Rails, Inc



Newsletter

January/2022

Trench warfare and a sad rail yard story

Money, as it applies to us

Rails Inc keeps both an e-mail list and a postal list of recipients for our material and that of selected other people and groups we like. You may already know that in terms of time and money, handling each list is an entirely different job, even though the materials are essentially the same. E-mail? Make up some PDF's, pull up the recipients' e-addresses, hit a few buttons, and there you go. Cost is minimal. P-mail? Each of our *Newsletters* costs about $1.50, stamp included. Our time is all-volunteer.

What we're driving at here is that it would help a lot if you would either 1) Send us your e- address, 2) "sponsor" a bunch of Newsletters at $1.50 each, or 3) Both.

We never sell, trade, or give out anybody's contact information. Period.

Help Wanted

Rails Inc is on the lookout for somebody (or -bodies) to take care of social media matters for us, and to reach out to younger people. Young people preferred, and women encouraged., mostly because it's the right thing to do, but also because the banners of our Cause are carried in large part by OWM's (Old White Men) a little out of date in our communications skills. And we're beginning to die off.

We'd like to see this balance shifted so as to "look like America". You would get

paid the same as the rest of us (0), but as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, we can offer course credit, a notch on your resume, and our undying gratitude.

Search our Web site for all the reasons that modern passenger Rail is an excellent and important Cause in this world. https://www.nmrails.org . Our revised Site is not out yet, but this one is full of good information.

A Sad Railyard Story

(This also appeared in the RUN Newsletter, Winter 2022. Photos Rails Inc.)

The top photo, looking Southeast from the Coal avenue Bridge, shows the Albuquerque maintenance facility for our Rail Runner Express (NMRX). Yes, it's that giant red carport. They do a lot of fine work in this "shop". Here's the sad part:



The second photo shows a part of the Albuquerque Rail Yard locomotive repair works. Although there is a successful seasonal Rail Yard Market (a kind of outdoor fair) on the premises, the historical guts of the Yard are still abandoned and closed to the public. This picture is taken looking East from Second Street SW, a few blocks South of Coal Avenue SE.

The building on the left (North) was the Boiler Shop; on the right was the Machine Shop. The space between is the remains of the Transfer Table, which could carry a locomotive under repair and connect any Boiler Shop track set to any in the Machine Shop, to enable the transfer of said locomotive between any part of the former to any of the latter (a transfer table acts like a roundhouse, only back and forth instead of radially). All this idle (and ideal) train-repair real estate lies a couple of hundred yards West of that hard-working big red carport, with all kinds of tracks in between, serving both (as well as the *Rail Runner* and the *SW Chief*).

The point is, as Albuquerque City Councilor Isaac Benton, this writer, and damn

few others have observed, there’s all this great train-repair real estate sitting right across the right of way from that oversize carport and doing all but nothing.

It doesn’t seem to us that it would be all that big a deal, at least technically, to work on the *Rail Runner* in a real live (well, for now, dead) Rail Yard, out of the weather and away from vandals and trackside hazards.

Trench Warfare

This phrase elegantly describes the near-eternal struggle in America for a halfway worthwhile national passenger Rail system: Decades of fighting, a foot or two gained here, at least that much lost elsewhere———and we’re not anywhere near back to the speedy and pervasive train network we had 60-70 years ago.

Local and regional Rail transit in America have been in renaissance for 20-30 years. The national picture is still dismal, especially compared to those of every other “civilized” country in the world.

Groups such as Rails Inc, the Rail Users Network (RUN), and the Railroad Workers United (RWU) have over the years extensively documented this struggle and various proposals and schemes to end it. These are the Web sites of these groups. These sites also contain Links to others you might find informative:

https://www.nmrails.org https://www.railusers.net
https://www.railroadworkersunited.org

With all this information (and the Newsletters we’ve sent you), we need not belabor these points any further. Following is what we consider the best chance of someday achieving a passenger Rail network worthy of a major (or even minor) country:

1) Conversion of all our principal track segments to *public ownership.* People kick around the terms “nationalization” and “socialism”. RWU uses the term “Public utility”. We like that one. We also like our own term, the “Rail Interstate”.

As it stands now, all of the following are “Public utilities”:

Highways and streets
The Interstate Highway System
Waterways, with their channel markers, buoys, etc.
Airports, control towers, runways
Law enforcement agencies, firefighters, and first responders serving all these Farm-to-market roads
Public libraries

These “socialized” infrastructure elements leave planty of room for both public and private moving parts and support services. All we’re suggesting is that the tracks, signals, bridges, and the like be restructured to take their place in the above list.

These are not systems modelled after those of some foreign country. They’re American as hell, and they work pretty well.

2) Fostering the proliferation of small and medium size passenger, freight, and express service, as per in days of old. As with our other “socialized” infrastructure systems, public infrastructure ownership will encourage private and public entities to try out these compact and efficient services, for profit and / or the benefit of taxpayers. Some will prosper, some will combine, some will die. Public trackage provides a stage for these dramas to play (and play out) on.

3) While we’re at it, let’s convert Amtrak into either a true public transportation entity (another public utility) or a fully private corporation, in competition with other passenger and express companies. To us, Amtrak’s operating model offers both the worst of capitalism and the worst of socialism.

Upcoming RUN Conference

The Rail Users Network will be holding its next national conference (virtual again) on April 29, from 1 PM to 5 PM. General admission is $25.00, which also gets you an

introductory membership for the rest of 2022. We'll be sending a program of topics to be covered, and attendance information as they become available. Don't miss this one. Half a day very well spent.

Share this:

- Share on X (Opens in new window) X
- Share on Facebook (Opens in new window) Facebook
- Email a link to a friend (Opens in new window) Email
- Share on LinkedIn (Opens in new window) LinkedIn
- Share on Reddit (Opens in new window) Reddit
- Share on Tumblr (Opens in new window) Tumblr
- Share on Pinterest (Opens in new window) Pinterest
- Share on Telegram (Opens in new window) Telegram
- Share on WhatsApp (Opens in new window) WhatsApp