

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Monthly Meetings Return to Roseville Lutheran Church



*L: RCP&E GP40 at Night
in Brookings SD July
18 2018 –Bob Ball
Photo*

*R: C&NW SD9's on Transfer
to Shoreham Yd October
1988 –Dan Meyer Photo*



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The May 2022 newsletter (May 2022) will be out around May 4th, 2022. May 2022 meeting is the 4th Saturday in May, **May 28th 2022** (delayed due to NRHS convention in May). If you know someone that may be interested in the meeting, please have them send a quick e-mail to dan@meyer-family.net and he will add them to the mailing list.

Meeting Notice: **Saturday April 16 2022 6:15 pm** At Roseville Lutheran Church, our April Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting.

If you join us via Zoom, 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. Then, you simply click on the link below to join using your internet browser. Meeting Notice: Saturday April 16, 2022 6:15 pm in person at Roseville Lutheran Church *and* also online via the ZOOM meeting platform. If you join us via Zoom, 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. Log into your Zoom app and use the following meeting **ID: 892 0395 6259** and **passcode: 016747**

If you prefer, log in using this link in your web browser: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89203956259?pwd=Q01zT2JvZkpRQnUxdFZmN0V0VEx6UT09>

The Zoom meeting will be up at about 5:45 pm; the business meeting will start promptly at 6:15 with the program to follow.

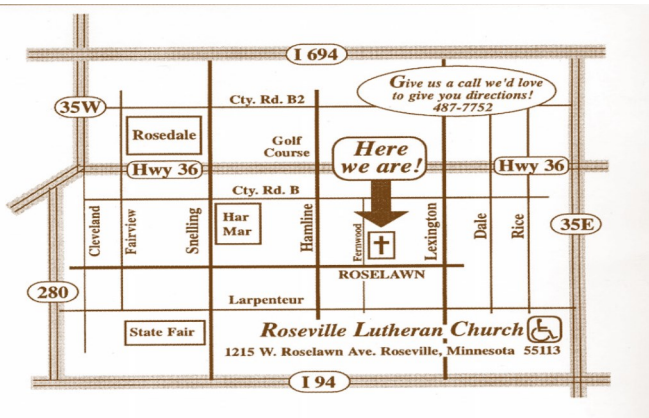
If you are new to Zoom and have questions or would like a test Zoom meeting, please contact Dan Meyer via e-mail at dan@meyer-family.net

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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: 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 shared by the railfan community.

Trains MAGAZINE Jim Wrinn led Trains Magazine with passion | March 30, 2022

Editor, 61, dies after more than 17 years at helm of magazine WAUKESHA, Wis. — Jim Wrinn, who aspired since his youth to be the editor of *Trains* magazine and served in the role for more than 17 years, died at home on March 30, 2022, after a valiant 14-month battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 61. Wrinn's longevity in the editor's role was second only to that of the legendary David P. Morgan, who led the magazine for more than 33 years and died in 1990 at age 62. Morgan's editorship and writings deeply influenced Wrinn, who began reading *Trains* in 1967 at age 6. <https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/jim-wrinn-led-trains-magazine-with-passion/>

Meeting Minutes March 19 2019 (Zoom)

The meeting was called to order by President John Goodman at 6:21 pm. A quorum was determined. President Goodman stated that we will meet back at Roseville Lutheran Church for the April 2022 meeting. A motion to approve the February 2022 meeting minutes as in the March Newsletter was approved. Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers Report. The cash position of the chapter for both the Chapter and Calendar accounts was is good standing. Russ stated that we have 34 regular and 2 family members renewed and there are only 4 subscribers have not renewed. Dick Tubbesing requested that Russ submit the members to him who have not renewed so the Newsletter address list can be updated. President Goodman asked if Ron Lineburger has renewed and Treasurer Russ Isbrandt indicated that Ron has paid. Dawn Holmberg gave the NRHS Report. Registration for the Los Angeles Convention is now on-line. There has been a problem with processing some credit card orders and that charges to Registrant credit cards will be delayed. The Web Master report was given by Dan Meyer. The web site is up to date and our presence on face-book has been updated. The Cheer Committee report was given by President John Goodman. Cy Svobodny has returned home from a hospital visit. Again, contact with member H Martin Swan has been futile. President Goodman attended the funeral services of Mike Mackner in Marine on the St Croix. President Goodman met with Mackner's wife and son and requested that we be considered for any railroadians that were in Mike Mackner's possession. President Goodman stated the Russ Isbrandt lost his son-in-law (Derrick Ometz) to a ski accident in Pennsylvania. He reported that his family is dealing with this tragedy as best they can. Treasurer Isbrandt then stated that he and his wife Martha are doing as best they can and their daughter has been supported by many friends in Pennsylvania. Dawn Holmberg gave the report of our meeting location.

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The Roseville Lutheran Church has made our room at the church again available and with mask's being optional. Dawn reported that we have scheduled the April and May Meetings at the Church for this year. President Goodman then stated that we will delay our meeting to the 4th Saturday in May, which will be Memorial Day weekend due to conflicts with members attending the NRHS Convention. Dawn will arrange with the church of the change in the May 2022 meeting date. The trip report was given by President Goodman. We will have our annual Light rail trip the 3rd Saturday in June, our picnic will be held at Maiden Rock WI the 3rd Saturday in July, and we will visit the Wisconsin and Great Northern Museum in Trego WI the 3rd Saturday in August. Charles Barthold of the museum was contacted and stated that any trips on the museum railroad will be short ones, and that the schedule for train trips will be known about May 28th 2022. The Trego trip will be on your own and carpooling with friends is suggested. The program report was given by Rickard Tubbesing. Future programs are a DVD of Super8 films by Joe Frischman, Video of CN and BN railroads by Jack Barbier. Russ Isbrandt will have a DVD of railroad and trolley 8mm film ready in the fall. The schedule will be determined as the presenter's schedule is determined. The Calendar report was given by Dawn Holmberg. All revenue for the 2022 calendar is now in our checking account. The Calendar for the 2nd straight year was sold out. We have begun looking at photos for the 2023 calendar. John Goodman with Russ Isbrandt stated that the Minnesota Historical Society have a collection that they are willing to give away from one of the founders of the Minnesota Railfan's Association, Frank Donovan. Russ Isbrandt stated that only a few of the items, like timetables, patches are of interest to our organization. President Goodman stated that the MTM has a new staff of Officers. The NP #328 has been restored (display only) and has been put on a visible track in the MTM Jackson Street roundhouse and looks great!. The Library report was given by President Goodman. The MTM has stated (the MTM was due to get the collection after we get done reviewing them) and that we can keep the Barney Olson slide collection, as their policy is they have no room to store such items. The only caveat is to create a program from the slides for the MTM a couple times a year. There was no Old Business. New Business. President Goodman asked Mark Quam to report on the 2nd Amtrak train to Chicago. Mark reported that a meeting was held recently in LaCrosse with the FRA (*see article in this issue*), Amtrak President Gardner, and local representatives and went well. Possible start-up could be as early in 2023. Here is a short synopsis of the meeting and meeting can be viewed on line by getting a link via Email. Mark will send an Email link if requested from him. The main problem with the 2nd train is publicity. Many communities along the route and nearby were unaware of the 2nd train coming in the near future. WIDOT and MNDOT will undertake a plan for more communication to the communities of the 2nd Train. WIDOT will look at possible extensions for AMTRAK to Green Bay and Madison. Ed Johnson also had a few comments from the meeting. Mark also reported from 'All Aboard Minnesota' organization that they support a plan by MNDOT on future possible passenger train routes and information can be viewed on YouTube. Mark Quam also gave a report on the proposed train to Eau Claire WI. In general, there are problems getting money for more detailed studies of the proposal. Wayne Torseth then was asked by Richard Tubbesing if he can prepare a future program on his trip to Western Maryland scenic and a special outing with the newly restored engine #1309. Roger Libra were asked if they he can present a program for a future meetings and stated that he has a Cumbres and Totlec DVD that can be shown. President Goodman motioned for the meeting to adjourn at 7:08 pm. Motion carried. Dave Herbert then presented a commercial DVD of the last steam engines of the New York Central in Ohio and Indiana in the mid 1950's. Dave Herbert stated that one of his first jobs was a Track Foreman on the New York Central. Respectfully Submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing

Obituary: Derrick Ometz

Our Treasurer Russ Isbrandt and his wife Martha recently suffered a great tragedy of the death of their son-in-law Derrick Ometz in a skiing accident in Pennsylvania. Our Chapter sends its sincere condolences to Russ, Martha and their daughter and grandchildren.

Family, Coworkers Remember Derrick Ometz: 'One of the Brightest and Nicest Guys I Ever Worked

By Sean Adams | sadams@pennlive.com

A skiing accident in February led to the sudden death of Derrick Ometz, a husband and father and a man passionate about music, athletics, his faith and his family. Ometz was 45 years old when he died on Feb. 20. While he shifted into other careers years ago, including a position at Mechanicsburg's Naval Supply System Command, audiences in our region may remember Ometz from his time as a meteorologist at WHTM abc27 from 1999 to 2004.

Chuck Rhodes was a forecaster and reporter with abc27 for over 40 years before retiring in 2015. In a statement, Rhodes said that Ometz "was one of the brightest and nicest guys I ever worked with," and that he had "the fondest memories of working with Derrick and was so heart broken to hear of his passing."

Rhodes had hired Ometz to the abc27 weather team when the younger man was still fresh from his time at Penn State University. "His background was music and meteorology," Rhodes said in a followup phone interview. "He was in the Penn State Blue Band, he was the drum major."

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A photo of Derrick Ometz from his time at WHTM abc27. Ometz was a meteorologist at the station from 1999-2004.

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That's the guy who has to run the length of the field and do a flip at the 50 yard line."

A running gag between the two was that Ometz would frequently offer to teach Rhodes how to do that very flip, to which Rhodes always politely demurred.

But while he never took Ometz up on his offer to train him in acrobatics, Rhodes did take note of Ometz's skill with computers, particularly in the pivotal time at the start of the new millennium as the technology used by television meteorologists shifted rapidly.

"The thing we all remember about him was his personality," Rhodes said. "As soon as you met him, you liked him. He was very likable, very bright. You could tell that right off the bat. And he had a wonderful sense of humor. That was a good combination to have on any team, in any profession."

Those sentiments were echoed by another abc27 colleague, Mick O'Hearn, [in a post on the abc27 website](#).

"It's such a shock, just horrible," O'Hearn said in the post. "I remember him as an affable young man with a great sense of humor. And he was working with us when his daughter was born. He was just so thrilled."

Rhodes said that it was Ometz' devotion to his family that led to his leaving the TV news industry for careers with more regular hours. Ometz is survived by his wife Allison and two children, Alexia Brewster and Elijah Ometz.

Twin City Model Railroad Museum -Obituary

Dear TCMRM Members,

It is with a heavy heart that I pass along the very sad news of the passing of President Emeritus Oscar Lund. Oscar had been battling illness for the past several months and went quietly in his sleep Tuesday afternoon. It is difficult to explain how much he will be missed by his family, his friends, and his Museum family. Oscar had already been a member of the Museum for several years and had just launched the 'Toy Train Division' in the Chimneys Building when he "recruited" me. During my two stints on the Board of Directors with him, part of his seventeen years there, I quickly learned that he could be energetic, demanding, excitable, hilarious, frustrating, insightful, imaginative, and frustrating...all in a six-hour shift. The one thing that stood out, though, was his love of toy trains and the Museum and his drive to see it succeed. A large part of where the Museum is today is due to Oscar's vision, dedication, knowledge, and just plain sweat and blood. We have much to thank him for and to be thankful for in having him with us for the time that we did. There is so much more I can say and so many stories I could relate but I think the best thing to say is...Thank You and Rest in Peace, Oscar. You've earned it. President Dr. Peter Southard



Multiple Train Cars Slide into Pond After Derailment in Pewaukee

Crews said no injuries were reported. WISN 12 News Updated: 5:42 PM CDT Mar 20, 2022



PEWAUKEE, Wis. —

Nine train cars derailed in Pewaukee on Saturday morning. The train derailment happened about 6:35 a.m.

The scene was near Glacier and Parkside roads. Crews said no injuries were reported. Several train cars slid into a pond.

First responders said there were no hazmat, fire risks or environmental impacts.

Photos: Parker Licari



Photo: [Mike Spaulding](#) March 19, 2022 620 WTMJ

The Waukesha County Sheriff said the Canadian Pacific Railway cargo train was slowing down to a stop when a box car derailed. That caused a tanker car and seven other box cars to derail. Only one box car was full, hauling lumber. All other train cars were empty. The sound of the derailment alarmed some neighbors. Investigators have not yet said why the train cars derailed. The conductor told first responders the train hit a "hot box" and triggered the emergency brakes. Officials said there were no power outages or property damage. The rail line reopened to train traffic about 6 p.m. Saturday. The eight railcars that remain at the scene will be removed in the coming days. No other details were immediately available.



Union Pacific Train Derails in Northern Iowa Trains Newswire By | March 25, 2022 35 cars of grain involved; line near reopening



Union Pacific said Friday that 35 train cars derailed Thursday near Rockwell. KIMT photo.

ROCKWELL, Iowa — Thirty-five cars of a Union Pacific grain train derailed in Iowa's Cerro Gordo County, [KIMT-TV reports](#). No injuries were reported.

A Union Pacific representative told the station on Friday that the locomotives and railcars involved in the Thursday derailment had been cleared from the right-of-way, and track repairs were in progress. Restoration of service was expected late Friday or early Saturday. The railroad said the cause of the accident is under investigation.

The accident occurred about a mile southwest of Rockwell, which is about 12 miles south of Mason City and 50 miles northwest of Waterloo.

FRA Awards Grant to Improve Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Route



Amtrak President and CEO Stephen Gardner spoke to the media yesterday about an FRA grant award to fund the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Intercity Passenger Rail Project. When completed, the project will increase Amtrak service in the corridor. Photo – media.amtrak.com

The grant funds come from the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program. The 411-mile corridor between St. Paul and Chicago will be served by two daily Amtrak round-trips, with departures planned for each city in the morning and midday. The first year of service is projected to serve more than 124,000 riders.

Improvements to the line are expected to save \$34.7 million in freight costs over the next 30 years of operation. Grade crossing improvements will reduce gate-down times, while capacity improvements will increase efficiency.

"Through the leadership of [FRA Administrator Amit Bose], strong partnerships with state and local leaders in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and our productive relationship with [Canadian Pacific](#), we are moving the addition of Amtrak service between the Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago to the forefront of our growth efforts," said Amtrak President and CEO Stephen Gardner in a press release. "While we cannot announce a TCMC start date yet, know all of us working together can make this happen in months instead of years."

The [Wisconsin](#) and [Minnesota](#) departments of transportation on March 9th announced a \$31.8 million federal grant to fund station and rail segment improvements aimed at doubling passenger-rail service and increasing freight efficiency along the corridor that connects the Twin Cities, La Crosse, Milwaukee and Chicago.

The [Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail Project](#) (TCMC) will add a second daily passenger-rail round-trip along the corridor shared by [Amtrak](#) Empire Builder and Hiawatha Service trains. The trains will stop in the Twin Cities, La Crosse in southwestern Wisconsin, Milwaukee and Chicago.

The TCMC added round-trip is expected to begin in 2024 or sooner. Rail improvements will ease train congestion, modernize sections of track and speed the movement of freight, said state, federal and Amtrak officials during a media event held yesterday in La Crosse.

Minnesota Bill Would Provide \$20 Million for Short Line Capital Projects *By* | March 11, 2022

Sent: Monday, March 14, 2022, 11:22 AM, Provided by Frederick Krenske

Sponsor says state's smaller railroads need \$150 million in route improvements*Minnesota Rep. Paul Tokelson is sponsoring a bill to fund infrastructure improvements for short lines in the state.*

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Legislation introduced in the Minnesota House of Representatives would provide \$20 million for capital improvements on the state's short lines, which face significant costs to upgrade their infrastructure, according to the bill's sponsor.

Rep. Paul Tokelson (R-Hanska, Minn.) says the state's 821 miles of Class II, III, and private rail lines would need about \$150 million to improve their right-of-way

to the standards of larger railroads. Funds for the bill would come from bond sales for the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement program, which offers grants and loans

for rail projects. The most round of grant requests involved five times more money than was available.

On Thursday, the House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee laid the bill over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill, according to [the Minnesota House website](#).The bill is [HF2941](#).**Canadian Pacific Trains Involved in Two Derailments**Trains Newswire *By* | March 14, 2022**Accidents occurred Saturday in Saskatchewan, Minnesota**

Canadian Pacific trains were involved in two derailments on Saturday, one in Saskatchewan and one in Minnesota.

An unknown number of cars were involved in the derailment of a train carrying corn near Drinkwater, Sask., but at least 20 cars are visible on their sides or otherwise off the track in [a video posted to the Twitter feed](#) of a reporter for the Canadian agricultural news site The Western Producer.[The CBC reports](#) the derailment occurred about 6:30 a.m. and that there were no injuries. An investigation of the cause is under way.

Drinkwater is about 25 miles southwest of Regina, Sask.

The Minnesota incident, near Minneiska, involved 10 to 12 empty railcars and led to a closure of one lane of U.S. Route 61 near the accident site, [the Rochester Post-Bulletin reports](#).

No injuries were reported and no hazardous materials were involved. The highway was expected to be reopened on Sunday.

Minneiska, on CP's main line along the Mississippi River, is about 15 miles northwest of Winona, Minn..

MINNEISKA TRAIN DERAILMENT *By Beret Leone**Published: Mar. 12, 2022 at 2:35 PM KTTC News Rochester MN***Minnesota Senate Unanimously Approves Light Rail Audit**

By MOHAMED IBRAHIM On Tuesday, March 15, 2022, 11:37 AM, provided by Frederick Krenske

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota Senate voted unanimously Monday to approve an audit of a more than \$2 billion light rail line that's been marred by delays and huge cost overruns since the transit project broke ground in 2019.

The bill allocates \$200,000 to the Legislative Auditor's office to conduct a special review of the Southwest Light Rail Transit project, which is shaping up as one of the most expensive public works projects in state history. The audit will include evaluations of project costs and overruns, changes to the project schedule, the qualifications of project management staff and quality of construction, among other criteria.

It also requires the Metropolitan Council to provide project updates to lawmakers every six months and notify lawmakers immediately if the project costs go 5% over budget more than they already are.

"What's occurred here, in my mind, is just literally criminal as to how badly the taxpayers — be they federal or state or county taxpayers — how badly they are being treated by the Met Council on this project," Republican Senate Transportation Committee Chairman Scott Newman, of Hutchinson, said on the floor Monday. "They've gone too far to stop and it's too expensive to go ahead. What are they going to do? Keep wasting taxpayer money?"

The 14.5-mile Green Line extension, which is about 60% completed, will connect downtown Minneapolis with southwestern suburbs that include St. Louis Park, Hopkins and Eden Prairie. The project is now estimated to cost \$2.75 billion and will be passenger-ready by 2027, which is hundreds of millions more expensive and four years later than originally planned. .

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The increased costs and delays are due to issues with construction of the tracks, including in a narrow corridor between two Minneapolis lakes, where there have been serious groundwater and soil issues, and a condominium complex has sustained damage blamed on the project.

Democratic Sen. Scott Dibble, of Minneapolis, the author of the bill, said he and House Transportation Committee Chairman Frank Hornstein asked legislative auditors last summer to conduct a preliminary review of the project last summer.

A [memo from auditors in October](#) outlined a "prolonged and significant" difference in opinion between the Met Council and a third-party contractor on construction issues.

The Minnesota House passed the bill last week 129-1. Minor changes in the Senate version passed Monday require final approval by the House.

Update: SLRT: via FOX 9, **VERBATIM:** [March 18, 2022, 9:55 AM \(provided by Rick Krenske\)](#) "A bill triggering an audit of the troubled Southwest Light Rail project is headed to Gov. **Tim Walz's** desk after overwhelming support in both the House and Senate this week. The House gave final passage Thursday afternoon on a 132-1 vote. The Senate passed it unanimously earlier in the week. The bill has \$200,000 to bring in engineering experts to investigate cost overruns and delays that have driven the cost estimate to \$2.75 billion with a 2027 opening. It also forces Met Council to report to the Legislature whenever there are significant overruns or delays."



A Canadian Pacific train passes through Deerfield, Ill. The railroad and union representing crew members have reached an agreement ending a work stoppage in Canada. (Trains: David Lassen)

Canadian Pacific, Union Agree to Arbitration, Ending Work Stoppage

Trains Newswire [By](#) | March 22, 2022

Members of Teamsters Canada Rail Conference will return to work at noon today

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific and the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference have agreed to take their contract dispute to binding arbitration, ending the shutdown of the railroad in Canada that began at 12:01 a.m. EDT on Sunday.

The agreement will allow the railroad to resume operations in Canada today (Tuesday, March 22, 2022) after a 60-hour halt.

The union represents about 3,000 engineers, conductors, other crew members, and yard personnel. This was the fourth straight negotiation between the railroad and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference to result in a work stoppage.

"CP is pleased to have reached agreement with the TCRC Negotiating Committee to enter into binding arbitration and end this work stoppage," CP CEO Keith Creel said in [a press release](#).

"This agreement enables us to return to work effective noon Tuesday local time to resume our essential services for our customers and the North American supply chain." The railroad thanked the Canadian Federal Conciliation and Mediation Services for what it called "critical work" during the negotiation.

"The decision to agree to final and binding arbitration is not taken lightly," union spokesman Dave Fulton said [in a brief statement](#). "While arbitration is not the preferred method, we were able to negotiate terms and conditions that were in the best interest of our members." The union said it would have no further comment until arbitration is complete.

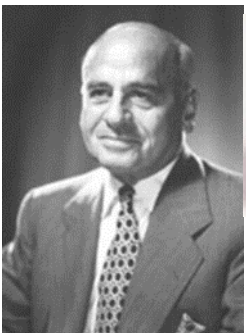
Each side blamed the other for the work stoppage that began Sunday, with the union saying it had been locked out and the railroad saying the union "withdrew its services" [see ["Canadian Pacific shutdown begins ..."](#), Trains News Wire, March 20, 2022]. However, the sides had continued to talk with the involvement of federal mediators.

Seamus O'Regan, Canada's minister of labor, had remained on hand during the talks, while Canadian agriculture and industry group pressured the federal government to introduce back-to-work legislation to end the strike.

"This outcome is further evidence that when employers and unions work together, we get the best results for Canadians and the economy," [O'Regan said in a statement](#). "I congratulate the parties for staying at the table and coming to a resolution with the help of federal mediators."

March 13 in Toy Train History: Lionel Manufacturing Company

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Sun, 13 Mar 2022 04:40:41 PDT Provided by Rick Krenske



The **Lionel Manufacturing Company** was incorporated 120 years ago today for the purpose of manufacturing "electrical, mechanical and industrial appliances, and toys, also the purchase and sale of merchandise, patents and real estate." The new firm's board of directors consisted of Joshua L. Cowen, Harry Grant, and Michael R. Conley. According to Ron Hollander's **All Aboard!**, Conley may have been Cowen's lawyer.

Cowen's first toy train, the **Electric Express** gondola that ran on two-rail 2-7/8" gauge track, was already selling briskly. One hundred shares of stock were issued. Cowen held two; Grant had two, and Conley had one. The application form for incorporation asked Cowen to estimate the duration of his company. He wrote "fifty years". The names and owners have changed several times, but Lionel is still going strong 120 years later.

Joseph Lechner

RBMN Revives Reading T-1 2102, 'Iron Horse Rambles'

Railway Age Written by William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief March 23, 2022



Following an extensive, \$2.4 million overhaul, Class II Reading & Northern Railroad (RBMN), *Railway Age*'s four-time Regional Railroad of the Year, is returning Reading Class T-1 4-8-4 Northern 2102 to the rails with four "Iron Horse Rambles" round-trip excursions between Reading and Jim Thorpe, Pa.: May 28, July 2, Aug. 13 and Sept. 3, with five classes of seating. May 28 is already sold out; tickets are going fast for the remaining three trips.



Reading No. 2102 on an inaugural run of the Greenbrier Railroad at Cass, W. Va. on May 2, 1971.

"The time has come for 2102 to make a triumphant return to the high iron, and now, for the first time in more than 30 years, it will once again be pulling main line excursions on the Reading & Northern!" said RBMN Passenger Department General Manager Matt Fisher. "Our all-day Iron Horse Rambles—which are very similar to the famed Reading Company Iron Horse Rambles of the late 1950s and early 1960s—will operate from Reading to Jim Thorpe and return, with three and a half hour layover at Jim Thorpe. As an added bonus for railfans and train enthusiasts alike, a photo run-by will be offered on the return trip from Jim Thorpe to Reading.

This is an opportunity for riders to exit the train and take pictures and videos of the train passing by a photo location." Rebuilt and upgraded from 1923-vintage Class I-10sa 2-8-0 Consolidation type 2022 in 1945 by The Reading Company at its Reading, Pa. shops, 2102 is one of four surviving T-1 steam locomotives. It had a busy career hauling heavy main line freight trains for the Reading until being retired and set aside by the company for use in its Iron Horse Rambles program at the end of the steam era in the late 1950s. After spending several years with Steam Tours in Ohio, RBMN founder and owner Andy Muller, Jr. purchased the locomotive in 1986, operating it between Temple and South Hamburg, Pa. In 1991, the locomotive was placed into storage. In 2016, work began on rebuilding the 2102 and restoring it to service on the Reading & Northern.

Reading & Northern, with its corporate headquarters in Port Clinton, Pa., is a privately held Class II railroad serving more than 70 customers in nine eastern Pennsylvania counties—Berks, Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland, Schuylkill, and Wyoming. It has expanded operations during the past 30-plus years and now handles more than 34,000 carloads of freight and 225,000 excursion train riders on 400 miles of track annually. RBMN operates both freight services and steam and diesel-powered excursion passenger services, owns almost 1,400 freight cars and employs nearly 300. Reading & Northern has repeatedly been honored as one of the premier railroads in the U.S., including being named Regional Railroad of the Year in 2002, 2011, 2015 and 2020 by *Railway Age*.

Metro News - Northshore Mining Railroad Video Date: Sun, 27 Feb 2022

With the pending shutdown of Northshore Mining at end of March for an unspecified amount of time, a trek to northern Minnesota was in order.

We started out the day at the Toimi ponds for the 0500 train on its way back west to the mine. We then headed for the county highway 2 overpass and waited for the 1100 loaded train headed south for Silver Bay and followed that train the rest of the day.

Full video on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/3BZdgwv>



Mid-Continent Railway Museum Report

(next 3 1/2 pages:)

Provided by the web site and Chuck Lavallee

From: William Buhrmaster **Sent:** Tuesday, March 1, 2022 10:40 AM

MCRM Volunteers any and all!!!

Spring is around the corner and I'm pleased to roll out the **2022 Restoration Department Volunteer Work Session Schedule** for the Mid-Continent Railway Museum. The next volunteer work session will be held on March 11th-13th and sessions are scheduled to continue into December. In addition to the two or more scheduled sessions each month we typically will add a number of non-scheduled sessions based on volunteer availability. A copy of the 2022 Restoration Department Work Session Schedule is attached and a link to the schedule can also be found at:

<https://www.midcontinent.org/2022-restoration-department-work-session-dates-announced/>

We have a dedicated core of volunteers that help with the restoration work and we're always interested in expanding the group that actively participates in the Car Shop. Our doors are open to anyone willing to give us a hand and help us with the restoration work. Give us a hand for a day or several days throughout the summer. Every bit of help makes a difference and is appreciated. We have a wide range of needs (i.e. painting, cleaning, stripping, wood work, roofing, refinishing, upholstery, metal work and more) and everyone can be a help.

Plans for 2022 call for focusing on the five core projects that are in process in the Car Shop. These projects include the East Jordan & Southern #2, the DSS&A sleeping car DULUTH, the Soo Line #203 caboose, the LS&I #64 coach and the C&NW #1099 narrow gauge combine. A complete list of all of the planned projects for 2022 is attached below. We're hoping to do even better this year as we have a lot of work to complete and plenty of opportunities for volunteers to participate in a wide variety of projects. Please join us as we welcome everyone willing to help us preserve and restore Mid-Continent's Collection pieces.

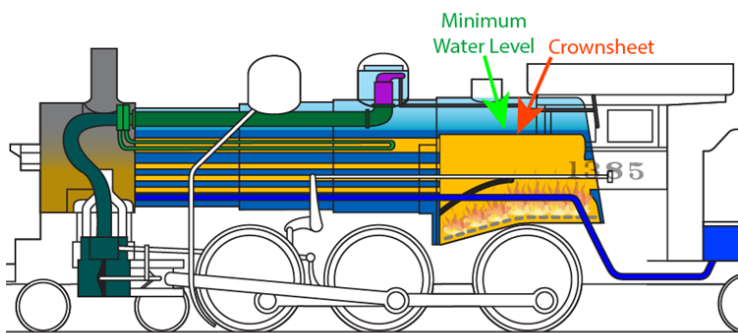
About a week prior to each session a reminder and call for help will be posted on the Member's Discussion Board and a notice will be sent out via email to the volunteers on my distribution list. If you're interested in volunteering or would like more information, please feel free to drop into the Car Shop during a work session or contact me. To help with the work session planning we're asking all volunteers interested in joining a work session to contact me (buhrmawc@gmail.com or 708-340-4098) in advance of the work session. This helps make sure that we make the best use of our volunteers and we can have productive sessions.

MCRM members can stay current with the project work, progress and volunteer session dates by accessing the **Restoration Department** section of the MCRM Members Discussion Board (<https://www.midcontinent.org/members-bbs/>).

I'm looking forward to a great year and seeing you in the Car Shop! Bill Buhrmaster

Category Archives: C&NW #1385 Status Updates (From the MCRM web site)

Welcome to the Chicago & North Western #1385 steam status blog! Follow along as we bring the 1907 American Locomotive Company 4-6-0 steam engine back to operating condition.



What are the first three things an operator **must** know on any boiler? 1) Where's your water?, 2) Where's your water?, And 3) Where's your water?

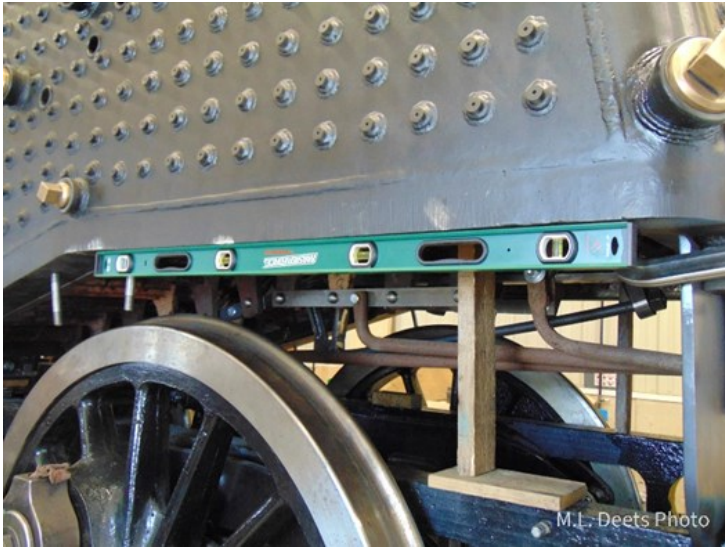
A steam locomotive's water level is so important the Federal Railroad Administration includes an entire section dealing with water gauges in the CFR Title 49 Part 230 Steam Locomotive Inspection and Maintenance Standards. Part of 230.51 states that "...The lowest reading of the water glasses shall not be less than 3 inches above the highest part of the crown sheet. ...". What's the crown sheet? It is the 'roof' of the firebox so it will have the heat of the fire on one

The water is constantly absorbing the heat transferred through the crown sheet and keeping the steel relatively 'cool'. If the water were allowed to get low enough to let the crown sheet become dry then the heat of the fire from the underside could quickly damage the steel or worse.

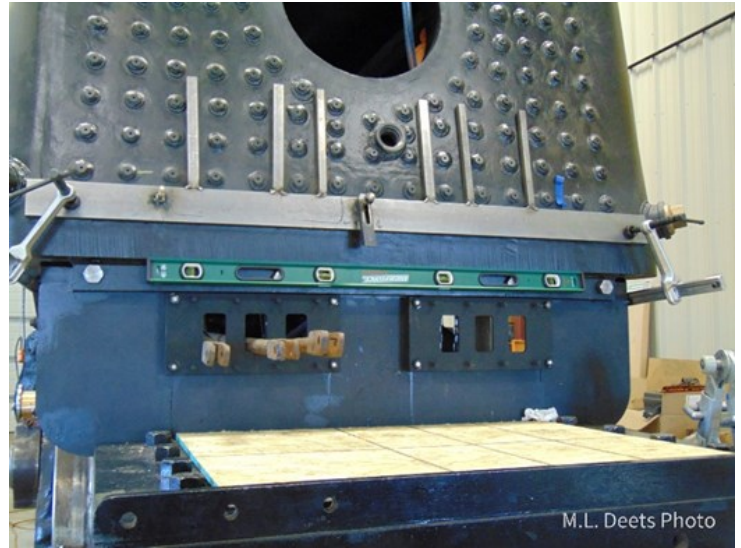
How do we prevent this situation? By constantly being aware of the water level in the boiler. But first we must know how low is too low by knowing where the top of the crown sheet is.

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Level under 1385's firebox verifying front-to-back level.



Second level to check side-to-side level under backhead



Water-filled tube coming out of firedoor and attached to backhead



Installed sand dome. One of the new studs is visible



1385's throttle, located inside the steam dome.



Throttle lever attached to backhead.

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This was done at SPEC Machine in January by first confirming the engine was setting level. Front to back level was first checked and then side to side.

The next task was to use clear plastic tubing to create a “U” shaped tube open at both ends. One end of the tube was placed against the highest point of the crownsheet inside the firebox but with a small notch in the end to allow air and excess water to escape. The other end of the tube was brought out through the firedoor and tied to the throttle gland so the outside end would be higher than the end inside the firebox and a funnel was used to fill it with water. Once the water quit running out of the end of tube in the firebox the level of the water shown at the outside end is equal to the level of the *bottom* or *inside/fireside* surface of the crownsheet. To locate the top of the crownsheet and mark it per FRA requirements we had to add the thickness of the welds and the crownsheet itself. Now that we’ve found the top of the crownsheet the water glasses and try cocks can be laid out for installation so the lowest water indication is no less than 3 inches above it. Generally speaking as long as we can see water in the gauges we’ll have at least 3 inches of water over the crownsheet if we’re on level track.

Once finished playing in the water, other layout and installation steps have been made. Locating and installation of the sand dome base has been finished and this task includes another milestone in the 1385 project; the first studs to be applied to the boiler since its delivery to SPEC Machine are used to hold the sand dome base in place. You can even see the glint of one of the new studs at the top of the boiler and just under the edge of the base here.

Another fixture on the backhead is the throttle lever and the pivot point that is studded to the boiler. Here Steve has rigged a temporary way to support the pivot to facilitate this layout. The throttle rod reaches through the packing gland attached to the backhead and through the boiler to connect with the bell crank and levers that will allow the engineer to open and close the throttle which resides in the steam

Category Archives: Dardanelle & Russellville #9 Status Updates

Welcome to the Dardanelle & Russellville #9 restoration blog. D&R #



Buttoning Up D&R #9 for the Winter October 29, 2021 *Update text and photos by Jason Reiman*

October 16-17, 2021; Fletch and his crew had a great weekend during the last volunteer session this year on the D&R #9. Fall is here, so we did what most folks in Wisconsin do; buttoned up and prepared. In hopes of not losing the great progress we made on the #9 in the last 6 months, we wrapped the locomotive and tender in layers of

of tarps and did our best to seal the elements out of the cab and coal space, and especially to keep snow and water from sitting anywhere on the locomotive or tender. It was not hard work, but a lot of guessing and anticipating where water or snow could cause a problem. We reinforced those locations with wood and bracing. Hopefully we find her high and dry in the spring.

We also had the pleasure of meeting a fan of the D&R #9 this weekend. He stopped by and walked all the way back to our little corner of the museum to say hi. I apologize we didn’t get your name, but you came all the way from Minneapolis, and I wanted to thank you for coming down, and taking the time to check out the #9. If you read this, please say hello to everyone here. If there are any other fans of the #9’s restoration, and you want to see in person how it’s coming along, please, by all means, come over and check us out. We are down at the far end of the car shop, and would love to say hi.

Finally, we want to wish a Very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the little leader of our crew, Fletcher Reiman, who turned 10 years old on 10/23. Fletcher is a great reminder of what our purpose truly is when working on the #9. When we are outside tinkering with parts on the boiler, or planning our next move, we might find Fletcher inside the cab pulling levers and making steam noises. In his eyes, the #9 is literally coming back to life. But don’t be fooled, when Fletcher is not daydreaming about the good ole days of Steam, he is out turning wrenches with the rest of us. Fletchers’ family stopped by Saturday, and we all went out for a birthday supper, opened some presents, and a large crowd of Museum volunteers were on hand to sing him Happy Birthday. Thanks for keeping us young Fletch, and Happy Birthday.

And a HUGE thank you to ALL volunteers and vendors that have helped us get the #9 to the point she is at now. Please continue to watch over winter, as we will be tackling small projects here and there, and will keep you updated with those and more.

Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic DULUTH Sleeping Car Restoration 2021 Progress Report

February 4, 2022

Photos and additional information on the progress made on the DULUTH Project during 2021 follows.

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View of the sleeping compartment showing the woodwork that has been stripped during 2021 A crate containing (5) of the upper completed berths being loaded

Photos above and additional information on the progress made on the DULUTH Project during 2021 follows.

Completed the construction and finishing (staining/varnishing) of the (6) new upper berths Completed the construction and finishing (staining/varnishing) (6) new lower berth seat ends Applied final finish (stain/varnish) to the (4) original upper berths Delivered all of the completed berths, seat ends, seat cushion frames to the museum.

Very good progress was made on the DULUTH project in 2021 thanks to a great crew of volunteers, contractors and hired help. The primary focus was to work on restoring the 10-section sleeping compartment but a lot of other areas and parts of the car were also worked on during the year. The most noticeable progress on the car has to be the interior woodwork that has been stripped of its 120 year old varnish and shellac. What has reappeared is beautiful mahogany and marquetry throughout the car. Another significant milestone for 2021 was the upper sleeping berths and lower berth seat ends, as they were completed and delivered to the museum. This included six replicated upper berths and four restored (original) upper berths. The berths are absolutely beautiful and we look forward to the day when they are reinstalled in the car. Underneath the car significant progress was made the air and hand brakes. As of the end of the year we now have functioning air brakes and the hand brake system is 95% complete.

Traveling to the 1953 Boy Scout Jamboree Part I by Bill Dredge Mar 18 2022

I was 15 years old at the time of the Convention.

Prior to July 19 1953 I had made four round trips to Chicago from Minneapolis using the Burlington's Morning Zephyrs. Now for the first 'Big trip'. On July 10th of 1953, I went to the boy Scout Jamboree on a special train beginning on the Great Northern to Seattle, WA, with the following consist. One half of a four-unit F-7 diesel, two heavy weight baggage cars, (one for storing our tents etc) and one with an extended picnic table where we would eat. Our food was prepared in an ex-army kitchen car, and we were provided with the luxury of seven or eight un-airconditioned heavy weight tourist sleeping cars.

Enroute to Seattle we made these stops: Minot ND for servicing, Wolf Point MT, for a rodeo and saw the east bound 'Empire Builder' roll by. We got back on the train for overnight, and the next morning we were at Glacier Park (my first view of the mountains). They took us off the train and put us on the Parks vehicles called 'Jammers' for a Going to the Sun road tour of the park, and then we reboarded the train at Belton (West Glacier). We stopped for servicing at Whitefish MT. The next service stop in early evening was Spokane, WA. Then it was bedtime. Before arrival in Seattle we saw Puget Sound.

After arrival in Seattle, we hiked down to the ferry boat going to Victoria BC, We were given a tour of the city, then back to Seattle. We had some 'free time' before going back to 'King Street Station' for an overnight ride to Portland OR for a brief city tour.

We left Portland on the SP's Shasta route, with a few more cars (possibly from boy scout councils) behind a 'daylight' 4400 series steam locomotive. When we got beyond Eugene OR we also picked up a 'Cab Forward' helper engine for our climb up the Cascade Mountains to Klamath Falls, OR. We met the northbound Shasta Daylight and then saw Mt Shasta, and soon after that it got dark.

The next morning we arrived at the "Oakland Pier" and took a ferry boat to San Francisco for a tour of the city. We had lunch at the Presidio Army Facility. We had some free time and then went to the Ferry building and then boarded the boat back to Oakland Pier. Then we boarded the train for an overnight trip to Santa Ana CA where we de-trained for a bus trip to Irvine Ranch (now the city of Irvine CA). At the time of the Jamboree, Irvine Ranch was lots of sand, and kind of hilly. For the next 10 days we participated in boy scout activities of sleeping in tents, and cooking our meals outside. So much for going to the Jamboree in 'Tent City'. Return to Minnesota will be in the next Newsletter.



AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

March 2022 Volume 10 Issue 3 Provided by John Goodman

Washington Update by Ross Capon

Gulf Coast passenger service: AAPRCO President Tony Marchiando on February 25 submitted the following comments to the STB in the Gulf Coast Amtrak/CSX case (Finance Docket 36496): *The American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners strongly supports efforts to expand intercity passenger rail service in the U.S. and appreciates that this is a priority of the Biden Administration. In particular, we believe that the long-anticipated, twice-daily New Orleans-Mobile service will fill an important void in Amtrak's network. Thank you for considering our views.* The STB delayed the evidentiary hearing to April 5-6 (from March 9). Click [here](#) for instructions if you or your organization would like to file comments.

The FRA seeks comments on 16 questions it has posed regarding the IIJA's Corridor Identification and Development Program. Click [here](#) for FRA's four-page Federal Register document with the questions. Your answers, that is, written comments on this Request for Information (RFI), must be submitted on or before March 9, 2022. If you have points you believe AAPRCO should make, please let me know. From RPA: "A robust response from stakeholders will be helpful in guiding the FRA. If you are currently working on this RFI for yourself or another organization, please contact RPA VP Policy [Sean Jeans-Gail](#); Rail Passengers is currently drafting a response, and to the extent they can help coordinate responses with other stakeholder organizations, "we're willing and ready." Click [here](#) and scroll down near the bottom to see IIJA Section 22308, "Corridor Identification and Development Program." FRA, incidentally, plans to address long-distance routes under both this section and, of course, in the Section 22214 "Amtrak Daily Long-distance Service Study."

White House IIJA Rail Program Webinar: I attended this on February 28. Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose indicated that IIJA contemplates bringing *all* Amtrak stations into ADA compliance. He said the Section 22214 study has already started. On the freight side, he noted that the National Academy of Sciences is required to study train lengths, and FRA has reinstituted a minimum crew size final rule process: "In our view, the longer trains require a minimum crew size."

Potential Revival of Amtrak's North Coast Hiawatha. A serious effort is underway to reinstate service on the old Northern Pacific route across southern Montana and North Dakota – the route traversed by Amtrak's *North Coast Hiawatha* (NCH) from June 5, 1971 (a little over a month after Amtrak began operations) to October 5-6, 1979. The train ran tri-weekly west of Minneapolis/St. Paul except it operated daily during the 1974 Thanksgiving travel period and the Christmas/New Year's holidays in 1972/73, 1974/75, 1975/76, and 1976/77. It also ran daily during the summer months each year 1974-1977. For most of this period the Empire Builder operated daily, but from September 1977 until the Hiawatha's last run in 1979, the two trains combined for a daily Chicago-Seattle round trip with the *Builder* running on the four "non-*Hiawatha*" days.

The [Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority](#) (BSPRA) is the first agency created under a 1993 Montana law which allows counties to come together and establish a regional rail authority, thus BSPRA – which also favors restoring Amtrak's *Pioneer* – is a subdivision of state government and is the only such entity between Minnesota and the West Coast. BSPRA is on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Rail Passengers Association devoted its February 23 afternoon webinar to the subject. BSPRA Chairman and Missoula County Commissioner Dave Strohmaier described BSPRA's efforts and RPA President & CEO Jim Mathews presented findings of RPA's study of the economic impact of restoring the *Hiawatha*.

From RPA's presentation: "Rail Passengers assesses that restoring the *North Coast Hiawatha* as a daily Amtrak service would generate \$271 million each year in economic benefits to the seven states served while costing Amtrak roughly \$68 million per year to operate – a cost offset 66% by collection of \$41 million each year in fares and other customer revenue. As many as 426,000 passengers can be expected to take this train each year once it reaches a steady state of operation, including perhaps as many as 29,000 new passengers who would not otherwise travel at all using any travel mode if the train did not exist." Click [here](#) for the October 13, 2021, *Missoula Current News* article on the study.

Strohmaier noted continuous efforts to restore the *NCH* ever since it was discontinued in 1979. These efforts by passionate advocates and groups, including resolutions from Missoula and other cities, lacked the governance structure to get it over the finish line. BSPRA was established in November, 2020, and first convened two months later virtually and in August 2021 in-person. The board consists of representatives from the 17 member counties and ex-officio representatives from Amtrak and from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

BSPRA has a handsome video which includes clips with supportive comments from Senators Steve Daines (R-MT) and Jon Tester (D-MT). The authority has been in touch with allies in North Dakota and other states and parties from Calgary to El Paso, and is urging Secretary Buttigieg to form a Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Coalition—an effort that also was supported by North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (R) in late February. BSPRA's efforts have been covered by state, national and international media, including Zeit Online (Germany), Publico (Portugal), *The New York Times* and Calgary Herald.

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The FRA called Strohmaier on Feb. 19 to assure him that the *NCH* will be included in the IIA Section 22214 study of long-distance routes not currently operating and with tri-weekly service.

I participated by invitation in BSPRA's executive committee meeting the morning of February 23. BSPRA has a good relationship with BNSF and, because of BNSF's passenger experience and knowledge, believes that the impending return of this route to BNSF control will be helpful. I indicated that private car owners would love to see the *NCH* restarted, particularly in light of Amtrak's 2018 policy that restricts charter trains to regular Amtrak routes. Of equal interest to AAPRCO would be the establishment of on-route access points, such as Livingston and Missoula (which are already set up for PVs), in contrast with the *Empire Builder* which has no access point between St. Paul and Portland/Seattle even though BN built tracks for private cars at Whitefish. BSPRA has not yet discussed PV access points but likely would if AAPRCO raised the subject.

The Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Summit, planned for Billings on August 22-23, will bring together passenger rail organizations and advocates, local, state and federal elected officials and policymakers, host railroads and rail infrastructure experts to educate, innovate and coordinate for the restoration, expansion and enhancement of passenger rail service across the Greater Northwest/Mountain West, from Wisconsin to Seattle/Portland. This will be at the Northern Hotel and culminate on the 23rd with a gala dinner at the historic Billings Depot. (Additional hotel rooms at group block rate available at DoubleTree by Hilton.)

Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-OK), 87, will retire January 3 and has endorsed his chief of staff, Luke Holland, to fill out a term that ends in 2027. The special election will be in November with the mid-terms. Inhofe is the top Republican on the Armed Services Committee. The Environment & Public Works Committee has jurisdiction over highways. Inhofe is its senior member and was chairman in 2003-04 and the ranking Republican from 2005 to January 3, 2013. He also is on Small Business & Entrepreneurship. Inhofe was first elected to the Senate in 1994.

Two More Will Leave the House: Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL-22-Boca Raton/Margate/Coral Springs) is the 31st Democrat to announce retirement and Rep. Fred Keller (R-PA-12-Williamsport/Selinsgrove/Tunkhannock) is the 14th Republican. Keller, who would have had to run against a fellow Republican due to redistricting and Pennsylvania's loss of a seat, joined Congress in mid-2019 after winning a special election to fill the seat of Rep. Tom Marino (R) who resigned. Deutch, who is in his seventh term, will become CEO for the American Jewish Committee. *Politico* said, "the GOP-controlled Legislature is considering new maps that would keep [Deutch's] district in Democratic hands."

AAPRCO

Mid-Month Highlights

More: Washington Update by Ross Capon

March 2022 Volume 10 Issue 4

President Biden on Friday, March 11, signed into law the FY 22 omnibus appropriations bill funding the federal government through September 30. The Senate passed it 68-31 late Thursday. The House had passed the bill in two parts (both by bipartisan majorities) on March 9 – military spending by 361-69 and the non-defense part by 260-171. Click [here](#) for the entire bill. US DOT (first part of Division L) starts on p. 1582; Amtrak grants begin on p. 1649.

As in recent years, a joint (House-Senate) explanatory statement generally endorses House and Senate language "unless otherwise noted." For the transportation/housing section, click [here](#). Of particular interest, is this at page 49: "The agreement does not support proposals that will inevitably lead to long-term or permanent service cuts or segmentation of Amtrak's long-distance routes, which will lead to less service for rural communities." A provision regarding Amtrak station restaffing reflects a union-approved agreement which results in restaffing Raton, NM, and Dodge City, KS, instead of Lamy, NM, and Garden City, KS (due to issues with localities and station facilities).

The private car/charter train report language accompanying the House and Senate bills stand. To see the House report language, click [here](#) and go to page 74. For Senate report language, click [here](#) and go to page 70. AAPRCO leadership recently met by Zoom with Democratic and Republican appropriations staff to express thanks for this language and request that similar language accompany the FY23 bills.

This is how the omnibus bill's rail and transit sections were summarized by the House Appropriations Committee:

- Advances the safety and reliability of our passenger and freight rail systems by providing \$3.3 billion for the Federal Railroad Administration, an increase of \$504 million above fiscal year 2021. This includes \$625 million for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program, \$250 million above fiscal year 2021. It also provides \$2.3 billion for Amtrak, \$331 million above fiscal year 2021, including \$874.5 million for Northeast Corridor Grants and \$1.45 billion for National Network Grants.

- \$16.3 billion for the Federal Transit Administration, including \$13.4 billion for Transit Formula Grants to expand bus fleets and increase the transit state of good repair, consistent with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA); \$2.3 billion for Capital Investment Grants, \$234 million above fiscal year 2021; and \$504.3 million for Transit Infrastructure Grants and projects.

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My January 2 column noted that the IIJA “has \$66B in guaranteed rail funding over five years [plus an] additional \$34B which is just authorized.” Importantly, the FY22 omnibus appropriations law includes some (not all) of the “authorized” funds. Here is the breakdown for Amtrak:

- Authorized funds: \$2.3B -- National Network \$1.457B (vs. \$2.3B authorized); NEC \$875M (vs. \$1.57B authorized)
- Guaranteed funds: \$4.4B -- NN \$3.2B; NEC \$1.2B

There also is considerable passenger rail funding (and funding potentially available to passenger rail) that does not go directly to Amtrak. As RPA noted, “One key program to watch will be the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail, which received \$7.3 billion to fund new and upgraded passenger service through a competitive grant program.”

Part of the \$1B guaranteed funding for the CRISI program will go to these passenger rail projects:

- Georgia DOT: Atlanta-Savannah EIS (\$8M)
- Maryland Transit Administration: Improve Baltimore Penn Station (\$5M)
- Village of Essex Jct., Vermont: Multimodal Train and Bus Station Redevelopment (\$3M)
- Rhode Island DOT: Kingston Train Station Intermodal & Parking Expansion (\$2.5M)
- Vermont Agency of Transportation: White River Jct. Station Platform Reconstruction (\$800K)
- City of Ypsilanti, MI: Ypsilanti Train Station (\$300K)

There is also \$750K to study Reading-Philadelphia passenger rail, and \$600M for a new grant program focused on *eliminating* rail-road/highway crossings.

Gulf Coast follow-ups: The process of submitting comments to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) [my Mar. 1 column] also involved sending the comments to 200+ “parties of record.” This required individually highlighting email addresses from a “non-Excel” document and pasting those addresses into an email “to” field—actually, pasting them first into a Word document for future reference and possible use. For the five politicians whose email addresses did not appear on the Service List, this meant generating mailing labels and scrolling through them to find those five. This work was completed March 11.

To sign RPA’s petition in support of the Gulf Coast service, click [here](#).

Canadian Pacific continues as Amtrak’s No. 1 Host Railroad: RPA is highlighting this quote from CP President and CEO Keith Creel, on receiving an award at a Chicago Union Station ceremony “in recognition of the railroad’s industry-leading ‘A’ grade for keeping Amtrak’s service on-time for the sixth year in a row”: “[Canadian Pacific] is pleased to continue to support Amtrak and its infrastructure projects to provide capacity needed to accommodate additional service and thankful to Amtrak for its support of our historic combination with Kansas City Southern.” The “additional service” is a reference to Baton Rouge-New Orleans. As Bob Johnston of *Trains* reported December 8, “A senior Canadian Pacific official [James Clements, senior vice president of Strategic Planning and Technology Transformation] told New Orleans and Baton Rouge, La., civic leaders on Wednesday that the railroad will permit a single passenger round trip between the two cities, without any infrastructure improvements, if CP’s merger with Kansas City Southern is approved by the Surface Transportation Board.” Click [here](#) for a March 10 PR Newswire release from Canadian Pacific.

Ukraine: Pittsburgh-based Railroad Development Corporation is among those running extra trains to accommodate refugees. Click [here](#) for a fascinating report about how Ukraine’s own railways keep running, quickly rebuilding bombed trackage.

Keep *Trains* Editor Jim Wrinn in your prayers as he fights cancer. Mike Schafer, editor of *Passenger Train Journal*, notes that “Jim has been suffering from this for over a year, and it’s been quite a struggle, though he’s been able to keep up with his duties as *Trains* editor. Give him all the support you can. We’re with you, Jim!”

More AARPCO news Passenger Rail News

CSX Requests Delay in STB Hearing on Amtrak Gulf Coast Case

CSX petitioned the [Surface Transportation Board](#) (STB) on February 23 to postpone for a month its scheduled evidentiary hearing in the [case concerning Amtrak’s proposed Gulf Coast service](#).

In its filing, CSX officials said that other parties involved in the case — Norfolk Southern Railway, the Port of Mobile and Amtrak — do not object to rescheduling the hearing from March 9-10 to sometime in the first full week of April. “Granting this request for a three-week delay to the hearing will avoid any prejudice to CSX’s ability to put on an effective case in chief,” the filing states.

CSX made its request after STB members said last week during a pre-hearing conference that the evidentiary hearing is likely to last more than two days based on the estimated examination time for witnesses, and opening and closing statements. CSX has proposed a hearing date of April 5-6, with April 7 reserved should a third day be necessary. In an email, an Amtrak spokesman confirmed the railroad does not object to CSX’s motion.

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Amtrak Begins Baltimore Penn Station Construction



The Penn Station Partners development team will preserve the historic character of the station while making modern changes. Photo – Amtrak

Construction has begun on a project to upgrade Penn Station in Baltimore, [Amtrak](#) announced late last week.

To date, the construction includes the installation of scaffolding, fencing and materials around the station exterior. The installations are part of a [state-of-good-repair project](#) that will enhance the station's appearance and increase overall functionality, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

Essential core and shell improvements are tentatively scheduled to begin in summer.

The [Penn Station Partners](#) development team will preserve the historic character of the station while introducing modern changes, Amtrak officials said. The station's now vacant three upper floors will be renovated for office use. That work is scheduled to be completed in summer 2023.

A station expansion is planned to be integrated with the existing station to accommodate a high-speed rail platform — using Amtrak's new Acela trains — with more modern functionality and increased capacity. Construction is expected to begin this fall.

"Once it is fully renovated and repurposed, Penn Station will serve as the prominent anchor for all future development that springs up on the adjacent properties while remaining the lively beating heart of the vibrant surrounding neighborhoods," said Dennis Newman, Amtrak's executive vice president of strategy, planning and accessibility.

Moorman, Foote, Gardner Testify at STB Amtrak Hearing

Track-sharing agreements between Class Is and [Amtrak](#) can benefit both sides if the parties involved are open to transparency and collaboration, the former president and CEO of [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) (NS) and Amtrak told the [Surface Transportation Board](#) (STB) on February 15th.

During the second day of a two-day public hearing on Amtrak's application to relaunch Gulf Coast service, the STB heard from Charles "Wick" Moorman, who served as NS president and CEO from 2005 to 2015, then a year later took what would be a 16-month stint as Amtrak's top executive. Moorman's background as a former CEO of a Class I and Amtrak gave him a unique perspective on the case now before the STB, in which Amtrak has petitioned for its trains to run on what is mostly [CSX](#) track between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama.

Amtrak has not offered Gulf Coast service since Hurricane Katrina damaged rail infrastructure there in 2005. Amtrak wants to offer two daily roundtrips between the cities, but CSX has said passenger service on its line would hurt freight-rail traffic in the region.

Former NS and Amtrak CEO Charles "Wick" Moorman testified yesterday at the STB public hearing on Amtrak's petition to operate Gulf Coast passenger-rail service. Photo – STB/YouTube (screenshot)

In his testimony, Moorman told the board that when he was CEO at NS, the Class I was able to reach an agreement with Amtrak, Virginia, and North Carolina that resulted in a significant expansion of Amtrak service in those states.

"I felt then, and I still feel now, that these agreements were a win-win for Norfolk Southern, Amtrak, and the people who live in Virginia and North Carolina," he said. "The Amtrak services have been very successful, attracting high ridership leading to additional service increases. And, very importantly, there has been significant public investment in Norfolk Southern's rail lines as a result of the Amtrak services."

Moorman got involved in Amtrak's Gulf Coast discussions in 2017, after conversations between the parties had been going on for a few years. Then Amtrak's CEO, he "made a commitment" to the Southern Rail Commission and U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) that Amtrak would support restoration of Gulf Coast service, he said. For years, Wicker and the Southern Rail Commission have advocated for Amtrak's return to the Gulf Coast.

During Moorman's time as Amtrak CEO, CSX was seeking over \$2 billion in infrastructure investments to restore service from New Orleans to Jacksonville and add a second train from New Orleans to Mobile. At the same time, CSX was claiming that it was "virtually impossible to add Amtrak service on the line because the Class I couldn't meet the 80% on-time performance standard" as required under federal legislation, said Moorman.

"I was optimistic at the time that Amtrak would be able to reach an agreement with CSX, given the experience I already had working out agreements between Amtrak and the states when I was at Norfolk Southern," he said.

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Moorman said he reached out to CSX's then-CEO Hunter Harrison to discuss the details, but unfortunately Harrison died before the two could meet. By the time he left Amtrak as CEO later that year, "it seemed increasingly apparent that there wasn't going to be an agreement with CSX," Moorman said.

"And now it appears four years later, at least to me, that very little has changed," he added. "That is very unfortunate. While negotiations over these types of projects is never easy, they shouldn't take forever. If you have reasonable people on both sides, they can get done — and I have seen this happen many times."

A neutral party needs to develop a resolution, and the STB is the right entity to do that, Moorman said.

"There is a real need for passenger-rail service, particularly in the South," he said. "Our highway system is overcrowded in many areas and in an increasing state of disrepair. The appetite for good, environmentally friendly transportation alternatives is growing."

As Amtrak CEO, Moorman regularly rode the railroad's Lynchburg-to-D.C. train from his Charlottesville home to Washington, D.C. The success of that route was a driver in Virginia's recent "audacious plan" to invest \$3.7 billion on improving passenger-rail service in the state, including the construction of a new Long Bridge over the Potomac River — a feature that will benefit CSX, he said.

Until the Amtrak Lynchburg service started in 2009, Virginia had little Amtrak service other than a few long distance trains, he noted.

"The one thing that I've seen in Virginia is that once states see the benefits of passenger-rail service, they can't get enough of it," Moorman said. "I expect that will also be the case on the Gulf Coast."

Moreover, the expansion of passenger-rail service in Virginia did not hurt the Port of Virginia's freight-rail service — something that he initially was concerned about while CEO of NS. "But [NS] worked collaboratively with Amtrak on what [rail] capacity was required for the service, that capacity was installed, and initiation of Amtrak service to Norfolk in 2012 over the NS line did not have a detrimental impact on the port," he said.

The STB also heard from CSX President and CEO James Foote and Amtrak President and CEO Stephen Gardner.

Foote testified that his company is not against passenger-rail service along the Gulf Coast. CSX hopes the STB can help facilitate a partnership among the railroads, stakeholders and others so that goal can be achieved, he said.

"I am urging the board to be a voice of reason here," Foote added. "Amtrak is seeking to force its way onto our rail lines without consideration of any of the impacts it would have on our existing and future customers and local communities."

New infrastructure is needed to accommodate Amtrak's proposed service and that "should not be ignored," according to Foote.

"Instead of working together as we have successfully done in the past, Amtrak has apparently decided it would be more politically advantageous to petition [the STB] to require us to initiate service without first providing for needed infrastructure to accommodate new Gulf Coast service or to reach any agreement on the proposition," he said.

Foote suggested that Amtrak has a broader agenda than the Gulf Coast service: It wants to use the case "to create a new road map for imposing new passenger service without working with host carriers or local communities and without first adding necessary capacity."

Meanwhile, Amtrak's Gardner disputed the notion that Amtrak has not wanted to collaborate with CSX on Gulf Coast service. Discussions on the issue go back to 2015, when the federal FAST Act created the Federal Railroad Administration-led Gulf Coast Working Group to plan passenger service restoration. The working group included Amtrak, CSX and the Southern Rail Commission, but CSX did not participate "in good faith," Gardner said.

The Class I also disagreed with cost estimates for infrastructure improvements, Gardner said. While the working group estimated \$100 million would be necessary, CSX put the cost at \$1.1 billion.

Also, in February 2020 when Amtrak agreed to CSX's and NS's request for a capacity modeling analysis that used the rail traffic controller (RTC) model, it "quickly became apparent that the RTC modeling would serve no purpose other than to obfuscate and delay," Gardner said.

"Given the clear congressional directive to re-establish service along the Gulf Coast, and realizing that only an STB order would make that happen, Amtrak saw no choice other than to initiate this proceeding," Gardner said.

After the public comment portion of the hearing concluded yesterday, the STB held a pretrial hearing in the afternoon. The case's next phase will begin March 9 with an evidentiary hearing.

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AARPCO News Continued from previous page:

STB Wants Parties to Address Amtrak Gulf Coast Matters Prior to April Hearing



More than 300 people rode Amtrak's Gulf Coast Inspection Train (pictured) from New Orleans to Jacksonville, Fla., in February 2016, as part of an ongoing effort to restore passenger rail service along the Gulf Coast, which was disrupted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and never resumed. (Marc Glucksman, Amtrak)

The [Surface Transportation Board](#) (STB) has directed [Amtrak](#), [CSX](#), [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) and related parties to be prepared to address several issues at the April 4 evidentiary hearing on Amtrak's proposal to introduce Gulf Coast intercity passenger-rail service.

At a preliminary hearing last month, the STB directed all the parties to contact the U.S. Coast Guard over the question of scheduling operations of movable bridges along the Gulf Coast corridor.

Yesterday, the board informed Amtrak, CSX, NS, the Alabama State Port Authority and its Terminal Railway-Alabama State Docks to report on their meeting with the Coast Guard, as well as to address a renewed request by Amtrak for access to certain NS lines.

The April 4 evidentiary hearing will address Amtrak's request that the STB require CSX and NS to allow passenger-rail service between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama. CSX and NS own the track that Amtrak would use to operate its service. The Class Is oppose Amtrak's use of the line without certain conditions.

Amtrak hasn't operated passenger-rail service along the Gulf Coast since Hurricane Katrina damaged rail infrastructure there in 2005.

CP earns an 'A' for Sixth Straight Year as Amtrak Host Railroad

[Amtrak](#) on March 10th recognized [Canadian Pacific](#) for earning an industry-leading "A" grade for the sixth-consecutive year on Amtrak's annual [Host Railroad Report Card](#), which ranks freight railroads for keeping Amtrak trains on time.

Amtrak President and CEO Stephen Gardner presented CP President and CEO Keith Creel a plaque to mark the Class I's achievement.

"We're proud of the Amtrak-CP partnership and we applaud you and your team's continued commitment to providing outstanding service to our passengers," Gardner told Creel, according to a press release.

In addition to its strong dispatching performance from its Minneapolis-based rail traffic control center, CP was the first Amtrak host to certify schedules to measure on-time status at each Amtrak station, Amtrak officials said.

Amtrak President and CEO Stephen Gardner (right) presented CP President and CEO Keith Creel a plaque to mark the Class I's achievement in making sure Amtrak trains are on time when operating on CP's network. Photo – media.amtrak.com

In January, Amtrak and CP announced an agreement that calls for the two railroads to cooperate on Amtrak's plan for bringing new and expanded intercity passenger-rail service to the Midwest and southern United States. And given CP's consistent record as an Amtrak host, Amtrak is supporting CP's proposal to expand its network in a merger with [Kansas City Southern](#), Gardner said.

"CP is pleased to continue to support Amtrak and its infrastructure projects to provide capacity needed to accommodate additional service and thankful to Amtrak for its support of our historic combination with Kansas City Southern," said Creel.

CN also received an "A" grade on Amtrak's 2021 Host Railroad Report Card. The other Class Is received the following grades: BNSF Railway Co., B+; CSX, B; Union Pacific Railroad, C+; and Norfolk Southern Railway, D-.

Tri-state Passenger Rail Gets \$31.8 Million Federal Grant

Thursday, March 10, 2022, 10:01 AM, Frederick Krenske

By Nick Longworth **Published** March 9, 2022 5:00PM [Transportation FOX 9](#) article

In October 2021, the Midwest Regional Rail Plan proposed a "40-year vision" to create a high-speed rail system that would pass from Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison to the Twin Cities, along with other branches and cities in the Midwest.

(FOX 9) - Rail lines that currently serve commuters from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois could soon see improvements that double available round trips, according to an announcement by both the Minnesota and Wisconsin department of transportation. Both states announced Wednesday a \$31.8 million federal grant had been received for station and rail segment improvements to double passenger rail service and increase freight efficiency along the corridor that connects the Twin Cities, La Crosse, Milwaukee and Chicago. According to the announcement, the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Intercity Passenger Rail Project will add a second daily passenger rail round-trip along the corridor shared by Amtrak Empire Builder and Hiawatha Service trains.

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When combined with the Empire Builder, the corridor will offer two daily round trips between St. Paul and Chicago, expected to begin in 2024.

Rail improvements will ease train congestion, modernize sections of track and speed the movement of freight.

"This has been a long time coming," said Minnesota Senator Dibble, who spoke at an event at the La Crosse Amtrak Station celebrating the completion of funding for the second daily train. "It's a great day for transportation. Minnesotans deserve a modern transportation system built for the 21st century and I'm grateful for collaboration between states and public and private entities to get this second train up and running."

The 411-mile corridor between St. Paul and Chicago will offer two daily round trips, with departures planned for each city in the morning and mid-day. The first year of service is projected to serve more than 124,000 riders.

"This vital rail project came together because the federal government not only recognized its importance to the region, but the extraordinary collaboration among states, local economic groups and freight and passenger rail," WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson said in a statement announcing the grant. "The team effort we are celebrating today brings us a stronger and more diverse transportation infrastructure."

Improvements to the line are expected to save \$34.7 million in freight costs over the next 30 years of operation. Grade crossing improvements will reduce gate-down times, and capacity improvements will increase efficiency.

Once known as "Amtrak Joe," the Biden Administration has made expanding commuter rail lines a priority.

In October, [the Federal Railroad Administration proposed creating high-speed rail lines that would connect much of the Midwest including Minnesota.](#)

The Midwest Regional Rail Plan proposes a "40-year vision" to create a high-speed rail system that would pass from Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison to the Twin Cities, along with other branches and cities in the Midwest.

Carload Considerations: Oil's Sudden Rise Creates New Demand, Challenges for Frac Sand

Trains Newswire *By Chase Gunnoe* | March 16, 2022

Soaring price drives increase in shale-oil production



Canadian Pacific GE ES44AC No. 8848 leads a unit frac sand train on the Kansas City Southern at Plano, Texas, on Feb. 19, 2022. (David Hawkins)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Texas Intermediate oil has eclipsed \$100 a barrel in recent days, a substantial comeback from the record-low, negative-\$37.00-per-barrel price during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in April 2020. Oil's rally, driven by a recovering economy and exacerbated by the Russian-Ukraine War is pressuring U.S. oil companies to increase shale production. This has oil producers seeking more sand used in hydraulic fracking.

Frac sand has historically been sourced from Wisconsin and other Upper Midwest states, accounting for 70% of the silica "white sand" used in oil and gas fracking operations. It is typically hauled by railroads in unit-train and manifest service to the Permian region of West Texas, and to a lesser extent, the Utica and Marcellus shale regions. In recent years, suppliers have migrated to a lower-cost in-basin sand, known as "brown sand" that is closer to Permian oil and gas operations and therefore cheaper to transport. In-basin sand is moved by truck, helping producers' production logistics and bottom lines.

Oil producers and suppliers are accustomed to the volatile boom and bust of energy markets, but like many industries affected by the coronavirus, sand suppliers are struggling to keep pace with fewer people working in the mines and a shortage

Tight supply is hurting growth in shale production at a time when domestic demand is strong.

[A Reuters article on Feb. 15](#), citing an oil and gas executive, reported that Tall City Exploration, a Permian oil and gas company, was looking at bringing in sand by rail due to its operations being hindered due to limited sand supply. Another executive noted that West Texas rail frac sand depots were busy, while local mines were out of supply. This was nine days before the start of the war in Ukraine put more pressure on the industry. If limited inventories of in-basin sand and a shortage of truck drivers persist, companies may have no choice but to lean more on rail-dependent sand from the Upper Midwest, which could lift Class I railroads' carloads.

According to the Association of American Railroads, carloads of non-metallic minerals, which includes sand as well as crushed stone and gravel, are up 17% year-over-year. Six of the seven Class I railroads have seen a rise in the commodity group, led by Kansas City Southern, up 47%. Union Pacific is up 37%, and BNSF Railway up 25%. In the East, CSX Transportation and Norfolk Southern, which serve the Marcellus and Utica shale regions, are both up 7% year-over-year.

Canadian Pacific Railway's sand business is up slightly. It is not clear if Canadian National's sand business is up, as its nonmetallic minerals carloads are down 10% year-over-year.

Continued uncertainty with the outcome in Ukraine will further influence oil prices; however, U.S. oil production's momentum is anticipated to continue recovering toward pre-pandemic numbers. Right now, the U.S. is producing about 11.6 million barrels per day, down 10% from 13 million barrels per day in pre-pandemic March 2020.

Oil prices are now 105% higher than before the pandemic. If oil prices remain elevated at these high prices, it's possible that energy companies will be able to absorb the cost of moving sand-by-rail from the Midwest as a temporary solution until in-basin sand issues are corrected. And this isn't to say railroads may not look at what opportunities exist for a short-haul play in moving in-basin sand.

— *Chase Gunnoe works in marketing & sales for the freight rail industry and is the author of Carload Considerations, a monthly Trains News Wire commentary series. It discusses the freight rail industry, commodities, and economic trends. Its views are the sole opinion of its author with no particular emphasis on a specific railroad or shipper.*



Two Years After COVID: Amtrak Lags, VIA Rail Hopes

Railway Age Written by [David Peter Alan](#), Contributing Editor March 23, 2022 Provided by John Goodman



Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada took major hits in the two years since COVID-19 pushed much of the world into lockdown mode. Today, Amtrak's service recovery has stalled, while VIA Rail is looking forward to something of a comeback under difficult circumstances later this spring; a comeback that has already begun in part.



VIA Rail Photos:



[Railway Age recently reported on how rail transit is faring in the U.S. and Canada.](#) It certainly spelled misfortune for transit in the two countries, although most local rail transit—subway and elevated lines, light rail and streetcars—has recovered to pre-COVID levels of service without recovering to similar levels of ridership or revenue. Regional railroads, still often called “commuter” railroads, have not generally fared as well; although, as we reported, some are doing better than others.

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In addition, some have shifted to providing more evenly spaced service throughout the day; others have restored their old “commuting peak” schedules in an effort to bring back on board former commuters; and some have abandoned “off-peak” service on certain lines that used to run at those times.

Editors and reporters at *Railway Age* and its sibling publications, *Railway Track & Structures* and *International Railway Journal*, joined to provide team coverage of the rail-related progress of the virus, which stopped much of passenger and freight railroading in its tracks. Since then, we have reported every six months on the slow recovery of the industry, particularly on events surrounding rail transit as well as [Amtrak](#) and [VIA Rail](#), providers of rail corridors and long-distance trains. Amtrak was hard-hit, but a look at VIA Rail’s schedules during the period shows that it was almost obliterated.

As the pandemic started to take hold, ridership on Amtrak plummeted, especially on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and other corridors. NEC service was slashed, including *Acela* trains, which were eliminated entirely for awhile. Other corridors had service cut to one or two round trips per day. The long-distance routes, which only ran once per day (except for a portion of one route) kept going until early October, when Amtrak slashed service on every route to three times per week. The sole exception was the *AutoTrain*, which remained scheduled every day, although it is only available to motorists who bring their vehicles along.

Although ridership losses on the long-distance trains were less-severe than on the corridors, Amtrak killed 58% of its weekly runs. [Railway Age ran a series collectively called Farewell, Long-Distance Trains?](#) at the time and expressed concern that the 14 trains in Amtrak’s long-distance network would soon be phased out. Congress intervened with money for Amtrak’s recovery and mandated that the trains which ran every day before the virus struck return to daily operation in time for the summer. Amtrak brought the trains back to daily operation in late May and early June. Ironically, [Amtrak celebrated its 50th anniversary on April 30 last year](#), when it ran the lowest overall level of service in its history.

The daily operation was not to last. In January 2022, Amtrak announced that service on long-distance routes would again be slashed, although not as badly as when the railroad scaled down to tri-weekly operation for eight months in October 2020. This time, trains run for five days, with no service for the next two. On the Atlantic Coast, the *Silver Meteor* is suspended entirely, while the *Silver Star* and the *Palmetto* (a day train between New York and Savannah) still run every day. There were also cuts on the corridors, but Amtrak announced at the time that all the trains would be back by March 27; a promise that Amtrak did not keep. We reported on such cuts on Jan. 18—[Omicron Forces Amtrak Service Cuts](#)—including a list of days when each long-distance train runs.

With little fanfare, Amtrak announced quietly on March 3 that many of the cuts would remain in effect. Daily service on a majority of affected trains would not be restored for at least another two months—maybe longer. Nine trains currently run on the five-day-a-week schedule (as we noted, two that currently run daily and one that has been suspended are Atlantic Coast service trains, while the other two run tri-weekly and have done so for decades).

Of those nine, only the *Coast Starlight*, *Capitol Limited* and *Texas Eagle*, will return to daily operation on March 28. The *Lake Shore Limited*, *Crescent*, *City of New Orleans*, *Southwest Chief*, *California Zephyr* and *Empire Builder* will continue to run on the days they run now. The suspension of the *Silver Meteor* will also continue. Amtrak is accepting bookings on any day for the six trains currently running five days per week and the *Silver Meteor*, beginning the week leading up to Memorial Day. Nevertheless, Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari told *Railway Age* that, even though Amtrak is allowing bookings on a seven-day basis, that is not a confirmation that all of the affected trains will actually run daily by that time. If they do not, it will mark the first time that long-distance trains that normally run every day will run on less-than-daily schedules during the busy summer season. Magliari referred to the schedule with the three trains running daily as the “spring schedule” and said that the “summer schedule” is yet to be determined. There will be an operational change accompanied by an equipment change in the spring schedule. The same sets of equipment will be used for the Trains 21 and 22, the *Texas Eagle*, as well as for Trains 29 and 30, the *Capitol Limited*. While the consists will run between Washington, D.C., and San Antonio, Tex., through Chicago, Ill., there will be separate ticketing for segments on either side of the Windy City. Magliari attributed the change to the shortage of employees on the operating and maintenance sides, as well as the fact that both trains are one-night trains, rather than taking two nights.

Part of the rationale behind the change is to move the required 1,500-mile mechanical inspections from Chicago to St. Louis, Mo. That means a new schedule, with more layover time in that city. Schedules will change on the portion of the trip between Chicago and St. Louis, so they will remain the same south of there, on most of the route.

Two short-distance corridors will return to full schedules on March 28: *Hiawatha* service between Chicago and Milwaukee, Wis., and the portion of the *Empire Service* route between New York and Albany. Other corridor trains that were cut in January are not coming back—at least not at the end of March. Trains 391 and 392, the *Saluki*, remains suspended. That was the round trip from Chicago to Carbondale, Ill., in the morning and returning in the late afternoon, for an evening arrival in the Windy City. Some shuttle trains between New Haven, Conn., and Springfield, Mass., have not returned, but Amtrak’s schedules on the line comprise only part of the service. The rest is provided by the Connecticut Department of Transportation’s *Hartford Line*. Some NEC trains have not returned, either. For example, Trains 66 and 67 between Boston, Mass., and Newport News, Va.—still known as the “Night Owl” unofficially—remain suspended.

Amtrak’s continued service reductions may conflict with the Congressional mandate stated in §22210 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or BIL).

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That provision prohibits Amtrak from reducing service to less than daily on long-distance routes without giving at least 210 days' notice to members of Congress who represent the districts where those trains run. Subsection (c) allows temporary reductions in the event of an "emergency," which is normally triggered by an outage or by track work. The current "emergency" started in late January and was slated to last for nine to ten weeks. It has now been extended two more months for two-thirds of the affected long-distance trains, and Amtrak has still not promised a date on which it will end and all affected long-distance trains return to daily operation. It appears that Amtrak considers the current shortage of employees to constitute an "emergency" for that purpose. For almost 20 months from early October, 2020 through at least late May 2022, there will have been only seven months when all long-distance trains have run every day historically did so again.

The spring schedule will not include Amtrak trains to Canada, either. Magliari said that restoring those trains requires getting crews qualified, including VIA Rail crews for the portion of Trains 63 and 64 (the *Maple Leaf*) between Niagara Falls, N.Y., and Toronto. The part of the route in New York state still runs.

Service on VIA Rail suffered even more than Amtrak's throughout the past two years. Corridors in Ontario and Quebec that once hosted multiple trains were cut to one or two daily round-trips in 2020. The schedule has recovered somewhat, but is not yet back to pre-pandemic levels.

The service recovery has had its ups and downs, though. Some trains were added last year, but on Jan. 19, 2022 the carrier reduced service on its corridor routes by one to three frequencies per day in each direction. In a Jan. 13 press release, VIA Rail reported that this "temporary service reduction in the corridor has been carefully planned in order to provide essential service on all routes." Some of those cuts remain in effect, but the schedule at this writing looks better. The basic schedule calls for three daily round-trips between Montreal and Quebec City, four between Montreal and Ottawa, five between Toronto and Montreal and Toronto and Ottawa (with some adjustments for weekend schedules), three between Toronto and Windsor (actually Walkerville), and still only one between Toronto and Sarnia.

The few long-distance routes in Canada fared worse. While the *Hudson's Bay* between Winnipeg and Churchill, Manitoba, always ran (the name is now unofficial), the few other routes in Western and Atlantic Canada were suspended for some of the time, and the ones in the West now run only once a week: the *Canadian* between Toronto and Vancouver, the *Skeena* (the name is also unofficial) between Jasper, Alberta, and Prince Rupert, B.C. The trains from Montreal to Jonquiere and Senneterre, Quebec, now leave Montreal only on Fridays and return on Sundays. The train between Sudbury and White River, Ontario (on the original Canadian Pacific *Canadian* route) also only runs once per week: from Sudbury on Saturdays and returning on Sundays. The *Ocean* between Montreal and Halifax now runs twice a week, leaving both endpoints on Wednesdays and Sundays. It ran three times a week before the virus hit. The *Canadian* is slated to get a second weekly departure, too: leaving Toronto on Wednesdays (in addition to Sundays) and Vancouver on Fridays (in addition to Mondays). That was its pre-COVID frequency.

On-board services were curtailed, as well. Food service was suspended on the train to Churchill, Manitoba, even though the trip from Winnipeg is scheduled to take 45 hours each way. On the *Canadian*, sleeping car passengers were required to stay in their rooms, except for breakfast and dinner in the dining car (lunch was delivered to their rooms). The 1954-vintage dome and lounge cars were closed on all the long-distance trains where they ran as part of the consist. In short, the experience that goes with rail travel was not offered. The Jan. 13 release that announced cuts in corridor services also said: "There will be no reductions in frequencies at the moment on any other routes, but some on-board services have been modified," while trains on non-corridor routes were running only once per week.

Things seem to be looking up for some of the long-distance trains, though. According to VIA Rail, dome and lounge cars on the *Canadian* and the *Ocean* are again open, and berth accommodations are scheduled to become available on the *Canadian* soon, along with the deluxe staterooms called "Prestige Class" sleeping accommodations. As mentioned, schedules on that train and the *Ocean* will also increase to two departures per week, rather than only one. The trains to Senneterre, Jonquiere, White River and Prince Rupert will continue to run only once per week, instead of tri-weekly.

In the long run, VIA Rail is in trouble, according to *Railway Age* Canadian Contributing Editor David Thomas' [Feb. 17 report](#). He reviewed VIA Rail's three-year corporate plan and reported: "VIA Rail's future depends upon a rapid rebound in domestic travel and global tourism to restore operating revenues, the beneficence of rival railways in renting track and station access, and above all, a greatly expanded largesse on the part of present and future national governments."

We don't know what the future holds, especially in these uncertain times. The immediate threat of a new variant of the COVID virus coming back with a vengeance seems to have subsided, but nobody knows what will happen in light of the war in Ukraine. Travel on Amtrak and VIA Rail could boom this summer, or ridership could remain weak.

We do know that VIA Rail is in trouble and has not restored some of the trains that ran until two years ago. The same holds for Amtrak, despite widely held expectations that Amtrak's schedule and services in summer 2022 would look much like they did pre-COVID. Time will tell. Our advice never seems to change: Ride all the trains you can while you know you still can. Anything can happen.

Hydrogen Hinted for Calgary-Banff Passenger Scheme

Railway Age Written by [David Thomas](#), Canadian Contributing Editor March 21, 2022



A proposed 150-kilometer Calgary-Banff passenger rail service could include seven stops—Calgary International Airport, downtown Calgary, Calgary Keith, Cochrane, Morley (Stoney Nakoda), Canmore and Banff—along a dedicated line built within the existing Canadian Pacific right of way. (Photo: Courtesy of David Duffin)

Flush with cash, as its vast tar sands oil field suddenly lurched from environmental pariah to savior of western civilization, the Alberta government is looking more favorably upon a scheme to build a new, independent passenger railway, connecting Calgary International Airport (YYC) to the Rocky Mountain's global tourist destination, Banff National Park.

While Vlad the Invader has partially redeemed the reputation of Alberta's dirty oil, the railway promoters are dangling the prospect of clean, green, hydrogen propulsion as an added lure for government funding. The railway "has the potential to be hydrogen powered," according to the promoter consortium, which includes a unit of the rail-friendly public pension fund, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec.

Off-the-shelf hydrogen trainsets, already in the catalogs of European railcar builders, would be ideal for the short, 150-kilometer (93-mile) link between YYC's currently rail-less terminal, Calgary city center, and [Canadian Pacific's](#) (CP) picturesque Banff Station. Calgary is already the focal point for [CP's development of hydrogen locomotion and trackside fuel generation](#). Both the Alberta and Canadian governments are aggressively encouraging hydrogen generation, whether "grey" from natural gas, or "green" from wind and solar.

The most compelling argument for train service from Calgary's flatland airport to the peaks of the continental divide is the hope it would mitigate the traffic deadlock of Banff townsite in summer, while winter skiers could avoid the often snowblown TransCanada Highway. Indeed, the railway's primary promoters operate one of the park's ski resorts, as well as holding a long-term lease to Banff Station and surrounding rail lands.

Alberta quietly engaged PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake an economic benefit study for the C\$1.5 billion project, submitted by Liricon Capital, Banff's *Rocky Mountain Outlook* newspaper reported March 16. In addition to capital funding from the new Canada Infrastructure Bank and other institutional investors, the business plan calls for C\$30 million in annual operating subsidy from Alberta's oil-soaked public purse.

The line would parallel CP's Laggan Subdivision on its wide right-of-way. The promoters secured a memorandum of understanding (MOU) from CP last year, and such easy track laying could mean trains running by 2025. [\(In July 2021, a detailed MOU was released from Invest Alberta Corp., Alberta's Ministry of Transportation and Canada Infrastructure Bank.\)](#)

Support from municipalities and indigenous communities is strong, but environmental organizations are wary of increased potential for wildlife fatalities, and perhaps even more human congestion.

Contributing Editor David Thomas is a reporter who has covered government and society since graduating from Ottawa's Carleton University with degrees in political science and journalism. He has written for National Geographic, Maclean's, The Globe and Mail, The Gazette, and The Canadian Press news agency from postings in Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto and London, England. "Railroading has been a personal fascination since a childhood timed fortunately enough to witness the golden years of steam on the late-to-dieselize Canadian National and Canadian Pacific," he says.

BLET, SMART-TD Seeking Arbitration Over BNSF Hi-Viz

Railway Age Written by [Marybeth Luczak](#), Executive Editor March 24, 2022

[In January, BNSF announced that after 20 years of no changes to its attendance guidelines, it would institute on Feb. 1 a new system called "Hi-Viz," which is "designed to provide employees with real-time information and greater flexibility, so they can make informed decisions about their work schedules."](#) The move follows [a Feb. 22 U.S. District Court ruling that blocked a strike by the unions, which oppose the new policy and represent some 17,000 BNSF TYE \(train and engine service\) and Yardmaster employees](#)

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The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) and the SMART Transportation Division reported March 23 that they will “proceed as expeditiously as possible to arbitration” over BNSF’s Hi-Viz worker availability policy that took effect Feb. 1.

As part of that ruling, Judge Mark Pittman also granted [BNSF’s](#) request for a preliminary injunction, saying the railroad “is likely to prevail over the union in arbitration and that a threatened strike would cause irreparable harm to the rail company from which it could not recover damages,” according to a report in the *Fort Worth Star Telegram*. “[The Feb. 22] ruling keeps the strike ban in place while the two sides negotiate over the availability policy ... [Pittman] ruled that the dispute was ‘minor’ under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act (RLA).”

The “minor” designation means the “resolution of the matter must be by arbitration,” [BLET](#) and [SMART-TD](#) said on March 23. “In considering a potential appeal of the District Court’s ruling, it was determined that an appeal could take another one to two years, and likely not result in a different decision,” they noted. “An appeal would not be the quickest, or most effective way, to stop the BNSF policy. The quickest and most direct way to challenge this policy is through a Public Law Board or Special Board of Adjustment, properly constituted under Section 3 of the Railway Labor Act. That board will have the authority to strike down either the entire policy or the most egregious parts of the policy much more quickly. The time frame will be months as opposed to years.” The unions said they have notified BNSF of “their intent to move the dispute forward pursuant to Section 3 of the Railway Labor Act.”

In a March 24 statement to *Railway Age*, BNSF explained that its “new system will provide more predictability for our train crews while also providing more reliable crew availability, which is essential to meeting our customers’ expectations and the demands posed by an increasingly competitive global supply chain. Our program is designed to provide ample time for obligations outside of work, including planned vacations, personal leave days and unplanned absences, while ensuring that we have sufficient employees available to work. Based on initial feedback, BNSF has already modified the program. We look forward to continuing to work with our employees to gather input and refine the program if needed. BNSF team members drive our success and we couldn’t deliver the nation’s goods without them. We understand that change can be an adjustment, but we believe we can adapt together to meet today’s competitive freight environment.”



BNSF, J.B. Hunt to Expand Intermodal Capacity

By Bill Stephens | March 16, 2022

Partners to expand container, chassis, and railcar fleets as well as intermodal terminals



A BNSF intermodal train, consisting almost entirely of J.B. Hunt containers, travels along the triple-track line through Hinsdale, Ill., on June 13, 2021. BNSF and J.B. Hunt are planning a significant expansion of their intermodal partnership over the next few years. (Trains: David Lasen)

FORT WORTH, Tex. – Longtime partners [BNSF Railway](#) and [J.B. Hunt](#) today said they will significantly boost intermodal capacity in the next few years by adding containers, chassis, and well cars while expanding terminals and their capabilities. “Over the past few years, intermodal has been disrupted by increased demand and tight capacity, resulting in poor container velocity and long dwell times,” J.B. Hunt CEO John Roberts said in a statement. “Together, J.B. Hunt and BNSF will enhance their work to bring back the consistency and reliability customers expect with intermodal services and further embrace intermodal conversion and transload services.”

J.B. Hunt will increase the size of its container fleet by 40% within the next three to five years, bringing it to as many as 150,000 53-foot boxes. The company also will increase the size of its chassis fleet. BNSF will expand intermodal terminals and provide property around terminals in Southern California, Chicago, and other key markets to increase terminal efficiency. BNSF also will expand its wellcar fleet to carry additional volume, including 1,250 well cars scheduled for delivery this year. “More than 30 years ago, J.B. Hunt Transport Services and BNSF predecessor The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Co. loaded a Hunt trailer onto a railcar to help usher in the modern age of intermodal freight transport,” BNSF CEO Katie Farmer said in a statement.

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“BNSF’s industry-leading service combined with J.B. Hunt’s unparalleled intermodal product has set the standard for seamless door-to-door service. We will raise the bar on service to the next level through technology and innovation as we further integrate our platforms with real-time data exchanges. We want our customers to enjoy the best of both worlds: economical and environmentally friendly service delivered by transportation’s premium providers.”

Over the long-term, J.B. Hunt believes it can convert 7 million to 11 million highway shipments to intermodal. The company currently handles about 2 million intermodal loads annually.

Expansion is already under way at BNSF’s Cicero Intermodal Facility outside Chicago, where 400 parking spaces are being added as part of a multi-year project that includes additional production track and parking capacity to support growth. BNSF this year also will complete a multi-year expansion at its Alliance Intermodal Facility in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, including 1,100 new parking spots.

BNSF’s intermodal plans also include improving throughput at its terminals and coordination with J.B. Hunt.

“The relationship between JBH and BNSF creates a unique opportunity to jointly plan our operations to support supply chains and prioritize our joint customer’s cargo,” BNSF spokesman Zak Andersen says.

“JBH and BNSF have already been collaborating on managing flows from customer release to outbound rail loading at key locations in Southern California to improve rail throughput and maximize the potential of available rail capacity,” he says. “Additionally, we will have joint planning teams in Southern California and Chicago to optimize flows. These efforts will serve as a framework for systemwide optimization efforts.”

He adds: “At this point, we are in position to move several thousand more units per week than are currently being loaded directly at the ports on to rail, so we believe increasing rail use should be a key part of the nation’s greater logistics solution.”

BNSF has increased terminal capacity over the past year through a combination of process improvements and the addition of resources including more workers, cranes, locomotives, and railcars.

“In addition to tactically collaborating on service execution, we also have teams that are strategically looking into market opportunities,” Andersen says. “We look forward to announcing new services in the weeks to come.”

The BNSF-J.B. Hunt announcement comes three months after Schneider announced it would shift its western intermodal traffic from BNSF to Union Pacific on Jan. 1, 2023. UP also has gained Knight-Swift and APL Logistics intermodal contracts. BNSF’s loss of the three contracts will help free capacity for growth with J.B. Hunt.



Missouri Eastern Railroad Commences Rail Operations

NEWS PROVIDED BY Jaguar Transport Holdings Mar 01, 2022, 18:11 ET

JOPLIN, Mo., March 1, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- Missouri Eastern Railroad (MER), a wholly owned subsidiary of Jaguar Transport Holdings (Jaguar), began rail operations on March 1, 2022. In January 2022, MER acquired approximately 42 miles of track located in the western portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area. In February 2022, it acquired leasehold rights to approximately 9 miles of adjacent track owned by Union Pacific. MER's operations run from just west of Union, Missouri to Overland, Missouri where it interchanges with the Terminal Railroad of St. Louis.

"We are excited for the opportunity to begin serving customers in the St. Louis area," said Stu Towner, CEO of Jaguar. "The railroad's location in the center of the country with access to six class I railroads, multiple interstate highways, and the Mississippi River offers current and future customers tremendous reach across the United States."

Missouri Eastern is the seventh shortline railroad for Jaguar, who has partnered with OPTrust, one of Canada's largest pension plans. Other Jaguar railroads include Cimarron Valley Railroad, Southwestern Railroad, Washington Eastern Railroad, Oregon Eastern Railroad, Texas Eastern Railroad, and West Memphis Base Railroad.

About Jaguar Transport Holdings

Jaguar is a transportation and logistics company headquartered in Joplin, MO. Since 2018, Jaguar has focused on safety, team culture, service to customers, and innovation to help drive its growth. Jaguar operates seven short line railroads and multiple other rail served sites across the United States. Jaguar is partnered with OPSEU Pension Plan Trust Fund ("OPTrust"), which invests and manages one of Canada's largest pension funds and has significant experience investing in the surface transportation and logistics space. For more information, please visit www.jag-transport.com.

About OPTrust

With net assets of over \$23 billion, OPTrust invests and manages one of Canada's largest pension funds and administers the OPSEU Pension Plan (including OPTrust Select), a defined benefit plan with over 100,000 members. OPTrust is a global investor in a broad range of asset classes including Canadian and foreign equities, fixed income, real estate, infrastructure and private markets, and has a team of highly experienced investment professionals located in Toronto, London and Sydney.

SOURCE Jaguar Transport Holdings



CP Asks Federal Regulators to Resolve Key CN Chicago Interchange Question

By Bill Stephens | March 23, 2022

Long-running dispute returns to STB after court ruling

WASHINGTON – Canadian Pacific has asked federal regulators to determine whether the Belt Railway of Chicago's Clearing Yard is a reasonable location to interchange traffic with Canadian National.

It's the latest twist in the Canadian railways' long-running dispute over where to exchange traffic in Chicago.

The U.S. Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in December vacated an October 2020 STB decision which said CN could not unilaterally designate Clearing Yard as the railways' Chicago interchange.

The court sent the matter back to the STB, noting that a railroad can designate a third party — like BRC — to receive interchange traffic. The ruling also said the STB did not resolve the question of who should bear the cost of the BRC's switching services.

CN last month argued that CP should have to pay BRC's switching fees for CN-bound traffic delivered to Clearing, just as CN pays the fees for CP-bound traffic handled at Clearing.

But [CP's filing this week](#) says that's not the case, and sought to bring the matter full circle by asking whether Clearing is a reasonable interchange compared to Spaulding, east of Elgin, Ill., where the railways exchanged traffic for more than a decade. Only after that determination is made, CP says, can the board then determine which railroad should pick up the tab.

"The question of reasonableness of Clearing relative to Spaulding must take into account the fact that interchange at Spaulding ensures CP is able to keep its Bensenville Yard clear of CN interchange traffic when Clearing is struggling," CP argues. "Keeping cars out of Clearing and Chicago helps protect CP's and the terminal's fluidity. As CN itself represented to the Board as a prime public interest justifying its acquisition of the EJ&E, the acquisition would allow CN to keep traffic out of the Chicago terminal area — and Clearing in particular — to the benefit of all stakeholders."

The BRC operating agreement requires each co-owner of the switching line to pay the BRC fees for traffic delivered to Clearing, CN contends. CP disagrees.

CN's argument conveniently ignores the fact that it voluntarily assumed the obligation to pay the BRC fees for CP-bound cars when CN asked CP to accept cars via the BRC rather than at CP's preferred interchange location of Spaulding," CP wrote. "CP continues to make its facilities at Spaulding available to receive cars from CN for free as the statute requires. Also CN's argument ignores the fact that it is CN that is demanding that CP deliver cars to CN via BRC rather than delivering to CN's interchange facilities at Spaulding which are free to CP. And the change to Clearing in both directions is for CN's benefit."

The railways' dispute dates to May 2019, when CN sought to shift CP interchange from Spaulding, in Bartlett, Ill., to its own Kirk Yard in Gary, Ind. [see ["Canadian Pacific, Canadian National locked in Chicago interchange dispute,"](#) *Trains News Wire*, May 2, 2019]. The daily interchange at Spaulding often blocked area grade crossings and tied up CN's busy single-track main line.

CP objected and asked the STB to intervene. CN and CP ultimately reached an interim agreement to move Spaulding interchange to Clearing, with CN temporarily reimbursing CP for the BRC's switching fees until the STB reached a decision on the matter

[see ["Canadian National, Canadian Pacific settle ...,"](#) *News Wire*, Aug. 26, 2019]. When the board sided with CP, CN filed suit at the federal appeals court in Chicago [see ["Canadian National asks federal court to overturn STB Chicago interchange order,"](#) *News Wire*, Jan. 8, 2021].



Amtrak last week debuted the first two of 75 total ALC-42 locomotives to be delivered through 2024 on the Chicago-Seattle route.

Amtrak Debuts New Locomotives on Chicago-Seattle Route

The locomotives began service by pulling the railroad's westbound Empire Builder train. Part of Amtrak's sustainability initiatives, the new locomotives are more environmentally friendly than their 1990s-era predecessors by reducing nitrogen oxide emissions by more than 89%. They also reduce particulate matter by 95%, while consuming less fuel than the retired locomotives. Top speed is listed at 125 mph.

Siemens Mobility developed the ALC-42 locomotive series in partnership with Amtrak to haul heavier and longer trains during cross-country trips. The units were built at Siemens' manufacturing hub in Sacramento, California. The total cost of the 75 locomotives is nearly \$850 million, including supplemental maintenance support. The locomotives are expected to power trains on 15 different Amtrak routes across the United States.

"From the first ACS-64 in 2014 to the latest Charger locomotive, Amtrak is a leader in sustainable travel for Americans," said Michael Cahill, president of Siemens Mobility North America rolling stock, in a press release. "We are looking forward to seeing these Chargers safely transport millions of Americans across the nation."

[AllAboardRailDiscussion] Michigan, Charger woes.

Despite Opposition, Becker County Approves New Gravel Pit in Toad Lake Township

By [Nathan Bowe](#) February 17, 2022 05:33 PM Valley News Live Fargo ND

It's not just a lake issue. I think if you go by the current mining operation, you'll see that it's a very large operation," says Long Lake Association President, Tom Anderson.

Some Detroit Lakes residents are upset, because a local gravel company wants to put a pit in their backyards. The pit would be near the Long Lake area, in southwest Detroit Lakes. People who live there are concerned about its impact on their economy and environment, and they intend to make their voices heard.

"The new mining operation we think is, number 1, bad for the environment and number 2, makes very little sense economically for Becker County," says Anderson.

Tom Anderson has lived on Long Lake for about 7 years now. In fact, it's always been a dream of his to own a house on the water. But after hearing about Strata Corporation wanting to put a gravel pit near his beloved lake, he was devastated.

"The idea of having it expanding right into neighborhoods, mining below the water table on a spring fed lake and all the other things, I think they are items that need to be thought through very carefully," says Anderson.

Strata already has a large gravel pit not too far from Long Lake. But the thought of adding another one to the existing system, has the people who live and vacation there, upset.

"120 acres of the west shore of the lake and 1,800 feet of shoreline is owned by Concordia College and that's where the college does all kinds of research," says Anderson.

Anderson tells us, he's also worried about the additional noise and dust this pit could bring to the area. The owners of the summer resorts and campgrounds across the lake from him, have that on their minds too.

"Everybody always likes our campground because it's close to the city but away from everything. We're usually pretty quiet with not much noise," says Long Lake Campground & RV, Levi Wold.

Levi Wold's family owns Long Lake Campground and RV. They've been open for nearly 50 years. They live a couple miles away from where the current pit is. But they tell us, they're worried a new one will scare away tourists.

"We're also very worried about how deep they are going to dig because how deep they want to go could impact the water level. They could possibly contaminate the water," says Wold.

and that it will take a toll on the economy.

"Property values could go down by 20%," says Wold.

Now, we tried speaking to some commissioners with Becker County but they referred us to the City of Detroit Lakes, and the city referred us back to the county. But the people we did speak with, say they won't be commenting on the issue until that meeting Tuesday night. The Becker County Board will make the final decision near the end of the month.

We spoke with Strata Corporation's Business Development Manager, Bill LaFond. He tells us, the environmental review has been completed and he says, it found the project imposed no significant environmental effects.

He also says, he understands and appreciates the residents' concerns but he says, Strata took great pains to make this project as invisible to the surrounding neighborhood as possible.

The public input meeting will be Tuesday at 7 P.M. at the Becker County Courthouse.

Detroit Lakes On-Line News: Comment

"We trusted the process, and the process failed us," one woman said. "If this goes through, we are basically going to be living in the middle of a gravel pit."



A BNSF railway spur serves the Strata gravel pits near Becker County Road 6. The new gravel pit in Toad Lake Township will be a much smaller operation. Tribune File Photo



March 3, 2022, 11:16 AM, sent by Frederick Krenske

[Kalmbach Media](#) and the [Great American Train Shows](#) will partner to produce Trainfest 2022, the renowned national model train show. The event is scheduled to take place in November at a venue in the greater Milwaukee area.

Details on the show will be announced later in March. "We are excited to have the show return after a two-year hiatus," says Brian J. Schmidt, Vice President of Operations with Kalmbach Media "We plan to make this year's Trainfest one of the best ever." Trainfest is America's largest operating model railroad show and has almost 200,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space and features up to 70 operating model railroads. It is a great event for families and hobby enthusiasts alike. There will be fun activities for kids, and up to 300 exhibitors, manufacturers, and retailers offering model railroad goods and products of all varieties. The [Wisconsin Southeastern Division of the National Model Railroad Association](#) has produced past annual events and this year agreed to license Trainfest to Kalmbach Media and the Great American Train Shows. Kalmbach Media is a creator of model train and train content through well-respected brands Model Railroader, Trains, Classic Toy Trains, and Classic Trains. Great American Train Shows produces over 40 model train shows annually of various varieties including Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show, Great Train Show, Great Midwest Train Show, and World's Greatest Hobby on Tour. Combined Kalmbach and Great American Train Shows have a wide-reaching audience and vast experience in producing and executing train events. Wisconsin Southeastern Division of the National Model Railroad Association will continue to exhibit at the show. For more information on the event visit www.train-fest.com.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Newport Model RR Club Train Flea Market	Saturday April 9 2022 9:00 am—2:00 pm	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury, MN 55125	\$6
Granite City Train Show	Saturday May 14 2022 9am—3pm	Rivers Edge Convention Center 10 4th Ave S St Cloud MN 56301	\$6
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Train Show/Flea Market	Saturday May 7 2022 9am—2pm	Mn State Fairgrounds –Education Bldg 1265 Snelling Ave N Falcon Heights MN 55108	\$6
NRHS Convention	May 15th—May 20th 2022 Los Angeles Calif Many Activities	go to: https://NRHS.com/convention	Fares vary by Activity

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