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A Tale of Two Trains: High-Speed Transportation Systems: Which country has the most advanced and resilient infrastructure?..."high speed railways, yes or no?" is a second order question. First order questions concern the kind of society Norway (or California) aspires to become in the decades ahead...My conclusion...is that high-speed, high-entropy transportation systems take a country back to the past. They are not the way of the future. By John Thackara/Doors of Perception [images, links] - Change Observer

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Behemoth Packs 2.83 Million Square Feet of Blight: Commentary: ...15 Penn Plaza that may rise opposite Pennsylvania Station would deface New York City's skyline and cast a pall over surrounding streets already shortchanged on light and air...How did this thing get so huge? By James S. Russell -- Pelli Clarke Pelli [images] - Bloomberg News

San Diego Convention Center expansion to include rooftop park: A five-acre rooftop park, truck tunnel for exhibitors and 500-room hotel built on top of a nearby parking garage wowed officials as they announced the lead architect... -- Fentress Architects; John Portman & Associates; Civitas [images, flythrough] - San Diego Union-Tribune

San Diego Crossings Gets Green Lighting Scheme: The 2.5-mile long San Diego–Coronado Bay Bridge is set to undergo the "largest interactive green energy lighting project in North America."...Lighting will respond to the rate and intensity of automobile traffic on the bridge, as well as major boat traffic... -- Peter Fink/FRM Architects; Mark Major/Spies + Major; Buro Happold [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art defies the odds and Hurricane Katrina to open on Mississippi's battered coast: ...a glistening cluster of silver structures...the product of a marriage made in aesthetic heaven...Gehry...intended his Biloxi buildings to dance with the trees. And so they do: breezily, playfully, with a sense of abandon that flies in the face of form-follows-function philosophy. Yet there's probably no place in the world where his joyful shapes seem so ideally suited to their purpose. By Doug MacCash -- Frank Gehry [video, links] - The Times-Picayune (New Orleans)

Back On Its Feet: A New Ohr O'Keefe Museum Opens: More than five years after hurricane Katrina...the new museum for the area's self-styled mad potter...has opened -- with a mad architect in charge. Just kidding... By Judith H. Dobrzynski -- Gensler [slide show] - New York Times

PlayhouseSquare stars in its own real estate revival: PlayhouseSquare Foundation...owns roughly 1 million square feet...buying and redeveloping real estate has allowed it to reap the financial benefits...that might otherwise have landed in private developers' pockets. -- Urban Design Collaborative [images] - Cleveland Plain Dealer

Modern Theatre brought up-to-date: Restored theater to play role in area's resurgence...joins the Paramount Center and the Boston Opera House, all in the row...to represent the reclaiming of a once-glorious cultural center that became a porn-
Moscow Hotels Get Glitzy Rehabs, But Where Would Stalin Sleep? Swank Meets History; "We Hope We Don't Need a Bomb Shelter"...Proud rivals, the Leningradskaya and Ukraina...two of Moscow's "seven sisters"—Stalin-era skyscrapers..."if the restoration experts hadn't been there, the whole inside would have been covered in gold"..."We might have overdone it in a few places"... -- Alexander Solovyev, Leonid Polyakov, Vladimir Sheskin [slide show] - Wall Street Journal

Battery Park City Parks Conservancy Maintenance Facility; ...in the base of the Visionaire, a new, sustainable high-rise residential tower...LEED Platinum facility uses a combination of low-tech, passive strategies and high-tech equipment to reduce the energy costs by 35%. -- Dattner Architects [slide show] - Eco-Structure magazine

Lemons to Lemonade: Empty bottles inspire a young designer's competition-winning bus shelter in Lexington, Kentucky...Bottleshop, by designer Aaron Scales, is the Art in Motion's first attempt to shelter and enlighten transit riders. By David Sokol [slide show] - GreenSource Magazine

Your Guide to the New Draft of LEED: The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has released a draft of the next version of the LEED rating systems, and has opened the first public comment period...to Dec. 31, 2010...What's (Mostly) the Same; What's Different; What's New [links] - BuildingGreen.com

Two British Designers Win International Competition to Find the Ultimate Drinking Fountain; ...for London's eight Royal Parks...Trumpet and Watering Holes.... -- Ben Addy/Moxon Architects; Robin Monotti Architects/Mark Titman [images] - Dexigner

Bill Moggridge honoured with Duke of Edinburgh prize: The creator of the world's first laptop has been given a lifetime achievement award...the 2010 Prince Philip Designers Prize...co-founded design company IDEO...currently the director of the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. - BBC (UK)

America's suburban sprawl elevated to aerial art; Eye-catching and provocative aren't descriptions you'd readily associate with the architecture of America's sprawling suburbs. But seen from photographer Christoph Gielen's perspective, they are. -- Jeff Speck [slide show] - CNN

Toyo Ito & Associates: Za-Koenji Public Theatre, Suginami-ku, Tokyo, Japan