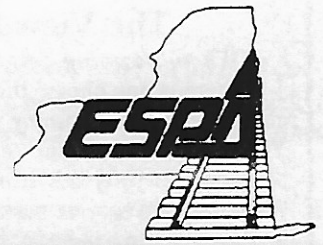


# The ESPA EXPRESS

NEWS FROM THE EMPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.trainweb.org/espa>



## WORKING FOR A MORE BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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March/April 2005

### ESPA RESPONDS TO BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE OPERATING SUPPORT FOR AMTRAK

*On February 8, 2005, ESPA issued a statement to the media, which included the followed...*

The Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA) is gravely concerned over the Bush Administration's proposed zero funding level for Amtrak starting in October 2005. If enacted, this would immediately shut-down the nation's intercity passenger rail system and very likely end ALL passenger rail service in New York State north of Poughkeepsie. Trains to be eliminated include the popular Albany to New York Hudson Valley service and those serving Syracuse, Buffalo, Niagara Falls, Montreal and many points in between.

The Administration's proposal calls for the states to pay the full cost of any services they desire to retain, but with New York facing its own severe budget constraints; it would be very difficult for the State to fully fund the services currently provided by Amtrak. The Administration's proposal acknowledges that longer distance trains, including the Lake Shore Limited that links New York with Chicago would disappear entirely.

The Bush Administration proposal appears to be out of touch with the views of New York State citizens. A Marist Institute poll conducted several years ago found that 82% of voters throughout the state believed that having improved and modernized intercity passenger train service is at least as important as having good highways and airports

The loss passenger rail service as a public transportation option would directly effect twenty-one communities across the state where Amtrak trains currently stop. Nearby localities, whose residents use these stations would also be affected. Many of the towns and cities affected, including Albany, have spent millions of dollars to upgrade their rail stations in recent years.

Amtrak's 2004 ridership across New York State totaled 1,661,125 passengers with another 8,724,232 passengers using New York City's Pennsylvania Station for Amtrak travel. An Amtrak shutdown would have an immediate and dire effect on the quality of life of millions of New Yorkers.

The loss of Amtrak service in New York State would have a widespread economic effect beyond the actual loss of a vital public transportation option. Over 2,000 Amtrak employees, with total wages of over \$96 million a year, reside in the state. In addition, direct expenditures by Amtrak for goods and services in New York total over \$49 million a year.

"If the service is stopped, it will be almost impossible to revive it" according to Bruce B. Becker. (Cont'd on page 2)



### Sweeney Receives President's Award at ESPA Annual Meeting

ESPA President Bruce Becker presented Congressman John Sweeney with the ESPA President's award for his work on maintaining funding for Amtrak at the ESPA-NARP Region II Annual meeting in Schenectady on March 12. Congressman Sweeney, (R., Clifton Park), who represents much of the Capital District, is the first Congressman to address ESPA in many years. This year he begins serving as Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, a position he said he fought hard to get. He has emerged as one of Amtrak's "Champions" in Congress, which he said "makes me feel like a "lone wolf."

"The future has never been more in doubt," he said; "We must have a defense formed as quickly as possible—there is really strong opposition to rail service, and to Amtrak in particular." Sweeney said the differences between those who say we need a national system and those who say otherwise, or that it ought to be privatized, "are so severe that we can't agree. We've created an environment where we're willing to let it collapse, then we'll rebuild it. Many are proposing bankruptcy. If Amtrak goes into bankruptcy it will wreak havoc in New York and elsewhere in the nation."

(Cont'd on page 3)

### Spring Empire Corridor Schedule Changes

Empire Corridor schedules will be changing on April 25, with several positive improvements planned, including:

\* Train #284 will run one hour earlier eastbound from Niagara Falls, arriving at New York at approximately 1:30pm. This earlier timing, with arrival at Albany- Rensselaer of approximately 10:45am should help increase business travel from upstate points. In addition, same-day connections will be re-established to the southbound Silver Meteor, which will depart New York at 3:15pm

\* The westbound Lake Shore Limited will leave New York one hour later at 3:50pm. This will provide a later afternoon departure from New York City to upstate locations and also re-establish a connection with the northbound Silver Meteor.

\* The eastbound Maple Leaf will depart Toronto earlier, which should promote more consistent on-time operation across upstate New York.

**The View from the Cab...**

*"When the going gets tough, the tough get going"...*

If there is one phrase that aptly sums up the battle that lies ahead for us in the coming year, I truly feel this is it. With New York State passenger rail advocates facing formidable obstacles to progress from many sides and with the very future of train service across our state and nationwide in real jeopardy, there has never been a greater need for us to unite in support of our cause.

As was clearly stated by Congressman Sweeney at our recent Annual Meeting, the battle over Amtrak's continued existence and securing the funding which it needs, will be an extremely hard fought one this year. As ESPA has done many times over our 25-year history, we stand ready again do whatever is necessary to get our message out. As the timing of this need becomes clearer, the Officers and Coordinators will be calling on all ESPA members to help, both with financial resources and with the power of the pen and collective voice of our over 1,400 members.

Also in the year ahead, your Officers and Coordinators will be undertaking a number of initiatives to help insure our Association continues to grow and remains strong for the future, including...

- A significant membership drive this spring, utilizing targeted mailing lists of current New York State rail users.
- A re-design of the Association's printed materials and graphics will be completed.
- A re-launch of the Association's web site, which will include expanded capabilities for breaking news, member action alerts and enhanced public information. On-line membership applications, payments and renewals will also be available.

In closing, I wish to extend my thanks to all of the Association's Officers and Statewide Coordinators, who spend countless volunteer hours advancing our cause, and to each of you, the members of ESPA, who make our Association the finest state rail advocacy group in the country.

As always, I welcome your comments, critiques and suggestions, on how ESPA can better attain our goals. Don't hesitate to contact me at anytime. *Bruce B. Becker, President*

**ESPA Coordinator Positions Open**

The ESPA Regional Coordinator position for Long Island is currently vacant. ESPA members interested in being considered for this open position should contact Bruce Becker.

As information, the ESPA By-laws define the Regional Coordinator's positions as follows: "The Regional Coordinators shall report on membership activity in their respective regions and shall relate Association activities to the regions." Attendance at the bi-monthly Officers and Coordinators Meeting is encouraged.

**Amtrak Seeks ESPA's Input**

Amtrak's Empire District Superintendent, James Turngren, wants to hear of your New York State Amtrak travel experiences. Whether everything was great or if there was room for improvement, Jim welcomes our input, as he strives to provide the best possible service on the Empire Corridor. Please send your written trip reports and comments, including specific dates, train numbers and employee names as appropriate to:

James Turngren District Superintendent, Empire District  
Amtrak 525 East Street Rensselaer, NY 12144

Please also send a copy to Bruce Becker, so we can track trip experiences and follow up as necessary. Thanks for your help...

Dear Sir:

An article in the Buffalo News noted a 25% loss of Amtrak passengers west of Albany on the Empire Corridor. The prime factor was listed as the low cost Jet Blue fares to New York City. Although Jet Blue and other low cost carriers provide competition to Amtrak, two factors controlled by Amtrak may also be significant factors for the decline in passengers west of Albany.

First is the lack of same day connections for Florida and Georgia trains. Current schedules for Western and Central New York trains preclude same day connections for Florida and Georgia trains. With lodging and meals approaching \$200 a day per person in Manhattan, travel by Amtrak becomes prohibitively expensive. This in turn becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy that low cost air carriers are solely to blame for the reduced ridership west of Albany.

Second is the price structure for the Empire Corridor west of Albany. Full fare charges on Friday and Sunday discourage travel on these days. Passengers on Empire Corridor west of Albany are generally the discretionary or vacation travelers unlike the business travelers south of Albany and other parts of the Northeast Corridor. The region west of Albany is distinctively different culturally (more Mid western), and in travel customs from the rest of the Northeast Corridor. What may make good economic and marketing sense for the Boston and Washington market may be counter productive for the traveler west of Albany. *Dave Skoney*

**Small Groups Save Big with Amtrak**

This offer is valid for up to six passengers traveling together. The first two passengers are at regular (full) adult rail fare; passengers three through six will receive a 90 percent off the best available rail fare discount. See Amtrak web site for other details

**Canadian Pacific Track Program**

Canadian Pacific (CP) maintenance of way crews have a busy season of trackwork planned for the Amtrak *Adirondack* route between Schenectady and Rouses Point. 2005 work season efforts include: Surfacing- 60 track miles, new rail- 8 track miles, rebuilding 4 highway crossings.

CP anticipates completion of the sale of its line between Corinth and Saratoga Springs on the North Creek Branch sometime during 2005. The Town of Corinth is taking the lead role as purchaser of the line. The intention is to have passenger service on the branch connecting with existing Amtrak service at Saratoga Springs.

*Ben Gottfried*

**ESPA responds (Cont'd from page 1)**

Empire State Passengers Association President; "This is not something you can close down in a bad year and then bring it back when times are better".

Loss of rail passenger service in Central and Western New York will be a particular blow to a region that has struggled economically. Amtrak trains are especially valuable for the expanding population of older people who find driving intimidating and a loss of rail service will deprive upstate colleges and universities of a competitive advantage, Becker said. He also pointed out that trains use far less fuel than cars and planes, cause much less pollution and provide an escape from the increasing congestion in those modes.

Becker strongly urged citizens of New York to contact their Congressional representatives and President Bush and let them know that this attempt to eliminate funding for AMTRAK is unacceptable.

## Committee Heads Change in Congress

Both the House and Senate have changed the subcommittee structure of the key Appropriations Committees that determine Amtrak funding, and each subcommittee has a new Chairman. As we hinted in our last issue, Ernest Istook, one of the most vitriolic Amtrak haters in Congress, is out, having been demoted to vice chairmanship of another committee. The new House transportation subcommittee will now prepare appropriations for housing and the District of Columbia as well as transportation and the treasury Department.

Istook's replacement is Joe Knollenberg, who represents a Detroit suburban district. According to John De Lora, a Michigan NARP Boardmember, "Knollenberg has not shown signs of being friendly to Amtrak, and is philosophically opposed to subsidies," though he has supported funding for highways. Hopefully he will be more open-minded than Istook. Three Amtrak trains each make three stops in his district.

Bill Young of Florida, who previously chaired the full Appropriations committee, has been replaced by Jerry Lewis, of Redlands, California, a suburb near San Bernardino. Lewis has helped secure funding for improvements at the San Bernardino station, used primarily by Metrolink commuter trains, but also by Amtrak's Southwest Chief. According to the Almanac of American Politics, Lewis has a long tradition of bipartisanship with Democrats but has tended not to buck President Bush. These tendencies may contradict each other when the Amtrak appropriation comes up. His role will become key in negotiations with the Senate; it was at this level that Young was able to mitigate cuts proposed by Istook.

In the Senate, Richard Shelby, (Ala.), a longtime Amtrak critic, has been replaced by Sen. Chris Bond (Mo.), another Amtrak foe. Senator Patty Murray (D., Wash.) will retain her position as Ranking Minority Member of this subcommittee. She has been a key to adequate funding for Amtrak when both President Bush and the House have proposed shut down levels, and she will likely play a key role again this year.

Steven LaTourette of Ohio has replaced Jack Quinn as head of the Transportation and Infrastructure Rail Subcommittee, which is responsible for overall legislation concerning Amtrak's operations. Like Quinn, who retired last year, LaTourette is a strong supporter of rail passenger service. But it remains to be seen whether this committee can actually get pro-Amtrak legislation out on the floor under current House leadership.

*Frank Barry*

## TEA-LU Passes House with \$100 Billion for HSR

On March 10 the House passed a replacement for the TEA-21 highway/transit legislation, which expired in September 2003. The new "Transportation Equity Act—a Legacy for Users" (TEA-LU), guarantees \$284 billion over 6 years for highways and transit—a 42% increase over its TEA-21 predecessor. The bill also authorizes \$100 million per year for high-speed rail corridor development and technology improvement from 2006-2013. However while this is very encouraging, these funds are not guaranteed, but must be appropriated by Congress each year—a difficult step for rail projects. As of press time the Senate had yet to approve its version of the bill.

*Frank Barry*

## Sweeney Receives (Cont'd from page 1)

The status quo can't continue, Sweeney said, but we must continue the Northeast Corridor and "we simply have to do a better job of explaining why we want a national system." Congress has failed to provide a vision of what rail service ought to exist, he said.

Sweeney believes step one is to get an objective inventory of Amtrak's assets in the Northeast Corridor and elsewhere. This should indicate what condition they're in and what condition they should be in. This will lead us to develop a standard for determining what's needed and what isn't, he said.

"I'm willing to commit my own district's money to develop a plan to grow the system, make it vibrant," he said. "This area needs to be connected to the rest of the world as vibrantly as it can be." Sweeney said it is important to develop a process for funding and improving less efficient lines.

"I don't think we can keep on simply saying no to those who want change—that's a recipe for disaster in the long term," Mr. Sweeney concluded. "We have to come up with a plan for something better. And I need your help in doing this."

ESPA officers will be in touch with Mr. Sweeney in the coming weeks. Mr. Sweeney was also interviewed by several TV networks and news reporters.

**David Johnson**, Assistant Director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), said Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta is getting a cool reception from the media in the cities he has visited in his campaign to "reform" Amtrak. NARP has set up a Fact Check page on its website to counter inaccurate statements by Mineta and others. One such claim is that Amtrak could quickly enter bankruptcy and go through a reorganization that would lead to elimination of inefficient trains. Johnson said this would not be like an airline reorganization or a "time-out" bankruptcy. "This would be a Chapter 7 bankruptcy; operations would stop." He said a bankruptcy judge would be put in charge whose chief obligation would not be to Amtrak employees, customers or even taxpayers, "but to Amtrak's creditors."

Regarding Mineta's assertion that long distance trains are running empty and wasting money, Johnson said that in fact the long distance trains averaged 170 passengers per train mile in 2004, which was 27% higher than short distance trains. If the Auto Train is removed, the average is over 200. Long distance trains produced only 42% of Amtrak's train miles but 48% of its passenger miles, Johnson said. He pointed out that long distance ridership was up by 3.3% and corridor ridership up 4.4% last year "in spite of major disruptions including hurricanes, fires and extensive trackwork." Overall, Amtrak ridership has been increasing steadily for the last 8 years, he noted.

Johnson said another misrepresentation is that Amtrak wastes taxpayer money and no other form of transportation is subsidized. Last year, he said, 37% of the federal aviation budget came from general revenue, in addition to taxes paid by the airlines and their passengers. More than 41% of highway funding came from non-user sources, including fifteen per cent from general revenue. Other funds came from bond issues and other sources.

Johnson reiterated the importance of contacting Members of Congress and gave the following tips:

1) Don't overlook local and state officials on federal issues. A call from your mayor or your state legislator will get your Congressman's attention.

(Cont'd on page 4)

2) Thank elected officials who are supportive—they need reinforcement. Sometimes thanks is more important than requesting support in the first place.

3) Keep letters short—no more than a page, or 4-5 paragraphs for e-mails.

4) Explain why your representative should care about your issue.

5) Don't try to cover more than one issue in your communication. Send other messages for other issues.

6) Don't ever insult the person you're writing to.

7) Personalize your letter; include your own experiences. Don't just forward a form letter.

8) Always include your U.S. mailing address to prove you are a constituent.

9) If you get a form letter in response, respond to it. That will increase the likelihood that a staff person will review your letter and compose a personal response.

10) Fax is the most effective way to reach members of Congress, Johnson said. Regular letters to officials in Washington still get screened for anthrax and may never get through. Such letters should go to the district office. Original E-Mails are read; forwarded form letters are not.

**Larry Malski** Executive Director of The Lackawanna County Rail Authority spoke about recent progress and developments regarding renewed passenger service to Scranton. Mr. Malski responded to recent published criticisms that the project lacked sufficient riders. Newspaper stories in the Scranton area focused on study data, which indicated only 45 riders a day would use the service from the city of Scranton to New York City. Malski said a more realistic figure would be 3000 riders a day over the entire route with 10-12 trains daily in each direction.

Malski estimates a very respectable fare box recovery ratio for the Lackawanna route service in the 60%-70% range. He noted that very few new start proposals can boast such a high figure. New Jersey Transit and Metro North operate in this range for their well-established routes, which makes this project all the more appealing.

With respect to transit times between Scranton and New York (Hoboken), Malski informed the crowd that a running time of 2-1/2 hours was called for in the engineering study. The Lackawanna Railroad's best ever running times were in the 3-hour range.

Mr. Malski went on to say the successful Pennsylvania-New Jersey coalition used in the early phases of the Scranton-New York proposal could work for reintroduction of passenger service to the Binghamton gateway. He felt that a feasibility study would be required to advance any passenger service beyond Scranton. He said the meetings held in Binghamton during 2004 were a productive beginning to the process of bringing the necessary stakeholders to the table to undertake a new start proposal for New York's Southern Tier.

**Jim Turngren**, Amtrak's new Empire Division Superintendent, described difficulties Amtrak is facing in New York and his attempted response. Serious issues affecting business and revenue include on time performance, on board service announcements, employee attitude and cleanliness of equipment. On time performance continues to be difficult—CSX is now handling nearly twice as many freight trains as it did just a few years ago and it will be doing extensive track maintenance this summer. So 20-25 minutes will be added to schedules west of Albany to compensate. The Vermont Railroad has not been able to maintain its tracks adequately

and the Ethan Allen is down to 30MPH on the Rutland branch. Amtrak is providing used ties to help. The Maple Leaf will leave Toronto one hour later eastbound to compensate for increased delays crossing the border into the U.S.

Turngren said CSX manifest freight schedules will force Amsterdam and Rome to lose some train service. Amsterdam will be served by only two trains a day instead of three, and Rome will lose one westbound stop on weekends.

Amtrak is providing training to improve performance and reduce employee injuries, Turngren said.

The meeting adjourned after the President's report and election of officers.

*Frank Barry and Ben Gottfried*

## Ridership Numbers in for Airport Rail Links

The Port Authority of NY and NJ has released information on 2004 ridership on its Airtrain rail links to Newark-Liberty and JFK Airports. Daily paid ridership on the JFK Airtrain has averaged 8,500 split fairly evenly between the Howard Beach connection (4,000) and the Jamaica connection (4,500). An additional 23,500 customers per day use the free circulator component between terminals at the Airport. Far fewer than projected airline employees are using the JFK Airtrain according to the PANYNJ, but this number may change when higher employee parking fees take effect in February. At Newark-Liberty Airport approximately 4,000 customers a day use the paid rail link with the Northeast Corridor and another 30,000-ride on-airport between terminals and parking garages.

*Steve Strauss (source Jan. 12th New York Times)*

## Bush Budget Funds East Side Access

The Bush budget defunds Amtrak but provides \$390 million for New York's East Side Access project to bring Long Island RR trains into Grand Central Terminal, and \$158 million for the Second Avenue Subway and other New York City projects. Of all rail projects submitted nationally, the East Side Access and Second Avenue Subway were the only two awarded the coveted "highly recommended" rating by the Federal Transit Administration. Funding for both was included in the TEA-LU Highway/Transit Bill that passed the House of Representatives on March 10th. The FTA expects ultimately to pay 30-35% of the total costs of these projects, leaving a heavy burden on the state, especially since Governor Pataki's budget falls far short of the MTA's capital needs.

Bush's proposed budget would also allow New York to use \$2 billion in unused 9/11 tax credits to develop a direct rail link from downtown to JFK Airport. However the Joint Committee on Taxation, a nonpartisan Congressional body that reviews budget and tax figures, recently determined that the city's federal tax credits were worth only \$727 million.

*Frank Barry*

## Receive the ESPA Express Earlier!

For members providing their e-mail address, the ESPA Newsletter will be-mailed at the same time it is forwarded to the printer. The postage savings can be used for passenger rail advocacy. E-mail address submitted will only be used by ESPA and not given to any other group. Please send your e-mail address to Robert Lenz, Newsletter Editor [www.rwlent@aol.com](mailto:www.rwlent@aol.com)

## Bush Administration Demands Amtrak "Reform"

The Bush Administration has threatened bankruptcy for Amtrak unless Congress adopts the following radical changes: lease the Northeast Corridor to a compact of states that would be responsible for managing the infrastructure and train operations; require individual states or interstate compacts to negotiate with the freight rail companies for new routes elsewhere; states would cover train operating subsidies while federal matching grants would help pay for infrastructure improvements. (from the President's 2006 Budget Message).

The budget makes no mention of long distance trains, which appear likely to disappear if the Bush proposal is enacted. Short distance routes would be threatened since many states face major budget deficits; New York and Michigan are especially vulnerable as both benefit from corridor service without contributing operating support. Last year's Empire Corridor operating deficit was \$30 million.

Previous U.S. presidents have tried to reform or cut back Amtrak but none have waged such an aggressive campaign. Secretary Mineta has traveled to Chicago, North Carolina and St. Louis, placed an Op Ed piece in the New York Times and spoken on National Public Radio to promote the Bush Amtrak agenda. Sign carrying protesters, including members of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), greeted him at all three locations and received good press coverage.

In another unprecedented step, Amtrak's own board of directors—all Bush appointees—declined to request any federal funds for next year, and wrote to Congress that Bush's figure of zero is the "right message." The letter said Amtrak is undergoing a strategic planning process, which will address "core issues relating to routes and equipment throughout our corridor and long distance operations." The process will focus on "Amtrak's structure, its present and future role in development of U.S. passenger rail, the increasingly important emerging role of the states...and opportunities for competition..." The letter noted that "our recommendations will...require a transition period...well into FY06...(and) will likely result in higher front end restructuring costs. (Route elimination, for instance, will often incur substantially greater labor related costs in early years than would route continuation, but such costs can be carefully phased and managed.)"

This appears to signal intent by Amtrak's own Board to eliminate routes—most likely long distance trains. It drew an immediate and sharp response from Senator Patty Murray (D., Wash) the ranking minority member of the Senate Appropriations sub-committee that oversees Amtrak funding: "By not submitting a grant request" she wrote, "you deliberately leave uncontested the Administration's request to ... push the railroad into bankruptcy...The Board is...ignoring its legal responsibility to Amtrak's financial condition. We must question whether these actions are consistent with your fiduciary duties as directors...The Congress and Amtrak's 25 million annual riders expect the Amtrak Board to responsibly and independently work to improve and sustain a safe and efficient passenger railroad—not to dutifully line up behind the reckless policies of the President that appointed them."

On February 14th, 35 Senators, including eight Republicans, signed a letter to Budget Committee leaders challenging the Administration's proposal and requesting adequate funds for

Amtrak "at a time when Amtrak is setting ridership records, and congestion at our airports and ...highways continues to increase." Both New York Senators Schumer and Clinton signed the letter, which was developed by Senators Frank Lautenberg (D, NJ) and Conrad Burns, (R., Mont).

On March 3rd, 21 House Republicans followed suit with a letter to House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle (R., Ia.), opposing the President's zero figure and urging sufficient funding for Amtrak in the House Budget Resolution. "The government directly or indirectly subsidizes all transportation in the United States," the letter said, "and rail gets the least support." Six of New York's nine Republican House Members signed: Sherwood Boehlert (Utica), John McHugh (Watertown), Sue Kelly (Katonah), Peter King, (Seaford, L.I.), John Sweeney (Clifton Park) and Jim Walsh (Syracuse). (Boehlert helped draft the letter.)

Mineta says the hard line approach is simply to force Congress to adopt the Administration's reforms—and that if they do, the administration will request \$1.5 to \$2 billion for the coming year in a supplemental appropriation. But the Administration's stated rationale is at best misinformed. Mineta's Chicago statement (Feb. 14), that "Amtrak...is...running trains nobody rides between cities nobody wants to travel between," seems utterly false. Last year even the much criticized Sunset Limited averaged 310 people per trip in each direction, according to Amtrak figures—a respectable load for most airplanes. And this train served 40 different places along the way—something no airplane could do. Amtrak figures do not show any train that no one rode.

Mineta claims that Amtrak's route structure has not changed or adapted over the years, but a 1978 Amtrak map clearly shows that it was far more extensive then than now. Some politically motivated routes that actually did carry few people have been dropped, along with strategic routes such as New York-Columbus-Indianapolis-St. Louis-Kansas City, and Chicago-Florida. A few new shorter routes have emerged.

The National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) and ESPA welcome the Administration's professed intent to offer federal funds as an incentive for states to invest in rail corridors. But this should be in addition to existing funds, not as a way to cut service on existing routes.

Please convey this message to your representatives in Congress.

*Frank Barry*

## NY Metro Area Rail Advocates Press for More Sensible Transit Plans

Downstate members of ESPA, in cooperation with advocates from New Jersey and Connecticut, meet regularly to coordinate efforts to press transit agencies to develop more cost-effective and affordable regional transit plans for the NY Metropolitan area. Why not become part of this effort?

Every third Wednesday of each month regional rail advocates meet in Lower Manhattan to work out plans for better regional transit. Meetings are scheduled for 6-8pm pm March 16, 2005, April 20, 2005 and May 18, 2005.

The Regional Rail Working Group meets at: Conference Room NYPD Downtown Center 104 Washington Street, just north of Rector Street Lower Manhattan For more information contact: George Haikalis Manhattan Coordinator 212-475-3394 or [geohaikalis@juno.com](mailto:geohaikalis@juno.com) visit our websites at [www.rrwg.org](http://www.rrwg.org) and [www.irum.org](http://www.irum.org)

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Susquehanna Region:	Ben Gottfried, 464 Dugan Road, Richfield Springs, NY 13439 .....	315-858-2164 .....
Manhattan: Transit/Commuter	George Haikalis, 1 Washington Square Village #50, NY, NY 10012-6635 .....	212-475-3394 .....
Manhattan: (Intercity Rail)	Steve Strauss, 245 W. 104 <sup>th</sup> Street, Apt 16F New York, NY .....	212-222-2796
Queens:	George Armeit, 176-12 76th Ave., Flushing, NY 11366 .....	718-969-7588 (W)
Long Island:	Position Vacant	
Westchester:	Barry Adler, 14 Soundview Avenue #3J, White Plains, NY, 10606 .....	914-946-9523 .....
Rockland:	Orrin J. Getz, 5 Carlisle Court, New City, NY 1095 .....	845-683-4494 (H) ... 212-803-3150 (W) ... ORRINGETZ@aol.com
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\*Also on the Board of Directors, National Association of Railroad Passengers Additional New York NARP Directors:  
 John Ross 4 Maplewood Court Greenwich, NY 12834    Stephen Salatti 92 Fish Road Mexico, NY 13114    Lewis Hoppe 1900 Quentin road E16 Brooklyn, NY 11229

### 2005-2006 ESPA Meeting Dates

- Saturday, April 16, 2005 ..... Schenectady – The Parker Inn
- Saturday, June 25, 2005 ..... Schenectady – The Parker Inn
- Saturday, August 6, 2005 ..... Utica – Trackside Tavern
- Saturday, October 1, 2005 ..... Schenectady – The Parker Inn
- Saturday, November 19, 2005 ..... Rhinecliff
- Saturday, January 21, 200 ..... Schenectady – The Parker Inn
- Saturday, March 11, 2006 ..... Annual Meeting - Schenectady

If you are interested in becoming more involved in ESPA, these meetings are the perfect opportunity to learn about the Association and how you can make a difference. ALL ESPA members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact President Bruce Becker, 716-741-6384 or bbecker@westwoodcc.cc,

### 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 or Senior Citizen (\$12.50 per year)
- Family membership (\$35.00)
- Sustaining membership (\$50.00)
- Patron membership (\$75.00)
- Corporate membership (\$100.00)
- Lifetime membership (\$300.00)

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

Send news items and "Letters to the Editor" to: Robert Lenz, Editor, 10531 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, Tel: 716-759-2315. e-mail: RWLenz@aol.com. Deadline for material for May/June issue is April 30, 2005. Material may be reproduced if credit is given ESPA and to the writer.

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