



Hello Loopers et al. - At some point I have been in communication with you in regard to hearing loop technology or other matters pertinent to hearing loss. I'm sending this email as a tool to update my address book and to, at the same time, share some exciting news with you in regard to hearing loops in case you were not already aware of it.

Amtrak Getting in the Loop

In a major upgrade to rail travel, Amtrak has announced that California based Siemen's Mobility Inc. will manufacture up to 83 new multi-powered trains to serve their market. Long term growth plans could add another 130 trains to the fleet. The \$7.3 billion project covers the purchase of equipment and a long term parts and service plus facility modifications and upgrades.

Amtrak said the new trains will offer more comfortable seating, individual power outlets, USB ports and even onboard Wi-Fi. Other amenities will include the fitting of hearing loops, accessible restrooms and vestibules, an accessible Food Service car, and lifts for customers with reduced mobility such as wheelchair users. In response to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the latest health and safety standards are being incorporated that include include enhanced HVAC, touchless restroom controls and automated steps. The new trains will also offer enhanced lighting and panoramic windows, larger vestibules, and a more contemporary food service experience with self-service options.

In addition to the new trains, Amtrak reports it plans to make rail travel more digitally accessible with customer trip information, a digital seat reservation system, and navigation display systems.

Loops to Land at NYC Terminals

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has announced a new policy on accessibility for all airplane, bus, train and ferry terminals that it manages in the greater New York City area. Effective March of 2021, any new or significantly upgraded airport terminal in their entire system will be required to install hearing loops at all departure gates and information counters. The information counter mandate will also apply to all rail, bus and ferry terminals will

In adopting these new requirements, the Authority states that, “ By becoming an early adopter of the groundbreaking space requirements and effectuating other changes based on feedback from people with disabilities that have yet to be addressed in any building code or accessibility standard used in the United States, the Port Authority will be a true pioneer.”

Other Airports

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The Memphis, TN airport is in the process of looping the gates in the new concourse in their terminal and LAX will use the technology in a new rental car facility. Completed installations in the Oshkosh, WI and Eugene, OR airports have placed those two facilities on the looped US airports lists that has grown to 18 airports. The Memphis, TN airport is in the process of looping the gates in the new concourse in their terminal and LAX will use the technology in a new rental car facility. Completed installations in the Oshkosh, WI and Eugene, OR airports have placed those two facilities on the looped US airports lists that has grown to 18 airports..

Other Transportation Modes

The city of New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) has already looped all of their subway fair/information booths and now, following the lead of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system, is moving on to subway cars and buses. They issued an RFP for 504 looped subway cars with the option of 445 additional cars, and a second option to buy an additional 415 cars. Meanwhile, NYC Hearing Loss Association of America members were used as volunteers to evaluate the efficacy of hearing loops installed in some test buses by the MTA.

Website Updates

I've recently updated the LNM "Looped Airports" listing of those in the US using hearing loop technology in one form or another and have had some requests for a copy of that document. Anyone interested in the document can review and/or download it by going to www.LoopNM.com and clicking of the "resources" tab on the right side of the screen. Other files pertinent to airports are also posted on that page.

There have also been some requests for my Sound and Communications article entitled Louder Isn't Necessarily Better for use in explaining to prospective looped facility managers why many with hearing loss need more than just a public address system to have adequate communication access in theaters and other places of public assembly. That article is among several that are posted at www.sofnabq.com under the magazines link.

New Looping Articles

New articles of mine on hearing loops have recently been published or posted online by the Hearing Review and by the Runway Girl Network. They are now also posted at my website: www.sofnabq.com . More have been accepted and will be posted when they run.