

Amtrak NEWS

A NEWSLETTER FOR AMTRAK EMPLOYEES

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Long-Distance Cars Ordered; Budd To Build 150 Coaches, Food Cars

Amtrak has signed a letter of intent to the Budd Company ordering 150 new stainless steel passenger cars at a cost of approximately \$150 million.

Approval by the board of directors to purchase the cars was originally reported on February 28, the day after board's regular monthly meeting, but no builder had been specified at that time.

Tom Hackney, Amtrak's group vice president-operations and maintenance, told Budd officials to proceed on the contract, subject to negotiation of a final agreement on terms and conditions of the order. Some engineering details still remain to be finalized.

The new cars will use body shells similar to Amfleet cars but interiors and mechanical systems will be designed for long-distance service. The order will consist of 125 coaches and 25 food service cars.

Delivery of the cars will be speeded up significantly because of their similarity to the existing Amfleet equipment. The first new car is due for delivery in 17 months with the entire order completed within 10 months.

The new cars are needed because of future ridership growth as passenger demand for rail service continues to expand.

Budd built the nearly 500 original Amfleet cars at its Red Lion, Pennsylvania, plant where the new cars will be built. Amfleet cars were designed for corridor and medium-distance routes but many have been pressed into service—because of equipment shortages—all over the country as a substitute for the aging fleet of conventional rail cars. For example, Amfleet cars operate on

the *Panama Limited*, *Pioneer*, *Montrealer* and *Cardinal*, all overnight

trains that travel considerable distances.

More AEM-7s Coming Too

At its February meeting, Amtrak's board of directors also approved the purchase of 17 more high-speed, lightweight electric locomotives for use in the Northeast Corridor.

The new locomotives, numbered 930-46, will be similar to the 30 AEM-7 units currently under construction by the Electro-Motive division of General Motors. The AEM-7s are based on a design by ASEA of Sweden.

Under the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, scheduled for completion in the mid-1980s, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration estimate that 47 of the new units will be needed to provide reliable high-speed service.

The 17 new units will cost approximately \$50.6 million. Amtrak has previously committed \$85 million

for the purchase of the AEM-7s already on order. This includes escalation costs, spare parts and other support costs.

In the meantime, locomotive 900, the first AEM-7 to arrive on Amtrak property, continues its testing program over the entire range of the corridor. It now has operated over all of the electrified trackage from New Haven to Harrisburg and Washington.

On February 26, pulling an instrumented test car and three stock Amfleet coaches, the locomotive reached 125 miles per hour on a 13.3 mile section of track between Brunswick and Trenton, New Jersey.

Testing will continue until the locomotive goes into revenue service sometime later this spring.



The Washington section of the first head end power-equipped Broadway Limited — with diesel locomotives under the catenary — departs Washington's Union Station on Wednesday, March 19.

The Amdinette in the consist will be replaced with a cafeteria/lounge car when it is available from Beech Grove.

Amtrak, DOT Present Congress With Study Identifying Thirteen Major Corridors

Amtrak and the Department of Transportation have presented Congress with a study that could provide a blueprint for the development of as many as 13 major rail corridors across the country. The corridors would have the potential for carrying large numbers of intercity travelers thus saving significant amounts of fuel.

The 13 corridors were:

- Chicago-Indianapolis-Cincinnati
- Chicago-Cleveland
- Chicago-Detroit
- Chicago-Milwaukee-Twin Cities
- Chicago-St. Louis
- Miami-Jacksonville
- Los Angeles-Las Vegas
- Los Angeles-San Diego
- New York-Buffalo
- San Jose-Oakland-Sacramento
- Seattle-Portland
- Fort Worth-Dallas-Houston-San Antonio-Fort Worth, and Washington-Richmond.

The relative strengths of each corridor varied depending on trip frequencies, fuel prices and track speeds, but every corridor was able to meet or exceed required ridership and performance levels.

Most importantly, every corridor showed the potential to improve significantly Amtrak's overall system performance.

The study results suggest that the strongest situation exists when gasoline is assumed to cost \$2.50 a gallon—presumably by 1985—in today's dollars, train speeds are projected at 79 miles per hour and train frequencies reach at least six daily trips in each direction. Corridors that already have good trip frequency levels were evaluated with further expanded service in mind.

Under the most favorable conditions, every corridor in the study made a favorable contribution to Amtrak's goals for both ridership and ratio of revenues-to-expenses. Congress has set a minimum ac-

ceptable level of 80 passenger miles per train mile as the measure of ridership density on short-distance trains and has mandated that Amtrak improve its ratio of revenues-to-expenses to 50 per cent by 1985. Every corridor was able to meet these levels and even significantly improve on them.

"As rising fuel prices and continuing shortages change the transportation makeup in this country," says Amtrak President Alan Boyd, "we must be prepared to offer the public attractive alternatives to the automobile.

"Amtrak is convinced that these developing corridors can provide such alternatives, if trip times and frequencies are competitive with the private car. To a very great degree, Amtrak's future lies in these corridors."

The report was prepared at the re-

quest of three members of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee; Chairman Harley Staggers (D-WVA); James Florio (D-NJ), chairman, Transportation subcommittee; and Edward Madigan (R-ILL), subcommittee member.

The three had asked Amtrak and the Department of Transportation last fall to identify and study potential corridors between key cities to meet new energy and transportation needs.

Key factors evaluated included ridership levels, the ratio of revenues-to-expenses and the potential for energy savings.

Five other corridors also under study will be covered in specific detail in the future. Included are Harrisburg-Philadelphia; Boston-Springfield-New Haven; Atlanta-Nashville; Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati; and Savannah-Atlanta.

Corridor Legislation Introduced

On Thursday, March 13, Congressman Harley Staggers introduced legislation in the House of Representatives which would provide funding to implement the 13 high-speed multi-frequency corridors announced by Amtrak and DOT.

Staggers is chairman of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee which has jurisdiction over rail matters.

The Staggers bill—HR 6818—has a number of cosponsors, one of whom is Congressman Jim Wright (D-TEX), House majority leader.

The committee favorably reported the legislation to the full House on Wednesday, March 19.

As written, the bill would provide additional funds for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, for development of other energy-efficient corridors and to provide protection for some employees of the Rock Island railroad.

The Rock Island has been in bankruptcy for five years and is now scheduled to be liquidated.

The positive spirit of the committee debate over the future of American rail passenger service was in stark contrast to that of just one year ago when this same committee was considering the Secretary of Transportation's recommendations for drastically reducing Amtrak service.

The committee bill would provide an additional \$750 million for NECIP, \$55 million for Amtrak to conduct an engineering and design analysis of a number of other corridors, \$50 million for additional equipment and \$850 million for construction of the high speed corridors. Construction money would not be available until 1982.

At the present time there appears to be no plan to consider the emerging corridor component of the bill in the Senate.

Commuter Shuttle Successful When Flood Cuts Off Phoenix Drivers

Over 46,000 persons were carried by Amtrak in special commuter shuttle service in Phoenix during a ten day period between February 25 and March 7.

The special train was requested by Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt who appealed directly to both Amtrak and the Southern Pacific to provide the service to connect Phoenix's eastern suburbs with downtown. The two were separated by the flooding Salt river which put eight of the city's ten bridges out of commission. The resultant traffic jams at the open two spans delayed auto commuters for up to six hours.

Financed by Arizona's Department of Transportation, the train operated six round trips daily over the 10 miles of Southern Pacific track between Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.

Five Amcoaches were assigned to the service, along with two locomotives, one at each end to provide push-pull service to minimize turnaround times at each end of the run. Because of heavy patronage, a sixth Amcoach was added on the third day of operation.

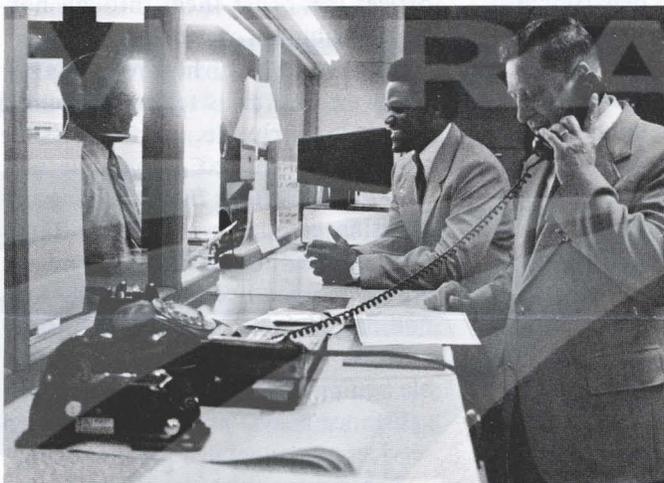
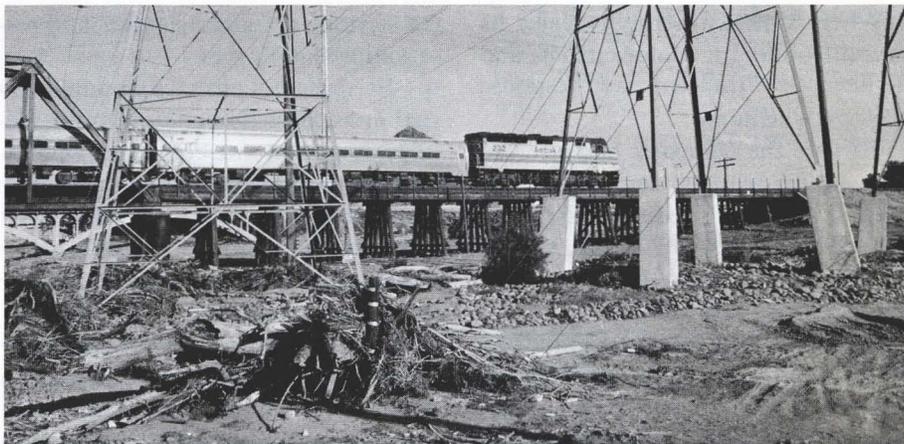
Fare for the 45 minute run was set at \$1.

Lloyd Clark, community resource coordinator, Arizona DOT, reports that one train reached a phenomenal load factor of 230 per cent. "Despite the crowding," he said, "passengers were courteous to each other and made sure no one was left at the stops. There was no New York-style shoving and pushing."

Clark did admit that on one of the first runs, he did have to dissuade a passenger from crawling into the luggage rack for an early morning nap.

The service was previewed on Saturday, February 23, with a test run with 200 invited guests. Prior to the departure, the train was officially christened the "Hattie B," after the governor's wife.

The first train on Monday carried



(Above) Litter covers the Salt river bed as the Hattie B rolls across the SP's trestle bridge approach on its last day of operation. (Left) Lewis Cook, left, and Ray Krebs, ticket agents, provided information to the many callers. Arizona DOT sold its own tickets for the train.

772 persons but this number climbed quickly. One trip, at the peak of the operation, carried 1,160 persons.

As the bridges went back into service one by one, ridership slipped but peaked again on the last day with 5,529 persons riding the 12 trains.

Said Clark, "I guess a lot of people around here just wanted to take a

train ride before the train went away.

"We appreciate what Amtrak did for us. We had a bad situation here in moving our people but the train did a phenomenal job for us."

After the service ended, the cars and locomotives were moved back to their Los Angeles base on the following day's *Sunset Limited*.

Minority Contracts Top Goal

Amtrak has surpassed its goal for minority contracts awarded in fiscal year 1979. In awarding the contracts to minority firms, Amtrak spent over \$28 million, or more than \$3 million over the internal goal set by the company's management.

The total amounted to over 15 per cent of all Amtrak contracts awarded during the fiscal year which

ended last September 30.

The current figure is far higher than several years ago when, during fiscal years 1976 and 1977, the company spent only \$2 to \$3 million annually in purchases from minority businesses.

Many of the contracts were part of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project.

Handicapped Access Program Features People, Equipment

When Amtrak recently revealed its new discounts for senior citizens and handicapped travelers the response was overwhelming.

To date the company has received over 18,000 requests for more information about the reduced fares and for copies of *Access Amtrak*, the informative travel guide for elderly and handicapped passengers.

Access Amtrak was first published in 1977 and never drew more than a few dozen requests per week according to Sue Stevens, director, special projects, public affairs department.

Recent news releases, which described the new fares and told of the availability of an updated version of *Access Amtrak*, made the booklet an overnight sensation. Requests continue to pour into the public affairs office with no letup in sight for the immediate future.

Stevens explains the booklet's philosophy. "Development of the original publication served as a device for drawing up of all the policies and procedures regarding the handicapped, changing them where necessary, and then communicating that information

to station, on-board services and reservations employees.

"It's original purpose was an internal and external communications device, but before we could really publicize its availability, we had to make sure all of our employees knew what services we had to offer and that they knew what a handicapped traveler had a right to expect."

The new *Access Amtrak*, currently at the printers, will be printed in a much larger quantity so all stations, travel agents and central reservations offices can order them through normal distribution channels.

Access Amtrak, however, is only one way Amtrak is telling the public that it is making its trains accessible to the handicapped. When the new *America's Getting Into Training* advertising campaign began last January, people in wheelchairs and on crutches were featured along with non-handicapped travelers. On-train notices in the growing fleet of accessible equipment also make it clear that assistance is available from on-board services personnel just for the asking.

The move toward accessibility has

been company policy since 1972, a time when most other public transportation companies were doing nothing about handicapped customers. This, too, was literally years before the Department of Transportation regulations mandated that federally-supported carriers be barrier-free.

Vic Ryerson, Amtrak's counsel who has worked on the compliance of the rules, notes, "We became sensitive to the access problem earlier than others because of comments we received from handicapped groups.

"Our employees, I'm happy to say, seem to have taken their obligation to handicapped travelers seriously. They feel that this is a civil rights issue and not just another burdensome federal regulation."

DOT's regulations, which were issued last summer, are a follow-up to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which outlawed discrimination against handicapped persons solely by reason of their disability. Architectural or structural barriers which prevent handicapped individuals from making full use of a facility constitute such discrimination. Since the Act applies to any program receiving federal money, Amtrak has to comply.

Federal law defines a handicap as any temporary or permanent physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Functions such as performing manual tasks, caring for one's self, walking, seeing, hearing, breathing, learning or working are described as such.

Amtrak's fare discount applies to anyone who has such a physical or mental impairment that limits access to—or use of—Amtrak services. Ticket agents have been instructed to accept a wide variety of identification cards—from those issued by handicapped organizations to those from state, local or federal governments—as certification of a legitimate handi-



Ramps on the new Superliner equipment make boarding much easier for handicapped persons in wheelchairs.

cap. They may also accept letters from physicians if they clearly state that the traveler has an impairment that affects his or her ability to use Amtrak services.

Since Amtrak's accommodations for handicapped travelers are limited, they should be reserved for those with physical mobility problems. Hence, a deaf person, who clearly qualifies for a fare discount, would probably not need special seats or other special accommodations.

A \$93 million facilities improvement program and a \$17.6 million equipment refurbishment program are already under way to make existing equipment and facilities comply with the federal regulations.

Eric von Schilgen, director, marketing services requirements, is Amtrak's coordinator for the program.

He emphasizes that making Amtrak accessible means more than just eliminating physical barriers. It also means good service.

"We'll give assistance," he says, "to any passenger needing help in moving through the train, getting on or off, or who needs food served at his or her seat or accommodation. We do, however, strongly recommend that people who need such special help enroute contact our reservations office so we can be ready for them."

The central reservations offices process requests for such assistance. They also answer questions as to whether a particular station presents barriers to a wheelchair or whether anyone at the station can help a passenger get on or off the train. Customer requests, including those for special meals, are forwarded by the reservations agent to the special services desk which then processes the requests and confirms all arrangements. When this is done, the customer is so advised.

Deaf customers are accommodated by Amtrak in a unique way. A special teletype machine has been installed at Bensalem. Listed in the timetable is a special 800-series no-cost phone number that deaf people anywhere in the country can call. Communications between the reservations center and



Cynthia Benton, senior secretary, public affairs, displays the Access Amtrak brochure that thousands of persons have written for.

the customer is all done via teletype.

Although DOT regulations require that all stations be accessible within 10 years, certain ones in metropolitan areas must be ready by 1984. Amtrak is inventorying its stations to see how best to accomplish this. Initially, 250 stations will be examined to see what renovations will be needed. A report on the progress of the program must be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation by July.

Jay Stearman, structural engineer, who has worked on the survey project with Charles Koch, architect, engineering design, said that parking facilities, passenger loading and unloading areas, ticket counters, restrooms and other station facilities are all being inspected.

"We've already visited 60 stations and measured them against the standards of accessibility for the handicapped," said Stearman. "There's no point in offering discount fares if the people can't use the system."

Newly-built stations, it might be noted, are automatically designed with accessibility features.

To ease the boarding process for wheelchair passengers, Amtrak has acquired portable lift devices which are now in service at some stations in California. They were introduced under an agreement with the California Department of Transportation which put up 75 per cent of the

\$2,500-per-unit cost. Some 30 lifts were purchased and sent to the stations.

According to William Presho, senior engineer, support systems, the lift program began with a successful demonstration of a prototype at Washington Union Station over a year ago.

"We'll be going to the board of directors pretty soon to get authority to buy 100 to 150 more lifts," said Presho. "We plan to install them at the stations that must be made accessible within the next five years."

"But, we're going to try to install the lifts within a year so we can save some money by eliminating the inflation of the succeeding years."

Some \$315,000 will be spent on the devices if the board approves.

Amtrak is also spending \$6.7 million to make much of its older equipment accessible. As the old steam-heated cars are being converted to head end power at Beech Grove, some 47 coaches and sleeping cars have been earmarked for installation of accessibility features. They will be fitted with spaces to park and secure wheelchairs and provided with storage space for orthopedic devices. A special roomette will be built in each sleeper so it can accommodate a wheelchair and permit use of the toilet with the bed down.

All new cars that are purchased in-

clude special seats and accessible restrooms automatically. The Superliners are equipped with special seats in the coaches for easy transfer of a person from a wheelchair. The sleeping cars have a special bedroom designed for disabled passengers. They also have lower vestibules and a ramp for boarding wheelchair passengers.

"The train is the easy way for disabled people to travel," says Larry Maxwell, chief, policy and procedures. "The other commercial modes are more difficult for them to use. We, for example, have accessible aisles and accommodations. I think we've gone a lot farther in this area than the other modes have."

Maxwell says that the company's training program for on-board services personnel has been modified to include teaching assistance methods for disabled travelers including those in wheelchairs.

Amtrak's policy of improving its accessibility has come to the attention of governmental agencies and organizations representing handicapped persons. Letters commending the company come in on a regular basis.

One wrote, for example, "The thoroughness of your brochure insures that the elderly and handicapped population of our country will be helped in an efficient manner and will enjoy a pleasant experience while traveling on Amtrak."

Because the rehabilitation law also mandates that Amtrak facilities be accessible by its handicapped employees, changes are planned for stations, shops, commissaries and reservations offices.

For example, a \$32,000 pilot program is about to begin in the Los Angeles reservations center which will permit visually-impaired and blind people to actually "read" the face of a CRT scope. They will be able to work alongside sighted personnel in the reservations office.

Plans for improvements at Chicago's 12th Street yard and nearby commissary include accessibility features. Bensalem and Jacksonville reservations offices, too, already have had their architectural barriers removed.

Hot Line To President Boyd

Question: I'm a sleeping car porter working out of Seattle on the *Coast Starlight* between Los Angeles and here. We have a problem in the maintenance and cleaning departments down in Los Angeles.

On February 10, I wrote up car 2722 for defects, one of which was a dirty bed box. The mattresses are three to four inches shorter than the bed box so when the passenger pulls down the roomette bed he can see all the dirt there.

I later picked up car 2722 in Los Angeles again and saw that the problem had been signed off, indicating that the car was cleaned.

Not so! I inspected all of the rooms and noticed that none of the cleaning had been done.

On February 19, I wrote it up again after reporting to work in Los Angeles. The next day I picked up the car once more and still none of the cleaning had been done.

I reported this to a supervisor and he told me to "write it up again." I did but thought I ought to call you.

Answer: We've conducted a thorough investigation about the signing off on work that had not been done.

To remedy the situation, the individual falsifying the form 1000A has been brought up on charges and a formal investigation held.

It is not the policy of the mechanical department to ignore items written up or to sign off unless the repair work has actually been accomplished.

You can be assured that management is taking the necessary actions to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Q: I work out of Chicago and there are some problems with our sleeping cars. Cars 2997 and 2981 have had trouble with the bedrest brackets in the roomettes.

When you put the bed down, there's nothing for it to rest on except the top of the toilet hopper. That

leaves about an inch of space and what happens is that the bed flops up and down all night.

I've written them up and written them up on form 1000A but no one seems to care about doing anything about it.

I think it's wrong for the passengers and it's very discouraging to us to keep writing things up and still have the cars come back out without being repaired.

A: We've had a lot of those bedrest brackets stolen because they're made of brass. To eliminate this problem, replacements are being cast of aluminum but the two cars you specifically singled out still had brass brackets.

Both are out of service right now and will have new brackets applied before being put back into use.

To insure the repair of items written up on the 1000A forms, a new system of reporting began on March 17.

The new form 1000A will consist of six pages and remain with the car the entire time between regular 120-day inspections resulting in a running history for the four month period.

The old form was a single page and when it was completely filled in was filed at the repair facility doing the last repair. Forms for a particular car often were filed in several locations preventing a detailed history on the car's problems.

Maintenance and repair will continue to be handled as usual. But, if for some reason—say a part is out of stock—the repair can't be made immediately, the car will be returned to service but the space blanked and not put on sale.

However, the running Maintenance History Log (the new 1000A) will show the repair as not having been accomplished. Everytime the car comes back into the yard somebody will check the log and see what work needs to be done, either newly-reported defects or the work that has been postponed.

Then, when the needed part ar-

rives, the repair people should automatically spot the uncompleted repair on the form and get it fixed promptly.

When the car comes in for its next regular 120-day inspection, the old Maintenance History Log will be cleared, completed and sent here to Washington for review and monitoring.

A new log will be put into the car for the next 120-day period.

Q: Could there be a provision worked into the computer system to automatically wait-list passengers? Then, if they can't reserve the space they originally request, it would be automatically provided when space becomes available.

A: Your suggestion of an automatic wait-list feature in ARTS is one that we've been considering for inclusion in the design of a new system which we hope to have in operation within the next two years.

Q: We just had a customer who wanted to go to Oklahoma City by taking the bus from Newton where the *Southwest Limited* stops. However, in the Newton file in ARTS, there is no information on where the bus station is located.

Here in San Jose, we get a lot of such requests for travel for Oklahoma City. It would be good if we had an interline agreement for connecting service to Oklahoma points.

A: Your suggestion to include more bus information in Newton's file was accomplished on March 6.

It now shows how far Newton is from other major cities, as well as Oklahoma City, and also indicates additional bus service as well as telephone numbers for the bus lines.

Our marketing department is in the process of reviewing current interline agreements. When this is finished, we'll have a better idea of where additional interline agreements might enhance our service.

Q: I work at the 16th Street diesel shop in Chicago and no progress has been made on the exhaust fume

problem here. It's difficult to work with the fumes as bad as they are.

A: As you probably know, there have been a number of complaints regarding the fume problem. We recently did complete plans and specifications for installation of four ventilation fans on the shop roof.

The purchase requisition has been sent to the procurement department and I've suggested they expedite the matter.

We hope to award the contract within 30 days so a contractor can be at work by early April.

Q: I'm a signal maintainer on the Baltimore division and wonder why the company is spending money sending us to the Book of Rules class. It takes four days of our time as well as costing money to transport us there.

All they teach is how to give track and write orders which we do not do. We're not qualified to put equipment on the track. As a matter of fact, we don't have any equipment to put on the track.

Why all this waste of time and money?

A: We feel that a maintainer should be qualified because of the nature of the work. He or she works at a block station and should be knowledgeable of the signal system, how a train is moved from one track to another, how a train is reversed and other facets of train operations.

In our training sessions, which originated in 1979, we required maintainers to take a written exam after attending the school. This was objected to by the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and referred to our labor relations department for a ruling.

They concluded that it was within the scope of our labor agreement to require a written exam.

We are aware some employees are objecting to this exam.

But, with the hiring of many new people as block operators and maintenance of way people, it is imperative that all employees be thorough-

ly knowledgeable regarding our rules. The only way we can assure ourselves that they are so qualified is through the written exam.

Q: I'm a station agent on the route of the *Pioneer*. On several occasions I've had to try and explain to somebody what the Superliners are like.

We understand that the marketing department has been working on a brochure which they, apparently, have decided not to distribute because it is too expensive.

We're proud of the Superliners but don't have a thing to show or give our customers.

A: There has been a brochure in the planning stage which is designed to promote the Superliners. Once a firm schedule is established for Superliner deliveries, we'll put the brochure back into production.

When that happens, we'll have

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.

full distribution to the field so each sales representative and ticket agent will have enough material to do a good job of selling the service.

Q: In this time of an energy crisis, I'm concerned why employees have to wait 24 hours before they can book their tickets. Is this a standard procedure?

A: Amtrak employees and their eligible dependents traveling on passes can make reserved coach reservations for each leg of a trip on certain trains and dates up to 60 days prior to departure.

However, if they want accommodations—sleeping car space, for example—these may not be booked for any leg of travel more than 24 hours in advance.

We distribute a guide—or matrix—covering a 90 day period that shows what trains can be booked 60 days in advance. These conditions of pass travel are based on studies of the load factors for each long distance train for particular days of the week and the season.

We do not contemplate relaxing our reservation policy because public demands on available space are increasing due to the energy crisis you speak of.

Q: When we get our new computer system working, is there any chance we can have CRT screens that show more than eight lines of information?

At the present time, when we serve customers with complicated reservations, a lot of time is wasted going from one page to the next to the next.

A: Our new reservations and ticketing system will be designed to support both existing and new CRT terminals.

Until we confirm specific requirements with the marketing department, no firm statement can be made but, as of right now, expanded screen size and simultaneous display of multiple pages are high on the list of features to be included.

Because of the need to provide a smooth transition from ARTS to the new system, we'll most likely implement the new system with the current network and eight lines per screen. As rapidly as possible thereafter, the entire network will be converted to new terminals with more lines—20 to 24—and many other new features.

Q: I'm an assistant stationmaster here in the Northeast Corridor and feel we work in a supervisory capacity. However, Amtrak supervisors who haven't been around nearly as long as we have, and who don't have as many responsibilities as we do, have better benefits.

For example, why are they entitled to such a high life insurance—I believe it's 2½ times their salary—while ours is only \$6,000. Also, they have better dental and health benefits.

Finally, why are ASMs in different locations paid sick time when they have less than 15 years of service?

A: Amtrak stationmasters and assistant stationmasters are represented by the Railroad Yardmasters of America. As is the case with many other labor organizations, the RYA has chosen the national group insurance plan to provide coverage for its members.

That policy, between participating labor organizations and the insurance carrier, is applicable to only agreement-covered employees.

Amtrak's non-agreement employees are covered by a policy with a different insurer and so have different benefits.

The sick leave policy is the one which was chosen by the RYA to apply on Amtrak. It's the sick leave policy that was in effect at Conrail and followed stationmasters and assistant stationmasters when they transferred to Amtrak.

Q: I'm complaining about the redcap jumpsuit, the blue one that redcaps and baggagemen must wear.

Even the short-sleeve model is too

hot . . . even if you wear nothing underneath.

Can something be done about it? Maybe they could use lighter or thinner material?

A: We have contacted the manufacturer in the past about this problem and were told that a work suit of lighter material would not be serviceable. They also said they could not be responsible for the wear and tear it would sustain.

But, good news!

An optional uniform has been approved for use in the summer months.

For baggagemen, it will consist of a gulf blue short-sleeve shirt, with red and white stripes, and navy trousers. For redcaps, it will consist of a red short-sleeve shirt, with blue and white stripes, and the navy trousers. We hope it helps.

Q: Why does a passenger-oriented company like Amtrak make it so difficult for first class passengers on the *Panama Limited* by having them walk further than coach passengers? There are four times when passengers must walk to or from the train: departing New Orleans, arriving New Orleans, departing Chicago, arriving Chicago.

In three of the four cases the sleeping car passenger must walk the furthest distance!

Why can't the sleeping car be put on the rear end of the train so its passengers could have the shortest walk most of the time?

A: Well, first of all, let me explain why the sleeping car is on the head end. We switch coaches in and out of the train at Carbondale and with the sleeper on the rear, it would take a double switch, taking more time and increasing the likelihood of electrical problems by disconnecting and reconnecting the electrical cables.

However, you are wrong in saying that sleeping car passengers walk the furthest three out of four times. It really is two out of four and regardless of whether the sleeper is on the rear or the front the situation

would not change.

Because of operating procedures, the *Panama* backs out of Union Station, Chicago—with the sleeper on the head end. It enters New Orleans Union Station locomotive first, still with the sleeper on the head end. In both these instances, the sleeping car passenger has the “short” walk.

Northbound, the sleeping car passengers do have to walk the length of the train at New Orleans to get to the sleeper. And when that train backs into Chicago’s Union Station, they again have the “long” walk.

If we had the sleeper on the rear we would only switch the procedure.

Q: There are so many cases of lost checked baggage, lost carry-on bags and unclaimed baggage. One of the problems is that there is no identification attached to the luggage.

The stick-on labels we give people don’t work too well. Material used on a lot of the bags is such that the label won’t adhere. So, after a couple of hours, it falls off.

Can’t we get some sort of an ID tag with a string or strap? I know it would be more costly, but we’d save money in the end by not having to pay out claims.

A: There’s no question that the most effective way to reduce the amount of lost baggage is to have good identification tags on all baggage.

For that reason, we’ve required that all checked bags have an ID sticker. Unfortunately, we were not aware that the stickers were falling off.

We’re going to change to a different type of ID tag that can be attached quickly to the handle of the bag by an elastic string or a plastic fastener. They have been ordered and we hope to get them into the field before May 1.

We appreciate your telling us about the problem.

Incidentally, Amtrak employees who work in the baggage area could do the passengers a great favor by suggesting they have their name, ad-

dress and phone number located inside the bag too. That way, if an external tag is lost or torn off, we’d have some idea to whom it belongs.

Q: I work in the New York CRO and we recently promoted a person to supervisor who only had five or six months employment here. There are people who have been here a lot longer and should have had a chance for the job.

A: The notice for this position was dated January 17 and expired on January 21. Eighteen applications were received for the job, one of which was rejected while the other 17 were interviewed.

Those 17, incidentally, were all from your CRO or the ticket office.

After the 17 were interviewed, three were picked as top candidates. One person declined the job, while the second was promoted to a sales representative. The third person was promoted to R&I supervisor.

The chosen candidate had all of the qualifications for the job, had a bachelor’s degree in marketing and had supervisory experience with his previous employer.

There are a lot of factors that are considered when people are moved up the ladder.

Q: I’m the communications maintainer on the section of track that is being used by the AEM-7 test train. A lot of the people don’t wear hardhats or safety glasses. Why can’t they comply with the rules?

A: When we first began testing the locomotive on the Baltimore division none of the employees got off the locomotive for any purpose.

Tests were later moved to the New York division and many people would get off at stops without hardhats and safety glasses. These included manufacturers’ representatives, FRA people, Amtrak employees and others.

When this was brought to our attention, we immediately provided both hard hats and glasses. Their use is mandatory and all concerned,

I hope, are aware of this.

Q: I work in Newark and it’s all right to have those Amtrak commercials in Spanish because we do have a lot of Spanish-speaking people in the area. But, what about employees who have to help these people on trains? Why don’t we have some employees who can speak Spanish around here?

A: We do. In the New York and Newark stations we have two supervisors, three ushers, four clerks, one clerk-steno, one cashier and two baggagemen who speak the language. language.

Q: I’d like to make a suggestion that we start having small one-serving pizzas on our cafe cars, especially on the *Colonial*. We’ve had a lot of requests for them.

A: Thanks for the idea. We’re looking into this and hope to do that when we initiate our new snack menus in May. They’ll probably include such other items as Mexican chili dogs and burritos. Happy eating!

Big Band Sounds

Right in step with the current swing to the sounds of the big bands, Amtrak employees in the Northeast Corridor have formed the “Amtrak Big Band.”

Practice sessions are held at 30th Street Station, Philadelphia, but membership is available to any musician who is interested and can attend the rehearsals. More are needed and the band is actively recruiting new members.

Plans for the future include visits to select Amtrak locations. The group will specialize in all of the old favorites from the nostalgic era of the big bands as well as new tunes which fit the mood.

Information on joining can be obtained by calling Helena Pempkowski, FTS 597-4937; M.S. Clark, 597-8094; or Bill Thum, 597-4908.

New Tour Books Available, Highlight 1980 Travel Program

Amtrak is offering 141 tours in this year's program, an increase of 14 per cent over 1979.

The tours are described in a series of four booklets recently released by the marketing department. Listed in the colorful brochures, which are highlighted with imaginative graphics and excellent color photography, are:

- Amtrak West—45 tours ranging from a \$7.50 day-long "Train Lode of Fun" at Reno to a \$756.50 eight-day package vacation in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. The latter includes round-trip first-class fare from Chicago.

- Amtrak East—42 tours from a \$29.50 "Weekend Escapade" in New York City to a \$699 "Le Honeymoon Francais (for two, naturally) at Mont Ste. Anne in Quebec.

- Amtrak South—19 tours from a \$30 "Florida Sunland" three-day, two-night stay in the Orlando area to a \$495 (plus mileage) week-long Florida "Roamin' Holiday" using a

deluxe motorhome that sleeps six.

- Amtrak Group and Escorted—From a \$15.50 day-long group tour

Rail-Canoe?

Although Amtrak has offered, over the years of its existence, a variety of rail-drive, rail-bus, rail-air and rail-sail package tours, it now has a rail-canoe trip available.

The "paddle-your-own-canoe" holiday begins at the Duluth, Minnesota, station after arrival of the *North Star*. The \$179 per person price includes transportation to Ely, Minnesota, overnight lodging there, canoe, tent, sleeping bags, cooking and eating utensils, food supplies and other essentials for the six-day trip into the Boundary Waters Canoe area. Rail fare is extra.

of "Historic Lincoln Land" in Springfield, Illinois, to a \$2,753 22-

day escorted "Majestic Americana" first-class rail trip from New York.

The brochures, which range from 40 to 54 pages, are 8-by-9-inches in size and are folded so they can be easily placed in standard counter racks.

The tour catalogs are available from Amtrak agents and can also be received by writing the Amtrak Travel Center, P.O. Box 311, Addison, Illinois 60101. Readers are asked to specify which specific brochure is wanted.

New in the catalogs this year are comprehensive package tours to Las Vegas, in the West, and Atlantic City, in the East.

Ticketron Tickets

Tickets for unreserved trains between Washington, New York and Boston are now being sold, as of Monday, March 17, at 175 Ticketron outlets in the Northeast, during a one-year pilot project.

Bob Hagopian, assistant director, reservations/ticketing systems, says that Ticketron's many outlets in such major retail stores as Sears, Macy's, A&S, Bambergers and Gimbles would make ticket buying easier for Amtrak customers.

A 75 cent service fee will be charged by Ticketron for each ticket sold. Customers can use store charge cards or other credit cards accepted by the store to buy their tickets.

The Ticketron outlets will sell Amtrak tickets good only for unreserved trains. Tickets for reserved trains, such as Metroliners, must still be purchased directly from Amtrak or from Amtrak-authorized travel agents.

Customers using Ticketron's facilities will be able to buy only full-fare one-way or round-trip transportation or 30-day off-peak excursion-fare tickets.



A father-son team helps serve Amtrak customers on trains in the Northeast Corridor. Tom Walsh, Sr., right, began railroading in 1947 when he began working in the New Haven railroad's restaurant in Providence. Walsh, Jr., started in 1967 as a sandwich butcher for the NH just before it merged into the Penn Central.

The younger Walsh joined Amtrak in 1972, while his father did so in 1974.

Although they do prefer working the same train, at present they have different runs. Another son, Raymond, works in the Turbo facility in Rensselaer.

St. Louis Division, Beech Grove Shops Win Safety Contest For 1979

St. Louis and Beech Grove were declared 1979's top winners in the division and shop categories, respectively, of the president's safety contest.

St. Louis reached the top position of the nine divisions with a 3.0 safety ratio for the year. Trailing closely behind were Southern with 3.9, Western with 5.0 and Philadelphia with 5.8.

Beech Grove topped the four shops with 10.3, followed closely by New Haven with 11.3.

In the mechanical facilities category, Minneapolis and Kansas City went through the entire year without any injuries, earning the coveted zero ratio. Kansas City had accomplished the same feat in 1978.

Beech Grove, Amtrak's largest shop, has now won in its category for three of the last four years. As such, it will retain permanent possession of its category's trophy. Albany-Rensselaer won the shop award the other year.

Formal presentation ceremonies will be scheduled for both St. Louis and Beech Grove in the near future.

The 1979 safety figure for the entire company was 10.4. Bob Herman, vice president, operations, happily notes, "This is the best rating we've had since Amtrak acquired the Northeast Corridor. Our people are really trying to work safely and I'm very proud of them all."

January

In the first statistics for 1980, Southern division began the new year on the right foot by taking the lead in the division category with a 2.7 ratio for the month of January.

The figures, released by Joe Bonelli, director, safety and rules, showed St. Louis and Empire divisions closely behind with ratios of 3.9 and 4.7, respectively.

Wilmington led the four shops for January with an 11.0 ratio, while eight mechanical facilities—Minneapolis,

Detroit, Kansas City, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, New Orleans, Niagara Falls and Jacksonville—went through the entire month without an injury, resulting in a zero ratio.

February

For February, St. Louis led the other nine divisions with a 1.0 ratio, with the Southern taking second place with a 3.0 figure.

In the shop category, Wilmington continued what it had started in January by leading the other three shops

with a 4.0 ratio. Trailing closely behind were Albany-Rensselaer with 4.7 and New Haven with 5.3.

Eight mechanical facilities—Minneapolis, Kansas City, St. Louis, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, New Orleans, Niagara Falls and Jacksonville—tied for the zero ratio by going through the month without an injury.

The safety ratio is a figure that denotes the number of injuries or job-related illnesses, requiring more than mere first-aid, per 200,000 man-hours.

Recycling Program A Real W-O-W

Employees at corporate headquarters are helping to preserve the environment by participating in the WOW paper recycling program.

WOW stands for We-Cycle Office Wastepaper and the program is designed to channel white and computer paper to the paper mills for recycling.

It is estimated that, nationwide, some 3½ million tons of paper is wasted each year.

The WOW program, sponsored by the Weyerhaeuser Company, was inaugurated at Amtrak but will probably be expanded to other companies in the headquarters building.

Each employee has been issued a "wowget," a black U-shaped plastic holder. As one runs through paper during the day, he or she places recyclable paper into the wowget. At the end of the day, the papers are carried to a large WOW box. The paper is picked up by Weyerhaeuser which pays Amtrak on a per-pound basis.

The program hasn't been in effect long enough to determine how much income is generated, but Ruth Lederer, manager, office services, and the person masterminding the program, reports that fees for extra trash pickup have dwindled down from approximately \$180 a week to about \$80.

What is recycleable? Good white

ledger paper including typing paper, stationery, letterheads, tissue copies, bond and computer printouts, white tablet sheets and other white paper.

Not acceptable are colored or carbon paper, photographic or blueprint material, window envelopes, gum labels, magazines or cardboard.

By participating in the WOW program, Amtrak employees help to use a natural resource a second time around. Such secondary use, through recycling, extends the availability of valuable forest resources.

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Linda Duffany, John McLurkin Named Best On-Board Services Employees

Top winners in the on-board services "Employee of the Year" contest for 1979 were Linda Duffany, Boston, in Category I, and John McLurkin, Washington, in Category II. Duffany also won in her category last year.

Category I includes employees who have direct contact with the public such as waiters and sleeping car, chair car and lounge car attendants. Category II consists of on-board personnel who do not deal with the public directly, such as chiefs and pantry people.

"Votes" for Category I candidates consist of unsolicited letters received by the consumer affairs department lauding their service. These can come from either regular passengers or Amtrak employees who are not members of the on-board services department.

Category II employees are selected on the basis of commendatory reports filed by their supervisors.

As winners, Duffany and McLurkin will each receive a six-day-five-night vacation for two at a choice of locations. In addition, both will be brought to Washington for a luncheon hosted by the passen-

ger services department and attended by Amtrak President Alan Boyd.

First runners-up in Category I include Steven Carter, Boston, and Lewis Greenway, Seattle. Second runners-up include Anegee Beasley and Clarence Ghosar, both from Los Angeles.

First runner-up in Category II is Johnny Smith, Jacksonville, while Aubrey Agee, New York, was chosen as second runner-up.

First runners-up will each receive a three-day-two-night vacation for two, while the second runners-up will each be awarded a wrist or pocket watch of their choice.

Special Employee Cruise Offer

Holland America Cruises is offering Amtrak employees special rates aboard its ship, the *ss Veendam*.

Available cruises include seven and 14 day trips from Miami and seven day cruises from Aruba.

The special rates begin at \$405 for the seven day sea journeys and \$672.50 for the 14 day trips.

Islands visited include St. Croix, Martinique, Barbados, Aruba, Guadeloupe, St. Maarten and St. Thomas.

Departures from Miami are on April 13 and 27 and from Aruba on April 6 and 20 and May 4.

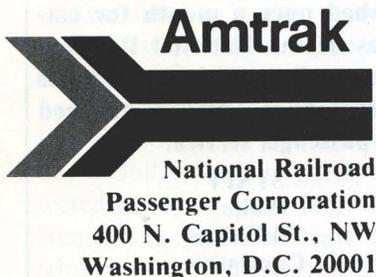
Also, available for those with more exotic wishes is a 14-day cruise on

the *ms Prinsendam* departing Singapore on April 14. The ship will visit Penang, Sumatra, Nias, Java and Bali. Special rates start at \$902.50.

Fares quoted are minimum cruise rates and include a 50 per cent reduction for Amtrak employees. Air fare to or from departure points, transfers, port taxes and hotels are not included.

Interested employees should call Holland America direct at 212-760-3880 or, toll free, at 800-221-6842.

Bookings will be confirmed on receipt of a written request on Amtrak stationery. Space is subject to availability.



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