Transportation and land use experts may disagree on solutions, but there is generally agreement that trend line growth like that shown on the C-DOT graph below is causing and will cause problems if it continues.

Those who want to build more lanes each year may see the problem as a shortfall of highway funds. Those concerned about the environment can identify limits to simple trend line growth. And there are those who think there must be alternatives to the status quo of the past century.

“Opportunities and Challenges for Colorado” was the theme of the Intercity Passenger Rail conference held on September 16th at the University of Denver’s Cable Center. Speakers and panelists explored the potential (or not) of the rail modes in taking the edge off of highway demands.

ColoRail members participated in the event, working with the National Center for Intermodal Transportation staff in helping to organize it, attending it, and participating. ColoRail Vice-President Jim Souby coordinated with Dr. Patrick Sherry, NCIT Director and his staff to assemble the event. ColoRail President Ira Schreiber chaired one of the expert panels.

Attendees were treated to facts and figures, but also to lively -- though sometimes indirect -- debates between well-informed speakers. Sandi Kohrs, Multi-Modal Planning Branch Manager of Colorado Department of Transportation, highlighted the growth in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) that is creating new stresses on old plans. Even with the economic slowdown, past growth has not been accommodated in the intercity highways and alternative transportation modes that are available.

Is Maglev ready to leave the station? Should I-70 Mountain corridor needs determine how Front Range urban areas develop? Should existing rail lines be freight only? Inside this issue, learn more about ideas expressed in the conference.

Transportation demands pressing Colorado

Growth in VMT

VMT Growing Faster Than Population and Lane Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled… and traveled… and traveled…

“A Voice for Colorado’s Rail Passengers”
Amtrak to slow down Southwest Chief in Colorado and Kansas -- is re-route or slow-speed rail next?

Effective October 18th -- in advance of the System Timetable to be dated November 8th -- speed restrictions on the former Santa Fe main line through Western Kansas and Eastern Colorado will lower passenger limits to 60 mph. The line was formerly noted for 90 mph or faster operation. Train 3 will depart Chicago half an hour earlier and Train 4 will depart Los Angeles half an hour earlier to offset the slower speeds, so Colorado times will change slightly. This will also affect the Denver-Raton Thruway bus connection operated by Greyhound.

Construction of improvements on the alternate lower-gradient line through the northern Texas pampas grasslands has resulted in a drop in priority for the Santa Fe main line’s owner BNSF. Amtrak will now face the choice of a reliable, but slower operation on a line without freight interference, or a smoother and potentially slightly faster trip on a double-track main line.

The re-route would trade smaller cities such as Goodland and Dodge City, KS, Lamar, La Junta and Trinidad, CO, for similar sized cities on the grasslands line. Major cities affected could include Wichita, Amarillo gaining service, with Albuquerque and Santa Fe/Lamy losing service. Front Range cities would lose their Thruway access at Raton, NM.

Amtrak in advance of the System Timetable to be

Recent aerial photos of RTD FastTracks projects are available on line at:

http://www.360media.cc/fastracks/
The photos include West Line and Denver Union Station angles.

Rick Harnish of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association reports good news for travelers: Illinois Gov. Quinn held a press conference on October 4th at Chicago Union Station to announce that Amtrak will be renovating Chicago Union Station. The work will include:

+ Air conditioning the headhouse and main waiting room
+ Moving the first class waiting room into the headhouse
+ Expanding the restrooms
+ Expanding the coach passenger waiting room
+ Renovating the office space so that Amtrak’s offices can be relocated into the headhouse.

In September, Ramsay County officials announced the selection of the contractor for renovation of the St. Paul Union Depot. Trains have not been scheduled into the depot since April 30, 1971 when Amtrak was set up. The “new” SPUD will be intermodal, with not only Amtrak’s Empire Builder, but also Greyhound and Jefferson Lines intercity buses, and the Minneapolis light rail connection now under construction.

Is urban transit bleeding to death from a thousand cuts? Tom Downs, former president of Amtrak and now Chairman of the North American Board of Veolia, writes about funding deadlocks and effects of the economic crisis at:

http://citiwire.net/post/2193/

RTD public hearings on service reductions and other changes wind up in the week of October 10th. A revised package will go to the RTD Board on October 26th for its vote.

Construction continues on the “temporary” Amtrak station at 21st & Wewatta Streets. The relocations of Amtrak and Light Rail are both due in 2011.

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Friends of ColoRail members are still asking when the “light rail” line will get to DIA. RTD has hosted the groundbreaking for commuter rail to the airport from DUS, with completion of the 27-mile line set for 2016. It was an electrifying event, according to participants.

Robert Rynerson, Newsletter Editor, Denver. (720-570-0647) <rw.rynerson@att.net>

ColoRail, the Colorado Rail Passenger Association, is in correspondence and coordinates with NARP, the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Membership in both organizations is encouraged.
Intercity Passenger Rail Conference brings ideas to the table—some agree to disagree

A Colorado Perspective

The Rocky Mountain Rail Authority’s High Speed Rail Feasibility Study has developed a number of statewide options for intercity passenger rail in Colorado, based on rail technologies in revenue service throughout the world. In his keynote presentation to the NCIT Intercity Passenger Rail conference, Harry Dale, chairman of the authority, said that they have also evaluated the operational and economic feasibility of these options. He emphasized that this work was based on Federal Railroad Administration criteria.

The RMRA has not established a preferred alignment for a HSR line or lines, nor has it chosen a preferred technology, nor has it established preferred station locations, nor has it evaluated specific environmental impacts. Those would all be the subjects of future environmental studies under the National Environmental Protection Act.

In spite of that caveat, it became clear from his presentation that significant alternatives, such as using alternate mountain passes instead of bundling lines into the I-70 corridor, or using some rail formats are seen as unlikely due to environ-

(Continued on page 4)
mental difficulties. The assumption that highway traffic will continue to move at 75 mph also immediately makes some alternatives unattractive.

But assuming the 75 mph driving, the chart from RMRA above shows a variety of technologies applied to familiar Front Range routes. For those unfamiliar with the terms, the “Joint Line” refers to the jointly operated existing BNSF-UP line between Denver and Pueblo. “Greenfield” refers to the idea of locating the line in areas east of the metropolitan centers where cheap land and development opportunities would intersect with smoother alignments.

Dale walked the conference audience through the economic and engineering facets of each alternative that was studied. Due to space limitations, they cannot be included here, but each of the conference PowerPoint presentations is available on the NCIT website:

**Maglev Transport:**

When high-speed rail studies -- and even some urban transit studies -- are conducted, magnetic levitation alternatives are included. Rail advocates find themselves asking whether it is a credible alternative, or whether it is just a ploy used like monorails were used in studies through the 1960’s and 70’s, to prevent implementation of anything except more highways. **Kevin C. Coates**, Executive Director of the North American Maglev Transport Institute was prepared to make the case for maglev as fast, sustainable, reliable, on-time, all-weather transport.

The last point was of particular interest, along with points about projected low maintenance, because the speed advantage once claimed for maglev over other grade-separated alternatives has been narrowed or eliminated. Coates pointed out the amount of maintenance required on high-speed lines, noting that planners should look at life-cycle costs, rather than simply initial capital costs.

**Practical Constraints:**

If audience members had any remaining thoughts of trying to buy the use of existing rail lines, **Thomas Finkbiner**, Senior Chairman of the ITI Board of Directors, presented a brief, but pointed, lecture on the dire impact that a passenger train has on

(Continued from page 3)

(Continued on page 5)
dispatching freight trains. He walked conference participants through the travails of orchestrating the movements of 8000-foot, 14,000-ton unit trains versus 1000-foot, 2,500-ton Amtrak trains.

His diagrammed sample was appropriate in supporting his point: an Amtrak train trying to navigate a segment of the former Nickel Plate that is overloaded with diverse types of trains due to the downgrading and abandonment of parallel lines. This was to be done without scheduling any pause in the passengers’ journey. It was easy to see that if a passenger train -- or any train -- was operated in that manner, it would be disruptive.

Finkbiner concluded that “there is no way that passenger trains can operate on the U.S. freight rail infrastructure without considerable capital investment and the degradation of current and future infrastructure productivity.”

This brought a sharp rebuttal from Gil Carmichael, Founding Chairman of the ITI Board of Directors and former Federal Railroad Administrator. Carmichael advocates a more collaborative approach that would lead to development of upgraded infrastructure benefiting both freight and passenger transportation.

This was outlined in Carmichael’s opening presentation, so that in effect two opposing views were presented, the differences being clarified in Carmichael’s rebuttal.

An Advanced Guideway for I-70 Mountain Corridor:

The I-70 Mountain Corridor has been the subject of much study over the past decade. Wendy Wallach, C-DOT’s I-70 Mountain Corridor Environmental Manager, walked conference participants through the process that led to release of a draft study in September of this year.

Her discussion of the unique I-70 corridor brought up some of the issues analyzed by the Rocky Mountain Rail Authority, such as the 7% grades along the Interstate’s path. However, she also introduced the context in which specific rail modes turned into the less focused “Advanced Guideway System” as a long-term solution for mobility and congestion relief.

The AGS component is a part of a larger Collaborative Effort by a 27-member stakeholder group that included ColoRail’s Jon Esty. The study was “multi-modal” -- not “intermodal” -- and tries to cover a planning period that reaches to 2050.

With the various high-speed technologies lumped together, common benefits were identified. An AGS line would protect resources along the Corridor, allowing growth to occur in a more concentrated manner, with less potential for growth induced at secondary highway interchanges. This would protect historic properties, adjacent waterways, wildlife habitat and recreational resources in National Forests, according to Wallach.

More information about the study is available at: http://www.i70mtncorridor.com

Coverage of the keynote speech is on Page 6.

Advanced Guideway System

- Recommendation for a high-speed fixed guideway transit system.
- Fully elevated for 118 miles and varies in alignment between the north, the south, and the median of I-70.
- Specific technology, such as maglev or monorail defined in upcoming studies.

In addition to the presentations summarized in this edition of ColoRail Passenger, an important panel discussion covered the theme of Financing Intercity Passenger Rail. We plan to cover this in the next issue.

Graphics in this issue are as presented in the conference, without editing.
Fast Track to Sustainability:
Speaking after a luncheon can be a humbling experience for someone who is not prepared. Hon. Rod Diridon, Sr. was prepared. He has served in a variety of posts, currently as Chair of the Intercity and High Speed Rail Committee of the American Public Transit Association and as Member and Chair Emeritus of the California High Speed Rail Authority Board.

Diridon began with a concisely drawn panorama of a world scene in which much of the developed world, and some less-developed countries are now operating and extending high-speed rail networks, with the U.S. being a conspicuous laggard. Then he unfolded the massive California project with which he has worked so effectively.

California’s High-Speed Rail Authority was okayed by state legislators in 1996, after a generation of studies similar at first to the C-DOT and RMRA studies, and then becoming more specific. The board is a compromise that made it through the Golden State’s legislative civil war, with five members appointed by the Governor, two by the State Senate and two by the State Assembly. To date, it has spent $200 million preparing detailed studies and obtaining in 2008 a Program Level Environmental Clearance.

Detailed business plans have been developed to forecast ridership, fare and revenue levels. Annual ridership is expected to bring in revenue sufficient to exceed Operation & Maintenance costs. Based on a 220 mph top speed, the travel time from Los Angeles to San Francisco is expected to be 2:38. Other major cities to be served are San Jose, San Diego, Sacramento, Fresno, Bakersfield, Riverside and Anaheim. An intense process with confidential elements is underway to determine a starter segment. For example, is it better to build first in the Central Valley where costs will be lower and bugs might more easily be dealt with? Or should one of the shorter, high-population segments be built to gain public support? Diridon is weighing these issues within the board process.

Interregional trips are expected to mainly be drawn from the auto mode, with about 16% of the riders coming from aviation and 3% from rail. Unlike HSR proposals in Colorado, California would continue to depend on conventional rail passenger service in secondary markets, so that non-HSR cities need not be left out, nor are the major cities being left unserved in the meantime.

More information on this landmark project is available at:
http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov
Yes, Platform 9¾ really exists

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resources.

The Railways Act of 1993 authored by the Conservative government led by John Majors created the private franchising of passenger rail in the UK. It was thought that competition among private providers would improve the service and efficiency of trains beyond what the government controlled operation had accomplished.

Railtrack, a government supported publicly traded corporation, was established to maintain the railroad infrastructure. The privatized train companies gradually gained public acceptance for improved service; however, Railtrack drew much criticism for their failure to keep the railroad infrastructure in good repair. Track failures resulted in a serious of three accidents in which numerous passengers were killed and injured. Public displeasure with the Railtrack Corporation and its apparent mishandling of government funding resulted in the creation of the Network Rail Corporation in 2002.

Since the establishment of Network Rail, there has been a steady decline in derailments along with a noticeable improvement of track condition, speed, and on time performance. This suggests that even though the profit motive seemed to work for private companies offering train service, it did not succeed with keeping the physical railway plant in good shape.

Passenger rail in the UK achieved a welcomed milestone when it inaugurated the country's first truly high-speed service out of a revitalized St. Pancras Station in London in November 2007. The current London to Paris Eurostar trip now takes only 135 minutes.

In December, Network Rail will complete the first entirely new rail line in over a century between New Lothian and West Lanarkshire in southern Scotland. The new 24km route will add three new stations and two relocated stations and provide speedier connections between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The biggest objection to the privatization of British Rail was the immediate escalation in ticket prices resulting from the removal of government subsidies. Though it certainly is not cheap to travel by rail in the UK, a little schedule flexibility on the part of the traveler and a search on the British Rail web site usually results in the discovery of cheaper fares. British nationals also can get special fares in many cases.

Rail has a lot of competition from intercity bus companies though the trains are far superior in terms of comfort, speed, and reliability if not in cost. One of the side benefits of privatization to rail advocates is the colorful paint schemes and logos one sees on train equipment around the country.

And if by chance you would like to take a train to Hoggwarts School made famous by the Harry Potter novels, you can depart from London's Kings Cross Station. Yes, Platform 9 3/4 really does exist.

Jon Esty is past president of ColoRail. He lives in Ridgway.

ColoRail Membership

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Name: ______________________________________________________________________
Address: ______________________________________________________________________
City: __________________________ State: _____________ Postal Code: _____________
Telephone, with area code: ______________________________________________________
E-mail address, fax number or other contact information: ____________________________

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A Pleasant Surprise...

Last spring my wife and I visited our son who lives in Cambridge, England. While there we had the good fortune to reacquaint ourselves with the British rail system after a long absence. Not knowing what to expect we were very pleasantly surprised. We purchased a rail pass in the US which allowed us unlimited travel for four separate days during which time we rode ten different trains. We found service was frequent, comfortable, punctual and fast (speeds of 80 to 125 mph appeared to be the norm on most routes).

Passenger trains in the United Kingdom are run by over a dozen private entities which are responsible for the operation of trains “above the rail.” Many of these companies are subsidiaries of well-known international public transportation companies such as Virgin, First Group, Stagecoach, and Keolis. The British transport ministry is responsible for franchising out the service and for monitoring the performance of the companies, which operate the trains.

Network Rail, on the other hand, maintains the railroad infrastructure. The activities of this government structured corporation are closely supervised by the Office of Rail Regulation located within the transport ministry to make sure the tracks, bridges, signals, and stations are kept in a state of good repair. Many of the popular long haul routes are electrified and trains are either locomotive drawn or are individually powered multiple units. Diesel multiple unit trains are in service elsewhere, generally on the lower density lines. Concrete ties and welded rail are used extensively along with high-speed turnouts at many railway junctions. There are only a few grade crossings, which are generally located in rural parts of the country. The crossings are well fortified and are attended. Orange jacketed Network Rail maintenance personnel were seen working along the railroad in numerous locations.

It has not always been smooth sailing for British Rail. At the conclusion of WWII, UK’s four major private railroad lines were consolidated into a nationalized system. Freight traffic, which had been the mainstay of British railroad profitability, plunged with the construction of four lane “motorways” across the country. Though efforts were made to modernize by replacing steam with diesel powered trains and adding electric trains to some of the busier corridors, expenses rapidly grow and infrastructure deteriorated under government direction.

In order to create a more efficient, cost-effective system, the Transport Act of 1962 established the British Railways Board chaired by Dr. Richard Beeching. It was the Beeching Report which rationalized (downsized) large portions of the system that were not highly utilized. About a third of the railway network was eliminated which included most branch lines. Of the 7,000 stations nation-wide, a total of 4,000 were shuttered. Despite all the line and station closures, British Rail continued to be a large financial drain on government financial

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