

Amtrak NEWS

A NEWSLETTER FOR AMTRAK EMPLOYEES

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April 1, 1977

First Work Officially Begins On Huge Northeast Corridor Program

Work began officially on Thursday, March 31, on the \$1.75 billion federally-funded improvement program to bring the Boston-New York-Washington rail corridor to 120-mile-per-hour speeds by 1981.

Transportation Secretary Brock Adams and Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup joined the first track team when it began work on a seven and one-half mile section of the Northeast Corridor's mainline near Odenton, Maryland. Briefing the inspection party were Charles E. Bertrand, Amtrak's vice president and general manager, Northeast Corridor, and Kenneth Sawyer, Corridor project director for DOT's Federal Railroad Administration.

Adams, who promised to go out on the track himself with a pick and shovel if work didn't start promptly with the 1977 season, said he was gratified. "With Amtrak's help, we're beginning on time and with machinery a bit more sophisticated than a mere pick and shovel," he said.

The 12-man track gang Adams inspected was working two types of the many kinds of modern, automatic track construction and maintenance machinery which will be used in large numbers in the Northeast Corridor as the improvement program picks up momentum.

While Adams and the other officials watched, the construction team operated a 41,000-pound automatic tamping machine which lifted a complete section of track, leveled it, aligned it and then tamped the stone ballast in place around the ties of the now straightened and level track. A slightly smaller machine, a ballast regulator, preceded the tamper, to prepare the underlying rock ballast in

which the track was laid.

The track sector visited by Adams and his party is known to railroaders as "Stony Run." Work taking place there is typical of hundreds of similar projects already scheduled for completion during 1977.

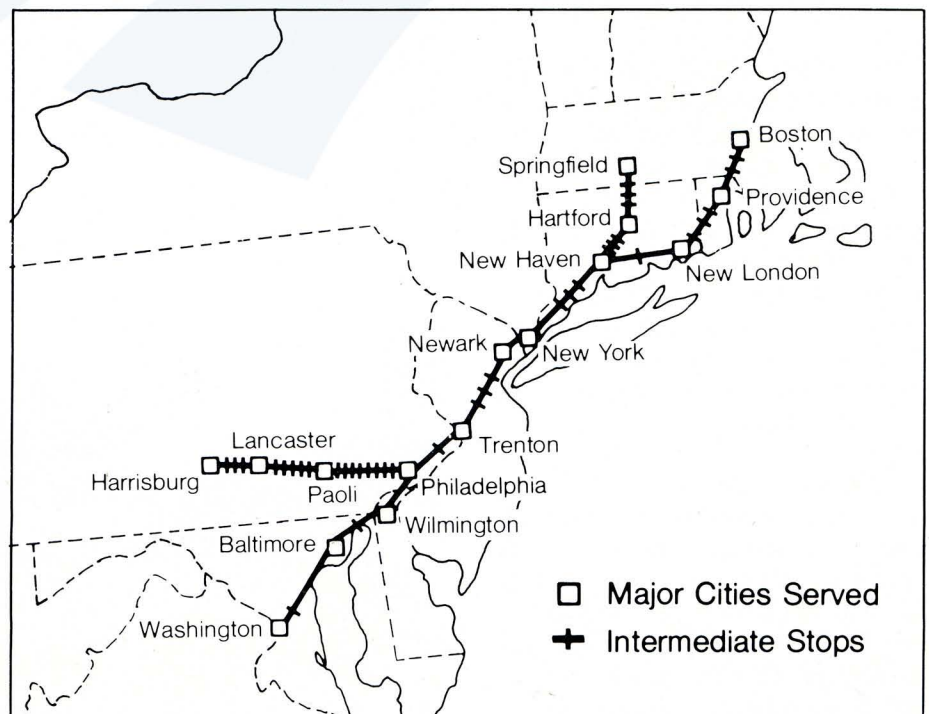
During the first weeks of April, as more new track machinery is delivered and training is completed for the first of nearly 6,000 newly-hired track workers, similar projects will quickly get underway on sections of track throughout the Northeast Corridor.

The track surfacing operation at Stony Run is just one item in a first "work package" approved by the Federal Railroad Administration under its control of Corridor improvement funds. This preliminary package of work will cost about \$22 million.

However, the Department of Transportation expects approval of additional work packages committing an estimated \$120 million during the 1977 work season. Over the authorized five-year life of the improvement program, \$1.75 billion in federal funds has been authorized. Additional money from states and other sources is expected to bring the total expenditure to \$1.9 billion.

When the project is completed, electric-powered trains, free from dependence on petroleum fuel, will run at speeds up to 120 miles per hour between Boston and Washington.

Travelers will be whisked in quiet, smooth comfort from Washington to New York in two hours and 40 minutes with intermediate stops, and from Boston to New York in three hours and 40 minutes with intermediate stops.



Customer Inquiry Unit

Answers Employee Pay Queries

Employees now have a centralized desk in Amtrak's payroll department to handle questions and problems concerning their paychecks, taxes, exemptions and deductions.

The Customer Inquiry Unit, or CIU, is staffed full-time by Consumer Correspondents Nancy O'Neill and Jeanette Bigby. Their job is to assist timekeepers, supervisors and individual employees over the system who have any type of problem with their paycheck.

These jobs were formerly handled by whatever accounting clerks were available. The process was often confusing to the employee and time-consuming for the individual clerks who had to stop normal activities to handle the matter.

The impetus for the new jobs came when Amtrak took over the Northeast Corridor. A combination of unfamiliarity with Amtrak pay practices, the integration of former railroad procedures and the adoption of a new time sheet for Corridor employees created temporary havoc for the payroll department trying to cope with a great many changes at once.

Marv Liebow, manager of payroll, decided that a single desk working exclusively on such matters could handle the load more effectively. He set up the CIU to do just that.

This allowed the payroll forces, under Supervisors Isaiah Hillhouse and Joe Jaskiewicz, to concentrate on normal tasks without interruption. With the new setup, both sections have experienced substantial improvement in their operating efficiency.

This was no small accomplishment since the department currently handles 13 payrolls per month, an average of one every other working day. The department is also responsible for all NRPC-35 personnel action notices. Those are the forms that record any changes related to an

employee's pay status. Over 100,000 of the forms are processed each year.

O'Neill and Bigby handle an average of 100 calls each week. Inquiries range from underpayments and lost checks to tax problems and transferred employees who have not had their checks catch up to them. Having two experienced accounting clerks handle all such cases now avoids duplication of effort among the payroll clerks. In the past two clerks could have found themselves working on exactly the same problem.

The two women also have the authority, if necessary, to take immediate action on certain hardship cases by writing out a check to an employee right on the spot.

The CIU deals mostly with timekeepers and supervisors out in the field. Most of the work involves answering questions, tracking down missing checks and paying time claims. The two also remind timekeepers when they are late in supplying data or if they are filling out their

time sheets incorrectly.

In addition to dealing with problems that arise with paychecks, the two consumer correspondents handle many questions and requests from outside sources.

For example, they verify information for employee's loan applications. However, this is only done with an individual employee's written consent. They also answer court inquiries, comply with unemployment and railroad retirement forms and provide all legally required information to state and federal government agencies.

With over 18,000 employees coming under the payroll department for accounting purposes, the CIU is kept busy. O'Neill and Bigby are glad to answer questions and assist individual employees. But their job is made easier if individuals would first take their payroll problems to their local supervisors or timekeepers.

One of the girls noted, "Timekeepers are much better equipped to help us track down an individual's



Jeanette Bigby, left, and Nancy O'Neill answer paycheck queries.

particular problem. We can operate more efficiently by handling one call from a timekeeper who has five problems, rather than handling five individual calls from five persons.”

Employees can alleviate many of

their problems and delays to their paychecks by working closely with their timekeepers. Of particular note is the importance of notifying the payroll department whenever they move or transfer to another job.

And when the need arises, they now can discuss their situation with a payroll expert. O'Neill and Rigby can be reached at the CIU in the Washington headquarters on extensions 7904, 7905, 2837 or 2441.

Tour Desk Serves Penn Station Clientele

Amtrak has opened a new tour desk in Penn Station, New York, hoping to attract increasing numbers of travelers to take advantage of the many tour packages offered.

The desk was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony presided over by Al Michaud, vice-president, marketing on February 18. The tour desk is the same one that was awarded first prize at the American Society of Travel Agents' annual convention in New Orleans last year.

The desk was re-designed to fit the needs at Penn Station to promote and sell tour packages, a job regular ticket agents are not equipped to do. It is staffed during normal working hours by Mary Murray, a former reservations agent who has worked the New York CRO's tour desk.

The station tour desk has begun tapping the large potential market of travelers who use the station but are unaware of the many attractive tour packages Amtrak has to offer. In its first nine days of operation, the desk averaged 320 visitors and \$1,000 worth of business a day.

As Paul Weiss, New York regional sales manager puts it, "That tour desk is a natural revenue producer for Amtrak. A quarter of a million people go through Penn Station each day. Many of them do ask about tours at the ticket counter and now they can be referred to the desk. Others have time to kill before their trains depart and wander over out of curiosity."

Weiss adds, "As soon as Mary Murray shows them some of the packages we have, they're hooked. Take the 'Week of Wheels' program as an example. Most New Yorkers have no idea they can buy a ticket to

Florida and have a car included in the package. Many never really understood what the U.S.A. Rail Pass offered. And, in New York today, the \$27 round trip special fare to Montreal on the Turbo-equipped *Adirondack* is a pleasant surprise for many."

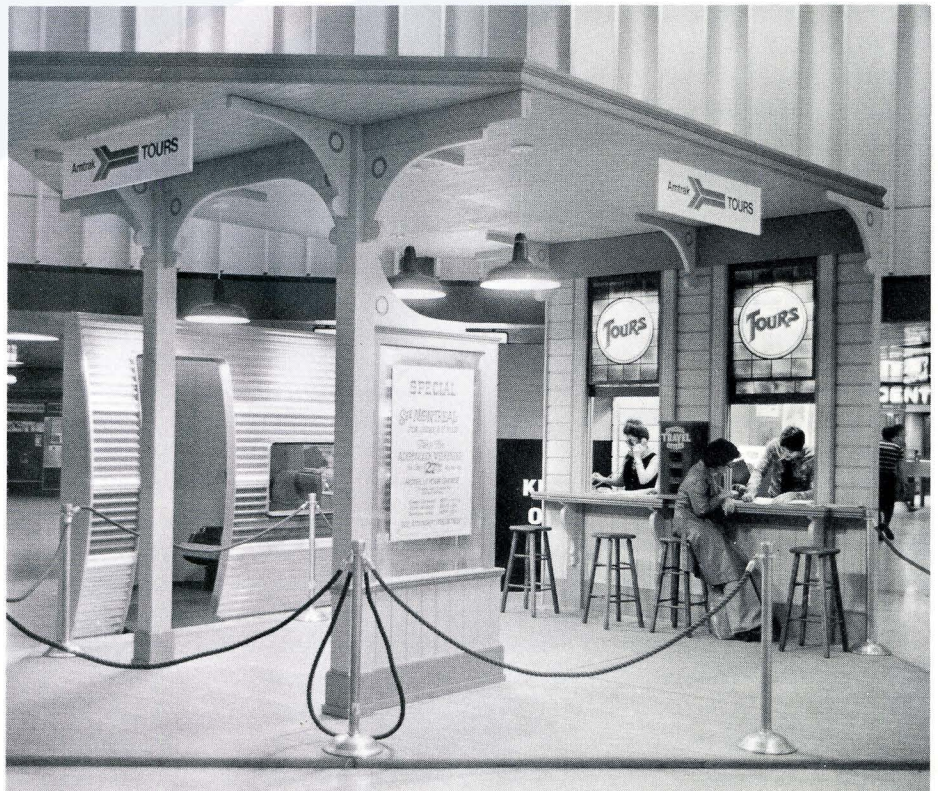
Weiss expects the already brisk business at the new tour desk will grow rapidly in the next several months. Says he, "I wouldn't be surprised if that desk was doing between \$5,000 and \$10,000 worth of business per day in the not too distant future."

Amtrak's tour business has grown considerably in the past few years, more than tripling in the last year.

Ken Karchinski, manager of the New York CRO, is staffing his own tour desk, of which the one at the station is an extension, to handle the ever growing number of tour package information calls there.

Karchinski is convinced that the tour package business for Amtrak will continue. He says, "People want tour packages because they appreciate the savings in time and money that a package, complete with all necessary travel arrangements, offers them."

The Penn Station tour desk cost nearly \$5,000 to erect. If business keeps growing at its present rate, it will have been well worth the effort in additional revenue.



Working the tour desk in Penn Station are Mary Murray, left, tour clerk, and Stephen Leonardo, reservations sales agent.

Three Phased Program Mapped For Chicago Yard Upgrading

During the first quarter of 1976 Amtrak acquired the passenger car and locomotive facilities formerly used by the Penn Central immediately south of Union Station.

Years of limited maintenance and neglect seriously affected the operational and maintenance capabilities of the yards which were built in the early 1900s.

At its February 23 meeting, Amtrak's Board of Directors authorized a \$6.8 million modernization project to rebuild the old 12th Street car yards and the 16th Street locomotive shop.

The \$6.8 million will be spent during the first phase of an ultimate three phase program costing \$38 million and scheduled for completion by 1981.

Each phase has been engineered as a separate entity. As each is completed, the new facility can be fully utilized and not be dependent on either the next phase or the completion of the total project.

At the present time, there is no one facility of sufficient size to accommodate all of Amtrak's car servicing requirements in the Chicago area. Similarly, the locomotive facilities are inadequate. There is no one location capable of servicing the locomotives or performing the necessary periodic inspections and maintenance work.

Phase One

Work to be done in the first phase includes:

- Construction of five car servicing tracks, with a capacity of 19 cars per track, plus platforms and all of the necessary facilities to properly service the cars.

- Extend the existing diesel house to enclose the locomotive servicing facilities.

- Do the track work required to make the new facility connect to, and be compatible with, the present arrangement of tracks.

- Provide adequate power, lighting and drainage.

The five tracks will be serviced by platforms capable of handling commissary and sanitary vehicles and will have receptacles for 480 volt, 220 volt and 110 volt standby power, and power hand tools, compressed air, water and steam. The arrangement will permit full turnaround servicing, running repairs and assigned maintenance to Chicago-dispatched trains.

Temporary track work will be done, using existing materials, to keep the repair and diesel yards functioning during the reconstruction. A new access road will provide entry into the new facility.

The extension of the diesel building will allow the fueling, watering and sanding operations to be protected from the weather. This will reduce the time required to service the locomotives and eliminate unsafe conditions of excessive ice buildup in the area.

Phase Two

The second phase includes construction of two additional car servicing tracks, a diesel maintenance facility, an under-roof car repair building, a material storage building, commissary and more track improvements.

The two tracks will complete the long train yard begun in phase one and allow all operations in the old servicing yard to be discontinued.

The diesel yard will be completely rebuilt. A wheel truing building will be constructed to provide prompt correction of wheel treads to conform to railroad standards. The car washer will be located on the new lead to the servicing yard, with connections to the car repair and diesel yards.

A new under-roof repair facility will be built to perform running repairs on the passenger car fleet. It will be completely independent of the car servicing yard.

The ex-Penn Central commissary building, now being used by Conrail as a division office, will be rehabilitated for Amtrak's use as a commissary. The immediate area will be paved for use by delivery vehicles and general parking.

Phase Three

The final phase of reconstruction will include seven short servicing tracks, four live storage tracks and a supply building. The seven tracks will be primarily used for short trains having a capacity of 12 to 14 cars each. Each will also be served by platforms usable by vehicles and equipped with power connections.

The four additional tracks will be used primarily for storage of extra

cars for replacing cars that are found at the last minute to need repairs. Each of the tracks will be equipped with 480 volt standby power to keep the cars ready for immediate use.

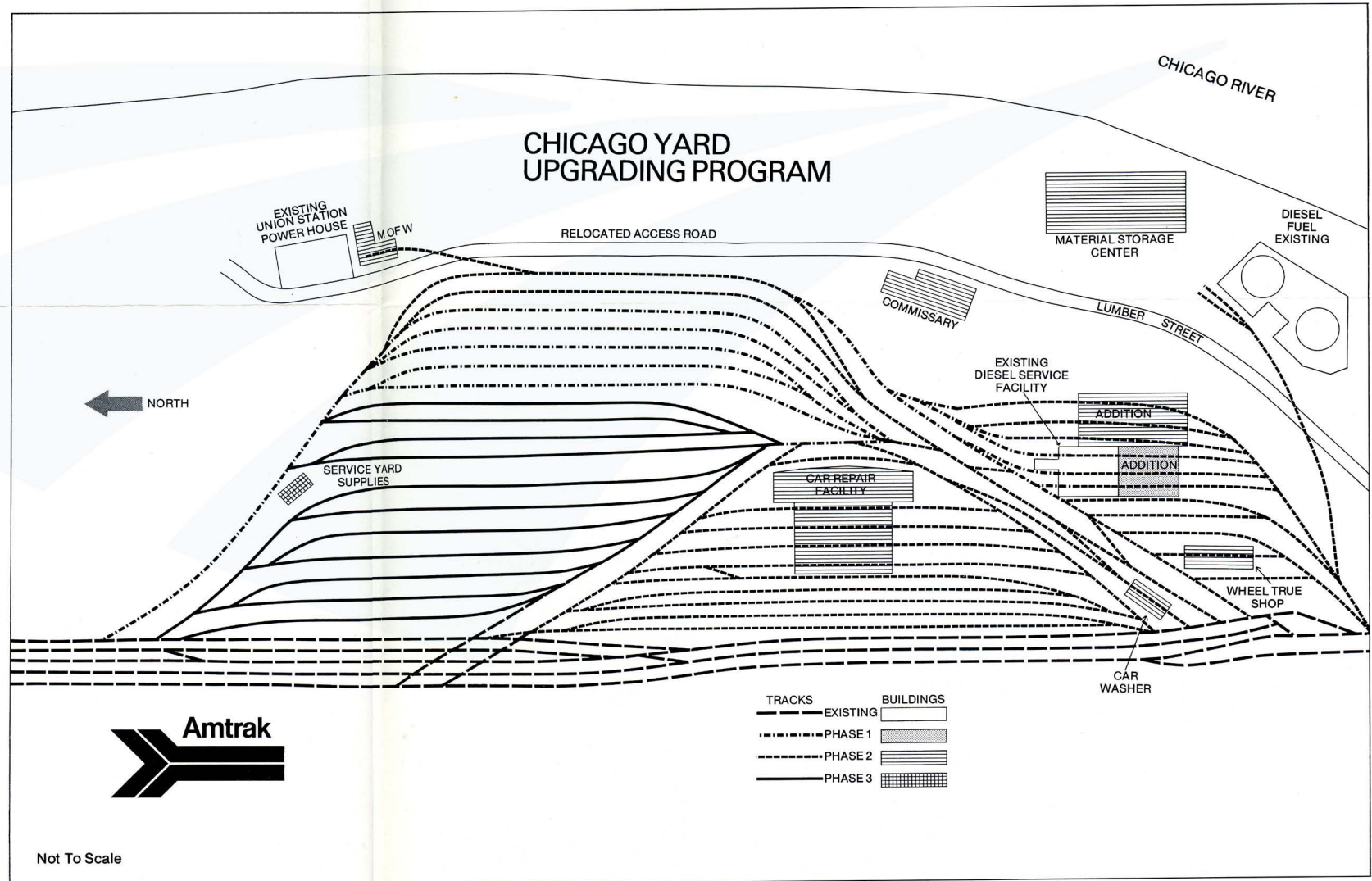
The supply building will be a small structure containing employee facilities and supplies for use at the north end of the yard.

At the completion of the third phase, the car work presently done at two yards will be centralized at 12th

Street and the locomotive maintenance work done at ten shops over the system will be concentrated at 16th Street.

The maintenance of 30 per cent of the car fleet, about 600 cars, and 43 per cent of the locomotive fleet, 124 locomotives, will be assigned to the new facility.

The completed upgrading program will improve the efficiency of the Chicago operation significantly.



Keeping Track Of Amtrak

Mel Baker Named Assistant Vice President

Melvin H. Baker has been named assistant vice president of finance and controller effective March 1.

Baker will be responsible for the overall supervision and direction of the accounting, auditing, budgeting and financial control functions of the company.

He joined Amtrak in August 1974 as director of budgets and was promoted to controller in August 1975.

Before joining Amtrak, Baker was a deputy assistant secretary of defense in the office of the assistant secretary of defense, comptroller. As such he was responsible for accounting, data processing, weapons systems status reporting and manage-

ment information. Prior to that he was comptroller with the Defense Supply Agency.

Winterized Zephyr

Three sections of the *San Francisco Zephyr* ran into problems enroute to their destinations because of a fierce late winter storm on the high plains.

The westbound *Zephyr* that left Chicago on Thursday, March 10, was stopped in the station at McCook, Nebraska, because of the impossibility of proceeding further because of heavy snows. Cuts were filled between 17 to 18 feet deep and high winds caused drifting over the right of way.

The storm was concentrated between Denver and eastern Nebraska.

Because of lack of hotel space and the impossibility of busing passengers out of McCook, they remained on board the train waiting out the storm. Heat was provided by the locomotive and a Burlington Northern electrician strung electrical wires to the train for lighting.

Electricity is normally provided by a generator attached to the car's wheels. When the train stops, batteries take over but a non-moving train quickly runs the batteries down.

The train that left Chicago on Friday, December 11, reached Lincoln, where it was terminated and passengers housed in hotels in Lincoln and Omaha. Amtrak personnel later made airline reservations for those passengers for Denver, Salt Lake City and San Francisco. Ten passengers refused to ride and waited for the next westbound *Zephyr* through Omaha.

Penn Station Electrician Helps Save Passenger's Life

Rocky Cassandro, electrician, Northeast Corridor, is now Rocky Cassandro, lifesaver, after a recent incident in which his quick response to a situation saved a man's life.

Cassandro, a 40-year railroad veteran, works out of the maintenance shops at Penn Station, New York. On February 16, after a Conrail commuter train stalled in the New York tunnel, Amtrak sent a crew in to get it started again.

Cassandro got the train going, then walked through the cars to check on their operation.

Says he, "I was walking through the train when I came upon a man sprawled out in his seat. His tongue was out and his eyes wide open. He wasn't breathing and when I checked his heart I found it had stopped. So I placed him on the floor and began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation."

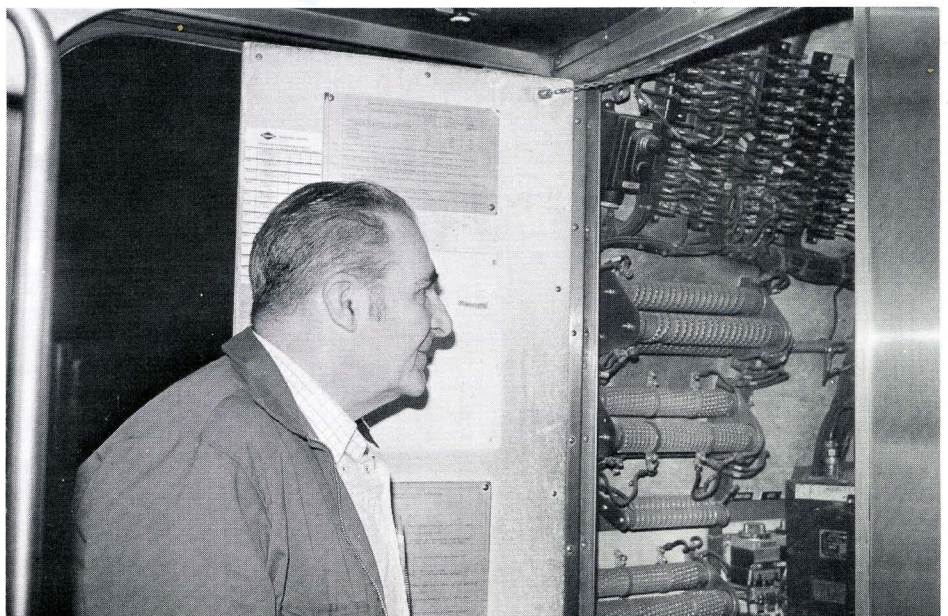
Sally Robinson, an employee of the Cornell University Medical School, was on the train and rushed over to assist Cassandro in administering CPR, a technique of using both resuscitation and chest compressions

to restore both breathing and heart-beat.

Both worked on the passenger, one doing the breathing, the other counting and working on the chest. Within a few minutes the passenger began breathing again.

An ambulance met the train as it pulled into the station and the

passenger was taken to a hospital for observation. The incident is just one of many that occur each day in which an Amtrak employee sees and takes the opportunity to help another person. In this case, that person was a train passenger and his life was in the good hands of Rocky Cassandro.



Rocky Cassandro, Northeast Corridor electrician, checks over a circuitry cabinet in an Amtrak car.

The eastbound *Zephyr* that departed Oakland on March 10 arrived in Denver and could not proceed into the blizzard area. Some 146 persons were put up in hotels and then flown to Omaha and Chicago where they made connections with other Amtrak trains for the east.

After 42 hours in the station, the McCook train left at 1:30 a.m., Sunday, after tracks were cleared by Burlington Northern snow plows.

When the food supply got low on the *Zephyr's* diner, Fred Neumann, lead ticket clerk, took the steward to the local supermarket to replenish his stock. Says Neumann, "Generally, the passengers took it all very well. They accepted the fact that nature was on a rampage and made the best of it."

Since telephone service out of McCook is over microwave and thus unaffected by winds or snow, passengers could communicate with friends and relatives.

Mountaineer Future?

As part of its legal responsibility, Amtrak posted notices in stations along the route of the *Mountaineer* that the Norfolk-Chicago train was subject to possible termination.

The train has operated for a two-year experimental period which was scheduled to end on March 24.

The Secretary of Transportation will decide whether to terminate the service, add it to Amtrak's basic route system or restructure it.

On Wednesday, March 16, Senator Robert C. Byrd, of West Virginia, said the decision had been postponed for a time. Said he, "I have been informed by Transportation Secretary Brock Adams that he has granted a 30-day extension to the *Mountaineer* route."

Byrd has been urging that the *Mountaineer* route be restructured with an origination point in Washington, D.C., instead of Norfolk.

Amtrak's Board of Directors was to consider the proposal at its March 30 meeting.

Amtrak Appoints

Clyde Dismukes as Director, Tax and Insurance. Dismukes will report to Don Brazier, vice president, finance, and be responsible for all of Amtrak's corporate tax and insurance matters, seeing that the corporation has the proper coverage and is attending to its legal tax responsibilities.

Dismukes began his Amtrak service in the tax department in March 1972 as a tax analyst and was named manager, tax and insurance, in April 1974.

Prior to joining Amtrak he worked for five years as assistant manager of state taxes for duPont in Wilmington, Delaware. Before that he attended Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, where he received a degree in accounting.

Charles E. Mosby as Manager, Property Taxes. Mosby will report to Dismukes and be responsible for coordinating various state and local tax assessors to insure proper valuation of all Amtrak properties, file tax returns and pay all corporate property taxes.

Mosby started with Amtrak as a tax analyst in February 1974 and was promoted to senior tax analyst that June.

Before coming to Amtrak he was a tax accountant for American Finance Management Corporation, Silver Spring, Maryland. Prior to that he was an administrative assistant in the Department of Defense.

Ronald E. Jefferson as Director, Systems and Procedures. Jefferson will report to Melvin H. Baker, assistant vice president of finance and controller, and be responsible for assuring a strong and fully coordinated systems and procedures development and implementation program within the controller's functions.

Jefferson joined Amtrak in December 1972 as a senior systems analyst and was promoted in September 1975 to manager, cost system and analysis. In that capacity he coordinated the

accounting requirements for takeover of maintenance of equipment facilities and the maintenance of way and transportation operations in the Northeast Corridor.

Prior to joining Amtrak, he was in the systems and accounting department of the Canadian National Railway, Montreal, and was also the controller for Farm House Food Corporation, Milwaukee.

H. Peter Gates as Director, Contract and Joint Facility Audits. Gates will report to Angelo Caputo, assistant controller, and be responsible for the operation of the contract and joint facility audit functions throughout the Amtrak system.

Gates began with Amtrak in August 1971 as manager of contract auditing. He participated in the establishment of the revenue accounting function and became its manager in June 1973. In 1975 after a brief assignment in the information systems department as its chief of administration, he rejoined the contract audit department and became its principle audit manager.

After graduation from American University with a degree in accounting in 1964, Gates joined the audit staff of Peat, Martwick Mitchell and Company, in Washington. He became a Certified Public Accountant during his tenure there.

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Foreign Travel Agents Inducted Into Golden Spike Society

Ten travel agents from around the world were honored by being inducted into Amtrak's International Golden Spike Society in ceremonies at New York's St. Moritz hotel on Friday, March 11. The ten are the leading sellers of Amtrak business outside the United States.

The ten included Geoffrey R. Marsh, Thomas Cook Ltd., London; Rudolph Hain, Frankfurt, Germany; Tsutomu Suguira, Tokyo; Ralph Hofman, Zurich, Switzerland; Bjoern Gerden, Stockholm, Sweden; Ted Godwin, Croydon, Australia; Renate Zernickel, Paris, France; Anne Deak, Sydney, Australia; Isa Hansen, Munich, Germany; and Hans van Daelen, Rijswijk, Netherlands. van Daelen was unable to attend the ceremonies and his award was forwarded to him.

The plaques were presented to the travel agents at an awards dinner by Al Michaud, vice president, marketing. The plaques derive their name from and feature the golden spike which was driven at Promontory, Utah, in 1869, to complete America's first transcontinental railroad.

The agents were flown to the

United States by Pan American World Airways. The day after the ceremonies, the group rode the Metroliner to Washington where they lunched at the Smithsonian Institution. After a tour of the city, they returned to New York and later flew back to their homes.

The International Golden Spike Society is a parallel organization to the domestic Golden Spike Society.

That group consists of the 500 top producing domestic Amtrak-appointed agencies. Late last year Warren Peters, Four Winds Travel, New York, was honored as the top seller of Amtrak business with the first membership in the group. Since then the other 499 agents received their certificates in a series of lunch and dinner meetings held around the country.



Foreign travel agents receive their awards from Al Michaud, fourth from left. Agents, left to right, are Ted Godwin, Australia; Ralph Hofman, Zurich; Renate Zernickel, Paris; Anne Deak, Australia; Bjoern Gerden, Stockholm; Rudolph Hain, Frankfurt; Tsutomu Suguira, Tokyo; and Geoffrey Marsh, London. In front is Isa Hansen, Munich.

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