

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

BY TONY TRIFILETTI

MARCH 31, 2020

Goals:

- Build support for Amtrak to include a Phoenix-Tucson link as part of its state-supported short-range corridor system.
- Work for daily service on the *Sunset Limited*.
- Build credibility among regional politicians, managers and organizations as the critical organization with expertise in rail.
- Recruit new members and raise funds.

Meeting with Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego

Mayor Gallego was accompanied by Senior Policy Advisor Tony Motola, her transportation guru. Our PowerPoint presentation, with graphics by John James:

- Pointed out that 75% of the state's population lives in the Sun Corridor and how that population will grow by 50% over the next 15 years;
- Stated that Phoenix lost its bid for Amazon's second headquarters due to a lack of passenger rail in its transportation profile;
- Listed the \$11 billion windfall on the property tax rolls of the towns along the \$2.5 billion Valley Metro Rail line;
- Made the case for passenger rail guiding increased population density in the corridor;
- Pointed out the advantage of using the existing Union Pacific line between Phoenix and Tucson instead of the high-speed option in the median of I-10 due to cost and construction time;
- Stated our recommendations: form a tri-county joint powers authority to build and operate, sit down with UP to build a relationship, build Sky Harbor Station at the airport, and determine a site for a downtown Phoenix station;
- Pointed out that everyone we have talked to wants passenger rail service between the two cities, and there is a sense of inevitability for it.

She listened but made no commitments. Tony Motola told us that her plate is full, and she will be occupied full time with her reelection campaign. He suggested that we go to the mayors of the towns along the line and make similar presentations. I left them with two copies of our document.

We didn't hit a home run, but we did hit a single. The mayor took notes and understands that rail planning cannot stop at the Maricopa County line. We got a fair hearing.

Transportation Choices Coalition Meeting

Cancelled due to coronavirus. There was no February meeting either.

Meeting with Dr. Ram Pendyala at Arizona State University

Cancelled due to coronavirus. It will be rescheduled when things return to normal.

Presentation to Transportation Club at the University of Arizona

Cancelled due to coronavirus. It will be rescheduled for the next academic year.

FROM PRESIDENT CHUCK MOTT

- Your Executive Director has personally visited most of the mayors, council members and civic organizations in cities that Amtrak serves, providing information and offering specific proposals how to save these passenger trains.
- He has been on radio, TV and has written up in major newspapers in Arizona. As a result, hundreds of letters, emails and phone call have been made to Arizona’s US senators and our Arizona congressmen asking for legislation to preserve, sustain and fund new equipment for interstate passenger trains serving Arizona.
- Tony’s efforts as a full time, modestly paid Executive Director have made the difference in moving Arizona forward for more rail passenger service. However, our dues alone cannot fully support him. As a result, we have had to temporarily pull him back from his full-time duties.
- Therefore, we are asking that you consider increasing your annual renewal membership dues to get him back on board full-time.
- We want to thank many of you who have already paid your 2020 memberships dues and particularly those who have already given above the Regular Membership Dues of \$35.00. Here is our expense budget for 2020:

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES AND CORPORATE GIVING GOAL FOR 2020 is: \$32,000

ALL ABOARD DUES PAYING MEMBERS: 200

INDIVIDUAL/CORPORATE GIVING BUCKETS THAT WILL MEET THE BUDGET FOR 2020

- 80 MEMBERS Regular/Spouse/Family: \$ 35.00 \$ 2800
- 50 MEMBERS Copper Spike \$ 50.00 \$ 2500

