



Turboliner Extra Photos

This website segment shares Amtrak Turboliner photos that are not found in either of the Turboliner books, and most of which have not previously been shown online. Pictures will be posted on a regular, accumulating basis. So check back for additions. All photos by Dale A. Johnson unless noted.

Turboliner Beginnings



Chicago-St. Louis was the route selected by Amtrak for the initial revenue service use of Turboliner equipment. The first Turboliner test and training run to cover the entire length of that line took place August 29-30, 1973; operating southbound on the 29th, and returning to Chicago the following day. The photos to the left show Amtrak's first RTG I trainset, bracketed by power cars 60 and 61, raising a cloud of dust as it races past the Alton, Illinois station on August 29, 1973; just 27 miles away from its St. Louis destination. For most of the spectators (including the photographer), this would be their first "in person" encounter with a Turboliner.

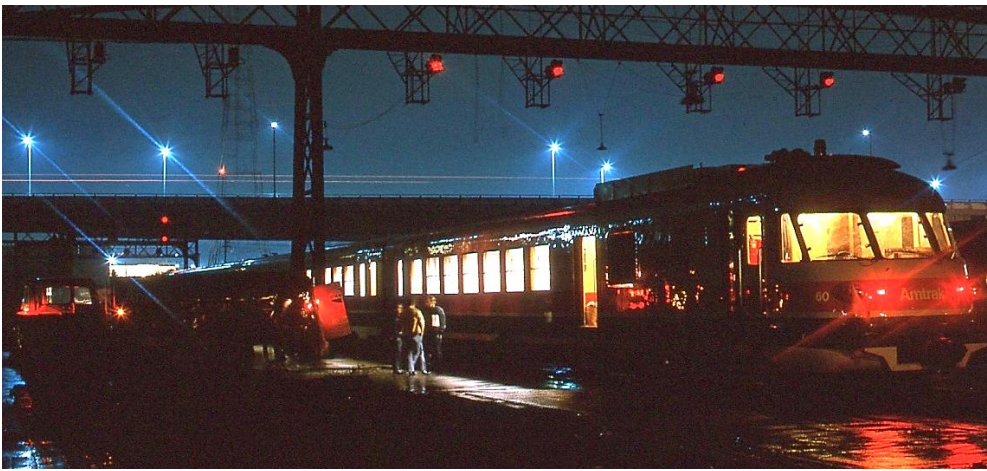


The second step in the implementation of Amtrak's first Turboliner service was a Chicago-St. Louis preview trip of the new equipment; conducted on September 28, 1973. Members of the press, state and local officials, and other guests could obtain a special ticket to ride the train. The general public was able to tour the cars at multiple stops along the route. The above photo, showing the cab of lead power car 63, was taken during a one hour pause at Springfield, Illinois. The photo below shows the same train at the next public inspection stop, approximately 66 miles further down the line, at Alton, Illinois. For additional details of the event, see the *Online Museum* segment of this website.





The first Chicago-St. Louis route revenue service Turboliner trips took place on October 1, 1973. In the above photo, southbound Train 301 pauses at Alton, Illinois, the final stop before St. Louis Union Station. After a slightly more than three-hour layover in St. Louis, the trainset would return north to the shores of Lake Michigan as Train 304. If both trains were on time when this photo was taken, the sister consist, with power cars 62 and 63, and running as northbound Train 302, was just a few minutes from arrival at Chicago Union Station. The 62/63 trainset would also do a same-day turnaround, and return to St. Louis in the evening. One further equipment note. Those with a sharp eye will notice that a flashing strobe light has been added to the power car roof. This light, in turn, would later be replaced with other forms of safety/warning lights.



As shown on page 127 of the first Turboliner book, fixed fueling stations were in place at the major Turboliner maintenance facilities. However, depending on route length and equipment assignments, Turboliners were also regularly refueled “in the field” through the use of tank trucks. Several examples are shown on this page.



In the top photo, the RTG I consist shown is being refueled under the St. Louis Union Station trainshed, shortly after arriving from Chicago as Train 303. The date is October 12, 1973, less than two weeks after the start of Turboliner service on the route. By the June 1974 date of the second photo, such servicing had been moved to an area just west of the trainshed. The trainset shown is between runs as Train 301 and 304. In the photo, the SDP40F engines are for Trains 30-31, the Kansas City-New York *National Limited*; and the ex-Union Pacific E-units will be used on Trains 21-22, the St. Louis-Laredo, Texas *Inter-American*.



The third photo shows the refueling of an RTG I Group 2 trainset at Michigan Central Station in Detroit. The Turboliner has recently arrived from Chicago as Train 350, and will return to Chicago as Train 355 later in the day. The date is May 29, 1975.



In the bottom photo, an RTL I trainset, running as Train 73, the *Empire State Express*, is being refueled from a trackside truck during a station stop at Albany-Rensselaer, New York, part-way through its journey on Amtrak’s longest Turboliner route—the 463-mile Empire Corridor line between New York City and Niagara Falls. The date is October 29, 1983.

For Turboliner modelers, such scenes could be realistically recreated on one’s model railroad layout.

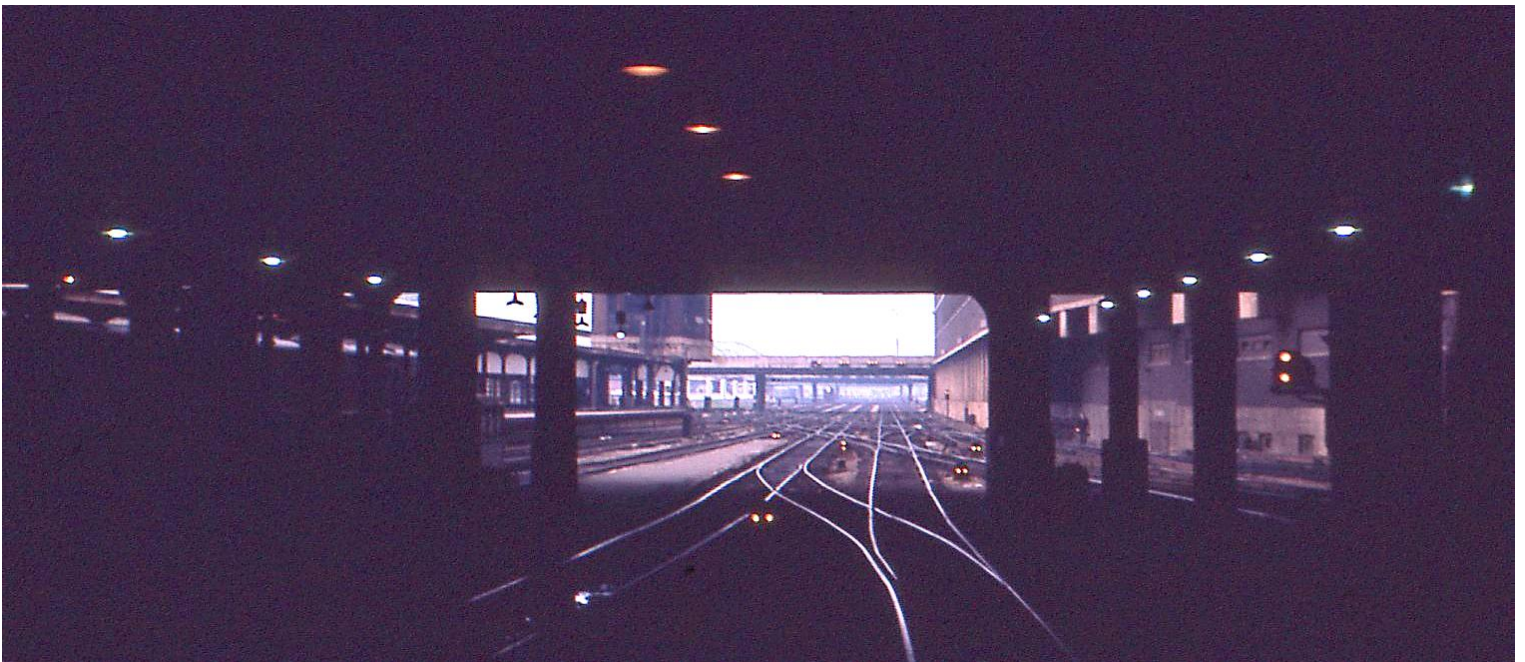
Turboliner Terminals—Midwestern Routes

Chicago, Illinois



In the scene above, recorded in July 1974, Train 302 has just arrived at Chicago Union Station on a morning run from St. Louis. Following the unloading of passengers on the opposite side of the train, the RTG I consist will reverse direction and travel approximately five miles southwest of the station to the Brighton Park Turboliner Maintenance Facility, and be serviced for a late afternoon return to St. Louis as Train 303.

The photo below shows the view from the cab of RTG I, Group 2 power car 67, just prior to departing Chicago as the lead car on Detroit, Michigan-bound Train 350 on May 29, 1975.



St. Louis, Missouri



Above, Chicago-St. Louis Train 303 sits at the bumping post following the unloading of passengers on October 12, 1973. The Turboliner will be refueled under the trainshed by a trackside truck, then moved to a holding area just west of the trainshed, then return the following morning to load passengers for a trip back to Chicago as Train 302.

Below, one of the original two RTG I Turboliner trainsets, running as Chicago-St. Louis Train 301, passes Tower 1, at the throat of St. Louis Union Station trackage, and negotiates the final curve under U.S. Highway 40, moments before arriving at the platforms under the trainshed. The date is June 1974.





On April 24, 1975, one of the four recently-received RTG I, Group 2 Turboliner trainsets (Cars 64, 83, 84, 85, 65) ran in revenue service for the first time, making a Chicago-St. Louis-Chicago round trip as Trains 301 and 304. The above photo shows the new Turboliner moving between the St. Louis Union Station trainshed and a servicing area just west of the station.

The photo below, taken under the St. Louis Union Station trainshed on October 17, 1975, shows a representative from each of the three Amtrak routes serving the Gateway City. On the left is Turboliner Train 301, recently arrived from Chicago (note the cab-mounted flashing red light protecting the rear of the train). In the center is Train 21, the St. Louis-Laredo, Texas *Inter-American*. To the far right, is Train 31, a late-running New York City-Kansas City *National Limited*.



Detroit, Michigan



In the above view from the cab of Turbopower car 67, Chicago-Detroit Train 350 is only moments away from reaching its destination terminal of Michigan Central Station in Detroit, on May 29, 1975. As is easy to see from the limited number of tracks entering the trainshed, the Turboliner has little competition for space inside the once grand and busy terminal. However, on the positive side, the Turboliner equipment will spark a nearly 70 percent ridership increase during a ten-month period on the Chicago-Detroit route.



Within the confines of Michigan Central Station in Detroit, the Turboliners shared space with a few conventional equipment trains. In the above scene, recorded on May 29, 1975, Turboliner-equipped Train 355 awaits a 5:00 PM departure for Chicago. In the background, is diesel-powered Train 373, the *Michigan Executive*, a more localized run that will depart at 5:25 PM for a 75-mile trip to Jackson, Michigan, with three intermediate stops.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin



The photos on this page, taken on June 1, 1976, show Train 324/352, a Milwaukee-Chicago-Detroit through service. In the above view, the Turboliner consist awaits boarding passengers within the Milwaukee station. In the scene to the left, the same train has just departed the station, is crossing the Menomonee River, and is headed away from the camera toward Chicago.

Port Huron, Michigan



Not possessing, or having seen, any photos of a Turboliner-equipped “Blue Water Limited” at the Port Huron, Michigan station, this “blended” set of images is presented to convey the subject matter. The station shown was built in 1974, and was photographed in 1986. Turboliners used this facility from May 20, 1976 until September 8, 1981.

NOTE: If any viewer of this website has a photo of a Turboliner at this station (clearly showing both the train and the station), and would be willing to have their photo posted, please use the “Contact Us” segment of this site. Thanks!

Champaign-Urbana, Illinois



The two photos on this page show Train 380, the *Illini*, at Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, just prior to a 6:30 AM departure for Chicago on September 9, 1978. Located on the former Illinois Central Railroad's Chicago-Memphis-New Orleans main line, the primary platforms for this facility can be seen in the upper photo, and are located in the slightly elevated area to the left of the Turboliner. However, since this city is both the end point and starting point for this particular train, the Turbo spends the night on, and departs from, the stub-end track shown. The primary Champaign-Urbana station building is the two-story structure located just behind the rear cab of the Turboliner in the upper photo. The previous Champaign station, seen directly next to the Turboliner in both photos, was moved approximately 100 feet north in 1924, and re-designated a freight facility.

Turboliner Territory—Midwestern Routes



During its first two weeks of operation, Chicago-St. Louis Train 303 pauses at the Alton, Illinois station on the evening of October 10, 1975. Note the Amtrak banner hanging on the outside of the station building.



In a pastoral setting at Godfrey, Illinois, Train 304 races northward in June, 1974.



A few miles south of Carlinville, Illinois, near Beaver Dam State Park, Train 307 briefly shatters the surrounding solitude with the muffled whine of turbine engines and the wail of a multi-chime airhorn, on May 4, 1974.



In the above scene, Train 302 sleekly skims along the shoreline of Lake Springfield on July 9, 1974. Soon, however, the wide open spaces are exchanged for the downtown streets of the Capital city of Illinois.



As shown to the left, in the photo of Train 307 (taken on October 12, 1974), Turboliner passengers are given an almost “front-door step view” of the Illinois State Capital building. The winged emblem on the bridge reflects the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio chapter in the route’s history.

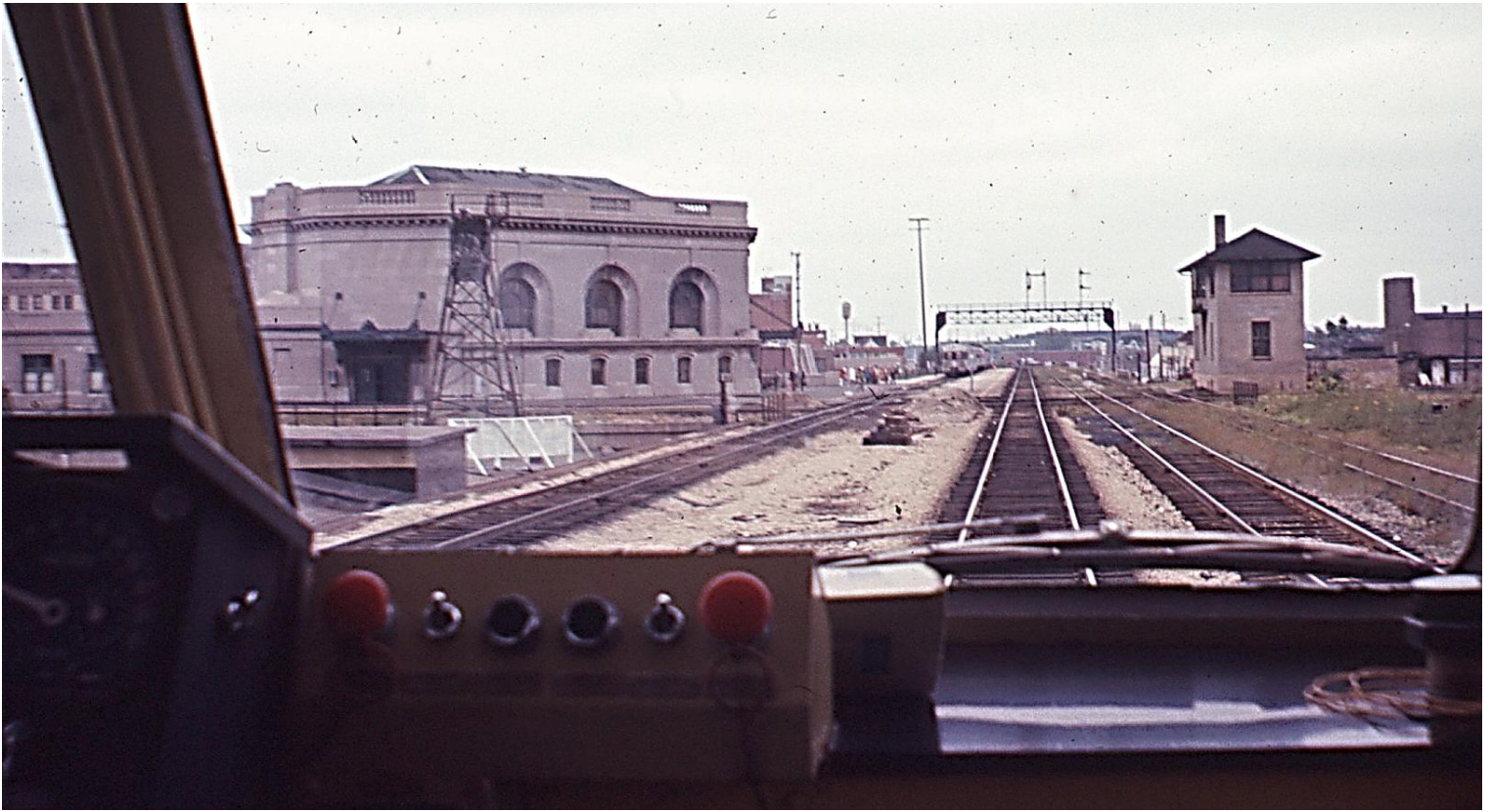


Amtrak's downtown Springfield, Illinois station (originally used by the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad), is located just a few blocks from the Capital building. The photo to the left shows Train 302 at that location on October 12, 1974.



North of Bloomington, Illinois, on September 13, 1974, Train 302 makes the maximum allowable 79 miles-per-hour track speed for the route, and passes an Illinois Central Gulf Railroad freight train.





With multiple railroads and Amtrak routes passing in front of the classic Joliet, Illinois Union Station, it was not unusual for Chicago-St. Louis Turboliners to meet other trains at that location. Three examples are shown on this page.

In the top photo, taken from the cab of RTG I Turboline power car 61 on September 13, 1974, Train 302 slows for a stop at Joliet Union Station. On the track to the immediate left, Amtrak Train 16, the Houston-Chicago *Lone Star* is just departing for the last leg of its journey to Chicago Union Station. Bringing up the markers of Train 16 is the former New York Central high-windowed observation car *Wingate Brook*.

In the center photo, taken on September 17, 1974, Turboline Train 302 shares an arrival and a platform with Amtrak Train 4, the Los Angeles-Chicago *Southwest Limited*. The dome car shown on Train 4 is no stranger to this route, having served many years as a "Pleasure Dome Lounge" on the Santa Fe Railroad's *Super Chief*.

In the bottom photo, also taken on September 17, 1974, Train 4 has departed, and Train 302 has cleared the interlocking, thus allowing a westbound Rock Island Railroad freight train to cross on an intersecting route.

In June 1974, an Illinois Central Gulf freight train derailment at Godfrey, Illinois blocked Amtrak's Chicago-St. Louis route, and forced all passenger trains, including Turboliners, to operate over a little-used industrial branch line to circumvent the derailment site. Northbound trains entered the branch just beyond Wann Interlocking, approximately five miles south of the Alton, Illinois Amtrak station; and rejoined the main line approximately five miles north of the Alton Amtrak station. This incident was a very rare (perhaps the ONLY) instance of street running by a regularly-scheduled Turboliner in the history of Amtrak Turboliner operation. Each of the scenes below were recorded on June 9, 1974.



In the above left photo, St. Louis-Chicago Train 306 has recently entered the branch line, changed direction from north to west, and is crossing Illinois Route 3 at East Alton. The above right photo shows Train 306 carefully passing through a levee flood gate and over Wood River Creek at East Alton. The levee was intended to control rising flood waters from the nearby Mississippi River.



In the two views immediately above, Train 306 has just completed a passenger stop at Lincoln-Douglas Square in downtown Alton, Illinois, and is following branch line trackage in the center of Piasa Street, and past storefronts of the central business district.



The photo to the left shows Chicago-St. Louis Train 303, on the evening of June 9, pausing at Lincoln-Douglas Square to unload and load passengers, following the majority of its downtown Alton street running. This site was the location of an October 15, 1858 debate between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in the race for a United States Senate seat from Illinois. An Illinois Terminal Railroad station also once stood here.



Train 380, the Champaign-Urbana to Chicago *Illini*, accelerates northward moments after a station stop at Kankakee, Illinois, on September 9, 1978. Turboliner use on this route lasted less than six months, and the turbine-powered equipment would be replaced with conventional diesel locomotive-hauled Amfleet cars the following month.

The remaining pictures in “Turboliner Territory—Midwestern Routes” provide a “from-the-cab” perspective for the Chicago-Detroit route that complements the “trackside” photo coverage found in the first Turboliner book. All photos were taken from the cab of Turbopower car 67, as that car led Train 350 from Chicago to Detroit on May 29, 1975.



Early in the journey of Train 350 from Chicago to Detroit, as the Amtrak run crosses above the Dan Ryan Expressway on the south side of the Windy City, crew members in the cab of Turboliner power car 67 catch a view of a Chicago Transit Authority rapid transit train heading into downtown.



Gathering speed while passing through an industrial area southeast of Chicago, Train 350 encounters the tunnel-like structure of a large suspension bridge.



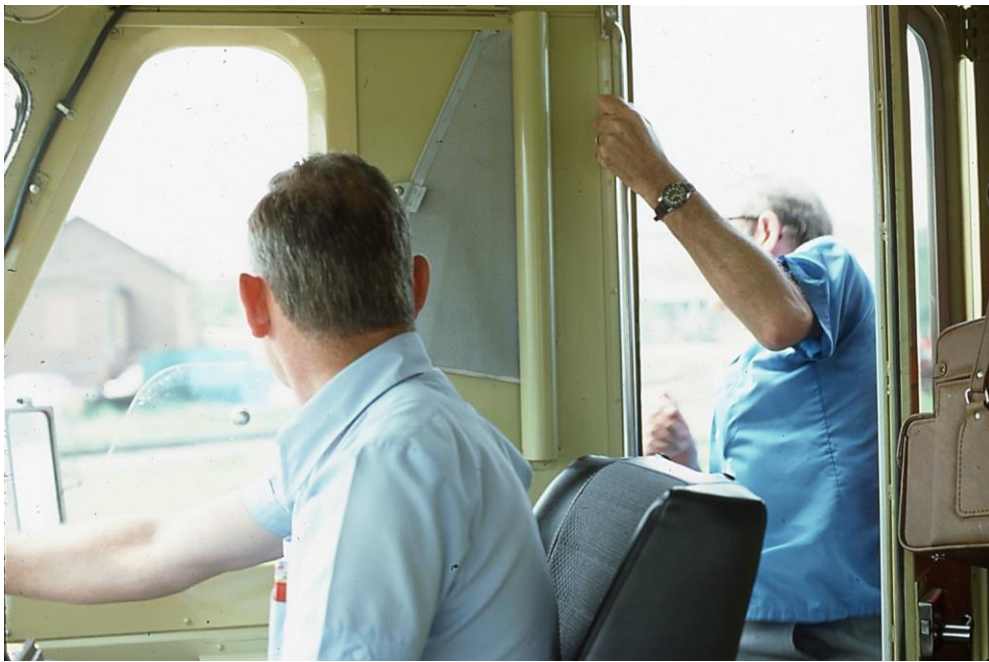
Continuing eastward across northern Indiana, Train 350 skirts the shoreline of Lake Michigan, and passes within sight of the Michigan City lighthouse.



In the view to the left, Train 350 enters the Michigan Division of the Northern Region on the Penn Central Railroad.

Below, Train 350 meets Chicago bound Train 365, the Port Huron-Chicago *Blue Water*. At this point in time, the *Blue Water* operated with diesel locomotive-hauled conventional equipment. Turboliners would begin to serve that route on May 20, 1976, utilizing a trainset displaced by Amfleet equipment on the Chicago-Detroit route.





In the scene to the left, the head-end crew of Train 350 prepares to snag train orders “on-the-fly” from a trackside hoop.

Below, Train 350 prepares to move through a steam locomotive coaling tower—a long-unused monument to a bygone era. Faintly visible in the distance is the headlight from Turboliner-equipped Detroit-Chicago Train 353, which will soon speed past on the adjacent track.



Turboliner Maintenance Facility—Midwestern Routes

Turboliner Terminals—Eastern Routes

New York City—Grand Central Station

New York City—Pennsylvania Station

Buffalo, New York

Turboliner Territory—Eastern Routes

Turboliner Maintenance Facility—Eastern Routes

Turboliner Winter Wonderland

Beech Grove Rebuild/Storage Facility

Turboliner Equipment

Turboliner Collisions/Accidents