

36th Annual ESPA/NARP Membership Meeting March 5, 2016 In Schenectady

Now is the time to register for this year's gathering of rail advocates from across our state and region. This great day of speakers, lunch and camaraderie is one you don't want to miss. You are encouraged to invite a friend or associate to join you at this year's meeting; they will have a good time and will thank you for including them in our cause.



This year's event is on Saturday, March 5, 2016 and is once again being held at the historic Key Hall at Proctors on State Street in downtown Schenectady. This beautiful meeting space is located just two blocks from the Amtrak station and is accessed from inside the Arcade of Proctors Theater. Ample free parking is available in lots behind the Proctors complex. The Schenectady Downtown Hampton Inn is adjacent for those desiring overnight accommodations.

NARP President Jim Mathews has been confirmed as a principal speaker for the meeting. Invited guests include NYSDOT Commissioner Matthew Driscoll and Representative Paul Tonko, a long-time rail supporter who represents the Capital Region. Representatives from Amtrak, the Long Island Railroad and the City of Schenectady are also expected.

This year's registration fee is only \$36 for the entire day's program and lunch if mailed in by February 22nd (and \$40 after this date). Please complete and return the enclosed registration form with your payment check as soon as possible. On-line registration is also available via a link at www.esparail.org. This great day of speakers, lunch and camaraderie is one you don't want to miss. You are encouraged to invite a friend.

Be sure to check www.esparail.org for the latest information on our line-up of speakers and to download complete meeting information & the registration form. If you have any questions please contact President Bruce Becker at 716-880-7291 or bbecker@clearblockconsulting.com See you March 5th in Schenectady!

Governor's Budget Seeks \$44.3 Million For Passenger Rail

Governor Andrew Cuomo has submitted a state budget requesting \$44.3 million for "contractual agreements entered into for rail passenger service" for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2016. In addition, the proposed budget submission would continue (re-appropriate) approximately \$115 million in past unused appropriations for support of Amtrak rail service in New York.

Under the federal Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), New York State is required to support Amtrak passenger rail service north of New York City except for the long distance Lake Shore Limited. According to the State Comptroller "Open Book" contract reports, there is a \$27.6 million agreement for Amtrak service which started October 1, 2014 and continues until September 30, 2016.

The Governor's budget request continues clear support to intercity passenger rail service in New York. Also, part of the budget submission indicates the Governor will seek additional new appropriations for passenger rail service in future fiscal years until April 1, 2020.

In addition, previously appropriated federal and state construction monies will continue in 2016 with noticeable work on improvements to the Albany-Rensselaer station, the double track project between Albany and Schenectady, Schenectady station work, and work on the Hudson Line from Poughkeepsie to Albany. Station improvements at Rochester and Niagara Falls are also on the 2016 agenda.

A portion of the Governor's combined January 13th State-of-the State and State Budget submission was committed to rehabilitation of the stressed Penn Station. The vision offered was a \$3 billion upgrade of Penn Station and the ongoing Farley Post Office (Moynihan Station) work with a commitment of \$325 million from existing federal funds and contributions from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Amtrak, and New York State.

Funds to bridge the financial gap between government funds and the total cost of what the Governor called "Empire Station" would come from private developers. The private sector entities would gain the right to use retail and office space in a development contract.

The Governor set an ambitious schedule for the initiative with proposals and expressions of interest due in three months, and work to begin before the end of 2016.

Anthony Rudman

State-Wide Passenger Rail Improvement Projects Move Forward

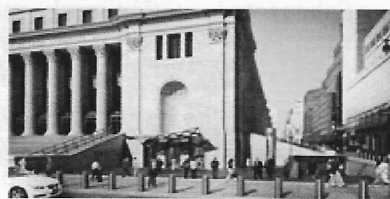
At long last, the majority of the approved and funded rail improvement projects focused on increasing safety, reliability and enhancing the overall passenger experience are now well underway across the state...

Here is a summary of the projects and the ongoing progress made to date on each:

- **Harold Interlocking Reconfiguration (Amtrak Project)** – Harold Interlocking is a complex two mile stretch of signals and switches in Queens, New York. It is the busiest passenger rail interlocking in North America, serving 783 trains each weekday. It is a critical connection for Amtrak, Long Island Railroad and New Jersey Transit trains; all Northeast Corridor Amtrak trains that operate between Boston and Washington must pass through this area, with Amtrak trains delayed while commuter trains navigate the bottleneck. Of Harold's total weekday usage, 136 are Amtrak trains. This project will construct grade separated routes for Amtrak trains within Harold Interlocking. Amtrak trains will then have a clear path between the Hell Gate Bridge and Pennsylvania Station and this will significantly enhance the on-time performance and service reliability and reduce trip times for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor service. Substantial completion expected in 2017.
- **Penn/Moynihan Station Expansion (Phase 1) (Moynihan Station Development Corporation Project)** – Consists of a \$150 million contract to build some of the key elements of future Moynihan Station Complex including:
 - Two new entrances into the Penn/Moynihan Station complex through the corners of the Farley building. The extension of the Penn Station West End Concourse to serve eight additional tracks.
 - The doubling of the width of the West End Concourse to meet ADA requirements.
 - New stairs, escalators and elevators from the platforms up to the West End Concourse. This work will help to alleviate congestion in the current station and at the platform level. It also constitutes a critical first step toward the larger goal of building a new train hall in the Farley Post Office Building for Amtrak. Phase I work is scheduled to be completed in 2016.



New West End Concourse



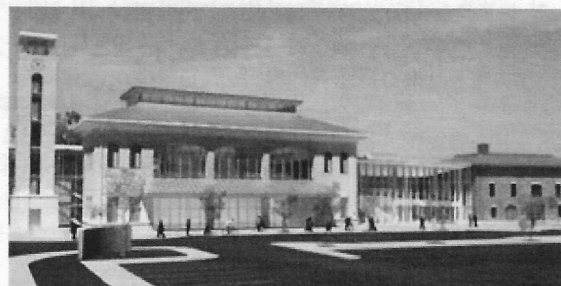
New Station Entrance At 33rd & 8th Ave

- **Poughkeepsie to Rensselaer Signal System Improvements (NYSDOT/Amtrak Project)** – Consists of new signal, power and fiber optic communication cables to be installed along 63 miles of the Empire Corridor between Poughkeepsie and Rensselaer. Eliminates the old and unreliable above-ground signal lines. Connections to existing signal systems we expected by the spring of 2016. Upon the final completion, the current poles will be removed.
- **Poughkeepsie to Rensselaer Grade Crossing Improvements (NYSDOT/Amtrak Project)** – Consists of the rebuilding and reconfiguration for improved safety of 13 grade crossings between Poughkeepsie and Rensselaer. Four crossings have been completed and eight more will be finished by the end of the 2015 construction season. The final crossing will be upgraded in 2016 with all work to be completed by summer.

- **Albany-Rensselaer 4th Track and Extended Platforms (NYSDOT/Amtrak Project)** – Consists of the extension of the current two high-level platforms to accommodate longer trains and the addition of a fourth boarding track (originally planned but never constructed). In addition the overall station track configuration will be reconfigured to ease train movements and congestion, along with a new signal system which will allow for increased speeds and operational flexibility. The substructure for the platform extensions are in place. The new signal systems are expected to be in service by early in 2016 and the fourth track is to be completed by the spring of 2017.
- **Albany to Schenectady Second Main Track (NYSDOT/Amtrak Project)** – Consists of 18 miles of new second main track which will be capable of speeds of 110mph. Grading, track drainage and bridge repair work is nearly complete. 32,500 concrete ties have been delivered and they, along with new welded rail will be installed beginning in the spring of 2016. The majority of the project will be completed by the spring of 2017.



- **New Schenectady Station (NYSDOT Project)** – Consists of the construction of a new Schenectady station on the current site, including a new low-level platform, access stairs, and elevator. Additional parking will be provided. Construction is to start in the spring of 2016 and be completed by the end of 2017.
- **Syracuse Congestion Relief Project (NYSDOT/CSX Project)** – Consists of upgrades and improvements to tracks and signals, and rebuilding of a current 30mph siding between the Dewitt Yard and the Amtrak station to allow for 60mph operations. No project commencement date is known; NYSDOT and CSX have not yet reached agreement to allow the work to occur.
- **New Rochester Station (NYSDOT Project)** – Consists of a new station building on the current site, and includes a new double-sided, high-level platform, which will allow two trains to be at the station at the same time. Additional secure parking will be provided. Completion is expected in the fall of 2017.
- **New Niagara Falls Station (City of Niagara Falls Project)** – Consists of a new station building and an adjacent single high-level platform. Tracks and signals will be improved to speed movements. Completion is expected in late 2016.



Amtrak Ridership Improves in New York State, Down Nationally

Despite a slight decrease in nationwide ridership due to the major Philadelphia accident on the Northeast Corridor, railroad infrastructure work by both the freight railroads and Amtrak, and declining gasoline prices, Amtrak station boardings and alightings throughout the Empire State continue to increase at most stations over the last few years. Eighteen of New York's 26 Amtrak stations posted gains during the fiscal year (FY) ending September 30, 2015.

Station	Boardings + Alightings: FY 2015	FY 2014
Albany-Rensselaer (<i>9th busiest in Amtrak system</i>)	825,353	781,597
Amsterdam	11,155	11,119
Buffalo-Depew	116,496	126,250
Buffalo-Exchange Street	41,584	41,222
Croton-Harmon	48,773	50,321
Fort Edward	9,616	9,197
Fort Ticonderoga	2,324	2,075
Hudson	196,786	187,776
New Rochelle	85,876	83,707
New York - Penn. Sta. (<i>busiest in Amtrak system</i>)	10,189,521	10,024,474
Niagara Falls	31,831	32,636
Plattsburgh	13,989	13,458
Port Henry	2,427	2,163
Port Kent	727	681
Poughkeepsie	100,791	98,516
Rhinecliff	194,477	186,273
Rochester	136,816	139,691
Rome	9,972	9,743
Rouses Point	1,208	1,257
Saratoga Springs	36,299	33,814
Schenectady	58,551	60,677
Syracuse	141,396	152,222
Utica	61,145	65,022
Westport	5,097	4,977
Whitehall	1,866	1,595
Yonkers	26,127	24,760
Total Usage FY 2015: (<i>up 1.7% from FY14</i>)	12,350,248	
Total Usage FY 2014: (<i>up 4.3% from FY13</i>)		12,145,223

New York State Amtrak stations had passenger gains of 1.7% compared to last year. All *Adirondack* stations north of Schenectady (except Rouses Point), and all *Empire Service* Hudson Valley stations (except Croton), reported gains. However, all stations west of Albany (except Amsterdam, Rome, & Downtown Buffalo) had passenger losses.

Nationally, only Arizona (+6.8%), California (+3.3%), Colorado (+11.7%), Nebraska (+9.0%), New Mexico (+4.2%), Rhode Island (+3.5%), and Tennessee (+2.8%), had a greater percentage increase in nationwide station usage. Six other states (Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin) had percentage gains in Amtrak station usage during the 2015 fiscal year.

So far during FY 2016 (beginning October 1, 2015), New York ridership numbers appear mixed. A major exception is a significant increase on the *Lakeshore Limited* due primarily to better timekeeping by host railroad Norfolk-Southern between Cleveland and Chicago.

October – November 2015 (FY 2016) Cumulative Ridership

Service (Route)	FY16	FY15	% change
Acela (Boston – NYC – Washington)	631,455	629,309	+0.3
Regional (Boston – NYC – Washington)	1,462,673	1,497,214	-2.3
Ethan Allen (*Albany – Rutland)	8,287	8,416	-1.5
Empire (*Albany – Niagara Falls)	61,494	65,985	-6.8
Empire (NYC – Albany)	202,524	202,532	-0.0
Adirondack (*Albany – Plattsburgh – Montreal)	20,506	20,199	+1.5
Lakeshore Ltd. (Boston/NYC – Buffalo – Chicago)	58,749	51,964	+13.1
Amtrak System Total	5,285,449	5,370,206	-1.6

**to/from New York City (NYC)*

No Snow Train in 2016

The Saratoga & North Creek Railway will not run the 'Snow Train' this year from Saratoga Springs to North Creek due to poor ridership in the previous years of operation since the company started it in the winter 2011-12.

The consensus seems to be as expressed in local papers, including the Saratogian and Glen Falls Post-Star, that the Snow Trains failed to attract a lot of passengers because they arrived too late in the morning and left too early for people to get in a full day's worth of skiing at the Gore Mountain Ski Center in North Creek. Weather has also not been cooperative with some warm and snowless months during the previous winters.

It should be noted that unlike the famous "Ski Train" in Colorado, the "Snow Train" did not connect a big metropolitan center like Denver with a world famous winter alpine resort like Winter Park. Also at Winter Park, as soon as the 'Ski Train' crossed the Continental Divide thru the Moffat Tunnel, it stopped right at the base of the ski slopes. You exited the train and walked right over to a ski lift; extremely convenient with such seamless connection.

In stark contrast the trip from the North Creek Station to the Gore Mountain Ski Center involved a shuttle bus ride of three miles, or a half of a mile walk to the Ski Bowl where you could board a lift up Little Gore Mountain and then ski over to Gore Mountain, or at the Ski Bowl go tubing on a sledding hill with a tow line. If perhaps there were a gondola ride directly connecting the station with ski center and if the train started from the heart of the Capital District at Albany-Rensselaer, business might have been more brisk.

This news has no doubt disappointed some who have long been enraptured, of the promise return of the ski trains which, from 1934 to 1942, ran each winter from Schenectady and then later New York City to the Adirondack Village of North Creek in Warren County. The trains were popular with winter sports enthusiasts including day trippers from Schenectady and many others from New York City who lodged with local residents for weekend getaways, but they ended with the entry of the U.S. into WWII.

They never resumed after the war until revived in late December 2011 by Iowa Pacific after they won the concession to operate the former Adirondack Branch of the D&H Railway from its local government owners: Warren County and the Town of Corinth. With the help of federal and state money, the two local governments had purchased and repaired the 57-miles of tracks from Saratoga to North Creek.

The awarding of the operating concession to the short line holding company Iowa Pacific brought a large expansion of tourist excursion service from its former concessioners the Upper Hudson River Valley. Iowa Pacific also bought outright the 30-miles of the "industrial spur" railroad tracks north of North Creek to the shuttered titanium mine at Tahawus from its owner NL Industries.

Next year in June, Iowa Pacific's 5-year contract with Warren County will end, but Ed Ellis, president of Iowa

Pacific, told the local newspapers that he expects the contract will be renewed. The company has sunk a lot of money into the operation which, while reportedly profitable "above the rail", has been in the red overall when you take into account the annual maintenance cost of the infrastructure that supports passenger rail operations including sightseeing excursions and dinner train specials.

In order to move the line into the black, Iowa Pacific has been working building a freight business in parallel to its passenger service. This year saw some success, reportedly some box cars of garnet an industrial abrasive where shipped from Barton Mines just west of North Creek. Iowa Pacific, after much controversy this summer, dropped plans to store out-of-service tank cars on the former mine sidings in Tahawus.

Also, the acquisition and repair of the Tahawus tracks have allowed the SNCR to begin shipping out car loads of crushed stone for use in construction from the shuttered NL mine. The stone is the "tailings" or waste product of decades of mining that mounted up in enormous piles. The railroad estimates that there are decades worth of business in exporting this stone which could bring the entire SNCR operation into the black if fully developed.

Finally, back to the passenger side of the business, Iowa Pacific has stated that SNCR excursion trains might begin running again for the 2016 season on specific weekends, perhaps starting in March. Specials run for occasions, including St. Patrick's Day, Easter, and Mother's Day, have reportedly done well in previous years. The railroad told Warren County officials that the tracks would be used "occasionally" during the winter and that was sufficient to ban use of the right-of-way by snowmobiles.

For more information on SNCR passenger services please visit their website at www.sncr.com

Ben Turon

Vermont Rides the Rails with Continual Investment

Vermont Rail Action Network's 2015 Annual Dinner Meeting was held on November 5 at Burlington Union Station on the shores of Lake Champlain. VRAN is a citizen's advocacy group promoting the revitalization of the Vermont rail network including both freight and passenger service. The organization enjoys broad support from business leaders and rail enthusiasts to political leaders to professional railroaders.

For the past several years since 2011, VRAN has been holding its annual dinner at various locations around the state to highlight the work ongoing or planned to improve the Green Mountain State's railroads. The state's two sponsored Amtrak services are the Washington-St Albans *Vermont* and New York-Rutland *Ethan Allen*.

The *Vermont*

The *Vermont* has in the past few years benefitted from significant public investments that will lead to significant improvement in travel time reduction and reliability.

First was the successful completion of the \$70 million upgrading of 190-miles of the New England Central tracks from Brattleboro to St. Albans thanks to high speed

rail grants from the 2009 ARRA "Stimulus" finished on time and on budget despite Hurricane Sandy that devastated large parts of Vermont including its railroads. Speeds were increased to 79-mph and about 30 minutes was cut off the schedule.

The *Vermont* is benefiting from completed and ongoing federal and state-funded work to upgrade the tracks south from Brattleboro, in Massachusetts and Connecticut, including an \$83 million "Knowledge Corridor" project that rerouted the train north of Springfield, saving 25 minutes.

Plans are afoot to extend the *Vermont* to Montreal; like its overnight predecessor the *Montreal Limited*. The U.S. and Canada have signed an agreement that would allow for the establishment of a pre-clearance customs and immigration facility within Central Station in Montreal, but this deal must first be approved by the U.S. Congress and the Canada's Parliament. The tracks north of St. Albans to the Canadian border have been upgraded thanks to a \$7.9 million federal grant.

The Ethan Allen

Last year's VRAN meeting was focused on the future service to Montreal; this year's meeting was focused on the 'Western Corridor' running south from Burlington to Rutland were the '*Ethan Allen*' currently terminates. Since the 2009 ARRA, this train as benefited from completed and ongoing work in New York State, including new mainline track south of Saratoga and between Albany and Schenectady, as well as various improvements south of Albany on the Hudson Line.

However, a major source of delays was the 22 miles of track from Rutland to Whitehall NY where the train merges onto the old D&H mainline (Canadian Pacific), Amtrak rated this segment 'the worst in the nation' for its trains.

After an investigation, the Vermont Rail System completed \$3.25 million of track work and grade crossing upgrades that reduced delays by 99% and cut 15-minutes southbound and 25-minutes northbound from the schedule. Also, Amtrak's grade crossing "train stop" at Fairhaven was replaced by a privately owned station building in nearby Castleton, 9 miles west of Rutland.

Next was completing the work to extend the '*Ethan Allen*' to Rutland on tracks that had not seen passenger service since 1953. Several attempts to win money from the first ARRA, and then the TIGER program, failed but the private operator, Vermont Rail System, made steady progress on the state owned tracks. Vermont acquired much of the former Rutland Railroad after its collapse in 1961, and since then has leased its operation to the Vermont Rail System. Some of the money for the upgrades came from an old \$10 million unspent federal earmark. Finally in 2013, a \$9 million TIGER grant was awarded with the state matching the other \$9 million.

Last October, a \$10 million TIGER grant was awarded which will allow for completion much of the rest work necessary to extend the '*Ethan Allen*' to Burlington. The state will more than match the federal money with \$15-16 million including \$3 million of highway money for grade crossing improvements. Overall, the cost of the Western Corridor project will be about \$65 million according to the newspaper *VTDigger*.

As with the upgrading of the New England Central's track for the '*Vermont*', HSR project, much of the work involves the replacement of lighter jointed rail with heavier, continuously welded rail, the replacement of ties, new sidings and crossovers, bridge work, and the upgrading of public railroad crossings. Top

speed will be 60-mph for passenger trains and 40-mph for freight.

These improvements not only benefit passengers by providing a faster and smoother ride but benefit local shippers by increasing the efficiency and convenience of shipping by rail. The new heavy welded rail will facilitate the use of freight cars than can carry up to 286,000-lb, reducing costs to shippers while boosting the profits of the freight railroads.

Making freight rail more attractive can help reduce traffic congestion, highway wear and tear, air pollution and traffic fatalities by replacing trucks with trains. The often overlooked freight part of the equation makes for a positive cost-benefit analysis based on economic, social, and environmental benefits of both passenger and freight rail. It also encourages broad, deep, and bipartisan political support for public investment in rail, including business, industry, tourist, higher education, and environmental communities.

This broad public support is likely the key reason why Vermont has been able to sustain a steady investment in its Amtrak services for the last decade. Also important is the professionalism and efficiency of VTrans (its transportation department) and the good working relationship it has with its shortline railroad partners.

Lastly, there is the enthusiasm for rail by governor Peter Shumlin (D) who was first elected in 2010, not found in previous administrations. VTrans in 2008 and 2009 actually proposed eliminating the *Ethan Allen* in favor of an intercity coach connection due to budget restrictions. But this was rejected by the legislative due to large public support rallied local politicians and Trans to help save the train.

The timeline to when exactly the *Ethan Allen* will make it to Burlington is still uncertain, VTrans Secretary Chris Cole told the newspaper *VTDigger* that it would be sometime after 2020. Intermediate stations on the 67 miles between Rutland and Burlington would definitely include Middlebury which has a large college. Street signs there already point to the station's future location.

Vergennes will also be a flag stop, having a site with a building and park-n-ride lot. Brandon, halfway between Rutland and Middlebury, has requested a station along with Shelburne, south of Burlington, which has a famous museum. Some \$4.4 million is earmarked for the stations including platform work.

As to the question of why terminate the *Ethan Allen* at Burlington instead of continuing it to Essex Junction (east of Burlington) and St. Albans, the answer is that the 8 miles of track between Burlington Union Station and the wye at Essex Jct. (NECR's Winooski Branch) is in very bad condition with some steep grades. Currently it's only used for the interchange of cars between the Vermont Rail System and New England Central.

There is also the aging 1861 North Avenue Tunnel which underwent \$1.2 million in repairs in 2008 with a new lining, lowered floor with new steel ties, and concrete track bed constructed. But questions of the safety of the tunnel remain, and repairing the rest of the line to Essex Jct. would cost at least several tens of millions.

Burlington Union Station

The terminus for the intermediate future will be Burlington's Union Station starting at the foot of Main Street on the edge of downtown, with the waterfront to its immediate west. The station was built in 1916 to serve both the Central Vermont Railway and Rutland Railroad. The city government helped finance its construction.

Built in the Beaux-Art style of architecture popular in the early 20th Century, the building remains a landmark of the Burlington waterfront.

Burlington is Vermont's largest city with a population of over 42,000, and about 213,000 in the metro area. Its economy is based on higher education and healthcare, but there is some light manufacturing and high tech industries. Tourism and retail are also major drivers of the economy.

The area surrounding the station was once largely industrial, but in the past few decades was redeveloped to include new residences, businesses, parkland, marinas, excursion boats, and the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center. The Lake Champlain ferry to Port Kent, NY is close to the station...

Ben Turon



#704 Before Leaving Beach Grove to Return to New York State

New York State Funds Repainting of Empire Corridor Locomotives

Amtrak's fleet of unique P32-Dual Mode locomotives have exclusively served the Empire Corridor for over 20 years, with the first ones having entered service in 1995. Many of these 18 units can operate on third-rail power in & out of Penn Station. They have been in need of a cosmetic update for many years. In mid-2015, NYSDOT started the process to remedy this need and in early January the first newly repainted unit, #704, returned to Rensselaer from Amtrak's Beech Grove Shops. The unit now sports the popular Phase Three paint scheme and features a large Empire Service logo on both sides. Three additional locomotives are scheduled for repainting during 2016.

Book Review: "The Second Age of Rail: A History of High Speed Trains"

For Christmas Santa Claus got me "The Second Age of Rail: A History of High Speed Trains" by Murray Hughes editor of Railway Gazette International. He joined the publication as a news editor in 1975 and has witnessed over four decades of high speed rail development. His previous book on the subject was "Rail 300: The World High Speed Train Race" published in 1988.

The book is 192 pages and is well illustrated with great pictures, graphs, charts, and maps. It is divided into fourteen chapters largely by geography, country by country. It gives one a good survey of various high speed

rail systems around the world from Europe to Asia, including nations new to HSR like Morocco, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

Of course Japan and France are extensively covered, but high speed powerhouses like Spain and South Korea merit a fair amount of attention. Italy is there, being one of the few countries where a state owned railway directly competes with a serious private competitor on the nation's high speed railways. High speed laggards like Britain and America each get a chapter.

Its overwhelming focus is on new high speed railways with speeds 250 kilometers per hour (160-mph) or greater. High speed intercity services on upgraded railways with speeds of "only" 125-mph (200-KPH) on older lines, such as the X2000 in Sweden or the Intercity-125 in Britain, are only scarcely covered.

That's a bit of a shame since "Higher Speed Rail" (HrSR), with train speeds of 90-to-125 mph on largely upgraded tracks, is really the future in most of America, including here in Upstate NY on the 110-mph "Empire Corridor". But the author writes that he already covered much of that history in his 1988 book. Besides, from the standpoint of a European 125 mph is not that unusual.

Still, given the lack of English language sources on the famous X2000 tilt train, a chapter in this book dedicated to its history would have been appreciated. Maglev, however does merit a chapter with the focus on the German Transrapid and Japanese Linear Maglev.

All in all, this is a pretty good book written by a professional rail journalist who's been following the business longer than all but the 1964 Tōkaidō Shinkansen, the world's first brand new dedicated high-speed railway.

Frankly there have been a few bad books on this topic from America, (a lot of "pie-in-the-sky" stuff by uncritical "dreamy-eye" HSR boosters). This book, should give the reader an informed and balanced take on the subject. I highly recommend it!

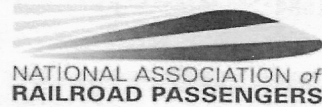
Ben Turon



Stay In Touch With **ESPA**
Via Facebook at
www.facebook.com/esparail
(You Don't To Be A Facebook
User To View Our ESPA Page)

Help ESPA go Green & Save \$\$

For members providing their email address, the ESPA Newsletter will be mailed at the same time it is forwarded to the printer enabling you to receive the newsletter one to two weeks earlier than by mail. Postage savings can be used for passenger rail advocacy. Email address submitted will only be used by ESPA. Send Email address to www.rwlens4@gmail.com



36th Annual Meeting
of the
Empire State Passengers Association

and
National Association of Railroad Passengers

Saturday, March 5, 2016

11:00am – 4:00pm

Key Hall At Proctors State Street Schenectady, NY

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

Confirmed Speaker:

James Mathews – President/CEO – National Association of Railroad Passengers

Invited Speakers:

**NYS Department of Transportation Commissioner Matthew Driscoll
Prominent Representatives From Amtrak And The Rail Industry**

Full Program Registration Includes The Meeting And A Three Course Luncheon...

**Full Early Bird Discount Registration - \$36.00 Per Person
(Registrations Must Be Post Marked By February 22nd)**

**Full Late Registration - \$40.00 Per Person
(ALL Registrations Post Marked After February 22nd)**

Meeting ONLY (No Lunch) Registration - \$25.00 Per Person

Please complete and return this form with your check for the appropriate registration fee, to be received NO later than February 26, 2016. (NO cancellations after this date).

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

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

**Bruce B. Becker
Empire State Passengers Association
8175 Old Post Road East
East Amherst, NY 14051**

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone No: _____

E-Mail: _____

_____ I will be arriving in Schenectady on: Tr. # 280 Tr. #63

THE ESPA EXPRESS
10531 Main Street
Clarence, NY 14031-1684

Forward & Address Correction Requested

Please take a moment to check your mailing label.
Your membership may be due for renewal.
We appreciate your support.

FIRST CLASS
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #102
CLARENCE, NY

2016 - 17 ESPA Working Group Meeting & Lunch Dates

If you would like to become more active in ESPA, our bi-monthly 'Working Group' 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, 716-880-7291 or bbecker@clearblockconsulting.com, for more information or if you are planning on attending a meeting. Advance registration is required!

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

Saturday, April 23, 2016 Schenectady – BackstagePub
Saturday, June 4, 2016 Schenectady – Backstage Pub
Saturday, August 6, 2016 Utica – Trackside Restaurant at Union Station
Saturday, September 24, 2016 Schenectady – Backstage Pub
Saturday, November 12, 2016 Schenectady – Backstage Pub
Saturday, January 21, 2017 Schenectady – Backstage Pub

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

ESPA MEMBERSHIP NEW OR RENEWAL

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

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

Member Number _____

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

ESPA/NARP Member

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

Send news items and "Letters to the Editor" to: Robert Lenz, Editor, 10531 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031, Tel: 716-759-2315.
Email: www.rwlenz4@gmail.com Deadling for material for Spring Issue is March 1, 2016. Material may be reproduced if credit is given ESPA and to the writer.