



[NEWS LISTINGS](#) [SITE HOME](#)

Now available on your:



1/12/2012 Amtrak

## Amtrak outlines infrastructure renewal, fleet and other priorities for 2012

Yesterday, [Amtrak](#) officials announced what they term an “aggressive” agenda for 2012 that calls for service growth and operational improvements.

Among the highlights: manufacturing the first electric locomotives and single-level cars under contracts with Siemens and CAF, respectively; advancing Northeast Corridor (NEC) planning efforts; upgrading NEC infrastructure; and rolling out electronic ticketing to all trains.

Following another year of ridership gains in fiscal year 2011, Amtrak will proceed with investments “that yield a more efficient and reliable Amtrak” despite the uncertainty of future federal funding, said Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer Joseph Boardman during a press conference held yesterday.

“In the past, we have halted or put off projects when federal funding fell short, and that’s always put us two



**SERVICE FROM THE GROUND UP**

Service Parts,  
Repair & Upgrade  
Kits for all Nordco  
MOW Machines

**Nordco**  
Service from the Ground Up

**Nordco Parts 1-800-647-1724**  
[www.nordco.com](http://www.nordco.com)

**Powerhouse**

GENTLEMEN,  
**STOP**  
YOUR ENGINES

[www.dieselwarming.com](http://www.dieselwarming.com)

[Advertising Information](#)

steps back,” he said. “We’ve got a great future and cannot abandon — and won’t abandon — investments or plans.”

Although Congress has zeroed out high-speed rail funds in the past two federal fiscal years, Boardman says Amtrak is busy applying the high-speed dollars that the railroad and states already have in hand. In the future, more funding will be allocated to create or expand high-speed and intercity passenger-rail services, Boardman believes.

“As you see ridership continue to increase and energy costs being debated, there is a ... need for balanced transportation between trains, planes, automobiles and buses. We’re going to need all of that capacity,” he said. “There is a need for us to be connected across this country, and there is going to be continuing investment in rail across the country. Whether it’s private, state or federal dollars, it will be there.”

Following are some of Amtrak’s 2012 priorities.

- In spring, Amtrak officials expect to release an updated vision plan for the NEC that will better detail how Amtrak plans to phase in a “world-class” high-speed rail system. The railroad plans to upgrade existing infrastructure to improve capacity at key chokepoints, improve reliability and bring the system to a state of good repair, and develop a next-generation, 220 mph high-speed system.
- By mid-2012, the railroad plans to complete a business and financial plan for the NEC high-speed rail vision that will identify potential public and private funding sources, as well as financing strategies, such as maximizing private investment opportunities. The plan also will address project financing issues such as risk, credit, debt and investment phasing.
- The first of 70 electric locomotives and 130 new single-level long-distance cars will be built this year. The locomotives will operate at speeds up to 125 mph between Washington, D.C., and Boston, and up to 110 mph between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pa. The new cars — comprising sleepers, diners, baggage and dormitory cars — will replace and supplement the existing fleet and enable Amtrak to retire some of its oldest units. The first new locomotives and cars are scheduled to be in service

in 2013.

- Amtrak expects to issue an updated fleet strategy in spring that includes an analysis on replacing and expanding its conventional and high-speed rail fleet. It also will detail how the railroad plans to manage capacity to meet forecasted ridership growth.
- By late summer, Amtrak plans to roll out eTicketing on all its trains, enabling passengers to receive electronic tickets that can be printed at a location of their choice or opened on a Smartphone with the barcode displayed for the conductor to scan.
- During 2012, the railroad is set to spend \$50 million to construct 10 stations, design level-boarding platforms at 30 stations, complete interior designs at 57 stations and begin detailed assessments at another 53 stations to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
- Amtrak will launch an in-depth evaluation of its top-performing long-distance routes to determine and implement changes that will help improve customer service, ridership, and financial and on-time performance. The routes under analysis are the Auto Train (Lorton, Va.-Sanford, Fla.), Empire Builder (Chicago-Seattle/Portland, Ore.), Southwest Chief (Chicago-Los Angeles), City of New Orleans (Chicago-New Orleans) and Coast Starlight (Seattle-Los Angeles).
- Amtrak will continue a multi-year program to modernize its 30-year-old reservation system. The project is scheduled to be complete in 2014.
- The railroad plans to complete a \$42 million project to upgrade its Seattle King Street Coach Yard Maintenance Facility.
- The railroad also plans to spend \$15 million in 2012 for planning, design and preliminary environmental review for the Gateway Program, which will provide additional capacity into Manhattan via two new tunnels beneath the Hudson River to access expanded terminal facilities serving New York Penn Station and the future Moynihan Station.
- Amtrak will advance design, engineering and other pre-construction activities for a \$450 million project that will boost train speeds from 135 mph to 160 mph

along a 24-mile section of the NEC between Trenton and New Brunswick, N.J. Major construction is scheduled to begin in 2013 and be complete in 2017.

- The railroad will continue construction on the \$125 million Niantic River Bridge replacement, which will enable Amtrak to increase speeds and minimize delays. The project is slated for completion in May 2013.
- Amtrak also will continue work on a \$72 million project to replace track in all four of its East River tunnels that access New York Penn Station. The project is scheduled to be complete in mid-2015.
- By the end of 2012, Amtrak plans to complete a \$12.8 million project to install positive train control technology on sections of Amtrak-owned tracks along the NEC that are not already equipped with the technology.

— [Angela Cotey](#)

This information is brought to you by *Progressive Railroading* magazine.

[Receive Progressive Railroading Daily News email.](#)

[Receive Progressive Railroading magazine.](#)

If you do not wish to be contacted via email with new information on *Progressive Railroading* Daily News in the future, please [visit this link](#).

Distributed by Trade Press Publishing Corp. | 2100 W Florist Ave. | Milwaukee, WI 53209