

Swiss Section



Technical Visit to Regional Transport Bern-Solothurn and 2025 AGM

Report by Chris Glättli

This report covers the 2025 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Section, as well as the technical visit to Regional Transport Bern-Solothurn (RBS) to explore the progress of the construction of the new RBS underground terminus at Bern main station.

The original RBS station within Bern main station was designed in 1952 to accommodate 16,000 passengers per day. Today, however, it serves up to 60,000 daily, leading to significant challenges. These include overcrowding, platforms that are too short and narrow, limited access from only one side, and resulting safety concerns.

To meet future demand, service capacity must increase by 2030. The S7 line to Worb will operate with double sets, and the Regional Express (RE) to Solothurn with triple sets, which requires longer platforms. A total investment of CHF1.2bn (£1.1bn, €1.3bn, \$1.5bn) is planned to deliver a 25 per cent increase in capacity by 2030.

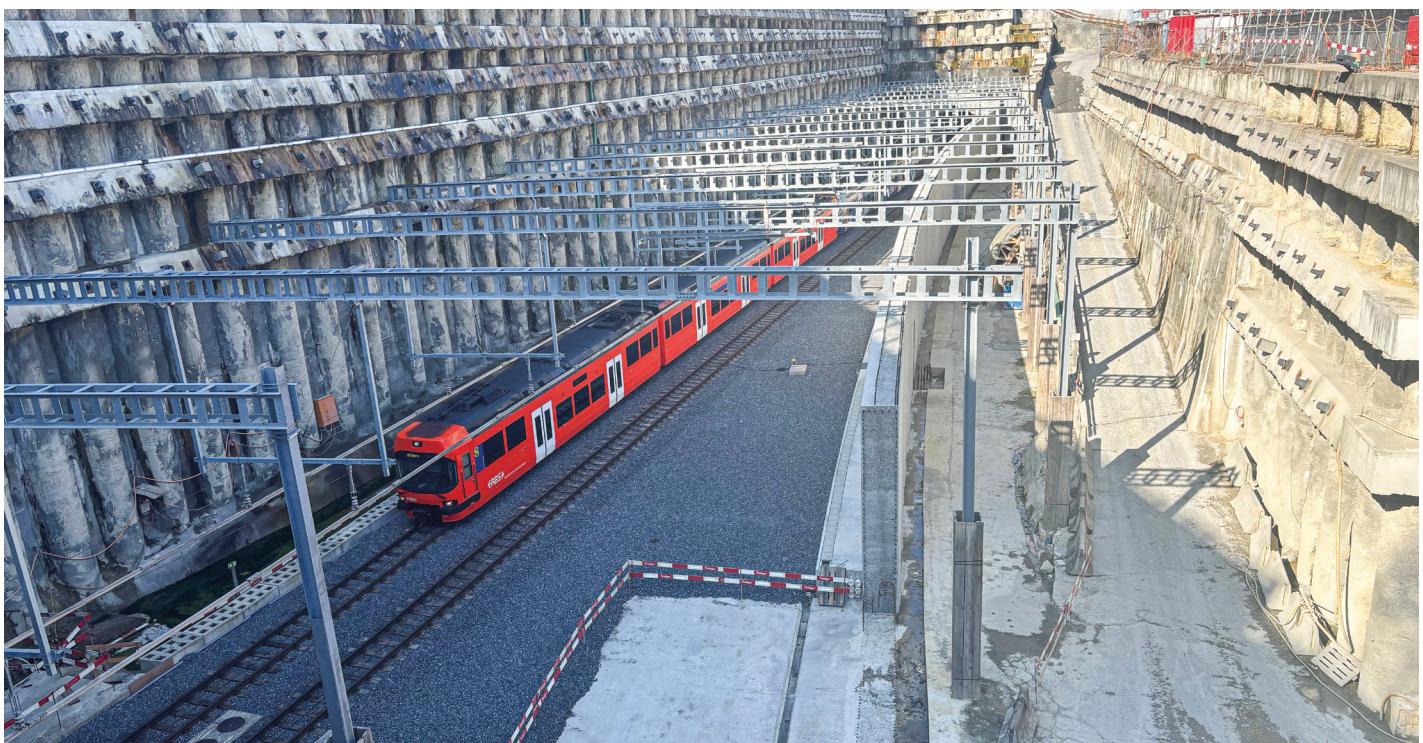
The new RBS station is being constructed directly beneath platforms 2 to 7 of Bern main station, providing connections to both intercity and S-Bahn trains.

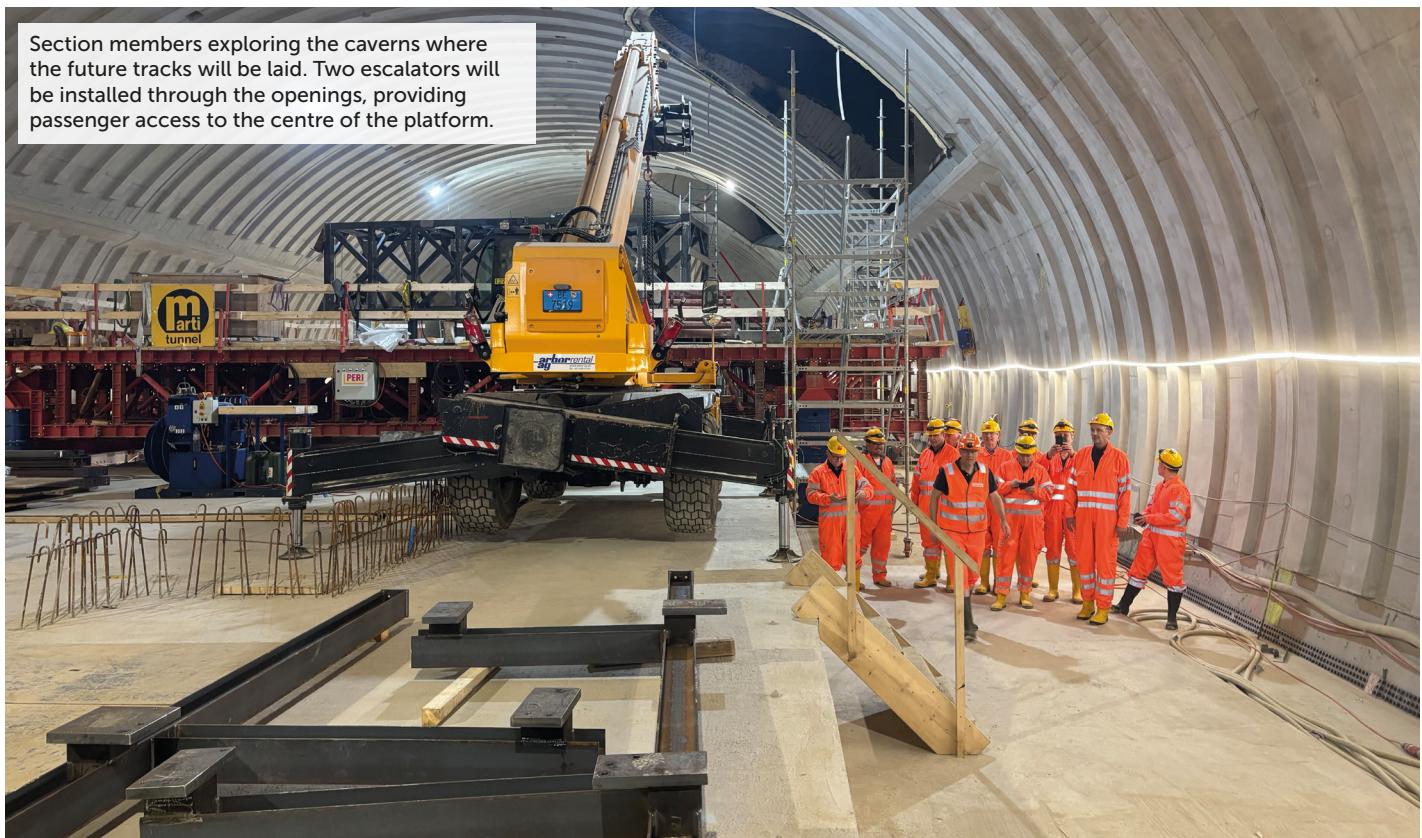
Because the main post office is located above the station, underground construction is particularly sensitive, requiring precise distribution of the load from above. The complexity is further heightened by the fact that access to the construction site is limited to lifts. Heavy machinery such as drills, excavators, and dumpers have to be craned down, while all excavated material has to be lifted out.

The two RBS main station caverns feature an oval cross-section measuring 17m in height and 25m in width, accommodating two tracks each.

Custom-built vehicles were developed specifically for the project: one for placing the steel reinforcement rebars, and another, a formwork dolly, to support the concrete during the vault pouring process.

To manage passenger flows across different levels, a new underpass will be constructed at the same level as the existing one. In total, three construction staging areas have been established for the project. Additionally, a new feeder tunnel, approximately 1km in length, will be built to connect the new station to the existing network.





Future expansion is also considered in the project. The University Hospital of Bern ('Insel') is located less than a kilometre from the new station, directly along the axis of the new tunnel. To enable the potential construction of a future station serving the hospital, the tunnel boring machine has already created two stub tunnels for a possible future connection.

Annual General Meeting

Section chair Chris Glättli opened the IRSE Swiss Section Annual General Meeting, and conducted his first AGM with efficiency and clarity. Newly appointed treasurer, Daniel Kesseli, presented the financial report, including membership fees and the proposed budget for 2025. All existing committee members were re-elected.

The meeting concluded with a social dinner, providing an opportunity for members to share both past experiences and future perspectives in a relaxed setting.

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