



ProRail Nebraska News

Dedicated to supporting and advocating for railroad
service in the State of Nebraska

Visit our web site at <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska/>

Volume XXVII

April 2017

ProRail Nebraska Annual Meeting Saturday, April 8, 2017 – 9:00 am to Noon – Omaha, NE

Where: University of Nebraska - Omaha – Milo Bail Student Center Chancellor's Room on 2nd Floor
The Milo Bail Student Center is located on the south side of Dodge St. near 62nd St. **Public Welcome!**

Time: 9:00am to about Noon (*Refreshments - 8:30am*) Meeting Sponsor: UNO Department of History

Tentative Agenda:

8:30 am - Social with refreshments

9:00 - Welcome & Introductions (Matt Roque, PRN President)

9:10 - UNL Student Passenger Rail Studies

- Metro Omaha Area Transit (Kyle McLaughlin)
- Sustainable Transportation/Energy (Steve Kirchner)

9:40 - Omaha Dodge St. Bus Rapid Transit update (Jason Rose, Omaha Metro Transit)

10:10 - ModeShift Omaha (Liz Veazey, ModeShift Board)

10:40 – Break

10:50 - Nebraska Mobility Management Study (Kari Ruse, Transit Liaison Manager, NDOR)

11:20 - Nebraska Railroad Museum Update (David Fachman, NRM President)

11:35 - NE Legislature Activities:

- Support LB339 NDOR ==> NDOT (Bob Kuzelka, PRN Vice Pres.)
- Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) Briefing (Matt Roque, PRN Pres.)

11:50 - PRN Business - Secretary & Treasurer Reports, Election of Officers (See bottom of p. 4 for candidates)

Noon - Adjourn

Registration: Free! Advance registration appreciated so we will have enough refreshments.

To register or for more information call Bob Kuzelka (402) 417-9424 (Lincoln) email rkuzelka1@unl.edu
or Clyde Anderson (402) 740-5556 (Omaha) email ClydeLAnderson@cox.net.

Please join us on April 8th to better understand why we feel so strongly that ProRail must become an active participant in the future of passenger rail and transit in Nebraska.

See page 6 for instructions how to get to the meeting location and where to park.

ProRail - Your Voice Before the Nebraska Legislature



Testimony in Support of LB 339
Transportation and Telecommunications Committee
Submitted on Behalf of ProRail Nebraska
January 30, 2017

TO: Members of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

RE: LB 339 - Merge the Department of Aeronautics into the Department of Roads and rename as the Department of Transportation

First, I want to thank Senator Friesen for introducing LB 339. My appreciation is also extended to the rest of this committee for their work on behalf of the citizens of Nebraska.

I am here today representing ProRail Nebraska and have just a few short comments. This non-profit advocacy group focuses on increased passenger rail services as well as other public transportation options within the state.

For some time, one of the objectives of our organization has been advocating for the creation of a Nebraska Department of Transportation. This has been one of our objectives because we recognize that fully integrating all forms of transportation into one department benefits the citizens of Nebraska. Transportation by road, air, rail, and river all play a part in ensuring the future success of our state, but currently there is no agency in Nebraska tasked with coordinating all of these transportation modes to assure the best mix and greatest value to our citizens.

Please vote to advance LB339 from your committee.

Thank You.

Matthew Roque, President
ProRail Nebraska

UPDATE: On March 3rd LB339 was placed on Genral File, and on March 9th the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee designated LB339 as one of its priority bills. Since the Governor supports LB339, it stands a good chance of passage in this Session.



Visit MIPRC's web site at: <http://www.miprc.org/>

Informational Session on the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact for Nebraska State Senators and Staff

*Hosted by Nebraska's Legislative Appointed Compact Commissioners
Senator Burke Harr (District 8) and Senator Brent Lindstrom (District 18)*

On January 11th ProRail Nebraska and SMART/UTU cosponsored an informational session about the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) at the State Capitol for members and staff of the Nebraska Legislators. The session was well received, and a total of 21 persons attended from 17 senators' offices and the Business and Labor Committee. Thirteen senators were there. Thanks to Matt Roque for helping and speaking effectively.

On hand via conference phone were Laura Kliewer, MIPRC Director and Joan Bray, State of Missouri Governor's designee to MIPRC.

Lunch and meeting arrangements provided by SMART/UTU and ProRail Nebraska with great assistance from Kaylie Hogan-Schnittker, Office of Senator Burke Harr.

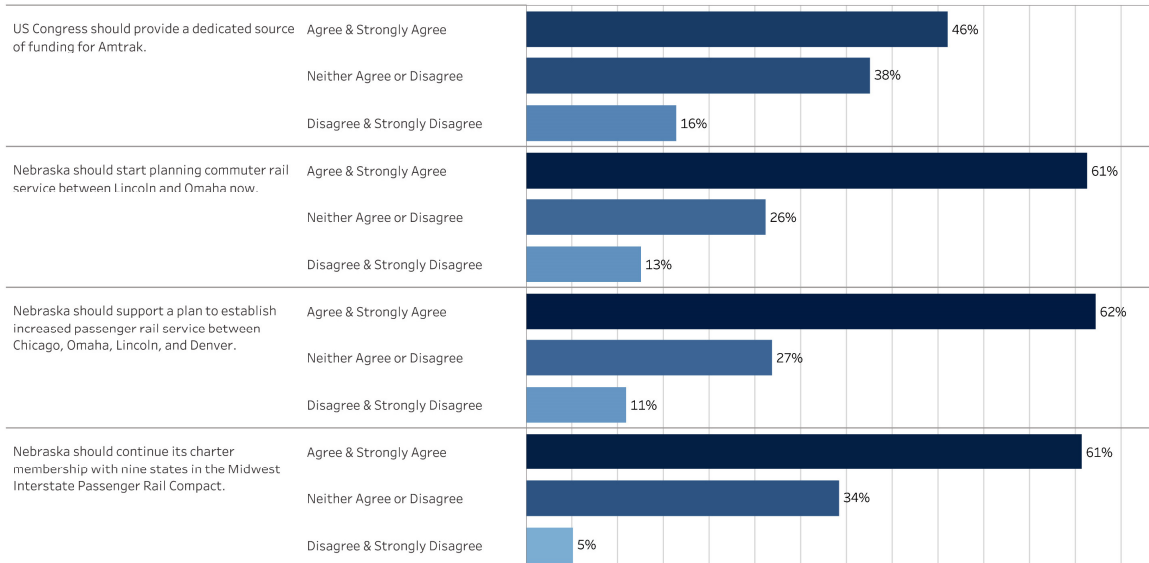
ProRail Receives Results for Nebraska Railroad Survey

ProRail requested UNL's Bureau of Business Research to add four passenger rail-related questions to its Nebraska Annual Social Indicator Survey (NASIS) which was conducted last Fall. Responses to the four questions were favorable indicating a strong support for rail passenger service by Nebraska residents.

Results will be available for use in our legislative work in the 2017 Unicameral Session.

The table below summarizes the results of the survey.

2016 Survey of Sociological Indicators
Conducted by: UNL Bureau of Sociological Research



The findings above indicate that there is rail support in Nebraska. Where respondents did not give support, they were much more likely to be neutral on the subject than report disagreement.

N values for the questions are: Question 1 = 1,184; Question 2 = 1,184; Question 3 = 1,185; Question 4 = 1,181. With 1,208 total respondents, the survey had a 26.9% response rate of the 4,500 addresses sampled.

Omaha streetcar financial assessment completed

Written by Dan Templeton - Wednesday, March 01, 2017 - www.RailJournal.com



OMAHA City Council has received a final financial assessment of the proposed Omaha Urban Circulator, which is estimated to cost \$156 million and scheduled to open in 2022. The assessment estimates that the running costs will increase from \$7.4 million in the opening year, to \$8.9 million annually by 2041.

The 5.1km line would run from the University of Nebraska Medical Center on 42nd Street and Farnam Street east to TD Ameritrade Park, linking north and south Omaha to the city centre. The financial report proposes a range of funding sources including: federal grants, donations, bonds, tax-increment financing and parking fees. Omaha mayor Jean Stothert says she does not expect to raise taxes to fund the project.

The \$181,000 financial assessment was funded by a federal grant plus with contributions from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, Mutual of Omaha, Omaha Public Power District, Metropolitan Utilities District, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency and Downtown Omaha Improvement District. Investment in public transport is seen as necessary due to the continued growth in Omaha. Around 5000 housing units will be built within the study area by 2035 while the number of offices and retail buildings is expected to increase by 35%. Three major hotels are also planned, almost doubling the number of hotel rooms available within the city.

Stothert says that no decision will be made without public meetings but an advisory committee of business people, real estate developers, and city experts will now be appointed to explore potential funding options suggested by the assessment.

ProRail Nebraska Election of Officers at Annual Meeting April 8th

The Board has nominated the following slate of candidates for officers to be elected April 8th for 2-year terms:

President - Matthew Roque (incumbent)
Treasurer - Ralph Hayden (incumbent)

District 1 Director - Richard Schmeling (incumbent)
District 3 Director - Dave Purdy (incumbent)

Trump budget ends funding of Amtrak long-distance trains, TIGER grants

Thursday, March 16, 2017

President Donald Trump's proposed federal budget blueprint released today would cut the U.S. Department of Transportation's budget by \$2.4 billion, or 13 percent, to \$16.2 billion, according to the document.

Regarding rail, the budget calls for terminating federal support for Amtrak's long-distance service; eliminating the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant program; and limiting funding for the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Program (New Starts) to projects with existing full funding grant agreements only. Omaha's Dodge Street Bus Rapid Transit Project is funded in part by a TIGER grant.

The budget request streamlines the department to focus on "vital federal safety oversight functions and investing in nationally and regionally significant transportation infrastructure projects," the document states. "The budget reduces or eliminates programs that are either inefficient, duplicative of other federal efforts, or that involve activities that are better delivered by states, localities or the private sector," it says.

For Amtrak, the budget would restructure and reduce federal subsidies to the national intercity passenger railroad to focus on services within regions. It eliminates federal support for long-distance Amtrak services, "which long have been inefficient and incur the vast majority of Amtrak's operating losses," according to the document. "This would allow Amtrak to focus on better managing its state-supported and Northeast Corridor train services," it states.

Amtrak's 15 long-distance trains offer the only Amtrak service in 23 of the 46 states the railroad serves. Eliminating funding for long-distance routes could impact many of the 500 communities served by Amtrak, the railroad's President and Chief Executive Officer Wick Moorman said in a prepared statement. Nebraska would be one of the 23 states losing Amtrak service.

"These trains connect our major regions, provide vital transportation to residents in rural communities and generate connecting passengers and revenue for our Northeast Corridor and state-supported services," said Moorman. "Amtrak is very focused on running efficiently — we covered 94 percent of our total network operating costs through ticket sales and other revenues in FY16 — but these services all require federal investment."

Moorman said Amtrak officials look forward to ensuring that Trump, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Congress "understand the value of Amtrak's long-distance trains and what these proposed cuts would mean to this important part of the nation's transportation system."

The \$2.4 billion cut in transportation spending will help fund the \$54 billion increase in defense spending to help make America great again!



Visit our website at <http://www.trainweb.org/prorailnebraska>

ProRail Nebraska
7020 Burt St.
Omaha NE 68132-2600

\$0.49
Stamp

Annual Meeting Sat. April 8th

ProRail Nebraska's Annual Meeting will be in Omaha on Saturday, April 8, at 9:00 am (refreshments at 8:30 am). The general public is welcome!

Where: University of Nebraska - Omaha – Milo Bail Student Center Chancellor's Room on the east end of the 2nd Floor. The Milo Bail Student Center is located on the south side of Dodge St. near 62nd St.

See page 1 for details.

For more information or if you get lost, contact Clyde Anderson (402) 740-5556 (Omaha cell phone) or email ClydeLAnderson@cox.net

Directions to Reach the Saturday, April 8th Meeting

MEETING LOCATION: The Milo Bail Student Union (MSC) is on University Drive North which is a frontage road on the south side of Dodge Street and can be accessed turning south off Dodge generally between 62nd Street and the west edge of Elmwood and Memorial Parks. Enter the MSC through its western most doors which will put you on the second floor of the building. The Chancellor's Room is located on the east end of the floor. If you become lost, please call 402-417-9424 (Lincoln number) or 402-740-5556 (Omaha number) for help.

PARKING INSTRUCTIONS: All University of Nebraska at Omaha parking lots are open to any visitors on Saturdays, and parking meters are not checked. The best parking for MSC is in the metered drive just north of the building or the closest lot west of the building. You can easily reach the meeting site via public transit. Take the Metro Route 2 Dodge Street Bus and get off at the stop at 62nd St. See the Metro web site <http://www.ometro.com/> for schedules and fares. A bike rack is located next to the northeast entrance to the Milo Bail Student Center.



ProRail Nebraska and ModeShift Omaha will again have their joint booth at the Earth Day Omaha Celebration at Elmwood Park on Saturday, April 22 from 11 am to 5 pm. Stop by and say Hello!