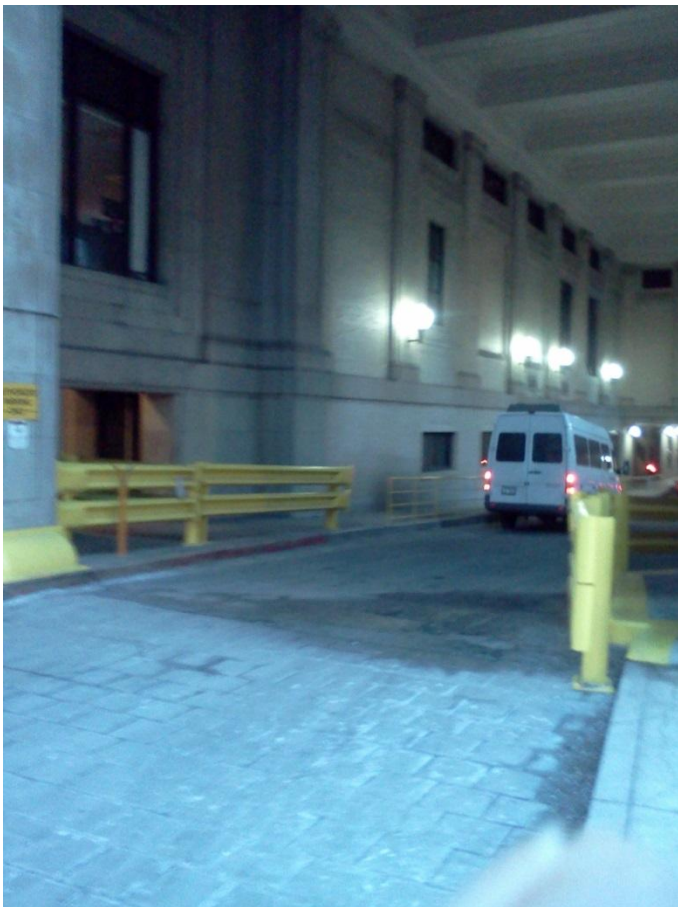


## UPGRADES TO CHICAGO'S UNION STATION STUDIED

The City of Chicago has been conducting a Master Plan Study on Union Station with participation of Amtrak (which owns the Station) and Metra. Ideas include a new entrance on Clinton Street to relieve congestion on Canal Street and restoration of the Great Hall as the waiting room.



The Great Hall was used over Thanksgiving for boarding the Cardinal and is now used for boarding full trains like the Wolverine. The taxi stand shown above is no longer used. (Source:Badger Rails)

## SCAFFOLDING UP AT INDY'S UNION STATION

A piece of the ceiling fell at Indianapolis' Union Station and a portion of the brick wall on the south side of the Station collapsed after a wind storm.

A front page story in the December 18 *Indianapolis Business Journal*, "Union Station Gets New Scrutiny after a Spate of Repairs", highlighted the frail condition of the station which also serves as a Greyhound and regional bus station.

Floor to ceiling scaffolding is now up in the station.

The 127 year old building's ceiling problem cost the city \$60,000 to fix in November.

The city is also spending \$600,000 to replace an escalator with an elevator and renovate the lobby.

The city is spending \$110,000 on a study to assess the building's condition according to the IBJ story.

## IN DOT MAY SEEK THIRD PARTY PROVIDER FOR HOOSIER STATE

INDOT has retained consultant R.L Banks to develop a RFP to improve the Hoosier State in order to improve the passenger experience, increase the number of passengers, and decrease operating costs by opening the operation of the train to private operators.

In addition, INDOT also posted a copy of the Amtrak contract on its website ([www.in.gov/indoct/3200.htm](http://www.in.gov/indoct/3200.htm)).



### **AMTRAK TESTS ALTERNATIVE ROUTE**

Amtrak is testing alternative route from Dyer into Chicago.

A conductor told me on the Cardinal recently that initial tests had been disappointing (but apparently not abandoned for further study).

The CN track is being studied as an alternative to the current route which goes through multiple rail lines including through a maintenance yard facility. Coordinating with multiple rail lines (sometimes via telephone) often makes the trip a slow crawl.

However, use of the CN line apparently involves backing into Chicago.

### **AMTRAK CHANGES FARE POLICIES**

Effective on March 1, Amtrak pricing will seem more like that of airlines and Greyhound.

For all reserved Coach Class and Acela Express Business class reservations, you must cancel your reservation at least 24 hours prior to the train's scheduled departure in order to be eligible for a full refund. If the reservation is canceled within 24 hours of the scheduled departure, a refund fee will apply (Value fare tickets only; Saver fare tickets are not refundable). If the reservation is not canceled prior to the scheduled departure ("no show"), the entire amount paid for the reservation will

be forfeited (Value and Saver fare tickets); the ticket value will not be stored in an eVoucher and cannot be applied toward future travel. Flexible fare tickets will remain fully refundable.

### **INDIANA EXCLUDED FROM MIDWEST WI FI UPGRADE**

Amtrak is now installing the equipment on railcars under contracts with the states of Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin. When we asked why Indiana wasn't on the list, Amtrak told us that this had been in the works for a while with the other states.

### **DYER GETS NEW STATION**

Construction is well underway on the new station serving Dyer. Amtrak is spending \$2-\$3 million on the new facility.

### **LAFAYETTE AREA TOPS HOOSIER STATE FUNDING**

**On December 30 the Tippecanoe County Commissioners voted 2-1 in favor of supporting the Hoosier State route. According to a story in the *Journal and Courier* on December 31, funding will be**

**Tippecanoe County: \$300,000 per year**

**West Lafayette: \$200,000 per year**

**Lafayette: \$200,000**

**Crawfordsville: \$120,500 per year**

**Rensselaer: \$18,000 per year**

**Beech Grove: \$199,500 per year**

**Indianapolis: \$300,000 per year**

**Dyer: 0**

**Total from cities and one county:  
\$1,338,000.00 per year**

**Total additional dollars from INDOT:  
\$1,541,088.00 per year**

*Source: Joe Krause and Journal and Courier, December 31, 2013.*



### **LETTER NEEDED TO IMPROVE SERVICE?**

In a meeting with Amtrak, officials told us they would not change the 6 a.m. Hoosier State departure time from Indianapolis absent a directive from state officials. Amtrak also said they would “need a letter” from INDOT to add food service to the Hoosier State.

In a subsequent meeting, state officials told us they already told Amtrak to improve ridership and service in the contract and that no such letter was needed nor would one be forthcoming.



### **ELKHART MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS NY CENTRAL HISTORY**

Rail buffs will want to visit the Elkhart New York Central Railroad Museum. One exhibit is The Cardinal’s Train which took cardinals and bishops to the 1926 Eucharist Congress in Chicago. Visit [www.nyccrmuseum.org](http://www.nyccrmuseum.org). (See page 13 of the January edition of *Senior Life*, [www.seniorlifeneewspapers.com](http://www.seniorlifeneewspapers.com), for the full story).

### **MICHIGAN STUDIES PARALLEL TRACKS FROM PORTER TO CHICAGO**

The Michigan DOT is funding a study about the possibility of running parallel tracks for passenger-only service from Porter into Chicago.

The tracks would also be available to trains going east to Ohio as well as south to Indianapolis.

In comments filed on the study, the City of Ft. Wayne said it supported the Chicago to Porter upgrade.

Illinois Senate Transportation Committee Chair said Illinois supported the idea of a separate passenger track that could accommodate trains going 220 m.p.h.

The Indiana High Speed Rail Association supported the move.

The Indiana DNR and U.S. EPA commented on the environmental impacts of the project.

To read the comments, go to [www.greatlakesrail.org](http://www.greatlakesrail.org) (the website of the MI DOT looking at rail upgrades into Chicago).

## LAFAYETTE THANKS THE GOVERNOR



Lafayette officials thanked Governor Mike Pence for helping to save the Hoosier State in a recent meeting.

## KRAUSE'S CORNER

### News from Lafayette from Joe Krause

#### 1. What about different routing out of Chicago?

The most realistic hope for Amtrak (Hoosier State and Cardinal) routes out of Chicago depends upon completion of projects under CREATE (Chicago Region Environment and Transportation Efficiency). All Amtrak trains exiting south and east from Chicago have major problems going through rather narrow passages south of Lake Michigan.

#### 2. Departure time changes?

Yes. 6:00 a.m. is pretty early for Indianapolis riders but 6:58 a.m. is not bad at all for Crawfordsville, 7:33 a.m. not bad for Lafayette, nor 7:38 a.m. CST for Rensselaer.

We need to press for much greater support from the Indiana State

Legislature to order INDOT to get serious about supporting additional trains (or at least one more train originating in Indianapolis).

#### 3. Can a third party do better than Amtrak?

Congestion near Chicago, freight operations on CSX, are the problem.

Other companies will have to deal with the same issues as Amtrak.

What about repair and maintenance of equipment?

Where else but Beech Grove--but instead on a contract basis?

#### 4. Repairs coming to Lafayette Station

All Amtrak passengers should be alerted that there will be major repairs being done to the Lafayette Amtrak station as well (ADA requirements---replace existing elevators, bypass current sets of steps by constructing two major ramps). Furthermore, the Riehle pedestrian bridge--the iron bridge that goes directly over the three mainline tracks is going to need so many repairs and rebuilding that the Riehle Bridge will be closed for 6-8 weeks this summer.

### For more information

Join Hoosiers for Passenger Rail (on Facebook)

See Save the Hoosier State (on Facebook)

National Association of Rail Passengers  
(narprail.org)

Midwest High Speed Rail Association  
(www.midwesthsr.org)

Indiana High Speed Rail Association  
(www.indianahighspeedrail.org)

Wisconsin Association of Rail Passengers  
(www.wisarp.org)

All Aboard Ohio ([www.allaboarohio.org](http://www.allaboarohio.org))

Michigan DOT ([www.greatlakesrail.org](http://www.greatlakesrail.org))

### **About All Aboard Indiana**

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