



# IOWA RAILS

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

\*\*\*OCTOBER 2005\*\*\*

## IARP to meet in Grinnell

Our next meeting is Saturday, November 12, 2005, Depot Crossing Restaurant and Lounge, 1014 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Grinnell, Iowa (641-236-6886).

Attendees may enjoy an optional from the menu lunch at 11:30 a.m. and join together at 1:00 p.m. for the program and business meeting. Meals will be paid for by each individual participating in the lunch.

The program includes:

Pat Hendricks, President, IARP  
Passenger rail update

Invited Speakers include:

NARP Assistant Director Dave Johnson  
or Rick Harnish, Executive Director  
Midwest High Speed Rail Assoc.

Sarah Henderson, Cedar Rapids Light  
Rail Initiative

A member of the staff of Congressman  
Leonard Boswell.

The public is invited and welcome and encouraged to attend the program and meeting.

Following the meeting, members will be able to view the Grinnell Railway Express Model Railroad Club across the street. They will expect us at 3:00 p.m (641-236-0968).



Photo of the Grinnell Depot is from the Vaughn Ward Collection – 1949.

Photo is courtesy of May 1958 issue of “The Switchlamp”. “The Switchlamp” is the publication of the Iowa Chapter National Railway Historical Society (NRHS).

# **NARP Expresses Concern Over Amtrak Board Action, and Vacancies on Amtrak Board** Release #05-32—October 22, 2005

**Washington, D.C.—The board of directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, at its semi-annual meeting today in Minneapolis, approved two resolutions. The full texts of both are at the bottom of this release.**

One reports that the NARP board is in unity with the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which on October 14 wrote to Capitol Hill leaders expressing the Conference's "deep concerns" regarding the Amtrak Board's decision to direct management to do the work needed to create a subsidiary that would take title to Amtrak's Northeast Corridor infrastructure.

The other resolution notes that Amtrak's board currently has four members, all Republicans, and that two of these board members are recess appointments that expire when Congress adjourns later this year. Under the law, the board is to include seven voting members, appointed by the President after consultation with Capitol Hill leaders of both parties. In making nominations, the President is to consult with the leaders of both parties in both the House and the Senate, but all four board members are Republicans; the term of the last Democratic voting member of the Amtrak Board expired more than a year ago.

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## **RESOLUTION OF CONCERN REGARDING CREATION OF NORTHEAST CORRIDOR INFRASTRUCTURE SUBSIDIARY**

Whereas the Amtrak Board of Directors in April approved and publicized a strategic plan which stated in part that the separation of "infrastructure management from operations for planning, accounting and financial reporting and analysis purposes...will deliver much of the

benefit of ownership segregation," and stated, "We have decided for now...that the costs, complexities and risks of such a split within Amtrak outweigh the benefits,"

Whereas the Amtrak Board on September 22, 2005, directed management to "to take all appropriate action" to create a wholly owned "NEC Subsidiary," subject to the board's final approval,

Whereas the board's action was never officially announced but was reported in The New York Times three weeks later, after being revealed by another organization,

Whereas the considerable work required to create such a subsidiary would also be required to undertake the break-up of Amtrak long proposed by the U.S. Department of Transportation,

Whereas this work also inevitably would divert management attention from other areas where the need for improvement is much greater than with infrastructure,

Whereas the Association is mistrustful of the U.S. DOT because of its lack of commitment to intercity passenger rail,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers joins the U.S. Conference of Mayors in expressing "deep concerns regarding the Amtrak Board of Directors' decision" directing management to prepare for creation of a subsidiary to own Amtrak's Northeast Corridor infrastructure, and in urging "Congress to immediately begin hearings on the actions of the Amtrak Board of Directors."



**RESOLUTION URGING THE WHITE HOUSE TO APPOINT MEMBERS TO THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Whereas the law calls for an Amtrak Board of Directors with seven voting members nominated by the President after consultation with leaders of both parties in both the House and Senate, and to be confirmed by the Senate,

Whereas the existing board has four members from the same party, two with recess appointments that expire when Congress adjourns this year,

Whereas many observers believe the Amtrak Board will be legally incapacitated after Congress adjourns,

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Directors of the National Association of Railroad Passengers urges President Bush to move quickly to nominate candidates sufficient to bring the Amtrak Board of Directors to a full complement of seven voting members, including some candidates acceptable to Republican leaders on Capitol Hill, and some acceptable Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill.

**AMTRAK BOARD VOTES TO SPIN OFF NORTHEAST CORRIDOR!**

**CONTACT CONGRESS NOW!**

**TELL THEM TO REJECT THE AMTRAK BOARD'S PLAN TO DIVIDE AMTRAK.**

**The plan by Amtrak's board, all Bush appointees, would create a totally new subsidiary which would both own and operate the entire northeast corridor, thus separating that segment of the rail network from the rest of the national system. Be aware that this is part of the broader effort by the Bush administration to dissolve Amtrak and dismantle the national passenger rail system, the first step down the road to privatization and the elimination of long distance routes. In addition, by separating the Northeast Corridor from the rest of the system, this would effectively divide the national pro-rail coalition, thus weakening Amtrak's support in Congress.**

# Amtrak Myths & Facts – Part II

From NARP website – [www.narp.org](http://www.narp.org)

**5. Myth:** Any dollar going to Amtrak is another dollar not going to roads.

**Fact:** Federal funds for roads come from the Highway Trust Fund, a dedicated long-term source of funding, whereas Amtrak receives federal dollars from the General Fund through the annual appropriations process. However, states and local governments should have the option to spend transportation dollars on the most efficient mode of transportation. Current policy discourages states and local governments from investing in intercity rail.

**6. Myth:** Shut down Amtrak and the private sector will operate passenger rail.

**Fact:** Rail passenger service was in private hands from its inception in the 1830's until 1970, when Congress and the Nixon Administration made a policy decision to create Amtrak because the private sector could not make a profit. The private sector operators that have expressed an interest in operating rail passenger service will do so for a fee with the clear expectation that the government will absorb the associated losses. Furthermore, most Amtrak route miles are on tracks whose owners, the private freight railroads, do not want to run their own passenger trains and have a top priority of opposing legislation to give Amtrak's rights (for track access at reasonable cost) to any other entity. The practical result of shutting down Amtrak would be elimination of intercity passenger rail.

**7. Myth:** Flying is cheaper than taking a long-distance train.

**Fact:** Anyone with a computer can find a train fare that is less than an airfare, or the opposite. Long-distance trains don't just go from one major market to another like flights, but serve many intermediate markets with poor air service (or no air service, or costly air service). Furthermore, the walk-up fare for an Amtrak trip is often much less than walk-up airfare. There are also people who cannot or do not want to fly.

**8. Myth:** One particular route (e.g., the *Kentucky Cardinal* between Chicago and Louisville) shows the entire national system is flawed.

**Fact:** The *Kentucky Cardinal* was instituted in 1999 to grow express package business. The profitable business never materialized and Amtrak discontinued the route on July 6, 2003. Despite limited ridership, no community wants its passenger train to disappear. Residents of Louisville recently filed a class action suit against Amtrak and the USDOT to bring back the route.

**9. Myth:** The overwhelming majority of Americans have chosen the automobile lifestyle.

**Fact:** To a large extent, this apparent "choice" reflects a necessary response to pro-highway federal policies, which for decades have encouraged state and local decisions that foster reliance on the automobile. States -- naturally influenced in choosing transportation projects by the federal funding available for those projects -- can obtain generous federal matches for investments in highways--often 80% and 90% of a project's total cost--and aviation, but there is no federal match for states to develop intercity rail projects. The public's interest in more travel choices is reflected both in the aforementioned polls and in ridership increases on Amtrak over five straight years (Fiscal 1997-2001) and on mass transit. At a June 27, 2003, conference on traffic congestion, American Public Transportation Association President William Millar stated, "Since 1995, transit ridership has grown by 21 percent, versus 16 percent for driving and 12 percent for domestic airlines. More people are taking public transportation now than in the last 40 years." Also, on April 17, 2001, *The Washington Post* reported, "Mass-transit ridership grew faster than highway use for the third year in a row last year, according to new national figures."

In their July 2001 report, "Twelve Anti-Transit Myths: A Conservative Critique," Paul M. Weyrich and William S. Lind of the Free Congress Foundation write, "From the advent of the Model T until quite recently, transit was a declining industry. This is not surprising because government offered massive subsidies to cars and highways. Most transit systems, in contrast, were privately owned and operated and, far from receiving subsidies, had to pay taxes ... Post-World War II building codes, which forced a separation of housing, shopping, and work places also hit transit hard." Of course, the private railroads -- including their passenger facilities -- also were privately controlled and publicly taxed.

**The following was submitted by the United Transportation Union (8/27/05)**

AMTRAK: TELLING IT LIKE IT IS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. –

Rep. Corrine Brown (D-Fla.), one of the UTU's best friends and an ardent supporter of Amtrak and its conductors, pulled no punches last week when the House Railroad Subcommittee heard testimony on Amtrak.

Brown especially bristled at stated plans to break apart the national railroad passenger network and parcel it out to possibly non-union operators.

Following is what Brown said at that congressional hearing.

"Last year, Amtrak achieved record ridership of 25 million passengers nationwide -- the equivalent of 125,000 fully loaded Boeing 757 airliners. That is a substantial increase in ridership, which tells me that support for Amtrak is growing.

"Recent polls show that 66 percent of the American people support Amtrak -- not 66 percent from the "red states" or "blue states," but 66 percent of the American people. "Amtrak works, and Americans depend on it.

"We should be investing in our railroad system just like we invest in the other modes of transportation. We spend trillions of dollars to subsidize every form of transportation -- highways, aviation, transit, and maritime -- and Amtrak gets the short end of the stick, with just over \$1 billion a year from the federal government. "We've spent \$18 billion on aviation security since 9/11, but nothing to secure Amtrak's passengers. The airlines are looking for another hand-out from Congress because of fuel prices -- about \$600 million in tax relief. I don't see any relief for Amtrak.

"We spend \$4 billion a month in Iraq, but we can't find \$3 billion to get the Northeast Corridor to a state of good repair.

"Haliburton wastes \$7.2 billion of federal funds and inflates costs billed to the federal government for things like soda, movie rentals, tailoring services and equipment, but that gets swept under the rug.

"Haliburton billed the federal government for 37,200 cases of soda each month at \$45 per case, and we complain about a \$3 beverage that Amtrak sells to passengers.

"Haliburton spent \$10,000 per day to house their employees in Kuwait at a five-star hotel, instead of moving them to air-conditioned tent facilities -- as requested by the Army, for under \$600 per day -- and we complain about the cost of Amtrak sleeper cars.

"Then there is the Transportation Security Agency, which spends \$1,200 for 20 gallons of Starbucks coffee, \$1,500 for 14 extension cords, \$500,000 to rent tents that flooded in a rainstorm, \$250,000 for artwork for TSA's new crisis management center in Virginia, \$30,000 for silk plants and flowers, \$13,000 for lamps, and \$29,000 for art consultants. And we're complaining about \$1 billion for a service that millions of Americans rely on.

"We should be ashamed of ourselves.

"Let's stop nickel-and-diming Amtrak to death. Let's stop looking for ways to get rid of the railroad. Let's start giving David Gunn the support he needs and our constituents -- many of which are Amtrak passengers -- deserve."

To this the UTU can only add, "Thank you, Rep. Brown."

Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers  
Minutes  
August 27, 2005  
Okoboji Grill Restaurant  
Des Moines (Pleasant Hill), Iowa

At 1:00 p.m., President Patrick Hendricks opened the August 27, 2005 meeting of the Iowa Association of Railroad Passengers.

Our first speaker was Ellen King Huntoon, Senior Professional Staff Member and World Development Coordinator for Senator Tom Harkin. She told us that both the house and senate have passed different funding amounts for Amtrak. As a result the funding amount difference will be resolved by a conference committee. This resolution should occur around the third week of September.

She urged us to contact our officials. We need to keep up the pressure. Any correspondence sent by US Mail takes about 6-8 weeks. This is because all mail is tested to make sure that it has not been contaminated by Anthrax. The best way to contact our officials is by FAX, e-mail or telephone.

Congress has grouped some committees. Transportation is now part of the Transportation/HUD/Treasury combined committee.

She was asked why Transportation Secretary Manetta's tells lies about Amtrak. She was unaware of this.

President Hendricks thanked Ellen King Huntoon for speaking to us. He also thanked Senator Harkin for his support of Amtrak.

Mary Buczek passed out both the Secretary and Treasurer's reports. IARP's current balance is \$4,599.13.

Mike Kulik, Assistant General Counsel, gave the General Counsel's Report. He said that the by-laws were approved at an earlier IARP meeting. He said all old annual reports have been filed with the State of Iowa. All is now in order. He will be re-applying to the IRS for the 501c3 exemption for IARP.

Cathy Johnson is in Europe. Before she left, she asked if we could get a graphic artist to create a new IARP membership brochure. President Hendricks asked Mary Buczek to investigate the cost of a new brochure. Mary said that she would contact Cathy in a few weeks to discuss the new brochure.

Gary Billmeyer said that there was no Iowa Operation Lifesaver Report.

Eliot Keller gave the Excursion chair report. Eliot Keller spent one 6-hour shift at the Iowa Department of Transportation Rail Office booth at The Iowa State Fair. Eliot said that the number one topic was Amtrak; the number two topic was The Boone & Scenic Railroad, and the number three topic was rail crossing issues.

Eliot said that *The Hawkeye Express* would run between Coralville and Kinnick Stadium for this fall's Iowa home football games. Eliot said that he had brochures from The Iowa Department of Transportation, Midwest Interstate Rail Commission and Midwest High Speed Rail.

NARP director Dick Welch was not at the meeting. He was recuperating from surgery. As a result there was no NARP Regional Director Report.

President Hendricks passed out a list of legislators to everyone at the meeting. He had no additional passenger rail comments.

Our second speaker was George F. Davison, Jr. He gave his presentation “Building Steam for Passenger Rail”.

George Davison told the group that we are at a unique opportunity for passenger rail. He said that the following challenges make this an ideal time to gather steam for passenger rail.

1. Gas Prices
2. The noise of the trains in downtown Des Moines. People are moving back to the inner-city.
3. World War II veterans thought that highways were the better way for the country. Younger people ask, “Is it a better way?”
4. Air Service – filing bankruptcy, older fleet, maintenance problems and security.

Rail is more efficient in trips 300-500 miles. Iowa wants to grow economically. Rail is less expensive than highways. It is the right economic decision.

George said that we need to build the inferno for steam by contacting our elected officials.

There was no old business.

Under new business, Lance Erickson wants us to investigate getting a booth at next year’s Iowa State Fair. He thinks that the little depot would be an ideal location.

Gary Billmeyer said that Amtrak has 2 for 1 coupon from September 6, 2005, through June 9, 2006.

The next meeting will be in Boone, Iowa. It will be in October. Gary Billmeyer will contact a meeting location.

John Ely donated several books for door prizes.

Greg Franck won “World of Railroads”

George F. Davison, Jr. won “Guide to Trains. World Greatest trains”

Mike Kulik won “American Locos”

Betty Schneider won “Guide to Tourist Trains”

Caroline Barzen also won.

President Hendricks said that directions to the model railroad at the Iowa State Fairgrounds were printed in the newsletter. He also gave verbal directions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Buczek , Acting Secretary

# IARP Membership Application

**Yes! I want to support improved Iowa  
railroad service. Here's my  
membership in the Iowa Association  
of Railroad Passengers (IARP).**

**(Print this form, fill it out and mail it  
with your payment.)**

Name :

\_\_\_\_\_

Address :

\_\_\_\_\_

City :

\_\_\_\_\_

State and Zip :

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone :

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail :

\_\_\_\_\_

**One calendar year regular  
membership \$15.00 (Student  
members \$12.00)**

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: IARP

Mail to:

IARP  
3349 Southgate Court SW #108  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404-5424

**Note:** IARP is a tax-exempt organization  
under section 501(c)(4) of the IRS code,  
however contributions to IARP are not  
tax-deductible.

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