

IndyGo Asked to Consider Linking to Amtrak, Regional Buses

On March 13, Bill Malcolm and Doug Yerkeson met with Michael Terry, CEO of IndyGo, to express their views on the new \$20 million IndyGo Transit Center on West Washington (across the street from the Mega-Bus Stop) which is scheduled to open in late 2015. Malcolm and Yerkeson stressed that while the state of the art facility is certainly an improvement over the current situation (i.e. no station at all), it does not link with Amtrak and regional bus connections like new facilities in St. Louis (see picture), Milwaukee (see picture), Bloomington-Normal (IL), and Champaign Urbana (IL).

Terry reported that IndyGo had tried to obtain the U.S. Postal facility across the street from the current Amtrak station but that fell through so they are using city-owned land on Washington Street instead. He agreed connectivity between the new station and Union Station was needed.

Malcolm and Yerkeson encouraged Terry to consider an IndyGo circulator or feeder bus connection with the Amtrak/Greyhound Union Station depot on Illinois Street.



New IndyGo Station; St. Louis Gateway Station; Milwaukee Intermodal Station

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INDOT Issues RFP for Alternative Rail Operator

The INDOT request for proposal to operate the Hoosier State was issued on March 28. Bids are due April 29 (and there will be a pre-bid meeting on March 16). Bidders have three bid options: Option (1): Perform all functions presently performed by Amtrak on the Hoosier State Service; Option (2): Bid on some portion of those functions; or Option (3): Perform all functions presently performed by Amtrak, and add functions (e.g. Wi-Fi, food service).

The Indiana Department of Transportation and its Hoosier State Partners will choose the bid or bids which are deemed most beneficial to the State of Indiana. The RFP mentions the delay issue (see page 4), the use of an alternative route, and the other issues that have plagued the Hoosier State service (lack of food and beverage, etc).

Indy Union Station Study Nearing Completion; Scaffolding Remains

On March 20, Doug Yerkeson and Bill Malcolm met with the City of Indianapolis's Peggy Frazier to discuss the repairs and general condition of Indianapolis Amtrak/Greyhound Station.

As reported last issue, a consultant report on repairs needed to the facility is expected shortly. Scaffolding which appears to be holding up the joints on the roof has been in place since November 2013.

The study is being done in conjunction with CSX, which owns the tracks.

The City of Indianapolis owns the station but contracts operations to Browning Investments. Browning has Greyhound maintain the facility including cleaning the restrooms.

The city informed Yerkeson and Malcolm that Greyhound patrons with tickets are allowed to sleep on the floor; in combination with the scaffolding, the sleeping patrons give a decidedly edgy flavor to the station.

"You're not getting an airport," quipped Frazier when asked if Union Station could represent the City along the lines of the new (albeit costly) Weir Terminal/Indianapolis International Airport.

South Shore Expansion to Dyer on Track

Governor Mike Pence has signed legislation (SB 367) to help fund extension of the South Shore commuter rail line to Dyer. Under SB 367, an estimated \$4 million will be given annually to the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority "to establish or improve public mass transportation systems in Lake County." The bill passed 73-24 in the Senate and 47-1 in the House.

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission is taking public comment on funding for an environmental impact study for the expansion of the South Shore commuter railroad to Dyer. Public comment hearings were held in March; written



Scaffolding at Union Station



comments are due April 10.

The 8-mile expansion is expected to cost \$571 million and would create a second route for the operation, run by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District.

A consultant has been hired to prepare an environmental impact statement.

Also, a new advocacy group, the Emerging Leaders Network, has been formed to support the expansion.

In related news, the new Amtrak station in Dyer is expected to open this summer (see picture).

Indiana High Speed Rail Group Gets New Name, New Leader

By Steve Coxhead

The Indiana High Speed Rail Association recently voted to change its name to the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA). The name change is supportive of the ongoing effort to promote passenger rail services in Indiana.

The organization's officers for 2014 are:

Steven Coxhead, President,
 Kate Zale, Secretary,
 George Vande Werken, Treasurer,
 Bill Schlosser, Legal Advisor,
 Steven Cecil, Vice President of Administration, and
 Dennis Hodges, Vice President of Marketing and Membership.

The members of the Board include:

Jeffrey Bainter, Muncie, Indiana (Brotherhood

of Maintenance Way Employees)

Steven Cecil, Indianapolis, Indiana (Longest, Beam, & Associates)

Steven Coxhead, Hammond, Indiana (National Association of Rail Passengers)

Thom Davis, Lafayette, Indiana (eScrap at The Oscar Winski Company)

Robert Garity, Merrillville, Indiana (Retired Professional Meter Engineer, NIPSCO)

Robert Gorski, Indianapolis, Indiana (URS Corporation)

Thomas Hayhurst, Fort Wayne, Indiana (Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association)

Dennis Hodges, Merrillville, Indiana (Marketing Consultant)

Michael Koyak, Indianapolis, Indiana (American Structure Point)

Joseph Krause, West Lafayette, Indiana (Amtrak Volunteer)

Timothy Moloney, Indianapolis, Indiana (Hoosier Environmental Council)

Fred Lanahan, Fort Wayne, Indiana (Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association)

Geoff Paddock, Fort Wayne, Indiana (Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Association)

William Schlosser, Indianapolis, Indiana (Attorney at Schlosser & Schlosser)

Joseph Seaman, Lafayette, Indiana (Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce)

Roger Sims, Highland, Indiana (Sims Professional Engineers)

Dana Smith, West Lafayette, Indiana (Retired Chamber Executive)

Elizabeth Solberg, West Lafayette, Indiana (Retired City Railroad Project Department Head)

George VandeWerken, Schererville, Indiana (Providence Bank)

Theodore Wetekamp, Indianapolis, Indiana
(HP, Inc.)

Douglas Yerkeson, Indianapolis, Indiana
(Faegre, Baker, & Daniels, LLC)

Kate Zale, Indianapolis, Indiana (URS Corporation)

For more information and to become a member, please see www.indianahighspeedrail.org.

Ft. Wayne Amtrak Study Progressing

By Fred Lanahan

I was pleased that Governor Pence named me to the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission as one of Indiana's representatives.

This appointment by Governor Pence is a real feather in the cap of NIPRA and for our efforts in behalf of passenger rail service in Indiana and the Midwest.

Regarding proposed rail service from Chicago to Ft. Wayne to Columbus, I am pleased to report that fundraising commitments for the Indiana partner portion of the Chicago-Fort Wayne-Columbus, Ohio proposed Tier I EIS study are close to complete.

Our Ohio partners are picking up speed in their efforts for fund raising commitments as well.

We hope for a signed partner MOA and an RFP out by midyear and with luck an award to a selected vendor by mid to late summer. We have lots of work to do, but progress is being made.

Krause's Corner

By Joe Krause, Lafayette

Purdue Spring Break boosts ridership, trains sold out. From March 14-19 at the Lafayette sta-

tion between 60 and 70 were boarding the northbound Hoosier State or Cardinal. There were at least three northbound trains that were sold out.

Switch problems. The railroad spring switch near mile post 122.4 seemed to give problems at least twice in the past week.

Major work in or near Lafayette station beginning. Several trees and brush were cleared near the south end of the platform. Contractors visited within the station itself to inspect needed repairs in the waiting lobby.

High Speed Rail Conference Set for April 12

In Chicago on Saturday, April 12, the Midwest High Speed Rail will have their Spring Meeting.

Speakers include:

Mark Gottlieb, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Joseph Schacter, Director, Illinois Department of Transportation

Mohammed Alghurhabi, Senior Project Manager, Michigan Department of Transportation.

For an updated agenda, see MidwestHSR.org/Annual-Spring-Meeting

New Chicago Crew Policy Continues to Delay Indiana Travellers

By Bill Malcolm

On March 25, I rode the Cardinal Train #50 from Chicago to Indianapolis. We were running a half hour late, which caused the crew to time out before reaching Lafayette, where a new crew was waiting.

As has been a frequent occurrence, about 30 miles north of Lafayette, the train stopped at the moment that the crew timed out of their allowed work hours. Since a new crew is no longer put on the train in Chicago, the train remained halted for 15 minutes while a new crew was bused from Lafayette.

As noted last month, this new Chicago crew policy has exacerbated the delays on the Hoosier State and Cardinal since it was instituted late last year. The on time statistics were as follows:

Cardinal #50 South-Eastbound 16.7% on-time
Cardinal # 51 North-Westbound 50%

Hoosier State #850 South-East Bound 25%
Hoosier State #851 North-Westbound 37%



In a meeting with Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari on March 25, Magliari stated that Amtrak has

no plans to modify this crew policy. This was confirmed in an email on March 26: "We are always reviewing policies, but there are no changes in the staffing pattern at this time," he said. This is despite reassurance from Amtrak CEO Boardman, who assured the Greater Lafayette Chamber in a February meeting in Washington DC that Amtrak would look into the problem. (See Amtrak CEO Boardman [center] and Lafayette's Arvid Olson [far right]. Boardman promised to look at an alternative route [Chicago to Dyer] as well as the crew issue.)

On a related note, the Friends of the Cardinal has sent Amtrak a letter in light of this winter's woes.

They are asking Amtrak to conduct a thorough study of the economics behind the decision that was made regarding the re-crewing policy. The letter was signed by Charles Riecks, Chair, and Bonni McKeown, Legislative Coordinator of Friends of the Cardinal.

Fishers Train Station To Be Demolished

The Fishers Train Station is being demolished to make room for apartments. A new train platform is being built. The city is paying \$9.5 million of the \$28 million cost. Some are concerned the move will jeopardize trains operated by the Indiana Train Museum which uses the current station to run historic fair trains.

Transportation Museum To Open With Celebration

By Michelle Yerkeson

The Indiana Transportation Museum in Noblesville will open the season with our National Train Day celebration, May 3 & 4. The ITM event is different than most other NTD events (indeed, the actual date for everyone else is May 10) because the event includes several different rides and guests can see restoration work up close. This family-friendly event is great way to introduce young kids to railroading.

This year the ITM will have train rides on 1937 stainless coaches, caboose rides, speeder rides, shop tours and equipment displays. In addition, the ITM will have modelers with their G scale "live steam" models, telegraph operators, hooping demos, pump car demos, coloring contest, food and music.

New this year, the ITM has partnered with the Boy



Indiana Transportation Museum

Scouts to help them start their Railroading badges. Scouts must register with the ITM at 317/773-

6000 and be available to finish their badge at Badge University on May 10. Boy Scout badge class starts at 10 AM. Please allow two hours.

Date: May 3 & 4, 2014 (not the national event day; museum is closed on the 10th due to park event)

Time: 9-5 Saturday and 10-5 on Sunday

Location: Indiana Transportation Museum, inside Forest Park, Noblesville IN, 46060

Cost: \$7 wrist band for the entire day including: Museum entrance, caboose rides, speeder rides, displays and tours. Stainless coach train ride extra cost. Children under 2, free. Free parking.

Web Site: itm.org

Central Indiana Transit Micro-managed while South Shore Overlooked at State House

Commentary by Bill Malcolm

After three years of trying, SB 176 – which only allows Central Indiana voters to vote on whether to expand transit (as long as it does not include light rail and as long as it does not require a tax on businesses but now must be 10% funded by voluntary contributions) finally passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor on March 26.

Remember, the legislation now only allows Central Indiana counties to vote to raise their income tax to

expand transit (and only if certain conditions are met). This contrasts with SB 367, which earmarks \$4 million for the expansion of The South Shore Line. It is ironic that it took three legislative sessions to get a bill through regarding a vote on Central Indiana transit but only one session to target funds for an expansion of the northern Indiana commuter rail line.

The hostility towards transit and rail in the state by some legislators is unfortunate but happily does not include a desire to micromanage transit in the northwest part of the state.

Save the Date: May 10 Is National Train Day

Saturday, May 10 is National Train Day. Special events are planned in Indianapolis and Lafayette. Details to follow. Amtrak Beech Grove is handling the event in Indianapolis. Other cities wishing to hold an event can register at www.ntd.org per Marc Magliari of Amtrak Chicago.

Midwest Wi-Fi a Hit

Riding the Hiawatha from Milwaukee to Chicago on March 25, I was happy to enjoy the free Wi-Fi service recently installed on all Midwest trains except for Indiana. (see photo)

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari told us that Amtrak would install it if the state of Indiana agreed to pay for it like the other Midwestern states did.



Monorails: A New Era in Transportation

By Bob Garity

Several years ago I attended a conference at Purdue University sponsored by Nextrans. It was decided during the conference that Intercity passenger services would need to have a new system to operate the handling of passenger services in and out of Chicago. The 110 MPH increase from the present level is a start; however, with an 88% increase of freight traffic through Indiana over the next 30 years, it will be tough to maintain schedules. An alternative is a monorail, capable of speeds over 200MPH with new technology that utilizes separate air rights of way. A well-planned new monorail system which can handle the volume of traffic and frequency of service that has been a vision for rail passenger services can then be accomplished.

Amtrak Offers Double Points

Amtrak Guest Rewards® members earn double points on all routes with Double DaysSM. Register to take advantage of Double Days now through May 17, 2014. The points you earn can be redeemed for free Amtrak travel, starting at just 1,500 points and more.

Acknowledgements

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