

Amtrak ridership soars

Steve Eldridge, The Examiner
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BALTIMORE -

Ridership for the Amtrak service in the Northeast corridor is at its highest level since the Sept. 11, terrorist attacks, when the trains were the only real option for going between here and New York or Boston.

In fact, Amtrak has 55 percent of the combined airline and train passengers between Washington and New York.

Two key factors for the increase are airline delays and the amount of time spent getting to the airport early to get through security.

It appears Amtrak has solved many of the maintenance problems with which it has been struggling.

However, few Amtrak corridors nationwide are as successful as the Northeast corridor.

Trolley ideas focus on ease

In response to the recent column on a trolley scheme under proposal, Laura writes: “Why not link Towson with downtown as well as out the Belair Road corridor, Harford Road, Loch Raven Boulevard and out Reisterstown Road, out all major arteries, but not with a trolley, but an elevated monorail system above the streets running on magnetic levitation.

“This is where a magnet is placed and starts the motion purely on the basis of a repelling of the poles of magnetism.

“[University of Maryland Baltimore County] students could compete to produce plans for such an enterprise.”

Mag-Lev is an idea that seems simple but has proven to be complex.

A system on the Virginia Tech campus has been more of a challenge than anticipated.

A Mag-Lev project is planned that would connect downtown Pittsburgh with the airport, and there’s even one on the drawing boards that would connect Baltimore with Washington.

Don’t hold your breath that either one will happen in the near future.

Harold wrote: “I believe that there used to be in the 1980s a 25-cent bus disguised as a trolley that tried to lure tourists from the Inner Harbor up to the Charles Street restaurant district.

“How would this proposal be different?

“Do we really need to give college students cheap access to the bars and stores in the Inner Harbor? I could see this being very popular on Thursday [through] Saturday night and dead the rest of the time.”

Reliable service is the key.

Trolleys are a great tourist device so people can get on without worrying about being taken far, far away.

Questions, comments, random musings? Write to Steve@SprawlandCrawl.com.

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