

Amtrak NEWS

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Superliners Go Into Service On Empire Builder Route

Amtrak's Superliners went into service on the *Empire Builder* with inaugural trips from Chicago to Seattle on October 28 and from Seattle to Chicago on October 29.

The *Empire Builder* is the first Amtrak train to feature full Superliner service.

The first Empire Builder with Superliners left Chicago's Union Station at 11:30 a.m., on Sunday, October 28.

On the same day, a special Superliner display was held at King Street station in Seattle from 2 to 5 p.m. with the public invited to tour the new train. The following day, the first eastbound *Builder* left Seattle with the Superliners as a standard feature.

Special inaugural celebrations were held on the trains during the first week of operation. Champagne was offered to adult passengers during this period and buttons and other souvenirs were distributed.

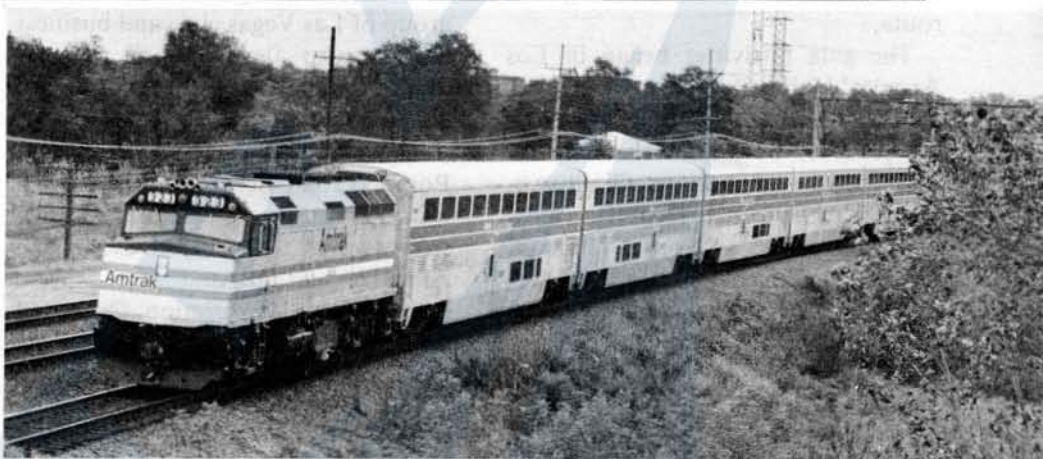
Several local and state dignitaries boarded to ride portions of the route.

The inaugural runs were the climax of a lengthy public display-training trip the Superliners made all the way from Chicago to Seattle earlier in the month. The cars followed the entire route of the *Empire Builder* making display stops at each city that is served by the train. The public and press were invited to inspect the new cars prior to placement into service.

At crew change points, Burlington Northern personnel who will operate the new cars were given training in their maintenance.

In actuality there were two training-display trains.

The first—three coaches, a diner and two Amtech training cars—left Chicago on October 2 making stops



The Superliner-equipped Empire Builder rolls out of Chicago heading for Seattle.

between St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Seattle. The second—two coaches, a diner and a sleeper—left Chicago on October 13, making all stops to Minneapolis.

The trains were staffed by personnel from the training, mechanical, marketing, security, on-board services and public affairs departments.

The tour was labeled a "hit" attracting much press and media atten-

tion from beginning to end.

Nearly 2,000 persons visited the train at St. Cloud. Thirteen bus loads of children, plus 1,200 adults, came to see the cars at Staples, Minnesota, and another 1,200 persons showed up at Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, despite 45 degree temperatures and steady rain.

Large crowds were the rule at virtually every stop.

Conference Approves Amtrak Funds

The House and Senate Appropriations Conference Committee met on Thursday, November 8, and approved a total of \$873.4 million for Amtrak for fiscal year 1980.

Report language stated the conferees agreed that Amtrak should have the flexibility to enter into a contract for purchase of up to 200 low level cars with the understanding that the total order would not exceed \$228 million.

The funding included:

- \$630.4 million for operations. This is \$500,000 less than authorized.

- \$211 million for capital costs and labor protection. This is \$12 million short of the authorized level for capital funds and \$10 million short for labor protection.

- \$20 million for 403(b) state services, just under the \$23.8 million authorized.

- \$12 million for a Northeast Corridor purchase payment.

The bill was passed by the House on Thursday, November 15; the Senate on Monday, November 19. The bill was then sent to the White House for the President's signature.

Desert Wind Inaugural Draws Crowds As New Train Goes Into Service

The *Desert Wind*, Amtrak's new Los Angeles-Las Vegas-Salt Lake City-Ogden train, was inaugurated with a special two-day run from Los Angeles to Ogden to introduce the service to communities along the route.

The gala festivities began in Los Angeles' Union Station at 9 a.m., Friday, October 26. Major speakers at the send-off were Amtrak President Alan Boyd and Adriana Gianturco, director, California Department of Transportation. George Falcon, president, Citizens for Rail California, presented a Gold Spike plaque to Nevada Senator Howard Cannon which Boyd accepted for the Senator.

Boyd told the crowd he thought Amtrak's future was bright. Said he, "We've had eight years of crises. Now we're growing and we're going to continue to grow."

After the speeches, Gianturco smashed a bottle of California champagne on the rear car's coupler and riders climbed aboard for the trip north. "I'm certainly delighted to see an expansion of service here instead of cutbacks," she said.

The eight car special train, with an open end observation car gracing the

rear, pulled out of the station carrying some 250 federal, state, county and city officials, business and media representatives, and Amtrak and railroad personnel.

Included among those riders was a group of Las Vegas civic and business leaders who flew to Los Angeles earlier that morning just to ride the inaugural.

The train made stops at Pasadena, Pomono, San Bernardino and Barstow en route to Las Vegas. At each stop, two of the Amfleet cars — an Amcoach and an Amdinette — were open for public inspection. On-board services attendants greeted visitors and explained the cars' various features. Amfleet equipment will be used on the train until Superliners are available.

Greetings were extended at the various cities by civic leaders. At Barstow, Mayor Bernard Keller gave his wholehearted approval to the new train. "Sure, I'll ride this train," he said, "It's something that's been needed here for many years."

Largest crowd of the day appeared at Las Vegas, where townspeople are delighted with the new service that connects their town to the Los

Angeles metropolitan area.

Sam Boyd (no relation to President Boyd), a casino operator said, "This will bring people back to Las Vegas. I support it fully. It is feasible economically and makes a lot of sense. I personally intend to promote travel on it in my casinos."

Mike Shapiro, vice president, Union Plaza hotel, where Amtrak's station is located, said, "I think this will prove to be a bonanza for Las Vegas. I think this train will be running full within two weeks with people coming here from the Southern California area."

Greeting the train on arrival in Las Vegas was the Mickey Finn dixieland band and Santa Claus, complete with red suit and long white beard.

Former Las Vegas Mayor Oran Gragson echoed what many other riders had said that day. "The rest that passengers get on this train more than compensates for the 'time element.' This is about as comfortable a transportation system as you can find." Gragson now is a director of the city's Downtown Progress Association.

After overnighting in Las Vegas, the train and its passenger guests continued north to Ogden the next day. Before departing, however, another ceremony was held while the cars were on public display.

Included in the morning festivities was the Las Vegas High School marching band and the Las Vegas *Rhythmettes*, a precision dance group of high school girls.

First stop after leaving Las Vegas, was Milford, Utah, where the largest crowd of the two-day trip appeared to hail and inspect the train. Extra time had to be allotted to permit the large group of townspeople to view the equipment. Music was provided by the Milford High School band and official greetings were presented Mayor Roy Young. Utah State Senator Whaddingham also spoke.



On-board services personnel who worked the special inaugural train included, left to right, Bill Mills, Mason Finley, Clarence Stafford, John Lillard, Dixie Trimm, Darrell Bryan, Arthur Jones, Sharon Hill, Alice Wong, Joe Broussard and Patty Saunders.

At Salt Lake City, the train was greeted by Governor Scott Matheson and Congressman Gunn McKay. Matheson noted that he was wearing a tuxedo. "That's how much I think of this train and its importance to our state," he said.

Another large crowd greeted the train at Ogden. Passengers were escorted to the station's huge waiting room where a band greeted them with spirited music.

Included among speakers here were Ogden Mayor Steven Dirks; John Kirkwood, of San Francisco's BART;

Congressman McKay; and Maury Moler, of the *Ogden Standard-Examiner*, who was the sparkplug behind the station's recent restoration and creation of a railroad museum located in the building.

The train was named for the conditions that range over most of the dry sage-covered terrain it traverses on its 811-mile route through three states. It operates across the Mohave desert and through historic Cajon Pass. The *Desert Wind* is the first regularly-scheduled train through Las Vegas since 1971.

At Ogden, the *Desert Wind* connects in both directions to the *San Francisco Zephyr* for Cheyenne, Denver, Omaha and Chicago. Similar connections are available at Salt Lake City to and from the tri-weekly *Rio Grande Zephyr* for Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs and Denver.

The U.S. Department of Transportation specified the new route as a needed operation in its report on restructuring the Amtrak system. Congress approved this segment in its recent ratification of the Amtrak budget for fiscal year 1980.

(Right) Amtrak President Boyd speaks at the departure ceremony in Los Angeles. (Below) Caltrans Director Adriana Gianjurco christens the new train.



(Above) The *Desert Wind* makes it way through the rough Utah landscape.



(Above Left) Crowds at Milford, Utah, jam the platform to view the equipment on the train. (Left) The welcoming ceremony at Ogden was held in the station's huge waiting room.



Mickey Finn, bedecked with an Amtrak hat, welcomes the new train to Las Vegas.

New Dearborn Station Opens, Serves Detroit's Growing Suburbs

Amtrak's new Dearborn, Michigan, station was dedicated with speeches and other ceremonies on Tuesday, October 23.

In use since October 1, the new \$348,000 station is built of brick, concrete and steel and has 2,600 square feet of floor space. The station can accommodate up to 150 persons and has parking spaces for 175 cars.

The station complex includes a large waiting room, modern ticketing and baggage facilities, ramps for the elderly and handicapped, signal and communications equipment and a large platform.

Located near the Dearborn Civic Center complex, the one-story build-

ing will be open daily from 6:45 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.

Speakers at the ceremonies included Bob Herman, Amtrak's vice president, operations; Dearborn Mayor John B. O'Reilly; Lawrence C. Patrick, Sr., commissioner, Michigan Department of Transportation; and Scott Hercick, acting manager, rail passenger operations, Michigan DOT. Members of the city council were introduced to the persons attending the dedication.

Master of ceremonies for the event was Jim Barber, manager, state and local services for Amtrak.

The state representatives pointed out that Dearborn is a major station

for Amtrak serving one of Michigan's most active markets for tourism, business and shopping. The representatives also emphasized the importance of a unified transportation system and noted that the station was evidence of the state's interests in rail transport.

The station was paid for jointly by Amtrak and the state of Michigan and was built on 2.3 acres of land leased from the city of Dearborn.

Mayor O'Reilly told participants how proud he was to have the new station and that he was looking forward to his citizens making good use of it. "Amtrak's eight daily stops here," he said, "offer an attractive alternative to our congested highways."

Dearborn is served by the *Twilight Limited*, *St. Clair*, *Wolverine* and *Michigan Executive*.

Following the ceremony, visitors were invited into the station for a short reception that featured sweet rolls, coffee and soft drinks. Travel literature was distributed promoting the Amtrak services available to residents.

Amtrak's new station is located in a potentially good market area. Detroit's western suburbs have been expanding at a rapid pace and the facility should attract much new business to the rails. Before a stop was instituted at Dearborn, residents of the western suburbs had to go all the way to downtown Detroit to board trains.

The new facility is also located near the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, probably Michigan's top tourist draw.

The station is built on property originally deeded to the city by the Ford Motor Company.

Train service began at Dearborn on Sunday, July 30, 1978, after installation of a temporary modular station at the site. Work began on the permanent station shortly after that.



Dearborn's new station follows the architectural style of Amtrak's standard station design.



Passengers waiting for the next train mingle with ceremony participants.

Board Approves Locomotive Purchase, Electrification Of Conventional Cars

At its October 31 meeting, Amtrak's board of directors approved spending \$30.5 million to expand the successful program of rebuilding and modernizing the best of its passenger car fleet as well as \$31.6 million to buy 30 more diesel-electric locomotives equipped with head and electrical power.

Cars

The massive rebuilding program involves converting cars which were built for the private railroads after World War II so that their heating and air conditioning systems will operate from the electrical generator in the locomotive instead of being dependent on steam.

At the same time, the cars will be given a heavy mechanical overhaul and be completely refurbished.

Work will be done at Beech Grove. This latest program involves 158 cars, funded over two fiscal years, and is scheduled for completion by spring 1981. The total number of cars includes 72 coaches, 31 sleepers, 16 lounges, 10 diners, five slumber-coaches and 24 baggage and dormitory-baggage cars.

The 10 diners will receive all-electric kitchens to replace wood-burning stoves and ice boxes. Lounges will be fitted with food service bars.

The conversions are similar to those already done at Beech Grove. Some of those cars are already in service on the *Lake Shore Limited*, the *Cardinal* and *Pioneer*. Eventually, Amtrak plans to have an all-electric fleet.

The conversion program approved by the board depends on Congressional approval of Amtrak's capital appropriations already authorized for fiscal years 1980 and 1981.

Locomotives

The board's approval of the locomotive purchase will permit Amtrak's

management to reserve production line positions insuring that Amtrak will have the locomotives as soon as they are needed to power new or converted passenger cars going into service.

The new locomotives will be four-axle, 3,000-horsepower units. Acqui-

sition of the 30 locomotives will bring Amtrak's total of diesel-electric units equipped to supply head and power to 193. Amtrak projects a need for 235 head end power diesels to convert the entire system, including new trains that are expected to be added in state-supported 403(b) service.

Lake Shore Gets Upgraded Cars

Rebuilt, all-electric passenger cars have been phased into service on the *Lake Shore Limited*.

The refurbished cars went into service on Monday, October 15, departing Chicago for New York and Boston.

The first westbound all-electric train left New York and Boston on Tuesday, October 16.

The cars are part of a fleet of 59 which are being converted to head end power at Amtrak's Beech Grove

shops at a cost of \$8.4 million.

A similar conversion of 68 cars for the *Broadway Limited* is also underway at Beech Grove at a cost of \$9.8 million. The rebuilt equipment will go into service on the *Broadway* next year.

Because the converted cars are compatible with Amfleet, some Amfleet cars may be used on the *Lake Shore* until the entire rebuilt fleet has been delivered.

Handicapped Access Program Begins

Amtrak's management has outlined to the board of directors its plans to spend \$27.1 million during the next two fiscal years to begin compliance with recent handicapped access requirements.

Of this total, \$15.6 million will be spent to alter passenger cars to make them barrier free. Another \$11.5 million has been earmarked for renovations to passenger stations.

Examples of such renovations include addition of special restrooms and accessible coaches and sleeping accommodations on trains and, in some cases, construction of ramps and lower ticket counters at stations.

Initial action to comply with federal regulations for handicapped transportation was taken at the board's October 31 meeting when it approved funding for modification of 72 conventional cars at a cost of \$6.9 million.

Modifications to the cars—36

coaches and 36 sleepers—will provide space to park and secure one wheelchair, a restroom which is accessible to the handicapped, and an orthopedic storage area.

Modified cars are initially slated for operation on the *Broadway Limited* and the *Lake Shore Limited*.

Builder Goes Daily

The *Empire Builder* will go on a daily schedule for the holiday season beginning December 15. The train will revert to its normal tri-weekly operation after January 5.

The "extra" trains—departing Chicago on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, and Seattle on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday—will consist of Superliner coaches and diners. There will be no sleeping cars on the extra trains.

Keeping Track Of Amtrak

Superliner Press Preview

Amtrak unveiled its new bi-level Superliners to the press and public in Chicago on October 11 as President Alan Boyd hailed the new trains as "the beginning of a new era in rail travel" for the 1980s and beyond.

Boyd spoke to the newsmen at Chicago's Union Station before a press trip to show off the world's newest long-distance passenger cars. The reporters and photographers then took a ride to see for themselves what the new trains are like.

The press display train was made up of three Superliner coaches, a diner and a sleeping car. An F40PH diesel locomotive was placed on each end—for push-pull operation—to facilitate photo runbys which were scheduled for the benefit of still and motion picture photographers.

At the press conference, Boyd also announced that the Superliners were to go into mainline passenger service on October 28 between Chicago and Seattle on the *Empire Builder*.

Other routes will get the double-deck luxury cars as they roll out of the Hammond, Indiana, Pullman Standard plant.

Six other long-distance western routes are scheduled to receive the Superliners. These include the *San Fran-*

cisco Zephyr, Desert Wind, Pioneer, Southwest Limited, Coast Starlight and Sunset Limited.

The Superliners," said Boyd, "will provide the modern, clean, comfortable kind of rail travel the American people deserve.

"We at Amtrak think that our Superliners will mean as much to long-distance rail travel as the jumbo jets did for the airliners."

Safety Standings

Southern led the nine divisions in September in the President's safety contest with a 1.6 ratio. Beech Grove led the four shops with a 6.6 figure, while eight mechanical facilities went through the month with no injuries and a resultant zero safety ratio.

The eight were Minneapolis, Detroit, Kansas City, St. Louis, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, Philadelphia and Jacksonville.

For the first nine months of the year, St. Louis leads the divisions with a 3.7 ratio, followed closely by Southern with 4.7, Western with 5.7 and Philadelphia with 5.9.

New Haven leads the shops for the year with a 9.7 figure, while two mechanical facilities—Minneapolis and Kansas City—continue their injury-free performance with their coveted zero ratios.

The safety ratio is a figure denoting the ratio of injuries per 200,000 man-hours of work. All injuries or job-related illnesses that require more than first aid are counted in the statistics.

Post Road Reopened

Scheduled running time on the Boston-Albany leg of the *Lake Shore Limited* has been reduced by 30 minutes as a result of the new "short cut" between Post Road and Rennselaer, New York.

Amtrak has restored the 12.6 miles of track during the past year under a \$4.1 million capital grant from the federal government.

The segment, on the former Boston-Albany mainline, had been abandoned by the Penn Central railroad in 1972 and track was removed.

In 1975, when Amtrak initiated the *Lake Shore* it was forced to use a complicated and time-consuming detour of almost 18 miles.

When Conrail was created, the right-of-way of the missing section of track was conveyed to Amtrak.

Work on the Post Road section got underway in mid-1978 and included grading; brush removal; acquisition of materials including rails, tie plates and ballast; and, finally, installation of the track.

New Buffalo Station

Amtrak trains serving up-state New York began making stops at a new Buffalo suburban station at Depew beginning Sunday, October 28.

Buffalo's Central Station is no longer used. It was closed after departure of the westbound *Lake Shore Limited* at 4:10 a.m. on October 28.

The move was motivated by the excessive costs at the outmoded and expensive-to-operate Central Station. Expenses there were unduly high and, if Amtrak were to remain there, large sums of money would have been required to repair the facility.

Heating bills alone amounted to over \$150,000 per winter.

The station at Depew is housed in a trailer—formerly used as the temporary facility at Dearborn, Michigan—until a permanent facility is



Central Region Sales Manager Al Kaletta points out Superliner diner features to Chicago reservations center personnel. Left to right are Eugene Warden, Mary Swindell, Brenda Plakke, Kaletta, Kathy Kirby, Lois Willis and Penny Gaul.

completed on the site in fall 1980. Ticketing and checked baggage are available and station personnel are on duty for arrival and departure of all trains.

Also effective on October 28, services at Buffalo's downtown Exchange Street station were improved. Ticket office and waiting room hours were expanded and the office is now open from 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Previously, the ticket office closed at 5:40 p.m. Checked baggage and package express service are also available here.

New York-Niagara Falls trains, the *Niagara Rainbow* and *Empire State Express*, stop at both Exchange Street and Depew stations. The *Lake Shore Limited* stops only at Depew. Connecting train service to Toronto is available from Exchange Street station.

The permanent facility at Depew is being financed by New York State's Department of Transportation under the 1974 Rail Preservation Bond Act.

Temple Track Work

Track modifications at Temple, Texas, to improve operation of the Houston leg of the *Inter-American* have been approved by Amtrak's board of directors.

The \$176,342 expenditure will include combining and lengthening of some station tracks and installing switches. The improvements will enable Amtrak to split and recombine the Houston and Laredo sections in a more efficient manner.

Although the train is being split and put back together at Temple at the present time, the operation is done on the mainline under a temporary arrangement with the Santa Fe railroad.

Termination of that temporary arrangement would result in splitting and recombining the train in Fort Worth, 128 miles to the north.

Running two separate sections of the train from Fort Worth south would cost an additional \$400,000 per year. The capital expenditure will thus be recovered within six months.

Work will be performed under a contract with the Santa Fe.

Bi-Levels For Commuters

After taking over from Conrail the Chicago-Valparaiso, Indiana, commuter service on October 29, Amtrak allocated \$2.9 million to upgrade and modernize a 12-car fleet of former Chicago and North Western bi-level cars for eventual use on the route as well as on the Detroit-Jackson, *Michigan Executive*.

The cars will be modified to make them compatible with the all-electric Amfleet cars as well as equipping them for "push-pull" operation. For this purpose, four of the cars will be equipped with cab controls and head-end equipment such as headlights and signal horns.

In push-pull operations, the locomotive always remains on one end of the train. The engineer operates the train—depending on which direction it is going—from either the locomotive or the head end cab control car.

The upgrading expenditure will be recovered in cost savings in less than four years. Savings will result from the push-pull operation which eliminates the need for turning the locomotive at destination, as well as less maintenance on the cars.

Work on the cars is scheduled for completion by late 1980. Electric standby power is also to be installed at Valparaiso for servicing the equipment.

High Speeds In New York

Travelers in New York State have been getting their first taste of high-speed rail service as Amtrak slashed from 10 to 30 minutes from most train schedules beginning Sunday, October 28.

The shortened schedules were made possible by improvements to Conrail's main line tracks and signal systems which were funded by New York State's 1974 Rail Preservation Bond Act. Beginning October 28, Turbo-liner trains were authorized to operate at speeds over 100 miles per hour

between Albany and Amsterdam. Locomotive-hauled Amfleet trains were permitted to operate at speeds up to 100 miles per hour.

Further track improvements, which will be made over the next two years, will permit extension of the high-speed service to Poughkeepsie and, finally, to New York City. The state's objective is two-hour service between New York and Albany by 1982.

Subway Car Owner

Alan Zelazo, block operator, New York division, and a director member of the Branford Trolley Museum, East Haven, Connecticut, recently purchased a 1928 subway car for the museum from New York City's PATH.

PATH officials sold the car to the museum for a handshake and a single dollar bill.

The 40-ton rail car will be completely restored by the museum, according to Zelazo. The car was turned over to him in a ceremony at the PATH rail yard near Jersey City's Journal Square.

The car was immediately shipped to Connecticut on a flat bed truck at a cost of \$3,000.

Missing Merchandise

In the past, some orders for Amtrak merchandise which the marketing department sells—such as coffee cups, frisbees, calendars and such—have either been unnecessarily delayed, or even lost, because they were misdirected within the company.

Employees should remember that any orders, or requests for information about available merchandise, should be mailed to Amtrak, P.O. Box 311, Addison, Illinois 60101. Information can also be received from Dave Halperin, marketing distribution, Washington, FTS 657-2018.

Hot Line To President Boyd

Question: Mr. Boyd, what I'm interested in is getting a mailing address where I can write you instead of telephoning. Can you please oblige?

Answer: You can write me here at corporate headquarters, 400 N. Capitol St., NW., Washington, D.C. 20001. Put the words "President's Hot Line" conspicuously on the envelope.

We've made note of this fact before, but we will include the address permanently in the box that lists the Hot Line telephone numbers.

Q. Two comments. First, sleeping car 2614 that runs out of Los Angeles is in dire need of new windows. Also, a lot of cars are leaving 8th Street Yard without going through the car washer.

On another subject, nobody has ever given us a reason why there is no sleeping car on the *Desert Wind*.

A. Los Angeles was directed to check the car the next time it arrived and replace any windows that aren't in compliance with Amtrak standards.

All trains are washed daily after arriving at 8th Street. If a train is late, it's washed just before it leaves the yard on its next run. The motor that ran the brushes on the section that applies acid cleaner was out of service one day in early November. Trains that day received only a water bath.

Regarding the *Desert Wind* sleeping car, there just aren't enough head end powered sleepers to protect the service. The *Desert Wind* should be equipped with sleepers by summer 1980.

Q. As ticket agent here at Rye, New York, I'm wondering why train 172 no longer stops here. This inconvenience is especially apparent with Thanksgiving and Christmas approaching. Would you please reconsider stopping the train here again?

A. With the issuance of October 28 timetables, two northbound trains now bypass Rye. This is because of

schedule conflicts with MTA commuter trains that use the same tracks.

We do hope to restore the Rye stops, if at all possible, with the next timetables.

Q. I am a ticket agent here at Niles, Michigan. I'm concerned about some poor connections we have to some of our trains in Chicago. Why can't we have the early morning train from Michigan — the *Blue Water* — make connections in Chicago to Texas and Seattle?

A. I appreciate your concern and realize it can be very frustrating not being able to sell tickets to certain points because of a lack of connections.

However, when we have only one train a day to points in Texas and Seattle, connections cannot always be established with all other points.

The trains you mention are the only ones to western destinations that the Michigan trains miss.

We do not believe that advancing the departure of the *Blue Water* out of Port Huron to 4:45 a.m. — which we would have to do — is justified to make these additional connections because of the greater inconvenience of the early departures to travelers from eastern Michigan points.

Q. I'm a reservations clerk here at Bensalem and work mostly with the Canadian trains . . . *Montrealer*, *Adirondack* and *Pacific International*. People from Vancouver used to make connections at Seattle to the *Coast Starlight* for points like San Francisco and Los Angeles.

With the change of time, the *Pacific International* passengers have to overnight in Seattle if they want to go south. And there isn't a single bus connection that meets the train at Seattle.

What's the reasoning for changing the times of the *Pacific International*?

A. There were two reasons for this.

First, it was believed that a 6:05

a.m. departure from Vancouver was too early to attract substantial patronage. Our research also showed that most travelers leaving Vancouver were headed for Pacific Northwest points and not California. So, the schedule was changed for a more convenient departure time for travelers going to cities in Washington and Oregon.

Secondly, when Amtrak was restructuring its trains to meet Congressional criteria for continuation, it was discovered that the only way the *Pacific International* could meet those criteria was to be combined with the *Mount Rainier* which ran to Portland.

If we had stuck with the 6:05 a.m. departure, we would have had no choice except to discontinue the train.

Q. I would like to call your attention to Paragraph D, Page 2 of *Amtrak's Rules of Conduct* booklet.

"The use of tobacco by employees while serving the public in ticket offices, in passenger stations, or on passenger trains is prohibited. All smoking regulations shall be observed."

This practice, however, continues day after day, week after week, month after month, and nobody does anything about it. Are smokers exempt from the company rules? I work in a ticket office and all that smoking bothers me.

A. Your call is just one of many that we have received on the subject.

The smoking rule has been interpreted over the years to apply while employees serve the public. Other Hot Line calls, like yours, referred to smoking inside ticket offices.

This is specifically where the interpretation applies. When handling a customer at the ticket window, an employee should not smoke. When doing other duties in the ticket office, such as paperwork at a desk, employees are allowed to smoke.

Q. Regarding the Superliners, I have three suggestions.

1 — A handicapped emblem should be put on the outside of the

handicapped bedroom, so firemen — in case of emergency — could spot it immediately.

2 — A second handrail should be installed in Superliner stairwells.

3 — The lock used on the trap door that covers the stairwell in the Superliner diner is rather fragile. Some sort of plate should be installed to cover this to provide better security.

A. Handicap symbols are located at entrance doors on coaches and sleepers equipped with such facilities. We will check out the feasibility of perhaps applying a permanent metal symbol under the windows.

Also, access from the outside is possible by removing the glazing rubber and popping out the glass first and then the Lexan. Contact has been made with the safety department to insure that the removal method has been given to various fire and rescue units along our train routes.

Secondly, our equipment engineering department thought of putting a second handrail in the stairways but decided that, because of width restrictions, this was not practical.

Thirdly, our mechanical forces in Chicago are checking out all diner security locks to make sure they operate correctly.

Q. I'd like to suggest that the *Desert Wind* stop at Victorville, California. It's a decent-sized city of about 20,000 persons and is located half-way between San Bernardino and Barstow.

Why don't we try this for six months or so and see how it goes?

A. We're currently reviewing our experimental stop policy to see how many such stops have reached an adequate number of daily on-offs to justify retention.

Once this review is finished, we'll decide whether we should add any future experimental stops. We'll be happy to include Victorville in any study of future stops.

Q. I'm currently working as a service attendant out of Jacksonville and recently made a trip as a waiter.

I got the job of waiting on two handicapped persons in the coach. They were in wheelchairs and could not walk to the diner to eat.

I see the need for having trays so that people who can't go to the diner can sit at their coach seats and eat their food. The only trays I had were the regular large, round ones that we use to carry food from the kitchen to the tables.

We need some new types of trays that a person can use at his seat.

A. Apparently you have not been instructed in just such a procedure. Our "Service Policy and Procedures Manual" describes how such passengers should be served.

A sleeping car-size pillow is placed on the passenger's lap and a standard size cafeteria tray — with raised edges — is then used to serve the food.

A "G" bulletin will be issued immediately to remind all on-board supervisors to check that these trays are stocked on all diners and that employees are instructed in this procedure.

Q. We need a train baggageman on the *Empire Builder* between Seattle and Spokane. Is this on the agenda for the near future?

A. The labor agreement permits step-up of the head brakeman to a combination head brakeman/baggageman job but the Burlington Northern does not consider this necessary.

Thus, Amtrak station employees handle baggage and express at East Auburn, Ellensburg, Yakima, Pasco and Spokane.

Q. Why in the world do they hold up train 172 at Washington for the *Crescent* when that train is an hour late? Can't those people take train 174 or one of the Metroliners?

A. On the average, 155 persons are handled on the *Crescent* for points north of Washington. The train is scheduled to arrive at Washington at 8:30 a.m. but when it is late there are several options.

Previously when the *Crescent* was late we could:

1 — Hold train 172 which was scheduled to depart at 9:10 a.m. This was done when not more than 45 minutes delay was anticipated.

2 — Transfer passengers to train 108, the 10 a.m. Metroliner. But, this could only be done when there was enough room on this reserved train. It also required that all passengers transfer at Washington, breaking the advertised through connection.

3 — Make the connection on train 174, which left Washington at 11:10 a.m. This was only done when the *Crescent* was sufficiently late so passengers from the south didn't have to wait a long time for northbound service.

When the first three alternatives were inappropriate for the circumstances involved, and there was a crew and locomotive available, an extra section was operated.

Now, effective with the October 28 timetables, the *Crescent* connects to a

President's Hot Line

U.S.A. 800-424-5191
D.C. only 383-2027

8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST)
Monday through Friday

Personnel Hot Line

U.S.A. 800-424-5190
D.C. only 383-3636

24 Hours a Day,
7 Days a Week

Callers to the President's Hot Line can either identify themselves or remain anonymous. Personnel Hot Line callers, obviously, must identify themselves if they wish a reply to their questions.

Employees also have the option of writing instead of calling. Write either "President's Hot Line" or "Personnel Hot Line." c/o Amtrak, 400 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

new Washington-New York train that leaves at 9:10 a.m.

Train 172, the Boston train, now leaves at 10:10 a.m., an hour later, and will be used for cars off the *Crescent* when it is late.

Q. I have a suggestion regarding Auto-Train and Amtrak. They've got a new proposed service where they would take a person's car to Florida, while the passenger flew. Amtrak should get a lot of those customers.

A. We've just finalized an agreement with Auto-Train to handle their

overflow passengers between Lorton, Virginia (really Washington, D.C.) and Florida. This should be implemented soon.

Auto-Train is working on some plans for a new service from either New Jersey or Pennsylvania. We are discussing an agreement with them to handle their Florida passengers once a decision is made on the origin city.

Q. To finish off your day, I want to take time to express how I feel about the President's Hot Line. Our office has used it three times and I've

seen its effectiveness. Thank you for caring.

A. Well, thank you for your comment. As I mentioned on many occasions, I can not answer each Hot Line query. There are just too many calls.

But, I want to assure all employees that each call is directed to the proper person for an answer to me and, when needed, corrective action.

I hope you notice the results of our work, even if you don't get a direct answer.

(Note: The number of Hot Line calls soared above the 1,000 mark the first week of November.)

Communications, Signal School Opens In Lancaster

A new training school, combining both classroom work and "hands on" experience, has been opened by Amtrak's communications and signals department in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The school is housed in the former Railway Express Agency, or REA, building which has been converted into class and training rooms where various working models of actual railroad equipment are being built and assembled.

Initially, the school will concen-

trate on training new employees in groups of 10. Eventually, it will also retrain older employees in application of new techniques and use of new equipment which have developed in the railroad industry over the past few years.

Jim Crighton, engineer training, communications and signals, Philadelphia, who designed and is in charge of the new school, said that approximately 100 new employees will go through the Lancaster facility and complete — in two years — what normally would be a four year apprentice program.

Employees start their training by going to school five days a week for two weeks. During that time they are familiarized with everything they are going to see later as well as getting some first hand experience before going into the field.

The students then rotate between field work and classroom work.

Classes are taught by Zane Baulitz and Bill Wiedmann, instructors, communications and signals.

The 50-by-150-foot one-story building that houses the school is divided into six sections, including a traditional desk-blackboard classroom. This room features a working board model of the track circuitry and automatic block signaling system.

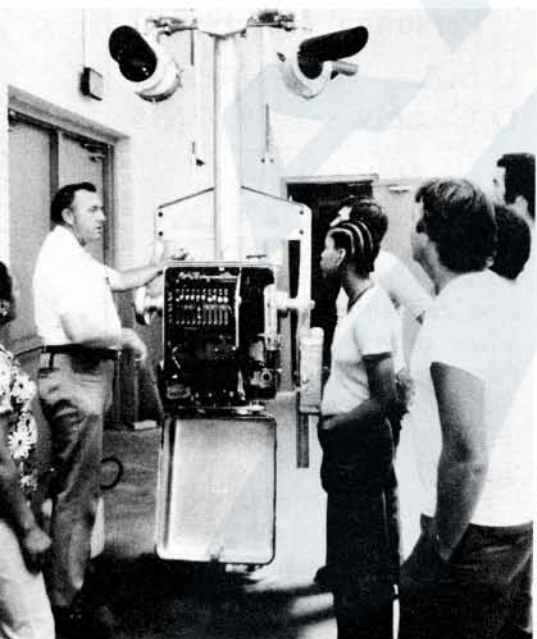
Still in the planning stages is an automatic block system which, when built, will run 95 feet in length showing both a two-way and a one-way track operation on double track. The system will have an actual grade crossing, plus all associated equipment, including a full grade crossing gate mechanism.

Also found in the school are the communications and electronics room which contains hot box detectors and audio frequency relay equipment, a heavy equipment room, and a battery room.

Highlight of the "hands on" sections will be an actual piece of railroad constructed inside the building. It will include switches, an interlocking, a crossover operated with electric switch machines, a turnout with an electro-pneumatic machine, and eight signals, all controlled from an interlocking machine.

Crighton estimates it will take at least a year before all equipment is in place.

Comparatively little renovation had to be done to the brick and concrete building. A new electrical system, including high pressure sodium lighting, was installed along with new metal interior doors and custom-made exterior doors. All work, except for lighting, was done by Amtrak's bridge and buildings department.



Jim Crighton explains a crossing gate mechanism to a new class.

Photo By Fred DeMers, Jr.

Quarterly Winners Picked In On-Board Service Contest

Winners for the second quarter, ending June 30, in the on-board services *Employee of the Year* program have been chosen.

Winners in Category I, employees who have direct contact with the traveling public, such as waiters, car attendants and lounge car personnel, include:

East

Six-way tie between Paulette Ballard and Melvin Thompson, Washington; Steve Kaufman and Jo Sephus, Boston; and Robert Lazzaro and Robert Simmons, New York.

Central

Richard Morris, Chicago.

West

Sigbjorn Askvik, Los Angeles.

Runners-Up

Runners-up were chosen only in the West region. These include Floyd Beacham, Oakland, and Lewis Greenway, Seattle, as first runners-up.

Second runners-up include Linda McAtee and Toni Allari, Oakland; Dennis Bowden, Donald Bryan and Gerrie Shaw, Seattle; and Frank Perry, Los Angeles.

Category II Winners.

Category II winners, personnel who have no direct contact with the public, such as chefs, and pantrymen, included:

East

John McLurkin, Washington.

Central

Percy Lee, Chicago.

West

Cornelius McDowell, Oakland.

Runners-Up

First runners-up include: East, Leslie McFadden, Miami; Central, Conrad Guild, Chicago; and West, Cesar Arguelles, Oakland.

Second runners-up include: East, Johnny Smith, Jacksonville; and Central, James Davis, Chicago. No second runner up was picked in the west.

The regional winners each received

a letter of commendation and were awarded a dinner for two at a local restaurant. Runners-up received letters of commendation which were placed in each employee's individual personnel file.

Ridership Sets Fiscal Year Record

Amtrak carried more passengers, generated more revenue and showed a higher ratio of revenues-to-expenses in fiscal year 1979—which ended on September 30—than in any previous year in its history.

Ridership was up 14 per cent with a record 21.5 million passengers, some 2.5 million more than last year.

The company's ratio of revenues to expenses was 41.5 per cent compared to last year's 38.5 per cent. Recent Congressional legislation requires that Amtrak achieve a 44 per cent revenues-to-expenses ratio by the end of fiscal year 1982 and 50 per cent by 1985.

Average trip length for an Amtrak passenger was 229 miles, also an increase. This contributed to a total of 4.9 billion passenger miles, a 22 per cent increase.

Amtrak experienced its highest revenue year with \$381.3 million in total operating revenues, a 22 per cent increase. Ticket sales accounted for 83 per cent of this total. The strong revenue performance, induced by the fuel crisis, produced a \$10 million favorable revenue balance, a situation forecast by Amtrak and taken into account by Congress during the fiscal year 1980 authorization and appropriations process.

While coach ticket revenue was up 23 per cent, other categories also showed impressive gains. Sleeping car revenue was up 30 per cent, food service revenue up 28 per cent, and package express business up 29 per cent.

Travel agent business accounted for over 19 per cent, or \$62.5 million,

of Amtrak's ticket sales, up 52 per cent over last year.

The largest single cost category within Amtrak's \$998 million operating budget was for personnel. This amounted to 63 per cent of total costs.

Grade Crossings

Amtrak will continue to cosponsor grade crossing improvements in the state of Florida as a result of a \$426,500 expenditure approved by the company's board of directors.

Amtrak is sharing expenses of a \$2 million improvement project with Florida and the Seaboard Coast Line railroad.

The board also approved a capital expenditure of \$240,000 as Amtrak's share of a \$1.4 million grade crossing program in New York State.

AMTRAK NEWS

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Calendar Available, Price Remains \$4

Amtrak's 1980 calendar is in process of being printed and will be available for sale to the general public in early December.

The calendar follows the format established in past years. It is 24-by-33-inches in size, vertical in format and displays the entire year on the lower portion.

Featured on the top half of this year's edition is a full color painting of a meet between a new AEM-7-powered Amfleet train and a consist of four refurbished Metroliners on the bridge that spans the Susquehanna river between Havre de Grace and Perryville, Maryland, in the Northeast Corridor.

As in past years, the painting was done by Gil Reid, noted rail artist from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The calendar is printed on heavy paper and the picture can be cut off at the end of the year for framing.

Each office on Amtrak should receive a calendar through their department channels.

Extra copies for personal use by employees, or by the general public, can be purchased for \$4, tax and postage included. Readers will note



(Left) Artist Gil Reid, at the bridge site, makes a preliminary rough sketch of this year's calendar art work. (Below) Finished picture shows AEM-7-powered Amfleet train meeting a consist of refurbished Metroliners.




that the price has not risen since last year.

To order send a check, made out to Amtrak Calendar, to Amtrak Calendar, Dept. AN, P.O. Box 311, Addison, Illinois 60101.

A limited supply of both 1978 and

1979 calendars is still available for collectors. Price of those also is \$4 each. The 1978 calendar featured Amtrak's Superliners, while the 1979 issue showed the Amfleet-equipped *National Limited* rounding Horse-shoe Curve.

Amtrak

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