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AMTRAK PLANS FOR SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

Amtrak's spring 2000 announcement of plans for new intercity medium- and long-distance trains signaled the first significant expansion of the system since the early 1980s. Amtrak's 2001 travel planner includes the Philadelphia-Pittsburgh-Chicago *Skyline Connection*; the New York-Atlanta-Meridian-Dallas *Crescent Star*; the new Chicago-Des Moines route; and the planned addition of the Jacksonville-Daytona Beach-Miami East Coast of Florida service. Start-up dates have not been announced for these new services. The *Kentucky Cardinal*, a new extension of the Chicago-Cincinnati-Washington train, began overnight service between Chicago and Louisville in December 1999. A planned extension of one *Hiawatha* train to Fond du Lac has been delayed until 2001. The announcement also identified a new international service, Amtrak's first with Mexico, that in the future will link San Antonio and Monterrey.

New and rehabilitated passenger stations have been opened at several places on the Amtrak system. Salem, Oregon, and Memphis, Tennessee, have both witnessed the reopening of restored and rehabilitated historic depots. The Memphis facility is unique in that it includes seven stories of apartments and commercial space in the former Illinois Central office tower that is a key part of Central Station. Amtrak also opened three new station buildings on the San Joaquin route in California at Modesto (November 1999), Bakersfield (July 2000), and Merced (August 2000). A major East Coast addition is Amtrak's new terminal for Auto Train at Lorton, Virginia, which opened in July 2000, replacing a smaller older facility. The new Lorton station has longer platform tracks, expanded waiting room space, and other amenities. Plans for 2001 and 2002 include a new station at Mt. Vernon, Virginia, and a new station stop at Warwick, Rhode Island, to serve Providence's T. F. Green International Airport. The new Albany, New York, station will also open in 2001. A new intermodal station is under construction in Everett, Washington, for use by Amtrak, Greyhound, Sound Transit commuter trains (in 2002), and local and regional bus transit. A new intermodal station is nearing completion in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Commuter rail connections have been improved and expanded at several key metropolitan areas on the Amtrak system. Metrolink has increased the number of trains operating in Southern California. An additional 17 miles and three new stations have been opened on the *Trinity River Express* service out of Dallas; the route will be extended to Fort Worth in 2001. Sounder commuter rail service began in September 2000 between Tacoma and Seattle's King Street Station, where connections are made with Amtrak trains. Metro North extended commuter rail service 7 miles north on the Harlem Line, where tracks had been rehabilitated on a line that has not seen passenger service since the 1960s.

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Express freight and mail service expansion is a key element in Amtrak's plans for attaining the financial goals established by Congress in 1998. Revenues from mail and express have climbed to nearly \$100 million. Additional mail and express handling cars have been ordered, including refrigerated cars to handle special shipments such as the "Apples on Amtrak" program, which is being developed by Amtrak and Washington State Department of Transportation (DOT) to ship fruit from eastern Washington orchards to Midwest markets on the *Empire Builder*. Several long-distance trains have had their schedules lengthened to allow time to attach or detach mail and express cars outside of Union Station in Chicago. Mail and express revenue growth is a key factor in Amtrak's decision to add several long-distance trains including the *Skyline Connection* and *Crescent Star*.

Amtrak has introduced several new marketing innovations to attract and retain customers. One of the most innovative approaches is the introduction of a service guarantee, which offers compensation to travelers if their trip does not meet their satisfaction. Another is a new nationwide frequent-user program that provides rewards points that can be redeemed for future Amtrak travel, airline miles, hotel stays, or retail gift certificates. The third innovation is a joint Amtrak-Caltrans effort in California that introduces a variety of statewide rail pass options extending from 1-week to 30-day periods that permit unlimited travel for a specified number of days during the valid pass period.