

Joe Krause Gives His Keys to Effective Rail Service

By Joe Krause

Lafayette – I liked Bob Stewart’s 16 top preferences for excellent rail service as published in the October issue of *All Aboard Indiana*, but I still like my mantra which goes as follows:

Effective Intercity Passenger Rail Service should be SAFE, Frequent, Reliable, Convenient – and, if possible, Pleasant.

SAFE: In the stations, on the platforms, on the trains, and at highway-rail grade crossings. SAFETY ALWAYS MUST COME FIRST.

FREQUENT: More than one train a day each way between major city pairs with plenty of service in between. (On the *Hoosier State* corridor, city pairs include Indianapolis-Chicago, Indianapolis-Crawfordsville, Crawfordsville-Lafayette, Lafayette-Rensselaer, Rensselaer-Dyer, and Dyer-Chicago.)

CONVENIENT: Stations readily accessible with adequate short and long-term parking. Passenger stations and trains with handicap facilities (ramps, lifts, working elevators, proper lighting). Train schedules which provide some trains stopping during daylight and not having some major cities with midnight or very early morning train stops. (*continued*)

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page Two

Bullets from the Board

Page Three

Train Through Fort Wayne

Three to Five Years Away

Op-Ed: Let Indy Airport Auth.

Run Bus-Rail Terminal

Page Four

Illinois Executive Offers Advice

on Orchestrating Rail Projects

Successful Rail Projects

Involve Paying Close

Attention to Details

Engage Business Leaders to

Expand Urban Rail

Page Six

Passenger Rail Advocacy

Changing: Incremental

Projects Best Understood

Riding the Rails

Page Eight—Nine

MIPRC Meeting: Interest

Very High in Restoring Rail

Throughout Midwest

Page Ten

Central Indiana Mayor Opposes

Rail Conversion

Contributors

Discounts

For More Information...



("Joe Krause Gives His Keys..." continued from page 1)
The east-bound *Lake Shore Limited* through northern Indiana and all of Ohio is an example of a train with less than desirable scheduling. This long-distance train, which connects Chicago with New York City or Boston, has the following Indiana arrivals – South Bend, 11:59 p.m.; Elkhart, 12:22 a.m.; and Waterloo/Fort Wayne, 1:15 a.m. – and the following Ohio arrivals -- Bryan, 1:40 a.m.; Toledo, 2:50 a.m.; Sandusky, 4:12 a.m.; Elyria, 4:51 a.m., and Cleveland, 5:35 a.m.

RELIABLE: As close to on-time performance as the host railroads can allow. All equipment on trains must operate close to optimum, including heating and cooling, noise control, clean restrooms, and attractive dining and lounge areas.

And if possible, **PLEASANT:** Wi-Fi, "clean windows," very clean restrooms, pleasant crew members, pleasant passengers (no loud talking, no "chatty Kathy's or Charlie's" on cell-phones, well-behaved children, teens, adults, and even adult drinkers.)

And crew members who keep passengers informed of any delays or unplanned changes in service.

Stewart's 16 top preferences were cheerful crews; choices of fares, equipment, modes and schedules; classy equipment – inside and out; clean cars, platforms, and stations; climate – temperature in the station and on the train, and clock – on-time service.

Additionally, Stewart calls for good communication on the train, on the platform, on web sites and apps; condition of rail equipment kept up to high standards; good connections with other modes of travel in terms of location and timing, and good control over operations, good line of authority, and decision-making.

Other items on Stewart's list to better rail are consist or equipment used appropriate for operation; convenient schedule; cost of the ticket, and crews -- well-trained, enough of them, and visible.

Both Krause and Stewart know what they're talking about. Each continues to voluntarily serve the American passenger rail industry.

If you're on the morning *Cardinal* or *Hoosier State* passing through Lafayette, Krause assists passengers at the Big 4 Depot. Stewart –the immediate past chairman of the Rail Passengers Association (formerly National Association of Railroad Passengers) – travels the country from his home in Franklin, Tennessee, promoting the potential for growth in passenger rail.

Bullets from the Board

By Steve Coxhead

The Board of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA) met on 9/28/17, at noon, in the public library in Tipton, Indiana. Tipton is the northernmost point on the old Nickel Plate line running down through Fishers and Noblesville, to Indianapolis. Conceivably, it would be the northern terminal of a commuter rail line connecting this growing corridor with downtown Indianapolis. The following items were among those discussed.

- **Board member Phil Streby presented a report on the recent Midwest Rail Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan. It was noted that the conference was very useful, and that IPRA should continue to attend the annual event.**

- Logan Day gave the Board an update on the status of the effort to preserve the Nickel Plate corridor (Indianapolis-Fishers-Noblesville-Tipton) for use as a future commuter rail route. The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is in the process of ruling on whether the rail line may be abandoned. Logan reported that there has been significant success in generating submissions to the STB requesting that the line not be abandoned.

- **It was noted that the Indiana Chamber of Commerce will be holding its Government Affairs Council Reception on November 20th, in Indianapolis. As Chamber members, IPRA is entitled to attend.**

- IPRA will once again participate in the annual meeting of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC), in Wichita, October 9th thru October 11th. IPRA is recognized as an "allied organization," which gives us observer status at the commission meeting.

- **Discussion regarding changes in the format and distribution of the newsletter, "All Aboard Indiana," continued. There is a suggestion on the table that the newsletter be distributed as a physical publication on a quarterly basis, supplemented with electronic communications (continued)**



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("Bullets from the Board" continued from page 2) on the off months. Discussion also centered on how best to make use of modern social media channels to further enhance communication.

- The continuing disruption of *Hoosier State* performance by the ongoing operational problems at the CSX railroad was noted and discussed. Letters requesting assistance in resolving the situation have been sent to all members of the Indiana Congressional delegation.

- There was a discussion regarding IPRA's strategic direction, regarding the *Hoosier State* project. It was suggested that an attempt be made to have state support for a doubling of frequencies be included in the next biennial budget (two trains, each direction, each day). The question was also posed as to whether IPRA should work to have a high, or higher, speed rail project included in the budget after the next one.

The next meeting of the Board will be in January 2018, location to be determined. All members are welcome to attend! Please watch your e-mail and "All Aboard Indiana" for details.

Finally, don't forget that it's not too late to make a tax deductible donation to IPRA for the 2017 tax year! Suggested donation is \$30. The simplest way to donate is through the website, at www.indianahighspeedrail.org/join.html. Otherwise, checks can be sent to Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance, 2017 Donation, 7032 Olcott Avenue, Hammond, Indiana 46323.

Don't forget to include the *Hoosier State* (and other services of the Amtrak system) in your holiday travel plans.

Train Through Fort Wayne Three to Five Years Away

By Fred Lanahan

The Northern Indiana and Ohio Passenger Rail project continues to make forward progress. Several NIPRA board members recently met with Amtrak executives to discuss a partnership in the operation of the line from Chicago to Fort Wayne and on to Columbus, Ohio.

Amtrak will soon begin its own studies of this line to help with implementation. The first draft of our pre-NEPA report to the Federal Railroad Administration has been submitted by our contractor, HNTB.

We continue to seek the political support of our local, State and federal elected officials with good success. Among our next incremental steps is a Hi-rail inspection of the proposed

track line we plan to use for the passenger service.

Actual implementation of the passenger rail service on the Northern Indiana and Ohio passenger rail line still looks to be three to possibly five years out.

Opinion/Editorial:

Let Indy Airport Authority Run the Bus-Rail Terminal

By Bill Malcolm

Congratulations to the City of Indianapolis and its airport for winning the coveted Conde Nast Traveler Airport of the Year Award. It is an honor and shows the City knows how to run transportation facilities right.

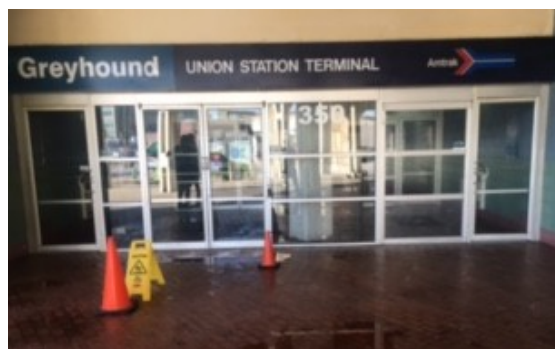
Now let's finish the gap by moving the Union Station Bus Rail Terminal, 350 S. Illinois, out of DPW (and its contractor, Greyhound) and letting the Indianapolis Airport Authority run it.

The beleaguered terminal (see picture) is a civic embarrassment.

The list of horrors is long and includes:

- Letting people sleep on the floor
- Leaving cleaning mops and buckets everywhere
- Inadequate bathroom facilities
- Loud buzzing of the 1940s era sodium fluorescent lights
- Dimly lit
- Looks more like a homeless shelter
- Poor signage
- Remove the directions to the non-existent Metro on signage
- Use the current Amtrak logo

And more.



The City has been approached several times during the last several years to no avail.

DPW is not a customer-focused organization. We wouldn't let them run the Airport. Don't let them run the Bus Rail Terminal.

The City Council should impose a traveler facility fee on all passengers with the revenues dedicated to improvement of the passenger experience.

Illinois Executive Offers Advice on Orchestrating Rail Projects

By Phil Streby

Efforts to reduce travel time on the rail corridor between Chicago and St. Louis continue, participants at the Midwest Rail Conference in Kalamazoo were told last August.

Currently, travel time between the two major cities is 5 and ½ hours. The goal is to cut it by one hour by boosting speeds to 110 mph along 75 percent of the route. Passenger trains presently average 79 mph on the corridor.

Many players working together to carry out a major project such as this passenger corridor upgrade is what's required, said Beth McCluskey, director, Office of Intermodal Project Implementation, with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

Entities involved include Amtrak, the Federal Railroad Administration, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the State of Illinois, Union Pacific Railroad, and WSP-USA, formerly Parsons Brinckerhoff, a transportation engineering firm, and WSP, a buildings engineering firm.

Involving stakeholders early and often is critical to success in these types of projects, she emphasized.

"Find out what they (stakeholders) want before you even go out there," McCluskey said.

Speaking about transportation equipment procurement with other states, the Illinois transportation executive warned that every player needs to be on the same deadline because money is dependent upon grants and public dollars with timelines from various agencies.

Thirty-three new locomotives were procured by the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Wisconsin to bring greater reliability along those rail corridors.

Successful Rail Projects Involve Paying Close Attention to Details

By Phil Streby

When there's limited amounts of money to spend on rail projects, both intense focus and depth of knowledge is needed to achieve success.

Bruce Nelson, senior principal technical specialist at WSP USA, illustrated this point by recalling a question raised by a public works director of a small community. "Who is going to buy the toilet paper (for the new restroom)?" Attention to even the smallest detail can spell success for a project when dealing with partnerships.

Nelson's topic at the Midwest Rail Conference was partnerships involving millions of dollars for new rail stations. A solid design is crucial. It must improve the passenger rail experience and foster ridership growth, he said.

While design of the new stations is important, equally important is working out legal agreements among the various partners, Nelson said.

Needed agreements would include:

- State and municipalities agreeing to spend money on the stations.
- Host railroads authorizing communities to build facilities on railroad property.
- The service provider (Amtrak) agreeing to use the new facility once built.
- Communities finding the right contractor to build the train station.

"Included with any rail station plan is to take a good look at the community to assess its strengths and see how it operates as well as what local issues need to be worked out," he concluded.

Engage Business Leaders To Expand Urban Rail

By Phil Streby and Donald Yehle

Three speakers, including the director of economic development for the City of Dearborn, Michigan, said today's landscape offers considerable opportunity for urban rail. Engage community business leaders to make it happen, attendees of the Michigan Rail Conference were told last August. (cont'd)

MRC Midwest Rail Conference
Aug. 15-17, 2017 • Kalamazoo, MI

High(er) Speed Rail
Beth McCluskey
Director, Office of Intermodal Project Implementation
Illinois Department Of Transportation

Rail Transportation Program
Michigan State Transportation Institute • Michigan Technological University

MDOT
Michigan Department of Transportation

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

NURail Center

("Engage Business Leaders..." continued from page 4)
Barry Murray, Dearborn's economic development director, proudly pointed to his city's new \$28 million Dearborn Transit Center as a "nexus point connecting the civic community and its new development in Southeast Michigan."

The Dearborn station is near the River Rouge, is a two-block walk from downtown Dearborn, and is just a bit further from Ford Motor Company's World Headquarters. A Florida-based restaurant chain has already opened a new restaurant in this transit-oriented development area, appropriately named "Ford's Garage," he said.

Tourists visiting Dearborn's Greenfield Village are frequenting the new restaurant. Ford hopes planned new living space, additional shopping, park space, and new restaurants near the station will assist them in attracting talented new employees.

In the first month of operation, a bike-share program at the station had over 1,000 uses. Ford has also put together a shuttle system between their headquarters and other Ford facilities with shuttle expansion to other area locations now in the planning stages.

Kevin Keller, vice president and National Director of Rail Business Planning, HDR, Inc., said "I've yet to see a community which doesn't support some kind of rail transportation in their community."

Virtual, ticketless ticketing for unmanned stations and Li-Fi, 10 times faster than Wi-Fi, providing better connectivity for travelers, are examples of public transportation innovations described by Keller, whose engineering and consulting company helps clients manage complex rail planning projects.

An ergonomic station design – another innovation -- is being implemented at Los Angeles Union Station. This design looks at how people move about and conduct work while at a transit facility, Keller said.

To attract and keep riders, passenger entertainment and digital signage is gaining increased attention in the urban rail world. Streetcar systems with light rail are rebounding, while communities and cities explore commuter or regional rail, he continued.

"How do we get people from inter-urban core environments to the outbound community? How do we get people from bedroom communities into the urban core where the jobs are? The answer is "customer satisfaction – hav-



ing people want to use the services," Keller added.

Paul Childs, chief operating officer for Detroit's Q-Line, explained how cooperative partnerships allowed the \$140 million project to be completed with virtually no interference or delay. The business community led the drive for the line which is about 80 percent off wire, runs on battery power, saving \$2.5 million dollars per mile while eliminating overhead wire and associated maintenance.

The Q-Line Streetcar runs with vehicular traffic on Woodward Street in downtown Detroit. It makes 12 stops, while traveling at a maximum speed of 30 mph. Each car comfortably carries 125 people, although the per car passenger count has reached 200.

Planning for the Q-Line began around the time the City of Detroit hosted the 2006 Super Bowl at Ford Field. Recognizing transportation improvements were needed, the Q-Line design connected major downtown assets including arts, education, finance and hospitals, Childs said.

Capital cost models and financing options were included in the business case study. Federal grants were applied for and received. Once construction began, costs were kept down to the original 2007 estimate, due to coordination and partnering among multiple levels of government, utilities, and the business community, he said.

Investment along the line has reached \$7.5 billion – 51 times the \$140 million construction cost. Woodward Ave. was transformed with all new utilities and traffic control systems. Twenty sponsors and four other entities helped bring about significant tax credits. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) frequently said, "I can't believe you got that (Q-Line) done."

With 12 million people visiting downtown Detroit annually to attend sporting events and other functions, Q-Line ridership is expected to grow. Officials believe service expansion will be needed, particularly once the Michigan Central station is redeveloped.

Passenger Rail Advocacy Changing: Incremental Projects Best Understood

By Phil Streby

Passenger rail advocacy is changing, said Joe McHugh, Amtrak vice president for state-supported services. "It's very difficult to explain the case for improved service to a public which doesn't understand the reasoning," he explained to a luncheon gathering at the Michigan Rail Conference last August.

At one time everyone had a friend or family member working for a railroad. The railroad was where nearly every engineering student strove to work. Now it's more difficult to attract the talent. Most people don't know how this business works, McHugh continued.

Over are the days of large infrastructure projects without Federal revenue and incentives. Large scale projects such as the electrification of the Northeast Corridor were completed because of the long-range planning done then compared with current thinking along the lines of next quarter's profits, he said.

"While transportation is one area so far not affected, there are too many issues taking on political aspects that make decisions deadly to political careers which makes it very difficult to gain that needed support," he said.

Rally regional groups to work on a project at the state level, which can lead to funding solutions. For instance, build or refurbish train stations and turn them into models of commerce and economic development for the community, McHugh explained.

He urged advocates to involve the local community early in passenger rail projects.

In the 1990's, McHugh met with a group of knowledgeable, local mayors who were concerned with maintaining Amtrak service between Atlanta with New Orleans. The mayors found a solution which preserved daily, *Crescent* service on the corridor. That initial meeting was followed up with personal "get acquainted" visits with the mayors, who ultimately acted as "portals" to Congress.

Today, incremental passenger rail improvements are far better understood and approved than the "great leaps forward" type of projects, he stressed.

Midwest states were commended for increasing speeds along its corridors, rebuilding its rail stations, and bringing on new equipment. "The Midwest rail passenger infrastructure is be-



Amtrak's Crescent train. Image via Amtrak.com.

coming a gem of the system," McHugh said.

Advocates must look back upon their successes as they look forward toward even better service. With improved, well-used service, the detractors of passenger rail service will be quieted, he added.

Riding the Rails

By Donald Yehle

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Railroad Passengers released a new economic report, [Dismantling a National Transportation Network](#), and then voiced its support for a strong and well-funded passenger rail system in an [Op-Ed in The Hill](#) – a well-known and well-read political publication based in D.C. This is a pointed rebuke at lawmakers who believe de-funding long-distance passenger rail is a benefit to the economy, when in reality, it would cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars and leave rural Americans worse off.

To become a "better informed" Rail Advocate, left click on the economic report (above) . You'll be taken to another link for the report – left click to open it. To read NARP President's Jim Mathews' [Op-Ed in The Hill](#) article, left click on the link.

Courtesy, National Association of Railroad Passengers.

Washington, D.C. -- During the Surface Transportation Board's public listening session on CSX Transportation's rail service meltdown, NARP President Jim Mathews warned regulators in October that a legislative fix will be required to ensure that passengers are able to enjoy the full rights granted to them under current law.

"It's often said that passenger trains serve as the canary in the coal mine for railroad operations—when host operations degrade, passengers are the first to notice and suffer disproportionately," Mathews told Acting Chairman Ann Begeman and Board Member Deb Miller.

"This is true of the recent CSX service degradations, (*cont'd*)

("Riding the Rails" continued from page 6) and while we're deeply sorry that CSX freight customers face these troubles, we welcome allies in the fight to restore service quality. With that fact in mind, our organization is sounding an alarm—not just about CSX's network, but about host railroads across the National Network.

"Unfortunately, many host railroads have demonstrated repeatedly that when there is insufficient enforcement of their statutory obligation to grant preferential dispatching to Amtrak trains, they will default to treating passengers as simply another form of freight.

"Without action, this will happen again—and is already happening... The evidence is in, and self-regulation hasn't worked," Mathews went on to say.

"[We] believe Congress needs to step in and expressly delegate regulation of on-time performance to the Federal Railroad Administration, and needs to define that On Time Performance (OTP) as all-stations OTP.

"We're advocating for Congress to strengthen protections for passengers by enshrining metrics and standards into law, and providing clear thresholds that will allow Amtrak to trigger STB investigations into dispatching practices. These investigations should have clearly defined timelines and, in the event of findings of malpractice, meaningful and significant consequences."

It was a point that was echoed in testimony given by CSX's own CEO, Hunter Harrison.

"Amtrak...we need to...live up to the contracts... We need to do what we say we're going to do," Harrison admitted, before adding: "Now, do freight railroaders love Amtrak? No, probably not. And the groups, to some degree, clash, because it's almost designed that way. You know you're not, in my view, you're not going to solve the problem with Amtrak in some public-private partnership unless there's something in it for somebody."

NARP believes that common-sense metrics and standards to quantify quality service, combined with effective oversight, can ensure that host railroads have skin in the game—and that passengers get to their destinations on time.

Courtesy, National Association of Railroad Passengers

Kalamazoo, MI -- A graduate student at the University of Illinois-Urbana is developing an algorithm to detect problems with rail corridors.

What is an algorithm? In mathematics and computer science, an algorithm is an unambiguous specification of how to solve a class of problems, according to Wikipedia.



Ann Begeman, acting chairman, Surface Transportation Board

Chen-Yu Lin's risk analysis model will be able to predict the probability of an intrusion incident; that is, an accident in which a train derailment on one track intrudes on an adjacent

track.

"This will allow preventive measures or improvements to be made in a specific area to reduce or negate that probability," said Chen-Yu Lin.

The Illinois grad student was a presenter in August at the Michigan Rail Conference.

Peru, IN – In the letter below, Phil Streby of Peru expresses the feeling of many in Central Indiana that we need to Save the Nickel Plate railroad. Writing to the Surface Transportation Board, he said:

**Ann D. Begeman, Acting Chairman
Office of Proceeding-Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW, Room 1034
Washington, D.C. 20024**

RE: Docket No. FD-36137-0 "Nickel Plate Railroad"

Dear Ms. Begeman:

I am very concerned about the proposed removal of railroad track between the towns of Fishers and Noblesville, Indiana. This route has huge potential as both a freight and passenger line, and should be kept intact for those purposes.

Nearly \$2 million of both Federal and local taxpayer money was used to purchase this trackage about 20 years ago for potential use as a commuter rail route to alleviate heavy highway traffic congestion along this corridor. Taxpayer money was also spent to build a passenger station in Fishers. Requests for an operator were announced only a few months ago, and several proposals were submitted.

The highest scoring applicant, Iowa Pacific Holdings, proposed freight service which had not been provided for many years. The Iowa Pacific group's proposal also included continuing the much-loved Fair Train to the State Fair and instituting a Polar Express train they successfully have (*continued*)

("Riding the Rails" continued from page 7) run elsewhere.

Other rail related services were proposed as well as a scheduled passenger service (commuter rail). This group's bid was rejected because the two cities did not want freight trains.

Rejecting this bid by the Port Authority looks suspiciously like they never intended to operate the line as proposed in the bidding process.

It is my belief they thought this would give them additional grounds to remove the line. This country and state cannot afford to lose any more railroads already in place. It is imperative for future generations that connections between towns and regions be maintained, not broken.

I am requesting the Surface Transportation Board reject the proposal put forth by the cities of Fishers and Noblesville and Hamilton County to remove any track and direct them to utilize this railroad as intended when they accepted taxpayer dollars to purchase this railroad line.

Respectfully,

Phillip Streby
Board Member, National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP)
Board Member, Rail Users Network (RUN)
Treasurer, Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance

MIPRC Meeting: **Interest Very High in Restoring Rail Throughout the Midwest**

By Steve Coxhead

The 2017 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) was held from October 9th, through October 11th, in Wichita, Kansas. IPRA attended the meeting as an Allied Organization (observer status), and was represented by Steve Coxhead (IPRA President).

MIPRC is a nine-state commission, created by an interstate compact in 2000. Its' mission is to promote, coordinate and support regional (Midwest) improvements to passenger rail service.

An important part of the mission is to implement the plan developed by the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MWRRI), as well as the development of additional state supported rail passenger corridors in the Midwest.

Members are Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minne-

sota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin. Iowa, Ohio, and South Dakota are not currently members, but are eligible to join.

Indiana's MIPRC Commissioners are Rep. Sharon Negele (House Appointment), Senator Phil Boots (Senate Appointment), Ms. Katie England (INDOT), and Mr. Fred Lanahan (private sector appointee). All Indiana Commissioners, but one (due to a health problem), were present.

Other Allied Organizations in attendance were the Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), City of Newton, Kansas, South Central Minnesota Regional Inter-City Rail Initiative, West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition, and the Council of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP).

Note that the role of MIPRC is to share information and facilitate voluntary coordination among the member states. To that extent, it is a consultative organization.

In addition to the administrative business of the organization, the following topics were addressed.

1. The Status of Passenger Rail Improvements in the Region and Plans for the Future: DOT representatives from the various states discussed the status of passenger rail projects and planning in their states.
2. Legislative and Partner Passenger Rail-Related Activity in the Various States: MIPRC Commissioners and partners updated the group on legislative and other passenger rail related activities in their states.
3. Passenger Rail at the Federal Level: A representative from Amtrak's Federal Office provided an overall update and outlook on passenger rail legislation and funding at the federal level, followed by a presentation by the FRA's new grant programs and funding.
4. Visit of MIPRC Federal Delegation to DC: MIPRC sent a delegation to Washington, in May, to visit with Congressmen and discuss rail related issues. The effectiveness of the visit was reviewed, and plans were made to repeat the visit in 2018.
5. Update on the FRA-led, Midwest Regional Rail Planning Study: The FRA is leading an effort to develop a 40-year passenger rail vision for the Midwest, informed by the states and other stakeholders. A report was given on the overall goals and the three Stakeholder Planning Group workshops held thus far to receive input on both the technical and governance elements necessary to articulate the 40-year vision.

(continued)

("MIPRC Meeting..." continued from page 8)

6. **The Next Generation Equipment Committee and Status of Midwest Next Generation Procurement and Operation:** Several states (not including Indiana) have formed a pool to use Federal money to procure advanced locomotive and cars to be used on their state supported routes.

The locomotives are being delivered and have begun to come into service. There have been delays in the manufacture of the cars, and there are uncertainties regarding the vendor and production schedule.

7. **Limitations of States in Multistate Passenger Rail Development:** There was a presentation and discussion on areas in which MIPRC states may be limited by statute in developing passenger rail -- which states have dedicated funding for passenger rail, which states can own and operate equipment, which states can enter into agreements with other states, and which states have limitations on expending funds in other states, were among the issues addressed.

8. **Plans for Extension of the *Heartland Flyer*:** Last year, Wichita got back on Amtrak's national map for the first time since 1979, thanks to new bus connections with Newton (*Southwest Chief*) and Oklahoma City (*Heartland Flyer*). At the time, Amtrak officials said it could be a first step toward eventual restoration of passenger rail service. The effort is moving forward.

9. **Long Distance Passenger Rail Service in the Midwest: An update was given on Amtrak's long-distance passenger rail service, with an emphasis on routes that serve the Midwest.**

The overall take-away from the meeting was that there is real, and serious, interest in the restoration and development of passenger rail service, throughout the Midwest. It is, however, quite common for a given state to be faced with both funding problems and lack of strong political commitment.

Some states have the benefit of vision (and this writer will single out Illinois and Missouri as good examples), and are making significant progress. Other states seem to lack a coherent vision, and so, are having difficulty in moving towards the future. The lack of dedicated funding is serious, and is presenting an obstacle in many cases.

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Indiana is not alone in grappling with funding issues. There is work for us to be done. Moreover, we have a ridership problem with the *Hoosier State*. Steadily increasing ridership is the key to nudging Indiana into a position of more generous support of service in the *Hoosier State* corridor. We are all aware of that, and are doing what we can in that respect.

However, the current, continuing operational problems of the CSX railroad are seriously affecting ridership. The unfortunate truth is that when the Legislature takes up the next biennial budget, they may just see low ridership on the *Hoosier State*, and not be particularly concerned with the reasons. So, resolving the CSX internal problems remains critical to our efforts.

Please feel free to send us any comments or questions regarding the MIPRC meeting to info@indianahighspeedrail.org. Those who are interested may find out more about the MIPRC by visiting their website at www.miprc.org.

Central Indiana Mayor Opposes Rail Conversion

By Logan Day

The mayor of Logansport, Indiana, Dave Kitchell, sent a letter to the Surface Transportation Board dated October 20, 2017, stating that conversion of the Nickel Plate Railroad to a trail would be "detrimental to existing efforts" to transport passengers and freight in the near future.

Mayor Kitchell also mentioned that imminent roadway traffic issues facing Central Indiana, along with the "massive increase to the state gasoline tax," were each a reason to preserve the railroad and prevent trail conversion.

Most notably, the letter states that "the actions of Noblesville, Fishers, and Hamilton County have not been taken with regard to comments from other cities in the region affected by the decision."

This concern augments the sentiments and outcry from a large number of local residents and businesses, who have questioned the fairness, thoroughness, and adequacy of the Owners' efforts to collect feedback and input prior to developing and implementing a plan with such far reaching implications.

Until now, no local governments or agencies have involved themselves in this highly controversial matter. It is the hope of many rail supporters that Mayor Kitchell's letter will prompt participation from other area leaders who have yet to voice their concerns and opinions regarding the Nickel Plate Trail."

Contributors

Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance – Steve Coxhead, Joe Krause, Fred Lanahan, Bill Malcolm, Phillip Streby

Michigan reader – Marcia Sholty

National Association of Railroad Passengers – Staff reports

Save the Nickel Plate – Logan Day

Discounts

Crowne Plaza Union Station Indianapolis: Ask for discount 100329414 and receive 12% off the best flexible rate.

AAA and NARP members save 10% off Amtrak tickets at www.amtrak.com if booked three or more days in advance.

For More Information

All Aboard Indiana is a monthly publication of the Indiana Passenger Rail Alliance (IPRA), formerly the Indiana High Speed Rail Association (INHSRA).

To learn more about IPRA, visit www.indianahighspeedrail.org

or contact us via USPS or email:

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