

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

High Water



Remember the Floods of 1965 and 1969?

L: 1965 Flood looking E at SPUD R: 1969 Flood Looking W from Mounds Park in St Paul and looking at Lamberts Landing St Paul. Wm Cordes and R Tubbesing Coll



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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. Next business meeting is scheduled for Saturday May 18th 2019 6:15pm, at Roseville Lutheran Church at 1215 Roselawn Avenue, mid-way between Lexington and Hamline Avenues in Roseville. See map on page 2.

There will be a pre-meeting get-together May 18th 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 meeting—Jack Barbier Video of Railroads from his collection.

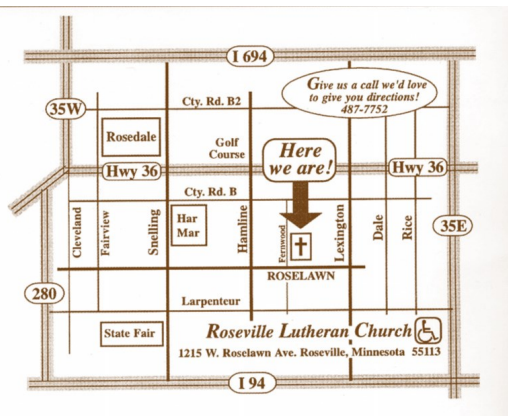
Next newsletter will be out around **July 1st 2019**.

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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:

UP #844 and Big Boy 4014 will be running from Cheyenne to Ogden UT and return. The NRHS Convention is a great opportunity to see these classic locomotives. If you haven't signed up for the convention you are too late for registration. But if you are willing to chase, the locomotives will be running according to the schedule published in the last newsletter, including a double header on the return trip to Cheyenne.

Photo selection for the 2020 calendar is now being finalized and should be ready for the publisher in another month.

Again, Chapter Dues and subscription renewals are past due. If you do not renew by the end of March, you will be dropped from the mailing list. Please renew and you can join in our activities for this 50th anniversary year.

Meeting Minutes Apr 20 2019.

The Meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm at Roseville Lutheran Church by President Bill Dredge. 20 members were present. A quorum was declared. John Goodman and Ed Johnson motioned to approve the March 2019 meeting minutes as printed in the April 2019 Newsletter. The Motion was carried. The Treasurers report was given by Russ Isbrandt. Our Checking account balance is about twenty five hundred dollars less than last year. A question was raised as to how many members are NRHS members and Russ Isbrandt said about 35 members are NRHS members. Russ Isbrandt gave the Library Report. An inquiry as to when we would have a Open House at the library was asked. There have been no discussions by the Library Committee as to when we would have an open house. The Calendar Report was given by Dawn Holmberg. Slide images are being finalized for the 2020 calendar. Dawn reported that we made seventeen hundred dollars profit from calendar sales. The Trip Director report was given by John Goodman. We are going to have our annual Light Rail/Northstar train ride the third Saturday in June. Richard Tubbesing stated that the schedule (announced by John Goodman) will be in the next newsletter. Our annual picnic will be held in Prescott WI the third Saturday in July. Our August trip will be a charter of the streetcars at the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. Russ Isbrandt stated that it would start at 11:00 AM and we would have an hour to ride and we would have many runby's as desired. The Program Report was given by John Goodman. The planned May 2019 meeting program will be postponed until the September meeting since the presenter will not be present at the May Meeting. (see note on page 1)

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page: We will have DVD programs from the Bill Dredge Collection at the May meeting. John stated that we need more volunteers to present programs this fall as the autumn schedule has not been determined. John Goodman gave the NRHS report. The Convention in Salt Lake City is full. UP's 'Spike 150' programs are set. The Heber Valley Charter is sold out. John Goodman also stated he is coordinating when and where we will hold our 50th Anniversary dinner and that depends when officials from the NRHS can be present. The Newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. The cost of the last newsletter was far less than the March Newsletter, and we were overcharged for the March newsletter, and should get a credit on the next newsletter. Ross Hammond stated that he likes the newsletter, and solicited that the attendee's give the publisher a hand of appreciation. The Cheer Committee was given by John Goodman. An attempt to contact former President H. Martin Swan to see how his progress was produced no answer. The Web report was given by Dan Meyer. The website has been update and has current data. Old Business. The proposed by-laws change to reduce the BOD from seven members to five was discussed. Dan Meyer presented the proposed change where the current BOD consisting of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, NRHS Representative, Past President and Trustee will change to the new board of President, Vice President/Secretary, Treasurer, NRHS Representative, and Past President. Richard Tubbesing stated that this change will be published in the next newsletter. A vote to approve the change was passed. The change will be effective Jan 1, 2020. There was no new Business. The meeting was motioned to adjourn by Dan Meyer and John Goodman at about 6:50pm. Announcements: Cy Svobody stated that Fleet Farm has a magazine featuring the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad. Ed Johnson stated that he has a cheap ticket for sale to the NRHS convention in Salt Lake City. Bill Dredge stated that the Hennepin Overland Model Railroad Club will not be open Easter Sunday, but will be open the following Sunday. Richard Tubbesing stated that there are still tickets available for the MRHA convention #261 trips June 21 and June 22. After a short break, Trains Magazine DVD provided by Bill Dredge on the building of the Transcontinental Railroad was shown. Gary Weldon then presented a DVD of 8mm film he and his mother shot of Twin City passenger trains in the 1960's which was very well received. Then a portion of Trains Magazine DVD of the Union Pacific 150 years after the Golden Spike and looking at Echo and Weber Canyons in Wyoming and Utah was shown. Respectfully Submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing.

Annual Northstar and Metro Transit Tour Saturday June 15 2019.

We will Meet at the Bloomington 28th St Station between 10:00am and 10:30am on the Light Rail Blue Line to ride to Target Field. Northstar Train Leaves Target Field 11:30am and arrives at Big Lake 12:22PM (Lunch on your own here) You can meet our group at Target Field if desired.

Northstar Train Leaves Big Lake 12:50pm and arrives Target Field 1:42pm.

Option... Return to Bloomington 28th station, Blue line train

Departs 2:16 pm or 2:26pm arrive Bloomington 2:57pm or 3:07pm

(Light Rail 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 Bloomington Departs SPUD 3:12 or 3:22pm arrives at US Bank Stadium 3:49 or 3:59pm.

Spring Flooding Impacting Railroad Traffic in Minnesota, Midwest.

Chanel 5 Eyewitness news March 29, 2019 06:41 PM

Several temporary flood walls, built to combat the threat of spring flooding in Minnesota, are also causing delays for Union Pacific trains.

Two of the flood walls, built on railroad tracks north and south of Union Pacific's rail yard in South St. Paul, have caused significant delays for trains entering and leaving the yard.

"It's been a very difficult time," Union Pacific Switching Foreman Kevin Klitzke said. "It hasn't been this difficult in a very long time."

the Hoffman Swing Bridge over the Mississippi River is one of the only ways trains can exit the South St. Paul yard. The bridge normally gets about eight trains a day. But lately, due to other tracks being cut off because of the flood walls, the bridge is seeing twice that amount.

Klitzke said the reduced number of open and available tracks is leading to congestion. And ultimately to a delay in trains getting to their destinations.

"We're kind of limited in the area we have to work these trains around each other," Klitzke said. "It takes a lot longer to go from Point A to Point B than it would normally."

Union Pacific is also dealing with tracks that have been washed out in Iowa and Nebraska, which is adding to the congestion and delays in train traffic throughout the Midwest.

The company is trying to offset the impact of the disruptions by extending the length of some trains from 5,000 and 6,000 feet to as much as 10,000 feet.

"We're making the trains as long as practically feasible," Klitzke said. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: He added that this time of year, the trains entering and leaving the South St. Paul yard typically carry oats, corn and fertilizer farmers in the Midwest use for feeding and planting. But because of the flooding, Klitzke says trains are getting to their destinations weeks later than expected. "You'll eventually notice in an increase in cost for your groceries at the grocery store," Klitzke said. "We won't be able to move grain trains, automobiles, anything like that. "It's going to take substantially longer." Klitzke said if the Mississippi comes up another three feet, it could cause additional flood walls to be constructed, which would cut off the rail yard's only remaining open tracks. That would result in a total shutdown of the rail yard. The last time the Union Pacific's South St. Paul rail yard experienced a total shutdown was 2011. Other trains that have been affected by flooding this season are BNSF and Amtrak.



Aerial footage of flood waters on the Minnesota River around Port Cargill in Savage MN March 25 2019.



The Minnesota River Approaches the Union Pacific Tracks in Savage March 25 as snowmelt pushed the river to major

Updated: Minnesota River Reaches Major Flood Stage in Savage; Water to Rise Through Week.

By Christine Schuster cschuster@swpub.com Mar 26, 2019
Savage MN Pacer News

Updated at 4 p.m. Wednesday

The Minnesota River in Savage entered major flood stage Wednesday and is expected to reach the highest levels since 2001 this weekend. The gauge at Port Cargill in Savage measured the river at 712.1 feet at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday. Major flood stage begins at 712 feet. The National Weather Service's projections show the water will continue to rise this weekend to around 713.4 feet, placing it on the list of historic crests. The weather service also forecast a two-week crest to begin this week.

Lisa Brickey, warehouse manager for Mosaic Crop Nutrition in Savage, said the last train pulled into the company's warehouse yard Tuesday morning. She said trains will stop arriving at Mosaic until the water recedes. The first barges of the season haven't arrived yet because loading and unloading isn't possible during the flood stage.

Brickey said barge traffic normally starts getting busy around the beginning of April, but with the river locks closed on the Mississippi River, it's unclear when the barges will make their way to Savage from St. Louis.

Operations along the river in Savage will be up and running in a few days after the water recedes and following silt clean-up, Brickey said.

Kristen South, a spokesperson for Union Pacific Railroad, said trains are running across the state as normal, though some businesses may stop accepting them. The company is closely monitoring tracks' conditions, she said.

The river in Savage climbed to 714 feet last in April 2001. The highest recorded level occurred in April 1965 at 719 feet.

Local emergency management personnel are meeting daily to monitor and manage the rising water, said Savage Public Works Director Greg Boatman.

Flood preparations began with meetings around a month ago, and

"The good news is that things are not going as high in those areas as previously anticipated," he said. Savage Deputy Fire Chief Andrew Slama said the fire department is mindful of ways high water could impact incidents that aren't related to flooding. "A vehicle crash on a normal day may turn into some sort of water rescue," he said, pointing to flood waters filling the ditches around Highway 13. Slama said the community is well-prepared for annual flooding and the fire department's flood plan is adjusted based on historical data. "It's not a surprise unlike some of our other emergencies," he said. Slama said the fire department has cold-water rescue suits and boats in the unlikely event that infrastructure such as a levy becomes compromised and flood waters end up in an unplanned area. The Highway 101 frontage road from Zinran Avenue to Wyoming Avenue closed last weekend due as rising water on Eagle Creek covered the road.



Large pumps remove water from flooded railroad tracks near Winona, Minnesota, April 20, 2001. As many as 50 counties were declared disaster areas, with more than \$34 million in reported flood damage, according to the US Geological Survey. (Photo by Tim Boyle/NewsMakers)



52 Counties Impacted by Flooding or Ice Jams, but Water Levels in Southern, Central Minnesota Expected to Drop. April 01, 2019 03:25 PM KSTP News

The **Minnesota Department of Public Safety** says **52 counties and one tribal nation** in the state are currently dealing with issues related to ice jams and/or flooding.

A total of 21 of those counties have now declared local emergencies. They are: Big Stone, Blue Earth, Chippewa, Clay, Cottonwood, Jackson, Lac qui Parle, Lyon, Martin, Nobles, Norman, Ramsey, Rock, Sibley, Swift, Traverse, Wadena, Waseca, Wilkin and Yellow Medicine.

Meanwhile, river gauges show water levels on the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers in central and southern Minnesota have either crested or are expected to crest over the next several days.

The National Weather Service says water levels in those areas are expected to drop as what are described as perfect melt conditions continue.

Rising St. Croix River Floods Roads, Parks in Hudson. March 30, 2019 06:33 PM KSTP News

Across the state border, people in Hudson, Wisconsin are keeping a close eye on the rising St. Croix River. It's expected to crest there on Monday.

Front Street has already flooded. It's covered by several feet of water. It's the only road to nearly a dozen homes.

"People get in and out by taking canoes or rowboats," said Georgia, a homeowner. "It is fairly normal for us to have this water condition here about every five years."



KSTP spring flooding coverage

The water came up in just a matter of days. Hudson police closed the road to traffic on Tuesday.

Several neighbors are now staying at a hotel or with family.

"If medical issues occur or if there's a house fire, how do you get down there?" said Georgia.

She said they are prepared for the water to remain high for a couple of weeks.

"The snow has not melted up north, the rains haven't come yet," she said. "Without rain, we've been lucky."

Spring flooding impacting railroad traffic in Minnesota, Midwest

In downtown Hudson, Lakefront Park is disappearing. The picnic tables and swing sets have been swallowed up.

"I've never seen it this high, it's incredible," said Jennifer Belisle, from Hudson. "It's going to affect the community, definitely."

She has been stopping by every day and said the park loses about two to three feet per day.

"It's just worse than can be imagined until you actually can come see it firsthand," said Belisle.

For Georgia, "It's just part of what we deal with it. You can prepare for it, that's all you can do."



A Canadian National Railway trestle near International Falls, Minn., caught fire early Wednesday, May 27, 2015, damaging several railroad cars that were caught on the burning span before it collapsed. (Forum News Service)

Northern Minnesota Railroad Bridge Fire, Collapse Disrupts Canadian Route.

By **FORUM NEWS SERVICE** | Twin Cities Pioneer Press PUBLISHED: May 28, 2015 at 5:36 am | UPDATED: October 28, 2015

A Canadian National Railway trestle near International Falls, Minn., caught fire early Wednesday, damaging several railroad cars that were caught on the burning span before it collapsed.

There were no reports of injuries, or word on when service would resume on the busy rail line connecting northern Minnesota and Canada. The crew of a southbound train carrying potash — a non-flammable farm fertilizer — reported the fire just after 12:30 a.m., CN spokesman Brent Kossey said. Koochiching County Sheriff Perryn Hedlund said the bridge that burned crossed the Rat Root River, just north of Ericsburg and about 8 miles southeast of International Falls.

“As soon as (the crew) came around the corner, (they) saw the flames,” Hedlund said. A crew member “applied his emergency brakes as soon as he saw the flames.” When the train came to a stop, several cars were on the burning bridge. By the time the crew could prepare the train to start moving again, those cars were stranded in the fire.

The crew uncoupled the cars on the bridge. Hedlund said the original locomotive — on the south side of the bridge — and another locomotive called in from Ranier, to the north, cleared the unaffected cars that were on either side of the bridge.

A couple hours later the bridge gave way; two rail cars on the bridge shifted but did not fall into the river, Hedlund said. Kossey said the cars remained intact and had not spilled their cargo.

Several nearby homes initially were evacuated until authorities could determine what was aboard the burning cars, Hedlund said.

Hedlund said the cause of the fire has not yet been determined, and local authorities and the State Fire Marshal’s Office were assisting CN and police with the investigation. Hedlund praised the response of local law enforcement and fire personnel to the early morning incident, calling their efforts “picture-perfect.” The collapsed bridge is on a major rail line that sees about 24 trains a day. The line crosses the border at Ranier — the busiest rail crossing between the U.S. and Canada — and continues south to Duluth.

CN did not immediately respond to questions about how long it expects the rail line to be out of service while a replacement bridge is built.

Current Northstar Railway Historical Society Bylaws Change (enacted 2013).

Reduction on Number of BOD Members.

“The Board of Directors shall be composed of the following elected positions: Effective Jan 1 2020.

President (who is chairman of the Board) Vice President/Secretary Past President Treasurer

National Representative/Trustee” The following will be changed from: “No person shall hold more than one position on the Board of Directors. Example; If the person that is scheduled to become the Past President on the BOD, is elected to another position on the BOD, then that person must resign the Past President position, and that position is offered to the immediate proceeding Past President. If that person cannot accept the position for whatever reason, then the position would be offered to the next preceding Past President (s) in reverse Chronological order, until a Past President accepts the position.” To: “No person shall hold more than one position on the Board of Directors. Example; If the person that is scheduled to become the Secretary on the BOD is elected or appointed to another position on the BOD, then that person must resign the Secretary position and the Secretary position (nomination by the nominating committee) is elected by a Quorum of members or by Appointment if Secretary is unavailable to attend meetings due to illness, long term unavailability (6 months), resignation or death. The position of Trustee will be added into the duties of National Representative. The former BOD member of Trustee is combined with then NRHS representative and Secretary and Vice President duties combined.

Also, “The Nominating Committee will be formed at the October monthly meeting, NOT September.



Tribune file photo After years of planning, work on the Willmar Wye is set to begin this year. Trees, brush and stumps will soon be removed from the construction zone to prepare the site for road work as soon as ground can be worked.

Wye Construction Set to Begin in West Willmar.

By Shelby Lindrud Wilmar Tribune on Apr 4, 2019 at 8:16 a.m.

Provided by Rick Krense Metro News

WILLMAR — After over five years of meetings, plans and agreements, construction on the Willmar Rail Connector and Industrial Access project, better known as the Willmar Wye, is set to begin this year. According to a news release from the state Department of Transportation, the first step in the construction project will be the removal of scrub trees, brush and stumps in the construction zone. This work should begin in early April. Road construction should begin once the ground thaws. The Hoffman Team is the contractor of the project. The team is made up of Hoffman Construction Company, Lunda Construction Company and Bolton & Menk.

The approximately \$47 million project, when completed in 2022, will allow trains to go to and from the Morris and Marshall subdivision tracks without having to turn engines around in downtown Willmar. The project should reduce train traffic and noise downtown while improving safety and expanding economic growth possibilities.

The total construction project includes the rerouting of U.S. Highway 12, the construction of a new rail line, a rail spur into the Willmar Industrial Park and the construction of new bridges over the new track.

The Willmar Wye is a partnership project between BNSF Railway, MnDOT, Kandiyohi County and the city of Willmar. Funding is coming from BNSF, MnDOT, Kandiyohi County, Local Road Improvement Program funds and a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation



Great Northern's First SD45 Set to Return.

By Steve Glischinski | April 8, 2019 Provided by Rick Krense Metro News

MINNEAPOLIS – Great Northern Railway Historical Society's GN SD45 No. 400, "Hustle Muscle" is returning to service after two years. The locomotive was the first EMD production model SD45.

In spring 2017, while being operated on the test rack at BNSF Railway's Northtown Yard in Minneapolis, No. 400's prime mover failed, and the unit was moved into storage as BNSF and the society worked on a long term solution to return the unit to service. BNSF located a 20-cylinder prime mover from ex-Santa Fe SD45-2 No. 6470, had it rebuilt at the railroad's Topeka (Kan.) Shops, and shipped it to Northtown.

This winter No. 400 was pulled from the Northtown storage track and brought into the diesel shop. The damaged prime mover was pulled out and the rebuilt engine installed by Northtown shop forces, all at no cost to the society.

Great Northern Historical Society's SD45 No. 400 got a new engine at the BNSF shop in Minneapolis.

Steve Glischinski

Built in May 1966, No. 400 was the first production SD45 built by Electro-Motive Division; it received the Hustle Muscle moniker by GN when the company purchased the unit. It continued to carry the name after it became Burlington Northern No. 6430 following the 1970 BN merger. In 1986 it was retired and donated in operating condition to the GNRHS. In 1989, the unit was repainted to its original GN paint scheme by BN at Grand Forks, N.D. It was repainted again by the Wisconsin & Southern at Horicon, Wis. in 2006.

The society is searching for a location where the unit can be displayed and operated. It expects to make a decision on where it will be located later this month.



Members and Readers, (SPUD Train Day activities)

You are cordially invited to join the Friends of the 261 in celebrating railroads history and its future, May 31st & June 1, 2019, at St Paul Union Depot. Join us in celebrating the safe and successful operation of the 261 and the continued growth of the fleet. For complete details and to purchase your ticket to the celebration visit www.261.com today!



Will No. 4014, No. 844, or diesel power a July 15 excursion from Omaha, Neb., to Council Bluffs, Iowa? Trains: Jim Wrinn

UP Museum Excursion Set for July 15; will 4014 Pull It?

April 22, 2019 Provided by John Goodman
OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific will operate an excursion from its headquarters city of Omaha, Neb., to Boone, Iowa, traveling across the famous Kate Shelley Bridge on July 15, the UP Museum confirmed Monday. But whether it is a steam or diesel excursion or the second public excursion for newly restored Big Boy No. 4014 isn't known just yet. The Omaha-based Camerail railroad club newsletter says No. 4014 will pull the fundraiser excursion to benefit the UP Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The newsletter says the excursion will be one-way with a bus return. UP Museum Director Patricia LaBounty confirmed the trip but said power and details were not available. The route is former Chicago & North Western. UP has said that No. 4014 would tour much of the system in 2019, but no schedule has been announced. Omaha Railroad Days is the weekend prior to the excursion, but that organization has only said that UP's Chicago & North Western heritage unit will be on the display.

A webpage for the excursion at the UP Museum site shows 4-8-4 No. 844 pulling a train. The original Kate Shelley bridge, just west of Boone, was one of the highest and tallest bridges when it was built in 1901. A doubletrack replacement was built in 2009 that is 2,800 feet long and 190 feet tall. Coach tickets for a May 12 one-way fundraiser excursion with Nos. 4014 and 844, the first ever using a Big Boy, between Ogden, Utah, and Evanston, Wyo., are still available at the www.spike150.org website at \$3,000 each; dome seats at \$5,000 sold out in minutes. That trip benefits Spike 150, the umbrella organization for Utah's observance of the 150th anniversary of the transcontinental railroad, as well as the UP Museum.



AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS. VOL.7 ISSUE 4 April 2019

Washington Update by Ross Capon Provided by John Goodman

The AAPRCO Board met in Washington, DC, on March 25. Several Board Members and five other members participated in a total of 40 meetings on Capitol Hill March 25-26, including five face-to-face meetings with legislators.

Two AAPRCO members - along with your executive director and the mayor of Galesburg, Illinois - met March 19 with Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL). I was in nine Hill meetings on April 2, three with legislators. RPA(NARP) President Jim Mathews and some other RPA members said they brought up private-car issues in their April 2 Hill meetings, and every office indicated they were already aware of those issues. Congratulations - and keep up the great work!

If you haven't contacted your legislators yet, it's not too late to start.

The formal deadline for House members to submit appropriations requests past this week and in the Senate is Tuesday April 9, but the authorization process is just beginning, and legislators indicating support for appropriations language even after the deadlines helps increase the determination of appropriators to include / retain that language. Go to Congress.gov for legislators' contact information. Let me know if you need any help or have responses from legislators to report. rcapon3@gmail.com or 301-385-6438

The AAPRCO Information Board has my April 5 posts of the appropriations report language AAPRCO has requested and a shorter "talking points" version. Here is part of the latter:

The Committee does not believe Amtrak's six-page report on private cars and special trains complies with the directives the Committee gave Amtrak in FY 2019 report language. Amtrak simply provided some old rhetoric spiced with a few out-of-context statistics"

[see in March 19 Briefs quotes from Amtrak's report].

Here are a few excerpts from the longer version: "The Committee understands that Amtrak normally does not inform a car owner when a train's operating crew cites his or her car for causing a delay. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: Thus, the owner cannot present - and management cannot hear - information that might shed different light on a delay.... The Committee is concerned at reports that Amtrak is arbitrarily changing and further restricting policies without general notice and repeats its FY 2019 encouragement for 'Amtrak to improve public outreach and offer its stakeholders an opportunity to comment on policies that affect services prior to finalizing any such decisions.'"

NARP/RPA Presented Awards to the six U.S. Senators from Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico. Five showed up in person to accept the awards; the other one was caught up in floor action on Medicare. In addressing the RPA reception, Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) cautioned that, notwithstanding Amtrak's willingness to fulfill its funding commitment for the TIGER and CRISI grants, management is continuing to work to undermine the people's Southwest Chief victory. Other senators warned the national audience that what happened to the Chief could happen anywhere.

[Amtrak] management is continuing to work to undermine the people's Southwest Chief victory.

Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)

To confirm the accuracy of those warnings, see Amtrak President Richard Anderson's 13-page response to the 91-member House letter expressing concern about Amtrak policies (including private cars) reported in the last AAPRCO newsletter. Anderson tries to prove that Amtrak's service to rural America is insignificant, saying "very little of our long-distance ridership comes from" rural America. He twists statistics by using what the transit industry calls "unlinked trips." He says only 156,000 of 4.5 million customers on long-distance trains "travel the full distance of the long-distance routes." By his calculation, someone riding from San Bernardino, California, to Toledo, Ohio, is dismissed as not "traveling the full distance" of the Southwest Chief even though the actual trip is longer than Los Angeles to Chicago! Anderson should focus on the origins and destinations of his passengers, not his trains!

Use of unlinked trips artificially cuts the share of trips with a rural endpoint. For example, someone traveling from Chemult, Oregon, to San Diego should be counted as one trip with a rural endpoint. Amtrak, however, counts it as two trips, one of which is non-rural (Los Angeles-San Diego). The same would be true of Las Vegas, New Mexico, to Milwaukee or Cleveland - and countless other examples.

Anderson strains credibility by saying "Congress should consider opportunities to serve these routes with multi-frequency, shorter distance corridor trains that could offer more practical utility and far better service to the traveling public." This is roughly what DOT Secretary Mineta said more than a decade ago during an anti-long-distance tour, including regarding Montana, though he never specified what Montana segments would qualify for "multi-frequency, shorter distance" service.



Repeat Actions Don't Produce Different Outcomes.

Provided by John Goodman

Railway Age April 20, 2019 Commuter/Regional, High Performance, Intercity, Passenger Written by Andrew Selden

Amtrak CEO Richard Anderson and his chief deputy, Stephen Gardner, have proposed eliminating the company's interregional trains in favor of a scattering of discontinuous, higher frequency short corridors connecting nearby city pairs. But this reflects a deep misapprehension of the performance of the company's three primary business groups, and a surprising emphasis on minimizing the returns on investment of the company's capital resources.

It also amounts to repeating an action while expecting different outcomes. Reducing interregional service in favor of short corridors has all been tried before, and has never had a financially successful outcome. On each previous occasion when Amtrak eliminated interregional trains to "cut losses," the action had the opposite result. In 1979, when the company cut four interregional routes; in the mid-1980s, when it eliminated the Pioneer and Desert Wind; and again in the early 1990s, when then-CEO Tom Downs, on the advice of Mercer Management Consulting, cut frequencies of long-distance routes, Amtrak's corporate loss and subsidy requirement in subsequent years rose rather than fell. More recently, when the White House budget for FY2018 proposed eliminating all interregional services because, as Amtrak often claims, they purportedly lose gobs of money and don't serve many customers, Amtrak's then-CEO,

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Continued from previous page: Wick Moorman, told Congress, in writing, that such a step would increase Amtrak's corporate loss and subsidy requirement by \$423 million. Graham Claytor once told an open meeting of the Rail Passengers Association (at the time, NARP) that the interregional trains were "operating in the black." This has been true for decades.

It is not possible to eliminate an activity that you claim "loses money" and then have the enterprise's overall loss go up, not down. Yet that is what has happened each time Amtrak tried it—cut interregional service, and the next year the deficit is higher, not lower.

Anderson's proposal also neglected to mention that under Amtrak's use of the PRIIA law, Amtrak will not operate a train on a route shorter than 750 miles (except in the Northeast Corridor) unless a state (or other sponsor) pays it to do so. Most states are not lining up to pay for substitute corridor trains to replace the interregional trains that comprise the national network that Amtrak is chartered to operate. This means that Anderson's proposal really is to do away with intercity service in most of the country.

Apart from the history, Anderson's proposal also reflects a deep misunderstanding of the objective business performance of Amtrak's three groups of trains. The interregional trains are critical to Amtrak's future because they are the heart of Amtrak's business. By objective measures (the same metrics that Delta and other airlines use to measure their performance), the interregional trains are Amtrak's largest, strongest and by far its most commercially successful business segment. They are the only segment where Amtrak historically has earned a positive return on invested capital, and the only segment that is even capable of meaningful growth.

Amtrak goes to considerable lengths to conceal the consistent production by the interregional segment of the largest output of passenger transport measured in annual revenue passenger-miles of any of Amtrak's three segments. These trains routinely produce half again the output of the NEC or the regional corridors. "Ridership" measures nothing useful in assessing Amtrak's performance. If anything, what is truly remarkable about Amtrak's long-distance services is how few customers it takes to outperform the larger number of customers in the short markets, and how staggering Amtrak's growth and results would be with easily-attainable modest growth in these markets.

The interregional trains also consistently produce the greatest load factors (demonstrating both capital efficiency and the degree of underinvestment in these services), and market share for intercity rail in their respective corridors. The intercity market share of the interregional trains is often more than twice Amtrak's market share in the NEC.

The short regional corridors that Gardner and Anderson prefer represent the smallest, weakest and least commercially successful trains Amtrak operates, by the same objective data. These trains serve useful functions, mainly feeding traffic to and from the interregional routes. But they suffer two significant handicaps: Their routes are half of the average trip length of the interregional trains, so they cannot possibly replace them, and they compete against private cars in cars' strongest market. In the NEC, private cars' market share of intercity—not commuter—passenger transport is approximately 30 times greater than Amtrak's. As stand-alone services, the short corridors cannot, and do not, reflect a strong business (outside California). In terms of both output and market share, the short corridors (including the NEC) are Amtrak's smallest and weakest segments.

This matters even more because the short corridors that are the focus of Gardner's and Anderson's preference are also the weakest of Amtrak's businesses in generating positive returns on capital investment, measured either financially or in terms of incremental output of annual revenue passenger-miles per dollar invested. The interregional services by wide margins are the strongest by both measures of return on capital.

The interregional trains are the most capital-efficient segment of Amtrak's business because their load factors are significantly higher than in any of the short corridors, including the NEC. Indeed, most of the interregional routes operate at a level that is statistically close to sold-out. Thousands of the highest revenue would-be passengers are turned away each year for lack of capacity, mainly in the sleeping cars. This alone demonstrates that the interregional services are undercapitalized (demand exceeds capacity) while the NEC, like the regional corridors outside of California, is overcapitalized (capacity exceeds demand). It surprises many to learn that, outside the commuter territories of Philadelphia-New York and New York-New Haven, and setting aside purely commuter passengers, Amtrak's NEC load factor for intercity traffic does not (and arithmetically cannot) exceed about 25%. How many flights does Delta operate with a 25% load factor?

Commercial success and social relevance are both measured by market share—what proportion of market demand does a given product or service capture? Interregional trains in their respective corridors usually capture shares that are twice the share of any short corridor. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: The reason is simple: in markets of 100-500 miles, the private automobile is the overwhelming mode of choice for American travelers, capturing market shares of 90% to 95%. Air, bus and rail compete for the leftovers. And to be competitive with cars, trains have to offer frequency and reliability along with low fares. Frequencies must be inversely proportional to distance to compete against cars in their strongest market. Outside of California, Amtrak has never succeeded in that competition. And higher frequencies require costly infrastructure that Amtrak cannot afford.

That returns us to the subject of money. Amtrak needs lots of subsidy money, because the sum of its NEC train and real estate revenues plus state commuter agency track access payments falls as much as a billion dollars a year short of covering all of Amtrak's ongoing costs of owning and operating its NEC railroad. Amtrak claims a mythical "operating" surplus in the NEC by concealing the massive ongoing fixed facility costs that are necessary to run trains and generate revenues in that corridor.

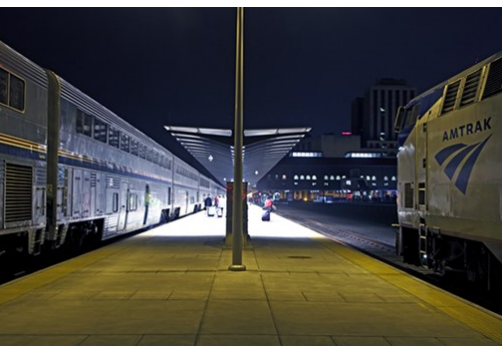
Amtrak then claims that its financial woes arise not from its unrecovered NEC infrastructure costs but from its interregional services, which we know in fact to be its only cash-positive business segment (to the tune of \$400 million-plus a year, per Moorman). How can Anderson and Gardner think that cutting out a segment that reduces Amtrak's loss will improve its financial results?

The explanation is hiding in plain sight. Amtrak publicly reports what it says is the performance of its various trains and routes by using data derived from its Amtrak Performance Tracking (APT) system. APT, which Amtrak says is its only route accounting system, is a one-off tool that purports to allocate all of Amtrak's costs to all of its trains. It is deeply flawed and internally contradictory (as shown in a 2018 White Paper released by RPA, and in criticisms by Amtrak's own Inspector General). But RPA missed the forest for the trees. APT's greatest failing is not its many internal flaws but that Amtrak misrepresents APT data as reflecting what businesses call their "financial results of operations." But APT does no such thing. It cannot do so because APT is not a financial accounting or reporting system. It does not (and does not pretend to) conform to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). It is not audited. It is not necessarily consistent from one period to another. APT values instead reflect whatever management wants them to because 80% of APT data is made up from algorithms devised by management, rather than by tracing costs to the activities that incur them. And APT does not properly address capital costs. Because APT is not a GAAP-compliant financial accounting system, it cannot and does not report financial results of anything. Its reported values are not "profits" or "losses" but an arbitrary artifact of management's assumptions and biases (colored by its own internal flaws). This is the antithesis of financial statements that do reflect the financial results of operations of an enterprise in a given period. APT numbers are not a prudent foundation for making capital investment or strategic business planning decisions. No one can know with any certainty why Anderson and Gardner continue to rely upon a tool that is incapable of doing what they say it does. But the result is their proposing, once again, to dismantle Amtrak's largest, strongest business, the only one it has that produces an annual free cash flow of more than \$400 million, and expecting that to improve the bottom line. No rational executive would abandon profitable lines of business in sectors where the company has its strongest competitive position and growth prospect to invest scarce capital instead into its smallest and weakest lines. This would be the same as Delta Airlines abandoning its lucrative trans-Atlantic and trans-Pacific routes, selling off the A-350s and 777s, and buying more 737s to go after only the short-haul markets inside the U.S. That is a remarkably counterproductive way to invest capital.



Great River Rail Updates. April 23 2019 –provided by John Goodman

The next meeting of the Great River Rail Commission will be taking place at 9:30 on Thursday, May 2 at the Jury Assembly Room of the Goodhue County Justice Center located at 454 W 6th St, Red Wing, MN 55066. Please join us to hear updates on the TCMC Second Train project from the Minnesota Department of Transportation and hear about the future plans for the Commission's efforts to increase awareness of the project and increase passenger rail options along the River Route. More than 70 passenger rail advocates spread out across the Minnesota State Capitol on March 6 to visit with legislators. They were advocating for a commitment from the state to invest in increased passenger rail options, including the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Second Train. The event was organized by All Aboard Minnesota. Updates were made on several transportation corridors. Thank you to Senators Jeremy Miller, Jerry Newton and Melisa Franzen, and Representatives Frank Hornstein, Alice Hausman, and Dan Wolgamott for also addressing advocates. *Continued on next page:*





Continued from previous page: In The News

Marie Kovecsi and Paul Schollmeier: Spring - a time for action on passenger rail at the Capitol

WisDOT aims to double frequency of Amtrak service through state

Supporters rally in St. Paul for more passenger rail in Minnesota

County Board backs 2nd Twin Cities-to-Chicago train

New Congress, New Faces, New Challenges.

Railway Age April 16, 2019 Class I, Commuter/Regional, Freight, News, Passenger, Regulatory, Short Lines & Regionals Written by Frank N. Wilner, Capitol Hill Contributing Editor

LEGISLATIVE REPORT, APRIL 2019 - Knock, knock. Who's there? If at the door are those laboring in official Washington, the answer is, "many new faces"—new congressional committee chairs, regulators, association chiefs, lobbyists and labor negotiators. Does not danger dwell where unfamiliarity and uncertainty lurk?

History may provide solace. "When you're fighting the railroads, they're very strong and they seldom lose," says one of the railroads' most resolute adversaries, attorney Robert

G. Szabo, whose Consumers United for Rail Equity coalition once came within a single Commerce Committee vote of sending to the Senate floor a referendum on whether to retain for railroads partial economic deregulation. Indeed, it is difficult finding evidence of railroads making a hash of things in the legislative or regulatory arenas.

Enter now an assemblage of new advocates and decision-makers as railroads again sally forth to defend against those urging a tilt in their direction of the competitive playing field. Railroads also must avoid stumbling service-wise in implementing Precision Scheduled Railroading that is pounding operating ratio down to unmapped depths, and in finalizing installation of Positive Train Control (PTC). Also fraught with risk of unwanted new regulation and legislation is rail transport of crude oil, which has bounded from 55 million barrels in 2012 to more than 130 million barrels, and now represents some 40% of domestic crude oil moving to refineries. A misstep could chill efforts to replace prescriptive safety regulation with more efficient performance-based safety standards, where the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) establishes a desired safety outcome and carriers innovate to reach the goal.

To be preserved and advanced are policies and programs assuring continued viability of smaller freight and all manner of passenger railroads.

The New Faces

As for the new arrivals, there are Association of American Railroads (AAR) President Ian Jefferies, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) President Chuck Baker and American Public Transportation Association (APTA) President Paul Skoutelas. On the lobbying front, new AAR arrival Adrian Arnakis is collaborating with newbie Jefferies in pursuing the industry's lobbying agenda. Arnakis arrived from the Republican side of the Senate Commerce Committee; Jefferies from the Democratic side—both having been senior advisors to senators on transportation, economic and safety issues. Other new lobbyists are CSX's John Patelli, Norfolk Southern's Marque Ledoux and Union Pacific's Printz Bolin.

Among challenges is that of 535 lawmakers, only six remain who were present in 1980 when Congress concluded the necessity of rolling back stultifying economic regulation (the Staggers Rail Act, largely now unknown in name on Capitol Hill)—provisions of which many rail shippers are aggressively seeking to dilute through regulatory fiat or new legislation. Those remaining—some since moved from the House to Senate—are Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wisc.), Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska). As for the new 116th Congress, the most railroad-important committees have leadership changes. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.)—robust in his support of short lines, but thought "swayable" by captive shippers—chairs the House T&I Committee; while Sam Graves (R-Mo.), previously a "no" vote on liberalizing truck size and weight, and said to be "no fan of economic regulation," is ranking (senior minority party) member. DeFazio succeeds now-retired Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), who, with his father, Bud—a previous T&I Committee chairman—were among the freight railroads' best congressional friends. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: T&I's Railroad Subcommittee is chaired by Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.), said "not a plus" for passenger rail, but a proponent of funding the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program, a public-private partnership to reduce train and truck congestion. Lipinski's father, Bill, a former T&I Committee member, now lobbies for BNSF.

The Railroad Subcommittee's ranking member is Rick Crawford (R-Ark.), a perennial supporter of the short line and regional railroad investment tax credit, but otherwise a back-bencher on rail issues.

On the Senate Commerce Committee, Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), who voted to open Amtrak long-distance routes to competitive bidding, favors economic deregulation and opposes longer-combination trucks, is chairman, succeeding John R. Thune (R-S.Dak.), now Senate Majority Whip. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) succeeds election-defeated Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) as ranking member. While said "not very friendly" toward Class I's, she is a proponent of passenger rail.

On the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee, Deb Fisher (R-Neb.) remains chairman. She advocates safety regulators be bound by "sound science, relevant data and data modeling" in decision-making, and supports giving railroads greater flexibility to apply innovation in meeting safety goals (performance-based safety standards). The subcommittee's ranking member is Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), with minor past involvement in rail issues.

At the Surface Transportation Board (STB), former Senate Commerce Committee senior legislative aide Patrick J. Fuchs, a Republican, joins attorney, former Chicago alderman and Chicago Metra Chairman Martin J. Oberman, a Democrat, as new members. Republican Ann D. Begeman remains chairman, with two STB seats vacant. (See *Watching Washington*, p. 10, for more on these members and STB issues.)

For the first time since 2009, the three-member National Mediation Board (NMB) is under Republican control, with new GOP arrivals Gerald W. (Trey) Fauth III and Kyle Fortson. Should productive rail collective bargaining stall, the NMB determines if and when to declare an impasse, leading to appointment of a fact-finding Presidential Emergency Board that recommends a non-binding settlement. The NMB's new tilt was seen in the first significant action of Fauth and Fortson—a rulemaking to weaken impediments for workers seeking to decertify their union.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have relatively new leaders—Ronald L. Batory at FRA; and Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams at FTA, pending Senate confirmation of Thelma Drake.

Don't call the newbies rookies, however, as each has MVP credentials. The crucial unknown, of course, is a difficult-to-quantify human chemistry—the principal determinant of effective engagement. It was no coincidence that in 1998, when Bud Shuster chaired the T&I Committee, and STB reauthorization, hard-coupled to a shipper reregulation agenda, was before Congress, the AAR hired Ed Hamberger as its president. Early in his career, Hamberger was employed by the elder Shuster, with whom he built a lasting bond, which served railroads demonstrably well.

A New Era Now Begins

Although railroads are targeting lawmakers and regulators with advertising, advertorials and third-party-induced commentary defending partial economic deregulation, the more immediate challenge is competitive equity—assuring that heavy trucks pay user charges commensurate with the pavement and highway-bridge damage they cause.

Railroads also oppose congressional loosening of maximum truck length and weight limits, which would accelerate user-charge under-payments, as weight is a primary cause of pavement and bridge deterioration.

A coalition, including the National Industrial Transportation League (NITL), Amazon, FedEx and UPS, is asking Congress to allow double 33-foot trailers nationwide—up from twin-28-foot trailers; and even to allow maximum truck weight to increase from 80,000 pounds to 91,000. While railroads grasp it's a sticky wicket fighting their customers, "it doesn't preclude us from remaining firm on the need for truckers to fully cover their costs," says the AAR.

Although heavy trucks pay a per-gallon motor fuels tax directed to the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the tax hasn't increased since 1993, while purchasing power has decreased by almost 65%, and nominal costs of highway and bridge construction and repair has risen substantially.

The HTF, created in 1956 to finance the Interstate Highway System and other federal-aid highways—and now with a separate account for mass transit—has required bailouts from the General Treasury of more than \$143 billion since 2008. The HTF remains underfunded, meaning rail-competitive heavy trucks enjoy an unjust competitive advantage over railroads that own, operate, maintain and even police their track network.

To restore HTF solvency, lawmakers are considering either an increase in the per-gallon motor fuels tax; a vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) fee; a weight-distance charge; or removal of a legislative prohibition on tolling Interstate Highways constructed since 1956—supported by President Trump. The 2015 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) authorized a pilot project allowing 18 states to toll Interstate Highways, with some 3,000 miles of the 46,000-mile Interstate Highway System now tolled. While the House T&I Committee has jurisdiction over truck size and weight, the Senate gives jurisdiction over truck length to its Commerce Committee, and truck weight to the Environment and Public Works Committee. Whether user charges are called a tax or fee, the congressional tax-writing committees (House Ways & Means and Senate Finance) may seek jurisdiction. Semantics is at play here, as Republicans en masse have signed a "no new taxes" pledge.

Notable is that the Senate Finance Committee's ranking Democrat Ron Wyden, the Ways & Means Committee's Democratic Chairman Earl Blumenauer and the T&I Committee's Democratic Chairman DeFazio all are from Oregon, where a state "weight-mile tax" has been in effect for decades. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: Although the AAR told Congress in February it supports a 20-cents-per-gallon increase in the fuels tax, Arnakis says “railroads are largely agnostic as to the means for keeping the Highway Trust Fund solvent,” as long as it is paid for by users.

APTA, meanwhile, is seeking creation of a Passenger Rail Trust Fund—separate from the HTF—to increase existing investment in intercity rail. It would have a yet-to-be-determined dedicated revenue source, with grants directed by regional and state transportation authorities.

Aside from the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which expires in 2020 and already serves to authorize highway, mass transit and highway-rail grade crossing projects, Congress is crafting a more comprehensive 10-year infrastructure bill to include telecommunications, the electrical grid, and water and waste water systems, with a price tag exceeding \$1 trillion and no identifiable revenue source.

Strong political divisions already are evident. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) says such an infrastructure bill must transition America to a “clean energy economy,” with DeFazio calling for a “less fossil [fuel] dependent” nation; but the Trump Administration [and, by extension, most congressional Republicans] rejects the Democrats’ New Green Deal. The Administration advocates greater use of coal, and has relaxed emissions caps for coal-fired generating plants.

Equally problematic is that while projects and spending are being identified for a bold infrastructure bill, there has been little discussion as to who will pay, and how. The nation’s debt has increased by more than \$2 trillion since 2017, standing now at \$22 trillion, and on track to reach \$33 trillion by 2029. Even absent new spending legislation, Congress faces having to increase the national debt ceiling before Oct. 1. In 2015, Presidential candidate Donald Trump said that if the debt topped the then-\$21 trillion mark, “Obama will have effectively bankrupted our country.”

Perhaps no greater truth has been spoken than by T&I Committee ranking member Graves: “We’re going to have to spend a lot of political capital to do whatever it is we’re going to do.”

Short Lines and Regionals

For short line and regional railroads, no issue is of greater importance than restoration of a 50% investment tax credit (45-G, for its designated section in the Internal Revenue Code)—and making it permanent, as opposed to the six renewals it has received since being created in 2005. That tax credit has encouraged capital investment of more than \$4 billion by regional and short line railroads, benefitting some 10,000 shippers in mostly rural areas.

Bills to extend 45-G are moving in Congress. Among sponsors of the House-introduced Building Rail Access for Customers and the Economy (BRACE) Act (H.R. 510) are Blumenauer, DeFazio and Graves; while a similarly named and written S. 203 has support from Schumer, Thune and Wicker. Both include provisions making the 45-G tax credit permanent, and retroactive to Jan. 1, 2018, as the previous 45-G provision expired in 2017.

Expected is that these bills will be incorporated with tax credit bills benefitting other industries—collectively moving in a single omnibus bill. For example, the Tax Extender and Disaster Relief Act (S. 610) incorporates the small-railroad 45-G tax credit with those of other industries, the rub being that S. 610 has no provision for permanence.

Amtrak and Transit

The immediate challenge for Amtrak and public transit is avoiding President Trump’s heavy-on-the-skinny fiscal year 2020 budget request that seeks to slash Amtrak funding by 23% and transit by 31%.

There already is a \$90 billion backlog in project funding to bring transit systems to a state of good repair, says APTA. Millennials increasingly are looking to substitute public transportation for the automobile, and transit is a lifeline for many, especially in rural areas. As for Amtrak, the Trump budget proposal cuts in half funding for the Northeast Corridor (NEC), and zeroes out Amtrak’s NEC Gateway project, which includes a new cross-Hudson River tunnel linking New Jersey with New York City. It is suspected that the Federal Transit Administration’s “medium-low rating” of the tunnel project, which disqualifies it for federal funding, is in furtherance of the President’s intention to shift more cost responsibility for Amtrak to the states and localities.

The Trump budget request also would cut funding for long-distance trains, break many into shorter routes and, in many places, substitute connecting buses for rail.

Where the President’s budget proposal provides for capital improvement grants for new transit projects, they are intended as incentives for regions, states and localities to provide most of the financing. The Trump Administration says that while highways are of national concern, transit and intercity corridor trains are of local concern.

Amtrak’s dismal on-time performance (OTP), where its trains are hosted on freight railroad tracks, could be ripe for new legislative attention. This could occur if the Supreme Court agrees with an AAR petition to scrap a requirement in the 2008 Passenger Rail Improvement and Investment Act (PRIIA) allowing Amtrak to collaborate with the FRA in establishing metrics and standards for OTP. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Wicker takes special interest in freight railroad dispatching of Amtrak trains. In 2018, only one of Amtrak’s long-distance routes had an OTP of more than 70%. Ten of those routes had OTP of less than 50%, with Norfolk Southern the caboose, delivering on time only 24% of Amtrak trains it dispatched.

Additionally, the Association for Independent Rail Passenger Operators (AIPRO) seeks a new “rail title” in the FAST Act, to include creation of an Office of Rail Expansion within the FRA and FTA to encourage additional intercity rail passenger corridors, with pilot projects allowing competitive bidding by private-sector operators on Amtrak routes. Where private-sector competitors were allowed to bid on commuter routes, Amtrak often lost the contracts. *Continued on next page:*

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Rail Suppliers

Topping the congressional wants of rail suppliers is a “Buy America” provision, where federal dollars fund capital investment. This request is taking on a national security aspect as PTC and other advanced electronics, with billions of lines of computer code, are becoming fused into all aspects of railroading, making them targets for foreign-government cyber espionage and cyberwarfare.

Soo Line No. 2719 to Stay in Duluth – For Now.

By Steve Glischinski | April 17, 2019 [From the TRAINS Newswire](#): Provided by Rick Krenske Metro News

DULUTH, Minn. – The City of Eau Claire has given up its effort to move Soo Line 4-6-2 No. 2719 from the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth back to the Wisconsin city. The engine was donated to the city by the Soo Line in 1960. Under terms of a contract with the city reached in 2015, the locomotive was sold to the museum for \$2, but with the stipulation that Eau Claire could repurchase the engine within three years. In August 2018 the city exercised its option to repurchase the locomotive, paving the way for the eventual move of the Pacific back for display. The locomotive has been in Duluth since 2006, and operated on the museum’s North Shore Scenic Railroad from 2007 to 2013.

After it repurchased the engine, the city estimated the cost of the moving it to Eau Claire at around \$35,000, but the museum had gotten quotes that put the cost to load and move it by flatcar at close to \$120,000. Then the city would have had to build a structure for the engine and get it from the railhead to the display area.

Bowing to financial reality, the city council has passed a resolution that would allow the engine to stay in Duluth, under certain conditions. The resolution directed city staff to retain ownership of the engine but to seek a long-term lease with a viable organization – it does not specify Lake Superior Railroad Museum. The lease would require the engine to be brought to operating status in three to five years, and that the lease not be longer than 20 years. At the end of its operating life, the resolution said, the engine should be returned to Eau Claire.

The sticking point for the museum could be a lease. If Duluth doesn’t want to lease it and if future negotiations fail, the city stipulated it will issue could a request for proposals for either a long-term lease agreement or even a buyer from other organization, the resolution said.

Ken Buehler, Lake Superior Railroad Museum executive director, says a meeting with members of his board of the directors and the city is scheduled for April 26. “We are negotiating a lease, but in the past the museum board of directors has favored ownership of the engine,” Buehler says.

The Soo purchased No. 2719 from American Locomotive Co. in May 1923, at a cost of \$47,091.64. No. 2719 and its sister No. 2718 (now on display at the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wis.) gained a measure of fame pulling excursion trips in the late 1950s. The Minnesota Railfans’ Association chartered the two engines for several trips from Minneapolis into western Wisconsin. On June 21, 1959, No. 2719 pulled the last steam-powered train on the Soo Line, a round trip excursion from Minneapolis to Ladysmith, Wis.

The Pacific was on display in Carson Park in Eau Claire from 1960 until 1996, when it was removed and the nonprofit Locomotive & Tower Preservation Fund began restoration work. It was returned to service in 1998. With no railroads available to operate the engine in the Eau Claire area, in 2006 the Pacific was leased by the museum and moved to Duluth. It operated until 2013 when its mandatory federal inspection came due. The museum had set aside and sent payments that totaled \$48,000 to the Locomotive & Tower Preservation Fund to help partially fund the future rebuilding of the engine, but the location of those funds is unknown.

Now the parties are back to square one. The museum would like to see 2719 operate again on its North Shore Scenic Railroad between Duluth and Two Harbors, but is understandably reluctant to invest money into a locomotive it does not own. It also currently has an operational steam locomotive, Duluth & Northeastern 2-8-0 No. 28, which can operate for the next 13 years under current federal regulations, so 2719’s return to service would be a number of years away. The city, for its part, wants to retain ownership but see the engine operate again – ideally in Eau Claire – but that doesn’t seem possible under present conditions.

Through the next few months the saga of 2719’s future will continue to play out.



The Empire Builder crosses the Mississippi River in Hastings, Minn., in September 2018. Planning continues for efforts to launch a second train on the Builder's route between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul. TRAINS: David Lassen

Planning Continues to Advance for New Chicago-Twin Cities Amtrak Service.

Train could begin service in 2022, Wisconsin official says
April 12, 2019 From the TRAINS Newswire:

Provided by Rick Krenske Metro News

PORTAGE, Wis. — A proposal for a second daily Amtrak train between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul should receive a waiver exempting it from a full environmental impact report, easing the process of preparing to launch the train.

Arun Rao, passenger rail manager for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, discussed the project at a recent meeting of the Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers in Portage, [the Portage Daily Register reports](#). He said the Federal Railroad Administration told the state that the project would qualify for a “categorical exclusion,” allowing a more abbreviated environmental report, because the project involves an existing railroad.

Rao said the report could be completed as early as 2020. Planning, including studies of ridership, equipment, and revenue, is 25 to 50 percent complete, he said. That planning is fully funded in Wisconsin and is expected to receive full funding in Minnesota. .

The train could begin service as early as 2022, Rao said. Construction and implementation costs to allow the train to launch are currently estimated at \$76 million, with annual operating costs of \$5.5 million to be shared by Wisconsin, Minnesota, and possibly Illinois.

The proposed schedule for the eastbound train would run 4 to 5 hours later than that of the *Empire Builder*, the route’s current service. The westbound train would run 4 to 5 hours ahead of the *Builder*.



Boarding a Northstar commuter train at the Big Lake station. That Sherburne County city is currently one of the end-points of the 40-mile line that runs to Minneapolis. Extending the service northwest to St. Cloud is under consideration. RTSONG-TAATARII@STARTRIBUNE.COM

How Best to Gauge Demand for a Northstar Commuter Rail Extension?

Arrange a trial run: two trains per weekday to St. Cloud. It'll teach us more than the costly, drawn-out planning proposed by legislators. By Jerome M. Johnson April 2, 2019

Provided by Rick Krenske

St. Cloud-area legislators have proposed yet another bill, [HF 1179](#), to study and partly plan for extending Northstar commuter rail service to that city. But the bill’s drawn-out review and analysis process, combined with the engagement of the usual entourage of planners, consultants, lobbyists and contractors, will virtually ensure that the extension will cost too much, promise too much and take far too long to complete.

Corridor taxpayers have seen this movie before. The original 2009 project cost \$317 million, was \$50 million over budget and took more than four years after initial funding to design and build, even though most of the track was in place. Annual ridership is consistently 10 to 20 percent below initial projections, with farebox receipts, at 15 percent of operating costs, among the lowest such ratios in the nation.

The bill at hand promises more of the same. It specifies 18 months of study followed by 12 months of, yes, more study before construction and testing. With history as a guide and political pressure to extend most, if not all, of the 12 current weekday trains to St. Cloud, figure a 2023 startup and a price tag exceeding \$150 million. As before, most of this will be spent upfront on easements and track capacity based on unproven ridership over a host freight railroad that has other understandable and realistic priorities.

Look familiar?

And make no mistake about the priorities of the freight railroad. Its line through St. Cloud is one of two such high-volume, high-performance freight rail corridors connecting the nation’s midsection and the Pacific Northwest. As such, it is a strategic national asset with few real alternatives for the movement of goods. Adding up to 12 fast commuter trains per day to a network set up for 50 slower freight trains comes at a price. That price was \$107 million in 2008 for 40 miles east of Big Lake. You can do the math for the 30 miles west to St. Cloud. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: A faster, more reasoned and far more cost-effective way to assess the potential of the St. Cloud extension would be to implement immediately a two-train-per-weekday trial service arrangement. Here, weekday morning trips from existing stations to Minneapolis would go from five to four in exchange for St. Cloud receiving a morning inbound and outbound trip. Same idea for afternoons. Total system train miles per-day stay about the same, so no additional train sets or costly track occupancy easements would be needed.

Because these costs and resource requirements are few and well-defined, planning and design should move quickly so that service would start in 2020. Most important, by late 2021, the public will have had a year of real-world ridership experience to determine if more trains can be justified. If trains are full, costs under control and public policy remains so inclined, there will still be time for construction and testing of the higher-frequency plan to meet a 2023 startup.

But if a higher-frequency service extension cannot be justified, either the trial service can be made permanent at St. Cloud or the original Big Lake service pattern reinstated. Either way, the public would likely save over \$100 million that could then be spent on alternative corridor mobility measures like more Interstate 94 freeway lane miles, conversion of signalized Hwy. 10 intersections to interchanges, and/or a fleet of modern buses to serve the transit needs of the corridor.

It has happened this way elsewhere. A shared track commuter/freight rail arrangement planned for the 30-mile Denver-Boulder corridor in Colorado was rejected in 2015 in favor of bus rapid transit service over a parallel freeway using dedicated HOV/bus lanes. The freight rail easements were just too costly and the high-tech bus operation too competitive and efficient to pass up. BRT ridership has since exceeded expectations.

It is unclear, of course, what will happen here — St. Cloud is not Boulder — but close to 1 million annual riders will likely be needed to/from St. Cloud to cover just the anticipated track easement costs at an acceptable level. That could be why the federal government would not fund the extension in 2008 and won't do so now. And it is precisely why the trial service extension is so necessary and why a thorough grasp of the non-rail passenger transportation alternatives is so timely. There is too much riding on the outcome for it to be otherwise. *Jerome M. Johnson, of St. Paul, is a retired transportation economist and railway executive.*

Northstar Added Train Service for Final Four Weekend.

April 5, 2019 Provided by Rick Krenske

MINNEAPOLIS — Northstar Commuter Rail will run special trains beginning Friday for the NCAA basketball Final Four and related events being held at U.S. Bank Stadium in downtown Minneapolis.

On (Friday, April 5) an additional train left the northernmost station at Big Lake at 1 p.m., arrived at the Target Field stop at 1:52 p.m. A return trip operated at 6:15 p.m.

Saturday, in advance of the two semifinal games at 5 and 8 p.m. CDT, a train left Big Lake at 2:30 p.m. Return trips will operated at 8:30 p.m. and 60 minutes after the second game ended.

Northstar will operated on its regular schedule on Sunday, with three round trips. On Monday, for the national championship game, a train will left Big Lake at 5:03 p.m.; the return trip will departed 60 minutes after the conclusion of the game.

Seasonal BFT Moving.

From: [Dave Schauer](#)

Date: Wed, 24 Apr 2019

Bessemer & Lake Erie 909 leads DM&IR 405 and B&LE 900 up Proctor Hill with empty BFT cars. The cars are loaded seasonally at Laurentian Aggregate (Largo - UTAC Tbird pit) and unloaded at Hallett Dock 5 in Duluth. Blast furnace trim is basically crushed raw taconite rock and is shipped out in lakers for use in steel mills. I believe E&LS has been rebuilding some of these cars, which also double as ballast haulers.



The Twin Cities' Northstar commuter rail service will add trains for this weekend's Final Four in Minneapolis. Steve Glischinski





Union Pacific Steam Club Update No. 6 - Apr. 24, 2019.

The Union Pacific Steam Team is busy making final preparations for the May 4 christening of the Big Boy No. 4014 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Final touches on its paint job are being applied and the last necessary tests are being conducted.

To ensure the Big Boy is ready for its big debut, No. 844's whistle-stop tour that was scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday, April 27-28, has been cancelled. Instead, No. 844 will double-head with No. 4014 from Cheyenne to Ogden on May 4 after the 9:30 a.m. MT christening ceremony.

This new schedule will give the UP Steam Team more time to complete final preparations for No. 4014. The latest tour schedule is available at UP-Steam.com



May 9 Ceremonies to be Streamed Live via Facebook Union Pacific will be streaming the May 9 ceremonies live via the UP Facebook page, located at <http://www.facebook.com/unionpacific>. If you haven't already "liked" our Facebook page, do it today. You'll be notified as soon as the cameras start rolling



Busy West Duluth.

From: Dave Schauer

Date: Mon, 15 Apr 2019

A busy West Duluth today as CN job R921 lifts limestone out of Missabe Junction for United Taconite while another job (R926?) spots cars on Dock 6. Thousand footer James R Barker is at the conveyor shiploader while CN's Roger Blough is docked on the east side waiting for the Barker to finish. Cloudy but interesting scene.

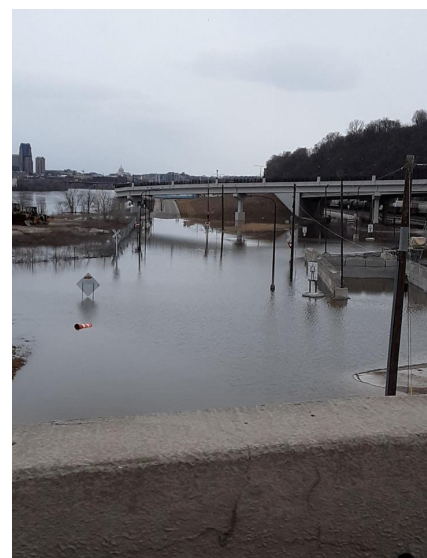
Pictures: 2019 Flooding in St Paul and Hudson WI –MN Railroads Facebook Group Downloads.



Water in the UP's Belt Yard St Paul Apr 2 2019 -John Hill



St Croix River at Hudson WI
–Mar 31 2019 –Aaron Feela



UP Bridge across the Mississippi St Paul
Apr 2 2019 –John Hill

Water at Warner and Childs Roads St Paul March 31 2019 –TJ Gaspers

Bob Ball Photos.



Amtrak #8 Lake City MN Mar 11 2019



MNVA GP's Green Isle MN (now MN Prairie Line) July 20 1986

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Model Train Show	May 6, May 7th 2019 10 am — 4 pm	First Presbyterian Church 1225 4th St - Fond du Lac, WI 54935	\$6
Hennepin Overland Open House Schedule	May 13 2019 1 pm—4 pm, 6 pm—9 pm night trains	2501 East 38th Street Minneapolis, MN 55406 (612) 276-9034	\$7 Family \$20
Granite City Train Show	Saturday May 13 2019 9 am—3 pm	River's Edge Convention Center 10 4th Avenue South Saint Cloud, Minnesota 56301	\$6
Twin City Model Railroad Train Show and Flea Market	Saturday May 11 2019 9 am—3 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$6
International Toy Train Expo	July 6 2019 July 7 2019 10 am—5 pm	Chippewa Valley Expo Center, 5150 Old Mill Plaza, Eau Claire, WI 54703,	\$10
Newport Model Railroad Club Flea Market	May 27 2019 9 am—2 pm	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury, MN	\$6
Train Days at St Paul Union Depot	Saturday June 1, Sunday June 2 2019 10 am—5 pm	St Paul Union Depot St Paul MN	Free

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Address Correction Requested

