



NRHS

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Happy Halloween!



L: Past Pumpkin Express train on the O&STCV of the MTM –cancelled this year

R: Past Pumpkin Express at the Boone and Scenic RR

-Operating on October 3, 10, 17, and 24 (Saturdays) this year



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Meeting Notice

Stay Tuned for Future Meeting and Activity Announcements in the Next Newsletter!

Next newsletter (November) will be out around November 1, 2020.

Monthly meeting news from Roseville Lutheran Church: Roseville Lutheran Church is NOT allowing their meeting rooms to be used until a review at the end of this year. Therefore, we will have virtual meetings using Zoom for the remainder of the year. Since we are having a Duluth Train ride the third Saturday in September, the next Zoom meeting will be the third Saturday in October, October 17, 2020 at 7:00 pm. Look for an invite by email from Dan Meyer in order to join the meeting

2021 Calendar is now available for \$14.95

Contact Dawn Holmburg to get your copy.

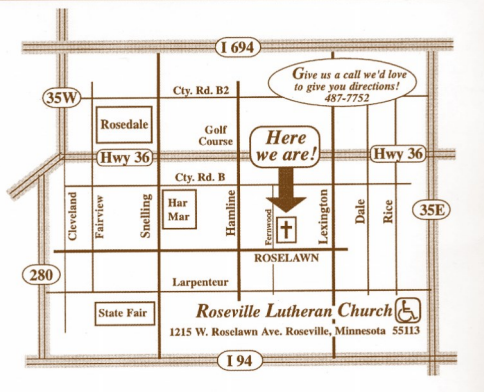
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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



From the Editor:

Note: Nominees for BOD positions for 2021-2022 are needed! Contact John Goodman or Bill Dredge (contact info above) with your nominees! If no nominees are received, the BOD will appoint officers for next year.

Obituaries: From John Goodman, October 4, 2020 John: it is with deep sorrow that I report the death of **J. David Ingles**, noted railfan and former TRAINS magazine editor, today in Milwaukee. He had been recovering from recent back surgery in a long-term care facility. He was 79. BTC

From the MTM: From Scott Hippert MTM Executive Director It is with a heavy heart that I bring you news that our beloved **Arthur Pew** passed away on October 2nd. I learned of his passing last evening and wanted to inform you as soon as possible. Information about ways to remember him can be found at the Hosna Family Funeral Home website at [Hosna Funeral Home](http://HosnaFuneralHome.com).

Meeting September 26 2020 (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order by President Bill Dredge at 7:05 pm. Dan Meyer motioned to start the meeting and Russ Isbrandt seconded the motion. The Treasurers report was given by Russ Isbrandt. The Checking balance was given and the Calendar balance was low. This was corrected by Calendar Chairman John Goodman. John Goodman stated that the calendar account will show increases due to the 2021 Calendar Sales. The Calendar report was given by Dawn Holmberg. We have received the calendars from the printer. We only have 425 calendars printed this year. She is in the process of getting calendars to our retail outlets and have already sold a few of them. She did not have a count of calendars sold so far. We have not received an invoice for printing of the calendar yet. The Calendar Postcard reminders are in process of being produced. Bill Dredge announced that Choo Choo Bob's Store has closed and is now history. Dan Meyer stated that the postage for mailing the calendar to purchasers has increased slightly. It is about \$5.30 for postage. He stated that the calendar will be available for sale soon on our web site. Russ reported that we have prepaid for three meetings at the Roseville Lutheran Church. Hopefully we will use this facility sometime in 2021. For future meetings, we will use Zoom till at least the end of the year. Russ Isbrandt stated that the Library Rent is nearly \$500 a month. Richard Tubbesing gave the newsletter report. It costs around \$60 a month to print the snail mail newsletter. Bill and Dan proposed that we add a Surcharge of \$5 per year for members who receive the snail mail copy of the newsletter. A vote was taken by members and approved. Next year's subscription will increase by \$5 for members that receive the snail mail copy of the newsletter. Chapter subscription cost for subscribers will be \$35 and for NRHS members \$30. Russ Isbrandt said he will figure that out the costs by individual when invoices are sent out for renewals at the end of this year. John Goodman gave the trip report. We had 14 paid (out of 15) members who rode the Northshore Scenic railroad Knife River train having combine W-24 for our own use. Train left on time from Duluth and returned about 1:30 pm. John Goodman also gave the program report. We need people for programs in the future months who attend our meetings via Zoom. Bob Ball noted that Tinucci's in Newport for the holiday banquet is not feasible since they will not extend their open hours. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: Mancini's in St Paul is an option but would be much more expensive than in the past. Ed Johnson was asked about his son's restaurant in Minneapolis, but said they are struggling for business due to the COVID19 Pandemic. John Goodman stated that there are a couple of Golden Corral restaurants, and if chosen each individual would pay at the door. Russ Isbrandt stated it might be a good idea if we move the banquet to January 2021. John Goodman will continue to get more details by the next meeting. The next issue was staffing of officers for the next two years. We need nominees for President and Vice President. If we have trouble getting nominee's, the BOD might consider reducing our BOD to three positions. John Goodman will give a report at the next meeting. Dawn Holmberg and Dan Meyer reported on NRHS news. The NRHS had a remote meeting for all members earlier in the day. The NRHS will go to an all at large membership and no chapter affiliations will exist starting in 2022. Also, the NRHS BOD will be reduced and all offices have been filled. These bi-law changes were adopted. John Goodman reported the the 2021 NRHS convention will be held in Milwaukee Wisconsin June 23 to June 28 in 2021. The Web report was given by Dan Meyer. We have a presence on FACEBOOK and our website will be updated with the 2021 Calendars for sale. John Goodman gave the cheers report. NRHS member Kurt Mahre is back in town. These longtime members are hunkered down due to the Covid19 pandemic. Mike Mackner is now in an assisted care facility. Cy Svobodny is homebound with health problems. Russ Isbrandt reported that Gary Rumler is waiting brain surgery at the U of M and restricted to his home. Dave Herbert gave a report that Bob Clarkson is also restricted to home due to physical problems. Old Business: None. New Business: Mark Quam stated that funding for the second Amtrak train to Chicago needs \$10 million from the state of Minnesota legislature and has some FRA issues to resolve. John Goodman reported that in October the Empire Builder will be reduced to 3 days a week with no change for the holiday season. Dave Herbert reported that the NYNH&H last electric freight locomotive at the IRM needs more funding to restore it. He wondered how to get an NRHS grant to help in the funding. Russ Isbrandt said all Fall train shows and flea markets have been cancelled. Bob Ball stated that a Martin Raabe Model Railroad sale will be held in Bloomington. Bill Dredge reported that the Hennepin Overland Model Railroad Club will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm. A motion to close the meeting was given by Russ Isbrandt and seconded by John Goodman at 7:59 pm. Richard Tubbesing showed clips of the NRHS Convention in Tacoma WA in 2011. Attendees: Dan Meyer, Dawn Holmberg, Roger Libra, Bill Dredge, Mark Quam, Frank Wilke, Dave Herbert, Joe Fishbein, Russ Isbrandt, Robert Ball, Robert Thurn, Dave Banewicz, John Goodman, and Ed Johnson. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing, Secretary

News from the Iron Range

NSM SD70ACe Units

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Mon, 31 Aug 2020

All five of NSM's "new" SD70ACe units (671-675) are in service, although suffering from various teething issues so SD40-3s have filled in as needed. Here 673 and 671 arrive at Silver Bay with the 5 AM train from Babbitt this past Saturday, August 29, 2020. With days getting shorter you can only get decent light on this train as it nears Silver Bay (between 0730 and 0800). 671 is former CSX 4833, 672=4839, 673=4838, 674=4848, 675=4832. The tailings train still uses SD40-3s as power but the ACe units are expected to eventually take over that assignment as well. These will look nice in fall color in a month or so.

<http://www.railpictures.net/viewphoto.php?id=746798> Dave Schauer Duluth, MN



LSRM Equipment Move

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Fri, 04 Sep 2020 05:01:16 PDT

The museum pulled a bunch of equipment off the property so some 6-axle passenger car trucks could be moved from underneath the parking ramp. It was a nice opportunity to see some pieces out in the sun as they sat on the track to Rices Point. I wonder how many time that caboose found itself in this yard during Northern Pacific days.

<https://www.railpictures.net/viewphoto.php?id=747059> Dave Schauer Duluth MN



Cars in Storage on Gunn Line (Casco) and Lakes Around Grand Rapids Area.

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Mon, 07 Sep 2020 14:58:49 PDT

On Saturday I arrived at Kelly Lake just in time to photograph BNSF 8423 pulling 161 steel 3 bay covered hoppers southbound. I heard that they were heading towards the cities. Earlier in the week the Kelly Lake Local had gathered up the three bay covered hopper cars that were stored on the Gunn main line between Pengilly and Keewatin. The cars were then assembled into one long train and parked on the siding at Kelly Lake until September 5th when BNSF 8423 picked them up and headed south. Total train length would have been a little over 9,000 feet including the engine. Of note that the rest of the three bay covered hoppers are scheduled to be removed from the Keewatin Taconite Siding according to a source. It appears that sometime in the very near future that the rest of the container well cars will be retrieved some time in the very near future. Those cars were still in storage between Holman Bridge and Calumet as I drove up the Range. The container well cars have been in storage since mid summer 2019. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: Of note is that I did some back trail exploring to check the Itasca County Rail Authority receiving yard and it still has one string of Magnetation Gondolas stored there. I had assumed all of the gondolas were pulled a year ago prior to the storage of the container well cars since access to the wye on the Itasca County Rail Authority tracks was blocked by the stored container well cars. I did not get out on the back roads last summer (2019). I had photographed one string of Magnetation gondolas last summer coming through Keewatin and Kelly Lake. I heard that perhaps the last string of cars from Magnetation will be pulled in the near future (not confirmed). In counting cars from my photos it appears that there is about 100 gondolas in that string.

Storage Report:

Gunn yard:

Track 1- taconite 100 ton cars.

Track 2- taconite 100 ton cars and three bay steel hoppers.

Track 3 - empty

Gunn Wye and Gunn Line up to Magnetation /Jessie Mine loadout: empty

Philbin - West half of siding old 100 ton taconite cars. East half of siding 3bay steel coverel hoppers.

Seyton: empty

Potlatch/Ainsworth siding : empty

Cohasset: empty

Deer River: three bay steel open hoppers

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minnesota

Container Well Cars Moved from Storage on Gunn/Casco Mainline

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Tue, 08 Sep 2020 22:06:01 PDT

As reported earlier in a previous post, there has been some movement of the stored cars on the Gunn/Casco line. Prior to Saturday September 5, 2020 a string of 3 bay covered hoppers that had been stored on the Gunn Line mainline between Pengilly and west Keewatin were assembled into a train at Kelly Lake. A crew arrived from Superior and pulled the 161 cars heading toward Superior with the destination being the Twin Cities.

On that day (Sept 5, 2020) I observed the container well cars stored between Holman and west of Marble still in storage. The Cars stored from Calumet (MP 16) to Snowball road crossing (MP15) were still in storage.

Today as I worked my way up the Mesabi Range from Grand Rapids, Hibbing (Hull Rust Mine View), Chisholm, Virginia and off to the Vermilion Range I observed the following:

- The container well cars between Holman and Marble were still in storage.
- The container well cars between Calumet and Snowball road crossing were missing.

On my return trip from Ely I observed that the container well cars stored between Holman and Marble had been moved.

Upon arriving home (9:30pm) I had a message from Bruce K and he reported the following:

At 4:48 pm he had observed at Calumet, a container well car train blocking the crossing just east of the old Calumet Depot site (approximately MP16). He reported that the train crew was inspecting the train.

As is stands now the following are still in storage along the Gunn/Casco Line on spur/siding, or rail yard but not stored on the mainline:

- Keewatin Taconite spur/siding: three bay covered hopper cars
- Itasca Rail Authority Receiving Yard: (located east of Holman and NW of Marble) approximately 100 Magnetation gondolas

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minn



News from the North Shore Scenic Railroad & Lake Superior Railroad Museum

Issue #96 - September 2020

Summer is coming to an end and that crisp scent of fall is in the air. Already leaves have started to change color in Duluth. Our annual Fall Colors train has undergone some changes for this year, which many passengers are excited to experience.

Continued on next page:

Continued from Previous page: In addition, we have some other breaking news regarding the Christmas City Express as well as an historic Train-car that has returned to Duluth.



Christmas City Express November 27 - December 20

Holidays are the best in Duluth, and our Christmas City Express is an annual tradition. This year the museum has made the decision to operate the Christmas City Express Story Performance and Train ride, but at 25% capacity. This means that each train/performance will only have about 25 people per trip, rather than our usual 110 passengers. This means tickets will be sold out very quickly.

Tickets are On Sale NOW for this year's Christmas City Express performances, to members of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum ONLY until Sunday, September 13th when they will go on sale to the general public.

We're hoping for the best, and *if* restrictions change, the capacity may increase, but right now, only 25 people per trip will allow us plenty of social-distancing room, and make for a very unique and intimate performance of the annual Christmas City Express show, followed by a short train ride.

Now's your chance to get tickets. This newsletter is the first formal announcement of tickets sales this year. If you are already a member, you will just need your member number to unlock ticket sales. If you're not a member yet, you can purchase a membership with your tickets. We look forward to seeing you soon for the holidays! Christmas City Express trains run starting the weekend of Thanksgiving, up until the weekend before Christmas Day



THE RAINIER CLUB IS BACK

After five long years, the Rainier Club Car is back in Duluth. It has been away for a few years getting some light restoration work done. The work was completed by a partner of the museum, which is a shortline railroad in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

It has returned with a brand new paintjob, just in time to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Northern Pacific Railway. We like to think that Raymond Loey would be proud. He was the industrial designer who came up with the Northern Pacific's famous two-tone green paint scheme... and here it is in this photo by photographer David Schauer, maybe better than it ever has been!

In addition to a fabulous paint job, the car got a lot of extra body work, an under-carriage paint, among some other light electrical work. \

You'll notice that the windows were removed for shipping, and we have brand NEW windows to be installed in the car very soon (already purchased). Much of the furniture will be re-upholstered, and we might even get the new carpet installed (already purchased). Although the official timeline has not yet been completed, the rough idea is to have the car ready for a re-christening ceremony next spring. It later became privately owned by Carroll Mattlin of White Bear Lake, Minnesota, who sold it to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in 1983.

Although Mattlin has since passed, his family made the journey annually to ride in the Rainier Club in Duluth. A few years ago they sponsored the car's paintjob. The family will be back to ride the car again next year, and the Rainier Club will re-join the collection of the museum. It will be available on occasion or charter on the North Shore Scenic Railroad.



Car #390, the Rainier Club, was built in 1948 by Pullman Standard for the streamlined North Coast Limited train which operated between Chicago and Seattle, on the Northern Pacific Railway.



Second Amtrak Train

Thursday, September 24, 2020, 9:15 AM, provided by Rick Krenke:

Ramsey County Commissioner Announces \$31.8 Million Federal Grant For Second Amtrak Train

A proposed second train from St. Paul to Chicago rolled a little closer to reality this week with the approval of a \$31.8 million federal grant.

Ramsey County commissioners involved in the project spoke about the grant approval at Tuesday's board meeting. An official announcement is expected later this week.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page: “This is not only about a second train that will have multiple stops through southern Minnesota all the way to Chicago, making that transportation more accessible. This is about jobs and the economy,” said Ramsey County Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo. “Most of this money would be spent in Minnesota. So it’s good news. It’s a good first step...but we still have a lot of work to do.”

The Empire Builder, an Amtrak train, currently makes a daily stop (one westbound and one eastbound) in St. Paul on its route between the Pacific Northwest and Chicago. Transit advocates have long wanted a second train between the Twin Cities and Chicago.

The proposed second train, called the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train (or TCMC), would provide an additional daily round-trip service between Union Depot in St. Paul and Chicago Union Station.

Partners in the project include the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois departments of transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Railroad Administration, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, the Great River Rail Commission and La Crosse Area Planning Committee.

The tri-state transportation departments jointly submitted a grant to the Federal Railroad Administration June 18 for funding to complete the final design and for construction of track, signal and bridge improvements necessary to accommodate the second train. The grant request, in the amount of \$31.8 million was submitted through the [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program](#).

Matching funds in the amount of \$21.2 million were included in the application: \$6.2 million from Wisconsin and \$5 million from Amtrak. The matching \$10 million from Minnesota has not yet been approved in the legislature.

If all goes well, the northbound Hiawatha 333 out of Chicago at 11:05 a.m. would continue westbound out of Milwaukee to St. Paul as the TCMC Second Train. The eastbound TCMC Second Train leaving St. Paul at 11:47 am would arrive in Milwaukee at 5:45 pm and continue southbound to Chicago in the Hiawatha 40 time slot.

A federal grant for startup operations in the amount of \$12.6 million was awarded to the project on May 5.

[Amtrak announced in June that starting Oct. 19](#), it would reduce service on the Empire Builder line to three times a week instead of the current daily service because ridership has fallen significantly during the coronavirus pandemic.

The cuts will remain in place at least until the summer of 2021, but daily service could be restored if demand improves.



TRAINS Magazine: Amtrak Furloughs, Management Abolitions

Tuesday, September 1, 2020 from John Goodman

Amtrak will furlough approximately 1,950 of its unionized workers as part of cutbacks for fiscal 2021, according to a message sent to workers today and obtained by Trains News Wire. Additionally, approximately 100 managerial positions will be eliminated.

The largest portion of those, 698 employees, will come from on-board staff represented by the Amtrak Service Workers Council. Other planned cuts, by union:

- Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation, 509 employees
- Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, 390 employees
- Transportation Communications Union, 326 employees
- American Railway and Airway Supervisors Association, 27 employees.

The two locations which will take the largest hits are Los Angeles, where 236 workers — 203 of them in on-board services — will be laid off, and Chicago, where 171 employees will be furloughed. Of those, 165 are in on-board services. Seattle will lose 129 workers, 86 in on-board services.

Amtrak announced it would cut its workforce by as much as 20% earlier this year at the same time it announced its intention to end daily service on most long-distance routes [see “Amtrak asks Congress for more money, plans long-distance cuts, workforce reductions,” Trains News Wire, May 26, 2020.] Many of these cuts reflect the reduced staffing requirements resulting from less frequent service. Amtrak says the furloughs are subject to an increase or decrease of 2%. Those who are furloughed will have their medical benefits covered by Amtrak until they are recalled or until Sept. 30, 2021.

Those whose management positions are being cut will be notified on Sept. 16, the memo says. Those positions are in addition to those eliminated by buyouts earlier this year [see “More than 500 accept Amtrak buyouts,” News Wire, July 27, 2020].



BUILDING AMERICA™

Monitoring Tropical Storm Sally; New Orleans Interchange Update

Announcement Number: CN2020-47 Sept 12 2020

To Our Customers,

We are currently monitoring Tropical Storm Sally as it travels through the Gulf of Mexico. The storm is expected to make landfall over the southeast coast of Louisiana or southern Mississippi on Tuesday, bringing with it rain, storm surge, flooding and high winds.

Due to largely favorable conditions for strengthening across the Gulf, Sally is currently forecast to briefly become a hurricane before making landfall. In preparation for landfall, the City of New Orleans will begin to close flood gates tomorrow, September 13. The gate closures will effectively prevent interchange with eastern rail carriers until further notice; interchange traffic is expected to cease late tomorrow afternoon.

We are making preparations along our network to ensure any potential outages are addressed and repaired as quickly as possible. To ensure you are properly prepared, please visit our [Hurricane Planning and Recovery](#) web page, which outlines best practices to follow during the hurricane season.



NEWSRELEASE

Minnesota Receives \$928.8M Full Funding Grant Agreement to Construct Green Line Light Rail Extension

Sept 14 2020 provided by John Goodman

Continued on next page:



Continued from previous page: Metropolitan Council media contact: Terri Dresen, 651-343-1689, Terri.Dresen@metc.state.mn.us

Southwest LRT media contact: Trevor Roy, 218-590-2465, Trevor.Roy@metrotransit.org

Hennepin County media contact: Kyle Mianulli, 612-596-9875, kyle.mianulli@hennepin.us

St. Louis Park – September 14, 2020 – Today, Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, along with the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County and the communities of Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis are pleased to announce the Green Line Light Rail Extension, also called the Southwest LRT project, has received its Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FFGA provides nearly a billion dollars in federal funds as a match to more than a billion dollars of local funding and clears the way for the completion of Minnesota’s largest ever public works project.

The \$928.8 million FFGA will cover nearly half of the \$2.003 billion Southwest LRT Project and is the realization of a decades old dream to construct a 21st century transportation system that will unite people and communities.

“From a member of Congress to this state’s Governor, the Southwest LRT has long been an important project to me,” said Minnesota Governor Tim Walz. “While Southwest LRT is a project in the Twin Cities, there isn’t a county in the state this project won’t impact, from the businesses supplying construction material to creating thousands of jobs. I am pleased the Federal Transit Administration and the Trump Administration has recognized the importance of this project to Minnesotans. I can’t wait for my first ride.”

Construction of the project started in November 2018 and signs of progress can be seen throughout the project’s alignment. From Eden Prairie to Minneapolis construction crews have been busy building tunnels, bridges and stations in anticipation for opening day 2023.

“Today is a joyous day for the people of Minnesota,” said Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle. “With the FFGA firmly in hand, the questions hanging over Southwest LRT are finally answered. I would like to thank our community partners in Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, St. Louis Park and Minneapolis for their valued input and unwavering support for the project. Additionally, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Hennepin County, without their support Southwest LRT would be a dream unrealized. Early on these communities recognized the importance of Southwest LRT and without their support this project may not have happened. This is not only a great day for the Metropolitan Council but is an affirmation of the hard work, long nights, and thousands of meetings our neighborhood and business community members endured to see this project to fruition. Southwest LRT isn’t just another LRT line, it is a vital link between workers and businesses, people and housing and is a backbone of a robust 21st century transportation system.”

Excitement around Southwest LRT is not just confined to transportation advocates, already the alignment has seen hundreds of millions of dollars of private investments along the line. From affordable housing to commercial centers, Southwest LRT is making an impact on the state’s economy a trend which will continue far into the future.

“This is a momentous day for Hennepin County and the Twin Cities Metro,” said Jan Callison, Hennepin County Commissioner and Chair of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority. “Securing full funding for Southwest LRT firmly sets the course for completion of the next leg of a modern light rail system that will carry us into the future. I’ve seen this project weather times of great uncertainty, as both mayor of Minnetonka and as Hennepin County commissioner. The steadfast commitment of city and project partners over many years and through many challenges made this moment possible. Cities, agencies and private sector partners have worked together in unprecedented ways to prepare for the opportunities light rail will bring to the Southwest Corridor. The value of these collaborative efforts is already evident. Businesses and jobs are growing, and new housing—including affordable housing—and commercial development are booming throughout the corridor. Station areas are already becoming vibrant, walkable destinations, and the groundwork is laid for future growth and development. This project is evidence of the great things we can achieve when leaders and community come together with a shared ambition, clear vision, and the will to see them through.”

Hennepin County Commissioner and Board Chair Marion Greene echoed those sentiments and said “Enormous gratitude to the thousands of people who lent their time, their voices, and their talents to bring us to this moment. This project was carried forward through a decades-long process by an everchanging yet consistently persistent cast of staff, leaders, advocates and neighbors. I hope every person who participated over the years in making this project what it is today shares a deep sense of accomplishment and pride. Your work will greatly benefit our communities, our region, and our state for many years to come.”

“Abraham Lincoln said, ‘Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.’ There’s been a lot of hustle by a lot of great people to make the Southwest Light Rail Transit project a reality,” said Jonathan Weinhausen, President and CEO of the Minneapolis Regional Chamber. “We want businesses and employees to thrive in our state. That’s why we need an all-of-the-above approach to transportation. Now more than ever we should be investing in our future and building a transportation system that will position our region and state for growth and success.”

“We are extremely excited about the advancement of the Full Funding Grant Agreement. Since the inception of the project, TwinWest has been a very vocal advocate for the project. Shannon Full President of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce continued “SWLRT will provide long-term benefits to the businesses in our region. The light rail will increase our overall economic competitiveness by providing effective transportation for employees allowing for companies to attract and retain top talent as well as serving as a catalyst for economic development with new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, and new jobs.”

The Full Funding Grant Agreement was fully executed by Metropolitan Council officials on Monday, September 14, 2020. Execution of the agreement represents the final step in the process, following a 30-day congressional notification.

Southwest LRT is a 14.5-mile line with 16 stations serving Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, nearby Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. In 2014, there were approximately 64,300 jobs within a half mile of the proposed stations and 126,800 jobs in downtown Minneapolis. By 2035, employment is expected to grow to 80,900 within a half mile of the proposed stations and 145,300 in downtown Minneapolis — an 18 percent increase in employment. The population along the line outside of downtown Minneapolis is expected to grow by 56 percent from 2014 to 2035.



BNSF Names Kathryn Farmer as its Next CEO

First Woman Set to Lead a Class I Railroad is a Career BNSF Employee
By Bill Stephens | September 14, 2020 Provided by Rick Krenske



Kathryn Farmer will become CEO of BNSF on Jan. 1.

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway today named Kathryn Farmer as its next chief executive, effective Jan. 1. Farmer, who has been BNSF's executive vice president operations since 2018, will become the first woman to lead a Class I railroad. She will replace Carl R. Ice, who will retire at the end of 2020 after spending seven years at the helm.

Farmer, 50, has spent her entire career with the railroad. She was an intern in the Burlington Northern engineering department during her junior year at Texas Christian University, and worked for BN during her senior year. After graduation she was hired as a management trainee in BN's network operations center in 1992.

Farmer has held leadership positions in operations, marketing, and finance. Before being named chief operating officer, Farmer headed BNSF's largest business unit as group vice president, consumer products, which includes the railway's intermodal and automotive segments.

"I am humbled and honored to be asked to lead this incredible company and its dedicated employees — men and women that I have worked alongside for almost 30 years," Farmer said in a statement. "We are well-positioned in our approach to safety and meeting our customers' expectations while having the necessary capacity to grow with our customers. BNSF has long been a cost leader and we will ensure that continues into the future. I look forward to continuing BNSF's success."

Analysts said Farmer was long expected to succeed Ice.

"BNSF has been a mystery of late, seemingly hiding behind Berkshire's broad shoulders, but this is one piece of news that was straight and consistent from the beginning — Katie Farmer to be the CEO," says independent analyst Anthony B. Hatch.

"Katie will do a great job," Hatch adds.

Farmer told the Wall Street Journal that BNSF, the lone Class I to not officially adopt E. Hunter Harrison's Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model, will continue Ice's focus on efficiency and cost controls.

"That has always been our business model and will continue to be our business model," she told the newspaper.

The announcement of Farmer's promotion comes six months after another transportation company, UPS, named Carol Tome as its new chief executive, and less than a week after Citi named Jane Fraser its chief executive, a first for a Wall Street bank.

Ice has been with BNSF and its predecessors for 42 years. In 1995, he led a team that orchestrated the merger and subsequent integration of Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway. Since then, he has helped lead the company into what's become the largest Class I railroad in North America by revenue and volume.

"Katie and I have been working toward this plan for a long time," Ice said in a statement. "Katie has held many different roles at BNSF with an ever-increasing impact with each new role as she has built trust and confidence throughout BNSF. I am pleased for Katie and the organization knowing BNSF's future is in good hands. Katie is a shining example of BNSF's leadership model and BNSF will continue to build upon its legacy."

BNSF is a unit of Berkshire Hathaway. Berkshire Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett said in a statement: "We look forward to Katie's leadership and more success. She possesses all of the qualities that make us excited about the future."

BNSF to Take Over Route Operated by California Short Line

Sept 4 2020 Gary Kazin via groups.io <gkazin@yahoo.com@groups.io> provided by John Goodman

Pacific Sun Railroad to discontinue operations; BNSF to take over

BNSF Railway will take over operation of San Diego-area lines currently served by short line Pacific Sun Railroad, according to a petition filed with the Surface Transportation Board. Pacific Sun's lease to operate the 21.3 Escondido Subdivision and 0.3 mile Miramar Spur, along with trackage rights on BNSF from Miramar to the San Diego County/Orange County line, is set to expire on Sept. 30, with BNSF taking over operations on Oct. 1. The Pacific Sun Railroad, a Watco line, began operations in October 2008 and was Watco's first operation in California.



AMTRAK Notes from 9/29/2020 Conference Call

Present from RPCA:	Roger Fuehring	Burt Hermey	Mike Stickel
Present from Amtrak:	Rob Rikperger	Steve Robusto	Mike
	DeAneglo	Beverly Davis	Theresa Smith

Rob Rikperger reports to Paul Vilter, and Steve Robusto reports to Rob.

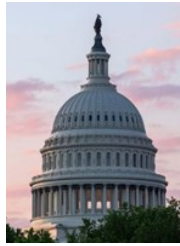


Amtrak is still promoting long-term (3 months) parking in Albany, for the period Oct-Dec 2020. This is at a reduced rate vs published tariff rates. Amtrak is considering a parking discount for multi-cars. No details yet.

A new "best practices" page has been added to the Amtrak website. This provides a pretty good checklist for things the owner/mechanical rep/person in charge should ensure are in place prior to pickup by Amtrak.

Amtrak is working on a "Parking Brochure" that will list locations and amenities available for private car parking. Track charts are also contemplated to be in the brochure.

It may be possible to operate a charter train of PV's on the NEC without the necessity of booking multiple departures, provided that the charter conforms to an established charter train business plan, such as Amtrak's sports charters. Interested operators should discuss with Beverly Davis or Steve Robusto for details. A small rate increase takes effect on Oct 1. Although not guaranteed, at this time Amtrak does not expect to implement another rate increase until Oct 1, 2021. Burt Hermey cbhermey@pacbell.net



Legislative

Amtrak President William Flynn has told members of Congress that the company needs a \$4.9 billion appropriation for fiscal 2021 to avoid employee furloughs and reduced long-distance train frequencies planned for October. He was among those testifying at the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Rail Subcommittee hearing titled, "Amtrak's response to COVID-19."

If Senate and House conferees don't come up with the \$4.9 billion (which includes the \$2 billion Amtrak originally asked for in its annual Grant and Legislative Request in February), Flynn says Amtrak will have to make very dramatic reductions across the company to stave off bankruptcy.

Railroad News

This is a synopsis of Railroad related news culled from various sources including Trains Magazine, Progressive Railroading, Railway Age, and various web sites. Please submit your railroad news as well.



Many Holiday Trains are cancelling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Canadian Pacific Holiday Train's annual trip across the CP system in the U.S. and Canada will be replaced by donations to food banks in communities along its network, as well as an online concert. The railroad says the 2020 program will draw attention to food security issues, while ensuring donations go to all food banks that would ordinarily receive them, including those that typically host a Holiday Train event in alternating years.

The [Indiana Rail Road Co.](#) has canceled the 2020 run of its Santa Train. The train travels to communities in the INRD's service areas every December. This year, however, railroad officials were unable to find a safe way to operate the train.

Kansas City Southern will not operate its Holiday Express train this year, but will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the program with a fundraising campaign to benefit the Salvation Army in 20 communities along its rail network

The Essex Steam Train & Riverboat in Essex, Conn., has announced its North Pole Express and Santa Specail Elf Academy holiday operations are postponed until 2021 The tourist operation will instead stage a 1-hour, self-tour event, Christmas Adventures at Essex Station.

Michigan's Steam Railroading Institute has canceled all 2020 excursions including its annual Fall Colors Tours and North Pole Express trips The institute, home of Pere Marquette 2-8-4 No. 1225, is seeking donations to help offset the revenue loss from its cancelled excursions.

The Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum has cancelled both its Fall Work Weekend and its popular Victorian Christmas events for 2020. In recent years, the spring and fall work weekends have attracted up to 100 volunteers, who build track, repair and paint rolling stock, paint buildings, and tackle other projects. The Virginia & Truckee Railway Commission has announced the railroad has canceled its Polar Express excursions for 2020, and will replace them with Santa's Drive-Thru Village, a socially distanced holiday event Dec. 11-13 and Dec. 18-24 at Eastgate Depot in Carson City, Nev.

A former Norfolk & Western passenger car, built in 1927 and most recently a part of a hotel restaurant, has been donated to the Roanoke chapter of the National Railway Historical Society. The Holiday Inn restaurant in Blacksburg, Va was being torn down, and the company doing the work, Empire Salvage and Demolition, made the donation. The Southern Pacific Historical and Technical Society and the Southern Pacific Railroad History Center, and the California State Railroad Museum have saved a former Central Pacific coach that was at the driving of the Golden Spike in Promontory Summit, Utah, in 1869. The car, Central Pacific No. 12, was inside the former Southern Pacific depot in Calistoga, which is planned to become a restaurant and if not moved would have been destroyed. A benefactor of the Center offered to pay for CP No. 12 to be removed from the depot and transported to safety.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust has announced two significant changes to eligibility rules for those seeking grants. In certain cases, groups can now apply for grants for equipment or facilities that are owned by a governmental agency or leased from a different owner. This replaces the prior policy in the project requesting funds had to be owned by the group seeking funding. Details on the specific requirements which apply are [available at the Trust's website](#). The has distributed \$1.376 million to 63 groups.

The Boca Raton Historical Society has sold the former Florida East Coast Railway train station that houses its Boca Express Train Museum for \$2.1 million. The museum's collection also features two former Seaboard Air Line passenger cars, an Atlantic Coast Line caboose and a 1930 Baldwin steam switch engine.

The Center for Rail Photography & Art and historian and professor Roger Grant have been selected to receive the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society's annual research fellowships. The CRP&A received \$2,500 as recipient of the 2020 William D. Middleton Research Fellowship, for a project to examine the role of videography in railroading. Four individuals have received the inaugural scholarships awarded by the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, selected by a three-member panel. Receiving the \$3,000 scholarship are: Thomas Blampied, Lee Evans, Katherine Teipel, Michael Begany.

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad will receive a federal grant for more than \$1.9 million to replace a bridge over the Animas River as part of the latest group group of Department of Transportation Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants.



Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies

Amtrak's Office of Inspector General reports that although Amtrak has built a more disciplined process to plan and coordinate major track repairs more steps could be taken to reduce service

disruptions and maximize the amount of time it has access to tracks. According to the report, these additional steps include institutionalizing multi-year planning, updating planning tools, and clarifying the roles of departments that coordinate the outage plan with affected external stakeholders like commuter railroads.

VIA Rail will not resume transcontinental passenger service as previously planned as a second wave of COVID-19 cases is seen in parts of Canada. [It had previously hoped to resume service on its two flagship trains, the *Canadian* between Toronto and Vancouver and the *Ocean* between Montreal and Halifax, on Nov. 1.](#) VIA has not operated either of the trains since March when the pandemic began to impact North America.

For the first time in the nearly 200-year-old history of North American railroading, a woman has been named chief executive of a Class I railroad. Kathryn Farmer was named as the next chief executive of BNSF effective Jan. 1. She will succeed Carl R. Ice as President and Chief Executive Officer. She will also assume leadership of BNSF's Board of Directors. Farmer has been BNSF's executive vice president operations since 2018 and has spent her entire career with the railroad.



RPCA Conference is on!

Provided by John Goodman Sept 20 2020

SAVE THE DATE March 4, 2021 - March 7, 2021 The SAM Shortline - Cordele, Georgia



We will be staying at the Lake Blackshear Resort located at Georgia Veterans State Park, just down the road from the SAM Shortline Excursion Train, in Cordele, GA.

Current Plans Include:

Hands-on Mechanical Sessions at the SAM yard

Seminars and Workshops

A Dinner Train Ride on Rare Mileage

An Excursion Train to Plains Georgia

Banquet, Hospitality Rooms, Vendors, Silent Auction

Members Meetings, Elections

*The resort is so large that we can maintain social distancing. The conference will be held in compliance with all Georgia Covid-19 rules and regulations at the time of the event.

The Atlanta airport is roughly 2 hours from the resort (and plane tickets are a great deal right now). Rental cars are available and we will try to arrange for a shuttle.

More details on pricing, registration, schedules and transportation will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.



Chris Lockwood Manager, SAM Shortline

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights

VOL. 8 ISSUE 9 September 2020
Provided by John Goodman

Washington Update
By Ross Capon



Please ask your Senators to work for \$5.49 billion for Amtrak in FY 2021 and a requirement that all daily long-distance trains remain daily. New York-Florida July 6 reductions should be reversed.

That dollar amount is apparently the funding level that Amtrak needs in FY 2021 to maintain daily service and avoid furloughs. This is Amtrak's original request of \$2.040 billion plus a \$3.45 billion supplemental, rather than Amtrak's May 25 supplemental request of \$1.475 billion.

That May 25 request contemplated reducing daily long-distance services to tri-weekly. So far, demand for travel on the long-distance trains is the least affected by the pandemic. That is consistent with the idea that short intercity travel shares to some extent the vulnerability of commuter rail to telecommuting. In each of the four completed pandemic months, April-July, Amtrak's long-distance train revenues exceeded total NEC+State Corridor revenues.

July 2020 ridership compared with July 2019 ridership		
Northeast Corridor	State-supported routes	Long-distance trains
-87%	-83%	-62%*

This decline would have been even less had Amtrak not reduced New York-Florida service July 6.

Spot checks indicate long-distance ridership is strengthening. For July 29 and August 13, passenger counts on long-distance trains at their California originating terminals were 182-242 and 188-294 respectively. The New York Times reported that Sunday, August 23, "was the second-best travel day of the pandemic, with more than 840,000 people screened by the [TSA] at airport checkpoints." It seems that pandemic-era train travel is preferred over flying, reflected in Amtrak's promotion of private rooms, physical distancing policy gives two seats to each coach passenger traveling alone.

Trains magazine reported August 31 that, "Amtrak ridership has been inching up through August, according to a series of daily booking monitors sent to state agencies. The latest report shows the seven-day average has beaten the one-day peak attained July 2. System-wide revenue has risen to only 25% of last year's totals for a comparable period, but long-distance trains together have been holding steady at about 50%. That includes sleeping-car revenue at about 70% of the previous year."

Amtrak's website now offers capacity information. Trains reports that, "running with fewer coaches and trains limited to 50% capacity [in coach], departures on some routes tend to fill up quickly." Coach sales tend to be heavy in the last week before departure. Trains reports that Chicago-Memphis was sold out for August 30 though sales were at just 20% on August 22. Chicago-Little Rock had but one seat left for August 28 though only 30% were sold as of August 21.

Implementation of service cuts planned for October likely would cause a plunge in revenues but not the expected reduction in expenses. Amtrak's May 25 supplemental request letter to Congress said "the elimination of any of the state services would result in increased costs to the remaining services, as common network costs are reallocated, further increasing the financial pressure on the states that wish to continue their rail service." Though the letter does not say it, the same is true regarding the reallocation of costs that result from long-distance service reductions.

All eyes now are on the Senate Appropriations Committee as well as the September 9 House Railroads Subcommittee hearing (live and archived [here](#).)

You can very easily send a message to both of your senators using the [RPA \(NARP\) Action Center](#). You will see a draft message that you can easily modify and send simultaneously to your two U.S. Senators. Below is one way to modify the message. Including a relevant personal story if possible; they can be effective. When you add private-car/charter-train issues, feel free to give them more prominence than in the example below.

Please support a FY 2021 Amtrak funding level of \$5.5 Billion and a requirement for continued daily operation of all long-distance trains that are currently daily, plus restoration of daily service on the Silver Star and Silver Meteor. I am outraged at Amtrak's plan to reduce those trains from daily to three days a week--including the [name of train], [name of city]'s only public transportation. These reductions are set to begin on different routes the weeks of October 5, 12 and 19. The pandemic has had a devastating impact on short corridor trips, with Acela July ridership off a whopping 93% from a year ago. Overall, Northeast Corridor ridership was off 87% and State Supported corridor trains were down 83% whereas long distance ridership was down 62% and strengthening. Amtrak often quotes system-wide statistics that mask the stronger performance of the long-distance trains.

Failure to act by the Senate - either through the FY21 appropriations process or through a coronavirus relief package - would result in Amtrak's collapse systemwide. This would be an economic catastrophe for Amtrak-served communities across the U.S. - from big cities to rural America - and of course leave more workers unemployed and dependent on public aid.

As well, please endorse report language for private cars and charter trains similar to that in the House-passed FY 2021 T-HUD appropriations bill. This will be the third year of such language, a reflection of Amtrak's unsatisfactory response to previous reports.

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Thank you for considering these important issues.

Impact of "tri-weekly-everywhere" on private cars-if implemented. All three westbound Texas Eagle departures from Chicago will lack same-day connections from the East or South. However, since Amtrak does not offer PVs same-day switching in Chicago, the single overnight benefits PVs -- arrive Monday/Thursday/Saturday, depart Tuesday/Friday/Sunday. But many other connections have been scheduled for same-day passenger convenience and would force two- or three-overnight connections, including:

in Chicago, connections between Lake Shore/Capitol Ltd/Cardinal/City of New Orleans on one hand and Empire Builder/Southwest Chief/eastbound California Zephyr on the other.

in Portland, connections in both directions between Empire Builder and Coast Starlight

in Los Angeles, the three westbound Sunsets and Monday/Wednesday Chief arrivals connect to the Starlight

For my rebuttal to Amtrak's "Restoration" paper, now with tables showing planned times and days of departures and arrivals at Chicago, Portland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, New Orleans and Washington, send an e-mail request to rcapon3@gmail.com

Another Voice Joins the Cause -- Wayne Boyles. Robert Menzies is a private car owner, longtime AAPRCO member, and generous contributor to the work of inserting AAPRCO concerns into fund-raisers for key legislators. He is also owner and board chair of the Aberdeen, Carolina, and Western Railway (AC&W). Under his leadership, the AC&W recently retained Milvian Bridge Government and Public Affairs, LLC. Wayne R. Boyles III, President of Milvian Bridge, is a veteran North Carolina transportation/energy/economic/trade/commerce and economic development public policy specialist. He will work on various projects including assisting in securing favorable outcomes for key issues of importance to AAPRCO. He is one of the longest serving US Senate staff members in the history of North Carolina.

Boyles worked for Senator Mack Mattingly (R-GA) for one year, and almost 21 years for the late Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC). Subsequently, he spent four years in the U.S. Department of Energy, handling intergovernmental affairs including relations with the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Since then, he has assisted clients in addressing their public policy needs with Congress and the Federal Executive Branch.

Last year, Wayne and his wife took the Empire Builder from Chicago to Seattle with a three-day stop in Glacier National Park. They took note of the otherwise-isolated communities along the route. That trip gave Wayne an appreciation of the critical role long distance trains play in connecting those communities, and similar communities across the U.S., to the national transportation grid.

Amtrak's timetables are vital marketing tools and also appreciated by passengers--especially on the long-distance trains and even more importantly for less-than-daily routes. After Amtrak stopped printing timetables, and while the pdfs were still easily available, train attendants often would make copies for their passengers. Perhaps you have done the same thing for your passengers? Pdfs are still available for long-distance routes except the Silver Service.

Go to www.amtrak.com

Click on DESTINATIONS (at the left)

Click on SEE ALL ROUTES. (towards the right, roughly opposite DC on the map)

Select a route; when the page opens, click on SCHEDULE at the bottom, next to MAP (NOT the schedules link at the top of the page)

I have a complete set of timetables (including all the corridors), some of which were published as recently as May 1 (including Silver Service). If you need a timetable, and the above method doesn't work, email your request to me at rcapon3@gmail.com.

My August 17 column included an incomplete list of start weeks for the planned tri-weekly service, although AAPRCO published Amtrak's own table just above my column. Here are my bullets with the previously missing trains added.

October 5 for Crescent, California Zephyr, Capitol Limited, and City of New Orleans;

October 12 for Coast Starlight, Lake Shore Limited, Texas Eagle and Southwest Chief; and

October 19 for Palmetto and Empire Builder



AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights

September 2020

More: **Washington Update by Ross Capon**
Please ask your Senators to work for \$4 billion for Amtrak in FY 2021 and a requirement that all daily, long-distance trains return to daily within six weeks after funding is assured, including the New York-Florida trains that were reduced July 6. If you acted on the slightly different ask in my last column, thank you very much; there is no need to change it -- legislators will understand what you want.

Click [here](#) for link to see an easily personalized/updatable draft message that you can send simultaneously to your two U.S. Senators. The draft covers both Amtrak and transit, but you can modify this to suit yourself. Click [here](#) for good advocacy graphics from RPA/NARP, including this comment from Pres. Jim Mathews at the September 9 hearing described below: "Whatever the reasons, reducing frequencies across the National Network will drop a \$2 billion-dollar bomb on 'Flyover Country.'"

Amtrak's August 24 "updated FY 2021 grant request" says "Amtrak will adjust long distance service frequency in October as planned. If Congress were to subsequently provide funding for daily service and prohibit such adjustments in legislation later in the fiscal year, it will take Amtrak some time to return service to FY20 levels. It cannot happen overnight, and we ask Congress to keep this in mind as it considers legislative directives."

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The August 24 document also shows percentage comparisons of Amtrak's projected gross ticket revenues to the actual FY 2019 levels. It is interesting to compare them with July 2020 ridership (the same table that was in my last column).

Amtrak's projected FY21 gross ticket revenues as % of FY19		
Northeast Corridor	State-supported routes	Long-distance trains
-69%	-59%	-65%
July 2020 ridership compared with July 2019 ridership		
Northeast Corridor	State-supported routes	Long-distance trains
-87%	-83%	-62%*

**This decline would have been less had Amtrak not reduced New York-Florida service July 6.*

The top table clearly acknowledges the damage that Amtrak's cuts will inflict on the long-distance trains. Amtrak will cut long-distance train-miles by about 50% and projects a 65% decline in ticket revenues.

It is unfortunate that Amtrak, having unilaterally decided to cut the long-distance network in half, waited until it was too late to avert that destruction before revealing the price tag for avoiding it. Sixteen Senators wrote on June 24 and 25 to Amtrak making clear their concern. At the August 6 confirmation hearing, Senators Jerry Moran (R-KS) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA, ranking member on the Commerce Committee) reiterated that concern (my August 18 column).

As previously noted, Amtrak few years ago dramatically reduced the size of its public monthly performance reports from over 60 pages to just eight. The page headed "Key Performance Indicators" has both a table and a graph that break out ridership among Northeast Corridor, State Supported and Long-Distance Trains. There is no similar breakdown for either revenues or passenger-miles, thereby concealing the measures most reflective of the long-distance trains' strength.

House hearing. The Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held an August 9 hearing, "Amtrak's Response to COVID-19". The four witnesses:

Mr. William Flynn, President and Chief Executive Officer, Amtrak

Mr. Arthur Maratea, National President, Transportation Communications Union (TCU/IAM)

Ms. Amy Griffin, President of America Local 1460, Transport Workers Union of America

Mr. Jim Mathews, President and Chief Executive Officer, Rail Passengers Association

Subcommittee Chair Dan Lipinski (D-IL) opened with a scathing indictment of Amtrak's approach to its national network. "The October 1 furlough announcement was extremely disappointing. Amtrak has had months to come to Congress and request additional funds to help keep workers on payroll. The principle reason Amtrak didn't get any money in the HEROES Act passed by the House [in May] is that Amtrak did not submit a supplemental request until 10 days after passage. To make matters worse, Amtrak is just now submitting its amended supplemental request, less than one month before...Amtrak plans to implement these furloughs. I believe Congress needs to act quickly to avoid furloughs and long-distance service cuts...We tried cutting long-distance service to three days a week under President Clinton in 1994. Congress, on a bipartisan basis led by Mississippi Republican Senator Trent Lott, eventually rejected those cuts and restored long-distance service to seven days a week because cutting long-distance service economically hurts rural communities, undermines Amtrak's role as a national rail passenger system and actually doesn't save that much money. Congress's view on this has not changed in the past 25 years...Ultimately the furloughs and LD service cuts are misguided and weaken our national passenger rail service."

Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX-7-Houston) said, "I believe cutting to three days will slash demand, make the service less convenient. How will Amtrak guarantee long-term prospects of daily service?" Flynn reviewed the metrics Amtrak published in its August 11 paper, "Restoring Long-Distance Service." My pro bono rebuttal to that paper is on the members-only section at aaprc.com

Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN-7-Indianapolis) asked "what happens to Midwestern service when trains are cut?" Mathews' response included the observation that "\$39 million of connecting revenue flows through Chicago alone. Many trips will not take place because the network does not have the utility required to make those trips worthwhile. Those are people who will not be supporting the local economy."

Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-MA-8-Brockton/Quincy/Boston) said "I fully support using Northeast Corridor profit to help our Midwestern and southern and western states. I don't think we should cut out those lines that don't necessarily benefit my district but benefit the country. [Addressing Flynn], I hope you'll consider the reputational impact of these decisions."

Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA-11-Lancaster) would like to transfer ownership of the Keystone Line to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Flynn disagreed. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1-Langhorne) gave Maratea an opportunity to recite the considerable efforts his TCU has done to reduce Amtrak's costs. Fitzpatrick said it was important to recognize these front-line workers: "They have significant skin in the game and have made significant sacrifices."

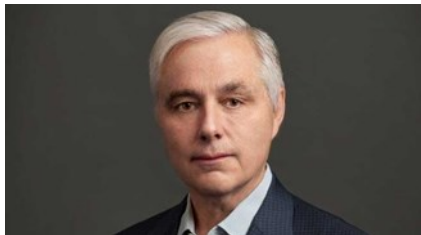
Some Republicans asked Flynn when Amtrak would achieve profitability. These included ranking members of the full T&I and Railroads Subcommittee, Sam Graves (R-MO-6-St. Joseph/La Plata) and Rick Crawford (R-AR-1-Walnut Ridge/Jonesboro/Cabot/Mountain Home/Dumas), respectively, and Brian Babin (TX-36-Woodville/Orange/Deer Park). Flynn handled these questions well; he is a diplomat. Mathews, in answering Carson's friendly question, noted that Amtrak is not statutorily required to make a profit, only to minimize subsidies.

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Profitability is NOT a mandate for Amtrak: Section 301 of the Rail Passenger Service Act was amended to modify the term 'a for profit corporation' by inserting the term 'operated and managed as' (Amtrak Improvement Act of 1978). This wording was deliberate, as indicated by the report language accompanying the bill (H.R. Rep. No. 1182, 95th Congress, Second Session, 15): "Section 9 amends section 301 of the RPSA...to conform the law to reality, providing that Amtrak shall be operated and managed as a for-profit corporation. This amendment recognizes that Amtrak is not a for-profit corporation." The only profitability "mandate" is from the Amtrak Board, a self-inflicted wound.

More AARPCO News: **Amtrak Now Needs \$5 Billion in Federal Funds, Flynn Tells Congress**



William Flynn Photo - amtrak.com

[Amtrak](#) anticipates it will need up to \$4.9 billion in federal funding to operate and continue to invest in its rail network, President and Chief Executive Officer William Flynn yesterday [told lawmakers](#) during a congressional hearing on the railroad's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The latest dollar amount, which includes \$2.8 billion in federal supplemental funding, is necessary to help Amtrak address the financial crisis it faces as a result of the pandemic, Flynn said.

"We, along with our state partners, have seen stunning revenue losses as a result of the precipitous decline in ticket sales due to COVID-19," Flynn said. "Our latest projections are that in FY2020, Amtrak's revenue loss from ticket sales will be \$1.266 billion, which would be only 55 percent of what it was in FY2019."

Amtrak's FY2021 begins Oct. 1. Given the uncertainty of the supplemental funding for the new fiscal year, the railroad has had no choice but to slash operations and [furlough about 2,000 employees](#), Flynn said.

The federal funding not only would help the railroad continue to operate and invest in the network, it would address lawmakers' concerns, such as by avoiding the employee furloughs and maintaining daily service on its long-distance trains. Earlier this year, Amtrak announced a plan to reduce most of its long-distance routes to three days a week. The railroad also is reducing train frequencies on the Northeast Corridor.

The two-hour hearing before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials was Flynn's first time testifying before Congress as Amtrak's chief executive.

Congress is considering Amtrak's earlier request for \$2.8 billion, nearly double the supplemental funding it projected it would need in May. The funding request comes on top of the \$2 billion in federal subsidies the railroad receives annually toward its operations.

Subcommittee Chair Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.) asked Flynn to commit to rescind the furloughs and service reductions if Congress agrees to fund the \$4.9 billion that Amtrak wants, according to a [Washington Post](#) report.

"We will do as directed by Congress," Flynn said, the newspaper reported. "If that \$4.9 billion instructs us to rescind the furloughs and rescind the service cuts, we'll do that."



Lower ridership and revenue mean reduced staffing levels, the railroad says Photo – Amtrak

Amtrak to Furlough Nearly 2,000 Workers, Cut 100 Managers

[Amtrak](#) last week announced plans to furlough 1,950 workers and cut 100 management positions due to contracted operations and pinched finances.

For several weeks, the railroad conducted a thorough review of its fiscal-year 2021 operating plan and planned service levels, which revealed reduced staffing needs for the next fiscal year, Amtrak officials said in a prepared statement.

"While we have implemented initiatives to minimize the number of furloughs and involuntary separations, significant reductions remain necessary due to the slow recovery of ridership and revenue," they said.

[Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen](#) (BLET) leaders are urging members to ask their U.S. senators to adequately fund Amtrak, provided the railroad maintains full daily services to prevent the nearly 2,000 job cuts. The furloughs will impact about 400 BLET members.

Earlier this summer, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Moving Forward Act, which would have tripled Amtrak funding to nearly \$29 billion," BLET officials said in a press release. "It conditioned the extra funding on Amtrak maintaining service levels no lower than in 2019, and bars furloughs."

The layoffs are unacceptable and avoidable, said [Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO](#) officials in a statement.

"Congress must immediately provide this carrier with the funding it needs to preserve its operations and keep its employees on payroll. If lawmakers fail to do so, Amtrak won't stop at 2,000 jobs," they said. "The carrier could ultimately lay off nearly 50 percent of its staff, leaving communities in both urban and rural areas without a vital transportation lifeline, and sending 10,000 workers to the unemployment line."

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Meanwhile, Amtrak last week also announced a new partnership with Lysol maker RB that will help strengthen disinfection protocols for trains, stations and lounges. The protocols first will launch in Northeast Corridor stations and Pacific Surfliner trains before expanding across Amtrak's network.

RB will supply Amtrak with disinfection solutions, including those proven to be effective against the SARS-CoV2 virus that causes COVID-19. The products will be used in high-touch and high-traffic areas where germs are most prevalent.

Amtrak Drops Off-Shore IT Provision in RFP

Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer William Flynn told a congressional panel last week that he eliminated a provision in an Amtrak request for proposals (RFP) that would have allowed certain information technology (IT) work to be done overseas.

In response to questions during a House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) subcommittee hearing held last week, Flynn said T&I Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio and other lawmakers recently brought the RFP provision to his attention.

In a Sept. 8 letter to Flynn, the lawmakers expressed outrage that an Amtrak RFP would contain such a policy at the same time the railroad plans to lay off 2,050 employees and is seeking nearly \$5 billion in federal funding to address pandemic-related financial problems.

"We have adjusted that RFP and taken out the ability of the successful responder to outsource that IT work," Flynn said during the hearing.

Amtrak has removed similar provisions in other RFPs, he added.

In a Sept. 11 press release, DeFazio, U.S. Reps. Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.) and Jennifer Wexton (D-Va.) commended Flynn for reversing the policy. However, they reiterated their concerns about Amtrak's pending layoffs and the railroad's plan to reduce service on long-distance routes.

"While we are pleased with Amtrak's decision to change course (on the RFP), we must be diligent in our efforts to prevent the furloughing of over 2,000 Amtrak employees," said Lipinski. "We should continue to work with Amtrak leadership to keep American workers on the job and protect daily long distance service."

AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

Please ASAP ask your Representative -- particularly if he or she is a Democrat -- to urge Speaker Pelosi to reach agreement with the Administration on a new coronavirus emergency appropriation. Speaker Pelosi is at \$2.2 trillion. President Trump has said he would support \$1.5 trillion, and he presumably could get enough Senate Republicans to go along.

"I don't understand why zero is better than \$1.5 trillion."

Senator Wicker (R-MS) September 29, 2020

VOL. 8 ISSUE 10
October 2020

Washington Update By Ross Capon

The economy, including passenger rail, would go off a cliff if no deal is reached in the next few days.

Background: The Speaker and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin met Sept. 30 after days of phone calls. They did not reach agreement but said talks will continue. A House vote on Democrats' new, slimmed-down HEROES Act (now with Amtrak funding and daily long-distance service mandate, last section of this column) originally set for Sept. 30 was postponed one day to allow more time for those talks. Key remaining issues: state and local aid Democrats want; liability protections for businesses and workers Republicans want.

If you already have an e-mail relationship with your legislator's staff, use that! Otherwise, go to Congress.gov, put "members" in the drop-down menu at left, insert your representative's name in the main field, and when information about the legislators appears, click on "web site." Once there, it is usually easy to find the web form for sending a message.

Below in italics is an example of a message you can send, but you will want to personalize it, adjust it for any news that makes part of the first paragraph out-of-date, and change to your taste some of the asks at the end. The first sentence is only appropriate for Democratic reps.

Second-guessing Speaker Pelosi can be a fool's errand. However, a Republican Senator on September 29 observed, "I don't understand why zero is better than \$1.5 trillion." He was referring to the President's willingness to support a new, \$1.5 trillion coronavirus emergency appropriation. Speaker Pelosi and Secretary Mnuchin spoke on Sept. 30. They did not reach agreement but agreed to keep talking. I am very concerned about the economic fallout and the human tragedies we would see if they fail to reach agreement soon.

The nation and its people would be far better off with a \$1.5 trillion package (or even \$1.6) than with both parties retreating into their comfort zones while the economy tanks in the next several days.

The package should include payroll protection, state and local government aid (addressing pandemic-caused problems) and funding for public transportation and intercity buses. The package also should include funding and language that prevents or quickly reverses Amtrak's crazy plan to cut long-distance service in half. Ridership recovery from late March has been much stronger on long-distance trains than on Amtrak's other trains, in part because the markets served have less telecommuting and fewer travel alternatives. Long-distance coach passengers are Amtrak's lowest-income customers.

Thank you for considering my views and for conveying them to Speaker Pelosi.

Continuing Resolution and Amtrak food service mandate: Early October 1st, the Congress approved, and President Trump signed into law, a continuing resolution (CR) which funds the federal government at FY 2020 levels through December 11. If Amtrak's May 25 supplemental appropriations request is taken literally, this funding level puts all long-distance trains (except Auto Train) and many state-supported trains "at risk." However, recent action by House Democrats (next section of this column) raises hopes for more funding and for Amtrak doing nothing worse than the October service cuts (bad as they are) which Amtrak said in August are definite and would "take time" to reverse. *Continued on next page:*

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During a short-term CR, report language accompanying the previous fiscal year's appropriations laws remains in effect. For private cars and special trains, the House and Senate report provisions were reprised in my December 20, 2019 column. On AAPRCO's Information Board, I posted the House language on June 3, 2019, and the Senate language on December 18, 2019. Alternatively, for the House language, click [here](#) and go to pages 58-59; for the Senate language click [here](#) and go to page 77.

A long-overdue provision in the continuing resolution eliminates problematic language that prohibited use of Federal funds "to cover any operating loss associated with providing food and beverage service on a route operated by Amtrak or a rail carrier that operates a route in lieu of Amtrak pursuant to section 24711." This micromanaging by Congress was used to justify some bad decisions at Amtrak, ignoring this June 9, 2005, Amtrak testimony before the House Railroads Subcommittee: "Food service in the travel industry is not meant to make a profit. The business model, price elasticity, and regulatory and statutory hurdles are too great for Amtrak, or any other entity of the size and reach of Amtrak, for that matter, to ever break even on a consistent basis, let alone make a profit. Food service in the travel industry was never designed to be a profit center, but instead, it was intended to maximize ticket revenues."

Besides a 72-day CR, the bill also has a full-year extension of the FAST Act (surface transportation authorization). Highways and the Trust-Fund part of transit are made whole by a further general-fund bailout of the Highway Transit Fund (HTF) which brings to \$152.7 billion the size of the general (and LUST) funds HTF bail-out over the last 12 years. So, even using an incredible narrow definition of highway costs, highways are not self-supporting. (LUST = Leaking Underground Storage Tank, which has its own trust fund created in 1986)

House Democrats Revised HEROES Act: House Democrats on Sept. 28 unveiled an "updated," slimmed-down \$2.2 trillion version of The Heroes Act. It has \$2.4 billion for Amtrak that would prevent furloughs, provide extra funding for state-supported routes and prohibit long-distance service cuts (or, presumably, force their reversal as soon as possible). "None of the funds made available in this Act ... may be used by [Amtrak] to reduce the frequency of rail service on any long-distance route...below frequencies for such routes in fiscal year 2019, except in an emergency or during maintenance or construction outages...provided further, that the coronavirus shall not qualify as an emergency in the preceding proviso." Click [here](#) for the full text. The quoted language begins on page 255.

Significantly, the Amtrak funding and directives were added even as the bill was slimmed down from the \$3.4 trillion version the House passed May 15 on a 208-199 vote. As reported in my last column, Amtrak submitted its request 10 days *after* May passage of the HEROES Act; and Chairman Lipinski said at the September 9 hearing that "Amtrak is just now submitting its amended supplemental request" (including what it would take to avoid "tri-weekly-everywhere") "less than one month before Amtrak...plans to implement these furloughs" and service cuts.

It must be frustrating to Amtrak workers to watch as airline executives work on Capitol Hill with their labor leaders to secure emergency funding, while Amtrak tiptoes around with "if Congress were to subsequently provide funding for daily service and prohibit [service] adjustments later in the fiscal year, it will take Amtrak some time to return service to FY20 levels." (Fortunately, the new bill refers to Fiscal 2019 levels to avoid any ambiguity about the Silver Service cuts that Amtrak snuck in on July 6.)



Amtrak Workers Rally to Call on Congress to Preserve Jobs

Unionized [Amtrak](#) workers, led by rail labor organizations, rallied in Washington, D.C., New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles yesterday to urge members of Congress to provide emergency funding to Amtrak to prevent planned cuts to service and its workforce.

Earlier this month, Amtrak President and Chief Executive Officer [William Flynn](#) called for \$5 billion in emergency funding to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. If no additional funding is provided by the federal government, Amtrak has announced impending cuts, effective Oct. 1, of 1,950 unionized employees and a planned reduction of service.

Of the unionized workers targeted by the cuts, 1,225 are members of the [Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen](#) (BLET), [International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers-Transportation Division](#) (SMART-TD) and [Transportation Communications International Union](#) (TCU), BLET officials said in a press release.

"Placing the burden of the pandemic's effects on all of these essential workers who faithfully kept the service running during this ongoing national emergency is absolutely wrong. Job cuts are not the cure," the BLET, SMART-TD and TCU union presidents said in a joint statement.

Members of the BLET, SMART-TD, TCU and other local unions today will gather outside the U.S. Capitol, in front of Penn Station in New York City, near Union Station in Chicago and in front of Union Station in Los Angeles.

Earlier this week, Democratic leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives unveiled a new \$2.2 trillion [COVID-19 relief bill](#) that includes \$32 billion in emergency funding for Amtrak and transit agencies. The House will consider the proposed bill later this week.



Amtrak Adds Booking Feature to Provide Real-time Seating Availability

Amtrak has updated its website and mobile application to allow riders to view how full their reserved train will be while booking.

When searching for travel, riders will see a passenger volume percentage next to each route. The percentage represents the proportion of seats sold based on the total number of seats on the train.

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This new feature will give riders the opportunity to book a route that is less crowded in order to best follow social distancing practices during the COVID-19 pandemic, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

Amtrak has also limited the number of riders on reserved trains to allow for more physical distancing in seating areas.

CRISI Grant Awards include Southwest Chief and Wisconsin Inter-City Passenger Service

The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) (FRA) last week released its full list of 50 projects in 29 states granted funding under the fiscal-year 2020 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program.

The \$320.6 million worth of projects selected include a wide variety of railroad investments that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of freight and intercity passenger service, FRA officials said in a press release.

This year, the program expanded beyond supporting traditional infrastructure and safety improvements and into research and workforce development projects that help the future of the rail industry, FRA Deputy Administrator Quintin Kendall said during a media call yesterday.

The program also drew first-time short line applicants, and an excursion railroad - Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Colorado - was awarded a grant for the first time in program history.

Rural projects received over 62 percent of the funds, with 29 grants totaling \$152 million designated for short line or regional railroad projects.

"The bread and butter of this program is investing in upgrading Class II and Class III railroads, the one that connects rural communities and their manufacturing and agricultural plants into the broader U.S. economy," Kendall said.

Among the projects awarded are:

Up to \$31.8 million to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to fund six infrastructure improvements in Wisconsin and Minnesota on Canadian Pacific's Soo Line serving Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, to add the first state-supported intercity passenger rail frequency between the Twin Cities and Milwaukee to contribute to an eighth round-trip on Amtrak's Hiawatha service between Milwaukee and Chicago.

Up to \$5.6 million to Amtrak to stabilize and rehabilitate the line along the Amtrak Southwest Chief's route in Colorado and New Mexico.

Up to \$15.6 million to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for trespass prevention and pedestrian safety enhancements along the Michigan Line accelerated rail corridor. The grant will help MDOT build fencing to prevent trespassing and provide other safety enhancements at select grade crossings in high foot traffic areas along the MDOT-owned segment between Kalamazoo and Dearborn. Amtrak and Norfolk Southern Railway trains operate on the line.

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act authorized the CRISI Program to improve the safety, efficiency and reliability of intercity passenger- and freight-rail systems. The act authorized the program for four years beginning in 2017. This year's program is the last round, but Kendall said he anticipates another one-year allocation extension.

The program garnered the most applicants in program history, despite the notice of funding for this round of grants being announced in April during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle gives a press conference on February 13, to reduce light rail crime. Courtesy of Metro Transit

Feds OK \$928 Million for Southwest LRT Project

By Scott McClallen | The Center Square Sept 15 2020

Provided by Rick Krense

(The Center Square) – The Federal Transit Administration Monday awarded Minnesota's Green Line Light Rail Extension, also called the Southwest LRT project, a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) of nearly a billion dollars.

Southwest LRT is a 14.5-mile line with 16 stations serving Minneapolis, St. Louis Park, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka and Eden Prairie.

The FFGA provides nearly a billion dollars in federal funds to match over a billion dollars of local funding and lays the groundwork for Minnesota's largest-ever public works project, according to the state.

The \$928.8 million FFGA will cover nearly half of the more than \$2 billion cost of the Southwest LRT Project.

The largest chunk of other funding, \$591.4 million, comes from Hennepin County.

The Hennepin County Railroad Authority funded \$199.5 million; the now-defunct County Transportation Infrastructure Board contributed \$218.9 million; Minnesota paid \$30.3 million; and local entities gave \$26.4 million.

"From a member of Congress to this state's Governor, the Southwest LRT has long been an important project to me," Governor Tim Walz said in a statement.

"While Southwest LRT is a project in the Twin Cities, there isn't a county in the state this project won't impact, from the businesses supplying construction material to creating thousands of jobs. I am pleased the Federal Transit Administration and the Trump Administration has recognized the importance of this project to Minnesotans. I can't wait for my first ride."

Construction started in November 2018 with a planned opening in 2023.

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"Today is a joyous day for the people of Minnesota," Metropolitan Council Chair Charlie Zelle said in a statement. "With the FFGA firmly in hand, the questions hanging over Southwest LRT are finally answered."

Zelle continued: "This is not only a great day for the Metropolitan Council but is an affirmation of the hard work, long nights, and thousands of meetings our neighborhood and business community members endured to see this project to fruition. Southwest LRT isn't just another LRT line, it is a vital link between workers and businesses, people and housing and is a backbone of a robust 21st century transportation system."

Jan Callison, Hennepin County Commissioner and Chair of the Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority, called the announcement "a momentous day for Hennepin County and the Twin Cities Metro" in a statement.

"Securing full funding for Southwest LRT firmly sets the course for completion of the next leg of a modern light rail system that will carry us into the future," Callison added.

"The steadfast commitment of city and project partners over many years and through many challenges made this moment possible. Cities, agencies and private sector partners have worked together in unprecedented ways to prepare for the opportunities light rail will bring to the Southwest Corridor. The value of these collaborative efforts is already evident."

Callison said the project would provide for more growth and development throughout its stations.

Business leaders applauded the announcement.

"[Southwest LRT] will provide long-term benefits to the businesses in our region," Shannon Full, President of the TwinWest Chamber of Commerce, said in a statement.

"The light rail will increase our overall economic competitiveness by providing effective transportation for employees allowing for companies to attract and retain top talent as well as serving as a catalyst for economic development with new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, and new jobs."



The Met Council announced last week that the Southwest Light Rail transit project has received \$928.8 million from the Federal Transit Agency. The line will run between Target Field Station in Minneapolis and SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie. (File photo: Bill Klotz)

Southwest LRT Project up for \$9.3M Change Order

By: Brian Johnson September 22, 2020 Provided by Rick Krenske

The Metropolitan Council is expected to approve a \$9.3 million change order related to additional track and retaining wall work for the \$2.03 billion Southwest Light Rail transit project under construction between Minneapolis and Eden Prairie.

The change order is up for approval at the council's Wednesday meeting. The order stems from a 2018 agreement with the BNSF Railway, which requires the Southwest LRT project team to extend an existing "tail track" near Glenwood Avenue about 1,500 feet to the west, according to a Met Council staff report.

As part of that work scope, crews will relocate "previously planned" retaining walls and build additional retaining walls, the document notes. The retaining wall work was not included in the initial bidding.

Though the Met Council reached the agreement with BNSF Railway more than two years ago, the change order request is just now going before the Met Council because the retaining wall work is about to begin.

"We generally don't do change orders until they are ready to do the work," said Trevor Roy, a Met Council Southwest LRT spokesman.

The Met Council's Transportation Committee unanimously recommended approval of the change order last week.

At the committee's Sept. 21 meeting, Southwest LRT Project Director Jim Alexander said the change order falls within the project's \$2.03 billion budget. Any change order above \$2.5 million needs Met Council approval.

The change order request comes on the heels of last week's announcement that the project has received \$928.8 million from the Federal Transit Agency. The long-anticipated "full funding grant agreement" will cover nearly half of the project's cost.

"From a member of Congress to this state's Governor, the Southwest LRT has long been an important project to me," Gov. Tim Walz said in a statement. "While Southwest LRT is a project in the Twin Cities, there isn't a county in the state this project won't impact, from the businesses supplying construction material to creating thousands of jobs. I am pleased the Federal Transit Administration and the Trump Administration has recognized the importance of this project to Minnesotans. I can't wait for my first ride."

In May 2018, the team of Black River Falls, Wisconsin-based Lunda Construction and Maple Grove-based C.S. McCrossan submitted the [apparent low bid](#) of \$799.514 million for civil construction, the single biggest work package for the project.

Southwest LRT construction began in November 2018, shortly after the Met Council received a "letter of no prejudice" from the Federal Transit Administration for the project. The letter cleared the way for construction to begin.

Scheduled for completion in 2023, the project encompasses 16 stations, 29 new bridges, seven bridge modifications, eight tunnels, 15 at-grade crossings, 182,000 feet of track and more than 100 retaining walls

Southwest Light Rail Transit Project Clears Funding Hurdle

Andrew Hazzard / AHAZZARD@SOUTHWESTJOURNAL.COM

Sept 30 2020

Provided by Rick Krenske



The Southwest Light Rail Transit project has received a full-funding agreement from the federal government, a significant and long-expected move that will cover roughly half the price of the \$2 billion Green Line extension. After multiple letters of no prejudice — essentially notes from the federal government assuring the Metropolitan Council the money would be coming — the Trump Administration announced the advancement of the full funding agreement on Aug. 5. The Federal Transportation Administration will contribute \$929 million for the project, just under half the total bill. *Continued on next page:*

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"This is incredible news for the Twin Cities and state of Minnesota," Gov. Tim Walz said in a press release. "The Southwest Light Rail Project will be transformative for so many communities when complete and encapsulates the idea of a One Minnesota."

The 14.5-mile Green Line extension connecting Downtown Minneapolis to Eden Prairie has now been under construction for 16 months.

In Southwest Minneapolis, construction activities continue to intensify. In August, crews began the excavation process for the new tunnel being built in the Kenilworth Corridor. The half-mile tunnel being built in Cedar-Isles-Dean is one of the most technically complex and controversial parts of the project.

Work this summer has consisted mostly of installing metal sheeting used to form the tunnel, but crews began the early stages of excavation in August, according to the Met Council. Initial excavation steps are starting near Park Siding Park off West 28th Street, where temporary tunnel cells are being constructed. More trucks and workers will be in the area in the coming weeks to remove and bring in materials for the excavation.

The northbound lane of Burnham Road will be closed until the third week of September for utility work on the east side of the road.

The new freight bridge over the Kenilworth Channel is complete and a demolition of the old bridge will occur in early September, according to the Met Council. Construction of the new light-rail bridge is expected to start after Labor Day.

The large dirt surcharges at the future sites of the 21st Street and Bryn Mawr stations have achieved necessary compaction and will be excavated in the coming weeks. Work on the 21st Street Station is expected to start this fall.

Minnesota Streetcar Museum (MSM)

Minnesota RR Facebook Group Aug 14 2020

On this day, 75 years ago, Motorette Mary Ann Jones Turner was operating her streetcar on the Interurban line when President Harry Truman announced the surrender of Japan. Upon hearing that World War 2 had ended, mass celebrations broke out in the streets of cities and towns throughout the country, including in Minneapolis and Saint Paul. Years later, Mary Ann Jones Turner recounted her experience on that day in an interview:

"It was six o'clock in the evening in the middle of the old Washington Avenue bridge. The whistles started blowing and the windows were open so you could hear the noise and people didn't know what was happening. Of course some of us had heard the reports that the war was going to be over, so I stopped the streetcar and I turned around and some lady asked me 'What's going on? What's happening?', and I said 'Ma'am, I think the war is over.'

By the time I got the streetcar to 5th and Hennepin it was virtually impossible to get through. People were converging on downtown like they had gone absolutely mad. The police got us through and we turned the car at the 5th Avenue N. wye. In about an hour and a half I got back to the University of Minnesota but from then on it was absolutely lost time. The kids from the university did everything but sit on the roof. My conductor came up and said she couldn't get any fares and I said, 'You weren't really trying, were you?' She said no and I said why don't you sit up here on the electrical box and so she did.

As we neared downtown St. Paul, they pulled us into the wye at the top of Wabasha Street by the state capitol and we sat there until probably two in the morning. You never saw so many people in your life. They couldn't even move. When it started breaking up one of the checkers got to us and told us to put up a 'Snelling Station' sign. We got back to the station after 3 AM. It was quite a night. I was very grateful to the streetcar company, because I had the best seat in the house."

We do not have photos of streetcars among celebrations on that day in our photo archive, so here is a photo of a streetcar on the Washington Avenue bridge. This location is where Motorette Mary Ann Jones Turner, her conductor, and her passengers realized the war had finally ended.

By Jonathon Koenig MN RR Facebook Group



Bruno Station Fire

The old (Bruno?) train station had an electrical fire last night. It was being used as a school in Sandstone. I'm not sure what is going to happen with the building. Also not sure if there could be any architectural salvage.

On Sept 3, 2020 our school caught fire. At this time it is unknown what happened, but with only a few days before school starting our small community is in need of love and support.

Please join with us in prayer, our teachers and students as well as our community of families could use prayer during this difficult time. As we watch the fire crews work tirelessly to save our building- we do not know how much curriculum is lost, if the building will be lost.

Our Bible based school receives no state or federal financial support. This fire has caused significant loss. Please join with us in financial support if you are able.

Trip to the Illinois Railway Museum

-by Russ Isbrandt Sept 19 2020



IRM GP's on regular passenger train -Union IL Russ Isbrandt

On Saturday Sept. 18th Mart and I down to Rockford, IL to a Sleep Inn for a one night stay prior to going to the Illinois Railway Museum. We had a nice steak dinner at a Longhorn Steak House. Sat. stayed at the IRM from about 10:15 to 2 pm. We brought camp chairs but didn't need them. Weather was perfect, blue skies and sweatshirt temp, lower 60s. It was Members Day, (play day for the members). The freight car people had their vintage cars out in a train, a number of which displayed their restoration handiwork. They did a "runby" using a Commonwealth Edition steerable electric locomotive, something you never see. The passenger car and diesel gangs had a heavyweight passenger train including a DM&IR coach, a Bessemer and Lake Erie coach, a recently restored Burlington Railway Post Office manned by clerk who made a drop off and catch from a mail crane at about 30 mph. The diesel people showed off their beautifully restored Illinois Terminal GP7 in lime green and yellow and a restored Rock Island GP7R in sky blue and white. It was a very colorful combination. In addition, they were switching with a Milwaukee Road Fairbanks Morse H10-44switcher the kind you used to see on the Beer Line and all over Milwaukee. The steam people had their recently restored Niels Lumber Company 3 truck Shay out.

The electric car people had a Chicago Aurora and Elgin-Cincinnati Car Co. interurban train, and latter a 1920s Cincinnati Car Co. 4 car L train out in addition to the Vera Cruz Mexico open car (good ventilation for the COVID 19 fearing people), a Chicago Transit Authority Green Hornet PCC car and a Chicago Surface Line big red 1920s streetcar. The museum was open until 9pm this day only so people could see the sign people's restoration work on many iconic signs lit up.

So as you can see this is much more than a railroad museum. It's a railroad, bus, sign and architecture (numerous saved building facades) museum.

We didn't need the camp chairs as there were plenty of benches especially around the depot so spouses and kids could watch the trains and streetcars go by as the guys took off to check out the many barns full of historic equipment.

The diner was closed except for the restrooms, so we packed a lunch. There were lots of picnic tables spaced out. Face masks were required and perhaps maybe 95% of the visitors complied. They had volunteers going around wiping all touchable surfaces with disinfectant wipes. Plus there were hand sanitizer stations all over. Seats on the passenger cars and streetcars were roped off to provide proper spacing.

We left at 2pm and got home about 8:15pm after a supper stop at a Tomah Culvers. What a shame this place is so far away. The drive gets pretty tedious.



CN Cold Weather Prep From: [Matt Carlson](#)

Date: Tue, 22 Sep 2020 09:31:40 PDT
Yes BNSF seems to be using DPU as the answer. I can tell when the Dakotas are getting very cold as the Z trains start running 2x2 and 1x1 instead of all up front. Matt

More news from the Iron Range CN Cold Weather Prep

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Sat, 19 Sep 2020 Photo: David Shauer

Proctor yesterday as side-dump cars await their cold weather call to service, as do the air repeater cars in the distance.
<https://www.railpictures.net/photo/748532/>

Dave Schauer Duluth MN

Re: CN Cold Weather Prep

From: srubeerman@yahoo.com Date: Mon, 21 Sep 2020

On very long trains air loss can be a major issue in extreme cold. All the rubber O rings in the air line shrink, multiple that by 400 or more connections and trains will struggle to build enough air to keep the brakes off.

I think CN is the only RR to use this technique so far??? Bob

Re: CN Cold Weather Prep

From: [Gordon Mott](#)

Date: Tue, 22 Sep 2020 04:57:30 PDT

BN was using similar over forty years ago. I assume they still are unless Distributed Power has eliminated the need. Gordon

From Chuck Lavallee Sept 4 2020



Hello Everyone -

Is it really September already? Where did the summer go?

I thought it was a good time for an update on what's been happening around the museum this summer. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues without much of an end in sight, the museum has been closed all summer. New Prague has canceled its Dozinky Days so we won't be open for this community event. We've also decided it best to cancel the Pumpkin Express this year as well. We're hoping 2021 will be a better year for everyone.

Volunteers have been working around the museum this summer and have made quite a bit of progress. The depot is coming along well. The office is mostly painted in two tone cream over brown like the waiting room. Tim Null built a beautiful new, sliding freight door which is installed. It just needs some final trim work as well as a door track extension which is still on back order from Menard's.



The new freight door should be complete by the end of September.



Loaded and ready to leave – Heading north on 6th Street by the entrance to the Stone Arch Bridge



Unloading at the museum, reinstalling the rear truck, One Alco locomotive kit, some assembly required



The last week of August was busy for GSRM. Beginning on Monday, 24Aug, Adam Kosel, Tim Null and Jeff Braun began working on the U of M locomotive, preparing it for transport from the University campus to New Prague by truck. The three volunteers spent the next seven days with some help from the folks at Veolia (the contractor operating the U of M steam plant) to remove everything below the frame of the locomotive. On Monday, 31Aug it was loaded on a semi-trailer and moved to GSRM in New Prague. The move crew unloaded it in the GSRM parking lot Tuesday morning and were done by about 230p.

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The locomotive is fully operational and when reassembled and serviced, it will supplement NSP4 on the caboose train in the 2021 season.

The locomotive was purchased from the University for \$1.00 plus MN Sales Tax of \$0.07.

We'll be working on it this fall to reassemble it.

Just a short note on work priorities for the fall at GSRM:

Keep working on the depot, finish the new freight door, keep working on the interior including cleaning out the freight room so work can continue on wall paneling and building display cabinets along the north side of the freight room
Reassemble Alco FW1 Service and operate NSP4 a bit of Track work

Please consider volunteering to help with some of these projects. Volunteers meet every Saturday around 10a at the museum to work on various projects. Hope to see you there!

That's it for now. Hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable weekend.

Take care, Jeff (Gopher State Railroad Museum)



We Can't Let This Happen! Meeting Sept 16 with updated phone information

www.allaboardmn.org

Amtrak is moving forward with plans to reduce all long distance trains from daily to tri-weekly service beginning in October. Our Empire Builder is scheduled to begin tri-weekly service on Oct. 19, 2020.

All Aboard Wisconsin and All Aboard Minnesota are conducting a brief zoom meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 16 at 2:00pm to discuss the impact this will have and what we can do about it. Meeting Agenda below Zoom info: NOTE - Updated Phone information below

Date: Wednesday, September 16th, 2020 Time: 2:00 pm-3:00 pm Central Time (US and Canada)

Meeting Agenda:

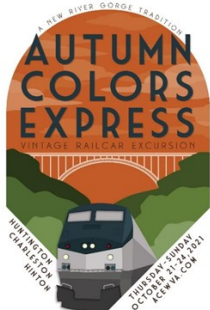
Why is this happening, what is the reason, and what does this mean?

The impact to you and your community

What can you do to help prevent this from happening

Questions and Answers

Additional Resources



Autumn Colors Express 2021- Get Your Tickets Today!

Sept 2 2020 provided by John Goodman

We here at the Rail Excursion Management Co. are extremely excited to announce our 2021 Autumn Colors Express! Join us onboard October 21st through October 24th of **2021** for beautiful foliage, scenic river views and the small town charm of the New River Gorge in West Virginia. With a long train of vintage private railcars, you're sure to find the perfect car to experience this wonderful fall tradition. Prices start at \$179

The train will depart from Huntington before making a station stop in Charleston, and then arrive in Hinton for the annual Railroad Days Festival. The 2021 festival will feature an expanded food vendor area, as well as amenities and activities at the Hinton Depot, which is currently undergoing extensive renovations!

Onboard, you can expect the same attention to detail you've enjoyed on other Railexco excursions: clean, welcoming cars with friendly and knowledgeable car hosts. Meals will be served according to class of service, and as always a concession car will be available during the trip for snacks or souvenir purchases.

Click the links below to learn more about the excursion, purchase tickets, and start your 2021 off right- by booking your passage on the Autumn Colors Express!

Dept. of Transportation: Wisconsin-Minnesota Passenger Rail Project Selected to Receive \$31.8 Million Federal Grant

October 1 2020 Provided by Rick Krenske

The joint Wisconsin-Minnesota Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Passenger Rail Project has been selected to receive a \$31.8 million federal rail grant. The TCMC project will add an additional daily round-trip between the Twin Cities, La Crosse, Milwaukee, and Chicago and points in-between, along the existing long-distance Amtrak Empire Builder route. The TCMC service will be an extension of one of the existing Amtrak Hiawatha round trips.

"The expanded service provides a much-improved connection between the Midwest economic hubs of Minneapolis/St. Paul, La Crosse, Milwaukee and Chicago," Craig Thompson, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary-designee said. "Just as important is the enhanced service for residents in the many rural communities. They will have increased travel options, with better reliability and on-time performance."

"Minnesotans will benefit from the expanded passenger rail service by having access to a safe, reliable and affordable alternative to driving or flying," said MnDOT Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher. "This project will also help Minnesota create new jobs and generate economic growth in our communities and improve access to higher education facilities along the corridor."

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced today that the project has been awarded a Consolidated Railroad Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) competitive grant for final design and construction of railroad improvements needed for the project.

The grant application received broad support from communities, stakeholders, business groups, state legislators, as well as members of Wisconsin's congressional delegation.

The TCMC project will improve the existing passenger rail corridor, making it more valuable and useful for corridor communities, residents, and visitors by:

Increasing the existing rail service on the corridor from one round-trip daily to two daily round-trips. The new round-trip will have a shorter travel time and greater on-time performance and reliability for regional trips – especially important for business and student travel.

Doubles schedule options making more regional trips viable by rail. For example, it enables a one overnight business or personal trip to the Twin Cities, Milwaukee, or Chicago from mid-size and rural communities in Wisconsin and Minnesota, which is not possible with the current one-round-trip schedule.

Supports tourism efforts among communities on the route.

Supports communities' ability to attract and retain jobs and business through improved connectivity to the economic centers of the region

The grant is the final piece of federal support needed to implement this service. The states and Amtrak need to provide \$21.2 million in matching funds in order to accept the award.

"Amtrak contributed \$5 million to match the grant for this project because it will greatly improve passenger rail service and freight operations in Wisconsin and Minnesota, better connect the Great Lakes states and contribute to the economic competitiveness of cities along the route," said Joe McHugh, Amtrak Vice President, State Supported Services. "The development of corridors is an important part of our mission at Amtrak, where we have a history of success using the foundation of an interregional train such as the Empire Builder and adding round-trip segments to develop a corridor service."

Earlier this year, FRA provided a \$12.6 million grant for operating support to offset the cost of the first three years of service.

Planning for the TCMC Service began in 2012 when project partners requested that Amtrak assess the feasibility of providing a state-supported second round-trip intercity passenger train service between the Twin Cities and Chicago Union Station. Amtrak's findings, completed in 2015, indicated favorable ridership and revenue projections which initiated more detailed study of the proposed service. The first year of TCMC rail service is anticipated to begin in 2024. More information on this project can be found on the TCMC.

webpage: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/projects/multimodal/tcmc.aspx>



Charles City Iowa, City Administrator Discusses Plan to Save and Utilize the 'Milwaukee Railroad Depot'

For many, the Milwaukee Railroad Depot on North Grand Avenue in Charles City is a historical landmark. Though, for a while now, it has been slated to be demolished. And this entire time, people in a group titled 'Friends of Save the Depot' have been trying to mount a rescue mission for the train depot. This rescue mission has a price tag of over \$300,000 and involves relocating the depot. City Administrator Steve Diers says just recently the plan is seeming more and more possible. The depot relocation project has been funded about \$100,000 as of today and is gaining steam as the demolition date nears.

PRR T1 Trust Challenge From: PRR T1 Trust <newsletter@prrt1steamlocomotivetrust.org

October 1, 2020 Provided by John Goodman

We have an exciting announcement, one of our donors has stepped up and challenged you our supporters. He will match dollar for dollar every donation through December up to \$50,000!!!!

YES \$50,000

We know you guys will step up to make it happen. Click the link below to make donation or do it right here on Facebook. Every donation will be doubled. That means we will be able to make twice as many parts and speed up production. The sooner we are done, the sooner you will experience this beast.

It was announced early to our Founders Club Members a couple days ago and they have already donated \$10,200 to get us started. Now it is your turn to crank it up and blow by the goal of \$50,000. (It will be doubled to \$100,000)

If \$5 is all you can give, we will be thankful. If \$5000 is in your ability, we will be ecstatic. Every dollar matters as construction will only get more expensive from here.

Show us what you can do T1 Nation! Click Here to Make Tax-Deductible Contribution:





BNSF WB Grand Crossing
LaCrosse WI July 29 2020
–Bob Ball



Amtrak #7 Near LaCrosse WI (Medary)
July 29 2020 –Bob Ball



CP Military Unit, Potash Train WB
along Mississippi River Aug 11 2020
–Bob Ball

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Newport Model Railroad Club Flea Market and Show	Saturday Oct 17 2020 9am-2pm Cancelled	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury MN	\$6
Granite City Train Show	Saturday Nov 14 2020 9am-3pm Cancelled	River's Edge Convention Center 10 4th Avenue South Saint Cloud, Minnesota 56301	\$6

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