

January–June 2005 • \$10.00 / Rails to Rubber to Rails Again, Part 1: Alabama–Montana

# HEADLIGHTS





## Headlights

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**Below:** LAMTA P3 3156 is eastbound across the First Street bridge over the Los Angeles River in the waning weeks of service before abandonment of Los Angeles' narrow gauge system on March 31, 1963. GERALD SQUIER PHOTO



**On the Cover:** This issue of *Headlights* celebrates the return of traction in the United States after almost complete abandonment. One of the finest examples of this renaissance is shown in this composite of the First Street bridge. It combines the PCC from the 1963 image above with an image showing the bridge in April 2008. Where once the P line provided close headways with postwar PCC streetcars, new rail is already in place and catenary installed for the Gold Line East, a light rail version of the P, complete with a 1.5-mile tunnel and two underground stations. The bridge is in the process of being widened by two traffic lanes by physically moving and reconstructing the north side of the bridge (see page 33).

ALAN K. WEEKS PHOTO | DIGITAL COMPOSITE BY SANDY CAMPBELL

# News

Compiled by Frank Miklos

## California

### Los Angeles

**The Metropolitan Transportation Authority board has voted to add the expansion of the Red Line subway to its long-range transportation plans.**

This is a reversal of a 1998 voter-approved measure against using local sales tax dollars for subway tunneling. Officials of the cities west of Los Angeles are now urging that the rapid transit system be expanded into their communities and have pledged to try to reverse congressional and sales tax bans on subway construction. They now see the alternative of rail transit as important to a balanced transportation system for the region.

Ridership on the Pasadena Gold Line averaged 15,226 in March 2005. This was only the third time that the number of passengers topped 15,000. Projections prior to the opening of the line called for it to carry between 26,000 and 32,000 riders a day. The MTA's three other rail lines carry considerably more passengers with the Red Line subway leading everything with an average of 117,507 daily riders. The Long Beach Blue Line averages 75,122 daily riders and the Green Line from Norwalk to El Segundo averages 33,227 daily riders.

Several factors have been cited for the poor performance of the Gold Line, but the major reason is the very slow speeds that are in effect at several locations on the line. Many of these were in response to concerns from residents along the line about noise from passing trains.

The line also suffers from the lack of a direct route through downtown. The trains terminate at Union Station where passengers must transfer to the Red Line subway to reach downtown Los Angeles.



Arizona

## Phoenix Funding Woes

**The chairman of Arizona's House Transportation Committee, a long-time opponent of light rail, has proposed periodic audits of Phoenix's new light rail system.** These audits would re-allocate funding from Metro Light Rail to highways if the line doesn't meet minimum standards related to costs and passenger counts. Metro Light Rail was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in the November 2004 election. Construction began in March 2005. The audit and de-funding bill has drawn strong criticism from local chambers of commerce and business groups. The 20-mile starter segment is scheduled to be completed in December 2008 and will operate between Phoenix and Mesa.

Plans for an automated people mover between the light rail line and the Sky Harbor International Airport may also be in jeopardy. The 4.7-mile system was originally projected to cost \$200 million but that has jumped to over \$1 billion. The people mover was a major factor in getting voter approval of the light rail line because of the improved access that would be provided to the airport by the coordination of the two services.

Valley Metro Rail 102 is northbound on Central Ave. at Roosevelt, just short of the Roosevelt-Central station on a clearance testing run through the downtown area, July 10, 2008.

JOHN GALE PHOTO







# RAILS TO RUBBER TO RAILS AGAIN

The information which follows is a 60-year summary of the street railway industry in the U.S. and Canada, starting with its precipitous 30-year, post-World War II decline. It continues with the industry's rebirth under the banner of "light rail" in the early 1980s, a renaissance which continues to

this day. Beginning on page 26, there is a brief description, a synopsis rather than a history, of

every passenger carrying street railway and interurban line operating in August 1945, followed by an annual list for each property covering the years 1945–1974, with the date of final passenger operation for each railway during this three decade period. Similar information then continues for each of the nearly 30 light rail and heritage streetcar lines which began operation between 1976 and 2004.

Each of these properties was in operation on December 7, 1941, and continued to operate throughout the war years. Two California systems which were separate entities in 1941 (Central California Traction's C Street line in Sacramento, and the Market Street Railway) were merged into other properties in 1944. They don't appear as separate listings, but are noted under the properties that absorbed them. In addition, two roads that came on the scene shortly after World War II (Waco Transit and the Milwaukee Speedrail) then soon vanished, are examined individually.

Part one of the listing covers Alabama through Montana. Part two, which will appear in the next issue of *Headlights*, covers Nebraska to Wisconsin and Canada. Two listings will follow, one a brief chronological description of each property with the date service began, followed by another showing each start up date on an annual basis.

By Edward Ridolph. Toronto PCC photos by Tony Di Lorenzo.

Part 1:

# Alabama— Montana







## Alabama

### Birmingham

Birmingham Electric Company was the primary transit operator in the city and surrounding area, and one of the South's larger systems. Electric cars first appeared in 1891, gradually replacing horse cars and steam tramways. By the mid-1920s BECO was operating more than 350 cars over some 150 miles of track, a substantial amount of which was on private right-of-way. The first rail to bus conversion occurred in 1931, and although the bus and trolley bus system continued to expand, there was much rehabilitation of the rail network during the 1930s. Then, in 1947 BECO placed 48 PCC cars in service, one of



Birmingham Electric Co. 828, a 1947 product of Pullman-Standard, takes layover at West End loop on line 2 in September 1951. JOHN STERN PHOTO

only three southern cities to employ the modern cars. Still, rail to bus conversions accelerated, with much of the streetcar system abandoned between 1948 and 1950. In May 1951, BECO sold its transit division and the seven remaining rail lines to the BIRMINGHAM TRANSIT COMPANY, which, under intense city pressure, continued the conversion from streetcar to bus and trolley bus. The East Lake, South Lake and West End lines went out in early 1953, and the PCC fleet was sold intact to Toronto, as rail service ended in the "Pittsburgh of the South."

**April 19, 1953:** PCC 812 made the last streetcar run on route 27/Ensley.

## Arizona

### Phoenix

Phoenix Street Railway was a municipal operation, which succeeded the privately owned company of the same name in 1925. Electric cars had first operated in October 1893, and by the 1920s some 35 cars and 30 miles of track were in service. By 1945 the city needed only 17 cars to cover the four remaining rail lines. The Brill line was abandoned in April 1946, and the Kenilworth and Indian School lines went out during 1947. Only one line, route 2/ Washington St., was in service when a car barn fire in October 1947, destroyed eight cars.

Buses supplemented streetcar service on this line until regular service ended on the night of February 16, 1948. A gala last run parade was held the next day to celebrate the end of streetcar service. Phoenix, now a much larger city than it was in 1948, is currently preparing for the opening of light rail service.

**February 16, 1948:** Last day of streetcar operations.

#### New Operations

Light rail is scheduled to return to the Phoenix valley on December 27, 2008. Metro Light Rail, a service operated for Phoenix's Valley Metro, will be a 20-mile line connecting Phoenix with the cities of Mesa and Tempe for a trip just short of an hour in each direction. In Phoenix, service will operate along the busy Central Avenue and Washington Street corridors. Fifty three-section articulated double-ended cars were built, tested and accepted from Kinki Sharyo. Service is scheduled to run every 10 minutes throughout every weekday. A notable feature is the long, light rail-only bridge over Tempe Town Lake.





Phoenix had an early (1925) municipal railway with four lines that survived World War II. Car 506 (top) is on route 4 destined to North 3rd St & Indian School. Two more of their double-truck 500 series cars (they acquired 18 in 1928) pass on a siding at Latham Street on Route

3 Kenilworth (left) in a scene unrecognizable today. Both views date from April 12, 1947.

SPRAGUE LIBRARY PHOTOS

Some of Valley Metro's fleet of 50 Kinkisharyo LRVs (above) rest in the yard on March 7, 2008.

ANDREW GRAHL PHOTO



## Arkansas

### Little Rock



Capital Transportation Company was the 1935 successor to the Arkansas Power & Light, itself a descendant of the Little Rock Railway & Electric Co. Electric cars first appeared in the capital city in 1892. Rail transit reached its greatest extent in the 1920s, with nearly 100 cars in service over some 40 miles of track, totals which varied little over the years. A gradual streetcar to bus conversion program began in the late 1930s, which was temporarily delayed by the war emergency. Three streetcar lines, served by 45 cars, the oldest of which dated back to 1898, remained in service throughout the war years, operating until enough trolley buses could be obtained to conclude the conversion program. The Pulaski Heights line was abandoned in September 1947, and the last two rail lines, South Highland-East 14th and Fair Park-East 9th, were abandoned less than three months later. It would be 57 years before streetcar service would return to the state capital.

**December 26, 1947:** Final day of streetcar operation by the Capital Transportation Co.

#### New Operations

CENTRAL ARKANSAS TRANSIT AUTHORITY operates two conventional, single-track, street-running lines in Little Rock and neighboring North Little Rock, known as RIVER RAIL. The South Line describes a clockwise loop through the central business district, primarily along Markham and Second Streets. The North Line crosses the Arkansas River on the Main Street Bridge, then loops counter clockwise through North Little Rock, primarily on Main and Maple Streets. Three conventional Gomaco cars provide service. A one-mile extension along Third Street to the Clinton Presidential Library opened on February 16, 2007, utilizing two more Gomaco cars.

**November 1, 2004:** First day of streetcar service on RIVER RAIL in Little Rock.



(Top) Little Rock was served well by Birney cars, both single and double-truck. Arkansas Central Power Co. 327 was rolling down First Street on July 31, 1933.  
SPRAGUE LIBRARY

(Bottom) Central Arkansas Transit (the present transit operator) 411 poses on Maple Street at the 6th Street stop in North Little Rock on September 5, 2007.

411 is one of two additional cars delivered for the 2007 extension to the Clinton Library.  
JOHN PAPPAS PHOTO



## California

# Los Angeles

Los Angeles Railway operated the largest city streetcar system on the West Coast, and the last narrow gauge (3'6") system in the U.S. Both horse cars and cable cars were replaced by electric cars in 1896, a year after the LARY was organized. Traction magnate Henry Huntington gained control of the LARY in 1898 and greatly expanded the system. During the 1920s the LARY was running more than 1100 streetcars over some 400 miles of track, nearly a third of which was on private right-of-way. In the 1930s, after a decade of successful bus operation, LARY began converting the rail system to buses. This program gained momentum after the LOS ANGELES TRANSIT LINES, a National City Lines subsidiary, gained control of LARY in January 1945. Although 165 PCCs had been bought and placed in service, much of the rail network was abandoned between 1946 and 1955. In March 1958, the system, by then down to five streetcar lines (routes J,P,R,S and V), was sold to the LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY, a bus minded organization which abandoned rail service five years later.

**March 31, 1963:** Car 3081 made the last regularly scheduled run on route V-Vermont.

PACIFIC ELECTRIC RAILWAY was the largest interurban system in the U.S., the third largest freight hauler in California, and, with more than 1000 miles of track, a major local, suburban, and interurban carrier in Los Angeles and the surrounding areas. The first line opened between Los Angeles and Long Beach in 1902, and by the 1920s nearly 800 of the "Big Red Cars" ran from the Pacific beaches to the eastern mountains. The company began abandoning passenger service in the 1930s to concentrate on its core freight business, but still employed nearly 500 rail cars, including 30 modern PCCs, to handle record traffic during WWII. At war's end PE increased its efforts to get out of the passenger business, and on October 1, 1953, sold its six remaining passenger lines to the METROPOLITAN COACH LINES. MCL converted two lines to bus, then on May 3, 1958, sold the four remaining rail lines to the LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY, which abandoned the last remnant of the PE, the original line to Long Beach, three years later. In 1990 the MTA inaugurated its first light rail service, ironically on the route of the long abandoned Los Angeles-Long Beach PE line.

**April 9, 1961:** Cars 1519 and 1502 made the last passenger run on the Long Beach line.



## New Operations

LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY, a 1993 merger of the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT and the LOS ANGELES COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, currently operates three light rail lines in the Los Angeles area, with a 129 car fleet of Nippon-Sharyo and Siemens P2000 articulated light rail cars. The 22-mile Blue Line, which opened in 1990, runs between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, following the route of the one time PACIFIC ELECTRIC Long Beach line, abandoned in 1961. The 20-mile cross town Green Line, opened in 1995, runs between Norwalk and El Segundo, primarily in the median of the 105 Freeway. In July 2003, the 13-mile Gold Line between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa in East Pasadena began operation, and an extension into East Los Angeles is under construction. Other than short sections of street running in downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, most of the system is on private right-of-way.

**July 14, 1990:** First day of electric rail service between Los Angeles and Long Beach.

## Los Angeles to Long Beach Line Then & Now

Blimp 1706 on last day excursion, April 8, 1961.

GERALD SQUIER PHOTO

Train of Nippon-Sharyo articulated cars inbound at Wardlow Road on August 1, 2003.

JOHN PAPPAS PHOTO



## The Los Angeles Yellow Car System Through the Years

(Top right) Los Angeles Transit Lines H4 1381 rounds the corner from Avenue 61 onto Monte Vista in the Highland Park neighborhood on the last day of service here, May 21, 1955. AL STYFFE PHOTO

Thirty-eight years later (bottom right), Pasadena Gold Line trains returned rail transit to this community. A Siemens-built two-car train is seen southbound about to cross Avenue 56 on the former Santa Fe Railway's right-of-way between Los Angeles and Pasadena on July 18, 2004.

WILLIAM D. VOLKMER PHOTO







All electric P3 3136 (above), a 1948 product of St. Louis Car Company, has just left the First Street bridge heading eastbound in January 1963.

GERALD SQUIER PHOTO

(Left) The same location on August 27, 2008. (Note the warehouse from the top picture.) Construction has begun to shift the north edge of the bridge. The new retaining wall will add about 26 feet to the width of the bridge and place the new tracks (now at the north curb) once again in the middle of the bridge, but this time on an exclusive right-of-way.

ALAN K. WEEKS PHOTO



## Oakland

KEY SYSTEM TRANSIT was the primary transit operator in the East Bay region. Electric cars appeared in 1891, after both horse and cable lines had served Oakland. Consolidated in 1901, the company operated local, suburban and interurban service throughout the area, as well as a substantial freight service. During the 1920s some 600 cars ran over nearly 300 miles of track, nearly half of which was on private right-of-way. On January 15, 1939, high-speed trans-bay trains began operations between Oakland and its suburbs and downtown San Francisco via the Bay Bridge. Five routes, A, B, C, E and F, were served by



Key System's "bridge units" were a familiar sight in the east bay for 20 years. Unit 157 is seen here outbound on line C climbing the Clairemont foothills enroute to its terminus at the famous Clairemont Hotel, July 1, 1956.

ALAN K. WEEKS PHOTO

88 articulated rail cars. During WWII 14 local rail lines were in service in Oakland, but on May 14, 1946, KEY SYSTEM was purchased by Pacific City Lines, a bus-minded subsidiary of National City Lines, which began converting the local lines to bus operation. Seven rail lines were abandoned in May and June 1948, and the remaining local lines, routes 1,2,3,4 and 5, were abandoned in November. The trans-bay trains continued to run for another 10 years, but a gradual decline in passenger traffic as well as a deteriorating infrastructure, and the desire of the state to take over the private right-of-way lanes on the Bay Bridge for automobiles, brought an end to trans-bay train service.

**November 28, 1948:** Last day of local streetcar operation.

**April 20, 1958:** Last day of trans-bay train operation between Oakland and San Francisco.

## Sacramento

PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC began operating streetcars in Sacramento in 1906, succeeding the SACRAMENTO GAS & ELECTRIC CO. Electric cars had been operating in Sacramento since 1890, after 21 years of horse cars. In the 1920s the PG&E had 76 cars and 44 miles of track in service, but by 1943 this had dwindled to 33 cars and 27 miles of track. On October 31, 1943, the PG&E was sold to SACRAMENTO CITY LINES, another bus minded subsidiary of National City Lines. In 1944 SCL bought the local C Street line of the SACRAMENTO NORTHERN, as well as the single local line operated by the CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TRACTION, one time operator of an interurban line between Sacramento and Stockton. These two lines were then combined into Rt. 15/Colonial Heights, which was then abandoned in late 1946. By the end of 1946 only Rt. 5/P Street and Rt. 6/21st Street were rail operated, and SCL buses quickly replaced the last cars. Electric rail transit, in the form of light rail, would return to California's capital city in 1987, 40 years after SCL abandoned streetcar service.

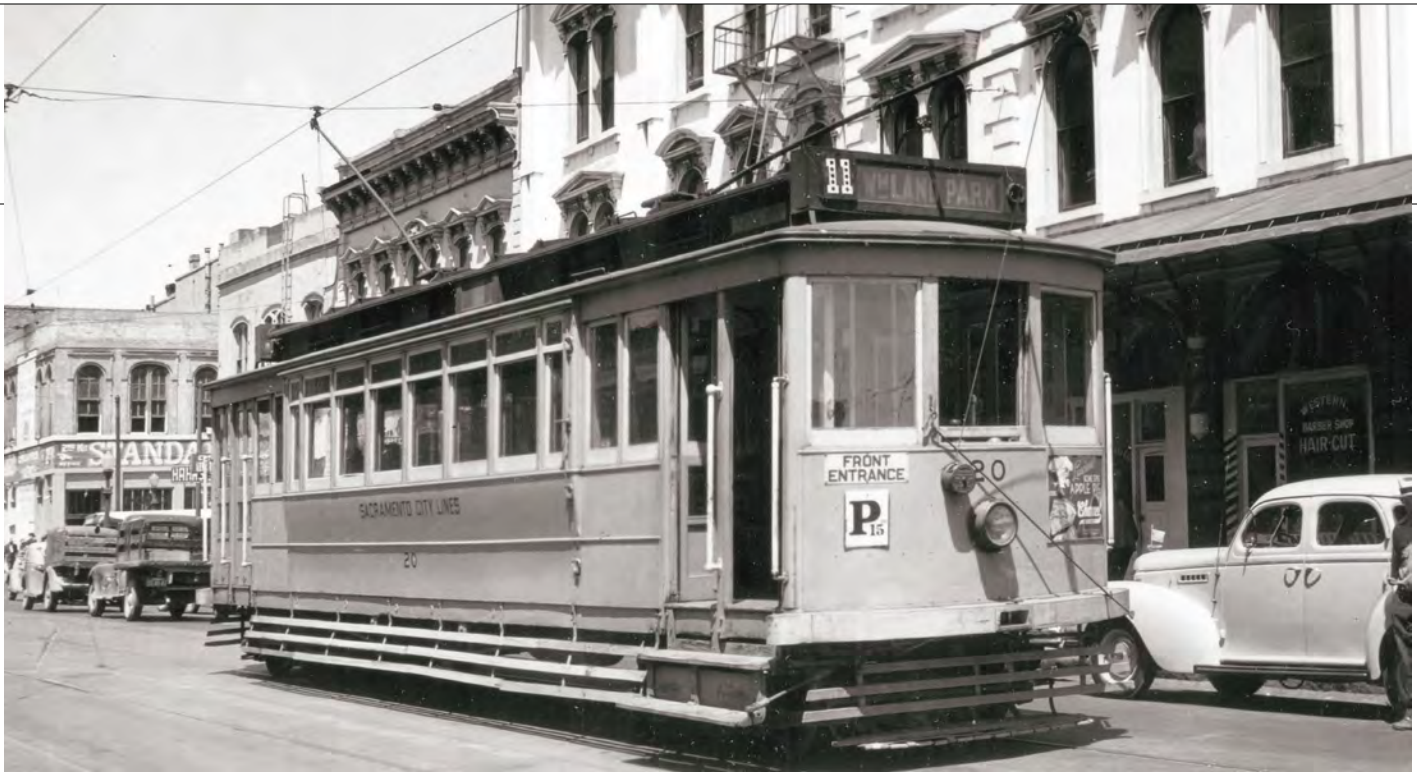
**January 4, 1947:** Final day of streetcar operation.

SACRAMENTO NORTHERN was a consolidation of several interurban and local streetcar systems in the Sacramento Valley, and the 359 miles of track the company claimed in 1943 served an area nearly 200 miles long, from San Francisco through Sacramento to Chico in the north.

The 185-mile line from San Francisco to Chico was the longest interurban run in the West. The first line in what became the SN opened between Chico and Oroville in 1906, followed by a decade of new construction and mergers. In 1921 the SN came under control of the Western Pacific Railroad, and freight soon became the primary source of revenue. Passenger schedules were gradually reduced in the 1930s, and in 1940 Sacramento to San Francisco service via the Bay Bridge ended, followed a few months later by the rest of the interurban network. Local service between Marysville and Yuba City ended Feb. 16, 1942, right under the ODT deadline. The SN local line in Sacramento was sold in 1944, leaving only the isolated local Birney car operation in Chico as the last remnant of passenger service, although electric freight service continued for some years.

**December 15, 1947:** Car 62 made the last SN passenger run in Chico, California.





## New Operations

SACRAMENTO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT, known as the RT, operates two light rail lines in California's capital city. Service originally began with an 18-mile line, and gradual expansion through 2005 brought the system to its present 37 miles of track. The system features both street running and private right-of-way, some of which follows railroad alignment. Operations began with 36 Siemens-Duewag U2A cars, later supplemented by 40 CAF high-floor cars from Spain. The original line, now known as the Blue Line, operates from Watt/I-80 to Meadowview Road. The Gold Line operates from the Sacramento Valley Amtrak station to Folsom. Further extensions are currently planned.

**March 12, 1987:** First day of operation on the SRTD Light Rail Line.



## Sacramento: Then and Now

Sacramento City Lines 20 (top), an enclosed former California Type, still plies the rails on May 12, 1946, just months before the end of service.  
SPRAGUE LIBRARY

A four-car train of mixed equipment (above), one Siemens-Duewag U2A and three CAF LRVs, is north on 8th Street approaching the K Street transit mall on March 25, 2008.  
TREVOR LOGAN PHOTO





## Last Days of the SDER

ALAN K. WEEKS PHOTOS

The Adams Avenue carbarn crew (above) readies San Diego PCCs for shipment to their new home in El Paso, Texas, on March 11, 1950.

PCC 517 (right) is west-bound on Broadway Street passing Horten Plaza on the last day of streetcar service, April 23, 1949.

Class 5 401 (bottom) pauses in front of the former Imperial Avenue barn on a last day fantrip.





## San Diego

SAN DIEGO ELECTRIC RAILWAY began operating horse cars in 1892, then electric cars in 1896. Organized by two brothers, John and A.B. Spreckles, the SDER would be controlled by them or their estate until 1948. Expansion continued into the 1920s, when nearly 150 cars offered city, suburban, and interurban service over almost 100 miles of track, including an isolated line on Coronado Island, reached by ferry boat. Buses replaced several light hauling rail lines in the 1930s, and in 1937 the company put the first PCC cars on the West Coast into service.

As a Navy town the SDER experienced a sudden surge in passenger loads during WWII, which necessitated the purchase of used streetcars from various U.S. cities. Following the war the company began gradually converting to bus, abandoning five lines in 1946–47. In 1948 the Spreckles interests sold the SDER to the SAN DIEGO TRANSIT SYSTEM, still another subsidiary of Pacific City Lines. The three remaining rail lines, routes 2, 7 and 11 were abandoned the following year, and most of the PCC fleet was sold for further use in El Paso, Texas.

**April 24, 1949:** Class 5 446 made the last streetcar run on Route 2.

### New Operations

SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT SYSTEM, operator of the SAN DIEGO TROLLEY, began the light rail revival in the U.S. with the opening of the San Ysidro line in 1981. The line's genesis came in 1979, when portions of the San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railroad were bought with the intention of building a light rail line on the right-of-way. In 1986 a second line, known as the East Line, opened. This line was extended to El Cajon in 1989, and Santee in 1995. Other extensions were made through 1997, and in 2005 service began from Mission San Diego to La Mesa, including the system's only subway station, at San Diego State University. The current 50-mile system includes three main lines, dubbed the Blue Line (south), Orange Line (east) and Green Line (Mission Valley), with further extensions planned. The 134 car operating fleet, which began with Duewag U2 cars, now includes SD100 and Avanto S70 cars as well.

**July 26, 1981:** Regular revenue service began on the San Ysidro line with cars 1004 and 1008.



Rail transit returned to San Diego in a big way in 1981 with the inauguration of service between the Santa Fe Depot at Kettner & C Street and the U.S.-Mexican border at San Ysidro.

Seen here in the early days (top) is a three-car train of Siemens-Duewag U2s led by 1012 waiting to depart for the border. RAY BERGER PHOTO

The America Plaza office tower now completely obliterates the view of the Santa Fe Depot. Siemens-Duewag SD100 2037 (bottom) is seen here exiting the building. TREVOR LOGAN PHOTO







## San Francisco

CALIFORNIA STREET CABLE RAILROAD was the last independent railway in the city, and one of only two cable railways in the U.S. after the Seattle abandonment of 1940. The company operated three cable lines, the best known of which was the main line on California Street. In 1924 the company reported 11.5 miles of track and 49 cars, but by WWII only six miles of track was in service. Although generally profitable, post war inflation and two costly strikes put the company in bankruptcy. On July 31, 1951, operations ceased when Lloyds of London cancelled the company insurance policy. On August 13, 1951, the MUNICIPAL RAILWAY OF SAN FRANCISCO bought the company, and cable car service resumed under Muni management on January 13, 1952. Portions of the original operation remain in service to this day.

**July 31, 1951:** Last cable cars operated under CALIFORNIA STREET CABLE RAILROAD ownership.

MUNICIPAL RAILWAY OF SAN FRANCISCO opened its first streetcar line on Geary St. on December 28, 1912, in competition with other privately owned street railways in the city. The system was gradually extended over the years to reach areas not adequately served by existing companies. Two long tunnels, Twin Peaks and Sunset, brought cars and development into western areas of the city. By the 1920s more than 200 cars were operating over some 65 miles of track. The system greatly expanded on Sept. 29, 1944, when the MRSF bought the much larger, privately owned MARKET STREET RAILWAY, bringing nearly 500 more streetcars and cable cars and over 200 miles of track under city control. However, much of the "White Front Car" system was worn out or obsolete, and by 1949 the last MSR lines had been replaced by buses, or more often, trolley buses. Further expansion occurred in 1951 when the CALIFORNIA STREET CABLE RAILROAD came under city ownership. Retrenchment in the 1950s left five streetcar lines, routes J, K, L, M and N, a fleet of PCC cars, and three cable lines in service.

The 1980s saw a rebirth of electric traction in the city, with line extensions, operation in the Muni Metro Subway, a new fleet of LRV cars, as well as rebuilt PCC cars from other cities. The opening of the "F" line on Market Street in 1995 was later followed by new rail construction on Third Street. Current operations include a mix of LRV and PCC cars, subway and surface running, and the three remaining cable car lines, the last ones in the world.



(Left) California Street Cable Railroad 3 receives passengers at its California & Drumm terminal just short of Market Street in 1949. JOHN STERN PHOTO

(Top) Former Market Street Railway 967 is seen on an original Municipal Railway line in 1949. The car is at the northern terminal of route H, at Van Ness & Bay. JOHN STERN PHOTO

Muni 1534 (bottom) on the 4th Street Drawbridge outbound on the new T line on March 11, 2007. JOHN PAPPAS PHOTO





## San Jose

### New Operations

SANTA CLARA VALLEY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (VTA) serves the San Jose area with 42 miles of private right-of-way and street running track. The three route system includes two long lines and a short shuttle to Almaden. Service was provided by 50 high-floor UTDC articulated until 2002, when new Kinki Sharyo low-floor cars were introduced.

The street running downtown transit mall portion of the line includes a loop featuring historic cars, reminiscent of the service once provided by the San Jose Railroads. The San Jose Trolley Corporation has restored six historic trolleys which are maintained by VTA.

**December 11, 1987:** Service begins with a six-mile line from Younger Street to Great American.

Car 1 (left) was built by the Sacramento Electric, Gas & Railway Company and ran in Sacramento from 1903–1906, and in Santa Cruz from 1906–1923. It was the fifth of six trolleys to be restored by the San Jose Trolley Corporation. It is seen here making a run on the Downtown Center Plaza during the 2004 ERA Convention on September 4.

SANDY CAMPBELL PHOTO

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Agency Kinkisharyo LRV 956 and train (bottom) show off VTA's second generation light rail equipment on August 5, 2005.

TREVOR LOGAN PHOTO



## Colorado

# Denver

DENVER TRAMWAY COMPANY operated a large network of narrow gauge local, suburban and interurban lines in the Denver area. Organized in 1885, the company experimented with horse cars and cable cars, then began converting to electric power in 1890. Consolidation with rival companies left the DTC as the dominant company after 1900, the year the last cable cars ran. By the 1920s the company had nearly 350 cars, including more than a hundred trailers, running over 250 miles of track. That same decade saw the introduction of the motor bus, followed in 1940 by the trolley bus, as the rail system began to gradually contract. Following WWII the conversion program resumed in earnest, and by 1950 only four city lines and three interurban lines remained in service. On June 3, 1950, the last cars ran on the four remaining city lines, routes 3, 5, 14 and 72. One month later official permission was finally received to abandon interurban service to Leyden and Golden, ending all streetcar operations on the DTC. It would be 44 years before light rail service brought rail transit back to Denver's streets.

**July 2, 1950:** Last day of interurban operation on DTC routes 81, 82 and 83.

DENVER & INTERMOUNTAIN opened in 1890 as a standard gauge steam railroad between Denver and Golden. The road later came under control of the DENVER TRAMWAY CO., and was electrified in 1909, offering an alternative interurban route to Golden. The line remained standard gauge and independently operated under its own corporate name until final abandonment in 1953. Operated as Route 84, the D&I was the only standard gauge line in Denver, and carried a substantial amount of freight traffic in addition to its interurban duties. Electric freight service over some 75 miles of track continued until final abandonment, but interurban passenger service ended with the closing of the local Denver streetcar system.

**June 3, 1950:** Last day of Denver-Golden interurban service on Route 84.



## New Operations

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT, known as the RTD, operates two light rail lines, primarily on private right-of-way, although some conventional street running is included in the central business district. The first line, just over five miles long, known as the Central Corridor, opened in 1994. It is now identified as the D, or Green Line, operating between 30th & Downing to Littleton/Mineral Station. The Central Platte Valley Line, a two-mile branch known as the C or Orange Line, opened in 2002, running from Union Station to Littleton/Mineral. Seimens-Duewag built the 104 light rail vehicles now in use. Planning for extensions to the system is well under way.

**October 7, 1994:** First day of light rail operation by the RTD.

(Above) Denver doubled its rail system mileage overnight in November 2006 by adding two new routes in the Interstate 25 corridor. Here Siemens SD160 145 and its three-car train sits at the end station of line F, Lincoln on April 23, 2008.

JOHN PAPPAS PHOTO





## Denver Tramway Near the End

AL STYFFE PHOTOS

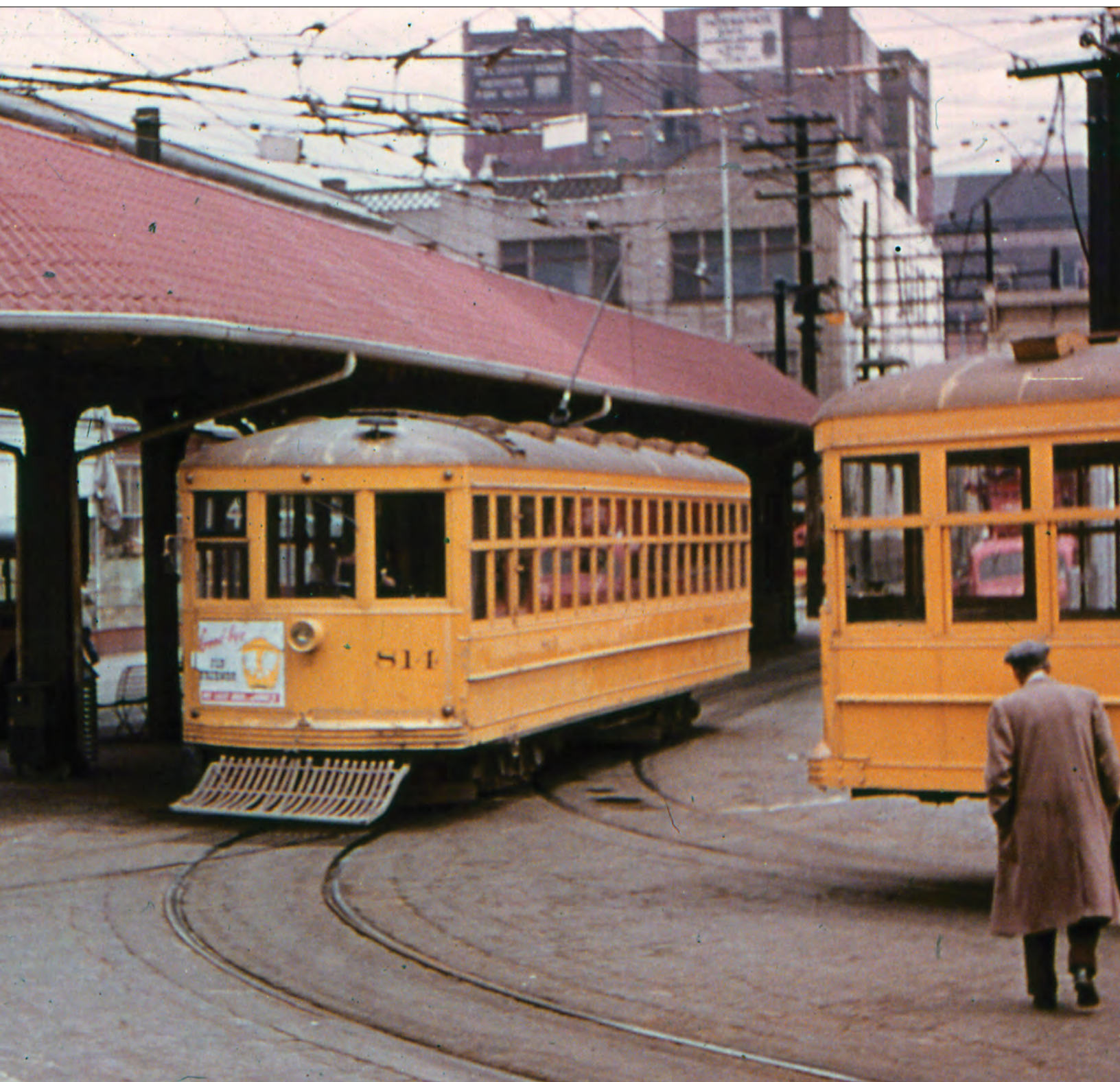
Car 818 (top) is at the Golden terminal of the narrow gauge line to that city in June 1950

Car 309 (bottom) turns the corner at 17th and Welton in 1947.

A "City" version of the 800 series, Denver's newest, (right) waits at the Interurban Terminal downtown for departure to East Colfax, June 1950.











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