Amtrak sets schedules for triweekly long-distance operation

Message to employees says service reductions for 10 trains will be phased in over three-week period beginning Oct. 5

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Amtrak will phase in triweekly operation of its long-distance trains over a three-week period beginning Oct. 5, according to a message to employees obtained by *Trains* News Wire. Trains moving to triweekly schedules as of Oct. 5 are the *California Zephyr*, *Capitol Limited*, *City of New Orleans*, and *Crescent*. The *Coast Starlight*, *Lake Shore Limited*, *Southwest Chief*, and *Texas Eagle* will become triweekly on Oct.12, with the Empire Builder and Palmetto triweekly as of Oct. 19. *Auto Train* will remain daily, while the *Cardinal* and *Sunset Limited* will continue their current triweekly operation, and frequency reductions have already occurred for the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor*.

Amtrak has said that the switch to triweekly operation is because of financial losses reflecting decreased ridership because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but could be avoided if a funding proposal passes Congress [see "Amtrak CEO: Appropriations proposal would preserve daily service, avoid job cuts," *Trains* News Wire, July 13, 2020]. Earlier this week, the company released the metrics that it will track to determine if trains resume daily operation in spring or summer 2021 [see "Amtrak releases criteria for restoring long-distance service," *Trains* News Wire, Aug. 11, 2020].

The planned schedule is shown below. This is a developing story; follow *Trains* News Wire for more information as it becomes available.