

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Happy Thanksgiving! (snowflakes coming!)



1. CP EB at Lake City Nov 13 2020
-Bob Ball Photo
2. Amtrak EB #8 Frontenac Sept 2 2020 -Bob Ball



Above: BNSF Westbound Big Lake Nov 30 2020 -Bob Ball

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

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 he will add them to the mailing list.

Meeting Notice: November 20, 2021

Meeting is planned at Roseville Lutheran Church 6:15pm to 8:45pm. Please visit www.northstar_NRHS.com for confirmation.

OR you can join us via zoom: We will attempt to hold a hybrid chapter Zoom meeting from Roseville Lutheran Church Saturday evening November 20th. Please make sure your Zoom client is the latest version. Click on the icon in the upper right corner of the Zoom app and the click check for updates. If this doesn't mean anything to you simply click on the link below to join using your internet browser: Join using your Zoom app on your computer, tablet or phone: Meeting ID:

The Zoom meeting will be open around 5:30 pm, and the business meeting will start promptly at 6:15 with the program to follow. 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

Northstar Chapter Officers

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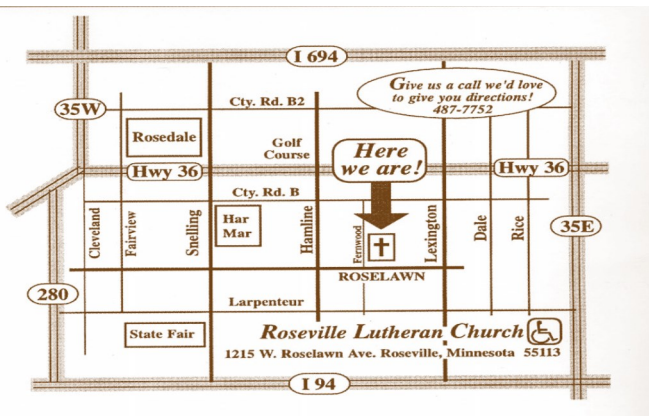
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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the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

From the Editor:

Note: Election for all BOD positions for next year will be held at the November Meeting.

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 October 16, 2021 Roseville Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by president John Goodman at 6:33 pm. Motion to open meeting was carried. President Goodman stated this was our first in person meeting at the Roseville Lutheran Church in eighteen months. President Goodman declared we have a quorum. A motion was carried to approve the meeting minutes from September as written in the October newsletter. President Goodman gave the treasurers report in lieu of absent Treasurer Russ Isbrandt. Our financial situation is close to what was reported in the September meeting. Dawn Holmberg gave the National Directors report. She just returned from a BOD meeting in New York. The NRHS is working on the Los Angeles Convention in May of 2022. Membership renewals on the web site is being addressed. The Web Master report was given by Dan Meyer. The web site is currently up to date. Dawn Holmberg gave the Calendar Report. We have some additional sales to the Lake Superior Railway Museum. The Postcard reminder for the calendar is being readied for distribution soon. We also have sold the traditional 40 calendars to the Minnesota Commercial Railroad. Dawn Holmberg was asked about the condition of member Bob Clarkson. He had successful brain surgery and is currently in a Rehab facility for three weeks. The Trip committee report was given by President John Goodman. We had Twelve members attend the trip in September at the Lake Superior Railroad Museum to Two Harbors. We had the W-24 combine for the trip which was on time with a two-hour lunch break in Two Harbors. President John Goodman said that a charter bus trip is too Expensive and there is a shortage of bus drivers. President Goodman stated that to continue our in-person meetings we are required to wear masks, maintain social distance of four feet with the doors to the room open. We are set for the November Meeting November 20th. The annual banquet was discussed. President Goodman stated the Banquet facilities at Mancini's is all booked up to the first of the year according to Cy Svobodny. Tinucci's in Newport is another possibility, but you have to leave the building by 3pm.

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Use of the party room (Inquiry pending) requirement is that participants must leave by 3pm. President Goodman suggested that we move the banquet to January 2022. It would on a Sunday to be either January 9th or the 23rd. The RPCA conference is scheduled for the Martin Luther weekend of January 18th. Mancini's menu options are various steak dinners. Consensus was that we have the banquet moved to January. Further research needs to be done on details. Since our banquet is in January, we would then have a monthly meeting at the church the third Saturday in December. Dawn Holmberg will check with the church for availability. We then would not have a meeting in January. Dawn stated our meetings are all scheduled with the church until May 2022. The program report was given by President Goodman. Wayne Torseth will present a slide show of a charter trip on the D&SNG in Colorado at the November meeting. The December meeting would be a program of Twin City Trains in Winter of 2020-2021 by Richard Tubbesing. There was a solicitation for future programs by members and or quests in 2022. Dan Meyer gave the election report. Dan solicited from the attendees if anyone would volunteer for a BOD position. There was no response from attendees. Dan stated that Dan Meyer will run for vice president as Dave Herbert voluntarily will not run for vice president next year. Elections for BOD positions will be held at the November 2021 meeting. Glen Holmberg gave a report on Bob Clarkson. Bob will be in a Rehab facility for three weeks and is doing well. President Goodman stated he has tried to contact Marty Swan with no success. President Goodman then asked attendees Gary Rumler, Cy Svobodny and Dave Norman how they were doing. All stated they were well. President John Goodman then stated that the recent convention in Milwaukee was a success. The venues at the National Transportation Museum, East Troy Trolley Museum, Illinois Railway Museum, Christopher Farms Museum and the Metra Charter Trip were well patronized and enthusiastically received. The 2022 convention will be held in the Los Angeles area in May with convention hotel being the Knotts Berry Farm Hotel at a rate of \$119 per night. Also was news of the recent derailment in St Paul where a CP engine did not have the lead locomotive with a working PTC. The recent Amtrak derailment in Montana was probably due to a sun kink in the rail. A Lounge car was lost as a coach and sleeper were overturned. The standing cars were recently sent back to Chicago on Amtrak #8. A motion to adjourn the meeting by John Goodman at 6:32 pm was carried. The program was Marv Mahre film in the 1950's and 1960's of excursions on the C&NW and DM&IR. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing, Secretary

Message from Our Chapter President

Please be advised that at the recent October 2021 in-person monthly meeting of the chapter, it was decided to make the following changes in our normal programs for the months of December 2021 and January 2022.

We will not be having our normal Holiday banquet in December (we missed it in 2020 due to Covid-19) but instead we will have a meeting at the Roseville Lutheran Church that will be in person, and we will have a Zoom meeting for those not able to attend. Date confirmed for this is December 18th, 2021.

We are planning on a January 2022 banquet to replace the normal January in-person meeting. The location and date of this banquet will be in the December 2021 North Star newsletter. We will not be having an in-person meeting in January 2022, but will have our normal February meeting on February 19th, 2022 at our normal location at the Roseville Lutheran Church.

Thank you John H. Goodman President North Star Chapter

NO CP Holiday Train Again This Year

October 11, 2021, 10:50:23 AM CDT Provided by Rick Krenske

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific's Holiday Train will again be sidelined by COVID-19 considerations in 2021, but the railroad will continue with the actions it took in 2020, donating to food banks and holding an online benefit concert.

"The spirit of the Holiday Train is about giving generously and inspiring those around us to give as well," Canadian Pacific CEO Keith Creel said in [a Friday press release](#). "While we are disappointed we again cannot bring the Holiday Train to communities, we are honored to run a virtual program and continue to support communities and food banks across our network as they work to address food insecurity in North America." The railroad will donate to food banks that would normally benefit from a holiday stop — including those that receive visits in alternating years — as well as holding the concert. The railroad said details for the concert will be announced in the weeks ahead. CP joins CSX Transportation and Kansas City Southern in opting for alternative forms of giving in place of traditional holiday train operations. The CSX Santa Train in the Appalachians will be replaced by drive-through gift distribution [see ["CSX Santa Train won't run again in 2021,"](#) *Trains News Wire*, July 15, 2021], while Kansas City Southern will hold fundraising efforts to benefit the Salvation Army in lieu of its traditional Holiday Express [see ["KCS Holiday Express will not run in 2021,"](#) *News Wire*, Sept. 13, 2021]. The Indiana Rail Road announced last week its Santa Train would run, but with new COVID-19 protocols [see ["Indiana Rail Road Santa Train to return,"](#) *News Wire*, Oct. 6, 2021].



Montana National Railroad Passenger Corporation Derailment with Passenger Fatalities

From: RAY BENSEN <rayande@comcast.net> Tuesday, October 26, 2021, CDT Provided by John Goodman
Subject: Preliminary report



NTSB Vice Chairman Bruce Landsberg walking the crash scene



Figure 1. Aerial view of the accident. (Photo is under copyright and courtesy of The Billings (Montana) Ga-

National Railroad Passenger Corporation Derailment with Passenger Fatalities

Investigation Details: What Happened

This information is preliminary and will be either supplemented or corrected during the course of the investigation. Release date OCT 26, 2021.

On September 25, 2021, about 3:47 p.m. local time, westbound National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) train 7 (also known as the Empire Builder) carrying 154 people derailed in a right-hand curve at milepost 1014.57 on the BNSF Railway (BNSF) Hi Line Subdivision near Joplin, Montana.[1] (See figure.) As a result of the derailment, 3 passengers died, and 44 passengers and crew were transported to local hospitals with injuries. Damage was estimated by Amtrak to be over \$22 million. Amtrak train 7 consisted of two locomotives and 10 railcars. Eight of the 10 railcars derailed with four railcars derailling on their sides. In the vicinity of the accident area, BNSF authorizes train movements with a traffic control system. Train movements are coordinated by a BNSF train dispatcher located at the Dispatch Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Train movements on the Hi Line Subdivision are governed by operating rules, special instructions, timetable instructions, and the signal indications of the traffic control system and supplemented with an overlaid positive train control (PTC) system. The maximum allowable speed on this section of track was 79 mph for passenger trains. The PTC system was enabled and operating at the time of the derailment. Preliminary data from the leading locomotive's event recorder showed that train 7 was traveling between 75 and 78 mph when its emergency brakes were activated. The locomotives and the first two railcars remained on the rail. The weather was clear with no precipitation at the time of the accident.

While on scene, National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators conducted track and equipment inspections, reviewed signal and train control data logs, obtained data from the lead locomotive's forward-facing image recorder and event recorder, and conducted interviews. NTSB's investigation is ongoing. Future investigative activity will focus on track and engineering, equipment, survival factors, and passenger railcar crashworthiness.

Parties to this investigation include the Federal Railroad Administration, Amtrak, BNSF, the Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-Way Employees Division, the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers – Transportation Division, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. [2]

□ (a) All times in this document are local time unless otherwise noted. (b) Amtrak is a passenger railroad service that provides medium- and long-distance intercity passenger rail service in the contiguous United States and to nine cities in Canada. Train 7 operates from Chicago, Illinois, to Seattle, Washington, with a portion of the train removed at Spokane, Washington, and then continuing to Portland, Oregon, as train 27.

□ The Brotherhood of Maintenance-of-Way Employees Division spells the word "Employees" in its name with one e. Therefore, we are using that spelling in this report.

[RRD21MR017.aspx](https://www.ntsb.gov/RRD21MR017.aspx) ([ntsb.gov](https://www.ntsb.gov))

CZ hits Garbage Truck in Iowa From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com>

Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 06:45:39 PM CDT AllAboardRailDiscussion] provided by John Goodman

Report: the AMTK 36 is damaged and disqualified to lead but due to emergency conditions, will take the train to where it can get a BNSF unit from a freight train. Might be happening now; 6(25) is stopped. Had been moving from the scene at a maximum 10mph.

FRA Unveils Ambitious Midwest Rail Plan

By Bob Johnston | October 14, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenski

Deputy Administrator Amit Bose touts infrastructure's funding opportunity.



FRA Deputy Administrator Amit Bose unveils a new Midwest rail network plan during a Wednesday event at Chicago Union Station. (Bob Johnston)

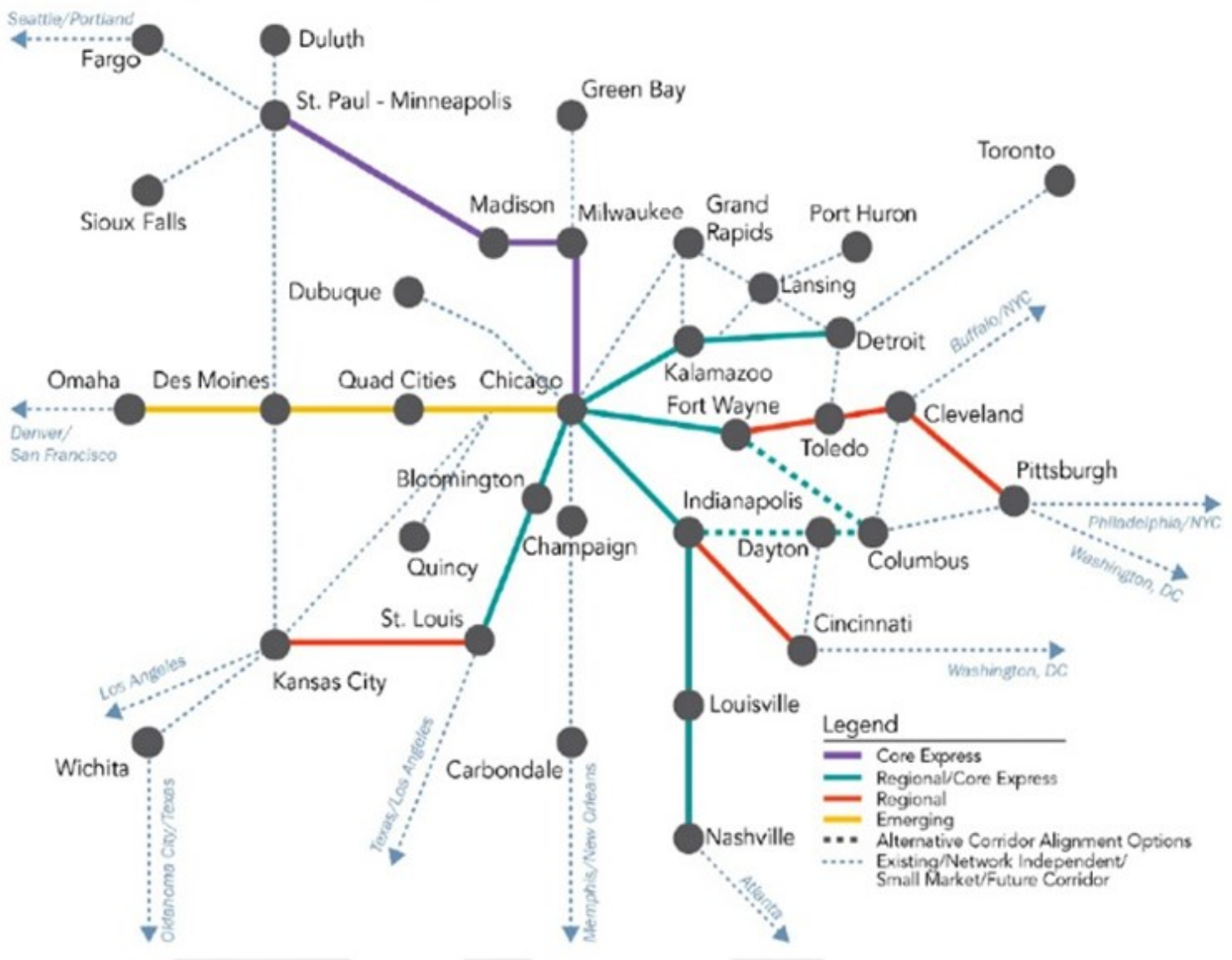
The blueprint, a culmination of two years collaborative work between the FRA, Amtrak, interested stakeholders such as the Midwest Interstate Rail Commission (MIPRC) and 12 state departments of transportation, prioritizes varying levels of additional infrastructure investment on different routes, as outlined on the schematic map that accompanies the report. The full 198-page report is available [here](#).

These include four primary “Core Express” routes radiating from Chicago to Milwaukee, Madison, Wis., and the Twin Cities; St. Louis; Detroit; and Indianapolis. These would feed corridors linking other cities. This is the third FRA regional study, following similar rail plans for the Southeast and Southwest.

“For too long, passenger rail has been the forgotten mode, in the sense that it lacks the sustained funding stream afforded to other forms of transportation. The time has come to change that,” Bose notes, adding, “The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act pending before Congress represents the largest investment in intercity rail since the founding of Amtrak.”

The “once in a generation investment,” he says, also provides for interstate compact programs, “such as the one underpinning the plan released today.” After the announcement, Bose and members of MIPRC boarded Amtrak *Wolverine* train No. 352 for Dearborn, Michigan, where the compact’s annual conference is taking place Thursday.

Figure 30. Proposed Network for the Midwest Regional Rail Plan



A schematic diagram of proposed passenger rail service in the Midwest. (Federal Railroad Administration)

CP Train Operating Without Functioning PTC at Center of Three-train Collision in St Paul

By | October 13, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenske <rick@usjet.net>

Preliminary report from NTSB

WASHINGTON — A Canadian Pacific train operating without functioning positive train control triggered August's three-railroad, three-train collision in St. Paul, Minn., according to a preliminary report from the National Transportation Safety Board.

The preliminary report, released Wednesday, lays out basic facts of the accident but does not draw any conclusions or recommend any actions.

The Aug. 25, 2021, accident saw the eastbound CP train collide with a stopped Union Pacific train on the same track, derailing one locomotive from the CP train and two from the UP train; the derailed CP locomotive then struck a lumber car from a BNSF Railway train on an adjacent track [see "NTSB to investigate three-train collision ..." *Trains News Wire*, Aug. 27, 2021]. The report says CP train 296-23, which originated in Calgary and had four locomotives and 117 cars — 28 loads and 89 empties — had a failure of its onboard PTC system on Aug. 23. CP's PTC help desk was unable to troubleshoot the problem and instructed the crew to proceed, per regular procedures. Upon arriving in St. Paul, the crew informed the BNSF dispatcher that the train was operating without PTC; the BNSF chief dispatcher authorized the train to proceed.



This illustration from the NTSB's preliminary report shows where a derailed Canadian Pacific locomotive hit a car on a BNSF train. (Federal Railroad Administration)

No injuries were reported; initial damage was estimated at \$674,000. The NTSB report indicates the ongoing investigation "will focus on train crew performance."

Metro News - Commuter Transit Is Declining

On Monday, October 18, 2021, 9:24 AM, Provided by Rick Krenske

"Traffic patterns of three generations have been disrupted by COVID-19 and the work-at-home movement. Rush hours are fading, use of commuter transit is sinking, and even freeways are evolving. 'Transportation choices have been impacted hugely by COVID, across the board,' said **Kyle Shelton**, director of the Center for

Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota. 'We should think about all of our planned projects in a new way.' ... By 2022, more than one-quarter of American employees will be working from home multiple days a week, predicts the nonprofit Global Workplace Analytics. Those workers won't be riding buses or trains.

Even the ones who do commute won't necessarily be going downtown. Roughly 80 percent of the metro area's jobs are in the suburbs, according to an August report by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. As a result, commuter transit is declining. Planners were stunned when COVID stripped away 96 percent of the riders on the Northstar commuter-rail line from Minneapolis to Big Lake. Rides on most other commuter lines dropped by about half.

'That type of trip is not happening any more,' said **Eric Lind**, manager of research and analytics for Metro Transit.

More Oil Trains Will Run Through Minnesota, Twin Cities

Mike Hughlett, Star Tribune October 17, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenske

A new Canadian railroad venture is sparking a significant increase of 15 to 20 oil trains that run through Minnesota each month. Canadian Pacific Railway's specialized new Canadian crude cargoes run on its main line, which bisects the Twin Cities. And the Canadian rail giant's recent deal to purchase a major U.S. railroad will likely make its new oil service even more appealing to shippers. Oil-by-rail has stoked safety concerns in Minnesota and elsewhere since 2013 when an oil train in Quebec caught fire and exploded, killing 47 people. Since then, several more oil trains in North America have derailed and spilled, some catching fire. Canadian Pacific declined to say how many of the new oil trains it's currently running. But during a conference call with analysts in July, the railroad's chief marketing officer said he expects "business to ramp up to 15 to 20 trains per month during the third quarter," which ended Sept. 30. Their destination: Port Arthur, Texas.

Canadian Pacific and the company behind the new Alberta, Canada, rail venture, USD Partners, say they're using a new technology that makes shipping oil safe enough it need not be categorized as a flammable hazardous cargo. "From an innovation, sustainability and safety perspective, this is a game changer," Canadian Pacific CEO Keith Creel said in 2019 when the project was announced. USD Partners said testing of its proprietary oil blend indicates that if it's spilled into water during a derailment, it will float. Unlike lighter oil, heavy Canadian crude can eventually sink and diffuse, making cleanup efforts more difficult. But the venture and USD's claims have some skeptics. "There are a lot of problems with this proposal and the complete lack of transparency around it," said Frank Hornstein, the Minneapolis DFLer who heads the Minnesota House's Transportation Finance and Policy Committee.

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"We don't know the characteristics of this material being transported," he said. "We have to depend on the company making a profit off of it to guarantee its safety." Plus, Hornstein said it's imprudent to launch such new fossil fuel projects "at a time when a climate emergency is building day by day."

Most Canadian crude bound for the United States — by far Canada's biggest oil export market — travels on pipelines, particularly Enbridge's corridor of six lines across Minnesota. Enbridge recently completed a \$3 billion-plus pipeline to replace Line 3, which was corroding and able to operate only at 50% of capacity. One of Enbridge's arguments for the controversial pipeline was that without it, the number of oil trains in Minnesota would multiply, said Laura Triplett, a geology and environmental studies professor at Gustavus Adolphus College. "Now we are getting more trains anyway," she said. The Canadian Pacific's route runs the length and breadth of Minnesota, hugging the Mississippi River in the southeast. For the past 21 months, Department of Public Safety records indicate CP is the largest rail shipper of oil in the state. Volume varies considerably. For the week ending Oct. 3, CP had five to six hazardous trains running through the most heavily trafficked counties for those types of loads. For the week ending Sept. 5, that count was 16 to 19. Crude oil and ethanol generally make up the bulk of hazardous rail cargoes.

The new oil trains running from USD's terminal aren't likely to be tallied in those state counts. USD said the oil is not hazardous cargo as defined under U.S. and Canadian transportation regulations. Heavy Canadian crude, known as bitumen, is considerably less volatile and combustible than lighter oil from North Dakota, which was at the heart of the massive accident in Quebec eight years ago. But Canadian crude can still catch fire. A Canadian Pacific train derailed in rural Saskatchewan in February 2020, spilling around 400,000 gallons of oil, which ignited. A similarly-sized CP derailment and oil spill two months earlier in Saskatchewan also burned. USD says oil processed through its new technology is not flammable — and therefore not hazardous. A key to that claim involves something called diluent.

Bitumen from Canada's oil sands is so thick that it's often extracted from big open pit mines, a particularly carbon-intensive process. To make the stuff fluid enough to transport, oil shippers use diluent made from lighter — and more flammable — hydrocarbons. Diluent typically makes up about 30% of the oil shipped through pipelines. Sometimes, oil will be moved directly off pipelines to railcars with that 30% diluent level maintained. Other times, trains will transport heavy crude with about 15% diluent.

USD Partners' said that with its "DRUbit" process, the diluent level of a barrel of oil is reduced to 5% and the diluent that remains has fewer light hydrocarbons. "By design, DRUbit reduces diluent to allow the product to not meet the flammable and hazardous classifications of the U.S. Department of Transportation and Canada's Transport of Dangerous Goods regulations," USD said in a statement to the Star Tribune. Canadian Pacific, also in a statement, said, "DRUbit is specifically designed for safe rail transportation." U.S. and Canadian transportation regulators say it is the shipper's responsibility to classify whether oil and other cargoes are hazardous. For years, companies in Canada's oil patch have been working on ways to remove diluent from rail cars — and not just for safety reasons. Economics plays a key role.

Diluent is a low-value product that adds costs to shipping, said Kevin Birn, a Calgary-based oil industry analyst for IHS Markit. "It basically occupies space."

USD's terminal in Hardisty, Alberta — a joint venture with the Canadian firm Gibson Energy — receives crude from pipelines with 30% diluent. It recycles much of that diluent and ships it back to Alberta oil producers to reuse, a particularly cost-effective measure. Publicly traded USD Partners has a long-term agreement with oil producer ConocoPhillips to ship crude from Alberta and is looking for more customers. Shipping oil by pipelines is generally significantly cheaper than by rail. But USD Partners claims that its technology is cost-competitive with pipelines — and analysts say that is possible. The economics for USD Partners and the Canadian Pacific should get even better if CP's \$27 billion purchase of Kansas City Southern goes through.

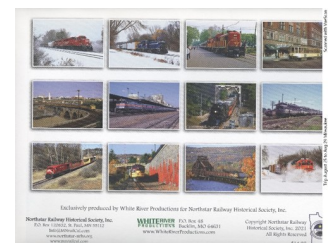
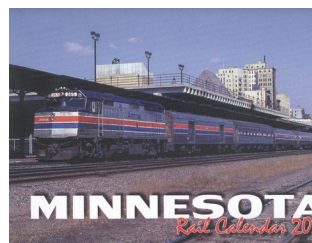
The Canadian Pacific's system runs south to Kansas City. From there, the KCS has extensive ties to the Gulf Coast — the largest U.S. oil refining hub — including Port Arthur, Texas. ConocoPhillips has a refinery nearby. In Port Arthur, USD Partners has built a new terminal, which like its Hardisty venture, was completed this summer. Like CP, KCS has been instrumental in advancing the new DRUbit rail service to Port Arthur. But with the merger, CP will be able to offer single-line service all the way to the Gulf Coast, which should reduce costs for all traffic moving on the combined railway.

"That single-line service, you'll hear us talk a lot about that," Kansas City Southern CEO Pat Ottensmeyer told stock analysts in September. "That is significant in that it avoids interchanges, avoids those [situations] that generally add cost and add time."

Minnesota Rail Calendar for 2022 Now Available!

Purchase yours at our next meeting. \$16.25

See Dawn Holmberg



Mark Twain Zephyr Work Continues with Dining-car Project)

By Steve Smedley | October 7, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenski

Former Buffet-coach 'Huckleberry Finn' Converted to Full Dining Car.



Completed for the Mark Twain Zephyr car Huckleberry Finn, including a new three-burner stove at left. The right side of the kitchen includes the original sink and other original fixtures. (Steve Smedley)



Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad President Greg Vreeland arranges chairs in the new dining area of the Huckleberry Finn during work Oct. 2, 2021. (Steve Smedley)



Wisconsin Great Northern's Greg Vreeland exits the Huckleberry Finn next to a sign explaining the work being done on the car. (Steve Smedley)

TREGO, Wis. — The interior of another car has been completed as the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad continues its work to return one of the first diesel-powered streamlined passenger trains to operation.

Trains News Wire's latest visit to northwest Wisconsin to check on restoration of the Mark Twain Zephyr, the articulated trainset built by Philadelphia's Budd Co. in 1934 for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, highlights the work on the train's third car, No. 551, the *Huckleberry Finn*.

The car, originally a coach-buffet, is being converted into a full-service dining car. The steam generator and buffet kitchen area, which spanned the width of the car, have been replaced with a modern kitchen that allows room for a walk-around hall on one side, so passengers can access the restored train's tavern car, museum car, and theater.

The original sink and some of stainless-steel cabinets have been retained. Added are a new three-burner stove and steam table, along with an industrial dishwasher and heavy-duty refrigerator. In contrast to the original kitchen, the chef and staff will work in air-conditioned comfort while preparing five-course meals.

The remainder of the car, which had been coach seating, has been turned into a dining room with seating for 40. The original seating had been gone for some 40 years, according to Wisconsin Great Northern president Greg Vreeland.



Mark Twain Zephyr E-Newsletter:

Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad

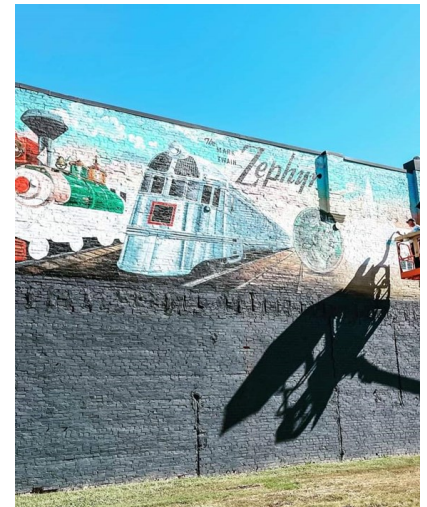
Excerpts: October 2021 provided by Chuck Lavallee

While the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad is home of the under-restoration *Mark Twain Zephyr*, the city of Hannibal, Mo., is getting its own version of the streamliner — a 60-foot-by-14-foot mural.

For a couple of weeks, muralist Ray Harvey of suburban St. Louis has been perched on a lift above the corner of 3rd and Broadway, painting a lifelike depiction of the train. Harvey, a freelance illustrator and muralist for the past 35 years, has created over five hundred public, residential, commercial, and industrial murals around the Midwest. He has been commissioned by cities, mayors, corporate executives, and celebrities, and has completed numerous large mural projects in Hannibal, including one for Hannibal City Hall.

The *Mark Twain Zephyr* mural was made possible by generations from about 20 individuals, with donations ranging from \$20 to more than \$1,000. One of the main benefactors is Deborah White of Nashville, Tenn., who grew up in Hannibal. Another is Archie Hayden, who worked for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad as a trainman and still calls Hannibal home.

"Believe it or not, I have actually never actually ridden on a train before," Harvey says. "People are surprised sometimes when I tell them that ... but I just never really had the opportunity even though I live in a town that has an Amtrak train to Kansas City."



MURALIST SHARES THE MTZ WITH HANNIBAL

Continued on next page:

"But I don't need to ride on a train to be able to paint one. I can get the visual for something without having the experience. With that said, I really hope my first train ride can be on the *Mark Twain Zephyr* when it's restored at the Wisconsin Great Northern. I will be planning on making the trip up."

Harvey says even though he uses the best materials around, most murals last about 15 years due to harsh winters and thunderstorms of the Midwest. "The murals I paint are really with us just for a short period of time," he says. "They are for people to enjoy now ... and then in 15 years or so ... they will come down or it's time to paint over them with something new."

The mural was completed last week.

COMING SOON TO MUSEUM CAR

Please be sure and watch this Sunday afternoon's *Mark Twain Zephyr* video update on our YouTube Channel... or MarkTwainZephyr.com... to learn more about a generous donation made by a Mount Pleasant, Iowa resident. We will also tell you about part of the "Injun Joe" that was acquired by the Wisconsin Great Northern and will be reunited with the train for the first time since the 1960's.

That and much more coming up on the October 31st update!

If you are interested in discussing a donation to the *Mark Twain Zephyr* Museum and Display Car, "Becky Thatcher", please e-mail, rtabern@spoonertrainride.com.



METRO BLUE LINE EXTENSION

Open House in Robbinsdale October 15 2021

Provided by John Goodman

Project staff invited People to attend an open house for the METRO Blue Line Extension project. They shared a project update on the proposed LRT alignment, potential station study areas in Robbinsdale, including possible connections to North Memorial Medical Center.

ROBBINSDALE OPEN HOUSE was held

Wednesday, October 27

5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Elim Lutheran Church

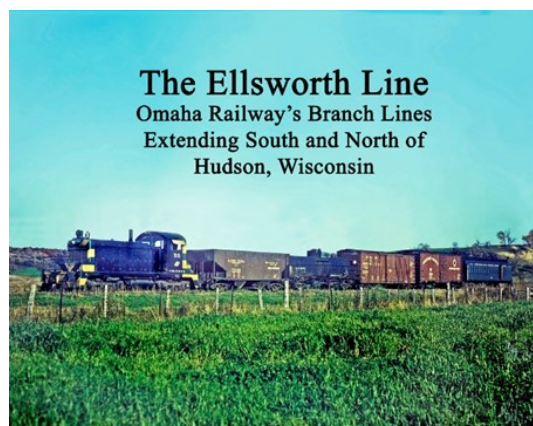
3978 West Broadway Avenue.

Robbinsdale, MN 55422

Attendees were encouraged to wear masks throughout the meeting.

The direction of this project relies on community input, so be sure to share your thoughts and ideas to help chart the future of the Blue Line Extension. Anyone who required assistance to participate in this event was invited to contact Sophia Ginis, Manager of Public Involvement: sophia.ginis@metrotransit.org or 651.592.1911.

Requests for assistance was made at least five business days in advance of the meeting so they can accommodate everyone. You can find the open house materials, ways to share feedback, and the latest newsletter at the project website: www.BlueLineExt.org



New Book

On Friday, October 22, 2021, 11:25 AM, Arlyn Colby

barronrrbooks@yahoo.com

I finished my latest book about abandoned branchline railroads in West Central Wisconsin. It is called *The Ellsworth Line*. The Ellsworth Line was the Omaha Railway's track from Hudson, WI south to Prescott Road, Glover's Station, River Falls, Cherma, Beldenville, and Ellsworth and north to Bayport and Stillwater.

Thanks much.

Arlyn Colby

427 Pine Street

Barron, WI 54812

Email: barronrrbooks@yahoo.com

Union Pacific Sets Quarterly Marks for Operating Ratio and Profits

By Bill Stephens | October 21, 2021 Service hurt by wildfires, weather, and congestion. Provided by Rick Krenski



A Union Pacific intermodal train departs the Global IV terminal in Joliet, Ill., on Aug. 7, 2021. The railroad says intermodal car dwell and velocity have improved, but global supply chain issues remain. (Trains: David Lassen)

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific set third-quarter records for operating ratio, profits, and earnings per share despite flat traffic volume and the impact of wildfires and bad weather that hurt service reliability.

“The Union Pacific team dealt with multiple network disruptions that required us to rebuild bridges, reroute trains, and connect more closely with other links in the supply chain to support and to serve our customers,” CEO Lance Fritz told investors and analysts on the railroad’s earnings call on Thursday morning.

UP’s operating income rose 20%, to \$2.4 billion, as revenue grew 12%, to \$5.1 billion. Earnings per share increased 28%, to \$2.57.

The railroad’s operating ratio improved 2.4 points to 56.3% despite surging fuel costs and the month-long detour of trains while UP rebuilt the fire-damaged Dry Canyon Bridge on its I-5 Corridor linking the Pacific Northwest and California.

The bridge outage, combined with a Gulf Coast hurricane and mudslides in the Rockies, hit UP’s key operating metrics, including

car miles per day, average train speed, and terminal dwell. Global supply chain disruptions, including the surge of international intermodal traffic at West Coast ports and the slowdown in shippers picking up containers at inland terminals, also contributed to congestion.

As a result, intermodal on-time performance dropped to 66% in the quarter, down from 77% a year ago, while trip plan compliance for merchandise and automotive traffic was 60%, down from 72% a year ago.

Eric Gehringer, executive vice president of operations, said service metrics have been on an upswing since bottoming out in August. “We recognize improving trip plan compliance is critical to support our customers and our long-term growth strategy,” Gehringer says.

I-5 Corridor disruption limits train length

Average train length fell during the quarter due to detours around the severed I-5 Corridor, which limited detour train length to 8,300 feet. But executives said UP’s long-train focus would continue. UP completed nine 15,000-foot siding projects during the quarter and began construction or was in the final planning stages for 26 more siding expansions to support operation of longer trains.

UP’s bulk traffic, including coal, grain, fertilizer, and food and refrigerated products, was up 4%. Higher natural gas prices, and new coal contracts indexed to natural gas prices, helped boost coal volume, says Kenny Rocker, executive vice president of marketing and sales.

Industrial products volume grew 14% thanks to rising energy, forest products, chemicals and plastics, and metals and minerals shipments, Rocker says.

UP’s premium traffic, which includes intermodal and automotive business, was down 9% due to congestion at West Coast ports and inland intermodal terminals and the ongoing computer chip shortage that has crimped auto production. Intermodal traffic was down 6% for the quarter, while automotive volume was off by 18%.

UP reduced its full-year volume expectations to 5% growth, down from its prior outlook of 7%, due to the impact of congestion in the intermodal supply chain and the downturn in auto production.

Executives said freight demand should remain strong into 2022, but capturing more volume would hinge on the pandemic waning and unsnarling congestion in the global supply chain. There’s a record backlog of container ships waiting to dock at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, while turn times for chassis and containers at inland destinations has slowed due to a shortage of truck drivers and warehouse workers.

“If we could snap our fingers, on the back end we would love to see more dray and warehouse distribution capacity. That’s the first thing that we would love to see. I think that would fundamentally change street time for chassis and boxes,” Fritz says.

UP’s intermodal car dwell is back within its historic averages, Gehringer says, and intermodal car velocity is the highest it’s been in nine months. But street turn times for intermodal equipment are up 20% this year, effectively limiting the capacity of the intermodal network.



NORTH POLE EXPRESS

December 3-5 & 9-12, 2021 Coach Class

Carhost service and entertainment / Visit from Santa / Ride to North Pole in vintage railcar / Holiday treat

<https://261.com/npe/> <https://www.showclix.com/events/8813>

Greetings to One and All, This is Santa writing to let everyone know that the North Pole Express will be returning to the historic Union Depot, in the heart of St. Paul, the first two weekends of December 2021.

The all volunteer staff of the Friends of the 261 will operate the North Pole Express, pulled by our world famous Milwaukee Road #261 steam locomotive the first weekend. The second weekend the train will be pulled by our historic and meticulously restored Milwaukee Road #32A streamlined locomotive. The 261 volunteers look forward to offering a safe event with very limited seating to encourage social distancing and optional mask wearing. The 261 volunteer staff will make every effort to continually provide a safe and clean environment for passengers.

Join the Friends of the 261 and me, Santa, as we travel on a short journey to and from the North Pole. You will be able to view all the special shops, Santa’s home and the elves working hard preparing for the big day. And, along the way, we’ll enjoy singing holiday carols and the spirit of the Holidays with some of my entertaining characters on board to enhance the experience. Ho, Ho, Ho! All Aboard the North Pole Express! **Santa Claus**



Mid-Continent Railway Museum BBS Oct 7 2021 Provided by Chuck Lavallee



MCRM Tour Group in passenger



2021 Oct MCRM Bob in Coach Shed #2 with a tour group



MCRM Owen lettering the Soo Line herald on the #203 caboose



MCRM Randy and Bill working on the hand brake system under the DULUTH



MCRM Randy helping to install the baggage racks in the GN coach

VRCT and Volunteer Session Update

A large group of volunteers were on hand during the recent work session (Oct 1-4) to support the **Vintage Rail Car Tours (VRCT)** as well as working in the Car Shop Volunteers. The volunteers helping with the VRCT's preparations and tours included: Don P., Randy M., Jeff Ha., Cindy H., Owen, Tom, Bob R., Ross, David M., Bobbie, Gary and myself. In the office Jeff Lentz and Nancy Kaney

assisted with planning, advertising, ticketing and reservations for the VRCTs. This year's VRCTs included tours through the DSS&A #213, Soo Line OAK PARK, MLS&W #63 and the Badger #2 Fish Car. Many of the visitors with a tour ticket also went on to see the active restoration projects in the Car Shop. The tours went well and we received a lot of positive feedback on the restored cars and the work that we have been doing. The tours were well attended with a total of (160) people taking the tours (97 tickets sold on Saturday and 63 on Sunday). Thank you to everyone that helped with the preparations, tours and the clean-up. It was a great team effort.

In the Car Shop volunteers were also active during the four day period. Volunteers that worked in the Car Shop included: Owen, Richard P., Randy M., Pete, Mike M., Fred, Jack, Jerry and myself. A brief summary of the activity and progress follows:

DULUTH: Stripping of the interior wood work is in progress in the women's end of the car (Larry). Randy and I worked on installing the hand brake brackets and rods under the south end of the car. We also installed all of the pins and cotter keys in all of the connections. The hand brake system is now complete up to each end of the car with the exception of one lever that needs to be fabricated.



MCRM The LS&I #64 upper roof with the new carlines and blocking installed

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Soo Line #203: Owen started to layout and paint the Soo Line herald on the east side of the car. Richard P. installed the curved flashing on each end of the car and glued down the membrane onto the flashing. The roof is now largely done with the exception of installing the stove smoke jack and the cupola braces.

EJ&S #2 : On Friday Pete continued to work on the north end platform decking. He completed replacing the door batten and painted all of the new wood. Pete was assisted by a newer member (name?) as the two of them painted the south trucks with a fresh coat of gloss black. On Saturday Pete started to tear into the south end platform decking. Upon removal of the deck he found one of the platform sills deteriorated and in need of replacement. Pete got the sill removed and will start the replacement process during the next session.

LS&I #64 : Fred, Jerry, Jack and Mike completed installing the last of the spacer blocks between the upper roof carlines. This is a significant milestone as this completes the structural repairs to the car's roof. We plan on installing the roof decking on the upper and lower roofs during the upcoming work sessions.
Bill Buhrmaster Restoration Dept. 708-340-4098

News from the Iron Range

NP ore dock

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Wed, 06 Oct 2021 12:18:05 PDT

There is a nice article on the NP ore dock in the most recent NPRHA Mainstreeter (V40/3).

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

West Duluth Signals

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Tue, 12 Oct 2021 10:41:56 PDT

Here are two links to shots of signals at Jenswold Street (Soo/NP) and at 46th Ave. West (DW&P/NP). J. David Ingles images from 1964. Thanks to Dan Holbrook for pointing these out and Lake States for the scans.

<https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/J-David-Ingles-Collection/Signals/i-hZSRWs5/A>



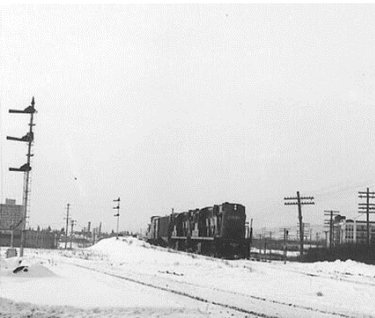
<https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/J-David-Ingles-Collection/Signals/i-hZSRWs5/A>

<https://www.lakestatesarchive.org/J-David-Ingles-Collection/Signals/i-NsqGLD5/A>

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

Re: West Duluth Signals

From: [Gordon Mott](#) Date: Tue, 12 Oct 2021 12:59:03 PDT



Nice, Dave, especially the one at 46th Ave. W. The photo is looking down the DWP towards Duluth and the Bridge Yard. The line joining from the right is the NP from Mike's Yard and Grassy Point. At the end of the track is the junction with the NP Short Line and the actual tower. The photo below is looking the other direction — up the DWP towards the trestle and their yard.

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Cliffs Enters Scrap Business

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Tue, 12 Oct 2021 12:57:58 PDT

Another note of the high prices for scrap iron is that Hibbing Salvage and supply has been shipping a lot of scrap weekly from its siding in Hibbing. I have seen as many as five gondolas being loaded at the beginning of the week and the Kelly Lake Local would pull them on say Tuesday and spot another 4 or 5 and then pull them on Thursday. This has been going on most of the summer and early fall.

Hibbing Salvage and Supply does have a new scrap yard located just west of Hibbing off of 25 street (road going to Kerr and Letonia). Truck loads of scrap are then trucked to north Hibbing for loaded into gondolas.

The Kelly Lake Local only operates at Kelly Lake for three days. Tuesday through Thursday are the Kelly Lake Locals operating days out of Kelly Lake. On Friday and Saturday the Kelly Lake local crew goes to Grand Rapids to do the Seyton Local's

Hull Rust Hibtac Mine Blast Sep 23, 2021

From: [Bruce K](#) Date: Fri, 24 Sep 2021 06:34:54 PDT



https://youtu.be/SmltU_g6g84

This was between 2 and 3 million tons of mostly waste rock. It was taken from the Mineview in Hibbing.
Bruce Kettunen Mt. Iron MN

Cliffs to Shift Low Silica Pellet Production to Minorca

From: [Bruce K](#) Date: Mon, 25 Oct 2021 07:12:43 PDT

Cliffs announced Friday that they are shifting low silica pellet production from Northshore to Minorca.

From the Mesabi Tribune 20/22/21.

DR-grade pellet production is at long last coming to Minnesota's Iron Range.

Lourenco Goncalves, Cleveland-Cliffs, Inc. chairman, president and chief executive officer said Friday that the iron and steelmaker is moving production of DR-grade pellets to its Minorca Mine in Virginia from Northshore Mining Co. in Silver Bay.

We will soon be shifting our DR-grade pellet production away from Northshore and into Minorca, where we will not have to deal with the unreasonable royalty structure at Northshore," Goncalves said during the company's third quarter earnings call. "As we plan to no longer sell pellets to third parties in coming years, Northshore will become a swing operation, which will be idled every time we decide to do so."

It's a major move within northeastern Minnesota's iron ore industry.

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DR-grade pellets are a higher quality pellet compared to the acid or flux iron ore pellets that for decades have been produced at Iron Range taconite plants.

Because DR-grade pellets contain a higher iron content, they're of more value and can be used in modern steelmaking technologies.

For the Iron Range, it's a big step forward into the future of iron and steel production.

"It's the next generation with the evolution of the EAF's (electric arc furnaces)," John Arbogast, United Steelworkers District 11 staff representative said. "We're very excited about moving the process to Minorca and (USW Local) 6115. We're trying to learn more details, but this is exciting for Local 6115."

The move allows Cleveland-Cliffs to provide a consistent feed and lower costs at its \$1 billion hot-briquetted iron (HBI) plant in Toledo, Ohio, Goncalves said. The HBI plant can produce about 1.9 million tons of HBI annually for use in blast furnaces, basic oxygen furnaces and EAF's.

Cleveland-Cliffs spent about \$100 million at Northshore Mining Co. to implement production of DR-grade pellets. DR-grade pellets from Northshore currently feed the Toledo plant.

But Goncalves says the company will save money in royalty payments by producing DR-grade pellets at Minorca Mine instead of Northshore. Royalties are paid by mining company's for removing ore from land owned by other entities.

"The royalty component at Northshore is absurdly high," Goncalves said. "That's why we are moving from Northshore with a very bad royalty structure to Minorca. We are always looking for better costs and that's why we are going to Minorca."

Rep. Dave Lislegard of Aurora said Goncalves has for years been foreshadowing the transformation of the steel and iron mining industry.

"We have been seeing this play out in the form of investments and consolidation and today's announcement may be another sign of this process," Lislegard, whose district includes Minorca said. "I plan to be in communication with Cleveland-Cliffs to learn more about this development, express the value of the company to the region and advocate for the people and businesses that rely on this core industry. Our state has an opportunity to play a key role moving forward with companies committed to this transition. You're either at the table or you're on the menu. It's time for the state to be at the table."

Minorca is a great plant with great equipment and great leadership, Goncalves said.

"They are very excited with the opportunity to produce DR-grade pellets," Goncalves said. "I have my Northshore people working to help our Minorca people to move DR-grade pellets from Northshore to Minorca. We're going to have a much better royalty structure and we're going to have Northshore idle now and then. That's what we're going to do."

Goncalves said if he had a crystal ball, he never would have invested \$100 million into DR-grade pellet production at Northshore knowing that Cleveland-Cliffs would later acquire assets of ArcelorMittal USA, including Minorca Mine.

Additional changes at other Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Range operations are underway.

Minorca Mine and Cleveland-Cliffs' United Taconite facility in Eveleth and Forbes, both produce the company's superflux Mustang pellet, Goncalves said

With the shift of DR-grade pellet production to Minorca, 100 percent of Mustang pellet production will move to United Taconite, he said.

Cleveland-Cliffs reported record quarterly revenue of \$6.0 billion in the third quarter. It also recorded record quarterly net income of \$1.3 billion.

With its 2020 acquisitions of AK Steel Holding Corp. and ArcelorMittal USA assets, Cleveland-Cliffs is the largest flat-rolled steel producer in North America. It's also North America's largest producer of iron ore.

"In a short period of less than two years, we went from \$2 billion annual revenues in 2019 to expected revenues of \$21 billion in 2019," Goncalves said in a news release. "Also, the \$1.9 billion of Q3 adjusted EBITDA we have just reported is equivalent to half of our year-to-date adjusted EBITDA of \$3.8 billion, showing that our profitability continues to increase, as we continue to implement our way of doing business, and take advantage of – and extract synergies from– our modern, efficient and unique footprint."

Cleveland-Cliffs operates four of northeastern Minnesota's six taconite plants, Hibbing Taconite Co., Northshore Mining Co., Minorca Mine, and United Taconite

Re: Cliffs to Shift Low Silica Pellet Production to Minorca

From: [Bruce K](#) Date: Tue, 26 Oct 2021 14:48:28 PDT

Babbitt ore tends to be very hard high silica concentrate ore. It's not the best feed for low silica concentrate for DRI.

Some of Minorca's ore produces low silica concentrate very easily.

The best, of course, is the taconite around the former Butler property. Relatively soft and low silica.

Since royalties are apparently a problem at Babbitt and the ore isn't all that great anyways I don't see that ore being shipped anywhere but to Silver Bay.

My read is that Goncalves is posturing for better royalty terms at Northshore.

All my humble opinion. Bruce K

403 Headed back North

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Wed, 27 Oct 2021 07:29:33 PDT

Missabe 403 is headed back north for its normal assignment in Thunder Bay. It was nice while it lasted and fun to see it back on Missabe rails.

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

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2022 DM&IR Calendar

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Wed, 27 Oct 2021 09:57:57 PDT

The MRHS is again offering wall calendars in the tradition of the DM&IR as a fundraiser. Please click on this link for ordering info via the MRHS web site. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d56c77908f00300013224db/t/6170cd24b97c5606fd703e51/1634782500405/MRHS+2022+Calendar+Order+Form.pdf>

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN



Volume 5 Issue 10 October, 2021 Provided by John Goodman

RAILROAD NEWS

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

Museum and Excursion Trains



Heavyweight business car NYC No.3 and two lightweight sleepers returned to their birthplace as part of the grand opening of the Pullman National Monument Visitor Center on Chicago's South Side. The cars, built by Pullman or Pullman-Standard between 1928 and 1955, were available for tours at Metra's 111th Street station.

The Kentucky Steam Heritage Corp. began train excursions for the first time in its six-year history to help celebrate the Ravenna Railroad Festival. The excursions featured two cars, including Kentucky Steam's former Pennsylvania Railroad baggage car, and were pulled by the former Lehigh Valley Coal Co. 0-6-0T saddle tank locomotive No. 126, nicknamed "Sadie." The 90-year-old locomotive, on lease for the weekend, built by Vulcan Iron Works in 1931, operated 17 half-hour excursions. Kentucky Steam is actively restoring former Chesapeake & Ohio 2-8-4 No. 2716 to operating condition.

The KCS Holiday Express has been cancelled this year. Twenty-one communities will still receive funds through the Salvation Army Campaign.

Tabor City, N. C., has issued a Request For Proposals seeking an operator for excursion trains. The move comes after several years of efforts by local officials who believe such an operation could attract tourism and become an economic generator for that section of the state. This effort follows a successful drive to revive the dilapidated Carolina Southern Railroad. The RJ Corman acquired ownership of all but one mile of the system and put it back into service. The RFP seeks an operator solely on the lines within North Carolina, between Tabor City and Fair Bluff, a nearly 25-mile run.

For the second year, the Autumn Colors Express railroad passenger excursions in the New River Gorge have been postponed. The surge in COVID-

19 cases was cited as the reason. Ticket holders will automatically be transferred to equivalent dates in October 2022. The Hinton Railroad Days Committee is evaluating the situation to determine if a smaller event or a two-day event makes sense for the vendors. The Autumn Colors Express operates the route of the former New River Train from Huntington and Charleston to Hinton through the New River Gorge.

The B&O Railroad Museum has obtained a \$500,000 grant to cosmetically restore both the exterior and interior of the former Baltimore & Ohio Washington Pullman observation-tavern car No. 3316 built in 1949. The funds, to be matched 1:1 with other contributions come from the Federal Saving America's Treasures program. That is a National Park Service grant program in collaboration with the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies

The westbound Empire Builder was traveling from Chicago to Seattle when it left the tracks about 4 p.m. near Joplin, a town of about 200. Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams said the train was carrying about 141 passengers and 16 crew members.

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Federal investigators are seeking the cause of an Amtrak train derailment near a switch on tracks in the middle of vast farmland in far northern Montana. Three people were killed and seven hospitalized.

It had two locomotives and 10 cars, eight of which derailed, with some tipping onto their sides. Officials have not released any information on what they suspect caused the train to derail as it was traveling through an apparently flat and straight section of the route. The wreck is under investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.

Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, took on questions about automated track inspection, crew sizes, hazardous materials transportation, and port congestion, among other topics, during a Sept. 22 hearing on his nomination by President Biden to be the next Federal Railroad Administrator. Currently, Bose serves as Deputy FRA Administrator, returning to the agency where he was also Chief Counsel and Senior Adviser.

Iowa Pacific Railroad Equipment in Late 2021

From: Gary Kazin via groups.io <allaboardraildiscussion@groups.io> Provided by John Goodman
Thursday, October 7, 2021, 05:34:56 PM CDT

ALAMOSA, Colorado — Iowa Pacific Railroad equipment rolled out of Alamosa in the San Luis Valley bound for days of fun, music, and beer in the Colorado mountains until just a few years ago. The Illinois Central colors of Iowa Pacific Holdings and the trains of the San Luis & Rio Grande added to the landscape.

Today, in Alamosa, freight trains behind former CSX SD70Ms (leased from Progress Rail) still run on behalf of the trustee placed in charge of the receivership of the bankrupt Iowa Pacific, and Rio Grande Scenic's rolling stock is for sale, or sold, and waiting on brake valves and inspections before moving out to new homes.

In late August 2021, 11 passenger cars bound for Pennsylvania regional Reading & Northern had been stenciled for their new owner. Freight trains still made the twice weekly trip to Antonito, Colo., on what were once dual gauge tracks of the famed Rio Grande narrow gauge. But tourists no longer clamber on board fun trains. A buyer for the railroad is being sought, but so far the freight operation continues under the trustee.

...

Other Iowa Pacific Railroad equipment:

- Former SL&RG No. 59, a full-length "Super Dome" car built by Pullman-Standard in 1952 as part of a 10-car fleet for the Milwaukee Road's *Olympian Hiawatha* and *Twin Cities Hiawatha* service. Built as Milwaukee No. 59, it will join another former Milwaukee full-length dome already on the roster, R&N No. 4, *Lehigh Gorge*, formerly Milwaukee 55. The newly acquired car will become R&N No. 5. It formerly ran on Amtrak trains as car No. 9383 and subsequently in tour-agency service. It differs from R&N No. 4 in that its appearance was modified with the addition of fluted-side skirting.
- Former SL&RG 1056, *Lookout Mountain*, ex-Southern Railway No. 1595, a 60-seat heavyweight coach rebuilt by Southern as a 44-seat open-air car for that railroad's (and successor Norfolk Southern's) steam program, which operated for 30 years, 1964-1994. It will become R&N No. 20.
- Former SL&RG No. 3305, *Mardi Gras*, a streamlined observation-lounge rebuilt in 1947 from Illinois Central 1916 heavyweight 88-seat coach 2188 to serve on the *City of New Orleans*, IC's secondary intercity train on the Chicago-New Orleans route. This car has a long history in excursion service for the New Orleans and Roanoke chapters of the National Railway Historical Society. It will become R&N 7.
- Former SL&RG No. 3378, *Calumet Club*, built by Pullman in 1918 as IC 88-seat coach No. 2211 and rebuilt in 1952 as a streamlined flat-end parlor-observation-lounge car. It will be renumbered R&N 6.
- Former SL&RG No. 2904, originally IC heavyweight coach No. 2221, will become R&N 450.
- Former SL&RG No. 1062, *Chuchara Valley*, formerly Canadian National heavyweight coach No. 5067. It will become R&N No. 1165.
- Former SL&RG No. 1066, a 46-seat heavyweight coach, originally Southern 60-seat coach No. 1649. To become R&N No. 451

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- Former SL&RG No. 1067, *Gila Valley*, a 46-seat heavyweight coach, originally Southern 60-seat coach No. 1670. Will become R&N No. 452.
- Former SL&RG No. 1068, *San Luis Valley*, a 46-seat heavyweight coach, originally Southern 60-seat coach No. 1668. Will be renumbered R&N 453.
- Former SL&RG No. 1125, *Ellerslie*, a streamlined sleeper, built by Pullman-Standard in 1954 for Canadian National and later operated by VIA Rail Canada. An eight-duplex-roomette, four-double-bedroom, four-roomette car, it will be renumbered to R&N 1125.
- Former SL&RG No. 448, originally New York Central diner No. 448 and later Penn Central No. 4548, and subsequently owned by the High Iron Co. excursion operation. A streamlined stainless-steel car built by the Budd Co. in 1947, it will become R&N No. 1166.

More: <https://www.trains.com/trn/videos-photos/photos/photo-galleries/iowa-pacific-railroad-equipment-in-late-2021/>

Gary R. Kazin Boca Raton, FL



September 23 2021 -Provided by John Goodman

In consultation with state and local officials, Rail Excursion Management Company (Railexco) has announced that the 2021 Autumn Colors Express railroad passenger excursions in the New River Gorge have been postponed.

“An overwhelming number of customers have expressed concern about this year’s event. The current surge in COVID-19 cases in West Virginia has local hospitals operating at emergency levels, making postponement our best and only option this year,” said Railexco CEO Adam Auxier. “We’re grateful to our partners at Amtrak and in the region for the support and understanding.”

Current ticket holders will automatically be transferred to equivalent dates in October of 2022. Questions about tickets, credits, or refunds can be directed to info@railexco.com.

“We are extremely disappointed in the situation we find ourselves in. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has worsened and we understand why Rail Excursion Management, in cooperation with our event organizers, has chosen to postpone the 2021 Autumn Colors excursion,” explained City of Hinton Mayor Jack Scott.

“The Hinton Railroad Days Committee is evaluating the situation currently to determine if a smaller event or a two-day event makes sense for our vendors. We have worked diligently since the spring to organize the event and again are disappointed but support our partner's difficult decision.”

Operated in concert with Amtrak and the cities of Huntington, Charleston, and Hinton West Virginia, the Autumn Colors Express operates the route of the former New River Train from Huntington and Charleston to Hinton through the New River Gorge. In 2019, the newly created Autumn Colors Express welcomed over 3,000 passengers from around the world to the region.

Ever Want to Drive a Railroad Locomotive? This is the Next Best Thing

Odd-looking utility vehicles allow railroad fans to engineer the ride of their dreams.

By Richard Chin Star Tribune JULY 30, 2021 Provided by Rick Krenski and Leigh Neprude

8:16AM GALLERYGRID 1/12



Lots of kids want to be railroad engineers. Who wouldn't want to wear a cool hat, toot the whistle and clickety-clack down the tracks?

C.J. Pappas enjoyed playing with model trains so much that he became a conductor and engineer with the Union Pacific Railroad.

But when he's not working on the railroad, the 34-year-old Crystal resident sometimes takes a busman's holiday to operate what might be the coolest toy train of all: an antique railroad motorcar.

"Trains have been in my blood since I was a little kid," he said. "I run big trains all day, but there's still something about taking these little speeders on the rails and bouncing around on the track like they did 50 years ago." Pappas (who still owns model trains in five different scales) is part of a national community of railroad hobbyists who restore old railroad maintenance vehicles to live out their choo-choo dreams — whizzing down real rail lines, tooting their horns and waving to curious onlookers.

Gallery: From left, Gloria and Jim Dragstrem worked on preparing their railcar before riding it down the North Shore Scenic Railroad from Two Harbors to Duluth.

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Some are so passionate about the odd-looking, obsolete vehicles that they buy multiple models of them, seek out the cars' "birth records" (many were made by a Minnesota company) or even have a likeness of their vehicles made into a tattoo. The motorized steel-wheeled vehicles, sometimes called speeders, are roughly the size of a golf cart and were used by railroads for much of the 20th century to transport track maintenance or inspection crews on rail lines. They were an upgrade of the old-fashioned pump handcars seen on railroads in the 19th century, except that a small gasoline motor replaced the pump handle that workers had to push up and down.

But by the 1980s, railroads were getting rid of these railroad utility carts, replacing them with more comfortable and practical hi-rail vehicles: pickup trucks with retractable guide wheels making them capable of traveling on rails as well as regular roads. That's how the rail motorcars got into the hands of hundreds of private collectors. They bought the surplus vehicles, restored them and formed a national organization that arranges excursion rides on rail lines throughout the continent.

"I've always been big on operating machinery that moves and watching the scenery go by," said Greg Cotton, a rail car owner and operator from Minneapolis.

Cotton sailed on submarines during a stint in the Navy, then had a career as a cargo plane pilot. About the time he retired from full-time flying in 2015, he bought a World War II era railroad motorcar originally manufactured by Fairmont Railway Motors in Fairmont, Minn., for the Union Pacific Railroad.

Cotton got the car, a trailer and some spare parts for \$5,500 from a guy in Colorado who was getting out of the hobby. Now he has five of the cube-shaped cars, which are about 5 feet long, 5 feet wide and 5 feet high.

"They do tend to multiply," he said.

He takes his cars on cross-country rail excursions about 12 to 15 times each summer, putting in hundreds of miles on tracks in Michigan, Missouri, the Dakotas, Kansas and Colorado.

The trips are coordinated by members of the [North American Railcar Operators Association](#), a nonprofit group of rail car owners. The trips typically run on short line regional railroads or scenic rail lines and are carefully coordinated with the railroad management so they don't interfere with regular rail traffic.

Boxy, homely, addictive

Recently, Cotton brought his rail car to Two Harbors, Minn., for a run with 13 other Midwestern rail car owners for a ride to and from Duluth on the North Shore Scenic Railroad.

Rail cars are definitely work vehicles: boxy, utilitarian and homely, with the aerodynamics of a toaster. They basically look like a shed with windows rolling down the tracks.

"Usually there's a discussion at every gas stop," Cotton said of onlookers who want to know what the odd-looking vehicle on his trailer is.

But some owners restore their vehicles to factory-new condition with gleaming paint jobs in the colors of their favorite railroad company. They might add custom features like chrome exhaust pipes or an intercom system to make it easier to talk with passengers. The cars typically can carry only two to four people.

Thousands of the vehicles were made by Fairmont over the years. The Martin County Historical Society in the town of Fairmont maintains [a document collection from Fairmont](#) Railway Motors where rail car hobbyists can get a copy of the "birth records" of their cars.

The newer cars have engines that start up with the push of a button and a hydraulic turntable lift that jacks the whole vehicle off the tracks so they can be pivoted around and set back down to reverse direction.

But the rail car that Cotton brought to the North Shore has a more basic two-stroke engine that needs to be started by turning a big crank. While it's in operation, he has to adjust the choke, fuel mixture, spark advance and tension for the belt drive.

At idle, the exhaust from the little one-cylinder engine makes a distinctive "pop-pop-pop" sound, which is why some of the little cars are called poppers or putt-putts.

"The thing's older than I am," said Cotton, 74. "This is basically a 1920s engine. It's not rocket science, but it does take a little fine tuning."

Cotton doesn't have a hydraulic lift on his car. To maneuver the car onto the tracks or to turn it around to reverse directions, he has to pull out long handles attached to the frame, tilt the car up onto its front wheels and lever it around like a wheelbarrow. It's doable because the two-seat vehicle only weighs about 700 pounds, less than a typical golf cart.

Some cars have fully enclosed cabs, others just a windshield and a roof. Some owners run their cars sitting totally exposed to the elements. Riding is a little like being on a motorcycle. There's a lot of wind and engine noise and the smell of exhaust.

But there's also the unmistakable rhythmic sway and clickety-clack of being on a railroad.

Rail cars typically cruise at speeds of around 20 or 25 miles per hour. If you push it up to 30 mph in an open car with minimal suspension, "it feels like you're going 130," said Pappas.

Riding the North Shore

On the trip from Two Harbors to Duluth, the scenery included views of Lake Superior, highway traffic on parallel roads, wooded corridors, bridge crossings over rivers and trackside homes and businesses.

"Rails travel through the backyards of America," said Hal Johnson, a rail car owner from Bloomington.

In Duluth, the procession of little cars motoring toward Canal Park drew waves from onlookers. Bicyclists and people walking their dogs stopped to take out their cellphones and take pictures.

Rail car operators said much of the appeal of the hobby is seeing scenery that you can see only from the railroad. That might include dramatic mountain passes and historic railroad tunnels and bridge structures. They say the view from their little open cars is better than what a locomotive engineer gets.

"It's very exhilarating," said Johnson, who has traveled 29,000 rail miles in 22 years in the hobby, including trips through Canada up to the Alaska Highway or up to Churchill, Manitoba.

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"You'll never own your own locomotive. This is as close as you can come," said Mike Ford, a rail car excursion coordinator from Indiana.

There are about 1,200 members of the North American Railcar Operators Association in the U.S. and Canada. Rail car owners tend to be men, but they seem to come from all walks of life: priests, professors, plumbers, police officers, farmers and finance guys. Many are retirees. Many are railroad nuts.

"A lot of their houses look like railroad museums," Cotton said.

Johnson is so enamored of his rail car that he has a tattoo of it on one shoulder and a Southern Pacific Lines logo on the other. Safety first

One thing rail car operators seem to have in common: They're sticklers for safety.

In addition to having insurance, rail car operators must pass a written exam on NARCOA's operating rule book and must get checked out on their first ride by an experienced mentor in order to go on a NARCOA excursion.

The cars have to have headlights and taillights and towing equipment in case of a breakdown.

On the North Shore ride, everyone wore reflective safety vests and the group carried first aid kits, two-way radios, fire extinguishers, signal flags, tools and even an automated external defibrillator. A couple of crew members from the railroad also came along in a hi-rail pilot truck. Alcohol was prohibited, as it is on all rides. So is using a cellphone, and smoking.

"No fire. We don't want a fire on the tracks," said Fred Lonnes, assistant excursion coordinator for the North Shore trip.

Even though the cars don't have to be steered, the drivers can't be lulled into a daydream by the gentle rocking of the tracks. Rail cars don't trigger crossing lights, so their operators have to be vigilant for auto traffic at every road juncture. They also need to make sure they maintain adequate stopping distance between cars.

"Every time we go on a railroad, we're a guest," said NARCOA president Mark North. "We have a very good track record."

Richard Chin • 612-673-1775



Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 11:02 AM Provided by Rick Krenski

About this event The Magic of Night Trains® returns for our 2021-2022 Season! As we did last season, we are offering limited advance ticket sales in 2 hour time blocks. \$15 per guest, kids under the age of 4 are free. There will be no group rate for the 2021-2022 season due to COVID precautions. TThis popular seasonal event begins on October 23rd and continues every Saturday (except Christmas Day) from 3:00 to 7:00 pm through February 26th, 2022. Check our Facebook Page and Website for additional times, dates and special events.* Tickets will ONLY be sold at the door if we have not reached our COVID capacity of 200 people. What is Night Trains? The museum's collection of model trains of all scales and toy trains of yesteryear come alive throughout the Museum (Sorry, no real train rides here). Night Trains Season magic begins as the lights are turned down and the buildings and street lights glow warmly, setting the scene for specially lighted models of operating vintage passenger trains.. The make believe town of Matlin is buried in a blizzard, and throughout the Museum the layouts are adorned with miniature Christmas lights and decorations. COVID Precautions Masks are strongly recommended by all staff and guests over 2 years of age. Please stay home if you are feeling ill, we can process ticket exchanges via email.

Please maintain good social distancing practices. Museum staff are doing extensive cleaning before, during and after each shift. 2021-2022 Special Evenings *Special appearances may change without notice. Please watch our Facebook page for the latest info. Halloween Spooky Trains – October 23rd and 30th – See spooky trains and Halloween decorations on the layouts! Costumes are welcome! Treats will be handed out.

November - We are slowly switching from Halloween trains to winter decorations and then to Christmas decorations. See something different each week.

December - Stay tuned for more information on our Santa events on December 11th and 18th! Santa's appearance may be virtual depending on the current COVID situation.

January - Christmas decorations will end January 23rd but we will maintain winter decorations through February.

Night Trains is a registered trademark of the Twin City Model Railroad Museum.

October 27 in Railroad History: The Mark Twain Zephyr

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Wed, 27 Oct 2021 Provided by Rick Krenke <rick@usjet.net>

Burlington Route's fourth articulated trainset was named the **Mark Twain Zephyr** in honor of its planned route along the Mississippi River.

MTZ was dedicated on Friday, October 25, 1935 at Hannibal MO in a highly-publicized ceremony attended by Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch (Mark Twain's daughter), her husband Ossip Gabrilowitsch (director of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra), and their daughter Nina.

On Sunday, October 27, the train returned to St. Louis. The following day, it began its regularly-scheduled daily round trip. The **MTZ** departed St. Louis Union Terminal at 8:35 a.m., headed north along the west bank of the Mississippi River, and arrived in Burlington IA at 2:20 p.m. Its southbound return trip departed Burlington at 3:30 p.m. and arrived in St. Louis at 9:25 p.m. Hannibal was near the midpoint of the 220-mile run. Although **Zephyrs** were noted for their speed, **MTZ** made some thirty stops along its route, and so it averaged less than 40 mph even though it could easily hit 80 mph on the high iron.

MTZ was the first **Zephyr** to have named cars. Each unit was named for a character in Samuel Langhorne Clemens' famous novels:

#9903 power car / Railway Post Office **Injun Joe**—a regrettable pun;

#506 baggage-express **Becky Thatcher**

#551 kitchen-dinette **Huckleberry Finn**

#572 solarium-observation **Tom Sawyer** sported a large bronze medallion on its tail, with a bust of Mark Twain positioned above his signature.

During its career, **MTZ** was reassigned to several alternate routes, including Chicago—Denver (June-October 1936); Chicago—Twin Cities (November-December 1936); St. Louis—Kansas City (September 1938); and Galesburg IL—St. Joseph MO (1953-1956). **MTZ** was retired from service in May 1958. It was destined to spend the next six decades slowly rusting away.

Frank Dashner of Glenwood, Iowa intended to convert it into a restaurant, but he passed away before he could carry out his plan.

In 1962, Ernie Hayes bought the **MTZ** (sans its prime mover) for \$6500 and hauled it to the Midwest Old Thresher Association grounds in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. He had hoped to restore the train to operating condition and offer rides on the fairground, but this never happened. Reportedly, the Old Threshers didn't care much for the streamliner because it was "too modern".

In 1979, multi-millionaire Alexander Barket purchased the now badly-vandalized **MTZ** and moved it to Kansas City. He passed away in 1980 without leaving a will. After a lengthy probate process, a bank held title to the train because Barket had used it as collateral for a loan. It sat forlorn on a Union Pacific siding in Kansas City.

Mark Twain Zephyr, Inc. purchased the trainset in 1987 and moved it to Joliet IL a year later. **MTZ** didn't become part of a planned Mark Twain theme park that never got built. It also didn't get remodeled into a dinner train that might have run between Chicago and the Quad Cities. It didn't even become a stationary restaurant at Downers Grove IL.

A new owner moved the **MTZ** to Relco Locomotives, Inc. at Minooka IL in 1997. Dan Bachman, head of Relco, hoped to restore the train for excursion service. He never did. A decade later, Relco was about to close, and the **Zephyr** was standing in several feet of water. **MTZ** would spend the next twelve years at Gateway Rail Services in St. Louis.

Finally, in February 2020, Greg Vreeland purchased the **MTZ** and prepared to move it to his **Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad** in Trego, Wisconsin.

Over the past year and a half, Vreeland has made real progress toward restoring the once-proud **Mark Twain Zephyr** to operating condition. An ex-C&NW Electro-Motive SW-600 provided a suitable prime mover and generator. You can follow the restoration process at [The Mark Twain Zephyr Homepage \(rtabern.com\)](http://TheMarkTwainZephyrHomepage.com)

You can support the project by purchasing these books at [Mark Twain Zephyr Store \(hostingprod.com\)](http://MarkTwainZephyrStore.com)

Joseph Lechner

October 08 in Toy Train History: Ozzie and Harriet

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Fri, 08 Oct 2021 Provided by Rick Krenke

Band leader **Ozzie Nelson** married his group's vocalist Peggy Lou Snyder (who performed using the stage name **Harriet Hilliard**) in 1935. The duo joined the cast of Red Skelton's radio show in 1941. When Skelton was drafted in 1944, the Nelsons decided to create a family sitcom.

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet premiered on the CBS radio network on this date in 1944. During the show's ten-year run, it aired 402 episodes on three different networks: CBS (1944-1948), NBC (1948-1949) and ABC (1949-1954). The roles of sons David and Ricky were performed by professional actors until the Nelsons' boys joined the cast in February 1949.

A 1952 feature film **Here Come the Nelsons** served as the springboard for an ABC television series, which debuted in October of that year. Ozzie insisted on a ten-year contract. ABC executives, desperate to retain proven talent, agreed. **The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet** ran for fourteen seasons and produced 435 episodes, becoming the longest-running American sitcom until **It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia** surpassed it in 2020.

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Establishing shots depicted the exterior of the Nelsons' actual Los Angeles home, but the show's scripts (all of which were written by Ozzie) portrayed life in the fictional small town of Warfield. Plots reflected typical situations encountered by youngsters coming of age in postwar America—including the love affair with Lionel trains, and the heartbreaking question of whether a teenager has "outgrown" them.

The Electric Train (episode 93) originally aired on February 4, 1955. Ricky (age fourteen) stumbles across his long-forgotten Lionel outfit while rummaging through a closet. No longer interested in toy trains, he wonders if the local hobby shop would trade it for a chemistry set. Next morning, Ozzie goes downtown to make the swap—but is dazzled by an operating layout featuring some of Lionel's finest 1954 offerings, including **The Texas Special**.

Meanwhile, Ricky has changed his mind and wants his train back. Unfortunately, the dealer has already re-sold it, so Ricky is stuck with the chemistry set. Later, we learn that neighbor Thorny was the buyer. Ultimately, he agrees to sell the outfit back to the Nelsons—at a profit—including the extra switches and accessories he has bought.

The episode ends happily with Ricky and David running trains on the living-room floor, while the grown-ups play with the chemistry set. You'll never guess what track plan the boys built:

Watch the episode at [The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet Electric Train - YouTube](#)

Joseph Lechner



We Need Your Help
to Make this Dream
A Reality
One Piece at a Time

PRR T1 TRUST #5550 Boiler Work Update

October 5, 2021 Provided by John Goodman



If you haven't been watching our website or social media, then you have missed quite a bit lately. We have made HUGE progress on the boiler. If you follow the link below, you can see photos and videos of the AMAZING work our team has done with your donations.

We need your help to continue the momentum. We are nearly half way to our 2021 Fall fundraising goal of \$150,000. Please help us reach the goal so we can get the boiler wrapped up so we can start working on the frame! (Everyone wants to see the frame built)

Visit our boiler page to see updates and make a donation if you like what you are seeing. You can see exactly what your money is being spent on.

Visit <https://prrt1steamlocomotivetrust.org/2021-capital-campaign> for updates

Thanks in advance for your support! Brad

Dining Car Access to be Extended to 'Coast Starlight' Business Class

By [Bob Johnston](#) | September 23, 2021 Provided by John Goodman

Amtrak's 2020 consist decisions still affecting pricing, availability



This business class coach on the north-bound Coast Starlight at San Luis Obispo, Calif., on June 13, 2021, at one time featured a kids play room and later a pinball arcade on the lower level. Passengers who ride in the Starlight's business class will be able to purchase food in the train's dining car in October. Bob Johnston



Food specialist Brian Garrigues tosses a salad to order in the kitchen aboard the Southwest Chief on July 22, 2021. Bob Johnston



The Capitol Limited, then tri-weekly, arrives Chicago in November 2020 with one sleeping car, two coaches, and a Cross-Country Café combination lounge diner. It previously operated with a transition sleeper, a Sightseer lounge, and an additional coach and sleeping car. Bob Johnston

WASHINGTON — During a presentation to the Rail Passengers Association this week, Amtrak's Chief Marketing and Revenue Officer, Roger Harris, revealed that beginning some time in October, business class passengers on the Seattle-Los Angeles *Coast Starlight* will be permitted to purchase food in the train's dining car.

But he also said restoring coach and sleeping car capacity to long-distance trains "will take some time" because of decisions made to sideline equipment and reduce mechanical forces more than a year ago.

Harris defended the decision to initially limit traditional dining to sleeping car patrons, whose meals are included in the ticket price, "to get the service right" while not burdening already-limited onboard crews, many just returning from furlough, with collecting cash and implementing COVID restrictions. "Our intention all along was to get to a point where we could offer it to coach customers," Harris says.

Regarding the *Starlight* trial run, "The idea is to start small and work through the issues that we inevitably will encounter by opening up the dining car to more customers," Harris says. "Then if the test is successful, we will roll it out to additional markets."

In June 2020 the company cut onboard staffing and expanded its "flexible" meal-in-a-bowl format from overnights operating east of the Mississippi River (except *Auto Train*) to the entire system. In late June 2021, [full-service dining returned to all western Superliner-equipped trains except the *Texas Eagle*](#).

"Western dining was chosen because it was where we had the ability to restore employees on the trains and also where dining is such a critical part of the experience," Harris says. "We wanted to live up to the expectations of our customers there." However, he didn't offer a reason why the *Eagle* wasn't included; that train's potential passengers might be aboard for as many as five meals, the same number for those riding the *Coast Starlight* between its endpoints.

The *Starlight* is the only Superliner-equipped long haul that sets aside a standard coach for business class travelers, who currently get a free bottle of water and an "onboard credit for food and beverage purchases." An Amtrak call center agent contacted by *Trains News Wire* believes the "credit" includes a non-alcoholic beverage and sandwich, but could only say, "you'll find out from the lounge car crew when you get on the train" after trying to get information from someone at Amtrak in Los Angeles.

Eastern food prospects

Asked if meal offerings and service restrictions on eastern trains will change, Harris says the company is working with a new food vendor, "that is helping us with a lot of menu items to find out what will work well within the constraints of single-level dining cars." The vendor has been involved with [recent Northeast Corridor Acela enhancements](#) that also incorporated some items from the western launch.

"We're also looking at putting on new types of ovens and other kitchen equipment to be more creative in the types of food offerings we have," Harris adds, "because the feedback we have from customers is that we have very repetitive food options. By trying to offer different types of foods that are more appealing," he says, "we think we can substantially upgrade the food offerings on the East Coast."

Limited capacity to continue:

Addressing concerns of Rail Passengers Association members about numerous sellouts and high prices that have occurred as a result of reduced long distance train consists, Harris confirmed that the company continues to be affected by non-reviewed decisions, made in the summer of 2020, to put some equipment in "temporary storage."

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“Eighteen months ago we had to decide how much fleet we were going to be able to run and how much money we were going to spend on overhauls and how many employees we thought would be able to work on the equipment,” Harris says, “because we didn’t have enough demand to justify keeping the system running at historical levels and we didn’t think we would have enough money from Congress at that point.”

Amtrak had plenty of evidence beginning as soon as last October that original patronage projections for long distance trains had dramatically low-balled demand even as COVID-19 cases began spiking [see “Coming back: Amtrak’s steps (and missteps) to recover from pandemic,” November 2021]. Yet continuing to stick with a plan that kept idle cars and locomotives from earning revenue again after federal funding was assured early in 2021 has now created a maintenance logjam.

“So what you see running on the system is all the equipment we have available,” Harris explains. “We had some employees who decided to leave us with early retirement, so we have a reduced mechanical base. We have to re-recruit for some of those [positions]; there is this unintended effect, but at this point unavoidable where we have to work through this backlog to get back to what was once our historic fleet availability, and that will take some time.”

Acknowledging the ongoing strength of private room sales, Harris says, “Making sure we don’t have to continue to put employees in sleeping cars — that’s a priority. But it will require working through the winter to get a lot of those sleeping cars, and by that I mean [transition sleepers], back into service.”

Harris also talked about changes in Northeast Corridor pricing strategies and advancements to ensure mechanical failures are properly addressed. *Trains News Wire* will examine those initiatives in separate reports.

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/dining-car-access-to-be-extended-to-coast-starlight-business-class/>

Special Private Car Train on the Twin Cities and Western Railroad Thru Glencoe MN

Oct 13 2021 Photos by Roger Libra (Can anyone provide more Info on this train?)



Train Thru Glencoe (from video) -Roger Libra



Cars parked somewhere on the TC&W -Roger Libra Photos

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Canterbury Train Show	November 6th and November 7th, 2021 10:00 am– 4:00 pm Saturday, Sunday	Canterbury Park 1100 Canterbury Rd S Shakopee MN	\$10 (good for both days)
Granite City Train Show	Saturday Nov 13, 2019 10:00 AM—4:00 pm	St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center 10 4th Ave S St Cloud MN 56301	\$6
Lakes & Pines Train Collectors Association	Sunday November 14, 2021 Hours: TBA	Merzyn Hall in Columbia Heights MN	
Greater Upper Midwest Train Show & Sale CANCELLED	Saturday Nov 20, 2021 9:00 am—2:00 pm	Century College West Campus 3300 Century Ave. N. White Bear Lake, MN	\$6
Twin City Railroad Museum Night Trains Resume	Saturdays October 23rd thru Feb 26 2022	668 Transfer Rd Ste. 8, St Paul, MN 55114	\$15

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