

Erie Times-News

Amtrak doesn't deserve support

By: Martin C. Fox – May 24, 2013

Your editorial advocates investing in Amtrak (Erie Times-News, May 10). It should have said more investing.

I am sure the Scott Westcott family's ride to New York City was pleasant and economical, as stated. It was economical because they weren't charged enough. Amtrak loses billions every year. The taxpayers made up the difference. The main reason Amtrak exists is for the Washington to New York to Boston run. It's another taxpayer-subsidized freebie for government employees as well as Bostonians and New Yorkers who are used to living off the rest of us. Indeed, the Cato Institute says that it would be cheaper to provide individual commercial plane fare for the outlying runs.

The editorial cites a white paper stating more growth would occur if tracks, signal system and stations were improved. In other words, the whole system needs to be rebuilt. Where do billions of dollars of regular yearly taxpayer subsidies go? Apparently, not toward increasing efficiency. But like I said, this is a typical government operation.

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