

October 12, 2002



New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers

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NJ-ARP Annual Report

2001-2002

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Message from the President

At last year's Annual Meeting, I indicated that I had three major goals for 2002. First, I wanted to get our organization to reach 400 members. Second, I wanted us to be even more aggressive in our advocacy in the midst of a weak economy. Finally, I wanted to continue outreach to inner cities. In a trying year, we met two of our goals and did not reach the third.

At the end of last year, Joe Versaggi took over responsibility for our membership. At this time last year, I reported that we were at a membership high of 385. Upon Joe's converting the membership list to new software, we discovered that there were members who had not responded to membership renewals since 1999. Joe advised that our actual membership number was closer to 325 members. We have sent several batches of renewal notices and we have had a renewal rate of 75%. We now have 304 members and a list that we are

confident is accurate.

A growing organization needs to have a renewal rate in excess of 90%. We are taking steps to identify why members have not renewed. We are working with NARP to approach New Jersey NARP members and see if they would be interested in joining NJ-ARP. We are also planning to devote more space to Amtrak and national issues in our Newsletter Report and Observations. Finally, we have developed a new brochure and will resume our canvassing of areas with these brochures in the search for new members.

Despite our decline in membership, our advocacy has been stronger than ever. Our year opened with many NJ-ARP members vigorously testifying against the NJ Transit fare increases. Because of our efforts, some of the more onerous provisions of the ill-advised fare increase were beaten back. NJ-ARP thanks the many members who banded together and fought with one voice. A job well done.

The fare increases were proposed largely due to a weak economy with not enough funding to go around. In response, NJ-ARP revamped its Funding Paper, which proposed a formula by which transit could be funded in the state. This paper was originally advanced in 1985. We believe it stands the test of time and will finally give transit a stable source of funding. We will continue to push this proposal with DOT Commissioner James Fox and the State Legislature. The Funding Proposal may be viewed on our website, www.nj-arp.org.

During 2002, thanks to Al Papp, Joe Versaggi and Ralph Braskett, we staked a position on equipment recommending that the state not go ahead with the purchase of Bi-Level cars and that the Morris & Essex line be returned to an all EMU operation. The Bi-Level purchase was too far advanced to pull back; however, EMU operation on the M&E is not out of the question. We'll be pushing hard for that during 2003.

2002 also saw the creation of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation charged with rebuilding downtown New York. Al Papp was asked to represent NJ-ARP in that organization and Al has been a lone voice for New Jersey. Al proposed, and NJ-ARP's Board approved the PATH/Lex Connection proposal, which entails the physical connection of the downtown New York PATH trains with the #6 Lexington Avenue New York City Subway line. The current plan essentially restores what was once there. We need to take advantage of this unique opportunity to give New Jersey residents access to the east side of Manhattan. We need to dream big dreams.

We were active again in 2002 in helping preserve Rights-Of-Way. Our draft proposed legislation has been shared with the DOT and we will work with Phyllis Elston to see how we can effect this in 2003. With the continual sprawl going on in this State, we must do everything in our power to preserve valuable 19th Century assets for use in the 21st Century.

Our efforts on Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) continued apace with our active participation in various festivals and fairs. For an area where "everyone is opposed to MOM", we've seen a lot of expression of support. The Central Jersey Rail Coalition has been instrumental in getting "support post cards" developed so that MOM supporters can let the Governor know that they want the trains to roll. MOM is reaching the stage where, as part of the DEIS process, there will be hearings in each affected county. Latest word is that the hearings will take place anytime from late November to mid December. We'll be there and we would encourage you to come as well. Follow the developments on our website or contact either Director Dan Kerwin or Director Bill Armstrong. Both have stepped up their

tireless efforts to continue winning over supporters one person at a time.

2002 heralded the beginning of MidTown Direct service from Montclair to New York's Penn Station. What was proposed in the late 1920's has finally become a reality and it creates a big enhancement for riders in that region. We thank Adam Otsuka for his continual updates during the late stages of this project, which he could literally see outside his bedroom window! Upon alighting from their trains, riders are now able to access NJ Transit's East Concourse at NY Penn Station. For riders, this is a vast improvement in the quality of life. The concourse is spacious, dedicated solely to NJ Transit and a far cry from the mezzanine level of NY Penn.

2002 also saw HBLRT reach Hoboken opening up many more travel opportunities for citizens of New Jersey. At last, riders from Bayonne and Jersey City can travel to Hoboken terminal for connections to trains north, south and west. HBLRT's positive redundancy continues to be proven every day with the loss of PATH downtown New York service.

SNJLRT has gotten a lot of attention lately and we thank Carol Ann Thomas for being a staunch supporter. While there are those who decry it as a waste of funds, we believe this project will spur development along the Camden to Trenton corridor, an area ignored by many. At last, many of the working poor in that region will be able to ride the rails instead of busses stuck in choking traffic. Also in south Jersey, we're glad to report that Cape May Seashore Lines continues to do well with increasing ridership. There have been issues with equipment moves that we will work behind the scenes with NJ Transit to formalize a procedure. Paul Mulligan continues to be a wonderful resource in that region and those efforts are very much appreciated by Tony Macrie.

At this Annual Meeting, we've seen the Colorado DMU railcar, which Bergen County is interested in for service in Bergen County. We applaud Bergen County for forging ahead to try to make service a reality. Our members have expressed support for the various options and we believe they would all be viable. Also in Bergen County, we continue to be disappointed that more progress hasn't been made in completing the sidings on the Pascack Valley Line. We will continue to lobby for this and thank Orrin Getz and Steve Lofthouse for their ongoing activities and support.

Sussex County remains aptly handled by Tim Apgar who has adopted the Mount Olive station. He pretty much takes care of that station on his own. The weak economy has unfortunately pushed back action on the Lackawanna Cut-Off; but we believe this project must occur.

We have continued to reach out to inner cities by actively supporting the Newark City Subway extension, Camden's revitalization as a transportation hub, and assisting the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy with the Bergen Arches. The Bergen Arches will see much work on our part next year as Parsons Brinkerhoff has released their study, which concludes that the best use for the Arches would be to create vehicular HOV lanes! I wonder what that study cost?

A lot of things happen because of dedicated members. Our Newsletter Report and Observations continually happen because of the hard work and dedication of Doug Bowen, Mary Ann Bowen, and Les Wolff. Our printer, Chatham Minuteman, has ensured high print quality and quick distribution. Bob Scheurle continues to work the website and has been instrumental in monitoring transit-related online forums. Bill Wright continues his work on NJTPA, Union County matters, TransAction and a host of other activities that tire us "young

ones" out. Finally, Jim Ciacciarelli has updated our legislative database and lobbied on our behalf in Washington and Trenton despite a serious illness earlier in the year.

I want to thank the Board, the Officers and, most importantly, the membership for making us look good this year.

Sincerely,
Leonard Resto, President
October 12, 2002

Membership Report

Effective November, 2001, to improve our efficiency, we split treasury and membership functions into two people and I assumed the latter role. The membership file was upgraded at that time to MS-Excel 2000 software. Our membership counts, renewal notices, renewal rates, and deletions are now continually updated and analyzed.

Between last November and August, nine batches of renewal notices were sent, except to those who last renewed prior to 1999. They were automatically deleted at that time as they had gotten prior renewal notices. We had fallen behind in the task nonetheless. The first batch in late November were those having last renewed in 1999, but we got only a 26% return on that batch. It took through the fifth batch in late January to get to the point of having a renewal notice sent to every member within a year of when they received their prior one. By summer, all those who did not respond to the notices sent though March were dropped as well. Because new memberships could not possibly keep pace with these two mass deletions, our membership now stands at 304. The overall renewal rate of the eight batches sent between December and August was 75%.

New membership efforts consist of word-of-mouth, brochure distribution at adopted rail stations, and at various community fairs. We are investigating the solicitation of the approximately 390 New Jersey-residing NARP members who are not NJ-ARP members.

Do remember that membership benefits are cumulative as status is upgraded. Patron members still get "Observations". Since Family memberships can be two or three interested parties in the household, Sustaining and Patron members can also be double or triple counted if the renewal invoice slip says as much in the name area. Renewal notices in the future will be within a month of when the last such notice was sent, not when it was returned. We do have a \$10 membership category for seniors and students, and can handle an annual waiver on a case-by-case basis for financial or personal hardships.

-- Joe Versaggi

Cape May Seashore Lines

CMSL had a good 2002 with passenger counts continuing to increase. More and more people are being drawn to this gem of a rail line in Cape May. During this past summer, CMSL launched luncheon and dinner excursions aboard its exclusively outfitted dining car, the Epicurus. While not as successful as had been hoped, the Epicurus provided residents

and tourists alike with a unique dining experience. The food and service were first class all the way. CMSL will evaluate providing this again next year.

Also during the summer, there were some serious operational issues with the drawbridge, all due to the intense heat of the summer. CMSL is grateful to New Jersey Transit (NJT) for their quick and effective help to minimize those problems. NJ-ARP is working with NJT and freight railroads to secure a procedure by which equipment moves can be made. CMSL had to move several UHRS cars to Cape May and encountered problems. In addition, CMSL had wanted to have one of its cars at the Atlantic City Rail Terminal this past April during the TransAction Conference. Due to disagreements over how the equipment move would take place and how much it would cost, CMSL could not get their rail car there in time. NJ-ARP will work towards an agreement acceptable to all to avoid these problems next year.

As NJ-ARP's Cape May liaison, I was thrilled to see that Upper Township in Cape May County made it very clear this Summer that it wants trains. It has completely renovated the train station in Tuckahoe and the station is just waiting for the trains to roll. Restoring service on the CMSL to Tuckahoe and points north on the Cape May Branch continue to remain elusive. NJ-ARP continues to push for such service as a vital link for the entire region.

NJ-ARP deeply appreciates your continued support for this rail line.

-- Paul Mulligan

Access to the Region's Core

In July of 2002, NJ-ARP strongly urged Governor Jim McGreevey and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to endorse Alternative "G", one of three current competing recommendations of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY&NJ) Access to the Region's Core (ARC) study. In October, 2002, New Jersey Senator Jon Corzine and DOT Commissioner Fox petitioned the federal government to release some of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) \$4.55 billion allocated to rebuilding damaged lower Manhattan transportation facilities to New Jersey for various rail projects including funds for continuing ARC planning.

Alternative "G" will provide expanded tri-state rail mobility options by constructing two additional trans-Hudson tracks and building a connecting tunnel between New York's Penn Station and the conveniently located Grand Central Terminal in the heart of midtown New York City. New York City will benefit by allowing its employers to tap the highly skilled labor pool in New Jersey and provide these potential employees direct access to the Grand Central area. About 70% of all midtown jobs are within walking distance of this terminal as compared to 36% for Penn Station. Through running of trains between Connecticut and New Jersey via Manhattan will serve to increase regional rail options, reduce vehicular congestion and mitigate environmental effects.

The destruction of the World Trade Center in lower Manhattan has added increased urgency to early approval of this program. New Jersey Transit (NJT) trains to midtown have experienced an additional 30,000 daily riders as businesses have relocated their personnel and operations to this transit accessible location.

An endorsement of Alternative "G" and the subsequent implementation of an adequate, stable and secure funding package from a variety of political constituencies and sources will enable key elements of the plan to move ahead ensuring 21st century mobility for all residents of the tri-state region. Once a funding package is in place, ARC can begin construction of its various aspects through a process of staged implementation as monies are made available.

The overwhelming success of New Jersey Transit's MidTown Direct service initiated in June 1996 (which for the first time permitted direct access for Morris & Essex line riders to New York's Penn Station) and the Montclair Connection inaugurated in September 2002 (also permitting direct Penn Station access) has proved conclusively the need for accelerating ARC's tri-state capacity and enhanced regional rail expansion recommendations. While incremental improvements for MidTown Direct service are continuing, additional track capacity is needed to supply the ever burgeoning New Jersey demand for direct rail service to Manhattan. Demand is expected to be generated by passengers from:

1. Percentage growth on the currently operating Northeast Corridor, North Jersey Coast and Morris & Essex lines;
2. Expanded Newark International Airport Northeast Corridor monorail transfers;
3. The Secaucus Transfer station, expected to be in service in fall 2003 (permitting Main-Bergen line riders access to New York's Penn Station);
4. The Raritan Valley line once direct access to New York's Penn Station is achieved either by electrification or with dual-mode diesel and electric locomotives; and,
5. The Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) proposed central New Jersey route (offering those county's residents access to New Brunswick, Newark and New York's Penn Station).

Over the short term, NJ-ARP suggests the through-running of NJT, Long Island and Metro-North regional rail trains through the New York Gateway thereby connecting Connecticut, New York and New Jersey with an integrated rail service today with existing and available equipment. By not having to turn regional rail trains in Manhattan, both these agencies would be gaining valuable platform and storage space in the currently overcrowded New York Penn Station complex and increase asset utilization of their expensive rolling stock.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

PATH / NYC Subway Connection

NJ-ARP has proposed a physical connection between the lower Manhattan PATH line with that of the New York Transit Authority's Lexington Avenue subway. The plan benefits passengers between New Jersey and both downtown and uptown New York City locations. A pro-active letter has been sent to New Jersey Transportation Commissioner Fox, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation (LMDC) Executive Director Thompson and other federal and state officials on both sides of the Hudson. NJ-ARP is deeply concerned that New Jersey's rail transportation infrastructure interests are not being adequately recognized and addressed in the ongoing plans and debate to rebuild lower Manhattan. This matter takes on increasing importance now that \$4.55 billion in federal funds has been pledged and designated for transportation purposes.

NJ-ARP notes the continuing lack of concern for our state's transportation needs due to our participation in the citizen advisory group that designed the widely attended "Listening to the City" town meeting at the Jacob Javits Center last July 20th. Attendance at subsequent "Civic Alliance" meetings that discussed the results from that unique convocation as well as several visits to Manhattan Community Board meetings has only confirmed the exclusive emphasis on improving New York rail and subway access to lower Manhattan - such as reconstructing a Long Island Railroad branch into a "super subway" from Jamaica, Queens to lower Manhattan for \$1.9 billion - along with an almost total neglect of mobility needs from points west of the Hudson.

The current Port Authority plan focuses its efforts on a vast labyrinth of underground pedestrian passageways to link the PATH and New York City subway lines. Certainly, New Jersey deserves better than a status quo rebuild of the former World Trade Center complex along with a series expensive underground walkways designed to cater to commercial retail interests.

We also acknowledged Governor McGreevey's reported comments last week that New Jersey, in fact, is -- and remains -- vitally concerned with the rebuilding of lower Manhattan, a location that has provided, and continues to provide, so many employment opportunities for our residents and which is an economic engine for the entire metropolitan region.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

Lackawanna Cut-Off

Disappointment was the order of the year when events were tallied regarding the restoration of service on the Lackawanna Cut-Off between Hoboken and Scranton. The lack of a bi-state operating agreement and a paucity of state matching funds have conspired to delay the start of the project once again. Now estimated to cost over \$200 million, only \$2 million dollars in federal funding has been secured to continue engineering work. Needed is another \$3.5 million dollars to finish the preliminary engineering - and without this, project completion will occur until 2007 or 2008.

After initial engineering is complete and agreements are in place between New Jersey and Pennsylvania regarding the proportionate share of construction costs and revenue split, both states can make application for the authorized \$200 million in federal funding. About \$40 million in matching funds are required from each state but New Jersey's \$1 billion state shortfall puts our state's funding in jeopardy.

On a related topic, the proposed passenger train service between Binghamton and Hoboken over the former Erie railroad route through Port Jervis was quietly dropped in May 2002 by the state of New York because it was deemed too expensive and too slow. Trip time was estimated at between five and six hours according to state transportation officials who claimed that a bus or a car would be quicker.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

Right-of-Way Legislation

NJ-ARP is gaining potential legislative supporters in its quest to preserve and re-develop our state's priceless transportation arteries - its abandoned, disused and underused railroad rights-of-ways.

Specifically, we're asking members of the State Senate and Assembly to introduce two pieces of related legislation which would:

First -

direct the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to prepare a comprehensive inventory of abandoned, disused or underused railroad rights-of-way suitable for preservation, restoration and/or service initiation to active passenger and freight commerce and to place the lines so selected on the state rail rights-of-way preservation map.

and Second -

require the publication and dissemination of information regarding the rights-of-way so selected in order to facilitate adequate disclosure to counties, towns, real estate developers and agencies and potential buyers and sellers of said property such that a contract for any property so affected, within a pre-defined distance from a rail line, will, upon being offered for sale or transfer, be required to have a proximity notification embedded within indicating that the price, so agreed upon, reflects the presence of a rail line.

This legislation is urgently needed to preclude further NIMBY obstructionism, and commercial real estate encroachment on these irreplaceable 19th Century assets which are the state's 21st Century arterial transportation lifelines.

-- Albert L. Papp, Jr.

Hudson-Bergen Light Rail

On September 29, NJ-ARP and other rail advocates celebrated the completion of Initial Operating Segment 1 (IOS-1), as Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit began operations to and from Hoboken Terminal, a major intermodal hub. For NJ-ARP, the event marked the end of an effort lasting 20 years -- the establishment of light rail service connecting to New Jersey Transit's passenger rail system.

IOS-1 became fully operational roughly 29 months after HBLRT opened for business April 15, 2000 (35 months after the "original" opening target date of October, 1999). But the phase-in of IOS-1, while frustrating, is also a positive approach to rail passenger expansion, in NJ-ARP's view. Rather than wait until everything was "perfect," New Jersey Transit, along with 21st Century Rail Corp., the Design-Build-Operate-Maintain (DBOM) contractor overseeing the project, opted instead to get HBLRT up and running where it could and when it could.

Given the increased (and altered) value of HBLRT following the terrorist attacks on the

United States, light rail service has proven its ability to adapt to new markets, even as it also creates them. And as residential development, commercial opportunity, and recreational facilities have flourished along the HBLRT route, LRT critics have slowly but surely faded into obscurity.

That said, criticism by LRT advocates and fans abounds; one such complaint is LRT's "remote" link at Hoboken Terminal. The complaint has merit, but Hoboken's LRT station was easily found by casual riders and those attending the NJ Transit's Hoboken Festival. NJ-ARP witnessed solid two-way ridership in the first week of operations at the Hoboken LRT station. The station itself still requires additional work, including a "Next Train Departure" sign to be installed. NJ-ARP recommended vehicle destination signs to accurately depict southbound terminal points while idling at Hoboken Station, as well.

Construction continues on most of IOS-2, moving HBLRT north from Hoboken Terminal to the new Weehawken ferry terminal -- but IOS-2's completion date has slipped from 2003 to sometime in 2004. Still on target for on-time completion -- and the only candidate for true on-time completion -- is the Bayonne branch's extension south from 34th Street to 23rd Street, still targeted for a 2003 debut.

Frustrations with slow operating speeds (also voiced re: the Newark City Subway operations) subtly have shifted. No longer are the loudest complaints heard on street running: LRT operations on Essex Street and (to a lesser degree) Exchange Place area street running have settled down to a predictable, prompt routine (if still too slow for many).

But overbuilt and/or overly restrictive "signal priority" -- where autos appear to get the priority -- has become a major impediment near Harborside and Pavonia-Newport stations, with multiple stops occurring literally with 10-to-20 feet of each other. NJ-ARP has solicited input and opinion from 21st Century Rail Corp., from New Jersey Transit, and other sources on this issue.

It appears the problem is both "diagnostic" and political. NJ Transit has secured funding to "study" the issue of signaling on its LRT systems, while railfan e-mails have urged someone "do something" about this, and NJ-ARP has volunteered to coordinate any letter-writing effort to draw attention to the problem, and increase pressure, at least from the "political" end. NJ-ARP also is using the signal troubles as a warning for ongoing development of Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit (see SNJLRT entry), which, at press time, is slated for superior signal pre-emption.

-- Douglas John Bowen

Bergen County Developments

DMU in 2002. That's been NJ-ARP's operating slogan this year as it threw its support to plans by Bergen County, the state's most populous county, to apply diesel multiple-unit (DMU) service on its "Cross County" route between Bogota/Hackensack and Paterson/Hawthorne (the last municipality across the border in Passaic County).

In March NJ-ARP member Paul Mulligan "discovered" the DMU prototype being built by Colorado Railcar LLC, as well as Bergen's plans to test the DMU on New York, Susquehanna & Western (Susie-Q) trackage. NJ-ARP advanced the DMU concept and the

testing schedule during the 2002 TransAction Conference in Atlantic City during the spring, coordinating its efforts with Bergen County and Colorado Railcar.

The anticipated DMU tests come to fruition Oct. 10, 11, and 12, with NJ-ARP a prime participant (and in conjunction with NJ-ARP's annual meeting in Hawthorne Oct. 12). Ironically, New Jersey Transit, resistant to the DMU concept, expressed no interest or knowledge of reviewing the DMU for its own purposes, even after Colorado Railcar announced NJT would display the prototype at an unnamed NJT rail station Oct. 14.

The Cross-County route is one of three (3) rail routes being considered for rail passenger service. Of those, two have weighed LRT alternatives (the Cross-County being one of them), while West Shore passenger service would utilize conventional rail passenger equipment.

In 2001, NJ-ARP lauded New Jersey Transit for advocating all three (3) options for Bergen County, home to 800,000-plus New Jerseyans; West Shore service would benefit residents of adjacent Rockland County as well. Unfortunately, NJT's "back to basics" stance in 2002 is, in NJ-ARP's view, means "back of the line, Bergen" -- a viewpoint we cannot share.

NJT's primary residual focus re: Bergen County rail expansion remains the Northern Branch. But here, too, other players have been more active. During the summer, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), the 13-county metropolitan planning organization, recommended Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit modify its official northern terminus at Vice Lombardi Park 'n Ride at the New Jersey Turnpike.

Instead, NJTPA recommended extending HBLRT up the Northern Branch route. The change was endorsed by outgoing U.S. Sen. Robert Torricelli, among others. Much credit goes to the Transit Committee of Bergen County, which has focused virtually all its efforts on securing the Northern Branch for LRT; NJ-ARP supports TCBC's efforts for this route.

For all three routes, the issue remains the same: a source of funding. Bergen County is advancing a plan to commit its own money -- up to \$500,000 -- to establish Cross-County DMU service. Its ability to sustain any kind of service over time, however, is a large question mark. Nonetheless, the county appears willing to fight for its own transit needs, lacking any substantial support from NJ Transit or NJDOT.

-- Douglas John Bowen

Monmouth - Ocean - Middlesex

In June 2001, the MOM project received \$4.5 million for a DEIS as mandated by the Federal Government. Systra Consultants of Plainfield, NJ were the successful bidders for the 18-month EIS study. The study began in July 2001. Since then, we have seen changes occur at the Governor's level as well as in the Senior Management levels at New Jersey Transit (NJT). Due to budgetary constraints, NJT eliminated the MOM community outreach programs, which had been established by NJT former Executive Director, Jeff Warsh. NIMBY's and Middlesex County are mobilizing to stop MOM in this study. They need to prove a "fatal flaw" in MOM in order to have it dismissed from the Circle of Mobility. NJ-ARP continues to push ahead keeping the project in the media and on resident's minds through our own community outreach.

NJ-ARP's role in the MOM project remains strong. Currently, NJ-ARP's community outreach has been successful in Middlesex and Monmouth counties. Recently, we attended the Monroe Township Mother's Club Country Fair, the Helmetta Crabtree Festival, Milltown Day, and Howell Community Day. In addition, NJ-ARP has given presentations to area civic groups, such as the Clearbrook Government Relations committee in Monroe Township, with very positive results.

NJ-ARP President Resto, Vice President Bowen and assigned Directors continue to lobby for the MOM project on the Federal, State, County and Local levels. We keep public officials constantly aware of MOM and we advocate for MOM's completion. NJ-ARP also continues to keep MOM in the public eye by submitting letters to the editor at area newspapers and challenging the opposition by placing ads in local community programs.

MOM also enjoys public exposure given it by the Central Jersey Rail Coalition through their public outreach programs. The Coalition, working together with NJ-ARP, continues to keep pressure on area politicians to get MOM moving. The Coalition, led by Bill Braden as its President, continues to be successful in their endeavors.

We have seen the opposition gather again through local government sponsored committees to fight the MOM line. They try to stir up more local opposition to the project. They have questions about viability, safety and the cost of the MOM project. Democratically controlled Middlesex County continues to oppose MOM. In Monroe Township, Council President Irwin Nailitt (D) continues to state the same tired anti-MOM rhetoric. Monroe Township continues to push for enhanced bus service instead of passenger rail. Senate and Assembly bills, introduced by Middlesex public officials, languish in their respective committees. Jamesburg continues with safety, child issues and traffic woes. South Brunswick continues to rubber stamp anything decided by the Middlesex County freeholders.

2002 has been an interesting year for MOM. MOM is now in the EIS stage, which will take 18 months. Hearings are scheduled to be held in December. NJ-ARP will continue its aggressive community outreach programs, which continue to produce good results. More and more residents continue to sign pro-MOM petition cards and we see this trend continuing. Many Monroe residents are beginning to question their local government's position on MOM. NJ-ARP will continue to push the MOM project at all levels. NJ-ARP gained good visibility in July when it co-sponsored the July 4th fireworks display provided by the Jamesburg Civic Association and Monroe Township Recreation Department at Thompson Park in Monroe. We have been challenged, we have held our ground and have been very visible to residents in the area.

MOM still faces the Federal EIS battle. NIMBY's have marshaled their resources and are now going "all out". MOM needs more NJ-ARP and CJRC members to become involved in spreading the positive aspects of passenger rail service and continue putting pressure on the NIMBY's. We must make certain that at the public hearings to be held that the pro-MOM voices are heard. This is the key to getting this project into the construction phase. We appreciate your support.

-- Daniel S. Kerwin

National Rail Passenger Advocacy

It is no secret that these are trying days for Amtrak and our national rail passenger network. As a corridor state situated between two major metropolitan areas, New Jersey is in the unique position to benefit not only from local passenger rail but also from intercity passenger rail. Given this it is imperative that a careful eye is kept on national rail policy issues and initiatives. NJ-ARP is heavily involved in this endeavor.

The organization is fortunate to have two directors that are also representatives of the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) of which NJ-ARP is an affiliate. Jim Ciacciarelli is a NARP Region III Director and Albert L. Papp, Jr. is a NARP Director At-Large. New Jersey interests are well represented given our "regionalized" representation due to the fact that Jim Ciacciarelli resides in southern New Jersey and that Albert L. Papp, Jr. resides in northern New Jersey. As such, we are able to present and represent all statewide interests much more effectively.

Lobbying efforts are also intensive. At a minimum we try to personally meet with the entire New Jersey Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC throughout the year. This provides not only for dissemination of vital information and our position on the issues but also provides for the necessary physical presence that is so critical today. This face-to-face approach has benefited both the organization and New Jersey interests. We have established our credibility and our stance is clearly respected. In today's economy where dollars and funding is becoming increasingly scarce it is crucial that such a presence is consistently maintained.

NJ-ARP is also represented in various activities beyond the state. We have direct involvement in the bi-annual NARP Board of Directors meetings where our presence is large. Here we are able to propel New Jersey interests in a specific sense as well as support general Northeast Corridor interests as a whole. We also get involved in other nationally sponsored activities such as National Raildays, an event that took place in April of this year in our nation's capitol. Furthermore, there has been direct contribution to *The Need for Passenger Rail, A National Necessity*. This is a comprehensive document on future passenger rail policy needs sponsored by NARP and co-authored by Albert L. Papp, Jr.

A current, comprehensive national and statewide legislative mailing list is also maintained so that the NJ-ARP newsletter and other pertinent, timely documentation can be consistently sent to legislators. We are currently in the process of coordinating our membership list with that of the NARP national membership list to ensure a comprehensive cross-section of members. This methodology guarantees that our membership is kept current on statewide as well as national issues.

There is also ample interaction between the various adjacent NARP affiliates such as the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers (KARP), the Delaware Valley Association of Railroad Passengers (DVARP), the Empire State Passengers Association (ESPA), and the Delaware Rail Passengers Association (DRPA). Additionally, there is also interaction with other interstate rail advocacy organizations such as the Penn-Jersey Rail Coalition. Such interaction provides for greater regional coordination as well as enhancing the regional approach to advocating ideas and proposals. Interstate projects, such as the Lackawanna Cut-Off proposal, can only benefit through such unified advocacy.

In conclusion, as we are all greatly affected by national transportation policy and initiatives, part of NJ-ARP's continuing goals is to seek constant political and economic support for rail passenger service on the national level. Our mission is also to continually strive for the

increase of the share that the rail passenger alternative plays in America's comprehensive transportation policy.

-- Jim Ciacciarelli

Funding Proposal

The approval of the New Jersey Transit (NJT) rail and bus fare increase that took effect on April 1, 2002 highlighted the absence of any adequate and consistent transport policy within the State of New Jersey. Because there is no consistent policy, NJT has had to routinely dip into funds from its capital budget in order to eliminate the annual operating budgetary shortfall.

This past May, NJ-ARP released its proposal for a statewide policy for funding public transportation. This proposal had actually been crafted in 1985 and was updated to meet today's needs. The proposal seeks to utilize taxes on the carbon emissions of fuels to fund public transportation and move towards equal modal support.

The proposal consists of five points: First, NJT fare policy must be a statewide policy. Second, NJT's base cost recovery ratio should be established within a band of 45% to 55%. Third, future operating costs should be split between NJT and the state on a sliding scale. Fourth, fare policies should be set by NJT. Fifth, service expansions should also be funded on a sliding scale.

NJ-ARP has already shared this proposal with both NJT and DOT Commissioner James Fox. We stand ready to assist both in addressing this important funding issue that has now reached critical mass.

-- Len Resto

Meetings with Transit Agencies

NJ-ARP's credibility throughout the state is recognized when transit agencies request to meet with us on a regular basis. During 2002, we have met with New Jersey Transit's Executive Director, George Warrington, and senior management members to discuss items of interest to New Jersey rail users. We believe our views have resulted in better scheduling, a roll back of some of the more onerous provisions of the April fare hike, and a good exchange of ideas.

Similarly, we have met with PATH's General Manager Michael DePallo and his senior management team. We have reviewed their plans for the restoration of service to downtown Manhattan and Exchange Place in Jersey City. We have suggested improvements in service and our ideas have been met favorably. Our dialogue is ongoing.

Finally, our Rockland County liaison, Orrin Getz, regularly attends the monthly MTA Board Meetings being our lone voice for improved service west of the Hudson.

-- Len Resto

Raritan Valley

The Raritan Valley Rail Coalition (RVRC) continues meeting, usually at 8am for 90 minutes on odd-numbered months, prioritizing goals for the Raritan Valley Line (RVL) and taking public input on capital goals and current service problems. I attend most meetings. The six short term RVRC goals and my current evaluation on their likelihood of the short term fruition are:

- 1) Constructing a "pocket" (relay) track east of Harrison to permit a higher proportion of AM peak RVL trains to arrive Newark on an eastbound track, as opposed to Track 5, permitting more same platforms transfers to Manhattan-bound Corridor and PATH trains. The cost would be about \$7 million and be electrified for other emergency uses. There is no funding.
- 2) Constructing a passing siding west of Whitehouse to permit more shoulder rush and mid-day trains to operate west of Raritan to Whitehouse or High Bridge. There is no funding.
- 3) Improving communication of operating problems in a timely manner, particularly at Newark and New York. This invariably runs into arguments of more technology and capital needed, blaming Amtrak for not making announcements and for causing the problems to begin with.
- 4) Assigning an additional trainset to the RVL for frequency expansion. This could be revisited once the Comet V's replace the Comet I's, the PATH downtown line fully reopens, and rush hour ridership rebounds. Weekday RVL loadings have dropped 15% from around 9,600 to 8,200 since 9/11/01. One Comet IV/rebuilt-Comet II trainset occasionally visits, but more will not be possible until Comet V's are placed in service elsewhere in significant numbers.
- 5) Extending some weekday peak trains to Hoboken. This is out of the question until the Bergen tunnel rehab is done. It might then be feasible for a train or two in the AM rush, but most others are on tight relays on Track 5. Since the Waterfront Connection is only half completed for the benefit of normally eastbound tracks (the westbound project is shelved), routing trains in the PM rush from Hoboken to anywhere west of Newark-Penn that is not the Coast Line isn't feasible.
- 6) Completing significant station projects: Plainfield and Union. Much like Westfield that was done several years ago, a thoroughly rebuilt Plainfield, with underground passageway restored, and full ADA-compliance, half the new high level platform in service last Spring, and the other half progressing, is to be completed early next year. Union Township station in Townley on the CSX Lehigh line will open this winter. It required track relocation, gauntlet track, and an island platform, a CSX requirement for new passenger stations built anywhere having double-track.

Of lower priority, there is the following:

Hunterdon County is choosing the site for an intermodal transit center in the Annandale-Clinton area on US22.

The 21-mile West Trenton line is undergoing environmental assessment, but there is no funding beyond that in sight. Its estimated start-up capital cost of just stations, parking, signal upgrades, and a terminal train yard is now pushing \$125 million. In addition, the host freight railroad now insists a flyover junction be built at Bound Brook and be added to the environmental review. Such a junction would not only cost at least another \$100 million, but misses Bridgewater station, a possible traffic generator with the Commerce Ballpark and Promenade Mall within walking distance, and can be a hub for feeder buses to nearby office parks, necessary if this line is to put a dent into US206 traffic, the main selling point in restoring passenger service to this line.

Moving the arcane, remote North Branch station to be on the same side of the tracks and grade-crossing as the usually filled parking lot has never gone past the drawing stage. NJT now insists ADA-compliance requires a high-level platform. While I cannot get it past the informal talking stage, it might be better to replace the station with one a mile-and-a-half to the east to straddle US202 in western Bridgewater. It would be in walking distance to a couple of office parks, share parking with the Towne Center Mall (Wegmans, Home Depot, Ruby Tuesday, First Union, among others), allow the Doylestown/Flemington - New York (PABT) route of Trans Bridge lines to exchange passengers with rail, and intercept motorists from Branchburg and beyond that are then driving through side streets to the over-whelmed rail station parking lot in Raritan Borough.

I have brought to the RVRC's attention the rampant vandalism that was occurring at Somerville station, including destruction of most eastbound platform benches, resulting in their permanent removal, as well as the abysmal reliability of connecting NJT Wheels routes 884 (Clinton) and 989 (Bedminster-Hillsborough) caused by driver no-shows, shortages, vehicles routinely off-route, trips deliberately skipped, and poor vehicle reliability in general. Contractor Suburban Management has responded by substituting some old 40' transit buses pulled from other areas.

I gave input to Somerset County planners on the Regional Center plans, emphasizing the need to connect clusters of condo developments in western Bridgewater to the Raritan station three miles away, given that theirs and Somerville's \$2 daily station parking is filled by 7-7:30am, and not to duplicate existing NJT bus services. The Center concept is an attempt by Bridgewater, Somerville, and Raritan to overcome home-rule and cooperate with "smart growth", develop better neighborhood ambiance, and have realistic alternatives to the automobile. The shuttle will likely start in 2003, but is unlikely to run beyond a two mile radius of Somerville and Raritan downtowns.

-- Joe Versaggi

Sussex County Area

New York Susquehanna and Western

Revitalization of passenger service on the NYS&W is delayed, perhaps indefinitely, due to an impasse in negotiations between right-of-way owner Delaware Otsego Corporation and New Jersey Transit over a final purchase price necessary for NJT's acquisition of the line. Other factors delaying the project include a budget shortfall at NJT as well as delays in

remediation of a landfill off of Lasinski Road in Hardyston Township, the proposed site of a railyard for the overnight storage of rolling stock.

Mount Arlington Park and Ride

The first phase of the Mt Arlington Park and Ride is dedicated in August. Located off of Interstate 80 East at Exit 30 in Mount Arlington adjacent to the Boonton Line between Lake Hopatcong and Dover, it can only accommodate vanpool, carpool, and bus commuters in its current configuration. A rail station is planned for this location with construction beginning sometime in 2003. The exact date of the commencement of construction is contingent on ongoing site acquisition activities by the DOT.

Port Morris Yard

A new facility is under construction at the Port Morris Yard in Roxbury just east of Netcong Station. It is designed to enable the performing of light servicing and maintenance as well as the washing of locomotives and coaches. Estimated date of completion is unknown.

NJTPA Proposed Road Widening

The DOT has proposed the widening of Route 15 between Houses Corner Road in Sparta Township at the NYS&W crossing and its intersection with Route 206 in Frankford Township from two to four lanes. In addition, the DOT has presented a plan to widen Route 206 in Byram Township between Acorn Street and Waterloo Road. Opposition has surfaced from various quarters for reasons ranging from negative environmental impact to quality of life concerns. The Byram Township council has passed a resolution in opposition to the proposed project. This has surfaced as an election issue with one of the incumbent Councilman who is against the road project up for re-election. The challenger has come out publicly in favor of the widening so the voters will get to decide this November.

Congressional Republican Primary

The June Republican Primary Election results in a victory by NJ State Assemblyman E Scott Garrett (R-Sussex) who will run in the November General Election for the Congressional seat vacated by Rep Marge Roukema. The Congressional District in question encompasses most of Sussex County, the northern edge of Passaic County, and a substantial portion of Bergen County.

Adopt-A-Station (Mount Olive Station)

The current Adopt-A-Station contract is renewed (each contract cycle is valid for two years) with NJ Transit. The Adopt-A-Station Coordinator makes an annual inspection/visit on September 29, 2002.

The Township of Mount Olive dedicates a 9/11 Memorial in honor of Mrs Hilda Marzin on March 11, 2002 to mark the six-month anniversary of the World Trade Center Attack. This coincides with an NJT system-wide effort to memorialize those lost their lives on 9/11. Mrs Marzin, a passenger on United 93, was a special education instructor in the Mount Olive school system. She was en-route to San Francisco to visit a family member and was about to retire at the conclusion of the semester. The memorial consists of a wooden plaque in the

shade of a Qwanzon Cherry tree located at the western end of the station property.

During the year multiple coats of yellow paint are applied to the central curbing adjacent to the plexiglass shelter for enhanced visibility. In addition to the existing established planting areas, a new garden bed is prepared in front of the ADA ramp and a wire fence erected on the eastern portion to delineate it from the grassy area. The bed is seeded with prairie-meadow types of plants native to the east and mid-west that are characterized by drought-tolerance. Results with the new bed are mediocre as two or three years are needed to establish this type of display so re-seeding will be accomplished in the Spring.

Various requests for improvements made to NJ Transit through the Adopt-A-Station Coordinator are pending. One is a request to re-stripe the entire parking area, which has not been done since the station opened. Another is to replace on panel of glass missing from the shelter either through thermal stress or vandalism. Also, an additional glass-panel sign is needed to display the Morristown Line Timetable to list those trains that travel west of Netcong. Those trains are missing from the Montclair/Boonton Timetable that is displayed on the existing sign along with an NJT System Map.

-- Tim Apgar

Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System

Background

On June 1, 1999, NJ TRANSIT awarded the SNJLRTS contract to the Southern New Jersey Rail Group, LLC., which is led by Bechtel and Bombardier. Their bid was:

- \$452.1 million for design and construction.
- \$151.2 million for operation and maintenance for a ten-year period.

SNJLRTS hours of operation:

- Light rail will operate between 6 AM and 10 PM, seven days a week.
- Freight will operate between 10 PM and 6 AM, six days a week.

Design and Construction

Approximately 95% of the engineering/design work and 80% of the construction work have been completed. The following are major milestones:

- Construction has been completed on sixteen bridges on the SNJLRTS alignment and 5 others are under active reconstruction.
- All the 20 SNJLRTS stations stops are either under construction or have been completed. Completed stops include four in Camden.
- Fifty-one of the 58 SNJLRTS grade crossings have been completed.
- Signaling work at grade crossings is 65% complete.
- Traffic signaling work is 40% complete.
- All existing track has been rehabilitated.
- New track - generally sidings - is 80% complete.
- Approximately 95% of the 171,000-foot duct bank is completed.

- Dry utility work is 80% complete.
- Wet utility work is 95% complete.
- Yard and shop is 95% completed.
- Trenton Layover facility is 55% complete.
- Vehicle design and manufacturing is 65% complete.
- Remediation is 90% complete.
- Track bed preparation is 90% complete.
- Track work is 85% complete.
- Retaining walls are 85% complete.

Signal Testing

The test requires a rail vehicle to pass through a grade crossing at the approved track speed in each community to determine if the gates and warning devices react properly. Ultimately, all grade crossings will be tested. The SNJLRTS staff conducted an aggressive school and resident outreach program prior to testing to raise awareness of the testing process and educate people about light rail safety. The outreach program, which began in April 2002, has already made presentations to almost 20,000 school children (K through 12) and held public information safety meetings in 18 of the 20 SNJLRTS communities.

-- Carol Ann Thomas

Web Site

NJ ARP has had an Internet web site since November 1995. The web site contains membership information, position papers, press releases, and the weekly Hotline. NJ ARP obtained its own domain name, nj-arp.org, in November 1999. In June 2001, an additional domain name, njarp.org (without the hyphen) was obtained to make it easier for people to find our site. Either domain name can be used to access the site.

Since November 1999, the NJ ARP web site has been hosted by pair Networks, Inc., located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Pair Networks operates over 700 servers in their datacenter. NJ ARP's site is hosted on an Athlon 1000 MHz computer with 512MB of RAM and a 40GB disk. (This server is shared with other pair Networks customers.) The web hosting cost is \$5.47 per month, and the domain names are \$19 per year each. These costs have remained constant during the past year. The service provided by pair Networks is excellent, with no significant outages.

Several NJ-ARP position papers were added to the web site during the summer. The most popular was the proposal to connect PATH and the Lexington Avenue subway. That position paper has been accessed over 750 times.

The NJ ARP web site is currently averaging over 30,000 "hits" and 7,500 "page views" per month. Each Hotline is viewed an average of 350 times. Traffic has increased about 25% from last year. The Hotline Mailing List, which allows people to be notified by e-mail when a new Hotline is available, currently has over 140 subscribers.

Bob Scheurle maintains the web site. NJ ARP Vice President Douglas John Bowen writes the Hotline.

Miscellaneous

NY Penn Station East End Concourse

Just last month, New Jersey Transit (NJT) opened its own concourse at New York's Penn Station. This concourse, located at the East end of the terminal, is dedicated solely to NJT riders. It has its own ticketing windows, waiting areas and restroom facilities. It is an open and airy ambiance in which to wait for trains bound for New Jersey. The result for the rider is one of a quality of life when compared with the "cattle call" which was what the mezzanine level of Penn Station had turned into. While not necessarily an improvement in rail riding, the experience of the station has been enhanced.

TransAction Conference - Atlantic City

Once again, NJ-ARP Director Bill Wright served on the Steering Committee for the annual TransAction Conference held this past April in Atlantic City, NJ. NJ-ARP obtained a good position for its table in the exhibit hall and, as has been the case in the past few years, co-sponsored the coffee/refreshment breaks. Our table was enhanced this year by a poster board depicting the Colorado Railcar DMU. We expressed our belief that this car, besides consideration for Bergen County, could have applicability on the MOM route.

North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority

NJ-ARP Director Bill Wright continues to represent us on the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA). Bill has been a tireless advocate for mass transit over road building. Bill will continue in this role during 2003.

Union County Transportation Advisory Board

NJ-ARP Director Bill Wright continues as Cranford's official representative to the Union County Transportation Advisory Board. This Board focuses on all transportation modes and alternatives within Union County.

-- Len Resto

These files were created by Bob Scheurle.