

# ALL ABOARD

# INDIANA

The Official Newsletter of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

Volume 2, Number 4 April 2015

## Hoosier State Agreement Reached by INDOT, FRA

By Arvid Olson

"An understanding of the clear lines of accountability for passenger rail safety and accessibility between Indianapolis and Chicago" was announced Monday (April 6) by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). The State of Indiana's agreement with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) paves the way for Indiana to implement long-term improvements to the four-day-a-week *Hoosier State* line.

### Eggs 'N Issues

Brought to you by Greater Lafayette Commerce

7:30am, Tuesday, April 14th  
Hilton Garden Inn, 356 East State Street,  
West Lafayette



For nearly fourteen years, Ed Ellis has served as the president of Iowa Pacific Holdings. The private holding company owns railroad properties across North America and the United Kingdom, as well as providing services such as railcar repairs and leasing and management and consulting services to other operators. Come hear how Iowa Pacific is connected to our local efforts with the *Hoosier State* line.

Cost: \$15 for members; \$20 for Indiana Rail Advocate Network members, \$25 for guests. To register, visit [www.greaterylafayettecommerce.com](http://www.greaterylafayettecommerce.com) and click on "Eggs N Issues" listed under Tuesday, April 14 on the Upcoming Events column on the right side of the page.

Under the new agreement, Amtrak and Iowa Pacific Holdings—both operating with INDOT contracts—would separately be required to comply with all Amtrak and FRA requirements. "INDOT would designate a staff member responsible for overseeing contract compliance," INDOT Commissioner Karl Browning said.

"Amtrak would serve as the primary operator, working with host railroads, providing train and engine crews, and managing reservation and ticketing. Iowa Pacific would provide the train equipment, train maintenance, on-board services, and marketing," INDOT said in its news release.

"INDOT and the FRA share the guiding principles of access to safe mobility, Browning emphasized. "Based on these guiding principles, we are both committed to a path of continuing the *Hoosier State* service." (continued)

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*Full-Dome Business Café Lounge Car: Hot meals and spacious seating, along with Café Car Service, are being planned.*

Many PRIA states and regional organizations expressed strong reservations regarding the long-range impact of each state functioning as an operating railroad. State legislators and Governor Pence requested assistance from Indiana congressional leaders, and they readily added their active support. Senator Joe Donnelly noted in a letter to acting FRA Administrator Sarah Feinberg that "I also expect the FRA to continue working with the state to address their concerns, while also ensuring that the safety of Hoosiers is not compromised." Senator Dan Coats also commented to Feinberg that "INDOT does not fit any common-sense definition of a 'railroad,' so communities along the

[*Hoosier State* line] are rightly puzzled by the FRA's decision." Representative Todd Rokita met directly with FRA staffers to express his concern over apparent federal government overreach.

Within one week, the FRA agreed to continue negotiations with INDOT over the third party ruling. This allowed for a 30-day extension of service graciously provided by Amtrak. (A nod of appreciation is due to Amtrak President Joe Boardman.) Reports from early April indicate that there continues to be positive and productive discussion between the FRA and INDOT.

Meanwhile, Iowa Pacific Holdings is continuing to ready the equipment and support structure for the new *Hoosier State*. On March 19, officials gathered in Bensenville, IL, to examine two locomotives and three passenger cars slated for use on the Indianapolis-Chicago route of the *Hoosier State*. The locomotives are GP40FH-2 units formerly operated by New Jersey Transit. Both units have had numerous upgrades and technology enhancements to prepare them for service. The units, San Luis & Rio Grande #4135 and 4144, have the capability of operating at 102 miles per hour when track conditions are optimal.

The three passenger cars that have been selected for use are Heritage 44-seat coaches DuQuoin and Dyersburg. They have had extensive renovations over their life including accessible bathrooms, 110 volt at-seat outlets, and Wi-Fi service. Of special note is the addition of full-dome business café lounge car (*continued*)

*("Hoosier State Agreement" continued from page 1)*

The passenger rail service will continue "in the near term until agreements can be finalized with Amtrak and Iowa Pacific. Amtrak, FRA, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspections of Iowa Pacific equipment is ongoing," INDOT said Monday.

Monday's announcement follows continual reports of progress toward introducing a new *Hoosier State* passenger train on May 1. Throughout March, significant developments appeared to place this popular passenger rail service in jeopardy.

On March 6, the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) announced that due to a substantive disagreement with the Federal Rail Administration (FRA) over the use of third party passenger rail providers, the service would end effective April 1.

INDOT had previously made plans to use Iowa Pacific Holding's locomotives and coaches and onboard customer service while continuing to use Amtrak employees for train operation. The FRA expressed concern that the agreement left no single party responsible for safety. Their solution was to rule that INDOT register as a railroad. Governor Mike Pence and INDOT's Karl Browning found the FRA's decision unacceptable and decided to end the service.

What followed was an impressive flurry of activity at the local, state, regional and national levels to request the FRA reconsider its ruling related to third party providers.

(“Hoosier State Agreement” continued from page 2) #554. This car will provide business class service including hot meals and spacious seating along with café car service.

Those interested in learning more about the new *Hoosier State* are invited to attend a Greater Lafayette Commerce Eggs & Issues breakfast featuring Iowa Pacific’s President Ed Ellis, on Tuesday, April 14, at 7:30 a.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in West Lafayette (directly across the Wabash River from the Lafayette depot). GLC member cost to attend is \$15. By special arrangement, those individuals who register as a member of the Indiana rail advocate network can attend for \$20 (versus the non-member cost of \$25). Register via [www.GreaterLafayetteChamber.com](http://www.GreaterLafayetteChamber.com) by clicking on “Eggs N Issues” listed under Tuesday, April 14 on the Upcoming Events column on the right side of the page.

## Shuttle Bus Service Begins at Lafayette’s Big 4 Depot

By Joe Krause

An agreement has been reached between the City of Lafayette and Greater Lafayette Public Transportation (City Bus) to provide shuttle bus service between the Riehle Depot on 2<sup>nd</sup> street and the western end of the John Myers Bridge over the Wabash River.

Service is expected to begin during the week of April 6, 2015. The shuttle service is necessary because the portion of the Riehle Bridge that crosses three railroad tracks is partially closed. Passengers aren’t able to safely travel between the depot and the Amtrak platform on the west side of the Wabash River.

Workmen have also been replacing two elevators at the Depot, with no word yet on a completion date. Parties must wait for final approval from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) before the temporary shuttle service can begin.

## Laying Tracks for the Future

By Steve Coxhead

On Friday, March 27, Purdue University Calumet and One Region jointly sponsored an informational forum on the South Shore Extension. The forum was held on the campus of Purdue University Calumet.

Specifically, the forum addressed the proposed West Lake extension of the South Shore Railroad, which would extend a branch from Hammond down to Dyer. Focus was on the prospect of transit-oriented development and the economic benefits that would be brought to the West Lake area. There were three speakers -- Ben Ross, Ross Capon, and Joe Wszolek.

Opening remarks were given by Robert Ennis, chief of staff and legislative liaison, Purdue University Calumet. That was followed by welcomes from Purdue Calumet Chancellor Tomas Keon and Chris White, publisher of *The Times* of Northwest Indiana.

Ben Ross, Ph.D., is a transit expert and author of *Dead End: Suburban Sprawl and the Rebirth of American Urbanism*. He gave a speech entitled “Rail Transportation: Key to Economic Revival,” specifically focusing on its effect on the local economy of transit-oriented development.

Ross Capon, a rail expert, consultant, and president emeritus of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, presented “Commuter Rail: Nationwide Growth and Popularity.” Capon emphasized Northwest Indiana’s rail transit being competitive with that in Northeast Illinois.

Joe Wszolek, COO, Greater Northwest Indiana Association of Realtors and former president of the Highland Town Council, presented “The Future of Northwest Indiana: It’s Not Only About the Train, It’s About Priorities.” Wszolek addressed various matters concerning taxation and local finance, as affected by transit-oriented development. Information was distributed about two bills now before the Indiana General Assembly. Both are relevant to the South Shore extension into Dyer.

HB 1398 – Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (Soliday) -- Provides for direct distribution of riverboat admissions taxes and supplemental distributions annually to the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) to satisfy the obligations of Lake County, East Chicago, Gary and Hammond. The bill has passed in the House and been reported favorably out of committee in the Senate as of April 1.

HB 1618 – South Shore Line Extension (Slager) -- Creates a program to provide state matching grants to the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) for projects extending the South Shore Railway. The bill has passed in the House and was in committee in the Senate as of April 1.



## Seattle and St. Paul Redo Their Union Stations as Transit Hubs

By Bill Malcolm and Don Yehle

City, county, and state planners involved with the *Hoosier State* need to take note of the growing movement to restore railroad stations across the country—and of the positive economic impact these restorations are making.

The latest is the breathtaking King Street Station in Seattle, ultra-clean and on the National Register of Historic Places. At least six transportation companies are located at or near the station, including Amtrak, Sound Transit, Central Link, Rocky Mountaineer, King County Metro Bus Lines, Bolt Bus, and other regional bus services. Consider:

**Amtrak Cascades** has six departures daily from Seattle—two north to Vancouver, two south to Portland, and two south to Eugene through Portland.

**Amtrak Coast Starlight** departs once daily -- inland -- to Oregon, through California, ending in Los Angeles, 29 stops total.

**Amtrak Empire Builder** heads eastbound via a magnificent ride across the Cascade Mountain range.

**Sound Transit's Sounder** commuter trains depart from across the street near King St. Station. Ten of its rush hour, weekday only trains travel south to Takoma.

Four others trek north, Monday-Friday only, to Everett.

**Sound Transit's light rail** offers all day light rail service connecting Seattle with SeaTac Airport, with one stop across the street from King St. Station (at the Chinatown light rail station).

**Rocky Mountaineer's** luxury excursion train, the *Coast Passage*, makes King St. Station its Seattle terminus.

**King County Metro bus lines** serves the station area as it transports passengers to and from three counties—King, Pierce, and Snohomish.

**Bolt Bus** (*express bus service*) provides service to Portland and Vancouver BC leaving from this area, as well. Bolt is a "MegaBus" type service owned by Greyhound ([www.boltbus.com](http://www.boltbus.com))

*Other regional bus lines* operate near the station.

Residents and visitors alike will find 30 hotels, numerous restaurants, Safeco Field, and CenturyLink Field near King Street Station. In short, the area is a transit hub.

Train tracks between Portland and Seattle are being up-



*The beauty of Seattle's newly remodeled Union Station (top) highlights the potential for Indianapolis (bottom).*

graded thanks to a partnership between the states of Oregon and Washington. Running times are improving, as a result. TALGO Trains operate on some of the runs.

Closer to home, the Union Depot in St. Paul, Minnesota, continues to impress. **Amtrak's Empire Builder** travels through that city on its way to (alternately) Seattle and Chicago. The new **Green Line** rail service—operating from Union Depot -- connects St. Paul with downtown Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota campus. Three bus lines -- **Metro Buses of the Twin Cities**, **Mega Bus**, and **Jefferson Bus Lines**—make Union Depot an intermodal transportation center. A special eatery -- a large Greek restaurant -- occupies the center of Union Depot.

As reported last September, the Green Line is said to represent St. Paul's best shot in years to turn around a stagnant downtown and revitalize what was once the Twin Cities' busiest strip.

Hoosiers living in Indianapolis, Lafayette, Crawfordsville, Rensselaer, or Dyer can connect in Chicago with the daily *Empire Builder*. Take either the *Hoosier State* or the *Cardinal* from any of these five cities, (*continued*)

*("Seattle and St. Paul" continued from page 4)* arrive in the Windy City at 10 a.m., and climb aboard the *Empire Builder* at 2:15 p.m. for a 10:03 p.m. arrival in St. Paul. The return train from St. Paul leaves for Chicago at 8 a.m. daily, arriving there at 3:55 p.m., early enough to catch a *Hoosier State* or *Cardinal* departure south at 5:45 p.m.

To travel on the *Empire Builder* to Seattle (or Portland) from St. Paul, passengers pass through Spokane, where a through train will take you to either of those Pacific Northwest communities.

Compared with Indianapolis' Amtrak Bus Station across from our Union Station -- which has no connections to Indy Go buses or MegaBus -- the train stations in St. Paul and Seattle offer transportation solutions worthy of exploration to improve rail and bus service in the Circle City.

## Level the Playing Field When Financing Passenger Rail and Highways

By Phillip Streby and Don Yehle

Is there a better way to fund passenger rail rather than ask the National Passenger Rail Corporation (Amtrak) to make the annual trek to the "Hill," explain its needs, and defend those needs in detail to a Congress that largely doesn't use rail services? Commuter rail faces the same battle. Why is this?

### Do elected officials ride trains or know our routes?

First, most decision makers don't ride trains (Joe Biden aside). In some cases, decision makers aren't aware of what train services are available in their states. One Indiana congressman wrote last month that Amtrak has two lines that run through Indiana—the *Hoosier State* and the *Cardinal*. As a point of information, the *Capital Limited* also operates in Indiana—stopping in Waterloo, Elkhart, and South Bend, as it runs between Washington, D.C., and Chicago.

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District also operates the *South Shore* line between South Bend and Millennium Station in Chicago. There are 19 stops as it runs on tracks owned by the Chicago, South Shore, and South Bend Railroad.

Ticket sales fund these four railroads, which are further

funded by public monies—commonly known and wrongly known as "subsidies."

### Freight rail and passenger rail are different

Public monies are needed by passenger rail because, unlike freight trains, people require additional amenities. Freight is self-sustaining because customers are billed based on weight or volume. Freight lines also gather, hold, and dispatch loads for the convenience of the railroad, within parameters set by shippers.

Amtrak and commuter rail passengers need space, heated or cooled air, restrooms, and often food and drink. Passenger trains must stop to take on or discharge people at facilities designed and built specifically for that purpose. People want to travel at times suitable for their needs. This is especially true for users of commuter rail, who generally travel one direction in the morning (or night) and the reverse way in the evening (or morning).

Railroad passengers require convenience, comfort, timeliness, and value/low cost or they will choose another mode of transportation. Ever since the 1950's, many people haven't been on a train—not because they don't want to—but because you can't ride what doesn't exist.

*Declining (or nonexistent) profits, dwindling freight revenues, and deteriorating railroad infrastructure prompted America's railroads to want out of the passenger rail business (thus the creation of Amtrak in 1971). At the same time, a massive influx of public monies was pumped into highways and airports, creating the illusion of value and low cost for those transportation modes.*

(Future issues of *All Aboard Indiana* will take a look at airport financing).

### Rail's infrastructure could use \$25 billion taxpayer dollars, too

*The National Interstate and Defense Highway Act of 1956 cost American taxpayers \$25 billion as it was used to build 41,000 miles of interstate highways – at that time, the largest public works project in American history. The Federal government paid 90 percent of construction costs on each mile of interstate highway, while states chipped in the final 10 percent, reports Wikipedia.*

Today, state and federal funds (general funds), in addition to taxes on fuel, vehicles, and tolls pay *(continued)*

*(“Level the Playing Field” continued from page 5)* for building and maintaining America’s roadways. Highway maintenance or improvements are still often delayed or cancelled. Consider also—are the costs of state police patrolling highways, maintaining grass on roadway shoulders, and plowing snow in the winter months, factored into highway maintenance?

The same congressman who didn’t acknowledge the existence of the *Capitol Limited* is concerned about Amtrak being too dependent on unsustainable federal subsidies. **We’d prefer to think of expenditures on passenger rail to be an investment in the future of our children and our grandchildren, as was the National Highway Interstate and Defense Act of 1956.** The same congressman said transportation availability and reliability is crucial for Hoosiers throughout the state. Transportation availability includes airports, highways, rail, and waterways, we think. **Each needs to be properly funded to be reliable, and each needs to be viewed through the same lens.**

**In short, if passenger rail should be “self-sustaining in the marketplace,” so should airports, highways, and waterways. Are they? It’s time for a level playing field for all transportation modes.**

Cost reduction for rail is important. We agree. **Can you think of any business that can properly manage its funds when they don’t know from one year to the next what their budget will be?**

**“At the very least, it [passenger rail] should be funded through user fees imposed on passengers using the service,” you write. Is the cost of driving on the nation’s highways paid exclusively through user fees? Is the cost of flying and touching down at the nation’s airports paid exclusively through user fees? Is the cost of using our waterways paid exclusively through user fees?**

There’s an old saying: “What’s good for the goose is good for the gander.”

## Is There a Better Way to Fund Passenger Rail?

By Phillip Streby and Don Yehle

Did you know gasoline taxes haven’t been raised since 1993? Once they were adequate. Once they built and

maintained our highways, bridges, and tunnels. Today they are not. Shortfalls are made up by supplementing the Highway Trust Fund with money from the general fund or cancelling highway maintenance or improvements.

*If you’re not ready for a mathematics lesson, stop reading this column immediately. If you choose to continue, shut your office door and proceed with an open mind.*

### Federal excise tax generates \$1.75 billion per penny of tax

The Federal excise tax on gasoline and diesel fuel generates \$1.75 billion of revenues per penny of tax, says the American Road and Transportation Builders Association. Here’s how the money is spent:

\$1.4 billion goes to finance the Federal Highway program via a highway account.

\$350 million finances federal public transportation programs via a mass transit account.

### Average motor vehicle usage in 2011: 11,318 miles

Cars, SUVs, minivans, and pickups were each driven on average 11,318 miles in 2011, the Federal Highway Administration reports. (More recent statistics aren’t available.)

National average fuel economy for cars and light trucks was 21.4 miles per gallon that year.

National average annual fuel usage in 2011 was 529 gallons (11,318 divided by 21.4 = 529 gallons) Every American household had 1.75 cars, SUVs, minivans, or pickups.

*If you’re youthful, get out your all-purpose I-phone; calculators are permissible for others.*

### Average annual household federal fuel tax in 2011: \$170.42

Here’s how to do the math:

National gas tax per gallon in 2011 = 18.4 cents/gallon

Multiply 18.4 cents x 529 gallons; divide by 100 to change cents to dollars = \$97.37 per car  
\$97.37 x 1.75 cars per household = \$170.42 federal fuel tax per household

Weekly average national gas tax = \$3.28 (\$170.42 divided by 52 = \$3.28) *(continued)*



*("Is There a Better Way" continued from page 6)*

**Average annual household state fuel tax: \$222.68**

Average state gas tax per gallon in 2011 = 24.01 cents/gallon\*

Multiply 24.01 cents x 529 gallons divided by 100 = \$127.01/car

\$127.01 x 1.75 cars per family = \$222.27 state fuel tax per household.

Weekly average state gas tax = \$4.28 (\$222.27 divided by 52 = \$4.28)

\*February 2014 figure. State gasoline tax rates varied from a low of 0.08 cents per gallon (Alaska) to a high of 39.00 cents per gallon, according to the Federal Highway Administration and data from states.

*The combined annual federal and state gas taxes per household was \$392.69. Another \$21.2 billion from all American households would allow adequate funding of highway projects.*

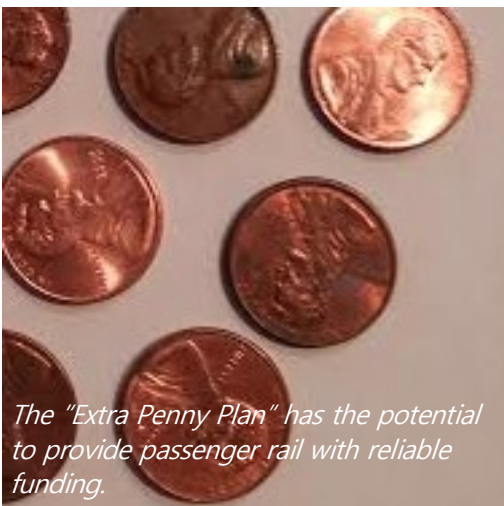
*Gasoline taxes would need to be increased by 12.11 cents per gallon to raise the \$21.2 billion. (1.75 billion x 12.11 = 21.2 billion.) Transportation drives our economy. Let's properly fund our highways and find a new way to fund America's passenger railroads.*

*Take a break, you've earned it. Hurry back, though, rail funding plan is upcoming.*

**Columbia University author wants 35 cents/gallon increase to federal gas tax**

Writing in *The Age of Sustainable Development*, author Jeffrey D. Sachs, director of Columbia University's The Earth Institute, believes it will take a 35 cents per gallon increase to the federal gasoline tax to close the "financing gap on the trust fund [Highway Trust Fund]

while also making a down payment on the huge arrears on maintenance of the federal [highway] transportation system."



*The "Extra Penny Plan" has the potential to provide passenger rail with reliable funding.*

Embrace a federal per

gallon gas tax of 53.4 cents per gallon, Sachs would say. (18.4 current federal tax + 35.0 additional federal tax = 53.4)

The U.S. Government would recoup approximately \$50 billion annually—over 10 years, that's \$500 billion. Combined with a mix of public grants and private loans, America's crumbling infrastructure would be given a new breath of life.

**Extra penny plan would fund Amtrak for \$1.75 billion**

Future rail equipment purchases, future rail expansions, and operating funds could be funded with this \$1.75 billion. This funding plan would also both eliminate the need for annual appropriation (begging) requests and provide the known income any business needs to survive and thrive.

Public/private and private/public partnerships as are being contemplated in Indiana (for the *Hoosier State*) could be explored, planned, and executed to bring about 21st century passenger rail. Local commuter rail shortfalls could also be made up by the "extra penny" plan.

Dedicated and adequate approaches to funding both highways and rail make both the true cost and true value of each transportation mode more apparent. When the true cost for driving—fuel, tolls, parking, and maintenance—are factored in with the benefit of convenience, rail may well be a better investment if it is available, and the "subsidy" may become known—as it should be—as an investment.

**Sources:**

American Road and Transportation Builders Association  
Federal Highway Administration  
Bureau of Transportation Statistics  
Highway Statistics 2011, Table VM1  
Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Annual Report 2012  
Highway Statistics, 2012, Table MF-205  
*The Age of Sustainable Development*. Jeffrey D. Sachs.  
Columbia University Press, 2015.

*Phillip Streby, a new member of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), can be reached at [pstreby@aol.com](mailto:pstreby@aol.com) or by calling 765-473-6561. Phillip's thoughts don't necessarily represent the views of the IPRA. We do encourage creative thinking to find solutions to passenger rail issues.*

## Board Member Lanahan Recognized with Outstanding Transit Advocate Award

Fred Lanahan, a workhorse for public transit in Fort Wayne and a member of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance board of directors, was honored by his peers on March 10. "An Outstanding Transit Advocate Award" was bestowed on Mr. Lanahan for 22 years of service with Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation (Citilink).

The award came as a complete surprise to Lanahan, who had joined Hoosiers from around the state for Transit Day at the Statehouse. Transit organizations came to advocate an increase in the state transit budget to \$60 million. The current budget, which funds 65 transit organizations, has been "flat-lined" for seven years, it's reported.

Since 2006, Lanahan has chaired Citilink's board of directors. While providing safe, courteous, and affordable public transit in the Greater Fort Wayne area, he and his organization are catalysts for encouraging neighborhood revitalization, downtown development, and overall economic development in the communities they serve.

This is what Lanahan's colleagues said of Fred:

"He's passionate and seriously engaged in transit, including riding the buses."



*Fred Lanahan, Transit Advocate Award Winner*

"It would be hard to find a better person [on which to bestow this recognition]."

"He does more retired than most people do while working."

Passenger rail advocates know the same about the transit advocate award winner. As president of the Northeast Indiana Passenger Rail Alli-

ance (NIPRA) for the last five years, Fred is leading the effort to develop an 11-city, regional passenger rail corridor through Fort Wayne and Warsaw connecting Columbus, Ohio, with Chicago.

NIPRA's next step is to secure a \$3.2 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to study the project and get public feedback.

Additionally, Lanahan is a private sector representative to the nine-state Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. States represented in the association are Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wisconsin.



*State Rep. Randy Truitt*

Indiana State Representative Randy Truitt, at Transit Day 2015: "I didn't understand public transit until I saw the importance of getting workers to the new hospital near I-65 in Lafayette." A leader in the effort to continue and improve the *Hoosier State*, Truitt also said at Transit Day the word "subsidy" needs to be removed from vocabularies when discussing funding transportation systems.

## Amtrak Has Legal Authority To Set On-Time Performance Standards

Northwest Indiana railroad passengers, long delayed while oil tankers slog by, are still cheering a unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision last month that "reinstates metrics and standards for Amtrak service that will protect the rights of train passengers," reports both the Chicago-based Environmental Law and *(continued)*



*("Amtrak Has Legal Authority" continued from page 8)*  
Policy Center (ELPC) and the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP).

"Amtrak is a government entity. Giving this ruling, the existing on-time performance standards should be enforced and passenger rail should again be given priority," says Howard Learner, ELPC's executive director. A Court of Appeals ruling previously ruled Amtrak to be a private company, thus negating minimum standards for on-time train performance standards and service quality.

### **On-Time Performance Fell to 42 Percent**

"In 2012, Amtrak achieved a nationwide on-time performance of 83 percent. Since the standards were invalidated by the Court of Appeals, on-time performance fell to an abysmal 42 percent," Learner's organization explains.

Railroad passengers are the victors in U.S. Department of Transportation vs. the Association of American Railroads. In its decision, the Supreme Court wrote "the political branches ... exercise substantial, statutorily mandated supervision over Amtrak's priorities and operations.

### **Congress Mandates Amtrak's Day-to-Day Operations**

"Also of significance, Amtrak is required by statute to pursue broad public objectives; certain aspects of Amtrak's day-to-day operations are mandated by Congress; and Amtrak has been dependent on federal financial support during every year of its existence.

"Given the combination of these unique features and Amtrak's significant ties to the Government, Amtrak is not an autonomous private enterprise," NARP reports the court as having written, without providing citations.

Organizations participating in setting Amtrak's performance standards are the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, the Surface Transportation Board, freight railroads, states, rail labor, and rail passenger organizations.

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## **Indianapolis Hosting NARP's Fall Conference October 16-18**

Circle October 16-18 on your calendars. The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) travels to Indianapolis for its fall conference. Advocacy for passenger rail is expected to be one of the primary agenda topics. Meanwhile, Washington, D.C., plays

host April 20-22 for the organization's spring conference. Indiana will be represented by Phillip Streby and Don Yehle, both members of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance and NARP. Streby is also a NARP council representative.

The case for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Rail will be discussed on April 21, when NARP members spend a "day on the hill" with U.S. Congressmen, U.S. Senators, and/or members of their staffs.

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## **100-Plus Rail Supporters Attend MHSRA Annual Spring Meeting**

Special thanks to Midwest High Speed Rail Association

Three Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) board members joined 100 other rail advocates for the Midwest High Speed Rail Association's (MHSRA) annual spring meeting March 21 in Chicago. IPRA members in attendance were President Steve Coxhead, Joe Krause (with wife, Barbara), and Liz Solberg.

Participants and attendees were "provided a forum to discuss the major opportunities and challenges facing America's transportation system. While each speaker brought a unique perspective, and discussed a different topic, all agreed that more funding for passenger rail infrastructure needs to be a high priority, Julius Parod, a MHSRA blogger wrote.

Six of the speakers, their affiliations, and their topics follow:

**Rick Harnish, MHSRA** -- "MHSRA's executive director gave an overview of the past year at MHSRA. He highlighted progress on building support for CrossRail Chicago, additional frequencies for Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited*; a more forward thinking approach to the Chicago-Detroit corridor and the recently-proposed Chicago-St. Louis/Indianapolis high-speed rail environmental impact statement (EIS).

"Harnish also condemned the proposed cuts to Illinois' rail services and regretted that much of the organization's work in the next year would be defending existing services. He emphasized that while MHSRA works to save funding, the message will be to keep growing something better." *(continued)*

*("MHSRA Annual Spring Meeting" continued from page 9)*

**Bob Stewart, National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP)** – "Bob Stewart, the Chairman of NARP, detailed his frustrations with America's transportation system and outlined where he thinks rail advocates should focus in the near future. He emphasized the need for greater choice in transportation, which isn't available today.

"To give America better train service and more transportation choices, Stewart called for new rolling stock, more routes, and more frequency. He argued Amtrak could double service if the right steps were taken.

"Stewart reiterated his organization's strong support for long-distance trains. He also called for high-speed rail and highlighted how much cheaper high-speed lines are than new highways."

**Kyle Whitehead, ActiveTrans** – "Kyle Whitehead, In his capacity at ActiveTrans, has been working to address the shortcomings of Chicago's outdated transit system, which is good at connecting people to downtown, but not between neighborhoods and suburbs.

"He detailed the Transit Future campaign, which would raise a county-level tax to fund new transit infrastructure capable of connecting some of the region's more isolated areas. Today, 12 of 17 Cook County commissioners (enough to pass legislation) recognize the need for the plan, and he's working to solidify support for a concrete tax increase. Cook County is expected to address this issue after the state passes legislation for the pension crisis."

**Sam Smith, Metra** – "Laid out the major successes and challenges in what has been an eventful year for Chicago's commuter railroad. Last fall Metra's board approved a long-term capital plan to replace the service's aging fleet and to install positive train control (PTC) in accordance with a federal statute. He also detailed Metra's plan to introduce mobile ticketing, in cooperation with the CTA and Pace, in the coming year.

"Smith also warned of the consequences of Governor's Rauner's proposed funding cuts to Metra. If the cuts were approved, Metra would have to further increase fares or reduce service.

"Smith also commended MSHRA for taking a long-term, holistic view of the regional transportation system, which operators can't always do."

**Dan Krause, United States High Speed Rail Association (USHSR)** – "Dan Krause, who has promoted high-speed rail first with Californians for High-Speed and now with USHSR, had a message of optimism and encouragement for the Midwestern audience. He outlined the recent progress the California high-speed rail project has made—with construction underway for the first segment and major upgrades in the works for conventional trains near San Francisco and Los Angeles.

"From his experience in California, Krause highlighted the importance of having completed planning work to keep high-speed rail in the discussion. He then emphasized the critical role of champions for the project like Governor Brown and President Obama to keep it moving ahead.

"For the Midwest, he recommended going beyond advocacy to find and empower political champions. He also stressed how although high-speed rail opponents are tough and well-funded, it's a winnable battle to keep working to debunk their myths."

**Joe Szabo, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)** – "Joe Szabo, reflecting on his experience as Federal Railroad Administrator and his current position with CMAP, addressed the future of passenger rail in America. He discussed how rewarding it was to see California break ground on high-speed rail and thanked Governor Brown for making it possible.

"Szabo also highlighted the importance of Chicago to railroads and transportation in general. With an expected 60% increase in freight expected by 2040, he called for a second CREATE project to build infrastructure to handle growing demand. He also called for similar investments in passenger trains in and around Chicago.

"Throughout his speech, Szabo mentioned how critical it is for Congress to create a dedicated funding stream for rail. He cited California's high-speed rail as an important source of inspiration for the rest of the country. He also argued that rail needs a large collection of suppliers to lobby for dedicated funding, much like the defense industry does. According to Szabo, the business case for trains is what is needed to drive greater, and more regular investments," the MHSRA blogger wrote.

**The May issue of *All Aboard Indiana* will cover MHSRA blog postings for the following speakers: Ray Lang, Amtrak; Jeff Sriver, Chicago (continued)**

(“MHSRA Annual Spring Meeting” continued from page 10) **Department of Transportation; Julius Parod, MHSRA; Jordan Horwitz, DePaul University, and concluding remarks by MHSRA’s Rick Harnish.**

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## IPRA Board Meeting in Indy

By Doug Yerkeson

On Saturday, March 7, 2015, the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) Board of Directors met in Indianapolis. Bill Malcolm and Phillip Streby were elected to the Board, replacing Kate Zale and Pat Pullara due to changes in their work responsibilities. The Board thanks Kate and Pat for their service to the Board and looks forward to working with Bill and Phillip. The Board discussed the desire for increased diversity of membership, including age, gender, race and geography. Current Board members include:

Steve Coxhead (President)  
 George VandeWerken (Treasurer)  
 Steven Cecil (Vice President – Administration)  
 W. Dennis Hodges (Vice President – Business Development)  
 Doug Yerkeson (Secretary)  
 William L. Schlosser, Esq. (Legal Advisor)  
 Jeffrey Bainter  
 Thom Davis  
 Mark Dobson  
 Robert Garity  
 Robert Gorski  
 Thomas Hayhurst, M.D.  
 Joseph Krause  
 Frederick Lanahan  
 Bill Malcolm  
 Timothy Maloney  
 Geoffrey Paddock  
 Joseph Seaman  
 E. Dana Smith  
 Elizabeth A. Solberg  
 Phillip Streby  
 Ted Wetekamp

The Board discussed the status of Amtrak’s *Hoosier State* passenger rail service including negotiations between INDOT, the Federal Railroad Administration

(FRA), Amtrak and Iowa Pacific. Action items by the Board included sending letters to Indiana’s federal congressional delegation requesting that Transportation Secretary Foxx suspend or rescind the FRA ruling, and to Governor Pence requesting his continued support for the *Hoosier State*. The Board further decided to continue its grassroots promotional efforts to contact federal and state representatives, including the distribution of informational e-mails and flyers.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to 21<sup>st</sup> Century passenger rail in Indiana through incremental improvements and expansions of service. The next IPRA Board meeting is scheduled for late April in Fort Wayne.

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## For More Information:

*All Aboard Indiana* is a monthly publication of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (formerly Indiana High Speed Rail Association).

To learn more or to join IPRA go to [www.indianahighspeedrail.org](http://www.indianahighspeedrail.org) or contact us at Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, 3951 North Meridian Street, Suite 100, Indianapolis, IN 46208

To follow rail news on Facebook go to Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, Hoosiers for Passenger Rail, and/or Hoosiers for the Hoosier State.

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Note: This group is not affiliated with Amtrak, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

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