

Brightline offers comfortable service between Florida cities

In 2017, All Aboard Florida is planning to inaugurate its intercity connection between Miami and West Palm Beach. The comfortable express trains with the brand name “Brightline” are built by Siemens in Sacramento, California.

First private intercity offering for decades

For the first time in many decades in the United States, a privately owned company began planning and developing an express intercity connection in 2012. All Aboard Florida is a wholly owned subsidiary of Florida East Coast Industries. Beginning in mid-2017, up to 16 pairs of trains will eventually operate along the existing Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) corridor between Miami Central and West Palm Beach via Fort Lauderdale. All of the railway stations on the line are spectacular new structures offering easy connections to local rail and road mass transit systems.

The Brightline route is to be extended to Orlando Airport by 2019 with a new high-speed stretch. Trains will take about three hours to cover the 390 kilometers distance between Orlando and Miami. On the new high-speed stretch between Cocoa and Orlando, trains will be able to reach a top speed of 201 km/h. The four-car trains with a Charger locomotive at each end will take about one hour to cover the 110-km first stretch of the line.

Comfortable trains with a European flair

Early this summer, five colorful and comfortable four-car Brightline trainsets will inaugurate passenger service on the new line. A new feature for the U.S. is that passengers will have level boarding direct from the platforms, and the handicapped can enter and exit the trains without assistance. Automatically extending ramps at the doors ease passenger access. The broad interior aisle (81 cm or 32”) offers more room for movement than is provided in other American trains. Upon entering

service this year, each train will have three “Smart” coaches and one “Select” coach. The Smart Class offers 48-cm (19”) wide seating in a 2+2 configuration, with a total of 66 or 58 seats, some with tables, depending on the coach. The coaches also have spacious restrooms and space for bicycles and luggage. The Select Class coach has only 49 seats and is roomier with 53-cm (21”) wide leather seats in a 2+1 configuration. All coaches are equipped with adjustable seats, folding tables, Wi-Fi (WLAN) and group seating arrangements with or without tables. Select Class passengers can have drinks and food served free of charge, have access to the Premium Guest Lounge at the stations, and can park their cars without charge at the stations.

The Brightline trains will be bookended by two colorful diesel-electric Charger SC-44 locomotives that are also built by Siemens in Sacramento. The locomotives are powered by a 3,100 kW (4,200 PS) high speed diesel engine that enable the Brightline trainset to reach a top speed of 201 km/h. The trains will initially operate at speeds of up to 127 km/h (70 mph) on the first stretch of the line.

Reliability and availability over 30 years

In June 2015, All Aboard Florida contracted Siemens to service and maintain the Brightline trainsets for a period of 30 years. In addition to a smaller service facility in West Palm Beach already in operation, a new maintenance hall will be built at the Orlando Airport. Around 40 employees of All Aboard Florida and about 70 Siemens maintenance specialists will ensure that the initial fleet of 20 coaches and ten locomotives will be permanently available and kept in optimal condition. The train’s maintenance concept has already been successfully implemented and proven on a number of continents, and ensures vehicle availability of well over 95 percent.

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