



# IOWA RAILS

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

\*\*\*MARCH 2006\*\*\*

## IARP to meet in Marshalltown

Our next meeting is Saturday, April 8, 2006 at Stone's Restaurant, 507 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Marshalltown, Iowa (641-753-3626).

Attendees may enjoy an optional lunch from the menu at 12:00 noon. The program and business meeting will begin at 1:00 p.m.. Meals will be paid for by each individual participating in the lunch.

The program includes:

Laura Kliewer,, Executive Director  
Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail  
Commission

Pat Hendricks, President, IARP  
Passenger rail update

Topics:

Federal legislation supporting the national  
rail passenger system

Cedar Rapids Light Rail Initiative

Elections of Officers and One Director

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



Stone's was founded in 1887 by Esbon Weed Stone who had come to Marshalltown with his family from Canada in the 1850's in a covered wagon. In it's early days, Stone's catered to railroad passengers and crews.



## MIDWEST INTERSTATE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION (MIPRC)

Iowa is one of the states eligible to join the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission and legislation is being considered in the Iowa Senate and House to join the six other states which belong to the Commission.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission's goals are: promote current and long-range plans for Midwest intercity passenger rail service; coordinate interaction among Midwestern state officials, and between the public and private sector at all levels (federal, state and local); and support current state efforts being conducted through state departments of transportation

Laura Kliewer is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Midwest office of the Council of State Governments, based in suburban Chicago. Laura Kliewer was at the Iowa Statehouse in February meeting with lawmakers to discuss passenger rail and the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission

## *Cedar Rapids Light Rail Initiative*

The following is from the January 20, 2006 meeting of the Initiative.

The Cedar-Iowa River Rail Transit Service hired R. L. Banks Planning Consultants of Washington, D.C. to conduct a feasibility study of the proposed project. Their work began in December and will be completed by April or May. At the December meeting Gene Davis of R. L. Banks made a proposal outlining the purpose of a feasibility study, the composition and experience of study team, proposed schedule leading to a report in April and tasks to be conducted including:

- ✧ Demand Estimation
  - Trips to work and recreational
- ✧ Investment Requirements
- ✧ Infrastructure Requirements
- ✧ Conflicts with Existing Freight Service
- ✧ Steering Committee and Meetings
- ✧ Federal Requirements

Information on the Cedar Rapids Light Rail Initiative can be found at the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce website [www.cedarrapids.org](http://www.cedarrapids.org) by going to Team 15 of team meetings.



### **New IARP Membership Brochures**

We are currently working on new IARP membership brochures. They will be available at the April meeting. Thank you to Gary Billmeyer, Eliot Keller, Cathy Johnson, Judy Lancaster, Dick Tinder and Dick Welch for your assistance.

It has been suggested that we include pictures of passengers on the trains or at the station. If you have any picture that you would allow us to use in the brochure. please let Mary Buczek know. Her address is listed with the officers. All pictures that are not in digital format will be scanned and returned.



A Harris poll released February 8th found that, “as personal travel and freight transportation grows in the future, the American public would like to see an increasing proportion of that traffic going by rail. The modes of transportation which the largest number of adults would like to see ‘have an increasing share of passenger transportation’ are: commuter trains (44%), long-distance trains (35%), local bus service (23%), and airlines (23%).” The comparable percentage for long-distance travel by car was just 10%, long-distance bus service 6%.

The actual poll can be obtained by going to the Harris Website at [www.harrisinteractive.com/harris%5Fpoll/](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris%5Fpoll/)



photo courtesy of [www.omahastreetcar.com](http://www.omahastreetcar.com)

Omaha Streetcar is a nonprofit unincorporated organization composed of grassroots citizens, organizations, institutions, businesses, and public agencies. The Omaha Streetcar Commission is the governing board that is charged with directing the organization. Omaha Streetcar is determined to open Omaha's first streetcar service since March 5, 1955 within 5 years by 2011.

**Mission Statement:**

To improve the quality of life in the Omaha metropolitan region through the implementation of streetcar and light rail service that encourages greater mobility, transit-oriented development, and sustainable economic development.

**Contact Omaha Streetcar**

You can contact Public Relations at Omaha Streetcar via email or regular mail.

E-mail Address: [publicrelations@omahastreetcar.com](mailto:publicrelations@omahastreetcar.com)

Mailing address: Omaha Streetcar, 304 South 16th Street, Omaha, NE 68102-2209



## Long-Distance Train Facts

- A long-distance train typically consists of sleepers, coaches, a diner and/or a lounge car.
- Long-distance trains travel as far as 2,800 miles and pass through as many as 12 states.
- Amtrak operates 15 long-distance trains over 18,500 route miles serving 39 states and the District of Columbia. These trains provide the only rail passenger service to 23 states.
- In FY 2004 these trains carried 4 million passengers accounting for nearly 2.7 billion passenger miles—48% of Amtrak's total—and produced ticket revenues of \$343 million.
- The average long-distance train passenger traveled 684 miles in FY04.
- Long-distance trains run primarily on tracks owned and maintained by private freight railroads.
- These trains are *not* the big money-losers as they are portrayed; only about \$300 million annually would be saved if they were eliminated, and only after a five-year period.



### Long Distance Trains

AutoTrain	Coast Starlight	Silver Meteor
CA Zephyr	Crescent	Silver Star
Capitol Limited	Empire Builder	Southwest Chief
Cardinal	Lake Shore Limited	Sunset Ltd
City of New Orleans	Palmetto	Texas Eagle

## Background Information

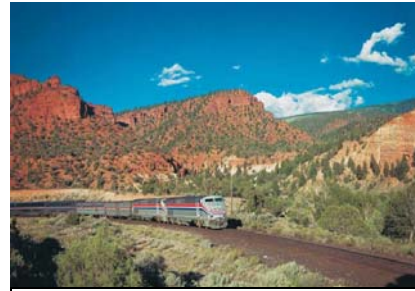
Amtrak's long-distance trains provide an essential transportation service for many communities and to a significant percentage of the general public. Many long-distance trains serve small communities with limited or no significant air or bus service, especially in remote or isolated areas in the United States. As a result of airline deregulation and decisions by national bus carriers to exit many communities, rail transportation may provide the only feasible common carrier transportation option for a growing number of areas.<sup>1</sup>

If long-distance trains were eliminated, 23 states and 242 communities would be left with no intercity passenger rail service and 16 other states would lose some service. No state or private operator has picked up a long-distance route that Amtrak has eliminated and virtually no long-distance route Amtrak eliminated has returned.



## Importance of the Long-Distance Trains

The route through the Northern part of the country, the *Empire Builder*, which carried over 437,000 passengers last year, is the only public transportation service in many communities in North Dakota, Montana and Northeastern Washington. For most of the states along the *Empire Builder*, tourism serves as a major economic engine. A recent study identifying the economic contributions of the *Empire Builder* demonstrated nearly \$14 million in annual economic benefits to the state of Montana alone.<sup>2</sup>



Amtrak's *California Zephyr* follows the same route over Donner Pass as the nation's first trans-continental railroad.

Long-distance trains also provide transportation during periods of severe weather conditions or emergencies that stall other modes of transportation. This was demonstrated after the September 11 terrorist attacks that grounded air travel. Additionally, these trains provide a strong economic benefit for the states and communities that they serve.

The majority of passengers on the long-distance trains do not travel between the endpoints, but rather to any combination of city pairs. For example, the *Southwest Chief*, which travels from Chicago to Los Angeles via Kansas City, has 33 stops, creating 528 possible trip combinations.

## Measuring Financial Performance of Long-Distance Trains

Most of Amtrak's expenditures are due to the immense capital needs of its infrastructure, particularly the Northeast Corridor, not the operating costs of the long-distance trains. These operating cost figures should be cited with caution. Critics often refer to the "loss per passenger" of the long-distance trains. However, each long-distance train passenger is the equivalent of five short distance train passengers because of the greater distances traveled. More importantly, these "loss per passenger" figures often include not only the "avoidable" costs of operating individual long-distance trains (such as the cost of diesel fuel) but all of the shared costs that Amtrak incurs for the benefit of both long-distance and corridor trains (such as the cost of mechanical facilities, Amtrak's computer systems, and stations like Los Angeles Union Station). Including shared costs produces inflated and misleading "loss" figures, since these costs will not go away if long-distance trains are eliminated.

Eliminating all long-distance trains would produce negligible cost savings in the first few years because Amtrak must pay labor protection to impacted employees. When these payments end after five years, the savings would still be minimal—around \$300 million annually, or about a quarter of Amtrak's annual appropriation in 2004 and 2005. Eliminating individual trains produces even fewer savings—most of the shared costs of Amtrak's long-distance network, such as the costs of maintenance facilities that serve multiple long-distance trains, would remain. Additionally, Amtrak continues to make changes to its long-distance trains that will improve revenue and finances for the system. Amtrak exited from the mail and express business in 2004, resulting in shorter and more convenient schedules, with reduced labor costs. The repair of wreck-damaged equipment continues and will allow Amtrak to increase capacity, and therefore revenues, on long-distance trains, which often sell out. These changes should help further reduce the losses of long-distance trains.

<sup>1</sup> *Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation*: AASHTO, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Analysis of the Economic Benefits of the Empire Builder*, R.L. Banks & Associates: [http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/tranplan/docs/empire\\_builder.pdf](http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/tranplan/docs/empire_builder.pdf)

# IARP Membership Application

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Director: Roland Lynch,  
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Director: [Judy Risvold](#),  
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NARP Region 10 Director (from Iowa)  
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52404-5424 319-362-6824 (voice) 319-362-7734 (FAX)

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**Yes! I want to support improved Iowa railroad service. Here's my application to join 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.

## IARP CONTACTS

President: [Patrick Hendricks](#),  
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