

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

HAPPY NEW YEAR !



December 12 2015

CP Holiday train at
Cottage Grove and
St Paul. Photos by
Dawn Holmberg



Contents

Meeting Notice	P1
Officer Contact Directory	P1.2
Editors Column	P2
Ford Plant Tracks in St Paul	P2
Northern Lights Express	P3
Gary Rumler & UP #3985	P4
BNSF retort to CP + NS proposal	P4
Rebuild of CZ Dome	P5
Amtrak drop in Passengers in TC	P5
Light Rail Tragedies in TC	P6
CP enlarges St Paul Yard	P7
Amtrak Empire Builder Schedule Change	P7
UP Profits Sink	P8
Washington DC Station Rehab	P9
NYCFC Dream Stadium	P10
BNSF Completed Baakan Oil Field projects	P11,12
2015 July Montana trip pictures	P12
Railfan Events	P13
DVD, Calendar for Sale	P14

Meeting Notice

Next business meeting will be held on
Saturday January 9, 2016 6:30 pm, at Roseville Lutheran Church
at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, midway between Lexington and Hamline
Avenues in Roseville. See map on page 2. NOTE the change, this is
the 2nd Saturday in January!

Program after the meeting –
Members night, Bring in a few (no more than 5 !!!!) of your pictures,
or slides for consideration for inclusion in the 2017 Calendar.
Short RR videos and pictures shown if time permits.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together January 9, 2016 at the Keys
Cafe and Bakery at the northeast corner of Lexington and Larpenteur
starting about 4:45 pm. PLEASE CALL Bob Clarkson at 651-636-
2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons
coming with you.

Thanks to Gerge Feraro for his outstanding presentation of the last
days of the St Louis Passenger Depot at our Holiday Banquet. Pictures
of the Grand St Louis passenger shed that housed many trains in the
early days of Amtrak were shown, and some great shots of the station
were seen where only George had access. Thanks to John Goodman
for getting George (from Chicago) to present this program.

Northstar Chapter Officers

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Meeting Location: From the east or 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.



From the Publisher:

Our calendar sales of the 2016 calendar has been very successful. We are nearly sold out. So if you haven't purchased a 2016 Minnesota Rail calendar, please hurry. Once we are sold out we are sold out!

2016 Dues are Due! Membership for 2016 is \$18 for NRHS membership (+NRHS membership dues of \$50, billed separately) and \$21 for subscriber. NRHS dues for 2016 can be paid online by credit card. If you are a current member of the NRHS and the NRHS has your email address, you should have gotten an Email from 'Amelia.com' to renew your NRHS dues via secure payment by credit card. If the NRHS does not have your email address, you should have by now received a letter in the mail to renew your dues. If you have received notification by either method, please renew your NRHS dues promptly. The NRHS is now in the Black due to great Leadership which has turned around this organization from dept ridden status. **If you do not renew by March 1 2016, You will be dropped from the Newsletter distribution list.**



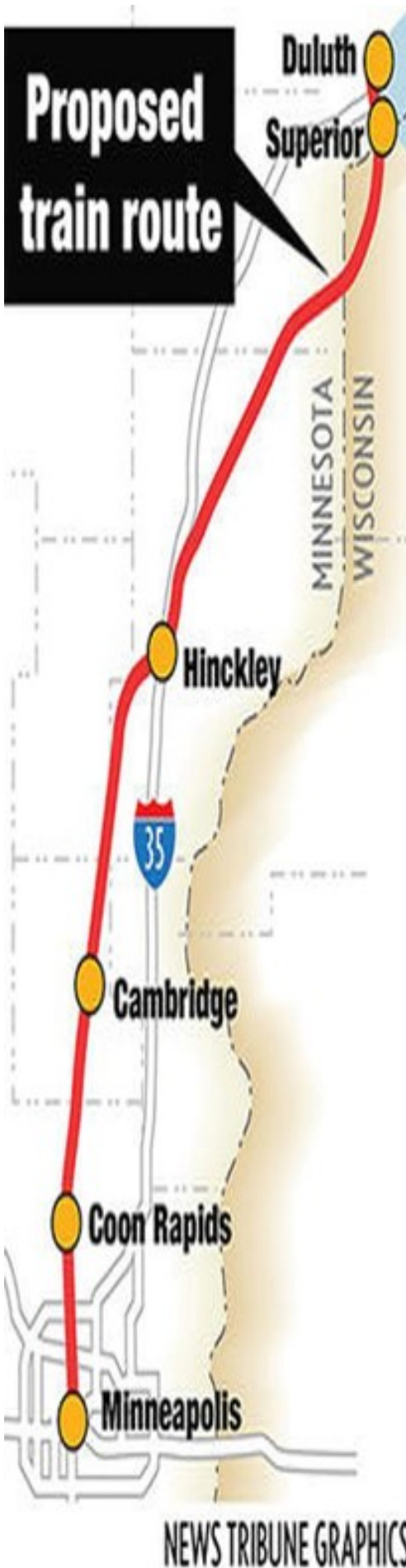
Pictures by John Hill
Minnesota Railroads Facebook Group

St Paul Ford Plant Trackage

From **John Hill** -Provided by John Goodman

December 23 at 12:43pm

A recent report said the trackage in the Ford yard was being taken up. When I stopped by Cleveland Ave today I saw much the same sight as in weeks past. Many of the switches have been taken up whole (for reuse?) from one of the yard ladders, but the other yard ladder is still intact. The body tracks on this end of the yard also still look mostly intact. It may be that some salvage work has begun on the other end toward Ford Parkway but I did not look over there.



Northern Lights Express passenger train back on track?

By [John Lundy](#) on Dec 16, 2015 Duluth News Tribune -Provided by Rick Krenske.

Duluth, Minnesota <http://www.duluthnewstribune.com>

Northern Lights Express passenger train back on track? Duluth Minnesota 424 W. First St. 55802

In a little more than four years from now, state-of-the-art passenger trains could be traveling between the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities four times a day, bringing riders to Target Field Station in 2½ hours for a fare of between \$30 and \$32.

That was the vision presented on Wednesday as advocates for passenger rail presented a scaled-down version of the sidetracked and long-dreamed-of Northern Lights Express rail connection.

"I'm pleased to say that I've moved from cautiously to enthusiastically optimistic," said St. Louis County Commissioner Steve Raukar, the chairman of the NLX Passenger Rail Alliance, during a news conference at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in the Depot.

The primary reason: a reduced price tag, from an estimated \$1 billion in 2009 to between \$500 million to \$600 million today, according to Frank Loetterie, project manager in the passenger rail office for the Minnesota Department of Transportation, which is now the project's lead agency.

In an interview, Loetterie said the savings can be achieved by two alterations to the original plan: reducing the top speed from 110 mph to 90 mph and cutting the number of daily round trips from eight to four.

"When we're operating at 110 mph we need our own track; we can't share it with a freight train," Loetterie said. "The original plan included the construction of a parallel track over 50 miles between Isanti and Hinckley."

The 90 mph top speed would produce an average, with stops factored in, of 60 mph and roughly match driving time, he said.

Also, fewer routes means passing tracks won't have to be constructed for areas where passenger trains would meet or where passenger trains would meet freight trains, Loetterie said. The existing sidings will be adequate.

The NLX would travel on BNSF tracks, and the next step will be talks with the rail company, Loetterie said.

"Northstar (Commuter line) operates on BNSF Railway, and they operate on time," he said. "BNSF Railway operates passenger trains in Chicago, and in the Pacific Northwest, and those trains operate on time. So I have no discomfort working with BNSF."

That will be followed by the creation of a financial plan, Loetterie said. He anticipates at least 80 percent of the project will be federally funded.

"And we view this as a state project," Loetterie said. "We don't plan on coming to the local governments with our hand out."

The projected timeline announced on Wednesday has passenger service starting in early 2020 "if funding is available in a timely manner." The fare of around \$30-\$32 would cover 75 percent of the operating cost, Loetterie said. But his analysis projects up to a million riders in 20 years, which "would bring the operating subsidy down to very minimal."

Restoring passenger rail service to the Northland has been a hope ever since Amtrak pulled out in 1985, Raukar said. Plans began to solidify with formation of the NLX Passenger Rail Alliance in 2007.

Wednesday's news conference started about 20 minutes late because, ironically, of transportation issues. Most of those presenting the plan had attended a rail alliance meeting in the Twin Cities earlier in the day, and their travel to Duluth was slowed by Wednesday's sloppy weather conditions.

"Having just driven over 200 miles in rather inclement weather I can only say: What a great day to have a train," Raukar commented.



Gary Rumler as a Union Pacific and longtime C&NW Engineer (Current Chapter Board Member) was privileged to operate UP #3985 upon Visits to the Twin Cities in 2002 and 2007. The following pictures showing him with famous UP Challenger #3985.



BNSF Open to Bid for NS to Challenge CP's Offer

Provided by John Goodman

all_aboard@yahoo.com Date: Thursday, December 10, 2015, 11:35 PM

Buffett's BNSF Open to Bid for Norfolk Southern to Challenge CP's Offer -Bloomberg by Thomas Black

The railroad controlled by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. is open to making a competing bid for Norfolk Southern Corp., the target of a \$27 billion takeover effort by Canadian Pacific Railway Ltd.

While BNSF Railway Executive Chairman Matt Rose doesn't favor more North American rail mergers, he said Thursday that the company won't sit on the sidelines in any fresh deal-making and could jump in to pursue Norfolk Southern.

A BNSF intervention would be akin to Union Pacific Corp.'s efforts to step in during the 1990s to "provide a competitive bid when the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe were merging," Rose said in a telephone interview. "If there is consolidation to be had, we would participate as well."

Rose's comments raised the prospect of another suitor for Norfolk Southern, which already has snubbed Canadian Pacific, as well as additional tie-ups in an industry already condensed by mergers during the 1980s and 1990s. CSX Corp., Norfolk Southern's larger rival in the eastern U.S., would be "very much in play" if Canadian Pacific succeeded with its effort, Rose said. Always More "We've never in this industry just done one merger," said Rose, 56, who became executive chairman in 2014 after serving as chief executive officer since 2002. "You do a merger and then somebody else announces it because of this issue of stabilization of the industry and parity in various markets." CSX rose 1.2 percent to \$25 at 6:50 p.m. in New York in extended trading, while Norfolk Southern gained 2.1 percent to \$89.56. Rose said the carriers' CEOs -- Mike Ward at CSX and Jim Squires of Norfolk Southern -- were aware that Fort Worth, Texas-based BNSF is circling. "I've had general conversations with both of them and told them that we're going to watch this with interest," Rose said. He described the discussions as centering on how regulators might view railroad consolidation, but otherwise declined to give details.

Norfolk Southern and Canadian Pacific spokesmen declined to comment on Rose's remarks. Messages left with Jacksonville, Florida-based CSX after regular business hours weren't immediately returned. Power Balance Canadian Pacific's proposed Norfolk Southern combination would create a transcontinental carrier, upsetting the balance of power in a North American industry dominated by six major operators: Norfolk Southern and CSX compete east of the Mississippi; Calgary-based Canadian Pacific vies with Canadian National Railway Co.; and BNSF goes head to head with Union Pacific in the western U.S. "I've always said that the industry would merge into the final round with one of two conditions," Rose said. One scenario would be a major railroad stumbling into financial trouble, Rose said. "Or two, due to population growth and the economy that we needed a significantly larger amount of railroad capacity, which we think would be a benefit of a consolidation. We're not at that point." 'Uneven, Unstable', but putting Canadian Pacific together with Norfolk Southern would leave CSX at a disadvantage, inevitably making that railroad a target as well, Rose said. Canadian Pacific sees \$1.8 billion in merger benefits from a Norfolk Southern deal, which "quite frankly creates an uneven, unstable railroad network with CSX," he said.

"Then you've got two railroads in the west that would be looking at, 'Should one of us jump in with the NS assets or should the other one jump in on the CSX assets?'" Rose said. Buffett completed his purchase of BNSF in 2010, a transaction valued at about \$34 billion that he described as a bet on the U.S. economy because of railroads' vital role in moving freight. If BNSF were to play a role in further industry consolidation, the company could bring considerable resources to bear. Omaha, Nebraska-based Berkshire had more than \$66 billion in cash at the end of the third quarter.

While there haven't been any combinations among major North American carriers in the 21st century, BNSF does "scenario planning every year," Rose said. "We've thought about it long and hard," Rose said. "I have the advantage also of having an owner who does these things as a steady diet. So he's very familiar with mergers and acquisitions."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-12-10/buffett-s-bnsf-open-to-bid-for-norfolk-to-challenge-cp-s-offer?cmpid=yahoo.headline>



Rebuild of 'California Zephyr' dome begins.

From the TRAINS Newswire: -from Rick Krenske

By [Steve Glischinski](#) | December 22, 2015

'Silver Club' undergoes restoration at The Friends of the 261 shop in Minneapolis. Friends of the 261 MINNEAPOLIS – The Friends of the 261 has begun a rebuild of former *California Zephyr* dome buffet/lounge dormitory *Silver Club* for the Lake Superior Railroad Museum of Duluth. Friends Chief Operating Officer Steve Sandberg says work began immediately after the car was delivered to the group's shop in Minneapolis last week. The Museum has contracted with the Friends to install new mechanical systems, a heating/air conditioning system, mount new windows in the dome, and put new wheels beneath the car. The Budd Co. built Burlington No. 250, the *Silver Club*, in 1948 for the famous *California Zephyr* streamliner as a dormitory-buffet-lounge. As built, No. 250 had two dormitory rooms, one for the food steward, and one for the "Zephyrette," who functioned as social directors, tour guides, babysitters, and nurses on the train. In the early 1960s the car was rebuilt by the Burlington, which installed the "Cable Car Room," a San Francisco themed lounge/food area under the dome. No. 250 was sold to Amtrak in 1971 and renumbered 9810; it was retired in October 1981. After passing through several owners, it was purchased by Dirk Lenthe of Fargo, N.D., who donated it to the Museum in 2011. Lake Superior Railroad Museum Executive Director Ken Buhler says the Friends will be working on new wiring for heating, and a two-system air conditioning unit (one for the dome, the other for the rest of the car) with dehumidifiers to keep the air conditioning from fogging up the dome. The wheels under the car now are loaners and will be replaced by new wheels being prepared for the car in Chicago, Buhler adds. All new dome windows have been cut and molded and will be installed in Minneapolis. After the Friends complete electrical, wheel and other work, the car will be returned to Duluth for interior work. The car has essentially been gutted, so the Museum will have to design and install an all-new interior. BNSF Railway has donated many parts for the interior of the car from its stores in Topeka, Kan., such as toilets, seats, chairs, tables, couches, cabinetry, and kitchen appliances. Buhler says the plan is to install a lounge on one end of the lower level, a kitchen/service area under the dome, and tables and chairs in the other end of the car. The dome will remain as it was in regular service with coach chairs for scenic viewing. Buhler says the car is on a "fast track" for completion, but no date has been set for finishing the work. When complete, the car will be used on the museum's 26-mile North Shore Scenic Railroad between Duluth and Two Harbors.

Amtrak sees big drop in riders through Twin Cities.

From: "Rick Krenske Mon, Dec 28, 2015 at 8:36 am

Revenue in Twin Cities, state is down substantially, in part due to delays caused by oil trains from N.D.



By David Peterson Star Tribune MARLIN LEVISON, Star Tribune. Amtrak passengers have faced chronic delays for the past several months while track repairs were made on the Empire Builder route that connects the Midwest to the Pacific Northwest. Amtrak's Empire Builder passenger rail service, which passes through the Twin Cities, suffered the biggest drop in ticket revenue this year of any of the 15 major lines on its national network. The \$4 million setback accounted for a large share of the \$13 million drop collectively among the national lines, including such iconic services as the City of New Orleans. Cheaper gas is partly to blame, having hurt public transportation of all kinds in recent years. But the Empire Builder has suffered as well from delays caused by trains serving the oil boom in North Dakota. "We've had some tough operating years," said Marc Magliari, Amtrak regional spokesman in Chicago. "There was a lot of freight congestion in 2013, 2014. "We've started to see improvements, but our on-time performance is still not what we'd like it to be, though it's better than it was." The boom in the western North Dakota oil patch should have boosted the numbers; and indeed, Minot and Williston, N.D., have been second only to Chicago as origins and destinations for Minnesota riders. But ridership along the Minnesota and Twin Cities portion of the line has been off substantially.

Since 2008, a year of severe spikes in gas prices, Minnesota ridership has fallen from nearly 200,000 to 136,000 in 2014. In the Twin Cities alone, ridership dropped from 138,000 to 90,000 during that same period, even as hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in a highly praised renovation of Union Depot in downtown St. Paul. Overall, Amtrak ridership dipped slightly this year, from 30.92 million passengers in fiscal 2014 to 30.88 million in fiscal 2015. The Empire Builder's ridership, however, fell by 3 percent in the same period, down to 438,000 passengers, according to an internal spreadsheet provided to the Star Tribune by Amtrak officials. That was the seventh fastest drop among the 15 lines on the national network. Ticket revenue was down by \$4 million, to \$50.5 million, the biggest drop in dollar terms among the 15 lines. The percentage drop, 7.3 percent, was the third largest. Amtrak, however, believes it's recovering, Magliari said. "We had strong gains in the last few months of the fiscal year as we had a more reliable, better product, and we expect to improve even more," he said.

LIGHT-RAIL TRAGEDIES RAISE SAFETY ALARMS

By Frederick Melo fmelo@pioneerpress.com

Provided by Rick Krenske



Two fatal accidents this month on Twin Cities light-rail lines have Metropolitan Council officials promising a thorough safety review of the system.

Though some chalk up the incidents to tragic coincidence, they might play a role in the debate over expanding mass transit.

Despite employing three types of braking systems, a 40-ton train car needs dozens of feet of room to stop.

Because of this, light-rail operators and transit advocates around the country say the best precautions still are common courtesy and common sense.

"I was talking to an operator who had one of these (fatal pedestrian crashes) happen years and years ago, and it's not one of these things you ever forget," said Metro Transit spokesman Howie Padilla. "We need people to heed the warning devices in places where there's cross-arms, there's bells, there's lights. All of those things are there for a reason."

Nurto Abdi Aden, 67, was killed the morning of Dec. 10 in a Green Line collision by St. Paul's Hamline Station. Bicyclist Jason Michael McCormick, 29, died the next day after being struck by a Blue Line train near 46th Street and Hiawatha Avenue in Minneapolis.

Nicholas John Chapman, 25, of St. Paul was hospitalized in critical condition following a Dec. 4 collision with the Green Line at Snelling and University avenues. All three incidents occurred during daytime.

Two other individuals suffered injuries that weren't life-threatening Monday in separate crashes in South Minneapolis: Michael Lawrence Klever, 39, was hit by a Blue Line train near the 46th Street Station, and a 16-year old female was struck by the Blue Line at 50th Street.

"I have asked for, and Metro Transit has already begun, a comprehensive review of our safety procedures and equipment on our light-rail lines," said Met Council Chairman Adam Duinink, in a written statement following the December fatalities. "I have also asked our staff to review any additional communications and outreach efforts we can undertake to amplify the message that safety is a shared responsibility."

RANGE OF ACCIDENTS

There have been three fatalities involving the Green Line since the St. Paul-to-Minneapolis service made its debut in June 2014.

There have been 12 fatal collisions since the start of the Minneapolis-to-Bloomington Blue Line service in June 2004.

Damian Goebel, a spokesman for St. Paul Smart Trips, a transit advocacy group, said the number of recent fatal accidents and serious-injury collisions appears to be a coincidence.

"We do believe that there could be safety improvements made to the regional light-rail system, especially along the Green Line," Goebel said. "But from the reports we've seen it seems like the issues were as much about people making bad choices as they were infrastructure. Frankly, the reason this is even being discussed is because it happens so rarely, which makes it newsworthy."

In little more than a year, the Green Line, which runs down the center of University Avenue, has registered 59 crashes of all types, from pedestrian to vehicle collisions.

The Blue Line, which is separated from traffic by crossing arms along Hiawatha Avenue in Minneapolis, has registered 107 crashes over the course of more than a decade.

Those crashes have run a wide gamut. They include drivers zipping in front of crossing arms to pedestrians walking along the tracks.

In November 2014, a St. Paul police officer in a squad car was knocked unconscious after turning in front of a Green Line train.

As light-rail technology has evolved internationally, track based transit has gotten quieter — a boon to neighbors trying to get some shut-eye but a potential safety concern for pedestrians.

Transit agencies have compensated by instituting flashing signals, warning bells and horns as trains approach station stops.

'SAFETY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY'

When it comes to safety, track layout, location and passenger access matter as does familiarity with the system.

Some cities, for instance, have experienced fewer crashes and pedestrian fatalities with time, a sign that education and exposure have taught the locals to watch for the train.

Metro Transit officials have said that normal safety systems such as horns, brakes and flashing train signage appeared to be working in all five of the recent collisions, but they've promised a closer inspection of the safety system.

Metro Transit's review in the wake of this month's fatalities will include looking at best practices around the country, Padilla said, but it's up to passengers and drivers to stay alert.

In the Twin Cities, the latest accidents come as Met Council officials and elected leaders across Ramsey and Hennepin counties press for local and federal funding, municipal consent or public support to expand the passenger rail.

The Met Council plans to build the \$1.77 billion Southwest Line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie, an extension of the Green Line, and the \$1.5 billion Bottineau Line from Minneapolis to Brooklyn Park, an extension of the Blue Line.

Members of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority are still studying possible transit connections from downtown St. Paul to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and a light-rail link with a spur into a planned neighborhood at the site of the former Ford Plant in Highland Park remains a possibility.



**CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY**



Canadian Pacific modifies Minnesota hump yard to handle longer trains

December 1, 2015 9:19 AM, provided by "Robert Moen"

Over the past several months, crews have completed many sitework tasks for the track extensions at CP's St. Paul yard, such as a number of earth-moving maneuvers.

By Jeff Stagl, Managing Editor

The last hump yard in [Canadian Pacific's](#) network is about to gain new infrastructure aimed at improving efficiency. In November, crews will begin laying rail and installing ties to extend six receiving tracks eastward from the yard in St. Paul, Minn.

Extending the tracks from 6,100 or 7,400 feet to about 10,000 feet will enable inbound trains to be staged in the yard on a single track, reducing or eliminating the need for car switching. The longer tracks also will match the length of network sidings to the west, helping support an ongoing effort to lengthen trains, says CP spokesman Andy Cummings.

"We're working to get the most out of our equipment and infrastructure, and longer trains help us do that," he says. "To run longer trains, we need longer tracks on which to build and meet them."

A combo deal Over the course of this year, CP has focused on lengthening nine sidings to 10,000 feet or longer on a mainline between the Twin Cities and the Canadian border at Portal, N.D. Combined, the longer sidings and yard tracks will add capacity to help make the railroad more efficient and business-growth oriented, says Cummings.

The project calls for installing about 36,000 feet of 136-pound continuous-welded rail, 9,100 wood ties and several No. 11 turnouts. Work is slated for completion by year's end. St. Paul Yard features 36 classification tracks and nine departure tracks in addition to the receiving tracks. The facility averages about 1,500 humped cars per day. Yard workers build manifest trains for various destinations in western Canada, such as Coquitlam, British Columbia; Moose Jaw and Sutherland, Saskatchewan; and Edmonton, Alberta. In addition, trains are built to head east to Bensenville, Ill., the [Belt Railway Co. of Chicago's](#) yard and Kansas City, Mo.

"[The yard] is also key to making connections between mainline trains and customers in Minnesota and Wisconsin," says Cummings.

Notable nuance to railroad's project The extensions to the receiving tracks — which are bounded by Pigs Eye Lake to the west, and a trunk highway and tracks owned by [BNSF Railway Co.](#) to the east — are the most significant change to the yard since the hump was installed in the 1950s, he says. The St. Paul facility is CP's last hump yard. The Class I has closed a number of them the past three years, including hump yards in Bensenville; Toronto; Calgary, Alberta; and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In 2012, Chief Executive Officer E. Hunter Harrison headed a review of how manifest trains were built at hump yards. The analysis found that the yards — which opened in the 1950s and 1960s — were more vital many years ago, when the Class I's traffic mix was different, and virtually all rail cars needed to be switched and classified.

Now, CP mostly moves unit trains of various commodities — including coal, grain, sulphur, potash and some merchandise — that don't require switching. The railroad currently switches 25 percent to 30 percent of all cars versus 80 percent-plus 50 years ago.

Since he believed CP's infrastructure was out of date, Harrison set in motion the yard-closing plan to not only cut costs, but help boost the railroad's competitiveness by making the network faster and more efficient.



Empire Builder schedule change January 11 -provided by Rick Krenske

Saturday, December 5, 2015 6:44 AM

Effective January 11, 2016, the Westbound Empire Builder will see some minor changes from St. Paul to Rugby inclusive.

The biggest change is eastbound when Amtrak has finally (somewhat) acknowledged that there is too much fat in west end of the schedule; this padding will be moved to Minot. Train 8 will depart 10 minutes earlier from Spokane to Cut Bank inclusive, and 25 minutes earlier from Shelby to Stanley inclusive. The times for St. Paul also change slightly. This is at least a start, but the train still spends way too much time in Spokane. Evidently the reason Amtrak wants all the station time in Spokane is for the very few times the train has private cars that are inbound from Seattle and need to be switched to the rear of the Portland cars when the Seattle and Portland sections are combined.

Now that the trackwork is done, including being a mostly two main track (or alternate main) railroad from the Twin Cities to Williston (and that El Nino is providing moderate December weather), that there is a lot of fat in the schedule both ways is highly evident.

--Mark Meyer



Union Pacific: As profits sink and furloughs rise, it's uncertain times ahead for the railroad

By Russell Hubbard / World-Herald staff writer | Posted: Wednesday, October 28, 2015

After a third straight quarter of falling rail shipments, Omaha-based Union Pacific Corp. said Thursday it continues to keep a sharp eye on expenses and payrolls. Chief Executive Lance Fritz told The World-Herald the company is being “constantly diligent” in reviewing the people and assets it employs to haul finished goods and raw materials on its 32,000 miles of track in the western United States. The company, the nation’s second-largest freight railroad, employs about 8,000 Nebraskans.

“We are concerned about the U.S. economy,” Fritz said, speaking after Union Pacific reported third-quarter freight volumes that fell 6 percent and profit that dropped 5 percent. “Consumers are saying they are optimistic and buying new vehicles like they are optimistic, but we don’t see it showing up in retail sales.”

Worries about the economy translate into worries about Union Pacific, which ships the stuff the world manufactures and consumes, from beer to lumber.

Quarterly freight volumes have fallen for three straight quarters, the first such run since late 2012 and early 2013. The company this year has placed 2,700 union workers on temporary layoff and has said it plans to eliminate several hundred management jobs.

It also will likely cut 2016 capital spending. “We still have some work left to do,” said Union Pacific Vice President of Operations Cameron Scott, speaking of controlling costs on a conference call Thursday with investors and analysts.

Concern is mounting because Union Pacific on Thursday reported that third-quarter net income fell to \$1.3 billion, or \$1.50 a share, from \$1.37 billion, or \$1.53 a share, a year earlier. The earnings per share beat the average Wall Street analyst estimate of \$1.43. Revenue dropped 10 percent to \$5.6 billion. Despite the worry on declining shipments, investors rushed into Union Pacific stock on Thursday.

Shares of Union Pacific rose 3.85 percent on the day, or \$3.60, to close at \$97.01 each on the New York Stock Exchange. The shares had fallen around 18 percent so far this year through Wednesday, the day before the third-quarter earnings were released.

Shipments of vehicles and vehicle parts were the only bright spot, rising 5 percent. Volume in ag products and chemicals, such as fertilizer, declined 3 percent. Intermodal shipments, or those traveling by ship, rail and truck, dropped 4 percent. Coal volumes led the shipment declines, down 15 percent in the quarter, as U.S. utilities increasingly shift to cheaper natural gas.

Shipments of industrial products such as lumber were down 12 percent. “The housing market is showing weakness again, and is always bad news for shipments of raw materials and lumber,” said Joseph Schwieterman, a transportation professor at DePaul University in Chicago.

Crude oil volumes tumbled 40 percent as persistently low petroleum prices put a damper on production from the fields in the northern regions of the country not well-served by pipelines. Operating expenses fell 13 percent to \$3.4 billion.

Union Pacific said Thursday that about 2,700 hourly workers on trains, engines and yards are on temporary layoff, up from 2,300 in September and 900 early in the year. Almost 1,000 locomotives have been placed in storage, up about 140 units from the second quarter. Overall, the company employs about 48,000 people. “This is about what I expected,” said Logan Purk, a transportation industry analyst at wealth adviser Edward Jones. “Tough sales and volume numbers, but solid cost control.”

Purk said “sluggish” U.S. growth makes it unlikely Union Pacific or any of the other six Class I railroads will be amping up hiring and revving up mothballed locomotives anytime soon. “They will continue to realign assets, whether that’s storing more locomotives or furloughing employees,” Purk said. “As long as volumes keep trending the way they are, this will continue to be the case.”

Union Pacific, which trails only rival BNSF Railway in ton-miles, said the negative trends are darkening the outlook for capital spending and profits. The company is unlikely to match last year’s record earnings per share of \$5.75 and this year’s record capital spending budget of \$4.2 billion, Chief Financial Officer Rob Knight said on the conference call.

“From an absolute-dollar perspective, we expect it to be somewhat less,” Knight said of the capital budget.

CEO Fritz told analysts and investors he expects Congress will vote to extend the deadline on when railroads must be compliant with an automated train control system that can prevent some accidents using track sensors and remote controls.

None of the railroads are close to meeting the 2015 deadline, and regulators have threatened fines starting next year.

If no relief comes, Fritz said Union Pacific will have no choice but to stop taking some cargoes, such as chlorine used to purify drinking water.

He would also expect interruptions of passenger service on the rail systems that use Union Pacific rails in major metro areas such as Chicago, where 300,000 commuters take the train to work.

“Both would be bad for the U.S. economy,” Fritz said.



Union Station Washington DC overhaul doesn't happen until H Street Bridge is rebuilt

from John Goodman Dec 15, 2015 by Michael Neibauer Washington Business Journal

The redevelopment of Union Station — inside, outside and above — cannot get underway until the District tackles its one major job, the reconstruction of the H Street Bridge.

The H Street, or Hopscotch, bridge carries vehicles (not streetcars, yet) over First and Second streets NE, 28 rail tracks and two Metro tracks. It is the primary access point to the Union Station parking garage and bus deck, and provides commercial truck access to adjacent commercial development.

Building a new bridge, one strong enough to support future development in all directions, is an immense undertaking, and Union Station's second century plan is at a standstill until it's done. The two together "will substantially transform Union Station as a transportation hub, not just in the region, but arguably on the eastern seaboard," D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson said Wednesday during an oversight hearing on Mayor Muriel Bowser's commitment to the overall project.

Brian Kenner, deputy mayor for planning and economic development, said Bowser is committed to the project and will be a "strong partner" going forward, though the District does not own the ground or the air on which these projects will take place.

The preliminary design for the new bridge should be complete by 2017, Kenner said, though that "goal" is dependent on Amtrak promptly submitting its preliminary track realignment requirements, so that D.C. knows where to put the new bridge supports. There are also federal environmental reviews that typically take "three to seven years with complex infrastructure projects like this one," the deputy mayor said.

Amtrak expects to submit its preliminary design for the track reconfiguration by the end of 2015, Rina Cutler, Amtrak's senior director for major station planning and development, told the council. Amtrak has \$20 million in hand for initial work, she said, and is currently seeking an additional \$25 million.

"Projects of this size are complicated and messy and timelines don't ever line up the way we expect them to," Cutler said.

Council members said they expect the bridge work to be complete by 2019 — two years later than they had originally hoped. That's why, in the recently adopted D.C. budget, they invested \$200 million in the project, with \$20 million coming in both fiscal 2015 and 2016, and \$80 million each in 2018 and 2019.

Setting 2019 as the goal may be "aggressive," Mendelson acknowledged, but if the council were to say 2020, then the bridge completion would slip to 2020.

The proposed \$8.3 billion, three-phase Union Station redevelopment will expand capacity and regional connectivity with platform improvements, new lower and central concourses, new taxi and bus access, larger entrances and exits, new parking and a new train hall. The overall plan also includes Burnham Place, Akridge's 3 million-square-foot development of the air rights atop the existing Union Station rail yard.

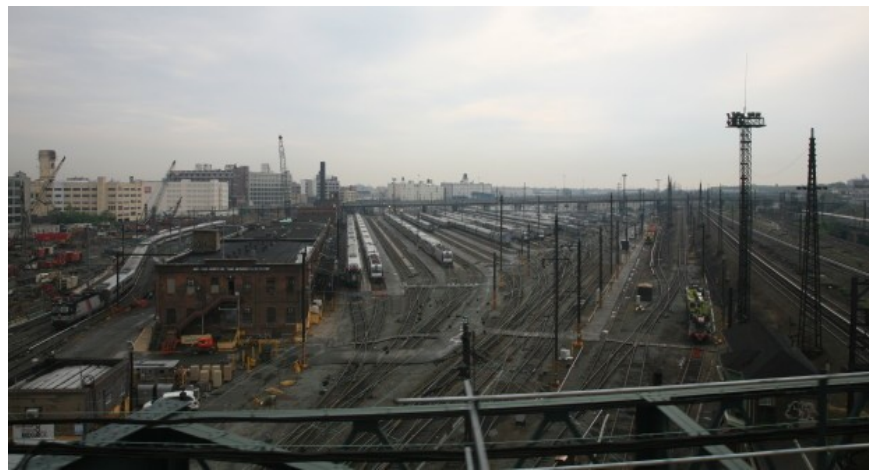
"We closed on our project in 2006. We bid in 2002," said David Tuchmann, Akridge's vice president of development and Burnham Place project manager. "We're looking at about 20 years from start to finish before a shovel can be in the ground in a part of our project. That's not an ideal timeframe. But the past is the past."

Beverly Swaim-Staley *, president and CEO of the Union Station Redevelopment Corp., told the council that the USRC has completed a historic preservation plan and an existing conditions study, and is working with architects Beyer Blinder Belle and Grimshaw to craft a master development plan.

"We are working now to make sure all of these pieces fit together," Swaim-Staley said.

* Former Maryland Secy Transportation under Gov. O'Malley. Michael Neibauer covers economic development, chambers of commerce, transportation and politics.

Sunnyside Yards: NYCFC's Dream Stadium Location? From John Goodman



by **BILL REESE**

Since the franchise was first announced, fans and pundits have speculated on dozens of properties where a soccer-specific stadium for New York City FC could be built. [Empire of Soccer listed 10 potential sites in 2013](#), and analyzed two additional sites in [the Bronx](#) and [Westchester](#) after that. As the calendar turns to 2016, the club is—at least publicly—no closer to a soccer-specific stadium than they were when the \$100 million expansion fee check cleared in 2013. However, EoS has learned that city and state agencies are currently investigating the potential of developing a massive piece of land in Sunnyside, Queens — vast enough to fit new city parks, thousands of units of affordable housing, a new convention center, or, perhaps, a soccer-specific stadium.

This piece of land is, in many ways, the “final frontier” of New York City’s real estate boom. In a city with shockingly few stadium-sized parcels of land available to build upon—this could become NYCFC’s last best shot of getting everything they want from a home field. The site in question is the Sunnyside Yards; a massive expanse of railroad tracks, train depots, and switches nestled between the neighborhoods of Sunnyside to the south and Long Island City to the north and west. It encompasses 192 acres and stretches from the mouth of the Long Island Railroad and Amtrak tunnels nearly halfway to the neighborhood of Woodside.

It is one of, if not the largest, undeveloped pieces of land in the entire city and it has been coveted for years by city officials and developers alike.

Sunnyside dwarfs similar NYC redevelopment projects where platforms were built above active rail yards, with large buildings later constructed atop those platforms. The West Side Yard near Penn Station was to be the site of the 2012 Olympic Stadium and later the home of the New York Jets before the proposal was defeated on the state level and the Olympics were awarded to London. A massive development project called Hudson Yards was approved and is now rising on that site. After years of community opposition and the use of eminent domain, the Vanderbilt Yard in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn was decked over and the Barclays Center—home of the Brooklyn Nets and now the New York Islanders—was built atop that platform. After years of delays, other residential and commercial structures are now atop other sections of the Vanderbilt rail yard.

The Barclays Center and Hudson Yards developments have provided the city with case studies in what to do with the Sunnyside Yards. Both were met by massive community opposition, and both took more than a decade to come to fruition. Both were—at least from the start—centered around a sports facility as their anchor tenant. Both were also approved in the pre-recession real estate boom of the mid-aughts and both had several brushes with death before they got off the ground.

The Sunnyside Yards could become just about anything, which is the site’s blessing and curse. The de Blasio administration, while championing a populist message, has been painfully impotent in imposing a meaningful affordable housing policy in a city festooned with cranes putting up luxury high-rise after luxury high-rise. Because Sunnyside is so big, and because there are so many power brokers at the table, there are dozens of proposals about what to do with the site. Mayor de Blasio unsurprisingly came out in favor of building affordable housing over the Sunnyside Yards, but others have called for constructing a brand new convention center to replace the Jacob Javits Center on Manhattan’s West Side. Local politicians have called for more open space and parks to be placed on the site.

If a current study by New York State determines that decking over the Sunnyside Yards is feasible, then the location should become an incredibly attractive option not just for a NYCFC stadium for City Football Group, but also for Shiekh Mansour and his government’s investment arm, The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. The ADIA, on which Mansour sits on the Board of Directors, has moved to diversify its holdings in the last decade, not solely relying on the fluctuations of the global energy market. They have invested heavily in sports teams, cultural institutions, and real estate around the world, especially in New York City. The price of oil goes up and down, but New York City real estate will always be a sound investment.

City Football Group, in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, could put together a master plan for Sunnyside similar to what the Riverbend Project tried to do in Harrison. They could use a NYCFC Stadium by itself, or in conjunction with a new Javits Center, to be the centerpiece of a massive mixed-use development. Unlike the Hudson Yards development on the far west side of Manhattan, Long Island City has never been hotter, and the transit options already exist in abundance.



Most Bakken rail projects completed -provided by John Goodman

Posted by: VerMontanan@aol.com vermontanan Date: Fri Dec 11, 2015

In spite of the drop in coal and crude oil traffic, BNSF continued with its 2015 infrastructure enhancement program, and as the year draws to a close, it appears that most of the work has indeed been completed. Here are many (not all) of the projects completed by the first week of December:

On the Staples subdivision (the joint GN-NP line between Northtown and Sauk Rapids and the ex-NP main line beyond to Dilworth), the double track that was removed in the 1980s between Big Lake and Becker has been restored. The single main track segment previously between Gregory and Staples now has two main tracks between Little Falls and Darling and Philbrook and Staples. The rest of the subdivision which was double track (signaled for operation in only one direction) is now two main track CTC. Numerous high-speed crossovers were added to increase fluidity. (Double track is good if all the trains are going the same speed or if trains have cabooses. But with everything from coal trains to passenger trains, it's difficult to maintain priorities with standard double track).

On the ex-NP main line west of junction of the New Rockford (KO) subdivision west of Casselton, the short section of double track to Magnolia is now 2 MT CTC (instead of directional double track). West of there, all the way to Jones Jct., Montana (Huntley) the NP was and BNSF was until recent improvements single track ABS, except for directional double track through Jamestown and CTC from Forsyth to Hysham. Now, CTC extends from the end of two main tracks at Magnolia to Windsor (and it's 2 MT CTC through Jamestown). From Windsor to Bismarck (except for control points with CTC at the Menard's warehouse facility), the line remains single track ABS. It is CTC through Bismarck to Mandan. The actual start of the CTC is a control point named "Great River" in east Bismarck where the "new" junction to the Dakota, Missouri Valley and Western (ex-Soo Line) was built. At this point, lignite coal trains off the DMV&W enter BNSF and run on BNSF to Spiritwood (with DMV&W power).

The Zap subdivision (former branch to Killdeer, now terminating at Beulah) now has two sidings that can accommodate long trains: Sanger and Hazen. This branch can be busy hosting trains for the Leland Olds power plant at Glenharold, the grain shuttle facility at Hensler, and a unit crude facility at Republic, outside of Beulah. Plus the tri-weekly local to and from Mandan and the roadswitcher at Beulah working local industries there (and there are lots).

West of Mandan is single track ABS to Dengate with a CTC island at the new siding at Judson. Dengate to Fryburg is CTC; Fryburg to Beaver Hill is ABS; Beaver Hill to Iona is CTC; Iona through Glendive to Yellowstone (a new siding near Fallon) is ABS. Then it's CTC from Yellowstone to Blatchford, ABS Blatchford to Rosebud (just east of Forsyth), then CTC from Rosebud to Big Horn, and ABS still from Big Horn to the beginning of CTC at Jones Jct. Additionally, extra yard tracks able to hold long trains were built at Forsyth and Glendive. In addition to the crude oil facility at Republic on the Zap line, there are such loadouts at Eland and Fryburg on the main line. Rock (not ballast) trains originating at Fisher (Glendive) and Richards Spur (Detroit Lakes) were frequent this past year and terminated at Dickinson, Mandan, Jamestown, and Fargo. CTC work to fill in some of the gaps between Windsor and Jones Jct. is ongoing, so the actual segments with CTC may have changed.

On ex-GN trackage, probably the least-known upgrades have occurred on the line from north of Crookston to the Canadian border at Noyes (Noyes subdivision). The junction between the Noyes subdivision and the ex-GN line from Grand Forks to Superior via Cass Lake is now CTC at the wye switches (otherwise the approaches are TWC/dark territory). On the Noyes sub, new long sidings have been built at Maverick (between Argyle and Stephen) and at Chatham (between Kennedy and Hallock). Chatham is a CTC island (power switches). An additional long track was built at Noyes to accommodate interchange with CN. All this was to expand capacity on BNSF's major north-south route in the area (Winnipeg-Grand Forks-Fargo-Willmar-Sioux City-Lincoln-Kansas City). Further south, BNSF has added power switches at Benson (on both legs of the wye) to speed trains to and from the former branch to Watertown and Huron, SD. Primarily, this is traffic to/from the ex-Milwaukee Road main line now operated by BNSF west of Appleton, MN. (In addition to grain destined to the Midwest and East routed through Benson from Aberdeen, BNSF also frequently routes shuttle grain trains from South Dakota east to Benson, then north to Fargo and the Northern Transcontinental route to the west coast; hence the need to CTC both legs of the wye.) The "Willmar Wye" project at the west end of Willmar (to move trains, basically, operating between Benson and west and Garretson and south without entering Willmar Yard) is still in the works, but this year received partial funding through a TIGER grant which gets it close to the \$50 million price tag. So far, no announcement has been made on its construction. BNSF is also adding track in the Sioux City terminal to expedite traffic there.

In the who'da-thunk-it-eight-years-ago department, the ex-GN main line between Fargo, Grand Forks, and Minot (actually Surrey) via Devils Lake is now CTC. This line has been almost completely rebuilt with new rail, new ties, and a new signal system. Long sidings with power switches have been built/lengthened at Bison (just outside of Fargo), Grandin, Hillsboro, Buxton, Spirit (south of Thompson), Emerado, Michigan, Lakota, Devils Lake, Leeds, Rugby, and Towner. In order not to reset the grade crossing warning devices, the speed limit for the Empire Builder between Fargo and Grand Forks remains 70 MPH, but the Devils Lake line (Grand Forks to Surrey) is all 79 MPH. Not bad for a line that was given up for dead years ago as Devils Lake (the lake) was morphing into an inland sea. As impressive as all the new sidings and CTC are on this route, raising of the 20 or so miles of track between Churchs Ferry and Devils Lake to a point higher than the lake could ever be (before it naturally drains into the Sheyenne River at the Tolna Coulee) will always be the defining characteristic of these projects. The line between Moorhead/Fargo and Surrey/Minot via Grand Forks and Devils Lake is operated as an alternate main line with the New Rockford sub-division to the south, effectively creating a double track railroad on BNSF's Northern Transcontinental route. Through trains operate with a single crew from Dilworth to Minot. BNSF has even rebuilt the east leg of the wye at Churchs Ferry (once taken out of service due to rising Devils Lake) so that shuttle grain trains loaded at Bisbee (on the one-time branch to St. John, ND) can go either east or west when reaching the main line.

Minot has had numerous long inspection tracks added, and many intermodal trains have their inspections done on these tracks rather than in Havre.

Continued from page 11: The branch line from Berthold to Niobe and Northgate has been upgraded to handle six-axle locomotives and additional track has been built from Northgate, North Dakota to Northgate, Saskatchewan to handle a new logistics park which is already shipping grain (so far, two 100-car trains to Mexico) and eventually crude oil. This new line across the border allowed BNSF to claim service to its third Canadian province!

The Glasgow subdivision between Minot and Glasgow is, of course, the "Heart of the Bakken." Except for 1.2 miles of single track over the long Gassman Coulee bridge west of Minot, the entire railroad from Minot to Williston is 2 MT CTC. Additionally, controlled sidings remain (off one of the main tracks) at Berthold, Tagus, Blaisdell, Stanley, Ross, and Wheelock! High-speed crossovers offer even more fluidity. Crude oil loading locations are at Berthold, Stanley (actually on what's left of the Grenora line), Manitou, Tioga (west of town, not the Hess Plant), Epping (the biggest shipper in North Dakota), and Trenton. In spite of downturn in oil prices, a new facility at Palermo just received its first train this week, and should load out in the near future. On the ex-GN branch to Sidney, major crude loadout sites are at Dore and East Fairview (on remnants of the Watford City line; one could only image the business on this branch had it not been abandoned 30 years ago!!!). Unit sand trains are received regularly at Ross and Bainville.

Williston has had additional long yard tracks added to accommodate additional local traffic. West of Williston, the infrastructure did not change, except for in the vicinity of Glasgow: At Glasgow proper, the former hand-throw "South 1" track is now a second main line (in addition to the controlled siding), and east of town, a defunct name from GN days was revived when three long (about 9100 feet) staging tracks (controlled sidings) were added at Whatley (for oil traffic, though other trains are routinely parked there as needed).

Before the busting of the boom, additional capacity enhancements were planned (such as a second main from Williston to Snowden) in 2016. Given the changes in traffic, we'll have to see what, if anything, will be built. But after living through the "we want to get rid of everything 1980s" mindset on Burlington Northern, 2014 and 2015 were something to behold!

July 2015 Railfan trip to Montana Pictures by R Tubbesing and Roger Libra



BNSF EB Manifest W of Blossberg MT



MRL Helpers returning to Helena



BNSF EB empty coal just E of Mullen Tunnel



BNSF EB Grain at Bebe Siding South Dakota



Amtrak #7 WB W of Glasgow MT



BNSF EB Manifest McIntosh SD



BNSF WB Manifest at Frazee MN



BNSF EB empty coal W of Mullen Tunnel

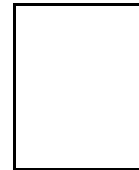


Amtrak #7 Gassman Coulee Trestle ND

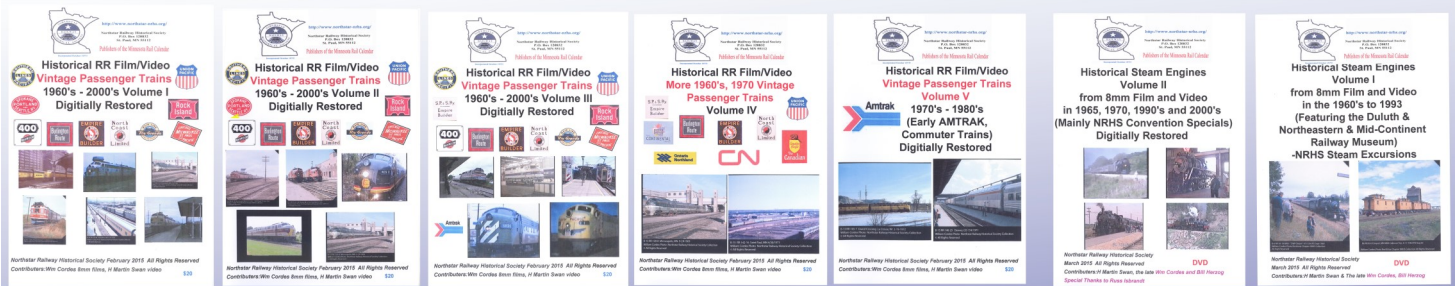
Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Cy Svobodny, Russ Isbrandt)

Twin Cities Model Railroad Club Night Trains	Every Saturday Nite November 7th 2015 to February 27 2016 6 PM—9 PM	Bandana Square 1021 Bandana Blvd E Suite 222 St Paul MN	\$10 Children under 4 free
Twin City Division NMRA Meeting CD Layout Project -- Base Scenery: Shell, Plaster, Cardboard strips. Contest: Container or Piggyback	January 14 2016 7PM	Jackson Street Roundhouse 193 Pennsylvania Avenue East, St Paul, Minnesota. 7PM	
Newport Model RR Club Train Show & Sale	Saturday January 15 9pm-2PM	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Dr Woodbury MN 55119	\$7 admission
25th Annual La Crosse Great Tri-State Rail Sale	Saturday January 30th 2016 9AM –3PM	La Crosse Center, 2nd & Pearl Streets, La Crosse, Wisconsin	\$5 or \$7 ??
Greater Upper Midwest Train Show & Sale	February 6 2016 and April 2 2016 9AM—2PM	Century College West Campus 3300 Century Ave N White Bear Lake MN	\$5 or \$7 ??
World's Greatest Hobby On Tour	February 6,7 2016 Sat 10AM—6PM Sun 10AM—5PM	St Paul River Centre, 175 West Kellogg Boulevard, St Paul, Minnesota	\$10 ??
Railroad Modeler's Retreat	February 26, 27 2016 Friday 6PM—10PM Saturday 9AM—4PM	Mount Olivet Lutheran Church of Plymouth 12235 Old Rockford Road, Plymouth, Minnesota	Admission ??
Granite City Train Show	April 9 2015 10AM—3PM	National Guard Armory, 1710 Veteran's Drive, St Cloud, Minnesota	\$5??

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Also, the 2016 Minnesota Rail Calendar is Still Available. Supplies are limited, so hurry before we run out of stock.