



NRHS

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Happy Holidays!



L: CP Holiday Train
Hankinson ND Dec 14
2018 -Chris Hennebry

R: Milw #261 Polar Express
SPUD December 2018
—Brandon Smith.



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Meeting Notice

Just a reminder, our meetings will now start at 6:15pm instead of 6:30pm to give more time for the program. Our next business meeting is scheduled for Saturday January 11 2020 6:15pm, at Roseville Lutheran Church at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, midway between Lexington and Hamline Avenues in Roseville. See map on page 2.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together January 11 2019 at the Keys Cafe and Bakery at the northeast corner of Lexington and Larpenteur starting about 4:35 pm. PLEASE CALL Bob Clarkson at 651-636-2323 and leave a message with your name and the number of persons coming with you. For the best service, Keys Café needs to know how many people will be dining , so it is imperative to let Bob Clarkson know if you are attending dinner!

Program after the January meeting — Jack Barbier video of trains in the 1990's.

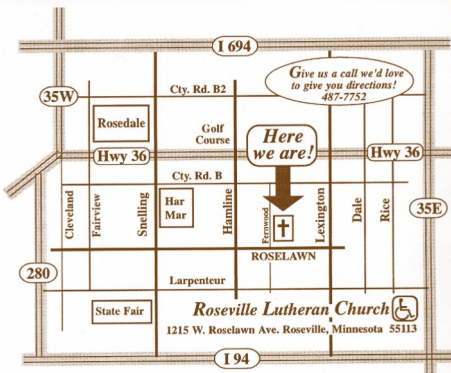
Next newsletter will be out around Jan 2 2020.

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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:

This year, our annual Holiday Banquet will be held on the **second** Sunday (Dec 8 2019) at Guldens in Maplewood MN. Cost is \$29 per person. Sign-up brochure was included in the November 2019 issue. Deadline for payment is Friday December 5 2019. We need 30 attendees to break even!

Note: **Member dues for 2020 are due.** All dues renewals have been mailed out. NRHS member dues are unchanged (\$25), but the *subscription dues* have been raised to \$30, this is mainly due to increased postage in mailing the black & white newsletter. Please remit promptly to the address on your invoice.

Minutes of the November 16, 2019 Northstar Chapter, NRHS Membership Meeting

President Bill Dredge called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. Twenty-six members, subscribers and guests attended. It was determined that there was a quorum with NRHS members raising their hands. John Cartwright moved, and Gary Rumler seconded a motion to approve the October 2019 Northstar Chapter meeting minutes as published in the Northstar News. The minutes were approved by a voice vote of attendees.

Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers Report. He listed the amounts in both the Chapter's and the Calendar's checking accounts as of November 16th. Again, the bottom line is the Chapter's finances are less by about \$1000 as they were at this time last year. Flea Market Sales at the St Cloud Train Show was \$320, not including calendar sales.

John Cartwright gave the Library Report. Library sessions on Wednesdays are proceeding normally. We have documented the Roger Clark estate donations. We are planning to have a library open house sometime next year.

Dawn Holmberg gave the Calendar report. The 2020 calendar sales are doing well. We got two new purchasers at the St Cloud Train Show. We have 3 orders to process at our PO box. We have about 100 calendars left. Calendars will be for sale after the meeting.

Dawn Holmberg gave the Meeting Location report. We are booked for the first five months of 2020 at the Roseville Lutheran Church. We also have one free month offered by the church. The January Meeting has been moved up one week to January 11, 2020 due to the RPCA conference the following weekend.

John Goodman gave Trip Director Report. Mike Mackner reported to John that the Iron Horse Central in Chisago MN has acquired a combine. This would be an option for our August trip. Also, possibilities for next year are the Boone and Scenic RR but there is no news that the steam engine will be running. Riding the D&NE #28 at Lake Superior Railroad Museum is an option, but we are not sure the #28 will be running next year. We will do our annual light rail, Northstar Commuter train ride in June. We will return to Maiden Rock Wisconsin for our summer picnic. Final decision of next summer activities will be decide at our next two meetings. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: The Holiday program is set for December 8, 2019 at Guldens Restaurant. We will have Railroad Consultant Rob Mangles as the speaker. The cost of the Holiday Banquet is \$29.

Newsletter Report was given by Dick Tubbesing. The newsletter cost for November was over \$100. The additional cost was due to sending out snail mail invoices for membership renewals to the E-mail recipients of the newsletter. The sign-up brochure for the holiday banquet and membership renewal invoices were attached to the November newsletter.

John Goodman gave the Cheer Committee report. Mike Mackner is in continuing dialysis treatment. We have not heard from H Martin Swan. It is assumed that he is now confined to home care. Bob Ball has been under the weather this autumn, but is reported to be almost back to normal.

Again, we were sorry to hear about the deaths of Roger Clark and Barney Olson this last summer.

The National Railway Historical Society report was given by John Goodman since Jim McLean is now residing in the Philippines. The Fall Conference was recently held in Dallas, Texas. There was a vote to reduce the BOD members from twenty-five to eleven members. There will be a vote at the Spring Conference, and a membership vote will be held at the Los Angeles Convention in 2020. The Los Angeles Convention will be held June 8 through June 13, 2020 at Fullerton CA. Excursions at the Knots Berry Farm, The Orange Empire Museum and the Filmore and Western are set. The Convention hotel is about five miles from the Fullerton Amtrak Station.

The Web report was given by Dan Meyer. He asked how many have joined the chapter Facebook group. Dan encouraged all to join this group and that all our announcements are posted in this group.

Nominees for the reduced number of five BOD members, effective January 1, 2020 was conducted by President Bill Dredge.

For Bill Dredge, President, solicitation for nominees by the members for candidates was done three times.

For Ed Johnson, Vice President, solicitation for nominees by the members for candidates was done three times.

For Russ Isbrandt, Treasurer, solicitation for nominees by the members for candidates was done three times.

For Richard Tubbesing, Secretary, solicitation for nominees by the members for candidates was done three times.

For National Representative, Dawn Holmberg, solicitation for nominees by the members for candidates was done three times. No new names were offered by the meeting attendees. John Goodman motioned for approval of the slate of officers. The motion was carried by a unanimous vote of the NRHS members present.

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business:

Announcements: John Goodman announced that the future program for January will be 1980s" railroad video by Jack Barbier, and the program for February will be slides by Greg Smith. Programs for the balance of 2020 have not been determined. Steve Kopacz introduced a new member Robert Anderson.

Bill Dredge called for adjournment at 6:30pm. Dan Meyer moved, and Ed Johnson seconded the motion, which passed.

Ross Hammond gave a truly great presentation of 1970s" film of South African Steam, various US and Canada Railroad freight trains, and clips of various passenger trains in the USA. Thank you Ross! Jack Barbier will present the January program, and Greg Smith the February program. Respectfully submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing.



Dec 6-8 and Dec 12-15, 2019

Now On Sale!

Buy Tickets today at

www.261.com (only a few tickets left!)

At St Paul Union Depot

FROM EMPLOYEE HOUSING TO RESORT, IZAAK WALTON INN TURNS 80

November 06, 2019 at 7:11 am | By [Chris Peterson](#) Hungry Horse News Montana



In the 1920s and '30s, men who worked on the Great Northern Railroad near Essex had a tough life in the winter. Their jobs were to keep the railroad line over Marias Pass free and clear of snow — no small task considering the numerous storms that walloped the region and the frequent avalanches that shot over the tracks. When they were finished with work, few had permanent homes.



They lived in wall tents and abandoned railroad cars and other forms of temporary shelter in a place that can drop to 20 below zero in a matter of minutes and sees more than 120 inches of snow a year. Employees eventually had enough. In 1937, I.E. Manion, a Great Northern Superintendent at Whitefish pleaded his case for employee housing at Essex, a few miles from the Continental Divide.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page: "With as many as eight or nine crews working out of Walton in snow service, with three helper engine crews and various officers, including roadmasters, trainmasters, traveling engineer, a master mechanic, also master carpenter frequently tying up at that point; the hotel should be of sufficient size to accommodate six crews of five men each tying up at one time, and three or four division officers and accommodations for the necessary hotel help," Manion wrote to R.A. McCandless, the general manager of the Great Northern in Seattle, according to the narrative attached to the Inn's National Historic Registry in 1984.

Management relented and the Isaak Walton Inn was built in a cooperative agreement between the railroad and the Addison Miller Co., opening on Nov. 15, 1939 as a winter home for employees.

The Inn would house employees in the winter but was a home for guests in the summer months, arriving both by train and by car on the newly-built U.S. Highway 2.

Construction cost was \$40,000.

"I recently built a deck that was almost twice that," said current owner Brian Kelly.

Kelly, who has a background as an ironworker, said maintaining the Inn has been the easy part for him, it's the other aspects that go with owning a resort that are challenging, like managing 108 employees every year.

The Inn originally had 29 guest rooms, 10 bathrooms (they were shared) a spacious lobby, dining room, kitchen, general store, a recreation room and a bar in the basement.

The name Isaak Walton Inn was a bit of marketing on the railroad's part. Isaak Walton was the author of "The Complete Angler and Outdoor Man," a famous book on fly fishing. The region had, and still has, a plethora of wild trout in its streams, and angling is a major draw to the region.

But Walton never stayed at the Inn, not even close. He died in 1683.

After World War II the railroad didn't need the Inn and it was sold to businessman Ed Wellman. Operated exclusively as a guest house, it has changed hands several times since. Kelly bought it in 2006 from Larry and Linda Vielleux.

There have been some upgrades over the years — including adding private baths to the guest rooms. That was done in 1995 by the Vielleuxs.

The Inn is a charming place, with rustic wood interior, and miles of hiking and skiing trails just across the tracks.

The ski trails are groomed in the winter. A season pass is \$225 for a family or \$125 for an individual, though those rates are 50 percent off from now until Dec. 6.

Over the years Kelly has expanded the housing accommodations as guests can now stay in remodeled luxury cabooses and railcars, nearby vacation homes and in the former Essex Schoolhouse, which has been converted to guest facilities as well.

When he bought the Inn and its supporting facilities, he had 37 guest units. Today he has 71, including the Halfway Hotel, which is down the road from the Inn.

Kelly is a high energy owner. He said his plan is to keep the property independently owned.

"I love what I do," he said. "I'm very fortunate."

To learn more about the Inn, visit the Inn's website at izaakwaltoninn.com.



The North Shore Scenic Railroad is currently in our seasonal switch-over from Autumn to the Holidays. There are no train excursions operating during this time. The next scheduled trains after that are the Bentleyville Shuttle Trains and the Christmas City Express, starting November 29th.



The performance of the Christmas City Express begins in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum included with all tickets), where you'll be treated to a reading



of the *new Christmas City Express* story, enjoy carolers, and a visit from a special guest! Then climb aboard the train for a 30 minute ride up to Lake Superior. Onboard, enjoy hot chocolate, cookies and holiday tunes. Show times at 4:15, 5:15, 6:15*, and 7:15* (*except Sunday) Sundays at 3:15pm as well. Full experience is about 90 minutes

\$18.00 for Adults, \$16 for children 3 years and up +\$2 on Saturdays (2 and under are free and do not need a reservation)

Reservations are strongly encouraged for this show, as space is limited. Tickets can be purchased in-person at the The Duluth Depot (North Shore Scenic Railroad) complex starting at 3pm on the dates of performances, but space is very limited and reservations are strongly recommended. There will be a \$.50 handling fee per ticket. *Wheelchair Information: The performance of the story is accessible, however the train ride is not, due to the historic nature of the equipment. Boarding the train requires about 4 steps up to the level of the train. Limited mobility patrons should consider extra time for walking to the train from parking.*

The Bentleyville Shuttle Train operates during this same time period. To learn more about this other holiday train option, click [here](#).

Tickets are just \$7 each. Ride to the Bentleyville Tour of Lights aboard the North Shore Scenic Railroad. Skip the hassle of parking at Bayfront, and enjoy a meal at Fitgers before or after your tour (not included with your ticket)! All tickets are round-trip included. Please allow time for parking at Fitgers, Saturdays are the busiest, but it is a great place to return to after exploring the magic of the Bentleyville Tour of Lights. Keep your parking meter stub and get it validated at any of the Fitger's shops, or at the Train Ticket Office at Fitger's. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: Here is the schedule of trains, along with convenient optional return times from Bentleyville:

Departure Times:	Return Times:
	6:00
4:45	7:00
6:45	7:45
	8:30

We are sorry, but due to the historic nature of the railroad equipment and un-even surfaces leading to the boarding platform, this train is NOT wheelchair accessible. Stollers are allowed but must be able to fold up and be stowed on the train. Very uneven terrain for loading and unloading, and large strollers are NOT recommended. **To do this train as well as the Christmas City Express:** The Christmas City Express Story Performance and Train Ride has moved to the Duluth Depot (ONLY), and trains no longer depart from Fitgers, making the ability to do both on the same night very difficult.

Amtrak had Another Record Ridership Year as it Works Toward its First-Ever Profit

GRAHAM RAPIER, BUSINESS INSIDER NOV 8 2019



An Amtrak assistant conductor stands at the coach door of a train stopped to pick up and discharge passengers at the railroad station in Lamy, New Mexico, near Santa Fe. Amtrak's Southwest Chief, which transports passengers between Chicago and Los Angeles, makes daily stops at the small Lamy station. Robert Alexander/Getty Images

[Amtrak](#) on Friday released its 2019 annual report for the fiscal year ended September 30. The railroad reported its third straight year of record ridership and revenues, as it targets breaking even by 2021. But with Congress threatening to slash Amtrak's budget, and badly needed infrastructure upgrades threatening its most important routes, the fight won't be easy.

[Visit Business Insider's homepage for more stories.](#)

Amtrak saw record ridership and revenue in 2019, the railroad said Friday, marking its third straight year of improvements as the railroad attempts to break even for the first time in its five-decade history next year. For the fiscal year ending September 30, unaudited numbers show Amtrak carried 32.5 million passengers, helping fuel a 3.6% increase in revenues, which totaled \$3.3 billion. On the bottom line, Amtrak lost \$29.8 million, an 83% improvement from 2018. "We listened, we invested, we improved, and our customers are noticing a difference," Richard Anderson, Amtrak's president and chief executive [said in a press release](#). "And we are not stopping. We have an aggressive plan to continue to advance our safety program,

refresh train interiors, improve amenities, and renew stations and infrastructure."

In the Northeast Corridor, Amtrak's busiest and most important route from Washington DC, to Boston, ridership increased about 3%, with the premium "Acela" high-speed service seeing a 4.3% jump. Long-distance routes, which have drawn the ire of lawmakers for their cash burn, saw ridership climb just under 1%.

Key to the railroad's plans for ending its negative cash flow over the next two years is infrastructure improvements to improve timeliness and [reduce costly delays](#). Amtrak's inspector general found in October that nearly one-third of all trains were delayed, costing the agency some \$42 million in annually.

"It's really important for this railroad to run on time if we want to have the confidence of our customers and policy makers," Anderson said on a conference call with reporters.

For 2019, Amtrak spent \$1.6 billion on capital investments, \$713 million of which went to infrastructure projects, and another \$110 million on technology. This spending included new overhead catenary wire on parts of the railroad Amtrak owns outright, as well as nearly 80,000 new concrete ties, and 283 miles of high-speed surfacing.

Amtrak's refreshing its trains, too. \$437 million went to the "largest fleet renewal in company history," Amtrak said, including a new Acela fleet and 75 new diesel locomotives. Next on the list is a new fleet of single-level "Amfleet" cars to replace the aging cars in use throughout much of the Eastern US.

"Bottom line is steady and continued improvement," Anderson said, "whether it's customer service scores, cleanliness of our trains, capital, financial, balance sheet, and engineering. Across the board, the enterprise had a really good year. We're set up well to move into 2020 and do better than break even on an operating basis.

The Sherwood Mine in Michigan

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Tue, 05 Nov 2019 OreRail Group Location: Iron River, Iron Co, Michigan.

It opened in 1931 by Republic Steel Corp. The Sherwood shipped in 1931, 1933 and 1936. The ore was taken out through the Spies-Virgil mine, which was another underground mine. The Spies-Virgil mine was owned by Cleveland Cliffs but was not shipping (inactive) during the time that the Sherwood was hoisting ore out. The Sherwood was acquired by Inland Steel Co. in 1943 and has shipped through 1950 (as listed in the 1952 Lake Superior Iron Ore 2nd edition.)

An internet search indicates that the Sherwood continued with shipments through 1974. The mine was worked by sub-level stopping. Photos on the internet indicate that there is subsidence around the mine area with which formed a pit area.

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minnesota

For Midwest Railroads, the Frac Sand Boom May be Over

By Steve Glischinski | November 8, 2019 From the TRAINS Newswire: Provided by Rick Krenseke



St. Croix Valley No. 1363 works at the Titan Lansing sand plant in North Branch, Minn., on Oct. 8, 2019.

Steve Glischinski

CHIPPEWA FALLS, Wis. – Take a look along railroad lines in western Wisconsin, and you’ll find evidence of the frac sand boom that’s meant good times for railroads. BNSF Railway serves a plant at Maiden Rock; Union Pacific serves mines near Augusta and Wyeville; Canadian Pacific has three facilities along its Chicago-Twin Cities main line at Oakdale, Sparta, and Tunnel City; and Canadian National has sand mines on the west end of the former Green Bay & Western and the ex-Soo Line near Barron and Weyerhaeuser. Shortline Wisconsin Northern has been one of the biggest benefactors of the boom in frac sand mining, serving five sand mines and processing plants along its 37.5 miles of track north of Chippeewa Falls. Areas of western and central Wisconsin, Minnesota, and northern Illinois saw heavy investment from 2011 to 2014, when sand mines, processing plants, and rail loading facilities were emerging. Frac sand is used in the process of injecting liquid at high pressure into subterranean rocks, boreholes, etc. to force open existing fissures and extract oil or gas.

The oil industry and the related frac sand mines have always endured “boom and bust” business cycles, and currently the industry is in the “bust” mode as several plants along Wisconsin Northern, CN, and other railroads have been idled. But this time, the bust for Midwest frac sand may be much harder to recover from. The U.S. is the largest producer of frac sand in the world. Much of the domestic production comes from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois, but the actual fracking takes place elsewhere, and sand must be shipped to shale basins which in some cases are 1,000 miles away or more. Moving sand from mines to transload facilities located near oil and gas plays is the most significant expense of production, accounting for upward of 75 percent of the final cost for some producers, so frac sand mines have located along railroads to reduce costs. This all worked to the advantage of railroads and resulted in an explosion of frac sand business over the last decade.

The upper Midwest produces Northern White sand of high quality, and for years the oil industry clamored to use it for fracking. Its nearly perfect round shape held up well to the pressure of the fracking process. However, according to financial analysts Gordon Brothers and officials at BNSF Railway, because transportation costs are so high for Northern White sand, industry operators in the Permian Basin of Texas and New Mexico have increased their use of sand located in the Basin, known as brown sand or “Texas sand.” While not as high quality as Northern White (brown sand has lower crush resistance and does not stand up well under increased pressure during mining and can clog up wells) oil companies are now willing to overlook its problems due to significant transportation cost savings. That spells trouble for Northern White sand producers and the railroads.

On top of that, there is currently a worldwide glut of oil, resulting in lower prices and less demand, which as a consequence results in less oil mining. The demand for frac sand depends on drilling activity, and the decline in the price of crude oil has resulted in drill counts being down somewhat in 2019. Of course, this has happened before and oil prices will no doubt rise again, but the demand for “brown sand” may not lessen.

According to Gordon Brothers, industry experts have predicted that by 2022, it’s likely that Northern White sand will be completely pushed out of the Permian, Eagle Ford, Haynesville, and Oklahoma shale plays, replaced entirely by brown sand. As recently as 2018 about 75 percent of Permian sand demand was for Northern White, so this is a significant alteration of the marketplace.

The good news is that analysts predict demand for Northern White sand in the Bakken (Canada, North Dakota, Montana), Marcellus (Northeast U.S.), and Canadian oil and gas plays should not be affected as there have been no substantial discoveries of suitable sand deposits near these areas. But while frac sand demand this year has remained flat, the available supply of frac sand has increased, driving down prices and profits. Midwest sand producers are looking to cut their costs to be more competitive, and have looked to railroads to cut their rates. Naturally railroads are reluctant to do so since it cuts into their profits.

The change may hit smaller producers the most. One reason: many producers purchased their own railcars during the boom days. Now with many plants idled, they still must pay what they owe when they purchased the cars, and endure the additional expense of storing the now excess cars during the bust cycle. Larger companies can likely withstand those costs and survive, but small operators may be forced into bankruptcy.

On the flip side, railroads, particularly short lines, that have space for cars can collect significant storage fees. Progressive Rail President Dave Fellon tells Trains News Wire that Wisconsin Northern, which also stores sand cars, is “aggressively working day and night to repurpose the frac sand plants into vibrant brand-new rail served customers.” In the Upper Midwest, mines with the annual capacity of 18 million tons of frac sand have already been idled this year, according to energy research firm Rystad Energy. Kent Syverson, a geology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, believes the region’s frac sand development boom is over with the emergence of brown sand. He told the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram “The capital has already been invested in Wisconsin, so the real questions are how much of this sand will still be needed and how many of these higher-cost operations that are taken off line will never come back.” That’s a questions the plants and the railroads that serve then want answered as well.

Minnesota Museum Begins Fundraising to Rebuild Northern Pacific Coach

By Steve Glischinski | October 31, 2019 From the TRAINS Newswire: Provided by Rick Krenske



Lake Superior Railroad Museum

No. 517 was part of an order for 18 coaches (500-517) built for the Northern Pacific by Pullman-Standard late in 1946 for the streamlined *North Coast Limited*. These chair cars were often used on other Northern Pacific trains, such as the secondary transcontinental train, the *Mainstreeter*, inaugurated in 1952. In its original configuration, the car had 56 seats and a smoking lounge. The car was sold to the Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway in 1974 by Northern Pacific successor Burlington Northern, and was renamed *Minnesota II*. The Missabe donated the car to the museum in August 2000. It has been repainted back into Northern Pacific's two-tone green passenger paint scheme created by industrial designer Raymond Loewy, which began appearing on NP passenger equipment in 1952. In addition to No. 517, the museum owns two other streamlined NP passenger cars: baggage car 255 and *North Coast Limited* sleeper observation No. 390, *Rainier Club*, which is currently being overhauled by the Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad in Wells, Mich.

Donations can be made online at www.duluthtrains.com, by phone at 218-733-7502, or by mail at Lake Superior Railroad Museum,

DULUTH, Minn. – The Lake Superior Railroad Museum has begun fundraising to rebuild the interior of Northern Pacific coach No. 517. The car has been used for several years on the museum's North Shore Scenic Railroad and after thousands of miles the car is in need of rehabilitation. The car will be the winter project for museum shop forces this off season.

Work will include removal and repair of all seats, reupholstering, replacing the flooring, and repainting the interior. Both restrooms in the car will be overhauled as will the air conditioning system.

Wisconsin Great Northern Unveils C&NW-Paint Switcher

By Steve Smedley | October 28, 2019 From the TRAINS Newswire: Provided by Rick Krenske



Freshly repainted SW600 No. 1280 leads Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad's Pizza Train at Earl, Wis., on Saturday, Oct. 26, 2019. The locomotive was repainted to its as-delivered scheme as a surprise for a Chicago & North Western Railroad Historical Society regional meet. Steve Smedley

TREGO, Wis. — A vintage Chicago & North Western paint scheme has returned as tourist railroad Wisconsin Great Northern unveiled SW600 switcher No. 1280, restored to its as-delivered C&NW paint scheme, on Friday, Oct. 25.

The surprise unveiling was part of a Chicago & North Western Railroad Historical Society regional meet held Friday through Sunday at the railroad.

No. 1280 is one of only 15 SW600s produced by EMD, and one of two delivered to the C&NW in March 1954. Shop forces of the Wisconsin Great Northern did the repainting into the heritage scheme at their facility in Trego.

Greg Vreeland, president of the WGN, purchased the locomotive from Independent Locomotive Service in Bethel, Minn., in July 2019. It last worked for Domtar Paper in Rothschild, Wis., as its plant switcher. Vreeland wanted to honor the history of the switcher's original owner.

"I had seen a number of photographs of the 1280 operating in and around Eau Claire, Wis., so one would assume it has spent time here," Vreeland said. His railroad operates on almost 30 miles of Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha trackage between Spooner and Hayward, Wis.

"Obviously this was a perfect opportunity to push this project to completion," Vreeland said. "We set an impossible goal and then achieved it, considering we started only 10 days before hosting the event. We had five days of rain in our 10-day work window." The locomotive was a centerpiece of a night photo session during the three-day historical society meeting, then was the featured locomotive of a three-train photographers special.

"Let's be realistic; it's the graphics that make it work," Vreeland said. "The sign company owner, Ron Helstern of Woodland Sign Company of Barronett, Wis., produces all our heralds and lettering,"

Vreeland was assisted by the historical society with painting diagrams and photographs to ensure an exact match to the 1280's as-delivered scheme.

The engine was used on the railroad's Pizza Train on Saturday, with some mechanical issues cropping up during the photo train.

"Like every locomotive that comes on the property, there are bugs to work out the first few weeks of operation," Vreeland said. "The pizza train was the first time the locomotive had pulled a train on the property."

Fred Hoesser, a retired pharmacist from Durand, Wis., said, "I thought it was just the neatest thing, and I got to operate it. It has that new-car smell about it."

Past St Paul Pioneer Press Article Provided by Dave Herbert (Use the .pdf zoom to read the article)

Hugo businesses benefit from freight-rail spur repairs



COURTESY OF MINNESOTA COMMERCIAL RAILWAY

A 6.5-mile stretch of Minnesota Commercial Railway between White Bear Lake and Hugo is shown under construction.

Officials secured \$1.5M in state funding to fix railroad track

By Mary Divine
mdivine@pioneerpress.com

The railroad track that serves the Bald Eagle Industrial Park in Hugo was in such bad shape a few years ago that Minnesota Commercial Railway planned to abandon the line.

The 7,600 railroad ties on the 6.5-mile "short line" had rotted to the point that the railbed was uneven, and trains were in danger of

tipping over, said Wayne Hall, the railway's chief operating officer.

With just 10 to 15 cars using the freight-rail spur each month, railway officials couldn't justify a loan to make the necessary repairs. Minnesota Commercial, which operates and maintains the Burlington Northern tracks, announced in 2015 that service would end the following year.

"We did some maintenance, but it was too big a job," Hall said. "For the amount of rail cars, we would never have been able to recover (the costs). We would have abandoned the line."

The news sent local officials and owners of businesses within the

RAIL REPAIRS, 4D

CONTINUED FROM 1D

> Rail repairs

Industrial park scrambling. Loadmaster Lubricants and J.L. Schwieters Construction depend on the freight-rail spur to bring in raw materials such as base oil and milled lumber.

In 2016, company officials worked with city, county and state officials to secure \$1.5 million in state funding to repair and upgrade the line, which runs from White Bear Lake to its terminus in the industrial park in Hugo.

The repairs have been done in stages with no stop in service; repairs are expected to be completed by September.

During a tour of the industrial park on Thursday, officials from Loadmaster Lubricants told U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn., and local officials that the rail-line repairs mean their business can stay in Minnesota.

The company ships in about 24,000 gallons of base oil each



MARY E. DIVINE/PIONEER PRESS

U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer, R-Minn., left, talks to John Schwieters, center, owner and president of J.L. Schwieters Construction in Hugo, and Blake Schwieters, the company's production manager, during a tour of the company on Thursday.

week by rail.

"Shipping costs are five times more expensive if you have to bring it in by truck," said Butch Hitchcock, the company's vice president of services and operations. "So it would make the price go

up, and we wouldn't be competitive. We would have had to leave and buy another plant near rail."

The company, which employs 20 people and produces high-grade lubricants for mining, agriculture and

other industries in its 80,000-square-foot plant, expects to double its workforce in the next five years, said Josh Barritt, production manager.

In addition to being more economical, shipping by freight rail saves wear and tear on area highways, said Washington County Commissioner Fran Miron.

"It would take five 18-wheelers to ship what one rail car can ship," he said. "Eighteen wheelers eat up roads quicker than normal traffic."

Just north of Loadmaster Lubricants is J.L. Schwieters Construction. The construction company, which employs about 500 people, recently completed a new 140,000-square-foot manufacturing facility — one that wouldn't have been built if the freight-rail spur had been abandoned, said John Schwieters, president and owner.

"If the line had closed, we would have had to move," Schwieters said. "We were looking as far away as Rochester. We have to have rail and outdoor storage, and

finding the two of those together is almost impossible."

J.L. Schwieters Construction and its associated companies does \$100 million in sales a year, he said. The company builds preassembled wall and floor panels and trusses, and sells them to metro-area homebuilders and commercial developers.

Using prefabricated parts cuts "build time" significantly, according to Schwieters. "We can build a D.R. Horton four-unit building in 10 days," he said. "That's taking a six-week frame cycle down to two weeks."

Business is booming. Schwieters said the new \$14 million plant, located across Fenway Boulevard North from its headquarters and other buildings, will allow the company to add another 100 jobs.

Those jobs, which start at \$40,000 a year, would not have been created if not for the improvements to the freight-rail spur, he said.

"In the first quarter alone, we had 32 rail cars (filled

with milled lumber) come in," he said. "We're on track to have 120 to 150 of rail cars in 2019; we had half that in 2018."

City Administrator Bryan Bear, who joined the tour on Thursday, said loss of the short line would have had a devastating effect on Hugo.

The industrial park is an economic driver for the northern Washington County city, which has a population of almost 15,000 people. Schwieters, which opened in 1999, is the city's largest employer.

"The city recognized that abandoning the railroad would also effectively abandon the businesses that rely on it, likely causing them to relocate elsewhere out of the city," Bear said. "By rallying behind the project, not only were jobs preserved in the community, but it has sparked significant business expansions."

Mary Divine can be reached at mdivine@pioneerpress.com, or on Twitter at @MaryEDivine.

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights

Washington Update with Ross Capon

November 2019

Provided by John Goodman

"You have people [private car owners] wed to a system that's decades old where they got very low rates and could pick what trains they could put their car on and take it off whenever they wanted, and we were taking a lot of passenger train delays..." -Amtrak President & CEO

Richard Anderson at November 13 House Railroads Subcommittee hearing "Amtrak Now and Into the Future"

Anderson was answering this question from Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-1-Oroville, Redding, Auburn): "Charter trains, private cars, things like that. There's been additional fees, restrictions, etc. to where, like in my part of the state, in northern California, it seems from what anecdotes we've been told at our office that it's hardly used any more. What's the issue with private cars, charter trains, being able to attach to ongoing Amtrak?"

After responding as shown here at the top, Anderson continued: "...We already take enough delays. We can't delay 280 people on our train because three people on a private car want to get off on a siding, number one. And number two, the Inspector General did a report on our tracking our costs and being certain that the private car owners - and it's not inexpensive on a private car - pay full freight, and that's what we did, and a lot of them got upset about it because they had a sweetheart deal for a long time."

LaMalfa: "So doing that in rural areas vs. urban areas wouldn't make a lot of difference, you think?"

Anderson: "It does if you've got to pull off on a wye and take a delay. We limited the places where we would pick up a private car and drop off a private car to stations where we had enough time and we had a wye so it was easy to pull the car off."

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LaMalfa: "So time is money. I get it. ..."

Your Association will continue to work to convey to Congress accurate information about cars and charter trains.

Dining Cars: Also, in the hearing, LaMalfa asked Anderson whether dining-car changes had affected "customers and ticket sales." Anderson responded, "We track this. There's a lot of anecdote about food because there are people that love the long-distance service and the halcyon days of sitting in the dining car in your coat and tie, and I appreciate that and we need to invest more in that in a few sort of stellar trips. But when you make these kinds of changes, you make them based on data. We have very good data about what our customer preferences are, and our customer service scores across Amtrak have been very strong on virtually all of our routes and our ridership is growing and it's growing significantly."

Anderson did not reference the only routes where impact of dramatic food service changes likely would be reflected in FY 2019 v. FY 2018 comparisons, since the changes were implemented around the start of FY 2019. These are the Capitol Limited and Lake Shore Limited (with the latter complicated by loss of the New York City section during the summer of 2018).

Later, Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN-9-Memphis) delivered a passionate defense of dining cars, describing rides as a 10-year-old with his dad on the Panama Limited. Cohen asked Rail Passengers Association President & CEO Jim Mathews what he has been hearing from passengers about this.

Mathews: Reaction has been, we'll call it charitably, we'll call it mixed. I have a stack of letters in my office from folks who recount experiences just like the one you did. They look back fondly at some of the meals they enjoyed and the people they met. To some extent, one of the things that's missing, it's not just the food it's the experience. It's the shared experience of meeting people on the train and having that shared meal which, in the modern era, has become increasingly a precious thing because we don't come together in public spaces very often. The interesting thing is that, yes, we've had some millennials who will tell us that they would prefer not to visit with other people, but we've probably an equal number of millennials tell us that that's the part they enjoy. In fact, my own son, before he was an adult, made a point of traveling on a different reservation at dinner than we had, because he wanted to meet other people on the train. And he would come back and tell us who he had met that day at lunch or at dinner. So, it's a very individual thing, but I've got stacks of letters at my office from people who really don't want to see that pass. They understand that maybe we can't have the big thick filet any more, but the idea of sitting at a table with no tablecloth, the bag, a plastic bag, a pile of plastic trash, that's just not what they were looking for and certainly not what they paid for.

Cohen: You have 79,000 signatures?

Mathews: It's actually a little more than that now, sir.

Cohen: People want to have the food service.

Mathews: Yes, sir.

Cohen: When you go on a Pullman car, you get food, but you expect to get prepared food, not paper sack food.

Mathews: Paper sack food is clearly not what anyone was paying for on that service.

Cohen: Mr. Anderson, there was this backlash in June of 2018, and you modified it, I think, in July of 2019. Did that backlash not affect you in understanding that a lot of people enjoy that experience and that's part of what makes passenger rail service so nice.

Anderson: You know, we did this based on market survey data and customer feedback so we give a survey to all of our customers on-line after their trip and we adapt our service to what customers tell us, and we don't do it on anecdote, we do it based on data. And our ridership has grown strongly this year across the board.

Cohen: I travel on Amtrak, the Acela, probably six times a year--

Anderson: Thank you.

Cohen: --and I've done that for 12 years. I don't think I've ever gotten one survey from you. ...

USDOT Rejects Trinidad's BUILD Grant Application for \$16 million for The Southwest Chief Route Improvement Project. DOT's complete list of winning grants is [here](#) (including \$13m for "The Underpass Project at Uptown Station, Normal, Illinois" and \$14m "Southern Illinois Multi-Modal Station (SIMMS) at Carbondale").

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This is part of a pro-rural-road, anti-rail pattern under the Trump Administration. Streetsblog USA [reported](#) November 13 "more than 70% of federal multi-modal grants went to roads in the Trump administration, double the Obama proportion." Colorado was not completely overlooked -- \$18.4m went to "Colorado Military Access, Mobility and Safety Improvement Project, Colorado Springs."

The Amtrak Winter Park Express in 2020 will run Saturdays and Sundays January-March plus the first two Fridays of each month, for a total of 32 trips. The first trip is Friday, January 4. As before, one-way fares start at \$29. Tickets are now on sale at [here](#).



BUILD Grant to Fund Amtrak/Multimodal Station in Carbondale, Illinois

AARPCO News November 2019



A \$14 million Build grant was awarded to the proposed multimodal station in downtown Carbondale, Illinois. The new facility (shown in the rendering) will replace an aging Amtrak train station. Photo - [explorecarbondale.com](#)

U.S. Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) announced a \$14 million grant was awarded to the Southern Illinois Multimodal Station (SIMMS) project, a new transportation center in downtown Carbondale. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) awarded the grants under the Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development (BUILD) program. The grant will be used to fund the design and construction of the new facility, as well as demolition of the existing Amtrak station. The SIMMS project calls for replacing the aging train station and bus stop with a new structure that serves multiple transportation modes.

"This grant will empower Carbondale to make critical updates to its transportation systems, improving access for more residents and providing new infrastructure to best connect Jackson County with the rest of the region," said Bost in a press release.

Formerly known as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, the BUILD program provides discretionary grants to projects that have a significant local or regional impact.

USDOT Extends Funding Deadline for Quad Cities-Chicago Amtrak Route

AARPCO News November 2019



The 160-mile Chicago-to-Quad Cities corridor would be located entirely in Illinois on the BNSF Railway Co. and Iowa Interstate Railroad. Photo - <https://illinoisrail.org>

Federal funding secured nearly a decade ago for a state-supported project to build an [Amtrak](#) Quad Cities-to-Chicago route has received a multiyear extension, three Democratic U.S. lawmakers representing Illinois announced this week.

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) has extended \$177 million in [Federal Railroad Administration](#) (FRA) funding secured in fiscal-year 2010 for a proposed Amtrak route between Chicago and Moline until Dec. 31, 2024, U.S. Sens. Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin and U.S. Rep. Cheri Bustos announced Nov. 5 in a jointly issued press release.

"The Chicago-Quad Cities passenger-rail project is a critical component of Illinois' dynamic transportation system and [this] extension is an important step toward making it a reality," Duckworth said. "I look forward to continuing my work with Sen. Durbin, Rep. Bustos

and local stakeholders to make sure this project is completed as quickly as possible."

The extension was granted after the [three lawmakers wrote](#) twice to U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao to express their support for extending the deadline for use of federal dollars to help fund the project.

The [160-mile Chicago-to-Quad Cities corridor](#) would be located entirely in Illinois on the BNSF Railway Co. and Iowa Interstate Railroad. The service would begin at Chicago Union Station and terminate at the Moline Multimodal Station.

State funding for the project had been delayed under former Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner's administration. However, current Illinois Gov. J. B. Pritzker renewed Illinois' commitment to the route this year by providing \$225 million in state funding,

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the lawmakers' letters stated.

Additionally, the city of Moline has converted a downtown warehouse into a multimodal transportation center and hotel, which will serve as the train station, they said.

Moreover, the Illinois Department of Transportation and Iowa Interstate Rail have been negotiating the project's scope and infrastructure upgrades needed to convert the tracks for passenger service. An extension of the federal funding would allow the negotiations to continue, the lawmakers wrote.

Empire Builder Tops Amtrak Long-distance Trains for Ridership

November 15 2019 Havre Daily News

Editor's note: This version adds comments from an Amtrak spokesman about comparing ridership from now to 10 years ago and clarifies his not commenting on an appropriations bill at this stage of the process.

While a bill that would restore ticket agents to Amtrak stations awaits action in Congress, the national passenger rail service released data showing the Empire Building, which runs across Montana's Hi-Line, has the highest ridership of any long-distance train. According to recent data published from Amtrak, the Empire Builder was the single most-ridden Amtrak long-distance train last year, with a total of 433,372 riders in the fiscal year of 2019.

The Empire Builder was also the most-ridden Amtrak long-distance train in 2018 with 428,854 riders. The second-highest ridden long-distance train was the California Zephyr for both 2018 and 2019.

Rail Passenger Association Representative-At-Large Mark Meyer said that it is a positive to see the Empire Builder has had high ridership, although ridership is still significantly lower than it was a decade ago.

"The FY 2019 ridership was about 120,000 less than Empire Builder ridership in 2008 at 554,000 or so," Meyer said.

But ridership may have been higher a decade ago because at the time the equipment for the Empire Builder was refurbished, the on board amenities upgraded and the train was promoted through advertising, he said. Meyer added that this is not the case today.

"I am afraid nothing will change unless there is a change of leadership at Amtrak," he said.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said that was also when the Bakken oil boom was happening in North Dakota and northeastern Montana, and comparing then to now is not valid.

In June of last year, Amtrak cut the ticket agents from 16 stations in the country including in Havre and Shelby as a cost-saving measure. Amtrak said that the cuts were due to customers purchasing their tickets on the internet or through automated telephone ticket purchasing. The criteria for Amtrak cut staffing at stations that averaged fewer than 40 passengers a day in order to be "good stewards of taxpayer dollars."

The decision was locally opposed by many people, some of whom said the cuts and changes ignored the other services ticket agents performed such as ticket agents assisting passengers with luggage, medical care and other services. Removing ticket agents also restricts children to board the train unless an adult guardian is traveling with them. Ticket agents were replaced with station caretakers, who are not official Amtrak employees and unable to provide the same services as ticket agents.

In response to a number of complaints, national congressional delegates have put forth a bill to require Amtrak to restore ticket agents to a number of stations which have been cut.

U.S. Sen. [Jon Tester](#), D-Mont., announced in September he had inserted language in an appropriations bill to benefit Montana, including language and funding requiring Amtrak to bring ticket agents back to a number of the stations where they eliminated in 2018.

"In a rural state like Montana, our airports, rail and highway systems serve as vital links for our economy," Tester said in a press release about the bill. "If we don't keep investing in those systems, we'll never see the dividends. This bill puts gas in the tank so we can continue building up our airports, shoring up our rail system along the Hi-Line, and giving our farmers and ranchers the tools to get products to market — keeping the engines of our economy humming."

The legislation includes a large boost in funding for Amtrak, increasing Amtrak's general funding to \$2 billion, \$58.4 million more than last year, which will keep long-distance routes, including the Empire Builder that runs along Montana's Hi-Line, operating. One of Tester's additions was to require Amtrak to restore ticket agents to stations from which it eliminated them in 2018 if they average at least 25 passengers a day.

U.S. Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., also voted to approve the bill.

Tester's Press Secretary Sarah Feldman said in an email that the Senate passed the bill last month and it is in a conference committee to resolve differences with the with the House version of the appropriations bill.

"Sen. Tester is continuing to push to keep the Amtrak/ticket agent language included," she said.

Daines and Rep. Greg Gianforte, R-Mont., both of whom have said they support Amtrak's long-distance trains and bringing back ticket agents, did not respond to requests for comment.

In February, President Donald Trump signed a budget agreement which would prevent the federal government from re-entering a shutdown. This legislation included funding for Amtrak, contingent on Amtrak providing a station agent in each of its stations that had ticket agent positions eliminated in fiscal year 2018.

Amtrak said that it was already in compliance with the directive by having station caretakers at the stations.

In its report on its version of the appropriations bill in which Tester inserted the ticket agent language, the House Appropriations Committee also told Amtrak to improve its work in several areas, including restoring ticket agents.

Magliari said commenting on the appropriations bill in the conference committee at this time would be premature

Wisconsin Central Ltd.-Operation Exemption-Hallett Dock No. 5 in Duluth, Minn.

A Notice by the [Surface Transportation Board](#) on [11/22/2019](#) Provided by David Shauer

Wisconsin Central Ltd. (WCL), a rail carrier,^[1] filed a petition seeking an exemption under [49 U.S.C. 10502](#) from the prior approval requirements of [49 U.S.C. 10901](#) to operate a rail/water dock facility in Duluth, Minn., known as Hallett Dock No. 5 (the Dock), after WCL acquires the Dock from its current noncarrier owner, Hallett Dock Company. The Dock is an approximately 100-acre, ground-level rail/water bulk commodity transfer and storage dock facility that includes a 2,400-foot vessel berth, two ship loaders, a railcar unloader, dry storage building, approximately 9,000 feet of rail trackage on the dock, and approximately 6,300 feet of adjacent railcar holding tracks along the shore line.

In an accompanying petition to set a procedural schedule, WCL requests that replies to the petition for exemption be due by December 13, 2019, and WCL's response by January 2, 2020.

The Board will institute an exemption proceeding pursuant to [49 U.S.C. 10502\(b\)](#). A procedural schedule will be set as noted below, consistent with the reply and response deadlines WCL requested.

All pleadings, referring to Docket No. FD 36346, must be filed with the Surface Transportation Board either via e-filing or in writing addressed to 395 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20423-0001. In addition, a copy of each pleading must be served on WCL's representative: Thomas J. Litwiler, Fletcher & Sippel LLC, 29 North Wacker Drive, Suite 800, Chicago, IL 60606-3208.

Board decisions and notices are available at www.stb.gov.

It is ordered:

1. An exemption proceeding is instituted under [49 U.S.C. 10502\(b\)](#).
2. Replies to WCL's petition are due by December 13, 2019.
3. WCL's response to any replies is due by January 2, 2020.
4. Notice of this decision will be published in the **Federal Register**.
5. This decision is effective on its date of service.

Decided: November 18, 2019.

By the Board, Scott M. Zimmerman, Acting Director, Office of Proceedings.
Kenyatta Clay,
Clearance Clerk.

Footnotes

1. WCL is an indirect subsidiary of Canadian National Railway Company.

Federal Legislation to Avoid Cuts to Transit Funding Passes, is Signed by President Trump

By [Dan Zukowski](#) | November 22, 2019 Trains Washington Watch

WASHINGTON — A threatened automatic cut to federal transportation funding, known as rescission, was avoided Thursday night when Congress repealed part of the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The portion that was repealed mandated massive cuts that would have taken effect July 1, 2020.

President Trump signed the bill, which was added as an amendment to legislation needed to keep the government operating for another 30 days as legislators continue to hammer out a full budget package for fiscal 2020.

The rescission had been included in the FAST Act as a means to lower the program's overall cost.

Rep. Sam Graves, the Republican Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said in a statement, "Our state and local officials will no longer have to worry about a massive \$7.6 billion cut that would sideline important roadway improvements, bridge maintenance and replacement projects, and many more plans to upgrade and modernize our infrastructure system."

Transit systems would have suffered as part of the overall funding cut. Paul Skoutelas, president of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), applauded the work of Senate and House members, noting that the legislation prevents a "\$1.2 billion cut to public transportation funding by blocking a 12% across-the-board funding cut to every transit agency in the nation in fiscal year 2020."

The FAST Act, which authorizes \$287 billion in transportation funding from the Highway Trust Fund, is due to expire Sept. 30, 2020.



St. Croix Valley SD40-2 No. 1326, wearing an NP logo for the day, heads south near Pine City, Minn. on Oct. 8, 2019.

Steve Glischinski

Fan-favorite Minnesota Short Line Faces Loss of Business

By [Steve Glischinski](#) | November 15, 2019 From the TRAINS Newswire:

RUSH CITY, Minn. — The St. Croix Valley Railroad, famous for its diesels painted in the style of the Northern Pacific Railway, is facing the loss of one of its major customers. The railroad operates the last significant portion of the former NP main line from the Twin Cities to the Twin Ports, 36 miles from Hinckley to North Branch known by the NP as the "Skally Line." It serves a flour mill in Rush City and a sand plant in North Branch.

Earlier this year Ardent Mills LLC announced that it would permanently close its flour mill in Rush City in February 2020. The facility will then be torn down to assure no competitor purchases it. The Rush City mill principally grinds spring wheat and durum, the latter is used is used to make pasta. *Continued on next page:*



St. Croix Valley No. 1326 switches the Ardent Mills flour mill in Rush City, Minn., on Oct. 7, 2019. The mill will close permanently in February 2020. Steve Glischinski

Continued from previous page: The Rush City mill has a long history. It was the first mill acquired by Farmers' Union Grain Terminal Association, a predecessor cooperative to CHS Inc. The mill was built in 1910 and converted to a durum mill in 1926.

That still leaves the railroad with its biggest customer: the Titan Lansing sand plant in North Branch. The railroad receives empties from BNSF Railway at Hinckley and takes loaded sand trains back for interchange. The plant opened in 2013 with sand trucked from Grantsburg, Wis. With the current downturn in the frac sand business, carloads from the plant have slowed to a trickle. While there have been persistent rumors about the plant closing permanently, the company has not announced any plans to do so and the railroad has not received any information about a permanent closure.

With sand traffic greatly reduced, the only remaining customers after Ardent Mills closes would be Interstate Energy Partner's propane facility in Rush City and Zinpro Corp. at North Branch, which produces animal nutrition products and receives about 100 cars of chemicals a year. Whether the railroad could hang on with that traffic and minimal sand shipments until it can land more business is an open question.

St. Croix Valley currently has three locomotives painted in a quasi-Northern Pacific scheme: GP9 1363 and two SD40-2s rebuilt from SD45s but retaining their original carbodies, Nos. 1325-1326. Another NP-painted locomotive, GP8 No. 1352 has mechanical issues and is off the property.

NP's "Skally" line was downgraded following the BN merger, with most traffic moving on the former Great Northern between the Twin Cities and the Twin Ports. BN began abandoning portions of the line in mid-1970s north of Hinckley; the route south of North Branch was cut in 1989. St. Croix Valley began operations in 1997 under the aegis of RailAmerica; in 2000 it was sold to KBN Inc., which also owns short lines Dakota Northern and Minnesota Northern.



Train Derails Near Ulen, MN

Ulen, Minn. (Valley News Live) Crews are working to clean up a train derailment near Ulen.

Dispatch confirms to Valley News Live the call came in early Monday morning around 1:02 for a Burlington Northern train that went off the tracks.

As of 8 this morning, train cars and some type of grain could still be seen near the tracks.

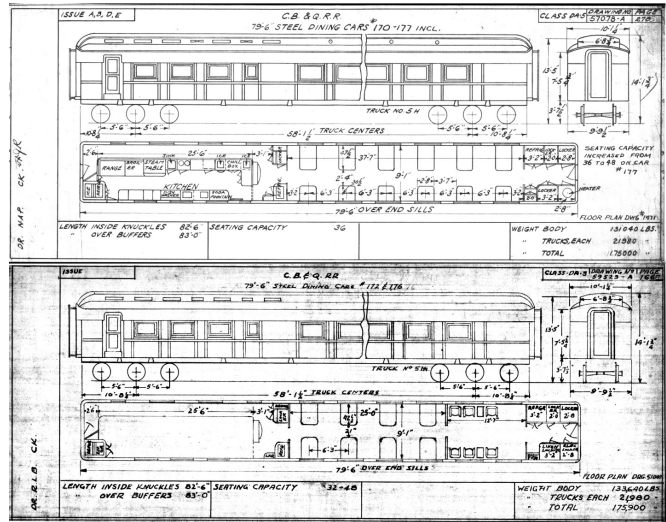
BNSF alerted the Clay County Sheriff's office about the incident and told them they would not need any additional resources and that they would clean up the situation on their own.

Because of this, no officials were sent to the scene.

We have a crew headed to the scene to gather more information, stay with Valley News Live as we investigate.

Posted: Mon 8:56 AM, Nov 25, 2019 | Updated: Mon 9:12 AM, Nov 25, 2019

CB&Q Diner-Lounge 172, 176 Provided by John Goodman



Car 177 on May 16, 1958. This car was equipped with ice activated air conditioning.



Built by AC&F - April 1917 Remodeled - 1956 Soon after the end of World War Two the Milwaukee Road and Chicago & North Western upgraded their overnight services between the Twin Cities and Chicago with new streamlined equipment. Milwaukee's Pioneer Limited was fully equipped with all new coaches, diner-lounges and sleeping cars, while the North Western Limited received new coaches and sleepers. The Burlington however, abandoned its competitive rivalry and took a more conservative approach, placing their Blackhawk at a severe disadvantage with its staid heavyweight consist. Finally in mid-1952 piecemeal upgrades began to appear, starting with new sleepers from the Budd Co.,

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page: delivered between June and September. In 1954 ten heavyweight chair cars received cosmetic re-furbishing, including a semi-streamlined roof contour and silver paint with shadow lining to simulate the appearance of fluted stainless steel sheathing ("simulated stainless steel" or SSS in Burlington parlance).). Four of these (4520-4523) were fitted with leg-rest seats and assigned to the Blackhawk. Nothing was done with dining cars until the end of 1955, when cars 172 and 176 were selected for remodeling. Both had previously been equipped with mechanical air conditioning. As was typical with this type of conversion the rear third of the dining room was given over to lounge space. In an effort to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear the world famous Mandel Brothers department store, located on State Street in Chicago, was hired as the interior decorating consultant. Known improvements were to include:

- 1) New dining chairs of the same type used on the postwar Zephyr diners. Dining room seating capacity would be 32 places with the lounge furniture in place, expandable to 48 places without the lounge furnishings.
- 2) Tables were to have Micarta covering.
- 3) Venetian blinds and drapes.
- 4) Adams & Westlake breather type window sash.
- 5) Chef's ice box and ice cream cabinet converted to dry ice refrigeration.
- 6) Partition between dining and lounge sections - Met-L-Wood below and decorative mesh grille above..

Undoubtedly floor covering and lighting were also included. Interior colors were shades of Turquoise. Light for the ceiling and hallways, Medium for the pier panels to the ceiling, Dark for the wainscoting below the windows. Lounge chairs were red. Originally a built-in curved love seat was intended for the rear corners of the lounge section, along with three chairs and a small table on each side. However the desire for a flexible dining room capacity meant that all of the lounge furniture had to be readily removable and thus the love seats were dropped. Presumably the spaces were occupied by additional chairs, although nothing was shown on the floor plan. There were apparently no real upgrades to any kitchen equipment. The unsightly exterior with rivet belts all over the place remained unchanged, except for a coat of silver paint (without shadow lining) for a decidedly unmodern appearance. These cars were out of service by 1966 and were sold for scrap in January 1967.

Twin City (TCRT) Street car at the East Troy WI Museum

Photos by -Doug Gough



ALL ABOARD MINNESOTA



Second Train to Chicago

Provided by Rick Krenske

We have a chance to make a real difference!

Funding for the second Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago train could be included in the Governor's bonding bill if he receives input from Minnesotans. This would be a huge win and could really propel this service to reality!

To provide a second train frequency, \$10 million in state funding (a small drop in the bucket) is needed to match a federal grant application to upgrade the railroad allowing for more passenger train service in Minnesota. Wisconsin will request funding from their legislature, and we need to work together! [Click this link](#) to provide your opinion before Nov. 30.

It takes about a minute to do this! Please do this today!

More info:

(From the Minnesota Management and Budget website) Earlier this year, local governments submitted more than 200 requests for investment in their communities, totaling more than \$1.3 billion, for consideration during the 2020 Legislative session. We want your input! Fill out the online form to comment on local government investment projects up for consideration in the 2020 capital budget (bonding) bill. Governor Walz will review this information with Minnesota Management and Budget staff as they develop his capital budget proposal which will be submitted to the Legislature in January 2020. The public comment period will be open through Nov. 30.

Amtrak Employee Advisory Media Policy

Provided by John Goodman

SPECIAL EMPLOYEE ADVISORY

Amtrak Social Media Policy A Message from DJ Stadler

To All Amtrak Employees,

We have just created a new Social Media policy, which you can [read in full](#). You are responsible for understanding and following this policy.

We recognize that many Amtrak employees and contractors use personal online social media channels. Our new policy provides guidance on how you can comment about Amtrak on your social media channels – while also protecting Amtrak's reputation and adhering to all of the company's legal and ethical standards.

Most of our guidelines can be followed simply by using common sense and good judgment. For your convenience, we have created an infographic of "Dos and Don'ts" when using social media to talk about Amtrak, which you can see below.

We do want to call your attention to these specific guidelines:

- **Use of social media at work – should be done sparingly and only on personal devices.** Amtrak views social media monitoring as a distraction from work. Employees and contractors are discouraged from accessing social media channels at work, unless their role specifically requires it. Without this exception, employees and contractors may not use Amtrak resources to access social media.
- **Refer all media inquiries to Corporate Communications.** If you are contacted by anyone working in the news, you should refer that person to Amtrak Corporate Communications at [202-906-3860](tel:202-906-3860) during regular business hours, or [800-562-1904](tel:800-562-1904) after business hours. Unless you are specifically authorized, Amtrak employees and contractors may not speak to the media on Amtrak's behalf.
- **Contact Amtrak's Social Media team if you see content that violates this policy.** You can email the Amtrak Social Media team at social@amtrak.com.

If you have any questions about the policy, please contact social@amtrak.com for additional guidance. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

DJ Stadler
Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer

EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

DOs

- DO** share your positive Amtrak experiences online (and tag our official Amtrak accounts and use #Amtrak!)
- DO** disclose that you are an Amtrak employee in your social media bio or in your Amtrak-related post
- DO** use good judgment and remember that anything you post may be seen by your manager, coworkers, family, friends, and customers
- DO** feel free to share posts from the official Amtrak social media channels
- DO** report anything that violates these social media policies

DON'Ts

- DON'T** exhibit any unsafe behavior
- DON'T** share any confidential Amtrak information
- DON'T** engage with customers online
- DON'T** engage with media or news outlets online
- DON'T** post anything that could negatively impact Amtrak's reputation

OUR OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS:

- social@amtrak.com
Email us if you see something that looks suspicious or violates our policy or if you have a question or need something positive done.
- [Facebook.com/Amtrak](https://www.facebook.com/Amtrak)
Responds to customer requests and posts, events, pictures, and marketing info.
- [@Amtrak](https://www.instagram.com/Amtrak)
Sharing pictures and videos from our brand and our fans.
- [@AmtrakAlerts](https://twitter.com/AmtrakAlerts)
For service alerts and updates from our brand and our fans.
- [@AmtrakNECAAlerts](https://twitter.com/AmtrakNECAAlerts)
For service alerts and updates from our brand and our fans.
- [linkedin.com/company/amtrak](https://www.linkedin.com/company/amtrak)
For company updates and news from our brand and our fans.
- [youtube.com/AMTRAK](https://www.youtube.com/AMTRAK)
For travel inspiration and how-to videos.

3 Trains Derail in Hempfield PA; 50 Railroad Cars Jump Tracks; No Injuries Reported



PAUL PEIRCE | Friday, November 8, 2019 4:04 p.m. Trib Live (Western PA News)

Three Norfolk Southern Corp. mixed-freight trains were involved in a derailment about three miles east of Greensburg on Friday that derailed 50 shipping containers, blocking both rail lines that carry freight and passenger traffic on the heavily traveled route between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, the railroad said.

No one was reported injured in the wreck.

There were no reports of any hazardous material that leaked as a result of the derailment that occurred about 2:30 p.m., when eight rail cars transporting 32 containers were pushed off the tracks, Norfolk Southern said in a statement late Friday night.

The trains derailed just west of the Georges Station Road bridge in Hempfield, along a double mainline section of track.

A westbound freight train transporting empty crude oil tank cars from Altoona to the huge rail yard in Conway, Beaver County, collided with the rear of a westbound intermodal train that carries trailers that will be hauled by big rig trucks.

Two locomotives pulling the crude oil cars were knocked off the track but remained upright. Three rail cars transporting 18 shipping containers derailed off the intermodal train, Norfolk Southern said.

Some of the equipment that derailed struck part of an eastbound train traveling on the adjacent mainline track, causing the derailment of eight rail cars transporting 32 containers on the eastbound train.

Several of the trailers carrying the name J.B. Hunt International were torn apart by the force of the collision, exposing shredded paper and other products.

A derailed locomotive was pinned by a freight car that jumped the tracks. At the spot where the collision occurred, the rail line was twisted and shipping containers were pushed against the hillside.

Norfolk Southern personnel and contractors that specialize in derailment recovery are working to restore train service to double mainline tracks where the rail cars derailed.





TWIN CITY MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM
SAINT PAUL, MINNESOTA
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668 Transfer Road, Suite 8
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Phone: 651 - 647 - 9628

Night Trains 2019 – 2020 Season

Night Trains season is a special Holidays tradition at the Twin City Model Railroad Museum. ***Night Trains will begin on Saturday, November 2nd and runs every Saturday evening from 6:00 to 9:00 pm through the last Saturday in February (Saturday, February 29th, 2019).*** Night Trains Season comes to museum layouts in a magical way, the lights are turned down, the buildings and street lights glow warmly, setting the scene for specially lighted models of vintage passenger trains. The make believe town of Matlin is buried in a blizzard, and throughout the Museum the layouts are adorned with miniature Christmas lights and decorations. **Admission** \$15 for Individuals Family and Group Rates (Groups of 3 or more, max 10) available: The first two visitors pay full price (\$15) and each additional member of the group pays half price (\$7.50). Examples: 4 Guests: \$45, 6 Guests: \$60, 10 Guests: \$90. This equals a great savings for your family or group! Children 4 and under FREE. **2019-2020 Special Evenings** *Special appearances may change without notice. Please watch our Facebook page for the latest info. **Santa Visits Night Trains – Saturday, December 14th AND Saturday, December 21st** – get your photo taken with Santa at the museum! Included with your regular admission, no waiting in long lines at the mall. **Artist John Cartwright's Depot Art on Display and Sale.** During the following weekends, artist John Cartwright will display and sell his unique train and depot art! **Great River Valley System – TBD** – A local N-Scale club will be displaying their modular layout at the museum inside the conference room. So come and check out this neat display during both our daytime hours or during Night Trains. Plus, they will be here thru Sunday, January 20th. For more information about the GRVS group click [here](#).

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

NMMRC(North Metro Model Railroad Club) Flea Market and Open House	Saturday Dec 7 2019 9 am—2 pm	Flea Market: Coon Rapids VFW Post 9625 1929 Coon Rapids Blvd NW, Minneapolis, MN 55433	\$6
Twin City Model Railroad Museum (Friday Nites are Back)	Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays 10:00 am—3:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am—5:00 pm Sundays 12:00 pm—5:00 pm	668 Transfer Road Suite 8 St Paul MN 55114 651-647-9628 (see Night Trains on Page 17 too)	\$15 (special rates for groups)
Hennepin Overland Model Railroad Club open house	Most Saturday's and Sunday's Oct 2019 thru January 2020. 1:00 pm—4:00 pm	62501 East 38th Street Minneapolis MN 55406 (612) 276-9034	\$5 \$15 family
Randolph Railroad Days (15th annual)	March 28th, 29th 2020 10:00am—3:00 PM	Randolph Minnesota High School Randolph MN 55065	\$6
24th Annual Model Railroad Show Albert Lea MN	Saturday Dec 7 2019 9:00 am—5:00pm Sunday Dec 8 2019 10:00 am—3:00 pm	Northbridge Mall Shopping Center 2510 Bridge Ave Albert Lea MN 507-377-3185	\$6
Newport Model RR Club Train Flea Market	Jan 18 2020 9:00 am—2:00 pm	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury MN 55125	\$5
Great Tri-State Rail Sale	Saturday Jan 25 2020 9:00 am—3:00 pm	La Crosse Center 2nd and Pearl Streets Lacrosse WI	\$5
Worlds Greatest Hobby on Tour	Feb 29 and March 1 2020 10:00 AM—5:00 PM	RiverCentre St Paul MN (next to Excel Arena)	\$10

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Address Correction Requested

