



Norfolk Southern C44-9W No. 9345 leads train 36T, a Buffalo, N.Y., to Allentown, Pa., manifest train on a new steel arch span on Dec. 11. The arch replaces an iron truss bridge built by the Erie Railroad in 1875 and shown on the right.

Norfolk Southern Opens New Portageville Bridge in Western New York

Norfolk Southern began a new era on its Southern Tier line when the first train rolled across the new 963-foot steel arch bridge spanning the Genesee River.

The \$75 million bridge replaces the former Erie Railroad Portageville Bridge, an oft-photographed iron-and-steel landmark built in 1875. It stood more than 230 feet above the Genesee River in New York's Letchworth State Park.

"This is a very exciting day for Norfolk Southern and for the future of freight rail service in New York's Southern Tier region," NS CEO James A. Squires said in a statement.

The new span, built 75 feet south of the old truss bridge, allows NS to run industry-standard 286,000-lb. cars over the Southern Tier line, up from the current 273,000-pound limit. Trains can move across the bridge at 30 mph, up from 10 mph on the old span.

The project was funded by a combination of NS, federal, and state money. NS paid the lion's share of the cost by kicking in \$59.5 million.

The successful completion of this bridge is an excellent demonstration of how the public and private sectors can work together on freight transportation projects that generate significant public benefits and are vital to U.S. commerce," Squires says. "It's also a testament to Norfolk Southern's robust bridge program and the ingenuity of engineers and railroaders."

The 1875 bridge, the second built on the site, will be dismantled.

Bill Stephens - Trains Magazine

Schenectady Station Construction to Start

On Friday December 29, 2017, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the final construction phase of the Schenectady Station, that includes building a new station building, platforms, and connecting stairs and elevators, would start in early 2018.

"With construction set to start next month, New York State's investment in a new and improved Schenectady Rail Station will help the Electric City continue its renewal and serve as a key economic driver for the Capital Region. All across New York we are making record investments in our state's infrastructure in the process revitalizing communities and local economies. Once completed, this new rail station will help attract thousands of new visitors to Schenectady and the entire region," stated Gov. Cuomo in a press statement.

According to the Schenectady *Daily Gazette*, the final hold up was a review of the construction contract by the state comptroller's office led by Thomas DiNapoli, who completed the required review of the contract and approved it after Christmas. The office of Attorney General Eric Schneiderman had already reviewed and approved the contract before the winter holidays.

With these two reviews completed, the NYS Department of Transportation is now free to have Murnane Building Contractors of Plattsburgh start work. At a bid opening in October, Murnane, one of two bidders, submitted the apparent low construction bid at \$10,435,900. According to the Gazette, "such contracts are usually awarded within 45 days, but this review took longer because DOT officials weren't familiar with Murnane, which has done extensive work in the past for the state college system and other state agencies, but not for DOT."

The newspaper reported that construction of the station is expected to be finished by this November. For now, passengers coming to or leaving Schenectady are using a temporary station Amtrak installed on the north side of Liberty Street, which will serve as a newly paved parking lot and emergency egress from the platform when the station opens.

ESPA advises all using the largely open air temporary station to be fully prepared for the elements and to dress accordingly.

Benjamin Turon

EDITORIAL: Amtrak's Food Desert

Rail passenger service remains an essential travel mode for New Yorkers, especially on one of Amtrak's busiest routes that connects the Albany-Rensselaer station with New York City's Pennsylvania Station. So why for the past 12 years can't those fare-paying customers buy something to eat or drink on board on half of these trains? One can't even buy a bag of pretzels or a bottle of water.

The removal of food and beverage service on the local runs between New York City and Albany dates to 2005 when Congress, in its ongoing battle over subsidies to Amtrak, insisted any food service on trains should at least break even. This came just as the states were handed partial responsibility for maintaining service within their borders.

This is frustrating because other Amtrak trains that pass through the Capital Region en route to or from Vermont, Buffalo, Chicago or Montreal, still offer a variety of food options ranging from snacks and beverages (including beer and wine) to full meals.

It may seem frivolous to make a fuss about food or drink on a trip that is under three hours while the railroad industry confronts much bigger issues — a struggle to retain passenger service subsidies, a need for infrastructure improvements, and a deadline to fully implement Positive Train Control technology that can protect against the human errors that have led to too many deadly accidents in recent years. Certainly, all those issues are more consequential.

But amenities that make travel comfortable and convenient can help draw riders, and that is the key to financial stability for Amtrak. We of the Empire State Passengers Association have been outspoken on the unavailability of food and drink on the local Amtrak trains through the Hudson Valley. We know that other states that support Amtrak trains make it work.

Imagine food service cars that pass Hudson Valley vineyards and orchards offering food and beverages from New York State producers, an economic segment Gov. Andrew Cuomo often touts and supports with tax breaks. Plenty of public money is spent to enhance airports and improve highway rest stops, with the goal of supporting travelers. This passengers' association rightly asks that rail passengers get equitable treatment. A solution rests in the hands of the state Department of Transportation, which sets service levels for in-state Amtrak routes. The state may need to persuade unions that have opposed bringing in an outside food vendor that their long-term benefit rests in growing ridership. Studying other states' solutions may well yield a workable plan for New Yorkers.

Trains are an important option for both business and leisure travelers, so it's in the state's economic interest to ensure that they are an enjoyable option as well.

Albany Times Union

Cross-Border Rail Pre-Clearance Deal Approved

In December, Canada approved a pre-clearance agreement that expands the ability of border agents from the USA and Canada to collaborate, including greatly reducing delays at the border to rail passengers, by instituting preclearance for Amtrak trains in Montreal Central Station. President Obama signed a bill approving expansion of pre-clearance procedures in December 2016, but it wasn't until December 2017 that Canada's Parliament followed suit.

Amtrak already has a pre-inspection site in Vancouver for its state supported *Cascades* service to Seattle. Once pre-clearance is operational in Montreal, with the construction of a newly shared US-Canada Customs facility in that city's Central Station, the *Adirondack* will no longer need to stop at the border in Rouses Point. Also, it will be a catalyst to extend the *Vermont* from its current terminal at St. Albans in northern Vermont to Montreal.

Garry Douglas, president of the North Country Chamber of Commerce, told WMAC Northeast Public Radio that,

“everybody would like to see faster rail service. But if we could resolve the historic need for the train coming out of Montreal and then stopping at Rouses Point (for an hour and a half or more at times) while U.S. Customs agents have to go on and clear people on the train there at the border, now we'll be able to have U.S. Customs at Central Station in downtown Montreal. They will clear people when they board the train. There may still need to be a perfunctory stop at the border, but that long stoppage will be eliminated and we will facilitate rail travel between our two countries.”

Ed Courtemanch, Amtrak's Director of Operation Service Planning (who spoke on this subject several years ago at the Annual ESPA Meeting and Lunch), stated to WMAC, “we cross the border at three locations in two directions each and there are six variations of what happens. And that is because there is no standard process and the border agencies would really like to have a standard process. But there is no standard process because the physical configuration and the operation at each location is different.”

Courtemanch cautioned, “first of all it won't be right away. Now that the legislation has been signed in both countries, the border agencies can proceed to write their design specifications and regulations for pre-clearance. It will really advance the state-of-the-art for rail travelers going across the border and open up new travel possibilities.” Courtemanch gave a timeline of up to three years to getting preclearance at Montreal for Amtrak.

Benjamin Turon

In Memoriam: Amtrak Cascades Deadly Derailment

Early morning on December 18, 2017, Amtrak *Cascades* Train 501 experienced a deadly derailment south of Tacoma, Washington killing three passengers, including two lifelong rail enthusiasts: James Hamre and Zack Willhoite.

Hamre, 61, was retired from Washington State DOT, the son and grandson of railway employees, he travelled widely riding and promoting train travel. Zack Willhoite, 35, was a close friend of Jim and worked as an information technology specialist for Pierce Transit in Lakewood, Washington, where, according to that agency's statement, "he was deeply appreciated and admired by his colleagues".

Both men were volunteers for the Washington State's railroad passenger advocacy group *All Aboard Washington*. Hamre also served on the board of directors of Rail Passengers Association (NARP). The *New York Times* quoted Harvey Bowen, president of *All Aboard Washington*: "I think it would be a disservice to them to do anything but redouble our efforts toward the goals that we shared. Jim would be very disappointed if anyone would not ride the train or not expand railway service because of this."

On the behalf of ESPA, from the Mid-Atlantic, to our fellow rail advocates and friends on the shores of the Pacific: "Our sincerest condolences to Jim and Zach's families, friends, and other fellow lovers of trains who worked and rode the rails with them. May the yeomen's work that Jim and Zach did to improve and expand our passenger rail services in this great land be continued evermore vigorously by others who will keep them in their memories and hearts.

*Officers & Coordinators
Empire State Passenger Association*

Vermont Rail Action Network Annual Meeting

Vermont Rail Action Network (VRAN) held their Annual Dinner Meeting in Rutland, Vermont on November 8, 2017, after missing a year. A special train to the event ran from Burlington to Rutland. At the meeting it was made clear that Green Mountain State continues to move forward on improving their passenger and freight rail services.

VRAN, a non-profit founded in 1972, has worked to modernize and upgrade the Vermont rail network for passengers and freight with the goal to strengthen the state's economic climate by improving rail infrastructure, and expand the availability of cost-effective rail transportation. The organization actively works with, and is supported by, a diverse group of stakeholders including rail freight haulers and shippers, Amtrak, public transit providers, state and federal agencies, elected officials, community leaders, and rail entrepreneurs.

A major state rail project supported by VRAN is on the verge of being completed: the extension of the current NYC-Rutland *Ethan Allen Express* to Burlington, via Middlebury and Vergennes. For several years the Vermont Rail System and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), using state and federal money including USDOT Tiger grants, have been upgrading the existing tracks, signalling, and grade crossings along that route, with the service expected to start before the end of the decade.

Current projects that VRAN is advocating: station upgrades, including improvements in accessibility; better street signage directing people to the Amtrak stations; and starting a volunteer station host program. The organization supports policy changes to promote the development of trackside property with rail access. VRAN is also working with Amtrak and VTrans to offer Vermont food, beverages, and snacks onboard the state supported Vermonter and Ethan Allen trains.

Rutland Mayor David Allaire (R), VRAN Treasurer, started the event by welcoming the attendees to his city and annual dinner. Vermont Governor Phil Scott (R) talked of state government's continuing efforts of upgrading passenger and freight rail. In terms of policy there has been a seamless transition from the Democratic administration of former Gov. Peter Shumlin.

Democratic Vermont State Senator Dick Mazza of Grand Isle, long a supporter of the rail industry, received the Jim Jeffords Award from his close friend, Republican Gov. Scott, who before running for office had worked at his Lake Champlain marina. Christopher Parker, former long-time VRAN Executive Director, received the Herb Ogden Rail Advocacy Award presented by Lee Khan, Chair Principal of Permitting Partners, founder of ChampP3, and Chair of VRAN Board.

Ben Elmore of Champlain Valley Custom Models and a new VRAN Board Member discussed his efforts to redesign and launch a new website for VRAN. Charlie Moore, former RailAmerica VP (New England Central) and VRAN Board Member, discussed his efforts as President of AllEarth Rail to launch a private-public partnership to expand passenger rail service in Vermont utilizing a fleet of Budd RDC rail cars acquired from Dallas Area Rapid Transit. David Blittersdorf, AllEarth Renewables CEO and founder of AllEarth Rail LLC, also briefly talked about the new passenger rail venture.

Debra Sachs, Executive Director of Net Zero Vermont and VRAN Board Member; Jim Mathews, President of the Rail Passengers Association (NARP); and Joe Flynn, Vermont Sec. of Transport, addressed the attendees. Larry Lewack, VRAN's new Executive Director, was also present.

A band played Big Band renditions of classic railroad theme songs throughout the event. The event ended with a raffle conducted by Brad Worthen, VRAN Vice-Chair, and Mr. Lewack, of a rail painting print. Many then boarded the special train back to Burlington.

A gallery of photos of the event can be viewed on the ESPA Facebook page.

Benjamin Turon

Help ESPA Go Green and Save \$\$

Members providing their e-mail address are entitled to the full-color, electronic version of the ESPA Express newsletter at the same time we forward the paper version to the printer. Receive the newsletter one to two weeks earlier than by mail! Our postage and printing cost savings will give ESPA more resources to further its passenger rail advocacy mission.

**Please send your e-mail address to: rwlenz@gmail.com
ESPA will NOT share your information with anyone**

Empire Service 50th Anniversary

At the Albany-Rensselaer Rail Station on Monday December 4, 2017, a two-hour ceremony was held to mark the half century of 'Empire Service' between New York City and Upstate NY.

Held on the second-floor balcony overlooking the main concourse where masses scurried to and from their arriving and departing trains. Several dozen people attended including several past ESPA presidents and current ESPA President Gary Prophet. Speeches were given, and light refreshments and sandwiches were on hand including a 50th Anniversary cake complete with the current service logo.

On December 3, 1967, *Empire Service* was officially inaugurated by the New York Central in its last days before the ill-fated Penn Central merger. The first train left Grand Central Terminal at 8:30 that Sunday morning from Track 36.

Based on research done by the New York Central's Passenger Department in the mid-1950s, its conclusions and recommendations pioneered many of the concepts of intercity service long seen in Europe and Asia since the 1960s. *Empire Service* was putting theory and plans finally into action. It was the creation of what we now call in America "Corridor Service", a timetable pattern of (relatively) fast and frequent passenger trains scheduled at regularly intervals through the day.

The first attempt to put the theory of replacing long-haul overnight trains with faster regional day trains into practice was the aborted "Travel Tailored Schedules" of 1956, which was axed due to opposition from the Freight Department which didn't want the interference that a fleet of short but fast passenger trains could create.

The suicide of the New York Central's pro-passenger chairman Robert R. Young, who had a controlling interest in the railroad thru the Allegheny Corporation in 1956, put further such plans on hold as Central's president Alfred E. Perlman focused on downsizing and modernizing the freight side of the business.

Mr. Young had vigorously championed passenger service at the C&O Railroad and then the NYC. This included the construction and service testing of the proto-Talgo lightweight "Train X", built by the Pullman Company that the Central ran in the Midwest from 1956 to 1960 as the Xplorer.

The technology and ideas developed in Train X would be further developed in the US & Canada, such as CN/VIA Rail's successfully run United Aircraft Company's (UAC) TurboTrain, in corridor service between Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal during the 1970s. Today, Talgo Trains used in Amtrak's Pacific Northwest Cascades corridor service are their descendants, albeit from a Spanish manufacturer.

The railroad into the 1960s slowly consolidated its intercity passenger service, mostly long-distance trains stretching from New York and Boston to Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis, and Chicago.

In 1966, President Perlman surprised many when he ordered the Central's Technical Research Laboratory at

Collinwood Yards (Cleveland) to build a jet powered train in 30 days. The result was the "M-497" which, on July 23, 1966, set a still standing North American rail speed record of 183.85-mph.

Seen as a publicity stunt following in the tradition of the railroad's famous *Engine 999* which powered the *Empire State Express* to 112.5-mph in May 1893, the 1966 effort was a serious scientific experiment. Strapping two surplus US Air Force jet engines to the roof of a Budd RDC rail car was the most expedient way of gathering important data on the effects of very high speed running on existing track structure. This was done at a time when "high speed rail" was very much in the news. The Japanese *Tōkaidō Shinkansen* had begun operation in 1964 with a top speed of 130-mph, and the French and British were increasing commercial revenue service speeds to 100-mph on upgraded existing mainlines.

Stateside, the book "Megalopolis Unbound: The Supercity and the Transportation of Tomorrow", by Rhode Island US Senator Claiborne Pell, was published in 1966 which promoted high speed rail as a solution to the problems of transport congestion, land use, and pollution in America's growing urban mega regions. Projects including the Pennsylvania Railroad's *Metroliner* and UAC's *TurboTrain* had started, funded in part by the High-Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965.

After the record run of the M-497, the railroad issued a press released laying out the details and purpose of the test project and the Central's vision of the future of intercity passenger rail. In a July 27, 1966 article in the *New York Times*, Perlman laid out replacing the existing long-haul trains with high-speed shuttle trains that would operate between cities about no more than 200 miles apart. Perlman also announced plans to go before the then federal regulator, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC), to file for the termination of its long-distance trains, including the famous *Empire State Express* and *20th Century Limited*.

This brings us to the spring of 1966 when the railroad applied to the New York State Public Service Commission for its approval to combine several existing named trains in what would be, in actuality, a reduction in service.

The commission, according to Walter Zullig, who was then a young lawyer at the NYS Public Service Commission when the 'Empire Service' launched, declined approval. Thus the New York Central came back with a proposal to replace the existing service between New York City and Buffalo with a daily schedule of faster and regularly interval trains. Mr. Zullig spoke at the *Empire Service* 50th anniversary commemoration about his experiences.

According to Mike R. Weinman, then an operating management trainee with the New York Central, reminiscing to the *Albany Times Union*, Robert D. Timpane, then the railroad's assistant vice president, operating administration, took charge and touted this new operating plan as the future of rail passenger service to the skeptical Public Service Commission. "He practically had to pledge his firstborn to convince them," Weinman

recalled to the newspaper.

With the permission of the New York State Public Service Commission, the railroad, on December 3, 1967, consolidated 11 daily long-distance trains into 8 round-trips New York-Albany, 4 round-trips New York-Buffalo, and one additional round-trip Albany-Buffalo. One of the NYC-Buffalo trains continued beyond Buffalo Central Terminal onto Chicago (the no name successor to the *20th Century Limited*, predecessor to Amtrak's *Lake Shore Limited*). At Buffalo Central Terminal, a once daily connection to Toronto was provided by Canadian Pacific equipment (Budd RDCs) via the connecting TH&B Railway; and New York Central ran 3 daily trains to Chicago (via Toledo), and one to Detroit (via Fort Erie, Ontario).

Empire Service trains were shorter, faster, and cleaner, and in the new year started utilizing 40 renovated dedicated coaches and snack cars. Mr. Timpane oversaw the project and utilized management trainees to distribute timetables, and monitor the service. An advertising campaign was also undertaken to promote the new service to the traveling public. The result was an initial bump in ridership, and Weinman told the *Times Union* that it even made an operating profit.

However, into 1968 and after the long-planned Penn Central merger at the beginning of that year, things began to change. Ridership west of Albany fell so low by late 1968 that only an average of 40 passengers traveled daily west of Albany on each of the four corridor trains (the early morning train from Albany to Buffalo was dropped).

Big gains in ridership would have to wait until the Amtrak Era (starting in May 1971), due at first to the Energy Crisis of the 1970s, which made train travel more attractive due to high gas prices at the pump.

Following a big \$100 million plus investment in infrastructure by New York State from 1975 to 1991 that enabled doubling train frequencies and slashing travel times south of Albany in the early 1980s, ridership nearly doubled from 1975 to 1985 from about 700,000 to over 1.2 million. Amtrak at this time also introduced its French derived Rohr Turboliner gas turbine train-sets, giving the service a high-speed image as speeds increased to 110-mph in the Capital District.

Since then there has been few changes in the level and pattern of inter-city rail service that exists today in Upstate NY. The biggest change was the switch in 1991 from Grand Central to Penn Station after the opening of the Empire Connection, on a former freight line to the West Side of Manhattan.

Amtrak service was also extended to Niagara Falls, Toronto, Montreal, and Rutland. Several new stations have been built, and after the American Recovery and

Reinvestment Act of 2009, a combined \$942 million in federal and state money has been invested in the Empire Corridor.

What the future holds it is hard to say, but hopefully *Empire Service* will be taken to its logical conclusion: Fast, frequent, and reliable inter-city service.

There is no reason why, at least between New York and Albany, we cannot achieve reduced travel times and an increase in frequency of service west of Albany to Niagara Falls. We should make it so by building on the solid foundation of our predecessors. Make our *Empire Service* a model of what a "Higher Speed Rail" service can should be.

Benjamin Turon

PRIMARY SOURCES: New York Central Headlight magazine January 1968, "New York State's High-Speed Empire Corridor" by Louis Rossi, NYSDOT 1985, "Twilight of the Great Trains" by Fred Frailey, "New York Central and the Trains of the Future" by Geoffrey H. Doughty, "Flight of the M-497" by Hank Morris and Don Wetzell, and "At 50, Empire Service has covered a lot of ground" by Eric Anderson for the Albany Times Union.

New York State Amtrak Station Usage	Boardings + Alightings		Gain/ (Loss)	NYS Rank
	FY 2017	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY '17
Albany-Rensselaer	803,348	855,176	-51,828	2
Amsterdam	10,475	10,410	65	18
Buffalo-Depew	106,815	108,111	-1,296	7
Buffalo-Exchange St.	35,528	37,960	-2,432	14
Croton Harmon	46,057	45,685	372	12
Fort Edward	9,917	10,199	-282	19
Ft. Ticonderoga	1,770	2,262	-492	23
Hudson	217,970	205,919	12,051	3
New Rochelle	91,058	87,510	3,548	9
New York – Grand CT	23,838	Not Used	23,838	16
New York – Penn. Sta.	10,397,729	10,436,909	-39,180	1
Niagara Falls	31,169	29,647	1,522	15
Plattsburgh	13,711	13,423	288	17
Port Henry	2,488	2,395	93	22
Port Kent	657	565	92	26
Poughkeepsie	102,070	101,536	534	8
Rhinecliff	201,667	202,406	-739	4
Rochester	127,203	124,901	2,302	6
Rome	8,580	9,208	-628	20
Rouses Point	1,253	1,276	-23	25
Saratoga Springs	36,835	37,068	-233	13
Schenectady	54,388	56,257	-1,869	11
Syracuse	131,881	128,476	3,405	5
Utica	59,868	59,170	698	10
Westport	5,699	5,693	6	21
Whitehall	1,638	1,776	-138	24
Yonkers	27,009	25,322	1,687	15
Total New York Usage	12,550,621	12,599,260	-48,639	



Delaware & Ulster Railroad News

At the beginning of 2017 the Delaware & Ulster Railroad, after having operating difficulties the previous two years, found that the railroad was shut down with locomotive failures, along with facing other serious challenges before it could operate again, including the need to rebuild a bridge. Determined to re-open the railroad, Nancy Gallup, the Board Chairman of the Catskill Revitalization Corporation, in March asked Wes Coates (Amtrak's retired former General Manager at Rensselaer) to accept the position of Executive Director of the parent organization and General Manager of the D&U in a voluntary capacity. Within a few weeks, the railroad work force was re-called from being laid off, locomotives were under repair, along with the start of an aggressive track program. Before the first train operated, the team at the D&U cleaned and the polished their streamliner, "the Rip Van Winkle Flyer." Soon the railroad was off to start of a new era and the first revenue train operated on Friday, June 24th. During the Summer, the team at the D&U introduced weekday trains, hosted growing ridership, that saw the Autumn season kick off with a September Steam Weekend. Participation in an "I Love NY" commercial saw interest in the railroad skyrocket so, that over 3,000 passengers would ride on the D&U in the month of October. Building on their charter dinner train business, a highly successful "Lunch in the Dome" was introduced for the general public to experience their dining car service. With attention to every detail, including white linen tablecloths, flowers on each table, and a talented catering company, by the end of the season over 1,000 passengers had been served in the railroad's dining cars. More significantly the team at the D&U doubled the ridership from the previous year, and increased the days and trains operated to new records for over the 30 year history of the railroad. Now looking ahead for 2018, the Delaware & Ulster is moving forward aggressively with its strategic vision, and will be working to expand its "Dining Car" operations, operating additional trains, hosting their entertaining Train Robbery Barbeques, and featuring a Spring and September Steam Weekends. The Board of the Catskill Revitalization Corporation is committed to growing economy and tourism in Delaware County and the Catskills, and proving the dynamic positive impact tourist railroads can have on their local communities. Train operations will begin on May 12, 2018, as the Delaware & Ulster Railroad celebrates National Train Day. Located in Arkville, New York, information on the Delaware & Ulster Railroad can be followed on Facebook or at durr.org

Wes Coates / Andy Cabal

Opinion

The New York Times has long come to blow the whistle on the senseless plan to replace the Portal Bridge – Amtrak's Northeast Corridor movable bridge across the Haversack River in the New Jersey Meadowlands.

This century-old swing bridge, like the vast majority of railway structures built in the early 1900's in the heyday of the industrial revolution, should not be replaced simply because it has passed its hundredth birthday. Needed is a careful analysis of the structural condition of each of the nation's railway bridges and a solid benefit cost-analysis of the consequences of alternative bridge repair strategies.

In the case of the Portal Bridge, one option worth considering is to "fix" the bridge in the "classic" position and live with a more limited 23 foot clearance above mean high water for navigation. This would permanently deal with the concerns about the reliability of a movable bridge. The extremely low level of marine traffic on this reach does not justify the two to four billion dollar investment in a new bridge with a higher clearance. When the mechanism of a nearby movable bridge failed a decade ago, marine traffic, consisting primary of partially treated Bergen County sewage sludge bound for the Passaic Valley treatment plant adjacent to Newark Airport, was diverted to tankers on the nearby NJ Turnpike. About 25 truck loads a day were added to the 200,000 vehicles using this 12-lane freeway without any significant impact. A careful analysis would almost certainly show that "carbon footprint" of constructing a costly new bridge would far exceed the emissions resulting from the added truck traffic on the turnpike.

An executive order at the Federal level would allow transport agencies to focus their resources on the region's most critical need – doubling cross-Hudson rail capacity, particularly in light of the gloomy outlook for increased Federal aid.

George Haikalis is a transportation planner and a Life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Lost in Penn Station? Amtrak Has the App

Amtrak launched the FindYourWay app, a new, real-time customer information app exclusively for use inside New York's Penn Station. The app provides real-time gate, train, and boarding information for Amtrak trains, and also helps you navigate the station to find restrooms, exits, ATMs, and restaurants. FindYourWay is currently available for free download in both the Apple and Android app stores.

Amtrak tapped Zyter to place approximately 300 "beacons" throughout Penn Station. These beacons enable proximity sensing, communicating with the FindYourWay app via Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology. The app will share relevant directions and information to nearby points of interest within the station based on your proximity to a beacon.

FindYourWay deactivates itself once you leave the station, and will automatically reactivate the next time you enter the station. While the app currently only serves Penn Station, Amtrak is considering bringing FindYourWay to other high-traffic stations. In the future, potential updates to the app may feature station deals, reminders, and rewards.



38th Annual Meeting
of the
Empire State Passengers Association
and
National Association of Railroad Passengers

Saturday, March 10, 2018 11:00am – 4:00pm

Key Hall At Proctors State Street Schenectady, NY

*The Entrance To Key Hall Is From Inside The Proctors Theater Arcade (Opposite The Box Office)
Two Blocks From The Amtrak Station – Free Parking Available In Lots Behind Proctors*

Confirmed Speaker:

Bruce Becker – Vice-President – National Association of Railroad Passengers

Invited Speakers:

From Amtrak, The Long Island Railroad and more...

Full Program Registration Includes The Full Meeting And Lunch...

**Full Early Bird Discount Registration - \$36.00 Per Person
(Registrations Must Be Post Marked By February 28th)**

**Full Late Registration - \$40.00 Per Person
(ALL Registrations Post Marked After February 28th)**

Meeting ONLY (No Lunch) Registration - \$22.00 Per Person

Please complete and return this form with your check for the appropriate registration fee, to be received NO later than March 5, 2018. (NO cancellations after this date).

Please Note: Written confirmation of your meeting registration and payment having been received is **NOT** provided unless specifically requested (i.e. tickets are not mailed to you in advance of the meeting). **Meeting registration begins in the Key Hall foyer at 10:00am.**

Please make checks payable to '**ESPA**' and mail to:

**Gary Prophet
Empire State Passengers Association
86 Cedar Lane
Ossining, NY 10562**

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Address: _____

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2018 ESPA Working Group & Meeting

ALL ESPA members (and other interested persons) are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact President Gary Prophet at thegp@aol.com for more information or if you are planning on attending a meeting. Advance registration is required!

All Meetings are 12:00n to 4:00pm

**March 10, 2018: Annual Meeting – Schenectady,
at Proctors**

Check www.esparail.org, for the most current information on meeting times and venues...ALL dates, locations and times are subject to change...

ESPA/NARP Member

If you are a member of both ESPA and NARP you can save \$5 when renewing your ESPA membership.
(Renew for \$19 instead of the regular \$24).



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ESPA MEMBERSHIP NEW OR RENEWAL

The Empire State Passengers Association is a volunteer network of people working to improve intercity rail, mass transit and bus service in New York State.

- Introductory membership (\$10.00 for one year)
- Renewal membership (\$24.00 per year)
- Renewal - Student, Senior, Fixed-Income (\$12.50 per year)
- Family membership (\$30.00)
- Sustaining membership (\$50.00)*
- Patron membership (\$75.00)*
- Corporate membership (\$100.00)*
- Lifetime membership (\$300.00)*

Member
Number _____

Yes send Pin

Please make checks/money orders payable to ESPA and mail to ESPA c/o Andrew Cabal, P.O. Box 434, Syracuse, NY 13209. *Premium membership can receive ESPA pin.

**Check www.esparail.org, for the most current
information on meeting times and venues...**

***** Stay in Touch with ESPA Via Facebook at
www.facebook.com/espa**

Send news items and "Letters to the Editor" to: Robert Lenz, Editor, 10531 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, Tel: 716-759-2315.
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