

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

February 19 Meeting is ZOOM ONLY!



L: Amtrak 'Charger' Locomotive at old Amtrak Midway Station January 2022 -Dawn Holmberg photo

R: Amtrak Heritage unit leads a late #8 at Coon Creek January 2022 – Dawn Holmberg photo

**Table of Contents**

Chapter Officers, Editor Column	Page 1, 2
Obituary	Page 2
Amtrak Refreshed Cars	Page 3
Amtrak Woes	Page 4, 5
Amtrak Snowbound	Page 6
Silvis Shop Complex News	Page 7
Gopher State Railroad Museum News	Page 8, 9
AARPCO News	Page 10, 11, 12
2nd Train to Chicago	Page 12, 13
MCRM News	Page 13, 14
MRL To End Operations	Page 15
Amtrak Woes	Page 15, 16, 17
HPO in History	Page 17
Talgo to Nigeria	Page 17, 18
Newswire Top Story	Page 18, 19
High Speed Rail Alliance	Page 19, 20
Amtrack Backs CP-KCS Merger	Page 20, 21
Brightline News	Page 21
Preserved Diesel Locomotives	Page 21, 22, 23, 24
UP 2021 Profits	Page 24, 25
SWLRT Delays, Investigation	Page 25, 26
Iron Range News	Page 26, 27
Sugar RR Explorer, Railfan Events	Page 28

Next newsletter (March 2022) will be out around March 2, 2022.

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

Meeting Notice: Saturday February 19 2022

Due to restrictions by Roseville Lutheran Church, our February Meeting will be a **ZOOM meeting**.

Normally, Meetings are planned at Roseville Lutheran Church 6:15pm to 8:45pm. Please visit www.northstar-NRHS.com for conformation. 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. You simply click on the link below to join using your internet browser: For the February meeting, join using your Zoom app on your computer, tablet or phone: Meeting ID: Zoom meeting info:

Meeting ID: 836 1011 0778 / Passcode: 734002

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83610110778?pwd=Sjg0YTBOVGVMUkt0SHVZQzZzV0FQdz09>

Dial-in (audio-only) 312-626-6799

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.

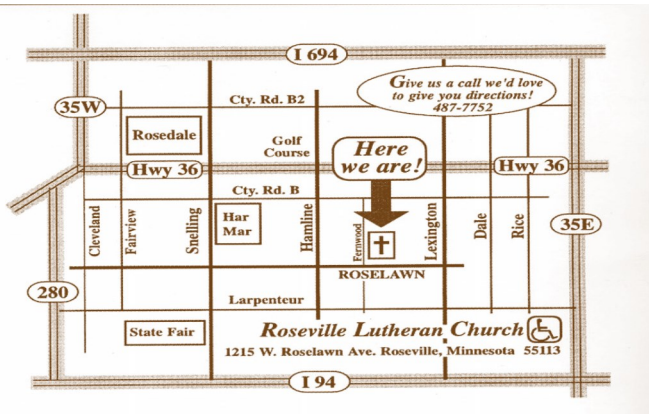
If you are new to Zoom and would like any sort of help or a test meeting, please contact Dan Meyer via e-mail at dan@meyster-family.net

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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: Chapter Dues for 2022 are Over Due. If you haven't gotten an invoice for 2022 dues, please contact John Goodman or Dan Meyer.**

If You haven't renewed, The March 2022 Newsletter will be your last!

Note: the editor and the Northstar Railway Historical Society are neutral and do not endorse any opinion pieces as printed in any issue! Printing of opinions show the varied viewpoints share by the railfan community.

No meeting in January 2022 .

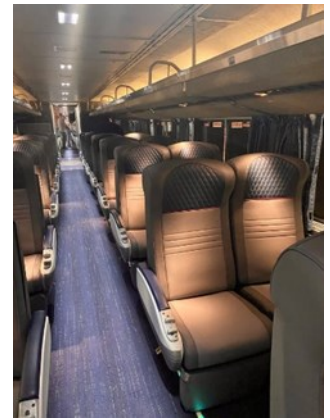
OBITUARY Provided by Dan Meyer Jan 11 2022



**Bennie Ralph
PRESSNALL**

Ben Pressnall was a former member, and I believe he was a friend of Martin Swan. I am so sorry to learn of Ben's passing. Ben was a member of our organization a number of years ago and I always enjoyed seeing his smile at our meetings. Please accept our condolences on behalf of the Northstar Chapter, NRHS. --Dan Meyer / Vice President, Northstar Chapter NRHS

Age 78 of West St. Paul Died peacefully surrounded by family on December 31, 2021. Bennie was born in Northfield in 1943 to Archie and Marion Pressnall. He spent his entire adult life working for Chicago Great Western Railroad and then Burlington Northern for 35 years. Bennie is preceded in death by his parents, Archie and Marion; brother, Steve; granddaughter, Kellie. He is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Kathy; children, Molly (Glen) Glover, Paul (Amy) Pressnall, Katie (Jim) Thrun; grandsons, Jacob, Nate, Ben; many other loving family and friends. A gathering to celebrate Bennie's life will be held 1-4 PM Sunday, January 9th at Bradshaw, 1078 Rice St., St. Paul. Our deepest thanks and gratitude to the South Metro Fire Department Paramedics and to the dedicated and loving staff at Regions Hospital ER and ICU (7th floor). 651-489-1349.

MASS TRANSIT

Amtrak Unveils New Tier IV Locomotive, Newly Refreshed Passenger Cars

June 17, 2021

Amtrak officials gathered at Chicago Union Station to reveal the refreshed railcar interiors and improved soft goods, as well as display the newest Amtrak locomotive to go into nationwide service.

Megan Perrin

Amtrak officials gathered at Chicago Union Station June 15 to unveil several upgrades to its long-distance service offering, including the first of the newly upgraded interiors of its bi-level Superliner fleet, as well as its newest American-made diesel-electric locomotive. This is the first of 400 Superliner cars that will be refreshed and the first of 75 new Tier IV locomotives.

Enhanced passenger experience

Upgrades were made to the coach, sleeping and sightseer lounge cars and aim to provide an improved, modernized customer experience. Riders in the coach section and in the sightseer lounge cars will see refurbished seat cushions with more eye-catching details, new drapes and new carpets, similar to updates made on the Acela fleet.

The sleeper cars were also refreshed with new carpet, new curtains and new seats, as well as updated toiletries, bedding, towels and linens that were successfully tested on Amtrak services in California. Among the new, Amtrak is also bringing back the nostalgia of how dining on the train used to be with the reintroduction of table linens, fresh flowers, China dishware and real cutlery, as well as a reimagined menu. The menu includes breakfast, lunch and a three-course dinner, with all made-to-order food. Menu items will include Amtrak's signature French toast, flat iron steak and grilled chicken Caesar salad and more. When dining, riders will have the choice between communal style dining or private dining.

The reimagined dining service will begin June 23 for riders in sleeper cars on the California Zephyr, the Coast Starlight, the Empire Builder, the Southwest Chief, the Sunset Limited and the western portion of the Texas Eagle. The plan is to eventually expand the dining service to coach riders after an initial evaluation period that will look at the logistics of how to do so. This will be the first reintroduction of the dining service on the six western routes that had to suspend the service due to the pandemic. The new Superliners will go into the equipment pool and will be used on the Empire Builder, the California Zephyr, the Coast Starlight, the Southwest Chief, the Texas Eagle, the Sunset Limited, the Illini Saluki, the City of New Orleans, Capitol Limited and the Auto Train.

Low-emission locomotives

The ALC-42 locomotive is a diesel-electric locomotive developed by Amtrak and made by Siemens. While the locomotive was manufactured and assembled in Sacramento, Calif., the engine was manufactured at the Cummins plant in Indiana.

This will be Amtrak's first Tier IV locomotive to enter service on its long-distance routes. Amtrak has had previous experience with Tier IV with its State Chargers, which served as the foundation for this new locomotive, explains Devon Parsons, a senior manager in Mechanical Engineering at Amtrak.

The new locomotives will head to the Northeast to complete two to three months of conditioning and testing and are expected to enter revenue service this fall. The ALC-42's will enter service on the eastern seaboard on the non-electrified routes and initially travel as far west as Chicago and New Orleans.

Parsons added that as the new locomotives make their debut, Amtrak will work with Siemens as part of its long-term service agreement that includes technical support materials such as training, onsite support, material delivery and more. Amtrak is also working this summer to bring the rest of its mechanical facilities up to speed that haven't had exposure to the State Chargers.

All of these upgrades come as Amtrak restores service to pre-pandemic levels. In March, Amtrak announced plans to fully restore daily service for 12 long distance routes following pandemic-related schedule reductions in 2020. The three-phased approach began in late May with the final routes restored in June.

Comment from: Gary allaboardraildiscussion@groups.io Sent: Saturday, January 1, 2022, 12:55:02 PM CST

Deep into the article it talks about restoring dining service for sleeping car passengers on western LD trains. May eventually allow coach passengers back into the diner. On 12-9-21, Mr. Gardner testifies before the House Hearing on Passenger Rail. C-Span has the video and at approximately 1 hour, 25 minutes and 20 seconds into the video Mr. Gardner states....."we also have restored and improved our dining service on our western trains".

For the record, as of 12-9-21, coach passengers were NOT allowed back into the diner. I guess the term "restored" takes on new meaning when facing a House hearing. Or can it be construed as another lie coming from the top brass of Amtrak? Just carrying on where Mr. Anderson left off? Just asking the questions,

AMTRAK WOES: A series of articles and blogs including AllAboardRailDiscussion@groups.io>**Amtrak to Decrease Service on Most Routes Jan. 24 to March 27**

Trains Newswire Sat 1/15/2022 10:17 AM Provided by Roger Libra



Passengers fill the platform during a Silver Meteor stop in 2018. The Meteor is being suspended Jan. 24 to March 27 as part of Amtrak service cuts. (Bob Johnston)

Most long-distance trains to be trimmed to five days a week, with 'Silver Meteor' suspended entirely; Northeast Regional, state-supported trains will also see reductions.

WASHINGTON — Amtrak will reduce Northeast Corridor, long-distance, and state-supported train frequencies between Jan. 24 and March 27, the passenger railroad announced Friday evening, citing “staffing challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the highly active Omicron variant.”

Overall, plans will amount to an 8% reduction in train departures over the 63-day period. That will include 8% of Northeast Regional departures; two weekly departures on nine long-distance routes, which will be reduced to five-day-a-week operation; complete suspension of the *Silver Meteor* for the 10-week period; and 6% of state-supported regional service. However, the head of one regional operation contacted by *Trains News Wire* was unaware of the national network cuts or the staffing impacts on that individual's service.

Cancellations were first implemented this week on trains whose onboard service crews are based in Los Angeles. .

The eastbound *Southwest Chief* did not leave Los Angeles on Sunday, Jan. 9, and Wednesday, Jan. 12, while its westbound counterpart was cancelled Wednesday and Saturday, Jan. 15. The Los Angeles-Seattle *Coast Starlight* also had departures cancelled. In addition to the *Chief* and *Starlight*, long-distance trains to see frequency reductions are the *California Zephyr*, *Empire Builder*, *Crescent*, *Texas Eagle*, *Capitol Limited*, *Lake Shore Limited* and *City of New Orleans*. The only trains maintaining daily frequency will be the *Silver Star*, *Palmetto*, and *Auto Train*; the triweekly *Cardinal* and *Sunset Limited* will maintain that frequency.

According to the announcement, while the *Meteor* is suspended, the *Silver Star* and *Palmetto* will see “a corresponding increase in capacity, as dictated by demand.”

Amtrak said that while nearly 97% of employees are fully vaccinated, “several hundred of our on-board service personnel, conductors, engineers, and mechanical crews continue to be impacted by COVID infections or exposures ... These Covid-related absences, when combined with the general skilled workforce shortage Amtrak and other transportation companies are facing, have reduced our ability to consistently deliver our current schedules and impacted the pace of hiring and training efforts.”

Trains News Wire has asked Amtrak for more information and is analyzing the impact on connections through the reservation system, since the company has not indicated which trains are cancelled on each route each week. The company said it is working to rebook passengers on remaining frequencies and ensure that all routes maintain frequencies sufficient to meet demand. “Given the recent roughly 25% reduction in customer demand now occurring because of the Omicron variant and typical season travel patterns, we expect minimal impacts to overall ridership because of these temporary changes,” Amtrak said in Friday's release.”

In most cases, passengers will offered same-day travel alternatives; when there is no same-day option, rebooking will be offered within one day of the original departure date. Those who were scheduled on the *Silver Meteor* will be offered alternatives including the *Silver Star*, *Palmetto*, *Carolinian*, and *Northeast Regional*.

Some Days of Operation, Reduced LD Amtrak Service

Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com> Date: Sun, Jan 16, 2022 at 3:14 AM AllAboardRailDiscussion@groups.io>
Provided by Dan Meyer

Reported as:

Not officially announced yet...

29-30 Capitol Limited Sunday - Thursday
48-49 Lake Shore Thursday - Monday
7-8 Empire Builder - Saturday - Wednesday
11, 14 Coast Starlight Friday - Tuesday
58-59 City of NO Monday - Friday
3-4 SW Chief Wednesday - Sunday
5-6 CA Zephyr Tuesday - Saturday
21-22 Texas Eagle Friday - Tuesday

Cancellations of #7, #8 From: RAY BENSEN

<rayande@comcast.net>

January 9, 2022, 4:59 PM, provided by john goodman

<jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com>

Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022, 12:09:07 PM CST

Subject: More Cancellations of the Builder

Sunday and Mondays trains are canceled in both directions.
AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

Empire Builder Train 8/28 which is scheduled to depart Seattle (SEA)/Portland (PDX) on 1/10 is now cancelled due to ongoing weather conditions in the area. For further assistance please call 1-800-USA-RAIL.

AmtrakAlerts

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

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More Cancellations of the Builder 7 & 8 From: RAY BENSEN <rayande@comcast.net>

Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 01:41:19 PM CST Thursday and Fridays trains are now canceled

AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

Empire Builder Train 7/27 which is due to depart Chicago on 1/13 & 1/14 is canceled. Please call 1-800-USA-RAIL for reservation assistance.

AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

Empire Builder Train 8/28 which is due to depart Seattle (SEA) on 1/13 & 1/14 is canceled. Please call 1-800-USA-RAIL for reservation assistance.

An Explanation: From Andrew Selden <ncl25@yahoo.com> On Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 6:08 PM,

The Alert refers to #7/27, but the eastbound departures on the same dates also appear to be cancelled.

ACS On Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 05:51:41 PM CST, john goodman <jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com> wrote:

This represents several days in a row of no service on this route. Not even a make up train between MSP and CHI in each direction nor protect chartered buses protecting this service. John Goodman

Weather forecast for Marias Pass Winter Weather Advisory

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE National Weather Service Great Falls MT 813 AM MST Sun Jan 9 2022 MTZ009 -101200- /O.EXT.KTFX.WW.Y.0005.220109T1513Z-220111T1200Z/ Northern Rocky Mountain Front- Including the following locations: Logan Pass, Heart Butte, Browning, and Marias Pass 813 AM MST Sun Jan 9 2022 ...WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY NOW IN EFFECT UNTIL 5 AM MST TUESDAY... * WHAT...Blowing snow occurring. Visibility less than one mile at times. Winds gusting as high as 50 to 75 mph, with the strongest winds along the immediate Rocky Mountain Front. * WHERE...Northern Rocky Mountain Front. * WHEN...Until 5 AM MST Tuesday. * IMPACTS...Drifting snow across roadways will lead to complete or partial lane blockages. PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS... Slow down and use caution while traveling. The latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1 or visiting the MDT Road Report website.



Beyond Wenatchee School Buses | Amtrak Journey Takes Several Turns Over 3 days [By Nevonne McDaniels World staff](#)



Amtrak passengers wait at the Wenatchee Train Station Friday to head west to Seattle. Snow closed the BNSF Railway tracks over the Cascades.

WENATCHEE — Some of the 145 stranded Amtrak passengers delivered to Wenatchee hotels by school bus Thursday night spent another two and a half days on the train before making it to Seattle Sunday morning. They had high hopes when they arrived back at the train station on Friday, passenger Alan Komrosky said in a telephone interview Monday. He had boarded Amtrak's Empire Builder at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday in Williston, North Dakota, for a return trip to Seattle, scheduled to arrive at 10:25 a.m. Thursday. It rolled into Wenatchee at 7:30 a.m. Thursday morning in the midst of a record-making snowstorm. Passengers spent the day waiting for the go-ahead. "At 3:11 p.m. they announced a derailment ahead of us needed to be cleared," Komrosky said. "They ordered us all Godfather's Pizza from a local vendor." At 8:41 p.m., he said, referring to his text messages to confirm times, the [school buses](#) arrived to take the passengers to Wenatchee hotels for the night. They were then delivered back at the train for an 8 a.m. Friday start. They left about 11 a.m., heading west. Two hours later, they stopped. "It was announced that we were going to back up to get a run at a hill," he said.



By 4:03 p.m. all forward motion had stopped.

"I did not feel any jerking or jostling around. We attempted to back up, but they stopped that effort quickly," he said.

Looking back, he said, it may have been a slide.

"It was an area with no lights. It was very dark and several times the engine had to power down to reset the circuit. The snow was surrounding the cars up to the windows and several times the power went out briefly," he said.

The passengers remained calm, if a little tense.

"The snow was up on the side, to the lower level of the windows. It had to be pretty darn deep," he said.

"At 4:41 p.m., we were told two engines were on the way to help us back out," he said. "We were not in any immediate danger, but you knew the potential was there. What if the lights didn't come back on? What if the extra engines couldn't reach us or what if they couldn't get us pulled out? What if it got cold and we started running out of supplies? All things that cross your mind."

The crew served a supper of pancakes and sausage, he recalls. When on a train for days, the meals become notable.

By 8:34 p.m. Friday, they were on their way back to Wenatchee and made it to hotel rooms by 10 p.m.

The state of the mountain snow and passes prompted a new plan for Saturday morning — return to Spokane.

"Customers had the choice, at Amtrak's expense, to fly on commercial air carriers or to take a train to our designation," Amtrak spokesperson Olivia Irvin said in an email Monday.

"We reached Spokane at 4:15 p.m.," Komrosky said. They had a choice: a hotel and a ride to the airport in the morning or catch the next train for Portland.

Komrosky stayed with the train, ate fast food and reached Portland at 7:30 a.m. Sunday. After some rearranging of train cars, they reached Seattle in the late late morning — three days late.

It was a trip he won't forget, he said.

"When we were waiting in Spokane to board for Portland, some people started calling it the ghost train," Komrosky said.

"Because it was under such unusual conditions, the train did not have a number and it did not show up on the Amtrak website.

Also, none of us were issued tickets," he said.

It went as well as could be expected.

"The staff was very accommodating and professional. I've taken Amtrak many times. This was highly unusual," he said. "It may be awhile, but I would do it again."

Irvin said all Empire Builder trips were canceled Monday and westbound trains 7 and 27 would also be canceled Tuesday. Tuesday's trains 8 and 28, heading east, would originate in Spokane.

Details on track conditions provided by BNSF Railway were not available, but the state Department of Transportation freight report on Saturday said crews had reported 208 snow slides across Highway 2 in Tumwater Canyon — about 25 slides per mile.

An updated WSDOT report Monday estimated reopening Tumwater Canyon and Stevens Pass sometime Wednesday.

Friends of the 261/Railroading Heritage of Midwest America to Expand to Silvis Shop Complex

By Steve Glischinski | January 10, 2022 Provided by Roger Libra



Railway Equipment facility in Silvis, Ill., the former Rock Island Silvis Shops, in September 2020. The parent organization of the Friends of the 261 will acquire the facility. (Erik Rasmussen)



The main shop building capacity at Silvis is more than 400,00 square feet.

SILVIS, Ill. — In one of the largest expansions in railroad preservation in recent decades, Minneapolis-based Railroading Heritage of Midwest America/The Friends of the 261 will expand operations into the former National Railway Equipment (NRE) shop complex in the Quad Cities community of Silvis.

The 90-acre facility was once the main shop of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. The Silvis facility has more than 10 miles of track; the main shop building is 400,000 square feet with multiple overhead cranes. It includes a wheel shop, warehouse space, locomotive wheel drop table, multiple overhead cranes and several other smaller shop buildings. The complex is served by Iowa Interstate Railroad, BNSF Railway, and Canadian Pacific Railway. The group has been negotiating to move into the complex throughout the last half of 2021.

RRHMA subsidiary Friends of the 261 owns and operates Milwaukee Road steam locomotive No. 261 based in Minneapolis. Steve Sandberg, president and chief operating officer of the RRHMA/Friends, said the organization currently has no plans to permanently move No. 261 to the complex, although it could be moved to Illinois to pull excursion trains on a temporary basis. “This takes our organization to a whole new level,” Sandberg said in a news release. “We are excited about the possibilities; I believe this is one of the boldest moves for historic and railroad preservation in recent history. The Quad Cities is home to such industrial giants as John Deere and is the backbone of American industry.”

Under the agreement, a portion of the shop will be leased back to NRE over the next five years, to help generate revenue to help offset the cost of the acquisition. Sandberg said the organization hopes to use portions of the facility for steam locomotive restoration and repairs, diesel repairs, passenger car work, and historical preservation. To help support the facility the 261 organization will explore freight car storage, transloading, and eventually a museum. In future years the Friends hopes to run diesel and/or steam powered Holiday-themed trains at the complex, which is adjacent to the Iowa Interstate Railroad main line.

“This historic shop complex and the City of Silvis are part of the greater Quad Cities area which has a population of nearly 500,000. We hope to work with local and state officials to bring more tourism to the region,” Sandberg said. “This will be the largest historic restoration facility in the United States, which we think will be a major attraction for the area. The facility is currently not open to the public, but we hope to change that in the future. We hope to someday construct a railroad museum in part of the complex.”

In 1902, Rock Island chose Silvis as the site of its largest locomotive repair shop, a central hub for its network that would eventually include a general stores department, repair shop, roundhouse, and large freight yard. Rock Island continued to use the shop until it shut down in March 1980. It was later acquired by National Railway Equipment.

NRE closed the Silvis shop in March 2021 as part of a plan to consolidate rail operations to its shops in Mt. Vernon, Ill., and Paducah, Ky. Since its founding in 1984, NRE has grown to become the world’s largest independent supplier of leased locomotives and new and remanufactured locomotives; electrical components; and field services.

Milwaukee Road 261, built in 1944 by American Locomotive Co., has pulled excursion trains around the United States, including the Quad Cities since it was restored to operating condition in 1993. It was donated by the Milwaukee Road to the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wis. in 1956 and moved to the museum in 1958. After leasing the engine from the museum in 1992, in 2010 the Friends purchased the locomotive. In addition to the 4-8-4, the Friends owns a large fleet of passenger cars and former Milwaukee Road E9 No. 32A, all located in Minneapolis. Some of the equipment could be displayed at a new Silvis museum when not in excursion train use.

The Friends of the 261 is accepting donations to offset the cost of the project and is urging supporters to donate and become members of the organization by visiting www.261.com. A new website has also been developed for Railroading Heritage of Midwest America at www.rrhma.com.



Greetings – Gopher State RR Museum

Thursday, December 30, 2021 12:51 PM
provided by Chuck Lavallee Happy New Year everyone!!

I hope the close of 2021 finds everyone safe and healthy and hope everyone enjoyed a Merry Christmas with family and friends. It looks like we haven't had any communication since March of this year. Let's take some time and catch everyone up with what's been going on with GSRM the past year.

First - Operations

With the Covid-19 pandemic still in full swing and concerns over visitor and volunteer safety, it was decided to again suspend GSRM's normal operating season, including the annual Pumpkin Train. We really hope 2022 will see a return to more normal circumstances and we'll be able to be open to the public again on a regular basis.

The operating season wasn't a complete loss. We did end up operating train rides for about four Saturdays in a row between the end of September and mid-October and took in about \$400 in donations. The impromptu operations began with a request by a family friend of an autistic high school senior from Jordan, MN to take senior photos at the museum. Volunteers decided to surprise the student and his family with a train ride and spent two weeks prior to the photo shoot servicing NSP4 which has been stored out of service since fall of 2019. We ended up spending the day giving train rides as people passing by, saw the train moving and stopped in to check it out.

The following three weeks a similar scenario played out as other families had scheduled appointments to visit the museum and ride the train. More people driving past stopped because they saw the train moving. We ended up operating train rides all day for four Saturdays in a row.

Minneapolis & St Louis Caboose 1201

On 1 July, M&StL Caboose 1201 arrived at GSRM. The move was hired out to Vic's Crane Service. Hayden Murphy of Bloomington donated the use of their heavy lift forklift to assist with the move.

The caboose was donated to GSRM by the family of Bill Hennes of Jordan, MN. The caboose resided in the Hennes' back yard for nearly 50 years or more and provided a playhouse for the Hennes kids when they were young. Bill passed away about ten years ago and his wife more recently. The children decided to donate the caboose to GSRM because they were aware of GSRM's ongoing efforts and knew the caboose would be restored and cared for. They also live in the area and liked the idea they'd be able to drive by and see progress on the caboose.

Without a shop to work inside of, the decision was made to repair, rather than restore M&STL 1201. In this regard, volunteers began right away, first covering the roof with rubber roofing to protect it from further weather damage. The roof is already failing near the center of the car where the stove pipe passed through the roof. Keeping the inside dry has made a big difference since the caboose arrived at the museum.

Next the end platform wood and steel was removed to access the lower part of the end walls which were badly deteriorated. Some patching was done to the wood to prevent further weather damage and the ends were painted with a couple coats of paint. Broken window glass in the doors on both ends was also replaced to keep the weather out.

During the months of September and October, volunteers removed all the siding on the north side of the car. Deteriorated structural wood was replaced or patched as needed and new tarpaper barrier and wood siding was installed. The bay window structure was also repaired. For now there aren't any windows in the north side, the openings will be cut and windows added this coming spring. One coat of paint was applied to the siding before it got too cold to paint.

The caboose looks great so far - thank you to everyone who's been working on this project and thank you to those who donated paint, lumber and other materials.

The caboose is mostly complete other than missing its stove and a couple pieces of brake rigging. It's possible M&StL 1201 could be ready to add to the caboose train by fall 2022 or spring/summer 2023.

Other Projects

Some of the many projects included:

Volunteers were busy in 2021 despite the *Painting CB&Q waycar 14534*

Repairing and returning to operation the air compressor trailer

Servicing NSP4 and restoring it to operation for a month

Track work to move Alco FW1 off of Tom Schuman's temporary panel track

Building a temporary track in preparation to move CB&Q coach Silver Crest from Montgomery

Welding FW1's battery boxes back on and installing the batteries

Removing plywood from the end windows of Manitoba and patching some leaks around the windows

Repairing arson damage to Silver Crest in Montgomery

tree and weed trimming around the equipment at Montgomery

It was a busy summer and fall for volunteers. museum being closed for regular operations.

In other donation news - we received a donation of a searchlight style signal and components for two Griswold grade crossing flashers and two Western grade crossing flashers. The donation also included some miscellaneous trackside signs and other signal parts.

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We also received a donation from the Jim Mahachek family of railroad books, magazines, papers, movies, DVDs/VHS and a few artifacts including tools, and a passenger car sink. Some may remember Jim as a founding member of GSRM and he also operated a narrow gauge steam railroad in his back yard in Northfield, MN. Jim passed away a couple years ago.

The year 2021 also saw the passing of long time volunteer, Phil Murray. Phil was a fixture at the museum on days we were open to the public and he enjoyed talking with visitors and reminiscing with them over the history of Jordan, New Prague, Montgomery and Kilkenny where he grew up. Phil will be missed by everyone and our thoughts are with his wife Darlene.

The year 2021 also saw continued vandalism and arson at our off site storage in Montgomery. In early spring, arsonists broke out a window in the coach Silver Crest and ignited a fire in the restroom using an accelerant soaked rag in a bottle. The fire was contained to debris left behind by previous vandalism and was extinguished by the Montgomery Fire Department. More damage was inflicted on Silver Crest by firemen cutting a hole in the side of the car than was actually caused by the fire. The interior damage is mostly confined to smoke damage.

Volunteers once again secured the car and covered over the broken window and the hole made by firemen. Vandals had also been trying to gain access to the Alco S-4 stored there and it was re secured again as well.

It's been no secret the City of Montgomery wants us to remove the coach and locomotive from where it's stored. We also have a vested interest in moving the equipment as it does GSRM no good where it sits and continues to draw volunteer and financial resources away from progress in New Prague. The board of directors has been working on a plan to move the equipment from Montgomery to New Prague where it can finally be of use to GSRM. Unfortunately, the Union Pacific is unwilling at this time to consider moving either piece by rail and suggested our best option is going to be moving it out by truck. This option isn't really our "best" option, but seems to be the only option at this time. We're in the process of getting a bid from Vic's Crane to do the work. Our plan is to move the coach this winter, possibly in January or February and move the Alco locomotive later in 2022. Once we have the bid, we'll begin a fundraising campaign to cover the cost of moving. Volunteers already have 96' of track ready at the edge of the parking lot for the arrival of Silver Crest.

When Silver Crest arrives, it will become one of our winter projects. It needs to be thoroughly cleaned inside and mounds of junk left behind by vandals removed. We'll also begin installing windows on the parking lot side to improve its appearance. The plan for this car is to use it as display and office space as well as providing an air conditioned space for visitors in the summer. The car was last used by a model railroad club in Fargo, ND so there aren't any seats inside. It was used in work service by the Burlington Northern prior that as a bunk car. The car will be parked to the west of the depot once track is extended that far later in 2022.

The other winter project for volunteers will be continuing to work on the interior of the Hill Top depot. We'll be working on wall paneling in the freight room and building display cabinets along one wall. To that end, a very nice, lighted, glass display cabinet was donated to GSRM by Living Spirit United Methodist Church in South Minneapolis this past fall. It's an L-shaped cabinet and will fit in the corner of the freight room, to the left of the sliding baggage door. More lighted display cabinets mirroring this cabinet will be built to the left of it, along the north wall of the freight room. We're also hoping we can get our electrical work done inside the depot this winter as well.

General Membership meeting planned for January.

We haven't selected a date or location yet, but it will be communicated when the time comes. We haven't had a regular business meeting in quite a while because of Covid and other things going on. We plan to have one later in January. The agenda will cover old business, then be open for new business, including an open discussion to bring everyone to the same page regarding GSRM's future, it's goals, it's published site plan and its current business plan. We plan to have open discussion regarding how do we reach the goals we set many years ago, what goals may need to be refreshed etc. This will involve some brainstorming and putting forth ideas which may have been discussed in the past, but may be new ideas to some newer folks to the group. All ideas are good ideas to put forth, regardless if they're ultimately acted on. Please plan on attending this meeting if you're able because we value everyone's input.

That's all for now. 2021 was a successful year despite Covid-19 and we hope 2022 will be even better.

Stay safe everyone - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!! Jeff

Jeff Braun - Vice President Gopher State Railway Museum

AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS January 2022 Volume 10 Issue 1 Provided by John Goodman

Washington Update by Ross Capon



Happy New Year!

The new infrastructure law – the Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act (IIJA) – has \$66 billion in guaranteed rail funding over five years, as itemized here. (These numbers do not include the additional \$34B which is just authorized.)

- \$5B CRISI Grants (can be used for either freight or passenger; Class II and Class III railroads are among the eligible applicants; Class Is can benefit from projects that enhance multimodal connections or facilitate service integration between rail service and other modes)

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- \$6B Amtrak Northeast Corridor – new rolling stock, upgrade and expansion of storage and maintenance facilities, ADA upgrades, eliminate backlog of deferred capital work and capital renewal projects;
 - \$16B Amtrak National Network (for long-distance and state-supported routes) -- acquire new rolling stock, ADA upgrades, eliminating backlog of deferred capital work; \$50M/year set-aside for restoration of discontinued passenger service;
 - \$3B Railroad crossing elimination grants (substantial increase over previous years);
 - \$36B Federal-State Partnership for Passenger Rail – this is the lion’s share of passenger funding and it goes to competitive grants administered by FRA, not direct to Amtrak.
- USDOT is to give Congress a detailed plan to spend the first year’s money within 180 days of enactment – i.e., by mid-May – and to include subsequent-year plans in its annual budget requests.

Amtrak’s lack of transparency in billing states is criticized in House Dec. 9 hearing: Donna DeMartino, Managing Director, Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN), in House Railroads Subcommittee testimony said “transparent cost information is necessary to inform investment and operating decisions...Given our state’s continued operating subsidies and capital commitments, we need clear cost information to inform our investment and operating decisions. Unfortunately, we have found the current state Amtrak cost formulas to be complicated, opaque and not necessarily tied to services we receive. Costs can increase in ways that are not intuitive or easily explained. However, we are hopeful that the reforms in the IJA and the required cost update will provide states more transparent costs and accounting information.” Click [here](#) for DeMartino’s written testimony – especially the page 9 discussion of cost formula problems, including this: “Like the GAO, we have found the current Section 209 system to be complicated and opaque.”

Asked by Rep. Michelle Steel (R-CA) for an example of the cost data problems, DeMartino said, “When I asked Amtrak to provide the costs to run an additional train, so we could support our anticipated high ridership during the holiday season, Amtrak was not able to provide that specific information in a timely manner. We chose to run the train not understanding exactly what it would cost. [As someone said earlier,] ‘that’s no way to run a railroad.’ We certainly are hopeful that the cost formula update will help solve these issues in the future.”

Click [here](#) for video of the 2 ½ hour hearing. See especially DeMartino’s testimony at 48:50 and her response to Rep. Steel’s question at 1:45:55.

St. Louis-Kansas City Service Cut in Half Today: Effective January 3, Amtrak discontinued the Missouri-funded morning departure from St. Louis and afternoon departure from Kansas City. In a September 21 letter to Amtrak, Missouri DOT Director Patrick K. McKenna stated “our legislative appropriation for SFY 2022 is \$10.85 million...Based on forecasted ridership and expenses, the current estimate will fall \$950,000 short of being able to maintain twice daily roundtrip service. While our preference is to keep twice daily service, the directive of the Missouri General Assembly is that we will not incur arrears, and continuing the current level of service past January 1 would do just that.” (Fortunately, the trains did run on January 1 and 2 presumably in recognition of holiday traffic.)

NS and CSX dig in against Gulf Coast Service: February 15, 2022 will see the next STB hearing regarding Amtrak’s attempt to restore New Orleans-Mobile passenger service. A December 27 *Trains* News Wire report says CSX provided little information to support its claim that the infrastructure investment required for two daily round-trips is \$2.2 billion, far more than the results of an FRA-led study. CSX claims this limited passenger train service would cripple rail operations for the Port of Mobile. *Trains* reported, “In an unprecedented ‘friend of the court’ brief filed by an agency not known for taking sides, the FRA weighed in by calling out the host railroads’ continued lack of transparency.”

The Amtrak Office of Inspector General, in a December 9 report, said the company’s human resources department lacks staff needed to add up to 3,500 employees as planned by September 30, 2022. As of October 2021, “the HR department responsible for recruiting and hiring management and employees, had vacancies in 28 of 64 positions, leading to workloads that are causing burnout and have some managers saying they or colleagues will consider leaving if the workload conditions do not improve” (from *Trains* news-wire). Click [here](#) for the OIG’s short summary and link to the full report.

Click [here](#) for summary and link to the full December 6 report on the need for Amtrak to more actively engage with regional partners to address bluff failures in the Del Mar Bluffs area north of San Diego.

Click [here](#) for the OIG’s semi-annual report to Congress covering April-September 2021.

Fund-raiser round-up: Thanks to all AAPRCO members who helped support my participation in 2021 political fundraisers for the following legislators:

- Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), member (& former ranking member), Senate Commerce Surface Transp Subcomm (2 events)
- Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), chair, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (3 events)

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- Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE), ranking member, Commerce Surface Transportation Subcomm
- Rep. David Price (D-NC), chair, Transportation/Housing Approps. Subcomm. (2 events)
- Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), ranking member, Transportation/Housing Approps. Subcomm. (2 events—one was free; Tom Lanahan attended the other)
- Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR), ranking member, T&I Railroads Subcomm (2 events)
- Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS), ranking member, Commerce Committee
- Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), chair, Appropriations Committee (2 events)
- Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), chair, Transportation/Housing Approps. Subcomm.
- Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI), chair, Commerce Surface Transportation Subcommittee
- Rep. Donald M. Payne Jr. (D-NJ), chair, T&I Railroads Subcommittee

Five events were in person, mostly late in the year (Peters [outdoors in June], Price, Leahy, Duckworth, Crawford). The rest were by Zoom. Zoom has one advantage, particularly for the larger events: everyone's name is displayed so you always know who is talking.

Pro-infrastructure Republicans to be “primaried”: In my Nov. 15 column, I urged constituents of the 13 House Republicans who voted for the IIJA to thank them for that vote, since they had received death threats and Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) called them “traitors” and accused them of voting for “Joe Biden’s Communist takeover of America.” It gets worse. In a December 28 MSNBC interview, *Washington Post* Reporter Colby Itkowitz said a vote for the IIJA was one of the factors Trump acolytes were using to choose which House Republicans to defeat in upcoming primaries. Her Dec. 26 *Washington Post* story says Reps. Greene, Madison Cawthorn (R-NC), Matt Gaetz (R-FL) and Lauren Boebert (R-CO) are leading an effort “to supersize the MAGA group in the House from its current loose membership of about a half-dozen—and give it the heft that, combined with its close alliance with Trump, would put it in a position to wield significant influence should Republicans win the House majority.” One of the cued-up House candidates -- Joe Kent, seeking to unseat Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) -- “said he has little interest in fighting with Democrats if he makes it to Congress. Instead, he wants to force Republicans into tough votes, starting with articles of impeachment against President Biden and a full congressional inquiry into the 2020 presidential election... ‘A lot of it will be shaming Republicans. I need to be going after the people in the Republican Party who want to go back to go-along-to-get-along. It’s put up or shut up.’”

John Madden, the train-rider: Upon his death, *The New York Times* had this: “Grounded by an incapacitating fear of flying, he met many of his fans while crisscrossing the country, first in Amtrak trains and then in his Madden Cruiser, a decked-out motor coach that was a rare luxurious concession for a man whose idea of a big night out, as detailed in his book ‘One Size Doesn’t Fit All’ (1988), was wearing ‘a sweatsuit and sneakers to a real Mexican restaurant for nachos and a chile Colorado.’”



AARPCO: Passenger Rail News

Amtrak BMWED Members Vote for Federation Consolidation

[Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees'](#) (BMWED) members who work for [Amtrak](#) voted in favor of a proposal to consolidate five separate federations into one Amtrak group, union officials announced last week.

The votes were 551 in favor of consolidation and 122 against, according to a BMWED-IBT press release. The referendum was presented to 2,348 members from the five federations.

The next step for the new Amtrak federation is to hold a “founding convention” Jan. 19-20 in Newark, New Jersey. Delegates from the local lodges representing BMWED members across the Amtrak railroad will come together to forge new by-laws, elect officers and set up the finances for the new federation.

"With the solidarity and efficiencies flowing from one unified federation, BMWED members on Amtrak have sent a strong message that we need one system to serve the united interests of the membership and not be divided by five systems that waste resources and weaken solidarity," said BMWED Vice President Jed Dodd.

More AARPCO news: OIG: Amtrak HR Staff Shortage Creates Hiring Challenge

[Amtrak's](#) human resources department does not have sufficient leadership or staff to effectively recruit, screen, hire and onboard new employees, which will likely hinder the railroad's plans to add 2,500 to 3,500 employees this fiscal year, according to an Amtrak Office of Inspector General (OIG) report released last month.

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After reducing service and downsizing its workforce due to the pandemic, Amtrak now expects to build its current workforce by as much as 21% from June 2021 through October 2022 as pandemic restrictions are lifted and travel demand returns, OIG officials said in a press release.

The recently enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will further increase the railroad's need to add managers and workers with highly specialized skills in the engineering, mechanical and transportation departments to oversee and execute high-priority capital projects, according to the report.

As of October 2021, however, 28 of 64 positions in the HR department's talent acquisition group — the team dedicated to planning, recruiting, hiring and onboarding Amtrak's management and agreement workers — were vacant. As a result, HR staff are taking on workloads double the industry standard, leading to burnout, causing hiring delays and diverting managers' attention from more strategic priorities.

Amtrak also faces difficulty competing for highly qualified talent acquisition candidates with other companies that offer more opportunities for remote work and greater schedule flexibility. In October 2021, three of five leadership positions in the talent acquisition group were vacant.

The railroad is reviewing options that could help address compensation disparities and make recruiting for HR executive positions easier. It has not, however, explored and developed meaningful solutions to address other competitive barriers, which could risk prolonged gaps in several key HR leadership functions.

The OIG recommended that Amtrak explore and develop solutions to address competitive barriers to attracting executive talent. Additionally, the OIG recommended that Amtrak fill the position responsible for overseeing third-party recruiting contracts.

Rail Agreement Could Fast-track Second Amtrak Train from St. Paul to Chicago Acquisition involving two freight rail giants could mean that service will begin sooner than expected.

By Janet Moore Star Tribune JANUARY 6, 2022 — 4:52PM



LEILA NAVIDI, STAR TRIBUNE FILE



Source: ESRI

Star Tribune

STAR TRIBUNE Second train route to Chicago

A second daily Amtrak train between the Twin Cities and Chicago would operate on Canadian Pacific freight track.

A proposed \$31 billion acquisition involving two freight rail giants won't imperil plans to add a second daily passenger train trip between St. Paul and Chicago — and could mean that service will begin sooner than expected.

Plans call for a second round-trip Amtrak train between Union Depot in St. Paul and Union Station in Chicago to begin in 2024, largely using freight track owned by Canadian Pacific (CP) railway.

Canadian Pacific on Thursday secured Amtrak's support for its impending [purchase](#) of Kansas City Southern railway. The U.S. Surface Transportation Board, which is currently reviewing the proposed merger, will have the final say on whether it goes through. Amtrak will submit its favorable stance on the deal with the board, based on the newly announced agreement.

"We welcome CP's commitment to our efforts with states and others to expand Amtrak service and are pleased to have reached an agreement formalizing CP's support of Amtrak expansion in the Midwest and the South," said Amtrak President Stephen Gardner, in a news release.

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Keith Creel, CP's president and CEO, said the Calgary-based railroad will continue to support Amtrak and its efforts to expand the reach of passenger rail nationwide, including the [expansion of service](#) between St. Paul and Chicago.

"We appreciate Amtrak's efforts to provide additional intercity passenger rail service that will benefit the people and economies of both Minnesota and Wisconsin," said Minnesota Transportation Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher, in a statement.

An Amtrak spokesman said Thursday because both sides agree on a common expansion strategy, the agreement could mean the service will begin sooner than 2024.

The second daily round trip between St. Paul and the Windy City is expected to "improve existing infrastructure and provide increased choice for residents traveling between some of our major cities — with stops in towns and cities of all sizes along the way," Anderson Kelliher added.

Last year, state lawmakers agreed to spend \$10 million to support the effort, leveraging a \$32 million federal grant along with \$6.2 million from Wisconsin and \$5 million from Amtrak.

Adding frequency on the route will supplement existing Amtrak service on the Empire Builder route, which connects Chicago to Seattle or Portland, Ore., via St. Paul, Minot, N.D., and Spokane, Wash.

Other projects covered by the CP agreement across the country include increased frequency of Amtrak's Hiawatha line between Chicago and Milwaukee, and passenger service through the Detroit River Tunnel between Michigan and Toronto through Windsor, Ont.

CP also pledged to work on establishing Amtrak service between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La., and to study service linking Meridian, Miss. and Dallas

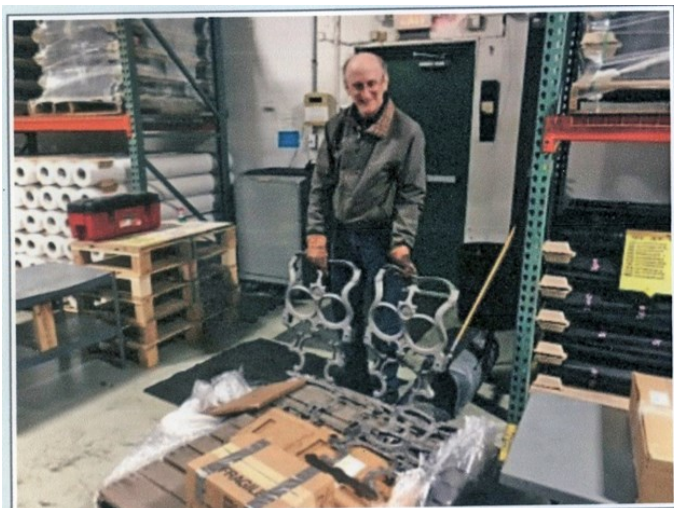
Mid-Continent Railway Museum BBS

Progress over the Winter Months Sun Jan 23, 2022 7:21 am provided by Chuck Lavallee

Over the winter months the Restoration Department is continuing to make progress on a several of our active projects.

Following is a brief summary of some of the progress that has been made:

EJ&S #2 Combine: Pete Becker recently took receipt of the last shipment of Buntin Seat Castings for the combine. These castings will be turned over to the machinist in Baraboo where they will join the seat castings that were shipped previously. The castings need holes drills and other machining to allow final assembly and installation.



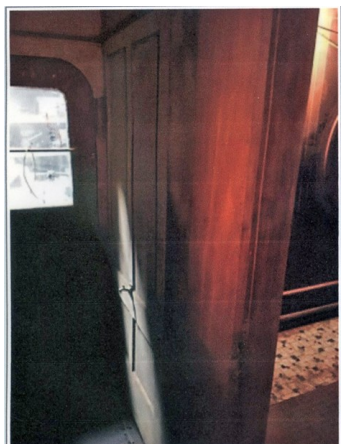
MCRM 2022 JAN 1 Pete Becker viewing shipment seat castings for EJ&S #2



MCRM 2022 JAN 2 One of the new Soo Line #203 cupola window frames



MCRM 2022 JAN 2 The cross section Soo Line #203 window frame for the two panes of glass



DULUTH sleeping car: As weather permits Larry T. continues to strip the old finish of the interior of the car and the vestibules. To date, he is about 85% complete with the stripping the interior and 60% complete with the inside of the vestibules.

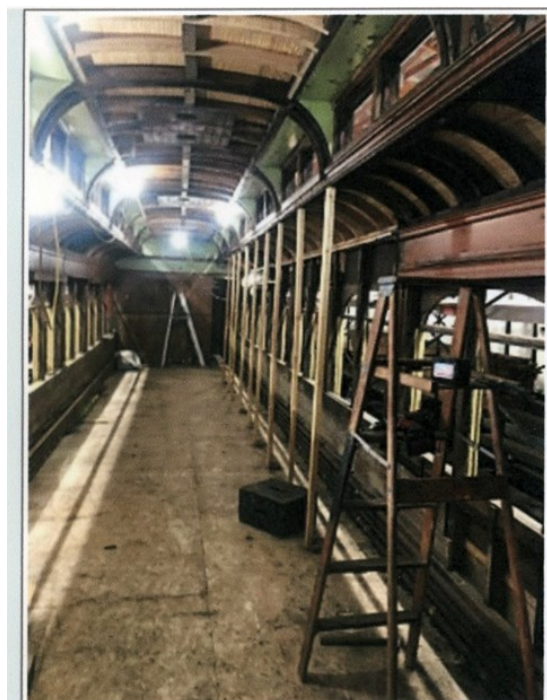
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Great Northern #3261: The (8) remaining baggage racks to install in the GN coach have been completed (machined, polished and assembled). I installed (4) of the remaining (8) baggage racks earlier this month and this now completes the east side of the car. Plans call for installing the last (4) baggage racks on the west side in February.

MCRM 2022 JAN 3 East Side of GN #3261 Baggage racks installed



MCRM 2022 JAN 3 CROP LS&I #64 INTERIOR bracing that was holding up the clerestory roof during the rebuilding process.



MCRM 2022 JAN 3 CROP LS&I #64 INTERIOR Bracing removed

LS&I #64: With the roof framing and decking work completed in 2021 I was able to remove the temporary internal bracing that had been previously installed inside the car. The bracing consisted of over a dozen 2"X4" studs on each side of the car. In the coming weeks I'll be sending out the 2022 Work Plans and the 2022 Work Session Schedule. So, be sure to check back for this information.

Bill Buhrmaster
MCRM Restoration Department
708-340-4098

Montana Rail Link to End Operations, with BNSF Taking Over Monday 1/10/2022 7:52 PM

Provided by Roger Libra -Trains Newswire



Montana Rail Link will end its lease of more than 900 miles of lines from BNSF, which will resume operations on those routes, MRL's president has announced. (Justin Franz)

MISSOULA, Mont. — Montana Rail Link will end its long-term lease on BNSF Railway lines in its namesake state, Idaho, and Washington, with BNSF resuming operation of those routes, MRL President Derek Ollmann told employees in a memo today (Monday, Jan. 10).

No timeline for the changeover was indicated in the memo.

"This decision was made after a great deal of thought including securing BNSF's commitment to continue employment for all MRL employees," Ollmann wrote. Employees will have the ability to remain in their current locations and will preserve payments that match MRL profit-sharing payouts, he wrote, once an agreement is negotiated.

The memo said an evolving freight environment has left 90% of Montana Rail Link's freight volume on BNSF trains. "BNSF operating the line as part of [its] network will ensure competitive access to global markets while continuing to provide the consistent and reliable service for our customers," Ollmann wrote.

Ollmann said MRL and BNSF planned to immediately contact union leaders to begin negotiations on labor agreements necessary for the change.

Montana Rail Link was formed in 1987 through a lease of 937 miles of former Northern Pacific Railway trackage from Burlington Northern. It employs more than 1,200 workers. The railroad was founded by Missoula businessman Dennis Washington and is part of The Washington Companies.

— This is a developing story. Follow Trains News Wire for further information as it becomes available

**Comment: Amtrak's Texas Eagle is like an Artichoke, Mr. Congressman**

From: "Gene Poon" <sheehans2016@gmail.com> **Cc:** Sun, Jan 23, 2022 at 6:07 PM

US., Texas: Amtrak's Texas Eagle is Like an Artichoke, Mr. Congressman

January 23, 2022 [Administrator](#)

What Amtrak USED to be...

From: Gene Poon <sheehans2016@gmail.com> **Date:** Wed, Jan 12, 2022 at 4:50 PM [AllAboardRailDiscussion]

I thought I would spread this around to AllAboard. It is by an official in the early days of Amtrak and is to be published in an upcoming issue of a State ARP newsletter, so it's not a private item.

It shows how Amtrak and one of the the Class Ones, when the railroads actually provided the service, cooperated when needed. It is a case from the very early days of Amtrak, showing how things have changed, and not for the better. In 1971, Amtrak told the participating railroads what they wanted in terms of schedules and consists and the railroads performed accordingly, some better than others, some more enthusiastic than others. But by and large it worked reasonably well.

We (Amtrak) had a very small staff in Washington and a small operating department still in its formative stage. I was in Marketing, but some of us took turns as "Night Operations Officer". On one of my shifts I took a 2 a.m. call from the Burlington Northern advising that the eastbound Empire Builder was running about 5 or 6 hours late. Did I want to authorize a makeup train to protect the Twin Cities-Chicago market? I said yes, and told them to make sure it had a dining car, or at least a food service car of some kind. When I arrived at work later that morning I checked and discovered BN had put together several coaches and a dining car and the train did indeed protect the MSP-MKE-CHI schedule and market.

This illustrates how things have changed over the Amtrak decades. Amtrak today would not even think to do such a thing, even if it had protect equipment and crews. And imagine a Class 1 actually suggesting it be done, and then in about five hours time assembling a train, a crew, and a provisioned dining car! That was passenger railroading the way it should be.

Hiawatha's Slashed From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, January 24, 2022, 11:54:25 AM CST [AllAboardRailDiscussion]

[Reason: Corrected number of Hiawathas previously run from 24 to 14 (fat finger error).]

Beginning today the schedule of Hiawatha Service trains is being cut by Amtrak unilaterally (contact in the Midwest says that this was not requested by Wisconsin and Illinois). In addition, a roundtrip is not running because of mechanical issues that Chicago Mechanical can not solve.

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332/333/335/336/337/338/339/340 are the only scheduled Hiawathas now, down from 14 trains daily; and two of them won't run today because there are no serviceable engines for them.

How bad are things at Amtrak Mechanical in Chicago? A Midwest Corridor train was held until a P42 off a late inbound Southwest Chief could be taken because the originally scheduled engine, a new Siemens Charger, was bad order.

Michigan, Charger Woes

from: "Gene Poon" <gpoon49@gmail.com>

Sent: Wed, Jan 26, 2022 at 1:53 AM Subject: [AllAboardRailDiscussion]

As a result of 355(25)'s safety appliance failure, the intended protect unit which arrived on 350 (it had the AMTK 4601 and 4617) immediately used to protect it, and the cancellation of Train 352(25) for a bum Charger right out of its delayed departure from CHI (it broke down immediately on pulling from the platform after being worked on for over an hour), there was no available Amtrak engine in Michigan at all until 354(25) arrived an hour late; its unit AMTK 4632 could now go out as 351(26) but that is reported cancelled and shows as "sold out" in availability so it is apparently intended that it go out on 353(26) instead. As the new 4600-class Chargers drop like flies, old P42s are substituting: AMTK 33 went on 381/382 and AMTK 148 on 393/390.

Empire Builder Derails at Milwaukee Station

From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com> Thursday, January 27, 2022, 12:08:32 AM CST [AllAboardRailDiscussion]
Empire Builder 7(26) with AMTK 48 and 201 derailed one truck of the coach behind the diner in the Milwaukee station at around 440pm. This was after one of its three units, AMTK 815, was removed from the train due to Mechanical issues, and a stop due to triggering a dragging equipment detector at mp 72.7.

As of about 1 1/2 hours ago (approx. 1030pm) the crew was switching equipment around to put the rest of the train back together.

Amtrak Alerts reported an "malfunction with one of the railcars" and an extensive delay "to leave it behind for repairs."

Silver Star Consist 1-25-22

From: wammp236 via groups.io Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 06:45:25 AM CST [AllAboardRailDiscussion]
I was able to observe Amtrak's Silver Star on the Plant City Florida rail cam on 1-25-22

This is now the only Florida train Amtrak operates at this time, and it did have an expanded consist.

2 P42 Locomotives
Viewliner Diner*
Viewliner Sleeper*
5 Amfleet II Coaches
Amfleet II Lounge
Viewliner Diner
5 Viewliner Sleepers
Viewliner Baggage
15 cars total.

* It appeared that the diner and sleeper on the head end ahead of the coaches were deadhead. Bill M Portage PA

Don't Wait Up for California Zephyr 5(20)

From: "Gene Poon" <gpoon49@gmail.com> AllAboardRailDiscussion@groups.io> Cc: Fri, Jan 21, 2022 at 9:51 AM
provided by John Goodman

California Zephyr 5(20) is now over 13 hours late. It got as far as Kewanee IL before the crew went dead on Hours of Service. Train sat there around three hours waiting for a dogcatch. Five hours delay out of initial terminal and then this? There was plenty of time to think about it and call a crew. That's what the glittering Operations Center is supposed to do but there seems to be a lack of brains in the area. What a sorry excuse for a company! Apologists will say there were no available crews. That may be a reason but not an excuse. It would be a condition that Amtrak brought upon itself.

RailPAC and Editor, Steel Wheels Magazine

From: Gene Poon <gpoon49@gmail.com> Tuesday, January 18, 2022, 09:28:42 PM CST Provided by John Goodman

Train 11 (16) - A Coast Starlight trip that is hard to beat! **From Paul Dyson., Coast Starlight 11(16):**

This one is hard to beat. Delayed a couple of hours at Davis with a suicide two trains ahead.

Delayed about two hours at Salinas, homeless person joined the train through the diner and refused to leave. Police called. Arrived Van Nuys about midnight. One of the locomotives overdue FRA inspection. Trains stopped while team sent from 8th street roundhouse to perform FRA inspection on the platform at Van Nuys. Train arrived LA 0210. Continued on next page: Every trip is an adventure.

HPO History as RPO's were Discontinued on America's Rails

David Thompson dathomps68@gmail.com Sun 1/16/2022 1:05 PM



Some at the North Star Chapter of the NRHS might find this History of the HPO interesting as RPO's were discontinued. It is a piece of transportation history from the Railway Mail Service Library in Boyce, VA that you may not have heard of..."The History of the Highway Post Office"

The HPO sorted and transported mail where discontinued trains with RPO's used to go throughout the country (started in 1941 and discontinued in 1974).

The HPO concept was designed not to compete with RPO's or railroads, but to extend the reach of the USPS to towns where rail-way mail service was discontinued due to passenger train service being terminated to these areas.

My dad was a clerk in charge of one of these HPO's in the fall of 1961 for about three months, as RPO's he worked on were being discontinued. It was a HPO that ran from Duluth, MN to iron range post offices (Virginia, Hibbing, etc) terminating in Grand Rapids, MN.

The Winton & Duluth RPO, on a Messabi Railroad passenger train that served this area of Northern MN, was discontinued in the late 1950's, This HPO served these communities with postal service on the MN iron range after the discontinuance of passenger trains and RPO's to this area.

My dad did not like HPO's for the lack of space to work in, compared to an RPO. He did not like standing the whole trip on a swaying bus hitting bumps in the road which happened often and suddenly without warning, making it hard to keep one's "sea legs" on the trip, along with the jerking of stopping and starting at intersections on this bus trip on rural highways and through small towns and cities. He preferred the Railway Post Offices he worked on for many years for the more stable ride and space to work. He had a heart attack on this HPO near Grand Rapids, MN in early December 1961...rode the HPO back to Duluth and went to a hospital to treat his coronary problem. He never went back to HPO's.

When my dad recovered from the heart attack, he went back to an RPO out of St. Paul, MN, the St. Paul & Portal RPO (ED) to Enderline, ND on the Soo Line railroad. When he returned home from that round trip he had a second heart attack upon returning home and died, four months shy of his 65th BD and retirement. I was 15 years old then.

The use of HPO's contributed to the change the name of the Railway Mail Service (RMS) in 1949 to the Postal Transportation Service (PTS), acknowledging multiple ways of the US Post Office to transport the mail by bus, truck, train, aircraft, and ship after that date.

Enjoy the attached history of the HPO.

Warm regards, Dave Thompson

Talgo's Wisconsin Trains Find Home In... Nigeria

Intended for high-speed Midwest line, they'll be used on metro line in Lagos. *By Jeramey Jannene - Jan 18th, 2022 07:am*
Provided by John Goodman

After more than a decade and a twisted legal saga, Talgo has found a buyer for its trainsets originally built for a high-speed rail line between Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison and the Twin Cities.

The Spanish train manufacturer will sell the two Milwaukee-made trains to the Nigerian government. In 2010, Governor-elect Scott Walker refused a \$823 million federal grant to build the high-speed Hiawatha extension, but the state was still on the hook to pay for the trainsets ordered by Governor Jim Doyle.

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*Talgo Trainsets.
Photo by Garrick Jannene*

Rather than invest in a maintenance facility to put them into use on the existing line, Walker and the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature had the state default on the contract.

Wisconsin ultimately settled with Talgo, a move that cost the state \$59 million and allowed the manufacturer to maintain ownership of the equipment.

Talgo's USA CEO **Antonio Perez** told Urban Milwaukee in 2019 that he was seeking to sell the trainsets to Oregon and Washington or a coalition of Gulf Coast states. But those deals never came to fruition, nor did a rumored lease to a California agency or to Michigan. Amtrak, meanwhile, ordered new equipment that is expected to enter service in phases starting in 2024.

But Talgo didn't give up. In addition to its international business, it has landed two major rehabilitation contracts in the United States. It is restoring subway and commuter rail equipment from California at its Milwaukee plant in Century City.

Now it's selling the trainsets to a new Nigerian rail line serving the Lagos metro area. The 23-mile, 11-station line is the first in a city of 27 million.

The Governor of Lagos State, **Babajide Sanwo-Olu**, will join Perez and Acting Mayor **Cavalier Johnson** in Milwaukee on Tuesday.

According to a press release, the new line is expected to open in late 2022 with a capacity of 500,000 passengers per day. The Hiawatha Service between Milwaukee and Chicago, with seven daily roundtrips, has never served more than 883,000 passengers in an entire year.

The two Series 8 trainsets Talgo will sell are 14-car trainsets with capacity for up to 420 seated passengers. It is unclear how the trainsets will be modified for use in Nigeria.

Talgo made two additional Series 8 trainsets in Milwaukee for use on the Amtrak Cascades Service between Oregon, Washington and Vancouver, CA. Those trainsets remain in service.



**CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY**

News Wire No. 1 story of 2021: CP, CN battle for Kansas City Southern

By Bill Stephens | December 31, 2021 provided by Rick Krenske

Twists, turns of merger saga end with CP-KCS deal awaiting regulatory approval in 2022.



A Canadian Pacific SD40-2 with the earlier "multimark" paint scheme leads a current CP locomotive and one from Kansas City Southern. CP and KCS followed a long, twisting road to become merger partners. (Brandon Muir)



The merger that wasn't: Canadian National and KCS locomotives cross County Road Y near Byron, Wis., on Dec. 15, 2021. (Trains: David Lassen)



Canadian Pacific CEO Keith Creel (Trains: David Lassen)



KCS CEO Patrick Ottensmeyer. (Trains: David Lassen)



CN CEO JJ Ruest (CN)

The Battle for Kansas City Southern, culminating in Canadian Pacific's triumph over Canadian National, is Trains' top railroading story of the year. (Editor's note: This may have seemed like a foregone conclusion, but balloting was close, with this story receiving just one more first-place vote and nine more points than the No. 2 story.)

Stage was set with 2020 approach by investor groups The seeds for the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger were planted in the summer of 2020, when a private investor consortium sought to take the company private. *Continued on next page:*

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News reports that Blackstone Group and Global Infrastructure Partners wanted to acquire KCS for \$21 billion prompted CP CEO Keith Creel to call KCS CEO Pat Ottensmeyer in August 2020 to propose a merger of equals. Such a deal, Creel said, would face the least amount of regulatory uncertainty because it was an end-to-end merger that would unite the two smallest Class I railroads.

KCS considered dueling merger offers from CP and an investor group identified only as “Party A” right up until March 2021. On March 20, KCS accepted CP’s \$29 billion offer and their deal for the first merger of Class I railroads in two decades was unveiled the next day.

But CN was waiting in the wings. It submitted an unsolicited \$33.6 billion offer for KCS on April 20. On May 21, KCS terminated its merger agreement with CP and accepted CN’s offer. “Overall, we are the better bid, the better partner, the better railway, and the best solution for KCS and for the North American economy,” CN CEO JJ Ruest said.

Why all the interest in KCS? The 6,700-mile railroad’s north-south main line stretches from Kansas City, Mo., deep into Mexico. Its cross-border traffic has doubled since 2012 and shows no signs of slowing down as intermodal, automotive, and refined products traffic all continue to grow. The pandemic has laid bare an over-reliance on manufacturing in Asia, and railroaders expect some of that production to shift to low-cost Mexico as part of a phenomenon known as near-shoring. Toss in the updated NAFTA agreement called USMCA, and you have the potential for more growth by creating the first railroad to link Canada, the U.S., and Mexico.

Thus the CP and CN battle to acquire KCS.

Regulatory chess match

In what would prove to be a pivotal move, CP and KCS sought to have their combination reviewed under the Surface Transportation Board’s less onerous old merger rules. The STB in April approved the request under a waiver that had been granted to KCS when the board tightened its merger review rules in 2001. The STB on May 6 approved CP’s request to place KCS in a voting trust while the merger is under review.

CN sought to gain merger approval under the board’s untested and far tougher “new” review rules. And it asked the board for permission to put KCS into a voting trust, a structure that allows shareholders to receive their cash and shares in the new company at the start of the merger review process.

Creel said there was no reason to sweeten his railroad’s bid for KCS because CN’s offer was so anti-competitive that it would never make it out of the starting gate. CP’s deal with KCS was ironclad, Creel insisted, and CN’s was so fraught with regulatory risk that it was “unattainable,” a “fantasy,” and “fool’s gold.”

As CP and CN traded barbs over their merger proposals and rounded up support from shippers, KCS scheduled an Aug. 19 meeting where shareholders would vote on the CN merger deal.

Ahead of the shareholder vote, CP boosted its offer to \$31 billion so that KCS investors would have an alternative to consider. But KCS postponed the meeting to await an STB decision on CN’s request to put KCS into a voting trust.

Then came the bombshell: The STB on Aug. 31 rejected the CN-KCS voting trust, saying it was not in the public interest. Absent the voting trust, it would be nearly impossible for CN to acquire KCS.

KCS accepted CP’s offer on Sept. 15, ending the five-month contest.

CP and KCS went on to file their merger application on Oct. 29. The massive filing with the STB outlines Canadian Pacific Kansas City’s growth projections, including a near tripling of traffic on CP’s former Milwaukee Road lines leading to Kansas City and on the KCS main from K.C. to the Laredo, Texas, gateway.

The STB is expected to rule on the merger by late 2022.

Fallout for CN

TCI Fund Management, the London-based firm that holds \$4 billion worth of CN shares and is the railway’s second-largest investor, in May urged CN to drop its bid for KCS, citing the regulatory risk. TCI also said it would ask for the resignation of Ruest and CN Chairman Robert Pace if the railway’s KCS bid failed.

After the Aug. 31 STB ruling, TCI ripped CN’s management in a [presentation posted to its website](#) and in a scathing [letter to the railway’s board](#). CN had lost operational discipline, TCI claimed, and needed to renew its focus on running a lean, reliable, and efficient railroad.

TCI asked for a special shareholder meeting where investors could consider its proposed slate of four directors. And the fund proposed that CN hire its former chief operating officer, Jim Vena, to replace Ruest.

CN responded in September with a plan to cut costs, reduce capital spending, and raise revenue to reduce the railway’s operating ratio to 57% in 2022. And as CN announced earnings in October, Ruest announced he would retire in January. CN expects to name a successor in January.



Amtrak & CP to Collaborate on New Service January 12, 2022

Provided by John Goodman

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Amtrak [has announced](#) its support for the Canadian Pacific (CP) railroad's [proposed purchase](#) of Kansas City Southern, a combination that would give the company control of 20,000 miles of rail. The buyout must be approved by the Surface Transportation Board—which [imposed a freeze](#) on mergers in the railroad industry two decades ago—before it can move forward. CP is the sixth largest railroad company in the U.S. Kansas City Southern is the seventh largest.

For its part, CP has agreed to cooperate with Amtrak on its [vision for a major expansion](#) of its network and increased service on some routes. Specifically, CP owns the tracks used by Amtrak's Hiawatha line, which runs from Milwaukee to Chicago. Amtrak plans to increase the Hiawatha's frequency and extend its service from Milwaukee to St. Paul. CP will also work with Amtrak on adding service in two Southern corridors that have been without trains for more than 50 years: New Orleans to Baton Rouge and Dallas to Meridian (MS).

The CP/Amtrak agreement is important for at least two reasons.

First, CP has by far the best record of the Class 1 railroads in terms of cooperating with Amtrak.

Amtrak assigns a grade point average (GPA) and a grade to the freight railroads, based on the amount of time its trains lose to delays on their tracks. (Amtrak trains technically have priority; even so, freight traffic frequently causes delays.) In 2020, CP and BNSF received GPAs/grades of 4.0 (A) and 3.3 (B+), respectively, for their four-year performance. In other words, there were relatively few delays on their tracks. CSX, Union Pacific, Canadian National, and Norfolk Southern ranked third through sixth, respectively, with scores/grades of 2.8 (B-), 2.7 (B-), 1.3 (D+), and 0.5 (F).

Notably, the Hiawatha line whose service Amtrak plans to upgrade had the second-best on-time performance of all Amtrak routes—94 percent. Only the Keystone route—from New York City to Harrisburg (PA)—performed better, at 96 percent. Of Amtrak's 15 long-distance routes, only the City of New Orleans received a passing grade for on-time performance, at 88 percent. See the [full report card here](#).

Second, because most rail infrastructure in the U.S. is privately owned, fruitful relationships with the Class 1 railroads are the foundation for improving passenger-rail service. "A strong passenger-rail system in the United States must have the full cooperation of the Class 1 railroads," as FK Plous [observes in this essay for the Alliance](#). "Instead of confronting the railroads, passenger-train advocates must seek opportunities to collaborate" in ways that "enable both passenger and freight trains to play larger roles in the U.S. economy." The agreement between Amtrak and CP is a great step forward.

[Go here](#) for our in-depth analysis of how the shared-use system could be improved, including this suggestion: Reform the way on-time performance is incentivized. "Amtrak makes incentive payments based on the performance of all trains on the host railroad," as we note. "One late train reduces the payment, even if all of the others are on time." Paying incentives on a route-by-route basis would alter this calculus.

Even more fundamentally, Amtrak needs to pay more to use the freight railroads' tracks, so that the companies will be incentivized to invest in making their infrastructure more accommodating of fast, light passenger trains.

Amtrak Backs CP-KCS Merger After Reaching Deal for Service Expansions.

By [Bill Stephens](#) | January 6, 2022 Provided by Rick Krenske **CP supports new Amtrak service in Midwest, South.**



Amtrak's Empire Builder passes a Canadian Pacific freight train in Milwaukee, where CP has agreed to host additional passenger service. (Canadian Pacific)

WASHINGTON – Canadian Pacific today won Amtrak's support for its proposed merger with Kansas City Southern after CP and Amtrak reached a deal to expand passenger service in the Midwest and South.

CP agreed to more frequent Amtrak service on the Hiawatha route linking Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as extending the corridor to St. Paul, Minn., with the addition of a daily Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul train. CP also said it would host passenger service from Michigan to Ontario via its Detroit River Tunnel.

Subject to approval of the merger, CP agreed to the launch of Amtrak service on KCS's route between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La. CP also said it would work with the Southern Rail Commission to study passenger service linking Meridian, Miss., and Dallas via the KCS Meridian Speedway.

"Given CP's consistent record as an Amtrak host, we support CP's proposal to expand its network," Amtrak President Stephen Gardner said in a statement. "This is exactly what Congress and the Administration are seeking: Amtrak and the freight railroads working together to benefit freight customers, Amtrak passengers, our state/regional partners and the general public."

CP CEO Keith Creel thanked Amtrak for its support. "CP is pleased to continue to support Amtrak and its infrastructure projects to provide capacity needed to accommodate additional service," Creel said in a statement.

CP has consistently received an A rating from Amtrak in its annual [host railroad report card](#), recognizing its industry-leading on-time performance record. CP is also the first Class I railroad to complete certification of its Amtrak schedules to the Surface Transportation Board.

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Transportation officials in Minnesota and Wisconsin applauded the agreement, as did the Southern Rail Commission.

“We appreciate the work Amtrak is doing to unite more of the south with passenger trains, from Mobile to New Orleans to Baton Rouge and now opening the door in this agreement to directly connect Mississippi

and Louisiana with Texas on the I-20 Corridor,” said SRC Chairman Knox Ross of Mississippi.

“The SRC continues to be impressed by CP welcoming the start of new Amtrak service west of New Orleans to Baton Rouge, while other railroads have fought new Amtrak service,” Knox added, referring to Amtrak’s standoff with CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern about new service between Mobile, Ala., and New Orleans.

Brightline Ridership Increases Lead to New Additions for High-speed Rail

From: "Gary Kazin via groups.io" <gkazin@yahoo.com@groups.io> Sun, Jan 23, 2022 at 7:49 AM
provided by John Goodman

By Lisa J. Huriash South Florida Sun Sentinel

Brightline, South Florida’s high-speed railroad, said Friday its ridership numbers during the pandemic are starting to rise, even with a fare increase.

More than 95,000 people rode the Brightline in December. Although that’s still far below the 127,690 riders at the same time two years earlier, Brightline’s service was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the company to halt operations between March 2020 and early November 2021.

In comparison, November’s ridership was 61,045.

Riders are now returning, even while paying more. The average fare in December was \$13.21, compared to \$9.55 in November.

And officials say that trend will continue. “We expect average fares to continue to increase in early 2022 as reopening-related promotional fares roll off,” according to the monthly ridership report.

In addition to increased fares, other changes that have recently been unveiled or are in the works:

Over the coming months, Brightline will integrate a bikeshare program, called BrightBike, with hundreds of bikes throughout downtown West Palm Beach. The rail line said there will also be “scooters and other modes of travel.”

Aventura and Boca Raton stations are expected to open in the fall.

Construction for rail service to the Orlando International Airport will be complete by the end of 2022.

The system extension from West Palm Beach to Orlando is about 70% complete and on schedule for “substantial completion” in late 2022. A Brightline spokeswoman said Friday there is no estimated date yet for the opening.

In October, Brightline launched a private, free ride service in a Tesla that dropped off riders from the train station to their final destination within a five-mile radius after they pre-booked. In December, the service was expanded to pick people up, too, and bring them to the train station. This past week the service was expanded again to allow riders to pre-book shared rides for the “first and last mile.”

Lisa J. Huriash can be reached at lhuriash@sunsentinel.com or 954-572-2008 or Twitter @LisaHuriash.

The First Batch Of Preserved Locomotives

On Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 10:54 AM, provided by Frederick Krenske

Top preserved diesel locomotives we’re glad were saved [By David Lustig](#) | December 17, 2021

They come from a variety of backgrounds and did a variety of jobs, but they all earned a place in railroad history

Top preserved diesel locomotives introduction. Top preserved diesel locomotives are units that were not only saved from the scrap heap, but special. These locomotives are important to see and understand not only because they were saved but because visionary railroad management saw them as examples of the past that should be saved to be enjoyed by the present and future generations.

These locomotives are just as much a part of American history as a preserved battlefield or monument. When looking at the bottom line, every preserved locomotive means that much less the railroad received in their scrap value for future purchases.

There are dozens of candidates, but here is an informal list of must-see units from around the United States. You will have other candidates just as deserving. It was tough limiting the list to 10. We looked not only at their esthetics but their impact on railroading itself. See if you agree.



Chicago & North Western No. 1518, a GP7 locomotive that was preserved. Photograph by Paul C. Hunnell, Lloyd Transportation

EMD GP7 — a preserved diesel locomotive

The very first GP7, Chicago & North Western No. 1518, is alive and well at the [Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Ill.](#) The design was not the first road-switcher on the market – Alco and Baldwin were already selling their models first – but with more than 2,700 copies built between 1949 and 1954, it was certainly the most influential. The GP7 proved it could work branch lines, switching jobs, and fast mainline freights with ease.

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No. 502 a 44-ton GE center cab locomotive at Rio Vista Junction, California in 1976. Photograph by Gary Vielbaum, Lloyd Transportation Library



THE Alco PA at Barber Junction on the grounds of the North Carolina Transportation Museum in June 2014. Jim Wrinn photograph



Union Pacific DDA40X near Fairchild, Wisconsin, in 2008. Steve Glischinski photograph



RPCX No. 52 a BL2 locomotive in North Judson, Indiana, in 2021. Photograph by Gordon Lloyd, Jr. Lloyd Transportation Library

GE 44 tonner — a small workhorse

For a while it seems every builder offered a small diesel-electric switcher that could satisfy union rules for one-person operation yet still have enough horsepower to shuffle a cut of cars. The most well remembered of them all is the General Electric 44-tonner. The little center-cab found homes everywhere, from the smallest short line to major Class I railroads and everybody in between including interurbans, the military, and private industry. Easy to maintain, many are still in active service today. Google “preserved GE 44-ton diesel locomotives” and watch the long list unfold. Examples are everywhere.

Alco PA1 — a top diesel

Chief competition to EMD’s E-line of passenger locomotives, the high, wide, and handsome six-axle units could be found everywhere from New York to California, throughout the Midwest and the South. Most all North American models were scrapped except for a handful picked up by Delaware & Hudson for passenger trains. Ultimately sidelined, they were sold to Mexico, with only two returning after intense negotiations. One is at the [Museum of American Railroads](#) in Frisco, Texas. The other is at [Oregon Rail Heritage Center](#) in Portland

EMD DDA40X — a preserved diesel locomotive

For a long time Union Pacific liked its motive power king-sized. While Union Pacific was famous for its Big Boy 4-8-8-4 steam locomotives, it was equally as proud of its 47 DDA40Xs, 6,600-hp, dual-engine machines that were the pinnacle of many experiments to create the biggest and best diesel locomotive that technology could produce. Built between 1969 and 1971, they had an average locomotive life span and were off the roster by 1986. One, No. 6936, was given to the railroad’s Heritage Fleet based in Cheyenne, Wyo. Of the 47 units built, an incredible 13 exist today in museums and parks all over the western United States, including one in Omaha near Union Pacific’s headquarters. A check of the internet will produce a list that mirrors the company’s system map.

EMD BL2 — a top diesel

Predecessor to EMD’s well-respected GP7, BL stood for Branch Line, which is where the builder’s marketing department thought it would be a perfect fit. Fewer than five dozen of the 1,500-hp units were sold and although it was usually derided as an ugly beast with standard EMD guts churning inside, it worked and performed well, often m.u.’d with other models. Original owners included Bangor & Aroostook, Boston & Maine, Chesapeake & Ohio, Chicago & Eastern Illinois, Monon, Rock Island, Florida East Coast, Missouri Pacific, and Western Maryland. Surprisingly, a number of those oddballs exist, including a former Monon unit at the Kentucky Railway Museum, a Western Maryland at the B&O Museum in Baltimore, another WM unit on the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad, a Bangor and Aroostook unit at the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay, Wis. Another BAR unit is on the Lackawaxen & Stourbridge in Honesdale, Pa., and another at the Cole Transportation Museum in Bangor, Maine. *Continued on next page:*

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EMD FT demonstrator unit diesel locomotive at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in

EMD FT — a preserved diesel locomotive

The granddaddy of EMD four-axle streamlined freight units, the 1,350-hp unit was originally marketed as a 5,400-hp four-unit design capable of cutting steam-era timetables to ribbons by keeping the same track speed and just eliminating the fuel and water stops and engine swaps. More than 1,000 rode U.S. rails, about a third of them for Santa Fe, which practically dieselized parts of its system with it. Santa Fe even painted a few sets into its red-and-silver passenger paint scheme. The design was for the most part warmly welcomed and it soon found a home on Southern; Atlantic Coast Line; Baltimore & Ohio; Boston & Maine; Chicago & North Western; Burlington; Milwaukee Road; Rock Island; Lackawanna; Rio Grande; Erie; Great Northern; Lehigh Valley; Minneapolis & St. Louis; Missouri Pacific; New York Central; New York, Ontario & Western; Northern Pacific; Reading; Cotton Belt; Southern, and Western Pacific. If you want to see one of these pioneering units today, you can find one of the demonstrator A units at the Museum of Transportation in St. Louis, and a B unit at the Virginia Museum of Transportation. The North Carolina Transportation Museum at Spencer also has a booster unit.



Columbus & Greenville No. 601 rests near the railroad in Columbus, Mississippi. Gordon Lloyd, Jr. Lloyd Transportation Library

Baldwin DRS-64-1500 — a top diesel

The first Baldwin diesel road-switcher built for service in the U.S. is still among us stuffed-and-mounted in front of the Columbus & Greenville short line at its shops in Columbus, Miss. Its importance is immeasurable and deserves a place of honor among top preserved diesel locomotives. Baldwin, along with Alco, was a leader in providing early road-switchers that could work branch lines and yards as well as handle mainline freight trains. Only about a dozen Baldwin road-switchers escaped the scrapper's torch to become examples of yesterday's technology from a builder that exited the field a half-century ago.



An EMD Model 40 appears at Travel Town, Louisiana. David Lustig photograph

EMD Model 40 — a preserved diesel locomotive

EMD produced a handful of two-axle, 300-hp center-cab switchers powered by a pair of Detroit Diesel truck engines. Their original owners were mostly the military. Looking like they were built from leftover parts found in the back of an assembly plant, they are important because almost all of them were immediately thrown into the war effort in the 1940s, working military bases and ammunition factories across the country. A number of them were saved and a few are still operable. The Model 40 shown here at TravelTown in Griffith Park in the city of Los Angeles began its working life switching cars at a torpedo factory at Goat Island in Rhode Island, later transferred to Douglas Aircraft in Torrance, Calif., before being donated to the city.



Atlantic Coast Line (purple-and-silver) E3 locomotive built by EMC at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina.

EMC E3A — a top diesel

One of the almost knife-nosed early EMC A1A-A1A passenger diesels designed to be as streamlined and futuristic as the new varnish they hauled. Atlantic Coast Line 501 is the sole survivor. The 2,000-hp unit, delivered in 1939, was upgraded to E6A status by the builder. It's importance as a survivor is clear; the railroads were actively wooing passengers, and many were toting the latest designs coming from the builders. Can you just imagine standing at a station and seeing the 501 leading a train of stainless-steel passenger cars? It must have been glorious. You can visit this star among top preserved diesel locomotives at the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer.

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Santa Fe FP45 No. 94 pictured in 2014 at Barstow, Calif. Photograph by Gordon Lloyd, Jr., Lloyd Transportation Library

EMD FP45 — a preserved diesel locomotive

The EMD FP45 is a perfect example of a builder and a railroad working together to come up with a great-looking locomotive. Image conscious Santa Fe needed new power for its passenger trains in the late 1960s and really wasn't fond of road-switchers, even the handful of GE U28Cs it painted in silver and red, on the point of their trains. Cowled U30Cs came next. Still not satisfied, the railroad turned to EMD and the FP45 was created. Not super streamlined but emoting power, the railroad was pleased with what was basically a standard SD45 with a cowl carbody. Nine rolled off the assembly line between 1967 and 1968, numbered 100 to 108. So impressed with the design, Milwaukee Road opted for five, appropriately numbered 1 through 5.

To everyone's delight, upon retirement — they had been renumbered to 90-98 to clear the 100 number series for new GP60Ms — a number of them were donated rather than scrapped or traded-in, proving once again the Santa Fe had an incredible feel for public relations.

90 went to the Oklahoma Railway Museum in Oklahoma City.

92 wound up at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union.

93 resides at the Great Plains Transportation Museum in Wichita, Kan.

95 is at the Western America Railroad Museum in Barstow, Calif.

97 went to the Museum of the American Railroad in Frisco, Texas.

98 resides at the Southern California Railway Museum at Perris, Calif. It has been renumbered to its original 108.



Union Pacific Reports Record Profits for 2021, has Bright Outlook for this Year

By Bill Stephens | January 20, 2022 provided by Rick Krenske

Executives say service and safety must improve



A Union Pacific coal train arrives in Elmhurst, Ill., on the final day of 2021. Coal is one of six commodities the railroad says have a positive outlook for 2022. (Trains: David Lassen)

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific on Thursday reported record profits for 2021 despite the impact of the pandemic, wildfires, and congestion in the global supply chain.

CEO Lance Fritz says the railroad expects another record-setting year in 2022, when UP will mark its 160th anniversary.

But UP's safety and service did not meet expectations last year and both must improve, Fritz told investors and analysts on the railroad's earnings call. "Our long-term growth opportunities are dependent on a reliable service product," Fritz says. In the fourth quarter, UP's trip plan compliance figures deteriorated compared to a year ago, to 78% for intermodal and 58% for merchandise and automotive traffic. Intermodal on-time performance improved 12 points compared to the third quarter, however, while manifest and auto on-time performance fell by 2 points.

The primary reason for the decline in service was crew availability, particularly on the southeastern portion of UP's network, says Eric Gehringer, executive vice president of operations.

UP operations improved throughout the fourth quarter, and the merchandise network was fluid systemwide by the end of the year as the number of recrews was cut by a third, Gehringer says. Bulk traffic service levels remain challenged, however.

Fritz says UP did not correctly anticipate the impact that COVID-19 would have on crew availability, both in terms of allowing time off for vaccination as well as the virus variants responsible for waves of infections and quarantines that sidelined hundreds of train crew members. "I look at that and think shame on us," he says. "That's a risk factor that we did not adequately plan for."

UP continues to hire conductors to make up for attrition in the ranks as well as anticipated traffic growth this year.

UP has a positive outlook for six of nine traffic segments this year, including coal. UP has an uncertain outlook for grain and international intermodal and a negative outlook on forest products due to an anticipated decline in housing starts, says Kenny Rocker, executive vice president of marketing and sales.

The addition of Knight-Swift intermodal traffic this month — a contract swiped from BNSF Railway — will help propel domestic intermodal growth this year, Rocker says. UP also landed the Schneider National intermodal contract held by BNSF through the end of the year, which will help drive UP's domestic intermodal growth in 2023, he says.



Union Pacific CEO Lance Fritz. (Trains: David Lassen)

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Truck remains UP's primary competitor, Rocker notes, and the railroad is working on converting business from the highway, including auto parts and finished vehicles as well as merchandise traffic. UP expects slow but steady improvement in international intermodal traffic, which has been affected by ongoing port congestion and chassis shortages. Steamship lines also have been reluctant to allow their containers to stray far from ports, which limits in-bound and export moves with international containers. UP's overall intermodal volume declined 15% in the fourth quarter. The railroad will spend \$3.3 billion on capital projects this year, up slightly from the levels of the past three years. UP aims to build 20 new or extended sidings, add capacity at its new Twin Cities intermodal terminal as well as its "pop-up" terminal in Southern California's Inland Empire, and install widespan gantry cranes to increase capacity at its Global IV intermodal terminal in Chicago. The budget also will fund the modernization of 120 locomotives. For the year, UP's operating income rose 15%, to \$9.3 billion, as revenue grew 12%, to \$21.8 billion on a 4% increase in volume. Earnings per share, adjusted for the impact of one-time items, surged 26%. The railroad's operating ratio was 57.9% for 2021, an improvement of 2.7 points. For the fourth quarter, operating income grew 22% as revenue rose 10% despite a 4% decline in volume. Earnings per share grew 30%. The quarterly operating ratio was 57.4%, a 3.6-point improvement over the fourth quarter of 2020.

Southwest Light Rail May be \$550 Million Short, Will Not Open Until 2027

By [Theo Keith](#) Published January 26, 2022 5:27PM Updated 8:20PM

[Metro Transit FOX 9](#) Provided by Rick Krenske

Southwest Light Rail may be \$550 million short, will not open until 2027

Met Council officials say they will likely need \$450 million to \$550 million more to finish Southwest Light Rail. That's beyond the \$2.2 billion that has already been allocated.

MINNEAPOLIS (FOX 9) - Southwest Light Rail will not open until 2027 and carry a final cost around \$2.75 billion, Metropolitan Council officials said Wednesday, ending months of speculation about the impact of ballooning cost overruns and delays. The new projected opening date is four years behind the original schedule. Almost a decade will have elapsed between the ceremonial groundbreaking and the time a passenger boards the 14.5-mile line from Minneapolis to Eden Prairie, the largest public works project in state history.

Met Council's appointed members voted unanimously Wednesday evening to authorize a \$210 million settlement with the prime construction contractor, paving the way for work along the line to continue. Met Council has been fighting with the contractor, Lunda McCrossan, over who is responsible for the overruns.

The settlement will exhaust the \$2.2 billion previously authorized for the project, known officially as the Green Line Extension. It will likely require \$450 million to \$550 million to finish systems work, testing and to start revenue service, said Nick Thompson, Metro Transit's deputy general manager. He did not say where the money would come from.

"Stopping this project is not an option," Thompson told Met Council members before the vote. "You do not just walk away from a project that is 60 percent completed without costs, without litigation."

Thompson and Met Council Chairman Charlie Zelle said the settlement with Lunda McCrossan was the best option to getting construction on track. Without it, work would have continued for years beyond 2027, Thompson said.

Civil construction, which was originally expected to finish this fall, will not wrap up until June 2025. The half-mile Kenilworth tunnel in Minneapolis, which has caused the most construction headaches and cost overruns, will be the last part of the rail line to be completed.

Other add-ons, including the Eden Prairie Town Center station and a corridor protection wall separating the light rail tracks from a BNSF freight line in Minneapolis, are also driving the overruns.

The project's original budget was \$2 billion. Met Council tapped a [\\$200 million contingency fund](#) from Hennepin County last summer as delays mounted.

The troubled project is leading to new calls for accountability against Met Council. Wednesday, a growing list of Republican and Democratic lawmakers called for an audit of Southwest Light Rail.

Council officials received a chilly welcome as they testified in front of the Legislative Commission on Metro Government, with lawmakers questioning a lack of transparency of Wednesday evening's Met Council vote.

"We're already talking about \$200 million (for the settlement) and you're not willing to say how much more the new overruns will be," said state Rep. Jon Koznick, R-Lakeville. "To the taxpayer, this is very hard to understand."

Two Minneapolis Democrats, state Sen. Scott Dibble and House Transportation Chairman Frank Hornstein, have said they will offer legislation requiring an audit of the rail project. [A more limited inquiry](#) from the Office of Legislative Auditor in 2021 revealed infighting between Met Council and its third-party validator, which had raised concerns that Lunda McCrossan was overcharging the council and doing substandard work.

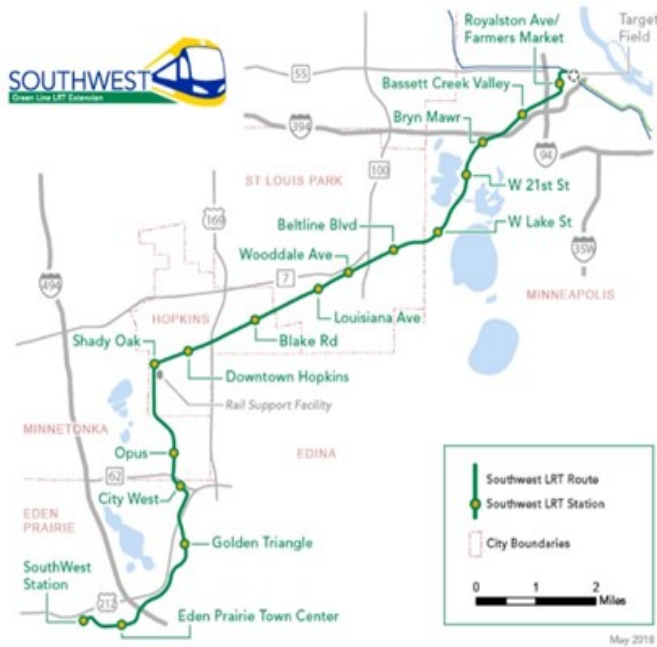
Joel Alter, the director of special reviews for the Legislative Auditor's office, said an investigation could take a year to complete because of the project's complexity. A bipartisan group of lawmakers -- including Dibble, Hornstein, and suburban Republicans -- support legislation changing Met Council's governance structure so that its members are elected.

Gov. Tim Walz, who appoints the members under the current system, said he was open to the change.

"If that brings more accountability, and that's a decision we come to, I'm certainly willing to have that conversation," Walz, a Democrat in his first term, told reporters.

Legislators Want Investigation of Minnesota Light Rail Project

By | January 28, 2022 Southwest extension sees costs soar, opening delayed by four years



Minnesota legislators are calling for an audit of the Southwest light rail project, beset by soaring costs and delays. (Metropolitan Council)

ST. PAUL, Minn. — With one senator calling the project “a boondoggle of historic proportions,” a bipartisan group of Minnesota state legislators is calling for an audit of a light rail project that has soared in cost and is now projected to open four years late.

The Minneapolis Star Tribune reports the legislators are calling for the review of the Southwest light rail project, a 14.5-mile extension of the Metro Green Line to St. Louis Park, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and Eden Prairie. Their request came a day after an announcement that extension — the largest public infrastructure project in state history — is now expected to cost \$2.65 billion to \$2.75 billion and is not likely to begin operation before 2027. Just a year ago, the price was estimated at \$2 billion, with completion in 2023.

State Sen. Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson, Minn.), along with calling the project a “boondoggle,” said in a statement, “Words barely capture what a monumental disaster it has been.” The chair of the Senate Transportation Finance and Policy Committee, Newman said a bill calling for an audit will receive an early hearing. The ranking minority member of the committee, Sen. Scott Dibble (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party-Minneapolis), said he will introduce legislation calling for an inquiry. He called the latest estimates for the project “jaw dropping and appalling.” The Metropolitan Council, the regional governmental body that oversees the Metro Transit system, revealed the new cost and timeline for the project on Wednesday, with Chairman Charlie Zelle saying finding money to pay for the increasing cost “is a puzzle to be solved.”

The Star-Tribune reports officials say three factors account for most of the increase: construction of a tunnel in Minneapolis Kenilworth Corridor, which poses significant challenges because of limited clearances and soil issues; the addition of a station at Eden Prairie Town Center; and construction of a mile-long, \$93 million crash protection wall separating the light-rail line from BNSF tracks.

NEWS FROM THE IRON RANGE

Twin Ports Rail - Digest #326nd

C. Reiss Move

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Wed, 29 Dec 2021 14:37:44 PST

An article outlining a grant for the C. Reiss move from West Duluth to Superior.

C. Reiss Receives \$8.3 Million Grant, will Complete Move to Superior

Business North: = NEWS RELEASE Dec 28, 2021 *Superior was awarded an \$8,368,000 grant to aid The C. Reiss Company in rehabilitating its dock on the western end of the city's port, municipal officials announced Tuesday.*

The \$17 million C. Reiss project includes:

Repair and replacement of 2,525 lineal feet of dock wall.

Dredging 48,000 cubic yards of material with some environmental mitigation;

Rail improvements including the installation of five switches and repair and extension of track;

Storm water improvements;

Road and utility improvements;

Construction of a 5,000 square foot office, repair shop and storage space;

Establishment of an equipment truck scale, rail scale, stacking conveyor and telescoping loading conveyor.

The C. Reiss Company, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Harbor Assistance Program will also be funding portions of the project.

Currently, C. Reiss operates their bulk handling on the Duluth side of the St. Louis River. However due to increasing water levels that cause annual flooding at their current facility, the company has been working to relocate to Superior at an existing dock they have owned for a number of years.

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C. Reiss, with more than 140 years of operation, handles two million tons of bulk materials annually out of its four docks, including coal, limestone, petroleum coke, and salt. Of the two million tons, 650,000 tons of material is shipped out of Duluth. The move to Superior will allow them to double their productivity due to the increased rail capacity at the Superior location, providing them twice the space for rail and truck loading and unloading and vessel loading.

“We are very appreciative of the PIDP grant award and look forward to moving to our Superior location,” said C. Reiss’ Vice-President of Operations Christian Zuidmulder.

Jason Serck, City of Superior Economic Development, Planning and Port Director added, “We are excited to help facilitate the re-development of this longtime vacant dock in the Superior Port. Most importantly, it will make C. Reiss a more efficient company, and this project will continue to build on all the development successes we have had in the Twin Ports.”

Twin Ports Rail - Digest #327

Range Year End Report (Excerpts)

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Sat, 01 Jan 2022 16:02:02 PST

Just a quick update on what was observed over the last two months.

Coal trains (loaded) come from the east from Carlton (Chub Lake) and then crews reverse ends and then come up the Lakes to Cohasset. Empties go east and go to Carlton or to Superior, depending on crew work time.

Rapids Turn still coming up late at night to drop off cars at Grand Rapids.

Superior/Grand Forks and Grand Forks/Superior going through Grand Rapids multiple times a week.

Mining:

Prairie River Minerals (PRM) in process of selling Jessie Mine Loadout to Mag Iron (Former Magnetation owners). PRM will have shipping rights out of Jessie Mine Load out. All of this is tentative.

Mag Iron working on acquire Magnetation Plant 4 - Tentative

Essar Plant - still in the works

Hibbing Minnesota:

The siding for Hibbing salvage located on west side of First Avenue was extended in length. Hibbing salvage had been receiving up to 5 gondolas per week for scrap loading. This occurred sometime in October or November. I had not been to Hibbing for about 6 weeks after the Hull Rust Mine View closed for the season at the end of September.

Hibbing Taconite:

Is mining real close to the tunnels northwest of Kelly Lake. They have finally broke into the Lamberton Pit on the north side. A year ago they had stripped the area immediately to the southwest of the road tunnel. It was drilled and blasted. This last year they continued to mine southward toward the Lamberton pit.

There appears to be some activity to clear trees off north of the railroad tracks just past the road crossing on the Hibbtac sub. Just south of Mahoning Group IV

The high power transmission lines crossing the Pillsbury Pit close to Discovery Center were moved to make way for near future mining just west of Highway 169.

These properties would be the Bradford, Pillsbury, Alexandria. The Morris and Pillsbury properties are in close proximities to the power line move also.

Minorca:

They have mined around and stripped partially into the Mariska Pit just east of Gilbert (across from the entrance to the ATV park road. They will be stripping the area just east of the Mariska pit and mining that area in the near future.

At the Hull Rust Pit Mine View:

All summer long they continued to strip and blast a peninsula that forms the high north wall just north west of the Whitney Pit (formally USS property). It will be interesting to see how much of the peninsula remains after 8 months of mining.

Car Storage:

Note: the following was observed in the middle of November

Bemidji: no cars in storage at depot tracks

Bemidji: east tracks - some center beam flats (likely going to Potlatch sawmill west of Cass Lake)

Cass Lake: no cars in storage except a pile driver flat car (flat tool) on track 4

Shley: Auto rack flats

Note: the following was observed in mid December to the end of the year-

Deer River: 3 bay steel open hopper cars

Cohasset: Track 3 bay steel open hopper cars

Seyton (halfway between Cohasset and Grand Rapids): track 1 and 2 3 bay steel open hopper cars

Gunn: track 1 flat cars track 2 empty track 3 east end some 3 bay steel open hopper cars west end Locomotive GMTX 413 and Depot caboose

Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minn

Sugar Railroad Explorer April 19 - May 1, 2022

Get your tickets while they last!



Join Us!

Join *Friends of the 261* and *High Iron Rail* as we collaborate on a journey over the US Sugar Railroad in Florida. On this once in a lifetime journey, you will travel to America's sweetest little city, Clewiston, Fl. It is here where we will join the US Sugar Railroad steam locomotive #148 and venture over the US Sugar railroad. Tour the Florida Crystal's sugar mill, explore historic Clewiston, enjoy the warm sunny weather of Florida and the rich cuisine of the local area, as we venture to the southeast corner of the United States.

See <https://www.261.com> for more info.



Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

None to report at this time			
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