

# Ohio Passenger Rail e-News

Volume 4 Issue 4

July 2013



*Calendar of Events*

## LOCAL MEETINGS:

All meetings start at 10 A.M. on the second Saturday of each month:

**CLEVELAND** -- 10th-floor conference room, City Club Building, 850 Euclid Ave.

**COLUMBUS** -- Grandview Public Library, 1685 W. First Ave., Columbus.

**TOLEDO** -- Amtrak station, Toledo MLK Plaza, 415 Emerald Ave.

## SUMMER EVENTS:

Aug. 8 from 5-9 pm: "TOD on Tap" Register at \$45 per person. (See page four)

Aug. 10 from 9 am-2 pm "All Aboard Ohio Summer Meeting & Family Outing" on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad Register on-line at \$35 per person.

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## Status Report: Reauthorization of Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act

On June 27, 2013, Mr. Ed Hamberger, President and CEO of the Association of American Railroads (AAR), testified before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure hearing on rail policy and the reauthorization of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. Although Amtrak and several commuter railroads are members of the AAR, Mr. Hamberger presented testimony on behalf of its freight railroad members only.



Hamberger reiterated the AAR's "five key principles" for passenger railroading:

1) Safety has to come first when it comes to passenger trains sharing track or rights-of-way with freight

trains. Where separate passenger tracks are required, AAR believes safety would be enhanced if these separate tracks were sufficiently far apart.

2) Capacity issues must be properly addressed. New infrastructure built for passenger trains should fully preserve both the ability to operate freight trains as needed and the opportunity to expand further freight service as the need arises in the future,

including the ability of the freight railroad to access new customers along the right-of-way.

3) It is reasonable for the host freight railroad to expect full and fair compensation. Host freight railroads should be fully compensated for passenger costs and any other added costs involved.

4) Freight railroads must be adequately protected from liability that would not have resulted but for the added presence of passenger rail service.

5) Amtrak's access fee is too low and is, for all intents and purposes, an indirect subsidy paid by freight railroads to Amtrak. Each project must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, "no one size fits all."

## "Trainsforming America" Debuts

Transit Columbus and All Aboard Ohio sponsored the showing of the documentary film *Trainsforming America* at the Gateway Film Center in Columbus on June 27th! Over 50 people attended the Ohio debut in Columbus and to listen to the film producer Rebecca Sansom explain

what motivated her to make this film. The documentary explores the current car culture of the US and the implications of that culture on the environment and our quality of life. The film outlines the benefits of adding more passenger rail to America's infrastructure. The film

takes a look at what expanding passenger rail service in America could look like, as well as asking passengers what they think about increasing rail investment. The film was also shown in Erie, PA and Fort Wayne, IN. Google "Trainsforming America" for more information.

## Cincinnati Streetcar Under Construction

The City of Cincinnati signed a contract for construction of the Cincinnati Streetcar system with Messer/Prus/Delta JV. According to City Manager Milton Dohoney Jr., the signed contract means that materials can be ordered and preparation for construction of the trackway, Maintenance & Operations Facility (MOF), power system (including overhead power lines and substations) and station stops can begin immediately.

The budget for the 3.6-mile first phase of the Cincinnati Streetcar is \$147.8 million. The streetcar will be paid for with \$44.9 federal, \$87.9 million local and other funding sources. There are no state funds allocated or appropriated for the streetcar project.



CAF rendering of Cincinnati streetcar

Utility relocation work is continuing throughout Over-the-Rhine and the Central Business District. CAF is assembling the streetcars in Elmira, NY. A project update from City Hall suggested that substantial completion of the test track and MOF will be March 1, 2015 with track work in Over-the-Rhine substantially completed by June 29, 2015. Completion

of all of phase one work is anticipated for March 15, 2016. City officials believe passenger service will commence on or about September 15, 2016 – just in time for the Bengals regular season home opener.

The state did announce that roughly \$9.1 million worth of Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credits will flow to six projects along the phase one route of the Cincinnati Streetcar. The state credits will spur approximately \$61 million in private investment along the route in Downtown Cincinnati, Pendleton and Over-the-Rhine. What it means is new residential units, commercial space, and hotel rooms will be added, and historically significant structures will be saved and restored. And this is just the beginning.

## High-Speed Rail in the Republic of Turkey

The Turkish State Railways (TCDD) announced the award of a contract to Siemens for seven 300km/h (186 mph) trains for operation on its growing high-speed rail network. The contract is worth €285 million (\$374.1 million) including maintenance. Delivery is due to start in 2016. The 200m-long eight-car trains will accommodate more than 500 passengers, and are based on the Velaro-D trains which Siemens is currently building for German Rail (DB).

These are the first 300km/h trains to be ordered by TCDD, which currently operates a fleet of 250km/h emus supplied by CAF on its first two high-speed lines linking Ankara with Eskişehir and Konya.

Turkey has a population of approximately 80.6 million people. Population density is approximately 266 people per square mile. The 2012 GDP was reported to be \$794.5 billion based on current exchange rates. GDP per capita is \$9,846.

TCDD started building high-speed rail lines in 2003. The first section of the line, between the capitol Ankara and Eskişehir, was inaugurated on March 13, 2009. An extension to the Eskişehir line to Turkey's largest city,

Istanbul, is due to open next year and TCDD wants to achieve a 3-hour journey time for the 533km (331 miles) trip. Ankara's population is about 3.8 million while the population of Istanbul is about 10.3 million, which is roughly the equivalent of Northeast Ohio and Chicago respectively. The distance between Cleveland and Chicago is approximately 345 miles.

Turkey plans to construct a network of high-speed lines targeting a 1,500 km (932 miles) network by 2013 and a 10,000 km (6,213 miles) net-

work by the year 2023. By 2015, the first phase of the high-speed network will be complete with trains running to Izmir and east from a new high-speed station in Ankara to Sivas and Erzincan. The Marmaray project is also under construction, which consists of the world's deepest immersed tube railway tunnel under the Bosphorus Strait.

For comparison, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois have a combined population of nearly 31 million people in an area approximately one-third the size of Turkey. Population density in Ohio is 257 people per square mile and for the three states it is 222 per square mile. GDP for the three states is \$1.5 trillion making GDP per capita over \$48,500. If Turkey can afford to build high-speed rail, maintain a military and build a tunnel under the Bosphorus Strait, why can't we build high-speed rail in the Midwest?

# American Exceptionalism

Originally Published in *Passenger Transport*, July 12, 2013

Alexis de Tocqueville was the first writer to describe the United States as "exceptional" over 170 years ago. He said the United States was different from



Al Engel

other countries because it was founded on a set of ideals, rather than on a common heritage, ethnicity, or religion. American exceptionalism is derived from our core ideals of liberty

and equality. President Lincoln enshrined these core beliefs in his Gettysburg Address when he described the United States as a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

But our cultural heritage also is that of a nation of revolutionaries who believe in rugged individualism, populism and laissez-faire Government policies. It may be this aspect of American exceptionalism that causes the United States to be the only major developed economy in the world that has not deployed true high-speed rail as a transportation tool to link major city pairs as have Japan, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Korea, Taiwan, China and others.

Amid great fanfare, France launched its high speed rail service, dubbed the TGV, in 1981. It was promoted as a new mode of transport and the casual observer might have come to the conclusion that it was a French innovation, given the way it was being marketed. The fact that Japan had introduced high speed rail in the Tokyo – Osaka corridor almost 2 decades earlier in

October 1964 didn't seem to undermine the notion that this was a French innovation. To be sure, the French improved the technology substantially and introduced the articulated trainset where coaches shared a truck at the coupler. Beyond the dramatic time reduction for a trip between Paris and a Lyon (300 miles in 2 hours), the environment was upscale and the service, chic.

But as early as January 1965, President Johnson had the vision in his State of the Union Address to proclaim, "I will ask for funds to study high-speed rail transportation between urban centers. We will begin with test projects between Washington and Boston. On high speed trains, passengers could travel this distance in less than four hours." That goal is still a dream and could be more than 25 years off.

The late Senator Patrick Moynihan wanted to outdo our global competitors by advancing the technology and making it an American innovation. This attempt at speaking to American Exceptionalism led to an unproductive maglev R&D program that set back true high speed rail progress by a decade.

Amtrak launched the Acela in December 2000. No one can argue its commercial success. Peak periods are routinely sold out and it is a profitable business line for Amtrak. Over 31 million riders a year experience Amtrak and about 3.2 million ride Acela. And many are repeat riders.

You would think that the Acela experience would have Americans clamoring for more of this service in other major intercity corridors or "mega-regions". There is some pro-

gress being made on higher-speed passenger rail in other intercity corridors in the Midwest, Southeast, Northwest, and Texas. But many of these projects still face stiff opposition. For example, in California one of the founders of the project is supporting a lawsuit to stop the project because it does not meet the intent of the state law authorizing the \$9 billion general obligation bond sale for the project.

While there are many folks who travel to Europe and recently more extensively to Asia, many of these travelers do their travel on package tours which make extensive use of motor coaches. Hence, the exposure level of Americans to intercity passenger rail, let alone high speed rail, may still be limited.

The general public did not storm the nation's capital in the middle of the 20th Century demanding the construction of an Eisenhower Interstate Highway System. In fact, when our state and federal leaders proposed the project, there were many doubters and strong opponents. It took visionary leadership and strategic thinking to sell the program to the public and execution skills to deliver the project. As Einstein said "Vision without execution is hallucination."

Our national nature is that of the pioneer and is highly individualistic. Incorporating some of those traits in the US fast train program could be key to gaining broader based support. What can and will the US do to make high-speed rail our own and not just an imported technology?

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## All Aboard Ohio Summer Events

### "TOD on Tap" Tour to Discuss Transit Oriented Development in Cleveland

#### TOD ON TAP

When: Thursday, August 8, 2013

SCHEDULE: start at Shaker Square:

5:00 p.m. -- Shaker Square, Zanzibar Soul Fusion, 13225 Shaker Sq (NE corner)  
Speakers: Peter Rubin, President/CEO Coral Co., and Maribeth Feke, Director, Programming & Planning RTA.

6:30 p.m.-- Flats East Bank, Aloft Hotel Riveria BC/Lago, 1111 W.10th; Speaker: Harley Cohen, Owner's Rep., Harlan & Associates.

8:00 p.m.-- Uptown/UC, Constantino's Market (balcony), 11473 Euclid Ave;  
Speaker: Ari Maron, Partner, MRN Ltd.

Registration of \$45 per person includes one RTA Day Pass, and one beverage at each of the three stops (3 drinks total), plus hot/cold food and/or hors d'oeuvres at each stop.



Aloft Hotel at RTA Flats East Bank Station



Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railway

#### SUMMER FAMILY OUTING

When: Saturday, August 10, 2013

SCHEDULE: 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ride the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad train to Akron and back with a National Park Ranger providing narration. Board trains at the Rockside Road Station in Independence.

The train ride will be followed by lunch at Yours Truly restaurant near the Rockside Station with CVSR President Craig Tallman talking about the scenic railway.

Registration of \$35 per person includes the cost of the train ride and narrations.

There are plenty of things to see and do in Cleveland on August 9th so plan on making it an All Aboard Ohio weekend. All Aboard Ohio has arranged special room rates at the Courtyard by Marriott, Cleveland University Circle hotel. Please call the hotel direct to make your reservation for this fun filled weekend.