



## NEW MEXICO BUSINESS COALITION

Comments and Feedback to the recent article, *“Viewpoint: How to turn lemons into lemonade with the NM Rail Runner”* written by NMBC president, Carla Sonntag.

- This is great feedback. Let government put aside it's provincial politics and help a good idea build momentum. I always felt the Rail Runner would take time to build energy. These things don't happen overnight, though the administration seems to be doing everything in its power to stymie it's continued growth and is actually choking its potential. Sometimes it takes longer than people want to get all the pieces in place. The pueblos are excellent, unique, only in New Mexico destinations and I am glad to ride and see they are building on the energy of the Rail Runner. Los Lunas is building a town center at their stop, Belen should enhance its Harvey House, Santa Fe's railyard is rocking it and Albuquerque's re-surgng downtown is finally becoming a destination we can be proud of, not to mention the potential of the Barelays Railyards. There is huge potential to build on the Rio Bravo stop in the South Valley into a small town center with cafes, retail, and other amenities with the potential to build a more consistent, dedicated ABQ ride from the Sunport directly to the Rail Runner station there. Also, ART would get more people, more efficiently with predictable reliability, from downtown up and down historic Route 66. Imagine jumping off the Rail Runner and within minutes being able to get over to Old Town, the Country Club corridor, EDO, UNM, Nob Hill, and Sandia National Labs' Eubank center with the National Atomic Museum. Just look at all the UNM/CNM students trekking to the Rail Runner each day and who would benefit tremendously from more trains running. I hear that comment way too many times, that people don't ride because there aren't enough trains running throughout the day when they are needed. Yet these infrastructure developments are finally pulling together, even if in fits and starts. And yes, it has taken more time than people expected, but no one would have predicted the great recession that stymied all development for so long... SO why not continue to build on something rather than kill it? People don't take mass transit currently because it isn't convenient for them here. That's where I don't mind my tax dollars subsidizing to the extent the Rail Runner transit spine is given a chance to build momentum. The state needs to keep holding it together, ABQ Ride needs to keep refining existing schedules to better maximize connections to the Rail Runner, ART needs to happen, communities along the route need to continue building their town centers at each stop. Then not only tourists would use the RR, but all

residents would benefit from it. In the meantime, perhaps Visit ABQ and the chambers of commerce can pitch in to develop a strong Rail Runner marketing campaign. That would help very much.

- Remember, musicians are independent businesspeople, operating their businesses to make a living. Their business includes being paid for the services they provide. Pretty shortsighted for a "business coalition" to suggest that these businesses should give their services away. (CD sales are a separate transaction)
- This is such a slanted piece. Public transportation is not designed to "earn its keep". It's a Public Good. Many people use it as a way to get to their jobs and to do business, so the RailRunner earns its keep in a more intangible way. This is classic Rio Grande Foundation "Don't tax me because I got mine" politics.
- The train never gets enough passengers to pay for itself so our taxes have to do that and then the 2 balloon payments are atrocious!
- Bravo CARLA, I love your positive attitude, great idea. We need more of this thinking. Let's move forward.....
- Thank you Carla for all you do. It is an uphill battle in business in our state. Keep fighting the good fight and thank you again.
- Prior to the Martinez Administration, I lived in Espanola and worked on contract with several organizations in Abq...I drove to Santa Fe...took the 11 AM train to ABQ to have lunch meetings...afternoon conferences take the train back to SF by 6:15 and cruise back home. The new administration cut out the 11 AM train and pushed it back to 1:15 PM, so that it became impossible to conduct a day's business unless I wanted to be ready to leave home at 6 AM to catch the 7 AM train south or stayed overnight. I also took the train from Santa Fe to Belen on a Saturday with 3 young boys in March as the train neared the Bosque back to Abq or home so we could see all the migrating birds...and to the State Fair with free connecting busses right onto the grounds...and to museums, etc. Santo Domingo wisely got a federal grant to restore their artist/artisan outlet right at the train station, but the schedule hardly allows potential shoppers to spend time there. Some Casinos now have shuttles to and from the train and that works and I had conversations with students from the Pueblos who could now get to UNM and/or CNM. The market is there for the train... the disconnect is lack of collaboration/cooperation of

the State Government which hardly understands or cares about our needs, Think about that!

- The train should have a late night run for people who go up for concerts & events. I paid \$45 for a Lensic show & had to bolt at intermission to catch the train back to ABQ! I'm sure it happens in reverse too!
- A weekend Las Cruces to Santa Fe party train would be wonderful. Get on board , spend the weekend in Santa Fe or albuq. Both cities could offer deals on food, lodging and entertainment. Sunday afternoon nice relaxing train ride back to Las Cruces.
- I am a well employed, well-educated member of the public - with family members of all ages and generations, and a lot of out of state (tourist) relatives that visit throughout the year.  
I was very excited when the Rail Runner was first introduced. I (and they) have NEVER used the Rail Runner because the service schedule is awful and does not meet our needs. Would I like to use it - yes - if your hours and days of service met general public needs.  
The desire is not to commute to work - it is to use it when not working.
- Better weekend hours and late nights for folks that want to attend a late concert and take the train home.
- Have trolley/bus team up for sporting events, balloon fiesta, wine tasting, concerts, etc.
- Sounds like a great idea Carla. It's pleasant to ride the train; making it fun could help it pay for itself.
- The train schedule seems to be more geared towards the business commuters than taking advantage of the potential tourism dollars. The trains neither run during the busy part of the day, nor run into the later part of the evening. I moved to ABQ from DC. The Metro runs continuously through-out the day, till midnight during the week. And, till 2am on the weekends. Try expanding the hours to accommodate both business and tourist needs.
- Cruise ships have tours set up for passengers.  
Maybe train ride, tour of Santa Fe with shopping, lunch etc. for tourists??