

Lovable Lancaster

This Pennsylvania city offers fast mainline action and industrial variety



The eastbound Amtrak *Pennsylvanian* rolls through on the Keystone Corridor as it approaches Lancaster station in December 2011. Three photos, Michael S. Murray



An NS local waits by Cork Tower before proceeding into Lewis Yard in February 2012. The Amtrak station is just beyond.

LOCATION: Lancaster is located in south-central Pennsylvania, between Philadelphia and Harrisburg. It is accessible from major highways, including the Pennsylvania Turnpike. While railfans tend to head directly to the nearby Strasburg Rail Road and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, both located in Strasburg, this city of 60,000 still has plenty of mainline railroad action.

TRAIN-WATCHING: Amtrak's New York-Harrisburg *Keystone Service* offers 14 weekday trains in each direction and seven weekend trains, including the daily appearance of two *Pennsylvanians*, operating between New York and Pittsburgh. *Keystone* trains are all push-pull, powered by the new Siemens ACS-64 electric locomotives. Trains may have a locomotive or cab car on either end. From 5:30 a.m. until after 10 p.m., there is rarely an hour without at least one train.

There are multiple street overpasses east and west of the station, and several underpasses to the east offer interesting perspectives for photography. East of downtown, Jefferson Drive, reached from Horseshoe Road off Old Philadelphia Pike, parallels the main line and is wide open for both eastbound and westbound photos on the north side of the tracks.

Norfolk Southern handles freight operation on the Keystone Corridor, as well as on its own Columbia, Lititz, and New Holland branches out of H. Craig Lewis Yard. It is located about half a mile west of the Amtrak station and is easily observed from Dillerville Road. There are seven scheduled crews, including daily turns to Columbia, Lititz, and New Holland, as well as several yard crews. A daily turn also operates to Enola Yard, near Harrisburg.

There are numerous grade crossings along the branch lines throughout the area, but none on the Keystone Corridor.

RADIO FREQUENCIES:
Amtrak, 160.635; NS, 160.070.

FOR YOUR FAMILY: Lancaster has a vibrant downtown, with a variety of restaurants, art galleries, antique stores, and shops. The city's Central Market, the oldest in the nation, dating to 1730, opens at 6 a.m. Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and features local produce, baked goods, and crafts year round.



A collection of NS power idles away at Lewis Yard in Lancaster, as seen from Dillerville Road November 2014.

THIS MONTH: LANCASTER, PA.

