general fund sources. Users are not paying the full cost of road repair and new highway construction. The tax has not been raised since the early 1990s and

at the hearing of the Environment and Public Works Committee, Voinovich said an increase would help cover its shortfalls.

The Bush administration also opposed a tax hike and last summer suggested looking beyond taxes to privately run electronic tolling systems and tax incentives for transportation investments. Revenues for the Highway Trust Fund have been hurt by new cars with higher fuel efficiency and by people driving less. The fund is authorized by a transportation law that Congress must renew this year. LaHood told reporters the administration is fully opposed to raising the tax. Gov. Strickland in Ohio is opposed to raising state taxes on gasoline.

Ohio Sees Decline in Airline Services

U.S. airlines carried 11.5 percent fewer domestic passengers and 7.2 percent fewer international passengers in January 2009 when compared to 2008 according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). BTS reported that the decline was the 11th consecutive monthly decrease in system passengers from the same month of the previous year. Consequently, airlines are cutting services especially

to second tier airports like Cleveland and Cincinnati. A year ago, Continental Airlines was expanding dramatically at Cleveland Hopkins International, a Continental hub. After jet fuel prices soared in the summer and business travel slowed, Continental began cutting back at Cleveland in

Ohio is losing services at airports in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown.

fall. In June, Cleveland's domestic service will be down 17.5% from a year ago. Cleveland lost non-stop service to Salt Lake City. Cutbacks in service have hit elsewhere including Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International where reductions this year are nearly 25%. Cincinnati has lost non-stops to several cities and vacation spots.

Ohio Seeks Stimulus Funds for 3-C Corridor

The Ohio General Assembly passed the ODOT biennium budget appropriation, which included authority to seek American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for the 3-C Corridor and the preparation of a statewide programmatic environ-



Toledo Central Station at MLK Plaza

mental impact statement (PEIS). Any project potentially involving federal funds must complete the environmental clearance process mandated by the National Environmental

Policy Act (NEPA). ODOT is requesting \$7 million to investigate the environmental impacts of operating higher speed passenger trains in four corridors: Cleveland—Pittsburgh; Cleveland—Toledo; Toledo—Columbus and the 3-C Corridor. This is the first step in building the Ohio Hub. However, most other states use state funds to support passenger rail projects.

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All Aboard Ohio Annual Meeting in Galion

Join All Aboard Ohio as it continues to advocate for public transit and passenger rail in Ohio.

PLEASE REGISTER ON-LINE:

Visit our website to register and
become a member: [http://
www.allaboardohio.org/cms/index.php](http://www.allaboardohio.org/cms/index.php)

Registration is \$25 per member,
or \$40 for non-members (includes
1-year membership)

Before May 18, please make
checks payable to:

All Aboard Ohio!
309 South 4th Street, Suite 304
Columbus, OH 43215

After May 18, please call (216) 288-
4883 or e-mail

kenprendergast@allaboardohio.org

to make late registrations

When:

Saturday, May 30th, 2009
9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Where:

The Palmer House
124 Buehler Street
Galion, OH



Galion Big Four Station 3-C Corridor

Proposed Agenda:

- Continental breakfast and buffet lunch
- All Aboard Ohio board elections
- President, Executive Director reports on association
- Update on Federal stimulus funding for passenger rail
- Update on State rail, transit funding Local/regional report
- Railcar manufacturing and railroad supply industry in Ohio
- Golden Spike Award