



The Voice of the Railroad Construction Industry

NRC Bulletin - November 4, 2015

www.nrcma.org

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2016 NRC Conference Registration - Hotel del Coronado Wait List and Overflow Hotel Information Available

Please register now and make your travel plans for the **2016 NRC Conference & NRC-REMSA Exhibition - January 6-9, 2016 at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, California.**

The NRC will be holding its 38th Annual Conference on Wednesday, January 6, 2016 through Saturday, January 9, 2016 at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, California.

Please visit the 2016 NRC Conference webpage at www.nrcma.org/2016nrcconference to register and for detailed conference information.

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New Member

Guzzler Manufacturing



www.guzzler.com

Simmons Railroad Group LLC



www.simmonsrailroadgroup.com

NRC Toolbox Talks

The NRC Safety Committee has revised and updated the NRC's Toolbox Talks. They are available for download at:
<http://www.nrcma.org/safety>.

A version is available in PDF format as well as in Microsoft Word so that NRC member companies can make company or job specific changes.

Member-Get-A-Member Campaign

Help Grow the NRC and Strengthen our Voice

Three options to help recruit new



Registration: Registration for the 2016 NRC Conference can be [completed here on the NRC website](#), or by completing and [mailing in this form](#) . Completed forms should be sent to our office at 500 New Jersey Ave NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20001. Checks may be made payable to: NRC. NRC accepts Visa, MasterCard and American Express for credit card payments. If you have any questions, please contact Matt Bell at mbell@nrcma.org or 202-715-1264.

Hotel Information: The conference will be held at the Hotel del Coronado, conveniently located on Coronado Island about a 10 minute drive from downtown San Diego. The NRC block is currently full, but **to be put on the waiting list, call Hotel del Coronado at 800-468-3533**. *While not guaranteed, it is likely that some hotel rooms will become available in mid-to-late December as the conference approaches, and at that time the hotel will contact individuals from the waiting list.*

Overflow Hotels:

As our recommended overflow option, the NRC has reserved a limited number of discounted rooms at the **Glorietta Bay** Inn, which is directly across the street from the Hotel del Coronado at 1630 Glorietta Boulevard, Coronado, CA 92118. **To book, call 800-283-9383**. The

members:

1. Reply to this email with names and contact information of potential members and we'll send them a membership information package.

2. Make a quick introductory call, email the potential member and CC mbell@nrcma.org.

3. Direct a potential new member to www.nrcma.org where they can learn more about the NRC and join online.

Visit the NRC Bid Notifications page on the NRC website at:

www.nrcma.org/bids

Publicize your Rail Industry
Event on

www.nrcma.org/industry_calendar

If you would like to submit an event for posting on the Industry Calendar, please email info@nrcma.org.

View our profile on 

Follow us on 

NRC rates are \$210/night for a suite or a bay view king room, or \$179/night for a deluxe king room.

Two additional overflow options are below:

Best Western Plus Suites Hotel Coronado Island - 1.3 miles away

<http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/US/CA/Coronado-hotels/BEST-WESTERN-PLUS-Suites-Hotel-Coronado-Island/Hotel-Overview.do?propertyCode=05481>

275 Orange Avenue

Coronado, California 92118

Phone: 619-437-1666

Price: \$171 (King Room), as of 11/4/15

Nights Available: 1/5/16-1/10/16

Loews Coronado Bay Resort - 4.7 miles from the Hotel del Coronado

www.loewshotels.com/en/Coronado-Bay-Resort

4000 Loews Coronado Bay Road, Coronado, CA 92118

Phone: 619-424-4000

Price: \$219 (2 Doubles); \$239 (1 King w/ Pool View); \$249 (1 King w/ Marina View), as as of 11/4/15

Nights Available: 1/5/16-1/10/16

Exhibition: Exhibit space for the 2016 NRC-REMSA

Exhibition is on sale now. The hall is more than 80% full, but spaces are still available. You may view the full [floor plan](#)

and sign up for a booth online by [clicking here](#). The

Exhibition begins with a reception the evening of

Wednesday, January 6 and concludes the morning of

Friday, January 8. For more information about reserving an exhibit space, booth pricing, show hours, and more, please

visit www.remsa.org/nrc-remsa2016. Please contact

Urszula Soucie with REMSA at 202-715-2921 or

soucie@remsa.org for all exhibition related questions.

***Please note that the exhibit hall this year will be held in a tent in the Hotel del Coronado parking lot. The 35,000 square foot tent will be constructed by Classic Party Rentals, the premier name in event tent rentals. This is apparently what happens when the size of a conference grows every year - we're running out of ballrooms that can fit us!

Golf Tournament: NRC's 2016 Golf Tournament will be held on Friday January 8 at the Sycuan Golf Course (3007 Dehesa Rd, El Cajon, CA 92019), located approximately 24 miles from the Hotel del Coronado.

Golf play will begin at 12:00 pm with a shotgun start. The Tournament format is a four-person scramble, allowing players with varying ability the opportunity to play and have a great time. A box lunch will be provided prior to the Tournament. Rental clubs are available. The Tournament registration fee includes carts, green fees, lunch and refreshments, driving range, putting green and prizes.

To register for the tournament, [please sign up as a part of the 2016 NRC Conference registration process](#), [fill out this form](#) or contact Matt Bell via email at mbell@nrcma.org.

Sailing Tournament: The first ever NRC Sailing Tournament will also be held on Friday, January 8th from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. Group transportation departs the hotel at 1pm, with expected return by 5pm.

The sparkling waters of the San Diego Harbor will provide a perfect backdrop the sailing event. Each person will be an official "crew member" of their vessel, vying to push their team into the winner's circle. The teams will tackle an exciting two-mile course over a period of 2 hours.

Sailing boats come with a captain who will brief the crew on strategy, techniques and sailing instructions before the race. The Tournament registration fee also includes a box lunch, snacks and beverages on the boat.

To register for the tournament, [please sign up as a part of the 2016 NRC Conference registration process](#), [fill out this form](#), or contact Matt Bell via email at mbell@nrcma.org.

NRC Membership - Did we mention discounted conference registration and exhibit booths rates for NRC members? If your company is not already a member of the NRC, [you may join online by clicking this link](#).

For all 2016 NRC Conference information, please visit www.nrcma.org/2016nrcconference.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the 2016 NRC Conference. You can also contact NRC President Chuck Baker at 202.715.2920 / cbaker@nrcma.org.

Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you all in January!

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NRC New Member Profiles

Guzzler Manufacturing is a leading provider of vacuum solutions for heavy industrial applications. Guzzler manufactures a High-Rail option for their Guzzler Classic model which offers the truck mounted industrial vacuum for the extreme demands of the rail industry.

For more information contact Kristy Gussarson, 847-622-7044, KGussarson@elginsweeper.com.

Simmons Railroad Group has extensive experience servicing, maintaining and building tracks of all types. Simmons is able to offer a wide range of services including the repair, maintenance and rehabilitation of all types of timber bridges. Simmons's range of services include track maintenance contracts, new track construction, cross tie renewal, rail replacement, road crossing repair and replacement, and rail welding services.

For more information contact Craig Simmons, 225-673-2021, cfalcon@simmonsrail.com.

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Cooke Co. Rail Project at Heritage Cooperative

On October 30, U.S. Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH-04) joined National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association (NRC) member - Fritz-Rumer Cooke Co., Inc. - for a tour of their track project at Heritage Cooperative.

Mr. Webster gave an overview of Fritz-Rumer Cooke and their current operations. Fritz-Rumer Cooke is a railroad and general contractor based in Columbus, OH. The company was established in 1879 and has been in continuous operation for over 135 years. They specialize in track design, track construction, track repair, track inspection and related services. They are family owned and operated, and the fifth generation of the Cooke family now manages the company. They serve customers throughout Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana, and Illinois.

Mr. Webster led a tour of Fritz-Rumer Cooke's project at Heritage Cooperative, a member-owned cooperative founded in 2009 which serves over 3,500 farmer members, and over 4,000 rural and urban customers. Fritz-Rumer Cooke designed and is currently constructing 11,457 feet of track to serve the new facility. The majority of the track consists of a 1.24-mile-long loop track to handle 90-car unit trains, and is one of only two such loop tracks in the state of Ohio at an agricultural complex. The track design avoided all wet lands on the project and includes a wye connection with CSX Transportation's mainline. This type of connection allows trains to enter and exit the facility in either direction, reducing delays at any nearby road crossings.

Heritage Cooperative broke ground May 14, 2014 for the Ag Campus and Research Farm. This state-of-the-art facility is being built on a 277 acre plot and will include an express unit grain terminal; a 30,000 ton dry fertilizer warehouse; and a 10,000 ton liquid UAN (nitrogen fertilizer) storage with 24/7 distribution. All of these commodities can be shipped/received by rail at the site.

To read the full press release, please [click here](#).

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US Senator Mitch McConnell Field Representative Shane Noem Tours TRAM Construction in Garrison, KY

On October 20, U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) Field Representative Shane Noem joined NRC member TRAM Construction for a tour of their facility in Garrison, Kentucky.

Terry LeMaster gave an overview of TRAM Construction and their current operations. TRAM is a family owned and operated contracting company that provides track services and railroad materials for the private and public sectors. TRAM currently has 25 employees, and has served clients throughout the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States for over thirty years.

Terry's introduction to the railroad construction business began with Chessie System where he worked as a camp car cook. His career progressed, and it was during his time working as a foreman that he saw a need to provide local industries with track repairs and maintenance. He did so on nights and weekends, and quickly developed a reputation for providing quality work. In 1983, Terry was awarded a contract from Mead Paper Company, and the dream of owning his own business became a reality.

Noem and guests went on a walk-through of the facility, where TRAM maintains a large inventory of relay rail and other railroad track material. This material is received by rail car at the Garrison, KY location, where it is sorted to use for future track projects or processed and sold as piling or scrap to local foundries.

To read the full press release, please [click here](#).

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U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross Tours Railroad Construction Co. of South Jersey Project at Port of Paulsboro

On October 15, U.S. Congressman Donald Norcross (D-NJ-01) joined NRC member Railroad Construction Co. of South Jersey (RCCSJ) - for a tour of their facility, and their

project at the Port of Paulsboro.

Jim Daloisio gave an overview of RCCSJ and their current operations. RCCSJ offers a wide range of services to their customers including track design, drafting, and layout; emergency track repair; track inspection, maintenance, removal, and rehabilitation; high production tie and rail gangs; grade crossing installation and rehabilitation; and more. RCCSJ serves the Greater Philadelphia region, including New Jersey, Delaware, and Eastern Pennsylvania. RCCSJ has been family owned and operated since its founding in 1969.

The Congressman and guests went on a walk-through of RCCSJ's facility, which has over 14 acres of storage yard, a 60,000 square foot warehouse, a 13,000 square foot mechanic's garage, 20,000 square feet of covered storage, a fully equipped training facility, and a new office building.

At the Port of Paulsboro, Congressman Norcross and guests learned about the construction of a new marine terminal at which 14,000 feet of new track and nine turnouts are being built.

Attendees discussed the importance of extending the Positive Train Control (PTC) deadline to avoid serious consequences and costs for not only companies directly affected by the railroad industry, but also for the local and national economies. In 2008, Congress mandated railroads to install PTC on lines that carry passengers and/or toxic by inhalation gas, such as chlorine and anhydrous ammonia. The deadline for installation was December 31, 2015, before being pushed back 3-5 years as part of the short-term extension of the surface transportation bill that passed Congress and was signed by the President last week.

To read the full press release, please [click here](#).

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NRC 2015 Safety Award Applications Now Open

The NRC is inviting all member contractors to participate in

the 2015 NRC/RT&S Contractor Safety Award Contest.

[2015 Safety Awards Application](#)

[2015 Safety Awards Criteria](#)

Underwritten by Commercial Insurance Associates, these awards seek to recognize those NRC Contractor Members with strong workplace safety programs. In addition to honoring our own members, we believe this safety contest helps demonstrate our commitment to safety and sends a positive message to the railroads and transit authorities with which we do business. It is also an excellent way to let government regulators know that we understand the importance of providing a safe work environment.

Companies that participate in the contest typically find that it is a useful way to make sure that their safety program is keeping up with industry best practices, and also find that winning an award in the contest can be a very effective marketing tool.

Note that applicants must be NRC member companies. No project entities/JVs are allowed to apply. Companies can include information and data from project entities/JVs in which they are the managing partner.

Awards are presented to applicants in four different categories, based on the number of employees. The categories will be evenly split based on average number of employees in the time period of January 1, 2015 through September 30, 2015.

We will publicly announce the winners at the upcoming NRC Conference and Exhibition (www.nrcma.org/2016nrcconference) at the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego, CA, in addition to publicizing the winners on the NRC website and in the industry trade magazine Railway Track & Structures (RT&S).

The application must be received in our Washington, DC office no later than November 30, 2015. *This year, digital submissions are encouraged as outlined in the application criteria, for your convenience.*

Please don't hesitate to contact me (mbell@nrcma.org, 202-715-1264) or David Armstrong of Commercial Insurance Associates (darmstrong@com-ins.com, 615-515-6048) if you have any questions.

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NRC 2015 Railroad Construction Project of the Year Award Applications Now Open

The Railroad Construction Project of the Year Award has two categories: the Large Project Category (projects with budgets over \$10 million) and the Small Project Category (projects with budgets of \$10 million or less). The purpose of this award is to honor innovation, expertise, and quality project management applied towards the successful execution of a rail construction project by NRC member companies in 2015. Any type of rail construction project is eligible for the award, including freight rail, industrial track, rail transit, commuter rail, intercity passenger rail, rail on port facilities, and rail on military facilities.

For **Large Project award criteria**, [click here](#).

For **Small Project award criteria**, [click here](#).

For a list of **past winners**, see the [Awards Page](#).

[Click here](#) to apply for a project award. Applications are due by November 13, 2015.

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NRC 2015 Field Employee of the Year Award Applications Now Open

The purpose of this award is to recognize and honor the rail contracting employee who has demonstrated the most dedication and excellence in his/her field. The NRC Field Employee of the Year goes above and beyond what is required of him/her on a regular basis, demonstrates innovation and perseverance, is a team leader, and a great asset to the company. He/she must also possess a strong commitment to safety and customer satisfaction. Any field employee of an NRC member company is eligible for the award. Only one award will be given to the employee who best addresses the stated criteria.

[Click here](#) for Field Employee of the Year criteria. For a list of the past winners, see the [Awards Page](#).

[Click here](#) to nominate someone. Nominations are due by November 13, 2015.

NRC Hall of Fame

The purpose of the NRC Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor those individuals who have made significant contributions to the NRC and the rail construction and maintenance industry. Any current or former employee or owner of a NRC member company is eligible for induction to the Hall of Fame. Members will be inducted into the Hall of Fame when the NRC Hall of Fame Induction Committee deems it appropriate. In any given year, multiple members may be inducted, but in other years there may be no inductees.

For NRC Hall of Fame criteria, [click here](#). To submit a nomination, [click here](#). **Nominations are due by November 13, 2015 for the Class of 2016.**

Past NRC Hall of Fame Inductees include:

James J. (Jim) Daloisio
Chairman and CEO,
Railroad Construction Co. of South Jersey

Bill Herzog
Founder and Owner,
Herzog Contracting Corp

Thomas Philip Stout ("Phil") Stout
Executive,
Atlas Railroad Construction and Marta Track Constructor



NRC President's Legislative Update

Surface Transportation (MAP-21) Re-Authorization:

The current legislation, which funds the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account (essentially all federal funding for rail transit other than New Starts), has now been extended to November 20, 2015. Full re-authorization discussions are well underway, the Senate has now passed a bill, and the House bill is on the House floor as we speak.

The underlying issues of funding source and funding levels are still somewhat unresolved, but likely to be glossed over in this round. At current rates, the HTF and MTA spend about \$53b/year while only taking in \$35b/year. The Senate bill proposes filling this gap for three years with about \$45b from a variety of revenue sources and offsets, none having much to do with transportation, including lowering the dividend rate by the Federal Reserve to member banks and selling 90 million gallons of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The House bill will mostly copy that approach. Beyond overall funding levels, specific provisions of interest to the NRC that are on the table in this legislation include:

- Intercity passenger rail funding
- Multimodal freight project funding
- Flexibility for State DOTs to use non-gas tax funds for rail projects
- Expediting project delivery
- The Section 130 grade crossing program
- Funding a PNRS/TIGER program
- PTC funding and implementation issues
- TIFIA
- Infrastructure Bank/Infrastructure financing authority
- Truck size and weight maximum laws

As noted previously, the Senate bill, the DRIVE Act, passed the Senate on July 30. The bill contains 6 years worth of policy and authorizations, but only enough funding to fill the gap between gas tax revenue and spending for 3 years. The bill would spend about \$53b in year 1 and then grow at about 3% a year, which is about a 3% bump over baseline highway and transit spending - not nearly sufficient to address our country's pressing infrastructure needs, but a welcome start.

The highway and freight sections of the bill includes three new funding programs which would have the potential to benefit freight rail projects:

- a \$1.5b/year average state-based freight formula program which has some limited eligibility (10%) for intermodal projects, funded with real highway trust fund dollars;
- a \$300m/year average Assistance for Major Projects Program (AMP), which is a TIGER-like program which has some limited eligibility (20%) for rail projects, also funded with real highway trust fund dollars; and
- a \$200m/year Freight Assistance Grants program, which is another TIGER-like program designed specifically

for freight projects and which would have no modal limitations, but alas is not funded with real highway trust fund dollars and is instead only a general fund authorization, which would be dependent on future appropriations.

The bill also continues a few longstanding programs that are of interest and benefit to NRC members, including:

- continuing to dedicate \$220m/year to the Section 130 grade crossing program
- continuing the TIFIA loan program, although dropping the funding from \$1b/year all the way down to \$300m/year
- continuing the Surface Transportation Program at an average of \$10.4b/year, which is a very slight increase over current funding. This is mostly a road program, but does contain some flexibility for local governments to use funding for multi-modal projects

The transit portion of the bill grows slightly faster than the overall bill, and in general highway and transit and rail maintain their historic 80/20 split in the bill. Notably the bill does include a one-time infusion of \$199m into the transit account to fund the installation of positive train control for commuter railroads. A drop in the bucket, but a welcome drop.

In general, the NRC is pleased with the bill.

On the House side, the bill is a bit smaller than the Senate side, but otherwise is generally similar in concept. The highway and freight section of the bill includes one major new funding program, which would have the potential to benefit freight rail projects: The Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Program, funded at \$750m/year, has some limited eligibility (about 11%) for freight and intermodal projects, plus unlimited eligibility for grade crossings and grade separations, and is funded with real highway trust fund dollars. In addition, the program contains a 10% set-aside for smaller projects, and the original draft of the bill limited eligibility within that set-aside to highway projects only - until the NRC joined with the ASLRRRA and CAGTC to play the lead role in working with Congress to get the eligibility within that set-aside fixed to include intermodal, multimodal, and grade crossing projects.

As in the Senate bill, the House bill also continues a few longstanding programs that are of interest and benefit to NRC members, including:

- continuing to dedicate funding to the Section 130 grade crossing program. Starts at \$220m/year, but rises

\$5m/year.

- continuing the TIFIA loan program, although dropping the funding from \$1b/year even farther than the Senate bill, all the way down to \$200m/year
- continuing the Surface Transportation Program at an average of \$10.5b/year, which is a slight increase over current funding. This is mostly a road program, but does contain some flexibility for local governments to use funding for multi-modal projects. The House bill would also slightly transform the program into more of a flexible block grant program.

The transit portion of the House bill would grow at the same rate as the overall bill, and in general highway and transit and rail maintain their historic 80/20 split in the bill. The House bill does not include any contract authority funding for the installation of positive train control for commuter railroads.

Truck size and weights:

After a highly visible and public debate in 2012, MAP-21 did not change TSW limits but instead included a two year study of the issue. The initial study results have concluded that current laws and regulations should remain unchanged. In the meantime however, advocates of larger and heavier trucks continue to push to make piecemeal changes in State laws, and also to make changes to Federal law through the appropriations process. The NRC will continue to oppose these changes, with the opposition being led by safety groups. The House appropriations bill discussed below does include multiple provisions allowing and even mandating certain types of bigger trucks, and the Senate appropriations bill also includes a provision allowing for the 'Twin 33's' configuration of two 33 foot trailers, vs the current limit of two 28 foot trailers . The NRC is opposed to these changes and will continue to work with allies to prevent passage into law.

On the good news front, there was an amendment offered by Rep Reid Ribble (R-WI) to the House transportation bill that would have allowed States to increase the maximum truck weight on interstate highways from 80,000 pounds to 91,000 pounds. This was very fiercely contested, in DC and across the country, and it was the single most controversial amendment being considered to the bill. A large coalition of business and agricultural groups supported this, including the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), which 'key-voted' it. The NRC joined with railroads (AAR and ASLRRRA), CABT, GoRail, labor, OOIDA, and a variety of

safety groups to oppose it, and we all used every tool we could (emails, phone calls, membership blasts to activate grassroots, personal Hill visits, tweets, paid advertising, etc) to get Congressmen to oppose. We prevailed on the House floor, 236-187! Thanks to all of you who helped on this fight.

Positive train control: Another piece of good news. The short-term extension of the surface transportation bill that passed in late October included a long term (3-5 years) fix for the PTC implementation deadline from 2015 to 2018-2020. The fix was controversial, but was necessary to allow for the safe and rational implementation of the system, and avoid a major rail service disruption, as many railroads would have been unwilling to operate parts of their systems in violation of federal law.

Passenger rail/Amtrak reauthorization: The previously passed Senate Commerce Committee passenger rail/Amtrak reauthorization/rail safety bill, designed as a counterpart to the House-passed passenger rail/Amtrak reauthorization bill, ended up being combined with the previously discussed Senate DRIVE Act, and is now the rail title of that bill. After the House produces a highway and transit title (probably tomorrow night), the likely scenario is a conference committee between the two bills that would include the highway, transit, and rail pieces.

The Senate bill contains some additional positive provisions beyond what was included in the House version, including authorizing more funding for Amtrak (\$1.65b/year average vs \$1.45b/year), authorizing more funding for States to invest in intercity passenger rail projects (\$570m/year average vs \$300m/year), additional RRIF loan program improvements, and aggressive project expediting/permitting improvements. The permitting streamlining changes mostly mirror what was in the Blunt/Manchin Track, Railroad, and Infrastructure Network (TRAIN) Act - they ensure that historic preservation protections do not apply to active rail lines, and also provide more efficient project development procedures for rail projects that require federal approval, similar to the process created for highway and transit projects in MAP-21.

Unfortunately, neither the Senate nor House bills contemplate the idea of providing predictable and dedicated funding for intercity passenger rail expansion, instead relying on the status quo funding model which has generally resulted in 'limp-along' funding and a mediocre passenger rail system.

The NRC will continue to work with Congress to further improve the bill before passage into law.

Fiscal Year 2016 Transportation Appropriations:

The Senate Appropriations Committee had approved a FY16 transportation appropriations bill, as had the full House. Not surprisingly given the tight overall budget for domestic discretionary investments and allocations given to the transportation sub-committees on both sides, the funding for the accounts that the NRC is most interested in is insufficient:

	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	Admin FY16 proposal	House FY16 proposal	Senate FY16 proposal
TIGER	\$600m	\$500m	\$1,250m	\$100m	\$500m
FRA including Amtrak	\$1,603m	\$1,626m	\$2,693m	\$1,377m	\$1,678m
<i>Rail Safety Grants Program</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50m
<i>RRIF Subsidy Grants</i>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4m
High Performance Passenger Rail	\$0	\$0	\$2,325m	\$0	\$0
Section 130 grade crossing set-aside within highway contract authority	\$220m	\$220m	\$220	\$350m	\$220m
FTA New Starts	\$1,943m	\$2,120m	\$3,250m	\$1,921m	\$1,585m
FTA Formula fundsFY15 Actual	\$8,595m	\$8,595m	\$13,914m	\$8,595m	\$8,595m

shown above, there are some meaningful differences between the House and Senate accounts (TIGER, FRA, grade crossings, New Starts), but the bigger problem was an insufficient total investment level. The NRC, along with many other groups, worked with Congress to increase the funding available for domestic discretionary investments, to allow these accounts some room to grow. Somewhat surprisingly, the White House and Congress were able to agree on broad budget deal, which has increased by \$25b the amount available for domestic discretionary investments this year. The NRC, through the OneRail Coalition, is urging Congress to invest as much of that funding as possible into transportation infrastructure, the lifeblood of our economy. Once that process is completed, we'll have an opportunity to go back to the House and Senate Transportation Appropriations Sub-Cmtes and argue for increases to the accounts of particular interest to the rail industry.

Short line tax credit: Legislation to extend the short line railroad tax credit bill continues to gain co-sponsors, and has now achieved a majority on both sides of the Capitol. H.R.721 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/721>) now has 248 (well more than the magic number of 218 in the House) co-sponsors and S.637 (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/637>) has 51 co-sponsors, just above half of the Senate. Action likely won't be until later this year, and the length of an extension (1 or 2 years) is uncertain.

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FTA Transit Asset Management Proposed Rule

The FTA has issued a proposed rule that would establish a National Transit Asset Management System to monitor and manage public transportation capital assets to achieve and maintain a state of good repair, improve safety, and increase reliability and performance. In addition, this notice includes proposed amendments to the National Transit Database regulations to conform to the proposed reporting requirements for transit asset management. Comments

must be received by November 30, 2015.

[Click here to view the proposed rule.](#)

Source: FTA

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Georgia Northeastern Railroad to be Acquired

Georgia Northeastern Railroad Co. Inc. (GNRR) is being acquired by SteelRiver Infrastructure Fund North America LP and two associated investment firms.

GNRR operates about 106 miles of railroad between Marietta and Mineral Bluff, Ga. In addition to SteelRiver, the other applicants for the acquisition are SteelRiver Devco Holdings LLC (Devco) and SteelRiver Devco Holdings LLC.

The acquisition would include GNRR and its subsidiary, Blue Ridge Scenic Excursions. The firms intend to acquire the railroad on or after Nov. 15. Additional financial details of the acquisition were not disclosed in the notice.

GNRR owns about 48 miles and leases about 32.74 miles from CSX Transportation. The remaining miles belong to the Georgia Department of Transportation, including industrial, spur and other track, according to the federal notice.

Source: Progressive Railroading

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MTA Board OKs \$29 Billion Capital Program

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA) board approved a revised \$29 billion 2015-19 capital program.

The plan marks the largest investment to date in the New York City agency's transportation infrastructure.

The plan calls for buying thousands of new subway cars, train cars and buses; investing \$2.8 billion in subway station improvements; finishing the installation of positive train control on Metro-North Railroad and the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR); building a new LIRR station in Elmhurst, Queens; and constructing four new Metro-North stations in underserved areas of the Bronx.

The 2015-2019 Capital Program can be viewed and downloaded from this link: http://web.mta.info/capital/pdf/Board_2015-

Source: Progressive Railroading

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Texas Central Selects Joint Venture for HSR Line's Pre-Construction Work

Texas Central Partners announced the company has selected Dallas to Houston Constructors (DHC) to perform engineering and pre-construction work for the private company's plan to build a high-speed rail line between Dallas and Houston.

The announcement is a milestone in the company's history in that it moves the proposal into the pre-construction phase.

DHC is a joint venture between Archer Western Construction and Ferrovial Adroman US Corp. Texas Central valued their work on the project at \$130 million.

Combined with the \$75 million in capital raised from private Texas-based investors, DHC's in-kind commitment means the company has secured more than \$200 million in capital and work product, which is halfway to the \$400 million needed to be committed to the project before moving to the final construction phase.

DHC's work will focus on engineering, cost estimation and construction activities and not as the project's developer. The joint venture will have no equity or ownership stake in the project and will not be involved in land acquisition.

Source: Progressive Railroading

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