



Little Rock Trolley Experience Belies Lancaster Projections

In response to inquiries *NewsLanc* received a report, reproduced below, from Virginia Fry of River Rail Streetcar, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Note that almost 80% of their cost is subsidized by federal and local tax payer dollars, despite the average charge of \$1.00 per rider!

Despite the huge subsidy and five street cars clogging busy streets, they only transport an average of 32 persons per hour during operations, perhaps 8 passengers per street car ride. That isn't even enough to begin to pay the wages of the operator!

The following, without deletions, is what Ms. Fry wrote:

"We have a fleet of 5 vintage Birney streetcars that run on a 3.5 mile track connecting the two cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock. We have no dedicated track except for over the Main Street Bridge (.4 miles).

"We travel in mixed traffic along a single directional track except for the Phase II portion of the system which consists of one mile of double track down to the Clinton Presidential Center. Our average speed is around 10 miles per hour.

"We have no dedicated funding and are 80

percent funded by federal funds.

"There are 3 entities that pick up the other 20 percent divided between the cities of Little Rock, North Little Rock and Pulaski County. Our operating budget for 2008 is around \$778,000. We are only expected to cover 25 percent of costs through ridership which we have exceeded.

"Our system began in November of 2004 and we have carried over 500,000 passengers in that time. (390 per day.)"

Based upon Little Rock's experience, the idea of spending over \$14 million to bring back street cars to Lancaster on the supposition that it will only require a subsidy of \$300,000 is untenable. Once the system is built, city residents can guess who will end up paying for it!

What is it about the benighted establishment in Lancaster that it never undertakes conscientious feasibility studies but rather rams half-baked ideas down the throats of the taxpayers? Last week, *NewsLanc* disclosed that the Dallas, TX trolley system doesn't charge a fare!

"This is not some harebrained idea," said Jack Howell of the Lancaster Alliance. Seems like one to us!

**Break free from the monopoly press! Visit www.NewsLanc.com daily.
Suggestions and letters welcome at info@NewsLanc.com.**

NewsLanc Challenges Newspapers to Split Cost of Trolley Poll

On one-minute radio spots on three local stations, *NewsLanc.com* challenges the Lancaster Newspapers to split the cost of a professional poll to determine whether residents of Lancaster City want trolley cars on their main streets.

The challenge can be heard as part of the third of three radio spots dated July 14th and posted in the right hand column of the *NewsLanc.com* home page.

NewsLanc would be willing to pay for the entire poll but, as was the case with the PKF Convention Center Project Feasibility Study, the newspapers would probably arbitrarily not accept the findings as valid. And on their own they are certainly not going to sponsor and report about a legitimate poll that likely would demonstrate public apathy towards the project.

SD of L Provides Meals on Paltry Budget

The *Intelligencer Journal* of July 14 reports “Consultants recommend improved breakfast, lunch menus” at McCaskey. This certainly would be desirable and the various suggestions listed are laudable.

But what is apparently missing from the study and certainly from the article is mention that McCaskey is producing these meals on a budget so skimpy as to awe the *NewsLanc* reporter, experienced in restaurant management, who toured their facilities and published a report several months ago.

What became apparent was McCaskey feeds their youngsters at a small fraction of the cost of suburban and private schools. The bulk of the McCaskey student body receives free or deeply subsidized food through federal programs, yet the amount the School District of Lancaster receives from the government is hardly enough to pay for the food itself, let alone the other 60% of the cost

associated with restaurant operations.

Filling the stomachs of students on the paltry funds provided (and keeping prices down for those who are paying) requires minimizing labor and food handling. To the trained eye, the short cuts were obvious, but essential. And if the kitchen appeared “chaotic” (when has a busy kitchen ever seemed otherwise?), food handling was designed to avoid the possibility of spoilage and food poisoning while minimizing labor costs. Yes, taste of food was subordinated to cost.

***NewsLanc* does not quarrel with what the consultant Nutri-Tech proposes.** However, if blame for the unappetizing, albeit minimally adequate, food is to be placed, it should not be on recently retired food-service and transportation coordinator Gene Miller, but on officials and taxpayers who have not been prepared to provide sufficient subsidies for a largely inner-city student body who live at below or only slightly above poverty level.

LETTER: F&M Actions since John Fry Self-Serving

I was shocked by your editorial that showed that F&M has a “dual police force” with the same power (but not the same controls from misuse of that power)

of the City Police. Do the Lancaster Police know about this? If not, why not? If so, what is their reaction?

NEWSLANC DOESN'T JUST REPORT. IT INVESTIGATES!