



NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2009

Welcome to our August Newsletter. We hope everyone is having a good summer. For Passenger Rail advocates it has been a case of some good news and some bad news.

The good news includes the \$8 Billion Dollars in Federal money for Passenger Rail and \$47 million in Wisconsin for new Trains on the Hiawatha Milwaukee Chicago Service.

The bad news includes an attempt by some in the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to further delay any action on the Milwaukee - Green Bay Passenger Rail Service. This is something you can do something about so we are devoting the first part the Newsletter to this.

Frank Ingram 920 445 3758 gbpassrail@new.rr.com

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WisDOT Backtrack. What it means and what you can do.

The Wisconsin DOT has published its final draft of the Connections 2030 plan <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/2030-background.htm>

At first reading this appears to be positive for rail. Chapter 4 acknowledges the large number of pro rail comments. In particular it acknowledges our call for early and incremental implementation of Green Bay – Milwaukee Service. However, when one examines Chapter 8 (which deals with rail) in detail it actually represents a downgrading of WisDOT Plans.

The early draft called for implementation of Green Bay Milwaukee Service between 2014 and 2019. The revised plan extends that period to 2014 to 2030. This permits a further eleven year delay in implementing Green Bay – Milwaukee. The first draft of the WisDOT plan has disappeared from their website but I have a PDF copy of the relevant chapter if people want to see it.

This is something that NEWRails supporters need to speak up on. You can send an email to connections2030@dot.state.wi.us . A draft is below. Copy and paste it and send it from your own email. If you decide to re write it your own words so much the better. But whatever you do send the email, and send it before August 31.

I welcome your acknowledgement in the final draft of Connections 2030 that there is support for the early implementation of passenger rail service between Green Bay and Milwaukee. It is therefore with great concern that I note that the response of WisDOT in its revised plan is to extend the projected completion date for the Green Bay and Milwaukee project from 2019 to 2030. Such a delay is not only a rejection of the public views which WisDOT sort but is a threat to the economic and social development of the Fox Valley. Such an extended timescale should be rejected.

There are five public consultation hearings, each from 4 to 7 p.m.

Milwaukee

Tuesday, August 11, 2009
Milwaukee County Downtown Transit Center
Harbor Lights Room - 2nd floor
909 E. Michigan Ave., Milwaukee, WI

Madison

Wednesday, August 12, 2009
Alliant Energy Center
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, Madison, WI

Appleton

Thursday, August 13, 2009
Appleton West High School
610 North Badger Rd. Appleton, WI

Stevens Point

Wednesday, August 19, 2009
UWSP Dreyfus University Center
1015 Reserve Street, Stevens Point, WI

Eau Claire

Thursday, August 20, 2009
Sacred Heart Conference Center
900 W. Clairmont, Eau Claire, WI

If you can attend in person to make your point this would be very helpful. But please send that email.

New Trains for the Hiawatha Line.

The State of Wisconsin is spending \$47 million to purchase the two 14-car trainsets from the Spanish company Talgo and retain an option to buy two additional trainsets if Wisconsin obtains American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for the Milwaukee Madison Service. The USA has no domestic passenger train manufacturing companies but these trains will be assembled in Wisconsin and could form the basis of a new US manufacturing facility. The Hiawatha Service desperately needs new rolling stock and capacity

<http://www.progressiverailroading.com/news/article.asp?id=21017>

The replacement of the existing Hiawatha units offers the opportunity to refurbish these trains and use them on the Green Bay Service. This is a common practice internationally and trains are often refurbished two or three times in a forty year life. It is efficient and a refurbished train would be a good way of establishing a service economically.

Wisconsin Association of Rail Passengers to meet in Green Bay.

The Wisconsin Association of Rail Passengers is the local chapter of the National Association of Rail Passengers. <http://www.narprail.org/cms/index.php> . They will

hold their annual meeting in Green Bay on 24 October. NEWRails supports are invited. More details next month.

NEWRails meetings with local leaders. NEWRails has been meeting one on one with legislators, City and County Board members and the Mayor of Green Bay to brief them on what we think can be done. We have been well received and hope to publish some public endorsements soon. We expect to meet with the Oshkosh City Council on 25 August (5pm.) If you live in Oshkosh and can attend the meeting please let me know at gbpassrail@new.rr.com . We work best with a personal introduction to representatives. If you can introduce us to someone you know please email gbpassrail@new.rr.com .

Green Bay Press Gazette endorses Rail (sort of).

The Green Bay Press Gazette endorsed High Speed Rail on August 3. The Editorial: "High-speed rail deal is good first step" does not expect anything to happen soon but NEWRails will be meeting with the editorial group soon and we will be explaining how things can be done much sooner. See the editorial at <http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/200908030407/GPG0602/908030511> . Whatever its low expectations of quick action this is a very useful show of support.

NEWRails at Milwaukee Train Fest. Help Needed.

NEWRails will have a stall at Trainfest <http://www.trainfest.com/> . This is Milwaukee's premier model railroad show. Nov. 14 & 15, 2009 • 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at [Wisconsin Exposition Center at State Fair Park • Milwaukee \(West Allis\)](#)

We had a great reception at the Tiletown show and should have a good time in Milwaukee. If you can help please email gbpassrail@new.rr.com . Many thanks to the organizers for giving us a free

Keep up to date with Transportation News.

NEWRails has limited resources and we do not want to duplicate the work of others. You can get excellent Regional and National News by signing up for the newsletter of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association. <http://www.midwesthsr.org/action/newslist.html> . You do not need to be a member to get it. Other good sources include the "Amtrak" and "Passenger_Rail_News" Yahoo Groups. You need to register with Yahoo Groups <http://groups.yahoo.com/> to receive these. Information on the Kenosha Racine Milwaukee Commuter Rail is available at www.transitnow.org .

Join NEWRails activities.

If you would like to be more involved in NEWRails activities please email me gbpassrail@new.rr.com . Help with our website development would be particularly helpful.

Spread the Word

Forward this Newsletter to a friend and get them to sign up at our website <http://www.newrails.org/join.php>