

Re: World's First Fuel Cell–Powered Train Locomotive Slated for 2008

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From: Hatunen (hatuunen_at_cox.net)

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Date: Thu, 19 Aug 2004 11:31:05 -0600

On 19 Aug 2004 13:08:47 -0500, Scott A Crosby
<scrosby@cs.rice.edu> wrote:

>On Thu, 19 Aug 2004 01:25:31 -0400, "Ian St. John" <istjohn@noemail.ca> writes:

>

>> >> *Mainly because U.S. trains had established themselves as slow, noisy*

>> >> *and with no fixed schedule. Given the lack of progress in train*

>> >> *technology, being 'leapfrogged' by air is logical.*

>> >

>> > *Could you explain why you think US passenger rail declined in the*

>> > *50's?*

>>

>> *That would be because air travel took over? All the returning airmen*

>> *starting up airlines for passengers? Was I not clear?*

>>

>

>*And why would things be any different now with HSR, except that now*

>*the passenger rail network is in more disrepair, hundreds of miles of*

>*high speed track is needed, and airplanes are the entrenched*

>*technology? IE: Tell me why history wouldn't repeat itself exactly the*

>*same way this time.*

Going to Europe can be illuminating. High speed trains are effective because they are used for medium distances where six hours is about the longest trip that gives a train an attraction over air travel (which is growing rapidly inside Europe since low–cost airlines have been allowed).

The other critical factor is the convenient and effective trains system in European cities. When you get off the train in Europe you will find a Metro or tram waiting. Even airports have high speed rail service; you can board a high speed train easily at, say, Koeln or DeGaulle.

Another factor is that European governments consider trains and local transit a social good and necessity and they are willing to

subsidize them heavily. One of the reasons for the decline of rail in the 1950s (besides the interstate highways and toll roads making driving attractive) was the rail service was provided by private rail companies that had to make a profit; you can't make a profit on passenger service and the rail companies found ways to kill off passenger service.

*>It seems to me that you've already admitted that air is superior, yet
>still push HSR. If I was really cynical, I'd accuse you of trying to
>astroturf for the construction industry.....*

>

*>But I think I know you better than that. My guess is that you want all
>of society to be rearranged in the way that you claim is correct?*

As Europe demonstrates, such a society wouldn't be particularly bad.

***** DAVE HATUNEN (hatunen@cox.net) *****

* Tucson Arizona, out where the cacti grow *

* My typos & misspellings are intentional copyright traps *