Volume 49 #5 Northstar Railway Historical Society May 2018

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

# Northstar News

## *Greening up, it is Finally Spring!*

L: BN EB University Jct with GE B-unit July 1986

R: BN EB Coal Westminster Hill St Paul July 1986

Bob Ball Photos

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## Meeting Notice

Next business meeting will be held on **Saturday May 19th 2018, 6:30 pm**, at Roseville Lutheran Church at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, midway between Lexington and Hamline Avenues in Roseville. See map on age 2.
Program after the meeting – Russ Isbrandt films: There are Amtrak 1977 - 1979 including the throat of Chicago Union Station, trips to Duluth on the Arrowhead and Winona, Mainline Steam in 77 and 78 before the lawyers and bean counters spoiled things. Big engines, big trains and fast running. and filler to be determined.
There will be a pre-meeting get-together May 19th 2018 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. Next newsletter will be out around July 1 2018.

**Saturday June 16 2018, Our Light Rail Train ride schedule:**
**Blue Line, 28th Ave, Bloomington departure for Target Field:**
**10:16 AM or 10:26 AM Arrive Target Field 10:54am or 11:04am.**

**Northstar Train Leaves Target Field 11:30am and arrives at Big Lake 12:22PM (Lunch on your own here)**
**Northstar Train Leaves Big Lake 12:54pm and arrives Target Field 1:42pm.**

**Option… Return to Bloomington 28th station, Blue line train Departs 2:16 pm or 2:26pm arrive Bloominton 2:57pm or 3:07pm (trains operate on 10 minute headways)**
**Option… Green line Target Field to SPUD departs 2:07pm arrives at SPUD at 2:56pm, Return to US Bank Stadium to catch the Blue line to return to Bloominton Departs SPUD 3:12 or 3:22pm arrives at US Bank Stadium 3:49 or 3:59pm.**

## Northstar Chapter Officers

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| **Vice President** | **William Dredge** | williamdredge@yahoo.com | 952-937-1313 |
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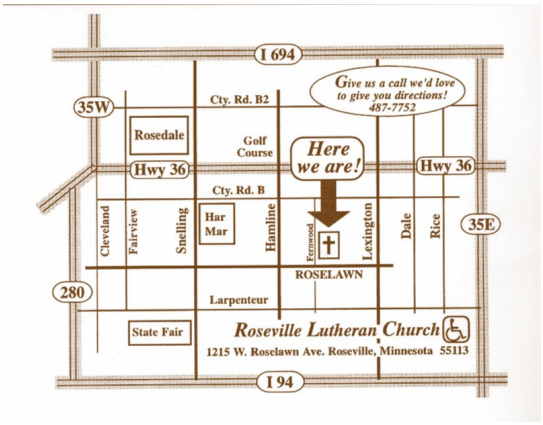
Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the church and turn left through the commons area. We'll be in room 40, The Diamond Room.




*From the Editor*:

The program at the last meeting of slides of Dave Herbert's work as a Civil Engineer working on railroad projects in the East was outstanding. We look for more of Dave's slides in the future.

Amtrak has policy changes on long distance trains and ceased running special trains and private cars.

There are many articles, opinions and comments in the news media on Amtrak's new policies. This issue will only touch on some of the too numerous press releases and reports on current Amtrak issues. It is recommended members take some time to read up on the many issues and comments of current Amtrak policies.

# Meeting Minutes April 21 2018

The meeting was called to order by President Dan Meyer at 6:32 pm at Roseville Lutheran Church. Twenty-two members were present providing an organization quorum. President Meyer called for a motion to approve the March 2018 minutes as written in the April 2018 Newsletter. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Frank Wilke and seconded by John Goodman. The motion was unanimously approved by attendees. The Trip Report was given by John Goodman. The August trip to the Osceola and St Croix Valley Railroad will be the third Saturday in August. The cost is $20 for the Marine on the St Croix trip, $17 for seniors and $15 for the trip to Dresser WI. The Brunch train cost is $50. The observation car A11 will not be available as it is due for wheel work. It was decided that the Osceola and St Croix Valley trip will be conducted on an individual basis where members can select what trips to ride. The Light Rail – Northstar train ride is planned for the 3rd Saturday in June 2018 starting at the Bloomington Transit Center. The schedule will be published in the May 2018 Newsletter. The chapter picnic is scheduled for the 3rd Saturday in July at Maiden Rock WI. John then presented upcoming programs for future meetings. Dave Herbert was present to show on his work as Civil Engineer for the New York Central in New York and Northeast Corridor, and that Russ Isbrandt will show his films of Amtrak trains and Steam Excursions in the 1970's at the May meeting. Fall Meeting programs are still to be determined. The Library Report was given by Dawn Holmberg. We are continuing cataloging our inventory of railroad magazines and that much of our inventory of railroad memorabilia is now completed. Upcoming participation at future flea markets was discussed. We will have a table at Train Day May 5th, and give out duplicate railroad magazines and old calendars from our inventory. *Continued on next page*

*Continued from previous page:* We will attend the spring flea market at the Fairgrounds. Fall railroad shows participation is still to be determined. The treasurer's duties for the calendar have been transferred to the Calendar Committee. Acting Treasurer Russ Isbrandt gave the treasurers report. Our financial situation shows less than a year ago. Jim McLean was still in the Philippines and absent for the NRHS report. John Goodman stated that the NRHS convention activities in Cumberland MD this year is close to being on the NRHS website (due to work by Dawn Holmberg and Dan Meyer with John Goodman getting the convention data of activities on the NRHS web site.) John also stated that the 2019 Convention in at Ogden Utah is under way and negotiations with Union Pacific on their 150th anniversary is to be discussed with an upcoming meeting with Union Pacific in Ogden Utah. There is a NRHS Board meeting in St Louis in May. The NRHS is in very good financial shape. Another NRHS Bulletin is due out in the next month. The Calendar Report was given by Dawn Holmberg. We are finalizing the photos for the calendar and hope to have the submission of the 2019 calendar to the publisher in the next month. The calendar is planned to be available sometime in June. The Newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. It was noted that after the May issue, that the next issue will not be out until about July 1st. The Cheer Committee was presented by John Goodman for absent Marty Swan and no news was reported. The web report was given by Dan Meyer. The current newsletter is available on our website. Bob Ball was present to detail train day activities on May 5 at SPUD and that UP #1995 will be on display, with other units from the MTM and TC&W. A night photo session (for a fee of $25) is planned for the night before train day. Slide shows from 1:00 PM to 9:00 PM will be conducted by prominent railroad photographers at SPUD for a fee of $25. Tickets can be ordered online. Dan Meyer solicited to members that we need a treasurer. Dan noted the appreciation by the chapter the work that interim treasurer Russ Isbrandt is doing. Jim Ertz then introduced two guests he brought to the meeting. New Business. President Dan Meyer asked for volunteers for the 2019 officer nominating committee. John Goodman volunteered and President Meyer accepted. Members then discussed the new Amtrak policies and actions that can be done by individuals to make their opinions heard. A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 7:21 PM by Russ Isbrandt seconded by John Goodman. Motion was carried. After a short break, slides of Dave Herbert's work as a track and structures official in New York and along the Northeast Corridor, as well as trains of the Southern Railway in Virginia was presented. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing for Secretary Dave Norman.

TC&W
TWIN CITIES & WESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

## Small Freight Rail Firm Rejects Met Council Deal, Relationship Between the Council and TC&W Sours

*By JANET MOORE janet.moore@startribune.com*

*A rendering provided by the Met Council shows a Southwest Light Rail train passing over the Kenilworth Lagoon.*

A small freight railroad company has rejected what it called a "take-it-or-leave-it" deal outlining how it will share part of the proposed Southwest light-rail line's nearly 15-mile route. Talks between Glencoe based Twin Cities & Western Railroad (TC&W) and the Metropolitan Council over ownership and operational issues related to the $1.9 billion Southwest project broke down late last year. Over the past month, their relationship has turned decidedly bitter. Freight trains operated by TC&W run along the Kenilworth corridor, a spit of land separating Lake of the Isles and Cedar Lake that is popular with bicyclists and pedestrians, and a spur between St. Louis Park and Minnetonka. Southwest LRT and TC&W trains are expected to share part of the corridor. After negotiations stalled last year, the Met Council offered TC&W an $11.9 million deal last month that calls for the railroad to cooperate during Southwest's construction and release all potential legal claims.

Another $230,000 was put on the table to cover TC&W's expenses. (Construction of the line, which would connect downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie, is expected to begin later this year, with passenger service starting in 2023.) At the time, Met Council officials said TC&W was trying to negotiate a "sweetheart deal," a charge the railroad called a "fabrication." The Council gave TC&W until Wednesday to respond to its offer. That was summarily rejected by the railroad, which called it "highhanded."

TC&W President Mark Wegner also said the company will fight the council's efforts to win approval of a broader rail agreement from the federal Surface Transportation Board. Wegner said his company wants to be protected from loss or damage to its property and degradation in service related to the construction and operation of Southwest LRT.

The council, Wegner added, is ignoring "the very real concerns of the farmers and freight shippers who rely on TC&W to move their goods to national and worldwide markets through Hennepin County." Wegner said the firm has "tried to be constructive partners with the Met Council, but the sad reality is that they have decided to make us adversaries."

Representatives from the Met Council were not immediately available for comment. Janet Moore • 612-673-7752


Enjoy a fun and educational experience as we highlight the history and future of passenger train travel, the historic and current role of freight railroads in our region, and changing transportation trends and needs. All will enjoy a wide variety of free transportation-inspired activities. The day will include train equipment, educational sessions, special events and activities for all ages. Concessions will be available in the concourse and on the train platform.
**Model Railroad Exhibits:** Granite City O-Gaugers, Standard Gauge Layout, **Exhibitors** Bruce Gustafson, Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad, Inc. John Cartwright Railroad Art, Matuska RailArt, Ladysmith, WI Rail Display, Charles McCreary, Yard Goat Images, Minnesota Operation Lifesaver, Center for Railroad Photography & Art, The Depot Duluth, MN, Great Northern Railway Historical Society, Metro Transit Green Line Extension Project. Metro Transit Blue Line Extension Project, Metro Transit. Jefferson Lines, Amtrak, Hertz, Lowertown Bike Shop, MTM locomotives, TC&W locomotive, UP #1995.
Join us for a celebration of trains and transportation at SPUD – Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. From website and Bob Ball.


## BNSF Plans $90 Million Capital Program in Minnesota for 2018

Provided by Rick Krenske Metro News Apr 13, 2018

**MINNEAPOLIS** – BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) today announced that its 2018 capital expenditure program in Minnesota will be approximately $90 million. To ensure BNSF continues to operate a safe and reliable rail network, this year's plan in Minnesota remains focused on maintenance projects. The largest component of this year's capital plan in the state will be for replacing and upgrading rail, rail ties and ballast, which are the main components for the tracks on which BNSF trains operate.

Over the past five years, BNSF has invested approximately $810 million to expand and maintain its network in Minnesota. This year, the maintenance program in Minnesota includes more than 750 miles of track surfacing and/or undercutting work as well as the replacement of nearly 20 miles of rail and close to 170,000 ties.

"As a part of the Great Northern Corridor, Minnesota serves as a crucial link between the Pacific Northwest and Chicago, ensuring that every year BNSF moves more than 140,000 carloads of Minnesota corn, wheat, soybeans and other agricultural products, as well as large quantities of timber and paper products to both global and domestic markets," said Chad Sundem, general manager of operations, Twin Cities Division. "By performing regular maintenance, we continue to ensure the safety and reliability of our network in Minnesota."

The 2018 planned capital investments in the state are part of BNSF's $3.3 billion network-wide capital expenditure program announced last month. These investments include $2.4 billion to replace and maintain core network and related assets, approximately $500 million for expansion and efficiency projects and $100 million for continued implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC). Another element of its capital plan will be $300 million for freight cars and other equipment acquisitions.

**About BNSF**

BNSF Railway is one of North America's leading freight transportation companies. BNSF operates approximately 32,500 route miles of track in 28 states and also operates in three Canadian provinces. BNSF is one of the top transporters of consumer goods, grain and agricultural products, low-sulfur coal, and industrial goods such as petroleum, chemicals, housing materials, food and beverages. BNSF's shipments help feed, clothe, supply, and power American homes and businesses every day. BNSF and its employees have developed one of the most technologically advanced, and efficient railroads in the industry. We work continuously to improve the value of the safety, service, energy, and environmental benefits we provide to our customers and the communities we serve.

## BNSF Completes PTC Installation

"Gene Poon sheehans2016@gmail.com [All_Aboard]" Sunday, April 15, 2018

BNSF Railway has completed Positive Train Control installation and testing on all lines that require it. Locomotives assigned to lead in road service have their equipment installed and tested.

All clear now, for Amtrak to run on BNSF...as far as BNSF is concerned. At Amtrak, not so much...

## Our Streetcar Heritage

From Rick Krenske Metro News April 6 2018


B-16 RR-153-21 Lake Harriet Minneapolis, MN 8/6-28/1971
William Cordes Photo Northstar Railway Historical Society Collection
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The "History Revealed" series sponsored by the Ramsey County Historical Society continued on April 26 with a focus on our region's impressive streetcar heritage.

The Twin Cities had what was considered one of the finest street railway systems around, and author John Diers told its story at 7 p.m. at the Roseville Library.

In 1920, for a nickel fare, the 1,100 streetcars of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company carried 238 million riders on a 500-mile system that stretched from Lake Minnetonka to the St. Croix River, the historical society says, noting that the system was among the largest employers in the Twin Cities, with more than 4,000 workers.

But in the 1950s, "it surrendered to the automobile. Its streetcars were gone, replaced by buses— its assets looted by an unscrupulous management," the event notice explains. "From streetcars to freeways, this is the story of the decline and fall of the late, great Twin City Rapid Transit Company."

Diers, author of "Twin Cities by Trolley: The Streetcar Era in Minneapolis and St. Paul," worked for the Metropolitan Transit Commission for 25 years.

Information about the series — featuring local authors, historians and archaeologists talking about a wide range of topics drawn from the heritage and traditions of Ramsey County — is at rchs.com/news/ history-revealed.

RailwayAge

# Want Airline Food? Take Amtrak

Railway Age: April 19, 2018: Written by William Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief

**Ex-Florida Congressman John Luigi Mica, a foodie who spent a considerable amount of time when he was Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee questioning Amtrak's food service costs, must be very pleased with Amtrak's announcement that it's getting rid of dining cars on two long-distance trains.**

Yes, you heard me right, and I believe it's part of a plan to dismantle the National Network—shutting down most, if not all, long-distance trains, to focus on the Northeast Corridor, Midwest (Chicago) and California short- and medium-distance services. More on that later.

This morning (April 19), I received a press release with the following headline:

**New and Contemporary Dining Soon on Two Amtrak Routes. *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* sleeping car customers to be offered fresh choices for meals this summer.**

Right away, I smelled corporate-speak rotten fish. Read on: "Amtrak will offer contemporary and fresh dining choices for sleeping car customers, instead of traditional dining car service, embarking aboard its *Capitol Limited* and *Lake Shore Limited* trains starting June 1. Sleeping car customers will choose meals delivered to their Bedrooms or Roomettes—or eaten in a private café or lounge car—and entrees such as:

Lunch & Dinner: Chilled beef tenderloin, Vegan wrap, Chicken Caesar salad, or Turkey club sandwich.

Breakfast: Assorted breakfast breads with butter, cream cheese and strawberry jam; Greek yogurt and sliced seasonal fresh fruit plate.

"These meals will continue to be included in the sleeping car fare and are delivered to the trains just prior to origination, eliminating on-board preparation. Customers will also be offered unlimited soft beverages, a complimentary serving of beer, wine or a mixed-drink and an amenity kit. A Kosher meal continues to be available with advance notice.

"'Our plan is to provide new and fresh food choices in a contemporary way for these overnight trains," said Bob Dorsch, Vice President of the Amtrak Long Distance Service Line. 'Our continued success depends on increasing customer satisfaction while becoming more efficient.' Dorsch said this enhancement 'will continue to be refined, and we look forward to hearing from our customers.'"

Gag me with a plastic spoon! Why don't you just come out and say it: "Amtrak is getting rid of dining cars." No BS. No dancing around the issue. Tell it straight up. It's what's happening, right? Anybody want to eat in a roomette? No thanks, not me. I'm not *entirely* antisocial.

Am I right? You tell me, President and CEO Richard Anderson, the former Delta Airlines chief executive. (By the way, Delta, I'm told, is a pretty good airline, thanks to you. I'm a regular United customer, and it's pretty good, too, at least for now. But Amtrak is a railroad, not an airline. Different animal. Different service expectations. Different type of customer. Just sayin'.)

Is what we have here "Amtrak as airline," complete with—as if you're flying first-class—microwaved meals delivered to your seat? Seated in coach class? You're only choice will be the café car, if the train has one. Goodbye dining car service, one of the pleasures of traveling by rail? Is this all part of becoming "lean and mean" (which is perhaps how the food will taste)?

Already gone are the *Coast Starlight* parlor cars, in-train tour guides on some western trains, most charters, and private railcars bringing up the markers (for a hefty fee, of course). The "cross-country café" is replacing, I'm told, full dining service in Superliner trains: One crew member runs the microwave, another delivers the meal. Gag me with a plastic spoon!

Anderson himself has reportedly mothballed the *Beech Grove*, the private Amfleet office car used on inspection tours. That's all well and good, but does this mean he's going to travel with his customers when he wants to see what's going on across the railroad? Or, does it mean that, before long, there won't be any national network to inspect?

I've been hearing about internal plans within Amtrak to discontinue long-distance trains. The best way to do that, of course, is to make the service so unpalatable that people stop riding them. Are we looking at a veiled attempt to drive passengers away?

A bit of history: Back in the just-before-Amtrak days, the freight railroads, which were losing untold amounts of money on intercity passenger trains they were forced to operate, purposely attempted to drive customers away, because it was the only way they could successfully petition the Interstate Commerce Commission for discontinuance of service. One famous example is Southern Pacific's *Sunset Limited.* During the decline of passenger rail in the 1960s, more and more services on board the once-luxurious streamliner were cut back, culminating in the elimination of the dining car, lounge car and all sleeping cars. By 1968, the train had three cars: a baggage car, a coach and an "automat lunch counter car" with vending machines.

But there's more to this story than lousy food. Amtrak recently issued a "report card" on how the freight railroads treat Amtrak trains. Grades were A (Canadian Pacific), B+ (BNSF), B- (Union Pacific), C (CSX) and F (CN and Norfolk Southern).

I looked this over, and it strikes me as being overly simplistic. Some of the language is, quite frankly, dumbed down. Some of it is downright silly, particularly the bolded text: "Put in perspective, an 'F' host forces Amtrak trains on a particular route to wait one hour and 40 minutes on average for freight trains, and forces many Amtrak trains on this route to wait as long as 3 hours and 12 minutes. **As a comparison, suppose you were on a flight and your plane had to circle the destination airport for one hour and 40 minutes while cargo flights were given priority to use the runway.** Amtrak passengers typically experience those types of daily delays on poorly graded host railroads owned and operated by large freight companies." This is a disingenuous comparison. It makes no sense. None.

The general media, which doesn't know any better, will swallow this nonsense whole and accept it as gospel. But perhaps that's the intent.

Stop the train. I want to get off. Oh wait—it's already stopped, in the middle of Nowhere, which is somewhere between I Left Late and I'll Get There Eventually. Whose fault is it? Why, it's (fill in the name of a Class I freight railroad)'s fault, of course! *Continued on next page:*

*Continued from previous page:* The other not-so-veiled hint at what may be in store for long-distance trains is Anderson's public statements on PTC. He told a Feb. 15 House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure hearing on PTC implementation that, as of Jan. 1, 2019, Amtrak won't operate its trains on freight railroad rights-of-way where PTC is not yet operational, even though the Dec. 31, 2018 deadline is an interim one. His words—and pay particular attention to the bolded text:

"It is now clear that we are likely to encounter four different scenarios where PTC is not yet operational by the end of the year. First, there will be carriers that have made sufficient progress to apply to FRA for an alternative PTC implementation schedule under the law. In these instances, Amtrak's equipment will be ready for PTC operation, but additional work, testing or approvals are still required by the host railroad before the system is considered functional. We believe a significant number of routes outside of the NEC will face this situation. **The question we must ask ourselves is whether we continue to operate over such routes until PTC is turned on and if so, what additional safety protections are appropriate to reduce risks?**

"Second, there will be carriers over which we operate who appear unlikely to achieve sufficient progress to apply for an alternative PTC implementation schedule by year's end. **For any such route segments, Amtrak will suspend operations until such time as the carrier becomes compliant with the law.**

"Third, there are areas over which we operate for which there is an FRA "Mainline Track Exclusion" in place exempting that segment from the PTC requirements based on the low levels of freight and passenger train traffic or the presence of low-speed operations, such as in yards and terminals. We are currently reviewing our policy on operating passenger trains on Exclusions to determine whether we have adequate safety mitigation practices in place for each territory. **In certain areas, where signal systems are not in place, we will reconsider whether we operate at all.**

Is this part of a strategy to get rid of long-distance trains? Maybe, maybe not. Is it time to shut down the National Network and focus on corridor and state-supported services? Maybe, maybe not.

For additional perspective, Contributing Editor Frank N. Wilner, author of ***Amtrak: Past, Present and Future***, offers the following:

Amtrak was created in 1970 to relieve freight railroads of the unaffordable regulatory mandate of operating money-losing passenger trains. Amtrak commenced operations in 1971, capitalized with federal money and equipment contributions by the railroads that paid to be excused from operating passenger service.

The 1970 statute creating Amtrak required "just and reasonable" compensation of the host railroad. It also required the avoidance of "unreasonable interference with the adequacy, safety and efficiency of (freight) railroad operations." It *did not* contain a preference or priority requirement for Amtrak passenger trains.

In 1973, Congress enacted legislation giving undefined (in the statute) "preference" for Amtrak trains. It has been interpreted as giving better than usual treatment to a specific rail customer, Amtrak. Amtrak seeks to extend the statutorily undefined term to mean absolute train priority in all cases, and at no increase in access fees.

That 1973 legislation gave the ICC authority to regulate passenger train performance, but the regulations that included fines for late trains proved impractical and unworkable, and were repealed by the ICC in 1979.

Main line track congestion did not become an issue until the mid-2000s, and in 2008 Congress enacted PRIIA, whose Section 207 allows Amtrak and the FRA to establish metrics and standards for passenger trains; with Section 213 allowing the STB to enforce the standards via fines payable to Amtrak.

In 2010, citing the PRIIA, Amtrak and the Clinton Administration FRA promulgated metrics and standards for passenger train performance over host railroad tracks based on the failed ICC rules from the 1970s. Under those metrics and standards, host freight railroads face what they consider to be unachievable goals and unlimited fines.

Beginning in 2011, freight railroads asked federal courts to block the PRIIA metrics and standards from being enforced. Ultimately, the Supreme Court ruled that Amtrak is not a private company, but an arm of the federal government, creating new legal concerns and perhaps a new round of legal challenges.

CN has since sought to terminate its operating agreement with Amtrak and demand compensation for delay of freight trains caused by hosting Amtrak. Amtrak responded with a demand for absolute dispatching priority at no increase in access fees, and brought suit against CN as well as CSX and Norfolk Southern (those cases in limbo pending resolution of the still pending metrics and standards litigation).

Possible solutions going forward:

**Repeal PRIIA.** As the ICC discovered in the 1970s, federal agencies are not equipped to micromanage the rail system. Fines don't work; in fact, they are counterproductive as disputes have moved to the snail's pace of courts, and the operating relationship between freight railroads and Amtrak has turned hostile.

**Invest in sidings.** If Amtrak wants to be able to overtake freight trains at will, the simple solution is for Amtrak to provide sidings at regular intervals. The cost per siding is estimated at about $15 million.

**If no money is available for sidings, run closer to freight speed.** Long distance Amtrak trains could reduce the amount of overtaking by a simple reduction in speed. If Amtrak ran at, say, 60 or 65 mph instead of the current maximum permissible 79 mph, its capacity footprint would be greatly reduced. Because maximum track speed would remain at 79, the engineer on a late train could potentially make up time by running at 79 mph where the track is clear. In fact, adjusting the Amtrak timetable to lower speeds would make Amtrak long distance trains much more reliable, and at a lower cost than new sidings.

**Revise schedules to focus on reliability.** Amtrak creates schedules using a best-case scenario called "pure run time." A "fudge factor" is added to account for "unavoidable" delay. Realistically, schedules should be based on what is achievable on a consistent basis, not ideal conditions on a sunny day as Amtrak assumes in its "best-case" scenario. In fact, the FAA requires airlines to advertise schedules that can be achieved reliably. Amtrak should follow the same rules—rules well known by its new president.

(Amtrak, in the past, has responded to this suggestion by saying, "If we make the schedules longer, the host railroad will just use the additional padding and OTP will be just as bad." This is pure speculation reflecting the poisoned relationship that has been created between Amtrak and the hosts.) At least one, and possibly three, Class I railroads are preparing for possible Tucker Act lawsuits against Amtrak. Because the Supreme Court found that Amtrak is "the U.S. government" for due process purposes, the Tucker Act opens the door for monetary damage claims against the government. Bolstering the Tucker Act's standing is that the Supreme Court also found Amtrak to be a competitor to freight railroads for scarce track space. *Continued on next page:*

*Continued from previous page:* If, in fact, Amtrak is demanding absolute priority of its passenger trains at no cost, the answer could be in a Tucker Act (takings) lawsuit by freight railroads. The Tucker Act permits claims against the federal government, which otherwise has sovereign immunity, for damages arising out of takings of private property.
Perhaps never fully explored by the courts is whether the original preference provision in the Amtrak statute was meant to be—or could be enforced—in perpetuity. Some of those who were involved in the original negotiations have said that freight railroads then were so desperate to exit the passenger business in 1970 that they didn't focus closely on that terms of that preference language.
Of course, freight railroads might not wish to test that definition, as it could be worse than the status quo—with the issue best left to play out, for now, before the STB.

## Long Distance Amtrak Trains Threatened

Mark Meyer via Groups.Io Sun, Mar 18, 2018 Provided by John Goodman

RPA (Rail Passengers Association, formerly the National Association of Railroad Passengers) is "pulling the alarm bell" regarding the future of long-distance services. They have good evidence that there is a major discussion going on within Amtrak to consider cutting and reconfiguring long distance trains. One discussion that they've heard about would be to reduce the Empire Builder to 3 days a week, and add frequencies between Chicago and St. Paul, which, of course, would need to be paid for by the states (which is unlikely). The shorter trains would need to be paid for by the states. These discussions are apparently happening due to presidential influences in the White House, in DOT, and in the Amtrak board.
RPA understands that Amtrak has been talking to state DOTs about this. Of course, they are unhappy because they would end up paying lots more for less service. In addition, reduction or removal of long-distance trains would increase allocated costs significantly for state-supported trains.

Amtrak may use safety concerns like PTC (i.e., the contracting freight railroads won't have it ready by December 31, 2018) as an excuse to "temporarily" suspend services, including parts of the Cardinal, Southwest Chief, Empire Builder, California Zephyr, Vermonter, Ethan Allen, Adirondack and others. Pressure from the states can force Amtrak to backtrack some of their plans, as may be happening in Vermont and Maine.

Keep in mind this is not the only threat to Amtrak and long distance services. In its budget proposal, the Trump Administration wants to eliminate funding for all Amtrak long distance trains (https://www.railpassengers.org/happening-now/news/releases/white-house-infrastructure-plan-guts-long-distance-amtrak-service/). So, long distance trains are being threatened from Amtrak internally and the White House. And, there is the long-standing threat faced by nearly all Amtrak trains of aging equipment. The Superliner fleet used on long distance trains is especially in jeopardy as some of these cars are 40 years old. Even with continued funding for operation, trains are in danger of being discontinued simply because there will no longer be operable equipment. Amtrak has discontinued route-specific marketing and on board amenities (and may cut other amenities such as dining car service) in a misguided move to slash costs - and again, for services that currently are authorized by Congress.
Please contact your US Senators and Representatives about this threat and ask them to contact Amtrak directly (specifically Richard Anderson and Robert Dorsch, Vice President, Long Distance Service Line) to get straight answers about what they are planning, and to remind them that a reduced long-distance service is not what Congress has authorized. (Again: the Amtrak budget authorized by Congress for the next two years or so includes funding for long distance trains.) Also, remind your senators and representatives that Amtrak needs additional, and ongoing funding to maintain and obtain equipment that will keep the service attractive and viable going forward.
Amtrak's long distance trains have always had a bullseye on them, but with both internal and external threats looming, as well as just general apathy by Congress, this one is real and has a very good chance of occurring if the constituency doesn't make their collective voice heard. --Mark Meyer

*Clouds of steam rising from the Northshore Mining Company in Silver Bay. (News Tribune file photo)*

## Cliffs Ready to Break Ground on Iron Plant

By **John Myers** on Apr 2, 2018 at 3:00 p.m .Duluth Tribune

Cleveland-Cliffs is ready to break ground on its long-promised hot-briquetted iron plant in Toledo, Ohio that will help boost production at Northshore Mining in Silver Bay.
Northshore will produce the HBI-ready taconite pellets used at the $700 million Toledo plant that's predicted to produce 1.6 million metric tons per year of HBI to be used in electric-arc steel mills.
It's one of the first major inroads into the electric steel-mill market for Minnesota taconite which has generally gone to larger blast-furnace steel mills. Because electric mills now produce nearly two-thirds of all domestic steel, that market is seen as critical for the long-term health of Minnesota's taconite ore industry.
Currently most of the iron for those electric-arc steel mills, which is mixed with recycled scrap steel, is imported into the U.S. as pig iron from Ukraine, Brazil, Russia and Venezuela,

Cliffs officials noted. It's the same iron market that Mesabi Metallics hopes to break into with a pig-iron plant planned for Nashwauk at the site of the former Essar Steel Minnesota project. Cliffs will celebrate the groundbreaking Thursday at an event in Toledo with Ohio politicians on hand. The company hopes to have its HBI plant up and running, with 130 employees, by 2020. Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves noted it will be the first HBI plant serving the Great Lakes region and said the high-quality iron product will help U.S. steelmakers make the highly specialized steel required by automakers and other high-tech industries. "Today we are launching a new era for the iron and steel industry in the United States," Goncalves said in a statement Monday. Cliffs expects to spend $50 million this year upgrading production at Northshore operations in Silver Bay to produce the new HBI-ready pellet, with more investment in 2019.But the upgrade will not include adding more employees, Goncalves told reporters at a February press conference in Eveleth.

# The Hidden Innovations Behind America's Railways (StateOf Print Edition)

Posted on March 20, 2018 By Dan Robitzki StateofPrint **American Society of Civil Engineers**

*This piece first appeared in the StateOf print edition from March 2018 and distributed in partnership with the American Society of Civil Engineers at its annual legislative fly-in.*

**Perhaps not obvious at first glance, but today's trains are built on a century of innovation.**

If you grew up in a railway town, odds are the sight of a freight train fills you with dread. Flashing back to what feels like hours stuck at a busy junction, a passing train may conjure the image of missed meetings or an angry boss when you show up late to work. Just 150 years earlier, however, that same train would have been the very thing that allowed your family and your town to prosper in the first place. In its 2017 Infrastructure Report Card, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave the US an overall grade of a D+. For a country that touts itself as a superpower and global leader, that barely passing grade may as well stand for dismal — perhaps even a touch depressing. And yet, that clunky, boxy freight train gliding by was awarded a B.

That B is the highest grade awarded to an individual aspect of American infrastructure, and next to its D-earning cousins in the highway and aviation industries, that's good enough to put up on the fridge.

To the frustrated outsider stuck in traffic, the freight train may look like the same one that chugged along when the railway was first laid down, but America's privately-owned freight system is the result of decades of innovation and investment — the ASCE counted $27.1 billion in 2015 alone — all of which remains invisible to the lay public.

"This is an industry that has been optimized over more than a century and a half of figuring out how rolling a hard steel wheel on a hard steel rail can be used to support the health of a nation," says Gary Fry. Fry is a Senior Scientist at Transportation Technology Center, Inc. (TTCI) who's currently phasing out of his civil engineering professorship at Texas A&M to focus solely on his industry research. "You look at a rolling stock and say 'oh, it kind of looks how it did years ago," Fry adds.

As Fry put it, the low-hanging fruit for railway improvements have all been plucked — it was the engineers of the late 19th century who got to do all of the shape optimization work, which is why freight trains haven't changed in appearance much. Since then, the innovations to the rail network have been subtle. For example, the very materials that make up the rail network have been developed to be more resistant to damages and more tolerant of imperfections.

*This is an industry that has been optimized over more than a century and A half of figuring out how rolling a hard steel wheel on a hard steel rail can be used to support the health of a nation." — Gary Fry* "What you don't see and what you have no way of knowing is that those materials have nothing to do with what was used in the 1940s. The alloys in those systems are very very sophisticated and are the result of state of the art computational simulations to design high-performance ferrous alloys," says Fry. "But there's no way to know, looking at a train as it goes by at a crossing, there's no way to know that's not the same rail we were using 140 years ago."

Improvements to automation, to fuel and logistical efficiency, to failure detection systems and emergency shutoffs, to the very materials that make up the railways have been continuing as facilities like TTCI, which is a subsidiary of the Association of American Railroads, and independent rail companies continue to find new ways to improve safety, efficiency and performance.

It's not surprising that the rail network received a higher grade than other forms of transportation like highways, says Michael D. Meyer, a consultant and engineer who has become a major player in the realm of transportation policy and research.

Meyer, who was a civil engineering professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology then Georgia Institute of Technology, served as director of planning and development at Massachusetts' Department of Transportation and more recently became a member of the European-US Transportation Research Symposium on Resilience and Adaptation.

"It does not surprise me because of who owns and operates those systems and because of the bottom line of that industry," says Meyer. "Railroads have customers. State [Departments of Transportation] claim they have customers, but they have different kinds."

Rail companies are using ultrasonic and laser technology to peer inside of their wheels, railways and rail structures in order to detect potential breaks and failures before they happen. Much of these techniques are already established in the field, explains Lisa Stabler, the president of Transportation Technology Center, Inc., but as new needs arise or new advances pop up in the realm of academia, so too come opportunities to improve. "People see a railroad track and think it hasn't changed in the 155 years that we've been around, but they're technological runways that are equipped with lasers and sensors that are constantly checking the health of the track and the train," says Raquel Espinoza, the Director of Corporate Communications at Union Pacific, a rail company that owns tracks throughout the continental US westward of Chicago, Memphis and New Orleans. Right now, Union Pacific operates four machine vision inspection sites that inspect trains as they pass by at speeds up to 60 miles per hour (96 kph). These sites use lasers, video capture, and other sensors to check for faults within the train, such as wheel thickness and alignment. The company also uses video capture technology throughout their network, all of which sends an alert to a team of inspectors when it finds something that's not up to code. These images could be taken by stationary detectors as well as with drones that can fly over and alongside tracks to check their alignment and durability as trains pass over. *Continued on next page:*

*Continued from previous page:* Some of these flaws are obvious: a cracked or misaligned wheel, a missing bolt. But the lasers can penetrate the steel wheels and report signs of wear that could lead to a failure down the road. That way rail companies like Union Pacific can find problems that require their immediate attention as well as those that can be safely addressed within the next few months or within the year, explains Stabler. This data allows inspection and repair teams go in knowing exactly what needs fixing rather than doing a time-consuming inspection by hand. Union Pacific, which conducts a great deal of in-house research, is also working on developing its algorithms to improve communication down the pipeline.

"Just having the data is not the success, the success is what systems you have in place and what you are doing with the data," said Espinoza.

At TTCI, researchers can run trains with faulty wheels past sensors again and again to determine whether or not their systems are finding all the known faults and if they're flagging problems that don't even exist. Without this experimental approach, the sensors would have to be tested and calibrated with field tests that would turn a false positive into a major delay for the rail company and its customers. TTCI is also currently working on improving the ultrasonic detectors that can be used to better examine the internal integrity of wheels and tracks as well as the underground structures that support the tracks.

*"People see a railroad track and think it hasn't changed in the 155 years that we've been around, but they're technological runways that are equipped with lasers and sensors that are constantly checking the health of the track and the train," — Raquel Espinoza*

"Rail lies on the surface but there's a lot that goes underneath the surface that's critical to have reliable, safe movement of freight and passengers," says TTCI President Stabler. They're working on systems that will be able to see 10 to 15 feet underground, allowing them to check up on the structures that hold tracks in place. Without that, the alternatives are excavation or crossing your fingers and hoping they hold out. "Ground penetrating radar is something that's in development, has been partially deployed, but is something that's coming in the future."

In addition to finding better ways to detect problems, research into more durable alloys, which is one of TTCI scientist Gary Fry's areas of expertise, can make those failed inspections fewer and farther between. In fact, the alloys that we build with today may seem totally primitive to the engineers of the next century."Engineers have this mindset of 'we're gonna build today with the materials we have today.' And that's our vision of 2100," says Michael D. Meyer. "But I think we're gonna have a whole new set of materials and a whole new set of technologies that are going to make us much more adaptive than we are today."

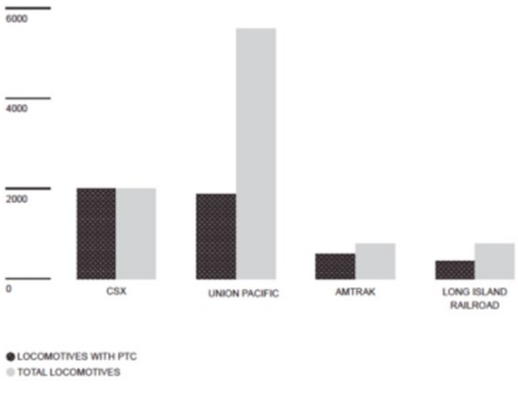
He envisions that future civil engineers will be building and repairing the country's infrastructure with materials that could even have built-in detection capabilities — smart materials that can provide performance feedback and give rise to a much more flexible, adaptive infrastructure that can face the challenges of our changing world.

Like many industries across the country, the railways are looking to the future and finding ways to increase automation. While human operators are still involved at every step of the process, some automation techniques, like Positive Train Control, could help prevent accidents through automatic shutoffs and switch changes that can circumvent human errors.

Positive Train Control (PTC) is a system of automatic shutoffs. If a train is going too fast or finds itself on the wrong track due to human error, PTC will automatically stop or slow it down. This automation doesn't replace the people in charge of operating the train, it just catches their mistakes to prevent casualties, damages and to a lesser extent, delays.

In an Amtrak crash in South Carolina on February 4, 2018, experts suggest that a collision was caused due to signals that were disabled in order to upgrade them and implement Positive Train Control. Many are saying that PTC would have prevented the accident, but Meyer isn't so sure — the system wouldn't have prevented the wrong signals being sent to the trains. Even so, PTC has been added slowly across the American rail network. In January, the Wall Street Journal reported that PTC implementation is causing delays and unexpected train stoppages as people work out how best to apply the technology.

First mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) in 2008, Positive Train Control was supposed to be installed on all railways by the end of 2015. By the end of 2016, freight railroads had only implemented Positive Train Control on 16 percent of the tracks that they had been required to. However, as of March 2017, 41 percent of passenger locomotives and 42 of freight locomotives had PTC installed, according to a Federal Railroad Administration Report.




Trains with PTC by company

Individual railroad companies are all at different stages of implementation, according to FRA documents. As private entities, they all use their own money and may enact different plans and prioritize different aspects of the process. For example, as of the end of September 2017, Alaska Railroad had equipped all 54 of its locomotives and 37 of its 39 towers with PTC equipment but only did so for three of the 12 required track segments. Meanwhile, Conrail has 100 percent implementation on its track segments, but has only equipped 10 of its 47 locomotives.

"I think with implementation there are organizations that are further along than others, but I would not want it said that there is any organization that is not embracing the use of technology to make their railroad more safe and reliable," says Lisa Stabler. She explained that in many cases it's just a matter of time until these systems are in place, mentioning that rail companies are incentivized to invest and innovate so that they can protect their assets and improve performance. "Each organization needs to look and see what is their particular need for implementation." *Continued on next page:*

*Continued from previous page:* Jessica Kahanek, Spokesperson for the Association of American Railroads, says that rail companies innovate in areas that will reduce safety concerns — they want a way to generate return on their investment as well as a way to make sure their locomotives will physically return when they're sent off with cargo.

But why not show off these advances? After all, SpaceX launched an expensive car into space for no real reason in February 2018 and lots of people went wild over it. Meanwhile, rail companies are quietly experimenting with new ways to bring their industry into the future, but all the typical American sees is a box on wheels.

"It's a very pragmatic approach, not an Elon Musk-ian approach," says Kahanek on the sorts of research projects that are prioritized by rail companies and organizations. "It's more of that operations focus than trying to make something that would appear to the general public." Kahanek gives the example of driverless vehicles. It's easy to explain the need for self-driving cars because everyone knows that people make mistakes. You'd be hard-pressed to find someone who has never been in a car accident or, at the very least, stuck in the traffic caused by one. But people don't even know about the problems that innovations in trains would help solve, she explains.

"I would love that we would no longer need TTCI because the industry was perfect in every way and there was no way to be better," says Stabler. "But the reality is that this is a very complex system like any other system and there are always ways to improve it."

Stabler says there are always some potential projects to explore that her researchers don't have time to investigate — their projects are often determined by the specific problems that railroads are facing. Those problems are usually identified by individual companies that may have different priorities since there isn't a single, uniform research vision across the entire industry. So while something may be going on in academia that could lend itself to a big, new flashy railway technology, they're going to look into applying the new science and technology that improves safety before any of that, Stabler explains.

But to talk about the future of infrastructure is to talk about our relationship with a world that is undeniably altered by human activity. Global temperatures are rising. The climate is changing. Weather patterns and storms are becoming more severe, and America's industrialized society played a large role in that. In order to survive into the next century, the rail system will need to find a way to adapt to all of these changes.

For all of the heavy lifting it does, freight rail is actually a particularly clean industry. According to Gary Fry, the researcher at TTCI, one gallon of diesel fuel will move one ton of freight roughly 460 miles, and that number is rising all the time as experimentation with cleaner fuels and higher-quality steel continues.

Freight railroads are responsible for 0.6 percent of US greenhouse gas emissions, according to a 2015 Environmental Protection Agency report, while other forms of freight transportation contributed another 0.9 percent. Meanwhile, trucking contributed 6.3 percent of all emissions and passenger transportation was responsible for 19 percent.

"Looking at this mode of transportation, one of the things that's very appealing is there's physics behind it," says Fry. He explains that part of the reason freight rail requires so little fuel is because there's very little resistance
keeping the hard steel wheels from rolling down the hard steel track.

Fry is confident that the detection systems already in place will help keep rail operational as floods and storms become more common. Rail companies already have sensors telling them when a track is damaged, and Fry says that additional systems to inspect the integrity of bridges or dams after they've been flooded or hit by a powerful water current are under development. "Track is very heavy," Fry added, "it's not impacted much by the weather."

In the last eight years of his retirement, Michael D. Meyer has focused on the problems of transportation and climate change. In his view, the railroad industry has to take both financial and technological steps to protect itself from a changing world. He's been conducting vulnerability and adaptation studies to look at what problems railroads may face and how they could adapt. For example, freight trains are already slowing to a stop during heatwaves in the American South because the rails are more malleable. As future heatwaves increase in duration and severity, as they are projected to do, rail companies will need to find a solution. In the meantime, many of the options available to rail companies require additional investment as they build up their infrastructure.

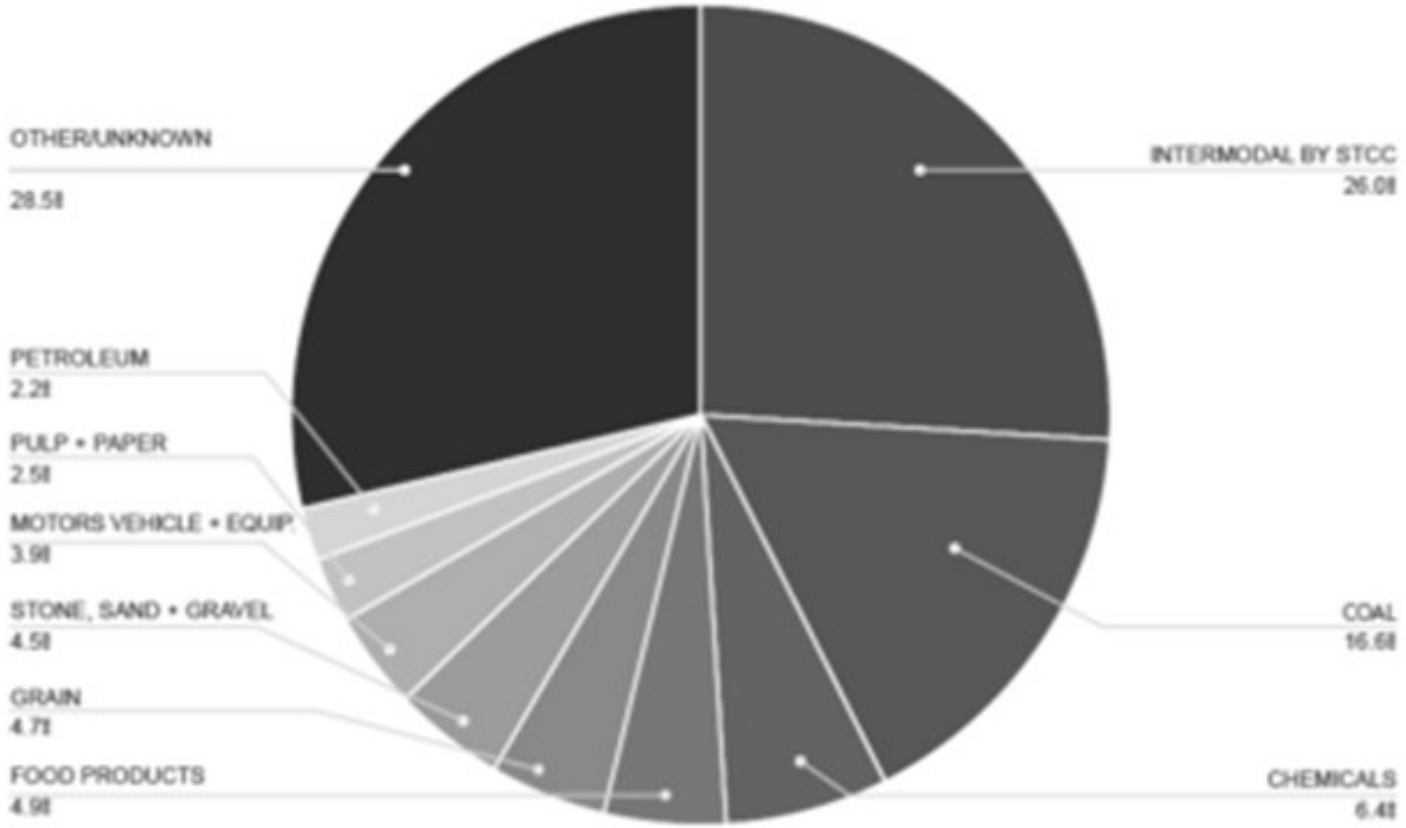
"A lot of the stuff we built today will be there 50, 60, 70 years from now," says Meyer. "So should you build that bridge 12 feet over the water or should you build it 14 feet over the water? For an incremental small cost now, you could be foregoing future risks due to extreme storms."

Meyer says that many rail companies are considering those investments, and that they also have continuity of operations plans in place for extreme events, which could include terrorist attacks in addition to weather and climate. For example, after Hurricane Harvey struck Texas, rail companies were deploying drones to examine the state of the rails and locomotives before sending people into what may have been dangerous situations.

Those smart materials that Meyer hopes to see developed in the future — the ones that would be able to detect floods or other damage — could help the railroads and other aspects of American infrastructure adapt and bend along with a world that's rapidly changing around them, but many of the technological and financial measures that might reduce damage from climate change will require our attention before there's a problem, not whenever those needs arise.

The future of technology is hard to predict, but the next century of railroad will likely involve skilled hands working alongside automated systems that help catch their mistakes and help streamline their jobs and performance. But no matter how clunky and out of place a locomotive may seem to the outsider, they're likely to continue carrying anything that's shipped in the United States. Food, vehicles, lumber and other raw materials, even beer and wine — much of it spends time traveling on the train that's making you a little late for work. *Continued on next page:*

*Continued from previous page:* "One of the things I always enjoyed doing is talking to people who see the trains in their neighborhood and get visibly frustrated," says Union Pacific's Raquel Espinoza, "because there's nothing more frustrating than trying to get to work on time and having to stop for a train. But that one train would be replaced by 300 trucks."




**Rail Cargo by Category 2016**

## Charter Trains and Private Car Charges

April 19 2018 Provided by John Goodman

**Charter Trains**

April 18, 2018 Guidelines for Charter Trains Operated by Amtrak These guidelines apply to Charter Trains, defined as non-regularly -scheduled trains for commercial customers operated by Amtrak pursuant to negotiated agreements. These guidelines do not apply to special moves that Amtrak may operate for its own or for governmental purposes. This policy does not apply to private cars. Amtrak's primary objective is to operate its core train service safely, punctually, and efficiently. Amtrak must stay focused on this objective. As a result, we have instituted the following guidelines for Charter Trains effective March 28, 2018: · Charter Trains must operate on existing Amtrak routes; · Charter Trains must not be one-time trips; · Charter Trains proposing to use Amtrak resources such as equipment and crews are subject to the availability of those Amtrak resources without impact on regularly scheduled operations; · Charter Trains must generate sufficient financial benefit for Amtrak to justify the Amtrak resources and assets; · All Charter Train terms and conditions are subject to a final written agreement signed by Amtrak and the commercial charter customer. If you have questions about Charter Train guidelines, please contact chartersales@amtrak.com.

**Private Car Charges**

Addendum No. 6 to Private Car Tariff This Addendum No. 6 to the CONDITIONS FOR MOVEMENT PRIVATELY OWNED RAILROAD CARS ON AMTRAK (the Tariff) will supersede the rates included in the Tariff dated June 1, 2007 and all previous addendums. Except as stated in this Addendum all terms and conditions of the Tariff dated June 1, 2007 will remain in effect. The rates in this Addendum will be effective for moves beginning on or subsequent to May 1, 2018. J Private Car Rates Base Mileage Rate (per car mile) $ 3.26 Additional Car Rate (per car mile) $ 2.50 Overnight Parking Rate $ 155 Overnight Parking Rate - Boston $ 360 Overnight Parking Rate - Portland $ 270 New Orleans Parking Surcharge 23% Premium Daily Parking Rate - Chicago $ 600 Monthly Parking $ 3,125 Short Term Parking (per month) $ 2,400 Long Term Parking (per month) $ 1,600 Car Wash $ 200 Waste Tank Service $ 120 Special Terminal Switching - BOS-BON $ 800 Special Terminal Switching - NYS-HUD $ 800 Special Terminal Switching - NYS-NRO $ 800 Same Day Switch – Chicago $ 300 Additional Locomotive Fee (per mile) $ 5.10 Minimum Charge $ 1,600 Annual Administrative Fee $ 400 The rates in this Addendum will be adjusted from time to time at the discretion of Amtrak.

*The 'Empire Builder' engine crew changes at Whitefish, Mont., on Feb 4, 2017.*

## Amtrak's Weather Fears Lead to 'Empire Builder' Cancellations

By Bob Johnston | April 13, 2018 Trains Newswire provided by Rick Krenske

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Winter storm Xanto, which is threatening travelers with blizzard conditions from the Dakotas through Minnesota and Wisconsin on April 13, and 14, is the type of weather system that the *Empire Builder* typically slogs through between November and March in providing daily mobility to passengers at 42 intermediate stops from Chicago to Seattle and Portland, Ore. Nevertheless, Amtrak operating division managers in collaboration with the company's Consolidated National Operations Center in Wilmington, Del., decided on April 11 to cancel trains leaving the West Coast on April 12 and 13 and Chicago on April 13 and 14. Spokesman Marc Magliari tells Trains News Wire that the company is "exercising an abundance of caution because our mission is to safely carry customers to their destinations."

He also points out that severe weather conditions often result in crews and booked travelers not being able to get to stations.

However, BNSF Railway spokeswoman Amy McBeth says, "Amtrak made its own determination about its schedule; we were fully prepared for them to operate on us."

In an email to Trains News Wire she adds, "It is business as usual…we have been planning and preparing by briefing with teams on safety and possible weather, arranging for a command center if needed, and readying equipment and resources, such as switch heaters and blowers."

BNSF handles the Builder west of the Twin Cities, where 7-12 inches of snow are now predicted to accumulate through Sunday morning, but tracks in Minnesota are the only parts of that host railroad's route affected. Wisconsin also expects to see April snows from Xanto, although Canadian Pacific spokesman Andy Cummings is unable to immediately ascertain whether special operating plans will be implemented on the railroad's St. Paul-Chicago *Empire Builder* segment.

Cancelling the train for two days necessarily disrupts crew turns by stranding personnel away from home and adding expense not offset by ticket revenue. It also inconveniences travelers who thought they had booked "all-weather" transportation.

In 2017 under avalanche threats, BNSF closed the *Builder*'s route for days through Montana's Marias Pass and other rugged mountainous terrain, though Amtrak often ran Chicago-St. Paul stub trains during extended cancellation periods to protect local and connecting patronage on a busy Midwest corridor that lacks state-supported service.

Other than a concern for passenger safety, contributing to the cancellation decision is likely a management structure that for the first time in decades fails to make any manager responsible for balancing a route's revenue and growth potential against adverse affects of inconveniencing travelers, while many departments are charged with cutting costs.

## Amtrak Cancelled Two Empire Builder Roundtrips

Provided by Rick Krenske's Metro News

Amtrak Modifies Empire Builder Service between Chicago and Portland/Seattle

Predicted Midwest Blizzard Affects Amtrak Service April 11, 2018 2:45 p.m. CT

Predicted severe weather is prompting the cancelation of Amtrak Empire Builder services eastbound on Thursday, April 12, both

eastbound and westbound on Friday, April 13, and westbound on Saturday, April 14. No substitute transportation will be available. Service will be restored after the storm passes and an assessment is made with the host railroads, BNSF and CP railways.

Canceled service for Thursday, April 12: Trains 8/28 between Seattle/Portland and Chicago

Canceled service for Friday, April 13: Trains 8/28 and 7/27 in both directions

Canceled service for Saturday, April 14: Trains 7/27 between Chicago and Seattle/Portland

## US Senator-MN Contacted about Amtrak's Cancellations of Empire Builder

**From:** sheehans2016@gmail.com [All_Aboard] provided by John Goodman

A communication has been sent to U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D.-Minnesota) by one of her constituents, regarding Amtrak's preemptive cancellation of three days' Empire Builder service across its entire route, ostensibly due to a snowstorm which was to have minimal effect on the train's operation, if any at all; the cancellations were described as unnecessary and outrageous.

"There is no justification for cancelling this service and destroying the travel plans of many hundreds (or more) passengers....We can't have a major transcontinental route, and Minnesota's only rail service, disrupted every time it snows here."

An aide of Sen. Klobuchar says she will be getting into contact with Amtrak "right away." There is no telling if this will have any effect, but at least an attempt has been made.

# Amtrak CEO: Phasing Out Long Distance Trains in Favor of "Corridors"

**From:** 'Diane C. Russell' dcrussell@gmail.com [All_Aboard] Provided by John Goodman

On Sun, Apr 22, 2018 at 1:14 AM, Gene Poon sheehans2016@gmail.com [amtrak] <amtrak@yahoogroups.com> wrote:

Report – Richard Anderson, Amtrak CEO – Remarks to California Rail Summit and Questions and Answers
by **Paul Dyson, president RailPAC-Rail Passenger Association of California and Nevada**
19th April 2018
Richard Anderson, CEO of Amtrak, gave a keynote address to about 150 passenger rail officials and industry professionals, plus a handful of advocates. I have the feeling he had not counted on there being any advocates in the audience. To the best of my knowledge there was no audio or video recording of the meeting, which is most unfortunate. I have done my best to give a reasonably concise account from my notes and from memory and have conferred with others who were there. I am reasonably certain that I have captured both the tone and overall content of his remarks and replies. I wish I had had the presence of mind to turn on my Iphone, at least to capture my own question. I have used quotation marks when I have recalled actual words used, otherwise it is my best recollection. Anderson had some positive items to report about reforms and initiatives he has undertaken. These include:
Union Contracts – All Unions are now covered with 7-year contracts which have been ratified with high percentage votes in favor.
On Time Performance – He's genuinely concerned about OTP and says they have achieved days on the NEC with 100% on time. He did not mention private cars.
Safety – He is also very concerned about safety and noted that airline safety is superior to rail. He seems to be shocked at the concept of dark territory, although he did not repeat his threat to cease operations on those routes. PTC implementation is continuing and is very complex as a tenant on 20 railroads. Amtrak is hiring more Road Foremen to help their engineers improve safety, and they have upgraded their route qualification rules.
Fleet renewal: His remarks on fleet renewal focused on the Amfleet Ones that are 45 years old and operating under FRA waiver, and the P42 locomotives. They will be replaced by DMUs and a few locos. The P42s are unreliable, forcing them to use two units instead of one. "I don't like carrying a spare". The locomotives are Tier Zero and operate with an EPA waiver, which "they would not get if a private company".
Finance – He claimed that Amtrak is "debt free" and is "stockpiling cash" for fleet renewals.
Stations – Spending money on stations. I think he regretted saying that, as Amtrak doesn't own many out West.
Operational Concept – Amtrak's market opportunity is in corridors of 100 to 400 miles (he wavered a couple of times on that and said 300 miles) and would be operated by DMUs. DMUs are lighter weight, more environmentally friendly. His concept is something like an Acela with diesel power. This would need investment by the States and cooperation by the freight railroads. I noted that he did not specifically say that the long-distance trains would go, only that corridors are the future.
He hinted that spare Superliners would go to the Surfliner and other corridors.
Questions and answers: There was a question by David Cameron of the Teamsters about enforcement of passenger priority on the Class Ones. His answer was that this has never been enforced but that they were "working" with the freights to improve matters.
I then had the mic and introduced myself as President of RailPAC, a nonprofit volunteer group that represents rail passengers. A lot of RailPAC members are regular customers of the long-distance trains and spend many thousands of dollars on tickets. There is a concept in business of having a "Unique selling proposition". Passenger rail has many unique features, like dining cars, lounges, the Pacific Parlor car, which you seem to be destroying. I note that you have skirted the question of the long-distance trains. Does this mean there will be no more long-distance trains?
Main points from his answer: His demeanor was angry and agitated. The long-distance trains cost $750 million a year to operate. Corridors are better. Only 4% of passengers travel end to end. Under PRIIA he believes that he has to operate at lower cost and more competitively. "That's what the law says". He angrily challenged me on that, expecting me to tell him to break the law. He said "There is some room for experience travel" but did not elaborate.
Another person in the audience asked "What will you do about the studies from a few years ago of the Pioneer and Sunset? Answer: "Nothing, they don't make economic sense."
Next came a question from Dana Gabbard: What about the National in NRPC? Are you not supposed to operate a National System? Are not these corridors going to fall into the category of State supported trains? Anderson was fuming by this time and again stated, I am following the law. "Anyone have a question about policy?"
I thought our questions were about policy! I suppose he was expecting some softball questions.
Editorial: There we have it. This is how Anderson will restructure Amtrak and destroy a connected national system. I have the feeling he expected the audience to be in agreement with him as many there represented the State Corridors. We'll see what the reaction will be, if any. The objective of the policy is obvious. By terminating the long-distance trains and establishing state supported corridors in their place there will be a further transfer of dollars to the NEC. It also means that Amtrak will not have to expend any of its capital budget on renewing or augmenting the Surfliner (I think Paul meant "Superliner") fleet and P42 locomotives. Any replacements will be charged to the States with their cost plus formula.
I will be writing further and discussing with the RailPAC Board and other like-minded organizations what our actions should be. Watch for more postings. http://railpac.org/2018/04/21/ amtrak-ceo-phasing-out-long- distance-trains-in-favor-of- corridors/

## Why We Care, and So Should You

AMTRAK IS PUTTING US OUT OF BUSINESS

by Borden Black co-owner provided by John Goodman

Twelve years ago I bought a 1925 railroad car on eBay. It was kind of a lark. My husband and I started renovating the 190,000 pound relic to make her compatible with Amtrak's safety standards so that we could provide luxury land excursions. It took 6 years and cost us most of our retirement savings. We had, however, become emotionally invested and passionate about preserving an important part of American history.

We called the old lady DEARING after the small Georgia town where my husband's grandfather served as a station agent. It was an homage to family and the past.

In 2012, we began coupling her to regularly scheduled Amtrak trains and taking paying passengers around the country. We have seen vistas that you can see only by rail. From Maine to Seattle and Los Angeles to Miami we viewed mountains and canyons, oceans and swift streams. Photographers snapped our picture and children waved. Let's face it no one waves at an airplane.

Dearing Railroad became a business too. Granted not one that will ever make us much money, but one that serves to make many people happy from senior citizens who rode the Man O' War to Atlanta to children who have never seen an train and are wide-eyed with excitement.

In April, Amtrak killed our dream. We store the car in a non-profit, historic society's yard in West Virginia. Without notice or input, Amtrak that is financed in large part by tax dollars, told us they would no longer put us on trains that make a station stop there. The same fate befell other cars stored at locations where in the past they were routinely added to trains.

We were told by Amtrak that it was all about the money. The approximately 250 private railroad cars in the US are estimated to put $10 million on Amtrak's bottom line. We were also told we delayed trains. Amtrak has no data to substantiate that however.

We were advised that there are a few locations where trains originate where we would not delay trains and we could park there. Savannah is one of those towns. We requested parking in the historic city. Without reason or recourse we were denied.

The Dearing is homeless and charters and special trains across the country will no longer run. The industry that built our country is dying and history will soon be denied.

## Train Derails Saturday Morning in Eastern Montana; No Injuries Reported

**Grady Higgins, ghiggins@greatfallstribune.com** Published 7:01 p.m. MT April 7, 2018

Around 30 BNSF cars derailed near Oswego in eastern Montana Saturday. (Photo: Cassie Joann Clampitt)

Around 30 Burlington Northern train cars derailed early Saturday morning on the Hi-Line in eastern Montana, spilling grain but no hazardous substances.

According to BNSF spokesman Ross Lane, the train derailed around 5:30 a.m. near Oswego in Valley County, about 12 miles west of Wolf Point. Lane said there were no reported injuries and that the train was not transporting any hazardous materials.

BNSF was on site removing the cars and checking on damage to the tracks as of Saturday evening. "It'll be at least 24 hours to get the track reopened," Lane said, citing the cold temperatures and snow. The cause of the derailment is still under investigation, according to Lane.

## Derailment, Affects the Empire Builder

**From:** Gene Poon sheehans2016@gmail.com [All_Aboard] Saturday, April 7, 2018

Loaded grain train stacked up. 30 cars, BNSF estimated 24 hour closure. Builders were turned at Williston and Havre.

## Permits Submitted for Second BNSF Bridge

*March 01, 2018 at 11:22 am | By Keith Kinnaird Bonner County Daily Bee*

SANDPOINT — Plans for a second BNSF Railway bridge across Lake Pend Oreille are being reviewed by state and federal agencies. If approved by state and federal resource managers, construction on the 2.2-mile span paralleling the existing bridge could start in the fall, according to a public notice published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The deadline to comment on the corps permit is Wednesday, March 28.

BNSF Railway said in 2016 that it was considering a second bridge linking Sandpoint and Sagle to alleviate bottleneck conditions on the 110-year-old bridge on the east side the U.S. Highway 95 Long Bridge. At the time, BNSF Railway officials said as many as 50 trains were passing through Sandpoint every 24 hours and forecasted that it would reached record volumes ahead of schedule. "The project need is based on continued growth of freight rail service between the Midwest (Chicago Terminus) and the West Coast," BNSF said in a permit application on file with the Idaho Department of Lands. The new bridge would be located 50 feet west of the existing span. As many as 700 24-inch steel pilings would be installed to support the new bridge, according to the permit application.

The bridge proposal has drawn the opposition of the Wild Idaho Rising Tide, which contends the span will ultimately exacerbate climate change because it will facilitate the trade of domestic coal and oil products. No public hearings on the BNSF permit request are scheduled, although the public may formally request one. The project is being reviewed against the National Environmental Policy Act. An environmental assessment, as opposed to a more rigorous environmental impact statement, is being prepared for the bridge project, federal records show.

The project is also under review by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Lands and the Coeur d'Alene, Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes. The Idaho Department of Lands has posted the 254-page application, which includes architectural renderings and technical specifications, to its website. The project would permanently discharge 11,220 cubic yards of rock into 1.2 acres of waters. More than a quarter acre of wetlands would be permanently filled, although BNSF seeks to offset that impact by purchasing wetland mitigation credits from the Valencia Wetland Mitigation Bank in Priest River. Comments on the corps permit should be directed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, Attn: Shane Slate, Coeur d'Alene Regulatory Office, 1910 Northwest Boulevard, Suite 210, Coeur d'Alene, ID. 83814-2676. They can also be emailed to NWW_BNSF_Pendoreille@usace.army.mil *Keith Kinnaird can be reached by email at kkinnaird@bon*

## Brightline President: 'Train Ridership is Three Times What We Expected'

by Debora Lima South Florida Business Journal March 7, 2018 provided by John Goodman

Ridership of Brightline has exceeded expectations since the train began service between Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, CEO Patrick Goddard told an audience at the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce luncheon Wednesday. The number of passengers who have used the train in recent weeks is three times larger than the company projected, Goddard said.

He did not disclose specific ridership figures but said Brightline is running an average of 11 roundtrips per day between Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. At capacity, each train can hold up to 240 passengers. "People are excited to be off I-95," the executive said. "We've gotten people out of traffic."

Service to Miami is expected to begin by end of April, he said. On Brightline, passengers can travel between each of its South Florida stops in about 35 minutes, with trains speeding along at about 75 miles per hour. The same trip by car can often take as long as two hours.

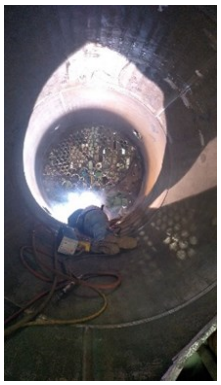
In his comments, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce chairman Gene Schaefer said that while the passenger rail service has experienced pedestrian fatalities, Brightline is a boon to the South Florida community. Several pedestrians have been hit by the train after ignoring armguards and signals. He said the chamber issued a letter of support for Brightline. After the train begins service to Miami, the next planned expansion is to Orlando.


# Front Flue Sheet Installation (C&NW #1385)

Posted on March 30, 2018 Mid-Continent Railway Museum website
Provided by Chuck Lavallee

The front flue sheet (along with the rear flue sheet) support the flues which carry the smoke and hot gasses from the firebox – located at the rear of the locomotive – to the smokebox – located in the front of the locomotive – where they can then escape through the smokestack. The front flue sheet also has multiple larger diameter holes for supporting the superheater flues. In a superheater-equipped locomotive such as the 1385, the superheater re-heats the steam generated by the boiler, increasing its thermal energy and decreasing the likelihood that it will condense inside the engine. Superheating the steam increases the thermal efficiency of the steam engine. Lastly, the single largest hole in the front flue sheet supports the dry pipe. The dry pipe carries the saturated steam (i.e. non-superheated steam) from the steam dome to the superheater header before being directed to the superheater flues. Inside the super-heater flues the saturated steam becomes superheated and is then directed to the cylinders, which in turn provide power to the driving wheels.

*NW 1385 new front flue sheet. March 21, 2018. Photo courtesy Gary Bensman.*



*Continental Fabricators welder installs C&NW 1385's front flue sheet. Photo courtesy Gary Bensman*

*C&NW 1385's new front flue sheet is welded in place. Photo courtesy Gary Bensman*

The following two images show 1385's old boiler to help give perspective of where the front flue sheet resides within the locomotive. You may notice the pattern of the smaller holes for the tubes is different between the new and old sheets.

One advantage of building a new boiler is that we can correct some compromises made when the Chicago & North Western modified the engine to add the superheaters. We can also incorporate an updated design for arch tubes in the firebox which will allow us to put tubes back into the area formerly blanked off in the old boiler. The old boiler has a patch in the belly of the barrel to repair cracking believed to be caused by uneven heating. Those thermal stresses were thought to be the end result of that bottom area of tubes being removed. Another advantage of populating that area with flues again is a gain in heating area so the new boiler should steam a slight bit better.

*The large hole is where the 1385's steam dome will sit.*

*Photo courtesy Gary Bensman*

## Metro News - Rail Safety - Drive A Train Apr 19, 2018 by Rick Krenske

**RAIL SAFETY:** What do UAVs or drones have to do with BNSF trains? See for yourself at the Railroad Technology Showcase, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 3 at the L'Etoile du Nord Vault at the State Capitol. Breakfast is served 8:30-10 a.m. You can even try out a Locomotive Simulator.

**DRIVE A TRAIN:** Ever wonder what it's like to drive a BNSF train? Find out on the Locomotive Simulator at the Railroad Technology Showcase, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 3 at the L'Etoile du Nord Vault at the State Capitol. Breakfast is served 8:30-10 a.m.

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

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|---|---|---|---|
| Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale 2018 (Spring Show) | Saturday, May 12, 2018 from 9 am to 3 pm. | MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights, MN 55108 | $6 |
| Train Day | Saturday May 5 2018 10:00am-5:00pm | St Paul Union Depot 3rd and Waucouta St's St Paul MN | Free |
| #261 Planned Excursion from Minneapolis to Duluth (currently on Hold) | Saturday June 9 2018 Sunday June 10 2018 | Harrison St shops to Duluth LSRM. | See 261.com |
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