



June 29 - July 4, 2004 we sponsored the National Railway Historical Society's National Convention. Here is the runby on the North Shore Scenic Railway at Palmers, MN. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Thursday, July 1, 2004 the first wave of convention-eers hits the Hiawatha Line for a shop tour and ride. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Thursday, July 1, 2004, the first wave of convention attendees arrives via vintage GM transit bus at the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Como - Harriet streetcar line. The MTM's vintage bus fleet was a hit with the conventioneers. Who knew?! Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Saturday, July 3, 2004, in cooperation with the Friends of the 261, a coach was set aside for convention attendees on the *Mississippi River Hiawatha*, seen here at Donehower, MN. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



Convention riders were able to order box lunches. Here are chapter members loading the lunches at Winona during a brief stop. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



July 4, 2004 we see a run-by on the Osceola and St. Croix Valley just west of Osceola. Photo by Dawn Holmberg



June 2005 we bused up to Spooner, WI to ride the Wisconsin Great Northern. Here is our train at Trego Junction. Photo by Russ Isbrandt



Here are our members enjoying the ride aboard partially restored North Shore 727. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

Railfan Calendar

Northstar Chapter 40th Anniversary Banquet

Sunday, August 9th, the Northstar Chapter will celebrate its 40th anniversary at Jax Cafe, 1928 University Avenue NE, Minneapolis. Plans call for ordering off the menu and individual settlement. The gathering will start at 4:00 pm. Please RSVP. See p.11 for form.

National Railway Historical Society National Convention in Duluth

The convention starts Tuesday, August 11th with a special train to Duluth. Convention details, registration and ticket purchase may be found at www.steamontherange2009.com/.

From Trains Newswire

4449 won't make Duluth appearance

Published: Friday, May 15, 2009

DULUTH, MN - Southern Pacific 4-8-4 No. 4449 won't make an appearance in Duluth, MN, the National Railway Historical Society has confirmed to TRAINS News Wire. The society announced it would appear last week, but the group said it had to cancel the appearance after Train Festival 2009 asked for \$25,000 as part of the deal.



October 2006 we joined the Iowa Chapter in riding the Iowa Traction Railroad from their Emery Shops to Mason City aboard Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee 727. Here is the car along Iowa Highway 106. Photo by Russ Isbrandt

No. 4449 is making its cross-country trek to appear at Train Festival in Owosso, MI in July. Train Festival's backers are paying \$400,000 to bring the engine eastward, and as a result, asked the society to contribute \$25,000 to help defray that cost. But Carl Jensen, chairman of the society's national convention committee, said his group can't afford to pay that cost. He noted the trips were announced before 4449 became part of the picture as diesel-powered excursions, and said it was too late to adjust ticket prices.

Jensen said the current trips will run as scheduled, but with diesel power as originally planned. He said the group hasn't yet discussed whether to refund ticket prices to passengers who bought tickets in response to the 4449 appearance.

Fundamentally, Jensen said the society didn't know it would have to pay Train Festival as part of using the engine at the time it announced the engine would appear.

For those looking to ride behind 4449 in Minnesota this fall, plans remain in place for it to pull fall color excursions from Minneapolis to Winona, MN, October 10-11. Sources indicate the group behind those excursions, the Friends of the 261, did pay Train Festival's fee.

For more information on Train Festival, visit www.trainfestival2009.com. For more information on the society's convention in Duluth, visit www.steamontherange.com. For more information on SP 4449, visit www.sp4449.com.

Minnesota Commercial acquires one-of-a-kind SF30B

Published: Wednesday, May 13, 2009

ST. PAUL, MN - The Minnesota Commercial Railway has acquired one-of-a-kind "SF30B" 4276 from BNSF Railway; the unit is a rebuilt product of Santa Fe's Cleburne, TX shops.

No. 4276 began life as U23B 6332. In 1987, Santa Fe's Cleburne, TX shops began its rebuild following a wreck

into what was to be a prototype for rebuilding the series. Designated as an SF30B, the 3,000 horsepower, B-B trucked locomotive was numbered 7200.

Included in the rebuild was an upgrade to 3,000 hp, updated electrical systems, wheel slip control, and a new nose and radiator section manufactured by Cleburne shop forces. Originally, the SF30B rode on AAR type "B" trucks, but by 1993, the floating bolster trucks from a B39-8 were used.

Although a successful rebuild, Santa Fe closed Cleburne shortly after and began contracting out its locomotive rebuilds, leaving the unit as a one-of-a-kind. General Electric was contracted to maintain Santa Fe's GE's, including the SF30B which was renumbered 6419 to fit into Santa Fe's fleet of B23-7 locomotives. When BNSF was formed the SF30B was renumbered 4276.

Minnesota Commercial dropped the 76 to give the diesel the "42" number. According to Commercial's chief mechanical officer, Scott Wardrope, the unit is assigned to a transfer run from the Commercial to BNSF's Northtown Yard in Minneapolis until work is finished on another unit. Then No. 42 will work any assignments available.

The railroad has no plans to paint the locomotive, which currently is in Santa Fe blue and yellow freight colors, with large "MC" lettering. - Steve Glischinski

For E&LS, the end of a long winter

Published: Tuesday, May 26, 2009

ESCANABA, MI - Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad's biggest customer reopens today, marking the end of a long winter for the short line. The 112-year-old privately held company, which operates a 208-mile ex-Milwaukee Road main line from Green Bay, WI, to Ontonagon, MI, has seen traffic levels drop precipitously the past six months. The Smurfit-Stone Container paper mill in the western Upper Peninsula town of Ontonagon that makes corrugated packaging material, shut down in November 2008 citing weakening market conditions. Today's reopening puts 150 people back to work and the railroad back on track. Smurfit-Stone is North America's largest producer of cardboard box materials, but it filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection January 26, 2009, citing heavy debt in a global credit freeze.

To serve Smurfit-Stone, E&LS normally operated a turn to Ontonagon out of Channing, MI, to supply the mill with empty boxcars for finished paper products. The railroad also moved inbound scrap paper and chemicals used in the paper producing process. From Channing, trains operated south to Crivitz, WI, to meet another turn from Green Bay, where E&LS interchanges with Canadian National.

During the shutdown, E&LS had to rely on other business to keep it going, such as hauling pulpwood, and rebuilding and repainting freight cars under contract at its shop in Wells, MI, just outside Escanaba. E&LS also derives revenue from freight car storage; the railroad has a number of lines that are inactive and used for car storage, including a 21-mile ex-Milwaukee Road route from Channing to Republic, MI, and 23 miles of former Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic trackage from Sidnaw to Nestoria, MI. Portions of E&LS's original 63-mile main line from Wells to Channing

are also used for storage. The railroad also has a six-mile branch from Stiles Junction to Oconto Falls, WI, and a 21-mile line from Crivitz to Marinette, WI, and Menominee, MI. But with the Ontonagon mill shut down, the railroad was forced to lay off employees and reduce operations to a minimum. With the mill's reopening today, normal operations will resume. - Steve Glischinski

Minnesota Transportation Museum receives SDP40 diesel

Published: Monday, June 01, 2009

OSCEOLA, WI - BNSF Railway has donated ex-Great Northern SDP40 No. 6327 to the Minnesota Transportation Museum. Formerly GN 325, the 1966-built EMD pulled GN and Burlington Northern passenger trains until the creation of Amtrak in 1971, when it moved to freight service.

The museum's Osceola & St. Croix Valley tourist line will be the locomotive's new home. Plans call for the unit to haul trains intermittently this summer.

When money becomes available, MTM plans to restore the unit to its original number and repaint it in Great Northern's "Big Sky Blue" color scheme that GN adopted in 1967. To donate to the repainting fund, contributions may be mailed to Minnesota Transportation Museum, 193 Pennsylvania Avenue East, St. Paul, MN 55130. - Steve Glischinski

Milwaukee Road Super Dome tickets available for Southern Pacific 4449 ferry trips

Published: Monday, June 01, 2009

MINNEAPOLIS - The "Friends of the 261," "Friends of SP 4449," and Train Festival 2009 announced today that the groups would be selling tickets in Milwaukee Road Super Dome 53 when Southern Pacific 4-8-4 No. 4449 travels from Portland to Minneapolis this July. No. 4449 will depart Portland on July 3, beginning a ferry move to Minneapolis and Owosso, MI, to attend Train Festival 2009, being held the weekend of July 23-26 in Owosso.

No. 4449 will pull a train of private railroad cars from Portland to Minneapolis, with the groups teaming with the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners to offer luxury seating and overnight packages. However, to accommodate those who want to ride only segments of the cross-country trip during the day, the groups are offering one-day tickets in former Milwaukee Road Super Dome 53. Tickets include lunch, beverages, and snacks during the excursion. The dome will be located near the front of the train behind the 4449 crew cars.

Tickets sales in the Super Dome are limited to 25 passengers per segment, and vary in cost from \$379.00 per day between Portland and Havre, MT, to \$299.00 per day between Havre and Minneapolis. Tickets can be ordered at the Train Festival web site, www.trainfestival2009.com.

Cleveland non-profit group may be forced to auction 30-plus streetcar collection

Published: Wednesday, May 27, 2009

CLEVELAND - A big idea for downtown Cleveland derailed before it left the station, according to an article in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. The newspaper says a nonprofit group with a warehouse full of streetcars is dropping plans

to build a tourist-attracting rail loop downtown and a trolley museum nearby.

Instead, Lake Shore Electric Railway Inc. wants to put its 30-plus car collection up for auction as soon as July, said Mark Ricchiuto, group spokesman and an executive with Marous Brothers Construction. Civic and elected leaders supported the project, he said. But the economic recession killed fund raising.

The nonprofit group wanted to build a short trolley loop near the east bank and up through the Warehouse District, Ricchiuto said. But Lake Shore Electric can't wait any longer to deal with its debts and mounting costs.

Many of the cars had once been on display in Trolleyville U.S.A. in Olmsted Township. When Trolleyville closed in 2002, the nonprofit group formed to preserve the cars and also crafted the downtown proposal.

Construction could begin next year on LA-Vegas link

Published: Tuesday, May 26, 2009

VICTORVILLE, CA - Construction crews could begin work on a proposed high speed rail line to Las Vegas as early as next year, executives with the company behind the project said, according to a story in May 25th's San Bernardino Sun. Victorville is about 85 miles northeast of Los Angeles.

"The strong need for the project is clear and obvious," said Andrew Mack, vice president of Las Vegas-based DesertXpress Enterprises.

The DesertXpress idea is based on the assumption that Vegas-bound Southern Californians would be willing to pay to park their cars in Victorville and forego the time and potential frustrations of freeway travel. The company says it can build the route with private funding.

The proposed high speed rail route is separate from the proposal to establish a Maglev route from Las Vegas to Anaheim.

The newspaper says that as planned, the DesertXpress line would enable Southern California passengers to board trains at a north Victorville train station and speed to Las Vegas as quickly as 150 mph.

DesertXpress is still awaiting approval from the federal government. The firm has completed a draft environmental impact statement and Federal Railroad Administration spokesman Rob Kulat said the agency could make a decision in nine months.

Synopsis of the Railway Age Article Special Report on High Speed Rail - Obama Means Business

**By Douglas John Bowen and
William C. Vantuono**

The article discusses the Obama news conference on high speed rail. The ten designated corridors were listed including the Chicago Hub network between Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Detroit,

Toledo, Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Louisville. High speed in this case means 110 mph initially.

The program divides the eligible projects into "first round" those that can be completed quickly with measurable job creation, and public benefits, and "next round" proposals to include comprehensive high speed, whole or partial corridor programs, such as the California high speed program for which \$10 billion has already been voted.

The freight railroads' response was positive, but cautious. They mentioned the development of high speed passenger rail and freight rail improvements are not mutually exclusive, though freight rail needs should not be forgotten.

Matt Rose of BNSF mentioned that improving speeds from 79 mph to 90 mph could be accommodated on tracks used by both passenger and freight trains, but for speeds in excess of 90 mph, separate tracks for high speed rail would be needed.

Obama cited high speed passenger service in France, Spain and China, saying there's no reason we can't do this. He cited the fact that more people travel between Seville and Madrid by high speed train than by car and plane combined.

"There's no reason why we can't do this. This is America. There's no reason why the future of travel should lie somewhere else beyond our borders. Building a new system of high speed rail will be faster, cheaper, and easier than building more freeways or adding to an already overburdened aviation system – and everyone stands to benefit."

The Obama administration's strategy has two parts: improving our existing rail lines to make current train service faster, and also identifying potential corridors for the creation of world-class high speed rail. To make this happen, \$8 billion of the Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been dedicated, and the President has requested another \$5 billion over the next five years.

The DOT is expected to begin awarding funds to ready projects before the end of this summer, well ahead of schedule.

The President said, "This plan is realistic. And the first round of funding will focus on projects that can create jobs and benefits in the near term. We're not talking about starting from scratch; we're talking about using existing infrastructure to increase speeds from 70 mph to over 100 mph—so you're taking existing rail lines and upgrading them. Many corridors merit even faster service, but since this is a quickly achievable first step. It will create jobs by improving tracks, crossings and signal systems.

His counter arguments for those who oppose this vision are as follows:

To those who say high speed rail is a fantasy, its success around the world says otherwise.

For those who say the if the investment doesn't directly benefit the people of their district, then it shouldn't be

made, he says if we followed that rationale, we'd have no infrastructure at all.

For those who say the investment is too small, he argues that this is just the first step. We know this is going to be a long term project. By getting started now, moving the process forward and getting people to imagine what's possible, and putting resources behind it so that people can start seeing examples of this around the country – that's going to spur all kinds of activity.

For those who say at a time of crisis, we shouldn't be pursuing such a strategy; we've got too many other things to do, he cites Abraham Lincoln who was committed to a nation connected from East to West, even at the same time he was trying to hold North and South together in the Civil War. The transcontinental railroad was still built.

From Railway Age Breaking News

St. Paul Union Depot purchase approved, June 4, 2009

The Ramsey County (MN) Board Tuesday unanimously approved purchasing St. Paul's Union Depot main building for \$8.2 million, to facilitate use by the planned 11-mile, \$914 million Central Corridor light rail transit project and for future passenger intermodal options as well. The board serves as the Regional Rail Authority overseeing the matter.

The purchase includes the head house and the parking structure and the land that the building sits on. Thirty-nine condo units built by the current owner will remain in private hands.

Union Depot is scheduled to reopen in 2012, two years ahead of the planned debut of the Central Corridor. The depot was built from 1918 to 1923.

"Today marks the official start of the project to return the Union Depot to what it once was: a transportation hub for Ramsey County, the state of Minnesota, and the entire upper Midwest," Commissioner Jim McDonough, chair of the Regional Rail Authority said. The site would facilitate Amtrak and/or Midwest high speed rail service, Greyhound and Jefferson Lines buses, Metro Transit, and bicycle transit options under current plans.

Chapter Library to Relocate to New Room

A quorum of the board of directors was present working at the library when we found out about the availability of a larger room for \$100 a month more rent. An inspection of the room, which is 2/3 larger than the current room, was made immediately. The room also faces the BNSF mainline. Currently, when as many as nine volunteers show up to work, at least two need to sit in the hallway and work off of large cardboard boxes.

Given that some of the chapter's possessions aren't even in the room and there's a possibility of inheriting more collections in the future, the board decided unanimously to upgrade to the new room.

The new room is 15x24 ft verses 12x18 for the current room.

Minutes of the May 16, 2009 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm in the historic Como Park streetcar station by chapter vice-president Dawn Holmberg, who was presiding in the absence of chapter president Cy Svobodny. Eighteen members and guests were present. Cheer Committee - Marty Swan reported that two cards were sent.

Help Celebrate the Northstar Chapter's 40th Anniversary

Sunday, August 9th, we'll celebrate the chapter's 40th anniversary with a banquet at Jax Cafe, 1928 University Avenue NE, Minneapolis. Order off the menu with individual settlement. The menu can be seen at

www.jaxcafe.com/docs/Early_Bird_Menu_2008.swf or

www.jaxcafe.com/docs/JaxDinner_Feb09.swf

Festivities begin at 4 pm. Following the dinner a combination slide and video show of Northstar Chapter activities over 40 years produced by your editor will be presented.

Please RSVP so the restaurant knows how many will be attending.

Name: _____ No. of Persons in party: _____

Phone Contact: _____ Email contact: _____

Clip coupon and mail to John Goodman, 8409 13th Avenue S., Bloomington, MN 55425-1705

One went to John Skooglin, who is recovering from knee surgery. The other went to Cy Svobodny, who was hospitalized last Wednesday and is now recovering. A card for Cy was sent around for members to sign.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2009 membership meeting, as printed in the May 2009 issue of Northstar News.

Treasurer Dan Meyer reported that he has not yet taken out from the reserves, the \$2,000 authorized to cover library and other expenses. As membership secretary, Dan reported that the chapter has three new members and all but three members from last year have renewed.

Joe Stark reported on sales of surplus and duplicate items from the chapter library at recent flea markets of railroad and model railroad items. He also bought four folding chairs for the library at a garage sale.

National director Bill Dredge reported on the recent NRHS Board of Directors meeting in Connecticut. The proposed national dues increase of \$3 per year was approved.

Trip director John Goodman reported that he has no trip planned for this year other than those in conjunction with the NRHS national convention in Duluth, which will be August 11-16. The Northern Pacific Railroad Historical Association will be visiting the Ironhorse Central Railroad Museum on Friday, July 17th for a ride behind their small steam locomotive. We might be able to piggyback on that event, but the museum would charge too much for us to get them to run it for us on a Saturday or Sunday. As national convention chairman, John reported that we lost the use of preserved Southern Pacific steam loco 4449 - it is leased to a Michigan group, which will be using it this summer. They wanted \$25,000 on top of the money we would have to pay to

the group which owns the engine. John also reported as the program chairman. This month's program will consist of slides from the Kurt Peterson collection, plus some from John Cartwright. In August, we will have a banquet at Jax Cafe to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Northstar Chapter. The program for the July meeting is undecided. No decision has been made about the chapter picnic. There was a discussion about possibilities for the picnic.

Webmaster Dan Meyer said that he did not have a lot to report. The website for Steam on the Range was recently updated.

Russ Isbrandt reported that next month we will have a program on the history of the chapter. Also, the June issue of Northstar News will feature pictures of trips that the chapter has run. There was a call for Old Business, but there was no response.

New Business - Bill Herzog donated a BN North Dakota Division Timetable #1.

Announcements - Bob Clarkson announced that some of us have been meeting for dinner at Keys Cafe in Roseville before the monthly chapter meeting. He had some menus for those who might want to know what is available there.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried at 7:25 pm. It was announced that pop is available. Exchange newsletters are available at the front table. After a break, the program was presented.

Respectfully submitted

Dave Norman, Secretary, Northstar Chapter NRHS

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Address Correction Requested