



NORTHSTAR NEWS

NO Meeting or Picnic this month



A montage of photos of Norfolk Southern heritage units. Upper left to right: Erie, Virginian; lower left to right: Reading, New York Central. Photos from Trains Newswire

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Notice

The June meeting and picnic has been annulled due to a scheduling conflict with the NRHS National Convention in Cedar Rapids, IA.

Coming up:

July 21, the chapter picnic at Maiden Rock, WI

August 18th, chapter trip to Duluth to ride behind Soo 2719 one last time before it undergoes mandated boiler inspection and repairs. See details inside.

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MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Dues are \$51 (\$36 for the National dues and \$15 for the local dues). Family memberships are \$5 per person additional. The student rate is \$22 (\$16 for the National, \$6 for the Northstar Chapter). If you want to join, an application is available at <http://www.northstar-nrhs.org/>. Print out this application and send it with a check made payable to "Northstar Chapter NRHS" to Northstar Chapter NRHS Membership Services, P.O. Box 120832, St. Paul, MN 55112.

A subscription to this newsletter may be obtained for \$18 for either printed or electronic edition by sending a check to the post office box above specifying the form of the newsletter you desire. A subscription does NOT include voting privileges at chapter meetings nor any of the NRHS membership benefits and no membership application is needed.

Chapter Member and Well Known Modeler Hospitalized From Richard Krenski and Cy Svobodny

It is with sadness we report the declining health of long time Metro and Northstar Chapter member John Skoglund. Those of us who know him call him "Skoogy". Rick Krenski received a report May 31st that John is currently at the VA Hospital complex near Fort Snelling in Minneapolis. He is quite disoriented and doesn't seem to know what's going on. Doctors are checking him out. More information will be transmitted as more information about John's condition becomes available. Rick will let everyone know what he hears. If you would like to send a card to John (it might help if he can recognize your name), you can send it to

Department Of Medical Affairs c/o John Skooglund
Community Living Center - Unit 1-F

1 Veteran's Drive - Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417

John is in his late 80's or early 90's. He is small in stature but big on model railroading and trains. Please say a prayer tonight for Skoogy.

Proposed Northstar Trip to Duluth

Trip director, John Goodman, is putting together a trip on August 18th to ride behind Soo Pacific 2719 between Duluth and Two Harbors. This will be the last season the 2719 will run until FRA mandated 15 year inspection, which requires the complete dismantling of the boiler, is completed.

The proposed schedule is: Meet at the Amtrak Midway Station at 7:00 am, departing at 7:15 am with arrival in Duluth in time for the 2719's departure at 10:30 am. Arrival in two Harbors will be 12:30 pm. Lunch will be on your

own. Departure from Two Harbors will be 2:30 pm with arrival in Duluth about 4:30 pm and departure to the Twin Cities shortly thereafter. A meal stop will be made on the return trip.

Cost will be \$105 with \$48 going for the 2719 portion of the trip. A minimum of 20 passengers is required.

Since Milwaukee Road 261 may not be available for excursion service this fall, this could be your last chance to ride behind a mainline steam locomotive in Minnesota this year.

Address inquiries to jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com.

Amtrak and VIA, citing ridership increases, gird for continued growth in 2012 From Update, Railway Age, May 2012

Capacity, not cost, is the definitive issue for North America's two intercity passenger railroads in 2012, and officials from both Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada are confident that, within limits, they'll meet the demand challenge.

From being "close to bankruptcy" due to debt loads in 2002, Amtrak's multiple projects increasing capacity (and speeds incrementally) is "a bridge to the future of higher-speed rail [HrSR] in the U.S.," Amtrak Vice President, Government Affairs and Corporate Communications Joe McHugh said. Addressing a gathering of Railway Supply Institute members April 12 at Amtrak's Washington, D.C. headquarters, McHugh noted Amtrak's debt had been reduced from \$4.2 billion in 2002 to \$1.7 billion at present.

From Railway Age Breaking News

Talgo, Inc. displays Series 8 trainsets

Written by Douglas John Bowen

Talgo, Inc. opened its Milwaukee factory Sunday, May 27th to visitors interested in seeing the company's Series 8 trains, manufactured for use by Amtrak on its *Hiawatha* service linking Milwaukee and Chicago.

Observers say the move is in part a calculated effort by Talgo to reinforce public support for its efforts, given the difficulties the company has endured with Wisconsin state officials in efforts to discourage passenger rail improvements. Wisconsin rejected federal funds targeted to deliver higher-speed rail (HrSR) operations between the two cities.

"We are very excited at the turnout and support we received from the greater Milwaukee community at our open house on Sunday," said Talgo Inc. President and CEO Antonio Perez to local media Sunday. "This was a very successful event for us—it is clear that citizens of Milwaukee are on our side and enthused about putting these new trains into service and keeping these jobs in Wisconsin."

Visitors to the facility, the former Tower Automotive site, were offered train tours and refreshments. Talgo representatives were on hand to answer any questions and provide information about the new trains.

Seattle-based Talgo, Inc. is the U.S. division of Las Matas, Spain-based Patentes Talgo SA.

Earlier this year, Talgo, Inc. pondered legal action against the state of Wisconsin following the latter's long-expected cancellation of a \$166 million maintenance contract. Wisconsin placed its order for the two trainsets in July 2009.

APTA: 1Q public transit ridership "surged"

Written by Douglas John Bowen

Public transportation ridership surged in the first quarter of 2012, increasing 5.0% over the first quarter of last year, according to a report released Monday, June 4th by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), coinciding with APTA's ongoing Rail Conference in Dallas.

APTA said the results marked the fifth consecutive quarter of U.S. public transit ridership increase, as 125.7 million more trips were taken than the first quarter of 2011. All public transit modes saw increases, APTA said. Light rail transit (LRT) use increased by 6.7%, with 25 of 27 LRT systems reporting increases. "Heavy rail" (rapid rail) use increased by 5.5%, with 14 of 15 systems reporting increases. "Commuter" or regional rail use rose 3.9%, with 22 of 27 systems reporting increases.

Large bus systems reported an increase of 4.6% nationally, APTA said.

"High gas prices were part of the reason for this large first quarter ridership increase," said APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. "More and more people are choosing to save money by taking public transportation when gas prices are high."

Amtrak President and CEO Joseph Boardman, also addressing the RSI group, added that ridership continued to climb even as Amtrak has achieved a revenue-to-cost ratio of 85% (comparable to or better than most intercity rail networks worldwide). Two HrSR projects in the Midwest and a 24-mile upgrade of Northeast Corridor catenary to 160 mph standards are under way, as is expected delivery beginning in 2013 of 130 single-level cars from CAF USA. Boardman hopes to move ahead with purchasing 40 additional Acela cars sometime this year, and expects a Notice to Proceed for the project in July. Bilevel equipment purchases, aided by various states, are planned for Midwest and California services.

RSI supplier representatives present noted the persistent lack of stable funding sources, a weakness Boardman acknowledged remains problematic. RSI Vice President Nicole Brewin also asked how the supplier community could be "enticed" to pursue passenger rail business opportunities, and indeed whether Amtrak sought such an option. Boardman acknowledged that the small sampling of intercity passenger carriers in North America made it difficult to generate enough consistent business volume to interest some suppliers.

Boardman did note that, even for high profile, higher-status operations such as the Northeast Corridor, any private-public partnership required public funding commitments first. "The first money isn't coming [from the private sector] if you don't have the public commitment," he observed.

"Foreigners" flock to VIA

Commitment from the Canadian federal government, aided by provincial governments, has spurred ridership and revenue at VIA Rail Canada, according to Pierre Santoni, director of national sales. Santoni, addressing travel media in New York April 5, noted VIA revenue rose 28% in 2011 as VIA logged 4,090,000 passengers, up 3% year-over year. U.S. sales so far in fiscal year 2012 are up 20%; "the U.S. passengers are coming, but for shorter vacations," Santoni noted.

"Also seen on VIA, particularly on its transcontinental *Canadian*: Australian and Japanese tourists in their 20s and 30s, far younger than the 'typical retiree' of years past," Santoni said.

VIA Rail is still rehabilitating its existing equipment fleet, with few plans such as Amtrak has for equipment expansion. Instead, VIA is aggressively pursuing interticketing capabilities—"a seamless journey"—with numerous other carriers, including GO Transit, numerous regional bus operators, ZipCar, and even Jordanian Airlines. "You can book online, and get one ticket for the entire trip," Santoni said.

Like Amtrak, VIA is pursuing incremental speed and capacity improvements. Santoni noted track capacity expansions in VIA's own corridor, linking Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor, which handles 82% of VIA's overall ridership. VIA hopes to bump speeds up to 115 mph, then 125 mph on portions of this route.

As well, a C\$850 million rehabilitation of Toronto's Union Station and adjacent yards continues, with smoother operations a key goal.

"As Congress is negotiating a federal surface transportation bill that is now more than 2 1/2 years overdue, our federal representatives need to act before the June 30 deadline to ensure that public transportation systems will be able to meet the growing demand," said Melaniphy. "It's obvious from the surge in public transit ridership in the first quarter that Americans need and want public transportation."

Bombardier unveils new PRIMOVE application

Written by Luther S. Miller, Senior Consulting Editor
In Berlin Thursday, Bombardier Transportation unveiled a new application for both rail and road transit of what it described as its "game-changing" PRIMOVE system, applicable to rail and bus public transit.

The PRIMOVE system transfers power without the use of overhead wires. It has been installed in a pilot demonstration area of the Augsburg, Germany, tram network.

Bombardier said the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building, and Urban Development is funding an electric bus project in the city of Braunschweig, where Bombardier will apply PRIMOVE.

Bombardier said PRIMOVE "is based on the principle of inductive power transfer and allows electric vehicles to be recharged either in motion or idled. "The system transfers energy at very high levels of efficiency without compromising on performance and can significantly reduce energy consumption when combined with an onboard energy storage solution," said Bombardier. "By eliminating the overhead cables and other wires previously needed to power electric vehicles, mass transit networks can now blend in effortlessly with their surroundings."

From the St. Paul Pioneer Press All Aboard

**By Maja Beckstrom
From Rick Krense**

'The Choo Choo Bob Show' is like the little engine that could.

Five years after a group of friends said, "I think I can," they finally did. They created a children's television show about trains that started Saturday, June 2, and will continue to air at 9 am Saturdays on KSTC-TV, Channel 45. The series would never have left the station if it weren't for a shop owner with a background in film, his underemployed friends and a chemist with a fondness for the railroad.

When Bob Medcraft opened his model train store on Marshall Avenue in St. Paul, the last thing on his mind was making a TV show. He was just trying to escape a collapsing industry. Medcraft had worked in movies, as a location scout for 'Grumpy Old Men' and later as location manager for 'Little Big League,' 'Jingle All The Way,' 'A Simple Plan' and 'Joe Somebody,' which in 2001 was one of the last big-budget movies filmed in Minnesota before the state pulled the plug on its tax subsidy. The movie business kind of fell apart here, said Medcraft, who subsequently produced music videos for Prince, Barenaked Ladies and others. When that, too, dried up, he turned to television commercials. A lot of friends in the production

business left town or changed jobs. Medcraft jumped into retail.

I still remember the day Bob came to me and he said: "You know what? Music videos have really died down, and I'm going to open a kids train store," said Joe Martin, a film editor and co-creator of 'The Choo Choo Bob Show.' "I knew he was into trains, but the idea of opening a retail store, well, that was a surprise." Medcraft opened the shop in 2005, creating something that would appeal to his own sons, now 10 and 11. He stocked Thomas the Tank Engine alongside HO- and O-scale trains. Neighborhood families flocked to the low train tables and to Tuesday morning storytimes.

THE SHOW

But Medcraft couldn't stay away from the cameras. On a weekday last month, he was peering at a color monitor beside director Andy Grund on the 'Choo Choo Bob' set, housed in a rented warehouse just south of downtown St. Paul. Two camera operators stood ready. "Retail is fine, but this is way more fun," said Medcraft, just before the assistant director called everyone to quiet down. And, yes, they really do say 'Action.'

The show revolves around Choo Choo Bob, an eager and hokey guy in red sneakers played by actor Sam Heyn. His sidekicks include Emily Fradenburgh as Engineer Emily and Paul Howe as Engineer Paul. Comedy fans will recognize Rich Kronfeld, from his days as Dr. Sphincter and host of 'Let's Bowl' on Comedy Central a decade ago. Local film and stage actors Dave Tufford and Charles Hubbell play Conductor Dave and the puppet Charlie Rat.

In an era of fast editing and animation, the live-action show has a slow, retro feel. Episodes include guest musicians, such as Dylan Hicks and Linnea Mohn, usually performing train songs written for the show. The actors ride lightrail lines and Amtrak, mixing goofy dialogue and short interviews with train workers. They've hung onto cable cars in San Francisco and climbed Colorado's Pikes Peak on the cog railway.

Thanks to special effects and a button called 'The Shrinkerator,' the actors also walk around a model train layout. These Tiny Land sequences delight the children who have seen early episodes, which Medcraft sells on DVD at the store.

On this morning, they were filming extras dressed as businessmen in suits who get zapped by the Shrinkerator and commute to work in Tiny Land. The director needed the actors to wiggle and 'oooh' as they shrank. And they weren't doing it with enough gusto. "Get them to do it a little longer. It tickles more than that," Medcraft said. "They look like they're getting electrocuted." "It's a Greek chorus of people getting tickled," someone joked.

After four takes, Grund was satisfied. Sometimes it takes more. Like the rest of the production crew, most of whom know each other from working on other projects over the years, Grund has high professional standards. The show's other co-creator, Wilson Webb, takes still photographs on movie sets. He ran cameras

for 'Choo Choo Bob' until he had to fly out of town to work on 'Men in Black 3.'

Medcraft met make-up artist Crist Ballas while working on 'The Straight Story' in Iowa. Ballas won an Academy Award for his aliens in 'Star Trek.' Photos that are stuck to the lid of his makeup box show some actors he's worked on, including Ben Affleck, Kristin Chenoweth and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Set designer Bryan Axell designed Prince and Incubus music videos before making sets for Best Buy and Target commercials. "This is a lot more fun," said Axell, who, like everyone, is working for less than his typical rate.

Fun is a recurring theme. "We've all worked on so many commercials where you're trying to sell hand lotion," Medcraft said. "This is so much more fun than anything else we've worked on. Here we don't have to answer to record labels. We're not dinged for a \$5,000-a-day wardrobe person. We have complete creative control. What it's evolved into is sort of like the 'Muppet Show.'"

Medcraft still can't quite believe the show is happening. A couple of years ago, it looked like the project would go nowhere. He and Wilson and Webb had shot six episodes onto DVD before they ran out of money. Getting a weekly kids show on the air is not a DIY endeavor, and only a few local groups have attempted it. Twin Cities Public Television has produced children's science shows like 'Newton's Apple,' 'DragonflyTV' and 'SciGirls.' The Minneapolis-based National Theatre for Children, which sends actors to schools to teach about money, bullying and other subjects, launched a syndicated educational sketch comedy show in 2010 aimed at tweens and teens called 'M@dA-bout.' Medcraft lacked a big sponsor or grant. And it's impossible to get Nickelodeon or Disney or a similar company to look at a show, Medcraft said. The series was stalled like a steam engine out of coal on an uphill grade when along came a rescue.

THE RESCUE

In the 1980s, a pharmacy professor at the University of Minnesota named Bob Vince invented a drug to treat AIDS. A company, then called Glaxo Wellcome, used his patented compound to develop its AIDS drug Ziagen and has paid the university \$600 million in royalties, enough to fund the Center for Drug Design, which employs 60 researchers and which Vince, at age 71, still oversees.

Vince also received royalties. And, he's liked trains ever since he grew up in Auburn, N. Y., where his grandfather worked in the train yards. When he isn't researching life-saving, antiviral compounds in the lab, he can be found tweaking his model train layout in the basement of his home in Mendota Heights.

Vince's daughter also is a longtime friend of Rich Kronfeld's wife. "We really wanted to find a way to keep doing this show, and I guess it dawned on me one day that, well, Bob Vince is a train guy and he'd be able to underwrite us," Kronfeld said.

Vince asked Medcraft and his partners to write up a business plan.

"He gave us enough money to make 52 of these shows," said Medcraft, who resumed filming last fall. He has five writers cranking out scripts, mostly writers with backgrounds in television commercials. One also wrote a 'Choo Choo Bob's' children's book.

"We've expanded the store, and we're coming out with plush toys and merchandise. We're going to create a live show. By the time we're done, we'll have 10 DVDs. There is even a possibility that we'll open up a store at the Mall of America. And it's all thanks to this one guy, who probably could win the Nobel Prize for chemistry." Vince has his name on two dozen patents and more than 150 scientific papers, but he is tickled by the credits at the end of each 'Choo Choo Bob' episode, where he is listed as executive producer. "It's more of a hobby for me," said Vince, who likes to stop by the set, often with friends and family. He doesn't expect to make any money from it.

DOWN THE LINE

'The Choo Choo Bob Show' is buying airtime on Channel 45, but the goal is to become self-sufficient by attracting sponsors, advertisers and building the brand. Medcraft's model is the wildly popular Australian show 'The Wiggles.' "As much as I can't stand that show, they're my heroes," Medcraft said. "They self-produced some videos. And lord only knows what that whole franchise is worth now."

Medcraft and Martin would settle for making enough money to pay people to work on it. Ultimately, they would like to find a home for the show, perhaps online. "That will be the real test," Martin said. "To see if we can take it to the next level, to see if it can get on Hulu, or Netflix or on a network or cable channel."

The show already has a small, loyal following from its DVD sales. Parents and kids packed the Riverview Theater in Minneapolis last month to watch several episodes and a live show with music. (Local musician Mark Mallman recorded an original 'Choo Choo Bob' album a couple of years ago.)

The actors weren't prepared for the young crowd's devotion. "This little boy came up to me and put his hands on each side of my face and kissed me!" Fradenburgh said. "These kids are the best fans."

The production team hopes to charm an even larger television audience of children and parents when the show hits the airwaves. And just maybe these kids will have as much fun watching the show as Medcraft and friends had making it.

Maja Beckstrom can be reached at 651-228-5295.

From Trains Newswire

Track work begins in Wisconsin to improve Amtrak operations

Published: May 25, 2012

TRUESDALE, WI – Canadian Pacific has begun work to add additional crossovers and make other improvements on its double-track main line between Chicago and Milwaukee. The work is intended to improve the performance of Amtrak trains operating on the corridor. A high speed rail grant from the Federal Railroad Administration for \$11,074,934 will pay for the entire project.

Currently, Amtrak operates seven *Hiawatha Service* round trips between Chicago and Milwaukee, along with the daily *Empire Builder* between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest.

The railroad will install a new double crossover near Truesdale and a single crossover near Pleasant Prairie, which will provide more flexibility to route Amtrak trains around slower freight traffic. Currently, the railroad only has crossovers at Wadsworth, IL and Sturtevant, WI creating a 20-mile stretch of main line where trains cannot move from one track to another.

Grading and access roads have been constructed at the new crossover site at Truesdale, and utility work has begun near Pleasant Prairie for the single crossover.

Along with the new crossovers, Canadian Pacific will install two new setoff tracks for bad-ordered cars in need of repair, with one located at Truesdale and the other at Franksville. The grant also includes funding for new signal spacing near the new crossovers and money to upgrade the hotbox detectors located at Oakwood and Somers.

New organization to restore Santa Fe 4-6-4 as “clean” passenger locomotive

By Steve Glischinski

Published: May 22, 2012

MINNEAPOLIS – A new Minneapolis-based organization, the Coalition for Sustainable Rail, announced plans to rebuild and modify ex-Santa Fe 4-6-4 No. 3463 into “the world’s first carbon-neutral higher-speed locomotive.” The engine was built by Baldwin in 1937 and has been on display in Topeka, KS, since 1956. The group has already acquired the locomotive from the Great Overland Station Museum and Education Center in Topeka.

The coalition is a collaboration of the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment and the nonprofit Sustainable Rail International. Sustainable Rail is the brainchild of four people: Rob Mangels, Shaun McMahon, John Rhodes, and Davidson Ward. Mangels and Ward have been involved for several years in the “Friends of the 261” organization, which operates Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261. Their new group is not affiliated with the 261, even though both are based in Minneapolis.

Ward, who serves as Sustainable Rail’s president, said he and his partners have been working on the idea of a clean steam locomotive for several years, but made the project public today as efforts to raise funds and move the locomotive get under way. He told *Trains* that the idea is to develop a steam locomotive using today’s technology that can produce a more powerful locomotive that will cost less to operate than diesels in passenger applications, such as commuter service. Seeking to develop a high profile and prove its technology, the group plans to use a modified 3463 in an attempt to break the world speed record for a steam locomotive, operating it at speeds up to 130 mph. It has named the venture “CSR Project 130.”

The key to the project, Ward said, is the lower-cost fuel that the locomotive will burn. It will run on torrefied biomass (biocoal), a biofuel that exhibits the same energy density and material handling properties as coal. The organization said that unlike coal, biocoal is carbon neutral,

contains no heavy metals, and produces less ash, smoke, and volatile off-gases. With the ability to burn biocoal efficiently, and without negative impact on the environment, the coalition claims its steam locomotive will exhibit significantly better horsepower output at higher speeds than diesel locomotives that pull the majority of passenger trains in the United States today. The group hopes to apply its technology to more than just locomotives. The engineering on combustion and boiler technologies could allow CSR to develop power boilers and electric generators for use in homes in the United States and the developing world. “Every dollar spent on engineering support of CSR Project 130 can generate up to three times the benefit in outgrowth technologies to solve energy problems in the United States and around the world,” the organization said.

“Participation in the Coalition for Sustainable Rail has enabled our team to pursue one of the more exciting and potentially groundbreaking research projects in the history of the Institute on the Environment,” Rod Larkins, special projects director of the institute’s Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment, said in a news release. “Once perfected, creating the world’s first carbon-neutral locomotive will be just the beginning for this technology which, we hope, will later be used for combined heat and power energy in the developing world as well as reducing the United States’ dependence on fossil fuels.”

Plans are to move No. 3463 within the next year. The group is searching for a suitable site in the Twin Cities area to house and rebuild the 4-6-4. Ward said the organization hopes to raise funds with the assistance of the University of Minnesota, and that several railroad industry professionals have been approached and are interested in the project.

Amtrak wins first round of AAR court case, judge rules Amtrak is a ‘governmental entity’

Published: June 4, 2012

WASHINGTON – A federal judge has upheld a law that gives Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration the “authority to promulgate binding rules governing the conduct of its contractual partners, the freight railroads,” Courthouse News Service reports. Representing freight railroads, the Association of American Railroads sued the Department of Transportation over the constitutionality of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act in 2011, claiming the law gave excessive regulation power to a private corporation with a “historically poor record of on-time performance and (a) chronic inability to generate revenue sufficient to cover its operating costs.”

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg relied on the Supreme Court’s determination that Amtrak should be considered a governmental entity for the purpose of constitutional individual-rights claims. “Amtrak was created by special law for the furtherance of governmental objectives, and the government sets its goals; the President appoints eight of the nine directors; Amtrak is required to submit annual reports to Congress and the President; the government owns more than 90 percent of Amtrak’s stock; Amtrak relies on more than a billion dollars in congressional appropriations annually; and Congress sets salary limits for Amtrak’s employees,” stated the judge, demonstrating how interwoven the company is with the federal government. The judge ruled May 31 that the government

is sufficiently involved to legally render the regulating power to Amtrak, and dismissed the railroads' claim. "Amtrak is not a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States government," argued the railroads. "Rather, it is a private entity that is 'operated and managed as a for-profit corporation.' PRIIA purports to vest Amtrak with the power to issue binding regulations governing the business operations of the freight railroads. It is a bedrock principle of constitutional law that Congress cannot empower a private entity to regulate other participants in the same industry."

The railroads fear the law will adversely impact their operations because it forces them to ensure that Amtrak meets federal on-time performance standards. They claim that if an Amtrak train dips below 80 percent of the on-time standard for two consecutive calendar quarters, the Surface Transportation Board can investigate Amtrak or the host freight railroad, and may order the host rail carrier to pay damages to Amtrak.

New York plans to sell turbo trains for scrap

Published: June 4, 2012

GLENVILLE, NY – New York State Operations Director Howard Glaser has announced plans to sell 20 turbo train cars and the spare parts for them, the Albany Times-Union reports. The trains likely will be scrapped. They have been stored since 2005 when the state abandoned plans to rebuild the 1970s Rohr Turboliners.

The administration of Gov. Andrew Cuomo was pointing to the hulks as a glaring example of waste and incompetence they say has long plagued New York State government. It costs the state \$153,000 a year to store them. The administration plans to hire a consultant to see how they can sell the trains, although they will probably end up being scrapped.

Rebuilding of the trains was touted as a job builder for the Schenectady area. "There is no state in America that has made a bigger commitment to high-speed rail than New York," then-Gov. George Pataki said in 2000 when Wisconsin-based Super Steel company rolled out the first refurbished Turboliner. As it turned out, the turbine fuel was too costly and Amtrak mechanics needed special training to work on the engines – so much so that a specialist had to be assigned to ride the trains as they traveled back and forth along the Hudson between New York and Albany. The trains' air conditioners never worked properly, and the turbines had a tendency to catch fire if not perfectly maintained.

By 2003, the program had been discontinued. Four of the original seven Turboliners train sets were ultimately brought to Glenville and mothballed with the doors sealed. Amtrak towed three other trains to Delaware, where they have been stored.

While the trains may be scrapped, there might be a market for the 100 truckloads of spare parts sitting in a Rotterdam, NY warehouse. That building houses wheel sets and entire \$750,000 French-built turbine engines, which are also used in helicopters, still in their boxes.

VIA chiefs pledge stability, announce new initiatives

By Bob Johnston

Published: May 30, 2012

WINNIPEG – President and Chief Executive Officer Marc Laliberté says his primary challenge is "to transform VIA

into a financially sustainable service" after a decrease in passenger miles of 3.9 percent and revenues of 2.8 percent in fiscal 2012 compared with 2011. He made his remarks Tuesday at VIA Rail Canada's annual public meeting.

Continuing to focus primarily on the Quebec-Windsor corridor, Laliberté announced that in mid-June, VIA will begin advertising escape fares "designed to provide a better option for travelers who currently rely on car travel." For specific departures, he noted, "we will offer a price that matches the cost of gas for two people traveling by car. These are definitely low fares targeting a very price-sensitive market."

Laliberté also revealed that beginning next week on the corridor, VIA will be introducing "on-line 'fare shopping,' which will allow customers and travel agents to find their best option quickly and easily based on travel dates, class of service, and price.... You may see that you can save money if you take an earlier train or save even more if you travel a day later." He said the new program would be laid out to enable travelers to choose a cheaper fare on a train that perhaps does not offer food service, for example.

Thus, VIA is attempting to follow Amtrak's lead in more actively yield-managing its inventory to maximize ridership and revenue. Unlike Amtrak, it will also be integrating commuter rail operator schedules into its schedule database with the introduction of more GO Transit frequencies between Toronto and Niagara Falls this summer. Also in Ontario, VIA will be investing in a \$28 million track and signaling upgrade of its Toronto-Kitchener route to increase speeds and frequencies.

The group of VIA executives, including Board Chairman Paul G. Smith, held the meeting in Winnipeg to announce a major station renovation project there, but made it clear that expansion of long distance service was not on their agenda.

■On upgrading the *Canadian*: The upgraded luxury class using four refurbished Park observation and eight Chateau sleeping cars will now launch in summer 2013 and will offer amenities "closer to what a cruise line offers."

■On reactivating the Winnipeg-Calgary-Banff-Kamloops route or Calgary-Edmonton: "If the government decides that it wants that and asks VIA to do it, we will do it," Laliberté said, "but it is not our prerogative."

A VIA onboard service crew base employee asked, "Are the rumors true that you will cut two trains a week Toronto-Winnipeg and that hundreds of us will be losing our jobs?" Laliberté did not flatly deny it, but said, "We are always looking at ways to improve our services and we are fine-tuning our services – fare and price – all the time, so at this stage [we have] nothing to announce on this but if there are any service changes in the future on the *Canadian* or other trains we will announce it in advance."

New sand plant opens on St. Croix Valley Railroad

Published: June 7, 2012

NORTH BRANCH, MN — The Tiller Corp. has opened a new sand drying and loading plant in North Branch on the St. Croix Valley Railroad. The plant is expected to greatly increase carloadings on the short line.

Sand is being trucked from mines in Wisconsin to the plant, where it is dried, sorted, and screened. The railroad expects to receive sand from 15 trucks per hour every day. After it's dried, the sand is divided into four different sizes. The silica sand will be used for the oil and gas fracking process, as well as other industrial processes.

There are two silos to load sand into rail cars, and two for loading to trucks. St. Croix Valley will pick up the carloads of sand and move them to its interchange with BNSF Railway at Hinckley, MN, approximately 33 miles north.

To handle the additional business, St. Croix Valley has leased a rebuilt former Burlington Northern GP10. The short line, based in Rush City, MN, owns two chop-nosed Geeps, GP9 No. 1363 and "GP8" No. 1352, which are painted in a version of Northern Pacific's freight diesel paint scheme.

St. Croix Valley operates a 36-mile portion of the former NP St. Paul to Duluth main line, nicknamed the "Skally." Except for the North Branch to Hinckley portion, the route has been abandoned. The railroad's previous largest customer was the Horizon Milling flourmill in Rush City.



In April 1965, both the Milwaukee Road and Chicago Burlington and Quincy routes down the Mississippi River were flooded. As a result, for a while both roads detoured trains over the Soo Line to Junction City, WI. These trains are likely headed to the Soo Line interchange in N. Minneapolis. On the left the train is going through the "Hole in the Wall". On the right the train is approaching Minneapolis Junction. Photos from John Hill

Northstar News
Northstar Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
1515 Creek Meadows Drive NW
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Address Correction Requested

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Alhambra, Calif.	106 W. Main St.
Amarillo, Tex.	Santa Fe Bldg.
Archison, Kan.	201 Mason Bldg.
Atlanta 3, Ga.	1314 Rhodes-Haverty Bldg.
Bakersfield, Calif.	Santa Fe Station
Beaumont, Tex.	415-415 Perlman Bldg.
Berkeley 4, Calif.	1300 University Ave.
Beverly Hills, Calif.	9455 Wilshire Blvd.
Boston 16, Mass.	Rooms 4-5 Little Bldg.
Buffalo 2, N. Y.	1408 Liberty Bank Bldg.
Chicago 4, Ill.	179 W. Jackson Bldg.
Chicago 4, Ill.	38 So. Michigan Ave.
Cincinnati 2, Ohio	701 Dixie Terminal Bldg.
Cleveland 14, Ohio	750 Union Commerce Bldg.
Colorado Springs, Colo.	Santa Fe Station
Dallas 1, Tex.	1315 Commerce St.
Denver 2, Colo.	524-17th Street
Des Moines 9, Iowa	601 Equitable Bldg.
Detroit 26, Mich.	1225 Lafayette Bldg.
El Paso, Tex.	Sheldon and El Paso Sts.
Fort Worth 2, Tex.	815 Houston St.
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Inglewood, Calif.	11th & Wyandotte
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Leavenworth, Kan.	117 Pine Ave.
Long Beach 2, Calif.	601 So. Hill St.
Los Angeles 14, Calif.	Santa Fe Station
Lubbock, Tex.	870 Shrine Bldg.
Memphis, Tenn.	Bolivar No. 2-13
Mexico City, Mex.	401 Maestric Bldg.
Milwaukee 3, Wis.	1286-1290 Northwestern Bank Bldg.
Minneapolis 2, Minn.	307 Pere Marquette Bldg.
New Orleans 12, La.	500 Fifth Ave.
New York 36, N. Y.	401 Fourteenth St.
Oakland 12, Calif.	112 N. Robinson St.
Oklahoma City 2, Okla.	Santa Fe Station
Pasadena 1, Calif.	211 Jefferson Bldg.
Peoria 2, Ill.	1416-18 Lincoln-Liberty Bldg.
Philadelphia 7, Pa.	102 N. First Ave.
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Pittsburgh 19, Pa.	Santa Fe Station
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Portland 5, Ore.	Santa Fe Station
Pueblo, Colo.	505 Francis St.
Riverside, Calif.	1300 Columbia Bldg.
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St. Louis 1, Mo.	1211 Maestric Bldg.
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R. T. Anderson, General Passenger Traffic Manager
Santa Fe System Lines, Chicago, Ill.

Let us show you how the Santa Fe
FAMILY FARES can reduce
your travel costs on El Capitan!



Another passenger brochure from the chapter library. This Santa Fe brochure was issued in conjunction with the introduction of full length domes on the all coach streamliner, *El Capitan*. These were built by Budd January - May of 1954. Only two years later the *El Cap* went *Hi-Level* and these cars migrated to the *Chief* and *San Francisco Chief*.



Ah-h-h-h

WHAT COMFORT

The contour seats, built with foam-rubber cushions, are molded to body measurements for greater riding comfort, day and night.

Each seat has its own leg rests that easily pull out when needed for use in reclining or sitting position.

And to make sure you enjoy a planned, carefree trip, your seat is reserved in advance exclusively for your use.



DINING AS YOU LIKE IT...

FINE MEALS AT ECONOMICAL PRICES!

In modern El Capitan dining cars you have a choice of table or lunch-counter service with a selection of Fred Harvey meals priced to fit your travel budget.

YOU'LL LIKE THE COURIER NURSE

Aboard El Capitan she helps mothers traveling with babies and children and assists all travelers requiring her services.

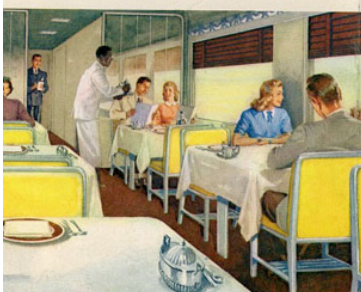
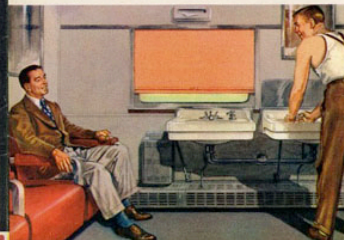


FOR THE LADIES

The lounge-dressing rooms in El Capitan chair cars are practically boudoirs on wheels with large mirrors, dressing tables, divans, and boudoir chairs.

FOR MEN ONLY

The lounge-dressing rooms have deep divans and other conveniences that men like, including sufficient electric plugs to keep all electric-shavers happy.



New "BIG DOME" LOUNGE CAR



Fun in the "BIG DOME"

The scenic upper level of the "Big Dome" is delightful for a panoramic view of passing towns and scenes along the route of El Capitan. Refreshments are available in the "Big Dome" lounge section during the day and early evening hours.



TOPS IN FUN TOPS IN TRAVEL

Designed for pleasure from end to end, from top to bottom, the "Big Dome" Lounge Car has 57 sofa seats—each angled to give passengers a full window view, and a refreshment lounge for 18 on the scenic upper level. On the lower level is a colorful cocktail lounge for 28 persons.

This new "Big Dome" lounge adds more fun, more interest and makes it easier for you to see the colorful route El Capitan travels through the scenic Southwest.

All cars on El Capitan are equipped to provide music, radio and train announcements to make your trip more interesting.



Fun in the Lower Lounge

In complete contrast with the spacious "Big Dome" is the intimate, colorful lower lounge seating 28 passengers.



Now an Indian Guide on El Capitan

A real Indian in full tribal costume now rides El Capitan (westbound) across New Mexico to tell you about the scenery, history and legends of the land you see through the train window.

