

## **BULLETIN BOARD**

Our thanks to Gordon Robinson of the Orange County Transportation Authority for his presentation on its Bravo! Bus Rapid Transit project at our March meeting.

Due to the Easter holiday our April meeting will be on the first Saturday of the month, April 4th. The speaker is Bruce Shelburne of Metro who will discuss Metro Rail issues. The presentation will begin at 1:00 p.m., followed by our monthly meeting.

Our workshop for the residents of Angelus Plaza to assist them in preparing their applications for the senior Transit Access Pass (TAP) card was a great success. Over 50 applications were processed and have been subsequently submitted to Metro. Our thanks to the volunteers who made this possible: Hank Fung, Lionel Jones, Kymberleigh Richards, Woody Rosner, Jerard Wright and Dana Gabbard.

It appears likely we will share table space at the Union Station National Train Day event with RailPAC, as we did last year; Nick Matonak has volunteered to represent us for NTD at the Van Nuys Amtrak station. By next month we should have further details about our Gold Line extension preview and our booth at the opening weekend celebration.

Metro's Wilshire Boulevard/La Brea Customer Center as of March 28<sup>th</sup> will have Saturday hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. (closed 1 p.m. -2 p.m. for lunch); Lost & Found will be also be open on Saturday.

3 upcoming rail events of interest:

Rail Passenger Association of California will have its annual meeting May 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Metro Boardroom. Details at <http://www.railpac.org/>

Electric Railroaders Association will be meeting in Los Angeles on Labor Day weekend. Further details at <http://erausa.org/>

Train Riders Association of California will hold its annual conference in Ventura County on November 6-8. Further details at <http://www.calrailnews.com/>

The Alliance for Sustainable and Equitable Regional Transportation is an umbrella group for transportation advocacy in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Further information on its website: <http://coastalcommuter.org/>

A group calling itself West L.A. for Change is engaged (among other things) in public agitprop to promote public transit. More information can be found on its website: <http://sites.google.com/site/westlaforchange/Home>

### **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS**

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website

<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>

This includes far more detail than any printed calendar can and is able to be updated or enhanced as we become aware of events almost immediately. We think you will be impressed at the depth and breadth of coverage therein. 🚆 🚊 🚗

## **Norwalk Transit Proposed Changes**

The City of Norwalk has proposed a number of changes to the Norwalk Transit routes. A public hearing will be held on April 21, 2009 at the Norwalk City Hall (12700 Norwalk Blvd.) beginning at 6 pm. If approved the changes will take effect on May 11, 2009. Below is a list of the proposed changes.

Line 3: Elimination of Sunday service

Line 4: Reduce the span of service on weekends

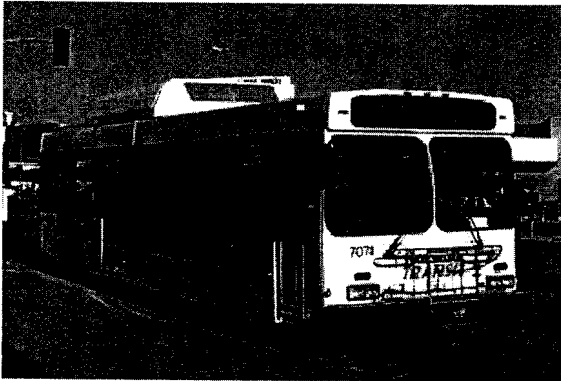
Line 4A: Elimination of route

Line 5: Reduce the span of service on Saturdays and eliminate Sunday Service

Line 6 and 7: Elimination of Saturday service

Line 8: Reduce the span of service on weekends

Line 9: Eliminate weekend service



## **MTS Opens new Transit Station**

The Rancho Bernardo Transit Station (RBTS) and Del Lago Transit Stations opened on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Routes 20 and 845 returned to regular service at that time. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, new Route 880 began service.

The temporary shuttle between Rancho Bernardo and North County Fair was discontinued. The Route 20/20B northern terminal moved to Del Lago Transit Station instead of North County Fair mall. Transfers to NCTD Route 350 can be made at Del Lago Transit Station for service to North County Fair and Escondido Transit Center (ETC).

All Route 810 trips now serve the ETC and the RBTS. Connections to new Route 880 to Sorrento Valley can be made at the RBTS. Route 810A trips no longer serve the Sabre Springs/Peñasquitos Transit Station in the morning (use Routes 820 and 860 instead). Selected Route 810A trips in the afternoon continue to serve the Sabre Springs/Peñasquitos Transit Station.

Northern terminal of Route 860 moved south to Rancho Carmel Dr. and Innovation Dr. Service on Pomerado Rd., Rancho Bernardo Rd., and West Bernardo Dr. was discontinued. Premium Express service to/from Rancho Bernardo will be available on Route 810 at the Rancho Bernardo Transit Station

Premium Express Route 880 provides service between 4S Ranch, Sorrento Valley, and University City (UTC), via the RBTS. Passengers from 4S Ranch going downtown can transfer to Route 810 at the RBTS. The new Route 880 is funded entirely by 4S Ranch. 🚌 🚌 🚌

# TRANSIT UPDATES

## **Golden Empire Transit**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> the GET Board approved ordering from New Flyer 27 forty foot low floor CNG fueled buses for \$493,494 each. The order includes an option for up to 50 additional vehicles over the next 5 years.

## **LADOT— DASH**

Effective March 1, 2009 the DASH Downtown LA Lost and Found phone number has changed to (213) 626-2367

DASH Midtown will be implementing a route change to help improve on-time performance. The north-most end loop will now travel clockwise to help eliminate left turns. The route will continue west on Pico Blvd., then turn right on Redondo Blvd., right on San Vicente Blvd., left on La Brea, and left on Pico. The change will have no impact on scheduled stop times.

## **Omnitrans**

Effective March 16, 2009 Omnitrans Line 1 began detouring on 2nd Street to better service the San Bernardino Metrolink Station. Along with this detour Omnitrans will also operate a free shuttle from the Carousel Mall in downtown San Bernardino to the Metrolink Station. The shuttle will operate Monday thru Friday operating every 15 minutes from 5:30 to 8:30 am and 3:50 to 7:30 pm.

This detour and shuttle will operate approximately 6 months due to construction at 3rd Street and Viaduct Blvd. that will eliminate about 70 parking spaces at the Metrolink Station.

## **Pasadena ARTS**

Is now offering ticket booklets for sale. Forty regular tickets cost \$20 and can be purchased Monday thru Thursday at the Pasadena Department of Transportation, 221 E. Walnut St., Suite 199 between 8 am and 4 pm.

## **Riverside Transit Agency**

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, routes 79, 202, 206 and 208 will no longer stop at the Temecula Promenade Mall upper parking level near Sears Auto Center. The routes will begin using a new stop in the mall's new parking structure in the lower parking lot.

On Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, routes 149, 204, 208 and 210 and Omnitrans route 215 will no longer stop at the Fairmont Boulevard stop near the Downtown Riverside Terminal. All buses will now stop inside the terminal.

A public hearing will be held at noon on Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at the Riverside County Transportation Commission Conference Room A, 3rd Floor, 4080 Lemon St. in Riverside to receive comments regarding the proposed cancellation of Route 52, the downtown Riverside Trolley. Comments may also be sent to RTA at 1825 Third Street, Riverside, CA 92507, e-mailed to [comments@riversidetransit.com](mailto:comments@riversidetransit.com), by phone: (800) 800-7821 or in-person at RTA's headquarters through April 9<sup>th</sup>.



## **APTA Reports High Ridership in 2008 (APTA Press Release)**

Despite falling gas prices and an economic recession, increasing numbers of Americans took 10.7 billion trips on public transportation in 2008, the highest level of ridership in 52 years and a modern ridership record, according to a report released today by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). This represents a 4.0 percent increase over the number of trips taken in 2007 on public transportation, while at the same time, vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) on our nation's roads declined by 3.6 percent in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

"Even as gas prices fell for the second half of the year and hundreds of thousands of people lost jobs, more and more people chose to ride public transportation throughout the country," said APTA president William W. Millar. "Given our current economic condition, people are looking for ways to save money and taking public transportation offers a substantial savings of more than \$8,000 a year. That's quite a savings."

This ridership record continues a long term trend of ridership growth. Public transportation use is up 38% percent since 1995, a figure that is almost triple the growth rate of the population (14 percent) and up substantially over the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on our nation's highways (21%) for that same period.

Millar announced the ridership increase before more than 600 public transit leaders at an APTA conference in Washington, D.C. He noted that the record ridership shows the clear demand for public transit and compelling need for increased investment at the

federal, state, and local levels.

Millar also announced the launch of a new advocacy campaign, *Public Transportation Takes Us There*, which is aimed at building congressional support for the authorization of the federal surface transportation legislation, which expires Sept. 30, 2009.

"Now, more than ever, the value of public transportation is evident and the public has clearly demonstrated that they want and need more public transit services," said Millar. "Public transportation is good for the economy, good for the environment and good for energy independence and now is the time for the federal government to increase its investment in public transportation."

Beyond the need for greater public transit investment in a new federal surface transportation bill (the current one legislation expires September 30, 2009), and the 2010 appropriations bill, APTA is advocating for the inclusion of public transportation investment in any energy or climate change bill.

"Every year, public transportation saves 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline and reduces our nation's carbon emissions by 37 million metric tons," said Millar. "Clearly, public transportation is part of the solution for our country's national goals of energy independence and carbon emissions reduction.

Millar also called on local and state governments to increase their investment in public transportation. Currently, transit systems are facing fare increases, service reductions, and layoffs – at a time of record ridership – because of declining state and local revenues.

*(Continued on page 8)*

Well, the Mayor got his way regarding the extension of the Breda contract. I openly question that we'll ever see this manufacturing plant Breda dangled in front of organized labor to gather the political mojo to have a shot at the extra 100 car option being exercised despite Breda's many miscues and delays. Member Erik Griswold shared with reporters and others links to numerous articles about Breda's rail building blunders here and abroad. But of course as always the Metro Board meddles to its own political advantage, not what is best or logical. As I commented on Streetsblog, this reminds me why I don't attend Metro Board meetings any more--so painful to watch political sausage making at its bloodiest. The whole thing reeks of lobbyist back room dubious advocacy a la the gating. Who cares where the plant is if the cars built stink?

I will credit Mayor Villaraigosa with adhering to the law by making his new Metro Board appointees one councilman (Jose Huizar) and one member of the public (Rita Robinson, General Manager of LADOT). Huizar's appointment makes sense as he has a strong transportation interest due to the downtown Broadway streetcar project he is championing. Robinson has brought stability to LADOT, but by her own admission isn't steeped in transportation policy--maybe she is just a placeholder until the Mayor has a reliable new appointee lined up.

So Kimberleigh Richards and I were right to consider Art Leahy to be the frontrunner for the Metro CEO job. It is a smart choice and I give props to the Metro Board for

making it.

Speaking of Ms. Richards, she informs me while participating on our behalf in the California Transit Association Sacramento Lobby Day she asked CTA Executive Director Josh Shaw about the rumored firewall initiative to protect the transit funding the state keeps stealing to balance the budget. Shaw confirmed the Association is working to make it happen, and eventually hopes we'll assist in gathering signatures to get it on the ballot at the appropriate time. Boy, that should be a wild ride and battle royal among key powerful interests.

In an interview with Passenger Transport (the magazine of the American Public Transit Association) Jane Matsumoto of Metro states regarding TAP one advantage is "Day Pass prices can then be evaluated relative to the base cash fare." Richards shared this with me noting this sounds like the groundwork is being laid for a day pass price increase. And I have to agree. The article is online:

<http://newsmanager.commpartners.com/aptapt/issues/2009-03-16/20.html>

Another article Richards brought to my attention detailed Veolia's financial woes. Considering how many contracts for transit operations and management they have in our region this certainly raises concerns:

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/1dac51c0-0c01-11de-b87d-0000779fd2ac.html>

## Public/Legislative Affairs Continued...

The recent informal trip a few of us did exploring the since severed connection of OCTA and Metro owl services had one bonus: Serena Maria Daniels of the Orange County Register (after being tipped off by Jane Reifer) joined us for part of the trip and mentioned the issue in a March 10th article on the OCTA service changes, "Bus Service Slashed 3%" ([http://headlines.ocregister.com/news/service\\_17001\\_article.html/octa\\_beach.html](http://headlines.ocregister.com/news/service_17001_article.html/octa_beach.html))

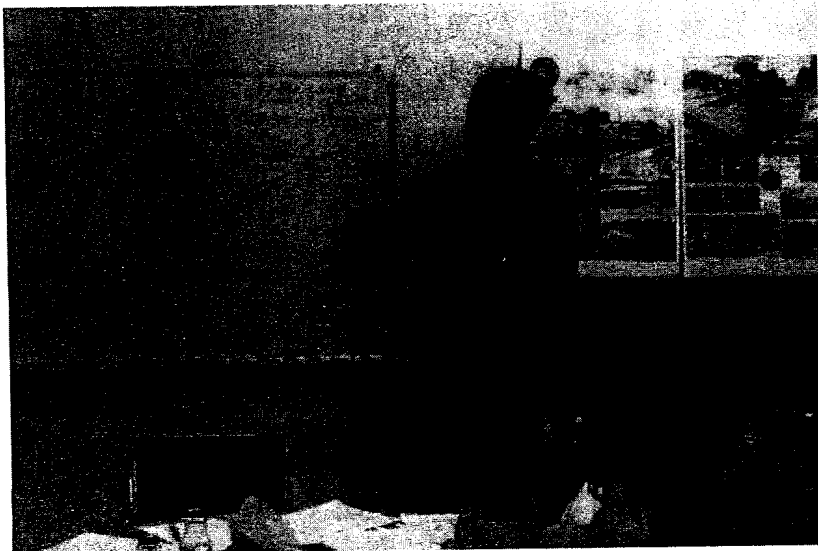
In sadder media news, the Los Angeles Times has let go its transportation reporter Steve Hymon, who I think most of us in the transportation advocacy world felt had been doing a bang up job. Given that traffic is a perennial SoCal issue, this seems like an especially boneheaded move on the Times' part.

Andy Novak was gratified to share with me links to a document proving MTS of San Diego is an agency that actually listens to the passengers, and adjusted proposals based on input by the public:

<http://www.sdmts.com/documents/FY10SvcCutsFlyerRecs1pg.pdf>

I hope the recently announced dramatic OCTA cutbacks and layoffs will convince legislators that their budget votes do have an impact on transit service. The whole situation south of the orange curtain is just beyond sad. I know a few activists like the aforementioned Reifer plus Phil Capo and Roy Shahbazian are working to minimize the impact and I wish them all the best in their efforts.

I'll conclude by noting the tragedy of a MTS mechanic killing three co-workers March 25th in the early morning hours before being shot and killed by police. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the victims.



*Darrell Clarke compares two of the pairs of alternatives on Phase II of the Expo Line draft EIR.*

*(Photo and caption by John Ulloth)*

## **APTA Reports High Ridership Continued...**

### **2008 Ridership Breakdown**

For the second year in a row, ridership on all modes of public transportation increased in every quarter. Light rail (modern streetcars, trolleys, and heritage trolleys) had the highest percentage of annual ridership increase among all modes, with an 8.3 percent increase in 2008. The light rail system that started in November 2007 in Charlotte, NC showed the highest percentage of increase with an annual 862 percent increase. The New Orleans, LA light rail system, which is still recovering from Hurricane Katrina, had an annual increase of 218 percent. Light rail systems with double digit ridership in 2008 were located in the following areas: Buffalo (23.9%); Philadelphia (23.3 %); Sacramento (14.4%); Baltimore (13.7%); Minneapolis (12.3%); Salt Lake City (12.3%); the state of New Jersey (10.9%); Denver (10.5%); and Dallas (10.2%).

Commuter rail increased in 2008 by 4.7 percent. The commuter rail systems with the double digit ridership growth rate in 2008 were located in the following areas: Albuquerque (35.1%); Portland, ME (26.5%); Seattle (23.8%); Pompano Beach, FL (22.9%); Harrisburg-Philadelphia (17.7%); New Haven (17.5%); Oakland (16.1%); Stockton, CA (14.7%); Dallas-Fort Worth (14.1%); San Carlos, CA (12.5%).

Heavy rail (subways) ridership increased by 3.5% in 2008. The heavy rail systems with the highest increases in ridership for 2008 were in the following cities: San Juan

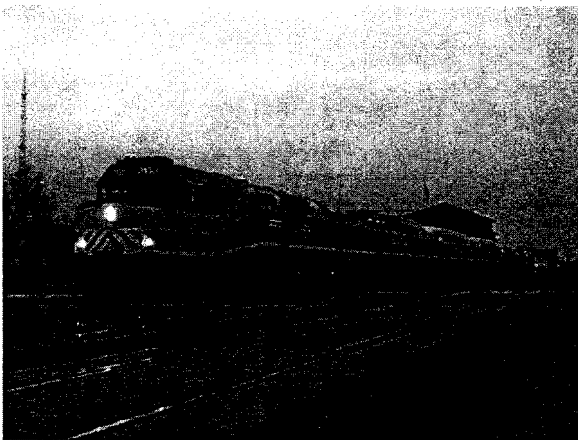
(13.3%); Lindenwold, NJ (9.9%); Atlanta (8.6%); Miami (8.2%), Boston (7.9%), and Los Angeles (7.7%).

Bus service saw an increase of 3.9 percent, but in communities with a population of less than 100,000, bus services saw an increase of 9.3 percent in 2008. Major increases by large bus agencies occurred in the following cities: Phoenix (11.5%); San Antonio (10.2%); San Diego (10.0%); St. Louis (8.9%); Baltimore (8.7%); and Denver (8.6%).

Demand response (paratransit) increased in 2008 by 5.9 percent.

To see the complete APTA ridership report go to <http://www.apta.com/research/stats/ridership>

For more information on public transportation's role in climate change and energy independence, go to <http://publictransportation.org/takesusthere/>



## **Metro Board Report for March 2009**

**by Kymberleigh Richards, Public & Legislative Affairs Director**

Transit Funding and You: The loss of the State Transit Assistance account funds has now been calculated as causing a \$231 million annual operating deficit for Metro, after what Measure R funds that are allowed to be used for existing service operations are applied. This is equivalent to canceling all Metro-operated service south of the I-10 freeway and dissolving the Gateway Cities and South Bay sectors.

Some of the difficulty in solving the deficit comes from the Board's previous decision to defer this year's fare increase to next year, the five-year freeze on senior/disabled/student fares, and the maintenance of peak bus seat capacity through November 2010 under the New Service Plan (the last remaining vestige of the consent decree). In addition, provisions in Metro's union contracts prohibit transfer of entire service areas to other operators and restrict layoffs. Solving the deficit completely through the farebox would require a fare structure based on a \$2.75 cash fare.

Breda Gets "Last Chance": Mayor Villaraigosa's much-publicized attempt to salvage relations between Metro and Anselmo Breda over the current contract – under which Breda is hopelessly behind on delivery of light rail vehicles (LRVs) needed for the Eastside Gold Line extension this year (and Expo next year) – was undone by a substitute motion by Richard Katz to extend the options on the remaining vehicle order until the end of May, by which time Breda has to

provide concrete answers to Metro's concerns.

During discussion of the motion, which included testimony from every local labor union that would receive a contract if Breda makes good its promise to build a manufacturing facility in Los Angeles, it became obvious that if Breda doesn't make some iron clad guarantees regarding its past deficiencies, the Board will go to bid on a new LRV contract in June.

Which LRTP is the Current LRTP?: In a move that was framed as "complying with the terms of the law", John Fasana brought directly to the Board a motion adding all of the Measure R projects to the 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan, which led to several people asking why this can't wait until the 2008 LRTP is redone to include those projects. After discussion that included public comment from representatives of several cities who belong to the Metro Gold Line Construction Authority (hmmm ... I wonder if that was Fasana's motivation?), Zev Yaroslavsky moved to forward the whole matter to committee, where it should have been vetted in the first place.

TAP, TAP, TAP: Cubic gets another \$23 million to integrate the Expo Line and the Eastside Gold Line into the TAP Regional Central Computer; Booz Allen Hamilton gets another \$2.1 million for regional integration of TAP with the munis. Metro Board gets a complaint from the Transportation Communications Union (which represents Metro's clerical staff) that work was "improperly transferred to contractors".

*(Continued on Page 10)*



## **Metro Board Report for March 2009 Continued**

Jane Matsumoto thinks all the gates will be installed by this time next year. Draw your own conclusion as to how this soap opera will play out.

Bicycle Parking: 224 more bike lockers and 150 more bike racks were approved for installation at the most popular Red and Orange Line stations, plus a handful of Blue, Green and Gold Line stations, plus the El Monte and Artesia Transit Centers, to be installed in phases by June 2011. The need was proven: System wide, the waiting list for lockers went from 98 in May of last year to 199 in September. 40% of the \$420,000 price tag will be paid by Rail Capital Improvement Program and Federal Transportation Enhancement funds.

DMU Apparently Stands for "Dead Multiple Unit": The results of a study that was originally proposed back in June 2006 and which took more than a year to complete after a contract was awarded for it in November 2007 were released and it turns out that Diesel Multiple Unit technology is not feasi-

ble for use in the Los Angeles region. The main reason for the conclusion is that while DMUs are more fuel efficient and less polluting than the engines used by Metrolink now for commuter rail service (the only feasible use for DMU technology), the capital start-up costs, including a new maintenance facility, make it non-cost effective. Not to mention that there are no manufacturers of DMUs that comply with current Federal Railroad Administration requirements. The study did look at overlaying DMU service on top of the Metrolink schedule, but the operational coordination issues are a nightmare.

Where Do All The People Go?: With apologies for usurping the title of a song by 80's one-hit wonders the Monroes, the Board approved \$1.2 million for a system-wide onboard origin-destination survey. The last such survey was done in 2001, and is necessary to satisfy federal requirements for New Starts project funding.

Staff reports on these items, as well as other matters of interest, will be available for reading at the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. 🚆 🚆



## MEMBERS IN ACTION

Carlos Osuna attended the Foothill Transit rodeo held Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and will be at the regional rodeo to be held April 18th.

J.K. Drummond's letter "Bus Changes Add Hassles" appeared in the March 12<sup>th</sup> Daily Breeze regarding planned changes to the 444 etc. for the dual hub.

Alex Friedman sent e-mails to Metro, members of the Metro Westside/Central Governance Board and the Metro Board regarding reductions in service this June impacting Metro Rapid 704 service to/from Santa Monica (west of the shortline at Westwood Blvd.).

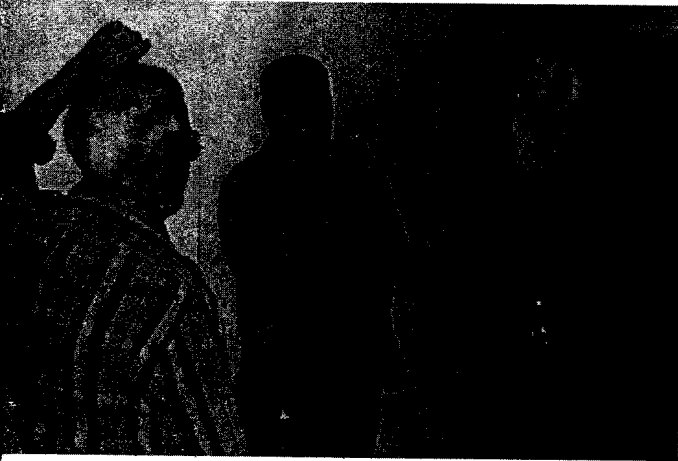
Ken Ruben attended the Westside Cities of Government meeting held in Santa Monica on March 19<sup>th</sup>. He also attended the Westside-Central Sector Governance Council meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Along with Hank Fung Ruben also attended the San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Ruben also attended the annual Winterail. Plus as of April 1<sup>st</sup> Ruben will

be serving a three-year term as one of the Directors for the Pacific Railroad Society. Among those congratulating him upon his election were Richard Phelps (Amtrak Vice-President for Transportation), Jack Rich (a Product Manager for Amtrak in Southern California) and Paul Dyson (President of RailPAC).

Andy Novak attended the annual rail fan photo exhibition known as Winterail in Stockton. At the end of February Andy was sent to Las Vegas by Coach America to sell tickets for a shuttle to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway for the Nascar race on March 1<sup>st</sup>. On race day Coach America hauled upwards of 12,000 people to and from the race.

The blog transportpolitic cited Erik Griswold's research in discussing "AnsaldoBreda Problems Aren't in Los Angeles Alone"

<http://thetransportpolitic.com/2009/03/26/ansaldobreda-problems-arent-in-los-angeles-alone/>



*Conan Cheung ponders questions posed by J.K. Drummond and Craig Weingerten.*

*(Photo and caption by John Ulloth)*