

update

A Newsletter for Amtrak Employees



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amtrak revolutionizes ticketing, reservations



Railroad passenger ticketing the modern way. Here at Amtrak's computerized reservation and ticketing center at Bensalem, Pa., ticketing and reservations have taken on space-age speed for rail passengers in the Northeast.

A new breed of reservation agent—modern, efficient, courteous and equipped with the most advanced computer tools—has gone to work for the nation's rail passengers to make buying a train ticket as simple and quick as dialing a telephone.

Working in carpeted, air-conditioned buildings with soft music piped in, these new agents are bringing expeditious order to an archaic railroad information and ticketing system which was, perhaps, Amtrak's most serious problem in modernizing the nation's rail passenger system. These agents are the vital part of Amtrak's ARTS program—ARTS meaning Amtrak Reservation and Ticketing System. With their computer readout consoles and their speed-of-light communications system, ARTS agents can tell a traveler what space is available on any Amtrak train and have his bedroom or roomette or reserved seat booked in his name almost in the time it would take him to dial the weather forecast.

Today, ARTS covers the Northeast from Canada to Virginia, with the ARTS Center located at Bensalem, Pa. The Southeast and West Coast Centers will go into operation in November of this year and the Middle West Center follows in February of next year. Five centers—Bensalem, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York City and Jacksonville—will make up the nation-wide reservation system.

ARTS is a unique system designed by Amtrak solely to serve the railroad passenger. While other transportation companies have developed modern reservation techniques, no system existed that could serve Amtrak's more complicated requirements. Amtrak's multiplicity of stops, fares, and accommodations required a totally new system if Amtrak passengers were to be served efficiently and quickly.

"And in ARTS, Amtrak has just such a system," says Robert J. Dooley, Director of Data Processing. "With ARTS, one call does it all for our passengers."

(Continued on Page 2)

Bensalem—which Amtrak calls the Northeast Centralized Reservations Center—went into operation on April 15, right on schedule. Almost immediately, salubrious effects were noted. The first day of operations the agents at the new center handled 3,000 telephone calls and lost not a single caller. Each phone call was answered within an average of six seconds—a far cry from the old days when a determined caller might have to hang on to a ringing phone for five minutes or more before someone picked it up.

With its 275 employees, Bensalem today is handling 14,000 calls a day. The Center's percentage of calls handled never falls below 95 per cent and frequently hovers at the 99 to 100 per cent mark.

ARTS is the result of work on the part of hundreds of people, but the four key Amtrak employees who designed the system are Mr. Dooley; Robert Bell, Manager-Computer Technology; Thomas W. Kennedy, Manager of the Bensalem Center, and Donald E. Ulrich, Project Manager for the Northeast Region. And considering the outmoded systems they had to work with, they did it in remarkably short time. "What we replaced," Mr. Dooley said, "were 13 individual antiquated systems which had been designed back in the 1930s. The only modern system we could build on was the Ticketron system which the Department of Transportation put in for the Metroliners. I don't think it is unreasonable to say that we had to start from scratch."

The "heart" of ARTS is two giant computers located in the basement of Amtrak headquarters. When a passenger makes a toll-free telephone call to inquire about reservations, his call is answered by one of the agents at one of the five centers. While the caller waits, the agent types the request into a visual display which looks considerably like a television screen. This information is transmitted via high-speed telephone lines to the computers. With almost unbelievable speed, the computers scan their millions of memory cells, find the right one, and send the information back to the agent where it appears on the agent's screen—all in the time it takes the caller to draw a few breaths. The computer can make the reservation if that is what the passenger wishes, or if he requires information only, the computer feeds back information on all trains for a particular destination on a particular date including the necessary fare information. If a reservation is made, the computer can automatically send an advisory report to the station where the ticket will be picked up.

The Bensalem Center is equipped with a sophisticated monitoring system. A flashing digital box reads out exactly what is going on at the center at all times. It shows how many agents are on duty, how many incoming calls are waiting, how long the oldest call has been waiting, how many agents are in conversation with customers, how many customers are on hold while the agents seek additional information from another source by phone, and how many agents are making callbacks or working on follow up duties.

Similar equipment is to be placed at all five reservation bureaus with a centralized monitor at Amtrak headquarters in Washington, D.C. This will enable calls

to be switched from a heavy workload area to another center which is less busy.

ARTS represents an initial \$7-million investment for Amtrak and is revolutionizing reservations procedures. But it isn't the hardware making up the system that Mr. Dooley finds most impressive.

"Certainly it is good equipment," Mr. Dooley said. "It's the best that the state of the art can provide. But it doesn't operate itself. It's the people that make it work that Mr. Lewis (Roger Lewis, President of Amtrak) and I are proud of. They are bright, dedicated, properly trained and equipped with the best tools we could buy for them. They know the importance of talking courteously, pleasantly and knowledgeably about our services."

And Mr. Dooley sums it all up: "If you don't have people like this working for you, the most sophisticated equipment in the world isn't going to help you."



With her computerized information system, reservations agent Lydia Hunter can quickly tell a passenger what space is available on any train in the Amtrak system and complete the passenger's ticketing.

HAVE YOU MOVED?????

Please let us know so that you can continue to receive UPDATE.

Name _____

Old Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

New Address _____

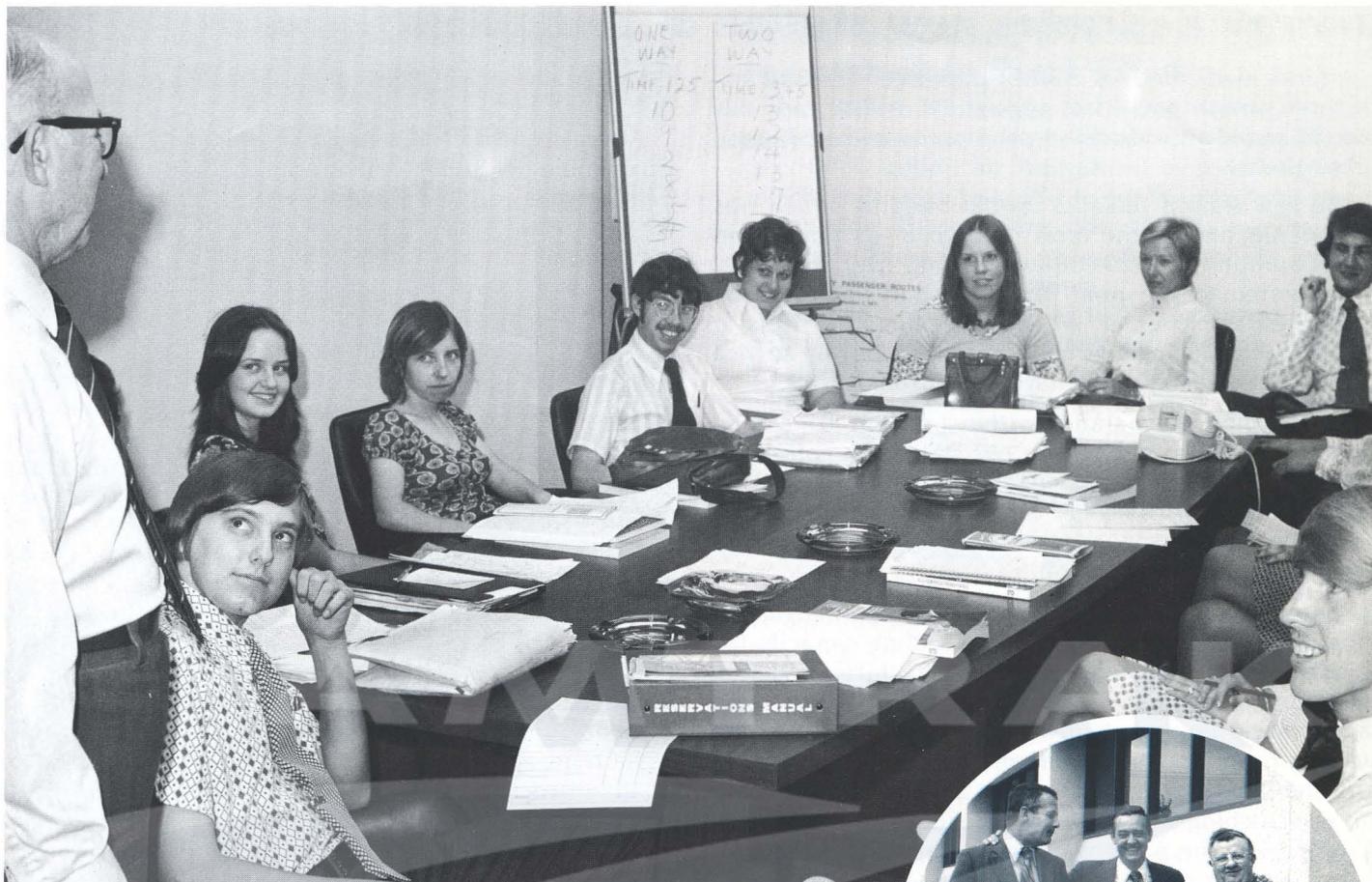
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Amtrak Employee? _____

Railroad Employee? _____

Railroad? _____

Mail to: Amtrak Public Relations
955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 200024



Amtrak passengers in the Northeast now are making reservations through Amtrak's computerized reservations and ticketing center at Bensalem, Pa. Shown above is a group of reservation agent trainees receiving indoctrination in the center's computerized communications system. At right are three Amtrak employees who played major roles in the design of the system. Shown left to right are: Robert Bell, Manager—Computer Technology; Robert J. Dooley, Director of Data Processing, and Thomas W. Kennedy, Manager of the Bensalem Center. At bottom, Amtrak reservation agents book passengers on Amtrak trains. Their light-weight headsets are the latest word in telephones.



amtrak dedicates new station at springfield, mass.

Amtrak dedicated its newest passenger railroad station renovation project at Springfield, Mass., early this month and demonstrated a solution to a too-common urban problem.

The new station replaces an old building which was considered among the most modern of its time when it was built in the 1920s but which had, over the years, deteriorated to the point that passengers were sometimes hesitant to enter. At the same time, the costs to Amtrak of replacing existing platforms and train service facilities elsewhere would have been prohibitive.

The solution was a station-within-a-station. Located in the northwest corner of the old station complex, the new facility provides passengers with a modern, well-lighted ticketing, baggage and waiting area and easy access to the passenger tracks without ever requiring them to enter the old station.

Renovated at a cost of over \$320,000, the facility measures 90 by 36 feet and has a seating capacity for 25 persons. P.Y.K. Chen was the architect. He used red-white-and-blue Amtrak colors for a main stairway leading to trackside and shades of orange and gold for the waiting room and ticket office. The floors are terrazzo and the vinyl wall covering gives a contemporary look. An eye-catching feature is an octagonal reflecting light fixture over the passenger waiting area. C. J. Driscoll

Company, Inc., of Springfield was the general contractor.

Amtrak operates 10 daily passenger trains through Springfield including the popular Washington/Montreal service initiated last fall. Amtrak considers the city an important link in the corporation's New England operation.

Amtrak employs four persons at the Springfield station including lead ticket agent, James McNulty, who is in charge of the Springfield operation.

The station is staffed 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week with tickets available for the entire Amtrak system.

Springfield area residents may use Amtrak's new computerized reservation system by calling the toll-free number (800) 523-5720.

The station is located in downtown Springfield at 66 Lyman Street and metered parking is available near the station. Bus connections can be made at the bus station located one block from the Amtrak facility.

The Springfield station is the second new station to be constructed by Amtrak. The first began serving Cincinnati last fall. Construction is now under way on a new station in Jacksonville, Florida, and a new facility is planned for Richmond, Virginia. Remodeling projects of varying degrees have been completed on scores of other stations throughout the country.



Amtrak's new passenger station at Springfield, Mass. (shown here is the interior) replaces an old, deteriorated structure which has become a community eyesore.



Peter Mazeo—Plants come first but trains are running a close second.

botanist tops 100,000 train miles

Peter Mazeo marked two major milestones in his railroad riding career in August—over 100,000 miles on trains and over 50,000 miles on the Amtrak system.

The National Arboretum botanist boarded the Broadway Limited in Washington August 9 for a 14,000 mile train trip which took him to Vancouver, British Columbia, via Amtrak and then on to Fairbanks, Alaska via the Alaskan Railways.

Mazeo took his first train trip in 1952 from Albany, N.Y. to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, and he's been riding the rails ever since.

When he finished the Alaska trip, Mazeo had covered all Amtrak route segments except Houston-Los Angeles and Ft. Worth-Laredo.

An active member of the Chesapeake Division of Railroad Enthusiasts, Mazeo says his first love is plants, but trains are running a close second.

house approves \$107.3 million for amtrak in fiscal 1974

By a 357 to 37 margin, the United States House of Representatives has approved an appropriation of \$107.3 million for Amtrak in fiscal year 1974, which ends next June 30, to continue rail passenger service. The measure also calls for increasing Amtrak's Federal loan guarantee authority from \$200 million to \$250 million.

The House bill now goes to a conference committee of the House of United States Senate, which previously authorized an appropriation of \$185 million for Amtrak. The committee will reach agreement on the differences in the two bills.

only champagne was worthy of montrealer pioneers

They were a special group of employees and their three month anniversary with Amtrak deserved a special celebration. And so a champagne reception was held recently in the Showcase Restaurant, L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, D.C. for the original crew of the Montrealer/Washingtonian, among the first on-board service employees hired by Amtrak.

Earle Adamson, System Manager-Administration and Training, toasted the forty-four crew members who received white Amtrak three-months-in-service pins. Don Ensz, Director Services, Neal D. Owen, System Manager-Passenger Services, and the crews' direct supervisor, Jim Hart, Chief on-Board Crews, Washington, D.C. were among those Amtrak officials who attended this "thank you" to the Montrealer crew.

Besides being one of the first Amtrak-hired crews, the Montrealer service employees were a very successful test case for a new concept in on-board service responsibilities. Under this new system, employees were hired as Service Attendants and trained to function in all service areas of the train on a rotational basis (sleeping car, coach, diner and pub car).

A second service category, Food Specialists, work solely on food preparation. Finally, a Service Director is assigned to each train with supervisory responsibility for all on-board services. He directs the other service employees; sees that food specifications are carried out; oversees on-board revenue accounting functions, and handles unusual passenger problems when they occur.

As one of the first groups of employees under this new system, the Montrealer crew received extensive training from Amtrak's Manpower Development Center and James Sides, a former Santa Fe employee with thirty years of experience in all phases of on-board services.

The training and enthusiasm of this young group of men and women (average age for Service Attendants is 28) seems to have paid dividends for both Amtrak and the traveling public. According to Bob Gorman, Chief-Food and Beverage Operations, "we receive more compliments on the service and crew of the Montrealer/Washingtonian than on any other train in the Amtrak system."

french train makes a splash by not splashing



Amtrak's new French turbine-powered train gives a smooth, smooth ride in comfort and in style.

When the first of Amtrak's two new French-built turbine trains traveled to Chicago from the port of Elizabeth, N.J., recently, a reporter on board placed an almost-full cup of water on the floor next to his seat.

Two days later, when the red, white and blue turbo pulled into its maintenance and testing facility, the cup was still full of water. And the newsman's simple experiment had attracted the attention of rail equipment engineers from France, England and the United States.

"It tells me as much about ride quality as \$80,000 worth of test equipment," said one expert. It also confirmed what most of the riders aboard that first operation run already had concluded: Amtrak's new French lovelies are as smooth in performance as in appearance.

tests before debut this fall

The two trains leased from ANF-Frangeco, the French builders, are now undergoing an intensive series of tests here before they are placed in scheduled operation in the Milwaukee—Chicago—St. Louis corridor this autumn. Amtrak's contract provides an option to buy these and a further eight of the five-car, 296-passenger trains.

The French-built RTGs (an abbreviation for "Rame a Turbine a Gaz") are capable of speeds up to 125 mph. but probably will be held to no more than 90 on U.S. schedules until a familiarization period is over and track improvements can be made. Even so, the trains are expected to shrink schedules and add a new sparkle to Amtrak's mid-western runs.

During the initial run here, over the route of the Broadway Limited, speeds were held to 50 mph. At each stop rail fairs gathered to admire and take pictures.

Crowds were particularly large and curious at such traditional railroad towns as Altoona, Pa., and Crestline, Ohio.

Curiosity about the new trains by rail buffs stems from the belief of many that the 1970s may be the decade of the turbine train. In railroading, first it was steam. Then diesel and electric power dominated the rails over most of the world. Now, many enthusiasts believe, the future—at least for high-speed, medium-distance rail travel—is turbine power.

Here in the U.S. two turbine trains, built by United Aircraft, have been operating between Boston and New York for four years. The Canadians, too, have been experimenting with the United Aircraft trains.

The French National Railways began turbine train research in 1965 and have been operating Europe's first scheduled service since 1970, between Paris and Cherbourg. They have clocked over 5 million passenger miles on their turbos, averaging over 99 per cent reliability. Ridership is up more than 25 per cent on runs where the turbos are in use.

The Turbos which will go into Amtrak service are a second generation. The first had a turbine engine (developed for use in a French army helicopter) in one end and a diesel in the other. The current model has two 1,140-hp. Turbomeca aircraft-type gas turbines, plus two smaller turbines which provide power for on-train needs like airconditioning and automatic doors. A third generation turbo is undergoing tests.

The French say a third generation test model has achieved 197 mph. and will do 160 mph. in commercial service. The British also are experimenting with turbine trains and have developed a prototype.

Jim Balkowitsch and Diane Mauze, Amtrak Reservation Agents in Seattle, work on a reservation system which will soon be a thing of the past—the decades-old reservation turret.

They will be trained to operate its replacement—Amtrak's Advanced Reservation and Ticketing System (ARTS)—a computerized system which will be operable nationwide in 1974.

Diane, a Seattle native, is following a family tradition of working for the railroad. Her mother works for Burlington Northern and several uncles have also been employed by railroads.



Diane Mauze

Diane has been working for Amtrak just over a year and she was one of the first reservation agents to join Amtrak. In addition to answering calls for fare and schedule information, Diane is responsible for releasing unsold space on the six daily trains that operate through Seattle.

Starting her day at the early hour of 6 a.m., Diane especially enjoys working with the public. She feels Amtrak is a great way to see the country and she finds most callers enthusiastic about Amtrak—especially the refurbished Coast Starlight/Daylight which operates between Seattle and Los Angeles.

Jim Balkowitsch, who will soon mark his first anniversary as an Amtrak employee, quotes fares, scheduling and routing information to persons calling for information on Amtrak's trains. He also doubles as a ticket agent occasionally when King Street station is really busy.



Jim Balkowitsch

Jim likes all forms of travel and believes 90% of the fun is how you get there. "Train service is here to stay," he says. "The public is not about to let passenger service die." Jim finds a great deal of curiosity in the calls he answers and he finds people are enthusiastic about Amtrak. His job is fascinating since everytime he answers a call

it is someone new asking something different.

After working in a restaurant on the Oregon/Washington border, Jim attended travel agency school. He then decided he wanted to work for Amtrak telling people what train travel has to offer. Rather than lose a customer, he sometimes suggests a potential passenger take the train one way if there isn't time to go both ways by rail.

amtrak withdraws discontinuance plans for two losing trains

Amtrak, with the concurrence of the Department of Transportation, has advised the Interstate Commerce Commission it would withdraw its notices to discontinue two of its long-distance trains — the National Limited, between New York and Kansas City, and the Floridian, between Chicago and Florida.

The Corporation said final tallies of May, June and July ridership figures showed substantial increases over forecasts made at the time of the decision to file for discontinuance of the two trains.

"While the losses continue to be substantial on both routes, especially the National Limited, the Corporation felt that withdrawal of the applications was prudent pending further analysis of ridership trends and investigation of alternate service patterns," an Amtrak spokesman said.

In the case of the National Limited, Amtrak would identify the more promising segments of the route for the purpose of initiating alternative experimental service.

Amtrak noted that traffic throughout the system was up substantially in the same three month period on a number of its long-haul routes. One reason attributed to the upsurge was the widespread concern over the energy crisis which began to have an impact in May.

The Floridian serves such cities as Chicago, Louisville, Nashville, Birmingham, Montgomery, St. Petersburg and Miami. The National Limited serves New York City, Washington, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City and 22 other cities.

Amtrak had also filed a petition with the Interstate Commerce Commission to discontinue service on the route between Newport News, Virginia, and Richmond, Virginia. It decided not to withdraw this petition.

amtrak appoints foreign agents

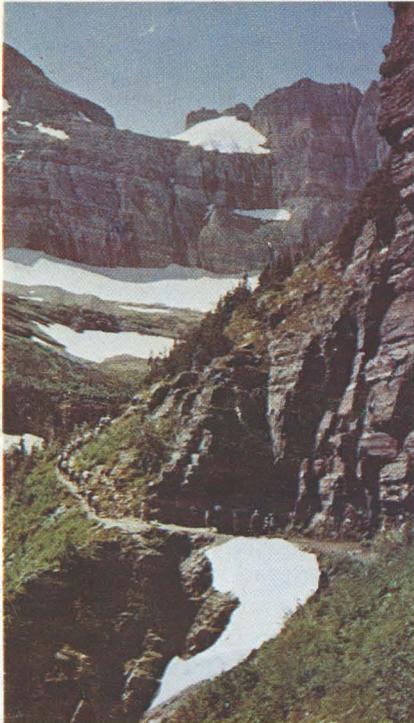
Appointment of Thos. Cook & Son Ltd. as general sales agents for the United Kingdom and of the Japan Travel Bureau for Japan was announced today by Amtrak.

The agreement with Japan's largest travel sales organization was signed by Kanji Hirota, general manager of JTB's overseas travel department, in Tokyo and by Harold L. Graham, Amtrak's vice president—marketing, in Washington.

The contract with Thos. Cook & Son was signed in London by Mr. Graham and John Shepherd, chief general manager of Cook's.

Under terms of the agreements both agencies will maintain Amtrak ticket stock and will be able to make reservations through their own sales offices and for other travel agents in both countries. Both plan extensive promotional and advertising campaigns of Amtrak's services and will develop special tours combining inexpensive air charters to the U.S.A. with travel on Amtrak's nation-wide system.

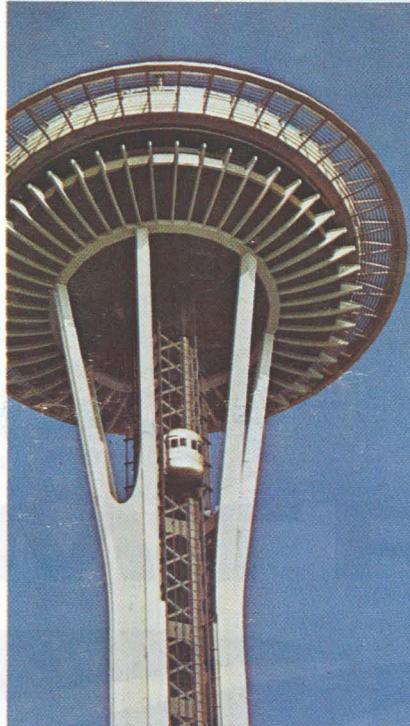
EMPIRE BUILDER



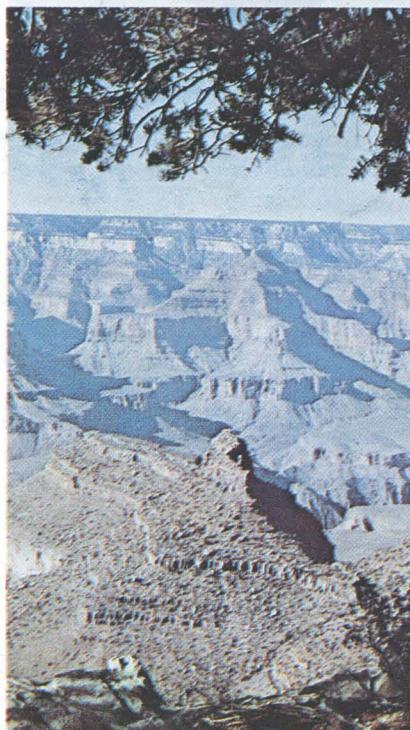
What is the mail advantage of traveling by train? Many people would agree with the Harris Poll finding that it is the view from the train, the unique opportunity a train trip offers to see the countryside. And now Amtrak's Advertising Department has come up with a colorful way for passengers to make the most of this advantage — a pocket size guide to the geography, history and tourist attractions along a train's route.

"Route brochures" have been written and distributed on seven Amtrak trains: the Broadway Limited; Merchants Limited; Panama Limited; San Francisco Zephyr; Super Chief; North Coast Hiawatha, and Empire Builder. Similar brochures will be avail-

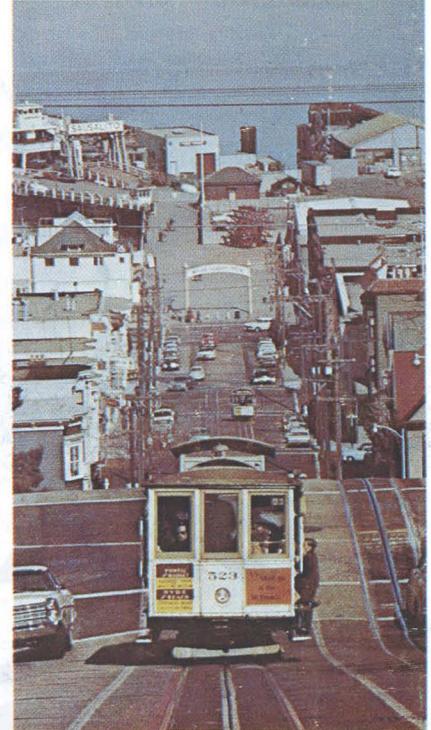
NORTH COAST HIAWATHA



SUPER CHIEF



SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR



able soon for the Montrealer/Washingtonian, Sunset Limited, Coast Starlight, and Amtrak's Florida Fleet.

Besides a commentary on each Amtrak stop along the route and information on intermediate points of interest, individual route brochures offer four-color photographs of important landmarks and views of the train's interior. Their most practical and advantageous feature is a fold-out map produced by Rand McNally which traces the train's route, major and minor highways, and motorcoach connections and indicates National Parks and Monuments.

With the help of route brochures, passengers won't miss the countless bits of scenic folklore visible from our Amtrak trains.