

# ALL ABOARD

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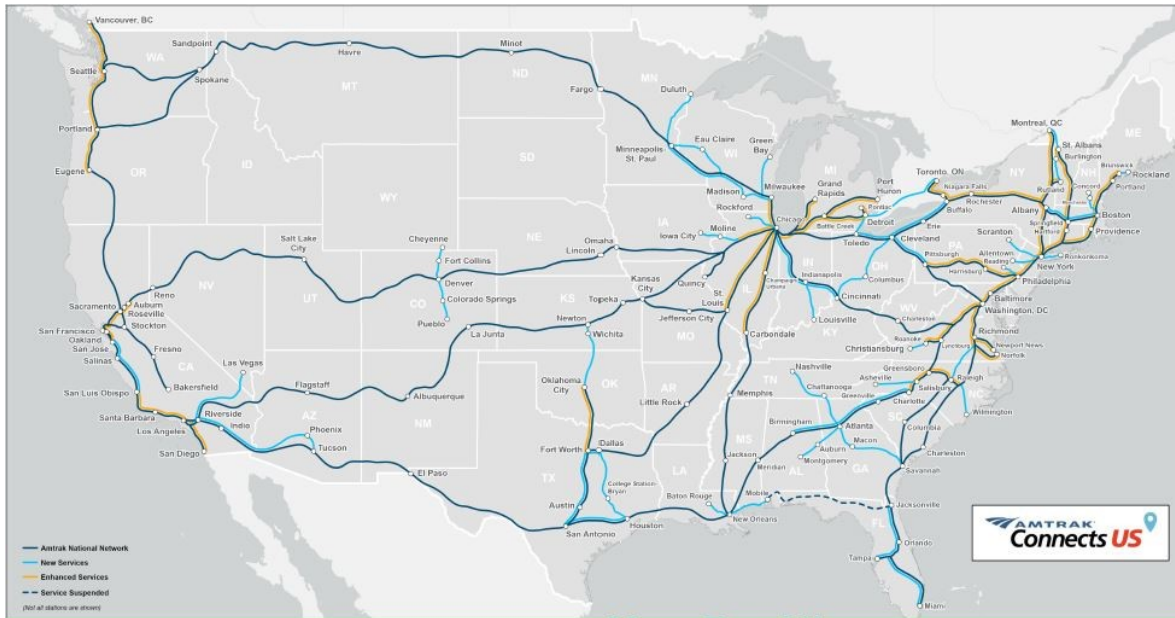
The Official Newsletter of the

**Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance**

Second Quarter 2021



## Amtrak Connects US A Vision to Grow Rail Service Across America



Now that our country has passenger rail advocates in the White House and the Department of Transportation, **Amtrak has a exciting plans for the future!** See the new **Amtrak Connects US** website at <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com> for the latest information. Be sure to download the two page **Fact Sheet** at <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Amtrak-Connects-US-Fact-Sheet-2021-04-16-1.pdf> and **use it for your discussions with your local and State transportation decision makers.** When you use the map shown here during your discussions, please ensure that you **credit Amtrak.**

Notice the restored service between Indianapolis & Chicago (a.k.a. the **Hoosier State**) as well as new service planned for between Indianapolis & Louisville and Indianapolis & Cincinnati!

You will also find a lot more very useful information about **Amtrak Connects US** at the **Amtrak Media Center** at <https://media.amtrak.com/amtrak-connects-us>.

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## INDOT Announces Next State Rail Plan Virtual Stakeholder Meeting

By: **Scott Manning**, Media Contact, Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

**Editor's Note:** Please RSVP to [INSRP@hdrinc.com](mailto:INSRP@hdrinc.com) by **Wednesday, May 12th** for this Wednesday, May 19th (1:00 -> 3:00 pm EDT) online meeting.

INDIANAPOLIS — INDOT will host a virtual meeting on May 19 to discuss some of the preliminary findings and recommendations for the state rail plan, which provides guidance on the improvement of freight and passenger rail investments in rural and urban areas throughout the Hoosier state. Federal law requires an update of INDOT's state rail plan every four years.

Please go to <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/INDOT/bulletins/2cadac8> for this meeting's details.

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## Hoosier State Conceptual Infrastructure Plan (Installment 3 of 3)

By: **Steve Coxhead**, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)

The Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) has commissioned a study providing some possible answers to the question of what it would take and what would it cost to run an improved daily passenger service in the Indianapolis-Lafayette-Northwest Indiana corridor. Our organization, the **Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)** has presented a general overview and a summary of the specific infrastructure improvements that must be made (to support higher speeds and greater frequency) in previous editions of *All Aboard Indiana*. In this edition, we will conclude our overview with a look at the estimated capital costs associated with the project.

The plan document may be found on the INDOT website at: [www.in.gov/indot/2394.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/2394.htm). When the page opens, click on the link titled "**Passenger Rail Infrastructure Plan**". It is a 64-

page PDF file dated November 2019.

If you have problems in viewing, downloading or printing the document please send us a note at [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org) requesting assistance.

So, what might it cost to bring the *Hoosier State* (& also the *Cardinal*) corridor into a state of good repair capable of supporting multiple daily round trips at an operating speed of 79 mph instead of the current maximum of 59 mph?

The plan document includes an estimated capital cost to support two daily round trips at 79 mph of \$677 million. The estimate is further broken down into the component needed to allow the corridor to support two daily round trips (\$150 million) and the component needed to increase the maximum operating speed to 79 mph (\$527 million). Depending on Federal legislation in place, it is estimated that a project of this sort could receive Federal financing of between 50% and 80%.

Note that this would be \$677 million spent in Indiana, further supporting the state's economic development.

This does seem like a lot of money, doesn't it? Well, transportation infrastructure projects are expensive. Is the cost of an improved Hoosier State service out of line with other transportation project costs in our state? Let's take a look at a few things. Remember that large projects usually include a substantial Federal component and take multiple years to complete.

- The INDOT budget for Fiscal Year 2018 was \$2.6 billion, of which \$1.5 billion were capital expenditures.
- Section #6 of I-69 (Martinsville to Indianapolis – 27 miles) is currently costing \$1.5 billion to complete.
- An estimate for a new Ohio River bridge is around \$1.5 billion.
- In general, the cost of a 6 lane interstate highway is around \$7 million per mile in rural areas and \$11 million per mile in urban areas.
- The State contribution to the Northwest Indiana *South Shore* commuter service expansion (8 miles from Hammond to Dyer) is around \$220 million.

So, it would appear that the cost to bring the *Hoosier State* corridor into an acceptable state of repair, of \$677 million, while substantial, is not out of line with other major transportation projects undertaken by our State.

Remember that these are capital investments whose benefits accrue to Hoosiers for many years into the future.

It is important that the State of Indiana begins planning for the Hoosier State (and other) projects now, so that when matching Federal funds become available, Indiana does not lose out. Funding became available for rail projects under the Obama administration but Indiana missed out because the state had only one small project to propose. The Biden administration has spoken of large infrastructure spending plans. It is too early right now to know how the current proposal will work out. What is certain, however, is that if and when funding becomes available, Indiana will once again be left out if it has not done its homework and have projects ready to propose.

So, now that you have some facts, and if a modern, 21st Century Indianapolis to Northwest Indiana corridor along the lines described in the conceptual plan document is of concern to you, please communicate with your State Representative and State Senator, and let them know your feelings. While you're at it, please let the Governor's office know as well. Realistically, we need a commitment from the State of Indiana Governor's office to turn the conceptual plan into a reality. We also need a commitment on the part of INDOT to aggressively seek funding for the plan. This is something with which Indiana's Congressional Delegation could definitely help so please get in touch with them as soon as possible! Let us know about your conversations at [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org)!

## An Advocate's Elevator Speech

By: **Tod K Bassler**, Board Member—Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), Council Member for Indiana—Rail Passengers Association (RPA)

**Editor's Note:** As an advocate for improved transportation options for the USA, we should always have an Elevator Speech in our "back pockets". The following are two versions of my Elevator Speech... the short and the long. The short version can be used when you're actually in an elevator (or anywhere) with a transportation decision maker and you have at the most 1 or 2 minutes. The long version is for when you have someone's (or a group's) attention for at least 15 minutes. Please read these examples and feel free to use them in your advocacy efforts.

### SHORT VERSION

Our transportation options in the USA have changed a lot over the last few centuries. While our country was built with the help of the railroad, today's options for getting around are much more limited. Our population has more than doubled since 1950 (now 332 million) and the automobile, a **low density** transportation option, can no longer get the job done efficiently, especially in urban areas. While the rest of the advanced industrial economies have invested in **right sizing transportation options**, we here in the USA have not. Traffic jams are now common on our roads and waste a lot of our precious, unrecoverable time. Adding more and expensive highway lanes does not solve the space problem. **Will you help fix our country's transportation "jam" by supporting investment in improved passenger rail?**

### LONG VERSION

The United States of America was built over two centuries ago by hard working visionaries using a transportation tool that got the job done, the railroad. A half century ago, a newer transportation option, the automobile, matured to the point when Americans decided that the *apparent* freedom of the automobile was too good to resist. At the same time, other transportation options, the airplane and the bus, also became viable options for long distance travel. While automobiles are very useful for short distances less than 100 miles (often referred to as the "last mile") and airplanes are very convenient for distances greater than 600 miles, Americans have fewer options than other developed countries when taking trips having distances ranging from 100 to 600 miles. Airlines find it hard to maintain profitable routes under 600 miles and automobile trips longer than 100 miles (typically 2 hours) are stressful and not healthy for passengers. In other words, you need to stop and stretch your legs at least every two hours!

As the population of the world increases (since 1950 the population of the USA has more than doubled and is now 332 million), automobiles as a form of transportation suffer from a density characteristic that cannot be avoided. Autos typically transport 1 to 6 people at a time. Other denser forms of transportation, like trains, buses and airplanes, more efficiently transport larger numbers of people. Our crowded highways (full of cars and large trucks), which frequently resemble parking lots, cannot sustain transporting groups of people using a mode that has such low density. Adding more lanes to highways quickly fill up with more traffic, which further compounds the problem. Yes, highways have a capacity limit on the best of days. Also, poor driving habits,

which are widespread today, cause frequent accidents and significant delays on highways everywhere. This wastes our valuable time (which we can't get back) and money.

So, what happened to passenger rail, which provides efficient and comfortable service in the 100-to-600-mile range? This same argument applies to people who commute to and from work and play, which is typically less than 30 miles.

Companies that support competing transportation options (i.e., tire companies and buses) took advantage of the free enterprise business environment in our country and, starting in the 1950s, removed most of the rail-based options for moving people around. Meanwhile, in 1971, the U.S. Government took regional and long-distance passenger rail off the hands of the railroad companies in exchange for preferred access to their routes. The result was Amtrak and enforcing their preference to access to the routes (Ref: The Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970) has been generally unsuccessful.

Americans (especially younger citizens) are realizing today that having transportation options that are "right sized" for a trip offers a more enjoyable experience and at the same time minimizes the impact on the environment. In order to return to more balanced transportation options, investment in improving our passenger rail, including long distance, regional and urban, is the right thing to do.

To invest in improving the USA's passenger rail service, there are four key areas that must be addressed:

1. Preference enforcement must occur (this was the deal in 1971) so trips are time competitive with other transportation options
2. Realistic funding for capital and operations must be available and implemented
3. Passenger rail equipment (especially the train vehicles) must be modern, efficient and most importantly comfortable (and quiet!)
4. Service schedules must be useful to passengers (the proverbial chicken and egg challenge) so the passenger rail travel option is actually available at convenient times

If the United States of America is to remain an attractive and competitive country in which to live and raise a family, our transportation options must simply be improved. **Will you help fix our country's transportation "jam" by supporting investment in improved passenger rail?**

## Biden's Inauguration Day Amtrak Trip Is A Game- Changer (Find this article online [here](#))

By: **Jim Mathews**, President & CEO, *Rail Passengers Association (RPA)*

**Editor's Note:** If you're not already a member of the [Rail Passengers Association \(RPA\)](#), please **become a member today!** An individual membership is **\$5/month** (paid annually) and you'll receive many great travel deals like 10% off Amtrak fares!

UPDATED (Jan 14, 2021): By the time my enthusiastic blog post about President-elect Biden's Amtrak ride for Inauguration Day went live, **the trip was off -- cancelled due to security concerns in the wake of last week's ill-fated insurrection attempt at the Capitol**. We've decided to leave the post below intact because much of what I said below is still true and still important.

If anyone needed a visual aid to understand how committed the incoming Biden Administration will be to passenger rail, well as the saying goes: "Here's your sign." **While not surprising, we all now have formal confirmation** that "Amtrak Joe" Biden will arrive in Washington, D.C., aboard Amtrak for his inauguration as President of the United States, retracing the daily commute from Delaware he made for many years as a U.S. Senator.

**His decades-long journey to the Presidency will finish with Washington Union Station as his gateway to the White House. Is it symbolic? Sure it is. And symbols are important not only in politics but in life. Symbols help us communicate when words are inadequate or when the message needs to echo for a little longer. President-elect Biden is sending a signal that transportation policy is going to take the front-and-center role it deserves in his Administration.**

All of us know how important transportation is to our communities. Mobility makes our towns grow as well as go. Mobility is opportunity. Mobility is freedom. Mobility creates the preconditions for all Americans to succeed and to thrive. By taking Amtrak to his inauguration, President-elect Biden is not just doffing his hat to a nostalgic routine. He's putting down a marker for Congress and for his own team to show



that he understands the role of mobility in creating a more vibrant and more just economy for every American.

Once Biden raises his right hand, no U.S. president will have logged as many miles by rail since the dawn of the Jet Age. And there has never been a president who understands Amtrak as well as Joe Biden—the good, the bad and the ugly. Biden understands the railroad's unique structure, its corporate culture, the politics of getting it funded. One of his sons served on the Board, and he counts many past Amtrak executives (and even more important, front-line on-board employees) as close personal friends. For Biden, Amtrak is a family business.

That's no small thing. So much of our job in your D.C. office is to educate incoming elected officials on the peculiarities of passenger rail operations in the U.S. A Biden Administration is going to understand the problems faced by the average American passenger on day one.

We told you in November that the Biden-Harris transition team seemed to be putting experienced professionals in place who will be ready to start executing a plan on day one. The transition team includes a deep bench of folks with a background in public transportation, now headed by DOT Secretary-designee Pete Buttigieg, a former Mayor who championed transportation investments in his Midwestern city because he, too, understands how mobility creates a more vibrant and just economy.

It is more clear now than ever that the incoming Biden Administration has a grander vision for its Department of Transportation than just building more highway lanes and runways.

In their public statements, transportation advisers to the President-elect demonstrate a clear understanding of the pressing needs faced by public transportation systems across the country, and the scale of relief needed to ensure their continued operations. That's why Rail Passengers is committed to continuing our work with the Biden transition team through January, responding to requests for our policy proposals and for a short list of passenger rail projects that are ready to move quickly and worthy of funding.

Rail investments will play a big role, both as a long-term enabler of economic power and as a short-term pillar of reinvestment and relief for an American economy battered by a worldwide pandemic and deep recession.

There's a bright future ahead for passenger rail and public transportation. Long-distance service enjoys strong support in the U.S. Congress, among both Democrats and Republicans. There's also pent-up demand in Congress to do something about modernizing Amtrak and injecting stimulus funding into public-transit systems across the country. Amtrak's ambitious corridor expansion plans (which Amtrak presented publicly for the first time during our September webinar on Amtrak's growth plans) are achievable with strong congressional and grassroots support. And those corridor plans are intimately linked with the success of Amtrak's long-distance trains -- the corridors depend on interconnection with long-distance routes. Amtrak's Chairman has already committed publicly to ensuring that long-distance service survives and thrives as part of that plan.

All of this presumes that our members/donors, like you reading this today, continue to make themselves heard with their congressional representatives and Senators. The Biden Administration can be expected to present Congress with an aggressive investment plan, and we'll need all of YOUR voices to chime in with support. A 50-50 split Senate means that even one skeptical Senator is enough to torpedo the whole thing. That's where you can help us!

Please consider responding whenever we send out Action Alerts asking members to email or call your congressional representatives or your Mayor or other officials. Every voice really does make a difference, and it's why we have such strong bipartisan support right now for long-distance trains. Also, donate when your financial circumstances allow. The generosity of others enables your professional Association staff to advocate for the needs of passenger rail and public transit.

Those elected officials need to know that their voters want those trains to survive. They won't know that unless you tell them over and over again!

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## Restoration of The Seaboard Air Line Observation Car

By: John Owen, President, Louisville Railway Company Inc.

**Editor's Note:** Please follow the Louisville Railway Company Inc on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/LouisvilleRailwayCo> and, if you wish, donate to help restore

the Seaboard Airline No. 6400!



**CHARLESTOWN, IN** — When it debuted at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, the *Silver Meteor* was a marvel of modern travel with luxury amenities affordable for the average citizen. Built for Seaboard Railroads 10 years after the end of the Great Depression and just at the start of World War II, the train marked the beginning of a new era in locomotives as railroads transitioned to diesel from the previous steam-powered cars. One important piece of this history is on its way to restoration after the City of Charlestown recently donated an observation car that was on the inaugural run of the Silver Meteor to a Louisville group intent on returning it to its former glory.

The Louisville Railway Company, Inc. is raising funds to help relocate the Seaboard Air Line observation car 6400 from its spot on Indiana 62 in Charlestown, where it has been for 25 years. Mayor **Treva Hodges** said the city had hoped to restore the car — which had been gifted by **Charles**

**Nicklies** — for use as a warming station at the Charlestown Family Fun Park. After looking into the cost of moving the car, city leaders realized it wasn't feasible to take on. And, renovations were compounded after vandals smashed the historic windows.

"We're just glad it's going to a good home," Hodges said. "I hate that we couldn't make good use of it but it was just too far gone from the vandalism because it wasn't just the windows, there were some other things that were just going to be too expensive to repair." **John Owen**, president of the nonprofit, said it could cost \$10,000 to



\$12,000 just to move the car and another \$500,000 to \$600,000 to renovate to Amtrak standards. "Cosmetic improvements alone would be about \$20,000", he said. But it's a task the group sees as a worthy one, to restore the more than 80-year-old car and help share its unique history.

At the World's Fair, the train was part of the Futurama exhibit hosted by General Motors, which had been instrumental in trains switching to diesel. Sleek, lightweight and fast, the train promoted modernism and a look ahead. This was the train of tomorrow. "The cars were very bright, very cheery," Owen said. "It was an all-coach streamliner with at that time modern conveniences; it was futuristic; it looked towards a future design." The train included a dining car and a lounge car that was more accessible — older trains had observation lounges available only for the passengers who had paid for sleeper cabins. "This was for the average person — a classy train at a coach price," Owen said. "Tickets would have been very very reasonable depending on the distance and where you traveled from." The car also has its tragic history. In 1942, eight people were killed when the train was rear-ended in North Carolina by a steam locomotive. It had been carrying 514 passengers and was the second train wreck involving military personnel during the early part of World War II.

Development is expected to begin about the end of April this year on the land where the car has been for the past quarter century, and Mayor Hodges said she's glad the car — if it can't be used in Charlestown — can be restored by the group to educate in another area. "We're very fortunate that we've found a way to give it a new life and it helps us begin to develop that section and it helps restore the train," she said. "It's going to a loving home."

## Noblesville Donates Two Santa Fe Coaches to Louisville Railway

By: **John Owen**, President, Louisville Railway Company Inc.

The City of Noblesville is allowing Louisville Railway Company Inc officials and volunteers the opportunity to salvage parts from two Santa Fe coaches that were headed for scrap. "The two coaches are a valuable source to us as we restore the Seaboard Car donated to us by Charlestown" said Louisville Railway Company and Rail

Passengers Kentucky chair John Owen.



Quoting John "We intend to preserve one of the Santa Fe Cars for restoration as well as companion car for Seaboard Air Line 6400; the other will be used for many hard to find parts including seats and luggage racks missing in the Seaboard Car. We have been treated wonderfully by the City of Noblesville and their entire parks staff. They took the time to listen and understand the value of our efforts with our coach from Charlestown and the help and cost savings the parts in Noblesville play in preserving our coach. I hope we can find other homes for those pieces that remain as one mans junk is another mans treasure".

## When Unlimited Potential Meets Limited Resources: The Benefits and Challenges of High-Speed Rail and Emerging Rail Technologies

By: U.S. House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

On Thursday, May 6, 2021 the **Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials** conducted a hearing about what it will take for the USA to get caught up with the rest of the world to improve our transportation options... specifically passenger rail. The hearing, which can be found online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAZnoDtnVWI>, is almost 4 1/2 hours long and has many "messengers" both in support of investing in improving our country's passenger rail (the optimists) as well as the doubters (the pessimists). The key witnesses in this hearing include [Peter DeFazio](#), [Andy Kunz](#), [John Porcari](#), [Seth Moulton](#), [Danielle Eckert](#), [Phillip Washington](#), [Carlos Aguilar](#), [Michael Reininger](#) [Bill Flynn](#) and [Andre Carson](#). IPRA recommends that, as an Advocate, you remember the

names of these key messengers, their role (look them up and/or listen to the hearing) and, most important, their **message**. Be sure to visit the HSRA website [here](#) and read a very good summary of this event! A constant theme throughout the hearing is that **any transportation system anywhere must be subsidized, not completely but realistically.** Enjoy!

## Amtrak Restores 12 Long Distance Routes to Daily Service

By: Philip Streby, IPRA Board Member

**Editor's Note:** Many thanks to Phil and the [Rail Users' Network \(RUN\)](#) for adding this preface to Amtrak's announcement. If you support what RUN is doing, **please donate!**

Earlier this week, Amtrak announced that it is restoring daily service on twelve of its Long-Distance routes beginning May 24th and continuing through June 7th. The members of the [Rail Users' Network \(RUN\)](#) can claim some credit for this happening following a strong letter-writing campaign to members of Congress involved with the Transportation Committee. These letters pointed out the absurdity of the "cost-cutting" tri-weekly lack of service in which Amtrak's own figures showed that long distance trains supplied the company with most of its ticket revenue.

Following that campaign, those members of Congress demanded that Amtrak restore daily service and provide that restoration schedule. Amtrak, in turn, put forth a list of monies required to do so which further exemplified the continuous lack of reasonable funding for Amtrak. Oddly, Amtrak's funding requirement indicated its cost saving to be far below the amount of revenue generated by the Long-Distance trains. Our letters, in addition to calling for restoring daily service, also called for restoring proper dining car service which should NOT be considered a luxury or nostalgic amenity, BUT should be recognized for what it is... a necessity considering the time spent traveling by rail.

We have also called for adding coaches and sleepers during this time of Covid/government-forced separation in order to handle the passenger counts. That equipment could be supplied from the short-haul and state-supported trains once it has come out of overhaul or refurbishment, a program Amtrak has enhanced during this last year or reduced ridership.



Finally, we have called for a massive order of new equipment to supply the needs of future riders. Such purchases should be in the hundreds, even thousands of new cars and locomotives. Spread over a ten-year program, this country could easily fund the purchase of an estimated (by this author) 10,000 new cars of varying (coach, sleeper, diner, etc) use and 1000 new locomotives. This purchase would not only allow for about six daily trains on current routes, and a few new routes, but would provide employment for thousands of new factory employees as well as those of the service industries that are found around any factory. The Rail Passengers Association (RPA) based in Washington, D.C. has the means by which to calculate the value passenger rail brings to any community, state, or region it serves and can very adequately demonstrate that passenger rail pays much more than it costs.

Please ready the Amtrak announcement at <https://media.amtrak.com/2021/03/with-increased-demand-and-congressional-funding-amtrak-restores-12-long-distance-routes-to-daily-service/> to re-establish daily service and some on-board amenities.

## Rail Users' Network (RUN) Virtual Mini Conference

### "Getting New England Connected"

How Rail Expansion Will Improve the Region's Mobility & Economic Development !

**Saturday May 15, 2021. 1:00 – 4:45 P.M. EDT**  
(Free access via the Zoom application)

Speakers include: [Richard Rudolph](#), President, Rail Users' Network; [Karen Christensen](#), President, the Train Campaign; [Tony Donovan](#), Chairman, Maine Rail Transit Coalition; [Ben Heckscher](#), Co-founder, Trains In The Valley; [Peter Cole](#), Maine Rail Group Director; [Jay Minkarah](#), Executive Director, Nashua Regional Planning Commission; [Christopher Parker](#), Executive Director, Vermont Rail Action Network, and others to be named.

Presentations will be followed by a public forum. The forum is designed not only for rail advocates, but also civic and business leaders, environmentalists, planners, real estate developers, and members of the general public, who are interested in knowing more about passenger rail and rail transit in New England.

**This mini-conference is free to participants but you must**

**register to obtain the meeting link.** Detailed info with a preliminary speaking schedule, and a link to register, may be found at: <https://www.railusers.net/annual-conference/>.

For a PDF Flyer to download and share, go here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U-jYvqyql-4qfLbOdvr7BGZwipNRU-u/view>.

## U.S Airports No Longer Have to Build Their Own Terrible Trains

The byzantine bureaucratic rule that made useful airport connections to mass transit difficult is finally gone. Its legacy will live on in our crappy trains.

Reprinted with permission from: [Aaron Gordon](#), Senior Writer, Motherboard, Vice Medial LLC (This article is online [here](#))

On January 12, a time when most of us were distracted by other events pertaining to the federal government, the Federal Aviation Administration [updated some rules](#) that will have huge implications for how travelers access airports via public transportation, and even for public transportation systems as a whole. It is also a correction for one of my pet peeves about U.S. public transportation, that we have spent decades building trains-to-the-trains to the airport. This unique type of U.S. transportation has no commonly-recognized name, and I will soon arbitrarily assign a term for them just to make everything easier.

They do not have a name because they make no sense and have no good reason to exist. The train itself should just go to the airport, like they do in virtually every other airport with a mass transit connection in the world. These useless trains only exist because of byzantine bureaucratic rule that has condemned U.S. travelers to this crappy extra train for no good reason. And it's finally, finally, *finally* fixed.

To fully understand what's going on here, let's back up and talk about airport transportation. Most large international airports anywhere in the world have some type of "people mover" system, which can be anything from those [weird and amazing mobile lounges at Dulles International Airport](#) outside Washington, D.C. to the automated trains more commonly found at airports these days (including also at Dulles). Airports have these when they are very large with terminals very far apart and even those moving walkways you are supposed to walk on and not just stand there for



**goodness sake MOVE are not enough to get people around efficiently.**

Generally speaking, there are two types of airport people movers. The first and most common from a global perspective are those designed to get people between terminals at massive international airports. The second and most common in the U.S. but virtually non-existent elsewhere are those that not only connect terminals but also the airport to rental car hubs and mass transportation. These second types, which I will continue to refer to as people movers for convenience, are frustrating as hell, as it requires travelers—to mention airport employees—to take a train to the train, an unnecessary and expensive transfer that typically requires a second fare.

**So: why? Why this extra train? It's because of this weird FAA rule.**

In 1990, Congress passed the **Aviation Safety and Capacity Expansion Act of 1990** which allowed airports, with the FAA's permission, to charge a small Passenger Facility Fee (PFC)—initially a maximum of \$3 per ticket, later upped to \$4.50 and, [like the federal gas tax](#), not increased in the 20 years since despite losing much of its value to inflation—for airport improvements. The statute allows the revenue to be used for specific types of internal airport improvements only, such as people movers that stay within airport grounds. And in 2004 the FAA clarified that only rail lines which *exclusively* serve airports are eligible for PFCs.

In the United States, getting funding for mass transit projects [is hard enough as it is](#), so PFCs offered airports and the cities they're in a workaround to creating mass transit connections, if not a direct link to city centers. As long as airports built their own, separate rail line that operated mostly inside airport territory—or, in theory, built a mass transit expansion with no intermediate stops that terminated at the airport—they could use airline ticket surcharges to pay for, at the very least, a good chunk of the project. This is why city governments in particular tend to love these trains to the trains, because it takes most of the funding load off their backs and they get to brag about having a mass transit connection to their airport.

But, as anyone who has ever used a people mover knows, they're an expensive half-measure that doesn't provide a true one-seat ride to the airport. The transfers can be a pain with luggage and add at least ten minutes to each leg of the journey, often more, when factoring in long walks through transfer stations. Plus, if you're traveling with others, the odds are the extra cost of the double fare for multiple people will

start to get price competitive with taking a taxi or Uber, defeating the whole purpose of the people mover to begin with. These are not life-changing inconveniences, but they undermine the point of a mass transit connection to airports and reinforce the notion that [the U.S. sucks at building useful public transit](#).

**"The convoluted structure of not having a one seat ride is driven pretty much by the way the regulations are structured," then-Airports Council International general counsel Tom Devine told me last year (he has since retired). The intent, he said, was to prevent cities from passing mass transit expansion costs onto airport users.**

"The rationale is they don't want the airport to be in essence paying for a commuter rail system that goes downtown where maybe there's 10 percent airport use and 90 percent use of commuters getting from the suburbs to downtown but the airport pays 100 percent." Devine explained. "So it was a crude way, I think, of limiting what Congress thought might be potential abuses."

Of course, there have always been possible compromises that allow mass transit systems to build, say, a light rail extension to the airport with intermediate stops and have PFCs cover a portion of the total cost, [as the FAA first proposed in 2016](#). But airlines have consistently opposed such changes because, in the words of Delta Air Lines' comment on the proposed change, "Airport transit connections do not produce the same level of benefits compared to airside projects, nor is there as direct a connection between the benefits and those who pay the PFC." (Ironically, Delta's headquarters and main hub is in Atlanta, one of the few cities in the U.S. with a convenient mass transit station at the airport itself thanks to a MARTA expansion and new airport terminal in the 1980s.)

These arguments stem from the euphemism that the PFC is a "user fee" and not a tax, a distinction quite literally without a difference since they are both grouped under the "taxes and fees" line item of your flight cost (next to the PFC on your receipt are ["congressionally mandated security fees"](#) which pay for the Transportation Security Administration and is my all-time favorite euphemism for a tax). A "user fee," the logic goes, must rigorously benefit the payee while a general tax can more readily be used for the common good. From the airlines' perspective, using PFCs to pay for a mass transit connection is more like a tax and therefore an illegitimate use. It is all unbearably silly.

**And so things would have gone probably forever, but for**

the Silver Line in D.C. In the FAA's own backyard, a planned D.C. Metro expansion called the Silver Line through northern Virginia planned to add a stop at Dulles Airport on its way through northern Virginia. Under the old PFC rules, Metro couldn't use PFCs because the airport stop was one of many along the Silver Line's route, even though a direct rail link from downtown D.C. to the far-flung airport that still relied on bus connections from Metro stops was undeniably a massive improvement for airport users.

Which (finally) brings us to the rule change issued a month ago. Under [the new rule](#), expansions like the Silver Line would now be eligible for PFCs, typically by estimating what percentage of ridership would use the airport stop and prorating costs accordingly. Cities no longer have to choose between building a semi-useful airport connection solely for airport users or a truly useful mass transit expansion that would be much more difficult to pay for. It can now have both, the way [it should have been all along](#).

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## Amtrak Adding Private Rooms to Overnight Trains on Northeast Corridor

By: [Philip Streby](#), IPRA Board Member

As reported by [Thomas Pallini](#), Amtrak is adding nostalgia-inducing private rooms to overnight trains between Washington, DC, New York and Boston.

Sleeper service has been added to overnight trains between Washington, DC and Boston. What the headline also suggests is that this somehow also provides nostalgia for the traveler. Unless that traveler was born before 1970 or watches old movies displaying overnight accommodations, that so-called nostalgia will not be forthcoming, but the additional convenience and comfort will be. I do applaud Tom Pallini for his suggestion and effort for, I hope, it was made to induce more travel by train. However, he appears to have limited knowledge of passenger rail, having worked in and reported for "multiple aspects of the aviation industry".

The following report is from Mr. Pallini. While he got most of it right, I've made a few changes concerning the room amenities and travel. Thomas is a reporter on the Business News and Transportation desks at Business Insider covering all things airlines and aviation. Before joining

Business Insider, he worked in multiple aspects of the aviation industry and previously reported on airline news for AirlineGeeks. The following is his report with minor editing by me:

The overnight trains between Washington, DC and Boston are getting slightly more bearable with upgrades coming this spring. Amtrak will offer private rooms on late-night Northeast Regional trains running between Washington and Boston starting in April. The once-daily trains depart in the evening and arrive in the early morning after a nearly-10-hour journey in each direction but have previously been limited to standard coach class and business class seats.

Starting at \$288 for one traveler on the full route, three types of bedrooms will be offered for purchase including the Viewliner roomette, bedroom, and accessible bedroom. The roomette offers two seats that convert into a sleeping berth at night. Another bed, stacked vertically, pulls down from the ceiling. Shower facilities, however, are not located in the roomettes but are shared at the roomette end of the car. The bedroom is double the size of the roomette and offers a sofa and adjacent armchair for seating and, similar to the roomette, two berths are stacked vertically for sleeping. The room also features a private restroom/shower, and a separate sink with mirror, lights, and power outlets.

A wheelchair accessible option for the bedroom is also available with an in-room sink and restroom/shower. All cars come with a dedicated attendant (once known as a sleeping car porter) and sleeper ticket holders also have access to Amtrak's lounges in Boston and Washington.

The Metropolitan Lounge, formerly known as Club Acela, is comparable to an airline lounge at an airport with complimentary food, drinks, and snacks available for Amtrak's top customers, as Insider found during a visit to New York's brand-new Moynihan Train Hall at Pennsylvania Station.

[Washington to Boston service on train 66 departs Union Station at 10 p.m. and arrives in New York at 1:55 a.m. followed by Boston at 7:58 a.m. for a journey time of nine hours and 58 minutes.](#)

[Boston to Washington service on train 67 departs South Station at 9:30 p.m. and arrives in New York at 2:30 a.m. followed by Washington at 7 a.m. for a journey time of nine hours and 30 minutes. On Fridays and Saturdays, however,](#)

times differ and the service is offered as train 65.

Trains make station stops at numerous intermediary points along the corridor like New Haven, Connecticut; Wilmington, Delaware; and Trenton, New Jersey, as well as a 45-minute layover in New York City. Travelers can book the rooms for any stretch of the journey.

## Bullets from the Board

By: Steve Coxhead, President, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)

The Board of Directors of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) continue to meet monthly online via video conference. Online meetings, while limiting interaction, allow us to meet more often thus facilitating collaboration while eliminating the need for travel. We anticipate continuing our Board meetings online for the foreseeable future.

All IPRA members are welcome to attend IPRA Board meetings. If you wish to attend an IPRA Board meeting please let us know at [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org) so that we may provide you with instructions for joining the video meeting. Both telephone and video (via computer and smart phone) options are available. Please watch your email for more details as each meeting's date approaches.

The Board of Directors currently meet on the 4th Thursday of the month from 5:00 to 6:30 pm Eastern Time with exceptions\*\* being made as necessary.

The IPRA Board Meeting schedule for the **year 2021** is from **5:00 to 6:30 pm Eastern Time** on these days::

- ⇒ ~~January 28, 2021~~
- ⇒ ~~February 25, 2021~~
- ⇒ ~~March 25, 2021~~
- ⇒ ~~April 22, 2021 (Earth Day)~~
- ⇒ May 27, 2021
- ⇒ June 24, 2021
- ⇒ July 22, 2021
- ⇒ August 26, 2021
- ⇒ September 23, 2021
- ⇒ October 28, 2021

⇒ November 18, 2021\*\*

⇒ **December 16, 2021\*\***

Highlights from recent IPRA Board Meetings are as follows:

- ◆ The Board continues to work to leverage the IPRA membership in the [Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce](#) (a.k.a. **Indy Chamber**) to expand the reach of our message in the central Indiana business community. Please send us an e-mail if you would like to be involved in this effort.
- ◆ The joint **NIPRA\*/IPRA** initiative to establish an [Indiana Passenger Rail Commission](#) continues. Despite having bipartisan support in both houses of the Legislature, **Senate Bill No. 9** was killed in committee, receiving neither hearing in committee nor floor vote. Our next step is to attempt to get the bill included in a General Assembly Summer Study session, between legislative sessions. We will make another attempt to submit the bill at the next General Assembly session. Visit the IPRA website at <https://indianahighspeedrail.org> (near bottom of page) to read a copy of his bill.

\* **NIPRA** - Northern Indiana Passenger Rail Association

- ◆ **IPRA continues to facilitate discussion of the Intercity Passenger Rail Conceptual Infrastructure Plan** commissioned by INDOT. This conceptual plan discusses replacing the old Amtrak [Hoosier State](#) train with a State operated train linking Indianapolis and Dyer, IN. Connection with Chicago destinations would be made via a cross platform transfer to the [South Shore](#) service West Lake extension terminus in Dyer. Two round trips, daily, with an operating speed of 79 mph are contemplated. Let us know if you would like a PDF copy of the plan.
- ◆ Both Federal and State tax filings have been completed for IPRA
- ◆ Both the "indianahighspeedrail.org" and "indianapassengerrailalliance.org" internet domain names have been renewed
- ◆ Both IPRA & NIPRA continue efforts to coordinate their efforts to encourage the development of modern passenger rail systems in Indiana
- ◆ Both IPRA & NIPRA met with representatives of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) in April to discuss ways of coordinating

efforts. MIPRC suggests that we acquire paid Partner status with them. Be sure to watch MIPRC's video entitled "The Midwestern states' vision for passenger rail" (published Nov 19, 2019) on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtGGAgoxiq8>.

- ◆ 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.
- ◆ The **IPRA YouTube website** at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHWW1gdr4crTXrSq2OKOPOA> has been updated and we're welcoming any good videos that you may have
- ◆ Work continues to modernize and update the **IPRA website** at <https://www.indianahighspeedrail.org>
- ◆ Questions or comments regarding any of the above items may be sent to us at [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org)

Even though the current budget session of the Indiana General Assembly is coming to an end, it is always useful to maintain a 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.

Dialogue with your Indiana government contacts can include:

- Further expansion of the Northwest Indiana *South Shore* commuter system (NICTD)
- An improved *Hoosier State* service
- The northern Indiana project (Chicago, Fort Wayne, Lima Ohio)
- Commuter rail for the Indianapolis metro area
- Extension of passenger rail to southern 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 at [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org).

As always, 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

**IF YOU HAVE WONDERED WHAT THE AMTRAK CUTS HAVE COST INDIANA, THE RPA HAS THE ANSWER** – The Rail Passengers Association (RPA) has a cost modeling computer program that estimates the impact of Amtrak's cost cutting measures. See the results for Indiana (& all other States) online at: <https://www.railpassengers.org/resources/what-will-amtrak-cuts-really-cost-your-state/>.

**RE-READ [LT.] GOVERNOR HOLCOMB'S COMMENTS AFTER HIS JUNE 2016 TRAIN DAY TRIP** – Let's go back *five years* and read Indiana Governor's (then Lt. Gov) thoughts about the *Hoosier State* service. Find that *All Aboard Indiana* issue online [here](#).

**'YES PLEASE': AMTRAK PROPOSAL WITH NEW INDIANAPOLIS ROUTES HAS PEOPLE TALKING** – Actually, the routes between Indianapolis and Louisville & Cincinnati are not new, just reactivated after many years. Read this article online [here](#). Hopefully this is the first of many future local articles on improved passenger rail for Indiana. (Thanks to **Ethan May** at the *Indianapolis Star*)

**WEST LAKE CORRIDOR & DOUBLE TRACK NWI PROJECTS** – The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) (a.k.a. *South Shore Line*) has two very good websites at <http://www.nictdwestlake.com/> and <https://www.doubletrack-nwi.com/> where you can read all the latest information about these exciting projects.

**BLUMENTHAL & DAVIS INTRODUCE BICAMERAL LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE PERMANENT FUNDING FOR AMTRAK** – These Connecticut and Illinois U.S. Senators recently introduced the Intercity Passenger Rail Trust Fund Act. Read the announcement online [here](#) on Senator Richard Blumenthal's website.

**VIRGINIA IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK & IS EXPANDING THEIR RAIL NETWORK** – Virginia officials recently finalized the plan to launch a **\$3.7 billion rail-expansion program** to improve passenger, commuter and freight rail service! Read this exciting article at: [https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger\\_rail/news/Virginia-inks-deal-with-Amtrak-CSX-VRE-to-expand-rail-service--63094/](https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger_rail/news/Virginia-inks-deal-with-Amtrak-CSX-VRE-to-expand-rail-service--63094/)! (This article thanks to *Progressive*



**Railroading)** Also, don't forget to watch the associated video at: <https://www.facebook.com/GovernorVA/videos/312762510301369/>. If Virginia can separate freight and passenger trains right-of-way (duh!) so can Indiana. I look forward soon seeing a similar celebration (Including **Secretary Pete**) when the **South Shore Line** West Lake extension opens!

### 15 MINUTE CITY POPULATIZED THANKS TO COVID –

Being cooped up for a year has made it clear that we all are, no doubt, social beings who do **NOT** like to be isolated (especially in our cars) so get out and buck the bad car culture! Read this great article at: <https://www.yesmagazine.org/economy/2021/05/05/15-minute-city-walk>. (Many thanks to Andy Hirschfeld at **YES! Magazine**)

### THE HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL (HEC) WORKS

**TO PROTECTS INDIANA** – Please sign up for the HEC newsletter and [support](#) their great work! Also, go to <https://www.hecweb.org/bill-watch-2021> to see the status of all environment & sustainable related bills the **2021 Indiana General Assembly** have been voting on along with HEC's recommended support of these bills. **A recently passed bill, SB 389, drastically reduces wetlands protection.** Go to the URL above and find **how your Senator voted and, if they voted "yes", ask them why they support damaging Indiana's ecosystem.**

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER (ELPC)

**SUPPORTS EXPANDED PASSENGER RAIL IN MIDWEST** – More support for protecting the environment comes from this great organization based in Chicago! Sign up for their newsletter at <https://elpc.org/>.

### SUNRAIL, BRIGHTLINE CONSIDERING ORLANDO

**AIRPORT LINK** – As a step toward a possible future **SunRail** east-west corridor, a link with **Brightline** at Orlando International Airport is worth a study. Read the article online [here](#). (Thanks to **Kevin Spear** and the **Orlando Sentinel**)

### IS AMTRAK SAFER THAN FLYING DURING THE

**PANDEMIC?** – The short answer is "...likely safer...", which is diplomatically "safe". Businesses want to err on the side of too cautious. Read this article online [here](#). (Thanks to **Bill Laitner**, **Detroit Free Press** and the Dubuque, IA **Telegraph Herald**)

### FUN ON TRAINS... THE GEORGIA COASTAL RAILWAY –

While Indiana has three tourist trains I can think of (**Nickel Plate Express**, **French Lick Scenic** & **Whitewater Valley**), this fun rail destination just north of Jacksonville, FL offers MANY

things to do! Check it out at <https://thegeorgiatrain.com/>! (Thanks to **John Owen** for this reference)

### THE RAIL PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION (RPA)

**NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR RPA MEMBERS** – All RPA newsletters (back to 1969!) are available at: <https://www.railpassengers.org/log-on/member-actions/rpa-newsletter-archives/>. If you wish to have access to this archive as well as many other benefits, please **join RPA today!** Members can also access the weekly **Rail Passengers Hotline** at: <https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/news/hotline>.

### A PASSENGER RAIL NEWSLETTER FROM SOUTH

**CAROLINA** – **Don Yehle**, IPRA Board Member & past editor of this AAI newsletter, now lives in South Carolina and co-publishes a monthly, one-page newsletter for the **Carolinas Association for Passenger Trains!** Find the current and past newsletters online at: <http://www.caprail.org/>. Thanks, Don!

## 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 traveling 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://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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The **Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA)** is a proud member of the [Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce](#) (a.k.a. **Indy Chamber**). Our membership allows us to collaborate with other businesses in Indiana to promote implementing 21st Century Passenger Rail in Indiana.



## Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

The Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance is a not for profit organization of concerned citizens, working to bring modern, 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century businesses considering locations for expansion.



**Want more information?**


Contact us at: [info@indianahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@indianahighspeedrail.org)

## IPRA Membership Form

Membership can be purchased online at:

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

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

 <p><b>Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance</b></p> <p>A one-year membership in the <b>Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance</b> is only <b>\$15</b> (Student/Senior 65+) or <b>\$25</b> (Member)</p> <p>Join or renew at <a href="http://www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html">http://www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html</a></p> <p>Please mail check to: <b>Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance</b>, 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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