

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Train Ride at the LSRM a Sure Go for Sept 19 2020 (see page 2)



L: BNSF WB manifest
Hoffman Ave St Paul
Sept 2001 –Bob Ball
Photo



R: C&NW Manifest
Nelson IL 1988 –Bob
Ball Photo

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Meeting Notice

Stay tuned for future meeting and activity announcements in the next newsletter!

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

Note: John Goodman Is recovering nicely from should replacement surgery. We wish for a speedy recovery!

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

2021 Calendar: per a Dawn Holmburg and John Goodman report, the 2021 calendar has been submitted to the publisher, We look for the calendar to be available mid-September.

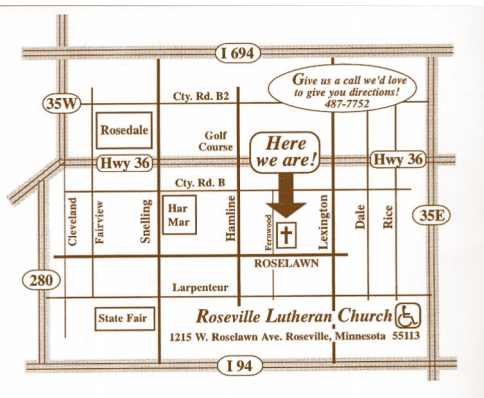
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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



From the Editor:

Our Organization has approved of a summer train ride on the Northshore Scenic Railroad. This will be September 19, 2020. Fare is \$38. Attached is a sign-up brochure which must be sent to John Goodman. The train will be diesel powered departing Duluth at 10:00 am. It will be the Knife River Train. It will run to Knife River where passengers depart to take a walk to where the Duluth and Northern Minnesota railroad ran through Knife River, or take a walk to the Lake Superior shore. The train will consist of a Budd RDC car and the W24 Combine. We are invited as a group to stay on the train as it heads to Marbles to have the engine runaround the train for the return trip. The trip does include a box lunch. Social distancing will be enforced. The Knife River Train fare is \$38. The Knife River Train returns to Duluth at 3:00 pm. Transportation to Duluth is on your own. car pooling with friends you trust is recommended. Our group will meet at the Duluth Depot at 9:30 am. Hope to see many of you there! **NOTE: Limit of 15 seats! These details in the brochure attached.**

Note: Nominees for BOD positions for 2021-2022 are needed! Contact John Goodman or Bill Dredge (contact info above) with your nominees!

Meeting Aug 15 2020 (Zoom) (Not Official)

Dan Meyer sent the invite to members at 6:20pm. Thirteen members attended (including Al Weber, President of the NRHS). The first issue discussed by John Goodman was a Trip on the Northshore Scenic Railroad in August. The LSRM museum has the private car Dagny Tagert. An offer by the LSRM was to ride this car (very limited number of people, due to COVID-19 restrictions) in September, provided that the AARPCO had to cancel its convention in September. IF AARPCO convention train is a go, then a trip by diesel to Knife River is an option. A decision will be made at the end of August by the BOD to make the Duluth Trip a go on the third Saturday in September. John Goodman will collect the ticket purchases and a brochure will be in the September Newsletter. John Goodman and Dawn Holmberg gave the calendar report. The calendar is ready to submit to the printer and our order will be for 425 copies. We have outstanding orders for the calendar from all our retail outlets except the Minnesota History Center and the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. It is hoped that orders from the postcard distribution will be near last year's levels. Dawn gave a report on the status of Roseville Lutheran Church. The Church will be restricting access and meeting rooms are closed until the end of the year. A question was asked of Al Weber on what he has used for virtual meetings. He stated he has used 'Go To Meeting' as well as others. 'Go to Meeting' costs \$16 a month and can host up to 300 people. There is also a learning curve to use whatever tool is used for virtual meetings. Also was an issue about the library. The building owner is installing new doors to the building with FOB type entry. Only 4 FOB's per tenant will be given. The BOD has to decide who gets these new FOB's. John Goodman reported that progress is being made by the NRHS Convention Committee for the 2021 convention in Milwaukee WI. John Goodman reported on the Holiday Banquet. He stated that Bob Ball has looked at Tunucci's in Newport and that they will allow the banquet to continue after the 3pm closing time. Mancini's was mentioned as an option, but the price will probably be a lot more than what we had at Guldens. Dawn Holmberg then showed excellent photos of the NRHS convention in 2019 at Ogden and Salt Lake City. John Goodman hopes to have Greg Smith give a program for our September meeting, which date is yet to be announced. Meeting was closed at about 7:50 pm. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing, Secretary.

News from the Iron Range

Odd Duck...

From: [Mark Arnold TwinPortsRail@groups.io](mailto:MarkArnoldTwinPortsRail@groups.io) Date: Sat, 01 Aug 2020 18:47:28 PDT

Just drove past Sanders heading south and BNSF had a full length empty well car train heading into Superior, just one unit. Cars going into storage up here?

Mark Arnold Carlton, MN

Re: Odd duck...

From: [Chuck Corwin TwinPortsRail@groups.io](mailto:ChuckCorwinTwinPortsRail@groups.io) Date: Mon, 03 Aug 2020 08:13:10 PDT

Last week the following activities were observed on the Lakes in relation to the retrieval of container well cars:

1. On July 28 locomotive units BNSF 9217 and BNSF 7852 retrieved well cars off the Cohasset siding and Seyton siding number 1. They headed east late evening just before sunset.
2. On July 30 locomotive BNSF 7852 and a second unit was observed retrieving container well cars off the Potlatch/Ainsworth siding (off the east end of Seyton siding number 1). The units would have to run around their train after retrieving them off the Potlatch/Seyton since the switch at Seyton is located on the west end. The east end Seyton switch was removed several years ago. They could do the runaround at the Cohasset siding (most likely) or wye the whole train at the MPL wye.
3. The well cars on the Gunn Line west end were still there on Thursday (July 30th) and I thought they were there on Saturday (August 1st) about 2 pm as I passed under the RR bridge on Highway 169 just east of Grand Rapids and north of Gunn Jct.
4. Dave had commented about a train picking up well cars at Gunn. The cars are not located in the Gunn yard. The cars stored in Gunn yard on tracks 1, 2, and 3 are taconite 100 ton cars and 3 bay steel open hoppers (used for all rail taconite shipments).
- The well cars at Gunn are stored on the east leg of the wye and go north ward up the Gunn line to at least the Prairie River Minerals (former Maganetation) loadout area. That would be the area where the cars would be pulled from at Gunn.
5. The well cars stored on the Gunn Line from Holman (just east of the town of Taconite) to just east of Calumet will take a whole lot of work to get to. There are several miles of three bay covered hoppers from west of Pengilly to just west of the west switch Keetac. stored on the Gunn Line. The well cars are blocked in for now.
6. At Kelly Lake on track 1 south yard is a string of 3 bay covered hoppers that have been stored since early June.

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minn

Re: Odd duck...

From: [Chuck Corwin](mailto:ChuckCorwin)

Date: Tue, 04 Aug 2020 07:01:26 PDT

Todd,

There are only three tracks in the Gunn Yard. Track 1 is the one closest to the mainline. That is the normal numbering system in yards. Track one at Gunn is normally used for train meets or to put a coal train in on it when they come from the east. For about the last half year track 1 has been used for storage.

I failed to mention in yesterdays post about the container well cars that at Cass Lake the following was the situation a few months (March or early April) ago which was the last time I made it that far west.

Cass Lake:

1. Track 1 - three bay steel covered hoppers.
2. Track 2 - brand new container well cars.
3. Track 3 - empty
4. Track 4 - brand new container well cars.

Note: Track 3 is usually used for the Cass Lake local to park or maybe to put a train in when crews run out of time. Not long enough for a coal train.

Shley: - box cars. Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minn.

First Hibtac & NSM

From: [Dave Schauer OreRail@groups.io](mailto:DaveSchauerOreRail@groups.io) Mon, 03 Aug 2020 06:08:04 PDT

The first train for Hibbing Taconite was scheduled to depart Allouez this morning after the plant has been idled for a few months.

NSM is resuming production with the first crude train scheduled for later this week, possibly Wed or Thursday. I'm not sure on the "maintenance day" but in the past it was Thursdays. Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

Tilden Restarting

From: Andy

Date: Fri, 14 Aug 2020 19:33:20 PDT

Hi,

Does anyone have information about the Tilden reopening? I searched online and there are no articles stating that the mine has started production.

Andy **Re: Tilden Restarting**

From: [Nevets Yoder](mailto:NevetsYoder) Date: Fri, 14 Aug 2020 20:01:00 PDT Back up and producing pellets since mid June. Steven

Big Wind



From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Mon, 17 Aug 2020 06:45:17 PDT

OreRail@groups.io

A line of thunderstorms rolled through the Twin Ports Friday evening and there were some strong wind gusts associated with that front. A number of double stack container cars at the port were blown over plus a few containers on a nearby grouping also blew off the pile.

<https://www.railpictures.net/photo/745314/> Dave Schauer Duluth, MN



News from the North Shore Scenic Railroad & Lake Superior Railroad Museum Issue #95 - August 2020

In an alternate reality, this email is full of ads for Thomas rides, Murder Mystery shows, Steam excursions, and lots of other special events. That is not this summer. However the trains are running and the museum IS OPEN!

This month we preview the expanded visits to Knife River by train, as well as show you a private traincar that can be YOURS for a night.

Knife River Picnic Trains Expanded



Last month the Knife River Picnic Train was better than ever with the newly remodeled Depot for guests to disembark at. This old building has a new life thanks to some hard working volunteers in the town who wanted to save their Depot.

Due to the popularity of this trip, the North Shore Scenic Railroad has added three more trips to Knife River, starting this coming Saturday, August 8th.

Passengers ride from the Depot in Duluth to Knife River for a 1 hour-ish stop in town for some optional tours, candy store visits, and walk on the beach. Box lunches are delivered from the Vanilla Bean just in time to enjoy before making the trip home.

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Traincar 'Dagny Taggart' In Duluth



In Ayn Rand's 1957 dystopian novel *Atlas Shrugged*, protagonist Dagny Taggart uses a revolutionary, light weight metal to expand her railroad empire. The controversial material replaces steel rails and saves her family's business. Of course along the way Dagny finds true love and purpose.

The railcar named after Dagny Taggart is now on loan to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum by a generous benefactor who is allowing us to use the car in First Class and Charter service.

Built by BUDD Car Company in 1949 for the New York Central RR, the car carried the markers at the end of the *Southwest Limited* that ran between New York and St. Louis. She also filled in on the line's famed *Twentieth Century Limited* whenever one of her tail cars was undergoing repairs.

In her novel Ayn Rand offers up science fiction, mystery and romance. On board the car *Dagny Taggart* we promise to deliver at least one of the three...the *romance* of riding our steel rails in unbelievable style and comfort. First Class tickets are available at www.duluthtrains.com. For private charter information call us at 800-423-1273.

Military Trains

From: [tpersoon2001](mailto:tpersoon2001@groups.io) TwinCityRails@groups.io Date: Sun, 09 Aug 2020 12:58:36 PDT

Yesterday, at least one trainload of military equipment passed by the Galesburg IL Railcam and there is a report that it headed north toward LaCrosse. Can anyone confirm if this train reached the Twin Cities or went east on the CP at LaCrosse toward Ft. McCoy? A second military train went east through Ft. Madison yesterday and a 3rd one today. Any sightings or destination info would be appreciated

Re: Military trains

From: [Kevin](#) Date: Sun, 09 Aug 2020 14:26:47 PDT

I saw one on the Division St. depot camera this morning going west

Re: Military trains

From: [Bob Anderson](#) Date: Sun, 09 Aug 2020 17:26:29 PDT

These might be usual summertime moves to/from Camp Ripley north of Little Falls MN. BNSF ran there last week anyway. RCA Clear Lake

Restoration, Upgrades to Milwaukee Road E9 32A Near Completion

From the Friends of the 261 summer issue of the Northern Lines newsletter. Provided by Rick Krensky



NEW STEEL New steel side panels with proper sized porthole windows adorn Milwaukee Road 32A after installation by the diesel team in late June. The panels replace steel that was found to be rusted in several places. © Steve Sandberg

Volunteers and employees of the Friends of the 261 are making great progress with the restoration and upgrading of Milwaukee Road E9 32A. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, crews have been practicing social distancing while working at the 261 shop in Minneapolis.

Even though 32A was in good condition when received from Wisconsin & Southern, the unit still needed some work. The outer steel skin was removed, which revealed much rust, so new steel panels were purchased and cut to fit. The car body structures and frame were heavily needle scaled and anti-rust treatment was applied.

Mechanical work has been ongoing since the locomotive arrived. Jim DeRocher of the 32A Diesel Team provides us with the updates on work that has been performed, and what future plans are. His recap gives an insider look at the work that goes into maintaining a 65 year-old diesel, as follows:

"The No. 2 (rear) prime mover was not making transition, which is a crucial function for increasing speed during operation. After extensive diagnostics, we found and repaired failed internal components on the BARCO transition module. The front and rear axle generators were also overhauled. Following repairs, the system is now functioning correctly.

Main and Auxiliary generator maintenance was performed. This includes rebrushing the main and auxiliary generators. We discovered many brush holders were sticking open, creating the opportunity for electrical failure. The engine load regulators were serviced similarly after discovering issues. All generators are functioning correctly now. Additionally, all traction motors received similar maintenance and lubrication.

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Several members of the 32A crew pause for photos while working on the E-unit. They are AJ Murphy, Steve Kinghorn, Henry Overzet, Charlie Elo, and Justin Young. – Steve Sandberg photo.

Upon receiving the locomotive, a full crankcase and airbox inspection was carried out on both engines, the valve lash adjusted and set, and fuel injector racks adjusted. This is a maintenance measure that allows us to look inside the engine while it slowly rotates, providing the ability to ensure the engine is sound mechanically internally, and running efficiently. It was observed that the rear prime was running warm during the first excursion in 2019. The source was a defective (stuck open) oil bypass valve, which causes a 70% reduction in engine cooling when defective, that was found and repaired.

An inspection of the air brake system was performed. Two defective unions were replaced and piping that was deemed worn or leaking was repaired. Due to long term storage, the air compressor unloaders were sticking, causing delay in building full air pressure. The compressor unloaders were overhauled, and compressors received standard maintenance. A number of frozen brake heads, which hold the brake shoes against the wheels, were freed up and the linkages were adjusted.

The hot start system (one system per engine) needed work. This system keeps the engines warm while not running during cold weather operation. Justin Young replaced one defective electric drive motor. The drives were leaking fluids due to dry rotted seals. New seal kits for the drives/pumps were ordered, and they will be rebuilt once parts arrive.

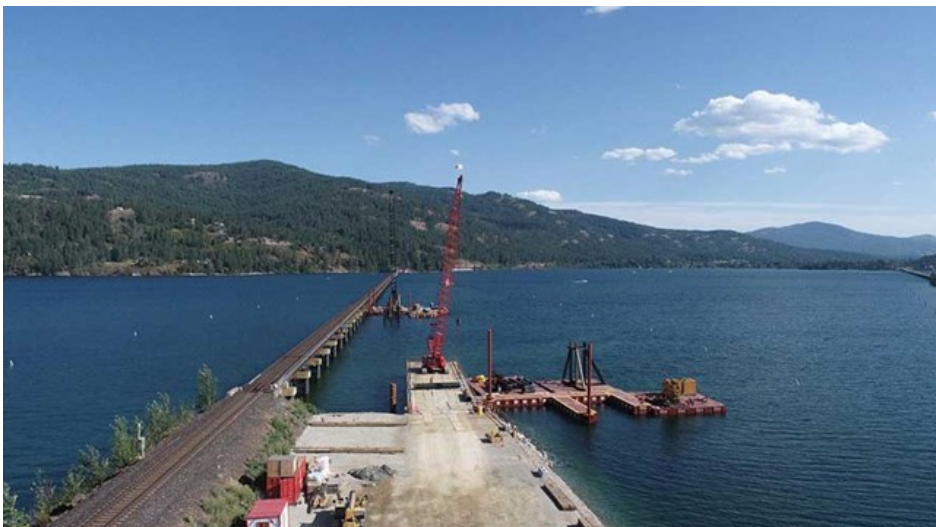
Still to come are FRA periodic maintenance (this process includes changing filters, required full locomotive inspection, and confirmation of compliance), and acquisition and installation of an Event Recorder/Alerter system. The system being installed is fully compatible with Positive Train Control. It can be installed now, and PTC can be added later. Final maintenance items include a load test, a shakedown run, and making any final repairs.”

No. 32A will be painted in orange and maroon to fit with the majority of the Friends passenger fleet. Since Milwaukee Road E9s were painted Union Pacific yellow, the scheme will hark back to original Milwaukee Road diesel schemes. The paint scheme will be a combination of the Milwaukee Road’s 1947 E7 scheme with orange substituted for gray, and the 1950s E7 scheme which featured orange and maroon.



BNSF Completes Work, Trestle on Lake Pend Oreille Bridge Project

Rail News: Maintenance Of Way Aug 30 2020 -provided by Ray Bensen and John Goodman



BNSF Railway is building a second rail bridge adjacent to an existing rail bridge over Lake Pend Oreille. The work trestle at the north end was completed recently. Photo – BNSF Inside Track newsletter

BNSF Railway Co. has moved to the next stage of its Sandpoint Junction Connector Project, which includes the construction of a second rail bridge over Idaho's Lake Pend Oreille adjacent to an existing rail bridge, the Class I announced this week in a company newsletter.

The project moved into the next phase since the work trestle at the north end has been completed. Engineering teams now are focused primarily on permanent pile construction for the new bridge, a three-quarter-mile long span next to the existing bridge. Additional pile installations will take place this month, as well.

Crews also will perform site grading work throughout the project limits, including in the vicinity of the Amtrak Depot, according to a BNSF website dedicated to the project.

The bridge over Lake Pend Oreille is part of BNSF's larger Sandpoint Junction Connector Project, which also will include new bridges over Sand Creek and Bridge Street in Sandpoint. The upgrades are aimed at reducing congestion and moving freight-rail traffic and future volumes more efficiently, BNSF officials say on a project website.

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Web page: <https://www.progressiverailroading.com/mow/news/BNSF-completes-work-trestle-on-Lake-Pend-Oreille-bridge-project--61429>

- From Jack Barbier Northstar Railway Historical Society member Aug 30 2020 Comment:

Interesting!

Having visited Sandpoint last July, it is my humble opinion that a second track through that area and over the lake is a good idea. The locals have nothing to worry about.

Once its' finished...let's all go out there to see it!

I had one day to "fan" the "Funnel." Followed tracks west into Idaho. Gandies had one main out of service all day. Weather was low and grubby. Other than a couple intermodals and a couple grain trains, traffic was sparse. So not a great day. Checked out the new digs at Hauser...

wow... very impressive. Trains stacked up waiting to get in. Had a AirBnB that night near Hauser... worked out well! / J



Amtrak Unveils Paint Scheme for New Diesel Locomotives

AARPCO Mid-Month Highlights August 2020



Amtrak Long Distance Charger Locomotive (ALC-42), PHASE VI LIVERY



Siemens ALC-42 Locomotive Rendering
Amtrak is a registered service mark of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation.

Amtrak has released renderings of the first of the diesel-electric locomotives that will replace the current fleet on its national network, including long distance and many state-sponsored routes.

Five of the first six locomotives will be painted in Amtrak's current Phase VI scheme and one will be painted to recognize the 50th anniversary of Amtrak's service launch next year. The red chevron at the rear of the ALC-42 is an homage to Amtrak's original Phase 1 livery, which also had a red chevron on the side. A final livery will be unveiled later as part of a fleet-wide plan, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The ALC-42 series, developed by Amtrak with [Siemens Mobility](#), is equipped with positive train control and crash energy management systems. They have alternating current propulsion for a maximum speed of 125 mph. The 16-cylinder Cummins QSK95 engine has Tier 4 emissions technology to reduce nitrogen oxide by more than 89 percent and particulate matter by 95 percent, while providing a savings in diesel fuel consumption, Amtrak officials said.

Amtrak announced the initial order of 75 new locomotives in December 2018, with deliveries expected through 2024. Amtrak also has a provision to order additional ALC-42 locomotives.

The new locomotives are part of Amtrak's long-term planned series of improvements for fleet, infrastructure and stations, including new Acela trainsets now undergoing tests to begin service next year.



AMTRAK

Volume 3 Issue 8 August, 2020 Provided by John Goodman

More than 500 management and union employees have accepted buyout offers to leave Amtrak. The staff reductions reflect internal estimates that Amtrak in fiscal 2021 would, at best, generate only 50% of its 2019 income, requiring reduction in personnel. In Town Hall meetings with employees, management indicated it would see how many people accepted buyouts before determining what additional layoffs would be needed. Amtrak management has said that not enough buyouts were made to achieve the cost savings needed. The company is now in the process of evaluating what involuntary separation actions are necessary for management employees. It is also likely that furloughs will be necessary for union employees. Joe McHugh, Amtrak's vice president of state-supported business development, who has worked in government affairs for 26 years was well known to the private car community. A number of other Amtrak employees who assisted private car owners have also left. Necho Terry has left after 30 years with Amtrak. He has been of great assistance to PV owners in scheduling moves. Correspondence should now be directed to:

SpecialMoves@amtrak.com

Michael DeAngelo, DeangeM@amtrak.com,

Beverly Davis Beverly.Davis@amtrak.com, and

Theresa Smith Theresa.Smith@amtrak.com.

Amtrak's Washington D.C. Chief of Police, Neil Trugman, also retired after 47 years of service. He welcomed private cars to DC and often visited with owners. Lee Trombecky, Sr. Manager Regulatory Compliance at Amtrak, considered the mechanical guru for private cars has also retired.



Museum and Excursion Trains

Volume 3 Issue 8 August, 2020



Excursion railroads reopening

The Harrisburg, Lincoln & Lancaster Railroad at Stone Gables Estate in Elizabethtown, Pa is again offering rides continuing through Oct. 31. The railroad features a replica of an 1868 locomotive as well as the replica of 1865 presidential car United States, used as Abraham Lincoln's funeral car.

Rio Grande Southern No. 20 will make its public debut at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, Colo., on Aug. 1, marking the conclusion of a 14-year, \$1.5 million restoration for the narrow gauge 4-6-0 built in 1899. It will power rides around the museum grounds.

Excursion railroads cancelling season

Tweetsie Railroad, is closed again after NCDHHS officials said the train could no longer run during the COVID-19 pandemic. The news came just over a week after the park announced they were reopening. At that time, Tweetsie Railroad let people aboard its open-air train show at 50 percent capacity. Its stores reopened but the majority of the park, including amusement rides, remained closed.

Operation of West Virginia's Autumn Colors Express has been cancelled for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The excursions between Huntington, Charleston, and Hinton, W.Va., had been planned for Oct. 22-25 of this year. Dates of Oct. 21-24, 2021, have tentatively been set for the return of the excursions.

Rocky Mountaineer, the luxury tour train operation in Western Canada, has ended its efforts to salvage at least some of the 2020 season, suspending all remaining departures planned for this year because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. "Those holding reservations can contact Rocky Mountaineer to reschedule for the 2021 or 2022 seasons.

Northeast Oregon's Eagle Cap Excursion Train has cancelled its 2020 season after previously delaying opening because of the coronavirus pandemic. The operation based in Elgin, Ore., will use this year to improve equipment and work with owner of the route, the Wallowa Union Rail Authority, to upgrade the right-of-way in preparation for 2021.

The Tioga Central Railroad, which operates a 34-mile tourist rail line between Wellsboro, Pa., and the Corning, N.Y., area, has suspended operations until further notice because of restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Age of Steam Roundhouse Museum in Sugar Creek, Ohio, has acquired a rare Camelback steam locomotive. Former Philadelphia & Reading 0-4-0 No. 1187 was built in 1903 to burn the smokeless anthracite coal found in eastern Pennsylvania. It was the last Camelback in Interstate Commerce Commission-regulated service and is one of just three surviving locomotives of that design. It joins a collection of more than 20 steam locomotives at the museum.

The U.S. Forest Service has halted a fire mitigation program by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad over concerns about the number of trees being cut down. The Associated Press reports the project cleared 100 feet along an 8-mile stretch of the railroad right of way in an attempt to prevent wildfires.

The Harpers Ferry, W.Va., footbridge damaged in a CSX derailment last December has reopened. The Goodlow Byron Memorial Footbridge — part of the Appalachian Trail — reopened Friday afternoon. The structure crossing the Potomac River links several area tourist attractions, including the C&O Canal.

The Emery Rail Heritage Trust and the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad has issued a special mid-year grant of \$50,000 to help complete 2-6-6-2 No. 1309 as part of the "Steam the Last Baldwin" fundraising campaign. The grant will go toward \$150,000 needed to complete No. 1309, the last Baldwin built for domestic service in 1949.

Amtrak/Federal Agencies RPCA Volume 3 Issue 8 August 2020

Democratic House leadership has announced they will finish a seven-bill spending package in August, including the Fiscal Year 2021 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD) budget. The T-HUD bill includes \$10 billion for Amtrak and \$24 billion for transit systems—funds that will be critical to avoiding service reductions and continuing infrastructure investment programs in the face of the economic downturn. The Senate, meanwhile, has yet to start the appropriations process for transportation, but will begin considering the next coronavirus relief package a bill which could include money for Amtrak and transit systems. The House Appropriations Committee FY 2021 transportation bill includes report language concerning private cars. click [here](#) and go to page 72.

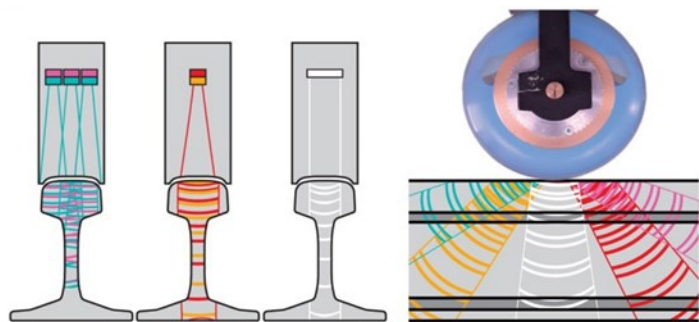
Amtrak needs to define the role and priorities of its police department before it can determine the optimum size of the force and determine if it is being used efficiently and effectively, according to an audit from the Amtrak Office of Inspector General. In a report issued earlier this month, the office says the company and police need to reach a consensus on those foundational issues, and then developed data-driven processes to determine the agency's size and how its resources are allocated.



Saturday, August 8, 2020 10:01 AM from Chuck Lavallee **Subject:** Can you help us save San Diego Electric 502? We are almost at our goal to saving the San Diego Electric Railway 502! We can't thank you our donors enough for your support so far. In just 30 days we've accomplished to raise \$9,000! Can you help us reach 100% of our goal?

RA Green-Lights Continuous Ultrasonic Track Inspection

Railway Age Written by William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief August 28 2020



70°-transducers 40°-transducers 0°-transducer Image courtesy Vossloh

It's a long-awaited rulemaking: The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) on Aug. 28 submitted to the Federal Register its "Final Rule on Rail Integrity Amendments & Track Safety Standards," which the agency says "focuses more on providing performance-based outcomes, rather than prescribing exactly how companies conduct effective tests. Railroads will be expected to utilize established methods to conduct required rail inspections, but they will also have the flexibility to utilize new technologies and methods as they are proven safe and effective." Specifically, this final rule allows railroads to use ultrasonic inspection technology augmented with global positioning system (GPS) for continuous rail flaw testing.



Sperry utilizes Roller Search Units (RSUs) to apply ultrasonics to the rail. RSUs adapt to less than perfect rail conditions thereby ensuring uniform and constant contact with the rail surface, resulting in higher defect-detection ratios. 15 ultrasonic channels per rail deliver optimum detection across the entire rail head, web, and a portion of the base. Sperry's X-fire technology increases transverse defect detection by 30% in areas of less than perfect rail surface conditions.

The new rule enables track inspection vehicles to conduct tests while in motion, "potentially decreasing passenger and freight train delays associated with routine inspections," FRA noted. "These updated regulations are expected to improve safety by making it easier for railroads to test rail more frequently and to identify and repair internal rail flaws before conditions degrade safety."



Vossloh's Rail Road Runner (RRR) rail testing trolley is used for regular inspection of short sections of track as well as switches and crossings. Vossloh photo.

Current FRA regulations require ultrasonic rail test vehicles to repeatedly stop, with a manual inspection to verify indication of defects, within four hours. FRA said such frequent starting and stopping can require slow orders for trains operating in the vicinity, delaying operations. These methods limit testing to about 20 miles of track per day. In contrast, FRA pointed out, continuous rail testing typically enables evaluation of 80 to 160 miles per day.



Pandrol's ultrasonic rail testing uses high pitched waves to identify rail defects. A full track inspection service is available, which provides an exhaustive report of the location, characteristics and urgency of all defects. Pandrol photo.

Continuous rail testing involves vehicles outfitted with ultrasonic and GPS technologies to internally examine rail without stopping, collecting detailed imaging and location data. Under the new rule, inspection vehicles transmit the information to test monitoring sites, where analysts scrutinize the data to identify suspected internal rail defects. Depending on the severity of the potential defect, a railroad has between 36 and 84 hours to dispatch inspectors. If a suspected defect is verified, FRA regulations require the railroad to immediately apply the proper remedial action—repairing or replacing the defective rail, issuing a slow order over the defect, or removing the track from service until repairs are made.

FRA estimates that one continuous test vehicle could replace three to five stop-and-verify test vehicles. "This equates to fewer test cars stopping on tracks, reducing the number of trains that slow to accommodate them," FRA said. "Fewer trains slowing decreases the likelihood of crews exceeding maximum allowable work hours, thus decreasing the expense of unscheduled replacement crews. Ultimately, FRA estimates continuous rail testing could, in 10 years, save the industry \$121.9 million."

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Mermec's rail flaw inspection system is based on equipment connected to a dedicated bogie attached to the inspection vehicle. The mechanical interface holds all the transducers, and is designed to keep the transducers in contact with the rail providing them with the required parameters to ensure proper coupling. This system is able to inspect track at speeds up to 60 mph, dependent on track surface and geometry conditions. Mermec illustration.

"Fast-developing technologies challenge regulators to craft and revise regulations that help ensure public safety, while allowing railroads to test and implement innovative inspection methods," said Federal Railroad Administrator Ronald L. Batory. "These modernized standards will allow railroads to implement innovative inspection methods without the burden of applying for individual waivers with well-established safety records. FRA has issued waivers for the past 10 years, allowing larger railroads to develop and utilize this technology, and the updated standards are consistent with the state of the practice. Between May 2019 and May 2020, there has been a 27% reduction in broken rail-caused train accidents, which is largely attributable to this new technology. Providing all railroads the option of using this technology presents an opportunity to improve the industry's overall safety record. More frequent data collection will produce new data troves, facilitating more detailed research into how track defects develop and propagate over time and how those issues can be addressed before adversely affecting rail safety."



Union Pacific's DC-59 Rail Inspection Vehicle's 48 ultrasonic transducers identify rail defects with high frequency sound. It features a detachable unit, called the "walking stick," for uninterrupted maintenance of sidings, main line crossovers and repair rail certification. UP photo.

"For years, railroads have operated continuous rail inspection technology under longstanding waivers and demonstrated this innovation's promise to advance safety and efficiency along the nation's rail network," said AAR President and CEO Ian Jefferies. "The new rule codifies those waivers and makes other important regulatory reforms. Continuous rail inspection is a proven, tested solution to efficiently and effectively monitor and maintain track health. FRA's common sense, data-driven decision will empower railroads to more broadly adopt this technology and increase the mileage of track inspected across the network. Freight railroads are grateful for this important regulatory modernization that will help drive further innovation and safety advancements in the industry." The final rule takes effect 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. View the final rule here: <https://railroads.dot.gov/elibrary/rail-integrity-final-rule-unofficial>.

Amtrak and FRA report on PTC Implementation AARPCO Mid-Month Report Aug 2020



The final piece of the PTC project recently concluded with the installation of a mile of slow-speed track in the Chicago terminal. Photo - amtrak.com

The Federal Railroad Administration announced that, as of June 30, [positive train control](#) (PTC) systems are governing operations on nearly 99 percent of all 57,537-PTC mandated rail route miles.

For its part, [Amtrak](#) reports that [positive train control](#) (PTC) has been implemented on all Amtrak-owned or controlled track. The final piece of the PTC project recently concluded with the installation of a mile of slow-speed track in the Chicago terminal, Amtrak officials said in a recent press release.

"As leaders in PTC implementation, Amtrak is pleased to achieve this milestone, and we will continue to work together with all of our partners to improve safety across the rail network," said Executive Vice President and Chief Safety Officer Steve Predmore. Amtrak continues to work with partners across the industry to advance PTC on host infrastructure, officials said. In addition, it's working with tenant railroads that operate over Amtrak infrastructure to complete interoperability testing. The national intercity passenger railroad is on target for all tenant trains to be operating with PTC before the federally mandated deadline of Dec. 31.

To date, Amtrak has advanced PTC implementation across Amtrak-controlled routes and equipment for the following:

- * All (550) owned locomotives are fully equipped and PTC operable;
- * All (11) installation/track segments are completed;
- * All (160) radio towers are fully installed and equipped;
- * All employees who require training to support PTC operations have completed training; and
- * 898 of 898 route miles are in PTC operation.

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights



AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

VOL. 8 ISSUE 8 August 2020

Washington Update By Ross Capon Provided by John Goodman

Prospects Remain for Preserving Daily Long-Distance Service. An effort is developing to add to the Senate relief bill Amtrak funding *tied to the preservation of long-distance service* and retaining employees. **Please ask your U.S. senators to support that effort.** The Senate bill already includes aviation. The full House on July 31 passed its FY 2021 transportation/housing appropriations bill whose Title V includes a prohibition against long-distance service reductions and more than enough to continue current frequencies.

Amtrak Board Nominations Hearing Set for August 6 at 10:00 ET. President Trump's first two Democratic nominees will testify -- Normal, Illinois, Mayor Chris Koos and New York City Transit Interim President (and former Federal Railroad Administrator) Sarah Feinberg -- along with nominees to the STB and for US DOT Inspector General. Click [here](#) to view the hearing webcast. It also will be archived. Forward movement of these nominees could presage Senate confirmation of the first new board members since President Trump took office. There are four Republican nominees, but the Senate usually confirms Rs and Ds at the same time, so it is possible that only two Rs and these two Ds will move forward.

President Trump on July 29 sent to the Senate the renomination of the fourth Republican, Theodore (Todd) Rokita. Rokita, a former Indiana Congressman, anticipates a new day job as Indiana Attorney General, having won the Republican nomination. He beat out three other candidates including incumbent Curtis Hill, who had been urged by Gov. Eric Holcomb (R) to resign due to alleged misbehavior at a 2018 party that also led the Indiana Supreme Court to suspend Hill's law license for 30 days.

Brief Discussion of Transportation Legislation and Relevant Committees. Congress passes appropriations or funding bills annually to set the dollar levels that programs actually receive. These bills originate in the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies. The FY 2019 and 2020 House and Senate transportation/housing appropriations bills had private cars/charter train language in accompanying reports, which have the force of law. We anticipate the same for the FY 2021 bills and the full House Appropriations Committee already has approved such language.

Congress passes multi-year authorization bills which set program policy and spending ceilings. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee handles everything except funding, which is the responsibility of the Ways and Means Committee. Here is a simplified list of the Senate's divided jurisdiction for transportation authorization:

safety, railroads, aviation, and maritime transportation -- Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee;

highways -- Environment and Public Works Committee;

urban mass transit -- Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee providing revenues -- Finance

Appropriations. Click [here](#) for the House Appropriations Committee's July 14 news release on the Committee's passage of its FY 2021 transportation/housing ("T-HUD") appropriations bill [my July 23 Information Board posting]. Near the bottom of the release are links to a summary of the bill, the bill's text, and the accompanying report. At the very bottom of the release, on the left side, click on "Minority Website," then "News," and then find Republican views in their July 14 release.

The private car / charter train language is in the report atop page 72. Private cars and charter trains also are referenced in the next section "Communications with Stakeholders" (same page):

"The Committee remains concerned that Amtrak continues to make and implement changes to operations and services without providing the public or its employees adequate time to understand proposed changes and provide feedback."

The paragraph lists seven areas -- including private cars and charter trains -- where Amtrak "has made changes relating to policies and procedures...all of which have impacts on its customers, employees, and communities. Therefore, the Committee directs Amtrak to continue efforts to increase engagement with customers, employees, stakeholders, and the public on proposals to change operations and services, *including providing an opportunity to comment on policies prior to finalizing decisions*" (emphasis added). This is not something Amtrak simply does; affected parties need to press for Amtrak to adjust its behavior accordingly.

Authorization. Click [here](#) for the text of HR 2, The Invest in America Act, which passed the House on July 1 [my July 21 Information Board posting]. AAPRCO's language is Section 9219 on pages 1101 and 1102, which you can get to quickly simply by entering 1101 in the page field at the top.

Click [here](#) for links to the HR 2 press release, fact sheet, thematic summaries, funding tables, and a recitation of "building support" for the legislation. There is also a link here to the bill's text, but apparently without the feature that takes you quickly to the page you select.

Status of Amtrak's "Tri-weekly Everywhere October 1" Policy. On May 25, Amtrak notified Congress about nationwide tri-weekly service for long-distance routes starting October 1. Today, 70 days later, Amtrak continues to sell daily service post-October 1 (except, of course, for *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* which were reduced July 6). Capitol Hill pressure may be having an impact (see first paragraph of this column). The potential impact of Amtrak's decisions on service and on workers is expected to be the subject of a House Railroads Subcommittee hearing -- and possibly a Senate Commerce hearing -- in September.

In a July 27 letter to Senate Commerce Chair Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) noted, in part, that "rural service and long-distance routes are in jeopardy, as are thousands of jobs... It is vital that Congress continue to support Amtrak's service to rural America, so that we can provide crucial connections to jobs, tourism, and family. I believe that it is important for members of the Committee to have the opportunity to debate the tools at our disposal to do so. *Continued on the next page:*

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I ask that you hold an oversight hearing of Amtrak, and support a robust debate on the future of this service."

In a July 20 letter to Rail Passenger Association of California President Steve Roberts, Amtrak Executive VP & Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer Roger Harris defended Amtrak's plan to reduce long-distance frequencies. Harris also told Roberts, "We appreciate your support for Amtrak's Long Distance service and we share your commitment to it...We are continuing to make significant investments in all aspects of our Long Distance service." Harris said figures comparing Long Distance and corridor revenues in recent months partially reflect that corridor frequencies "have already been significantly reduced." While this is a fair point, it does not change the fact that "tri-weekly everywhere" would have a crippling impact on long-distance trains, whose passengers are more likely to change trains en route, comparable only to the impact of completely shutting down some corridors. At this point, however, the list of suspended routes is short:

Amtrak trains serving Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver BC

Ethan Allen and *Vermont*

Piedmont Charlotte-Raleigh (but *Carolinian* serves this route)

More: Washington Update by Ross Capon AARPCO Provided by John Goodman

Amtrak Plunges Ahead with Service Cuts. Notwithstanding the prospect of at least one oversight hearing on Capitol Hill next month, Amtrak already has removed from inventory the trips it plans to discontinue in October. This may mean the costly un-booking process already has begun, that is, contacting everyone who booked on suspended trains, attempting to get them to re-book on a train that will operate, and-failing that, sending refunds.

The transition to tri-weekly service will happen the week of:

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

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

October 19 for *Empire Builder*.

All three Chicago-East Coast trains run the same days. Thus, Amtrak passed up the opportunity to provide daily Chicago-East Coast service and now ensures maximum disruption every time a Western arrival misconnects - passengers who insist on train travel will spend two or three nights in Chicago instead of one as now.

This also means PVs transiting Chicago must spend three nights in Chicago, except two nights for the Wednesday westbound *California Zephyr* (which will have no same-day connections for passengers). Conversely, the westbound *Texas Eagle*, which will have no same-day connections from the East Coast, will have single-night overnights for PVs on all three days (and for the Wednesday arrival of the eastbound train).

Assuming Congress does not "prematurely" force Amtrak to reverse course, restoration of daily service seems unlikely, especially if one reads Amtrak's white paper released August 11, [Restoring Long -Distance Service](#). However, it is still appropriate to express to your Senators and Representative your anger about what Amtrak is doing. You also can suggest that:

you do not believe Amtrak's "service restoration" talk or that Amtrak could achieve meaningful net savings by going through the current upheaval and reversing it by June 30;

Amtrak's persistent quoting of dated (April-May) *nationwide* ridership statistics lowballs current demand for long-distance trains; and by failing to volunteer to Congress the cost of maintaining daily long-distance service, Amtrak has arrogated to itself what normally has been Congress's responsibility

For my detailed rebuttal to Amtrak's paper, e-mail me at rcapon3@gmail.com

The newest (and only Trump Democratic) Amtrak Board Nominees testified before the Senate Commerce Committee on August 6 and showed no inclination to fight Amtrak's tri-weekly posture. The hearing is archived [here](#) and Senator Moran's comments begin at 1:19:29.

Chris Koos, the mayor of Normal, Illinois, said, "I am very committed to the national network. Without the long-distance trains, we don't have a national network...I understand the need to be prudent about the frequency of those routes in a COVID world. I am strongly committed [post-COVID] to returning to daily service on the long-distance routes."

Sarah Feinberg, Interim President of New York City Transit and former Federal Railroad Administrator: "I believe Amtrak is taking the right steps - cleaning, masks, matching service levels to current ridership demand."

Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA): "I'm very concerned that these cuts may significantly harm communities and threaten the long-term viability of the national railroad."

Jerry Moran (R-KS): "...I am here to make sure that the nominees understand what they've just answered in Senator Cantwell's question about their commitment to long-distance service...I've experienced what I think at least is an attitude in prior times at Amtrak a bias against, or at least not in favor of long-distance passenger service; what I would describe as a bias against service that can't make a profit on its own.

"My view is that Amtrak is designed to provide long-distance service across the country. The metrics of whether or not it should exist is not whether or not it is profitable. We have a nationwide system designed to make certain that that service is available to all Americans with geographic dispersity across our country...[references his hold on previous nominees]...

"At various times in my time in the Senate, I've seen where the *Southwest Chief* which runs through three states of members of this committee...has been in the crosshairs of Amtrak. It is, in my view, only through our engagement and intrusion that significant improvements are now being made on the *Southwest Chief* with the commitment of its future longevity. But, now with COVID, there is an opportunity and perhaps an excuse for the diminution of service which I understand. What I am concerned about is the return of the service.

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"I want to make certain that responding to the challenges financial and otherwise of COVID pandemic is not used an excuse to now terminate or significantly reduce, where it no longer is viable, long-distance service on the Southwest Chief and other long-distance routes."

Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)

"[One of Amtrak's restoration criteria is] whether or not the ridership levels in the [1:22:10] first quarter of FY21 is within 90% of Amtrak's projected numbers. That requires me to have a lot of faith in the projections of Amtrak, so that something less than what you project doesn't automatically become an explanation for why we no longer can support long-distance passenger service..."

"Ms. Feinberg and Mayor Koos...would you tell me again...and respond to me in writing, so that I don't have to delay your confirmation on the Senate floor, your commitment to long-distance service, and assure me that, if you are a member of the Amtrak Board, that you will not look for the excuse that COVID-19 *might* present for the elimination or significant further reduction of that service. In other words, we struggle with maintaining our service for the needs on a daily basis. Now, with reduced service, I think ridership is going to be less viable not more viable, and so the criteria that Amtrak is creating is making it more difficult in my mind to see that Amtrak is on a path to restoration of service..."

In responding to Moran, Feinberg said she understood the importance of the trains; she is from West Virginia where they are important. Koos talked about the importance of the *Texas Eagle* to his community and smaller communities across the nation. "The first quarter of Fiscal Year 21 seems to me like a tenuous benchmark, because I don't know where we're going to be the first quarter of '21 with COVID-19. I think we have to recognize the mood of the country and people's willingness to public transportation again in a post-COVID world and that is the metric that I would use to judge the viability of the long-distance routes."

My postscript: By all accounts Amtrak deserves credit for keeping the trains clean and riders and workers safe. But, as for "tri-weekly everywhere," today's comments about the Postal Service also ring true for Amtrak. As MSNBC's Mika Brzezinski said this morning, "How do we change that back? What's the damage that's been done." Another comment, on Nicole Wallace's afternoon show: "They're basically crippling it and saying it's to save money."

It remains unclear whether any Amtrak Board confirmations will take place this year.

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



AARPCO Mid-Month Highlights August 2020

Amtrak has published the tri-weekly schedule which will go into effect in October for network trains. The Office of Charters and Special Movements is currently reviewing all existing PV move requests and will reach out to any car owner whose travel plans will be impacted by this new schedule

AARPCO Passenger Rail News Padgett Elected State-Amtrak Committee Chair



Rob Padgett, Photo CCIPA

The [State-Amtrak Intercity Passenger Rail Committee](#) (SAIPRC) last month elected [Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority](#) Managing Director Rob Padgett as chair.

Padgett will oversee the committee's annual work plan to support growth of the nation's intercity passenger-rail network, and support collaboration among its 20 member agencies in 17 states, [Amtrak](#) and the [Federal Railroad Administration](#). His term will run through June 2021.

"Rob's extensive experience in passenger rail on both the East and West coasts brings a unique perspective to the committee," Patricia Quinn, executive director of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority and SAIPRC member, said in a press release. "We are pleased to have his expertise to help lead SAIPRC and develop high quality rail services across the country."

SAIPRC represents 28 Amtrak routes across the country. Committee members work together to encourage capital investment, equipment and infrastructure modernization, and safe, reliable and customer-focused rail service.

Padgett succeeds outgoing chair Jennifer Bergener, the deputy chief executive officer of the Orange County Transportation Authority.

Amtrak Tightens Mask Requirement AARPCO News



Amtrak now says passengers may be removed or banned from trains for not wearing masks.

Photo - amtrak.com

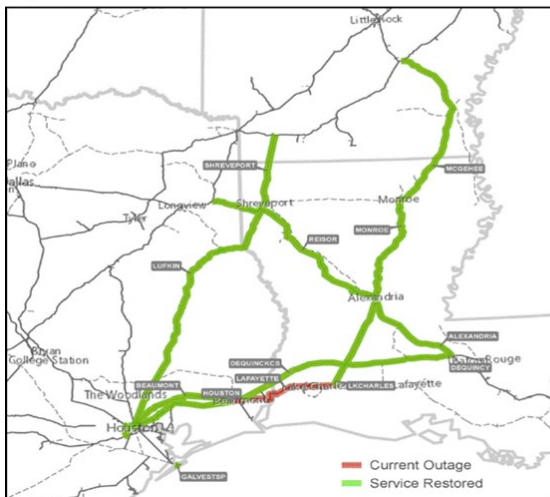
Amtrak has joined U.S. airlines in tightening requirements that passengers wear face coverings to help slow the spread of coronavirus infections. The nation's intercity passenger railroad now says passengers may be removed or banned from trains for not wearing masks.

In May, Amtrak began requiring riders to wear masks, but allowed riders to remove them when seated alone. Now, riders may remove masks only when riding in private rooms, which are available only on long-distance trains.

Amtrak reserves the right to remove passengers or ban them from future travel if they do not follow the face-covering policy, Amtrak officials said on the railroad's website.



Rail Operations Impacted by Hurricane Laura



From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com> <allaboardraildiscussion@groups.io>

Sent: Sunday, August 30, 2020 Provided by John Goodman

Subject: UP: Gulf Coast Rail Operations Update

Ex-SP Beaumont-Lake Charles remains closed.

Gulf Coast Rail Operations Update

Announcement Number: CN2020-45

8-30-2020

To Our Customers,

We continue to work to restore service to the rail lines impacted by Hurricane Laura, following is an update on current conditions: We restored service to additional line segments last night. Only one line segment remains out of service in Southern Louisiana, that outage is shown on the map below. Embargoes remain for the impacted area, please [see our embargo page](#) for detailed information.

Customers with rail shipments moving through the impacted area should anticipate a minimum of 72 hours of additional transit time as we work to restore operations. Customers in the affected area with facilities or tracks out of service should open a case in Case Management. Please refer to the instructions on our [Hurricane Planning and Recovery page](#) so we are aware of these outages. We will continue to communicate our progress as service is fully restored to this area. If you have any questions, please contact Customer Care & Support at 800-272-8777 or your Union Pacific representative.

Three Cheers for Intermodal!

Railway Age Written by **Andrew Corselli, Managing Editor** August 26, 2020



The Association of American Railroads (AAR) reported U.S. rail traffic for the week ended Aug. 22, 2020, which saw, for the third consecutive week, U.S. weekly intermodal volume up from the same week last year.

U.S. weekly intermodal volume was 285,086 containers and trailers, up 5% compared to 2019. However, total U.S. weekly rail traffic was 514,914 carloads and intermodal units, down 3.3% compared with the same week last year. And total carloads for the week ended Aug. 22 were 229,828 carloads, down 12% compared with the same week in 2019.

Two of the 10 carload commodity groups posted an increase compared with the same week in 2019. They were grain, up 1,489 carloads, to 22,530; and farm products excl. grain, and food, up 705 carloads, to 15,951. Commodity groups that posted decreases compared with the same week in 2019 included commodities such as coal, down 16,929 carloads, to 64,500; nonmetallic minerals, down 8,464 carloads, to 30,294; and metallic ores and metals, down 2,467 carloads, to 18,981. For the first 34 weeks of 2020, U.S. railroads reported cumulative volume of 7,222,554 carloads, down 16% from the same point last year; and 8,327,873 intermodal units, down 8% from last year. Total combined U.S. traffic for the first 34 weeks of 2020 was 15,550,427 carloads and intermodal units, a decrease of 11.9% compared to last year.

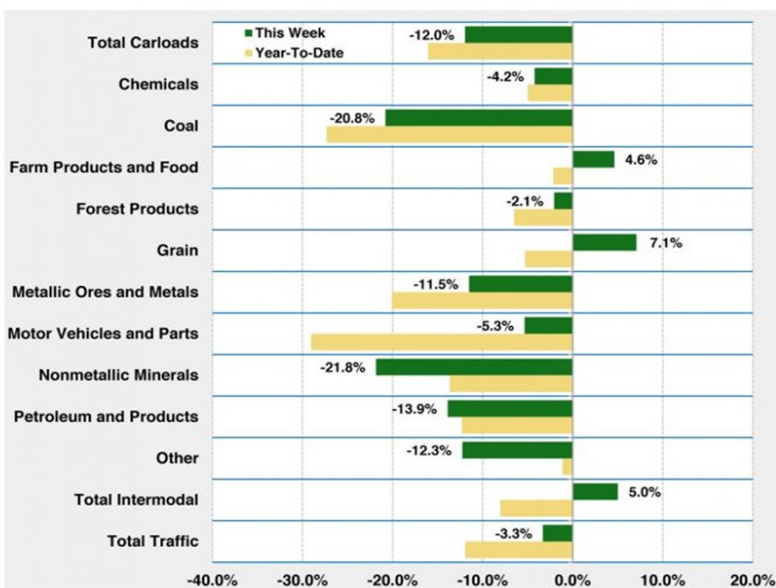
U.S. Rail Traffic¹
Week 34, 2020 – Ended August 22, 2020

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2019	Cumulative	Avg/wk ²	vs 2019
Total Carloads	229,828	-12.0%	7,222,554	212,428	-16.0%
Chemicals	31,408	-4.2%	1,043,444	30,690	-5.0%
Coal	64,500	-20.8%	1,929,967	56,764	-27.3%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	15,951	4.6%	518,172	15,240	-2.2%
Forest Products	9,541	-2.1%	314,254	9,243	-6.5%
Grain	22,530	7.1%	709,206	20,859	-5.3%
Metallic Ores and Metals	18,981	-11.5%	600,567	17,664	-20.1%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	16,492	-5.3%	389,849	11,466	-29.0%
Nonmetallic Minerals	30,294	-21.8%	1,016,010	29,883	-13.6%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	10,517	-13.9%	379,959	11,175	-12.3%
Other	9,614	-12.3%	321,126	9,445	-1.1%
Total Intermodal Units	285,086	5.0%	8,327,873	244,937	-8.0%
Total Traffic	514,914	-3.3%	15,550,427	457,366	-11.9%

¹ Excludes U.S. operations of Canadian Pacific, CN and GMXT.

² Average per week figures may not sum to totals as a result of independent rounding.

Trends, 2020 vs 2019
United States



Weekly Railroad Traffic | Copyright AAR, 2020

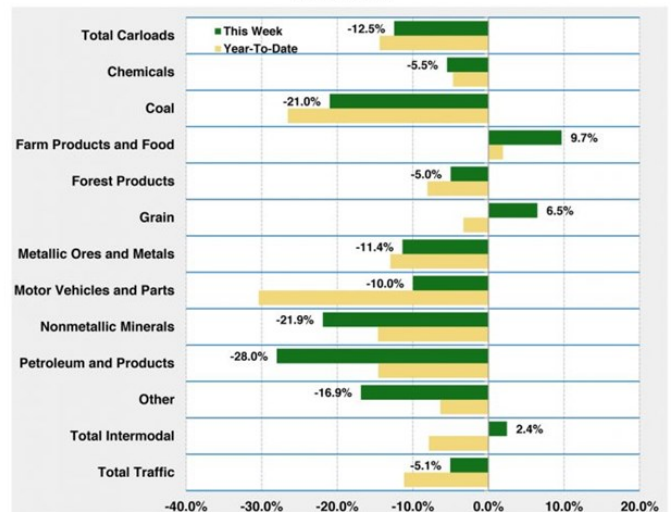
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North American Rail Traffic
Week 34, 2020 – Ended August 22, 2020

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2019	Cumulative	Avg/wk ¹	vs 2019
Total Carloads	320,649	-12.5%	10,367,576	304,929	-14.4%
Chemicals	42,868	-5.5%	1,479,034	43,501	-4.7%
Coal	70,890	-21.0%	2,147,333	63,157	-26.5%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	26,347	9.7%	860,548	25,310	1.9%
Forest Products	15,816	-5.0%	526,852	15,496	-8.1%
Grain	33,611	6.5%	1,082,030	31,824	-3.3%
Metallic Ores and Metals	36,876	-11.4%	1,239,114	36,445	-13.0%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	25,253	-10.0%	620,708	18,256	-30.4%
Nonmetallic Minerals	39,850	-21.9%	1,332,430	39,189	-14.6%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	17,396	-28.0%	684,272	20,126	-14.6%
Other	11,742	-16.9%	395,255	11,625	-6.3%
Total Intermodal Units	371,003	2.4%	11,053,372	325,099	-7.9%
Total Traffic	691,652	-5.1%	21,420,948	630,028	-11.2%

¹ Average per week figures may not sum to totals as a result of independent rounding.

Trends, 2020 vs 2019
North America



Weekly Railroad Traffic | Copyright AAR, 2020

4

Continued on next page:

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Canadian railroads reported 71,766 carloads for the week, down 14.2%, and 68,970 intermodal units, down 5.8% compared with the same week in 2019. For the first 34 weeks of 2020, Canadian railroads reported cumulative rail traffic volume of 4,713,185 carloads, containers and trailers, down 8.6%.

Mexican railroads reported 19,055 carloads for the week, down 12% compared with the same week last year, and 16,947 intermodal units, down 2.9%. Cumulative volume on Mexican railroads for the first 34 weeks of 2020 was 1,157,336 carloads and intermodal containers and trailers, down 10.7% from the same point last year.

Project Partners Announce New Direction for METRO Blue Line Extension Provided by Rick Krenske.

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA



Tuesday, August 4, 2020, 8:22 AM, Frederick Krenske <rick@usjet.net> wrote:

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. - August 3, 2020 - After years of unsuccessful discussions with BNSF Railway regarding colocation of light rail transit and freight rail in the Bottineau Corridor, BNSF Railway remains unwilling to allow the METRO Blue Line Extension (Bottineau Light Rail Transit) project to be built on its property. Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council now feel it is time to work with agency and community partners to explore opportunities to advance this critical project without using BNSF Railway right of way.

Hennepin County and Metropolitan Council staff, along with elected leaders, have worked hard to build on a long history of cooperation with BNSF Railway on this project. Unfortunately, over the last four years, this cooperation stopped, and the railway is unwilling to find solutions to move the project forward together.

Our commitment to the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT project has not changed. We are frustrated and disappointed in this outcome, and we recognize the time and effort agency and community partners have invested in this project over many years. These investments will remain valuable. We look forward to working together to find ways to complete this project as soon as possible.

We are optimistic that moving this project in a new direction presents an exciting opportunity to revisit and improve the METRO Blue Line Extension project to serve even more people and destinations, while maintaining as much of the existing alignment as possible.

The need for light rail that serves corridor cities, including North Minneapolis, Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park, is greater than ever. As the next leg of our planned regional light rail network, this line will connect people to opportunities for employment, education and health. The economic benefits the METRO Blue Line Extension will bring to these communities, the Twin Cities metro and the state of Minnesota cannot wait any longer.

The communities this project will serve are the most diverse in the metro area and have the highest rates of transit-dependent households. People in these communities continue to be harmed by historic patterns of systemic racism that are compounded by a lack of transit and transportation infrastructure. Now, in the face of multiple crises disproportionately impacting communities of color, transformational investment is more urgent than ever.

"This project is a critical element in meeting our transportation needs for a growing region," said Metropolitan Chair Charlie Zelle. "Our commitment to the Blue Line Extension has not changed and I look forward to working with project partners and community stakeholders as we chart our new pathway forward."

"For more than a decade Hennepin County has led planning for the Bottineau LRT line in close partnership with agency and community partners at all levels," said Hennepin County Commissioner Mike Opat, District 1. "The cities have been particularly strong partners and done amazing work to prepare for this transformative project. Local elected leaders have been more than patient as we tried to complete a deal with the railroad, who once conducted themselves as partners in this endeavor. BNSF's new obstinance cannot deter our work any longer. The time to forge ahead is now. These cities and the region, as a whole, need this LRT project."

"This light rail line is more than just a project to advance—it is a commitment to the residents and communities along the corridor for robust engagement and investment for years and decades to come. The Blue Line Extension will further our region's transit vision, and it will connect students to schools, workers to jobs, and patients to health care," said Hennepin Commissioner Irene Fernando, District 2.

We remain deeply committed to working closely with community and city partners to determine the best course forward for the METRO Blue Line Extension project. Advancing this project will require continued strong partnerships and sincere collaboration.

Given current public health constraints, we recognize the need to be thoughtful and flexible in engaging communities. We are committed to a full and open public engagement process that honors and builds on the years of previous community work.

As a next step, Met Council will convene a meeting of the Corridor Management Committee on August 13, where project partners will discuss next steps including community conversations and engagement opportunities in the weeks and months ahead.

Mayors React to Bottineau Blue Line Project Move out of BNSF Corridor.

Thursday, August 13, 2020, 10:14 AM, Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net> :

With Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railways still refusing to negotiate with the Bottineau Blue Line Extension project, Hennepin County and Metro Transit have decided to move the proposed light rail line out of the railway corridor. The decision was announced Aug. 3.

The project office told partners about the rail line's unwillingness to negotiate in January 2018. Since then, the rail line has maintained that the project would interfere with its ability to serve its freight customers in the corridor. Eight of the total 13-mile light rail line were planned to run inside BNSF right-of-way.

As part of the line, 11 stations would be added to the metro's light rail network, connecting downtown Minneapolis with Golden Valley, Robbinsdale, Crystal and Brooklyn Park. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page:

Response from city leaders

City leaders along the proposed line expressed anger, disappointment and frustration upon hearing about the change.

Golden Valley Mayor Shep Harris said the city was “upset and disappointed” with the decision. He believed more could have been done by the Metropolitan Council and Gov. Tim Walz to make the project happen, entities he believed could revive negotiations via a “coordinated, multi-level government effort.” Instead, he alleged the groups had been silent about the project for the past two years.

“They are not advocating for our communities, and they are certainly not advocating for our disadvantaged communities and communities of color or denied access to jobs, denied access to higher education opportunities, and so on,” Harris said. “We have state leadership that preaches about equity and racial justice and the tearing down of systems of institutional bias, well here’s a project that will do that.”

Robbinsdale Mayor Regan Murphy also felt that the statement was premature, and more akin “political maneuvering.”

“We haven’t exhausted all options,” he said.

Murphy, Harris, and Brooklyn Park Mayor Jeff Lunde all said that the city leaders had not been properly consulted about the decision.

The city officials have been aware of discussions related to the line for approximately a month, Lunde said.

“We did know about them, and even as we asked to be included, we were purposefully not included,” he said.

Lunde said he was very disappointed. “When you can spend 10 years working on a project and then in the course of a month, you can be locked out, which I think is a very sour taste in all the cities along the line,” he said.

Lunde and Murphy echoed the claim by Harris that inaction from state officials like Walz and U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith spoke volumes.

“They’ve done nothing,” Murphy said. “In our minds, if they’ve done something, we don’t know anything about it.”

“I don’t expect this project to get started for six to 10 years,” Lunde said. “We’ve been working behind the scenes with Met Council and the governor’s office to get them to actually fight for our line. We’ve seen fighting, what people will do when leadership is committed to getting stuff done. We saw Governor Dayton go to the mat on Southwest. I haven’t even seen the mat come out for the Blue Line.”

Murphy said he was confused by the news of the route change, especially since so much time, money and formal approvals had already been invested into a line along the BNSF right-of-way. He said the Thursday, Aug. 13, Corridor Management Committee meeting would be “interesting” as elected officials, and staff from the cities and community coalitions sort these issues out.

Lunde and Harris said they were concerned that the light rail line may be converted to a bus rapid transit line.

“I don’t know what people define a partnership as, but I know this isn’t one,” Lunde said. “When people ask about systemic racism, here it is.

Decisions are made by policy and announcement that affect people and another generation of the city who doesn’t have affordable transportation has to wait.”

Crystal Mayor Jim Adams is taking a wait-and-see approach. Admitting that he’s “never been a cheerleader” for the project, he also said he nor the city council have been trashing the movement either. Adams said that his constituents have made it known to him that the majority are not necessarily in favor of the line’s development.

“In terms of preparing the site, Crystal is up to about \$6 million in [making improvements to] the site and surrounding streetscape, and the park and to bring all that stuff up to speed,” he said.

Adams said Crystal will stand by on future plans, but the biggest impact at this point is that the city taxpayers have forked over “a lot of money.” He continued: “I consider this dead right now, but my counterparts don’t. They think there is more we should do to try to maintain this line. As it is right now I think we’re dead in the water. With that being said, I don’t have a problem with moving forward, but before we get to 90% engineering, we need to have secured rights to those lands that we’re building this new alignment on.”

Federal funding needed

While engineering plans for the project have continued to move forward, the project has been unable to apply for a full-funding grant agreement from the Federal Transit Administration while its third-party agreements, including land use agreements, remained unresolved. Local funding sources have largely been secured for the project, but federal funding would be required to make the project financially viable.

In contrast, the Southwest Light Rail project, which will connect Eden Prairie, Minnetonka, Hopkins, and St. Louis Park with Minneapolis announced that the Trump Administration advanced its full-funding grant agreement with congressional notification Aug. 5. If awarded, the \$928.8 million in federal funds would bring the total project budget to \$2 billion, making it the largest infrastructure project in the state’s history.

Our commitment to the METRO Blue Line Extension LRT project has not changed,” Hennepin County and Metro Transit wrote in a joint statement. “We are frustrated and disappointed in this outcome, and we recognize the time and effort agency and community partners have invested in this project over many years. These investments will remain valuable. We look forward to working together to find ways to complete this project as soon as possible.”

After the change, there is not yet a specific alternative route being considered, according to Trevor Roy, senior communications specialist for the Metropolitan Council. Furthermore, there are no cost estimates or specific timelines for the project at this point. “The decision was made between our project partners and the Metropolitan Council. After years of negotiation with BNSF it became clear their position was not going to change. The communities the line will serve deserve a world class transit option and it was clear we needed to move the project forward and this decision will allow us to do that,” he said. “We believe this is a good outcome, and we’ll continue working with Met Council, Hennepin County, and the state on the many areas we work together,” said Courtney Wallace, spokesperson for BNSF.

Meeting information

Project officials are expected to meet virtually at a Corridor Management Committee meeting 1:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13. The link to join the meeting and review meeting information is at metro council.org/Transportation/Projects/Light-Rail-Projects/METRO-Blue-Line-Extension/Committees/Corridor-Management-Committee.aspx.

Community Editor Raymond R. Rivard contributed to this report.

BNSF Unveils 25th Anniversary Locomotive

Sunday, August 16, 2020, 8:55 PM, Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net>



Railroad says engine with logos of predecessors is first of 10 to mark its formation in 1995

BNSF Railway has released photos of the first of 10 locomotives which will commemorate the railroad's 25th anniversary. BNSF Railway, via Facebook



Logos of BNSF predecessors adorn the side of the first of 10 locomotives which will be decorated to mark the railroad's 25th anniversary.

Metra Unveils C&NW Heritage Locomotive.

Monday, August 24, 2020, 10:09 AM, Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net> :

From the TRAINS Newswire by Chris Guss



Metra has unveiled its latest heritage unit, this F59PHI painted to honor the Chicago & North Western. Chris Guss

Metra C&NW heritage unit debuts

Chicago commuter railroad Metra has unveiled its latest heritage locomotive. Metra F59PHI No. 90 was released Monday from the company's paint booth in a Chicago & North Western-inspired scheme. The design incorporates elements of C&NW's paint scheme worn on early passenger diesel locomotives such as EMD's E6, Alco's DL-109, and Fairbanks-Morse "Erie Built" units. METX No. 90 is the first of Metra's 21 F59PHI's to be selected for a heritage paint scheme.

Previous heritage units include F40PHM-2 No. 211, honoring the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, released in October 2019; MP36 No. 405, released in early 2019 in Milwaukee Road-inspired paint; and Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific-inspired MP36 No. 425, which debuted in January 2018. Locomotive No. 425 was repainted to honor Metra's outgoing CEO, Don Orseno, who began his career on the Rock Island Railroad in 1974.

METX No. 90 was moved from Metra's KYD shop to Joliet Monday night for forwarding to downtown Chicago today. After transfer to Metra's Union Pacific operations, the locomotive will receive minor mechanical work and inspection before being released for revenue service.



Amtrak Releases Criteria for Restoring Long-distance Service.

Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 10:31 AM, Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net>

From the TRAINS Newswire:

Passenger railroad says three metrics will determine when to restore daily operation after planned Oct. 1 cut to triweekly service.



Amtrak's eastbound Empire Builder crosses the Mississippi River at Hastings, Minn., on Aug. 5, 2020. Amtrak has released information on how it will decide to restore service for its long-distance trains after they are cut to triweekly operation in October. TRAINS: David Lassen

Amtrak has released information on the measurements it will use to determine restoration of long-distance service after the service is cut to triweekly, which is currently planned for Oct. 1. The three metrics to be used are:

— Public health: COVID-19 hospitalizations must be stable or declining as of Feb. 15, 2021.

— Future demand: Advance bookings for June 2021 must be at least 90% of the available seat-miles or room-miles of the figure for June 2020, as of Feb. 15, 2020. Calculations will take into consideration caps on ticket sales to promote social distancing, as well as other COVID-related measures.

— Current performance: Ridership in the first quarter of Amtrak's 2021 fiscal year, which begins in September, must be at least 90% of projections in Amtrak's 2021 operating plan.

If all three criteria are met for a given route, service will be restored to daily levels as early as May 2021 and no later than June 30, 2021. In releasing the metrics, Amtrak notes that the plans for reductions and subsequent restoration are dependent on sufficient federal assistance, which it says requires at least \$3.5 billion for fiscal 2021.

While the Oct. 1 date for service reduction has been announced, Amtrak has yet to announce specific scheduling plans for long-distance routes. Only *Auto Train* is scheduled to remain in daily operation after that date.

More information on the service restoration plan, including Amtrak's answers to frequently asked questions about the planned reductions, are available [here](#).

New Study Offers Options, Cost for Northstar Extension to St. Cloud.

Wednesday, August 12, 2020, 10:27 AM, Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net>

Study says extension of Twin Cities' commuter rail service to St. Cloud could cost \$36 million to \$257 million.

A new feasibility study says it could cost anywhere from **\$36 million to \$257 million** to extend the Twin Cities' Northstar commuter rail service from its current northern terminus in Big Lake to St. Cloud, long envisioned as its actual northern end-point.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune reports the range of estimates reflects four possible levels of service:

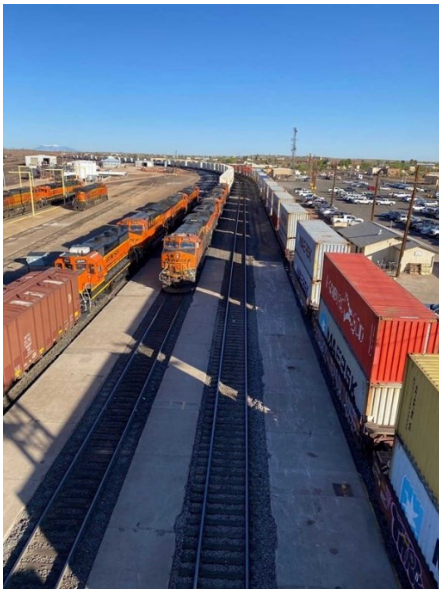
- \$36 million to \$139 million for one St. Cloud-Minneapolis round trip daily;
- \$96 million to \$207 million for four daily round trips also serving intermediate stops
- \$141 million to \$190 million for four daily express round trips;
- \$188 million to \$257 million for nine daily trips between the cities, including one late-evening trip to St. Cloud.

The current service and potential 28-mile extension use BNSF Railway right-of-way, so the freight railroad would be part of any extension efforts.



BNSF Forges Ahead with Capacity Expansion Projects Despite Downturn

Trains Newswire By [Bill Stephens](#) | August 7, 2020



Trains using the four main tracks at Winslow, Ariz., the latest of which opened earlier in 2020. BNSF Railway

FORT WORTH, Texas – BNSF Railway takes a long-term view and will continue to invest in maintaining and expanding its network every year even during economic downturns, Chief Operating Officer Katie Farmer says.

“As our volume fluctuates, our job is basically to match our resources with that demand,” Farmer says, in terms of the railroad’s employment levels and the size of its active locomotive and railcar fleets.

“Obviously volume dictates how we manage those resources and how we work to handle the demand that’s out there,” Farmer said on an intermodal webcast this week. “With that said ... regardless of what we see on volumes and the economy, we continue to invest in our infrastructure. We recognize that if you forego investment in your infrastructure it takes many, many years to catch up. It becomes a safety issue, it becomes a capacity and velocity issue for our customers.”

Over its 25 years, BNSF has continued to invest in its network even during downturns. “This year is no different,” Farmer says. This year BNSF will spend nearly \$2.6 billion to maintain its system, including 11,000 miles of track surfacing work, replacement of 489 miles of rail and nearly 2.7 million ties.

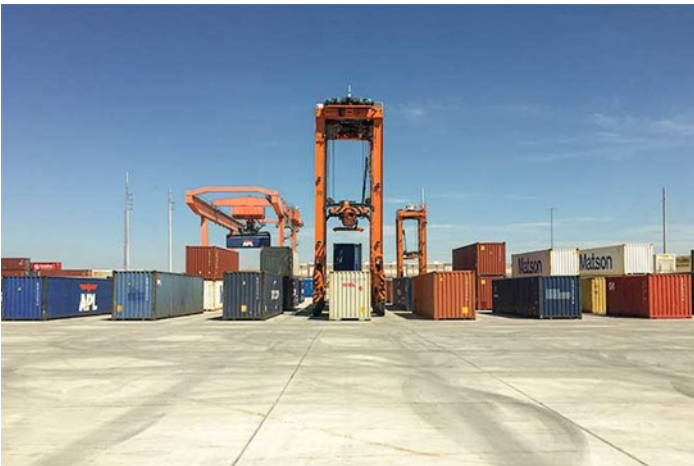
Meanwhile, BNSF is spending \$581 million this year to forge ahead with multiyear capacity expansion projects that are part of a five-year rolling plan. “Although volumes were down, we had several significant capacity expansion projects that we were already in process on that we continued to work through during the back part of last year into 2020 and we will continue to work through into 2021,” Farmer says.

In April a fourth main track was placed in service at Winslow, Ariz., the final crew change point on the Southern Transcon to gain additional capacity that allows faster trains to leap ahead of slower traffic. “We really think that this is going to be a really big capacity and velocity enabler for us on the Southern Transcon,” Farmer says.

A multiyear expansion project at BNSF’s Dallas/Fort Worth area intermodal terminal at Alliance, Texas, is nearing completion and will give the fast-growing facility the capacity for one million lifts per year.

A year ago BNSF opened a small intermodal terminal in Barstow, Calif., that has 6,600 feet of track and 640 parking spaces. “I can tell you we are glad that we have Barstow with the volumes we are handling today,” Farmer says. Domestic intermodal volume has surged 30% in Southern California since late June.

BNSF is adding a second single-track bridge across Lake Pend Oreille in Sandpoint, Idaho, to clear the last significant bottleneck on its Northern Transcon. The Sandpoint Junction project, which will be complete in a couple of years, aims to reduce congestion at BNSF’s junction with Montana Rail Link. *Continued on next page:*



Two BNSF automated straddle carriers at Logistics Park Kansas City. BNSF Railway

Continued from previous page: “This will really facilitate greater throughput and velocity into and out of the Pacific Northwest, both across our Northern Transcon and connecting with the Montana Rail Link,” Farmer says.

BNSF also is working to improve efficiency and capacity at its existing intermodal terminals through several pilot projects that aim to streamline the gate process and automate terminals.

The railroad is encouraged by the use of an autonomous autostrad crane at its Logistics Park Kansas City, which has improved efficiency and velocity while providing safety benefits, Farmer says. The technology, which is common at container ports around the globe, may allow BNSF to eliminate hostlers at its intermodal terminals.

BNSF also is experimenting with autonomous yard trucks at its terminal in Oakland, Calif., and remote-control crane operations at Logistics Park Chicago.

“We’re incredibly excited about the automation efforts,” Farmer says. “We think that this is really the future of automation inside of intermodal facilities.”

Farmer was asked if it was an advantage for BNSF to be a part of Berkshire Hathaway rather than a standalone public company that must answer to Wall Street every quarter.

“It is great being a part of Berkshire, and we do believe that we can continue to look beyond the next quarter if you will,” Farmer says, noting that Berkshire CEO Warren Buffett has encouraged a long-term outlook.

But BNSF took a long-term view prior to being acquired in 2010, Farmer says, noting that the backbone of the railroad’s intermodal network was in place before the company was taken private.

Farmer spoke on a webcast with the Intermodal Association of North America on Wednesday.



Canadian National's RDC track geometry car passes through Lemont, Ill., in February 2020. CN plans to spend \$165 million on capital projects in Illinois, leading its state-by-state spending. -TRAINS: David Lassen

Trains Digest: CN Plans More Than \$500 Million in U.S. Capital Spending

Trains newswire July 30, 2020

Canadian National will spend more than \$520 million on capital projects in the United States, according to [state-by-state plans](#) released this week. Notable projects include work on Chicago’s St. Charles Air Line bridge; a new auto facility in New Richmond, Wis; expansion of an auto facility in Flint, Mich.; continued work on the McComb Spillway Bridge in Louisiana, and dock repairs in Minnesota. Overall plans call for replacement of more than 58 miles of rail and 614,000 ties, repairs to 215 grade crossings, and continued work on positive train control. Capital spending by state includes \$165 million in Illinois, \$100 million in Wisconsin, \$60 million in Louisiana, \$55 million in Michigan, \$50 million in Mississippi, \$30 million in Tennessee, and \$25 million in Minnesota. The railroad had previously released plans for more than \$1.5 billion in capital spending in Canada [see [“Digest: 50% capacity rule lifted for NJ Transit,”](#) July 14, 2020].

The Trains are Running Again

The Illinois Railway Museum is open! Since late July we have been open and running trains on Saturdays and Sundays. Capacity limits are in place to ensure social distancing and tickets must be purchased in advance. General admission tickets are [now on sale on our website](#) or, if you cannot purchase your tickets online, you can phone our office during public hours on days we are open.



Social distancing policies

Safety is always our highest priority and we are enacting several policies designed to ensure the health and safety of our guests, volunteers, and staff once we reopen. 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!



Museum Showcase Weekend

Join us this September 19th & 20th for our annual Museum Showcase Weekend event. It's a great opportunity to recognize the volunteers that keep IRM moving while seeing and riding a variety of rarely-seen trains. Mark your calendar today for this memorable special event.

[Click for event information](#)



Above, and right: IRM action: Shay #5, CRI&P GP9, and CA&E Interurban cars

July 2020 -Doug Gough Photos

BNSF Unit Grain Arrives at New Ulm MN Grain Elevator for Loading.

Assisted by a couple of venerable GP9 Loco's (BNSF train run by CP/RCP&E crew to New Ulm from BNSF Marshall Sub connection loop track East of Tyler MN (West of Tracy MN)

Photos by Roger Libra August 2020



Ex Soo GP9 readies for its job of grain car shuffling. *Continued on next page:*



above: GP9 shuttling cars for grain loading



above: CP ECO GP20 local Switcher, BNSF Power for the grain train, when loaded will head west (grain to China)



Above: lining up Grain cars on the ladder tracks for loading



Left and Right :
GP9 working the Grain Elevator



All photos: Roger Libra

From Rick Krenske August 26 2020: News from the Pappas Clan:

"I received word a few minutes ago that the **October 2020 Eau Claire train show has been cancelled**. There was a confirmation of 8 vendors and 14 layouts (enough to do a show), but it sounds like the guidelines from the CDC and Eau Claire County Health department were the determining factor..."

Our group, the Cool Train Guys, planned to set up our layout at the show but now that we've been sidetracked we'll just patiently wait to 'spike it together' at a later date.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale	Saturday Sept 19 2020 9am—3pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$6
Newport Model Railroad Club Flea Market and Show	Saturday Oct 17 2020 9am-2pm Cancelled	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury MN	\$6
Granite City Train Show	Saturday Nov 14 2020 9am-3pm	River's Edge Convention Center 10 4th Avenue South Saint Cloud, Minnesota 56301	\$6

Northstar News
1515 Creek Meadow Dr NW
Coon Rapids MN 55433 3768
Address Correction Requested

