

THE INDIANA PASSENGER LETTER

The Official Publication of the
INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

VOL. 9 NUMBER 5 SEPTEMBER 1991

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

LAFAYETTE PASSENGERS ARE LEFT WITHOUT A STATION

On July 1, the Potpourri Shop, which served as the Amtrak passenger facility in Lafayette for three years, went out of business. This means that people waiting for the Hoosier State and Cardinal must brave the summer heat and stand outside until the trains arrive. The only hint of where to wait for the trains is provided by Amtrak trailblazer signs near Fifth and Main Streets. INDARP, by the way, was instrumental in working with Amtrak and the city of Lafayette in getting the signs posted two years ago.

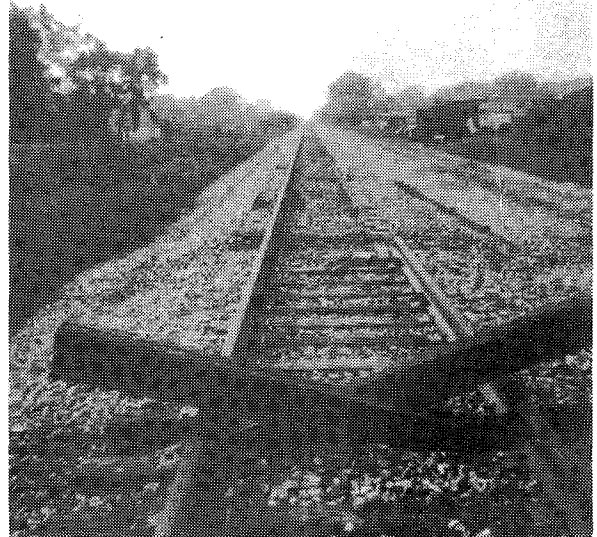
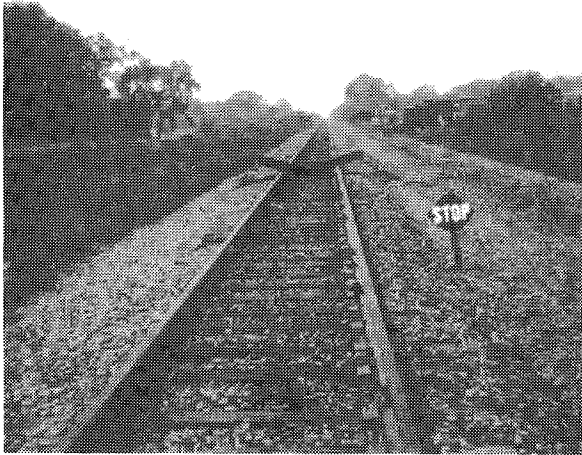
INDARP has been in contact with Frank Stoy, Amtrak's district superintendent of passenger services, concerning the troubling situation in Lafayette. It is our feeling that Amtrak is placing a high priority on securing a replacement facility. Stoy indicated that Amtrak is working on several alternatives. They range from leasing a building to having a travel agent set up to sell tickets at train times. Discussions will continue between Amtrak, city officials and businesses in hopes of finding a solution as soon as possible.

When the CSX tracks are relocated from Fifth Street further west near the Wabash River, Amtrak will move into the former Big Four depot. However, this will not occur for at least two years. In the meantime, it is imperative that a replacement facility is secured. Lafayette is an important contributor to Amtrak ridership in Indiana. It presently ranks fourth in passenger boardings, behind Indianapolis, Hammond-Whiting and South Bend.

DEVELOPMENTS ON CONRAIL'S FORT WAYNE LINE

On June 20, Conrail announced its desire to sell 257 miles of track between Gary and Crestline, Ohio. Conrail has diverted most of its long distance freight operations off of the line. Amtrak rerouted the Broadway Limited and Capitol Limited last November. The last passenger service on the route ended in early May when the Valpo commuter service was discontinued.

In a related development, Conrail has removed one segment of rail on the line, thus severing the route. The site of the rail removal is at Emmetsburg Avenue and Indiana 130, a location about one-half mile west of the former Amtrak station in Valparaiso. It appears that the rail was removed for safety reasons, to serve as a type of derail device. The following two photographs, looking westbound, were taken on June 30, 1991, and show the area where the rail has been removed.



**INDIANA PROVIDES FUNDS FOR CHICAGO-FLORIDA SERVICE,
BUT THERE'S A CATCH**

INDARP has learned that the Indiana General Assembly took a little-noticed, and rare step during its session this year. It actually allocated funds for Amtrak service in the state. The action provides that "a sum not to exceed \$3,652,000 from the Job Creation and Economic Development Account of the Build Indiana Fund may be used for the development of passenger line rail service on the Indiana portion of the "Western Route" between Chicago and Chattanooga."

These funds would represent Indiana's contribution toward the restoration of Chicago to Florida service through Terre Haute and Evansville. There is however, a catch. The Build Indiana Fund, generated from state lottery revenues, was over appropriated to the tune of \$28 million this year. It is up to the state budget agency to review the various projects and make recommendations. Given the large number of potential projects, and the uncertainty of when, or if, Chicago-Florida service will begin, it is unlikely that the funding will actually be committed. It is a refreshing change of pace, however, for the General Assembly to take the action it did. Hopefully, this will serve as a precedent at a later time.

In a related note, there was no funding included for Chicago to Florida service in the DOT appropriations bill recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. We understand that Rep. Frank McCloskey, D-IN, is preparing a plan to secure a degree of funding in next year's appropriation bill.

STATIONS IN THE NEWS

There are several items of news and developments regarding station facilities, not only in Indiana, but also in Cincinnati and Chicago to report in this edition of the IPL.

SOUTH BEND--

As we had noted in the previous edition of our newsletter, Amtrak has submitted a proposal to Conrail for the use of Union Station in downtown South Bend. Amtrak would like Conrail's permission to stop on its mainline to board and detrain passengers. If Conrail does not agree, the alternative would be to rehabilitate a 2200-foot siding. It is INDARP's impression, based upon discussions with Amtrak officials, that permission will not be granted for Amtrak to use the mainline. Amtrak doesn't want to use the siding, because they don't want to have to pay the costs involved with its rehabilitation. On the average, there are approximately 77 total movements in the area of Union Station six days per week. There are only two mainline tracks, used by Conrail, Grand Trunk and Amtrak. The Amtrak official that INDARP spoke with is aware of the poor conditions relating to Amtrak's present facility in South Bend, and of the safety concerns of Amtrak passengers. If Amtrak does end up using the siding and paying for the needed work, it would be the spring of 1992 before work would begin. We are aware that meetings between high level officials of Amtrak and Conrail are continuing in an effort to resolve the situation.

GARRETT--

CSX has cleared an area of land next to the platform that contained old and unused buildings in anticipation of the Garrett Historical Society moving its museum next to the Amtrak platform and having a portion of the building used as an Amtrak station facility. INDARP has learned, as a result of discussions with the Garrett Chamber of Commerce, that the city has gone out for bids to move its historical society building and railroad items next to the Amtrak platform. Plans call for an addition to the east end of the building to provide a station for Amtrak passengers. The city hopes to have it ready in late fall or early winter this year.

NAPPANEE--

Discussions between INDARP and the Nappanee Chamber of Commerce indicate that CSX's asking price for the station building is \$75,000. The city feels that this is too high and has brought in an independent appraiser to assess the value of the property. The city would then make a counter proposal to CSX.

BROWNSBURG--

INDARP has had conversations with local officials who indicate that there is still a high level of interest in having Brownsburg added as a stop on the route of the Hoosier State. The city park area is apparently still available as a site for a passenger facility.

INDARP has urged that Brownsburg follow the example of Connersville, and enlist the aid of local service clubs in an attempt to get the project off the ground. As you may recall, Brownsburg received conditional approval from Amtrak for passenger service a couple of years ago. However, the project never got off the ground, as it was marked by more talk than action. If the project does become a reality, it is likely that only the Hoosier State would serve Brownsburg initially.

CINCINNATI--

Amtrak service to Cincinnati returned to the newly restored Cincinnati Union Terminal on July 29. As a result of the move to CUT, a time consuming back-up move at River Road Station has been eliminated saving fifteen minutes. The schedule is unchanged between New York and Cincinnati. Train 51 will operate 15 minutes earlier between Hamilton, Ohio and Chicago, while train 50 will operate 15 minutes later between Chicago and Hamilton. The schedule between Cincinnati and New York is unchanged. CUT houses two history museums, a theater and various civic attractions. The Amtrak portion of the facility, which jointly cost Amtrak and CSX \$1 million to renovate, contains an Amtrak ticket office, baggage room and waiting room. Amtrak has a ten-year contract to lease 4,660 square feet of space, and will pay the Museum Center \$446,300 over the life of the contract. Amtrak moved from CUT to its new River Road station in October, 1972.

CHICAGO--

The renovation of Amtrak facilities at Chicago Union Station is nearing completion. New waiting rooms are much closer to the tracks and gates than before. The same is true with the new ticket and baggage counters. The relocation of staircases and escalators has improved traffic flow by separating Amtrak passengers from the weekday commuter crunch. Amtrak's Metropolitan Lounge opened on June 30. The lounge is for sleeping car passengers only, and will not accept those passengers with slumbercoach and custom class accommodations. The lounge features a self-service bar, stocked with coffee, tea, juice and soft drinks. Also included are private restrooms, telephones, a large-screen TV, a fireplace and a personal computer that carries the Prodigy service. Art Deco furnishings of the lounge match the style of the newly-renovated station.

AMTRAK FUNDING FOR FY 92 CLEARS FIRST HURDLE

On July 24, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 2942, making appropriations for the DOT and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1992. The bill passed by a vote of 379-47. Eight of Indiana's ten representatives voted with the majority. Congressmen Dan Burton (R-6th District) and Andy Jacobs, Jr. (D-10th District) voted against the bill. While we are not surprised at Burton's vote, we are very disappointed with the negative vote cast by Congressman Jacobs.

The following figures, in millions, gathered from NARP and the Congressional Record help detail Amtrak funding provided in the bill.

	<u>FY 1991</u>	<u>DOT REQUEST</u>	<u>AMTRAK REQUEST</u>	<u>H.R. 2942</u>
Operating	343.1	180.0	321.0	328.9
Capital	132.0	150.0	242.0	175.0
Special FRA Account	150.0	150.0	149.0	145.0
Amtrak Total	625.1	480.0	712.0	648.9
Northeast Corridor Improvement Project	179.0	0.0	223.0	36.0

The special FRA account exists to make payments on behalf of Amtrak to the Railroad Retirement Trust Account and the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Account. Up until FY 91, these expenses were covered under grants appropriated directly to Amtrak. This practice unfairly inflated Amtrak's true subsidy needs, since these expenses are merely passed on by Amtrak as a subsidy for the freight railroads. Therefore, Congress decided to fund these expenses in a separate FRA appropriation.

H.R. 2942 contains nothing for the New Haven-Boston electrification project. It is hoped that such funding will be contained in the Senate bill. Action in the Senate is expected after Congress returns from recess on September 11. As we noted earlier, the House bill contains nothing for the resumption of Chicago to Florida service.

NEWS FROM THE SOUTH SHORE

NICTD is considering a fare increase for commuters on the South Shore Line. Indications are that ticket prices could increase from between 3-5% in January. The increase would help offset rising operating costs. The last fare increase took place five years ago. No one likes to pay more for anything, but there appears to be justification for the possible increase. NICTD has increased the number of rush-hour trains and has improved the on-time performance of its rush-hour trains. Also, an order has been placed for 17 additional passenger cars. The first of these cars are expected to arrive in August, 1992.

ROADRAILERS TO BE TESTED ON THE HOOSIER STATE

On a date yet to be announced, Amtrak will test three prototype Mark V Roadrailleurs on the back of the Hoosier State. The cars were jointly developed by Amtrak and the U.S. Postal Service. The main feature of the cars lies in their ability for use on rail, as well as highways. The Roadrailleurs would travel via highway from Nashville, Tennessee to Beech Grove where they would be attached to the rear of the Hoosier State and delivered to Chicago. If the tests prove successful, look for expanded development of the cars.

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP STATISTICS

The latest ridership statistics we have from Amtrak are for the month of May. System ridership increased by 0.7 percent, reversing the decrease of 9.7 in April. The April decrease was due, not only to the effects of the recession, but also the brief strike against freight railroads and a derailment in the Northeast Corridor that resulted in many trains being annulled on a normally busy Friday.

	MAY '91	% CHG	FY 91 OCT-MAY	% CHG
BROADWAY LIMITED	19,014	+3.8%	131,496	+1.4%
CAPITOL LIMITED	14,455	+6.7%	105,392	+3.4%
CARDINAL	12,281	-11.5%	90,798	+18.8%
HOOSIER STATE	11,693	+78.4%	74,625	+78.5%
LAKE SHORE LIMITED	31,535	-4.1%	232,674	-5.1%
VALPO COMMUTER	746	-90.6%	48,383	-30.3%
NORTHEAST CORRIDOR	975,279	+0.4%	7,432,322	+1.5%
SHORT DISTANCE	459,679	-0.2%	3,331,572	+2.3%
LONG DISTANCE	538,157	+4.0%	3,845,424	+3.8%
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,974,964	+0.7%	14,651,288	+0.6%

The Valpo commuter service was discontinued effective May 4. Figures for the Lake Shore Limited include both the New York and Boston sections. The figures we receive from Amtrak are not broken down by each section. The Hoosier State continued its strong FY 91 showing, although ridership on the Cardinal declined.

On-time performance of the Hoosier State in May was atrocious. The train was on-time only 11.3% of the time. This gained it the dubious distinction of having the worst on-time performance in the system. The reasons for the poor performance are many. The train frequently arrives at Indianapolis Union Station from Beech Grove later than it should. Inefficient boarding policies often result in a late departure from Indianapolis. INDARP has contacted Amtrak regarding these two concerns, and has not received a satisfactory response. Having gone through channels without much success, we now plan to direct our concerns to higher levels of management at Amtrak. Another culprit playing havoc with on-time performance is Conrail's SC&S branch between Airline Junction in Munster and Colehour Junction in Chicago. In this regard, there is a small measure of good news to report. There has been a reduction of the track under 10 MPH temporary slow orders, but not enough to make a significant impact.

There may be some operating changes in store for the Hoosier State that could address some of the concerns relating to late departures from Indianapolis. For some time, Amtrak has contemplated wyeing the train near Union Station and parking the train overnight in the trainshed. Within the past two months, Amtrak has installed facilities that could be used to water the train at Union Station. This would make it possible to store the train there overnight. There is already 480-volt standby power available at the station. The train could be serviced and cleaned in the station, eliminating the time-consuming trip to and from Beech Grove. Cars deadheading to and from Amtrak's maintenance facility at Beech Grove could be

switched in and out at Union Station. This procedure was done in the days of the National Limited. Another advantage to leaving the train at Union Station would be to provide more rest for the train crews. This could open up the possibility for an earlier Hoosier State departure from Indianapolis, thus giving passengers the opportunity to spend a longer day in Chicago. It will be interesting to see what Amtrak decides to do regarding the Hoosier State. We will keep you advised of developments.

INDARP REPRESENTED IN MONON RAIL CORRIDOR DELIBERATIONS

INDARP has secured representation on a Citizen's Advisory Committee that is assisting the Department of Metropolitan Development of Indianapolis in determining the best permanent use of the Monon rail corridor. Recommendations will be made to the City-County Council in February, 1992.

At this stage, the following options are under consideration-- (listed in random order)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| -Busway/bikeway | -Greenway corridor/linear park |
| -Light rail transit | for non-motorized use |
| -Bridle trail | -Electrically powered elevated |
| -Nature preserve/arboretum | monorail/recreational trail |
| -Fitness trail | |

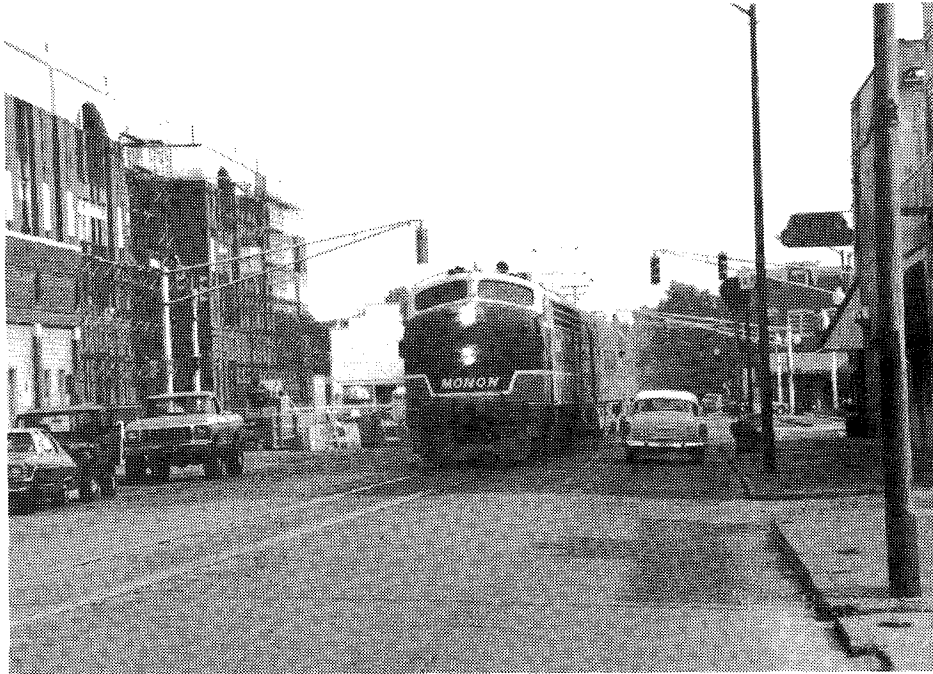
The city owns the corridor between 10th and 96th Streets. The land was acquired with federal money which would have to be repaid if the land is not used for transportation uses within ten years. The city is allowing "interim use" of the corridor, with the clear understanding that all such activities would terminate when a final recommendation for the use of the corridor is made. The city has gone on record that the use of a portion of the corridor for parking at the State Fair is not to be permanent in nature.

UPDATE ON NORFOLK SOUTHERN CORRIDOR

In the last edition of the IPL, we discussed the threat of potential abandonment of the Norfolk Southern (ex-Nickle Plate) line that runs from Indianapolis to Castleton, Fishers, Noblesville and further north. The Indiana Rail Road Company, which leases the line, has announced plans to terminate the lease on its November 30 expiration date. INDARP has learned that a consortium made up of on-line shippers and the Indiana Transportation Museum may make a bid to purchase the line. If the line were to be abandoned, the museum would be forced to relocate its operations.

Fairtrain '91 provided scheduled service again this year between Fishers and the State Fair. Track conditions between Fishers and Noblesville caused earlier plans to run to Noblesville to be canceled. The train made nine roundtrips August 16-18 and 23-25. Your newsletter editor rode the train and found the ride quality to be generally satisfactory. Ridership was reported to have been good.

Hoosiers are accustomed to street running in Lafayette by the Cardinal and Hoosier State, and the South Shore Line in Michigan City. During the State Fair, Noblesville was the site of street running as the Fairtrain was stored overnight at the Transportation Museum in Noblesville. The following photograph was taken in downtown Noblesville by Phil McGeath on August 25.



NEXT INDARP MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 5

The next regularly scheduled meeting of INDARP will take place on Saturday, October 5, in South Bend. Yes, we have checked and Notre Dame does not have a home game that day! While specific details still need to be worked out, our hope is to meet in South Bend Union Station and hear a presentation by its developer Kevin Smith. Exact details regarding location, time and program will be contained in a postcard mailing around the middle of September. This will be an excellent opportunity to see the facility that one day (hopefully) will be the Amtrak passenger station in South Bend.

ACTION ON HIGHWAY-TRANSIT REAUTHORIZATION BILL MOVES TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In the last edition of the IPL, we outlined the very favorable aspects of S. 1204, the highway-transit reauthorization bill passed by the U.S. Senate. Its counterpart in the House of Representatives, H.R. 2950, is somewhat disappointing. At this stage, the bill does not allow for the flexibility to shift highway funds to intercity rail. Also, the highway-transit funding ratio is not as favorable.

There is a good possibility that major parts of the bill will be rewritten after Labor Day, before it goes to the floor for a vote. The bill differs further from the Senate version in that it calls for a 5-cent increase in the gasoline tax. Ask your representative in the House to support a bill that creates as much flexibility as possible, specifically including intercity rail passenger and provides a better funding ratio for mass transit.

NEWS FROM BEECH GROVE

Amtrak has put 16 steam-heated cars up for sale. The cars have been moved to a location at the facility where they can be more conveniently observed by potential buyers. Most of the cars are 10-6 sleepers. Amtrak is required by federal law to stop discharging human waste on the right-of-way by October 15, 1996. Given the age of the cars, it has not been deemed cost effective to retrofit them with approved waste systems. We will have a more detailed look at Amtrak's attempts to deal with its "potty problems" in the next edition of the IPL.

There are now eight P-30 locomotives in un-serviceable storage at Beech Grove. The 706 and 709 were brought to Beech Grove in mid-July, and have already been cannibalized for parts to keep the remaining P-30s running.

The following turboliners are now being cannibalized for parts, power coaches #60 and 63 along with dinette # 81.

The locomotive shop was busy in mid-August as nine F-40s, five GP-40s, and one FL-9 were in for either heavy overhauls or repair of wreck damage.

LATE FLASH!!!- INDARP has learned that a replacement site has been found for the Amtrak passenger facility in Lafayette. It will be located in an existing business on Main Street near Fifth Street. The trains will stop at that location. The paperwork has been sent to Amtrak's real estate department for processing. We have no further information as to the exact location or the startup date.

--Hope to see you at our October 5th meeting in South Bend. Details will be mailed out around the middle of September.

--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, Indiana 46226. Newsletter editor is Phil McGeath.

--Annual dues are \$7.50 new members, \$10 regular renewal, \$5 spouse. Check or money order should be made payable to INDARP and sent to: INDARP, 5346 Chipwood Lane, Indianapolis, Indiana 46226.

--Due to space limitations, we are forced to omit the names, addresses and phone numbers of officers and board members. The list will be included in the next edition of the IPL.

Photo of INDARP members John Clark and Jim Kirwin taken at South Shore shops in Michigan City during June INDARP meeting.



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS
5346 CHIPWOOD LANE
INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA 46222

