

# THE ESPA EXPRESS

NEWS FROM THE EMPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

HTTP://www.trainweb.ORG/espa



## Working for a More Balanced Transportation System

Vol. 25, No. 3

May/June 2003

### Washington Amtrak Opposition Intensifies while Public Support Grows

Amtrak supporters won an early victory on March 21st when the U.S. Senate voted 51-49 for a 2004 budget resolution amendment to approve \$1.812 billion for Amtrak vs. \$900 million recommended by the Bush Administration. But the victory turned out to be short-lived, as the Amtrak language was dropped when the House and Senate reconciled their separate versions.

Since then two of the four Congressional committees that will decide Amtrak's future have held hearings characterized by harsh criticism of Amtrak in general and long distance trains in particular. Representatives of the Bush Administration have joined the criticism, outlining recommendations that seem intended to dismantle Amtrak's national network.

However all of this has taken place against a backdrop of growing public support. For the first time ever, the large and powerful AARP has included a "dependable funding mechanism" for "nationwide passenger rail service" as one of its legislative goals. This is largely the work of Doras Briggs, a dedicated, energetic board member of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), who lives in Emeryville, CA, and belongs to AARP. At the same time a new national poll, commissioned by the American Public Transit Association, found 72% support for using public funds to expand and improve public transportation. Of those polled, 64% said they were likely to vote for public officials who support such improvements. These results reflect trends found in earlier polls.

Twenty-four states have joined the States for Passenger Rail Coalition, headed by David King, Deputy Transportation Secretary of North Carolina. King, testifying before Jack Quinn's (R. Buffalo), House Railroad Subcommittee on April 30th, noted, "increasingly, broader business leadership has joined the public efforts to improve the rail mode." He mentioned the Southeastern Economic Alliance, formed of 15 chambers of commerce, saying "Our business leadership is not motivated because they are merely fans of rail transportation, nor do they simply advocate for more government. Rather their impetus comes from a hard-nosed business analysis that our current transportation system has a serious weakness and that hampers our ability to compete in world markets."

But so far Quinn is the only one of the four Congressional committee chairmen who will determine Amtrak's future who has sounded supportive. Quinn is a passionate Amtrak supporter with a railroad background. The key Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, chaired by Richard Shelby, (R., Ala.), has yet to speak, but Shelby

(Cont'd on page 4)



Main Hall at the Rensselaer/Albany, N.Y. Amtrak Station

### Letters can make a Difference!

Thank you ESPA members for writing AARP, which for the first time endorsed passenger rail in its Public Policy. AARP with over 35 million members is dedicated to addressing the needs and interest of persons 50 and over (these members vote, so legislators respect their views).

Our elected officials in Albany and Washington need to be informed that AARP supports nationwide passenger rail service that is integrated and coordinated with regional, state and local passenger rail, and to establish a dependable funding mechanism that ensures continuing passenger rail service. Please contact your elected officials and inform them of this important AARP policy!

### Niagara Falls Plans New Station

The City of Niagara Falls has developed a proposal for a new station that would eliminate the present special stop in the middle of a field for Customs and Immigration inspections. The station would be built next to the 1863 Old Customs House beside the Niagara Gorge and Whirlpool Bridge—more than a mile west of the present facility. The stone Customs House building, which has not been used for 20 years or so, would be restored for Customs and Immigration personnel who would do their inspection while the train is serviced at the adjacent station.

The station would feature a high level platform with canopy along with bays for local transit and other buses. It would be served by a second track so stopped passenger trains would not impede freight traffic crossing the bridge. The new complex would require a new bridge across Main Street for the second track and platform. It would be located on a main bus route, only half as far from downtown as the present station.

The design was developed with collaboration of CSX, Amtrak, Customs and Immigration. The project is expected to cost \$23 million—which can hopefully be drawn from various sources, given the multifaceted aspects of the plan.

Frank Barry

## The View from the Cab

Your response to my recent 2003 Special Contribution Letter has been most gratifying and generous. To date, over \$2,500 has been contributed to support the work of the Association this year.

And much hard work does lie ahead, both in New York State and Washington, as we actively support Amtrak's efforts to receive its full \$1.8 billion request for the 2003-04 budget years. Advancing infrastructure improvement projects in the state, including the critical Albany - Schenectady double tracking, hinge on Amtrak's future capital funding levels.

If you have not yet made a contribution, I urge you to consider doing so now. I thank you in advance for your generous contributions.

As always, I welcome your comments, critiques and suggestions, on how ESPA can better attain our goals of improved passenger rail service in New York State. Don't hesitate to contact me at anytime.

*Bruce B. Becker, President*

## Turboliners Enter Service

Monday, April 14, 2003 marked the long-awaited start of revenue service with the first of the refurbished RTL-III Turboliner trainsets. Amtrak is currently utilizing Set #1 for one round trip each weekday between Albany and New York's Penn Station. Set #2 is at the Rensselaer Maintenance Facility, waiting for acceptance by Amtrak and Set #3 is scheduled for delivery by Supersteel by the end of June.

Initial equipment reliability has been good for the first 30 days of service, with reportedly only one planned trip having been missed. Passenger impressions are generally favorable; however concern has been expressed with the reduced aisle width, seat comfort and lack of convenient baggage storage.

Amtrak plans to limit the Turboliner's use to Albany - New York runs in the immediate future and will likely not start a second daily round trip until the third set is delivered and accepted. *Bruce Becker*

## Amtrak Seeks ESPA's Input

Amtrak's Empire District Superintendent, Philip Larson, wants to hear of your New York State Amtrak travel experiences. Whether everything was great or if there was room for improvement, Phil 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:

Philip Larson, 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...

## Schedule Changes starting April 28, 2003

### Departure Times from New York to Western New York:

- 7:15am Maple Leaf to Toronto daily.
- 9:45am to Niagara Falls will operate Mon-Fri at this time, which is 2 hours earlier than previously.
- 11:45am Sat/Sun only. Weekdays will operate to Albany.
- 1:45pm Daily, replacing previous 3:45pm daily departure.
- 2:50pm Daily, Lake Shore Limited, which is 2 hours later than previously.

### Western New York (Eastbound), from Buffalo-Depew:

- 5:25am Departure of Lake Shore Limited to NY, with 1:50pm NY arrival.

- 6:40am Departure of Train 284. This is 1 hour 40 min later than previously, with an arrival into NY at 2:30pm, 2 hours later than before. It will operate Mon-Fri only.
- 10:40am Departure of Train 286. This is 1 hour 45 min later than before, with arrival into NY at 6:40pm, which is 2 hours 5 min later than previously.
- 1:50pm Departure of Train 64, which is 20 minutes earlier than before, with the same arrival into NY at 9:45pm.

On Saturdays/Sundays/holidays, Train 288 will operate instead of Train 284 and Train 288 will depart Buffalo-Depew at 8:40am with a NY arrival at 4:30pm.

**Saratoga** will benefit with the earlier time of Train 294, which will depart Saratoga at 8:50am on Mondays through Saturdays. Train 296 remains with its 10:45pm New York City arrival from Rutland on Sundays. (due to trackwork, Train 294 will operate later during parts of the summer, as Train 292.) *Gary Prophet*

## Letters Received by ESPA on New Schedule

\* How can Amtrak eliminate Train 284 from its 10am Albany arrival and 12:30pm New York arrival? Also, Train 48 is not even scheduled until a 10:50 arrival, which only has a chance of being on-time the last Saturday in October when the clocks get turned back and it has an extra hour to play with.

\* As a weekly or bi-weekly passenger between Rochester and Albany, I am outraged (to say nothing of mightily inconvenienced) by the new Amtrak schedule, which will essentially end service between western New York and Albany for all people with private or government business in the state capital.

\* With 3-4 trains from Rochester and Syracuse, not one allows me to arrive in New York City and still have a meaningful part of the day left. I just called Senator Schumer and Clinton's office and told them to not fund a penny for Amtrak because they refuse to serve passengers.

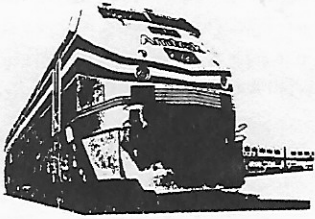
\* I have resorted to flying between Chicago and NYP for business due to the 12:45pm westbound departure out of NYP. If they could get NYP to Chicago running time down to the old 16 hours, the LSL would be more marketable to business travelers. (Ed - The current schedule has been changed to a 2:50 departure)

\* What happened to the Friday afternoon train that I take to travel to Buffalo for the weekend? Now, Amtrak says I must leave New York at 2:50 and arrive Buffalo at 11:40pm. I must depart 55 minutes earlier and arrive 40 minutes later. Is this part of New York State's High Speed Rail Plan?

## Transit Fares Rise

MTA's first fare increase in the Metro Card era took place on May 4th providing the first opportunity to differentiate increases by type of fare used. While controversy remains over MTA's stated need for a 2004 fare increase, the new fare structure clearly benefits customers who use the unlimited ride pass. While the base fare rose 33% from \$1.50 to \$2.00, riders who purchase the 30-day unlimited ride card saw their fares go up by only 11%. Straphangers who use the 7-day unlimited ride card will now pay \$21 per week versus the old price of \$17, a 22% increase. Tourist may have been hit the hardest as the price of the one-day "Fun Pass" jumped 75% to \$7. The discount on pay-per-ride Metro Cards is now available with a \$10 minimum purchase versus a \$15 minimum purchase under the old fare structure. Hopefully the new fare structure will encourage more customers to buy unlimited ride fare-cards and minimize the usual drop in ridership after fare increases. The fare increase is the first in eight years. *Steve Strauss*

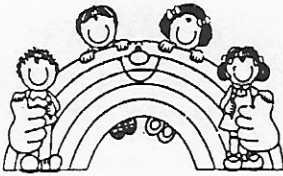




## Fun “One-Day Trip” to: **Utica NY**

Relax and enjoy the scenery as you travel to Utica from your nearest Amtrak station. Enjoy salads, deli sandwiches, snacks and beverages in the café car while in route. Amtrak offers 15% senior citizens discount, children 2-15 travel for half-fare.

**Historic Utica Station (1)** Built in 1914 by the New York Central Railroad, this Italianate style station serves eight Amtrak trains daily, along with the Adirondack Scenic R.R. The Station Restaurant & Martini Bar is located off the main lobby, and is one of the few stations in United States that still has a Barber Shop. Both local and regional buses serve Utica Union station, one of the first inter-modal stations in New York.



**Children’s Museum (2)** (next to the Utica station). Hands-on exhibits, teaching history, natural history, and science. Iroquois exhibit includes section of Long house; dress-up area; Childspace; railroad display. July- Labor Day daily except Monday, rest of year. Wed-Sun, closed holidays. 311 Main St. 315-724-6129

**The Adirondack Scenic Railway (3)** operates seasonally direct from Utica Station to Holland Patent, Remsen and Old Forge. For school field trips, group fares, dates of operation, and other information, call 877-508-6728, or on the web at: [www.adirondackrr.com](http://www.adirondackrr.com)



**Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute (4)** A Collection of 18th-20th-century American and European paintings, sculptures and prints; American decorative arts. Nearby is Fountain Elms, a Victorian 1850 museum. (Tues.-Sat. 10-5, Sun 1-5. Free. 310 Genesee St. 11 block walk or the #24 or #30 Bus from front of station. 315-797-0000



**F.X. Matt Brewing Company (5)** Demonstrates the process of beer manufacturing. Tours daily 11-4, June-Aug.; Mon-Fri at 1 and 3, Sat. at 11, 1 and 3, rest of year. Closed major holidays. Tour \$3; Age’s 6- 11, \$1. Reservations recommended Sept-May. Court & Varick Sts. 15 block walk or #30 & 20 Bus. 315-624-2434

**Oneida County Historical Society (6)** Museum traces Utica and Mohawk Valley history; reference library; changing exhibits. Tue-Fri. 1608 Genesee St. #24 or 30 Bus 315-735-3642

**Historic Hotel Utica (7)** “Traditions of Yesterday with every Comfort of Today”  
102 Lafayette St. 1-877-906-1912 [www.hoteluticany.com](http://www.hoteluticany.com)

**Utica Zoo (8)** Primates, reptiles, amphibians, children’s zoo has a petting area. Playground on the premises. Daily 10 -5 Steele Hill Rd. 315-738-0472 Bus #30 & 14

**Additional information;** Oneida County Convention and Visitors Bureau 315-724-7221 [www.oneidacountycvb.com](http://www.oneidacountycvb.com)  
Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce (9) 520 Seneca St.

**Train Reservations:** contact your local travel agent or Amtrak 1-800-USA-RAIL or [www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

Other “One-Day Trip” flyers available for Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse.  
The number following the attraction gives the location on the map on the reverse side of each flyer.

This informational flyer presented by the Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), working for a more balanced transportation system. 10531 Main St. Clarence, NY 14031 [www.trainweb.com/espa](http://www.trainweb.com/espa) 5/03

## Washington Amtrak Opposition (Cont'd from page 1)

has harshly criticized Amtrak in the past. His Democratic counterpart, Patty Murray (Wash.), received the NARP Golden Spike Award this year for her success in preserving Amtrak funding last year when she chaired the Subcommittee.

Criticism in the House Appropriations Subcommittee April 10th hearing became especially virulent, with John Culberson (R. -Tex.) complaining that spending money on Amtrak makes my blood boil." He said he was "appalled and outraged as a taxpayer at the sheer waste and tax black hole for Amtrak." Ann Northrup, (R., Louisville, KY) said "Too many places have service but no one on the train. The Louisville service made me lose faith in all Amtrak services ...The overwhelming majority of Americans have chosen the automobile lifestyle."

Subcommittee Chairman Ernest Istook, (R., Okla.) said, "Every dollar for Amtrak is a dollar that doesn't go to roads or other transportation." Culberson and Northrup both attacked the labor-protection provisions mandated by Amtrak-labor arbitration in 2001, which followed the 1997 Amtrak reauthorization.

A Senate Commerce Committee hearing on April 29 featured more criticism of Amtrak's nationwide services, particularly long-distance trains. Chairman John McCain (R. -Ariz.), probably the Senate's harshest Amtrak critic, said it was "disgraceful" that Amtrak President David Gunn had not eliminated the Sunset Limited—the only train linking Texas with the West Coast. However he softened his criticism slightly by clarifying that "I am not saying 'eliminate all the long-distance trains.' I'm saying 'eliminate waste and inefficiency wherever it exists.'" (Many would say that's exactly what Gunn has been doing). Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R. -Tex.) suggested that the Sunset's economic performance was related to the train's chronic lateness, then suggested, "We should do it right or not do it at all."

Michael Jackson, Bush's Deputy Transportation Secretary said, "Amtrak's structure is rotten" and criticized Amtrak for "not terminating long-distance rail." He discussed the Administration plan, which has yet to be finalized, but would phase out operating support, and provide capital for only half the cost of improvements to be selected by the states (compared to 80% support for highway and transit projects). He said rail routes should be determined and financed by the states—a virtual impossibility for long distance trains and difficult even for corridors, given the precarious financial status of most state budgets. He also said Amtrak should become an operating company only rather than having to own and maintain the Northeast Corridor (this coincides with NARP's position, but not Amtrak's). According to Jackson, competition and privatization will also be part of the Administration agenda despite the difficulties this has caused in Great Britain. Jackson said the Administration's plan would result in more passenger trains than exist today. But if this is true, they almost certainly will not be long distance trains.

On a more positive note, Tim Gillespie told the NARP Board of Directors at their meeting on May 2nd that he thinks the only way to fund Amtrak is to move infrastructure funding outside the traditional appropriations process. Gillespie, who formerly served as Amtrak's Vice President of Government Affairs, said a bill is being developed to generate revenue through tax credit bonds to be issued by a new corporate entity, the Railroad Infrastructure and Finance Corporation. The bonds would provide revenue for all types of rail projects, including freight. States would contribute 20-30% of the cost of the project, which

would be placed in a sinking fund that would generate enough interest over the life of the bonds (usually 20 years) to repay the principle. In lieu of interest, bondholders would receive tax credits to reduce their federal tax. The revenue forfeited by the federal government would be far less than the cost of paying for the improvements outright, thus more cost effective than the Bush Administration's tax proposal. Unlike some other proposals, this would not take revenue from freight railroads, highway or transit interests. In fact, legislation of this nature could unite all rail interests behind one bill. Gillespie said he is hopeful that a bill to accomplish this will be introduced soon. He pointed out that this bill would not only reduce tax liability, but would create jobs and stimulate the economy, all of which fit with stated Republican priorities.

In the meantime it is essential that Congress hear lots of support for Amtrak and particularly for long distance trains. Gillespie noted that this bill would not fund operations, although providing an alternate source of capital would greatly reduce the pressure on Appropriations Committees. Tim Gillespie currently works with NARP as a consultant after representing ESPA last year.

*Frank Barry*

### **ACTION ALERT!**

Urge your representatives in Congress to  
Fully fund Amtrak's 5-year plan—  
Tell them America needs long distance trains!

### **Long distance trains....**

- \*Serve many places not conveniently served by airlines or buses. Most travel on these trains begins or ends at an intermediate point.
- \*Are well used. Passenger loads typically exceed 100, sometimes reach 400 or more. They often far exceed loads on corridor trains, which serve fewer destinations.
- \*Serve multiple purposes—including business travel to small places, travel to visit relatives, travel for foreign tourists who don't wish to drive or fly, travel for those too young or too old to drive long distances.
- \*Cover about half their allocated costs in most instances, a higher proportion than many transit systems.
- \*Since they constitute a small fraction of the traffic on most of the tracks they use, the cost for track use is much less than on corridor track maintained by Amtrak.
- \*7 of Amtrak's 17 long distance trains originate in New York, providing New Yorker's with safe and comfortable transportation to other parts of the country.

### **Amtrak Releases new 5 Year Plan**

Amtrak has prepared a 5-year plan to bring the system up to a system of good repair. For \$1.5 to \$1.8 billion per year Amtrak aims to install 428,000 concrete ties on 162 miles of track, replace 270 miles of rail and refurbish 200 miles of catenary and 26 interlockings. Two movable bridges in Connecticut would be replaced and a new maintenance facility now under construction in Oakland, CA would be completed. The plan also entails repairing wreck damaged cars and major car overhauls to increase car availability and lifespan. In order to achieve more

(Cont'd on page 6)



## There's Always a Reason to Ride Amtrak

Buffalo	<a href="http://www.buffalocvb.org">www.buffalocvb.org</a>	
	Dixie Chicks	June 13
	Guitar Festival	June 13-22
	46th Allentown Art Festival	June 14, 15
Rochester	<a href="http://www.visitrochester.com">www.visitrochester.com</a>	
	International Jazz Festival	June 5-14
	River of Light Laser Show	June 13-14
	Red Wings vs. Syracuse	July 2-3
Syracuse	<a href="http://www.visitSyracuse.org">www.visitSyracuse.org</a>	
	Taste of Syracuse	May 30, June 1
	24th Annual Coors Balloon Fest	June 13-15
	Carousel Center - three blocks from station	
Utica	<a href="http://www.oneidacountycvb.com">www.oneidacountycvb.com</a>	
	Utica Monday Nite	June - August
	Day with Thomas	June 20-22, 27-29
	F.X. Matt Brewing Co. Tours	Daily
	Children's Museum	Daily x Mon
Albany	<a href="http://www.Albany.org">www.Albany.org</a>	
	Ray Charles with Lizz Wright	June 6
	Lobster Festival	June 15
	Dixie Chicks	June 27

## Depot Theater's 25th Season



The Depot Theater, located in the attractive Westport New York station, begins its season June 27 with 'Moon over Buffalo', a farce by Ken Ludwig. Other shows include Annie Get Your Gun, The Mikado, The Cripple of Irishmaan, and Proof. The Westport station/theater is served by Amtrak's *Adirondack*. For details: 518-962-4449 or [www.depottheatre.org](http://www.depottheatre.org)

## Thomas The Tank Engine At Utica

Thomas the tank engine will be spending some quality time at Utica, NY on June 20-22 and 27-29. Special themed events will accompany Thomas during his visit to the historic Union Station at Utica. The Tank Engine traveling show includes special train rides on the Adirondack Scenic Railway, which is playing host.

Adirondack Scenic Railroad will give Thomas a Highball for 9 daily runs each day during the visit. A \$14.00 admission includes Adirondack RR ride with Thomas on one end, entrance to children's museum and access to related events and activities. These activities include the Utica Zoomobile, Lego train city and storytelling from the Tank engine perspective. Events will run from 9:00am to 5:00pm which makes getting there possible with those traveling on Thomas's grown up friend Amtrak.

Adirondack special event coordinator Tom Trencansky is also pleased to announce that service to Boonville, N.Y. will be on the schedule this year. 5 round trips are planned with free time in Boonville for passengers on these special runs. The first run is scheduled for May 31, 2003. For tickets and information visit [adirondackrr.com](http://adirondackrr.com) or call 315-724-0700

*Ben Gottfried*

## 'Kids Ride Free' Promotion

Amtrak is offering a 'Kids Ride Free' promotion on unreserved trains between Albany and New York City starting June 1. Up to two children, ages 2 - 15 can travel free with each adult paying the full, regular fare. Also available from other Northeast

Corridor cities, this promotion is available for sale and travel through September 30, with no advance purchase requirements. Please refer to discount code H334.

## All Aboard at Marathon Station

Marathon Station has re-opened to serve as a passenger rail station after a 45-year hiatus. In a joint partnership of efforts on the part of IDA, NYSDOT and NYS&W Railway, this historic former Lackawanna station will serve as a centerpiece of redevelopment efforts in the Marathon area.

The station project is part of the larger *Tioughnioga Railroad corridor historic district*. The Tioughnioga River and Railroad share a common route between Cortland and Chenango Forks. A re-dedication ceremony was held at the classic 1907-poured concrete DL&W station on April 5, 2003. Leaders there want to focus attention on the corridor and its potential as a transportation system and a magnet for jobs and investment. The initiative is aimed at drawing attention to stations and structures along the route and their historic significance. Passenger stations include Tully, Cortland, Homer and Marathon. The route is an ongoing joint NYSDOT/ NYS&W capital project; passenger service on the route can commence once the project is complete.

This initiative is quickly developing the kind of broad support base needed to further a railway passenger project. IDA executive Director Linda Dickerson summed it well when she told ESPA "a rail line opens windows of opportunity to regions and communities". This is especially true at Marathon where station windows are set in poured concrete and overlook the Binghamton to Syracuse Mainline. Find out more at [www.cortlandbusiness.com](http://www.cortlandbusiness.com)

*Ben Gottfried*

## Amtrak expands Dining Car Menu

Amtrak passengers can now enjoy an even greater variety of appetizers, entrees and desserts. For dinner, passengers may choose beef tenderloin, New York strip steak, seared catfish, stuffed chicken or ravioli primavera, among other entrees. This includes an evening special -priced from \$9.00 to \$11.00. Coffee, tea or juice is now included in the price of the main entree for all meals.

"Fine dining should be the signature of a first class long distance rail experience," said David L. Gunn, Amtrak's President.

The expanded choices are offered on three different menus, which rotate concurrently on different trains. The system allows passengers to dine on one menu on their outbound trip and enjoy a different menu on the return trip. Additionally, in most instances, passengers connecting to different long-distance trains will be offered a different menu from their previous train.

## Rome Station Work to Begin

The city of Rome has awarded \$1.57 million in contracts to renovate its station, and construction is to be completed by Fall according to the Rome Sentinel (April 11). While the tunnel, elevator, platform and stairwell were upgraded last year, the station building itself still needs substantial attention. This summer's work will address heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical needs as well as roof, door and window repair and replacement. The floor and ceiling will be repaired as well.

The building, now far too large for its rail passenger volume, will become the new headquarters for the local bus company, whose buses will consequently provide more frequent service to the station.

## Amtrak Releases new 5 year Plan (Cont'd from page 4)

standardization, 188 old and oddball cars would be retired, including those until recently assigned to the Adirondack, along with 147 locomotives. Fourteen new self-propelled cars would be purchased along with 75 long distance cars and 25 switch engines.

Amtrak President David Gunn has presented the plan in hearings before two committees, saying the work is needed "regardless of what policymakers decide is the future for Amtrak." The response was mixed. Some senators said the amount requested is far too high; John Mica and some others in the House said it wasn't high enough, and didn't offer anything new. NARP Executive Director Ross Capon admonished the House Rail Subcommittee not to underestimate the significance of getting Amtrak to a state of good repair. "Amtrak has never been there before, which is why I do not say 'getting Amtrak BACK to' that state."

Former Amtrak Reform Council member and Amtrak supporter Jim Coston told the National Corridors Initiative Conference on April 28th that the plan focused too much on the Northeast and had too little in it for other states to support. But Gunn has said, "We have to concentrate first on what we own."

Whether the plan gets carried out will ultimately depend on Congress and the Bush Administration. *Frank Barry*

## 2003-2004 ESPA Meeting Dates:

Saturday, June 21, 2003 Schenectady - Supersteal  
11:30am - 4pm. **Advance reservations to attend this meeting are required. Please contact Bruce Becker by June 14.**  
Saturday, August 2 Utica - 12noon - 3:35pm Union Station  
Saturday, October 4 Rensselaer  
Saturday, November 22 Schenectady  
Saturday, January 10, 2004 Schenectady  
Saturday, March 6, 2004 Annual Meeting - Schenectady

If you are interested in becoming more involved in ESPA, these meetings are the perfect opportunity to learn more about the association and how you can make a difference. Please contact Bruce Becker, 518-383-5985 or [bbecker@albanycc.cc](mailto:bbecker@albanycc.cc) if you need more information or are planning on attending a meeting.

"Regional Rail Working Group" sponsored by ESPA/Committee for Better Transit/NJ Association of Rail Passengers, meets the third Wednesday of each month, 6 - 8 PM. Location: Conference room, NYPD Downtown Center, 104 Washington St. (just north of Rector St) Lower Manhattan.

For information call George Haikalis, Manhattan Coordinator 212-475-3394 or e-mail at [geohaikalis@juno.com](mailto:geohaikalis@juno.com)

**Corrections** The following are additions or correction to the 2003 ESPA Officers and Coordinators list published in the March/April issue.

Andrew Cabal \* also on the Board on Directors, National Association of Railroad Passengers. PO Box 434 Syracuse, NY 13209 315-252-6572

Gary Gianotti \* Board of Directors, National Association of Railroad Passengers

Orrin J. Getz 845-638-4494 [orringetz@aol.com](mailto:orringetz@aol.com)

## 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. Keep informed with The ESPA Express. Keep the pressure on for safe, efficient, environmentally sound transportation. Dues and contributions support ESPA's publications and advocacy on the passengers' behalf.

- Introductory membership (\$10.00 for one year)
- Renewal membership (\$20.00 per year)
- Renewal - Student or Senior Citizen (\$12.50 per year)
- Family membership (\$25.00)
- Sustaining membership (\$50.00)
- Patron membership (\$75.00)
- Corporate membership (\$100.00)
- Lifetime membership (\$300.00)

Individuals that join or renew at the sustaining membership or higher will receive the new ESPA lapel pin as a gift.

Please make checks/money orders payable to ESPA and mail to ESPA 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: 1-716-759-2315, Fax: 716-759-2791. e-mail: [RWLenz@aol.com](mailto:RWLenz@aol.com). Deadline for material for the July/Aug issue is June 29, 2003. Material may be reproduced if credit given to ESPA and to the writer.

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