

Rail Fuels the Economy – Beyond Rail-Oriented Development

The passenger rail renaissance is often connected with economic growth through the types of places it fosters through rail-oriented development. But a more basic and important element of passenger rail's economic might comes from its ability to move people to and from work. That access for employees is just as important at large companies as small businesses. RAIL spoke with a leader at one of the nation's largest corporations, Frank Bozich, President of chemical company BASF's Catalysts Division, about his corporation's prioritization of rail and transit access for their employees.

RAIL Magazine: Why is good access to transit routes – both rail and bus – important to a global corporation like BASF?

Bozich: Good access to transit routes for employees enables BASF to attract and retain talent. In the chemical industry in particular, there is a war for talent. With fewer young people pursuing degrees in chemistry, science and engineering, they have their pick of chemical companies when they graduate. Good access to transit helps companies like BASF differentiate itself from the competition.

RAIL Magazine: How is BASF better able to attract top-tier employment candidates through transit access?



Bozich: Attracting and retaining top talent is a perpetual challenge for any top-performing company like BASF. While many factors come into play for a potential job candidate, work environment can play a substantial role. Access to public transportation and company support of commuter assistance programs are key perks that employees look for, particularly in urban and suburban areas.

RAIL Magazine: What initiatives has BASF taken to interact with local transit options at its employment locations?

Bozich: We offer employees several options to assist with commuting at our corporate headquarters location in Florham Park, N.J., including a free shuttle service to and from the local NJ Transit



train station. This east-west rail line is an essential commuting artery for employees looking for an alternative to driving. While we have many younger interns, delegates and new hires commuting from New York City and the Hudson County-area, we also have a good number of employees commuting from western New Jersey.

Our Iselin, N.J., site is conveniently located directly across the street from a NJ Transit rail station. And the public rail link bus allows employees at our Tarrytown, N.Y., site to commute via Metro North's Hudson Rail Line from New York City to the south, or from points north.

BASF also maintains a partnership with TransOptions (www.transoptions.org), a local New Jersey-based organization that assists companies and employees with finding commuting alternatives

such as car pools or van pools. There are currently five active van pools running to the headquarters building from New York, southern New Jersey and Pennsylvania. TransOptions also provides emergency rides home in case of illness, etc.

In addition, BASF is looking at ways to enhance these commuting options at its new headquarters building which is currently being constructed down the road from the current location. Examples of possible enhancements include the addition of a second shuttle stop at another nearby train station, bike racks on site, and preferred parking for car pools and van pools and fuel efficient vehicles at the new building.

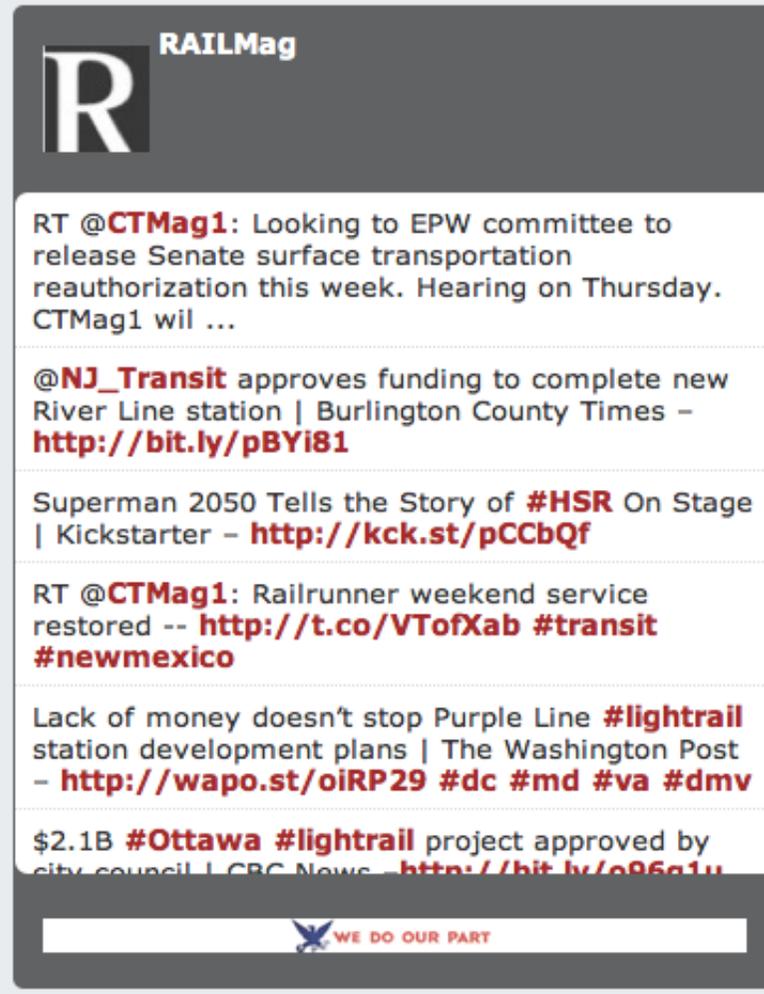
RAIL Magazine: How can governments and public agencies at all levels better support transit connections for private entities?

Bozich: Governments and public agencies can support transit connections for private entities by maintaining frequent and reliable service, offering pre-tax commuter benefits and offering shuttle service from stations to office buildings. It's in each state government's best interest to continuously invest in its transit system to keep people working and living in their state.

RAIL Magazine: What has been your greatest success in the commuter environment?

Bozich: Our biggest success story so far is the free transit connection shuttle offered at our Florham Park, N.J. headquarters site. With upwards of 20 riders per day, this perk is a great benefit for our employees that enables a less-stressful daily commute. 

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