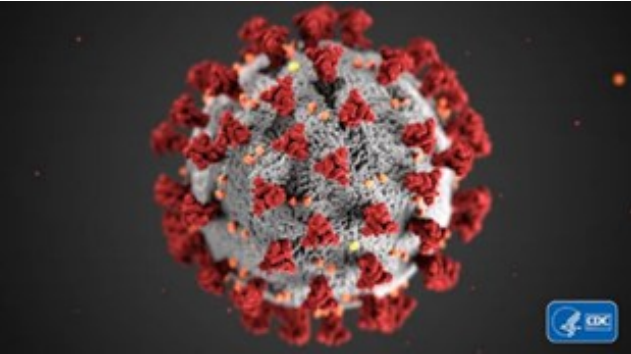
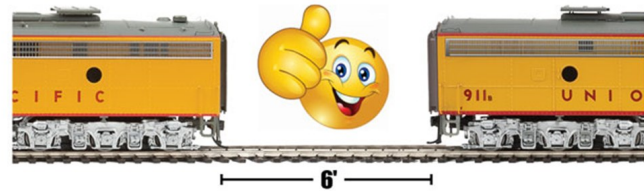


**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

CVID19 (Be Safe!)

L: The Corona Virus
CDC PhotoR: From Walthers
Catalog, modified –
provided by Rick
Krenske**I'M SOCIAL "UNCOUPLING".
PLEASE KEEP YOUR DISTANCE.****Table of Contents**

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Meeting Notice**APRIL 2020 Meeting Cancelled**
Stay tuned for future meeting and Activity
Announcements in the next Newsletter!**Also note, for NRHS members. The NRHS president has sent out a letter (both electronically and by snail mail) of the current status of the Southern California convention in June. Please stay tuned for the latest updates!**

As editor, I would like to **thank** many of the contributor news provided to me to make this newsletter what it is. Just to name a few, they are members *Rick Krenske, Dawn Holmberg, John Goodman, Russ Isbrandt, Chuck Lavallee, Roger Libra, Bob Ball, and David Schauer*. Others include Minnesota Railroads Facebook group (Greg Smith), Trains Magazine Newsletter, LSRM Newsletter, GroupIO Twin City, Ore Rail, Empire Builder, and Amtrak groups, AND other Chapter Newsletters like the Camerail Club 'Mixed Train', NW Illinois Chapter 'Northwestern Limited', and others like The 'The Coal Bucket' and 'Turntable Times' newsletters. Without their research, assembling this newsletter would be much more difficult.

THANK YOU CONTRIBUTORS!

Next newsletter (May) will be out around May 1 2020.

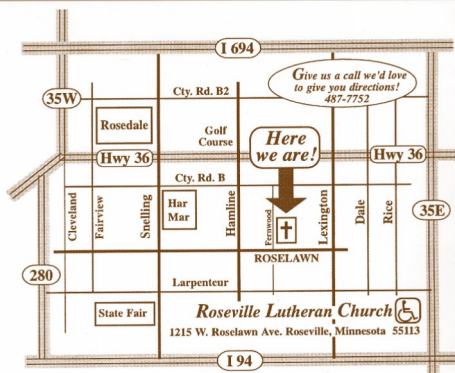
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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



From the Editor:

Note: This is the most depressing newsletter I have ever been involved with. All the closings of Railroad related organizations are 'what I should say' are displeasing. This is all due to tiny little gremlins called the Corona Virus. But I believe that we will recover and we will be all the better. I would hope by Summer's end things will have returned to near normal.

I wish to congratulate John Goodman, Dawn Holmberg and Russ Isbrandt. They were instrumental in making our calendar sales for 2020 the most successful we have had. They are also working hard on getting our 2021 Calendar ready for production. Target date for publication is July 1, 2020.

CLOSURES and REDUCTIONS April 1 2020



Dear Friends of the Twin City Model Railroad Museum:

Our ongoing decisions continue to be made in accordance with recommendations and guidance from state and local public health officials and the Governor's Emergency Executive Orders. These are directed at slowing the spread of COVID-19 in the interest of the health and well-being of our visitors, volunteers and the local community.

We are extending the Museum closure plans through Friday April 17th, 2020. We've also made the decision to postpone the Spring Hobby Sale at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds from May 16th to June 27th. Facilities at the fairgrounds are presently closed through May 10th and there is some uncertainty about their reopening plans. *Closures and Reductions continued on next page:*

Closures and Reductions *continued from previous page:*



It is very uncertain times for us all. The Duluth Depot has closed as part of Governor Walz's initiative to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and meanwhile the North Shore Scenic railroad is starting to explore the potential of cancelled excursions in the weeks to come. Now is a great time to show your support for your favorite museum and railroad. Below we introduce a new page to contribute to specific projects you're interested in, or learn more about museum membership.... But first, we bring the museum to YOU in an all new video series.

Josh Miller
Station Master
[North Shore Scenic Railroad](#)

Museum Closed, We Bring it to You!

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz closed schools, restaurants, bars, most State Office Buildings and other places where people congregate, like Museums. The St. Louis County Depot is CLOSED. You can't come to us, but we can come to you! Social media and video production techniques make it possible to take guest/visitors on video tours of the Depot and the Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

Each segment will be two to four minutes in length and will feature behind-the-scenes tours of spaces and artifacts you couldn't see, or get into, even if we were open. Executive Director Ken Buehler and Videographer/Producer Josh Miller will bring you features not only from the Railroad Museum but will include guests from the St. Louis County Historical Society and Duluth Art Institute, organizations that are also housed in the Depot.



MTM MEETING CHANGES, CLOSURES AND POSTPONEMENTS

(March 17, 2020, 12:28am)

Dear MTM Members,

Undoubtedly you've been receiving a large number of updates regarding recent events, so this notice will be short and in summary format. Please contact your trusted MTM advisor for additional details.

In light of recent events, and for the safety of our members, volunteers, staff and the general public in compliance with updated CDC guidance and recommendations, the full MTM Board has approved these emergency changes involving MTM, its operations and meetings:

THE ANNUAL MEMBERS MEETING HAS BEEN POSTPONED, AND THE LOCATION HAS CHANGED.

NEW DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2020 - 6:30PM
NEW LOCATION: JACKSON STREET ROUNDHOUSE, BAY D

(193 Pennsylvania Ave E., Saint Paul MN 55130)

NOTE 1: THE POTLUCK HAS BEEN CANCELED. MEMBERS MEETING ONLY ON MAY 21, 2020.

NOTE 2: NO MEETING WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020.

NOTE 3: KEEP LOOKOUT FOR NOTICE FROM ELECTION COMMITTEE REGARDING UPDATED (EXTENDED) DEADLINE TO RECEIVE ABSENTEE ELECTION BALLOTS.

JACKSON STREET ROUNDHOUSE IS TEMPORARILY CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

THIS SUPERSEDES THE PREVIOUS CLOSURE NOTICE. ALL PUBLIC ACTIVITIES ON MTM PROPERTY ARE SUSPENDED.

Newport Model Railroad Club

March 16 2020 Provided by Rick Krenski

And the dominos just keep falling. Ed Petry, President of the Newport Club, just informed me that their next scheduled train flea market at the Woodbury High School on April 25, 2020, has been cancelled. The high school has cancelled all activities at their high school for the month of April. Now there is only one possibility left for us. That's the Twin City Model Railroad Museum's train flea market May 16th on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. MAYBE!

Closures and Reductions continued on next page:

Closures and reductions *continued from previous page:*



Traffic flowed on Lake Street under the LRT station in Minneapolis on Feb. 25, 2020.

Metro Transit Curtails Overnight Service on Buses and LRT

*Hours shortened, with aim of curtailing virus. By Janet Moore Star Tribune
MARCH 17, 2020 — 6:08AM PROVIDED BY RICK Krenske*

Metro Transit said Monday that it will suspend service of all bus and light-rail service between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. beginning Tuesday, in an effort to stem the spread of the coronavirus. The transit agency, which serves the Twin Cities metro area, said the unusual move was necessary so it can focus its “limited resources” when demand for service is at its greatest. This is the first time in at least a decade transit service has been curtailed in this way.

“It is also an important safety measure as the region and nation works through this pandemic,” Metro Transit General Manager Wes Kooistra said in a news release. The move comes as transit ridership in the Twin Cities [continues to decline](#), and as other transit agencies nationwide consider similar cutbacks in the wake of an unprecedented pandemic. Earlier this week, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority curtailed transit service in the nation’s capital.

Overall ridership on Metro Transit buses, commuter trains and light rail dipped last year by 3%, with local bus routes taking the biggest hit, declining 5%.

Ridership on the system’s buses and trains is at its lowest overnight, meaning “the fewest number of people will be impacted by the loss of service,” Metro Transit said. Green and Blue Line trains already [shut down](#) between 2 and 4 a.m. nightly.

In addition, a persistent [shortage of bus drivers](#) is expected to worsen as the virus spreads among Metro Transit’s ranks, and as parents take time off because of school closures.

Metro Transit also noted that 60% of the “biohazard incidents” occur at night — including bodily fluids from nighttime passengers that pose “unhealthy conditions in regular times; during a pandemic event, those health concerns increase.” The closures will give Metro Transit more time to clean and disinfect buses and trains.

Reports have surfaced in recent days that bus and train operators have been given just 10 disinfectant wipes to clean their vehicles.

In addition, Metro Transit has advised passengers to take the bus and light rail during the day and early evening only for essential trips, and to practice social distancing while on board, if possible.

It’s unclear when regular service will resume. “We will continue to evaluate the right thing to do to make sure our service is safe,” said Metro Transit Spokesman Howie Padilla.

Metro Transit police officers will continue their overnight shifts.

UPDATE -On Friday, March 20, 2020, 12:41 PM, provided by Rick Krenske

via *Star Tribune’s Tim Harlow, VERBATIM:* “Twin Cities transit agencies are enacting stricter protocols to keep passengers and operators safe amid COVID-19 concerns, and in some cases are reducing service as ridership has plummeted this week with schools closed and many employees working at home. Starting Friday, the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority will require passengers to board and depart buses through the back door and prohibit passengers from sitting in seats directly behind the driver... Metro Transit, which is asking riders to “use transit for essential travel only,” may soon follow MVTA’s lead, said Ryan Timlin, head of the union representing 2,000 Metro Transit drivers and rail operators. The union and Metro Transit could be looking at having passengers enter by rear doors and possibly suggest that no bus carry more than 10 passengers at a time, Timlin said. Express routes with too few riders could be cut, and those buses could be deployed to routes with too many riders, Timlin said... Metro Transit already has curtailed service between 11 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. But no other service cuts had been made as of Thursday morning even though bus ridership fell 42% on Monday and light-rail ridership was down 53% Wednesday, said spokesman Howie Padilla.”

Northstar

Northstar Service Reminder: Reduced service begins today

03/25/2020 05:21 PM CDT Provided by John Goodman

Attention Northstar Customers: as a reminder, due to reduced service, there is no inbound afternoon service during the week and no weekend service from Big Lake to Minneapolis. Below is the current service schedule, for more information go to: <https://www.metrotransit.org/news>

NORTHSTAR LINE [No service on Saturday and Sunday]

These trips will operate weekdays only:

Trips to downtown, leaving Big Lake Station at 5:48 and 7:18 a.m.

Trips to Big Lake, leaving Target Field Station at 4:27 and 5:30 p.m.



Coronavirus Update: Amtrak Service Cuts Continue; Several Transit Agencies Reduce Operations

Trains News Wire Digest for Tuesday March 17, 2020 9:45 am

-Provided by Rick Krenske

Intercity, commuter, and local passenger rail systems continue to adjust to the COVID-19 outbreak. Here are the latest service changes as of Tuesday morning:

— Amtrak has announced further reductions. Because Amtrak continues to adjust schedules, check [Amtrak.com](https://www.amtrak.com) or Amtrak smartphone apps for the latest status. Here are changes [as of Monday evening](#):

- Effective Wednesday, March 18, all *Keystone Service* trains are suspended; the New York-Philadelphia-Pittsburgh *Pennsylvanian* will be suspended as of Thursday, March 19. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf [ordered a statewide shutdown](#) of non-essential activity on Monday evening.

Closures and reductions continued on next page:

Closures and reductions *continued from previous page:*

- Effective Wednesday, March 18, all *Keystone Service* trains are suspended; the New York-Philadelphia-Pittsburgh *Pennsylvanian* will be suspended as of Thursday, March 19. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf [ordered a statewide shutdown](#) of non-essential activity on Monday evening.
- In New York state, *Empire Service* and *Ethan Allen Express* trains are operating on reduced schedules; [changes for New England's Downeaster](#) will see trains 688 and 689 suspended beginning Tuesday, and trains 683 and 683 beginning Wednesday. Beginning Saturday, there will be two sets of trains on weekends.
- *Amtrak Cascades* trains will not operate north of Seattle following the closure of Pacific Central Station in Vancouver, British Columbia. Thruway bus service north of Seattle will continue.
- As of Monday, Connecticut's Shore Line East commuter service has joined its Hartford Line with reduced operations. The routes between New Haven and New London, Conn., is operating on a weekend schedule. More details are available [here](#).
- The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority is [reducing Regional Rail schedules](#) as of today. Until further notice, Regional Rail trains will operate on an "Enhanced Saturday Schedule;" details are available here. PATCO, which operates between Philadelphia and Lindenwold, N.J., is also reducing frequencies; details are available [here](#).
- Beginning today, Metro Transit in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area will [suspend service between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m.](#) on its light rail and bus routes, the Minneapolis Star-Tribune reports.
- Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit is [suspending weekend service](#) through at least Sunday, April 5. Weekday service is currently unchanged, but the agency cautions that it will make "adjustments as necessary, on a day-to-day basis."

Forecasters Predict Economic Fallout of Coronavirus Will Bring Rail Traffic Slump

From the TRAINS Newswire: By [Bill Stephens](#) | Wednesday March 18, 2020.

, Provided by Rick Krenke 1:31 pm

Railroad traffic is expected to take a hit from the economic fallout surrounding the coronavirus pandemic.

International intermodal volumes have declined since China extended its Lunar New Year holiday to slow the spread of the illness. Factories have since been ramping up production, however, so the lull is expected to continue for another four to six weeks while containers make their way to ports and then across the ocean, says Todd Tranausky, a rail and intermodal analyst with FTR Transportation Intelligence.

"The carload side of the business has not yet seen any impacts, but our baseline economic forecast now indicates a short V-shaped recession in the middle of 2020 that carload is unlikely to escape unscathed," Tranausky says. "The sharp reduction in crude prices we have seen over the last 10 days to two weeks will pressure crude-by-rail volumes and any remaining drilling sand volumes. Lower economic activity related to the coronavirus will limit electricity demand and make it even harder for coal to compete with now even lower-priced natural gas."



an eastbound BNSF intermodal train rolls through Western Springs, Ill., on March 7, 2020. A lull in international intermodal traffic is expected to last another four to six weeks. TRAINS: David Lassen

Like other forecasters and some of the Class I railroads, FTR projects a surge in volumes related to pent-up demand once social distancing measures are eased around the globe.

"But the magnitude and timing of that event is fairly uncertain, as the timeline for resumption of normal activities changes day by day, if not hour by hour," Tranausky says. "Right now, we would expect to see some of that bump occur in the late third or fourth quarters of 2020."

Bloomberg analyst Lee Klaskow says Class I railroad earnings growth is likely to be reduced to low-single digit percentages, down from mid- to high-single digit growth this year.

Independent analyst Anthony B. Hatch says the pandemic's economic effects will be unpredictable. Rail traffic was already expected to be relatively weak this year due to lukewarm manufacturing and ongoing trade uncertainty.

"Now there is no guidance," he says. The most uncertainty, Hatch says, revolves around the demand side of the economy and what and how much consumers will buy.

Railroads are likely to respond by cutting costs as freight traffic slumps. Traditionally this has meant running fewer trains and furloughing train and engine crews in line with the reduction in volume.

At an investor conference on Tuesday, Kansas City Southern executives said they were unaware of any KCS customers who had shut down facilities or scaled back either their operations or production amid the pandemic.

In fact, KCS has seen increased demand for grain, chemicals used in disinfectants, and for paper, Chief Financial Officer Mike Upchurch told the Bank of America Global Industrials conference.

But the United Auto Workers on Tuesday urged the Big Three U.S. automakers to shut down their plants for two weeks as a way to protect workers from the spread of COVID-19. The automakers instead agreed to partial shutdowns of plants to allow for increased disinfecting.

Volkswagen and Fiat Chrysler have shut down some assembly plants in Europe, and Ford has shut down a plant in Chicago that ran out of parts. Auto-related business represents around 5% of U.S. rail traffic. KCS was bracing for a downturn in automotive traffic because big-ticket purchases are the first thing consumers stop making in an economic downturn, Upchurch says.

Like other railroads, KCS is prioritizing the health and safety of its workforce amid the pandemic, CEO Pat Ottensmeyer told the conference. The railroad is now dispatching its system from multiple locations rather than just the centralized dispatching center in Kansas City and has stepped up cleaning of locomotive cabs, among other steps such as elimination of unnecessary travel.

Thus far there has been no disruption of railroad operations, the executives stressed.

Upchurch says KCS has a strong balance sheet, an untapped line of credit, and plenty of free cash to weather a pandemic-related downturn. Ottensmeyer noted that KCS is modeling financial scenarios worse than what the railroad saw during the financial crisis that spawned the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009.



Short Lines Seek Temporary Waivers From FRA Due To Coronavirus

FreightWaves March 25, 2020 1:41pm Provided by John Goodman

A handful of short line railroads are asking the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to exempt them from conducting random alcohol and drug tests on employees because of concerns related to the coronavirus pandemic.

The [Fort Worth & Western Railroad](#) (FWWR) of north central Texas, the [Texas Northwestern Railway](#) of in the Texas Panhandle, the [New Orleans Public Belt Railroad](#), and the [Indiana Harbor Belt Railroad](#) (IHB) of greater Chicago are among the companies that are requesting that FRA temporarily waive certain requirements, including random drug and alcohol tests, because of a lack of staffing as well as concerns of being unable to maintain social distancing guidelines.

The requests come as FRA [declared an emergency situation](#) on March 14 because of the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. "The IHB is petitioning for this waiver in an effort to expand social distancing in the workplace.

Anderson: More Cuts to Come

From: Gary Kazin via Groups.Io <gkazin@yahoo.com@groups.io>

To: "allaboardraildiscussion@groups.io" <allaboardraildiscussion@groups.io>

Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2020, 08:36:22 PM CDT Provided by John Goodman

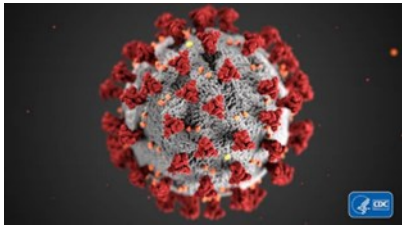
Subject: Re: [AllAboardRailDiscussion]

That didn't take long:

[Amtrak will cancel its flagship Acela Express trains in the Northeast on Monday](#), as the coronavirus pandemic continues to reduce demand for intercity travel.

[The railroad will still operate its slower Northeast Regional](#) trains from Boston to New York to Washington, though at only 40% of the regular weekday schedule.

More: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/2020/03/22/amtrak-cancels-acela-trains-northeast-coronavirus-reduces-demand/2895882001/>



Amtrak's trip cancellations are up 300 percent. Photo – CDC

Amtrak Cancellations up 300 Percent -- Corona Virus Impact

AARPCO Newsletter March 2020 -Provided by John Goodman

Americans are switching their travel habits from public transit to either staying home or relying more on cars as a direct result of the outbreak of COVID-19, according to a poll published March 11 by Northstar Reserach Partners. Of the 1,000 Americans surveyed, 48 percent indicated that they believe riding public transit poses a high health risk due to the virus, and 30 percent to 40 percent report they cut back their use of public transportation.

"People's movement away from public transit is likely to have long-term consequences," says Jennifer Yellin, senior vice president and co-lead of Northstar's transportation practice. "The implications include lost revenue for public transit authorities, which is ultimately used to upgrade and maintain systems."

Amtrak's trip cancellations are up 300 percent and future bookings are down 50 percent year-over-year across the nation, *The Washington Post* reported. If the trend continues, revenue losses for the railroad could be several hundred million dollars, Amtrak officials said in a memo to workers, according to The Post.

To cut costs, Amtrak expects to reduce train service and roll out a voluntary leave program for non-mission critical employees willing to take unpaid time off.

Amtrak will waive change fees for all trip reservations made before April 30.

Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) ridership in San Francisco also has taken a hit in recent days, which could translate to a \$450,000 to \$600,000 loss in fare revenue per weekday, BART officials said in a press release. Ridership on March 9 fell 25 percent to 301,547 riders, while ridership on March 10 dropped 30 percent compared with ridership on Feb. 24 and Feb. 25, respectively, officials said. The week of March 2-6, BART ridership tumbled 8 percent to 380,000 riders compared with the week prior.

Both Amtrak and BART have stepped up how often their cleaning crews wipe down hand-contact surfaces each day at stations and on trains. They also installed more hand sanitizer dispensers across their systems. Amtrak announced it will disinfect its trains and stations multiple times a day, and, in some cases, on an hourly basis, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

In Chicago, both Metra and Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District's South Shore Line announced they have canceled extra rail service previously planned for March 14 after Chicago city officials decided to postpone St. Patrick's Day events and parades due to concerns about the spread of coronavirus. Metra also cancelled extra service scheduled for March 15. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page:

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in New York City yesterday updated its agency-wide sanitizing protocols to increase cleaning efforts. MTA New York City Transit, Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) and Metro-North Railroad crews will disinfect high-contact areas at stations twice a day and clean rolling stock daily, MTA officials said in a press release. Under the new protocols, the full fleet of 6,714 subway cars, 64 Staten Island Railway cars and over 2,200 LIRR and Metro-North rail cars will be disinfected every 72 hours or less. At Metro-North's New Rochelle station, crews will perform a weekly deep cleaning, and a dedicated cleaning crew is now stationed there to clean high-contact areas twice daily. New Rochelle has the largest cluster of COVID-19 cases in New York, MTA officials said.

The Regional Transit District of Denver (RTD) also announced yesterday that its rail cars are being cleaned daily, including disinfection of high-touch surfaces. The RTD has purchased additional sanitation products and disinfectants for its frontline employees, RTD Interim General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Paul Ballard wrote in a letter to RTD riders.



AARPCO Newsletter March 2020 –Provided by John Goodman

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) has awarded a grant to the Colorado Department of Transportation in partnership with the Southwest Chief and Front range Passenger Rail Commission. The \$225,000 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program, or CRISI, grant will be used to help fund the Southwest Chief Thru-Car Service to Colorado Springs Feasibility Study. The study will analyze the potential extension of passenger-rail service on the Amtrak Southwest Chief to Pueblo and Colorado Springs.

"This extension of service from La Junta, Colorado, has the potential to provide critical transportation connectivity, along with social and economic benefits," according to Colorado Senators Michael Bennet (D) and Cory Gardner (R) in a December 2019 letter to USDOT in which they advocated for the federal grant to support the study. "This new service could also bolster ridership on Amtrak's Southwest Chief line, which provides important service to our rural communities."



Twitter / @NMStatePolice

Crazy Strong Winds Push Train Off Bridge In New Mexico

March 13 2020 1:17 pm Provided by Chuck Lavallee

<https://trainfanatics.com/crazy-strong-winds-push-train-off-bridge-in-new-mexico/>

This looks nasty. A total mess. The local community was shocked to see the wind got so strong it could knock all these rail cars off. According to the state police department of Logan, New Mexico 26 cars have derailed near the 469 Highway due to crazy high winds. The National Weather Service sent out a warning the day the crash happened that the wind speeds we're some of the strongest winds in the area in many years (58-84 miles per hour). Logan Fire Chief Rex Stall told ABC News it was around 11am when the incident occurred and the Fire Department and EMS were immediately notified to get to the scene. Luckily no one was reported to have been injured, the cars were fortunately empty but many hazardous materials had to be cleaned up.

Take a look at the images below taken by the New Mexico Police Department shared on Twitter.

The train was crossing over the Canadian River Bridge when a strong gust of wind pushed only the tail end of the train off the bridge. Railroad company Union Pacific's spokesperson Raquel Espinoza said 26 cars fell off the bridge out of a total of 73 rail cars being pulled by two locomotive engines. The bridge constructed in 1954 took some heavy damage as well that's made it non-operational until the railroad repair team can get in there and rebuild it.

What a miracle no one was hurt and that it didn't flip the other 47 cars over. Especially the two engines that had men in them. That could of been real bad. The wreck also stopped traffic for around an hour on Highway 469 but was quickly back to flowing as usual. Never has this happen before in the community of Logan, New Mexico so everyone was a bit in awe.



Plans Moving Forward For Old U.S. Steel Mill Site River Cleanup

Ryan Juntti Updated: March 04, 2020 11:27 PM

Plans are moving forward to clean up contaminants at the old U.S. Steel Mill site in Duluth's Morgan Park neighborhood.

On Wednesday night, the community was invited to an open house to learn what they can expect during the project.

U.S. Environmental Agency Project Manager Diana Mally says it will consist of dredging 780,000 cubic yards of impacted sediment that will then be put into confined disposal facilities that will be built on site. Mally says it is important to be able to improve the health of the ecosystem.

"It's important to clean up contaminated sediment because it affects the critters that live in the sediments. That's the bottom of the food chain for fish and then wildlife, so it affects both the diversity and health of the ecosystem," said Mally.

Construction is expected to start this summer or fall, and take two and a half years.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is funding the project.



AAR: Coronavirus Could Dampen US Rail Traffic In Coming Weeks

FreightWaves March 25, 2020 5:55pm Provided by John Goodman
U.S. rail volumes for consumer-related goods could fall even further in the coming weeks as the coronavirus pandemic, also known as COVID-19, takes hold, warned an executive with the [Association of American Railroads](#) (AAR).

"It wouldn't be surprising to see rail volumes ... soften in the weeks ahead as steps taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 continue to impact producers, both here and abroad, particularly those of consumer goods or intermediate products from which those goods are produced," said AAR Senior Vice President John T. Gray.

Gray pointed to declining automotive volumes as an example. Weekly U.S. carloads of motor vehicles and parts were down 7.1% last week to 15,887. In contrast, year-to-date carloads of motor vehicles and parts are only 1% lower, at 191,201.

"Demand for rail service depends on the demand further down the chain for the products railroads haul and on the ability of firms they serve to produce what is demanded," Gray said. "Autos are a good example. What with job uncertainty and either voluntary or enforced social distancing for many people, this isn't a great time to visit new car showrooms, so demand for autos is down. Further, most automakers have suspended manufacturing operations for the time being. As a result of both these factors, rail carloads of autos and auto parts fell considerably this past week." FreightWaves market expert Mike Baudendistel agreed, "Autos are among the most vulnerable rail segments given the correction in the stock market, newfound job concerns and the current aversion to travel and commuting. Accordingly, this week numerous auto manufacturers [announced shutdowns](#) of their Mexico assembly facilities.

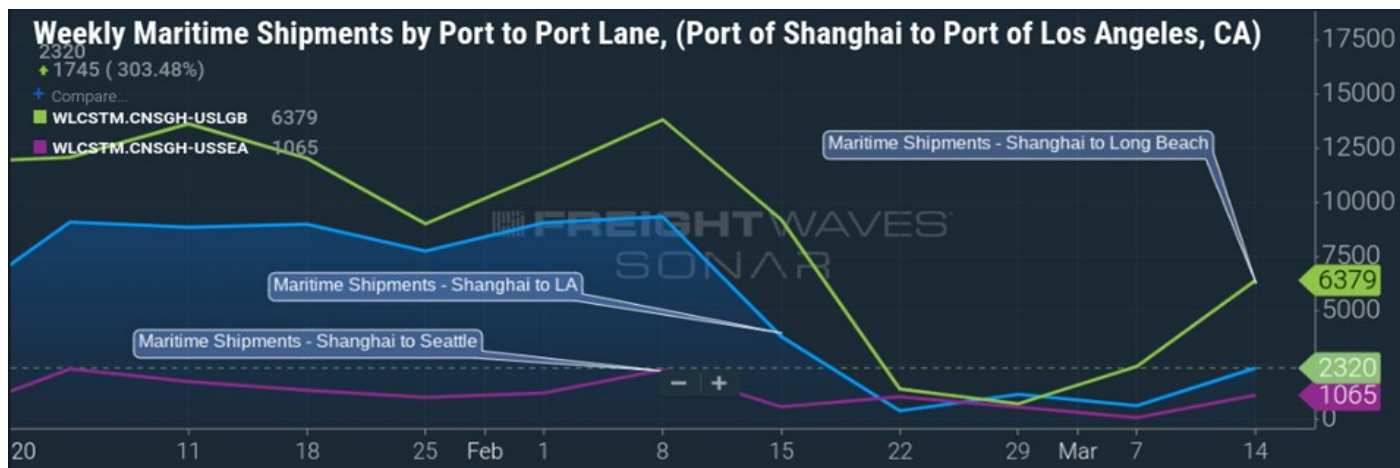
"Mexico has become the 'New Detroit,' both for U.S. consumption as well as North American exports. That negatively impacts rail volumes both due to auto parts moving south across the border and finished vehicles moving back north or to the ports," Baudendistel said in a note to SONAR subscribers.



SONAR chart showing motor vehicle parts carloads moved by the Class I railroads (RTOMV.CLASSI). Source: SONAR/AAR

But there are a few brighter spots. U.S. carloads of chemicals and farm products including food products but excluding grain are up on both a weekly and year-to-date basis, while increased imports at the West Coast ports could benefit rail intermodal.

"The good news is that the intermodal volumes of the railroads serving the West Coast ports that receive the bulk of imports from China appear to have plateaued over the last four weeks, indicating that we may have seen the worst of the COVID-19 impacts on the Asia trade," Gray said.



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Imports from the Port of Shanghai to the ports of Long Beach (WLCSTM.CNSGH-USLGB), Los Angeles (WLCSTM.CNSGH-USLAX) and Seattle (WLCSTM.CNSGH-USSEA) are starting to recover. Source: SONAR

Meanwhile, U.S. chemical carloads were up 12.2% on a weekly basis and 3.7% on a year-to-date basis to 34,471 and 394,888, respectively. U.S. carloads of food products and farm products (excluding grain) were 3.3% higher on a weekly basis and 2.1% higher on a year-to-date basis, to 15,984 and 189,984, respectively.

Overall weekly U.S. rail volumes totaled 459,966 carloads and intermodal units for the week ending March 21, down 8.6% from the same period in 2019. On a year-to-date basis, U.S. rail volume totaled 5.7 million carloads and intermodal units, a 7.2% drop from the same period in 2019.



U.S. rail volumes have trended lower over the past year. Carloads (RTOTC.USA) are still slipping although volumes for intermodal containers (RTOIC.CLASSI) and intermodal trailers (RTOIT.CLASSI) have improved or leveled off recently. Source: SONAR/AAR

Image: Flickr/Patrick Dirden



*Photo by Benjamin Minnick [\[enlarge\]](#)
An Amtrak Cascades train (foreground) idled
yesterday at King Street Station in Seattle.*



Amtrak Cascades Ridership off 85%; Additional Service Cuts Coming Today

by [JOURNAL STAFF](#) March 26, 2020

Washington State Department of Transportation says an 85% drop in ridership on the Amtrak Cascades route since the COVID-19 outbreak is necessitating cuts in service. A WSDOT news release noted the trains typically carry an average of 2,300 people per day and as many as 3,600 a day during peak periods. Ridership is now below 300 people per day.

In WSDOT on Saturday suspended the Seattle-Portland evening trains 507 and 508, and today is adding trains 517 and 518 to the list. That leaves trains 500, 501, 504 and 505 operating between Seattle and Portland.

Cascades trains running north of Seattle were suspended on March 17, when Canada closed the Vancouver, B.C., train station. Buses now shuttle train riders going to Everett, Mount Vernon and Bellingham; Amtrak long-distance trains continue to connect Seattle, Edmonds and Everett. Oregon, Cascades service between Eugene and Portland is down to one daily roundtrip (trains 500 and 505) and will be running on the weekday schedule seven days a week. All other Cascades trains in Oregon are suspended.

The Amtrak long-distance train, the Coast Starlight, continues to connect Seattle and Eugene and other cities in between with one daily roundtrip. WSDOT also made a few changes at some stations on the Cascades route: in Olympia/Lacey and Kelso, only the platforms will be available, with no access to the station buildings. Volunteers at those stations will not be available to assist with ticketing or boarding. Finally, food and beverage service on the Cascades route has been suspended, although passengers can bring their own food and nonalcoholic beverages with them.

WSDOT says it is deep cleaning Amtrak trains and stations, and wiping surfaces frequently. The agency notes it's easy to maintain personal distances with the reduction in ridership.

WSDOT may make additional service changes if ridership continues to be low.

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights



Washington Update
by Ross Capon
Provided by John Goodman

March 2020

AAPRCO Day on the Hill is postponed along with the mid-year AAPRCO board meeting. Because work on legislation continues in spite of COVID-19. It will be good for those who planned to be on Capitol Hill March 24th to communicate electronically with your legislators. One Hill staff member, working remotely because she is pregnant, asked if it would be "possible to get materials shared digitally and/or set up a call to discuss the issue?" I will be sending AAPRCO's legislative ask to all the offices that I asked for meetings. Please let me know if you would like me to arrange a conference call for you and your legislators staff and whether you would like me to be on the call. I can be reached at rca-pon3@gmail.com or via phone or text at 301-385-6438.

AAPRCO's Legislative Ask has been modified a bit further since publication of the February Mid-Month Highlights. The new language is shown here underlined.

"Amtrak shall operate special trains, excursions, and move privately owned railcars on scheduled trains, when such operations are funded by, or in partnership with, private sector operators through competitive contracting, negotiated contracts, or open tariffs at the rates and rules in effect as of January 1, 2018, to minimize the need for Federal subsidies. Such rates from that date forward shall be subject to annual maximum escalation consistent with the Railroad Cost Adjustment Factor (RCAF).

"The rules governing train makeup and obligations of operators, owners, and guests of Private car owners in effect on 1 January 2018 shall not be amended without the written consent of a majority of the Private car owners whose cars are registered with Amtrak and only after Amtrak presents detailed financial data as to all aspects of the operation of Private cars. Disagreement between Amtrak and the aforesaid majority of car owners shall be resolved by the Surface Transportation Board.

"Amtrak shall pick up or deliver Private cars to all points where switching services are available from Amtrak as well as from those points where local switching services not provided by Amtrak are available. Owners and/or operators of charters, excursions, and Private cars shall be responsible for paying the actual disclosed out-of-pocket billing for the cost of any local switching service at any point where switching services are provided by Amtrak, and shall make arrangements for such services directly with the carrier where switching services not provided by Amtrak are available."

Amtrak temporarily softens ticketing rules. As reported here March 2, Amtrak unveiled tougher policies on changes and cancellations just as the COVID-19 situation was heating up. Now, however, "we are waiving change fees on all existing or new reservations made before April 30, 2020. Simply log in to your account or go to Modify Trip on Amtrak.com, or find your reservation from your account on the home screen in the Amtrak app. A fare difference may apply to your new itinerary. If you want to cancel your reservation, call 1-800-USA-RAIL. As Amtrak can take you to parts of Canada, if you cross the border, the US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) may ask about previous travel as well as require a medical screening. Visit the CPB [website](#) for more information. Take care of yourself and keep others safe: If you are feeling ill, please stay home until feeling better." The [website](#) also outlines Amtrak's increased efforts to keep trains clean.

Amtrak COVID-19-related service changes: Amtrak has temporarily suspended Acela Trains 2401, 2402, 2403, and reduced weekday service frequency on the Philadelphia-Harrisburg corridor.

An internal memo reported by Business Insider says "Amtrak's future bookings plunged 50%, and cancellations rose more than 300%." The [memo](#) includes this from Stephen Gardner, senior executive vice-president: "You should expect significant reductions in train service across portions of our network in response to the sharp drop in ridership."

Rail Passengers Association reports that it will press for inclusion of Amtrak in federal aid programs now in development to help aviation and other industries hard hit by COVID-19.

Amtrak's new CEO effective April 15. William J. Flynn, 66, chairman of Atlas Air Worldwide and a former CSX official, will become president and CEO, "the third veteran executive from the transportation industry to run Amtrak in the last three years" (NYT). From 2000 to 2002, Flynn held senior positions at CSX including Senior VP of Strategic Planning and earlier spent some years in a variety of senior positions at CSX subsidiary Sea-Land Service, Inc. From Amtrak's [release](#): "Flynn succeeds Richard Anderson, who joined Amtrak as CEO in July 2017. Anderson, who fulfills his three-year commitment to the company this year, will remain with Amtrak through the end of the year as a senior advisor to Flynn."

Southwest Chief federal grant: U.S. DOT [announced](#) a series of CRISI grants including "up to \$225,000...supports developing a...plan to extend Amtrak's Southwest Chief service...to Pueblo and Colorado Springs." This apparently means study of a Colorado Springs-La Junta section of the Chief.



The little door below the headlight on an Alco switcher like Grand Trunk Western S4 No. 8090 led to a veritable chamber of horrors for a young roundhouse worker. J. David Ingles

"Most Dangerous Task I Ever Performed"

*From the Classic Trains newsletter. Tight quarters inside an Alco switcher
By Charles H. Geletzke Jr. | Posted on March 2, 2020 Provided by Rick Krenske*

I know there are many dangerous occupations. My wife's ancestors were coal miners in Pennsylvania after coming to America, having mined coal in Wales. I know that construction and farming are two of the most dangerous civilian occupations. But when I was just an 18-year-old kid, newly hired on the Grand Trunk Western, I had to perform a truly hazardous task — several times!

My first railroad job was as a laborer in GTW's roundhouse in Pontiac, Mich. The time was summer 1967, and Pontiac performed the annual and bi-annual tests on all of the Trunk's locally assigned switchers.

I had an uncle who was a shop foreman on the Erie in Jersey City, N.J., and I vividly recall his stories of climbing into a steam locomotive's firebox shortly after dropping the fire. I cannot comprehend that! But diesels carried risks of their own, as I found out.

When I was satisfied that I might be able to accomplish this mission, I backed out of the confined space, still in a crouch. Carefully I climbed down off the front of the locomotive and retrieved the steam-cleaning gun.

The steam cleaner itself was a long piece of pipe, tapered at the end to a nozzle, and wrapped with asbestos tape. Even so, it got hot as hell! The steam was piped from another locomotive's steam generator to an old steam locomotive injector, where a mixture of water and Oakite penetrant was siphoned out of a 55-gallon drum, mixed with the raw steam, and forced through that gun at an unbelievably high pressure. In addition to my bib overalls, I wore a pair of the heaviest rubber gloves you have ever seen. These enabled me to hold the steam-cleaning gun. Carefully I uncoiled the heavy 1.5-inch black hose and made sure I would have enough length to enter the fan room without having to obtain additional hose or snagging it on anything. I was determined I was only going in there one more time, and when I came out, that would be it!

Carefully I draped the spewing steam gun on top of the front platform and made one more check that I would have sufficient hose. Assuming my crouch position, I again entered the fan room. The space filled with steam and water vapor in a matter of seconds. All I could taste was Oakite, and my eyes watered from the exposure. I knew I had to do this as quickly as possible! As I began to spray down the walls, it dawned on me that should the steam gun get too high, I would probably fill the room with shrapnel! Keeping my head low, I washed the crud onto the floor and into a drain designed to remove rain and snow. The job took about 10 minutes, then I carefully and deliberately backed out of the confined space. My clothes were soaked. I was covered in sweat and mud. Remember, this was July or August — imagine doing this in January! I could not wait for this day to be over.

During the remainder of my stint in the roundhouse, I performed this task four or five more times — always leery, always scared, always respectful. I was thankful to enter train service the next year and face dangers of a different sort. I'm still a locomotive engineer for GTW successor Canadian National. Looking back, I am still not convinced the extremely dangerous task of cleaning a switcher's fan room was truly necessary. I cannot imagine that this chore would even be permitted to be performed in this manner today. The experience sure gave me a greater appreciation of what my forebears had to endure, and furthered my desire to strive for more education.

First published in Fall 2012 Classic Trains.



US DOT Puts Up \$8.5 Million to Help Improve Transit Service in Economically Distressed Areas

Trains Newswire March 3, 2020 RELATED TOPICS: [REGULATION](#) | [GRANTS](#)

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for \$8.5 million in Fiscal Year 2020 competitive grant funding for projects that help lift communities out of poverty and support recovery from substance abuse. The new Helping Obtain Prosperity for Everyone (HOPE) program supports planning, engineering and technical studies or financial planning to improve transit services in areas experiencing long-term economic distress.

"This new \$8.5 million grant program will improve mobility in underserved communities, including rural areas," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

The HOPE program will provide funding for planning, engineering and technical studies and financial plans that will result in improved public transportation, new transit routes and facilities, and innovative technologies in communities experiencing persistent poverty. It will also support coordinated human service transportation planning to improve transit service or provide new services such as rides to opioid abuse recovery and treatment. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: “The HOPE Program is designed to help communities succeed,” said FTA Acting Administrator K. Jane Williams. “We want to ensure that transportation connects people to jobs, school and healthcare and is not a barrier for people seeking substance abuse treatment and recovery services.”

Eligible applicants must come from counties with more than 20 percent of the population living in poverty for 30 years or more, as measured by the U.S. Census, or the 2013-2017 American Community Survey. Many of the communities are in rural areas, which experience unique challenges in providing public transportation, ensuring safety and keeping transit assets in a state of good repair. Applicants are encouraged to partner with non-profit organizations engaged in public transportation and anti-poverty issues.

The NOFO encourages applicants to demonstrate how their proposed projects are consistent with the Department’s Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (R.O.U.T.E.S.) initiative, which seeks to address disparities in rural transportation infrastructure, and FTA’s Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM) program, which promotes innovative approaches to improve financing, system design and service. Projects will be evaluated by criteria outlined in the NOFO. Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on May 4, 2020.

[More information is available online.](#)



MARCH 2, 2020 AMTRAK NAMES WILLIAM FLYNN AS CEO AND PRESIDENT

WASHINGTON – Amtrak announced that it has named William J. Flynn as its next Chief Executive Officer and President. Flynn, a seasoned business leader with four decades of transportation and logistics experience, will begin his role on April 15, 2020. Flynn succeeds Richard Anderson, who joined Amtrak as CEO in July 2017. Anderson, who fulfills his three-year commitment to the company this year, will remain with Amtrak through the end of the year as a senior advisor to Flynn.

Flynn, 66, has been a successful leader across multiple modes of transportation, including rail, maritime and aviation. Most recently, he served 13 years with Atlas Air Worldwide Holdings, Inc., which serves the global air freight, military charter and passenger charter markets, as President and CEO and Board Chairman. He also held senior roles with CSX Transportation, Sea-Land Services, Inc., and GeoLogistics Corp.

“Bill is the right executive to lead us into the future,” said Amtrak Board Chairman Tony Coscia. “We’ve never been stronger as a company than we are today. We are modernizing the customer experience and delivering our service to more people. Bill has a consistent track record of growing and improving complex transportation businesses. We are confident he will build upon the strong foundation of record-setting growth and improvement set by the Board, Richard and the entire Amtrak team.”

In fiscal year 2019, Amtrak set new records in ridership, revenue and earnings. In 2020, Amtrak is on pace to achieve operational breakeven for the first time in the company’s 49-year history. Additionally, Amtrak is investing billions in capital assets and is undertaking the largest fleet renewal in company history, with new high-speed Acela trains entering service on the Northeast Corridor next year.

“Amtrak’s future is incredibly bright and I’m excited to join the team,” said Flynn. “Amtrak service is vital to millions of Americans across the nation and by improving the customer experience, driving safety, and strengthening our partnership with states and other stakeholders, we can do much more for the American people. Tony, Richard and Amtrak’s dedicated employees have done an amazing job modernizing the company for the 21st Century. It’s a privilege to join them in continuing this work and advancing something as important as Amtrak’s mission.”

“I congratulate the Board on selecting Bill to lead Amtrak into its 50th year and beyond,” said Anderson. “Bill brings deep expertise across all aspects of transportation and a true passion for the customer. As the company reflects our equipment, expands our services and advances key infrastructure projects like the Gateway Program, it will require the steady leadership and relentless drive for improvement that I know Bill can provide.”



Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range 332 on a 2017 photo charter. Steve Glischinski

Lake Superior Railroad Museum Overhauls Steam Program

By [Steve Glischinski](#) | March 10, 2020 RELATED TOPICS: [STEAM/](#)
[PRESERVATION](#) | [MIDWEST](#) | [RAILFANNING](#)

DULUTH, Minn. – The Lake Superior Railroad Museum is overhauling its steam program for 2020, sending locomotive parts out for rebuilding, purchasing others, and operating on a reduced schedule. The revamp follows a 2019 season that saw Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range 2-8-0 No. 332 troubled by mechanical issues, which resulted in the cancellation of several runs. With the new and rebuilt parts, the museum hopes to make the engine more reliable.

During the off season, the museum brought in Steve Sandberg, president and chief mechanical officer of the Friends of the 261, to inspect the locomotive. Based on his suggestions, on March 10 the museum sent the locomotive’s pop and check valves to the Strasburg Rail Road in Pennsylvania for rebuilding. This is the first time museum has contracted with the Strasburg for such work.

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In addition, the museum purchased a rebuilt air compressor from the Minneapolis-based Friends, owners and operators of Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261. Other parts are being sent to contractor FMW Solutions LLC, including a mechanical oiler and air compressor governor. These are spares that are being rebuilt for delivery in 2021.

“The investment in keeping No. 332 running is part of the museum’s mission,” museum Executive Director Ken Buehler tells Trains News Wire.

After the visit of Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 to Duluth in 2019, Buehler says the museum decided to go in a different direction with its steam program. “I was talking to Ed Dickens of UP, and we discussed how UP uses No. 4014 as a public relations tool. We’ve decided to follow that approach. Using No. 332 as more of a ‘public relations’ engine will improve our whole program to better serve the museum’s mission,” Buehler says.

Rather than using steam to generate revenue (which it does not as costs usually exceed revenues) the museum will refocus and highlight that No. 332 is one of the few steam engines still operating, has historic ties to the region, and is part of a larger museum collection open for visitation.

American Locomotive Co.’s Pittsburgh Works built the engine in 1906 for the Duluth, Missabe & Northern as No. 332. It was operated by DM&N successor Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway as No. 332 until 1955, when it was sold to short line Duluth & Northeastern based in nearby Cloquet and renumbered 28. The locomotive remained in service on D&NE until 1964. It was donated to the museum in 1974 and was returned to service in 2017. In 2019 it was restored to its DM&IR appearance and renumbered back to DM&IR 332.

The Museum is planning to operate test runs with the 2-8-0 in June after all the parts are returned and placed back on the locomotive. Rather than trying to operate an extensive steam schedule, round trips from Duluth to Two Harbors will run only three weekends: July 25-26, Aug. 22-23, and Sept. 12-13. The museum will market the trips as special events, but is keeping ticket prices low at \$48, with lower prices for children.

For more information, go to www.duluthtrains.com/steam.



A Pacific Harbor Line train works at the Port of Los Angeles in January 2018. Traffic at the port was down significantly in February, and railroad officials anticipate a significant decrease in international intermodal traffic, because of the coronavirus. TRAINS: David Lassen

Rail Executives Expect International Intermodal Volume to Fall Because of Virus

Oil price war could also affect traffic, but CP says it is "fully protected" by contracts

By [Bill Stephens](#) | March 11, 2020

NEW YORK – The full impact of the global coronavirus epidemic will soon be felt on North American railroads due to the lull in Chinese manufacturing and exports that feed intermodal volume, rail executives said this week. Container volumes have already begun to sink at North American ports. At the Port of Los Angeles, for example, February container volume fell nearly 23%, the port announced on Tuesday.

International intermodal represents about half of all U.S. intermodal volume. Overall U.S. intermodal volume was down 12.5% last week, according to the Association of American Railroads.

“We’ve not seen the impact yet from the extended Chinese New Year volumes. But we expect to see this show up in our intermodal volumes over the coming weeks,” CSX Transportation CEO Jim Foote told an investor conference on Wednesday morning. Steamship companies serving China have cancelled scheduled sailings in recent weeks due to the coronavirus impact on manufacturing and transportation in China.

But the shipping lines have an optimistic view that trade will quickly return to normal after quarantine-related shutdowns that extended the traditional Chinese New Year holiday period, Foote says.

CSX will be able to handle the anticipated surge in international intermodal traffic, whether it comes via interline service from West Coast ports or lands at East Coast ports the railroad serves, Foote says.

“We’ve got a great running railroad and capacity to handle traffic changes, whether it comes east or west,” he says.

International intermodal volumes will see the largest impact from the coronavirus in the near term in Canada, as well, Canadian Pacific Chief Financial Officer Nadeem Velani told investors and analysts on Tuesday. The railway expects international container volume to slump in the second half of March and into early April before rebounding.

CP sees a “quick recovery” as retailers and manufacturers restock their inventories, which have been depleted amid extended manufacturing shutdowns in China, where the virus first began to spread. *Continued on next page:*

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“We don’t see this as lost volumes,” Velani says.

The economic impact of the coronavirus shuttered global stock, bond, and commodity markets this week. And an oil price war between Saudi Arabia and Russia sent crude oil prices plunging.

That prompted a large Canadian oil producer, Cenovus, to announce that it would temporarily cease shipping crude by rail. It has contracts with both Canadian National and CP.

Both Canadian railways have contracts with minimum volume commitments, meaning oil producers will have to pay even if they don’t ship crude oil by rail.

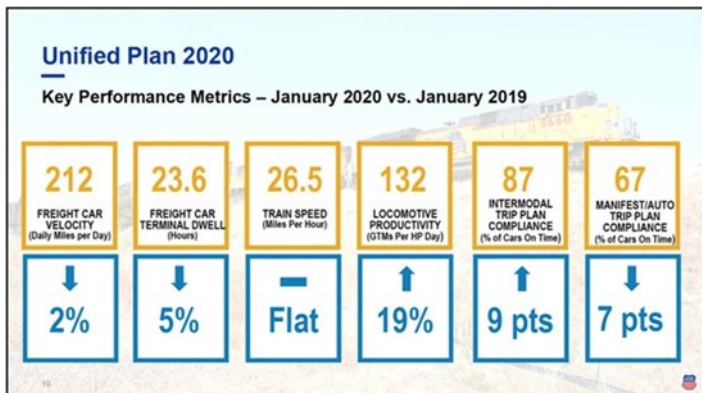
“We are fully protected when it comes to crude by rail on the downside,” Velani says.

Even if CP didn’t haul another carload of crude after the first quarter ends, the impact would not be enough to make the railway change the low end of its earnings guidance for the year, he says.

“Crude by rail isn’t going to make or break our franchise,” he says.

Footo and Velani spoke at the J.P. Morgan Industrials Conference.

Executives from Canadian National, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific cancelled their scheduled appearances at the conference when it was switched to a virtual format amid the spread of the coronavirus.



BUILDING AMERICA®

Union Pacific Reports Mixed On-time Performance Results

By [Bill Stephens](#) | March 3, 2020 RELATED TOPICS: [CLASS 1 FREIGHT RAILROADS](#) | [UNION PACIFIC](#) | [OPERATIONS](#)
Trains Newswire

UP performance numbers presented this week at a conference in Florida. Union Pacific

GRANDE LAKES, Fla. – Union Pacific’s intermodal on-time performance improved in January, but the reliability of the railroad’s merchandise and automotive traffic deteriorated, partly due to the impact of the idling of the hump at Davidson Yard in Fort Worth, Texas.

For the first time, UP provided separate trip-plan compliance statistics for its intermodal and manifest/automotive traffic during an investor conference on Tuesday morning.

“We’ve made substantial progress with our intermodal service product, which greatly improves our ability to be competitive in these markets,” Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Hamann says.

UP’s intermodal trip plan compliance hit 87% in January, a 9-point improvement over January 2019.

Intermodal analyst Larry Gross says UP is closing in on the level of service needed to grow.

“On-time performance to the receiver’s dock needs to be in the 90% range,” he says. “This is not to say that it needs to be as fast as truck, but reasonably consistent. Truck reliability often runs into the high 90% range. There is also an issue of what exactly is defined as ‘on-time.’ Intermodal’s definition tends to be a lot looser than truck, which generally is to the minute.”

The railroad’s carload traffic did not fare as well over the same period. Trip-plan compliance for merchandise and automotive traffic sank 7 points, to 67% – meaning that a third of UP’s carload traffic arrived late.

“The manifest and autos number reflects the difference in traffic mix year over year, as well as some impact from the hump yard closure we noted in our fourth quarter call,” Hamann said.

On Jan. 22 UP idled the hump at Davidson Yard and converted it to a flat-switching facility, the fifth such move since it adopted a Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model in 2018. See [“Union Pacific idles Fort Worth yard jump; railroad executives say more changes are likely,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Jan. 23, 2020.

About half of the yard’s volume was parceled out among nine smaller terminals in the Texoma Service Unit in Texas and Oklahoma. Major operational changes often produce service issues that are eventually ironed out.

UP also has been shifting more finished vehicle traffic out of its unit-train network and into merchandise trains as part of a drive to boost train length and move tonnage on fewer, but longer trains.

Average train length is up 17%, or by 1,200 feet, since the railroad launched its Unified Plan 2020 in October 2018.

Terminal dwell improved 5% in January, while train speed was flat, and car miles per day slipped 2%.

Hamann says UP still expects its overall traffic volume to be up this year despite a slow start.

Bulk traffic is off 14% through February, thanks largely to a 30% drop in coal volume. Coal is down due to record low natural gas prices that make it uncompetitive as a fuel for generating electricity. In addition, coal-fired power plants have large stockpiles due to the warmer than usual winter.

Premium traffic, which includes intermodal and automotive business, is down by 13%.

The lone bright spot to date is the railroad’s Industrial Products segment, which was up 2% amid rising chemicals, plastics, and construction traffic in the Gulf Coast.

Hamann says UP’s more consistent service allows the railroad to better compete with trucks for temperature controlled food and beverage service under the railroad’s Cold Connect program, which links growers on the West Coast with consumers in the Northeast.

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UP late last year took delivery of the first of 300 new refrigerated boxcars, she noted. They feature improvements such as hybrid refrigeration units, double-sealed doors, and customized air distribution pressure to better preserve food. But despite the new cars UP's reefer fleet continues to shrink. The railroad's industry-leading reefer fleet is down 23% over the past five years, according to the railroad's annual reports. Hamann spoke at the Raymond James 41st Annual Institutional Investors Conference.



Union Pacific Opposes Firm's Plan to Revive Tennessee Pass Route

By [Bill Stephens](#) | March 3, 2020 RELATED TOPICS: [UNION PACIFIC](#) | [CLASS 1 FREIGHT RAILROADS](#)
Trains Newswire

WASHINGTON — Union Pacific says federal regulators should not allow a firm controlled by New York City real estate magnates to poach its long-dormant route over Tennessee Pass using a legal maneuver designed to preserve rail service.

UP will formally oppose KCVN LLC and Colorado Pacific Railroad LLC's plan to acquire the 228-mile former Denver & Rio Grande Western line in Colorado, UP wrote in a short letter to the Surface Transportation Board on Monday.

In a feeder line application filed with federal regulators last month, KCVN and Colorado Pacific said they would buy the Tennessee Pass route for its liquidation value of \$8.8 million, [down from a \\$10 million offer they made to UP in November.](#)

UP in December declined Colorado Pacific's offer and said it was in active discussions with another party who wants to restore service on the line.

"The Tennessee Pass Line is simply not an appropriate target for a feeder line application," UP's general attorney, Jeremy Berman, wrote to the STB. "The feeder line process was created to preserve rail service to existing shippers. It is meant to prevent railroads from allowing active rail lines to fall into such a state of disrepair that shippers can no longer ship via rail."

KCVN and Colorado Pacific's plan does not follow "either the letter or the spirit of the feeder line application procedure," Berman wrote.

UP says it is unaware of shipper complaints about service on active portions of the route or of demands for service on mileage that has been moth-balled since 1997.

Nonetheless, UP has been in "promising discussions" with another interested potential operator of the line, Berman told the STB. The railroad will provide additional details about the negotiations, and the name of the interested party, in a formal filing subject to a protective order.

The Tennessee Pass line is not needed as a through route for Rocky Mountain traffic, UP says. The railroad's trio of main lines — the Central Corridor through Moffat Tunnel, the Overland Route, and the Sunset Route — are all superior, UP notes, citing the burdensome 3% grade over Tennessee Pass.

KCVN and Colorado Pacific in 2018 successfully used a feeder line application to gain control of the 121.9-mile Towner Line in Eastern Colorado. Last year Colorado Pacific spent \$3.5 million to restore the line to 25-mph operation and next month plans to resume regular service on the line.

A sale of the Tennessee Pass line to Colorado Pacific would create a nearly 400-mile route extending from Towner, Colo., to Dotsero, Colo., that would provide grain and mining shippers with a shortcut to Utah and the West Coast, KCVN says in its filing.

Colorado Pacific would spend \$278 million to bring the Tennessee Pass route back to Federal Railroad Administration Class 2 track standards that would permit 25 mph operation.

KCVN is controlled by New York real estate developer Sheldon Solow and his son, Stefan Soloviev, who reverted to the traditional spelling of the family's name.

Soloviev, who controls Colorado Pacific, has extensive land holdings in the West totaling more than 350,000 acres, including cropland in Colorado, Kansas, and New Mexico. His companies, which operate under the name Crossroads Agriculture, own grain elevators in eastern Colorado and western Kansas.

25 Railroad Places You Need to Visit in the West

Trains editors list their top 25 railroad locations in the American West to watch, ride, or celebrate railroads, railways, and trains January 16, 2020 *Trains* Magazine

A version of this article was originally published in the November 2015 issue of [Trains](#).

1 [GOAT LICK TRESTLE](#) (Google image search) Fast-paced action of BNSF's northern transcon and the beauty of Glacier National Park, plus live GN goats.

2 [CAJON PASS](#) Busy mainline mountain crossing for both BNSF and Union Pacific leaving LA.

3 [TEHACHAPI](#) Mind-boggling over-and-under loop in Southern California sees more than 40 trains a day. Approximate length: .7 mile.

4 [DONNER PASS](#) (YouTube video) The Central Pacific's daunting challenge to cross the Sierras lives on here.

5 [MOFFAT TUNNEL](#) The 6.2-mile solution to move trains west of Denver didn't get built until 1928.

6 [GAVIOTA TRESTLE](#) (Google image search) 80-foot-tall, 811-foot-long landmark on Southern Pacific's Coast Line.



Main lines of both BNSF Railway and Union Pacific squirm through southern California's Cajon Pass, a primary route into the Los Angeles basin. TRAINS: Drew Halverson

7 [RATON PASS](#) Steepest mainline grade on Amtrak (3.5 percent) is sadly devoid of freights but has plenty of semaphores, for now.

8 [ELY, NEV.](#) Home of the preserved Nevada Northern copper railroad — original shops, locomotives, route — is a step back in time.

9 [BOZEMAN PASS](#) Echos of the Northern Pacific abound, as do Montana Rail Link helpers. Lewis and Clark came through here.

10 [COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE](#) Action in unparalleled movie-like scenery features BNSF on the north bank and UP to the south.



Descendent of Santa Fe royalty, Amtrak's Southwest Chief attacks Raton Pass near the New Mexico border

11 [PROMONTORY SUMMIT](#) Lonely Utah desert spot where work on the first transcontinental railroad was declared "done!"

12 [SHERMAN HILL](#) UP's three-track "low" crossing of the Rockies is an amazing show in Wyoming.

13 [ECHO CANYON](#) (Google search images) Amazing rock formations form a backdrop for the legendary Wasatch grade. Best viewed from an Interstate 80 rest stop.

14 BILL, WYO. Heavy duty BNSF and UP action in the Powder River Basin coal field. Will coal's uncertain fortunes render it irrelevant in 20 years?

15 [ALONG ROUTE 66, ARIZ.](#) BNSF's former Santa Fe main line is busy and beautiful in the northern Arizona mountains and deserts.

16 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA [Alaska Railroad](#) headquarters town is the gateway to wilderness railroading adventure.

17 [CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM](#) North America's best railroad museum is found in Old Sacramento, Calif. Excellent juxtapositioning of tiny 4-2-4T C.P. Huntington with giant SP cab forward 4-8-8-2 No. 4295..

18 SKAGWAY, ALASKA Gravity defying [White Pass & Yukon](#) is tops in scenery and history with narrow gauge diesels and coaches.

19 GIANT'S LADDER Unbelievable attempt at running a railroad across the Rockies. Roadbed remains are all that is left.

20 CUMBRES PASS 10,000-foot crossing is a testament to the audacity of General Palmer's Rio Grande narrow gauge, now the amazingly authentic [Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad](#), a step back into railroading of the 1920s.

21 DURANGO, COLO. Busiest working roundhouse left in America; [Durango & Silverton](#) Mikados gather nightly in summer.

22 [CASCADE TUNNEL](#) 7.8-mile tunnel in Washington State is the longest in the U.S.

23 [PORTLAND UNION STATION](#) The essence of a classic major station resides in the Rose City of the Pacific Northwest.

24 [DUNSMUIR, CALIF.](#) Southern Pacific character lives on in mountainous Northern California.

25 [LOS ANGELES UNION STATION](#) Where named trains and Hollywood stars once gathered, commuters and light rail (and some long-distance trains) converge today.

Editors Note: How Many of these places have you visited?

FREIGHT WAVES

Mergers and Acquisitions Still Likely for Class I Railroads

Joanna Marsh Sunday, March 1, 2020

Mergers and acquisitions could happen among the Class I railroads within the next decade if regulatory and economic factors drive railroads to see mergers as a path to greater efficiency and expanded capacity, according to industry observers

“I just feel it’s inevitable at some point. It’s a natural evolution if capacity is going to be limited. And it is. It’s limited when you have two separate networks,” said [Canadian Pacific](#) (NYSE: [CP](#))

CEO Keith Creel at the Barclays investor conference Feb. 19. “When you create one bigger network, you create more capacity. And for the railroads to handle the growth that’s going to come...we have to have more capacity.”

One driving factor for a merger among the Class Is could be regulations that would compel the railroads to join forces as a means to make up for lost efficiencies, said Todd Tranausky, vice president of rail and intermodal services for FTR, a consulting firm.

*A Canadian Pacific train. Image: Joe Haupt/
Flickr*

“This would be the case if railroads feel the [Surface Transportation Board](#) is mandating [open access](#), or allowing freight rail companies to operate over tracks normally restricted to service only by a competing carrier.

I could see the carriers going ahead with mergers as a way to make up the efficiencies they would lose from an open-access regime,” Tranausky said. “Essentially if the carriers feel like the regulatory efficiency drag is too great, they could use mergers as a way to try and generate additional efficiency.”

He continued, “That said, I don’t think there is any political will on the part of the carriers or the board to undertake the next round of mergers if the status quo is maintained. It would take a shock to the system like open access to kick that off.”

Another impetus for a merger is if the Class I railroads feel their companies would be better served if they expanded their network footprint. Because the existing rail network is finite, one way to create more rail capacity is by joining resources.

“Eventually, you get to a place [where] to create ... capacity without an ability to build more railroads ... you got to have a better-running network,” Creel said.

While the adoption of [precision scheduled railroading](#) (PSR) by all the Class I railroads except BNSF has expanded the rail capacity of individual railroads, according to company officials, the adoption of a similar operating model among all the companies might make for a smoother transition post-merger.

But discussions about mergers might happen in the next five to 10 years rather than within the next five years because of the adoption of PSR, Creel said.

A merger “will depend on chemistry” and timing, said [Canadian National](#) (NYSE: [CNI](#)) CEO JJ Ruest at the Citi investor conference Feb. 20. Ruest also said the advantage of a merger with an Eastern U.S. railroad is access to major population centers, whereas a Western U.S. railroad has a geographic advantage because of the longer distances and a lack of competition from the rivers and the barge market. However, despite talk of expanded capacity, some question whether the railroads’ intentions for mergers are more about gaining market share. “There is nothing technical about a Class I merger that would help grow capacity. Capital investment to grow capacity is a choice by railroad management and their investors,” a transportation consultant said.

The consultant continued, “It is to the railroads’ advantage to keep capacity constrained. Careful control over capital investment to expand capacity reduces the chance that they will really compete with each other for market share to fill the capacity — the last thing that investors want. The game for 25 years has been cut costs and increase prices above inflation. Volume hasn’t grown much in that time. I think they are running up against the limitations of that strategy. All a merger would accomplish would be to improve the merging carriers’ market power, which would let them raise prices more rapidly above inflation and keep the current game going for a while longer.”

Whatever the railroads’ true motivation, the current environment doesn’t appear to support a merger and acquisition anytime soon, Tranausky said.

“Let’s also remember that there has never been a well-executed rail merger. Whether it is UP-SP [Union Pacific-Southern Pacific], the Conrail split between [Norfolk Southern] and CSX, or even CP’s acquisition of the Rapid City, Pierre and Eastern [short line]. So, I think it is a decision that would not be undertaken lightly and is probably off the table unless something drastic changes in the economic regulatory landscape,” Tranausky said

More Closures

FORT WAYNE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Dear Friends,

Per Indiana's stay-at-home order and in recognition of the growing scale of our national emergency, we are closing the shop to the general public and members until April 7th. At that time, the state may waive or extend its order, but in the meantime, we should remain vigilant and conscientious.

Also, this national emergency may extend throughout the summer and could invariably impact Society operations, events, and excursions. This will no doubt have an affect our opportunities to earn revenue and support the many projects we're working on.

To help support the Society during this time, we ask that you renew your membership now. You can do so quickly and easily online by clicking here.

If you are a volunteer, please only share or post items on social media from existing Society channels, as we do not want to give the impression that there is ongoing work occurring or that the shop is open, even if the work pre-dated Indiana or Ohio's stay-at-home orders.

We'll be back with an update near the first of the month. Until then, please enjoy our Spring 2020 issue of Short Lines and enjoy our video on the restoration of our Wabash caboose!

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

Your monthly news & updates

We're keeping you updated with all things related to the Virginia Museum of Transportation!

Closed due to COVID-19

Friends of the Virginia Museum of Transportation - in response to recommendations by state government, the Virginia Department of Health, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we will be closed until further notice.

[Roanoke, VA COVID-19 Resource Link](#)



A Day for the Archives is Cancelled

Jointly sponsored event in Batavia, IL

The 2nd Annual "A Day for the Archives", scheduled for March 28 in the Chicago suburb of Batavia, IL, has been cancelled due to the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

We hope all of you are staying safe and following local, state and national guidelines. In the meantime, if you're looking for some interesting historical information, please visit our web sites via the buttons below.

Sincerely,
Bob Hanmer, GNRHS member
John Langlot, GNRHS President

New High-Tech Equipment Speeds Used Railroad Tie Cleanup Process

INNOVATION 01-08-2020



We've all seen it at one time or another: Discarded railroad ties lying next to the right of way where new ties have been installed. So what happens to those old ties?

Union Pacific is using new high-tech work equipment to more quickly remove ties. The railroad annually replaces between 3 million and 4 million railroad ties. Railroad ties are literally the foundation on which railroads are built. They are perpendicular pieces that support the rail, holding it upright and keeping it properly spaced. Tie gangs work across Union Pacific's 23-state system, like a moving factory, installing and replacing ties year-round along the company's more than 32,000 route miles.

Rigorously maintaining quality rail infrastructure is central to our ability to operate safely within the communities we serve. It helps prevent derailments, provides a safe path for train crews and avoids shipment delays for customers.

Typically, contractors have used trucks and front-end loaders to pickup used ties along the right of way. It can take multiple trips to gather all the ties and transport them to a rail facility, where they are loaded onto a train for departure. On a good day, contractors can pick up around 2,500 ties.

Now, a new high-tech work equipment is speeding up the used-tie cleanup process. The Maintenance of Way Tie Pickup Work Equipment has two giant excavators that ride along the top of a series of connected 70-foot-long rail cars. Operators in the excavators – which look like front-end loaders – pick up tie bundles left in stacks along the right of way. Depending on the ties' size, each rail car holds 500 to 700 ties, which is about the same number it can pick up in an hour.

Once the rail cars are fully loaded, the train departs directly to one of three facilities where ties are recycled or shredded for cogeneration fuel. Used railroad ties are not offered to the general public for reuse.

The new system doubles the number of railroad ties that can be disposed of per day, to nearly 5,000.

Union Pacific's first Maintenance of Way Tie Pickup Work Equipment recently followed a tie gang in Western Nebraska.

[New Tech Supports Quick Cleanup \(Youtube video\)](#)

Demonstrating its commitment to the environment and the communities where its employees live and work, Union Pacific is speeding up the rail tie pickup process with a new, specially designed work equipment that holds used ties. Watch as an Engineering team puts the new equipment to work

"This demonstrates Union Pacific's commitment to the environment and the communities where employees live and work," said Gordon Thompson, assistant vice president – Track Renewal and Replacement, Engineering. "It's important that we clean up after ourselves, removing debris from the community, as well as reducing the emissions from trucks."

The Engineering team is slowly breaking in the new equipment, regularly monitoring and assessing ways to improve it for the future.

"Like anything new, you find things that are missing or need to be modified," Thompson said. "By the time future crews use the equipment, their results will improve our previous numbers."

Crews are drawing up lists of recommended improvements and modifications for the supplier, that include everything from how the excavators operate to the height of the step from the ground onto the equipment, to placing handholds on cars.

"Safety is key and our employees are looking at all aspects of the equipment to make it as well-designed as possible for future machines," Thompson said.

Union Pacific plans to purchase additional tie pickup equipment over the next 15 months



Mixed Train Consist From May 2008 -CB&Q Zephyr's February 1963

CB&Q No. 17, *California Zephyr*, departing Chicago Wednesday February 27, 1963

motors	(not recorded)	
82 ft. baggage	DRGW 1210	
46-seat vista-dome chair car	DRGW <i>Silver Bronco</i>	CZ-22
46-seat vista-dome chair car	DRGW <i>Silver Palace</i>	CZ-21
46-seat vista-dome chair car	Q <i>Silver Schooner</i>	CZ-20
"Cable Car" vista-dome buffet-lounge-dormitory	WP <i>Silver Hostel</i>	
48-place dining car	WP <i>Silver Platter</i>	
6-compartment/5-double bedroom sleeping car	Q <i>Silver Quail</i>	CZ-16
10-roomette/6-double bedroom sleeping car	DRGW <i>Silver Pass</i>	CZ-15
10-roomette/6-double bedroom sleeping car	Q <i>Silver Crag</i>	CZ-11
1-drawing room/3-compartment vista-dome buffet-lounge-observation	Q <i>Silver Lookout*</i>	CZ-10

* built for *Ak-Sar-Ben Zephyr* / *California Zephyr*

CB&Q No. 21, *Morning Zephyr*, Chicago-Minneapolis Sunday February 24, 1963

motors	(not recorded)	
72 ft. baggage	<i>Silver Treasure*</i>	
2-roomette/buffet-lounge-observation	Q 1291 <i>St. Nicholas Mountain**</i>	
64-seat modernized heavyweight chair car (deadhead)	Q 4526	
60-seat modernized heavyweight chair car (deadhead)	Q 4522	
46-seat vista-dome chair car	NP 558	
52-seat chair car	<i>Silver Eagle***</i>	
34-seat pattern-dome chair car	<i>Silver Dome****</i>	
52-seat chair car	<i>Silver Birch@</i>	
50-seat vista-dome chair car	<i>Silver Glade</i>	
48-place dininmg-refreshment car	<i>Silver Feast</i>	
vista-dome drawing room/31-chair parlor-observation	<i>Silver View</i>	P-21

* built for *Silver Streak Zephyr*

** built for *Empire Builder*

*** built for *General Pershing Zephyr*

**** built for general service as 52-seat chair car *Silver Alchemy*; converted Aurora (Ill.) shops 1945
@ built for general service

CB&Q passenger consists from the 1960's, thanks to Bill Schu
"Silver Treasure" on #21 of 2/24/63 mentioned on preceding p

THE MIXED TRAIN 2008-5

13

WGN Photo

Tue, 25 Feb 2020 18:05:21 PST from David Shauer

A nice overhead view of Wisconsin Great Northern at Trego WI from this past weekend. Diffused light from ground fog.



It's Back, a Page of Fabulous Bob Ball Photos



CP (Soo unit) Scrap Job at Red Rock Mar 7 2020



BNSF #9168 EB Manifest at Red Rock Mar 7 2020



CP (Heritage Unit) WB Rail train for Winnipeg
at New Brighton MN Mar 15 2020



RCP&E WB at Sleepy Eye MN (ex-C&NW Tracy line)
Mar 17 2020



UP Coke Train AS45CCTE #5424 Sand loads Crossing
Mississippi River St Paul MN Mar 2 2020



UP (CSX power) (1st unit is ex-Clinchfield)
EB Westminster Hill Feb 23 2020

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Twin City Model Railroad Museum (Friday Nights are Back) CLOSED Until Further Notice	Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays 10:00 am—3:00 pm Saturdays 10:00 am—5:00 pm Sundays 12:00 pm—5:00 pm	668 Transfer Road Suite 8 St Paul MN 55114 651-647-9628	\$15 (special rates for groups)
Hennepin Overland Model Railroad Club open house CLOSED Until Further Notice	Most Saturdays and Sundays October 2019 thru April 2020. 1:00 pm—4:00 pm	62501 East 38th Street Minneapolis MN 55406 (612) 276-9034	\$5 \$15 family
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale Postponed to June 27th 2020	May 16, 2020 from 9 am to 3 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$6
Thoussand Lakes Region NMRA Prairie Lakes Divison Spring RR Show and Midwest Region 2020 Convention	CANCELLED		
Rails and Rivers Mankato 2020 C&NWS Convention CANCELLED	May 28-31 2020 (see web site for all events) www.CNWS.org	Mankato City Center Hotel across rom C&NW Station	Registration fees apply
Sioux Empire Special Convention in Sioux Falls, SD	CANCELLED	Sioux Falls SD	
Hub Hobby Store	CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE	Richfield MN	
Scale Model Supplies Store	CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE	Lexington Ave St Paul	

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