

# A HEALTHIER STATE WITH TRAINS

by Ted Buehler  
TRAC Staff Volunteer

In October, 2004, a New York Times article reported on a German study of heart attack victims. From bedside interviews, the study determined that people who had been on the roads—driving, bicycling, or on transit—were three times as likely to have a heart attack than people engaging in other activities. The researchers even factored out stress—they found that increased risk was solely a result of the high concentrations of air pollution we are exposed to on roads. Air pollution contains small particles that are harmful to arteries and inflame lungs.

That roads are unhealthy in yet another way really comes as no surprise to most of us. Roads and highways are an inherently inefficient way of moving a large number of people, and congestion gets worse every year. Enabling drivers to use a train would reduce this air pollution—by taking vehicles off the road and by reducing congestion for everyone.

We as TRAC members and rail riders know that riding the rails is more pleasant, healthy and relaxing than being stuck in traffic. Reasons for taking the train number one, two and three might be that someone else does the driving, trains operate off the congested road grid, and you can walk about to stretch your legs. Four, five and six might be the positive interactions with your fellow travelers, being able to adjust your tie, and the comfortable rocking motion of the train.

This study now tells us that an additional reason is we are less likely to have a heart attack. But, unfortunately, logic and research is not enough to cause a policy shift from building highways to running trains.

That's why we have TRAC.

We use the convincing arguments of economics, the environment, and public health to lobby our elected officials to improve train service. We do what research alone can't do—we ensure that appropriate action is taken to improve our state's rail system.

Twenty-five years ago there was no TRAC. California had only a handful of trains. In 1984, we created TRAC, and in 1990 we passed Proposition 116, which provided \$2 Billion in bonds to fund rail systems throughout the state. TRAC and Prop. 116 made an enormous difference for every Californian rail traveler. For instance, all 194,876 passenger trips on the Surfliner in October, 2004 are direct beneficiaries of Prop. 116. Now we learn that those passengers, as a group, may be healthier today because they had the option to ride the train.

With a bigger and stronger TRAC, the more trains we will have, and the healthier the people of California will be. We must band together to advocate our cause. As an organization of train riders, we can help

California continue to lead the nation in building a fabulous rail system, with trolleys, light rail, interurbans, subways, commuter trains, intercity trains, and bullet trains.

Twenty years from now, we hope to be able to look back with pride at the work we accomplished in the early decades of the 21st Century. Maybe a New York Times article in 2024 will be reporting on how California's extensive rail transit system has decreased the incidence of heart attacks in the state.

Here's how you can help:

1. Join TRAC. This will help keep us funded. In turn, we will let your elected officials know how many thousands of dedicated rail transit boosters are among their constituents. Be counted as one of us.

2. Write letters and call your elected officials. This is why, despite years of attacks by critics, we still have Amtrak and growing state rail program. In the last several

months, your calls and letters have been effective in preventing development at the Transbay Terminal site in San Francisco, and forcing the hand of the High Speed Rail Authority to re-include Altamont Pass in their corridor studies.

3. Donate a little extra to TRAC or its sister society, the California Rail Foundation (CRF donations are tax deductible). It is the end of the year, and the stock markets are up. If you own stock and Santa has been good to you, you may be in good a position to donate some appreciated securities to CRN and keep the Grinch from slicing his tax knife too deep. [Contact Alan at (916) 557-1667 for details on the donation process.]

The changes are able to effect over the next 20 years will be proportional to the foundational efforts we build today. Join us.

[Heart Attack Risk Linked to Time Spent in Traffic, Anahad O'Conner, New York Times, October 26, 2004]

## Mills and Rampulla On Board

### JAMES R. MILLS San Diego County

TRAC is pleased to have State Senator James R. Mills return to its Board after a year authoring a historical work.

Mr. Mills is a former member of the California State Senate, serving for ten years served as President Pro-Tempore of the Senate. He authored legislation which initiated the California state rail program and provided funds for the first California Amtrak 403(b) service. He also co-authored the Transportation Development Act of 1971, creating the largest public transportation funding source in any state, as well as Proposition 5 of 1974, which made highway funds available for construction of rail projects subject to a vote by county. More recently, he served as Chair of the LOS-SAN Committee. and as a member of the High Speed Rail Authority. He left the Authority after becoming disillusioned with its leadership and direction.



TRAC is honored to have Mr. Mills back informing and educating our decisions.

### VICTOR RAMPULLA Los Angeles County

Mr. Rampulla is a long time supporter of

train travel and believes in the importance of expanding and improving passenger train service in the United States. He has traveled extensively throughout the United States and Canada on long distance trains and is a frequent user of California train service. As a member of TRAC for nearly ten years, he is a supporter of its mission to expand and improve passenger train service in California by building on its past successes in the expansion of service with the Capital Corridors, San Joaquins, and Pacific Surfliners.

Mr. Rampulla has been employed for 35 years by the County of Los Angeles. He is presently the Assistant Division Director responsible for Sheriff's Department's Human Resources and Facilities Planning operations. Past assignments have been in positions of Personnel, Fiscal and Facilities Directors with management responsibility of 700 staff members. He has been involved in personnel administration, budget preparation, expenditure and revenue control, grant management and capital project planning and design, and construction.



He believes the next few years are critical to the future of passenger train service and that TRAC must remain a "Front Line" player in this area.

**Join TRAC Today!** Clip, mail with your check or money order payable to:

### Train Riders Association of California (TRAC)

926 J Street, Suite 612 Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 557-1667

Please fill out the following, or attach address label:

Name _____	Regular member	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street _____	Contributing member	\$60	<input type="checkbox"/>
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	Sponsoring member	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telephone _____ E-mail _____	Corporate member	\$200	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Benefactor	\$500	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Fixed income member	\$25	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	

To help TRAC keep its staff at full-time, I am enclosing a special donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is a donation to TRAC's Legislative Action Fund in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I want to support the *Rail News*. Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation to TRAC's Educational arm, the **California Rail Foundation** in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_