

THE *RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION* NEEDS YOUR HELP - PLEASE GET INVOLVED!

The Rail Passengers Association (RPA) (<https://www.railpassengers.org/>) is our partner to improve passenger rail service in our region and our country. In Indiana, we have



RAIL PASSENGERS
ASSOCIATION

two representatives on the RPA *Council of Representatives*: Duane Chattin (Vincennes) and Tod K Bassler (Indianapolis). The role of members of this Council is to be a volunteer leader, an essential link, who unite local and national efforts to improve passenger trains and transit. Both Duane and Tod work to inform and educate Hoosiers and decision makers in our Indiana Government as to what can be done to improve Indiana's passenger rail travel option. We need your help. Please consider joining RPA and IPRA (if you haven't already) and contribute to success!

Let's discuss three important current events related to RPA that will help you decide your role in improving Indiana's future passenger rail travel option.

1. The Rail Passengers Association (RPA) **Rail Nation Fall Conference 2019** last October in Sacramento, CA
2. The **Amtrak Now and into the Future** House Hearing last November in Washington, DC
3. The **2020 RPA Advocacy Summit + Day on the Hill** next March in Washington, DC

First, the last issue of *All Aboard Indiana* (Nov/Dec 2019) featured three great articles about the **Rail Nation Fall Conference 2019** written by IPRA member **Andrea Ditto**. Please read them if you haven't already. At that meeting, these four resolutions were submitted to the *Council of Representatives* for approval. The voting results are noted here.

- 1) The RPA is committed to incorporating the values of diversity, equity and inclusion in the governance and operations of the Association. Vote = PASSED.
- 2) The RPA implores Amtrak to stop all public use of the adjective "contemporary" to characterize its favored initiatives. Vote = FAILED.
- 3) The RPA implores Amtrak management to stop all public use of the words "epic", "experimental", "historic" and "legacy" in connection with the long-distance trains. Vote = FAILED.
- 4) The leadership of the RPA shall engage with the services of a computerized system mapper and modeler to model how a well built-out passenger rail system could function and be self-sustaining in North America. Vote = PASSED but modified to say that RPA will recommend to work with Congress to develop a system map.

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IPRA Membership Form

Second, on November 13, 2019, **Jim Mathews**, President & CEO of **RPA**, testified at the **House of Representatives** hearing "**Amtrak Now and into the Future**" held before **The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I)**.

The online locations are: <https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/news/blog/rail-passengers-defends-pax-rights-in-house-testimony/> and <https://transportation.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/amtrak-now-and-into-the-future> as well as the YouTube location here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsqf2pNzIYE&t=1079s>.

Here is list of key messages from the Chairman of the **T&I Committee** and each of the 7 witnesses giving Testimony. View the video or read the Testimonies and get all the details.



Jim Mathews

- ⇒ **Peter DeFazio** (D-OR), T&I Committee Chairman
 - ◆ No passenger system in the world makes money
 - ◆ He intends to nix the break even mandate in this reauthorization
- ⇒ **Richard Anderson**, President & CEO, Amtrak
 - ◆ 2019 was a record breaking year
 - ◆ (He fully understands the situation but blindly follows the crazy break even mandate)
- ⇒ **Nancy Nathanson**, Representative, Oregon State Legislature
 - ◆ Oregon is not rich but still invests in infrastructure
 - ◆ Oregon has a 20-year plan to expand passenger rail
- ⇒ **Greg Regan**, Secretary-Treasurer, Transportation Trades Dept, AFL-CIO
 - ◆ Transportation labor is huge advocate for passenger rail
 - ◆ They need Government help for funding & policy to drive growth
- ⇒ **Jack Dinsdale**, National Vice President, Transportation Communications Union
 - ◆ Amtrak has a systematic campaign of Union busting
 - ◆ They're turning quality fresh meals into indescribable reheated airline calories
- ⇒ **Jim Mathews**, President & CEO, Rail Passengers Association

- ◆ Congress created Amtrak to provide service to places that needed it
- ◆ Congress eliminated the profit requirement in 1978
- ⇒ **Bob Guy**, Illinois State Director, SMART, Transportation Division
 - ◆ Chairman of Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC)
 - ◆ Public dollars (Federal & State) are invested in the private host railroad infrastructure to benefit passenger rail (not the other way around)
- ⇒ **Stacy Mortensen**, Executive Director, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority
 - ◆ Comparing the San Joaquin Amtrak Intercity service to the private ACE commuter rail service... Amtrak costs 3x more [public tax \$] on a per passenger mile basis

Finally, this is your official invitation to attend the **2020 RPA Advocacy Summit + Day on the Hill** in Washington, DC from Sunday, March 29 through Wednesday, April 1, 2020. Go online to <https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/events/rpa-spring-2020-washington-dc-advocacy-summit-day-on-the-hill/> and read all about it! Sunday evening and Wednesday morning host specific meetings. Monday and Tuesday are where most of the action is! Monday is for learning, planning for Tuesday and networking with other like minded passenger rail advocates. Tuesday is the exciting day! We put on our walking shoes and "do Capitol Hill". We meet with our State's Congress and Senate representatives and staff, make new friends and, most important, ensure that the people who represent Indiana on the National stage have accurate information about what it takes to improve passenger rail in Indiana and in the Midwest. When we leave, they will know what we, as passenger rail advocates, can provide them.

Amtrak's Preference Rights Are Not New - Or Reason For Alarm

Reprinted with permission from **Railway Age** magazine. See this article online at: <https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/intercity/amtraks-preference-rights-are-not-new-or-reason-for-alarm/>



By: **Stephen Gardner**, Senior Executive Vice President, Chief Operating and Commercial Officer, Amtrak

A recent opinion column [by *Railway Age* Contributing Editor Jim Blaze] with a *Perils of Pauline* title—Amtrak vs. Freight Railroads: Shippers, You Are Impacted!—urges freight rail shippers to take up arms against recently introduced federal legislation that would allow Amtrak to bring a legal action to enforce its statutory dispatching preference over freight trains. While there may be things that freight rail shippers have reason to be concerned about, Amtrak's preference rights are not one of them.

The column's alarmist predictions of delays to "priority shipper freight" ignore the fact that the proposed legislation would make no change whatsoever in freight railroads' legal obligations regarding Amtrak. The federal law requiring preference, on the books for more than 45 years, codifies the pre-Amtrak practice of prioritizing passenger trains that is essential for viable passenger rail operations. Freight railroads can apply for an exception should preference for Amtrak materially lessen the quality of their freight service—but no railroad has ever done so. For the most part railroads have complied with the law, without any harm to shippers.

Indeed, the railroads that are most successful in competing with trucks are, not coincidentally, at the head of the class when it comes to on-time passenger train operations. For



example, BNSF was second among the six Class I's in the most recent host railroad "report card" Amtrak publishes on its website. Florida East Coast, renowned for its ability to attract short haul intermodal traffic, accommodates 34 intercity Virgin Trains passenger trains a day on its Miami-to-West Palm Beach main line, more than Amtrak operates on any freight railroad-owned line. Well-run railroads operate their priority trains—including Amtrak trains—on time.

The column's suggestion that shippers urge federal policymakers to fund "dedicated Amtrak train schedule recovery tracks" makes no sense. For one thing, dedicated tracks would rarely be used—Amtrak accounts for only about 4% of train-miles on Class I railroads. On the majority of its National Network, Amtrak operates a single daily round trip or less. Even the hourly Virgin Trains service operates on tracks shared with high volume, reliable freight operations on which capacity has been added, at speeds that will increase to 110 mph when service is extended west toward Orlando.

There are better rail projects for federal and state governments to invest in, such as adding track capacity on shared tracks to improve reliability of Amtrak and freight service and provide room for growth in both. Although the column complains that Amtrak doesn't pay freight railroads enough, it ignores the billions of dollars that Amtrak, the federal government and Amtrak's state partners have invested to increase rail line capacity on nearly all of Amtrak's routes. Because there is presently no means for Amtrak to enforce its preference rights, Amtrak trains continue to experience major delays on some of the very freight railroad-owned lines that have benefited from these investments.

For example, between 2011 and 2017, the federal government invested \$197.4 million on the 33-mile line between Porter, Indiana and Chicago for new sidings and a mile-long flyover to improve the reliability of Amtrak service. But rather than declining, delays to Amtrak trains on that line due to freight train interference have gotten much worse: 63%

higher last year than in 2011. As a result, 66% of Amtrak's passengers on Chicago-to-Detroit/Pontiac trains arrived late at their destination last year. No freight shipper would tolerate such unreliable rail



service—and neither will Amtrak, its passengers, Congress or the states that fund Amtrak’s state-supported services. The railroads that ignore Amtrak’s preference rights must be required to obey the law.

Abysmal on-time performance due to failure to give Amtrak trains preference threatens the continued operation and expansion of many of Amtrak’s National Network routes and damages the public perception of the railroad industry. Passenger trains are railroading’s public face. When they consistently run many hours late, passengers, elected officials and the media take notice. Inciting shippers to do battle with railroads—passenger or freight—hurts our industry and detracts from the message we should be communicating together to policymakers.

Louisville’s **RAPID** BRT is Here!

By: John Owen, Chairman, Rail Passengers Kentucky

The **Transit Authority of River City (TARC)** inaugurated what Louisville Mayor **Greg Fischer** called “next level” service with



The TARC RAPID BRT ribbon cutting is attended by Louisville Mayor **Greg Fischer**, TARC Director **Ferdinand Risco** (4th & 5th from left respectively) and Louisville Metro Council Members

the launch of **RAPID**, the region’s first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system on January 6, 2020. This BRT service, which is part of the \$35-million **New Dixie Highway Project**, will offer improved bus service along one of TARC’s busiest corridors connecting the Gene Snyder Freeway in Valley Station to downtown Louisville.

The **New Dixie Highway Project** is a key piece of our **MOVE Louisville** initiative, and the rapid transit system is a game-changer,” said Mayor Fischer. “This is ‘next level’ service

on one of the city’s busiest routes and a great innovative option for people traveling the corridor on their way to work and school.”

The Dixie Highway is described as one of the busiest, widest and most dangerous transportation corridors in the city with a fatality rate more than three times the rate of similar highways. This corridor is traversed by more than 60,000 drivers and more than 4,000 transit riders each day.

Looking Back at Rail Pax and Its Hoosier Roots

By: John Owen, Chairman, Rail Passengers Kentucky

When the **Transportation Act of 1958** became law there were 1,448 intercity passenger trains in service and by 1968, there were only 590. During that time span, the issue of passenger rail service became even more decisive as Federal agencies attempted to satisfy the demands of the railroads, the economy and the public. In 1969, Indiana Senator Vance Hartke introduced his Rail Pax legislation to preserve the rapidly eroding passenger rail network at 1969 levels. Indiana’s largest passenger rail carrier, **Penn Central**, downgraded services, requesting to end all services in Indiana. The Hartke plan was seen as too costly, so a compromise was created and passed into law. The result would become **Amtrak** and Indiana retained many routes. Indianapolis would enjoy three daily trains: the **James Whitcomb Riley**, the **South Wind** and the **Penn Texas**. On May 1, 1971, everyone thought it was the beginning of a new era.

Amtrak’s problems in Indiana can only be credited to one source, **Penn Central**, and the deferred track work on its lines. The **Floridian** would derail three times in Indiana at Winamac, Greenwood and Seymour. The Federal Railway Administration (FRA) would embargo the routes used by the **Riley** and **Floridian** to and from Indianapolis in the summer of 1974 and again in 1975, forcing two of its trains serving Indianapolis to detour elsewhere. The **National Limited** would continue to serve Indianapolis while the **Floridian** would detour via Bloomington to points south and the **Cardinal** (a.k.a. **Riley**) via Peru to Cincinnati. Countless discussions were held by Hartke, Hudnut, Whitcomb and Orr on repairing the **Penn Central** lines but these bore little progress resulting in bankruptcy for **Penn Central** and the creation of **Conrail** as late as 1978. There

was talk of repairing *Conrail* tracks south of Indianapolis to both Louisville and Cincinnati. The *National Limited* lumbered along between St. Louis and Dayton swapping one set of bad tracks for another at 25 to 30 miles per hour.

The gas crisis was in full swing in the 1970s and *Amtrak* was using every car including many it planned to retire. In 1976, the *Amfleet* coaches began arriving carrying record numbers of passengers. Increased ridership squelched *Amtrak's* critics.

President Jimmy Carter, who rode to his inauguration on an *Amtrak* special with over 900 residents of Plains, Georgia, then targeted *Amtrak*. The long distance routes at the top of his cut list: the *Floridian*, the *National Limited*, the *Broadway Limited* and the *Cardinal*. Led by a previous *Amtrak* supporter, Brock Adams, the Transportation Secretary, the *Floridian* had powerful supporters in Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia, Senator John Sparkman of Alabama, House member Al Gore of Tennessee, Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama and Mayor Richard Fulton of Nashville, TN. The *National Limited* received new equipment and ridership was at record levels. Birch Bayh favored the Carter plan despite its effects on Indianapolis and his home town of Terre Haute.

With the *National Limited* doomed by Congress, someone realized any savings to *Amtrak* would be used in paying *Conrail* to deadhead cars to and from Beech Grove and thus a new route, the *Hoosier State*, was added to the list of trains retained after September 30, 1979. In January 1980, Bayh even suggested that Indiana restore the *National Limited* with State [of Indiana] funding.

Perhaps today, in hindsight, one could correct past mistakes. As of now, to all affected by the events of 1979, we can only wish that Hartke's original Rail Pax plan had survived with the railroads running their own passenger trains with Federal help (instead of creating *Amtrak*).

What it May Take to Reverse the Beeching Cuts of the 1960s in Great Britain

Editor's note: In 1963 and 1965, Dr Richard Beeching wrote two reports for the **British Railway Board** with plans to reduce and restructure the rail network in Great Britain. The automobile had an impact on the UK as well. The following speech was recently made to the Institute for Public Policy

Research (IPPR), the UK's leading progressive think tank. In North America we can learn from this as we advocate to improve our passenger rail network. Thanks very much to <http://www.ukpol.co.uk>, the **Political Speech Archive** for thousands of speeches on British Politics.

Below is the text of the speech made by Andrew Adonis, the former Secretary of State for Transport, at the IPPR on 7 June 2019.



Today I set out a plan for systematically reversing the Beeching rail closures in respect of large towns, and districts of cities, which lost their rail services in past decades. The plan would lead, starting now, to the reopening or creation of at least a hundred stations serving around two million people.

Much of this would be by reopening mothballed or freight-only lines, and reinstating stations on existing lines. Rebuilding a few stretches of completely dismantled lines – mainly fairly short, connecting large towns to their nearest existing main line – would also be involved. This is a practical, sensible, green, affordable policy, and I set it out as a key building block of transport policy for the next decade.

Let me begin with background and context.

As a boy I was an unusual kind of train nerd. I was never a train spotter. Rather, at the age of 13, I wanted to be chairman of British Rail because I was fascinated by railway timetables and by improving public transport connections between places.

I was equally interested in bus timetables, and wanted British Rail to take charge of them so that trains and bus timetables could be integrated and published together, with a single national timetable serving every town, village and district of every city in the country. I even wrote my own integrated national timetable, with 483 tables, and sent it to Sir Peter Parker, then Chairman of British Rail. All I got was an acknowledgement, which I thought impolite so I wrote to tell him so. I didn't get a reply to that one.

All this happened partly because I was at a remote boarding school where life depended on a train service to London from a station in the Cotswolds – Kingham – which was threatened with a post-Beeching closure in the late 1970s. And there was no proper bus service to get from Chipping Norton, the local town, to Kingham station, or most of the neighbouring

villages.

I suppose I was an unusually politically active 13 year old so I wrote again to Sir Peter Parker to protest. This time his office sent me back a polite letter with some passenger numbers showing that traffic on the Oxford to Worcester line, which served Kingham, was poor and didn't justify the current service.

I was sure that British Rail was lying about these numbers. It was obvious to me – and made me very angry – that the proposed reduction in services would be the prelude to closure of the line, which had been steadily run down since Beeching, decimating not only my school but the whole community around Chipping Norton which depended on Kingham station. And I was sure that Sir Peter Parker simply didn't understand this.

So I organised my friends to descend on Kingham station and count the number of passengers on all the trains over a 24 hour period. The British Rail figures were way too low. I thereupon wrote to Sir Peter Parker again and became active in a new lobby group called the Cotswold Line Promotion Group, which is still going today.

To cut a long story short, the Oxford to Worcester line was saved, the service was improved not reduced, traffic is now huge, and the stations of Hanborough, Charlbury, Kingham, Moreton-in-Marsh, Honeybourne, Evesham, Pershore, and the through trains which serve them from London Paddington to Worcester and Hereford are the lifeblood of the Cotswolds. Years later I learned that Sir Peter Parker had lived at Minster Lovell in the Cotswolds and used Charlbury station. So I think I know what really happened.

Anyway, there is a plaque to Peter Parker on Charlbury station platform – on platform 1 that is. There are now two platforms thanks to the investment in re-dualling the line in the noughties, I opened the new platform as Transport Secretary, with the local MP, David Cameron, in 2009. I went with him afterwards to his constituency cottage and showed him the plans for HS2 and urged him to make it a cross-party project. He did, and it is the second best thing he did as prime minister, after equal marriage.

Another thing I did at the Department of Transport was to begin a piecemeal policy of reversing Beeching closures affecting large communities and strategically important inter-urban routes. My key decision in this respect was to reinstate the Oxford to Bicester line for inter-city services through to London Marylebone, including a completely new station –

Oxford Parkway – which now generates significant traffic, boosting the connectivity and economy of north Oxford and the towns and villages to the north of Oxford.

The Oxford to Bicester project was a far greater success than I envisaged when deciding to do it. No one explained to me at the time quite what happens in Bicester Village, which was an unexpected bonus. The line is now being rebuilt right through to Milton Keynes, Bedford, and Cambridge, restoring virtually the whole line closed in 1967, with new stations at Calvert, Winslow, and one south of St Neots, and west of Cambridge, all prime locations for new housing.

In pioneering the Oxford-Cambridge project I was strongly influenced by my experience of the Cotswold Line, and the success in the 1980s and 90s of the first new stations and line reopenings which took place, including Milton Keynes and Bristol Parkway, and the Thameslink Bedford-Brighton service enabled by the reopening of the Snow Hill tunnel under the City of London.

The case for a systematic – not piecemeal – policy of reversing the worst mistakes of Beeching is now overwhelmingly strong. Look at the last decade. London Overground, reinventing and extending the North London Line which was a designated Beeching closure which didn't happen although the service became virtually non-existent, is one of the most successful public transport upgrades in history. The Welsh Government's reopening of the Valley line from Ebbw Vale to Cardiff and the Scottish Government's reopening of the Waverley line from Edinburgh to Galashiels and Tweedbank, have also been great successes. The problem on all three of these routes hasn't been viability but overcrowding, with traffic greatly exceeding projections.

All this is in the context of a wider explosion of rail travel. Passenger numbers are now far higher than at their pre-Beeching peak before most people had cars.

Other European countries are also reversing rail closures of decades ago. In parts of Germany, particularly those run by the Greens, there is now a systematic policy of re-opening lines. The Southern German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg has successfully reopened two major lines in recent years from Tübingen to Herrenberg and Radolfzell to Dettenhausen. It now has plans for re-opening 41 – yes 41 – more lines, with a decision to be taken next year on 15 priority projects.

There is also work by economists demonstrating that, across Britain, the long-run impact on communities of losing rail services has been devastating in terms lost population and jobs, particularly affecting young people.

I have been particularly influenced by a Centre for Economic Performance study, published last year, which shows that the fifth of Britain most exposed to rail station closures between 1950 and 1980 saw twenty-four percentage points less growth in population by 1981 than the fifth which were least exposed.

Indeed, the communities most exposed to rail closures suffered a real population decline, which is shocking. Also, among post-war new towns, those with the worst rail connections fared worst, led by Washington in the North-East, which incredibly lost its rail service under Beeching in the same year – 1963 – that the new town was designated and started to be built. Milton Keynes, the most successful new town, only got a station in 1982, 15 years after the new town was started, despite the West Coast Main Line going through the middle of it. Since the opening of the station, Milton Keynes has grown into a veritable city – and now, right next to the station, it houses the headquarters of Network Rail.

The Centre for Economic Performance study also shows that the places that suffered the worst rail cuts also saw a shift away from skilled workers and a shift towards older populations as the young moved to better connected areas.

The long-run effect of Beeching, it suggests, is nothing short of a population transformation of the UK. Had the Beeching cuts not taken place, population in London and the South East might have been at least 5% lower, with population higher elsewhere in England. The population of London is projected as 8.9% lower without Beeching, to the benefit of England more widely.

One final point related to the CEP study. The policy of Ernest Marples, who appointed Beeching, was essentially to replace rail with motorways. But the places losing rail access were not those targeted by improvements in road access and the motorway network. While major towns and cities mostly got motorways and kept their railways, giving them a significant connectivity and productivity gains, the Beeching-ed towns and communities suffered a double whammy: they lost their rail services and mostly got nothing in return – except haphazard bus services which were often withdrawn and even where they remained offered less good connectivity over time as road congestion

increased.

But we are where we are, so what should be done now? There are some 30 large towns across England with populations above 25,000 which lack rail connectivity. Significant parts of major conurbations, particularly in the West Midlands and the North-East, are also rail deserts and these also need restored or new rail connections.

These are the top priorities for reversing Beeching. My proposal is a Reverse Beeching plan with the following three elements:

First, reopen stations on existing lines which serve sizeable population centres.

Second, reinstate and upgrade mothballed or freight-only lines which serve major population centres. A key effect of this to enable the creation of more metro lines serving cities and their conurbations, constructed like the existing London Overground and the lines on the Manchester, West Midland, Tyne and Wear and Merseyside metros, from a combination of reopening or enhancing existing lines and supplementing with on-street tram lines where needed to get services into and through town and city centres.

Third, plan and build entirely new stretches of track where essential to connect large towns, or city districts, to the rail network, often on the alignment of Beeching closures but without reopening the entire lines which were often much longer.

Let me say more about each of these.

First, reopening new stations. As a rule of thumb, any population centre of more than 10,000 with an existing railway line should have a station.

Many of these would be within existing cities. It is an arbitrary facet of history that some cities have multiple stations and while some have just one. Compare Exeter, with seven stations, with Norwich which has just one, although they have similar populations. Norwich could and should have three stations on existing lines, and if there was a tram going north to Hellesdon and Drayton that could create a metro system for the city.

Leicester is three times the size of Exeter and Norwich, and it too has only one station. It should have at least three. A new station at Woodley and Sonning, a suburb east of Reading towards Maidenhead on the Great Western Main Line, would

serve a community of 40,000 and could be the prime minister's legacy if she reads this lecture in the next month.

A similar mix and match approach at Oxford could build a hugely productive cross-region metro by opening stations at Wolvercote, Yarnton, and Kidlington on existing passenger lines, reopening the current goods-only line to Cowley with a station also at Littlemore, and rebuilding the short line from Radley to Abingdon, maybe as a tram to get it into the town centre of Abingdon – population 33,000. I went on the special last train from Oxford to Abingdon and back in 1984 – it was obviously a catastrophic mistake dismantling the line even at the time.

A similar approach should be taken in Cambridge, with a new Cambridge South station on the existing London line, then rebuilding – for light rail – the closed line to Haverhill to the south east, population 27,000, while also reopening, going north, the missing link of line from March to Wisbech, population 31,000, which together with the proposed reopening of the Oxford to Cambridge route with new stations to the south-west of the city would transform the connectivity of the whole Cambridge region.

Second, reinstating and upgrading mothballed or underused lines.

At least four such lines should be opened as soon as possible.

The Burton-on-Trent to Leicester line, goods-only since passenger services were withdrawn in the 1960s, would serve the towns of Coalville, Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Swadlincote among others. This line comes into Leicester through heavily built up districts where there could also be stations. With new and reopened stations in the towns and Leicester, this would serve a rail neglected population of about 150,000 on this line alone.

The 7-mile Bristol to Portisbury and Portishead line, currently freight only, would be a major commuter route into and within Bristol and is already projected for reopening.

The 21-mile Leamside line in the North-East, mothballed in 1991 and closed to passengers by Beeching, would provide vital connectivity to Washington, Wardley, Peshaw and Houghton-le-Spring, going north to Gateshead and Newcastle and south to Durham. The new stations alone would give rail connectivity to a population of 150,000 as well as enhancing connections between Newcastle, Gateshead, and Durham and providing a vital relief line for the congested East Coast Main Line north of its future

junction with HS2, HS2 in effect being a giant relief line for the East Coast Main Line south of York.

The freight line north of Newcastle from Benton to Blyth (population 37,000) and Ashington (population 27,000) should also be reopened for passengers, giving through services to Newcastle and Morpeth. This would be a vital lifeline to large deprived former mining communities which desperately need better public transport connections.

Other short stretches of completely rebuilt line which would be transformational include Newcastle-under-Lyme, population 75,000, to Stoke-on-Trent; Skelmersdale, population 38,000, to Kirkby enabling services to run through to Liverpool and Wigan; Daventry, population 26,000, to Weedon, connecting to the West Coast Main Line; the lines to Abingdon, Haverhill, and Wisbech already mentioned; Cirencester, population 20,000, to Kemble, linking into the main line to Swindon and London. In all seven of these cases, a few miles of new track, mostly on pre-Beeching alignments, would transform the connectivity and economies of existing large towns. I also think there is a case for a short line or tram from Benfleet to Canvey Island, population 40,000, and highly deprived on the Thames Estuary.

Three facts say so much about the state of metropolitan England: there are 122 rail or metro in Greater Manchester; only 80 on the West Midlands. By comparison with both, there 640 in Greater London.

Birmingham and the West Midlands, woefully underserved by commuter rail and light rail, should be a key priority for Reversing Beeching. It is imperative to re-open, as extensions to the West Midlands Metro, the old Black Country line from Stourbridge and Brierley Hill to Dudley, Wednesbury and Walsall; the line from Walsall to Sutton Coalfield; and the old Camp Hill line should also be reopened between King's Norton and the central station of Moor Street. New stations on existing lines should include Willenhall and Darlaston on the Wolverhampton to Walsall line. Handsworth Wood station should also be reopened.

On the Manchester Metro, extending to Middleton, near Rochdale, population 43,000 and highly deprived, is a priority.

A point on buses and guided busways. In a few major towns guided busways have been – or are being – built to promote the connectivity which used to come from rail. Gosport to Fareham, Dunstable to Luton, Leigh to Manchester, and St Neots to Cambridge are prime cases,

all four of them long guided busways., in some cases on pre-Beeching rail alignments. I'm not generally a fan of buses pretending to be trams or trains, but there are more pressing priorities than upgrading existing rapid transit schemes, and so I would leave these to prove themselves.

What about costs and timescales?

I can't estimate what the final cost of this Reverse Beeching would be. It depends how far it is taken once started. But if it's phased and there is guaranteed year-by-year funding, with projects prioritised, this isn't an issue at the outset.

The thing is to get started now. And the way I would do this is simple. The M4 Relief Road has just been cancelled, saving £1.4bn. The ludicrous tunnel proposed for the A303 under Stonehenge, which I cancelled a decade ago but has resurfaced for political reasons at a projected cost of £2.3bn, should also be cancelled. Add in a few other politically motivated but unjustified road schemes and you have an initial £5bn Reverse Beeching fund. More if you can secure local contributions and other regeneration funding. That's enough to make a bold start on the first set of Reverse Beeching projects, which should be agreed through a competitive evaluation next year.

If Brexit were stopped, there would be more money still.

Britain's Heritage Railways also have a part to play. The story of our heritage railways and their extraordinary collection of steam and slightly more modern engines, and restored carriages, is remarkable. Indeed it is a powerful testament to the social revulsion at Beeching: between them 460 stations, as many as Northern Rail, and 562 track miles, the distance from London to Mallaig on the north-west coast of Scotland, all saved from the Beeching Axe or indeed earlier closures. A number of heritage railways serve notable towns such as Swanage on the Dorset coast, Minehead in West Somerset and Bridgnorth and Bewdley on the Severn Valley Railway. I would provide state funding to these excellent community and heritage enterprises to run commuter trains as well as their heritage trains. But I know this is a thorny area, and I suggest there be a review of the relationship between heritage railways and the national rail network and how they might collaborate to mutual advantage. I know the two people who should lead it: Julian Glover, who was special advisor to David Cameron and Patrick McLoughlin and is now leading a review of the national parks and, Richard Faulkner, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, the distinguished president of the Heritage Railway Association. They would do it brilliantly.

Almost everything I have said so far refers to larger towns and cities. In aggregate their population is of course huge. But one of the most significant social and economic challenges in Britain is the future of smaller towns and rural communities which also suffered grievously from the Beeching axe. It is important to note in this context that the figures I gave at the outset from the economic study on the negative impact of Beeching included a swathe of small towns and villages which accounted for the overwhelming majority of the 3,700 railway stations closed between 1950 and 1980. These weren't all stations like the Adlestrop of Edward Thomas's poem –ironically the next stop up the line from Kingham until it was closed in 1966 – where “no one left and no one came on the bare platform” – but rather stations which played a vital part in the life of their communities.

Roger Little makes this point to me in respect of his native Cumbria, where the loss of the 32 mile line from Penrith to Keswick and Cockermouth is still sorely felt, and undoubtedly harmed and still harms those towns and their wider communities. The same is true of all the more sparsely populated counties across the United Kingdom, and is particularly keenly felt in, for example, East Lincolnshire, Mid Devon, the Isle of Wight, and the whole of Northern Ireland.

In the case of Devon, a lot turns on strategic decisions which need to be taken on the main line Plymouth to Exeter route. Reopening the full 60-mile mid-Devon Okehampton and Tavistock line, may be justified as a secondary inter-city route, given the propensity of the Dawlish coastal route to be closed or indeed washed away. If so, this might get this Reverse Beeching project over the line, taken together with the potentially large regeneration benefits for mid-Devon, Plymouth and Exeter.

My best answer to the wider issue of rural connectivity is a dramatic improvement in bus services, including innovative forms of on-demand buses, a kind of publicly organised Uber share. And it would help if these buses and quasi-buses featured routinely in on-line travel and mapping services, including connections with rail services. However, where towns far smaller than 25,000 are fairly close to an existing rail line and in clear need of regeneration, there may be a case for restoring a Beeching closure. I think for example of extending the Barnstaple line to Braunton and Ilfracombe on the north Devon coast. On the Isle of Wight, there is a strong case for extending the Ryde to Shanklin line down to Ventnor on the southern coast.

On Northern Ireland, the scandal of the wholesale

dismantling of the north of Ireland's railways, far worse than Beeching in relative terms, particularly those serving Derry-Londonderry and crossing the border merits a whole lecture. The key priority is to get fast direct services from Derry to Belfast and Belfast to Dublin, neither of which presently exist. But the precondition of course is actually to have a government in Northern Ireland, since this is a devolved matter requiring also close transport planning partnership with the Republic of Ireland, which hasn't alas happened hitherto.

For completeness, and as an admission of failure, can I say that I have drawn a logistical blank on how credibly to provide rail connectivity to the following very large towns: Waterlooville (north of Portsmouth), Witney (Oxfordshire), Halesowen, Harborne (Birmingham), and Ferndown (north of Bournemouth). I would welcome suggestions for each of these.

To sum up, if I was back at the Department of Transport, as successor to Chris Grayling, the permanent secretary would doubtless tell me that all this is a bit too bold. Not quite in the league of ferry companies with no ferries, but bold nonetheless. As they told me a decade ago about HS2, electrification, the Oxford-Bicester re-opening, and the Trans-Pennine upgrade. To which my reply would be: Beeching and other rail closures from 1950 to 1980 reduced rail mileage by 42% – 8,000 miles – and closed 3,700 stations.

If the state can shut down 3,700 stations and 8,000 miles of track in 30 years, it can reopen a hundred or two stations and miles of track in the next decade or two. Don't let the ghost of Sir Peter Parker tell you otherwise – or I will be there with a clipboard, counting the numbers to prove you wrong.

It's Time to Build High-Speed Rail (Remind your Members of Congress)

Members of Congress listen when *hundreds* of their constituents make the same request. Please go online to <https://hsrail.salsalabs.org/2020-federal-petition/index.html>, read the letter, add your comments and sign the petition! As of this writing, *2036 people* have signed the petition with a goal of 5000. We can get out of this 20th Century transportation rut but only if you request it!!

The 2021 Indiana State Rail Plan

By: **Bridgette Hail**, Senior Rail Planner, Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

On August 16, 2019, the **Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)** solicited proposals from experienced consulting firms specializing in rail planning, logistics, engineering, and management to develop a Statewide Rail Plan for the State of Indiana. The 2021 State Rail Plan will accommodate current/future commercial and passenger rail demands and addresses the state's multi-modal transportation and economic needs. The consulting firm will provide services associated with meeting the requirements for the State Rail Plan as identified in the Public Law 110-432 including the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). A consultant has been selected and contract details are being finalized.

The Quintessential Community Leader

Duane Chattin, active member of *Indiana High Speed Rail Alliance*, the national *High Speed Rail Alliance* and the national *Rail Passengers Association*, is featured in a recent article by **Bernie Schmitt** of *Boomer Magazine*, Knox [Indiana] County's community magazine. Duane has made a significant impact in his community of Vincennes! Read this excellent article online at: <https://boommagonline.com/?p=4050>.

Northwest Indiana Couple Enjoys Travel on Amtrak's *Empire Builder*

By: **W. Dennis Hodges**, Vice President & Board Member, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Last November, a couple friends of mine, Runi and Helen Johannesen, took a round trip excursion onboard Amtrak's *Empire Builder* from Chicago to Eugene, Oregon and thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

Helen said, "Meeting people on the train was a plus, but that

the sightseeing of the Northern United States was breathtaking." She also said that they enjoy great porter services on their first-class ride to their west coast destination and return.

Delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner meals were included in their first-class travel, which gave the Johannesen's the opportunity to have some very interesting conversations with other travelers.

Helen and Runi were awestruck over the stunning display of stars at night and the sunrise in the morning. For part of the trip, the train followed the scenic Columbia River and passed through an "absolutely amazing Glacier National Park in Northwestern Montana."

Prior to boarding the train, the couple relaxed and prepared for the trip in Amtrak's first-class lounge where they enjoyed snacks. Once onboard, they found their roomette "roomy and comfortable." The train left on time and arrived in Portland on time. The same was true on the return trip to Chicago.

After getting off the train in Portland, Oregon, the Johannesens boarded a comfortable Amtrak bus for a two-hour ride to their final destination, Eugene, Oregon.

Helen said that the couple would definitely travel by train again to their west coast destination.

Bullets from the Board

By: Steve Coxhead, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) last met at Books & Brews next to the Redline BRT station near the University of Indianapolis on Thursday, November 21, 2019.

The Board normally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month, on odd numbered months, with exceptions** being made as necessary. All IPRA members and other interested parties are welcome to attend these meetings. The IPRA Board Meeting for year 2020 are planned for these Thursdays:

- ⇒ January 23, 2020
- ⇒ March 26, 2020
- ⇒ May 28, 2020
- ⇒ July 23, 2020

⇒ September 24, 2020

⇒ November 19, 2020**

The highlights of the November 2019 meeting are as follows:

- ◆ **A new [8 foot x 3 foot] vinyl banner (suitable for public display) has been donated to IPRA and it will soon be unveiled.**
- ◆ **IPRA and NIPRA (Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association) are meeting periodically to strengthen coordination between our two organizations. We are exploring the concept of an *Indiana Passenger Rail Commission*, which would focus the efforts of passenger rail advocates and governmental organizations to hasten the development of modern passenger rail in Indiana. This would not be a new organization, as such, but an umbrella structure to facilitate the coordination of private and public organizations to a common purpose. Stay tuned for more details!**
- ◆ **Outreach to *IndyGo* was discussed. In November, an attempt to make IPRA information available downtown at the Carson Transit Center was not allowed but they are working to update their policy to allow IPRA (& others) to make information available.**
- ◆ Discussion of membership in the *Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce* (a.k.a. *Indy Chamber*) was continued. When IPRA funds are available, there is a consensus that IPRA membership in the *Indy Chamber* would be mutually beneficial.
- ◆ **Information was shared concerning a possible regional *Rail Passengers Association (RPA)* meeting in Louisville to be held prior to the *RAILNATION:DC 2020 Advocacy Summit* on March 30th -> April 1st.**
- ◆ It was noted that IPRA participated in the recent *Greening the Statehouse* event with a very effective presence.
- ◆ **Now that IPRA's Indiana Passenger Rail Improvement white paper has been distributed to every member of the *Indiana General Assembly*, IPRA members will soon be visiting Indiana House & Senate majority party leadership during the short January to March session to discuss the next steps. Discussion points include: (1) non-Amtrak approaches for an improved replacement**

of the *Hoosier State*, (2) reactivating the Chicago — Ft Wayne — Lima, OH service and (3) the proposed *Indiana Passenger Rail Commission*. IPRA's goal will be to identify sponsors who can make our requests visible.

- ◆ A subcommittee of the Board (Development) has been formed to address the expansion of our membership, as well as the acquisition of significant corporation and/or foundation sponsorship.
- ◆ **Work continues to modernize and update the IPRA website. A date will soon be determined to activate a new IPRA website.**
- ◆ For year 2020, an IPRA Board position will be open. Please contact a member of the Board if you wish to hold an IPRA Board position. I wish to thank *Bill Malcolm* for his contributions to IPRA and his much appreciated years of tireless passenger rail advocacy for Indiana!

It is always useful to maintain the dialogue with your State Senator, State Representative and the Governor's Office concerning the importance of a modern 21st Century passenger rail network in the State of Indiana. Please let us know about your conversations with members of the Indiana General Assembly about improving passenger rail in Indiana by sending IPRA an email message to info@indianahighspeedrail.org.

The next IPRA Board meeting will be held at the date and location shown here. All IPRA members are welcome to attend!

What: IPRA Board Meeting

When: Thursday, January 23, 2020 from 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST)

Where: Faegre Baker Daniels LLP, 600 E 96th Street, Suite 600, Indianapolis, IN 46240 (This is the FBD office on the **NORTH** side of Indianapolis)

Food: Lunch **will** be provided

Those planning to attend this board meeting are requested to respond to the meeting announcement so that we may plan adequately. **Please watch your e-mail for more details as this meeting's date approaches.**

Please don't forget to include the *Cardinal* and other Amtrak services in your travel plans. Heavy ridership is the most important weapon we have in the fight to improve passenger rail service in Indiana.

Riding the Rails

By: Tod K Bassler Editor – All Aboard Indiana,
Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

WHY ARE AMTRAK TRAINS DELAYED BY FREIGHT

TRAINS? – This Amtrak blog post accompanied by a short YouTube video does a great job at summarizing the problem and what **you** can do about it. Be sure to read RPA President **Jim Mathews'** reply associated with the YouTube video. Read this understandable post online at: <http://blog.amtrak.com/2019/05/why-are-amtrak-trains-delayed-by-freight-trains/>. (This blog post thanks to **Amtrak** and **YouTube**)

AMTRAK TAKES FIGHT AGAINST DELAYS ONLINE –

Amtrak is fed up with host railroads breaking the law that prioritizes passenger rail on host railroads. The old host railroad folks ignore the law and the young ones may not know about it. See this March 18, 2019 blog post online at: <https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/news/blog/amtrak-takes-the-fight-against-delays-online/>. (This work thanks to **Sean Jeans-Gail** at the **Rail Passengers Association**)

WHAT LAW PRIORITIZES AMTRAK OVER FREIGHT? – The Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970

(Now codified online at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2015-title49/pdf/USCODE-2015-title49-subtitleV.pdf> (focus on Section 24308 (page 559) of PART C of SUBTITLE V of TITLE 49))) See this very good 16-page presentation's PDF online at: https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Planning/freight_planning/talking_freight/september_2017/21_talkingfreight9_21_2017bl.pdf. (This presentation thanks to **Jim Blair** at **Amtrak**)

THE TRANS EUROPEAN EXPRESS PARIS TO MOSCOW –

Wow!! This Russian RZD night train via Berlin (11 stops total) will amaze you for 3000 kilometers and two nights with an added technical surprise! In Brest, Belarus (on the border with Poland), each coach's bogie is replaced switching from **Standard gauge** (1435 mm / 4' 8 1/2") for Europe to **Broad gauge** (1520 mm / 4' 11 7/8") for former USSR countries. View this must see video (published April 3, 2019) online at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLHOB5tMugI&vI=en>. (This unforgettable video thanks to **Fritz Plous** & **Phil Streby** for awareness and, of course, **YouTube**)

CALTRAIN RAMPS UP CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS – The [California] Silicon Valley commuter rail service started 2020 on a strong note! . See this short but sweet news online at: https://www.progressiverailroading.com/c_s/news/Caltrain-ramps-up-construction-projects--59423. (This news thanks to *Progressive Railroading*)

CUOMO UNVEILS PLAN TO EXPAND NEW YORK PENN STATION'S CAPACITY – New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced on January 6, 2020 that the capacity of our nation's busiest transit hub will be increased by 40%. See this upbeat news online at: https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger_rail/news/Cuomo-unveils-plan-to-expand-New-York-Penn-Stations-capacity--59418. (This news thanks to *Progressive Railroading*)

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AMERICA LEAVES MOST CITIES & TOWNS FUNCTIONALLY INSOLVENT – We need to stop pouring our money into aggressive growth schemes and start focusing on producing more value out of the places we have already built. See this sobering article online at: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/this-ponzi-scheme-surrounding-development-leaves-most-cities-and-towns-functionally-insolvent-2019-12-16>. (This news thanks to *MarketWatch*)

TO BUILD A BETTER TRANSIT SYSTEM FOR ALL, START BY UNDERSTANDING HOW WOMEN TRAVEL – Women account for 55% of transit riders in the USA and their travel needs are not well understood. See this great October 29, 2019 article online at: <https://ggwash.org/view/74441/we-need-to-understand-how-women-travel-so-we-can-have-a-better-transit-system-for-everyone>. (This article thanks to *Elizabeth Whitton* and *Greater Greater Washington*)

CHICAGO DRIVERS LOSE 138 HOURS A YEAR TO TRAFFIC BACKUPS, THIRD WORST IN NATION – In just 3 years, Chicago is now considered worse for congestion than either New York City or Los Angeles. Read this sobering article online at: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/breaking/ct-biz-traffic-chicago-20190211-story.html>. (This February 12, 2019 article thanks to *Mary Wisniewski* at the *Chicago Tribune*)

A very big **THANK YOU** to **Faegre Baker Daniels, LLP** for your recent donation so IPRA can continue our advocacy for better passenger rail in Indiana and the Midwest!!

Discounts

Amtrak - The Rail Passengers Association (RPA) members **save 10%** online at www.amtrak.com if booked three or more days in advance. Select the [Rail Passengers Association] discount on Amtrak's website.

Rail Passengers Association (RPA) (a.k.a. **NARP**) members have a benefit... **MemberDeals**. Current RPA members will find details on RPA's website. **If you're not an RPA member, this is a great time to join!**

STUDENTS CAN SAVE ON AMTRAK MIDWEST TRAVEL – If you're a traveling student, please go online to <https://media.amtrak.com/2018/05/students-can-save-amtrak-midwest-travel/> and learn how you can save money travelling on Amtrak! The **Hoosier State** is no longer in service but all other Amtrak Midwest trains are available.

YOUR KIDS GET A 50% DISCOUNT WHEN TRAVELING WITH YOU – Please go online to <https://www.amtrak.com/children-discounts> and learn how you can save money when travelling with your children on Amtrak!

Crowne Plaza Union Station in **Indianapolis**: When booking online and selecting Corporate ID = **6972**, you will receive the Amtrak rate of **18% off Best Flexible rate** for these 4 room types: Standard, Superior / Train Car, Executive King and Suite. You can also call the hotel directly at 317-631-2221 and ask for the **Amtrak rate**.

For More Information

All Aboard Indiana is a quarterly publication of the **Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)**, formerly the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (INHSR).

To learn more about IPRA, please visit on our website:

<https://www.indianahighspeedrail.org>

...or contact us at our mailing address:

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance
125 West South Street, # 662
Indianapolis, IN 46206-0662

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IPRA Membership Form

Membership can be purchased online at:

<https://www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html>

You are also welcome to print and mail the following form:

 <p>Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance</p> <p>A one-year membership in the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is only \$15 (Student/Senior 65+) or \$25 (Member)</p> <p>Join or renew at http://www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html</p> <p>Please mail check to: Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, 125 West South Street, Unit 662, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-0662</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>City: _____</p> <p>State: _____</p> <p>Zip Code: _____</p> <p>E-mail: _____</p>
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Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is a not for profit organization of concerned citizens, working to bring modern, 21st Century passenger rail systems to Indiana. We believe such systems are one of the keys to Indiana's economic success in the new century.

Goals for Indiana:

- Improve the Chicago-Indianapolis-Louisville-Cincinnati corridor (The Hoosier State)
- Build the Chicago-Fort Wayne corridor
- Expand the NW Indiana South Shore commuter system
- Develop light rail commuter systems for Central Indiana

Modern transit systems are demanded by the work force now coming of age, and expected by 21st Century businesses considering locations for expansion.

Want more information?
Contact us at: info@indianahighspeedrail.org