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AMTRAK



ROB STROUD, JOURNAL GAZETTE & TIMES-COURIER

A southbound Amtrak Saluki train arrives in Mattoon on Sept. 12. Two of Amtrak's Illinois routes are among the worst-performing in the country, a new report shows.

POOR TRACK RECORD

Report: Illini, Saluki lines among worst in on-time performance

MARY WISNIEWSKI
Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO — Amtrak's Illini and Saluki trains have among the worst on-time performance records in the nation, according to a federal watchdog organization.

In the 12 months that ended in September 2018, only 6% of northbound Illini trains, which run between Carbondale and Chicago, were on time, meaning they arrived within 15 minutes of their scheduled arrival time, according to a report released Thursday by the Office of Inspector General for Amtrak. For southbound Saluki trains running between Chicago and Carbondale, 17% arrived on time, and 18% were delayed by more than hour.

The Illini and Saluki both run between Union Station in Chicago and Carbondale in Southern Illinois. Stops include Mattoon, Effingham and Urbana-Champaign. Both are both primarily funded by the state, according to the Inspector General's office.

Nationwide, the report found that 27% of Amtrak's trains were late in the same time period. The report identified poor on-time performance as a key factor driving Amtrak's operating loss of \$171 million for the fiscal year.

U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Illinois Democrat and a member of the senate's transportation committee, called the on-time performance for the Illinois trains "unacceptable."

"Reliability is the entire game

for passenger and commuter rail," Duckworth said in a statement. "It doesn't matter if there is one train per day or ten trains per day, if your customers cannot rely on a train to arrive at the time it is scheduled, they might as well drive or book a flight."

The lines are used heavily by students of Eastern and Southern Illinois universities and the University of Illinois.

The Illini and Saluki service operate on tracks owned and operated by Canadian National Railway. In May 2018, U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, wrote a letter to the Federal Railroad Administration complaining that the trains were consistently delayed by CN's freight interference and ongoing

speed restrictions.

The report sent to Congress earlier this week found that nationally, Amtrak's best-performing routes were state-supported and Northeast Corridor lines, which arrived on time 81% and 78% of the time, respectively. Long-distance routes typically did the worst, with just 46% of trains arriving on time, with an average delay of 49 minutes.

Amtrak said freight railroads were responsible for most delays on its long-distance routes, according to the report. Bad weather and congestion also can cause delays.

Improving and maintaining on-time performance on all

Please see **AMTRAK**, Page A5

US hails Turkey's break in attacks

Deal forces Kurds from border area

ROBERT BURNS AND ZEKE MILLER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — The U.S. and Turkey agreed Thursday to a cease-fire in the Turks' deadly attacks on Kurdish fighters in northern Syria, requiring the Kurds to vacate the area in an arrangement that largely solidifies Turkey's position and aims in the weeklong conflict. The deal includes a conditional halt to American economic sanctions.

After negotiations with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence hailed the five-day cease-fire as the way to end the bloodshed caused by Turkey's invasion. He remained silent on whether it amounted to a second abandonment of America's former Kurdish allies in the fight against the Islamic State group.

Turkish troops and Turkish-backed Syrian fighters launched their offensive against Kurdish forces in northern Syria a week ago, two days after President Donald Trump suddenly announced he was withdrawing the U.S. military from the area. Trump was widely criticized for turning on the Kurds, who had taken heavy casualties as partners with the U.S. in fighting IS extremists since 2016.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the United States had accepted the idea of a "safe zone" long pushed



Pence

Please see **SYRIA**, Page A5

Women's suffrage exhibit in works

Artifacts sought for display; living history program also planned

ROB STROUD
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MATTOON — Local historians plan to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women nationwide getting the right to vote by displaying a women's suffrage exhibit in 2020 at the Coles County Historical Society's museum in the Mattoon train depot.

Organizers Steve Thompson and Carolyn Cloyd announced plans for the "WS 100 Project" exhibit on Thursday. They also issued a call for local artifacts to be submitted for the exhibit and for volunteers to portray suffragettes in a related living history program next year.

The project organizers reported that the activism of five generations of U.S. suffragists culminated in the 1920 ratification of the U.S. Constitution's 19th Amendment, which prohibits the states and the federal

government from denying the right to vote to U.S. citizens on the basis of sex.

"It's really a fascinating story of determination and grit by the suffragettes and their male allies," Cloyd said. "The underlying context speaks to the character of U.S. society and it's common attribute to accept an adverse challenge and achieve positive results."

To promote the "WS 100 Project," Cloyd recently dressed from

Please see **EXHIBIT**, Page A2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

To promote the planned "WS 100 Project" women's suffrage exhibit, co-organizer Carolyn Cloyd recently dressed from head to toe in white as a 1910-era suffragette for a visit to the Mattoon School District office in the community's historic former post office building.



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