



Arizona Rail Passenger Review

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Passenger Rail Tests With Historic Motor Car Being Conducted on Arizona Eastern Railway in Globe Area

In a collaborative effort between Arizona Eastern Railway, The Historic Globe Main Street Program and The Apache Gold Casino Resort, demonstration excursion rail service between the historic Globe passenger station and the Apache Gold Casino Resort is operating through April 2006. A self-propelled 1930 Brill motor car is used. Several round trips daily are operated on Thursday through Saturday. Fares for the trips, which take approximately 30 minutes each way, are \$10-per-round-trip. The Historic Globe Main Street Program has led a volunteer effort since late August 2005 to renovate the historic 1916 freight office building at the downtown depot complex for this purpose. Main Street volunteers put in over 500 hours of labor prior to the start of operations. Apache Gold Casino Resort has constructed a depot platform for passengers.

Congressman Rick Renzi commented: "Downtown Globe is a vital part of the economy and this money will revitalize this area. A renewed downtown will attract new businesses which will expand the town's revenue and tax base. I am especially pleased to see the possibility of a Globe train station as part of a regional rail system between Miami, San Carlos and Globe." A Web site, www.copperspike.com, has been established for the operation. The Apache Gold Casino operates a number of buses to and from the Phoenix and Tucson areas for Casino patrons, and some bus trips may be modified to include a ride on the railroad. Several ARPA members who had planned to ride on April 1, cancelled for personal reasons; subsequently, the Spike vehicle suffered a breakdown and the day's trips were cancelled, anyway. Call 928-425-0235 for current information regarding the remainder of the experimental service, or go online to www.copperspike.com.

First Tracks of 20-mile Phoenix METRO System Placed

The first 200 feet of in-street tracks of the 20-mile METRO light rail have been installed near the Phoenix/Tempe border at Washington and 56th Street.

This initial track will be part of a mile-long test track that will be used ultimately by the METRO system. The test track will run along Washington Street between 44th and 56th streets when completed in early 2007. Trains are expected to begin testing in spring that same year.

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The restored M-55 Brill Motor Car, or "Spike", was manufactured in 1930. Test runs of "Spike" between historic downtown Globe and the Apache Gold Casino Resort began on November 10th.

—Rob Bohannon photo

Arizona Commuter/Regional Rail Symposium in Tempe April 28

The Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) is a non-profit statewide organization dedicated to improving public transportation in all Arizona communities. AzTA's membership includes local governments, chambers of commerce, major employers, transit program operators, transit suppliers and contractors, small businesses, non-profit community agencies and transportation consultants. ARPA is a member of AzTA.

Each year, the AzTA holds an annual three-day conference that includes funding and operations workshops for transit system operators, and transit related sessions designed to inform members about the latest technological, planning, and policy developments regarding the industry.

This year, the AzTA is adding a day-long Regional/Commuter Rail Symposium in response to the growing interest in rail service within the State. ARPA is helping to sponsor the event, and ARPA President Rob Bohannon will be a presenter at one of the workshops. The conference will take place at the Tempe Mission Palms Hotel beginning Tuesday evening, April 25, with AzTA sessions on the 26th and 27th and the Rail Symposium on Friday, April 28th.

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The first stretch of double track for the new METRO light rail system was laid on East Washington Street in Phoenix last month.
—Marc Pearsall photo

METRO

METRO board member and Phoenix Councilman Tom Simplot said placement of the first in-street rail is an exciting sign of progress of the 20-mile METRO system that will travel through the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa and help link the participating cities.

“The success of METRO depends on partnerships—partnerships between cities, residents and businesses,” said Simplot. “This line segment is the beginning of the collaboration. Working together, we will change the nature of public transit in the Valley for the better.”

Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman said the installation of the first tracks is not only advancement of the METRO system, but should serve as a significant reminder of what METRO will bring to the Valley.

“This is only the beginning of great things to come.” he said. “We have made an extraordinary investment in our future and look forward to developing thousands of new jobs and access to places where we live, work and play.”

Mesa Mayor Keno Hawker said Mesa is proud to be part of the regional system and looks forward to the tracks linking his community with the 20-mile system.

METRO Chief Executive Officer Rick Simonetta said the placement of the first tracks is a reflection of the METRO staff and the community members who continue to help make METRO a reality.

“During this exciting time we celebrate more than the placement of the initial tracks of the METRO system,” he said. “We recognize the unprecedented amount of public input gathered to create a system that will serve the public’s needs and stand the test of time for decades to come.”

The METRO light rail system is scheduled to open in December 2008.

New Mexico Rail Runner Express Begins Test Runs

ALBUQUERQUE - The New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter operation began test runs in late March to qualify engineers and conductors to meet federal requirements for passenger service, according to an Associated Press story in the Albuquerque Journal.

The tests, scheduled over the next several weeks, will run simulated passenger service between Albuquerque and Bernalillo as part of the process of commissioning train equipment for the \$393 million commuter project.

The Rail Runner Express is expected to be operating between Albuquerque and Bernalillo, to the north, by June, with trips south to Belen by midsummer. The service is expected to be extended north to Santa Fe, the state capital, by the end of 2008. Once service begins, 14 to 16 Rail Runner Express trains will operate between Albuquerque and Bernalillo Monday through Friday.

Rides will be free for the first three months and discounted — a \$2 flat fare — through the end of the year. A permanent fare structure would be in place in 2007.

State officials completed a \$50 million purchase of 51 miles of track between Belen and Bernalillo from the BNSF Railway last Friday, the first part of the planned purchase of nearly 300 miles of track stretching north to the Colorado state line.

The 48-mile Bernalillo-Lamy portion of the track is to be purchased in 2007 and the 200-mile stretch from Lamy to Colorado in 2008. The total price tag for all three segments is \$75 million. For more information visit the New Mexico Rail Runner website ~ <http://www.nmrailrunner.com/>



New Mexico’s new Rail Runner trains feature a roadrunner motif and red and yellow colors inspired by the State’s flag
—Rail Runner photo

SYMPOSIUM

Registration for the full three-day conference is \$ 275, and registration for either Wednesday, April 26th, or Thursday, April 27th, is \$125. Registration for the Friday Rail Symposium only is \$50, and includes admission to all of the Friday sessions, a continental breakfast, and a luncheon.

Rail Symposium Program

7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Symposium Registration**
7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**
8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. **Welcome and Introduction –**
Richard Simonetta, Chief Executive Officer, METRO

USA Commuter/Regional Rail Overview –
Marc Pearsall, ADOT Public Transportation Division

Symposium Expectations – Jim Dickey, Director, ADOT Public Transportation Division

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. **“Can Railroads Embrace Passenger Rail in Arizona?”**

Moderator: Jim Dickey, ADOT-PTD Director

Speakers:

Tom Mulligan, Director of Passenger Operations,
Union Pacific Railroad

Kathryn Pett, Transportation Industry Attorney, Snell & Wilmer

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. **Break**

10:15 a.m. – 12:00 Noon **“Commuter/Regional Rail Systems in the Southwest Region”**

Moderator: Marc Pearsall, ADOT-PTD

Speaker Panel:

“Fifteen Years of Success and Challenges in America’s 2nd Largest City” — Francisco Oaxaca, Media & External Communications Manager – Los Angeles’ Metrolink

“From Concept to Operation in Three Years” – Chris Blewett, Transportation and Planning Director, New Mexico Rail Runner

“Purchasing Freight Railroad Right Of Way for Passenger Rail” – Steve Meyer, Commuter Rail Engineering & Construction Manager, UTA Utah Commuter Rail

“Planning Commuter Rail in Large Metropolitan Areas” – Henry Stopplecamp, Engineering Services Manager, RTD Denver Commuter Rail

“A Decade of Ridership Growth and Shared Access with Freight Rail” — Pete Sklannick, COO, Dallas-Ft. Worth’s Trinity Railway Express

12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch**

Keynote Address – Bill Millar, American Public Transit Association (APTA) President

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

“Government and Community Challenges in Implementing Commuter/Regional Rail in Arizona”

Moderator: Dennis Smith, Director, MAG

Senator Thayer Verschoor – Chairman, Arizona Senate Transportation Committee

Representative Andy Biggs – Chairman, Arizona House Transportation Committee (invited)

Representative Tom Prezelski – Arizona State Legislature
Metro Phoenix Area Mayors: TBD

2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. **Arizona Passenger Rail Vision –**

Moderator: Rick Simonetta, CEO, METRO

Speaker: Rob Bohannon, President, Arizona Rail Passenger Association / Southwest Rail Corridor Coalition

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

“Next Steps/Expectations for the Future”

Moderator: Rick Simonetta, AzTA President

REGISTER NOW ONLINE at: <http://www.azta.org/contact/event-registration/> **or BY CONTACTING AzTA at:** e-mail: aztadir@cox.net **or phone: (480) 361-5101.**

President’s Message

After decades of being “alone in the wilderness” in advocating passenger rail in Arizona, ARPA now has company! We welcome the AzTA, the Friends of Transit, State and local officials, and the many others “on board!” This “sea change” in local public opinion simply expands ARPA’s mission. First of all, there will always be naysayers who oppose rail, and we will need to confront them as before. Even more importantly, we must help guide the discussions as rail options are considered, ensuring that the expectations of those who have newly discovered the rail option are realistic, and that none of the unique opportunities presented by the many types of passenger rail are overlooked. Let’s “do rail” right.

There is even encouraging news on the Amtrak front—a bi-partisan “Amtrak Working Group” in Congress is belatedly getting down to the nitty gritty of just what needs to be fixed and how to go about it. The next ARPA newsletter will be an “Amtrak Issue” examining the many issues regarding America’s struggling passenger rail system.

Meanwhile, ARPA’s 501(c)3 application is progressing.

Our new found importance makes it imperative that we publish comprehensive newsletters on a regular schedule, and persons to assist with editing the newsletter are sought. Please call me at (602) 996-7790 or e-mail robbohannon@earthlink.net if willing and able to help!

—Rob Bohannon



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Yes! I would like to join ARPA.

Mail to: ARPA • P. O. Box 10534 • Scottsdale, AZ 85271

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Membership type: \$100 Gold Spike (sustaining) \$35 Family \$20 Individual Corporate \$1,000

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