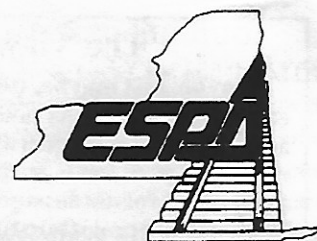


The ESPA EXPRESS

NEWS FROM THE EMPIRE STATE PASSENGERS ASSOCIATION

<http://www.esparail.org>



WORKING FOR A MORE BALANCED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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September/October 2007

Senator Bruno and DOT Commissioner Glynn Announce Rail Projects

At a press conference held at the Rensselaer station on September 5, State Senator Joe Bruno announced that an agreement has been reached between the Senate High Speed Rail Task Force and NYSDOT, allowing for the release of \$22 million of funding included in the current year state budget for passenger rail improvement projects. The specific projects being advanced are:

- Construction of the long-sought fourth platform track at the Rensselaer Station. This work will include demolition of the vacant former station building and the extension of the current two high level platforms to better accommodate trains (including the Lake Shore Limited) that serve this station. Part of the original station design (but never built due to cost overruns), the lack of the fourth platform track has caused frequent delays since the building was opened 5 years ago. Total cost is \$11 million.

- Construction of a new platform at Hudson on the west (Hudson River) side of the two main tracks with an overhead access bridge from the station. This will allow two trains to stop for passengers at the same time, thus eliminating a bottleneck that has plagued Hudson since the time the line was built in the 1800's. Total cost: \$6 million.

- Stabilization of the rock cut under the George Washington Bridge, which will eliminate a long-standing 'slow order', thus increasing speeds through the area and helping insure that Amtrak trains meet their 'operations windows' on Metro North. Total cost: \$4 million.

It is important to note that the funds for the fourth Rensselaer station track were originally earmarked for the introduction of a new Albany – New York Express train. It would appear that this service increase has been postponed in favor of constructing this necessary additional station track capacity.

In a separate Press Statement released the same day, DOT Commissioner Astrid Glynn confirmed that DOT is moving ahead with the funding for these projects. Governor Spitzer was quoted in the statement as saying "The state is committed to building a modern, efficient, higher-speed rail system". Commissioner Glynn noted "The state Department of Transportation welcomes the challenge of leading this endeavor. Together, we have already made more progress in one month than in all of the past year." Glynn also announced that a working group was being formed to advise NYSDOT in developing a higher-speed system that provides a clear public benefit through improved on-time performance, increased frequency of service and reduced travel time.

ESPA is extremely pleased that at long last it appears all of the involved parties are now 'On Track' to advance the Task Force's initial recommendations and we applaud Senator Bruno, Governor Spitzer and Commissioner Glynn for their joint leadership in finally getting things moving.

Bruce B. Becker



Saying Goodbye

Walter Rich, Chairman and Chief Executive officer of the New York Susquehanna and Western Railroad, passed away on August 9, 2007. Mr. Rich was 61 years old. He leaves behind an impressive and dynamic career in short line railroading that spanned five decades. His legacy to the industry of aggressive regional railroading and skilled legal and legislative dealings earned him the respect of the short line business community.

(Cont'd page 5)

Summer – Empire Corridor Sold Out

The past month has resulted in a large number of sold out trains along the Empire Corridor, which has limited ridership. With few exceptions, every Empire train operates with a maximum size of 4 coaches and a café/business class car, which limits each train to about 300 passengers.

On the Thursday before Labor Day weekend (August 30, 2007), the following trains were sold out, which meant no passengers could reserve a seat on these trains for any travel for any portion of the trip between New York and Albany. Nearly all these trains did have seats available for passengers who only wished to travel from Albany west. But by August 30 passengers were unable to reserve travel from New York to any destination on the following trains:

Fri, Aug 31: 63 283 285 255 237 293 241 64;
Sat, Sept 1: 63 71 281; Sun, Sept 2: 68;
Mon, Sept 3: 238 284 242 68 258 64.

Yes, this means that all three trains to Niagara Falls were sold out for Friday, so no passenger could reserve a seat from New York to Western New York. Also, for Monday, Sept 3, every train after the 10:05am Albany departure to NY and before the 8:15pm Albany departure to NY were sold out. This certainly limits ridership.

(Cont'd on page 6)

'Bring A New Member To ESPA'

From now through December 31, 2007, ESPA is offering current dues paying members an opportunity to introduce a new member to our organization with a **FREE** One-Year membership.

This is the perfect gift for a friend, neighbor or business associate you know who is interested in improved passenger rail service and public transportation in New York State. The new member will receive six complimentary issues of the 'ESPA Express' newsletter; be invited to our meetings and other special events and perhaps most importantly, know ESPA's collective voice in Albany will be strengthened by their being part of our cause. **Please see the enclosed flyer for complete details and to sponsor your new member.**

The View from the Cab

Maybe, just maybe, we are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. As noted in this issue, Senator Joe Bruno and DOT Commissioner Glynn recently announced that \$22 million in state funds are being released by NYSDOT, which will allow for three significant (but relatively low cost) improvement projects to finally proceed. The most vital of the three is the construction of the fourth platform track at the Rensselaer station. While we all recognize that many other projects are necessary for real long-term improvements in service across the state, the elimination of this longstanding capacity constraint will certainly help reliability.

But more important than these projects actually proceeding is the apparent lessening of tensions between the State and Amtrak. While the state initiated lawsuit against Amtrak over the Turbo rebuilding project has apparently not yet been resolved, it is very promising that at least the parties have agreed to finally accomplish something positive.

An ESPA member has asked that I from time-to-time provide an update on the various NYS passenger rail related projects which have been long discussed but never accomplished.

Probably the longest sought improvement project in the state is the double tracking of the Amtrak line between Albany and Schenectady. This 16-mile single track segment has limited reliable operations for decades. When trains are on-time, the schedules do allow for efficient, timely operations over the single track, but one delayed train can lead to other trains being held at either end awaiting their turn to traverse the route.

For many years, this improvement project lacked the necessary funding. Finally in 1998, the state and Amtrak agreed to mutually fund a number of projects, including the double tracking.

However opposition from then Conrail and later CSX (which owns the line currently) based on the increased property taxes that they have to pay from this passenger only focused expenditure blocked the work from proceeding. After several years of hard effort and near wins, the state finally enacted legislation in 2002 that addressed the tax issue to CSX's satisfaction.

Unfortunately by this time the state and Amtrak were deeply mired in the Turboliner fiasco and then Amtrak President David Gunn stepped back from the 1998 agreement. This left the double tracking again without a funding source, which remains the case today. In 2005 estimates put the cost of the complete double tracking from Albany to Schenectady at approximately \$35-40 million.

While no one disputed the need for the double track, this project, like so many others, languished during the Pataki administration. Hopefully, Governor Spitzer and the state legislature will now recognize the importance of this expenditure and make it a priority to accomplish.

As always, I welcome your comments, critiques and suggestions.
Bruce B. Becker President

Railvolution 2007

The 13th annual conference of people and practitioners "who believe strongly in the role of land use and transit as equal partners in the quest for greater livability and greater communities," will be held in Miami Beach from October 31 through November 4.

The conference consists of workshops, seminars, speakers and tours focused around successfully integrating rail transportation into communities. Attendees include a broad spectrum of disciplines including transportation experts, architects, planners, developers, elected officials and leaders of citizens groups. Visit www.railvolution.com for more information on the conference.

Congress Sets \$1.4 Billion for Amtrak

Both houses of Congress came up with figures for the 2008 Amtrak appropriation before their summer break. The amounts were slightly different but the totals very close. The House Bill was approved on July 24th largely as proposed by its Appropriations subcommittee on transportation after four hostile amendments were soundly defeated on the floor. The total approved was \$1.4 billion plus \$50 million to match state investments for intercity passenger rail on a 50-50 basis. The hostile amendments were as follows:

*Michele Bachmann, (R., Minn.): Transfer \$106 million from Amtrak to homeless programs; defeated 110-308.

*Jeff Flake, (R., Ariz): Delete all \$475 million earmarked for operations; defeated, 94-328

*Jeff Flake: Delete \$425 million of the \$925 million for capital and debt service; defeated 104-312.

*Pete Sessions, (R., Tex): Eliminate funding for the worst performing train (the Sunset Limited); defeated 169-283.

Opposition to these amendments was near total in New York. The only exception was Vito Fossella (R., Staten Island), who supported eliminating the Sunset Limited but opposed all the other cuts. All Democrats voted against all four amendments (except for Brian Higgins of Buffalo, and Yvette Clark of Brooklyn, who did not vote). **ESPA members should call or e-mail their representatives to thank them—especially those who have opposed Amtrak funding in the past.**

On July 12th the full Senate Appropriations Committee approved \$1.375 billion for Amtrak plus \$100 million to match state capital investments. The full Senate will act sometime after Labor Day. Although Kit Bond (R., Mo.) supported the bill, he said he feared Congress is "on a collision course with the Executive Branch."

The House version addresses last year's concerns, requiring Amtrak to reduce costs for food service and first class service including sleeping cars. Ranking transportation subcommittee member Joe Knollenberg, (R., Mich.), who chaired the subcommittee last year, thanked current chair John Olver (D., Mass.) for this language and for "working with us in formulating a balanced bill I can support."

Frank Barry (from NARPHotline News and August Newsletter)

Rail Users Network Conference In Dallas

The Rail Users' Network (RUN) 5th International Conference this year will be held in Dallas, TX, on Saturday, November 10 and Sunday, November 11, 2007. There will also be a dinner on Friday evening (Nov 9). Expected speakers included Ian Brown (Director of Rail Transport for London Rail), Doug Allen (Executive VP for DART), James Coston (Chairman Corridor Capital LLC), D.J Mitchell II (VP of Passenger Operations for BNSF), Peter LeCody (President Texas Rail Advocates), Robert Smith (VP Herzog Transit Services) and many others. Workshops will be held on the following topics: Advocating New Rail Starts, Best Practices of Rail Advocacy, Building a World Class Railway in the US, Retrofitting Older Transit Systems for Today's Accessibility Needs, and Transit Inequities.

Dallas is a city on the move and boasts both expanding commuter rail and light rail transit systems. The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Dallas, which is next to the Dallas Amtrak station. Registration is \$175 before Nov 1 and \$200 after. Rooms at the Hyatt are available for a conference rate of \$119. For information and registration, please call either Richard Rudolph (RUN President) at 207-642-5161 or Gary Prophet (RUN Treasurer) at 917-647-2973.

Congestion Pricing Funded in NYC

The U.S. Department of Transportation has agreed to provide New York City with up to \$354.5 million in federal funds through its Urban Partnership Agreement to assist the city and MTA in implementing a congestion pricing program to reduce traffic congestion. To qualify for the funding New York's program must reduce vehicle miles traveled in the congestion zone (proposed as Manhattan below 86th Street) by at least 6.3%. The plan must use pricing as its principle mechanism and the pricing program must be in effect for at least 18 months. The city and MTA must expand bus service to meet the mobility needs of the city and the plan must be authorized by both the City Council and the State Legislature during the first 90 days of the next regular session of the Legislature. The pricing program must begin by March 31, 2009.

A 17 member Commission appointed by the Governor (3), the Mayor (3), the Speaker of the NYC City Council (3), the Senate Majority Leader (3), the Speaker of the State Assembly (3), and the leaders of the minority party in the Senate and the Assembly (1 each) must either adopt the Mayor's Congestion Pricing program or recommend another that meets all the criteria above. The Mayor's PlaNYC 2030 Transportation Plan calls for an \$8 charge on vehicles entering Manhattan below 86th Street Monday thru Friday between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Drivers who cross bridges or tunnels but stay on the FDR Drive, West Side Highway and Battery Park underpass and do not enter the Central Business District, would not pay the charge. The charge would be net of any existing toll paid by the driver. Individuals who drive within the charging zone would pay \$4 per day.

Under the Mayor's Plan, the net revenue from the charging program, somewhat less than \$300 million per year, along with annual contributions from the City and the State of \$200 million each, would be used to fund NYC and other downstate transportation projects. The roughly \$700 million revenue stream could support bonding for over \$31 billion in transit, commuter rail and highway projects. The work would include both large new transportation projects and state of good repair investments to reverse decades of under spending on maintenance. The Second Avenue subway, East Side Access, Trans-Hudson tunnel and Metro-North service into Penn Station would all receive some funding from this program. Money would be spent to expand transit service, add express bus routes, construct bus rapid transit lines in each borough and operate new commuter ferries. The MTA has committed to buying 367 additional buses as part of the federal funding agreement.

It's important that members of the State Legislature hear your views about Congestion Pricing. Members in suburban districts surrounding NYC and many City representatives outside of Manhattan remain skeptical. Many have not fully considered the value of this new funding stream or doubt the ability of the \$8 fee to noticeably reduce traffic. The next six months promise to be an exciting time for transportation activists. *Steve Strauss*

Rails to the Adirondacks - Oct.20

Depart from Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse to Utica on Amtrak, then board the Adirondack Scenic Railroad to Thendara in the Adirondacks. Boxed lunch available. Luncheon available at Van Auken's Hotel in Thendara. Bus transportation into Old Forge also available. Photo stop at Remsen Depot. Visit historic Utica Union Station. Trip co-sponsored by the American Rail Link, Central NY Chapter, NRHS, Finger Lakes Scenic Railway and the Western NY Railway Historical Society. Information: 315-469-0864 or americanraillink@twcny.rr.com

Metro-North and Yankee Stadium

On July 20, 2007, New York State, New York City, and the MTA broke ground on the new 91 million-dollar Metro-North Station at Yankee Stadium. Scheduled for completion by June 2009, the new station will not only be served on days of home New York Yankees games, but will be a local station stop each and every day, as part of Metro-North's Hudson line service, which will result in hourly service. On game days, trains will also operate directly to the stadium from both the Harlem and New Haven Metro-North lines, as well as from Grand Central and 125th Street. The expected travel time is 20 minutes from Tarrytown and 30 minutes from White Plains and 15 minutes from Grand Central Terminal.

Metro-North estimates between 6,000 and 12,000 people will use the trains to access the Stadium on game days. The station will have 2 center island platforms to serve all 4 tracks. The MTA will contribute \$52 million and New York City will pay \$39 million for the cost of the station and Metro-North will own, operate, and maintain the station.

MTA Executive Director and CEO Elliot G. Sander said, "The new Metro-North station will make Yankee Stadium one of the most transit-accessible stadiums in the country, providing another great reason to take the train to the game. We are equally excited to be making an investment in a growing part of the Bronx that will provide access to new jobs, parks and shopping."

Gary Prophet

Barry's NARP Board Seat to Open

I don't plan to run for the NARP Board of Directors next year. There are two reasons for this. First, I think it is important to get new and younger people with energy, dedication and creativity onto the Board. I have been serving for 25 years and while I continue to strongly support NARP's goals, I am realizing that it is now time for me to step aside for others to take over and to move on—which leads me to my second reason.

As those of you who see *Classic Trains* may know, I spent a great deal of time and energy photographing steam locomotives during the last 20 years of their operation in North America. These photographs have now become historic and I'm finding a great deal of interest in them. Besides the two articles in *Classic Trains*, I have been asked to do a book with photos I took in Mexico, where we lived before coming to Ithaca in 1967. And I have been invited to prepare a photo exhibit for Cornell University's Johnson Art Museum next summer as well as another piece for *Classic Trains*.

Most of the photos have never been printed up and many negatives are not properly labelled. I'm realizing that others can advocate for better passenger rail service as well or better than me, but I'm the only one who knows what the photographs are about and the stories behind them. So this is where I feel I need to focus now.

I have found serving on the NARP Board very stimulating and enlightening. I have learned a great deal and it has definitely strengthened my efforts to improve rail service in New York State over the years. I highly recommend it for anyone with ability wishing to become a more effective passenger rail advocate. Those wishing to run must submit statements to NARP by November 9th. This process is described in the September NARP newsletter. Only New York State NARP members can vote.

Frank Barry

International High Speed Developments

As the perennial battle continues in Washington to help Amtrak survive, but not really improve in the face of a hostile lame-duck Bush Administration, readers might be interested – as a change of pace – to hear what is happening elsewhere in the world. Rail modernization is proceeding rapidly, not only in Europe and Japan, but in Taiwan and even more, in China.

London-Paris: On November 14, 2007, travel times between Paris and London will drop to 2 hours 15 minutes, from the present 2 hours 35 minutes. The rail distance from Paris to London equals that from New York City to Syracuse, NY (Amtrak travel time 5-1/2 hours or more). Eurostar trains from Paris to London will use a new high-speed line, looping around the eastern edge of London and passing under the river Thames in a new tunnel, to reach St. Pancras station, an extremely historic Victorian structure originally built to serve trains going directly north from London to Derby, Sheffield and Manchester in the Midlands. When Channel Tunnel rail service opened in 1995, using a 187 mph high speed line in France but at half that speed in England, then French President Francois Mitterrand joked to the British Prime Minister that travellers would have ample opportunity to contemplate the beauty of the English countryside. No more.

TGV- Est, France: Readers might have read about the speed record of 357 mph set by a French test train on April 4, 2007. The record was set on a portion of a new high-speed line, the 'TGV Est-Europeenne' from Paris to Strasbourg on France's eastern boundary, prior to the start of regular passenger service, which began on June 10, 2007. Two new features of the TGV Est: the authorized speed on the line is raised to 199 mph (320 km/h), from the 187 mph (300 km/h) which prevails on the rest of France's high-speed network. Second, international services: for the first time German ICE trains from Frankfurt now run directly to Paris, sharing the same tracks with French TGV trains. Conversely, French TGV trains now run from Paris to Stuttgart in Germany (also a first), and in a few months the TGV's will run to Munich.

The French had projected that ridership on the TGV Est would rise to 11 million passengers annually over a period of 18 months. In fact, this ridership level was exceeded in the first month of operation (load factors were 77 percent in first class, 88 percent in second class), causing complaints from businessmen who found trains sold out, and the French railways scrambling to add equipment.

To see the effect of different transportation policies in France and in the US, a comparison with Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is interesting. The TGV Est connects Paris with the medium-sized cities of Strasbourg (population 702,000), Metz (pop. 200,000), Nancy (pop. 170,000) and Reims (pop. 292,000). The Northeast Corridor connects New York City to much larger cities – including Boston (population 4.4 million in metro area), Philadelphia (5.8 million in metro area) and Washington (5.29 million in metro area). Yet intercity rail ridership on the TGV Est (one million in the first month, hence 12 million annually) dwarfs Amtrak's Northeast Corridor ridership (9,431,279 for all of FY 2006). The market share of rail is much, much higher in France, reflecting superior rail service, a gasoline price of \$5 per gallon, and government policies which encourage rail in France instead of the hostility of the Federal Administration in Washington. French high-speed trains do not require operating subsidy, since ridership revenue exceeds operating costs.

Madrid – Barcelona: Spain is completing a very high-speed rail line from the capital Madrid to its second-largest city Barcelona, a distance of nearly 400 miles. About two-thirds of the line, from Madrid to Zaragoza and Lleida, is already in service. To compete with air travel over this distance, the travel time upon completion will be 2-1/2 hours, and the Madrid-Barcelona line is designed for operating speeds of 217 mph (350 km/h), greater than the 187 mph (300 km/h) of most European high-speed operations. Trains have been ordered from both Bombardier/Talgo and from Siemens of Germany, which is delivering trains named Siemens Velaro (patterned on the German ICE 3) capable of 217 mph revenue service.

Other Projects in Europe:

Italy recently opened service on a new 187 mph rail line from Rome to Naples, relegating the "Diretissima" built in the 1920's to local and freight traffic. Other high-speed lines are under construction in northern Italy. Germany, after building a 155 mph rail line from Berlin west to Hannover in 1998 which cut travel times in half from Berlin to the former West Germany following German reunification in 1991, is now building a high-speed line south from Berlin to Munich.

Belgium is extending its high-speed network with a line northeast from Brussels to Amsterdam in Holland, and another line east from Brussels to connect with the German high-speed system. France is planning further extensions of the already extensive TGV network, to reach Bordeaux and the frontier with Spain. Most notably, a new rail tunnel through the Pyrenees mountains for both high-speed passenger and freight trains is being constructed between Barcelona in Spain and Perpignan in France, joining the Spanish and French high-speed rail systems. This will form part of a continuous fast rail line, about 1000 miles long, from Paris to Madrid via Lyon, Montpellier, Perpignan and Barcelona, to be completed in the next decade.

High-speed trains now make possible trips that previously were not made by rail. An example: on winter weekends, British ski enthusiasts can take direct trains from London to the French ski resort of Bourg St. Maurice, near Switzerland, in about five hours. By car, the drive takes two days. Another example: travel from England to Holland used to involve an overnight ferry trip, with rail travel at both ends, unless one traveled by air. Today, even before the high-speed line from Brussels to Amsterdam is completed, high-speed trains from London via the Channel Tunnel and Brussels have already gained nearly half of the air/rail market for trips between London and Amsterdam, now 4 hours by rail.

Taiwan now has Japanese-built Shinkansen 'Bullet Trains' in operation since January 15, 2007, on a new high-speed line running north-south from Zuoying (near Kaohsiung) to Taipei. The fastest trains cover 218 miles in 90 minutes (Amtrak's Acela Express requires 2 hours 45 minutes for the 226 miles from New York to Washington). For the first months of operation, the Taiwanese hired a delegation of French railway personnel, experienced in running TGV trains, to operate the line and train Taiwanese personnel to take over. The French found that Japanese Shinkansen trains are 'more automated' than the TGV's to which they are accustomed.

China has ordered 220 high-speed trainsets, from all four of the world's leading builders of high-speed trains: Alstom (60 trainsets), Siemens (60 trainsets), Bombardier (40 trainsets), and a Japanese Shinkansen conglomerate headed by Kawasaki (60 trainsets). In each case, the European or Japanese supplier is building the first few trains in its home plant in Europe or Japan, but has entered

into a joint venture with a Chinese plant that will build the remaining trains, partly with 'kits' or components from abroad. The final trains in each order are to be built entirely in China. All of the high-speed trains are to be capable of at least 125 mph, potentially upgradeable to 155 mph (and thus at least equal in performance to Amtrak's Acela Express trainsets), except for the Siemens order. Considerably more ambitious, Siemens will supply a variant of the Siemens Velaro train similar to those being delivered for the Madrid-Barcelona line, to operate at 187 mph (300 km/h) but capable of 217 mph (350 km/h) on a dedicated high-speed line now under construction.

Initial deliveries of trains from Alstom, Bombardier and Kawasaki have already started. When deliveries are complete perhaps around 2010, China will possess at least 220 high-speed trainsets of performance equal to, and in some cases considerably surpassing, Amtrak's 26 Acela Express trains. (By comparison, the French railways operate 410 high-speed TGV trainsets, even though France's population is less than one-tenth of China's.)

Summary: Thus, while America remains mired in debate as to whether 55 mph SUV's should be required to average better than 22 miles per gallon, the rest of the world is racing ahead building intercity rail transportation which is three times faster, three to five times more energy-efficient, and requires no petroleum since high-speed rail lines are electrified. (Amtrak does not currently have such a large advantage in energy-efficiency since European and Japanese trains have much higher utilization, lighter weight and better aerodynamics. However they demonstrate the potential of passenger rail).

It remains to be seen when or whether the United States will ever get out of the starting gate and start catching up with Europe, Japan, Taiwan and China.

Christopher Wasiutynski

Saying Goodby (Cont'd from page 1)

Walt (as his friends knew him) started out in 1968 working steam trains on a tourist operation out of Oneonta NY. He jumped into freight railroading with the 1970 purchase of the railroad north of Oneonta to Cooperstown where he moved the tourist operation after the south Oneonta branch was destroyed by Route 88 construction. Successive purchases of branch lines in the 1970's included the Erie-Lackawanna Richfield Springs Branch, Fonda Johnstown and Gloversville and even the Rahway Valley in New Jersey.

In New York, NYS&W grew to include the branches between Binghamton, Syracuse and Utica in 1982 to form the "Northern Division". The Company has worked with local and State resources to improve the Northern divisions. Both branches are long on miles and short on customers. The Syracuse line is 79 miles and the Utica route is 95 miles in length. In 2005 Susquehanna leased the former Erie Railroad mainline between Binghamton and Port Jervis

(95 miles) to add to its New York State mileage. Taxation and deferred maintenance have always been issues with the Railroad's New York State lines.

The 1980's brought exciting new possibilities to railroads in general and a chance for NYS&W to get into transcontinental traffic. Conrail was beginning to flex its mainline muscle in the mid 1980's as Intermodal traffic began the upward trend we see today. American President Lines (APL) introduced double-stack container service on Conrail in 1984. Sealand Corporation, a fierce competitor of APL, did not have a similar deal to bring its containers into the New York City area.

For NYS&W this new environment offered an opportunity to get into the Intermodal craze of the 1980's, double stack container traffic. Mr. Rich had purchased New Jersey's New York Susquehanna and Western Railroad in 1980 which included an unused western portion that had been out of service since 1971. In 1985 the decision was made to reopen the derelict line for the container business. In those days it was unthinkable to see any abandoned rail line brought back into service, not to mention the use of one for mainline service. Sealand Corporation leased the NYS&W yard in Little Ferry, NJ and turned it into an Intermodal terminal for the Metropolitan region. The trains began to run on the new "Sparta Mountain" line through northwest NJ in 1986.

In 1998 container traffic dropped dramatically on the new through route in New Jersey. CSX Corporation now owned Sealand Container and no longer needed the "Susie-Q" route to compete with Conrail, which CSX now owned along with Norfolk Southern. The container business is known for extraordinarily thin profit margins. But Susquehanna has replaced the lost container business with detour CSX traffic between Syracuse and northern NJ and good carload volume originating and terminating on the busy original Susquehanna line through industrial areas in the Garden State.

Richard F. Timmons, President of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association called Mr. Rich "an influential and powerful spokesman for the Short Line railroad industry 25 years during the explosive growth of the 1980's and 90's. As Chairman of the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, Walter dealt with some of the most challenging problems of that growth at both the state and federal levels and tirelessly dedicated himself to the expansion of the small railroad network."

The railroad today again finds itself versy with recent landmark legal exemption status for citing new Intermodal facilities. Mr. Rich, an Attorney himself, has always understood and advanced the cause of short line railroading.

Smile....though your heart is breaking, goes the well known song. Walt was known for his easy smile and affable manner by an industry and colleagues that respected his work. When cancer entered his life Walt knew what to do as pictured above.



Ben Gottfried

Summer Sellouts (Cont'd from page 1)

Empire Corridor Trains sold out as Thursday, Aug 16, 2007:

Fri, Aug 17: 63 69 283 285 237 293 68 64;

Sat, Aug 18: 63 71; Sun, Aug 19: 64 68.

Trains Sold Out as Thursday, Aug 9, 2007:

Fri, Aug 10: 63 69 283 285 237 293 241 68 64;

Sat, Aug 11: 63 71 68; Sun, Aug 12: 64 68 258;

Fri, Aug 17: 63

Trains Sold Out as of Thursday, Aug 2, 2007:

Fri, Aug 3: 63 69 283 285 237 293 241 64;

Sat, Aug 4 63 71 64; Sun, Aug 5: 68 64.

Trains Sold Out as Thursday, July 26, 2007:

Fri, July 27: 63 69 283 285 237 293 64;

Sat, July 28: 63 71; Sun, July 29: 68 64;

Fri, Aug 3: 63.

The above sold out trains along the Empire Corridor are truly remarkable when one considers that yield-pricing results in very high fares as a particular train approaches a sold out condition. Several observations follow:

1. Train 293 (northbound late afternoon train to Rutland) was sold out each Friday of the six weeks examined.
2. Train 68 was sold out every Sunday for the six weeks.
3. Train 71 was sold out every Saturday for the six weeks, which limited summer service to Saratoga, especially when the Friday afternoon train to Saratoga (# 293) was also sold out each Friday.
4. All three trains to Western New York from New York City were sold out each and every Friday.

One question frequently asked is where could Amtrak use additional coaches along the Empire Corridor? I would propose the following:

1. Train 63 and 64 each could use an additional coach each day.
2. The northbound *Adirondack* on Saturday (# 71) could use an additional coach or two, which would return on Sunday's southbound *Adirondack* (# 68), both of which were sold out each week for this Sat/Sun pairing of equipment.
3. Local coaches are needed on Fridays between New York and Albany. Except for the Toronto train (# 63 and # 64), the Niagara Falls bound sold out Friday trains (#283 and #285) depart Albany with at least one coach locked and closed, because the train fills with passengers from New York traveling to Rhinecliff, Hudson, and Albany. This leaves at most 2 of the 4 coaches for west of Albany passengers when the train boards in Penn Station.

Amtrak should take reservations for west of Albany passengers to fill the 4 coaches, then add coaches for the NY to Albany

segment. Is it the best use of coaches to run them empty Albany to Niagara Falls back to Albany on trains that are sold out when space is needed south of Albany? This is limiting west of Albany ridership, due to the reservation system and the fixed consists of current operations along the Empire Corridor. To make matters worse, New York to Albany passengers are attracted to the west of Albany trains, since they offer food service, and this results in fewer seats for west of Albany passengers on these trains.

Gary Prophet

2007-08 ESPA Meeting Dates

Saturday, Sept. 29, 2007 Rensselaer, NY - Rudy's Italian Restaurant

Saturday, Nov. 17, 2007 Schenectady, NY - The Parker Inn

Saturday, January 26, 2008 Schenectady, NY - The Parker Inn

Saturday, March 8, 2008 Annual Membership Meeting - Schenectady Holiday Inn

ALL dates and locations are subject to change...Please refer to the ESPA Web Site, www.esparail.org, for the most current information!

If you would like to become more active in ESPA, these meetings are the perfect opportunity to learn more about the Association and how YOU can make a difference! ALL ESPA members (and other interested persons) are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact President Bruce Becker, 716-741-6384 or bbecker@esparail.org, for more information or if you are planning to attend a meeting.

"...the best way to reduce running time often involves eliminating low speeds rather than increasing top speed."

ESPA MEMBERSHIP - NEW OR RENEWAL

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