

**NEWS FROM ALL ABOARD WISCONSIN**

**OCTOBER, 2015**

***Bi-State Fall Conference Coming-up in Just Over 2 Weeks!*** We’ve been talking about it for several months now, but if you haven’t taken the time to register for the **Minnesota/Wisconsin Bi-state Public Transportation Conference**, **scheduled for October 19-21 in Duluth, MN;** **NOW IS THE TIME!**  This year for the first time, All Aboard Wisconsin is an official sponsor of the conference, and along with that, there is specific passenger rail programming and breakout sessions scheduled for this year’s meeting. In addition, we’ll be joined by our friends and colleagues from **All Aboard Minnesota** for this event. ***Things you won’t want to miss:***

* We begin with a “bang” on Monday with the All Aboard Wisconsin Annual Meeting in the historic Duluth Union Depot; site of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.
* Just after the Annual Meeting, we’ll hold a **joint session with All Aboard Minnesota** to discuss passenger rail developments in both states; **with special guest speaker Ed Ellis, Chairman and President of Iowa Pacific Holdings,** talking about his company’s array of passenger rail services; including the recently inaugurated “Hoosier” in Indiana, the forthcoming service between Oklahoma City and Tulsa, and his ideas and plans for the future of privately-operated passenger rail service.
* **Tuesday special session with Minnesota and Wisconsin Department of Transportation Passenger Rail planners** with “the latest” on topics such as the **“Second Train Study”** –adding another daily Chicago-Twin Cities run opposite the Empire Builder; a Wisconsin Environmental study leading to **possible increases in “Hiawatha” service** between Chicago and Milwaukee, the **Minnesota “Northern Lights Express”** or NLX, service from the Twin Cities to Superior and Duluth; the recently announced **Federal Railroad Administration Midwest Regional Passenger Rail Study,** and several others**.**
* **Also, tour the new intermodal transportation facility – including passenger rail,** now under construction in Duluth, which will serve local and intercity buses as well as the Northern Lights Express passenger rail service.
* ***REGISTER NOW!!* Just “control/click” on this link:** [**2015 MN/WISC Public Transportation Conference & Expo**](http://mpta-transit.org/event/2015-mnwisc-public-transit-conference-expo)to go to the conference registration page.

***Representing Our Interests in Washington, DC:* A trip report from the Fall Public Transportation visit to Washington; September 14-17, 2015.**

All Aboard Wisconsin Secretary/Legislative Director Gary Goyke and I spent several days in mid-September visiting offices of Wisconsin Congressional Representatives and Senators, and meeting with their staffs and various transportation and rail – related organizations with offices in Washington. Our meetings were informative and productive, and gave us the opportunity to reiterate our support for passage of a comprehensive passenger rail bill in the Senate to match the House-passed PRIIA legislation this spring, support the extension of time needed by the railroads to finish Positive Train Control (PTC) and avoid the shut-down of passenger rail service as well as certain other shipments, and to add our voices to others in support of a long-term “fix” for Transportation funding overall.

In addition to our congressional meetings, we made sure to spend time with rail industry and labor representatives as well as the officers of national public transportation and rail trade organizations to get their insights on the goings-on in Washington, and how we in Wisconsin can support their efforts as well as how their efforts can support what we are trying to accomplish here going forward. These meetings included the **American Public Transportation Association** and it’s High Speed and Passenger Rail Committee; **The Community Transportation Association of America,** which publishes “Rail” Magazine, **SMART-Transportation Division,** which represents large portions of railroad workers both within Wisconsin and nationally, and the Washington lobbyist for the **Environmental Law and Policy Center,** a long-time promoter of passenger rail and supporter of AAW. For the first time, Gary and I met with Executive Director Anne Canby of **“One Rail”,** a relatively new national organization that represents allsectors of the rail industry, from Class I freight railroads and Amtrak to regional and short line freight railroads and commuter agencies, Rail labor, and the very important manufacturing and supply-side of the rail transportation industry. The premise of this organization is that the rail industry as a whole has more areas where it’s interests align and can be cooperatively pursued as a group, than those areas where individual sectors interests compete or on which certain members of the industry disagree. One Rail is becoming an increasingly more influential voice in Washington, and the organization’s motto “America’s Future is Riding on it” points out the crucial nature of the rail industry as a whole to our national economy and global competitiveness. It is an interesting model and one which we are investigating that might be replicated within Wisconsin to everyone’s benefit.

As with all trips such as this, the object is to undertake long-term, patient work with our representatives and others in the industry with whom we might cooperate, and with whom, our name recognition and the points we make in these meetings will be recalled when the subjects come-up for votes on the floor of Congress and positions are taken by national organizations which could help or hinder what we try to accomplish here in Wisconsin.

***Want to know more about our legislative activities?* Come hear Gary Goyke’s report at the AAW Annual Meeting in Duluth!**

***All Aboard Wisconsin is Looking for a Few Good Men and Women to Serve as Board Members!*** Our organization is fast approaching its fourth birthday, and as with any group there has been some turnover in officers and Board Members as folks retire, move out of the area, or pursue other interests. We currently have a few openings on the All Aboard Wisconsin Board of Directors, and are seeking interested and committed persons who would be willing to lend a hand, and some of their time and talent, to help our organization grow and prosper. Time commitments include preparation-for and attendance at quarterly Board Meetings, one of which is the Annual Meeting; and availability/willingness to participate in up to a half-dozen other events/meetings/activities during the year. (The number varies year-to-year, but as we grow and increase our activity level, in the interest of “full disclosure” these may become more common.)

**If you have the time and inclination to volunteer for a position on the AAW Board**, please send a letter or e-mail to AAW Secretary Gary Goyke ([*gary.goyke@gmail.com*](mailto:gary.goyke@gmail.com)*)* or mail to All Aboard Wisconsin – 754 Williamson Street, Madison, WI 53703, to express your interest and provide a brief description of your background and experience. New Board members will be appointed and begin their terms at the Annual Meeting in Duluth.

**Have You Visited the All Aboard Wisconsin Website Yet?** If you haven’tchecked-out[**http://allaboardwisconsin.com**](http://allaboardwisconsin.com)**,** why not give it a try? ***(Just “control-click” on the link at the left to go there!)*** Find out the latest news from AAW by checking our Twitter feed under the “News and Blog” button, along with current and back issues of this newsletter. Want to know more about us? The “About Us” tab gives a history of the organization, our mission, and what we’re working-on. There’s even a link to send a message to us! If you or a friend who supports our mission would like to join the AAW team, application forms and dues information are available under the “Support our Work” tab. The website is brand new, so watch for on-going improvements and expansion in the months ahead.