The Future of Amtrak in the Northeast
A Members Only Event

You can't be involved in the Transportation Industry in New England and not have heard at least some of the discussions regarding the future of Amtrak. But what is it really all about, and why is everyone talking about it?

In 1971, then President Richard Nixon nationalized America's passenger trains by directing the US Department of Transportation to take over a group of private railroads that were bankrupt, forming Amtrak. At the time, it was expected that the newly created entity, subsidized by Federal Funds, would be profitable within three years. Unfortunately, the company has yet to turn a profit, even some 35 years later, and current subsidy levels are near $1 Billion per year, which is substantially less than Amtrak says it needs.

In 2003, President Bush proposed the Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act to address what his administration sees as the failure of the existing model to provide successful, efficient and profitable intercity passenger rail services.

The Act transitions Amtrak into three companies:
1. A private passenger rail company that would operate trains under contract to individual states and multi-state compacts.
2. A private rail infrastructure company that would maintain and operate the infrastructure on the Northeast Corridor under contract to a multi-state Northeast Corridor Compact. The Federal Government would own the tracks, stations and other infrastructure and would lease those components back to the Northeast Corridor Compact.
3. The National Passenger Rail Corporation, a government corporation that would retain Amtrak's right of access to tracks owned by freight railroads, and the Amtrak corporate name. These rights of access, and rights to use the corporate name would be leased to states and multi-state compacts that wish to provide passenger rail service.

The Act proposes to shift passenger rail services to a model similar other transportation modes: a system of federal/state partnerships. States that wish to provide passenger rail service would be eligible for 50% Federal match of State Funds for capital investments, and would advertise operations of the system for competitive selection.

But what does this really mean for the States, and for the public? In a time when transportation funding becomes tighter each year, how will this new responsibility to fund rail operations and capital improvements affect other programs? Is it possible that passenger rail service in some areas would just disappear under this model, if States don't believe their available funds can support the service? Is that necessarily a bad thing, or might that simply be a reality of the market for transportation services?

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Become a WTS Member

Join WTS! Benefit from personal and professional fulfillment opportunities such as:
- Professional Development
- Informative Programs and Events
- Leadership Training Program

For more information, please contact our Membership Chair, Theresa Albanese-Pereyo, at (860) 426-1367 or talbanese@gfmt.com. Or, simply visit the official WTS website: www.wtsinternational.org. Don't forget to select CT Valley as your primary chapter!
The President's Message

Our target over the next two years is quite simple: increase membership and involvement! That being said, this is also our biggest challenge.

In the past, the WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter has relied heavily on the energy and dedication of a core group of people. Although they have done a fabulous job, they need more help. They need YOU to help generate ideas for programs that increase our visibility—programs that help you grow professionally because the topic was educational and the session promoted effective and useful networking.

So with that in mind, we will be focusing our attention on the benefits of membership in WTS. Some of our targets over the next two years include members-only programs (see adjacent article), networking sessions, education and training programs, and good old fun.

But, we will not be doing this in a vacuum. You—both existing and prospective members—will be receiving calls, e-mails and correspondence from us. We want to know what you are looking for from this organization and how we can help you become and remain successful in your careers. And equally important, we want to use your networking capabilities to help us grow!

This is going to be an exciting and challenging couple of years. With your help, the success and growth of the WTS Connecticut Valley Chapter will surpass other established chapters across the country. Let's put Connecticut back in the forefront.

Membership without involvement is like transportation without movement. Let's stop the bottleneck and get movement back into our chapter.

Jeanne

An Informative Presentation:
Cable-Stayed Bridges

On May 2, 2006, Wade Bonzon of Figg Engineering Group gave an informative presentation on Cable-Stayed Bridges. The group of attendees included professionals from both public and private sectors. Mr. Bonzon highlighted the construction techniques used on two projects: the Maumee River Crossing in Toledo, Ohio and the Penobscot Narrows Bridge near Portland, Maine.

The Maumee River Crossing, currently under construction, is the largest single project in Ohio Department of Transportation history. Figg designed a new cable-stay cradle system for initial use on the bridge, which eliminates stay anchors in the pylon, allowing for a more slender and aesthetic pylon. This reduced the required cross-sectional dimensions of the pylon, thus reducing material costs. In addition, it eliminated the need for the large, complex, and expensive steel anchorage boxes common in cable-stayed bridge pylons. The cradle also allows the inclusion of test strands that can be removed at any time during the service life of the bridge to evaluate the condition of the stays with no impact to the traveling public.

The Penobscot Narrows Bridge, currently scheduled to be completed later this year, is using a new project delivery technique called "owner-facilitated design-build". Using this technique, the Maine DOT first selected Figg to design the bridge, and then selected a Contractor after plans were completed to the 30% level. Final design plans were then completed by FIGG with input from the Contractor. The bridge has an 1161-foot long main span, and is being cast in place using form travelers. The cable stays incorporate an inert-gas encapsulation system. This is a major advance in cable-stay technology that protects the stays from corrosion by immersing them permanently in inert Nitrogen gas. The system is designed to be easily monitored and maintained by the Maine DOT.

With the construction on the Pearl Harbor Memorial ("Q") Bridge scheduled to begin next year, it was interesting to learn about two other major bridge projects—the unique challenges that presented themselves, and the successful solutions.

~Submitted by Wade Bonzon and Sara Capps

View of the Penobscot Narrows Bridge from a crane on a foggy morning. Photo by Steve Foster, Cianbro/Reed&Reed Safety Supervisor
2006-2008 Executive Board

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Events             OPEN POSITION

Bylaws             OPEN POSITION

Scholarship        OPEN POSITION

Interested in becoming more involved in WTS?

Prospective members and current members are always welcome at our monthly board meetings. Please contact any of the board members for more information.

We have three open committee chair positions—Events, Bylaws, and Scholarship—that are waiting to be filled by a WTS member who would like to become more involved in the chapter.

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On Wednesday, September 27, 2006, the WTS CT Valley Chapter, in conjunction with the Boston, Greater New York and Rhode Island Chapters, will host a Members-Only panel discussion on the Future of Amtrak in the Northeast at the Omni Hotel in New Haven.

Members of the panel will include: Mr. Clifford Eby, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Rail Administration; Mr. H. James Boice, Deputy Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Transportation; Mr. Christopher Boylan, Deputy Executive Director of Corporate Affairs and Communications, Metropolitan Transportation Authority; Ms. Astrid Glynn, Deputy Secretary of Multimodal Planning, Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation; and Mr. Stephen Devine, Chief of Intermodal Program Development, Rhode Island Department of Transportation. Our Moderator will be Ms. Judy Gott, Executive Director of Connecticut’s South Central Region Council of Governments.

Hope to see you there!

~Submitted by Leslie Haines
WTS—A Local Organization with International Benefits

After being involved with WTS at a variety of levels we would like to share the many opportunities that WTS local members have to become involved and fully benefit from WTS International.

WTS International has a magnificent website with real time updates for the most current information on both the Local and International levels. Please visit the site at your earliest convenience: www.wtsinternational.org

WTS International offers several scholarships and programs open to the entire WTS International Membership. These can all be found on the website under professional development. If you have any questions regarding these benefits you are urged to contact any of your Local WTS CT Valley Board Members or any WTS International Board Member. The wide variety of scholarships are offered through WTS and dedicated to advancing educational opportunities for women pursuing careers in transportation. The programs have proven to enhance leadership skills for utilization in fast track career paths in this transportation industry. One of the greatest benefits of WTS is the honor of being chosen to attend a program and the opportunity to connect with WTS International and to NETWORK.

We would also urge you to glance through the WTS Membership directory—you will be impressed with what you find. It is a guarantee if you contact anyone in this directory, identify yourself as a WTS member, you will get their attention and an immediate response to any questions, or an inquiry regarding a company or any other transportation information you are seeking. If you attend a WTS International Conference, JUST ONE, you will get hooked and you will meet people who will knock your socks off, help you when you need help and let you fly by the seat of their pants (skirt). Together and separately we have both attended several conferences and this has become a highlight of our year. Each International Conference is different, yet equally as exciting. Each year we both have met new people, made new friends, and caught up with old friends and colleagues. Upon return, we were refreshed, gained new insight, were re-energized, and full of new ideas—all from networking, attending dynamic workshops and presentations. Nothing will give you greater satisfaction, motivation and at the same time a true feeling of rejuvenation.

WTS has been a key component for us to better understand what it takes to move ahead, define and reach interim career goals, to set and prioritize daily activities, and to creatively network and utilize this information throughout our careers and personal lives. WTS is what you make of it. WTS can open doors—you are responsible for knocking. To us, our success in our careers is a top priority. And our success has been in part due to WTS and our active involvement in the organization. Therefore, WTS is a priority for us. IT IS worth the time and money! You too can have this same success, get motivated, become an active member and BENEFIT from WTS at the Local and International Levels. You will not regret it!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Boyle, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Lori Long, DMJM Harris, Inc.

~Both CT Valley Chapter Past Presidents

IF you would prefer to receive the WTS CT Valley Newsletter by mail...

IF you know of another transportation professional who would benefit from receiving the Newsletter...

Please contact Sara Capps at (860) 513-1503 or scapps@beta-inc.com.