



# NORTHSTAR NEWS

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## Meeting Notice

The Next meeting of the Northstar Chapter of the NRHS will be held **March 15, 2014 6:30 pm**, at Roseville Lutheran Church at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, midway between Lexington and Hamline Avenues in Roseville. See map on page 2.

Program after the meeting –

DVD of Steam on the White Pass & Yukon RR in Sept 2000 by R Tubbesing.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together at the Keys Cafe and Bakery at the northeast corner of Lexington and Larpenteur starting about 5:00 pm. PLEASE CALL Bob Clarkson at 651-636-2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons coming with you.

## Northstar Chapter Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>H Martin Swan</b>	<b><i>hmartinswan@msn.com</i></b>	<b><i>612-961-1684</i></b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Richard Tubbesing</b>	<b><i>Tubbesing261@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>763-757-1304</i></b>
<b>Past President</b>	<b>Dawn Holmberg</b>	<b><i>dawn@dhholmberg.com</i></b>	<b><i>763-784-8835</i></b>
<b>National Director</b>	<b>John Goodman</b>	<b><i>Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>612-839-0905</i></b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Russ Isbrandt</b>	<b><i>rmisbrandt@comcast.net</i></b>	<b><i>651-426-1156</i></b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Dave Norman</b>	<b><i>nevad11@hotmail.com</i></b>	<b><i>612-729-2428</i></b>
<b>Trustee</b>	<b>Gary Rumler</b>	<b><i>nlcdrumler@gmail.com</i></b>	<b><i>651-385-8752</i></b>

## Staff

<b>Program Chairman</b>	<b>Richard Tubbesing</b>	<b><i>Tubbesing261@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>763-757-1304</i></b>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Committee: Richard Tubbesing, Dawn Holmberg</b>	<b><i>Tubbesing261@yahoo.com</i> <i>dawn@dhholmberg.com</i></b>	<b><i>763-757-1304</i> <i>763-784-8835</i></b>
<b>Newsletter Distribution</b>	<b>Richard Tubbesing</b>	<b><i>Tubbesing261@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>763-757-1304</i></b>
<b>Trip Director</b>	<b>John Goodman</b>	<b><i>Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>612-839-0905</i></b>
<b>Chapter Librarian/Historian</b>	<b>John Cartwright</b>	<b><i>stationman86@yahoo.com</i></b>	<b><i>651-481-8479</i></b>
<b>Web Master</b>	<b>Dan Meyer</b>	<b><i>dan@meyer-family.net</i></b>	<b><i>763-784-8835</i></b>
<b>Chapter Mailbox</b>	<b>Northstar Chapter NRHS</b>	<b><i>PO Box 120832</i></b>	<b><i>St Paul MN 55112</i></b>
<b>Library Data Base Administrator</b>	<b>Russ Isbrandt</b>	<b><i>rmisbrandt@comcast.net</i></b>	<b><i>651-426-1156</i></b>

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION (Final Notice: Dues are due for 2014!)

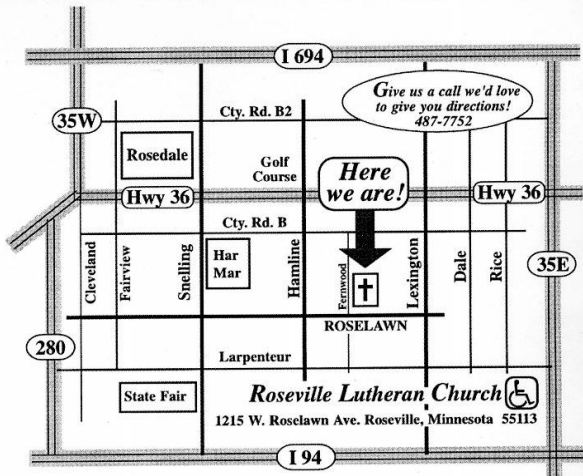
### Nonrenewals will be dropped from the membership roster!

Dues are \$65 (\$50 for the National dues and \$15 for the local dues). Family memberships are \$5 per each additional person. 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.

## Meeting Site

From the east and west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the church and turn left through the commons area. We'll be in room 40, The Diamond Room.



## Editor's Column

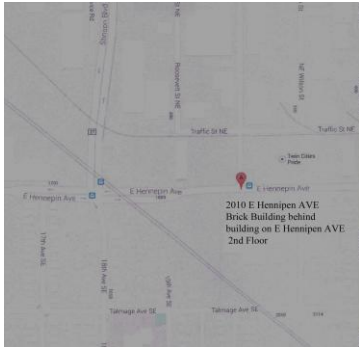
From the Editor:

Obit: Dick Thompson: Ironhorse Central Railroad Museum founder was 72 when he died on Feb. 4. See details in Electronic Version of the newsletter.

Again, an appeal for Cash donations. All Donations are tax deductible and an addition \$5 or \$10 are greatly appreciated.

I have been watching Amtrak (via ATCS, and AMTRAK.com) arrive at the east end of St Paul in the last week for 4 nights. Granted, the weather has been a factor, especially last Thursday nite. The first two nights, #7 arrived at Hoffman nearly On time. The BNSF dispatcher (East Hump) just let #7 sit there for 1 1/2 hours before #7 got clearance to cross over to the SPUD lead to go up shortline hill. Then another night, I think the AMTRAK crew really would be mad as I saw what happened to #7. #7 got to Cottage Grove and was on time until that point, and sat behind a Freight waiting at Newport and another Freight sitting at Dunn (A CP train probably waiting on a new crew) which would eventually go up Soo Jct to Cardigan Jct. Meanwhile, on the 'Q' track to St Croix Jct, 5 EB freights were (3 BNSF, 2 CP) to pass by the Newport crossovers. Thus AMTRAK #7 was delayed by 1 3/4 hours sitting in Cottage Grove. From what I saw, I thought AMTRAK could have been expedited around the freight traffic with little delay to Amtrak and the Freights involved. I just thought in this instance, Amtrak could have been treated better by the BNSF dispatcher. Just my Observation, and there could have been some mitigating circumstances here, but just seems too consistent of the #7 delays the last few days in the St Paul East area. Maybe All the Manager teams that BNSF has sent to solve congestion problems had an adverse effect on Amtrak. (or maybe too many cooks in the kitchen spoils the Amtrak Schedule -☺)

## LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE



There should be plenty of live action on the BNSF St. Paul Sub. There will be an open house at Northstar Chapter NRHS Library 2:00 to 4:00 pm Saturday March 15<sup>th</sup> 2014. The library is at 2010 East Hennepin Avenue, the Central Research Building Room 226. From the west take I-35W north to the Hennepin Ave exit and drive east just past Stinson Blvd. From the east take I-35W South / MN 36 West to Stinson Blvd. Turn left on Stinson to Hennepin Ave just under the railroad overpass, turn left. From either direction take the first driveway to enter the parking lot. Selected railroad DVD's or slides by Gary Rumler will be shown. You will be free to access and peruse any of our 1,300 Railroad books and our collection of timetables. At 4:30pm we will adjourn to Keys Restaurant at Lexington and Larpenteur. Drive straight east on Hennepin / Larpenteur to Lexington. Please join us.



BNSF ex-GN Plow on the Hinckley Sub in Feb 2014. Great Photos by Jeff Terry

Amtrak Reroute #7 at Fargo.

## BNSF Gridlock on the Northern Transcon, Amtrak Delays, Comments from various sources

### BNSF winter woes delaying Northstar commuter trains

By Steve Glischinski Published: February 11, 2014



BNSF and Northstar trains pass by Steve Glischinski.  
Photo by Steve Glischinski

Northstar train Photos by R Tubbesing March 2011.

MINNEAPOLIS — Passengers on Amtrak's perennially late *Empire Builder* aren't the only ones enduring delays due to problems on host railroad BNSF Railway this winter. Northstar commuter trains, which operate between Minneapolis and Big Lake, have endured delays and cancellations due to winter weather and congestion on BNSF. Last week, Metro Transit, which contracts with BNSF to operate the commuter service, took the unusual step of handing out letters of apology on Feb. 6, after one morning outbound train was canceled and passengers ended up taking a bus. Metro Transit spokesman John Siqveland tells *Trains News Wire* "We've had conference call with BNSF top personnel in the passenger division twice over the past two weeks. We're encouraged that there has been improvement in on-time performance in the past several commute periods without the major delays we'd been experiencing intermittently." Still, problems continue. Tuesday morning, BNSF trains having air brake issues blocked both main tracks at CP 421, just west of Elk River. The first four inbound Northstar trips and one outbound trip were cancelled, and the third and fourth were replaced by buses. The fifth inbound train ran on time. Some commuters have complained about a lack of communication from Metro Transit about delays. In response, the agency has unveiled a rider alert program using text messages and email. Metro Transit says it will send train-specific messages to riders if trains are running 15 minutes or more behind, or if the agency knows in advance that trains will be late. "BNSF service is being impacted by extreme cold and winter weather conditions across the Midwest. The extreme cold and snow are presenting significant operating challenges for our operations at the same time we have been experiencing volume increases across a number of business units on our Northern Corridor," BNSF spokeswoman Amy McBeth tells *Trains News Wire*. "We are working with individual customers to address their service issues as well as undertaking other efforts to help our network recover." Relief from the subzero cold could help BNSF's efforts to unclog its Midwest network, and it appears that may occur. Forecasters are predicting the jet stream will shift from the persistent northwest flow of the past two months and instead come from the Pacific. That will bring mild Pacific and Gulf of Mexico air masses streaming into the Midwest the next two weeks, with the possibility of temperatures above 40 degrees next week.

#### **Car hit by two Northstar commuter trains**

**Feb 19, 2014 3:38:44 PM Elk River, Minn. Provided by Rick Krenske**

##### **Crash on line follows Monday collision.**

By Tad Vezner [tvezner@pioneerpress.com](mailto:tvezner@pioneerpress.com)

A car that drove around a lowered crossing arm on the Northstar train line, then became stuck while attempting to do a U-turn on the tracks, was struck by two of the commuter trains late Tuesday afternoon in Elk River, police said.

The car's occupants were able to escape before the crash, and no one was injured.

Police were called about 5:15 p.m. to the collision site, where the Northstar line crosses Jackson Avenue in downtown Elk River, about two miles north of the city's train station. Elk River Police Chief Brad Rolfe said that according to witnesses, vehicles were stopped on both sides of the tracks, the crossing arms were down and warning signals functioning when a southbound car drove around one of the stop arms.

The driver apparently had second thoughts and attempted to turn around on the tracks, but got stuck, Rolfe said. A southbound Northstar train struck the car after its occupants, two men and a woman, escaped. Within minutes, a second, northbound Northstar train also hit the car, Rolfe said. No one aboard either train was injured. Rolfe said late Tuesday that any charges or citations pertaining to the incident were still under investigation. Metro Transit said buses were shuttling stranded northbound and southbound riders to their destinations. The commuter line operates between downtown Minneapolis and Big Lake, near St. Cloud. The Elk River stop is the second-to-last stop on the line. The Minnesota State Patrol and Sherburne County sheriff's office were assisting in the investigation. The incident came a day after a Northstar train struck a car with a baby inside in Elk River. The train was northbound when it struck the car at a crossing around 7 a.m. Monday. No one was injured. Metro Transit said the car slid onto the tracks after colliding with another vehicle at U.S. 10 and Proctor Avenue, just west of the scene of Tuesday's collision. The driver couldn't move the car and left the vehicle. She was not immediately able to rescue the boy, who was in a car seat. But after the train struck the car, the mother immediately retrieved the child and went to a nearby business for help. The mother and child were taken to a medical facility for evaluation and released.

#### **Riders question backup plans for tardy, cancelled Northstar trains. Provided by Rick Krenske**

Minneapolis Star & Tribune, Posted by: Tim Harlow: February 11, 2014.

It's been a tough run for Metro Transit's Northstar commuter train over the past month, and the bad luck continued Tuesday when two separate freight locomotives experienced mechanical issues and blocked the tracks between Big Lake and Elk River.

That forced Metro Transit to scurry to get buses to the stations and give commuters a ride to work. But that didn't occur until after the first two inbound runs were scrubbed. In all, the first four runs didn't operate Tuesday. The fifth and final trip did operate, running about 20 minutes late. Some passengers in Big Lake who boarded the 5:01 a.m. train said they waited almost two hours to get on a bus. Ross Priest, who commutes from Big Lake to his job in downtown St. Paul, swiped his Metropass card at 6:07 a.m. Just before 7 a.m., he got off the train, got in his car and began driving to his job. But then he turned around when he learned traffic was bad, and went back to the station. He got on bus just after 7 a.m.. He wondered why it took so long to get buses to the station.

"Do we need a train bill of rights?," asked Priest, alluding to laws that limit length of time airlines can hold passengers on the tarmac when flights are delayed. "These people were stuck. My biggest question is do they have a contingency plan? I hope they come up with a back-up plan." Metro Transit does have plans in place to deal with delays and unforeseen problems on the tracks, said spokesman John Siqveland. On Tuesday, Metro Transit told customers at 5 a.m. via Twitter, Facebook and its webpage that the first inbound train would be delayed 30 minutes, based on information Metro Transit got from BNSF, the railway which owns the tracks. As the delay grew to an hour and the second departure was scrubbed, Metro Transit arranged for buses to pick up passengers in Anoka, Coon Rapids and Fridley. It called Northstar Link buses from St. Cloud to pick up passengers in Big Lake, Elk River, Ramsey. By then, it was after 7 a.m. Many customers were upset with the delays and a lack of information from Metro Transit. Riders like Heather Beyer thought they'd be getting text messages after Metro Transit said it would improve communication in apology letters given to riders last week. "I signed up for Metro Transit's rider alerts to send me text messages, I didn't get any texts about the cancelations," Beyer said. "I heard about the cancelations from my friends and co-workers. Everyone



is getting so upset that we are starting to set up carpools because we cannot rely on the train." Siqueland said Metro Transit believed that BNSF would be able to move the broken-down locomotives and that Northstar service would be able to operate. "We were expecting the trains to be able to move," Siqueland said. "When the first was canceled and we realized the second was delayed, the bus bridge service was mustered and put into effect as quickly as we could." Priest, and others who wrote and called the Drive, asked why buses are not parked at rail stations for emergency situations. With the Northstar route running more than 35 miles, it's by far longer than any bus route. That alone means it takes longer to get buses out to the stations. Even if Metro Transit had extra buses parked there, it would still take time to get a driver to operate them, Siqueland said. Up until January, Northstar was one of Metro Transit's most reliable services with a 96 percent on time record. That, along with fare reductions put in place last year, helped ridership soar. But the line has suffered a rash of delays caused by mechanical failures, cold weather and rail lines clogged with freight trains. "This winter has been a new challenge for us, one we are trying to overcome," Siqueland said. "We are working with BNSF to come up with other strategies and working to clear freight traffic." Priest says the inconsistent service lately has led some people he knows to abandon the train. "I think they lost a few customers," said an irritated Priest, who said he will remain a Metro Transit rider because it's way cheaper than driving to St. Paul and having to pay to park. "They have lost customers who are making the drive or were giving Metro Transit a chance to win them over."

### **Forwarded from The Milwaukee Road list, without comment.** (Provided by H Martin Swan)

Talking yesterday with a retired Dispatcher; he was noting that BNSF currently has 300 trains stalled out; can't move 'em. Everything is tied up system-wide. He says it's not the weather, and it's not Williston Basin, it's the current crop of managers that think that running a railroad is nickle and diming everything, yanking out sidings, closing yards, and that magically, everything will work as the computer program says it will. And then they lose \$100 million when everything goes south. Having watched the traffic evolve in the PNW since the last Milwaukee Road train departed in March, 1980, he notes that The Milwaukee really left at a key time; that the traffic growth on Lines West in the '70s would have been just a beginning, and that The Milwaukee would have quickly had all the traffic it wanted. GE had done an estimate of cost savings from full-electrification and had projected, based on past price changes in both electric power and diesel fuel, that The Milwaukee Road would have saved \$402 million by 2003 had it fully electrified. GE was far too conservative, it turned out. Electric power costs remained remarkably stable, whereas oil really took off. Re-doing GE's numbers, using actual price changes as they occurred, with 8% annual growth on Lines West (which was the actual growth rate, 1969-1977), the cost savings today would have been \$1.8 Billion assuming capacity is 31 MGT. That's a \$1.8 Billion competitive advantage over UP and BNSF. This winter is demolishing the Empire Builder. It left Seattle on time yesterday, and got into Spokane 8 hours late. Westbound into Whitefish, instead of arriving at 9:15 p.m., it is routinely arriving at 3 am, 5 am, or even at 10:00 am. This may make the EB Amtrak's most money-losing train and Amtrak can't afford the losses.

### **Metro News - Blame The Weather For Northstar Delays BNSF Response**

Sat, Mar 1, 2014 6:19:33 PM provided by Rick Krenske

BNSF: Blame the weather, not oil trains, for Northstar's delays. Article by: TIM HARLOW, Minneapolis Star Tribune: February 27, 2014.

The cold, not oil train traffic, is to blame, a railroad official says. Legislators vow to keep an eye on the situation on the commuter line. The brutal cold, not increased freight traffic, has been the primary cause of delays on the Northstar commuter line between Elk River and Minneapolis, a BNSF railroad spokesman said Thursday during a legislative hearing. Legislators called the hearing in hopes of getting answers to why the commuter line has been disrupted repeatedly over the past two months. "Weather has created havoc," said Brian Sweeney, the railroad's regional assistant vice president, state government affairs, noting that the run of subzero temperatures has caused switches to freeze up several times and tracks to become brittle. "Crews can only work outside for 20 minutes at a time. That affects one train, and then there's a ripple effect. We've seen that on Northstar. Oil traffic is not a factor." Sweeney said BNSF said delays began with the arctic chill in January. "The cold has meant that freight trains have had to run at slower speeds and trains have fewer cars. That in turn has increased the number of trains, taxing the tracks' capacity," Sweeney said. The agreement between BNSF and Metro Transit stipulates that 95 percent of all Northstar trains should be dispatched to arrive at their terminal station within five minutes of their scheduled arrival time each month. Since January, that figure is down to about 75 percent, Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb said. In response to the frequent delays and rising customer furor, Metro Transit this week dispatched emergency buses to two of its busiest rail stations, Elk River and Coon Rapids, to handle passengers if trains were delayed. On Monday, some trains were delayed up to two hours and Metro Transit told its customers to find other modes of transportation. A few weeks ago, Metro Transit started sending e-mails and text messages to 700 riders who subscribed to a new rider-alert program. "That shows the desperation that our customers are feeling," Lamb said. "Employers only have so much patience." Is cold really the cause? Lamb questioned whether the cold was the real reason for delays. He noted that Northstar trains ran on schedule Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday even with temperatures in the teens below zero. Thursday's hearing yielded no solution. Sweeney said that he hoped things will get better when the weather improves. "We've brought in crews from other parts of the system and added locomotives to try to keep current," Sweeney said. "Reliability is critical to have a commuter-rail operation. We need to win back confidence." Until January, when the delays began, Northstar had a 96 percent on-time record. Metro Transit spokesman Drew Kerr said the number of rides on Northstar in January was down 2 percent to 54,507 compared with January 2013. The bitter cold and school closings also were factors in the decline, Kerr said. Legislators said they will continue to assess the situation and reconvene if necessary. "We still want to get to the bottom of this and prevent this from happening in the future," said House Transportation Finance Committee Chairman Frank Hornstein, DFL-Minneapolis.

### **Railroad pledges to improve service, end Amtrak detour**

From the Grand Forks Herald: BNSF Railway promised Tuesday to provide more locomotives and workers in the next few weeks to break the logjam of rail shipments that has dismayed North Dakota farmers and forced the detour of passenger trains through the state.

<http://www.grandforksherald.com/content/railroad-pledges-improve-service-end-amtrak-detour> --Mark Meyer

### **Minutes of the Feb 15, 2014 Membership Meeting of the Northstar Chapter NRHS**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Roseville Lutheran Church by chapter president Marty Swan with 28 people present. Those present were asked to introduce themselves. The normal agenda of the meeting was temporarily suspended so that Mike Rogers of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority could give a presentation on the *East Metro Rail Captivity Study* that the Authority had conducted. After Mike had finished his prepared presentation, he answered questions from the audience. He was thanked for coming to talk to us. After a brief break, the normal meeting agenda was resumed. Treasurer Russ Isbrandt gave his report. He noted that the calendar operation is generating a net surplus. He said that, over all, the chapter is doing OK. He also reported on membership, noting that there have been some non-renewals. There were no questions about his

report. John Goodman reported that he had represented the chapter at the winter NRHS board meeting, which was held January 11-12 in St. Louis. There was a plan proposed that would have charged an extra fee to members who do not have access to a computer or do not have credit cards to handle their membership renewals, but this was not approved. They are setting up committees to handle various things. John also reported on planning for upcoming NRHS national conventions. There will be one based in Rutland VT. They are working on a possible Northern California convention, with a possible Hawaii add-on. They are moving forward on plans for Rail Camp. Applications are open. Could our chapter put someone from our area to go? A question was asked about the finance of the national NRHS. John also reported on possible trips. John said that he had contacted Voight (a charter bus company) about a possible trip to the Boone & Scenic Valley at Boone IA (one very long day.) Another possibility would be a trip to the Illinois Railway Museum, which is west of Chicago. This would have to be a two day trip at least. John said that he is waiting for the upcoming chapter Board of Directors meeting, which will be held early in March, before proceeding any further. A question was asked about the chapter's summer picnic. Several ideas were suggested. A question was asked about when Amtrak trains will begin serving St. Paul Union Depot. At this time, no one knows for sure, but there was some speculation that it may be close to National Train Day (May 10th.) Also, the opening of Metro Transit's Green Line connecting downtown Minneapolis with downtown St. Paul will be June 14th. It was suggested that the chapter could get a table at National Train Day. Richard Tubbesing reported on programs. This month, he has a slide show on the area east of the St. Paul Union Depot. For March, he has several possibilities. For April, [sorry, I can't read my own hasty handwriting - please insert correct information.] For May, Rusa Isbrandt is putting together a program on the Illinois Railway Museum. Richard also reported on the newsletter. The February issue of Northstar News went out. Secretary Dave Norman reported that the minutes of January 2014 meeting were printed in the February issue of Northstar News. There was a call for any additions or corrections - hearing none, the minutes were approved without a formal vote. Webmaster Dan Meyer gave his report. He has problems with the chapter's current website, but should be able to fix it. The by-laws were changed to what is current. Richard Tubbesing thanked Dan Meyer and Dawn Holmberg for their help with the newsletter. John Cartwright reported on the chapter library. The library got some material from Byron Olsen, with more to come later. There was an open house at the library earlier today. A PDF of an inventory of the chapter library collection has been placed on the chapter's website. A question was asked about the Cordes Slide Collection. It is still being scanned. We are currently working on the Macnie Collection. Some material from the Cordes Collection went to the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. Dawn Holmberg reported on the calendar. We are almost sold out of the 2014 calendars. We are still accepting photos for the 2015 calendar. She hopes to get the 2015 calendar out early - getting the 2014 calendar out early seemed to help sales somewhat. They will wait a little while longer after the new calendars come out to send out reminder post cards to those who bought calendars in the past, but haven't ordered yet. She described the damaged calendars received from the printer. Joe Stark was not here to talk about sales at flea markets, but Marty read a report that he submitted. There was discussion about sales - which events should we go to? For example, should we go to the upcoming Randolph show? Which ones do we not sell enough to make it worthwhile to attend? Cheer Committee - Marty said that he didn't send out any cards in the past month, but got one for himself. New Business - PBS will be broadcasting a program on Penn Station in New York City next Tuesday. Dawn Holmberg said that she had not had time to check out alternate meeting locations. However, we have been getting donations that are covering most of the cost of continuing to meet at the church, so the chapter is only having to pay a limited amount toward the cost. We will still continue to meet here, at least through May. More donations would be appreciated. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and carried. After a break, Richard Tubbesing presented a program on 40+ Years of Railroads in the East St. Paul Area.

Respectfully Submitted; Dave Norman secretary Northstar Chapter NRHS

## BNSF announces \$5 billion capital spending program

Published: February 5, 2014 Trains Newswire



Photo by Steve Schmollinger



EB at Univ Jct. Photo by R Tubbesing



WB Grain Ross ND. Photo by Roger Libra

FORT WORTH, Texas – BNSF Railway plans to spend about \$5 billion on capital expenditures for 2014. This represents a roughly \$1 billion increase over its 2013 capital spending and a new record for the company.

The largest component of the capital plan is spending \$2.3 billion on BNSF's core network and related assets. BNSF also plans to spend \$1.6 billion on locomotive, freight car and other equipment acquisitions. In addition, the program includes \$200 million for continued installation of positive train control and \$900 million for terminal, line and intermodal expansion and efficiency projects.

"Our capital plan continues to focus on improving our ability to meet our customers' service expectations, increasing our capacity where there is growth, and strengthening our railroad to help ensure it remains the safest means of ground transportation for freight," President and CEO Carl Ice says. "BNSF's capital investments are an integral part of making sure our network is well prepared for the demand for freight rail service in the U.S. and helps ensure the continued integrity and reliability of our network."



## TC&W Railroad Rejects Transystems Light Rail Plan

Engineering analysis reveals design flaws; plan fails safety and efficiency standards

By Twin Cities and Western Railroad

Published: Thursday, Feb. 20, 2014 - 8:06 am

GLENCOE, Minn., Feb. 20, 2014 -- /PRNewswire/ -- After reviewing a technical analysis prepared by a South Dakota engineering firm, Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) today announced that it has rejected a proposal by Transystems, an independent consultant, to relocate freight rail service from the Kenilworth Corridor to a St. Louis Park route. The engineering analysis described the Transystems proposal as "neither efficient, safe nor cost effective when compared to TC&W's current route." TC&W President Mark Wegner said he received the report yesterday from Civil Design, Inc. (CDI). It highlighted a number of specific problems with the St. Louis Park route recommended by independent consultant Transystems on January 30. "The operating conditions proposed by the Transystems alignment would be detrimental in every respect to current and future operating conditions for the TC&W," the report concluded. The Transystems plan would reroute freight rail traffic through St. Louis Park on the MN&S rail line owned by Canadian Pacific. It is only slightly different from the plan proposed in the October 2012 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published by Hennepin County. Among the problems cited in the CDI report to TC&W: The proposed reroute does not meet mainline standards for Class I railroad construction as required by the length and weight of TC&W trains moving freight to and from Class I carriers; The installation of a Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) signal controlled by other railroads would force TC&W trains to wait on the track for access rights from the controlling railroads, causing costly and inefficient delays; The reroute includes three reverse curves, also known as S-curves, and multiple undulating grades in less than one mile, unsafe elements that should be "avoided at all costs," according to the American Railroad Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA), which reports that such elements can "greatly increase the likelihood of the train buckling and

thus derailment." The route requires tracks to be built on bridges, creating higher maintenance and repair costs, but there is no agreement as to who would be responsible for those costs. Wegner said it's hard for him to understand why Transystems recommended a St. Louis Park reroute that is only slightly different from the DEIS plan that TC&W rejected. He said the railroad wasn't asked for input in either case until the designs already had been made public. In contrast, Wegner pointed to the Brunswick Central reroute option, which TC&W found acceptable from a safety perspective. That route, which skirts the St. Louis Park High School's football field, was developed by the Metropolitan Council with the collaboration of Canadian Pacific and TC&W to meet Class I mainline safety and engineering standards. "You don't build passenger aircraft to meet minimum safety standards; you don't build road bridges to meet minimum weight standards. These designs have numerous safety redundancies built in," Wegner said. "When state and federal authorities are looking at freight rail options here in the Twin Cities, it's hard to imagine them taking the position that a less safe route is preferable to our current route." The failure to meet Class I safety and engineering standards makes it impossible for TC&W to accept the Transystem plan, Wegner concluded, because "it does not allow us to protect our current and future shippers in Minnesota and South Dakota." CONTACT: Mark Wegner, 320-864-7200



## July 2013 Montana Trip By Richard Tubbesing, Roger Libra – Part 4

Friday July 26 2013 To Helena and back -Continued

Then it was on to Helena. We got into town, stopped for Lunch and went to investigate MRL yard and Helena Depot (Nicely preserved and used by MRL as the yard office.) An EB BNSF Manifest came into the yard, and after a crew change, headed East. We raced back on the highway to find a spot to photograph this train a few miles east of town. We headed back to Helena to see how we could get to the Mullen Tunnel and proceeded to Austin MT which generally follows the MRL line up to the Mullen Tunnel. After reaching Austin, a rough dirt road wound its way around the mountains to the vicinity of the West portal of the tunnel. When we got to this area, an EB BNSF manifest was just leaving the siding (Called Blossberg) to enter the tunnel which was around a curve and we could not see as this was MRL property. Listening to the scanner, there appeared to be a WB train climbing to the tunnel from Helena. There was chatter about a meet of a WB train at Ellison siding about 10 miles West of the tunnel. We headed to Ellison to see if the EB train had arrived, but no train. Then we headed back to the tunnel again to see if the WB train at arrived. Not Yet. Roger and I waited for about an hour and still no trains. We decided to head to Ellison again to see if there was a train, and sure enough, the MRL EB was sitting in the siding waiting for the WB Train. Then we sped back to a spot about 5 miles west of the tunnel for the WB train, and after a short wait, the WB Train, which was the same coal train we shot S of Tosten and shot this train on a nice S curve thru the trees as it headed downgrade. Then we headed back towards the west end of the Mullen Tunnel and got the WB MRL train that was sitting at Ellison at Blossberg. By this time, it early evening and we had to head back to Bozeman. Highway 12 thru the continental Divide W of Helena is a gorgeous drive with many scenic mountain vistas. We Got back to our Motel about 10PM and retired for the night.



MRL EB manifest entering Blossberg MT. NEW EMC SD70's are Helpers. by R Tubbesing

Saturday July 27 2013

This was the last day at Hyalite camp, so we headed up to camp for breakfast and cleanup. After all the Goodbye's to family and friends, we headed back East looking for trains. We got to Livingston and an WB BNSF manifest was ready to head West. We set up just W of Livingston and got this train as it started the climb to the summit of Bozeman pass. Then we headed E on I90. We stopped at Custer MT to check signals again and they indicated an EB was close at hand. We waited and got this BNSF EB Empty Coal Train. Then headed to Forsythe MT, and stopped to see if any trains were in the yard, and sure enough, a WB Grain Train was leaving, so we headed West along the tracks and found a nice spot along the Yellowstone River to video this train. Headed back to Forsythe, where an EB BNSF Coal train was departing, so we sped to Rosebud MT to get this train on the Bridge we visited on the way out to Montana. Then we headed East to our stop for the night at Miles City MT. We checked into our Hotel and had a great meal at the Montana Rib and Chop House again before retiring for the night.



MRL Helpers W of Livingston MT,



BNSF EB Coal at Rosebud MT.

By Roger Libra

Sunday July 28 2013

We got up early, and went into town and saw an EB BNSF manifest leaving town, and sped E to get ahead of this train and got this on a small bridge a few miles east of town. Back on the freeway, we headed East and got off at exit 169 E of Blatchford siding and to a Truss Bridge across the Powder River and got the EB BNSF Manifest as it crossed the bridge. We continued along the road that follows the tracks toward Terry MT, and in the distance we spotted a three-deck Truss



bridge across the Yellowstone River at a location called Kamm MT on the Delorme Map. We headed on a dirt road to this bridge which was an old MILW RR bridge across the Yellowstone River. We drove across this one lane bridge to a spot called Calypso where the old MILW line is now a nicely groomed trail. We left there and proceeded to E of Terry MT and the ex MILW Bridge over the ex NP line (called the Hettinger Sub by BNSF) that was the MILW line to South Dakota. Signals at Terry indicated an EB was eminent and got an EB BNSF manifest going under this bridge as it headed to Glendive MT. Back on the Freeway, we headed to Glendive MT. We saw some coal trains in the yard, and one EB was departing and went just east of town to shoot this train.



*BNSF EB E of Miles City MT.*



*& Calypso Trail (ex MILW) Train Bridge at Kamm MT.  
by Roger Libra*

Back on the freeway, we headed E to Medora MT. As we entered Medora, (in the badlands area of ND) a WB Loaded Coal train was arriving and quickly turned around to get this train just N of downtown. Then we went a little west of town and followed a dirt road along the tracks a couple of miles to a nice spot to wait for trains as we heard from the scanner there were a number of trains in the area. We just stopped and a WB Manifest arrives and got a quick shot of this as it went by. Then there were two BNSF coal trains, one EB, and one WB that we got at this fairly scenic location.



*BNSF WB Grain W of Forsythe MT.*



*BNSF Manifest at Richardton ND. by R Tubbesing*

Back on the Freeway we headed to Dickenson ND. We checked the yard and signals, and no trains were imminent so we stopped for a late lunch at Hardee's. Then an EB manifest stormed by as we consumed lunch. We then headed back to the Freeway and exited at the Antelope ND exit to an old highway that follows the tracks to Richardton and Hebron ND. We stopped just W of Richardton and got a short BNSF WB Manifest, then headed East to where we got a WB empty coal train just West of Hebron ND. Then we headed back on the freeway, as evening was drawing near and headed to our next stop at the Holiday Inn in Bismarck ND. We got some dinner at Perkins and retired for the night.

Monday July 29 2013

This was the last day on the road, since we had to return our rental vehicle at 4:30 PM. Our only stop was at Castleton ND where the BNSF Surrey cutoff leaves the former NP mainline just west of here. We got an empty BNSF WB Oil can train, and a empty BNSF WB coal train here before departing and Heading home.



*BNSF WB Oil cans Castleton ND. by R Tubbesing Videographer Roger Libra at work? At Blossberg. By R Tubbesing*



In Summary, Montana and North Dakota, Great places to watch trains is some very scenic locations that are not difficult to get to. A Fun Trip!



From the Archives: Memo Timetable from October 31 1965. Note fare between St Paul & Chicago of just \$27.55 and parlor seat cost only \$2.40 more. Zephyrs to Chicago #22 and #24 left Mpls @ 7:45AM and 3:30PM respectively. It looks like the GN Empire Builder #31 was combined with the Afternoon Zephyr as the Times are the same.

### RAIL AND PARLOR CAR FARES

**ONE-WAY ROUND-TRIP FARE**

Between	Chicago and	First Class	Coach Class	First Class	Coach Class
Aurora	.....	\$1.72	\$1.22	\$3.10	\$2.10
Dubuque	.....	3.51	2.99	9.95	12.60
La Crosse	.....	6.89	6.76	12.45	13.80
La Prairie	.....	8.01	10.15	14.45	18.30
St. Paul	.....	9.01	11.43	16.25	20.60
St. Paul	.....	12.00	15.29	21.70	27.55
St. Paul	.....	13.39	15.70	22.35	28.30

**Between ST. PAUL and**

First Class	Coach Class	First Class	Coach Class
Winona	.....	3.15	3.99
La Crosse	.....	4.05	5.12
La Prairie	.....	5.83	7.40
Dubuque	.....	7.79	9.49
St. Paul	.....	8.72	11.04
Chicago	.....	11.97	15.18

**Between MINNEAPOLIS and**

First Class	Coach Class	First Class	Coach Class
Winona	.....	3.48	4.40
La Crosse	.....	4.37	5.52
La Prairie	.....	6.16	7.80
Dubuque	.....	8.13	9.91
St. Paul	.....	9.01	11.43
St. Paul	.....	12.27	15.57
Chicago	.....	13.39	15.70

**RESERVATIONS • TICKETS • INFORMATION**

**CHICAGO Ticket Office**  
Adams St. Clark  
Phone 232-2345

**SAINT PAUL**  
Wabash St. Fourth St.  
Phone 232-6311

**MINNEAPOLIS**  
Jackson Block and Canal St.  
Phone 233-4231

### BURLINGTON MEMO TIMETABLE

*Between CHICAGO and ST. PAUL-MINNEAPOLIS and intermediate points*

**Effective October 31, 1965**



### SCHEDULES BETWEEN CHICAGO - LA CROSSE - ST. PAUL - MINNEAPOLIS

**NORTHBOUND (Daily)**

Miles	Time shown in italics indicates connections	No. 21	No. 25	No. 31	No. 23	No. 47	No. 47
0	Central Standard Time	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
10	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	9:00	12:30	3:00	5:00	10:10	10:30
18	La Crosse	9:15	12:45	3:15	5:15	10:25	10:45
108	St. Paul	10:00	1:30	4:00	6:00	11:10	11:30
138	Minneapolis	10:20	1:50	4:20	6:20	11:30	11:50
146	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	10:30	2:00	4:30	6:30	11:40	12:00
184	E. Dubuque, Ill.	10:45	2:15	4:45	6:45	11:55	12:15
229	La Crosse	11:00	2:30	5:00	7:00	12:10	12:30
239	North La Crosse	11:15	2:45	5:15	7:15	12:25	12:45
259	Winona, Minn.	11:30	3:00	5:30	7:30	12:40	13:00
328	St. Paul	11:45	3:15	5:45	7:45	12:55	13:15
427	Minneapolis	12:00	3:30	6:00	8:00	1:10	1:30
437	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	12:15	3:45	6:15	8:15	1:25	1:45

**SOUTHBOUND (Daily)**

Miles	Time shown in italics indicates connections	No. 26	No. 32	No. 22	No. 24	No. 48	No. 48
0	Central Standard Time	AM	PM	PM	PM	PM	PM
10	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	9:15	6:30	7:45	2:40	3:30	10:30
18	La Crosse	9:30	6:45	8:00	2:55	3:45	10:45
108	St. Paul	10:15	7:30	8:45	3:40	4:30	11:30
138	Minneapolis	10:35	7:50	9:05	3:55	4:45	11:50
146	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	10:45	8:00	9:15	4:05	4:55	12:00
184	E. Dubuque, Ill.	11:00	8:15	9:30	4:20	5:10	12:15
229	La Crosse	11:15	8:30	9:45	4:35	5:25	12:30
239	North La Crosse	11:30	8:45	10:00	4:50	5:40	12:45
259	Winona, Minn.	11:45	9:00	10:15	5:05	5:55	13:00
328	St. Paul	12:00	9:15	10:30	5:20	6:10	13:15
427	Minneapolis	12:15	9:30	10:45	5:35	6:25	13:30
437	Chicago (Ill. Sta.)	12:30	9:45	11:00	5:50	6:40	13:45

**REFERENCE NOTES:** b—Stops to receive passengers; c—Stops to receive revenue passengers for Fargo and beyond when revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; p—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; r—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; s—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; t—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; u—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; v—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; w—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; x—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; y—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond; z—Stops to let off revenue passengers from Fargo and beyond.

From the Minnesota DOT website

## RR Statistics: Minnesota has 4,444 route miles of railroads serviced by 20 railroad companies .

Railroad companies are divided into three classes, based on operating revenues and status defined by the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

### Class I Railroads (Major Railroads)

Annual gross operating revenues of at least \$378.8 million

Railroad Companies	Miles of Track
BNSF Railway	1,584
CN, Canadian National	425
CP, Canadian Pacific	1,222
UP, Union Pacific	435
Total Class I Miles	3,666

### Class II Railroads (Regional & Short Line Railroads)

Annual gross operating revenues between \$30.3 million and \$378.8 million

Railroad Companies	Miles of Track
none	0

### Class III Railroads (Local & Switching Railroads)

Annual gross operating revenue of less than \$30.3 million

Railroad Companies	Miles of Track
CTRR, Cloquet Terminal	4
MDW, Minnesota, Dakota, & Western	4
MNN, Minnesota Northern	120
MNNR, Minnesota Commercial	35
MPLI, Minnesota Prairie Line	94



MSWY, Minnesota Southern	42
NLR, Northern Lines	23
NPR, Northern Plains	45
NSSR, North Shore Scenic (SLLX)	25
OTVR, Otter Tail Valley	71
PGR, Progressive Rail	80
RRVW, Red River Valley & Western	2

Misc pictures:



TC&W Ruebel Turn near Glencoe a few years ago. By Roger Libra

CP mixed bag of power Mar 2013 by Andy Shireman

Ironhorse Central Railroad Museum founder was 72 when he died on Feb. 4



*Richard Thompson in front of his pride and joy, steam engine No. 4. (File photo by Cliff Buchan)*

*Forest Lake Times* **Cliff Buchan** Staff Writer

Some railroad men spend their lives on the railroad, laboring 40 hours a week, working on trains and in rail yards. That was Richard Thompson's life for 40 years, but it was just one part of his lifelong love of railroading. Nearly 50 years ago, Thompson teamed with family members and friends to build the Ironhorse Central Railroad Museum on his farm in rural Chisago Lake Township. He labored long and hard on the museum grounds while working full-time as a train engineer for the Milwaukee Road, the Soo Line and the Canadian Pacific railroads.

#### Thompson works on an engine light.

The area is now without its museum master. Thompson was 72 when he died on Tuesday, Feb. 4, following open-heart bypass surgery at Fairview Southdale Hospital. Thompson spent his life working to preserve railroad history, and his life's work is on display at the family's operating museum. It was Thompson who teamed with family and friends to save a steam engine in Dresser, Wis. The engine, steamer No. 4, is the signature piece at the Ironhorse Central and was Thompson's pride and joy. When the museum needed a depot, Thompson purchased the old depot at Groningen and moved the structure to the farm. If a rail car or caboose came up for sale and caught Thompson's eye, they were added to the collection. When it became clear to Thompson that the history of the railroad that once connected Wyoming and Taylors Falls was slipping into obscurity, Thompson teamed with another rail fan, Steve Monson, in 2005 to write and publish "The Taylors Falls & Lake Superior Railroad." It was detailed book rich in text and photos that documented the history of the railroad that operated from 1880 to 1948. And there were many other acts of preservation. When the city of Brainerd decided it no longer wanted an old steam engine rusting away in a city park, Thompson bought the engine and moved it to the farm. "He did a tremendous job of preserving railroad history that would never have been preserved otherwise," said Neil Mattson, a Wyoming resident who grew up less than a block from the Northern Pacific tracks in Forest Lake. Mattson and Thompson met as a result of their love for railroading. "We used to chase steam engines up the line to Duluth," Mattson said of those rare days when a steamer would travel through Forest Lake over the St. Paul-to-Duluth line that was abandoned by the Burlington Northern and removed in the late 1980s. The two became friends, and Mattson would make four or five visits to the Ironhorse Central every summer. "He really knew his stuff, and steam history in particular," Mattson said. "He loved to talk trains and I loved to talk trains." Thompson had become a lifelong fan of steam railroads growing up not far from a railroad line in Minneapolis. His interest in railroads was focused on the St. Paul-to-Duluth line and its branch line from Wyoming to Taylors Falls. **1960s start:** Thompson was working for the Milwaukee Road when he moved to the farm in Chisago Lake Township in the early 1960s. His railroad job was interrupted by a stint in the Army and combat service in Vietnam. By 1965, Thompson, his twin brother Robert, and friend Doug Alexander teamed to form the Ironhorse Central Railroad Museum. During its 49 years, the museum acquired and restored 20 pieces of railroad equipment. The first major project was the purchase of steamer No. 4 from the Dresser Trap Rock business in Wisconsin. Thompson's son, Eric, is now part of the museum operation and since 2005 has run a tourist train operation each spring. The museum each summer and fall has sponsored train days for rail fans, drawing large crowds for museum tours and train rides. The steam locomotive has been fired up and used to pull excursion trains. The 1-mile loop of track at the farm museum was completed in 1985. Thompson's partnership with Monson to write the Taylors Falls railroad book was just one step in his preservation efforts. He was a skilled photographer and writer and would provide photographs and stories of rail matters to a numerous publications.

**A kind man:** At his funeral on Saturday at Chisago Lakes Baptist Church in Chisago City, Thompson was remembered by George Cable, a retired pastor, as a "tough, but kind" man who loved his family, the farm, the museum and God.

"He believed the gospel," said Cable, a 38-year friend of Thompson. "He loved the gospel. He took a stand for the gospel." Cable said Thompson showed his faith by being an active member of the church for many years and helping build the school where Thompson's three children would graduate. He had been a member of Chisago Lakes Baptist but switched to Sunrise Bible Church, where Cable had been preaching. Melissa Johnson remembered her father as a "walking history book" who enjoyed family trips. "He took all of the kids on trips, especially if it had a railroad involved," she said.

**Funeral details:** Cable and David Stertz, pastor at Sunrise, officiated at Saturday's funeral. Interment with full military honors followed at Chisago Memorial Park, Chisago City. Thompson is survived by his wife of 44 years, Caroline; daughter, Melissa (Chris) Johnson; one son, Eric (Trena) Thompson; 13 grandchildren; one brother, Kenneth (Marilyn); other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by his parents, Newton and Doris Thompson; one son, Karl; one brother, Robert, in 2001. Memorials are preferred to the Sunrise Bible Church building fund and may be sent to the church at 41300 Second St., North Branch, MN 55056. A railroad hymn was performed at the service as a send-off to Thompson. "Life's Railway to Heaven" included this verse: "Life is like a mountain railroad, with an engineer that's brave. We must make the run successful, from the cradle to the grave. With the curves, the hills, the tunnels; never falter, never quail. Keep your hand upon the throttle, and your eye upon the rail."



## Metro News - Trains Start Running On University Monday –Provided by Rick Krenski

**Expect trains anytime as operator training begins Feb. 24** So staying off tracks is more important than ever ST. PAUL, Minn. – Feb. 19, 2014 –Anytime becomes train time on the METRO Green Line (Central Corridor LRT) beginning Monday when more than 100 light rail operators start preparing for the line's June 14 opening. "Staying off tracks and practicing other safe habits around trains takes on a heightened importance. Safety is a shared responsibility, so please visit <http://www.metrotransit.org/green-line-safety> and review the safety messages," said Mike Conlon, Metro Transit's director of rail and bus safety. In addition, Metro Transit police would like to remind the public that violations of basic transit laws are misdemeanors with \$180 fines. Weekday roundtrips for light rail trains will occur as often as 10 minutes apart between Lowertown St. Paul and the connection with the Blue Line. The training runs are for 61 newly hired and certified Green Line operators and 58 Blue Line operators and their instructors. The operators already know how to run the trains. The purpose of the trips is to familiarize them with the Green Line route, stations, standard operating procedures and other features. In addition to these operator training runs, trains movements will continue for test purposes. Test trains may operate anytime, any day of the week. In April, Metro Transit will switch to operating trains on the regular-service schedule from about 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. seven days a week to prepare for the June 14 opening.

**University of Minnesota** The University of Minnesota's transit-pedestrian mall is an area where people need to have a heightened awareness of their surroundings. "As the light rail training runs begin, pedestrians and cyclists will need to watch for both buses and trains sharing the tracks on the East Bank. It becomes especially important for everyone to observe all pedestrian, bike and traffic laws," said Pamela Wheelock, Vice President for University Services. The mall has gathering spots flanking both ends of the East Bank Station on Washington Avenue. These gathering areas are basically sidewalks between the two tracks on which trains and buses will operate. Pedestrians in these areas will need to use designated crosswalks and walk-signal buttons. Cyclists will need to use bike boxes to ride across the tracks at intersections. No left turns will be allowed for cyclists or drivers crossing the tracks. See a video demonstration of how to safely use the Washington Avenue new bike boxes at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8a5DSBIXqLE>. **What the public can expect** Traffic should not be affected. Trains will operate with traffic, following traffic signals. If signals are unavailable or not functioning, trains will operate under guidance from Metro Transit controllers. Trains normally will not exceed 35 mph during training and after revenue service begins. Speeds will be lower in downtown St. Paul and through the University of Minnesota. Operators will not open train doors at stations or give rides to the public. **Stay safe. Stay off tracks** The Central Corridor LRT Project emphasizes four main safety points: - Always stay off the tracks; - Stay off station platforms until service begins in June 2014. -After service begins, a paid fare will be required to be on platforms; - Look both ways for oncoming trains during training and testing and after service begins; -Cross only at intersections and legal mid-block crosswalks. **How to learn more** With the advent of train testing last summer, Metro Transit, Central Corridor LRT Project staff and the city of St. Paul collaborated on production of a safety video and public service announcements. Project staff began safety presentations to businesses, neighborhood groups school groups and others, and Metro Transit created safety posters for station kiosks, brochures and wrapped train exteriors in safety messages. See Metro Transit's safety webpage for tips for staying safe and how to request a presentation at <http://www.metrotransit.org/green-line-safety>. **The Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Project (Green Line) will link downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis along Washington and University avenues via the state Capitol and the University of Minnesota.** Construction began in late summer 2010 on the planned 11-mile Central Corridor line, and service will begin on June 14, 2014. The line will connect with the METRO Blue Line at the Downtown East Station in Minneapolis and the Northstar commuter rail line at the Target Field Station. The Metropolitan Council is the grantee of federal funds. The regional government agency is charged with building the line in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. The Central Corridor Management Committee, which includes commissioners from Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the University of Minnesota, provides advice and oversight. Funding is provided by the Federal Transit Administration, Counties Transit Improvement Board, state of Minnesota, Ramsey and Hennepin counties' regional railroad authorities, city of St. Paul, Metropolitan Council and the Central Corridor Funders' Collaborative. The Central Corridor LRT Project Website is [www.centralcorridor.org](http://www.centralcorridor.org).

## Progressive Rails News -Provided by Rick Krenske

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From Progressive Rails, Comes the news that the massive Interstate Mills facility in Randolph is now in operation. So a reminder, the \$24 million operation will be ready for your inspection via tours during the 2014 Randolph Railroad Days on Saturday, March 29th in the all new Great Western Industrial Park. In addition author John Luecke, writer of the books on the Chicago Great Western and Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern, will be appearing at the show. So be sure to stop by his kiosk to meet and chat about his railroad books.

### A Historic Tradition Progressive Rail Incorporated | February 17, 2013

#### Innovation: A Historical Tradition - The Long Trains Return to the Rails at Randolph

The Chicago Great Western was always considered a company where innovation was not only a tradition but a watchword for the manner in which business was conducted. From the very start in the 1880s, the CGW defied convention and established itself as a link from the Twin Cities to Chicago, Kansas City and Omaha that was built through areas that had been ignored by the competition. By side-stepping most large towns, the CGW freed itself to carve out its own niche in Mid-western railroading. At the same time, however, the road's management knew that the company would have to spice up its operations with a good



degree of innovation in order to compete for traffic. The company's innovative spirit often put the CGW ahead of the curve when it came to new railroading techniques which included everything from gas-electric motor cars and massive steam locomotives to ribbon rail and piggyback service. The company's passenger trains between the Twin Cities and Rochester, the Red Bird and the Blue Bird, were groundbreakers for the industry - the non-stop Red Bird being credited as the first passenger train to have its locomotive painted in harmony with its train and the Blue Bird being the first passenger train to adopt the features of streamlining. In its later years, the CGW became known for its incredibly long mainline freight trains which often consisted of over 250 cars pulled by a veritable herd of diesel locomotives. These huge trains were a hallmark of the CGW through Randolph until the road was taken over by the Chicago & North Western in 1968. Today, the tradition of the long trains returned to Randolph with the inauguration of unit train operations over the refurbished branch from Northfield. The 100 car train was bound for the new Interstate Mills Company unit train load out facility at Randolph. What was once thought to have been a doomed branchline, who's only unwritten historical note was the date of its final abandonment, has been refurbished and repurposed, thanks to a new tradition of innovation that is maintained and pursued by Progressive Rail Inc.

John C. Luecke



Photo by Dave Schmeiding



Photo by Jill Shuster Peterson

Milw SKYTOP Overhaul: by Steve Glischinski

Published: January 31, 2014

The Friends of the 261 are progressing on the restoration of former Milwaukee Road Skytop parlor lounge observation car Cedar Rapids. The car, built by the Milwaukee Road at its Milwaukee Shops in 1948, is undergoing a complete overhaul. The lounge area at the rear of the car is unique since it is 90 percent glass, with multiple rows of windows reaching up to form the ceiling. This solarium contains 12 seats, with an additional 24 seats in the interior of the car. The interior also features wood paneling, characteristic of Milwaukee Road designs.

Designed by famed industrial designer Brooks Stevens, the Cedar Rapids was one of four parlor observations cars that entered service in 1948 on the Twin Cities Hiawathas between Chicago and the Twin Cities. Stevens also designed six sleeper Skytop observations for the Chicago-Seattle/Tacoma Olympian Hiawatha. One of those cars, the Coffee Creek, was recently moved to Alamosa, Colo., for restoration, and is the only intact sleeper Skytop. Three of the parlor observations survive, but the Cedar Rapids is the only car that is operable. The Skytop is a favorite of the passengers on Milwaukee Road No. 261 steam excursions, and also makes several charter moves on Amtrak each year. It traveled coast-to-coast in September 2013 as part of the Station-to-Station artists' train.

This winter, the car was pulled into the group's shop in Minneapolis for restoration. The trucks were removed for an Amtrak-mandated 10-year inspection. The Friends of the 261 have raised about \$30,000 for the work needed on the Cedar Rapids, but the group estimates the total cost of the project will be \$62,000. It is seeking donations to finish the work.

Skytop Donations can be made at:

[www.261.com](http://www.261.com)

or by mail to:

Friends of the 261

4322 Lakepoint Court Shoreview, MN 55126.

Central Corridor train derails on icy patch in downtown St. Paul & Obama Visit -Provided by Rick Krenske

By Tad Vezner St Paul Pioneer Press [vezner@pioneerpress.com](mailto:vezner@pioneerpress.com) Thursday Feb 27 2014

A Central Corridor light-rail test train rolled off the tracks on Cedar Street in downtown St. Paul on Wednesday afternoon. The minor derailment occurred as the northbound train, which was not carrying passengers, attempted to navigate a turn at 12th Street just before rush hour. It was leaving downtown headed toward Minneapolis.

Crews working on the derailment hooked up another train to pull the derailed car back onto the tracks. The train, which derailed about 4 p.m., was back on the tracks just after 6 p.m., according to a Metro Transit spokesman.

A Metro Transit official at the scene said this was the first time that particular stretch of track had been used since the Twin Cities were hit with 10 inches of snow last Thursday. It appeared that the train hit an area of snow and ice just before a curve in the tracks at 12th Street.

"Wheels on the lead car came off the tracks because of snow that had accumulated in the rail right of way," Metro Transit spokesman Drew Kerr confirmed in a written statement Wednesday evening, adding that there was no apparent damage to the tracks. Kerr said crews inspect tracks on a regular basis to make sure snow is removed and there's no impediments to operation. But it remained unclear Wednesday whether such an inspection had been done at the derailment site in the wake of the biggest snowfall of the season.

"For the Blue (Hiawatha) Line, in 10 years, this has happened once in downtown Minneapolis. Obviously, the conditions we've had for the last couple of days are more challenging than most, as evidenced by the roads," Kerr said. Spanning 11 miles between downtown St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis, construction of the \$957 million Central Corridor, or Green Line, project began four years ago. Regular service is scheduled to begin June 14.

It was a rough day for Metro Transit rail operations. On Wednesday afternoon, a motor vehicle got stuck on the Blue Line tracks near the 46th Street Station in Minneapolis. The agency used buses to get passengers around the vehicle until it was cleared later in the afternoon. The St. Paul incident occurred less than two hours after President Barack Obama's speech on road, bridge, rail and public transit investment at the Union Depot transit hub in downtown St. Paul. He also toured Metro Transit's light-rail maintenance garage in Lowertown and looked at several of the Central Corridor vehicles.

Obama specifically lauded the new rail system during his visit. "I just had a chance to take a look at some of those spiffy new trains. They are nice. And they're energy-efficient. They're going to be reliable. You can get from one downtown to the other in a little over 30 minutes instead of when it's snowing being in traffic for two hours," the president said. More than 100 operators hired for Green Line operations began training this week. Kerr said testing on the line will resume this week. Frederick Melo contributed to this report. Tad Vezner can be reached at 651-228-5461. Minneapolis Star & Tribune

Another Article:

St. Paul light rail train snow-derailed

Posted by: Rachel E. Stassen-Berger - February 26, 2014

Shortly before the evening rush hour, a St. Paul light rail train derailed and workers were digging the askew choo choo out of the snow on Cedar Street. The rail line is not yet open to passengers. Shortly before 6 p.m., Metro Transit explain the incident as follows: At approximately 4 p.m., wheels on the lead car of an out-of-service, three-car light-rail train came off the tracks while traveling northbound on the Green Line through the intersection of 12th and Cedar streets in St. Paul. This train had been located at the Union Depot and was returning en route to Minneapolis. Wheels on the lead car came off the tracks because of snow that had accumulated in the rail right of way. Trains had not traveled on this section of the track since the snowstorm last week. Rail operations responded to the scene to clear the snow and put the wheels back on the tracks. Metro Transit Police and St. Paul police directed traffic through the partially-blocked intersection. Two train cars that were attached to the lead car were moved to Tenth Street Station to clear the scene. The train cars were returned and reattached to pull the train car back onto the tracks. The effort to put the train car back on the tracks continues. When it is back on the tracks, the train car will be brought to Minneapolis for inspection. Other than the operator, no one was on the train when the wheels came off the track.

The incident came on the same day that President Obama was in town to talk about infrastructure spending. He toured the Metro Transit Light Operations Maintenance facility in St. Paul and later praised the program. "I just had a chance to take a look at some of those spiffy new trains," Obama said in a speech at St. Paul's Union Depot. "They are nice. And they're energy efficient. They're going to be reliable. You can get from one downtown to the other in a little over 30 minutes instead of when it's snowing being in traffic for two hours."

Star Tribune

### Former TCRT PCC Car Saved

On Saturday, February 15, 2014 8:59 PM, Rick Krenske wrote:

One of our former Twin City Rapid Transit PCC's cars that originally went to Newark, New Jersey, has been saved by the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. Metro member Brian Krysinski found this link and sent it to me.

Link: [www.baltimorestreetcar.org/njtpcc/njtpcc.html](http://www.baltimorestreetcar.org/njtpcc/njtpcc.html)

**Subject:** Metro News -

Streetcars Down The Greenway?

**Sent:** Tue, Feb 18, 2014 3:25:30 PM

Transit improvements eyed for Lake Street, Greenway. Posted by: Eric Roper: February 17, 2014.

A number of transit improvements being explored by the Metro Transit would fundamentally change how people navigate South Minneapolis using public transportation.

A group of stakeholders studying the Midtown Corridor decided last week that a combination of rail on the Midtown Greenway and enhanced bus along Lake Street would be ideal for accommodating passengers traveling both long and short distances. The route is currently served by the No. 21 bus, which provides a slow trot through one of the city's busiest commercial corridors, and the rush hour No. 53 express. The 21 route is the second-busiest east-west bus route in the entire state, according to Metro Transit spokesman John Sigveland, with about 14,600 riders traveling along it each weekday.

Funding needed for the improvements to materialize has not been identified, however. The expected cost of the project is between \$235 and \$270 million, not including operating costs. Most of that is for the rail component, with enhanced bus expected to cost about \$47.5 million. Enhanced bus, which will make its Twin Cities debut on Snelling Avenue, features improved bus stops that are spaced farther apart -- every half mile, rather than the standard 1/8 mile (see above). The stops would be built on widened sidewalks and include pre-payment systems, as well as possibly real-time arrival information. The rail along the Greenway would be similar to modern streetcar, simultaneously being planned for Nicollet Avenue, though somewhat different because it does not operate in mixed traffic.

Trip times would be dramatically reduced from the current bus service, which would take 42 minutes to reach the Hiawatha LRT station from just northwest of Lake Calhoun. The study of the corridor found that the rail trip would take 13 minutes, while enhanced bus would take 30 minutes.

### RailFan Events (Thanks to Rick Krense, Joe Stark)

<b>Lakes and Pines Division of the Train Collectors Association Train Show and Swap Meet</b>	March 9, 2014	John P Murzyn Hall 530 Mill Street NE Columbia Heights MN 55421	\$2 Kids under 12 Free
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Annual Randolph Railroad Days</b> Randolph Area Historical Society <a href="http://www.exploreminnesota.com/events/1535/randolph-railroad-days/details.aspx">http://www.exploreminnesota.com/events/1535/randolph-railroad-days/details.aspx</a>	Saturday March 29, and Sunday March 30, 2014. 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.	Randolph School and Museum 29110 Davisson Avenue Randolph, MN 55065	\$5 Admission Children under 12 Free
<b>White Bear Railroad Show and Flea Market</b>	April 5 2014 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Century College West Campus 3300 CENTURY AVE NO. HIGHWAY 120 White Bear Lake MN	ADMISSION \$5.00 UNDER 12 FREE

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Northstar News  
1515 Creek Meadow Dr NW  
Coon Rapids MN 55433 3768  
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