

# **THE INDIANA PASSENGER LETTER**

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MEMBERSHIP  
RENEWAL DUE

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*"Working to Improve, Promote, and Expand Passenger Train Service in Indiana"*

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## **INDARP LOSES A FRIEND AND DEDICATED MEMBER**

Don Hurst, Secretary-Treasurer of INDARP and a longtime board member of NARP, died February 8 at his Beech Grove home following a long illness.

As a founding member of INDARP, Don helped steer the organization through its formative years providing sound judgment and a keen understanding of passenger rail issues. Don was an effective advocate for improved and increased Amtrak service and often met with state and federal officials to articulate the need for adequate support and funding of Amtrak.

His dedication and enthusiasm will serve as an inspiration to those who were fortunate enough to know him. We have indeed lost both a true friend and a valuable member. We extend our condolences to his widow Jo.

## **NICTD RELEASES FINDINGS FROM INVESTIGATION OF JANUARY 18 CRASH**

On February 19, NICTD released findings of an internal investigation into January's South Shore train crash that resulted in 7 deaths and 69 injuries.

NICTD concluded that the crash occurred not only because the motorman of the eastbound train disregarded a red signal, but also because the motorman on the westbound train failed to heed three warnings to stop by an off duty motorman riding in the cab. As a result of the investigation, the motormen of both trains were fired. It is expected that both men will appeal their firing.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is not expected to release its findings for at least three months. The NTSB had previously indicated that it found no problems with signals on either side of the bridge, or with the trains and tracks involved in the accident. Tests did not indicate the presence of alcohol or drugs in the systems of either motorman.

One area attorney, on the day of the accident, began to solicit clients and promote lawsuits by them. Any lawsuits filed against NICTD would be affected by Indiana's tort claims act which limits plaintiffs to no more than \$300,000 per person and an overall total

of \$5 million. Another area lawyer maintained that the \$5 million liability cap is legally untested and vowed to fight to have it declared improper.

We will attempt to briefly summarize the events of January 18. The collision took place on Gary's west side between the Clark Road and Gary Metro stations. Just before the impact, a three car westbound train from South Bend carrying about 100 passengers had cleared an 85 year-old gantlet bridge about a half-mile east of Clark Road when it met a two car eastbound train from Chicago with about 35 people on board. A gantlet bridge has more than one track, but because the tracks overlap, it doesn't allow more than one train on the bridge at a time. Movement over the bridge is controlled by signals on either side of the bridge. The 9:37 a.m. collision occurred at a point where the tracks begin to merge on the west side of the bridge. The trains stopped just past each other with gaping holes torn on the lead car of each train at the point of impact. The collision left three dead on the westbound train and four on the eastbound.

It may seem unbelievable to those who have seen pictures of the collision, but the damage to lead cars #27 and #36 will be repairable as no damage was done to the center sills of the cars.

#### UPDATE ON INDARP'S PETITION DRIVE

INDARP's petition drive requesting that the state undertake an intercity rail passenger study is nearing its conclusion. While it is not yet clear how many signatures have been obtained, we can state that the preliminary numbers have been very gratifying. When the remaining petitions are received, they will be delivered to the Governor's office along with a cover letter from INDARP. We will include a copy of that cover letter, along with final signature count in our May newsletter.

We would like to acknowledge the fine response to our petition drive that we have received from INDARP members. While it has not been possible to thank each of you individually, we deeply appreciate your support and concern. Thanks is also due those of you who have written the Governor. Thanks for sharing copies of your letters with us. We're including copies of two letters written by INDARP members that appeared in The Indianapolis Star.

Letters our members have received from the state DOT claim that the upcoming multimodal transportation plan will look at rail passenger service. We sincerely hope that a comprehensive, objective examination will be made. On the other hand, we are somewhat skeptical of the process for two reasons. First of all, the study is mandated by the federal government under the ISTEA act, it was not something initiated by the state. Also, the recent failure of Indiana to apply for consideration of the Indianapolis-Chicago corridor as one of five corridors to receive ISTEA money casts doubt about new policy directions by our state.

We received a phone call from INDOT's Deputy Commissioner, Dennis Faulkenberg, regarding the lead article in our January newsletter.

He expressed concern over the article and felt that it gave an unfair and inaccurate account of our meeting with him, and that it also distorted state DOT policies and attitudes. We offered Mr. Faulkenberg an opportunity to write a rebuttal, that would be printed in this edition of our newsletter, but he declined the offer.

The following two letters by INDARP Vice-President John Clark and INDARP board member John Patrick have recently appeared in The Indianapolis Star.

## Amtrak service

I agree with John Patrick in his Dec. 30 letter that Hoosiers should have better Amtrak service than they currently receive.

Additional service between Indianapolis and Chicago through Lafayette would be most welcome for shoppers, business people and those wanting to connect to other trains in the Amtrak system.

There is considerable talk concerning a Chicago to Florida train being routed through Indiana, but talk must be turned into action.

We should ask Gov. Evan Bayh and other elected officials for alternative rail transportation solutions.

JOHN L. CLARK  
Indianapolis

## Train service

Will Hoosiers be left waiting at the station? With states in our area such as Illinois and Michigan working to create high-speed corridors and expand current Amtrak service in their states, they are well on the way to providing

their citizens with fast, reliable and energy-efficient trains.

Sadly, Indiana and its Department of Transportation have taken little if any interest in even bringing up for serious discussion an increase in Amtrak services or creating any plans for high-speed rail to neighboring states.

If you wish to see Indiana have a balanced transportation system that places an equal emphasis on all modes of transport, please let your elected officials know.

JOHN PATRICK  
Carbon

## PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN OFFERS HOPE FOR BEECH GROVE EMPLOYEES

The economic recovery portion of President Clinton's economic plan contains welcome news for furloughed workers at Amtrak's Beech Grove maintenance facility.

Amtrak would receive \$188 million out of a stimulus package totaling \$4.16 billion in transportation projects. Amtrak's board has placed a high priority on the need to recall the 257 workers who were furloughed last October. We hope that if/when the funds become available that the first dollars spent will be used to recall those workers. Such a move would end the economic hardships faced by the workers and would result in a major economic stimulus for central Indiana.

The \$188 million is in addition to monies previously appropriated for Amtrak's use this fiscal year. The President's proposal makes additional amounts available for highways (\$2.9 billion), airports (\$250 million) and mass transit (\$750 million). Please ask Senators Coats and Lugar and your congressman to support this initiative.

The furloughs have resulted in a reduction in the number of cars and locomotives scheduled for heavy overhaul work this fiscal year. Overhauls are planned for 50 F-40 locomotives, 41 Superliner cars, 41 Heritage Fleet cars and 34 material handling cars. This reduction will place further strain on already over-utilized equipment.

#### RECAP OF JANUARY INDARP MEETING

A productive exchange of ideas and strategies took place at the January 23 INDARP meeting held at the Warren Township Branch Library in Indianapolis. The 26 members in attendance shared ideas on ways to bring about greater involvement and interest by the state of Indiana regarding rail passenger service.

The incumbent slate of officers and board members were reelected to two year terms at the meeting.

Our next meeting will tentatively be held at the Terre Haute Public Library at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 17. Terre Haute is in a unique position to benefit from two potential services in the future, the resumption of Chicago to Florida service and a section of the Cardinal serving St. Louis/Kansas City. We will confirm the details of our April meeting via postcard.

#### LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP STATISTICS

The latest ridership statistics we have from Amtrak are for the month of November, 1992. The system registered a gain of 10% in ridership as compared with November of 1991. All trains serving Indiana showed increases for the month. It should be pointed out that November of 1992 had a built in advantage over November of 1991, in that both the Saturday and Sunday following Thanksgiving took place in November. In the previous year, only the Saturday following Thanksgiving took place in November.

	<u>NOV '91</u>	<u>NOV '92</u>	<u>% CHG</u>
BROADWAY LIMITED	15,696	16,693	+6.35
CAPITOL LIMITED	12,280	14,513	+18.18
CARDINAL	9,593	10,653	+11.05
HOOSIER STATE	6,723	7,254	+7.90
LAKE SHORE LIMITED	28,503	30,471	+6.90
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	862,056	898,536	+4.23
SHORT DIST (NON-NEC)	380,542	471,938	+24.02
LONG DISTANCE	440,013	478,153	+8.67
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,684,023	1,861,601	+10.54

#### MEETING HELD TO EXPLORE POTENTIAL STATION SITE IN SOUTH BEND

INDARP has learned that the South Bend Chamber of Commerce recently sponsored a meeting examining options for a new station location for Amtrak.

One location under discussion is at the corner of Lincoln Way East and Ironwood Drive. This site is near the dividing line between South Bend and Mishawaka and would be further east than the present

Bendix location which is on the west side of South Bend.

We are pleased to report that Amtrak, now the sole occupant of the Bendix station, has made some improvements at the facility. Lighting on the building exterior has been improved. Chuckholes have been filled in the parking lot area. Amtrak hopes this spring to do both interior and exterior painting on the building. Work on a new ticket window along with improved seating in the waiting room has been completed. Much of the work has been done by personnel from Amtrak's maintenance base in Niles, Michigan.

### SOUTH SHORE PROJECTS FOR 1993

The new year promises to be a busy one for capital projects on the South Shore. Plans call for the welding of approximately 15 miles of rail between the shops in Michigan City and South Bend. This will result in increased maximum train speeds and reduced running times. Also on the drawing board is a new station facility at the shops in Michigan City. There are also plans to increase parking at the Michiana Regional Airport station by approximately 40 spaces.

For 1992, the South Shore had a slight drop in ridership, but an increase in revenues over 1991. The revenue increase was due to a fare increase that became effective in January, 1992.

	<u>1991</u>	<u>1992</u>	<u>% CHG</u>
Ridership	3,332,565	3,272,279	-1.8
Revenues	\$10,080.005	\$10,411,506	+3.3

### UPDATE ON MONON CORRIDOR PLANNING PROCESS

The work of the Monon Rail Corridor planning committee is nearing conclusion as a recommended plan is taking shape.

The planning group will likely recommend that in order to achieve the greatest benefit from the Monon Corridor and to meet objectives related to both transportation and recreation use, the City of Indianapolis should join with other nearby communities in the purchase of the Norfolk Southern rail line located in Marion and Hamilton Counties. It will also probably recommend that development of a Monon Corridor greenway be initiated immediately, and that the NS corridor be preserved for future mass transportation use.

The recommended plan would place the greenway and transit way side by side south of Sutherland Avenue in Indianapolis, with a greenway extending to the north on the Monon line and a future mass transportation use extending northeast on the NS line. The committee feels that the transit use should be deferred until necessary to serve travel demand. In the short term, the northern section of the NS corridor would continue service for the State Fairtrain or other rail excursion activities. The committee feels that a transit corridor would provide limited benefit in the short term, but may be essential within 20 years.

PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL. 01-93  
INDICATES MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS DUE

**FORMER AMTRAK STATION IN VALPARAISO BURNS**

The former Amtrak station in Valparaiso, a structure built in 1870, has been destroyed by fire. Arson was suspected in the destruction of the one-story, frame building this January.

Amtrak service to Valparaiso ended with the termination of the Valpo commuter service in May of 1991. The Broadway Limited and Capitol Limited were rerouted off Conrail's line (ex-Pennsy) through Valparaiso in November 1990. The station had not been used for years, as Amtrak utilized small trackside passenger shelters.

**LEGISLATION TO CONTINUE WEST LAKE COUNTY  
RAIL STUDY PROCEEDING IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Legislation that would extend the life of the West Lake County commuter rail corridor study for another three years is expected to pass this year's session of the Indiana General Assembly.

The study commission is looking at the feasibility of establishing a commuter rail service between Lowell and Chicago along much of the old Monon line.

In December, NICTD, Munster and Hammond approved an agreement concerning who will pay for a key 4.8 mile segment of the proposed route between Airline Junction in Munster and the Dan Rabin Transit Plaza in Hammond. The cities of Munster and Hammond have gone to court to condemn the right of way, and are waiting for the courts and appraisers to rule on its value. Congressman Pete Visclosky has secured a federal grant for the right of way, but a local share of 20 percent is needed to get the federal money. It has been agreed that NICTD will pay the 20 local match and will be reimbursed by the state and the two communities. NICTD would gain the exclusive right to provide mass transit service in the corridor.

**NIRPC SEEKS TO STUDY POTENTIAL OF  
GARY-FORT WAYNE CORRIDOR**

The Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC), at the urging of city officials in Gary, has agreed to study the merits of establishing high-speed rail service between Gary and Fort Wayne. The proposed service would operate over Conrail's former mainline between Gary and Fort Wayne, and utilize Conrail's existing mainline between Gary and Chicago Union Station.

Conrail has sought permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the portion of the line between Gary and Valparaiso. Before any study could be made, the ICC would need to be convinced of the desirability to preserve the corridor. The ICC is expected to rule on Conrail's abandonment petition in March.

**FIVE PORTER COUNTY GRADE CROSSINGS  
TO RECEIVE GATES & FLASHERS**

Five grade crossings in northern Porter County are expected to get crossing gates and automatic flashers this spring. The Federal

Highway Administration has approved approximately \$900,000 for the project. The crossings are now protected by wooden crossbucks and stop signs. They are the only grade crossings on Amtrak's line between Porter and Kalamazoo, Michigan that don't have flashers and gates. Seven deaths have occurred as a result of accidents at the crossings in the past seven years. Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration have, twice within the past three years, asked Porter County officials to consider closing some of the crossings. However, local officials have insisted that the crossings remain open.

Improved grade crossing protection will certainly help in furthering public safety but it will not be the panacea that some think. Safety experts and local police say that the problem of people in Northwest Indiana going around gates and past flashing lights is a major part of the crossing safety issue. More than half of grade crossing accidents occur at crossings with gates or flashing lights, even though only 40% of the crossings are protected that way.

As a footnote to the grade crossing issue in Porter County, let's examine a grade crossing accident that took place on January 21 in Gary. A driver of a semi-trailer truck was headed north on Clark Road near U.S. Steel when he saw lowered crossing gates and automatic flashers. He chose to disregard his legal obligation to stop and drove around the lowered gates. His truck was struck by Amtrak's westbound Pere Marquette traveling at 79 mph. The trailer was separated from the truck cab and was dragged for about one-half mile before it derailed a freight car on adjoining tracks. Neither the truck driver, nor any of the passengers or crew members on the train suffered injuries. The truck driver was cited by police for disregarding a railroad crossing signal.

Government certainly has a responsibility to provide and promote public safety. Its efforts will always fall short when individuals fail to exercise responsibility and good judgment.

#### INDIANA DINNER TRAIN MAKES LAST TRIP

The Indiana Dinner Train was scheduled to make its last trip between Indianapolis and Bargersville on February 23. Its equipment has been sold to a group operating out of Orlando, Florida. The sale involves one locomotive (pictured on the back cover), four dining cars, two lounge cars and one kitchen car.

Your newsletter editor had the opportunity to ride the dinner train and found the food and atmosphere to be first class. The cars had been beautifully restored and the on-board staff was of the highest quality.

#### WHO WILL BE AMTRAK'S NEXT PRESIDENT?

Now that the election is behind us and the composition of the Amtrak board is being determined, there is much speculation that W. Graham Claytor, Jr. will soon step down as president and chairman.

**IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUE FOR RENEWAL?  
PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL**

The names of four possible candidates have surfaced over the past few weeks. They are: William Norman, Amtrak executive VP and Claytor's favorite to succeed him; Charles W. Hoppe, president of the Long Island Railroad; Michael Haverty, former president of the Santa Fe; and David Gunn, general manager of Washington DC Metro.

Those who approve of Amtrak's present management style and philosophy should hope that William Norman will be Claytor's successor. Those who have been troubled by a management style that appears to be overly centralized and out of touch with what is going on should hope that an someone from the outside that possesses a fresh perspective will be selected.

#### A DAILY CARDINAL BY OCTOBER 1995?

Amtrak's schedule of arriving Superliners on order and their proposed deployment gives hope that we will see a daily Cardinal by October 1995. Operation of a daily Cardinal would be made possible by using equipment freed up from the Auto Train which is scheduled to be reequipped with all Superliners in August 1995.

Amtrak plans to equip the Capitol Limited with Superliner sleepers and diners by October 1994. The train would receive Superliner lounges in April 1995, and Superliner coaches in January 1996. In the interim, access from Superliner cars in the train's consist to single level Heritage or Amfleet cars would be accomplished by the addition of Superliner transition dorm/coaches in October 1994. A transition car has a lower level walk-through at one end of the car and an upper level walk-through at the other end.

#### GOOD NEWS FOR THE BROADWAY LIMITED

At its January meeting, the Amtrak board voted approval to spend \$2.6 million to construct a track connection at New Castle, PA. The connection would allow the Broadway to move from CSX to Conrail tracks at that point for the remainder of its route to Pittsburgh. This will eliminate a time-consuming backup move in and out of the Amtrak station in Pittsburgh. The Conrail route between New Castle and Pittsburgh is also much faster than the CSX (ex-B&O) route. It is expected that work will be completed in time for the change to be made in October 1994. The decision to build the connection was necessitated by CSX's decision to abandon part of the route used by the Broadway just west of Pittsburgh.

#### SHORT LINES

--Unlike previous years when the Cardinal guide program was offered only seasonally, it is now a year-round feature eastbound between Charleston and White Sulphur Springs. The narrated tour of the New River Gorge began in 1985 with guides from the National Park Service. Now the commentary is presented by volunteers from the Collis P. Huntington Railroad Historical Society.

--China service with a new design was scheduled to be phased into service in late February on the Lake Shore Limited, Sunset Limited, and Crescent. Amtrak previously offered china service on the



Capitol Limited, Coast Starlight, Southwest Chief and Auto Train.

--Amtrak is getting a new station site in Detroit. The location will be in the New Center area and will be a temporary facility at first, with hopes for a new intermodal facility by 1997. The Wolverine and Twilight Limited will be extended to serve the cities of Royal Oak, Birmingham and Pontiac. The state of Michigan is spending \$1.35 million on the project. The move should take place this summer.

--The three Roadrailer units that Amtrak has been testing moved on the Hoosier State to Chicago on February 2. They were to go west on the Southwest Chief with an eventual destination at the DOT test center in Pueblo, Colorado.

Once again, our thanks goes to those of you who circulated petitions for INDARP and/or wrote the Governor. Your participation and support was great.

Look for details concerning our April meeting in Terre Haute. A postcard mailing will be made when details are finalized.

Thanks to those of you who have renewed your dues for 1993. A special thanks to those who added an extra donation. We appreciate your support and confidence greatly. For those members who have not yet renewed, a renewal form may be found at the bottom of this page.

The Indiana Passenger Letter is published six times each year. (Jan-Mar-May-July-Sept-Nov) by the Indiana Association of Railroad Passengers, 5346 Chipwood Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46226. Newsletter editor is Phil McGeath.

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Indiana Dinner Train at its Indianapolis boarding location, summer 1990. Photo by Phil McGeath.



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