

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Happy Holidays



What we've missed this year!

L: #261 North Pole Express
at SPUD, Date unspecified
—Jeff Terry photo

R: CP Holiday Train 2013
Lake Sarah Area —Dawn
Holmberg Photo



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Meeting Notice

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

Next newsletter (January) will be out around January 2, 2021.

Until further notice, there will be no in-person meetings. Meeting will be held on the Zoom platform. Please make sure we have your current e-mail address so we can get the Zoom meeting information to you.

Time for chapter subscription renewal for 2021! Invoices for snail mail recipients are in this newsletter.

Repeated from last newsletter: To Our Northstar snail mail newsletter recipients:

Due to the increased cost of printing and postage, we find it necessary as so many organizations are doing, and charge for the paper copy option. You may avoid this charge by sending a functioning email address to the news letter editor, Richard Tubbesing, at Tubbesing32A@yahoo.com. This will get you the PDF file version, which is in color and has much more content. Richard Tubbesing, Editor, Northstar News

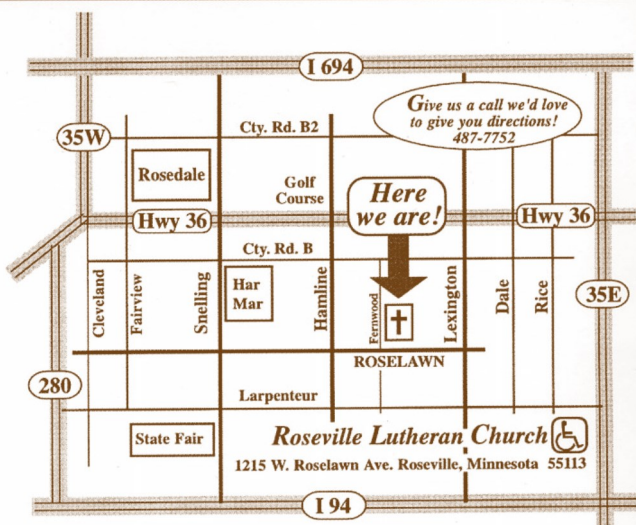
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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



From the Editor:

We will continue to have virtual (Zoom) meetings into next year. It looks like Spring in 2021 we might resume our monthly meetings at Roseville Lutheran Church.

The 2021 Minnesota Rail Calendar is Now Available

The calendar can be ordered on line at:

<http://www.mnrailcal.com/>

Minnesota residents — \$22.50 Includes postage and Minnesota sales taxes. **Non-Minnesota US residents** — \$21.50 Postage is included in the price.

You can also order the calendar via mail. Send a check for \$22.50 for in-state residents, and \$21.50 for out-of-state residents to:

Northstar Railway Historical Society, Inc

P.O. Box 120832

St Paul MN 55112

Library Open House for calendar sales only, is December 12 2020 1 – 3 pm.

**The library is located at 7000 57th St N, Suite 117
Crystal MN**

Meeting Minutes Nov 21 2020 (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by president Bill Dredge. There were 14 members attending. A quorum was determined. President Dredge made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 2020 meeting as written in the November newsletter. Frank Wilke made the motion to approve, seconded by John Goodman. The Treasurers report was given by Russ Isbrandt. As of November 21st, our cash position is better than last years thanks to a generous donation made to our chapter. The printing costs (about \$3400) for the calendar have been paid but not been posted. Chapter subscription invoices for 2021 have been sent to our email newsletter recipients and our snail mail recipients will receive their invoice in the next newsletter. The Library report was given by John Goodman. Some members are meeting every Wednesday at the library. Donations of magazines by Richard Tubbesing are being logged into our inventory spreadsheet. The Calendar report was given by John Goodman. Our sales are going very well and had a couple of days where orders were between 30 and 40 orders. We are now at the break-even point. This has been achieved without attending any flea markets this year. Dawn Holmberg reported that we have only about 100 calendars left. We plan to have a library open house on December 12 between 1 and 3 pm to only sell calendars. Calendars will be at the \$16.25 price including sales tax. John Goodman also stated that we will have a Zoom meeting Dec 19th in place of our annual holiday banquet. Lockdowns due to the COVID19 pandemic prevented us from finding a place to have our banquet. The NRHS report was given by Dawn Holmberg. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: The NRHS had BOD meeting and there was no more news than from the previous BOD Meeting. Dawn said the NRHS Administrative web site is being updated. John Goodman reported on the 2021 convention in Milwaukee, WI, August 23rd thru August 28th 2021. Hotel accommodations are still being determined. John is working on an possible additional excursion for the convention. The newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. Newsletter printing costs are about the same, and next meeting notice and Library open house for calendar sales will be in the next newsletter. The Cheer committee was given by John Goodman. Email contact with H Martin Swan revealed that he is still restricted to home. Phone conversations with Mike Mackner and Cy Svobodny are that they are also hunkered down at their residences. The Web Report was given by Dan Meyer. He is working on posting a revised membership renewal form and has posted his list of Railroad radio frequencies. He is scanning slides from his collection and will be placing some of them on our Facebook page. Dawn Holmberg reported that our meeting room at Roseville Lutheran Church is still closed. Also, The church is closed for church services, and there is no news about any time the church will be open. President Dredge had Russ Isbrandt announce the candidates for chapter officers for 2021. They are John Goodman President, Dave Herbert Vice President, Russ Isbrandt Treasurer, Richard Tubbesing Secretary and Dawn Holmberg for NRHS representative. President Dredge then solicited for any nominees from the attendees three times for each office. There were no nominees by the members. A motion to approve the nominees as presented by Russ Isbrandt was made, and members attending gave a unanimous approval for all BOD positions. There was no new business. Announcements include that the Hennepin Overland Model Railroad Club is close indefinitely and that the Twin Cities Model Railroad Club will be closed four weeks into the month of December. President Dredge made a motion to close the meeting at 7:25 pm. The motion was made by Frank Wilke and seconded by Dan Meyer. Richard Tubbesing then showed some video clips from our library collection and some video from his collection. Dan Meyer will present some of his slides at the next zoom meeting. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing Secretary.

Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad & Museum November 2020



A Vision for the Railroad's Future: Through strategic planning, our organization identified five areas that were important for us to continue our mission of sharing the story of railroading with future generations. After conducting a feasibility study, a \$900,000 capital campaign goal was set. With your help, we can continue to make memories for years to come. We are in the final few days of our capital campaign and the generous \$20,000 match grant from our friends at Fareway Stores. We are very close, and with your help we can reach our \$900,000 goal that will help us complete several projects to improve our museum and operations. For more information, or to donate, visit www.bsvrr.com/donate or call the depot at 1-800-626-0319. Thank you for your support as we continue to tell the story of railroad history here in Iowa!



Update: CP Fires Up Steam Locomotive For First Time in Eight Years

Updated: Saturday, Nov. 14, 6:15 p.m. EST By Justin Franz

CALGARY — Canadian Pacific fired up 4-6-4 2816 for the first time in eight years on Friday.

The steam-powered ambassador last ran nearly a decade ago, at about the same time the late E. Hunter Harrison, an executive known for his distaste of extravagant expenses, took over as CEO. Since then it has sat on display inside the CP campus at Ogden Yard near Calgary.

On Friday, [photos and videos emerged online of the locomotive fired up](#) and moving around the Calgary yard. Rumors quickly began to fly online that CP was restarting its long-dormant steam program, but on Saturday morning, company officials told *Railfan & Railroad* to not read too much into the steam up.

Continued on next page:

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"CP has steamed up 2816 and is assessing its mechanical position," spokesperson Andy Cummings wrote. "We have no plans to operate the engine on main lines."

Sources close to the railroad said that the locomotive will most likely partake in CP's "Holiday Train at Home" virtual concert scheduled for Dec. 13. Serena Ryder and The Trews will headline the event will raise money and awareness and help local food banks collect much-needed donations. The virtual concert is replacing CP's annual Holiday Train this year, which was canceled due to COVID-19.

CP 2816 was built in 1930 for heavy passenger service across Canada and is a sister engine to the railroad's more famous "Royal Hudson" locomotives. The 2816 is notable in that it is only surviving non-streamlined H1 Hudson. The engine was retired in 1960 and later sold to Steamtown U.S.A. in Vermont. The locomotive eventually migrated to Scranton, Pa., and was part of the Steamtown National Historic Site collection until being picked by CP for its new steam program in the late 1990s. The locomotive returned to service in 2001 and ran across Canada and parts of the U.S. for a decade before being sidelined again.

This article was posted on: November 14, 2020

News from the Iron Range Possible Good Keetac News

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Fri, 30 Oct 2020 14:39:48 PDT

WDIO is reporting that U.S. Steel is looking at possibly restarting Keetac. If that happens I'm guessing the all-rail trains from Minntac to Granite City will revert back to Keewatin. This could be good holiday news for employees.

Dave Schauer Duluth MN

U.S. Steel Looking at Potential Restart of Keetac *WDIO Updated: October 30, 2020 05:53 PM*

Better news for Keetac steelworkers. Their parent company, U.S. Steel, said because of market conditions, they are looking at a potential restart of the idled plant.

Keetac was idled indefinitely this spring, leaving hundreds out of work.

U.S. Steel's CEO Dave Burritt said on the conference call Friday morning, "We are prepared for the continued strong demand expected this winter. We are analyzing timing around restarting our Keetac iron ore pellet facility."



Burritt added that they want to make sure they have the right inventory while the locks are closed on the Great Lakes.

Other mines, like Hibbing Taconite and Northshore idled during the pandemic, but have since restarted.

<https://www.wdio.com/mining-news/restart-keetac-mining-range-us-steel/5911257/?cat=10335>

Updated: October 30, 2020 05:53 PM

Keetac Restarting Mid-December

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Thu, 05 Nov 2020 14:28:29 PST

From the DNT:

The only Iron Range mine still shut down due to the pandemic is set to restart.

U.S. Steel announced Thursday that it would be restarting the Keetac mine and pellet plant in Keewatin but did not immediately provide a timeline to resume operations.

The facility has been indefinitely idled since May, leaving 375 employees out of work after the pandemic caused the demand for steel to fall. Those employees are expected to be called back to work soon.

"We are encouraged by the increase in demand and believe this restart will best support our customers," U.S. Steel said in a emailed statement. "This will also ensure that we have sufficient iron ore supply where it is needed to meet that demand. We expect to fill nearly 400 positions as part of this restart and will work with the United Steelworkers (USW) to recall employees that may have been affected by the idle."

In a call with investors last week, U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt said the company is considering reopening Keetac to rebuild an inventory of iron ore pellets before locks on the Great Lakes close for winter.

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

Continued from Previous page:

Mark Twain Zephyr

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Sun, 01 Nov 2020 10:32:21 PST



I finally had the opportunity to get down to Trego to check out Greg Vree-land's Mark Twain Zephyr. It is amazing to see this iconic piece of early streamliner history in northwestern Wisconsin. Greg's team is busy working on restoring the Train, which will become an operational showpiece for his Wisconsin Great Northern railroad. <https://www.railpictures.net/photo/752688/>

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

Edmund Fitzgerald - 45 years ago. Rest in Peace

From: [Andy](#) Date: Tue, 10 Nov 2020 14:09:38 PST

The ship and its crew tragically sank 45 years ago today. Our family saw the Fitzgerald's life boats at the Valley Camp museum an the Soo in the summer of 1976. The Split Rock lighthouse will be lit this evening. Here is the link to their Facebook page. <https://m.facebook.com/splitrocklighthouse>

Mining Journal article: **Remembering the Edmund Fitzgerald 45 Years Later**
WLUC | 17d Nov 10 2020



MARQUETTE, Mich. (WLUC) - The familiar song opening of [Gordon Lightfoot](#)'s 'The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald' is enough to sweep you back to November 10, 1975. That was the evening when the mighty Edmund Fitzgerald and her crew fell to the gales of [Lake Superior](#). The [National Weather Service](#) determined that the likely cause of storm force were winds and waves over 25 feet doomed the titanic vessel and all 29 men on board perished when the ship sank some 15 miles away from Whitefish Point.

<https://www.newsbreak.com/michigan/marquette/news/2099333397315/remembering-the-edmund-fitzgerald-45-years-later>

Re: Six of the Heritage Units

From: [Mark Arnold](#) Date: Wed, 18 Nov 2020 08:31:30 PST

For those of you without access to the article, here is an excerpt pertaining to the locomotives:

In the past quarter century, CN noted, the railroad has expanded its network to reach three coasts, from the Atlantic to the Pacific and south to the Gulf of Mexico. It has acquired the Illinois Central Railroad (bringing the late Hunter Harrison on board), the Wisconsin Central Railroad, the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern Railway, and BC Rail. Each of those railways, as well as U.S. subsidiary Grand Trunk Western, are represented by one locomotives specially painted by CN for IPO's 25th anniversary. These units "will be rolling on CN's network to move its customers' goods."

In a couple other articles I've read, these are to be the "only" units to be painted in the heritage fleet and the rumors of all the rest, well, we'll just have to wait and see.

Mark Arnold Lake Superior Companies, Inc



News from the North Shore Scenic Railroad & Lake Superior Railroad Museum Issue #98 - November 2020

Christmas City Express – CANCELLED

November 27 - December 20

THIS EVENT IS CANCELLED. CURRENT TICKET HOLDERS HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED AND IF YOU DID NOT RECEIVE NOTIFICATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THE CONTACT FORM FOUND HERE.

ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS CITY EXPRESS:

The performance of the Christmas City Express begins in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum (included with all tickets), where you'll be treated to a reading of the *new Christmas City Express story*, enjoy carolers, and a visit from a special guest! Then climb aboard the train for a 30 minute ride up to Lake Superior. Onboard, enjoy hot chocolate, cookies and holiday tunes. Show times at 4:15, 5:15, 6:15*, and 7:15* (*except Sunday) Saturdays & Sundays at 3:15pm as well. Full experience is about 90 minutes **\$25.00 for Adults, \$20 for children 3 years and up +\$3 on Saturdays** (2 and under are free and do not need a ticket)



Rainier Club Up Front



Right photo: The rounded end on the Rainier Club car meant it was intended to carry the marker lights at the rear of the train, as shown here in this photo showing the North Coast Limited. Note the photo credits from Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association.

Numbered 390, the *Rainier Club* was one of six sleeper observation cars built in 1948 by Pullman Standard for the Northern Pacific's *North Coast Limited*. The first-class train made daily trips between Chicago, through the Twin Cities to the West Coast. The car's livery, its color scheme, was the work of industrial designer Raymond Loewy.

The sun glistens off the new paint so brightly it makes you squint. The car was moved into the museum for the winter months following its full body restoration and paint job, courtesy of the Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad, among several other donors. It is closed off to the public while it is being worked on, but you can see that we did wire up the drumhead on the back to light up!

The *Rainier Club* is back in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum for now, and all new windows will be installed, new carpeting put down and the lounge furniture reupholstered over the winter months Archives. A Wade Stevenson Photo, Courtesy of the Milwaukee Road Historical Association

DSS&A #101 Runs Again



For the first time in at least 10 years, the Duluth, South Shore, & Atlantic #101 was started up and run this past week. The locomotive is an RS-1 built in 1945, and is one of the last surviving relics of the DSS&A, today a part of Canadian National (CN).

The short video above shows the locomotive stretching its legs in the cold morning hours of October 27th, the first day it moved under its own power in many years. The crews in the shop pulled it out of the museum in early September to continue the long-term project of getting the #101 running again. After a lot of hard work under the direction of the leader of the restoration, Marty Fair, the engine was fired up and moved around. *Continued on next page:*



Continued from previous page: Marty's father ran the #101 on the Duluth South Shore & Atlantic, a railroad that went from Superior, across Northern Wisconsin to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, ending in Sault St. Marie, MI. Last spring during the quarantine, Ken & Josh put together a great video about the locomotive and the DSS&A Railroad, and you can revisit that video here.

There are no official plans about how the locomotive will be used, or how often. For now, it will likely be stored back in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum for exhibit, and it is always good to have another working locomotive in the collection. *Hats off to the hard working volunteers that made this possible!*

CN Heritage Units -Photos from the Web



CN CEO J.J. Ruest is seen with CN's new heritage units representing BC Rail, Grand Trunk Western, Illinois Central, Wisconsin Central, and Elgin, Joliet & Eastern. **Photo Courtesy of Canadian National.**



CN 100 Year Anniversary Unit



L:
EJ&E
unit
R:
BCOL
Unit





Metro News - Night Trains Season Is Here!

Thursday October 22, 2020, Frederick Krenske

Night Trains season is back! This special Holiday tradition returns to the Twin City Model Railroad Museum beginning Saturday, October 31, 2020 and runs every Saturday evening from 3:00 to 7:00 pm through the last Saturday in February (February 27, 2021).

Night Trains season brings a winter wonderland to the miniature train layouts in a magical way: the lights are turned down, the buildings and streetlights glow warmly- setting the scene for lighted models of vintage passenger trains. The make-believe towns are buried in blizzards, and throughout the Museum the layouts are adorned with miniature Christmas lights and decorations.

This year we are kicking off Night Trains season with a special Halloween event on October 31st. Spooky trains and decorations will be featured, treats will be provided, and costumes are welcome. Following weeks will see the museum turn into our traditional winter event.

Night Trains takes place at the Museum's location at 668 Transfer Road, Suite 8 in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Admission to this special show is \$15.00 per person and FREE for children age four and under.

Advance ticket sales are required to ensure we stay under our COVID capacity of 75 people. To ensure this we are selling tickets in two hour blocks (3-5 pm and 5-7pm). Masks are required for everyone over 2 years of age and we ask that you stay home if ill and practice good social distancing while at the museum. Get your tickets at <https://tcmrm.eventbrite.com>.

Watch our Facebook page and <http://tcmrm.org> for additional special events. Please see following article for the current situation.

The Twin City Model Railroad Museum is Closing for Four Weeks

Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 10:35 PM, Frederick Krenske

The museum is an inside activity and Governor Walz has closed down restaurants, fitness clubs, and other places due to the increased progression of the Covid-19 virus. Hopefully they can have Night Trains again on December 19th, and we can have a bit of fun right before Christmas. The next four weeks will be brutal for us.

Virtual Holly Trolley

Friday, November 20, 2020, 2:43 PM, Frederick Krenske



Virtual Holly Trolley 12:30 to 4 PM Saturday and Sunday November 28 & 29 and December 5 & 6 -Free

Here's a fun and completely safe way for children to visit with the Jolly Old Elf this season. The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is offering *Holly Trolley - Virtual Visit With Santa Claus!* The Museum is unable to operate our very popular holiday events this year, but Santa had the days blocked on his schedule. So through the Zoom application, kids will be able to chat with Santa directly from his home at the North Pole.

Here's how it works:

First, sign up for a virtual visit time. Go to <https://www.picktime.com/virtualhollytrolley>.

Choose a day and time slot, then fill in the required information on the next page. When giving your name, please use the name that appears on your Zoom account. You'll receive an automatic email confirming your selected date and time.

Second, if you don't already have a Zoom account, download the application. Go to <https://zoom.us>. In the upper right corner of the screen, click on the orange *Sign Up, It's Free* button. When you register, use the name you entered when you selected a date and time. Zoom is a very easy to use application that works on virtually any computer, tablet, or phone. If you're new to Zoom, we suggest you give it a try before your date with Santa.

A few days prior to your visit with Santa, we'll send you the information you'll need to log in on Zoom. About five minutes before your scheduled time, open your Zoom application and go to Santa's North Pole address. You'll be in a waiting room - Santa's helpers will know you're in the queue. If Santa's running a bit late please be patient - he likes to take time with every child.

If you select the Gallery View of Zoom, you'll see Santa and your child (children) in separate boxes on the screen at the same time. This is ideal for taking a screen shot as a keepsake. You may want to review the process for taking screen shots on your device.

We're pleased to provide virtual visits with Santa without charge. It's our holiday gift to you and your family. If you'd like to make a small donation to the Minnesota Streetcar Museum it will be greatly appreciated. <https://trolleyride.org/donate/> Thanks

Onboard Analysis: Slimmed Down 'California Zephyr' is Stretched Thin

Western trip on Amtrak national network shows pandemic measures are working, but revenue opportunities are being lost

Trains Newswire By **Bob Johnston** | October 29, 2020



Sleeping-car passengers traveling together are wearing masks and occupy every other table in the California Zephyr's dining car out of Chicago.
Bob Johnston



A traveler bound for Grand Junction, Colo., is greeted by his car attendant at Galesburg, Ill. Bob Johnston

Amtrak says, "Adding equipment adds costs, and we are conserving funds" [See ["Analysis: Amtrak triweeklies, with smaller consists, see sell-outs, high fares."](#) *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 9, 2020]. But sidelining revenue-producing railcars on a train whose clientele's origins and destinations continuously overlap is a questionable business decision.

When the train operated with the transition sleeper, it accommodated the onboard service employees and provided eight additional roomettes to sell. Now, four roomettes in one of the remaining sleepers can't be sold because they are reserved for crew. At \$400 per roomette per night — well below the average fare currently displayed between the route's overnight city pairs — selling 12 additional room could generate almost \$5,000 nightly.



An Amish family traveling from Pennsylvania to Osceola, Iowa, gets some fresh air at Ottumwa, Iowa, on Oct. 14, 2020 Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — Judging from an October *Trains News Wire* journey on the *California Zephyr*, *Coast Starlight*, and *Empire Builder*, Amtrak's onboard service plans for its cross-country passenger trains during the COVID-19 pandemic are providing a safe environment for travelers. Crews are enforcing mandatory mask-wearing rules, generally without passenger complaints; dining areas incorporate social distancing at tables; solo coach passengers can spread out on a seat by themselves for overnight travel, rather than being jammed together with strangers; and roomette and bedroom travelers can stay in their rooms for their entire trip if they are so inclined.

All these factors gain importance as prospective customers weigh travel options while coronavirus cases rise with the holidays approaching. Yet it's easy to see how a cost-focused management team's limited interest and experience in maximizing revenue and customer satisfaction is shortchanging all the unique elements rail travel has to offer and turning away business with reduced capacity.

Here are some observations:

More first-time passengers. Settling into a *California Zephyr* roomette at Chicago Union Station is strangely comforting in a world otherwise turned upside down. Familiar to a veteran rider are the sound the reading-light button makes when pressed; decisions on what to retrieve from the suitcase on the luggage rack downstairs for a two-night trip; and the instructions sleeping car attendant Michael gives to the couple across the hall after he ascertains they are first-time riders are all familiar to veteran riders.

Over half of the passengers with me in this car haven't been on an overnight train before, so they need to know what to expect and how everything in their room works," explains the 32-year onboard service veteran.

With staff furloughs looming Nov. 1 resulting from cutbacks to triweekly service, Michael's seniority might protect his ability to keep serving customers; an attendant encountered on the *Empire Builder* to Chicago a week later had been bumped from his *Zephyr* job because he hadn't worked for Amtrak as long.

Limited availability: The decision to drop the transition sleeper, and failure to add a third coach while restricting capacity to 50% of coach seating, stifles the trains ability to generate revenue and weakens its overall bottom line. This becomes clear from watching travelers come and go in the two Superliner sleepers, and noting intermediate stops listed on passengers' seat checks in the two coaches throughout the trip from Chicago to Reno, Nev.

West of Galesburg, Ill., only a handful of coach passengers are California-bound, but virtually every seat is occupied with people going to Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado stops. They are replaced later with others headed to Denver, but also to Grand Junction, Colo.; Helper, Provo, and Salt Lake City in Utah; plus Sacramento, Martinez, and Emeryville in California.

This *Zephyr* departure had sold out all sleeping-car and coach space between Denver and Glenwood Springs, Colo., for weeks in advance. Fortunately, a roomette became available in that segment, but securing it originally required switching between three different rooms in the two cars before a savvy Amtrak reservation agent figured out how to eliminate one change.

"I'm putting you in No. 3 out of Denver, not No. 5, so someone else doesn't have to move twice," attendant Michael would later strategize enroute.

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Time to reassess?: On April 3, before the strength of long-distance train revenue relative to Northeast and state-supported corridors was demonstrated over the following six months, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Operations and Commercial Officer Stephen Gardner looked to the future. He told employees on a town-hall conference call, “Service will come back incrementally — it’s not like [what happens after] a snow-storm — and will depend on what we see in demand. But we need to pay attention to this and be nimble because there might be areas of strong demand that will come back quickly.”

Gardner was thinking of short-distance corridors when adding, “We will be working with our state partners, who will determine how much service we have on the routes they help support.”

Though Amtrak insists daily service on cross-country trains like the *California Zephyr* won’t be restored before next spring — unless Congress appropriates additional funding in the interim — it’s not too late for management to fulfill its “nimble” promise by adding more capacity to the service it has committed to run.

Onboard Analysis: Scheduling Logistics, Limited Help Hobble 'Zephyr'

Reduced frequencies and staffing add to crew costs, take toll on passenger experience

Trains Newswire By Bob Johnston | November 6, 2020



Conductor Tom Alimena provides scenic commentary on the California Zephyr departing Denver on Oct. 15, while crew members at right deadheading to Grand Junction occupy the closed-off, lower-level section of the Sightseer lounge. Bob Johnston

Second in a series

DENVER — When Amtrak operates its long-distance trains daily, train and engine crews make regular turns back to their home base after a mandated minimum of 12 hours’ rest. On the routes of the triweekly Sunset Limited and Cardinal, longer stays — perhaps days longer — have been necessary, adding extra expense to those trains’ bottom lines.

Now similar inefficiencies are being introduced systemwide, as evidenced by Thursday Denver departures of the westbound California Zephyr, making things more difficult for crew members and less enjoyable for passengers.

Crews’ long layovers

In mid-June, management announced its intention to run most long-distance trains three days per week [see “[Amtrak plans triweekly service for almost all long-distance trains as of Oct. 1.](#)” *Trains News Wire*, June 15, 2020]. The complicated task of maximizing route connections was not completed for another two months [see “[Amtrak sets schedules for triweekly long-distance operation.](#)” *News Wire*, Aug. 13, 2020].

For a variety of reasons — including maintaining important same-day transfers in California to the northbound Coast Starlight — the Zephyr ended up with few connections for its Wednesday departures from Chicago. It is fed only by a variety of state-supported trains: two from Michigan, Milwaukee-Chicago Hiawathas, and the first Lincoln Service arrival out of St. Louis.

As it leaves Denver Thursday morning for the next crew change point at Grand Junction, Colo., the on-duty engineers and conductors know they will stay overnight and take the Friday eastbound back to the Mile High City.

Also on board, in the lower level of the sold-out train’s Sightseer lounge, are a group of Amtrak “deadheads.” These Denver-based crew members ride in non-revenue space to Grand Junction, where they will spend three nights in a hotel before operating Sunday’s eastbound Zephyr. That train is scheduled to accept passengers from the southbound Coast Starlight in California and deliver them to connections in Chicago on Monday afternoon.

Single-night layovers are also possible for the Denver crew departing Mondays, but engineers and conductors bringing the eastbound to Grand Junction from their base at Salt Lake City have two-night layovers twice a week. “Alternate transportation” with flights, buses, or excruciating van rides could replace lengthy hotel stays, but similar out-of-sync situations occur at other locations along *Trains News Wire*’s October journey on the Zephyr, Coast Starlight, and the Empire Builder. Expenses, of course, don’t offset money Amtrak saves by furloughing qualified employees and not running trains, but the charges must be factored in to the mix.



With Veterans locomotive 42, the “Joseph H. Boardman,” leading, the westbound Zephyr snakes through the Sierras east of Colfax, Calif., on Oct. 19, 2020. The train has two sleeping cars, a diner, Sightseer lounge, and two coaches. Bob Johnston

Detracting from the onboard experience

Heading west from Denver is among the highlights of any *California Zephyr* trip, along with the train’s morning trek across the Sierras a day later. Yet during the pandemic, coach passengers can no longer enhance the experience with breakfast in the dining car. That space is reserved for sleeping-car passengers. For those in coach, fare is limited to service in the Sightseer lounge car’s lower-level café. Every lounge and table seat upstairs is taken leaving Denver and Reno, Nev., so combining food with unmatched scenery isn’t always possible. Options aren’t appreciably better for the sleeper patrons who choose not to sequester themselves in their rooms. With only one attendant in the dining car serving one egg alternative, the breakfast sandwich, eating in either location is problematic. Since many roomettes and bedrooms tend to exchange customers at Denver and Reno, sleeping-car attendants need to get linens changed before new arrivals are situated.

Fetching breakfast orders has to wait.

Conductors on the Zephyrs that *Trains News Wire* took before and after a three-day Reno stopover made periodic trips upstairs to check on mask wearing and social distancing, and also provided strategic point-of-interest commentary on the public-address system. Such narration has become especially valuable with the discontinuance of schedules and route guides, another feature that helped differentiate rail travel from other alternatives. Perhaps when the crisis passes, the true value of what this train provides can again be appreciated and properly rendered by those in charge.

Trains Magazine Celebrates its 80th Year with Soo Line No. 1003

Posted by [Angela Pusztai-Pasternak](#) on Wednesday, October 14, 2020



Trains is turning 80 in November and what better way to celebrate than with a steam engine near and dear to Wisconsin's heart. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic quashing the plans for our evening soiree (stay tuned to next year for that), our celebration remains with 50 lucky registered folks who will enjoy a day with Soo Line No. 1003 on Nov. 15.

Editor Jim Wrinn has hosted several photo charters across the U.S. in recent years. These events are complicated on so many levels, not just for us, but more so for the railroaders and crew who must prepare special locomotives and other equipment, as well as operating logistics on host railroads, to put on an exquisite show tasty enough to draw a crowd. This is a sold-out show, and everything must run as smooth as possible. So, what does it take? To quell my curiosity about preparing a century-old steam engine for a day out and also to learn more about the star of our party, I delivered a coal load of questions to Ken Ristow, mechanic, fireman, and one of the regular engineers for the 1003, and he graciously agreed to indulge me. He's also involved with crew scheduling and event planning. Like in many organizations, the nonprofit, Hartford, Wis.-based Steam Locomotive Heritage Association's members wear many hats to sustain their goal: keep the engine running.



A Soo Line No. 1003 excursion train pauses behind a Metra train, until it can pull into the Fox Lake Station for passengers to board and then head to Chicago in 2017. Tim Pitzen photo

Q: In general, what types of maintenance must be performed before No. 1003 can run successfully for an event?

A: In general, maintenance can be items we tend to as we prepare for an event that keep the 1003 operational. When an annual inspection is due, then maintenance includes required work inclusive of numerous items required by law. This work is performed in stages and time frames that allow for proper inspection with the FRA, which culminates with a live steam test inspection to be placed in service with the FRA. Within that annual inspection, other items needing maintenance and attention are addressed as well, whether minor or major. Work on our rolling stock that accompanies 1003 is also done as needed.

Q: How long does it take to prepare the 1003 for an event such as our photo charter?

A: Depending on what we have planned, the total amount of time with a full volunteer group (16 people) can be cumulative of six months to prep an engine after the annual inspection has expired, and it's due for the inspection to be renewed. If we operate within the time frame of the inspection, and the locomotive has previously operated, it can take 4-7 days to prepare for another outing.

Q: The photo charter's host railroad is Watco-owned, regional railroad Wisconsin & Southern. How does your organization gain permission to operate on it?

A: In general terms, it starts with a request or idea and then developing a plan, meeting with railroad officials and event organizers, and editing the plan so that it's deemed feasible and is accepted by the railroad. Planning goes through stages and begins several months ahead of time, with a lot of communication between the proper channels.

Q: Besides work to the engine, what other preparations are necessary?

A: In addition to arrangements with the host railroad, we have to schedule crews, order supplies, and get insurance. For an away-from-the-shop outing, we also have to plan for hotel rooms, crew transportation, and plan for places where we can refill fuel and water for the locomotive. This behind-the-scenes work takes a lot of time.

Q: What safety measures/precautions are taken before and during an event, pertaining to the engine, the property, etc.?

A: In a stationary display of our locomotive, we follow any rules or regulations defined and required by the host railroad, and our own group's rules and procedures. We promote and practice common railroad safety. We limit or prohibit cab visits to promote safety. We will also staff the perimeter of our equipment with identifiable people to help keep guests safe around the railroad equipment. While operating, we follow railroad rules and orders, along with directions by the pilot crew and standard operating practices, all in the name of safety.

Q: This Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Mikado 2-8-2 L-1 class locomotive was built by Alco in 1913 in Schenectady, N.Y. What is its tender capacity?

A: It holds 10,000 gallons of water, but if we haul our tank car, we get an additional 20,000 gallons. It is listed for 17 tons of coal, but with the extended coal boards, we can get 19 tons when fully loaded.

Q: What is special about the locomotive compared to other steam locomotives? In appearance, mechanics, handling, other?

A: It is special because of its age at 107 years. But what also makes it special is that it is a Wisconsin locomotive, and the Soo Line had some of its own specific traits. Mechanically, it's unique because it has indirect Walschaerts valve gear where forward motion is in the top half of the valve gear link. That is a rarity. Other unique features are its large cylinders, and boiler pressure maximum of 170 psi.

Q: What do you find most enjoyable? Running the engine? Maintaining it? Other?

A: Both are actually rewarding. It is an educational experience working on the locomotive, learning the bare bones of how the machine works through making a repair or enhancement. Sometimes the dirty work in tight spaces isn't glamorous, but your aim is the end result. Working on the locomotive makes you appreciate how machines were built without the modern conveniences we have today. Operating is enjoyable and rewarding also. As much fun as it is to operate a locomotive, it's also a job of focus, dedication, and discipline. A reward is being able to operate and validate your work and repairs, and then to see others enjoy, appreciate, and learn from what our group does. It also gives me a chance to pass on what I have learned and experienced by teaching to others a skill or sharing an experience, while being part of an operating display that can educate the public about what once was. In addition, throughout my 21 years of involvement with the 1003, I've made many friends and have met a lot of people. Some have become lifetime friendships.

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Engineer Ken Ristow inside the cab of Soo Line No. 1003. Paul Swanson photo

Q: What is the organization's biggest challenge? Biggest opportunity?

A: The same challenges for anyone else who operates steam these days: It is a matter of finding an operational venue, being able to fund it, along with other things like insurance, for example. Sometimes running the locomotive is the easiest part. Passenger trains or excursions are not easy or common as they once were. The biggest challenges are finding places to operate, determining what to operate, and figuring how to fund it for those outside of a museum setting.

Thanks to the Steam Locomotive Heritage Association, Wisconsin & Southern, and the whole crew for helping us to commemorate our 80th year in such a grand way. What better manner to celebrate than with a



BNSF Reports Lower Revenue and Earnings, but Operating Ratio Improves to 59.7%

Trains Newswire By Bill Stephens | November 7, 2020



A BNSF Railway coal train climbs Logan Hill in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming on Sept. 30, 2020. BNSF reported decreased third-quarter revenue and earnings but improved its operating ratio. Bill Stephens

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway posted what's believed to be a record low operating ratio of 59.7% for the third quarter, despite deep declines in revenue and volume due to the economic impact of the pandemic. BNSF's third-quarter operating income fell 8.4%, to \$1.8 billion, as revenue sank 14%, to \$5 billion, the railroad's corporate parent, Berkshire Hathaway, reported in a regulatory filing on Saturday. Overall volume declined 8.3% in the quarter. BNSF reduced its operating expenses by 18% in the quarter, however, which helped improve the operating ratio by 2.9 points compared to last year's third quarter.

Revenue from consumer products, which includes intermodal and automotive traffic, fell 4.5% despite a 0.5% increase in volume. "Increased retail sales and inventory replenishments by retailers, along with increased e-commerce activity in the third quarter resulted in higher domestic intermodal volumes for the first nine months of 2020," Berkshire said in its filing. "International intermodal volumes and automotive shipments remained low primarily attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic."

Industrial products revenue tumbled 25% as volume sank 23%. Berkshire attributed the declines to pandemic's impact on industrial production and reduced demand in the energy sector, which drove lower sand and petroleum products volume.

Agricultural products revenue grew 1.7% as volume surged 3.9% thanks to higher grain and meal exports. The overall gain, however, was limited by lower demand for ethanol, sweeteners, and soybean exports. Coal revenue fell 35%, driven by a 25% decline in volume and lower revenue per unit.



Digest: CN CEO Says Railroad Can Likely Avoid Further Layoffs this Year

Trains News Wire Digest November 19, 2020

CN should avoid layoffs unless virus causes another drop in traffic, CEO says. Canadian National is likely to avoid further layoffs unless the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic causes a significant drop in rail traffic. The Canadian Press reports CEO JJ Ruest said Wednesday, after marking the 25th anniversary of the company's privatization, "If the economy slows down we might have to have layoffs." The company made significant layoffs in the second quarter when freight volume dropped dramatically because of the pandemic, but has recalled some of those workers. Ruest said the company probably has more employees than it currently requires because of the need to cover for those who become infected with or quarantine because of the virus.



Amtrak Releases FY 2020 Data

Written by [Marybeth Luczak](#), Executive Editor November 23 2020 Railway Age



Throughout a challenging year marked by operational and fiscal uncertainty, Amtrak also reported bright spots, including that it advanced testing of next-generation Acela trainsets, which are expected to enter service by the end of 2021.



Amtrak President and CEO Bill Flynn

“Our dedicated employees continue to work tirelessly through the pandemic to keep this country moving, advance critical infrastructure and update technology and services, and provide safe transportation to customers,” Flynn said. “However, without additional funding for 2021, we will be forced to further reduce service, defer critical capital projects and make more job reductions despite this important progress.”

Among Amtrak’s other FY 2020 highlights:

- In response to COVID-19, Amtrak—with a medical director and partnership with the [George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health](#)—studied, analyzed and made improvements for employee health and safety. It also implemented [a variety of cleaning, contact-free and safety measures](#), including requiring face masks at all times, limiting bookings and using signage to promote social distancing.

Through a partnership with RB, the Lysol manufacturer, Amtrak said it enhanced its cleaning and disinfection measures. ([The Federal Railroad Administration made more than \\$1 billion under the CARES Act available to Amtrak “to support the railroad’s activities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. and its impacts on operations and business.”](#))

- On the safety side, [Amtrak completed Positive Train Control \(PTC\) installations on all of its managed tracks](#). It also continued work on its Safety Management System, “resulting in improvements in a broad range of safety metrics.”
- On the equipment side, [Amtrak advanced testing of its next-generation Acela trainsets](#), which are expected to begin service by the end of 2021. ([Amtrak released a video in October, taking viewers on a tour of the onboard amenities and features.](#)) Efforts also included “gathering necessary data needed to meet regulatory requirements, improving infrastructure and facilities, and developing training.” By the end of FY 2020, prototype trains had been on the Northeast Corridor and at the Transportation Technology Center in Colorado. Amtrak said they topped 20,000 miles on the test track and reached a speed of 166.8 mph at TTCI. Additionally, Amtrak’s state partners in the Midwest and California have started accepting new railcars, which will begin service in 2021 and offer riders “touchless features and updated amenities including more space for bicycles.”
- For stations, Amtrak reported that it began upgrading major stations across the country. In the Northeast, work included updating the ticketed waiting area at New York Penn Station; a major construction project that will increase rail capacity at Washington Union Station; working with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New Jersey Transit (NJT) on the Penn Master Plan and Penn Expansion projects to upgrade and add more tracks and platforms to the existing station; selecting a team with international expertise to form a master development partnership via ground lease for the renovation of William H. Gray III 30th Street Station in Philadelphia; collaborating with New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and NJT on construction work at the New Brunswick, [Trenton Transit Center](#), Princeton Junction and Elizabeth stations; and a construction project to improve accessibility and safety at the Amtrak stop in Ashland, Va.
- For accessibility, Amtrak invested \$109 million on Americans with Disabilities Act- (ADA-) related design and construction improvement projects at more than 159 locations nationwide. Accessibility projects in Montgomery, W. Va., and Picayune, Miss., were recently completed, and [\\$29 million in improvements to the platforms and station at Homewood, Ill., are under way with Metra](#).
- Amtrak reported additional infrastructure work was completed this summer due to reduced train volumes. For example, concrete slab, tie and rail replacement work at the B&P Tunnel in Baltimore, Md., would normally be completed during extended weekend outages. However, an estimated two to three years of work was finished with extended outages during the summer. Additionally, crews accomplished some 20% more Sperry rail testing at night over the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak also accelerated data collection efforts in performing LiDAR mapping of infrastructure: What had originally been planned to take four months working around train operations was reduced to three weeks of continuous measuring. ([In a report released in September, Amtrak’s Office of Inspector General found that while Amtrak has built a more disciplined process to plan and coordinate major track outages, including those along the Northeast Corridor, more steps could be taken to reduce service disruptions and maximize the amount of time it has access to tracks.](#)) • Amtrak launched and expanded several programs to improve rider amenities, including introducing the carry-on bike program on the [Pennsylvanian](#) (and increasing the program for most [Northeast Regional](#) departures, and Northeast state-supported [Keystone Service](#), [Downeaster](#) and [Amtrak Hartford Line](#) trains); broadening reserved seating to all Acela Business Class and [Palmetto](#), [Vermont](#), [Carolinian](#) and [Northeast Regional](#) Business class customers; upgrading bedding, pillows, towels, linens and other goods in private rooms on the [Auto Train](#); expanding the pet program to allow riders to travel with their dogs and cats (up to 20 pounds) onboard weekday Acela trains; and debuting the RideReserve program to reduce rider crowding. *Continued on next page:*

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Amtrak FY20 Ridership

Amtrak Route Ridership
FY20 vs. FY19

NEC Spine	Ridership		
	FY20	FY19**	% change vs. FY19
Acela	1,656,764	3,490,874	-52.5
Northeast Regional	4,486,837	8,718,469	-48.5
NEC Special Trains	3,880	7,402	-47.6
Subtotal	6,147,481	12,216,745	-49.7

State Supported		by state(s)		
Northeast Routes				
Downeaster	ME	269,454	549,493	-51.0
Empire South	NY	655,021	1,183,000	-44.6
Empire West/Maple Leaf	NY	231,078	382,846	-39.6
Adirondack	NY	44,214	112,506	-60.7
Ethan Allen	NY/VT	23,275	47,741	-51.2
Vermont	VT/MA/CT	47,344	91,645	-48.3
New Haven-Springfield	MA/CT	271,048	490,751	-44.8
Keystone	PA	783,764	1,546,058	-49.3
Pennsylvanian	PA	127,683	209,290	-39.0
Southern Routes				
Washington-Lynchburg/Roanoke	VA	124,698	218,319	-42.9
Washington-Newport News	VA	182,467	331,592	-45.0
Washington-Norfolk	VA	152,558	237,390	-35.7
Washington-Richmond	VA	50,277	127,289	-60.5
Carolinian	NC	150,365	236,385	-36.4
Piedmont	NC	113,891	209,053	-45.5
Heartland Flyer	OK/TX	41,801	67,027	-37.6
Midwest Routes				
Hoosier State	IN	0	20,354	-100.0
Wolverine	MI	244,500	486,190	-49.7
Blue Water	MI	98,173	175,930	-44.2
Pere Marquette	MI	47,236	94,797	-50.2
Hiawatha	WI/IL	403,112	873,537	-53.9
Lincoln Service	IL	334,540	607,212	-44.9
Illini/Saluki	IL	159,981	257,890	-38.0
Illinois Zephyr/Carl Sandburg	IL	100,286	187,231	-46.4
Missouri River Runner	MO	86,398	150,575	-42.6
Western Routes				
Pacific Surfliner	CA	1,397,158	2,836,894	-50.8
Capitol Corridor	CA	898,007	1,766,763	-49.2
San Joaquins	CA	606,728	1,054,057	-42.4
Cascades	WA/OR	343,497	802,895	-57.2
Buses & Special Trains				
Unallocated Buses*		-	-	-
Non-NEC Special Trains		15,819	25,387	-37.7
Subtotal		8,004,373	15,380,097	-48.0

Long Distance				
Southeast Routes				
Silver Star		218,514	377,342	-42.1
Silver Meteor		200,136	343,531	-41.7
Palmetto		199,248	335,475	-40.6
Auto Train		163,556	234,529	-30.3
City of New Orleans		132,656	228,831	-42.0
Crescent		168,055	286,539	-41.4
Central Routes				
Cardinal		63,223	105,364	-40.0
Capitol Limited		126,997	203,829	-37.7
Lake Shore Limited		220,227	346,993	-36.5
Empire Builder		253,486	420,855	-39.8
California Zephyr		247,535	397,793	-37.8
Southwest Routes				
Southwest Chief		186,470	327,276	-43.0
Coast Starlight		258,200	410,872	-37.2
Texas Eagle		196,078	311,367	-37.0
Sunset Limited		55,118	90,248	-38.9
Subtotal		2,689,499	4,420,844	-39.2
Amtrak Total		16,841,353	32,017,686	-47.4

*Ticket revenues on bus routes 70, 71, 72 and 73 are allocated to train routes 05, 39, 35, and 37 respectively. Ticket revenues on all other bus routes (74 to 85) are combined. Bus ridership is not shown in this report.

Note: Fiscal year 2019 ridership previously reported as 32.5 millions has been decreased to 32.0 million to reflect an updated company definition of ridership.



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- Amtrak improved and expanded its website and mobile platforms. Updates included allowing riders access to information and services on their mobile devices, such as gate and track notifications at select stations to reduce crowding around station departure boards and a capacity indicator icon allowing riders to see how full a train is before booking.
- On the sustainability side, Amtrak reported that it quantified financial impacts to ridership and revenue due to storms and severe weather; developed a greenhouse gas emissions calculator comparing the impacts of rail vs. other travel modes; and identified inundation and flood mapping training with instruction from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Since 2010, Amtrak said it has reduced emissions by 20% and targets a 40% reduction by 2030 (from 2010 baseline figures).
- For state-supported services, Amtrak, in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and other stakeholders, “committed to creating a new passenger-dedicated rail infrastructure between Washington, D.C., Richmond [Va.], and the North Carolina border to allow for quicker and more predictable trips.” Additionally, Amtrak and partners are making “continued progress toward extending 110-mph service in Michigan and adding 90-mph service in Illinois, both to improve travel times and productivity.”
- Amtrak said it worked closely with its contract commuter service customers to “adapt many aspects of their operations, ranging from the frequency of departures to customer-facing processes, to sustain essential services and provide them with the flexibility they needed.”
- Amtrak implemented initiatives to improve diversity and inclusion, such as hosting listening sessions with employees, creating a Diversity & Inclusion Council, and offering “unconscious bias” training to all employees.



Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia

“Prior to the pandemic and with strong support from our partners, Amtrak set new records for ridership, revenue and financial performance on its path to achieve operational breakeven in fiscal year 2020, further demonstrating the country’s growing need for rail,” Amtrak Board Chair Tony Coscia said. “We are continuing to make advancements so when customers return, they will find an even better Amtrak.”
[*Railway Age published today an op-ed from Coscia on “Defining Amtrak’s True Mission.”*](#)

Digest: Rocky Mountaineer to Launch Colorado-Utah Route

Trains Newswire November 19, 2020



A Rocky Mountaineer train arrives in Kamloops, British Columbia, in October 2018. The passenger operator will launch a U.S. route in 2021. Bob Johnston

Rocky Mountaineer to launch Colorado-Utah route in 2021

Canadian luxury train operator Rocky Mountaineer will launch a U.S. train in 2021. The “Rockies to the Red Rocks” service will be a two-day trip between Denver and Moab, Utah, with an overnight stay in Glenwood Springs, Colo. The company plans to launch the service with 40 departures in a 10-week period between Aug. 15 and Oct. 23, 2021, and is working with tourism organizations, hotels, and tour operators on packages that include tours, activities, and stays in Denver in Moab.

“Over the past 30 years, Rocky Mountaineer has become renowned for our world-class train travel experiences, and now we are opening our newest train experience in the region where train travel history began,” Peter Armstrong, founder of Rocky Mountaineer, said in [a press release](#). “This region, with its magnificent scenery, national parks, vast opportunities to explore, will delight millions.” Two-day packages will start from \$1,250 per person plus tax. Those interested can reserve a 2021 trip with a refundable \$25 deposit by contacting travel agents or Rocky Mountaineer. More information is available at [the Rocky Mountaineer website](#).

With 12 Counties as Members, Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority Prepares for First Meeting

Trains Newswire Nov 19 2020

Twelve counties have completed the process of joining Montana’s Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, and the agency seeking restoration of Amtrak service on the former North Coast Hiawatha route could hold its first meeting in July. [The Missoula Current reports](#) the 12 members represent half the counties along the “southern tier” route, and is far more than the two counties that were required to form the agency under state law. Missoula County Commissioner Dave Strohmaier, who has led the effort to form the agency, says it will involve Montana State University’s local government center as part of the initial meetings, which will involve appointing officers and strategic planning.

DM&IR 2021 Calendar Reminder

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Thu, 19 Nov 2020 08:54:48 PST

This is a reminder that orders for the 2021 DM&IR wall calendars are now being accepted. We will mail them the first week in December so they arrive in a timely fashion. Please click on this link for an order form (or order online) to help support the Missabe Railroad Historical Society.

Thank you! **Calendars will start shipping from the printer in the first week of December 2020.**

[Order Form Link https://www.missabe.com/newsitem/2021-dmampir-calendars-available-through-the-mrhs](https://www.missabe.com/newsitem/2021-dmampir-calendars-available-through-the-mrhs)

End-to-End Intermodal Visibility, ‘Ship to Shore’

Written by [Tom Forbes](#), Vice President, Navis Rail November 20 2020 [Railway Age](#)



As freight transportation providers build up traffic volumes from pandemic-related lows, there remains a strong focus on supply chain visibility among ship operators, railroads and truckers. Additionally, shippers and beneficial cargo owners want better tools to see and track shipments from release to delivery, in the same way consumers track Amazon or UPS shipments. As consumers become more accustomed to better tracking and service standards, these capabilities are needed now at every stage of the transportation and handling process.

The next opportunity in supporting advanced supply chain visibility should take us beyond the tracking of shipments. This would be the full integration of planning and operational systems, and data across multiple transport modes. For example, if a single planning application (and set of data) extended from the ship, to the container terminal, to the on-dock rail, to the rail intermodal yard, the carriers would have more opportunities to optimize and track this extended process.

One critical area of system and data interfaces is in intermodal movements, and the related data, from the marine container terminal to the inland intermodal yard. This deserves some examination. The current technical environment for improving intermodal planning is very good, since devices, software and APIs from transport providers and third parties, for tracking cars, containers and individual shipments, are becoming available and affordable. Additionally, the integration of data feeds across systems is rapidly evolving and data is more easily shared among multiple transport modes. But is intermodal data available at all transport stages and for all interested parties?

Data and Tool Availability

Based on our observations and discussion with clients, railroads rarely directly exchange files with ocean carriers. Currently, there is data sharing between the ocean carrier and the ocean terminal operator, but not necessarily for the benefit of the railroad. This means that there is an opportunity for more data to be exchanged between vessel operators and rail companies, most likely through the terminal operating system (TOS), which already needs to “understand” what is being offloaded from the vessel and what is being loaded onto trains. This TOS intersection between the ocean carrier and the railroad could provide the common interface for all downstream transport modes.

Key information usually flows with the containers. For example, for containers arriving on a vessel, terminals will receive container information (weight, custom, hazardous, etc.) from the ocean carrier and as the boxes are loaded and departed on a train, the container detail is shared from the terminal to the railroad. From a planning and data visibility perspective, the container-oriented information should be made available to the railroad as early in the process as possible.

At the container terminal level, there exists an additional data management obstacle. According to research done by Navis, the biggest data challenge in the ocean terminal environment is not the lack of data, but the inability for terminal personnel to access, analyze and apply the data. According to a survey, co-sponsored by Navis a few years ago, 28% of terminals are still using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets to analyze data in their operations – while another 28% are using no tool at all. In our interactions with many global rail operators, we see that a similar situation exists regarding data analysis. Terminal management systems, with integrated rail planning and management capabilities can remedy this situation.

Planning and Analysis

In a recent article by [Jim Blaze in *Railway Age* \(Enough Intermodal Market Hype! – October 1, 2020\)](#), he reported that this year’s rapid intermodal turnaround was difficult for railroad planners. He suggested that if rail planners had been informed two to three weeks before the loaded ships started to arrive at LA/Long Beach, the railroads might have been able to have crew, power and other assets in place. Jim went on to say that the Port of LA announced that it has introduced an advanced vessel consignment sharing process so that such data might be available in the future.

It makes sense for the ports and the railroads to know the volume and types of containers that they will be receiving when a ship sets sail from Asia. Planners would then be able to have the rolling stock, crews and network capacity in place when the containers hit the pier. Additionally, more complete rail data would be available to share with the customer, earlier in the supply chain.

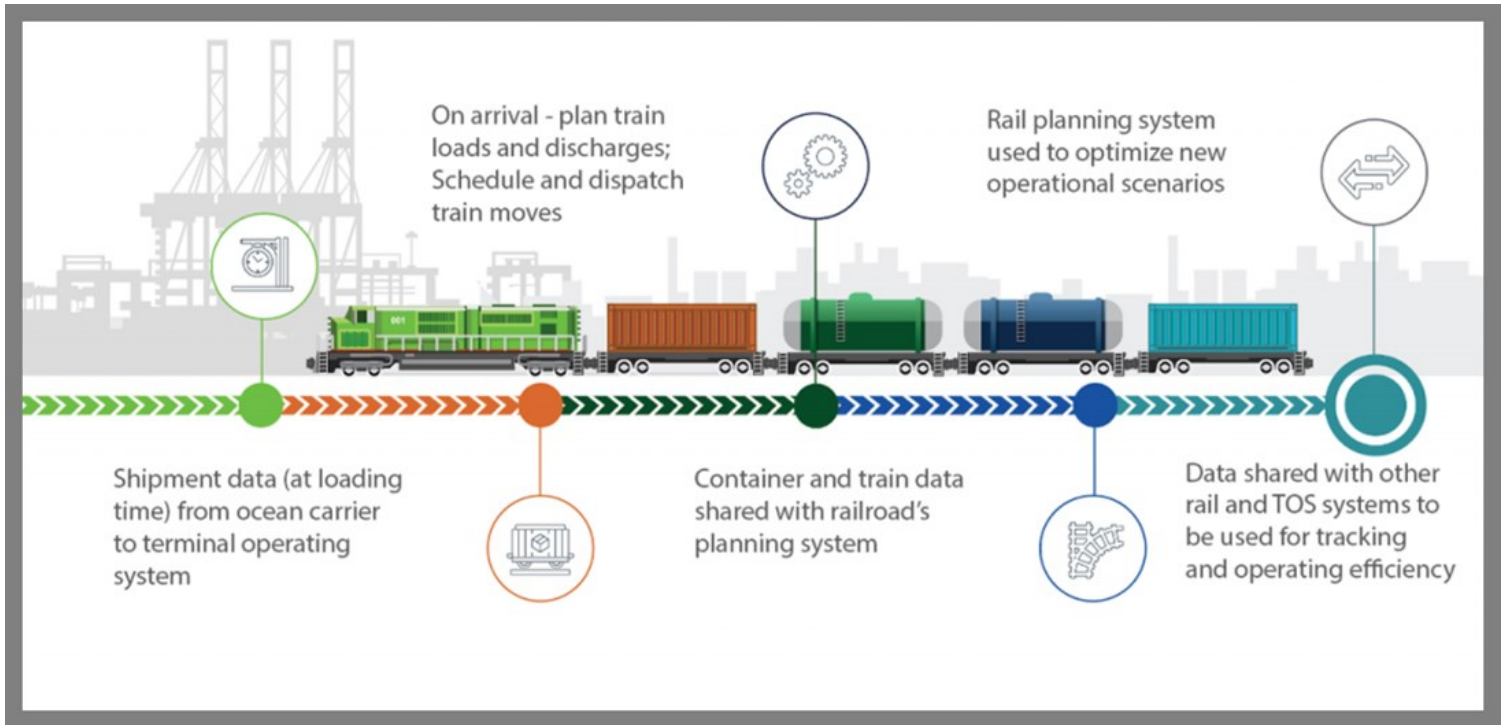
In the container terminal, the container and stowage data is used to create, view, and manage the intermodal train work. Users of systems such as Navis’s N4 Rail, can enter and manage full train visit detail information, including the train, service, direction of the train, various arrival and departure times and weight limits. This data is stored and made available to other Navis tools and for export to other systems.

At this point, the detailed container/rail information can be shared with railroad planning and operational systems. This will seamlessly provide the shipment status throughout the movement of the intermodal train from the ship, to the container terminal, through the freight rail network, to the intermodal terminus.

Software, such as the Navis Rail Planning platform, can use the data for immediate analysis and optimization of rapidly changing planning scenarios, such as the impact of the recent spike in intermodal activity on the west coast. The same data can also be communicated to rail and trucking operational systems through APIs, EDI, and other methods of data transfer, or sharing of business objects.

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Conclusion

Many railroads have tools in place to provide real-time, or near real-time, cargo status to their clients, and more tools are now being developed by the carriers and third parties. The expansion of this view to include detailed information on incoming or outbound international containers would dramatically improve this visibility. But this information is not readily available to all segments of the transportation process.

Transportation providers and software developers should take the immediate step of making sure that international shipment information is made available to the complete supply chain. This could start at the time of booking, but should be validated as the containers are tendered to the ocean carrier for loading. The availability of this data would close one of the largest remaining gaps in shipment visibility for all stakeholders.

John Walker Barriger IV, Aug. 23, 1927 – Nov. 20, 2020

Written by William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief November 24, 2020 *Railway Age*

John W. “Jack” Barriger IV, eldest son of legendary railroad executive and promoter John Barriger III, died Nov. 20, at his home in Kenilworth, Ill. He was 93.



Jack and Evie Barriger



John W. Barriger III

Barriger was a career railroader, beginning with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, where he spent 36 years. He worked his way through the operating ranks, to Vice President and Assistant to the President. He later served as a Vice President of the Chicago, Missouri & Western Railroad. After his retirement from the carriers, Barriger stayed active as a consultant, serving R. L. Banks & Associates, as well as becoming a Senior Advisor to PTSI Transportation.

The majority of Barriger's post-retirement years were spent working on the John W. Barriger III National Railroad Library, which he co-founded with his brother, Stanley H. Barriger (who also spent his career in the rail industry), in 1984. The Library is part of the St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. John Barriger III, Jack's father, (who died in 1976 and had served as an industry thought leader, executive and president of several roads) traveled throughout the nation photographing and documenting railroads. The Library houses his photographs, along with his collection of more than 15,000 books on railroads. John Barriger III was the author of the noted book, published by Simmons-Boardman, *Super-Railroads for a Dynamic American Economy*, which was his prescription for a healthy U.S. rail industry. At PTSI, Jack was one of the 'fathers' of the Route Learning System™, our premier physical characteristics training product, even narrating the first program, for the Belt Railway Company of Chicago," recalls PTSI Managing Director Michael R. Weinman. "Jack shared the title of 'father' with the late Deane R. Folsom, who he met in 1971, along with me, when he was heading the sale of the Santa Fe passenger fleet to the nascent Amtrak. Jack's father had a remarkable career as President of several railroads and head of several railroad agencies, and amassed a collection of literature and photographs second to none that form the core of the Library. Many important additions and the careful stewardship of its board, which Jack chaired, have made it possibly the most comprehensive railroad library on the continent."



From the Monthly Semaphore Newsletter

Thoughts from the Chair -Brian Voss November's blustery winds paid us an early visit this year; perhaps this is why my thoughts have turned to gratitude. And when it comes to MTM and gratitude there are countless ways where I am incredibly thankful. I am grateful for the endless generosity of people who have donated their time, talent and resources to help keep our operation running smoothly. We can't do it without you! I am grateful for the life of Art Pew, a member whose unending support resulted in so many good things for the museum, including our beloved Jackson Street Roundhouse. I am grateful for the generosity of Mr. James J. Hill III, who has the foresight, vision and confidence in MTM to donate GN A-18, a historic treasure which is very personal to the Hill family, entrusting the car to our care for restoration and exhibition. This donation is reinvigorating long-term efforts which will bring the Bay B Steam Exhibit to fruition. I am grateful for our professional relationships with the Osceola Historical Society, Osceola Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian National Railway. We may not have run any trains in Osceola this year, but should the fates allow we can look forward to operating trains again in 2021 and working with our partners to provide our guests with a cohesive historical and educational experience in the Saint Croix River Valley. Likewise, I am grateful for our partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society with the historic Minnehaha Depot. We are hopeful that it too may reopen in 2021. I am grateful for all the members and supporters of MTM, known and unknown, whose volunteerism, leadership, collaboration, hard work and dedication make this organization work. To each and every one of you - I say thank you. There is always more work to do, the need will always be there. In times like these I encourage everyone not to get mired in the mud of despair. We can and will make it through this and we will continue to thrive. Our story is not fully written; Our story is not fully written; we're merely turning the page and starting a new chapter.

Lastly and certainly not in the least, thank you for your financial support. MTM cannot survive on ticket sales alone. Your financial contribution no matter how great or small helps keep our doors open, the lights on and helps further our mission, vision and purpose one step at a time. As we head into our holiday season please keep an eye out for our upcoming annual board match fundraising drive. Please consider an end-of-year contribution to match the board's challenge! *Be well, stay safe and I'll see you at the roundhouse!*

Brian Sincerely, Brian Voss, Chairperson



This holiday season, why not give your friends and family a gift they'll remember for a lifetime.

MTM is offering holiday gift certificates through our website. Log in to www.trainride.org and scroll down the homepage to purchase your gifts.

New Members and Volunteers

MTM is always seeking to invite new members to the Roundhouse and Osceola family. We need docents, office helpers, grant writers, skilled tradespersons and shop workers at the Jackson Street Roundhouse. In Osceola, we can use additional car hosts, depot workers, and events help. In both locations, MTM has a need for event planners to coordinate special events. Consider inviting your friends and families to join MTM. Please contact Wayne Merchant at

waynem@trainride.org

MTM Container Garden (or Farm) Takes Shape



The final days of snowy October weather saw MTM's Container Garden take shape. The storage facility sits in the rear of the property and is the new home to much of MTM's stock of parts and supplies. Special thanks to those members who supported the project, including Jon Van Niewaal, Andy Inserra, Bob Puelston, and Lane Littrell. Much thanks to James J. Hill III who provided support to hire a crane to lift the containers into place. *Continued on next page:*

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Santa on His Way to the Train Shop

Santa Claus is coming to town again this year, and will be listening to children's holiday wish lists at the Jackson Street Roundhouse. Like everything else this year, our event will look a bit different. Santa will be greeting children from a distance in the 1102 Railway Post Office car. There will be train rides, hot dogs and treats. We will need volunteers to work on Saturdays and Sundays on the first three weekends in December. Members will be sent more information, so please keep checking your email boxes. For more information or to help, please contact barb@trainride.org or scott@trainride.org.

Thanksgiving Dinner by Northern Pacific



Here are some recipes from the "Dining Car Line to the Pacific" try 'em for Thanksgiving dinner this year.

Roast Young Turkey

Remove all pin feathers from the turkey, clean thoroughly, and stuff with Chestnut Stuffing. Tie the legs; place turkey in roaster with some chopped onions and carrots and a bay leaf. Brush with melted butter. Brown well, continuing to baste until done. Remove bay leaf and surplus fat from drippings in pan. Make gravy by adding a little stock to drippings; thicken with all-purpose flour. Season with salt and pepper.

Chestnut Stuffing

1 cube (3/4-inch) salt pork, finely diced

1 1/2 cups chopped onions

3/4 cup chopped celery

2 chicken livers, finely diced

1 sprig parsley, chopped

2 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon pepper

1 small clove garlic

1/16 teaspoon ground thyme

12 cups fresh breadcrumbs

1 can (8 ounces) water chestnuts

In large bowl, place bread crumbs. Add ingredients from fry pan; stir well. Add water chestnuts.

Stuffs 16-pound turkey.

Pumpkin Pie

3 eggs

1/2 cup sugar

1 can (15 ounces) pumpkin

1 tablespoon molasses

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground cloves 1/8 teaspoon ground all spice

1/8 teaspoon ground ginger

1/8 teaspoon salt

1 pie shell (9-inch), unbaked

In large bowl, add sugar to egg and beat well. Add pumpkin, milk, molasses, spices, and salt.

Whip to a smooth custard. Pour into pie shell. Bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes; reduce heat

to 350 degrees and bake 45 minutes longer, or until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Serve with whipped cream.

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Train Shop Trick or Treat Was a Huge Success



Over 500 ghouls, goblins, creatures, cuties along with their parents and families celebrated Halloween at the Jackson Street Roundhouse this year. With the railway season canceled, and the Pumpkin Train idled, this year's celebration was at the roundhouse in Saint Paul. There has been considerable momentum to continuing the event in future years because it was such a hit. Thanks to our event planners, Deb Wood and Ken Kane, along with the dozens of volunteers from MTM and our Venture Scout group. Special thanks to our train crews who often do their job without thanks for fanfare. You are very much appreciated!

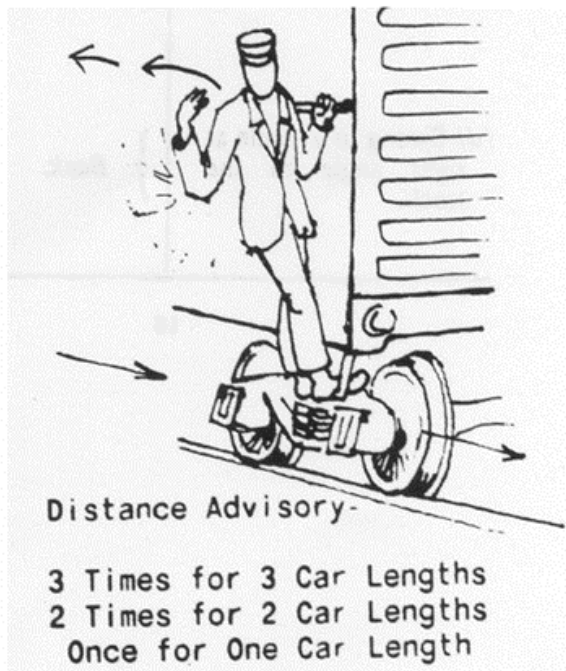


New Holiday Event for 2020

This holiday season the Illinois Railway Museum will keep rolling with a modified holiday event: "Happy Holiday Railway: The Holiday Light Experience." Join us for a ride on a heated streetcar around the festively-decorated grounds, walk around to see the trains and take photos, and see the model train and Christmas tree display. Santa will be there too, available for socially-distanced photos. [Click here for info and advance tickets](#)

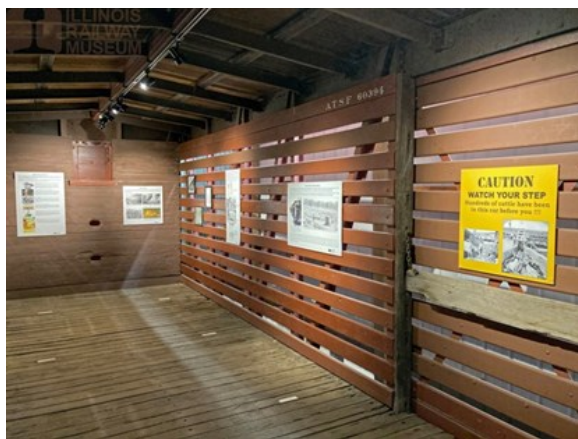
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Social Distancing Policies

Safety is always our highest priority and we have enacted several policies designed to ensure the health and safety of our guests, volunteers, and staff. We strongly encourage everyone to read through these policies and guidelines before your next visit to IRM. New policies include guidelines on social distancing, wearing masks, regular sanitizing of high-touch surfaces, spacing of seating on trains, and more. These policies will be strictly enforced. Safety always comes first on the railroad! [Click for the new guidelines](#)



Stockyards Exhibit in Barn 3

Phase 1 of our new exhibit on the role railroads played in the Chicago Stockyards and the development of the meat packing industry in Chicago is open. You can walk through a real stock car used to carry cattle and other animals and read about how meat "on the hoof" was transported across the country. More phases of this fascinating exhibit should be open next year, so stay tuned for updates.



East Union Depot Repainted

The major project to rehabilitate and repaint our historic 1851 depot is just about finished. This wasn't just a coat of paint; a lot of deteriorated wood was replaced and the east (baggage room) end of the depot was returned to its original appearance. The work was performed by our Buildings & Grounds Department



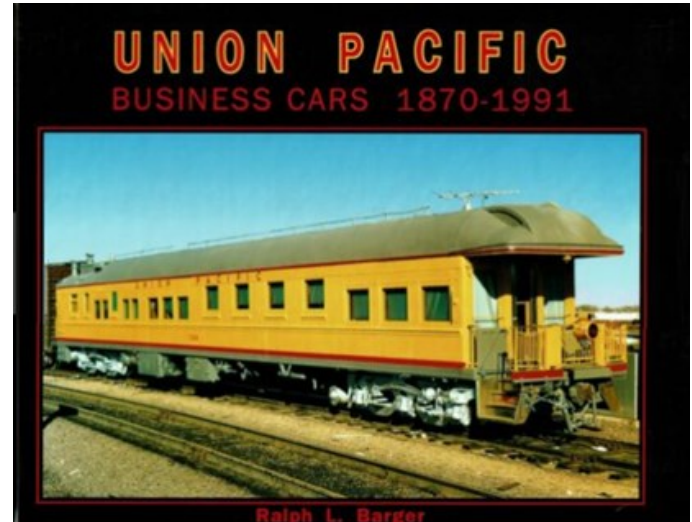
Restored 'L' Car Debuts

Our latest restoration project, Chicago Elevated Railway 1754, debuted to the public on Showcase Weekend in September. This 1906 wooden-bodied 'L' car has been completely rebuilt and restored to its 1920s appearance. The work was done over the past four years by IRM volunteers. It will be in regular service in 2021.

[Click to help with electric car restoration](#)

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2021 Memberships Available

Memberships good through the end of 2021 are now available on the IRM website. Becoming a member is a great way to support the museum's preservation and educational mission. It also gets you free admission during the regular season, discounts, and Rail & Wire magazine.

[Click here for membership information](#)

Visit our Used Bookstore online

The always popular IRM Used Bookstore is now online with its own eBay store. You can purchase rare and out-of-print railroad books that will be shipped directly to your house using your eBay account. The Used Bookstore is run by volunteers and all proceeds go directly to support restoration and educational activities at the museum.

[Click to peruse the online store](#)



Volume 20-4 | Nov 11, 2020

It has been a busy few months since our last newsletter. In this mailing we will update the status of passenger rail funding in Minnesota, the Covid impact on long distance train service, and fallout from the elections, plus plans for a Fall Meeting via zoom to discuss future plans.

But first of all,

Thank you for your response to our calls to action!

Although we haven't yet reached our goals, Your calls and emails have brought us much closer!

Fall Review Meeting Planned

We are planning to have a ZOOM conference meeting at 1:00pm on Saturday December 12th. This will take the place of our normal Fall membership meeting, and will be open to all interested members and friends of the organization. We will publish the details by email or postcard a week in advance with instructions on how to participate.

We will also be asking for interested members to help in several committees, and will ask for nominees for open positions on the Board of Directors. Watch for more details and please

[Save the date.](#) Here are a few more ways to participate

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Passenger Rail Funding



The bonding bill was finally passed in October as part of the legislative special session. Unfortunately, efforts by the House of Representatives and the Governor to re-instate the \$10M matching funds for the 2nd train between the Twin Cities and Chicago did not succeed. The \$3M which had been in the latest version of the bill for passenger rail was appropriated to repair of the Grassy Point swing bridge in Duluth in a last minute negotiated move. However, this work is required for the NLX infrastructure upgrades also.

The 2nd Train to Chicago is in the final design phase, and the \$32M grant awarded by the FRA this summer just needs the \$10M in matching Minnesota funds to become a reality. Amtrak has appropriated \$5M, and Wisconsin has appropriated \$6M. An additional \$12M grant has been received for offsetting the first three years operating costs..

It is necessary to get the \$10M authorized by next September, or the FRA grants may expire. We are working with the Great River Rail Commission to develop plans for seeking these funds in the next legislative session starting in January. If successful, the TCMC could be on the rails by 2024. We hope to be able to outline these plans...and how you can help...at our December 12th zoom conference. For more information see: [Star Tribune article 11/4/2020](#)

Tri-Weekly Schedules by Route

Service	Train #	Direction	New Schedule Begins	Days of Departure from Origin
California Zephyr	5	Westbound	Week of October 5	Monday/Wednesday/Saturday
	6	Eastbound	Week of October 5	Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday
Capitol Limited	29	Westbound	Week of October 5	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday
	30	Eastbound	Week of October 5	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
City of New Orleans	58	Northbound	Week of October 5	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday
	59	Southbound	Week of October 5	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
Coast Starlight	11	Southbound	Week of October 12	Monday/Wednesday/Saturday
	14	Northbound	Week of October 12	Monday/Wednesday/Friday
Crescent	19	Southbound	Week of October 5	Tuesday/Friday/Sunday
	20	Northbound	Week of October 5	Tuesday/Thursday/Sunday
Empire Builder	7	Westbound	Week of October 19	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
	8	Eastbound	Week of October 19	Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday
	27	Westbound	Week of October 19	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
	28	Eastbound	Week of October 19	Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday
Lake Shore Limited	49	Westbound	Week of October 12	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday
	48	Eastbound	Week of October 12	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
	449	Westbound	Week of October 12	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday
	448	Eastbound	Week of October 12	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
Palmetto	89	Southbound	Week of October 19	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
	90	Northbound	Week of October 19	Wednesday/Friday/Sunday
Southwest Chief	3	Westbound	Week of October 12	Monday/Thursday/Saturday
	4	Eastbound	Week of October 12	Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday
Texas Eagle	21	Southbound	Week of October 12	Tuesday/Friday/Sunday
	22	Northbound	Week of October 12	Tuesday/Friday/Sunday

COVID Impacts on Passenger Rail

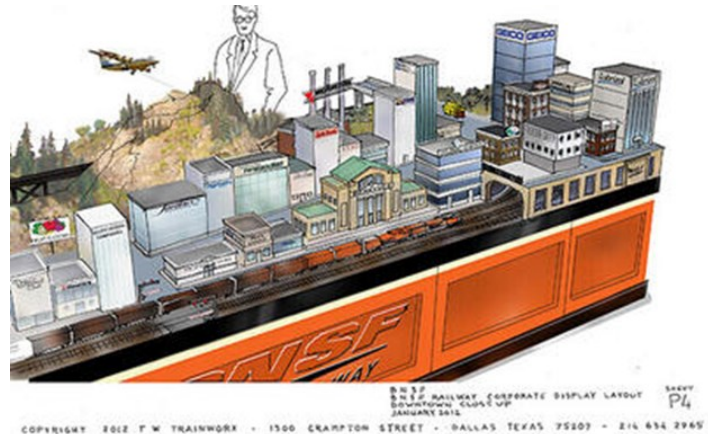
The Covid impact has drastically affected all forms of transportation. Amtrak announced the cut-back of service on long distance trains to a three day schedule to try to save money in the face of low ridership. We joined with other passenger rail advocacy groups to get measures into the Covid relief bill to prevent this action. To date, the Covid relief measures have not been passed in congress, and [three-day per week schedules are in effect](#). We believe that this will have a long term negative effect unless reversed

November 04 in Railroad History: Warren Buffett

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Wed, 04 Nov 2020 Provided by Rick Krenske



It's an all-in wager on the economic future of the United States. I love these bets." On this date in 2009, Associated Press reported that **Warren Edward Buffett** had agreed to purchase America's second-largest railroad.



In 2012, Buffett commissioned a large O gauge display from TW Trainworx. The 8' x 32' layout, dubbed **Berkyville**, has been a popular attraction at annual stockholders' meetings ever since. **Berkyville** includes structures lettered for each of fifty businesses in the Berkshire Hathaway portfolio.

Mr. Buffett's **Berkshire Hathaway** investment company already held a 22% interest in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe. He expected to pay \$26 billion for the remaining shares. BNSF stock promptly shot up to \$97 per share, a 27% increase, in response to the announcement.

Buffett (who turned ninety years young on August 30) is a long-time model railroad aficionado. He has a Lionel layout on the third floor of his Omaha home.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Most Model RR venues are closed for at least four weeks			

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