

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Green Grass and Leafing of Trees



L: CP Oil Train
New Brighton
on MN
(KCS units)
Mar 21 2020
–Bob Ball
R: BNSF 25th
Anniv Unit,
Willmar MN Mar
2021 –Dennis
Louden

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Meeting Notice

Hello Everyone

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

Next newsletter (May 2021) will be out around May 5, 2021.

Hello Everyone

If you know someone that may be interested in the meeting, please have them send a quick e-mail to dan@meyer-family.net and I will add them to the mailing list.

Thank you, and we hope to see you Saturday evening on Zoom! The Northstar Chapter NRHS will be having a ZOOM meeting Saturday night, April 17th at 7 pm. The Zoom meeting will open around 6:30 or so. Information about joining the meeting is below and will also be e-mailed late afternoon on Saturday the 17th.

If you are new to Zoom and would like any sort of help or a test meeting, please contact Dan Meyer via e-mail at

Dan@Meyer-Family.net

Log in with the Zoom app:

Meeting ID: 861 1202 8872

Passcode: 730285

Or with your favorite internet browser:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86112028872?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86112028872?pwd=d1Nhd2JkWkd4bjJSSFpkWEJMi9vUT09)

[pwd=d1Nhd2JkWkd4bjJSSFpkWEJMi9vUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86112028872?pwd=d1Nhd2JkWkd4bjJSSFpkWEJMi9vUT09)

or

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CP WB Frac Sand Train on the River Sub, Maple Springs
MN May 2020 –Bob Ball

From the Editor: We will continue to have virtual (Zoom) meetings into next year. It looks like Fall of 2021 that we will be able to resume our monthly meetings at Roseville Lutheran Church.

If you have any railroad slides or photos in your collection, it would be great to have you share your experiences and photos in a future meeting. Our members would truly enjoy what you have experienced and collected! Please contact Richard Tubbesing at Tubbesing32a@yahoo.com or leave a voice message at 763-757-1304.

Meeting Minutes March 20th 2021 (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order by President John Goodman at 7:01 PM with 17 members and guest present. A quorum was determined. President Goodman then called for approval of the February Meeting minutes as printed in the March Newsletter. Motions was carried with Frank Willkie and Bill Dredge seconding the motion. The treasurers report was given by Russ Isbrandt. The chapter Checking account and Calendar cash position is close to what we had a year ago. Our membership report showed 40 regular members that renewed and 6 that have not renewed. There were 17 subscribers that have renewed and 9 that have not renewed. Dawn Holmberg gave the National Directors report. The next BOD meeting will be held the end of April. The NRHS is currently developing a new web-based membership account site to make it easier to update member account information. NRHS is close to finalizing all the input for the web site. RailCamp has been cancelled for this year. The Calendar Report was given by John Goodman. We have sold all 425 calendars produced and had a wait list that we could not fill. The Calendar profits were less than reported at our last meeting, so our calendar cash position is quite a bit less than last year. We probably could have sold another 25 calendars. We have-to be careful what we order for the 2022 calendar since the president of the Minnesota Commercial Railroad passed away, they were responsible for about 50 calendar purchases every year. John will be in contact with the Minnesota Commercial Railroad to try and determine if they will continue purchase the calendars. We are starting to evaluate photos for the calendar, and we solicit photos of Minnesota Railroads from anyone for consideration. Photos should be sent to John Goodman, Dawn Holmberg or Richard Tubbesing. The Cheer committee was given by John Goodman. Ross Hammond was asked about Dave Norman. He is in an assisted care facility in St Louis Park. Ross didn't know how secure all of Dave Norman's Railroad and model railroad collection at his home. Dave Norman's house has been locked. There is nothing to report on former president Marty Swan. Cy Svobodny is still home bound. Mike Mackner has been in contact with John Goodman and reports that his facility is coping with a COVID19 outbreak. Mike Mackner's wife has health problems too. Richard Tubbesing was called on to report on meeting programs. The April program will be presented by Bob Gallegos, titled: "Second Time's the Charm". The subject is a potpourri of American railroads over the last 40 years. Hudson Leighton presenting a program for May. The Trip report was given by John Goodman. We are considering a Light Rail and Northstar trip in June. *Continued on next page:*

Continued from previous page: However, If Northstar is not running on weekends we would just ride the light rail to Minneapolis and then to St Paul and maybe have lunch at the St Paul Union Depot. Our picnic is scheduled for the third Saturday in July at Maiden Rock WI. Our August trip is proposed (have members ride share) to go up to Trego Wisconsin on the Wisconsin and Great Northern to view the progress of the restoration of the Mark Twain Zephyr and possibly ride the Wisconsin and Great Northern train. The Library report was given by John Goodman. We are in the process of digitizing some of Marv Mahre 8mm films (in the 50's and 60's with a lot of Soo Line, NP and CB&Q MRA Trips) and plan to eventually have some DVD's for sale containing these films. Richard Tubbesing gave some duration times by railroad. There was no old business. New Business. Dawn Holmberg gave a report on future meetings at the Roseville Lutheran Church. The Church is surveying groups that use their facility and hopefully, our September meeting will be held in the church. NRHS President Al Weber was asked to comment. Al said the NRHS is working on the August Convention, and with the Grant Committee. He has been vaccinated and working at the St Louis Museum and his HO railroad. John Goodman stated that Amtrak got 1.9 billion dollars and plans to restore full service starting in May in four increments. The Empire Builder is in the first increment. May 1 2021 is the 50th birthday of Amtrak. John said the Bob Niederkorn has passed away. He was prominent in the Twin City Model Railroad Museum. Motion to adjourn the meeting was at 7:24 pm by Frank Willkie was carried. Mike Yuhas president of the Wisconsin Chapter NRHS presented a program of Drone photography and photos of railroads in Wisconsin. His program was enthusiastically received by members. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing Secretary (thanks to Dan Meyer for recording the zoom meeting!)



22 Freight Train Cars Carrying Molten Sulfur and Asphalt Derail in Plymouth, Minnesota



Aerial photos from our FOX 9 helicopter show several cars derailed in Plymouth, Minnesota.

More than 20 cars of a freight train derailed Sunday along a rail line in Plymouth. There were no reports of injuries. Courtesy City of Plymouth

PLYMOUTH, Minn. (FOX 9) - No one was hurt after 22 freight train cars carrying molten sulfur, asphalt, and lumber went off the rails in Plymouth, Minnesota on Sunday.

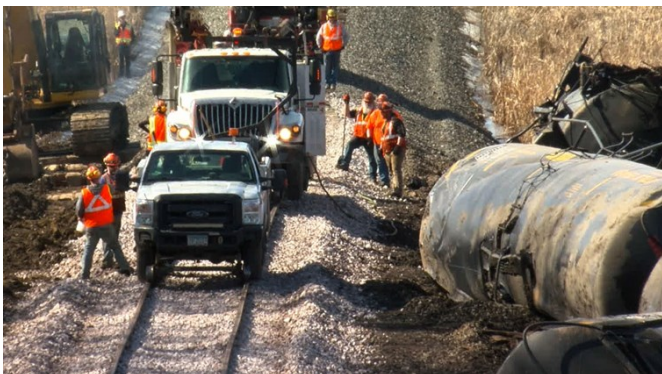
Police and firefighters, along with crews from Canadian Pacific responded after the derailment around 1 p.m. near Northwest Boulevard and Schmidt Lake Road in Plymouth, just east of I-494.

While some cars rolled over and went well off the tracks, a city spokesperson says firefighters have discovered no leaks from the incident. Officials also say Canadian Pacific has been monitoring air quality and there have been no "unusual readings." All the same, they are asking members of the public to avoid the area as clean-up is underway.

A hazmat crew will remain at the scene until the cleanup is finished as a precaution. Police say Canadian Pacific crews will work around the clock to clear the wreckage and lay new railroad tracks.

Crews Continue To Clear 22-Car Train Derailment In Plymouth

By [WCCO-TV](#) March 8, 2021 at 3:45 pm



MINNEAPOLIS (WCCO) — Plymouth city officials says work continues Monday to clear [a 22-car train derailment](#) that happened Sunday afternoon.

Crews with the city, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Canadian Pacific are creating a temporary road north of the scene — off Northwest Boulevard and Schmidt Lake Road — in order to remove the cars and restore nearby wetlands. The damaged train The Canadian Pacific train was carrying contents including molten sulfur, asphalt and lumber. City officials say a crack was found on one car, but it has been repaired and there were no leaks.

Canadian Pacific officials say crews continue to monitor the quality of soil and water in the area. People who live in the area can email community_connect@cpr.ca with questions and concerns.

Tracks were fixed Monday morning, and that stretch of railway has been reopened.

Train Derails for Second Time in a Month at Same Site North of Crookston MN

Times Report March 11 2021 Crookston Times



BNSF Personnel on the scene of a train derailment Wednesday North of Crookston -Mike Christopherson Crookston Times

A little more than a month after a BNSF rail derailment was reported north of Crookston on U.S. Highway 75 at the intersection of 210th St. SW that had some of the derailed cars leaking cooking oil, another derailment was reported late Wednesday afternoon from the tracks at the same location.

BNSF and the Polk County Sheriff's Office report that no one was hurt and nothing leaked from any of the railcars involved. In all, 22 railcars jumped the track at approximately 3:45 p.m. Wednesday. Several of the derailed cars from the Feb. 8 derailment remain in the ditch as cleanup from that incident continues.

The Crookston Fire Department responded to the scene as well. Several BNSF personnel were there as well.

Digest: Fire Damages BNSF Mississippi River Bridge

By: Trains Newswire March 2, 2021



L: Fire damaged this BNSF Railway bridge in Bemidji, Minn., on Monday. (Bemidji Fire Department)

Fire damages BNSF bridge in Bemidji, Minn.

A BNSF Railway bridge across the Mississippi River in Bemidji, Minn., suffered "moderate damage" in a Monday afternoon fire, [the Bemidji Pioneer reports](#). The fire was reported about 4 p.m., with Bemidji fire-fighters working about two hours to extinguish the blaze. The cause is under investigation but does not appear to be suspicious, according to the Bemidji Fire Department. No information was immediately available on the fire's impact on railroad operations.

Minnesota's Walz Includes Second Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Train in Bonding Proposal

Rail News: Amtrak March 25, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenke



It will cost about \$53 million to add a second round-trip train between St. Paul and Chicago. Photo – greatriverrail.org

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz on Feb. 22 released a \$518 million capital investment bonding proposal that includes \$10 million for a second Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) train, the [Great River Rail Commission](#) announced this week.

The funds would provide a local match for a \$32 million federal grant awarded last year, commission officials said in a press release.

It will cost about \$53 million to add a second round-trip passenger train between Saint Paul and Chicago, which would complement the existing [Amtrak Empire Builder](#) service, they said.

Most of those dollars are committed, as a result of support from the federal government, Amtrak and the state of Wisconsin. What's missing is Minnesota's contribution of \$10 million, commission officials said.

Minnesota's \$10 million would not only leverage the federal grant, it would leverage \$40 million in track and signal improvements in southeastern Minnesota, adding capacity for both passenger and freight trains, they said.

The proposed service would use existing tracks, log about 124,000 trips annually and serve 13 stations, including ones in Saint Paul, Red Wing and Winona, Minnesota.



[American Rescue Plan Restores Full Amtrak Long-Distance Services](#)

RailwayAge Magazine Byline: William C. Vantuono Reach: 123k

The \$1.7 billion in Amtrak COVID-19 recovery funding will enable Amtrak to fully restore daily service on 12 long-distance routes, following pandemic-related schedule reductions in 2020. Amtrak said it “will sustain and restore operations and recall the more-than 1,200 furloughed employees through the remainder of FY21 and into FY22. All destinations and scheduled departure/arrival times served by the long-distance network will be maintained ... providing customers significantly more departures for the upcoming summer travel season.”

[Things Looking Brighter at Amtrak with Passage of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021](#)

Railway Track And Structures (RT&S)

Byline: David C. Lester, Managing Editor Reach: 65.9k

As part of its COVID-19 recovery efforts, Amtrak announces full restoration of daily service for 12 long distance routes following pandemic-related schedule reductions in 2020. Providing customers significantly more departures for the upcoming summer travel season, the new schedule has been updated on all Amtrak reservation systems, including Amtrak.com and the Amtrak app. Due to COVID relief funding, Amtrak will sustain and restore operations and recall the more than 1,200 furloughed employees through the remainder of FY21 and into FY22. The funding is pending President Biden’s signature on the final bill.

[Daily Service to Resume on 12 Long-Distance Amtrak Routes](#)

By **Charlie McKenna** Globe Correspondent, Updated March 11, 2021, 9:50 a.m.

Amtrak plans to restart daily service on 12 long-distance routes in late May with President Joe Biden signing the [American Rescue Plan](#) into law on Thursday, officials said.

The restart will be rolled out across three phases, with four routes returning to service May 24, four more a week later on May 31, and the final four the next week, on June 7, Amtrak said in a statement. The relaunch comes as a result of increased demand and new funding being delivered by the rescue plan, better known as the stimulus package.

The new funding also will allow Amtrak to recall more than 1,200 furloughed workers through the remainder of this fiscal year and next.

[Amtrak Restores 12 Routes To Daily Service as Demand Increases](#)

TravelPulse Byline: Lacey Pfalz Reach: 843k

Amtrak announced that it is restoring twelve of its long-distance routes as desire for travel grows, as well as reinstating 1,200 furloughed employees. The newly reinstated routes had been canceled in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The twelve new schedules will begin in May 2021. Some newly restored routes are the California Zephyr, which travels between Chicago and San Francisco, stopping at Omaha, Denver and Salt Lake City; the Silver Meteor, which goes between New York and Miami, stopping at Savannah, Jacksonville and Orlando; or the Southwest Chief, which travels between Chicago and Los Angeles, stopping at Kansas City and Albuquerque along the way.

[Amtrak to Restart Five Routes That Begin in New York City](#)

New York Biz Journal Byline: Unknown Reach: 1.1k

Amtrak said it will restart a dozen daily long-distance U.S. routes, including five daily routes that start in New York City. The national train service said that with the passage of the Covid relief funding package, it will recall more than 1,200 furloughed employees through the remainder of fiscal year and into next fiscal year.

[Amtrak to Restore Tampa Passenger Train Service this Summer](#)

Tampa Business Journal Byline: Unknown Reach: 5.4k

Amtrak will fully restore its Tampa route service this summer after the company scaled back service due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Washington, D.C.-based passenger rail company started cutting many long-distance routes and discontinued daily train service at Tampa Union Station on July 6, 2020 as part of its cost-saving measures.

[Amtrak’s Overnight Trains From DC to Boston and New York Get Private Rooms](#)

The DC Post Byline: Unknown Reach: 3.9k

Amtrak is adding private rooms to some of its overnight Northeast Regional trains from Washington, DC to Boston and New York next month. There will be roomettes, bedrooms or accessible bedrooms offered as three different types of accommodations, with tickets becoming available on April 5. A full route — a nearly 10-hour ride from DC to Boston — costs \$288 per traveler with a roomette including two seats that convert into beds. There are also towels, linens, and bedding in private rooms. Dedicated attendants will provide turndown service, assist with meals, help with luggage for every private room.



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

Issue #102 - March 2021

March is that bridge-month where we start to transition to the summer ahead, while still having an occasional snow day. The Duluth Depot reopens on April 1st for the first time since November, and will be open 7-days-a-week from here on out.

In today's edition of Trackside, we report on the big news here at the [Lake Superior Railroad Museum](#), that SD45, engine #3617 has been fired up for the first time in its fresh NP paint.

Enjoy this monthly email newsletter, and keep tuned each month for more from your friends at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum & North Shore Scenic Railroad.

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



A group of dedicated volunteers have spent the past few years on a grass-roots endeavor to bring life back to the giant locomotive #3617. This past week, the crews finally got their wish and started the engine for the first time this century. After lots of hard work, and plenty of safety checks, they released the handbrake and put the throttle in notch one. The engine moved under its own power too! [Check out this great video highlighting the momentous occasion.](#)

This is called a grass-roots style project because although it was a priority of the museums' to someday get it running, this group made it happen sooner - and made their own timeline to push the project forward, and kudos to their successful efforts!

In addition, many donors contributed to the needed funds to make this project possible. There is a list of items that still need attention before the engine is ready for the mainline. But we now know it'll pull trains before too long. A detailed list can be found on the project page at: www.PowerUp3617.com

As a donor, you will get an invitation to the ride we will take behind the locomotive on an inaugural run. We don't know when that will be yet. But hopefully very soon!

“OFFICIAL” RAILROAD WHITE HOUSE IS 110 YEARS OLD THIS MONTH



The first *living* President to travel by rail in his own private car was Woodrow Wilson. (President Lincoln had his own private car but....) Earlier Presidents had campaigned by rail, but not with a designated rolling White House. Running for his second term, Wilson became the first sitting President to take to the rails on September 3, 1916 in the private car *Superb*. That car is 110 years old this month.

Pullman built in March of 1911, *Superb* is the second oldest, all-steel private car in existence. After serving several railroads, including the *Seaboard Air Line*, the car was retired in 1969 and is on display at a Railroad Museum in Duluth. Duluth? Can you see this car at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in Duluth? Not quite. It's at the [Southeastern Railroad Museum](#) in

Duluth, Georgia. -By Ken Buehler

CRI&P Mississippi River Swing Bridge -Inver Grove Height MN -Rick Krenske

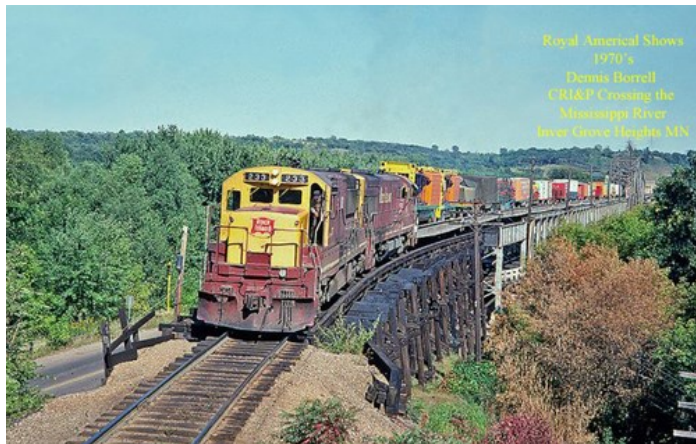


CRI&P swing Bridge –Northstar Chapter NRHS -Bill Herzog photo



Photo by Ross Hammond

CRI&P Mississippi River Br Inver Grove Heights One lane road under the tracks required signals (and later a Toll) for Autos to cross the river. Ross Hammond photo, Greg Smith Coll



Royal American shows train 1970's crossing the Bridge

–Dennis Borrell



CRI&P Inver Grove Heights Bridge 1986 abandoned -Tom Dethmers



So here is the old Rock Island track leading up to the old swing bridge that crossed the Mississippi in Inver Grove Heights. Just look at the size of those stumps of the trees that grew up around the tracks after they were abandoned. Of course now the old train track is a walking path leading up to the remnants of the swing bridge.



So here's another picture of the trackage leading to the old Rock Island Swing Bridge. Here is the track heading south from the Rock Island shops in Inver Grove Heights, curving to the left to meet up with the bridge. It's a walking path now.

Digest: Minnesota Tank Car Explosion Spews Molasses for More Than a Mile

From the TRAINS Newswire | March 24, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenke



Tank car of molasses explodes in Minnesota, damaging building

An explosion of a tank car full of molasses on Tuesday morning in Cannon Falls, Minn., spewed the sticky substance as far as a mile and a half from the site of the incident. [RiverTowns.net reports](#) the Cannon Falls Fire Department received a call about an overheating railcar at a Progressive Rail facility shortly after 7 a.m., then received another call minutes later that the car had exploded. Progressive had evacuated the area prior to the explosion; no one was injured, but the building where the car was located suffered significant damage. The Cannon Valley Railroad in Cannon Falls is one of 13 Progressive Rail properties in nine states.

This tank car of molasses exploded Tuesday in Cannon Falls, Minn. (Cannon Falls Police Department, via Facebook).

News from the Iron Range

New Orleans Ore Update

From: [Roger Beckett](#) Date: Sat, 20 Feb 2021 18:21:37 PST

Might have a lot to do with the physical nature and iron content of the ore. Most if not all USA furnaces use Taconite. Black Iron LLC produces a natural ore that's about 60% iron. The first shipments about 10 years ago went to China, where a lot of AU natural ores are used. Just an observer here. Details may vary.

Re: New Orleans Ore Update

From: [Bruce K](#) Date: Sun, 21 Feb 2021 09:16:49 PST

Truth of the matter is that now all structural, rail, and merchant shapes, and most plate and tube made in the USA are made in mini mills from melted scrap.

The only market left for steel made from ore is cold rolled sheet for things like exposed car bodies with a relatively small amount of plate and tubing. These are uses where the quality parameters needed in the steel can not be produced economically in mini mills, yet. This will change.

Over 75% of the steel produced in the USA is from melted scrap, made in mini mills that often aren't so mini anymore.

Worldwide most blast furnaces prefer around 5 to 7 % silica plus alumina, no phosphorous, and either lump or pellets. Economics may dictate differently, but the above fits Minnesota acid pellets with very low phosphorous to a T. It's mainly a question of costs from different sources of ore.

Most ore sources like Africa, Brazil, and Australia need blending because they have very little processing to make them homogenous. North American pellets are extensively processed and do not need extensive blending.

DRI furnaces need very low silica pellets or lump. DRI is mainly used in mini mills to dilute impurities in scrap.

Bruce Kettunen Mt. Iron, MN

Re: New Orleans Ore Update

From: [Mark Arnold](#) Date: Sun, 21 Feb 2021 12:30:18 PST

Just a little FYI. When I was a Master Electrician at MEI in the late 90's in Western Duluth (Gary), the vast majority of our product was made from recycled scrap, but not all was. We always had 4 ore cars outdoors and a couple car loads of taconite stored inside to "add to the mix". Looking at Google Maps today, I see they now have 3 jennies with what looks to be scrap.

We would take a sample from the pot, pour it into a small cylindrical mold and then grind the surface clean on one end. We would then load this sample into machine that would strike an electrical arc to the surface creating some fumes (smoke). From these fumes, we were able to read the mix and make adjustments to it within 5-7 minutes. They would never use old rail as there was way too much "garbage metals" in them. Their major commodity was to cast "grinding blocks" used at the mines for busting up (grinding) raw material. I seem to recall their biggest customer was located in Arizona and the items were always shipped by truck, never rail, about 5/6 truckloads a day.

Mark Arnold Lake Superior Companies, Inc

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New Orleans Ore Update

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Sun, 21 Feb 2021 14:00:56 PST

Mark,

You referred to "Grinding Blocks", didn't MEI make grinding mill liners. Wouldn't the Grinding Blocks you refer to be the mill liners that lined the inside of a grinding mill located in a ore concentrator. The concentrator could be one at a taconite plant or any other plant that processes crude ore (ie. copper, gold, etc.) to grind up the ore to a fine state prior to further processing.

Concentrators could have multiple series of grinding mills or maybe just one stage grinding such as Hibbing Taconite. Keewatin Taconite has primary grinding mills and secondary mills. This opens up to a whole new discussion on types of grinding mills and other stages in a concentrator. Is the grinding mill autogenous (does not use grinding balls or rods) or do you need to have rods or balls to aid in the breakup of the ore as the grinding mill is rotated.

In natural ore days, some mines would ship a siliceous ore which had a high silica content. The siliceous ore had a high silica content. It was used primarily to help clean out the impurities in a steel batch in the furnace. The Whitney Mine (part of the Hull Rust Pit) had specific dumps that were labeled "siliceous" and every now and then trucks with a loader would go to those dumps and build up a small stockpile of that material to be shipped out when demand for that material was called for by the steel companies.

Remember every ore car is sampled and part of a sample block that had a certain chemistry for the iron content, silica and other minerals that were present in the iron ore that is shipped. When I was working at National Steel Pellet Plant (Keetac now), as the train was being loaded a pellet sample was taken every few cars. That bulk sample was taken back to the lab and analyzed for iron content, silica, other impurities, tumble (hardness) and structure (size). Like wise when a boat is loaded at the ore docks samples are taken off the conveyor. There is a special sampler that cuts through the flow of pellets going to the dock every few hundred tons and delivers a set amount of pellets for the technician who cuts the sample to a specific size. Every boat is sampled. A 55,000 ton boat cargo can be represented by a can of pellets no bigger than a large coffee can. This boat sample is saved for a specific amount of time in case there is a question about cargo quality.

In the early 1980s Hanna Mining was shipping some natural ore to National Steel blast furnaces. Ore from two or three different mines was being blended together. The blending would take place with 4 different cuts of ore cars being loaded into the ore dock pockets in a precise sequence. As the ore flowed from the ore dock pocket into the hold of the boat it would become blended. When the boat arrived at the lower great lakes port and unloaded the ore was further blended in the unloading process. It did not matter if the boat was unloaded by conveyor system on the boat or if the boat was unloaded by cranes or Hulett Unloaders, the unloading of the boat cargo was part of the blending process for the iron ore.

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minnesota

Snowmobile Stunt on NSRR

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Fri, 05 Mar 2021 13:15:00 PST



LSRM's 245, dome car and Soo caboose 1 will be video stars in an upcoming YouTube presentation showing well known Minnesota snowmobile stuntman Levi LaVallee jumping over the train at Fitgers today. Based on posted videos from spectators it went off without a hitch. Here is a news article on the stunts being done around town this week. Earlier in the week his attempt to cross the harbor didn't go as well and he ended up wet.

[Levi LaVallee to film snowmobile stunt video in Duluth next week](#)

L: Star Tribune/Star Tribune/ANTHONY SOUFFLE • Star Tribune file/Star Tribune/TNS Levi LaVallee leapt a snowmobile over Nicollet Mall during Super Bowl weekend events in 2018. LaVallee will be filming a video of stunts around Duluth next week



NSM Loaners

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Thu, 18 Mar 2021 08:17:37 PDT

Two PRLX SD70M loaners (ex-CSX and ex-NS) are now working on NSM while two of their SD70ACes are out for work. They are 4695 and 2643.

[Photo link: https://flic.kr/p/2kLdKnR](https://flic.kr/p/2kLdKnR) <https://flic.kr/p/2kGreRg>

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NSM 672

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Fri, 19 Mar 2021 08:52:25 PDT

With NSM's two PRLX loaners in service I noticed 672 at the Proctor diesel house today; likely headed out for its turn getting modifications (I believe it is something with their trucks). NSM 674 and 675 had already been sent off the property but I don't know if they have returned.

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

DMIR caboose question

From: [Mark Arnold](#) Date: Sun, 21 Mar 2021 08:26:03 PDT

Just a general question about caboose usage on the Missabe. When the DM&IR was running cabooses on their trains from Proctor to the Duluth docks, how were they handled? I assume they came down with the train, the locomotives were run around on the dock to the rear but did they remove the caboose or did they keep it coupled between the locomotives and the train and did their "switching" with the caboose in the mix? Also when were cabooses discontinued to the docks? I'm assuming at Two Harbors the caboose was removed in the yard and didn't follow up on the dock.

This also brings up the question, before straight air and retainers were set on cars, was this done at Proctor or were they set somewhere down the line a ways?

Mark Arnold Carlton, MN

Re: DMIR caboose question

From: [lst100](#) Date: Sun, 21 Mar 2021 08:41:24 PDT

Mark,

At Duluth ore docks, trains departed Proctor with caboose on rear of train. When the train got down to Collinwood, with the air set on the train for the trip down the hill the slack was already in on the train making "pulling the pin on the caboose" an easy process, then caboose would be cutoff on the "fly", train pulled by and the caboose drifted down into a pocket track between the approaches to Dock 5 and Dock 6 with crew using handbrake to stop the caboose. (Bob Rivard, on one of his video's or possibly it was one of the other videos, has a video of this taking place). Not sure how they got the caboose on the empty train to go back to Proctor. Two possibilities are: 1) dock crew, while the Proctor transfer crew got tied onto the first set of empties off the dock, would place the caboose on another track on ore dock for crew to double the train to. 2) Proctor crew may have pulled past Collinwood, picked up caboose off the pocket track and then shoved back to perform the air test to go back up the hill.

At Two Harbors, switch crew would remove caboose from the train.

Before straight air, carmen at Proctor would manual set the retainers on the cars for the trip down to the dock. Mechanical personal at the dock, while cars were being unloaded, would take the retainers off. At Two Harbors, before straight air, it was necessary for crews to walk their train at Highlands scale and manually set the retainers. Keep in mind, this could have been accomplished while the crew was slowly moving across the scales at Highlands.

Cabooses on the dock transfers were discontinued during the late 1980's. It appears that the last use of cabooses on dock transfers took place during fall 1989, but I have not exact proof of that date.

Dan



Lake States Archive

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Thu, 18 Mar 2021 08:08:13 PDT

Here is an image from the Lake States Historical Society of DUD's 44-tonner. Lots of good material here, although I'm not thrilled by the placement of the watermark.

Link to more archives:

<https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/William-S-Kuba-Collection/Shortlines-Terminals-Industrial/i-X2hdSJ6/A>



Southwest LRT Construction Update: February 26 - March 11, 2021

Provided by John Goodman



Crews place beams for the Shady Oak Road LRT Bridge using cranes to lower the massive preformed spans. Crews continue work on the bridge deck and later this spring, they will also place the remaining beams over Highway 212 later this year.

Web: swlrt.org

Twitter: [@SouthwestLRT](https://twitter.com/SouthwestLRT)

Construction Hotline: 612-373-3933

2021 Virtual Construction Tours

Take a video tour of construction activities in your city! View your city's video update [here](#). Minneapolis and Minnetonka videos will be released in future weeks. Also, join us for a virtual townhall to learn more about upcoming construction activities:

[Eden Prairie Virtual Townhall](#): was: Monday, March 1 from 4:30 – 5:30 PM

[Minnetonka Virtual Townhall](#): was: Friday, March 5 from 3:00 – 4:00 PM
Missed your city's update? [Townhall recordings are available on our web-site.](#)

Weekly Construction Photo: Bridge Beam Placement for the Shady Oak Road LRT Bridge in Eden Prairie

Eden Prairie Highlights

The SouthWest station area remains a busy construction site with ongoing piling and concrete work.

Work continues on the Prairie Center Drive LRT bridge as crews work on bridge walkways.

During the week of March 1 there will be a single day closure of both the on-ramp and the off-ramp to Valley View Drive from eastbound TH 212 to advance the bridge deck. [See Eden Prairie detour maps here.](#)

Crews continue to advance the deck of the Nine Mile Creek bridge, expect construction activities in the area.

Beam placement work for the Shady Oak Road LRT bridge is wrapping up the week of March 1. Flying Cloud Drive will reopen once the cranes can be removed from the area. Shady Oak Road will temporarily close in the future for additional bridge work, [See Eden Prairie detour maps here.](#)

[Visit our website for more details and visuals of construction activities in Eden Prairie.](#)

Minnetonka Highlights

Smetana Road from Feltl Road to Nolan Drive remains closed. A temporary bypass is in place west of the intersection of Smetana and Feltl Roads to accommodate local traffic. [See Minnetonka detour maps here.](#)

Work in the Opus area continues with retaining wall work north of Bren Road West, near Smetana Road.

Crews are installing erosion control and fencing for the Minnetonka – Hopkins LRT bridge.

[Visit our website for more details and visuals of construction activities in Minnetonka.](#)

Hopkins Highlights

Crews continue work on Excelsior Boulevard LRT bridge pier tables.

Blake Road continues to have a single lane of traffic in each direction.

[Visit our website for more details and visuals of construction activities in Hopkins.](#)

St. Louis Park Highlights

Crews continue construction of retaining walls near Wooddale Avenue.

Crews are working on various elements of the Beltline Boulevard Regional Trail bridge. The bridge is mostly complete.

[Visit our website for more details and visuals of construction activities in St. Louis Park.](#)

Minneapolis Highlights

Kenilworth tunnel excavation continues near Park Siding Park. The initial concrete pour to create a waterproof base slab is anticipated in March but an exact date has not yet been determined as work is dependent on the weather. To pour the first concrete seal, crews will need extended work hours until 9:00 PM as this work must be completed in a single day.

Construction activities to advance the LRT bridge at Glenwood Avenue will continue throughout the winter and includes pile driving. Glenwood Avenue between Lyndale Avenue North and North 12th Street remains closed.

[Visit our website for more details and visuals of construction activities in Minneapolis.](#)

Trail Highlights

The South Cedar Lake LRT Trail in Hopkins and St. Louis Park will remain closed until 2022.

Temporary trails near Chowen Avenue and Lake Street remain in place. For your safety and the safety of our crews, please follow signage for the temporary trail and stay clear of the work zone.

The Kenilworth Trail will remain closed until the completion of LRT tunnel construction. The date is yet to be determined.

The North Cedar Lake Trail east of Dunwoody Boulevard will remain closed until 2022.

Cost of Wall for Minneapolis-area Light Rail Project Grows by 350%

Mar 24 2021 from Rick Krenske

The cost of wall separating BNSF Railway tracks from those of the Minneapolis-area Southwest Light Rail project has grown to almost \$93 million, an increase of more than 350% over the originally budgeted figure. [The Minneapolis Star Tribune reports](#) the mile-long wall along a section of the line between downtown Minneapolis and Eden Prairie, Minn., was required by BNSF, which owns the land. It will be heavily fortified to prevent a collision between freight and light rail trains. It was originally estimated to cost about \$20 million. The light rail project, an extension of the existing Green Line, is the most expensive public works project in state history; the most recent estimate places the total cost at \$2 billion.

AmeriStarRail Proposes Privatizing Amtrak NEC Service

Progressive Railroading March 5 2021

AmeriStarRail LLC (ASR) is proposing to privatize Amtrak operations on the Northeast Corridor (NEC). The private group says it will expand Amtrak's NEC capacity to meet travel demand over the next 20 to 40 years. The group would operate 160 mph trains and include "triple-class service" for coach, business, and first class on each train.

"For the first time, all passengers including senior citizens, students and families will have affordable, equal access to high-speed rail service in America which is funded by all taxpayers," the company's proposal states.

Additionally, the group says it would extend NEC service to new routes, "eliminate inefficient terminal operations" in New York City and Washington, D.C., reduce train congestion and delays, and create additional track and yard capacity.

In a presentation March 4th to the Delmarva Rail Passenger Association, AmeriStarRail officials said their group doesn't want to replace Amtrak, but enhance it, WHYY.org reported.

The group would arrange private financing to fund its proposal. Its project would cost \$5 billion for the NEC expansion and to create a centralized maintenance center, which likely would be in Delaware, according to WHYY.org.

"We simply would be setting ourselves up as a company, much like in the airline industry, where you have various private companies operate routes for the major carriers, like American has American Eagle or United has United Express," said Scott Spencer, ASR co-founder and chief operating officer, according to the WHYY.org's report. "The private entity has a different name, but they operate as an affiliated carrier under that marketing brand. So, we're simply using the airline model to improve Amtrak service."

AMR would have to get approval from the U.S. Department of Transportation to pursue its proposal.

In response to a request for comment, Amtrak spokeswoman Beth Toll noted the following:

- Although AmeriStarRail has proposed creating a centralized maintenance facility, likely in Delaware, that would employ 150 people, Amtrak already employs more than 1,000 Delaware residents primarily at two major equipment maintenance facilities. If Amtrak wasn't operating the trains and maintaining the equipment on the NEC, most of those jobs would go away.
- It's not likely that riders would be comfortable sharing small, closed compartments on a train [as AmeriStarRail has proposed] while the country is recovering from a pandemic;
- The assertion that the private group could expand the NEC for only \$5 billion does not take into account that the NEC has a huge state-of-good-repair deficit, calculated at \$42 billion, that must be addressed to maintain current Amtrak and commuter services.
- The AmeriStarRail proposal would not produce more money for Amtrak [as proposed] because the vast majority of Amtrak revenue comes from passenger fares, which AmeriStarRail would receive.

Toll also noted that Amtrak already is pursuing many of the good ideas proposed, including: an agreement with Metropolitan Transportation Authority in New York City to plan for the eventual operation of Amtrak trains to Jamaica/Long Island; a procurement for new trains is underway to eliminate the need for engine changes in Washington for trains operating from NEC points to Virginia and the South; there already is a comprehensive NEC service improvement plan, which was developed by the Federal Railroad Administration with input from Amtrak and includes many of the components of AmeriStarRail's proposal.

Amtrak has issued a whitepaper to address questions often raised in discussions about whether to privatize the railroad's NEC operations.



Chariots of Fire on the Erie

By W. L. Gwyer | March 1, 2017 Memories of hot-metal trains around Youngstown, Ohio -Provided by Russ Isbrandt

L: A hot-metal "bottle car," one of three in an Erie train that included eight hopper cars as spacers, passes DeForest Junction, between Youngstown and Warren, Ohio, in 1966.

Clifford A. Redanz

Continued on next page:

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One of the more interesting aspects of steel-mill railroading were the “hot-metal runs” that moved molten iron from the blast furnaces to the open hearths. The technology dates to 1914, when Jones & Laughlin at its Pittsburgh plant introduced the first “bottle” cars that could keep iron hot enough to remain molten for up to 36 hours. J&L’s innovation saved a major step in the steelmaking process by eliminating the need for “pig iron” (so named because as the hot iron was poured from the furnace, it flowed down a central channel with molds on each side resembling pigs at a trough). The early cars had a capacity of 90 net tons, but by the mid-1920s they could carry 150 tons.

Hot-metal runs were a staple of the Erie Railroad (and successor Erie Lackawanna) around Warren and Youngstown in northeast Ohio when I was a tower operator there in the late 1950s and early ’60s. The sight of a Baldwin or Lima-Hamilton diesel switcher with three or four “bottles” and caboose was routine, as much as a part of the traffic mix as boxcars and hoppers. Some bottle cars had covers, but others did not, and these were known to spill over and cause brush fires. I remember staring into the open tops of these cars as they rumbled underneath the street bridge at Erie’s Youngstown station. It was like looking into Dante’s Inferno, and I’m sure that riding in the caboose of a hot-metal train was a little intimidating. Special instructions in the employee timetable required that, to spread their weight, the bottles be separated from each other and from the engine and caboose by idler cars. Another reason for idlers: Some of the bottle cars did not even have brakes! Speed was limited to 20 mph loaded, 30 mph empty.

The Erie’s hot-metal trains used the same tracks as passenger and freight traffic. I always mused about would happen if a bottle car derailed on its side. Luckily such incidents were few, but one did manage to turn over at Worthington Street, just west of the Youngstown station, pouring molten metal over both tracks and into the street. Those who witnessed it must have thought a volcano had just erupted. It melted the rails and turned the ties into so much charcoal. The clean-up job must have been interesting. I wonder if they used jackhammers to break up that field of solid iron.

Hot-metal runs started on the Erie in the early 1950s between Youngstown and Hubbard, Ohio. In later years they also included Warren, Sharon, and Sharpsville. As a rule, the crews made one trip per day, sometimes two. Most bottle cars were built by the W. B. Pollock Co. in Youngstown, an on-line customer for the Erie. Pollock also built slag-dump cars for intra-plant use.

These hot-metal jobs also were a source of considerable acrimony between the Erie and the Pennsylvania Railroad. At a junction just east of Youngstown called variously Center Street, N Office, or Division Street, five Class 1 railroads crossed one another at grade: Erie, P&LE, Pennsy, Baltimore & Ohio, and New York Central. It was supposedly the busiest non-interlocked railroad crossing in the U.S. This crossroads of the nation’s commerce was under the control of a switchtender employed by the B&O who directed all movements with colored flags by day and lanterns by night. It was a statutory stop, so no train moved until the switchtender beckoned him on. This included 16 daily passenger trains operated by the PRR, P&LE, NYC, and B&O. Just a few miles west, the Erie crossed the PRR main line to get into one of the mills. The crossing was controlled by a target handled by the Erie crews. Because getting into the mill with the hot-metal jobs required throwing seven switches, the Erie crews were wont to just leave the target lined for themselves. The PRR trains could wait — which they did. And this led to war.

The PRR crossed the Erie at two strategic places. One was at North Warren, where the PRR’s Ashtabula line crossed the Erie’s Second District, over which most of its hotshot freights ran. The second was at Bruin, near Greenville, Pa. Here the Erie main crossed the PRR’s branch to Erie, Pa. The critical thing to understand here is that the operators at both towers were employed by the PRR. So when the war cry came out, these operators kept their signals red even if one of the Erie’s hotshot 100’s had to cool its heels while the closest Pennsy train was many miles away.

Needless to say, the Erie had a serious tactical problem. After about an hour or so, the Erie would cry “Uncle,” and some poor trainmaster would have to be rousted out of bed to chase down the hot-metal crew. Then peace would again reign in the valley until the next hot-metal job.

Alas, with the decline and fall of the steel industry in the Youngstown–Warren corridor, such skirmishes are long forgotten. After all, the former adversaries soon had to live together when Conrail came along. And of course the Erie hot-metal runs became history, as did the Erie itself. But the bottle car is alive and well and is used all over the world in the steelmaking process.

And they have not been forgotten. Pittsburgh authorities recently named the old Monongahela Connecting Railroad bridge over the Monongahela River — modified to carry a highway after the rails were taken up — the “Hot Metal Bridge.” I wonder, if there is a historical marker to mark the Erie-PRR skirmishes at Center Street near Youngstown? There should be.

First published in Winter 2009 Classic Trains magazine.



BNSF Commits Nearly \$3 Billion for Capital Investment in 2021

BNSF recently announced its 2021 capital investment plan of \$2.99 billion. This year’s capital plan focuses on projects that support the company’s growth and efficiency objectives, while maintaining a strong and reliable railroad.

“Every year through our capital plan, we work to ensure we are able to continue to operate a safe and efficient rail network, provide our customers with the level of service they have come to expect from BNSF as well as position ourselves for future growth opportunities,” said Katie Farmer, president and CEO.

The largest component of this year’s capital plan will be to replace and maintain BNSF’s core network and related assets. The maintenance component of this year’s plan is \$2.41 billion.

The projects included in this part of the plan mostly entail replacing and upgrading rail as well as track infrastructure like ballast and rail ties (which are the main components for the tracks on which BNSF trains operate) and maintaining its rolling stock. It will include nearly 11,000 miles of track surfacing and/or undercutting work and the replacement of 428 miles of rail and approximately 2.6 million rail ties.

Approximately \$400 million of this year’s capital plan will be for expansion and efficiency projects. On its Southern Transcon route between the West Coast and the Midwest, BNSF will continue a multi-year effort to add several segments of new double-track in eastern Kansas. Once fully completed, BNSF will have 50 miles of additional main track to support traffic growth. (Provided by John Goodman)



The Canadian Pacific Acquisition of Kansas City Southern

Trains Newswire March 21 2021 By -David Lassen provided by Roger Libra



The Canadian Pacific acquisition of Kansas City Southern should help the railroads develop new business — including diverting truck traffic to rail — but the \$29 billion deal announced on Sunday could face regulatory hurdles and opposition from shippers and other Class I systems. CP and KCS executives touted the potential for traffic growth that would flow from new single-line service linking Canada and the Upper Midwest with Texas and Mexico.

They were particularly bullish on the prospect of new intermodal service that would tap cross-border trade with Mexico.

Intermodal analyst Larry Gross says there's plenty of opportunity to grow intermodal service to and from Mexico. "I think that having single-line service can only help," Gross says. "The U.S.-Mexico cross-border market has been a laggard and so too, the Midwest-South Central (Chicago-Texas) market."

I think the bigger question than the southbound auto parts is the northbound market, which is the overbalanced direction.

Intermodal has a small share overall and the market has suffered because of the need to work with more than one railroad for most moves.

Todd Tranausky, vice president of rail and intermodal at FTR Transportation Intelligence, a freight forecasting firm, says intermodal, grain, and chemicals and petroleum products are likely to see the biggest gains from a CP-KCS merger.

Mexico is the largest export market for U.S. grain, but having single-line service from Canada could open the market to Canadian farmers as well, Tranausky says.

"From a chemical/petroleum perspective, Canadian crude and other petroleum products will no longer have to interchange in Chicago or Kansas City and would be able to move directly to the U.S. Gulf Coast, which would represent a significant efficiency for those shippers, particularly as pipeline projects face additional uncertainty," Tranausky says.

Shippers will play a major role in how the Surface Transportation Board views the merger, Tranausky says. Past mergers created major service problems at the outset.

"Rail shippers will have a big voice at the Surface Transportation Board and if they are not satisfied that the carriers can maintain service levels during the transition and improve them going forward, then they may not support the transaction at the regulator," Tranausky says. "The board has been increasingly focused on shippers' concerns in recent years and I would expect they will play an outsized role in how the board views this transaction through the process."

The National Industrial Transportation League, which is the largest shipper organization in North America, on Sunday took a wait-and-see approach to the merger.

"Given the scale of the announcement of the merger between Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern and many details yet to be learned, it's too early to take a position on the favorability of this merger to the rail shipping community," NITL Executive Director Jennifer Hedrick says. "While the National Industrial Transportation League and our members have outstanding relationships with both Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern, and are optimistic about this new venture, any merger in this industry and on this scale will be viewed with healthy skepticism based on prior history and experience of rail mergers."

Shippers look forward to learning more about the merger and its potential impact, she said.

Even though the STB's more stringent merger review rules enacted in 2001 contain an exemption for a merger involving KCS, the CP-KCS deal will be the first real test of the rules, Tranausky says. "There has not been a successful Class I merger since they were put in place and it will be interesting to see how they are applied to this transaction," he says. "KCS is a bit unique from a regulatory perspective in the U.S. so we will have to see how the board interprets its rules as the control proceeding moves forward."

CP CEO Keith Creel told investors and analysts today that he expects shippers will support the merger due to its pro-competitive impacts and the opportunity to connect new markets.

Independent rail analyst Anthony B. Hatch expects the merger will pass regulatory muster. "I don't see any realistic chance of STB rejection," he says, noting that no shippers will lose competitive rail service under the deal.

It is not clear how other Class I railroads will react to the deal and whether they would seek concessions from CP and KCS or regulatory relief from the STB, Hatch says.

Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern Say Merger is all About Growth

By Bill Stephens | March 21, 2021 Trains Newswire Provided by Roger Libra

New railroad will reach six of North America's seven largest metropolitan areas

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern executives say combining their railroads into the first system linking Canada, the U.S., and Mexico will generate significant traffic growth across all commodities.

"What a historic day," CP CEO Keith Creel said during a Sunday afternoon investor webcast where executives touted the \$29 billion deal to create Canadian Pacific Kansas City, a combination of the two smallest but fastest-growing Class I railroads.

"This combination is not about cuts, it's not about line rationalization, it's not about cutting heads," Creel says. "It's all about growth."

The merger will allow the new 19,200-mile railroad to connect six of the seven largest metropolitan areas in North America, boost rail competition, divert freight off the highway, and benefit shippers, investors, employees, and the environment, executives say.

"This is truly a perfect fit," CP Chief Marketing Officer John Brooks says, noting that the merger combines CP's traffic origins in Canada and the Midwest with destinations on the KCS system in the U.S. and Mexico, including ports on the Gulf of Mexico.

"We see growth opportunities across all of our lines of business," Brooks says, from grain and agricultural commodities to forest products, automotive, merchandise, and energy, chemicals, and plastics business.

But Brooks was most bullish on the potential of launching the first single-line intermodal service linking Mexico and Texas with the Upper Midwest and Canada. "There's just a massive amount of freight that should be moving on the rail network," he says.

Even gaining a fraction of that traffic from the highway will be enough to move the volume and revenue needle at CPKC, Brooks says.

The intermodal service will compete against existing interline service offered by both BNSF and Union Pacific but is really meant to take trucks off the highway, Brooks says.

The proposed merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern would create a 19,200-mile system spanning the Canada, U.S., and Mexico (Canadian Pacific). Mexico continues to benefit from foreign investment in manufacturing, particularly by automakers. KCS CEO Pat Ottensmeyer expects the trend to continue thanks to the renewal of the North American free trade pact as well as manufacturers' desire to nearshore production as part of an effort to shorten supply chains that are overly dependent on China and Asia.

"It just feels like this is the right time and the right circumstances to put these two companies together," Ottensmeyer says.

The railroads see \$780 million in annual merger benefits developing by 2025. Some \$600 million of that will come from growth, with \$180 million flowing from cost savings and efficiency gains. While some rationalization of duplicate functions is envisioned, by 2025 the combined company will be adding employees to handle volume growth.

To handle new traffic, CPKC will spend \$50 million to add and extend passing sidings, as well as to install centralized traffic control on CP's underutilized main line to Kansas City, Mo., which is the only place that KCS and CP connect.

Shippers will benefit from faster and more reliable single-line service, Creel says.

The combined company will share the same strong culture that's focused on growth and safety, Ottensmeyer says.

Creel said he has complete confidence that the merger will receive approval from the U.S. Surface Transportation Board. KCS was granted an exemption from the more strict merger rules the STB adopted in 2001 after disruptive mergers in the 1990s that led to the creation of four big U.S. Class I systems, with BNSF Railway and Union Pacific dominating the West and CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern blanketing the East.

The CP-KCS combination is so compelling, Creel says, that it would gain approval even under the STB's newer, more rigorous rules that cover reviews of merger applications. He said he could not contemplate the STB rejecting the deal.

Shippers have been skeptical of Class I railroad mergers and largely lined up against the ill-fated CP-NS merger that was proposed in 2015-16.

But Creel and Ottensmeyer say the CP-KCS combination is far different than prior mergers, particularly since it does not involve overlapping routes and not a single shipper will lose competitive options that they enjoy today.

The combination does not face a regulatory review in Canada. KCS has a concession to operate KCS de Mexico through 2047, which is renewable for another 50 years. The Mexican antitrust commission will review the transaction but KCS Chief Financial Officer Mike Upchurch says that's a low hurdle since CP does not currently operate in Mexico or serve any of the border crossings.

Creel will serve as chief executive of the new company. KCS will be placed into an independent voting trust while the merger is under review.

Former KCS CEO David Starling will serve as trustee, while the KCS management team will stay on at least until the merger is approved.

CP is paying a 23% premium to the KCS shareholders, based on the closing price of KCS stock on Friday.

Canadian Pacific Moving US headquarters Out of Minneapolis in \$25B Deal

This comes after the railway acquired Kansas City Southern to create the first U.S.-Mexico-Canadian network.

BY MELISSA TURPINEN, MAR 22, 2021 [Credit: Jerry Huddleston via Flickr](#)

Canadian Pacific Railway has acquired Kansas City Southern to create the first United States-Mexico-Canadian rail network, Canadian Pacific [announced Sunday](#). With this roughly \$25 billion deal, Canadian Pacific's U.S. headquarters will no longer be at Canadian Pacific Plaza in Minneapolis. "Calgary will be the global headquarters of CPKC, and Kansas City, Missouri, will be designated as the U.S. headquarters," [a news release says](#). "The Mexico headquarters will remain in Mexico City and Monterrey. CP's current U.S. headquarters in Minneapolis-St. Paul will remain an important base of operations." The impact the deal has on Minneapolis and its employees in Minnesota isn't yet known, though the news release does say the deal would create jobs "across the combined network." CEO Keith Creel [told the Star Tribune](#) any changes won't be immediate or mirror Target's [decision earlier this month to leave the City Center building](#), cutting back on the company's amount of office space in downtown Minneapolis. "Our history in Minnesota runs deep," Creel told the paper. "That role will not be diminished, it just doesn't have the title of U.S. headquarters." The deal still needs final approval of the Surface Transportation Board, the release says, noting once that happens it will create a single-network transportation offering throughout the region to deliver "dramatically expanded market reach" for customers and "provide competitive transportation service options" while supporting economic growth, as well as efficiency and service improvements that are expected to "achieve meaningful environmental benefits." [Canadian Pacific Railway](#) "This transaction will be transformative for North America, providing significant positive impacts for our respective employees, customers, communities, and shareholders," Creel said in a statement.

"This will create the first U.S.-Mexico-Canada railroad, bringing together two railroads that have been keenly focused on providing quality service to their customers to unlock the full potential of their networks. CP and KCS have been the two best performing Class I railroads for the past three years on a revenue growth basis." Following the approval of the acquisition, Creel will be the new Chief Executive Officer of the company that will be named Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC).



AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

VOL. 9 ISSUE 3 March 2021

Washington Update by Ross Capon

~ Reminder ~

Please contact me if you are willing to participate in virtual meetings with your Congressional offices.

Daily Service Return in Sight. The big stimulus bill which the House passed at 2 a.m. on Saturday February 27 has over \$1.5 billion for Amtrak. Amtrak is mandated – within 90 days of enactment – to return daily service to the long-distance routes that lost it last year. Democrats hope to enact the bill by March 14, when extended unemployment benefits otherwise would expire, so service restoration should happen by mid-June

The House passed the bill 219-212 with two Democrats and all Republicans voting no, even though national polls show strong, bipartisan support. Some polls show a majority of Republicans in favor and the bill is supported by many Republican state and local officials including West Virginia's governor. It is unclear whether a bipartisan compromise can be reached on a minimum wage increase, but chances for most of the bill to become law this month look good.

Postscript on February 10 House T&I COVID Relief Mark-up: Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA-10-Harrisburg/Wormleysburg) offered an amendment to remove all Amtrak funding from the bill. It was defeated 23-43. Special thanks are due to the eight Republicans who voted against the amendment and thus *for* Amtrak:

- Mike Bost (IL-12-Carbondale/O'Fallon)
- Rodney Davis (IL-13-Champaign/Decatur)
- Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1-Langhorne)
- Mike Gallagher (WI-8-De Pere)
- Carlos Gimenez (FL-26-Miami/Key West)
- John Katko (NY-24-Syracuse/Auburn/Oswego/Lyons)
- Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11-Staten Island/S. Brooklyn)
- Jeff Van Drew (NJ-2-Mays Landing)

As always, your job is to contact your own representative and senators – they are the ones who care what you think. If they are not on relevant committees, they are not helpless because they have friends who are on those committees.

If your representative is on House T&I,

this is a good time to tell him or her of your (a) appreciation for their service,

(b) interest in retaining last year's Section 9219 (private cars/charter train language) in this year's infrastructure legislation; and – where appropriate – (c) thanks for voting against the Perry de-fund Amtrak amendment (amendment #3) on February 10.

Again, all the Democrats and the eight Republicans listed above voted against the amendment. All committee members are listed [here](#). The specific tally for the Perry de-fund Amtrak amendment, is [here](#).

Senate Commerce Committee Assignments New In the 117th Congress

The "Amtrak" subcommittee, formerly "Transportation and Safety," is now "Surface Transportation, Maritime, Freight, and Ports". The new name is more consistent with the fact that there is a separate subcommittee for "aviation safety, operations, and innovation" (formerly "Aviation and Space"). The new surface subcommittee chair is Gary Peters (D-MI). New subcommittee members:

- Brian Schatz (D-HI)
- Jon Tester (D-MT) [key supporter of long-distance trains now on both Appropriations and Commerce]
- Raphael Warnock (D-GA)
- Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
- Todd Young (R-IN)
- Ron Johnson (R-WI)
- Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)

Fund-raisers I have attended since Dec. 1 with support from AAPRCO members and allies.

- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chair Peter DeFazio (D-OR-4-Eugene/Coos Bay/Roseburg)
- Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL-25-Naples/Doral), ranking (former chair), Appropriations Subcomm. on Transportation/Housing & Urban Development (free event)
- Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), former ranking member, Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety
- Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), majority whip; member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation/Housing and Urban Development
- Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE), ranking member (former chair), Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Safety
- Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), chair (then-ranking), Appropriations Committee
- Rep. David Price (D-NC-4-Raleigh/Chapel Hill), chair, Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation/Housing and Urban Development

Amtrak's readiness: Amtrak says it wants to restore daily service and knows that a Congressional mandate to do that is coming. Will Amtrak get the requisite rollingstock back into service? "No available power" was the explanation for delays to several trains departing south from Washington DC Friday, February 26. Was this a one-off or part of a larger problem? Will equipment be available for reasonable consists when daily service resumes? How quickly after enactment will the restored trips be added to sales inventory?

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Amtrak's finances: Fiscal 2020 had six and a half months of very low COVID ridership. Even so, year-end (Sept. 30) FY 2020 vs. year-end (Sept. 30) FY 2019 saw a cash and cash equivalents (including restricted cash, short-term investments, available-for-sale securities) increase of over \$400M. As well, Amtrak's working capital (total current assets less total current liabilities) improved from to \$1.9B in FY20 from \$1.4B in FY19. Click [here](#) and see computer page 5.

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights

March 2021

Washington Update by Ross Capon



What you can do right now!!

Focus on your own U.S. representative and your two U.S. senators – they are the legislators who care what you think! Ask them to work for:

1. Good report language to accompany the FY 2022 transportation/housing bill. Note that we've had language starting with FY 2019 and thus under both Republican and Democratic majorities. It is important for Amtrak to know that Capitol Hill is still paying attention to our issues.
2. Inclusion in the surface transportation reauthorization of Section 9219 [private cars and charter trains] from Chairman DeFazio's infrastructure bill in the last Congress.

"Work for" covers all legislators whether or not they serve on a relevant committee. Those not on such a committee have relationships with colleagues who are. And key committee members and staff need to hear support for what we want from colleagues!

Please reach out to me at rcapon3@gmail.com if you have any questions. If you get questions from Capitol Hill that you want help answering, let me know. I can get you answers and/or reply directly to Hill staff.

And please feel free to ask me to set up a Zoom meeting with one or more of your legislators. I am happy to join such meeting, or not as you prefer.

Thank you for what you have done already – both in keeping private cars and charter trains on the Capitol Hill radar screen, and more recently for the successful work to restore daily service on the long-distance trains. Amtrak faces a huge task in assembling the personnel and equipment to make this work, but appears to be operating in good faith – as reflected in the fact that the restored trains went into sales inventory right after the key House vote on additional supplemental funding and a few days *before* President Biden signed the bill into law on March 11. This is the \$1.9 trillion COVID relief law that includes over \$1.5 billion more for Amtrak and requires that daily long-distance service resume within 90 days of enactment. Precisely because restoration is a big challenge, daily service will resume on different routes on May 24 and 31 and June 7. Click [here](#) to see Amtrak's March 10 release with details.

Slate.com published a lengthy interview with Amtrak CEO William Flynn on March 15. You can read the full article below in the Passenger Rail News section of the news brief. Here is Flynn's response to Slate's predictable question about whether corridor development requires "moving resources away from the money-losing long-distance routes that run across the country":

"No. Many of the communities we serve have limited alternatives for transportation other than driving a car. The administration and the Hill have prioritized long-distance services because they believe that while it may be losing money, the larger economic benefit is greater than the cost of providing service on the long-distance routes.

And I support that."

Amtrak CEO William Flynn



More AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

Amtrak to Restore Long-distance Routes, Recall Workers

Amtrak announced March 10th that, due to the \$1.7 billion in federal funding it will receive under the American Rescue Plan, it will fully restore daily long-distance service, bring back furloughed employees and continue progress on vital capital projects.

"This funding will benefit the entire Amtrak network, out state and commuter partners, customers and employees," Amtrak Chief Executive Officer Bill Flynn said in a prepared statement. "We will work closely with Congress and the Biden administration on next steps for funding to support Amtrak's long-term growth. Funding options include expanding the Amtrak network through new corridor routes, that will create thousands of new jobs, reducing our nation's carbon footprint, and helping the economy recover and flourish in the years ahead."

Amtrak will restore daily service for 12 long-distance routes following pandemic-related schedule reductions in 2020. The schedule has been updated on all Amtrak reservation systems, including Amtrak.com and the Amtrak app. The daily schedules will begin in May and will be grouped into three phases.

Amtrak will resume the following routes with daily service as of May 24:

California Zephyr (Chicago – Omaha – Denver – Salt Lake City – San Francisco)

Coast Starlight (Seattle – Portland – Sacramento – Oakland – Los Angeles)

Empire Builder (Chicago – St. Paul-Minneapolis – Spokane – Portland/Seattle)

Texas Eagle (Chicago – St. Louis – Dallas – San Antonio – Los Angeles)

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The following routes will resume with daily service as of May 31:
 Capitol Limited (Washington, D.C. – Pittsburgh – Cleveland – Chicago)
 City of New Orleans (Chicago – Memphis – Jackson – New Orleans)
 Lake Shore Limited (New York/Boston – Albany – Buffalo – Chicago)
 Southwest Chief (Chicago – Kansas City – Albuquerque – Los Angeles)

Finally, the following four routes will regain daily service as of June 7:
 Crescent (New York – Washington, D.C. – Atlanta – New Orleans)
 Palmetto (New York – Washington, D.C. – Charleston – Savannah)
 Silver Meteor (New York – Savannah – Jacksonville – Orlando – Miami)
 Silver Star (New York – Raleigh – Jacksonville – Orlando – Tampa – Miami)

Additionally, Amtrak will recall the more than 1,200 furloughed employees through the remainder of fiscal-year 2021 and into fiscal-year 2022, railroad officials said in a press release.



Photo: An Amtrak Pacific Surfliner train at Moorpark Station in California. Laser1987/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The CEO of Amtrak Thinks Americans Are Ready for Trains Again

And he says sleeper cars are making a comeback

BY HENRY GRABAR [SLATE.COM \(NEWS AND POLITICS\)](https://www.slate.com/news-and-politics)

MARCH 15, 2021 3:28 PM

William J. Flynn took over as CEO of Amtrak at the worst possible time. It was April 2020—one month after the country locked down—and ridership on the quasi-public passenger rail network was down by 97 percent. Two recovery bills later, Amtrak’s finances have been shored up. Though business remains way down, vaccines are rolling out, and Flynn aims to double Amtrak’s pre-pandemic ridership in the next two decades.

We spoke last week about what America’s interstate rail system could look like after COVID. We discussed major undertakings like the [Gateway Project](#), the new tunnel beneath the Hudson River connecting New York and New Jersey, which Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer has called the most important infrastructure project in the country.

Flynn told me he does not pay attention to the [astronomical cost of rail construction in the United States](#) relative to peer countries. He also outlined his beef with freight railroads, explained why he welcomes private-sector competition, and showed me where he thinks Amtrak has room to grow after its 50th birthday next month. Our conversation has been edited and condensed for clarity.

Henry Grabar: Looking forward to a post-COVID world, where do you see the places where Amtrak can compete? What sort of trips—by car, by plane—and between which cities? What are the circumstances outside of the Northeast Corridor where you think Amtrak has room to grow?

William J. Flynn: For Amtrak, if you look at the network that we run today, it looks a lot like the network we had in 1971, 50 years ago, when we were created, but boy, population and demographics have changed, right? There’s 100 million more people in the United States today than there were when Amtrak was created in 1971. And if you look about the shift of where people moved to and where they have moved from, there are 20, 25 dense corridors across our nation where Amtrak has little to no service. And that’s where people have moved to. Think about the corridors in Arizona, between Phoenix and Tucson and Flagstaff, and the route between Las Vegas and Southern California. Look at the growth that we’ve experienced in the Carolinas, for example, from Raleigh to Charlotte and Greensboro and Winston-Salem—we started the service there a couple of years ago with two trains a day, and we’re looking to grow that to six trains a day along that route.

A lot of the growth I’m talking about here would occur on corridors we already serve, but we’re only serving them once a day. Another that comes to mind is Nashville to Atlanta, with stops in Chattanooga. Try to fly that. There’s no service there. It’s a major corridor. It’s an integrated economy. I could go on and on, but I believe these areas of opportunity allow us, over the next 20-year period of time, to double our ridership.

Do you need to make other improvements to make those corridors more reliable—or is it mostly about service?

It’s all of the above. It’s certainly about frequency, right? But we absolutely do need to invest. Only a very small percentage of our total track can support speeds of 90 mph or greater. There will definitely be a need for tracking infrastructure work to get speeds up. There are going to need to be investments in stations.

Does that require moving resources away from the money-losing long-distance routes that run across the country?

No. Many of the communities we serve have limited alternatives for transportation other than driving a car. The administration and the Hill have prioritized long-distance services because they believe that while it may be losing money, the larger economic benefit is greater than the cost of providing service on the long-distance routes. And I support that.



BNSF Begins Battery-Electric Locomotive Pilot Test

Provided by John Goodman

BNSF and Wabtec's exploration of the future potential of battery-electric locomotives crossed another significant milestone recently as they begin testing the technology in revenue service between Barstow and Stockton, California.

As BNSF seeks ways to further reduce its environmental impact, the advancement of battery technology offers some possible solutions.

"We've got everything in place and we're ready to see how this next-generation locomotive performs in revenue service," said John Lovenburg, BNSF vice president, Environmental.

"BNSF is focused on continuing to reduce our environmental impact, and we're committed to doing our part to test and assess the commercial viability of emerging technologies that reduce emissions." The battery-electric locomotive is expected to reduce the environmental impact from emissions along the route in an efficient manner, while improving the fuel economy for the entire consist by at least 10 percent. The pilot test runs from January until the end of March. If the initial pilot proves successful, BNSF will look to expand testing to other locations and operating conditions on its system.

This initiative builds on BNSF's existing investments in sustainable technologies including idle control, electric wide-span cranes, battery-electric hostlers, automated gates at its intermodal facilities, and Tier 4 locomotives. BNSF partnered with Wabtec on the development of the battery-electric locomotive, which features an overall energy-management system, including onboard energy storage that, when coupled with advanced system-optimization controls, will improve consist and train performance.

The battery-electric locomotive pilot program is part of a \$22.6 million grant awarded to BNSF and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District from the Zero- and Near Zero-Emission Freight Facilities (ZANZEFF) project by the California Air Resource Board to pilot several emissions-reducing technologies in and around railyards. The ZANZEFF project is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment — particularly in disadvantaged communities.

COLORADO RAIL PRIVATE CAR TRIP - including the Very First Rocky Mountaineer Denver, CO to Moab, UT - August 11-18, 2021

provided by John Goodman

THE VACCINES ARE COMING!

Vaccine rollout is ahead of schedule, with enough COVID-19 doses expected to cover every adult by mid to late May. The economic relief bill, which funds the daily return of many Amtrak long distance routes, has passed the House & Senate. This good news gives us confidence that our August trip to Denver will be minimally affected by the virus.

So if you're sick and tired of staying home, this trip may be just the thing to scratch your Pandemic Itch. Read on.

Deep River Rail Ventures, LLC is pleased to announce a nine day, one-of-a-kind private rail excursion with railcars FRANK THOMSON & BERLIN. In addition to visits to numerous tourist rail excursions & museums, our trip includes the very first Inaugural Run of Rocky Mountaineer's Rockies To The Red Rocks two day excursion from Denver, CO to Moab, UT via Grand Junction, CO. We will be enjoying the (now sold out) enhanced Silver Leaf Plus Class accommodations which include exclusive access to their newly renovated lounge car. Featuring signature cocktails, the lounge car offers additional space indoors to relax and soak in the scenery as it passes you by, as well as a small outdoor viewing area.

The first day of this inaugural run includes spectacular scenery of the the Front Range, Moffat Tunnel, and the Byers, Gore, Red & Glenwood Canyons.

The second day scenic highlights include the Colorado River, Mount Lincoln, and traversing the 25 mile long Ruby Canyon, which can only be accessed by rail or water. The final miles of the Cane Creek Branch to Moab will be "Rare Mileage", having never before seen a passenger train. You can be the first to experience one of the major rail passenger events in 2021.

This nine day excursion also includes admission to the Colorado Railroad Museum, Georgetown Loop Railroad, The Broadmoor Pikes Peak Railroad, Pueblo Railroad Museum, Royal Gorge Scenic Railroad Dinner Train, and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad.

Be a part of history by being "All Aboard" this unique trip! Don't delay as sales have been brisk. For Full Itinerary and Pricing click [HERE](#):

Continued on next page:

Canadian Cruise Ship Ban has White Pass & Yukon Summer Plans on Hold

Provincial border closures could also affect ability to resume operations By **Bob Johnston** | February 9, 2021



A White Pass & Yukon steam excursion prepares to depart Skagway, Alaska, in August 2015. Bob Johnston

SKAGWAY, Alaska — Narrow gauge passenger rail operator White Pass & Yukon Route never ran excursions during 2020, despite maintaining hopes into June that COVID-19 travel restrictions might be relaxed.

Now operations are in jeopardy for 2021 as well, in the wake of a Transport Canada decision not to allow ships carrying more than 100 people to call at Canadian ports until February 2022. Because United States maritime regulations prohibit foreign-registered vessels — which includes the majority operated by cruise lines — from traveling between two U.S. ports without an intermediate stop in a foreign country, it will be difficult for ships to include Skagway on their itineraries.

And that will take a huge toll on the White Pass, which relies on cruise ship passengers' shore excursion revenue to operate fleets of trains from Skagway docks into the mountains and back.

"It's obviously not positive news, but we're still looking at options as to what we can do," White Pass Human Resources Executive Director Tyler Rose tells *Trains News Wire*, adding, "we'll probably have better information in the coming weeks."

He says a skeleton staff had continued with track maintenance last year to keep the line ready to restart, but all major projects were shelved because there was no money coming in.

It is possible to get to Skagway by air, and the Alaska Marine Ferry will continue to operate from Seattle and Prince Rupert, British Columbia (the 100-person capacity limit does not apply to ferries).

But another wrinkle could be closure of the U.S. border with Canada. Some White Pass trips operate as far north as Carcross, Yukon Territory; bus excursions continue from there to Whitehorse, which has an airport and is located on the Alaska Highway.



With hikers' gear in the baggage car, a train bound for Carcross, Yukon Territory, skirts Lake Bernard in 2015. Bob Johnston

Land crossings for all but essential travel remain prohibited at the British Columbia border through Feb. 21, and Rose notes there are currently separate Yukon protocols for travelers into that province. "The regulatory and travel requirements keep changing, so we continue to monitor those for guidance," he says.

Alaska's congressional delegation — U.S. Rep. Don Young and Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan — issued [a joint statement](#) in response to the Transport Canada decision, saying they were "exploring all potential avenues, including changing existing laws, to ensure the cruise industry in Alaska resumes operations as soon as it is safe. We will fight to find a path forward."

In the meantime, radio station [KHNS-FM of Haines, Alaska, reports](#) the railroad last week informed 27 employees it was abolishing their jobs, citing the economic effects of the pandemic. Some had been employed by the railroad for decades;

one woman told the station she would be able to reapply for a position when jobs were restored, but in the meantime, she would lose her insurance, other benefits, and seniority. Skagway Mayor Andrew Cremata said his town needs to find some "out-of-the-box ways to survive as a community," and needs to find a way not only to preserve jobs, but create new ones. The community will hold a town hall meeting Wednesday, Feb. 10, to plan for another season without cruise-ship business. — *Updated Feb. 11 to correct location of Carcross to Yukon Territory.*



Volume 2021-3 March 22, 2021

In This Newsletter

Upcoming Events

Invitations to virtual events of interest

Legislative Status

Status of funding for the 2nd Train to Chicago & MnDOT Passenger Rail Plans

Status of Bills

Where your help is needed!

Outreach Efforts

New Legislative Allies

2nd Train Video

On the National Scene

Continued on next page:

Visit our website

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Good News for the Long Distance Fleet

Upcoming Events

An Invitation from WisArp - Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers

What: 2021 Spring Meeting via Zoom

When: Saturday, March 27th, 2021 9:00am to Noon Central Time

Free Event. Registration required for this meeting. Click on the Link below to register

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/joinmeeting/register/tZ0uduCtrjktGdNwxx3OV8nvGextW3s2q1ug>

*After registering, you will receive a confirmation email back from Zoom containing information on how to join the WisArp Spring Zoom meeting by computer or by phone. Both options are available.

An Invitation from The Great River Rail Commission to a Virtual Town Forum on the 2nd Train on March 23rd from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. Click [HERE](#) for details and to register.

Legislative Status

Our primary focus this legislative session is to fund the the 2nd train from the Twin Cities to Milwaukee and Chicago - aka Twin Cities Hiawatha, since it will be an extension of the existing Chicago - Milwaukee Hiawatha service. The project is "shovel-ready" for work to start and be on the rails by 2024...if Minnesota appropriates the required funds to match Federal grants. Here is the current status.

STATUS OF PASSENGER RAIL FUNDING LEGISLATION

Bills for funding passenger rail projects were heard before the Capital Investment Committee on February 23rd, as we reported in the last newsletter. Brian Nelson testified for AAMN and will testify again on Tuesday before the House Transportation Committee. If you want to tune in on the proceedings, video coverage can be found [HERE](#), starting at 1:00 on Tuesday March 23rd.

Other bills have been introduced. [Check out this link to our website for latest details](#) and support them as shown below.

GOVERNOR'S BONDING REQUEST -

GOOD NEWS! - The Governor's detailed budget request does include \$10 Million for the TCMC 2nd train to Chicago! - This received some national attention in an [article in Progressive Railroading which can be seen HERE](#).

Thank You to all who contacted the Governor's Office to advocate for this funding!

HOW YOU CAN HELP!

Contact your legislators - call or email your legislators and the Governor to support the Passenger Rail bills. Check [HERE](#) if you need to identify your legislators and their contact information.

Submit comments to the 2nd train Public Input page. MnDOT and WisDOT have initiated a form [HERE](#) on which you can express your support and comments, as part of the project approval process.

OUTREACH AND LEGISLATOR CONTACTS

Working with new pro rail legislators, Senators Jen McEwen, Duluth, and Ann Johnson-Stewart, Minnetonka, and Representatives Todd Lippert, Northfield, and Luke Frederick, Mankato, to promote support for the MnDOT Passenger Rail plan

Obtaining resolutions from city councils along the 2nd train route in support of the 2nd train. - Received from La Crescent and Redwing. Winona will vote next week.

Contacting Mayors and City Administrators of 10 communities along the Twin Cities to Moorhead/Fargo route, which would potentially be station stops for the extension of the 2nd train. Our objective is to raise awareness of the MnDOT rail plan, and ask for resolutions supporting the 2nd train from Chicago as the first leg of the Greater Minnesota network. Potential for the 2nd train extension has been enthusiastically received and several resolutions received and promised.

Developed the following 2nd Train video and included it in email correspondence with Mayors and other stakeholders.

On the National Scene

Congress approved the transportation funding proposal for the next round of COVID-19 funding that includes \$1.5 billion for Amtrak along with mandates to restore daily service on the long-distance trains and bring back workers furloughed due to the pandemic.

Amtrak has announced that the Empire Builder will resume daily operations on May 24th with the whole fleet of long distance trains resuming pre-covid operations by June 7th. See details [HERE](#)

It still looks like we may be headed in the right direction!





The organization is studying a possible conversion of the Milwaukee Road locomotive to burn oil.

Study Will Consider Conversion of Milwaukee Road 261 to Burn Oil

From the TRAINS Newswire: [By Steve Glischinski](#) | March 11, 2021

MINNEAPOLIS – The Friends of the 261, the non-profit organization that owns and operates Milwaukee Road S-3 class 4-8-4 No. 261, has launched a study to consider converting the locomotive from coal to oil firing. Friends of the 261 President and Chief Operating Officer Steve Sandberg said the group is conducting a feasibility study and cost benefit analysis for the possible conversion. It could cost up to \$200,000 to convert NO. 261 to burn oil, Sandberg said. If the group decides to proceed, it would not be the first time an S-3 has been changed to burn oil. Milwaukee Road owned ten S-3s built in 1944 and they worked exclusively in the Midwest. The outbreak of the Korean War brought an acute motive power shortage to the railroad as traffic boomed. In 1950, S-3s Nos. 262, 263, 267 and 269 were converted to burn oil and moved to the Idaho Division “gap” in Milwaukee Road’s electrified operations between Avery, Idaho and Othello, Wash.

They made the last steam runs on the Idaho Division, with No. 267 making the final trip Dec. 17, 1954.

The Milwaukee Public Library has some of the original Milwaukee Road engineering drawings on file from the S-3 conversions, and long-time Friends volunteer and 261 fireman Ed Selinski has been working with the library to obtain copies of the drawings. The Friends has also solicited input from other steam operators who have done conversions in the past. Union Pacific Senior Manager Heritage Operations Ed Dickens, whose team converted UP Big Boy 4014 to burn oil, is a technical advisor for the project.

In addition to studying oil conversion, other work is being done on the 4-8-4. Rail wheel manufacturer ORX has shipped three new wheel sets to the Friends shop in Minneapolis where they will be installed under No. 261’s tender. Sandberg said while there was nothing wrong with the old wheels, they were last rebuilt almost 30 years ago, in 1992. They were the thinnest of the original wheels and for safety reasons it was decided to upgrade them at this time, Sandberg says. “Thanks to our donors, the 261 organization is using the time during COVID to make improvements to the 261 as well as our fleet of rail cars,” he said.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the 1991 signing of the lease agreement between the National Railroad Museum of Green Bay, Wis., and North Star Rail, Inc. North Star returned the engine to service in 1993, with the non-profit Friends of the 261 taking over operation in 1995. The group purchased No. 261 from the Museum in 2010.

The Friends plan to have No. 261 back in operation this fall pulling excursions on the Twin Cities & Western Railroad Oct. 2-3, depending on pandemic restrictions. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of TC&W’s 1991 founding.

For more information go to www.261.com.

AllAboardRailDiscussion@groups.io Discussions provided by John Goodman

Subject: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] WSDOT Point Defiance Bypass Update

From: "Gene Poon" <gpoon49@gmail.com> Sent: Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 10:08 AM

February 2021 update

Sound Transit, Amtrak, WSDOT and FRA continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis to track progress towards return to the Point Defiance Bypass. Our hope is that service will be returning to the Bypass this summer or fall. The next step is Amtrak crew qualification, which will occur over a two- to three-month period. Sound Transit, as owner of the Bypass, is currently reviewing all documentation prior to giving approval to start crew qualification runs. Those runs will likely occur this spring. Once crews have completed required qualification runs on the route, Sound Transit will provide final approval and a date for returning to revenue service on the route.

And maybe Amtrak won't screw it up this time with a train wreck on the first trip. TWELVE YEARS since funding for this has been enacted and it is still not in service.

Subject: Re: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] A List

From: Gene Poon <sheehans2016@gmail.com> Sent: Thursday, March 11, 2021, 09:56:38 AM CST

The Newport News-Boston sleeper on trains 66 and 67 debuts on April 5. It will be the Viewliner 2 sleeper, and no dinner service is included (flexible or otherwise.) They are offering breakfast, apparently.

On Thu, Mar 11, 2021, 7:38 AM Ed Von Nordeck <vonnordeck-ed@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

No mention of the overnight sleeper Boston-Wash DC

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Subject: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] Fw: AK: Railroad revises summer train service**From:** Gary Kazin via groups.io <gkazin@yahoo.com@groups.io> **Sent:** Thursday, March 11, 2021, 09:59:39 PM CST

The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) announces a revised operating schedule for its summer 2021 passenger train service. The change reduces the traditional frequency for one train, and shortens the season for all summer routes.

The *Coastal Classic*, with service between Anchorage and Seward, and the *Glacier Discovery*, connecting Anchorage with Whittier and Spencer Glacier, will both operate round-trip daily, May 29 through Sept. 6, 2021. The *Denali Star* (which traditionally offered daily bi-directional service between Anchorage, Talkeetna, Denali and Fairbanks) will now offer bi-directional service on Sundays and alternating single-direction service the remaining six days of the week. Between May 29 and Sept. 5, the northbound *Denali Star* will operate Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays; while the southbound train will run Mondays, Wednesdays Fridays and Sundays. The *Hurricane Turn* flagstop will continue as a merged service on the *Denali Star*'s revised schedule.

More: https://www.anchorapress.com/bulletin/railroad-revises-summer-train-service/article_65d5b264-82b1-11eb-9212-97b3d89c57ac.html

Gary R. Kazin

Subject: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] Amtrak To Restore Long Distance Trains To Daily Service**More info... From:** Gene Poon <sheehans2016@gmail.com> **Sent:** Friday, March 12, 2021, 01:59:33 AM CST

Text of the Amtrak portion of the bill:

SEC. 7101. GRANTS TO THE NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION.

(a) NORTHEAST CORRIDOR APPROPRIATION.—In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated for fiscal year 2021, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$970,388,160, to remain available until September 30, 2024, for grants as authorized under section 11101(a) of the FAST Act (Public Law 114–94) to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

(b) NATIONAL NETWORK APPROPRIATION.—In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated for fiscal year 2021, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$729,611,840, to remain available until September 30, 2024, for grants as authorized under section 11101(b) of the FAST Act (Public Law 114–94) to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

(c) LONG-DISTANCE SERVICE RESTORATION AND EMPLOYEE RECALLS.—Not less than \$165,926,000 of the aggregate amounts made available under subsections (a) and (b) shall be for use by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation to—

(1) restore, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the frequency of rail service on long-distance routes (as defined in section 24102 of title 49, United States Code) that the National Railroad Passenger Corporation reduced the frequency of on or after July 1, 2020, and continue to operate such service at such frequency; and

(2) recall and manage employees furloughed on or after October 1, 2020, as a result of efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

(d) USE OF FUNDS IN LIEU OF CAPITAL PAYMENTS.—Not less than \$109,805,000 of the aggregate amounts made available under subsections (a) and (b)—

(1) shall be for use by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation in lieu of capital payments from States and commuter rail passenger transportation providers that are subject to the cost allocation policy under section 24905(c) of title 49, United States Code; and

(2) notwithstanding sections 24319(g) and 24905(c)(1)(A)(i) of title 49, United States Code, such amounts do not constitute cross-subsidization of commuter rail passenger transportation.

(e) USE OF FUNDS FOR STATE PAYMENTS FOR STATE-SUPPORTED ROUTES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts made available under subsection (b), \$174,850,000 shall be for use by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation to offset amounts required to be paid by States for covered State-supported routes.

(2) FUNDING SHARE.—The share of funding provided under paragraph (1) with respect to a covered State-supported route shall be distributed as follows:

(A) Each covered State-supported route shall receive 7 percent of the costs allocated to the route in fiscal year 2019 under the cost allocation methodology adopted pursuant to section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–432).

(B) Any remaining amounts after the distribution described in subparagraph (A) shall be apportioned to each covered State-supported route in proportion to the passenger revenue of such route and other revenue allocated to such route in fiscal year 2019 divided by the total passenger revenue and other revenue allocated to all covered State-supported routes in fiscal year 2019.

(3) COVERED STATE-SUPPORTED ROUTE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term “covered State-supported route” means a State-supported route, as such term is defined in section 24102 of title 49, United States Code, but does not include a State-supported route for which service was terminated on or before February 1, 2020.

(f) USE OF FUNDS FOR DEBT REPAYMENT OR PREPAYMENT.—

Not more than \$100,885,000 of the aggregate amounts made available under subsections (a) and (b) shall be—

(1) for the repayment or prepayment of debt incurred by the National Railroad Passenger Corporation under financing arrangements entered into prior to the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) to pay required reserves, costs, and fees related to such debt, including for loans from the Department of Transportation and loans that would otherwise have been paid from National Railroad Passenger Corporation revenues.

Subject: Re: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] H.W.'s Beloved Loco Parked for Good**From:** espee4441 <espeesd45t2@hotmail.com> **Sent:** Monday, March 22, 2021, 09:01:13 AM CDT

Mind-bogglingly the SP AC4400CW units are still going strong after a full 25 years later on the big Onion, and even their SD70M units. Saw one on the Tuscon rail cam last week. I'll give Onion Pacific credit though, that GW Bush unit is pretty good looking but the Olympic SD70M purple pair has to be the best paint job of any 70 I've ever seen. Wish one of those would lead 5,6,7,8 or 11 and 14 sometime. Or has it already happened?

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Subject: [AllAboardRailDiscussion] Amtrak Northeast Corridor Big Loser Again

From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com> **Sent:** Friday, March 26, 2021, 06:37:49 PM CDT

Amtrak Fiscal Year 2021 through Jan. 31, 2021...Revenue Passenger Miles (millions) and Load Factors:

NEC 123.2 M RPM 20% LF

Regional 160 16%

Long Distance* 265.3 33%

* referred to by Amtrak as "Inter-Regional."

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale NOTE CHANGE	Saturday, July 24 2021 from 9 am to 3 pm.	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights, MN 55108	Admission for the show is \$6.00 for ages 8 and up! Ages 7 and under are FREE!

Northstar News
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Address Correction Requested

