April 2013

Metropolitan Transit System
San Diego & Arizona Eastern (SD&AE) Railway

OWNER
San Diego Metropolitan System (MTS)

ROUTE DESCRIPTION
Four (4) lines totaling 108 miles.

Main Line
Centre City San Diego south to San Ysidro/International Border at Tijuana. Total length 15.5 miles. This Line extends through Mexico (44.3 miles) and connects up with the Desert Line. The portion through Mexico, originally constructed as part of the Main Line, is now owned by the Mexican national railways, Ferrocarril Sonora Baja California Line.

La Mesa Branch
Downtown San Diego east to City of El Cajon. Total length: 16.1 miles.

Coronado Branch
National City south to Imperial Beach. Total length 7.2 miles.

Desert Line
Extends north and east from International Border (junction called Division) to Plaster City, where it joins the Union Pacific (UP) Line from El Centro. Total length: 69.9 miles.

TRANSIT OPERATOR
San Diego Trolley, Inc. (SDTI), a wholly subsidiary of MTS on Main Line and on the La Mesa Branch.

Frequency
Seven (7) days a week; 4:16 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.; 15-minute headways most of the day on Blue and Orange Lines; 7.5 minute peak hour service on Blue Line; 30-minute evenings.

Patronage
97,401 average daily riders (FY 12).

FREIGHT OPERATOR
Private operators, San Diego & Imperial Valley (SD&IV) Railroad on three (3) lines: Main Line, La Mesa Branch, and Coronado Branch, and Pacific Imperial Railroad, Inc (PIR) on the Desert Line.

Frequency
Provides service as needed and at night when the San Diego Trolley is not in operation.

PASSENGER EXCURSIONS
Private operator, Pacific Southwest Railroad Museum, on the Desert Line. Weekends and holidays.

Frequency
Weekends and holidays.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

December 14, 1906
John D. Spreckels announced he will form San Diego & Arizona (SD&A) Railway Company and build a 148-mile line between San Diego and El Centro. Spreckels has agreement with Southern Pacific (SP) to silently fund the project.

September 7, 1907
Groundbreaking ceremonies for SD&A are held at the foot of 26th Street (now known as Dewey Street) and Main Street.

1909
Mexican Government orders SD&A to form the Tijuana & Tecate Company, which will construct and hold a 99-year lease on the 44-mile Mexican rail segment.

1911
Mexican revolutionaries mount several attacks on SD&A construction crews to conscript soldiers and supplies, and cut telephone wires.

1917
U.S. federal government seizes control of all railroads and stops construction as part of its war effort to conserve resources; U.S. Government later grants Spreckels special exemption on grounds SD&A will serve military installation.

November 15, 1919
Construction of SD&A is completed at cost of $18 million.

December 1, 1919
First passenger train “arrives” in San Diego from El Centro for official grand opening.

11926, 1927, 1929
Rains take out large amounts of trackage east of San Diego.

October 24, 1932
Financial problems force John D. Spreckels’ heirs to transfer their share of SD&A ownership to SP for $2.8 million. SD&A becomes San Diego & Arizona Eastern (SD&AE).

1932
Floods, land slides, and fires close three (3) tunnels resulting in over $600,000 in repairs.

January 11, 1951
SD&AE ends passenger service due to years of continued declining patronage.

May 20, 1970
SP relinquishes its interest in 44-mile (72 km) Tijuana and Tecate Railway to Mexican national railways, Ferrocarril Sonora Baja California, S.A. de C.V.

September 10, 1976
Hurricane Kathleen destroys major sections of track and bridges on the Desert Line.

1978
Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) denies SP’s request to abandon railway.

(continued on reverse)
August 20, 1979  MTS purchases SD&AE Railway Company in restored condition for $18.1 million (SP keeps Plaster City- El Centro segment), ICC approves operation of freight service by Kyle Railways under contract to MTS. MTS reorganizes SD&AE as a Nevada nonprofit corporation.

January 1980  Storm damages parts of SD&AE Desert Line and Ferrocarril Sonora Baja Line.

January 1983  Mexican damage repaired, Kyle begins rail shipments between San Diego and Plaster City.

June 18, 1983  Fire destroys two (2) bridges on Desert Line.

March 8, 1984  MTS signs agreement with Texas firm, RailTex, to provide freight service. New service to operate as San Diego & Imperial Valley (SD&IV) Railroad.

April 25, 1984  ICC denies Kyle's request to abandon the Railroad.

August 9, 1984  ICC approves RailTex's application to operate freight service.

October 15, 1984  SD&IV begins freight service.

December 1, 1985  San Diego Railroad Museum began 16-mile roundtrip Passenger Excursion trips between Campo and Miller Creek.

August 1, 1986  SD&IV enters into a multi-year agreement with the Mexican Government to set tariffs and provide freight service into Baja California.

July 14, 1989  SD&IV begins repair on Desert Line as a prelude to the start of freight service to Imperial County.

April 2003  SD&IV and MTS approve agreement with Carrizo Gorge Railway (CZRy) for freight service on the Desert Line. CZRy begins Desert Line rehabilitation.

January 2005  CZRy officially moves freight across the Desert Line.

October 2008  Embargo on Desert Line for moving freight pending bridge and tunnel repairs.

October 2010  Blue Line Rehabilitation project begins- overhead catenary wire replacement.

July 2012  Pacific Imperial Railroad (PIR) is assigned CZRy's rights and obligations on the Desert Line.

December 2012  PIR granted new, long term operating agreement for Desert Line freight services.