

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

CB&Q F-Units Dayton's Bluff September 1962
Barney Olsen SlidesBNSF GP30 at New York, 1963
Barney Olsen SlidesMike Redden SD 2512 at Minneapolis, August 1967
Barney Olsen Slides

Picnic July 16th 2022 -Train Trip August 20th 2022

NP SD Freight Staples or Northtown July 1967
Barney Olsen Collection

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Meeting Notice: *Saturday September 17th 2022 6:15 pm* At Roseville Lutheran Church, our September Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting.

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpenteur Avenues at 4:15 pm.

Please note: at this time program assignments are not confirmed For September and November, except that Russ Isbrandt will show some of his railfanning exploits from film at the October 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

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

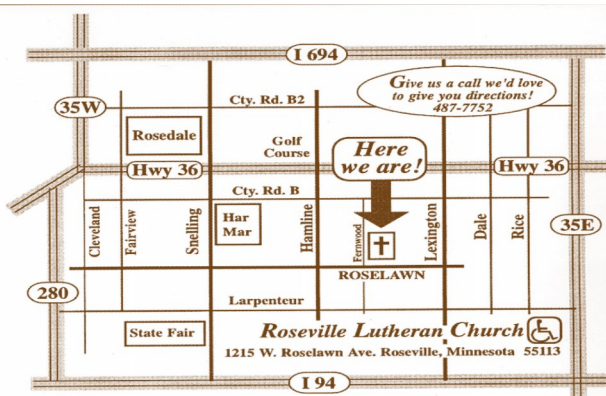
ZOOM ID and Link will be in the September 2022 Newsletter In this location..

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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.

Events: Please see details in THIS NEWSLETTER.

Chapter Picnic: Saturday July 16th at Maiden Rock WI

Chapter Train Ride: Saturday August 20th Trego WI

LSRM News: North Shore Scenic Railroad is running trains this summer.

-Duluth Zephyr runs daily during the summer

-Music and Pizza trains run Wednesdays to Sunday Evenings

-Two Harbors Train runs Fridays to Sundays July to September

-Possible Steam operated Trains this Fall!

Go to <https://duluthtrains.com/excursions/> for tickets

Meeting Minutes May 28 2022 (at Roseville Lutheran Church and with Zoom)

The meeting was called to order by President John Goodman at 6:15 pm. There were 24 people attending. A quorum was determined. President Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of last month's meeting in the May Newsletter. Gary Rumler and Roger libra seconded the motion and was approved. Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers report. Chapter Financial position is about the same as last month's. Russ stated that there are 38 regular members, and 2 family members with only 2 non-renewals. There are 30 Subscribers with only 3 non-renewals. Dawn Holmberg gave the National Representative report. The NRHS Convention in Los Angeles has just been completed. Venues included a trip to the Orange Empire Museum, the Nethercutt Museum, and a trip to San Diego with a ride on the Surfliner. The NRHS also had a board meeting, and Advisory Council meeting and a general membership meeting. The NRHS grant program exceeded expectations. The NRHS bulletin will be out soon, and the NRHS News will be out within a week. President and NRHS Convention Chairman John Goodman reported that attendance was not as expected but attributed those problems with paypal (many in the NRHS worked hard to correct this problem) in signing up for events was a factor in the lower-than-expected turnout. President Goodman reported that the Hotel was very nice, and the trip to San Diego and ride on the push-pull Surfliner train was great! Mark Quam was asked to give a report on the Western Wisconsin (Eau Claire to Minneapolis) train project. The powers to be looking for a 3rd party operator for study and exploratory work. They are also working on paperwork to be submitted by the end of summer to the Federal Railway Administration. The FRA requires this paperwork for any new service proposal. The Chippawa Falls RR commission is looking at station planning and establishing shuttle service to Amtrak from Rochester to LaCrosse, Madison to Columbus WI, and Eau Claire to Tomah WI. The Cheer Committee report was given by John Goodman. We has been unable to contact Martin Swan, and will send a certified letter to Marty's wife to see if we get a response. Cy Svobodny is still home bound and has a nurse attending a couple of times a week. President Goodman stated it was nice to have Gary Rumler and Bob Clarkson attend. Joe Frishmon stated that Steve Kopasz is doing OK but is unable to attend our meetings.

Continued on next page:

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Dan Meyer gave the Web Report. Dan is working on getting the web site updated and our presence on Facebook. Dan has posted some photos from the NRHS convention on our website. President Goodman reported on Summer Activities. There will a Light Rail ride the third Saturday in June and will be a ride from the Bloomington 28th street station to Minneapolis and St Paul. The Picnic will be held the third Saturday in July at Maiden Rock Wisconsin. It was noted that the Wisconsin Great Northern has begun operations of their dinner trains and bed and Breakfast train. We will monitor the Wisconsin Great Northern for running a regular excursion train from Trego Wisconsin. Information on the August trip on the third Saturday in August will be published in the July Newsletter. Dawn Holmberg gave the calendar report. Due to the hiatus for the NRHS convention, we will be selecting pictures for the 2023 calendar. Selections will be narrowed down at our next library session. John Goodman stated that anyone who has photos to consider for the calendar should be submitted within the next week. The program report was giving by Richard Tubbesing. Three programs for the fall meetings have been determined, with Russ Isbrandt having some vintage RR film to show, Dave Herbert has slides and film to show and Joe Frischman has a DVD of 1970's railroad film. Slots for September, October and November will be assigned and be printed in the July Newsletter. We also have many Barney Olsen slides at our Library that will be shown in the future. Russ Isbrandt gave the Library Report. A surplus of old RR magazines from the Marv Mahre collection was brought in for anyone attending to take. We are continuing to catalog timetables from the Marv Mahre collection. Richard Tubbesing stated that he has scanned most of the Barney Olson slide collection and have been put on the library computer. There are many photos in this collection for calendar consideration. Bob Ball asked if we got all of Barney Olson Slides. John Goodman stated we have all the slide except for what the Lake Superior RR Museum has taken of photos in the Duluth area. There was no Old Business. New Business: John Goodman asked for anyone to take the officer Nomination Committee. There were no volunteers. President Goodman then appointed himself as the Nomination Committee. President Goodman stated that we will plan to have a holiday Banquet the first Sunday in December. Thanks to Cy Svobodny, we will plan to have the holiday banquet at Mancini's in St Paul. That will depend on any COVID restrictions. Bob Ball asked about 100-year-old photos of construction of Soo Line in the Osceola area, at the bequest of Kurt Mahre. Dawn Holmberg reported that she has the photos and have scanned a few of them. She will finish scanning and bring them to the library and generate copies for Kurt Mahre. Bob Ball stated that Amtrak in the next couple of Days will have a Charger locomotive and a Heritage unit for power. President Goodman state that Train Day will be held at St Paul Union Depot the first weekend in June. John asked Bob Ball what will be on display. Bob gave a brief description of locomotives that will be displayed. Mark Quam stated he will be manning a table at train day and if we can get our chapter brochures to him and he will gladly display them at his table. President Goodman also stated that Steve Sandburg has purchased a large former Rock Island engine facility in Silvis Illinois. Donations to the facility from the Union Pacific were the Challenger Locomotive, tender, a 2-10-2 locomotive, some UP passenger cars and diesels. Many of these are expected to be restored to operating condition and since the facility is on a friendly Iowa Interstate Railroad, excursions could eventually be run on that railroad. Bob Clarkson was then asked to introduce his friend and neighbor to the group. President John Goodman welcomed him to the meeting. The meeting was then called for adjournment by President Goodman at 6:47pm. Motion was carried. Bob Ball presented many of his great railroad photos from his Flickr account. Bob's Photos was thoroughly appreciated by members attending. Respectfully submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing

QJ Makes Last Trips Before Rebuilding

On Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 11:50 AM, Frederick Krenske <rick@usjet.net>

By Bob Lettenberger, Trains Associate Editor | June 13, 2022

A special FRA waiver allowed No. 6988 to move under steam.



Iowa Interstate Railroad Chinese-built, QJ 2-10-2 No. 6988 races along U.S. Route 6 east of Ladora, Iowa on 11 June 2002 during its move from Newton, Iowa to Silvis, Ill. for inspection and rebuilding. Bob Lettenberger

SILVIS, Ill. — Chinese-built No. 6988, a QJ 2-10-2, traveled the [Iowa Interstate Railroad](#) on Saturday, June 11, and Sunday, June 12, 2022, for a final time before its FRA 15-year inspection and rebuilding. Although the locomotive's certification has expired the FRA granted a one-time extension for the two trips.

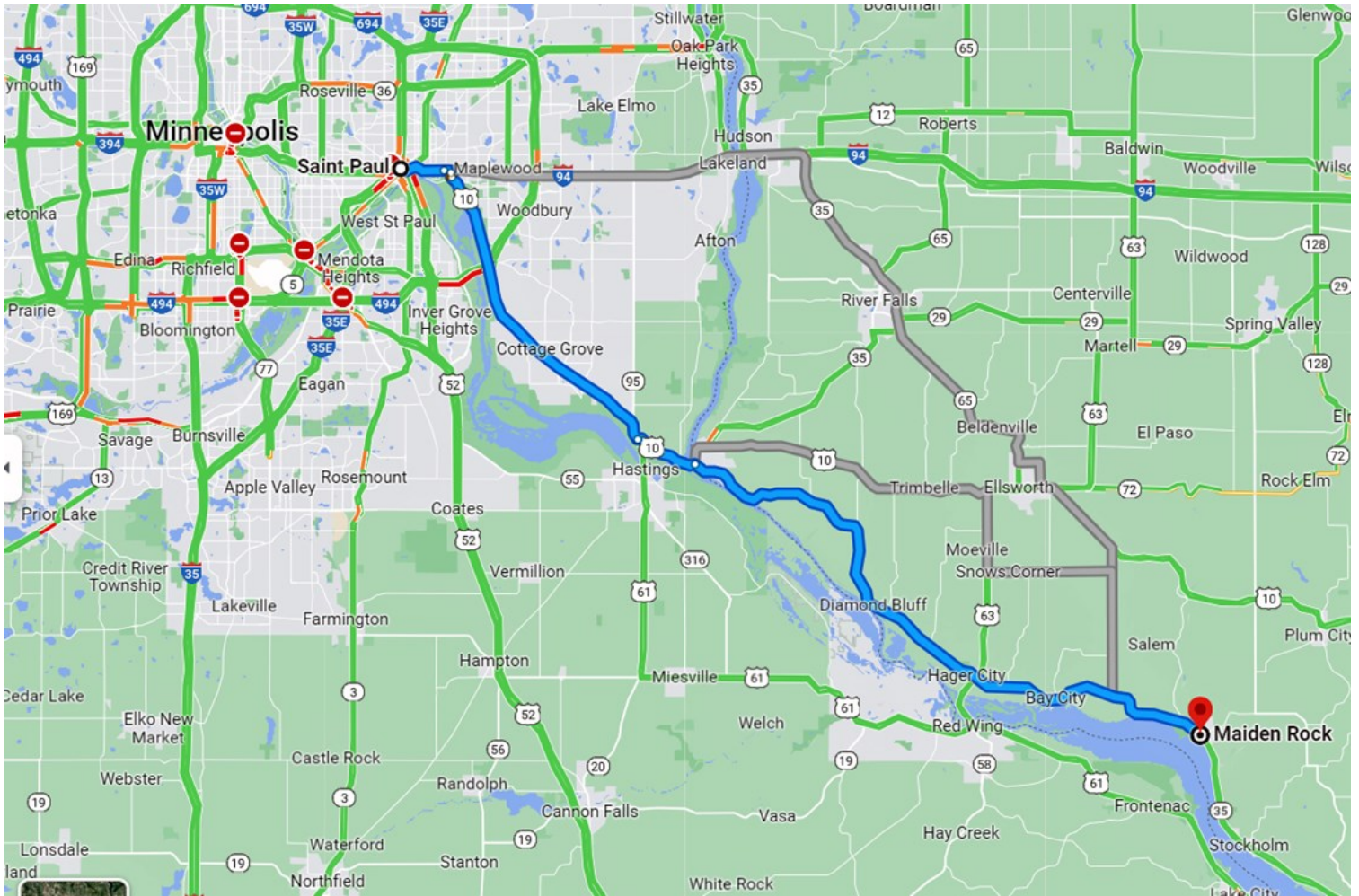
The QJs — Nos. 6988 and 7081 — have been based at Iowa Interstate's Newton, Iowa, facilities. On June 11, No. 6988 moved from Newton to Silvis, Ill. Inspection and rebuilding will take place in the former-Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad shop complex, which recently became the home of Railroading Heritage or Midwest America/The Friends of the 261 [see "[Friends of the 261/Railroading Heritage of Midwest America to expand to Silvis shop complex](#)," Trains News Wire, May 26, 2022].

On June 12, No. 6988 pulled an excursion train from Silvis to Bureau Junction, Ill. and back.

The [Central States Steam Preservation Association](#), a non-profit, volunteer organization, will now begin the rebuilding process, which is expected to take several years.

Nos. 6988 and 7081 are part of 4,712 locomotives of the 2-10-2 wheel arrangement built in China between 1959 and 1988. Although built in China, the design can be traced to American locomotives — 2-10-4s from Alco and 2-10-2s from Baldwin. These locomotives were delivered to the Soviet Union in 1931. The Soviets shared the drawings with the Chinese in the 1950s.

Should be a lot of BNSF Action! PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGE AND LUNCH and camera!



News Photo: D&I Railroad Buys Two Hawkeye Express Cars

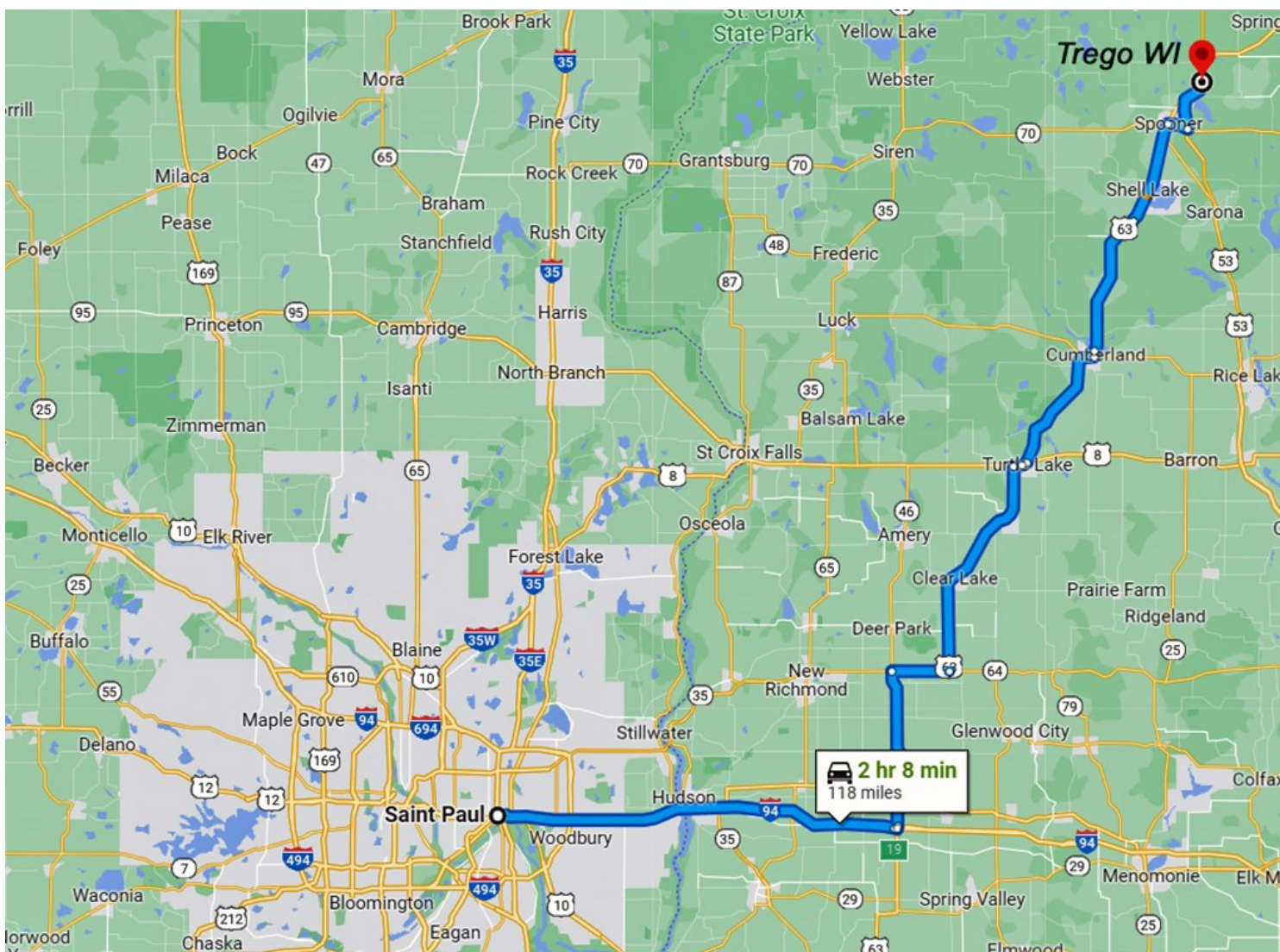
Equipment had been used for University of Iowa football service discontinued in 2021

The Iowa Northern Railway had owned and operated the Hawkeye Express on a route owned by Iowa Interstate Railroad for more than 15 years, providing a 10-minute trip to University of Iowa home football games, before the university athletic department and railroad announced its end in 2021 [see “[Digest: RTD ready to revive planning ...](#)” *Trains News Wire*, April 8, 2021].



Two former Hawkeye Express cars are moved at the back of a westbound train of new owner D&I Railroad at Sioux Falls, S.D., on May 10, 2022. (Kevin J. Ryan)

Northstar Railway Historical Society Train Ride
Saturday August 20th 2022 Wisconsin Great Northern Pizza Lunch Train Trego Wisconsin
Meet at Depot (N6639 Dilly Lake Road Trego WI 54888) at 11:30 AM (Car Pooling recommended)



Directions: From St Paul: Take I94 East to Baldwin WI. Exit to US Highway 63, go North on Highway 63 to Trego WI. Dilly Lake Road is south of Trego WI. A little over a 2 hour drive from St Paul. Train Leaves at 12:00 Noon. More Details:

See Signup brochure (to Select your Pizza) and make payment is inserted in this Issue.



Amtrak Announces Empire Builder Will Return to Daily Service on May 23

by: John Riley Posted at 12:09 PM, May 10, 2022 and last updated 1:09 PM, May 10, 2022 provided by Dan Meyer



HELENA — Empire Builder, the Amtrak passenger route that services northern Montana, is set to return to daily service beginning May 23.

Amtrak had reduced the route in January from daily to five days a week citing “staffing challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the highly active Omicron variant.”

Empire Builder is a long-distance Amtrak route with trains that travels between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. It services several Montana communities along the Hi-Line.

Sen. Jon Tester praised the announcement on Monday.

“This announcement is long overdue, and it’s great news for folks living on the Hi-Line who depend on daily Amtrak service to support our state’s rural economies and to stay connected to family and friends. I’ve been fighting to defend Montana from attempts to cripple Amtrak service in rural America, and I have been proud to lead the fight to return full, daily service to our state, which will grow our economy along our Northern Tier.”

Last September, an [Amtrak derailment on the route](#) happened near Joplin, killing three people and injuring 44 others. Amtrak estimated damages at \$22 million. The investigation by NTSB is ongoing.

New Schedule Changes for the #7-8 Empire Builder. Provided by John Goodman

I was alerted recently that there was a schedule change coming later summer for the Empire Builder. I did some checking and it appears that on/about August 1st the following schedule changes will take place..

Amtrak #7 Will depart CHI at 3:05pm
" " MSP 11:13pm
Will arrive in SEA 11:29am

Amtrak #27 Will arrive in PDX 11:17am

Amtrak #8 Will leave SEA 4:55pm
Will leave MSP 8:50am
Will arrive CHI 4:45pm

Amtrak #28 Will depart PDX 4:45PM John H. Goodman



Amtrak #8 Lake City MN Feb 8 2019 -Bob Ball

BNSF Train Derails, Catches Fire in North Dakota (updated)

Trains newswire By | May 2, 2022

Firefighters have difficulty reaching scene, turn to National Guard for help

BURLINGTON, N.D. — Fifteen cars of a BNSF Railway intermodal train derailed early Sunday near Burlington, with some cars catching fire, closing the railroad’s Glasgow Subdivision main line just west of Minot, N.D. KMOT-TV reports that while the derailment occurred about 1 a.m., as of 3:15 p.m., the fire was still burning because firefighters were facing difficulties in reaching the scene, with fire trucks becoming stuck in mud while en route. A North Dakota National Guard helicopter was dispatched to help fight the fire.. [KFYR-TV reports](#) the line reopened about 2:30 a.m. Monday. Cleanup is continuing. BNSF said in a statement that the containers involved carried paper products and frozen foods, and that cars with containers carrying hazardous material had not derailed and had been removed from the scene. No injuries were reported. The derailment and fire led to cancellation of both directions of Amtrak’s Empire Builder on Sunday between Minot and Shelby, Mont. Line reopened 7:50 pm CDT.



A derailment and fire closed BNSF’s main line west of Minot on Sunday. (North Dakota Highway Patrol)

UP Deal With RRHMA Took Over a Year to Complete.

By Steve Glischinski | May 5, 2022 provided by Rick Krenske

Special move will bring UP equipment to Silvis this fall; railroad has right to reclaim equipment.



building, where restoration work will be performed on UP Challenger No. 3985 and other equipment donated to Railroad Heritage of Midwest America. (Erik Rasmussen)



UP Challenger No. 3985 passes Iowa Traction locomotive No. 50 during a June 2002 trip. The locomotive has another trip across Iowa in its near future as it is moved to Silvis, Ill., to be returned to operation. (Steven J. Brown)

SILVIS, Ill. — Negotiations between Union Pacific and Railroad Heritage Of Midwest America took over a year to complete before the deal was inked that transferred two UP steam locomotives, including Challenger 3985, and other equipment to the preservation group.

The deal, which will see No. 3985 and 2-10-2 No. 5511 returned to steam, was announced last week [see [“Railroad Heritage of Midwest America, Union Pacific agree ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, April 28, 2022].

Steve Sandberg, RRHMA president and chief operating officer, said the two organizations worked together to bring the deal to fruition, with UP seeking a way to preserve the equipment and make it available to be seen by the public. That wasn’t really an option available through the railroad’s current corporate structure, Sandberg said, so UP and its steam boss, Ed Dickens, looked to find other ways to do so.

While the equipment could have gone to other museums, one appealing part of the deal was Sandberg’s insistence that if UP ever wanted to repatriate the equipment in the future, it would have the chance to do so. “I insisted that be part of the deal,” Sandberg says. “I wanted to give UP the ability that if they wanted to get equipment back at some point in the future, they would have the ability to do so, so we wrote that into the agreement. UP would have to reimburse RRHMA for doing so, but it is an option.”

Also part of the agreement: UP will prepare and move the equipment to Silvis. With the recent postponement of Big Boy 4014’s western trip this year, the timeline has moved up, since Dickens and his UP steam team now has more time to get the equipment ready. Sandberg said the move will likely be this autumn and be well publicized, like UP’s move of Big Boy 4014 from Southern California to Cheyenne in 2014. It will move via UP to a point in Iowa for interchange with Iowa Interstate Railroad, which serves the Silvis facility.

The Silvis shop was recently cleaned, and RRHMA is working to get it ready for the equipment. “We are doing a deep clean, track work, and installing new LED lighting,” Sandberg says. Some specialized equipment needed to overhaul No. 3985 will be moved from the shop in Minneapolis to be available to the crew rebuilding 3985. That crew, like the one that rebuilt Milwaukee Road No. 261 in the early 1990s, will be made up of paid employees that can work five days a week on the rebuild. “We are currently hiring,” Sandberg says. In particular RRHMA is seeking steel fabricators, pipe-fitters and boilermakers. “If you have those or other steam skills and want to be part of the team, we’d like to hear from you,” he said.

Sandberg says Silvis is the perfect shop to handle steam locomotive rebuilds, since it was designed as a steam locomotive shop and has two 150-ton overhead cranes, drop tables, and inspection pits. “If you were trying to design a shop to overhaul steam locomotives, you’d incorporate the features that Silvis already has,” Sandberg says.

One of RRHMA’s goals is to establish Silvis as a warehouse for steam locomotive parts for other groups. “The idea is that we could get together and buy in bulk for things such as boiler tubes,” Sandberg says. “They could be inventoried at Silvis and shipped around the country when needed.” While his organization is planning to open the facility for tours and open houses, Sandberg emphasized that the shop is not currently open. Some fans have already been stopping by, and while RRHMA appreciates the support, it is not currently set up to accommodate visitors and is discouraging the practice. Instead, RRHMA is asking for donations to support the overhaul of No. 3985 and 2-10-2 No. 5511 which can be made at the [RRHMA website](#), [261.com](#), and [Support RRHMA | Railroad Heritage of Midwest America](#).

Original Big Boy Tender to be Restored by Railroad Heritage of Midwest America

By Cate Kratville-Wrinn | May 13, 2022 **Project announced at UP Historical Society meeting will allow current tender to be rejoined with Challenger No. 3985.**

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Railroad Heritage of Midwest America will restore the tender for Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014, the Union Pacific Historical Society learned Thursday at its annual meeting. Restoration of that tender will allow the tender currently used by the Big Boy to be rejoined with its original locomotive, Challenger No. 3985, which the RRHMA is planning to restore. Steve Sandberg, president and chief operating officer of RRHMA, outlined the tender project as part of a separate agreement with UP, which last month donated the Challenger, a 2-10-2, and other equipment to the Midwest group [see [“Railroad Heritage of Midwest America, Union Pacific agree ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, April 28, 2022]. The tender for No. 4014 was used for coal firing and needs to be converted to support the engine’s conversion to oil firing, which came during the restoration that returned it to operation in May 2019. Since the Challenger had already been converted when it was restored to operation in 1981, UP used that tender to save time in working to meet the Big Boy’s restoration deadline. The tender to be restored was originally paired with Big Boy No. 4015. It was common in the steam era for tenders to be changed out between engines.

Minneapolis Tribune May 14 2022 Provided by Leigh Neprude

StarTribune
VARIETY



It's said the Milwaukee Road Depot lost its ornate cupola in the 1941 storm. Where's the proof?

MILWAUKEE MILWA
ROAD

STREETSCAPES

The mystery of the vanishing tower top

By JAMES LLEKES • james.llekes@startribune.com

The pleasure of researching historical questions in the newspaper archives is available to all.

Once you had to feed brittle microfilm into a machine and scroll through scratchy copies of bygone journals. Now anyone with a subscription to newspapers.com or the patience to wade through the Library of Congress' collection can investigate old mysteries, and find a satisfying answer.

This is not one of those stories. The mystery: When did the top of the Milwaukee Road Depot tower get shaved off?

First, consider the building at 3rd and Washington Avenues, downtown's only surviving train station.

tion. It's now The Depot, a hotel and meeting place, with a perfectly preserved train shed that was used for skating until 2017.

It's the second depot on the spot. Its predecessor was a slightly fussy Italianate building with an overbearing cupola atop a squat two-story tower.

The building we know as The Depot, finished in 1899, was designed in the Renaissance Revival style, a term for an eclectic assortment of Italian idioms. The tower was "modeled after" the Giralda, the bell tower of the Cathedral in Seville, Spain — and by "modeled after" I mean "bucky for the architect there aren't any plagiarism suits in 19th-century architecture."

See STREETSCAPES on E8 ▶



The tower-less depot as seen in 1976.

Star Tribune file

The mystery of the vanishing tower top

• STREETSCAPES from E1

The top of the tower is gone now, and Minneapolis is poorer for the loss. There would have been nothing like it downtown. The tower isn't ugly without its decorative Spanish hat. The flat-topped tower has a certain sturdy, practical appeal. We're used to the way the tower looks, especially since it has spent more years without the frilly hat than with it.

But exactly how long has the cupola been gone? And what happened to it?

Good questions. And here our troubles begin.

According to Wikipedia, the top was removed in 1941 after it was damaged by heavy winds. Ask CSM, the company that renovated the depot between 1999 and 2001, and they'll tell you: 1941. Ask the staff of the Renaissance Minneapolis hotel that's part of the depot complex, and you'll get the same answer: 1941. But if you ask how they know, they'll point to ... Wikipedia.

It must have been a sad day when the elegant top was shaved off the tower. Surely, members of the local press were present. Perhaps

they dragged out an old-timer who remembered when the station opened. Maybe the article would note where the rubble went, or whether a few carvings had been saved and sold to citizens who wanted a piece of history in their backyards. Was there a fragment of a balcony in a garden in a Lake of the Isles mansion?

As you can imagine, searching old papers for "heavy winds" generated a lot of hits. It seems as if 1941 had two big storms. One in March, which mangled a broad swath of Minneapolis, but doesn't seem to have reached the depot area. There also was a twister on Sept. 4, which "raked Minneapolis from north to south," as the Minneapolis Tribune put it. Four dead, 30 hurt.

Nothing in that paper — and several others — about the depot.

The front page of the Tribune did have a photo with the headline "Twister Made Shambles of Railroad Shops." Could this be it? No. This was a coach repair facility in Shoolbush, Minn.

Well, surely there'd be something in the coverage over the next few days, dis-

cussing the damage to the cupola. No. Perhaps something in the weeks that followed noted that the landmark building would be losing its crown. And no.

There is nothing in the 1941 newspapers concerning the loss of the top of the tower. There are 209 mentions of Milwaukee Road in the 1941 papers. Not a word about the damage.

There are four possibilities.

1. The date is wrong.

The tower may have been damaged in a storm in 1941, but didn't come down until later. While that may seem like a reasonable explanation, I searched the local newspapers for not just all of 1941, but also 1942 and 1943.

The damage and removal might have happened earlier than that, but a 1997 Star Tribune article on the depot said: "Until the 1940s, the depot had an ornate cupola atop the bell tower. It eventually was damaged in a storm and removed."

2. The removal didn't warrant mention in the local papers.

This seems unlikely, given the molecular level of cover-

age the papers of the day provided. It seems impossible that the removal of a landmark wouldn't get mentioned. Especially considering that when the dome atop the old Donaldson's Glass Block store at Nicollet Avenue and 6th Street was dismantled in 1942 for conversion into war supplies, it was a front-page story — with a photo.

3. The search index for the newspaper database is inefficient to the task.

Unlikely. The term "Milwaukee Depot" returns everything from spurious railroad protocols to want ads to hire a dishwasher for the cafeteria.

4. The depot never had the cupola in the first place.

This is the most disturbing theory because it suggests we live in a computer simulation, and at some point they rebooted Minneapolis, but the entire tower didn't load.

This is not likely, you say. OK. You have a better idea? I'm open for solutions at James.llekes@startribune.com.

We have to figure this out, if only to make sure Wikipedia doesn't have it wrong.

James Llekes • 612-673-7858

CITYSCAPES

Milwaukee Road mystery solved, with readers' help

By JAMES LLEKES
james.llekes@startribune.com

Two weeks ago, I asked for help with an answer to this question: When did the top of the Milwaukee Road Depot tower disappear?

The generally accepted date, according to Wikipedia, is 1941, after the building had been damaged by wind. But after a bit of searching, I couldn't find the date. It seemed a bit of a mystery.

Thanks go out to the many readers who called, texted and e-mailed me about more than just the fate of the tower top. We now know more about the rich history of the once-loved cupola.

Several readers wrote to say that before the 1941 windstorm, the tower

suffered a fire, specifically on May 1, 1908. According to the Minneapolis Star, the fire "killed" to force Mrs. Alice Kiggs, 257 13 Avenue S., from her switchboard on the third floor just below the blue-painted room, where the fire started. She donned fireman regalia and held her post."

The blaze was "quickly extinguished," and while it did cause \$5,000 worth of damage, it wasn't the reason that the tower lost its top.

Erik Johnson, keen in the ways of historic building permits, found references to the tower in Hennepin County Library archives. According to Card #301, "American Lbr. & Wigs. Co." got a permit to take down the top on a "pump depot" for the grand sum of \$32,000. The permit

See MYSTERY on E7 ▶



The cupola removal process was underway in this 1941 photo of the downtown depot.

Milwaukee Road mystery solved, with readers' help

• MYSTERY from E1

was issued on May 12, 1941.

Tom Murphy did some searching of his own, using variations on the Milwaukee Road name, and found a story from the May 29, 1941, Minneapolis Morning Tribune:

"For northbound travelers on Third Avenue S., who have been wondering what's wrong with the loop skyline, here's the answer. The top of the tower on the Milwaukee station has been torn off, and is being replaced. The old ornamental copper top, underpinned with wood, has been exiled to the weather since 1898, and rotting of the wood had made it insecure."

The story goes on to name some of the men who helped take it down. There's another old photo of the tower, from the June 17, 1941, edition of the Minneapolis Star. It shows the tower looking like it does today, with no cupola.

Sadly, the photo accompanies a story about steeplejack

Ted Tischer falling 35 feet to his death while working on the tower.

"The fall occurred when a rope supporting a bosun's seat high in the air, by which he could raise or lower himself, broke as he was suspended below the top of the tower," according to the Star.

Now we know that the tower was likely shaved because the top was decrepit, not because of wind, although a good gust in 1941 might have hastened its end. We also know that a man lost his life removing what was left of the top.

The story notes that Tischer had repaired the flagstaff high atop City Hall just a few days before he fell on the depot job.

If the City Hall tower ever topples, there should be no mystery about exactly when it happened. At least not for 100 years or so.

James Llekes • 612-673-7858
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Zoom your .pdf file to improve clarity

Note: Scan of newsprint loses some Clarity



Marshall, Windom Among MN Cities Receiving Railroad Grants From State

On Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 9:35 AM, Frederick Krenske
<rick@usjet.net>

The Minnesota Department of Transportation has announced that Marshall and Windom are among eight Minnesota cities that will be receiving grants to improve railway service near their communities.

Heartland Corn Products (Winthrop) – \$1 million to expand and improve the efficiency of a railyard.

Archer Daniels Midland (Marshall) – \$1.87 million for a new loadout building and equipment along with a new track connection to existing rail infrastructure.

The eight cities will receive a total of \$6.5 million in funding. MnDOT received 16 applications requesting a total of \$18.9 million for rail service improvement projects for this round of MRSI funding. Other projects and amounts awarded are:

Minnesota Commercial Railroad (Roseville) – \$301,000 to upgrade a stretch of track to safely accommodate heavier railcars.

Progressive Rail (Rosemount, Eagan) – \$609,000 to extend an existing track interchange to accommodate new business.

City of Newfolden – \$600,000 to replace an existing rail crossing bridge structure as part of a flood prevention project.

Duluth Seaway Port Authority (Duluth) – \$1.2 million to modernize and upgrade rail and switches.

Twin Cities and Western Railroad (Eden Prairie) – \$690,000 to improve and expand rail access at an unloading/loading facility site.

American Crystal Sugar (East Grand Forks) – \$270,000 for a new rail spur track that provides storage for rail cars for bulk and packaged products and improve rail movement.



The Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad has resumed passenger operations after a lengthy closure resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The first train, on Wednesday May 10, 2022, featured newly restored ex-Canadian National Railway dining car Cascade Falls, seen here traveling through a farmstead west of Earl, Wis. (Steve Smedley)

Wisconsin Great Northern Resumes Operations After Long Pandemic Closure

By Steve Smedley | May 11, 2022 Provided by Rick Krenske

First bed and breakfast train features newly restored dining car.

TREGO, Wis. — [Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad](#) opened its scenic bed and breakfast and dinner trains May 10, 2022, after being closed to passenger operations for 784 days due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The popular scenic train operates over two former Chicago & North Western Railway lines in Northwest Wisconsin, based out of Trego, just north of the former division headquarters in Spooner.

“This is exciting,” says Robert Tabern, director of passenger development at WGN. “During the closure it reminded me of how passenger depots that once served passengers became a work area, our depot reminded me of that during improvements to the line. Saws and tools have been moved out in anticipation of passengers being served again.”

The tourist railroad took on numerous projects to keep its workforce employed during the pandemic, according to Tabern. Work on equipment and a major track rehabilitation covering nearly two miles of line were among the projects. Additionally, Wednesday night’s train featured the first run of a former Canadian National Railway 48-seat dining car. The car, *Cascade Falls*, underwent a 2-month restoration and is now a part of the dinner train.

“To be able to share what we have done with our infrastructure in the last two years is beyond exciting,” says Mardell Vreeland, of-
fice manager and wife of owner, Greg Vreeland.

Retirees Dave and Anita Kiral of Dodge, Wis., celebrated their 22-year wedding anniversary with the ride. “The last time I rode a passenger train was on the Chicago & North Western 400 out of Winona to St. Charles, Minn.,” says Dave. “It was a Boy Scout trip, and I can still see that ticket, 41 cents!”

See website: <https://spoonertrainride.com/> for more information.



Carl A. Swanson Named TRAINS Magazine Editor

Trains Newswire By | May 11, 2022

WAUKESHA, Wis — Kalmbach Media Co. has named veteran railroad editor and journalist Carl A. Swanson as the new editor of TRAINS, the nation’s largest-circulation magazine about the railroad industry. Swanson succeeds the late Jim Wrinn, who died March 30, 2022, and served as editor for more than 17 years.

Continued on next page:

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Kalmbach has published TRAINS monthly since its founding in November 1940.

Swanson joins the TRAINS staff from MODEL RAILROADER, where he served as editor for the past three years. Before that he led Kalmbach's CLASSIC TOY TRAINS for 13 years. He relishes the opportunity now to lead what is known as the magazine of rail-roading.

"No industry has a richer history or a more dynamic future than railroading, and no one covers it better than Trains," says Swanson. "As a lifelong railfan and avid reader of the magazine, I am excited and humbled by this opportunity to continue TRAINS' tradition of excellence in informing, delighting, and serving our customers."

A Nebraska native, Swanson was a reporter for the Norfolk (Neb.) Daily News before embarking on his railroad journalism career. Swanson was editor of Pentrex Publishing's Passenger Train Journal and Rail News magazines prior to joining Kalmbach in 1997 as associate editor of CLASSIC TOY TRAINS. He moved over to TRAINS magazine as an associate editor in 1999 and then promoted to senior editor of MODEL RAILROADER in 2002.

Someone who knows Swanson's work from his previous tenure at TRAINS is the current acting editor, Kevin P. Keefe, who served as the magazine's editor in the 1990s and went on to serve as its publisher before his retirement as Kalmbach's vice president-editorial in 2016.

"Carl has wide-ranging interests when it comes to railroading," says Keefe. "In his earlier stint at TRAINS, he did an excellent job of recognizing what readers want, and now he'll do the same in the top job. Couple that with his superb skills as a writer and you have someone who will more than live up to the traditions of the position."

Swanson is also author of "Faces of Railroading," a deluxe pictorial tribute to the people of railroading, published by Kalmbach Books in 2004. He also edited the second edition of Kalmbach's "Command Control for Toy Trains."

A graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Woodland School of Photography, Swanson enjoys exploring and writing about local history and has authored two books for The History Press, "Lost Milwaukee" in 2018 and the recently published "Historic Crimes of Milwaukee." He blogs regularly at www.milwaukeebook.com.

Swanson lives in Milwaukee with his wife, Judith. The couple has three adult children.

As Light Rail Construction Resumes at Troubled 'pinch point,' Project Managers Won't Make Key Report Public

By KSTP Channel 5 June 17, 2022 - 6:27 PM Provided by Rick Krenske



Southwest LRT construction underway (KSTP)

"I think that they're going to try to do what they can to mitigate damage, but I think it's inevitable that more damage will be done," Palma said.

A private engineering firm, Socotec, minimized the role that construction played in the damage. The firm made a presentation to condo owners in which it declared that it was safe for the Metropolitan Council to restart construction in the area.

[Charlie Zelle, chair of the Met Council, pointed to Socotec's findings in an interview with 5 INVESTIGATES in April.](#)

"The conclusion coming that, 'yes, it is safe for the project to go forward' and that the building won't be compromised is comfort from our point of view," Zelle said. "We want to continue leaning in to make sure residents have whatever information they need from the engineers."

But when 5 INVESTIGATES requested a copy of the full engineering report that was the basis of Socotec's presentation to homeowners, lawyers for the Met Council refused, calling the study of the taxpayer-funded rail project "private data."

Dan Abelson, associate general counsel, added in an email that the full engineering report is "highly technical expert work product, which without further expert explanation likely will not be meaningful to the public."

Jane Kirtley, a professor at the University of Minnesota and an expert in the state's data practices law, called that response "pure contempt for the public."

"It's this notion that information is just too dangerous to get in the hands of the public. There's no excuse for that," Kirtley said. "It isn't up to them to decide whether we, the public, can interpret what these documents mean or not."

Palma, a retired physics professor, is among those calling on the Met Council to be more transparent.

"The idea that somehow this report is so technical that none of us could make heads or tails out of it is just sort of a fantastical explanation," Palma said. "Their lack of transparency is really reinforcing the doubts that we have about the validity of the whole exercise."

The Met Council and other project managers in charge of the Southwest light-rail extension could have to provide more information to the Office of the Legislative Auditor, Judy Randall.

Randall confirmed on Friday that her office is still conducting two projects related to Southwest light-rail construction.

The first findings could be released sometime this summer.

"This is a huge project that is dealing with delays and cost overruns. It's already very controversial," Kirtley said. "The public has a very strong interest in knowing what's going on here."



Amtrak Expands Service to Near Pre-pandemic Levels Ahead of DC Summer Travel - WTOP News Washington DC [Jessica Kronzer](#) | jkronzer@wtop.com May 10, 2022, 9:37 AM

D.C. travelers using Amtrak this summer will have more options than the past two years: train services are expanding up the East Coast.

The new schedule went into effect Monday and increases train frequencies, with more expansions planned for later this month. Amtrak cited an increase in demand for both leisure and business travel when announcing the bolstered service.

Northeast Regional trains are running nearly 80% as often as they did before COVID-19.

Starting May 23, four long-distance trains will be returned to daily service: California Zephyr; Empire Builder; Lake Shore Limited; and Southwest Chief.

And the Acela trains will run more often than they have since start of the pandemic.

Here's the updated schedule:

Northeast Regional service between D.C. and Boston:

13 roundtrips per weekday between D.C. and New York City;

Nine roundtrips every Saturday between D.C. and New York City;

14 roundtrips every Sunday between D.C. and New York City;

Eight roundtrips per weekday between Boston and New York City;

Eight roundtrips every Saturday between Boston and New York City;

Nine roundtrips every Sunday between Boston and New York City.

Keystone Service offers expanded service between Harrisburg and New York City:

12 roundtrips per weekday between Philadelphia and Harrisburg;

10 roundtrips per weekday between Philadelphia and New York City, including a new early morning departure arriving in New York City by 7:15 a.m.

Hartford Line between New Haven and Springfield is fully restored with seven roundtrips per weekday.

And the following additions to the schedule will start May 23:

Acela service between D.C. and Boston:

10 roundtrips per weekday between D.C., and New York City;

Four roundtrips every Saturday between D.C., and New York City;

Six roundtrips every Sunday between D.C., and New York City;

Nine roundtrips per weekday between Boston and New York City;

Three roundtrips every Saturday between Boston and New York City;

Four roundtrips every Sunday between Boston and New York City.

Long distance service will be offered effective May 23:

Daily service: Auto Train, California Zephyr, Capitol Limited, Coast Starlight, Empire; Builder, Lake Shore Limited, Palmetto, Silver Star, Southwest Chief, Texas Eagle;

Five departures a week: City of New Orleans, Crescent;

Three departures a week: Cardinal, Sunset Limited;

Silver Meteor: Interim service continues to be provided daily via Silver Star, Palmetto, Carolinian and Northeast Regional.

Amtrak plans to add more service for the summer months later this spring, according to a news release.

Amtrak, which was severely impacted by the pandemic in 2020 and part of 2021, said the expansion was possible because it added 1,500 new employees this year. "We are recruiting and training additional employees nationwide to accelerate our recovery from the pandemic and to support service growth," said Stephen Gardner, CEO at Amtrak, in a news release. Amtrak remains on track to put its faster, roomier Acela trains into service in 2023. Those trains will be capable of traveling at speeds in excess of 180 mph, though they will initially be capped at 160 mph. *WTOP's Jeff Clabaugh contributed to this report.*



A legislative stalemate -- and the fading chances for a special session -- have Minnesota transportation officials scrambling to figure out how to come up with required matching money to unlock federal construction funds.

Minnesota Scrambles to Match Federal Construction Funds After Capitol Impasse

On Tuesday, June 14, 2022, 10:10 AM, Frederick Krenske
<rick@usjet.net> By [Theo Keith](#) Published June 13, 2022 7:05PM [Politics FOX 9](#)

ST. PAUL, Minn. (FOX 9) - A legislative stalemate -- and the fading chances for a special session -- have Minnesota transportation officials scrambling to figure out how to come up with required matching money to unlock federal construction funds.

Minnesota stands to get \$7.3 billion from the 2021 federal infrastructure law. Many of the projects require a state matching contribution. State lawmakers identified \$280 million in required matches for road and bridge projects, but they adjourned in May without passing it. A key Senate Republican says there's a workaround that makes the situation less urgent, while DFL Gov. Tim Walz, legislative Democrats, and transportation advocates have called for a swift deal and a special session. "Do not jeopardize an infrastructure bill by your inability here at the state level to get along with each other," said Dan Olson, the business manager of Labors International Union of North America Local 1091, which represents thousands of construction workers. *Continued on next page:*

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Minnesota is in line for \$315 million immediately and could receive an estimated \$468 million of additional money from the federal infrastructure law before the start of the 2023 state legislative session, said Jake Loesch, a spokesman for the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Lawmakers broadly agree that the state wants the federal money, but major disagreements remain over how to fund the state match. Republicans favor dedicating the state's sales tax on auto parts to the cause, while Democrats do not.

Senate Transportation Chairman Scott Newman said MnDOT's commissioner could shift money between projects to come up with the match. Lawmakers could then approve the additional required money in the 2023 session, he said.

"I think everybody would be more comfortable if we would just appropriate the funds and be done with it," Newman, R-Hutchinson, said in an interview. "But it is not Armageddon if we don't do it this summer."

Others doubt that shifting money around is a practical solution. Loesch, the MnDOT spokesman, said it would create a funding gap next year and demonstrate a lack of commitment to the federal government.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher, a former state transportation commissioner who is now Minneapolis's public works commissioner, framed it as a trust issue.

"There are projects in the queue that are going to be delayed or canceled," Anderson Kelliher told reporters last week. "It could be one large project in the state. It could be 12 projects across the state to share the pain. It may not be fatal but it sure is not good practice."

There are other issues, too. The 2021 federal infrastructure law gives state transportation officials discretion over how some of the road and bridge money gets spent. Left unresolved is how much oversight lawmakers should have.

Newman said that was a "significant difference of opinion" between the Senate, which favors more legislative involvement, and the House.

House Transportation Chairman Frank Hornstein said he shared the construction industry's urgency about getting a deal and agreeing to a special session. Other states could get ahead of Minnesota in the queue if the state doesn't come up with matching funds, he said.

"This is a historic amount of money that we can be accessing from the federal government," said Hornstein, DFL-Minneapolis, in an interview. "Not since the New Deal in the 1930s have we had an opportunity like this."

Weekly Rail Traffic Stats Remain Below 2021 Figures

Trains Newswire [By](#) May 26, 2022 Year-to-date U.S. volume down 3.6%

U.S. Rail Traffic¹

Week 20, 2022 – Ended May 21, 2022

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2021	Cumulative	Avg/wk ²	vs 2021
Total Carloads	233,244	-3.7%	4,602,072	230,104	0.4%
Chemicals	33,943	2.4%	687,575	34,379	6.5%
Coal	65,609	1.5%	1,294,603	64,730	5.9%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	15,898	-2.7%	327,704	16,385	2.5%
Forest Products	10,300	1.7%	198,724	9,936	-0.6%
Grain	21,797	-13.9%	458,013	22,901	-10.1%
Metallic Ores and Metals	21,664	-8.2%	411,557	20,578	-6.0%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	13,831	0.5%	259,757	12,988	-4.1%
Nonmetallic Minerals	32,268	-3.2%	598,637	29,932	6.1%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	9,805	-9.2%	184,843	9,242	-15.4%
Other	8,129	-27.1%	180,659	9,033	-7.5%
Total Intermodal Units	273,732	-4.5%	5,274,963	263,748	-6.8%
Total Traffic	506,976	-4.1%	9,877,035	493,852	-3.6%

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

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

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WASHINGTON — U.S. rail traffic remains below 2021 levels on a weekly and year-to-date basis according to the latest statistics from the Association of American Railroads.

Figures for the week ending May 21 show overall traffic of 506,976 carloads and intermodal units, down 4.1% from the corresponding week a year earlier. That figure includes 233,244 carloads, a decline of 3.7% from a year ago, and 273,732 trailers and containers, a 4.5% decrease.

Just four of the 10 carload commodity types showed increases from 2021 levels, and those were slight: chemicals, up 2.4%; forest products, up 1.7%; coal, up 1.5%, and motor vehicles and parts, up 0.5%.

Year-to-date numbers for carloads remain 0.4% above the figure through 20 weeks of 2021, while intermodal units are down 6.8% and overall traffic is down 3.6%, averaging 493,852 carloads and intermodal units per week.

North American totals, for 12 U.S., Canadian, and Mexican railroads, include 329,823 carloads, down 2.8% from the same week in 2021; 365,682 intermodal units, down 3 percent; and 695,505 total carloads and intermodal units, down 2.9%. Year-to-date totals are down 3.8 percent from 2021.

Rail Unions Again Press for National Negotiations to be Declared at Impasse

Trains Newswire [By](#) | May 26, 2022 -Referred by Gay Rumler
Move could eventually place dispute in hands of Biden, Congress



WASHINGTON — Rail unions are again seeking to declare an impasse in negotiations with U.S. railroads, a move which could eventually lead to intervention by President Joe Biden and Congress.

[Bloomberg reports](#) that three days of meetings between the two sides with the National Mediation Board will conclude today, with labor unions renewing a request for a declaration of impasse first raised in January [see [“Unions declare impasse ...”](#), *Trains News Wire*, Jan. 20, 2022].

“We met 14 times and we’re getting nowhere,” Dennis Pierce, national president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, told Bloomberg in a May 20 interview. “And it wasn’t until two years into the round that they finally decided they would make a proposal on wages.”

Negotiations for a new contract began in 2020; railroads’ desire to enact one-person crews is a major point of contention.

Negotiations are a complicated process governed by the Railway Labor Act.

If an impasse is declared, the next step would be for mediators to offer arbitration; if one side rejects arbitration, which Pierce told Bloomberg the unions would do, Biden could form a Presidential Emergency Board after a 30-day cooling off period; that group would make recommendations to resolve the dispute. If the board’s recommendations are rejected by either side, the House and Senate would have to pass legislation to settle the matter. Failure to pass legislation would allow unions to strike.

— Updated at 5:05 p.m. to clarify date of Dennis Pierce interview with Bloomberg.

Union Members Protest at Stockholder Meeting of BNSF Parent

[By](#) | May 2, 2022

‘About 60’ protesters picket at Berkshire Hathaway meeting, SMART-TD says



Union members picketing outside Saturday’s Berkshire Hathaway annual meeting in Omaha, Neb., pose for a photograph on Saturday. (Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, via Facebook)

OMAHA, Neb. — Railroad union members, who have been increasingly vocal about working conditions and the lack of a new contract, protested Saturday at the annual meeting of BNSF Railway parent Berkshire Hathaway, picketing and handing out leaflets outside the meeting site.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen has also taken out ads in the Omaha World-Herald [see [“Union ad takes aim at BNSF, UP leadership ...”](#), *Trains News Wire*, April 22, 2022] and employed two mobile billboards to circulate during the Berkshire meeting weekend.

The International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers-Transportation Division was among other unions also participating in morning and afternoon protests at the CHI Health Center, site of the Berkshire meeting. [The SMART-TD website indicates](#) “about 60” protesters were present.

[The World-Herald reports](#) that Dennis Pierce, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, said in a Friday press conference that BNSF and Union Pacific are both “off the rails” for their current labor practices. Along with calling for a resolution to negotiations for a new national labor contract now well into their third year, Pierce criticized attendance policies at both railroads.

“The attempt is to keep people from taking a day off, and it’s working,” Pierce said. “It’s also driving people out of the industry.” BNSF spokesman Ben Wilemon told the newspaper the policy was to provide consistency of crew availability and scheduling, saying, “as with any other business, delivering for our customers requires employees to be available to work their assigned shifts.”

The SMART-TD site says union members are also in the early stages of planning another protest at the North American Rail Shippers meeting in Kansas City, May 9-11. Four Class I CEOs are scheduled to appear at that meeting.

Labor Leaders Skeptical of CEO Talk of Improving Railroads' Relationship with Rank and File

By Bill Stephens | May 16, 2022 - Referred by Gary Rumler

CSX CEO Jim Foote has called for mending fences with unionized workers



Railroad employees picket outside the North American Rail Shippers conference in Kansas City on May 10, 2022. CSX CEO Jim Foote called for a fundamental change in railroads' relationship with its union workers at that conference. (Trains: David Lassen)



CSX Transportation CEO Jim Foote addresses the North American Rail Shippers conference. Foote's call for improved labor relations has been met with skepticism by union officials. (Trains: David Lassen)

Rail labor leaders have given mixed reviews to a call from CSX Transportation CEO Jim Foote for railroads to mend fences with their unionized employees and negotiate new contracts, with the union officials saying the relationship with management is the worst it has been in decades. Foote has called for a change several times in recent weeks.

"That is the biggest transformative change that CSX can make, and that is the biggest transformative change that the industry can make: Finally, finally, finally building a better rapport with our employees and having a better working relationship with them," Foote told the North American Rail Shippers conference last week [see ["CSX's Foote calls for fundamental change" Trains News Wire, May 10, 2022](#)].

Union officials say the relationship is in its current state because of massive layoffs and operational changes under Precision Scheduled Railroading. Making matters worse, union leaders say: Punitive attendance policies, stalled contract negotiations, and a lack of raises since 2019 despite train crews keeping freight moving during the pandemic.

Dennis Pierce, president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, says railroads have lost touch with their employees due to the way they are treated under Precision Scheduled Railroading, which has brought longer days, more time spent away from home, less rest between trips, and fewer days off.

"It's a pressure cooker," Pierce says. "This thing's going to blow."

Foote's remarks surprised the BLET leadership. "Our bargaining unit was completely flabbergasted," Pierce says, noting CSX and the union have not met since January and no contract negotiations are currently scheduled.

"He's got the tools to fix it and he's never used them. So we're not sure what he's talking about," Pierce says of Foote's comments. "Two weeks ago, he's the one that said that the solution to all the railroad's problems was letting them have one-person crews, which equally offended every engineer and conductor out on the railroad because they all hold seniority in that job. And then two weeks later, he steps forward and says he wants to mend fences. Well, he's the one tearing them down."

At STB hearings on rail service last month, Foote suggested the train crew shortage would be alleviated if federal regulators would allow the use of one-person crews.

But Pierce says the push for one-person crews makes it harder for railroads to hire conductor trainees amid nationwide crew shortages that have caused rail service to suffer this year.

Pierce says he's convinced that national contract negotiations, as well as those at CSX, are stalled because the railroads want to reach a one-person crew deal. Railroads would like to take conductors out of the locomotive cab and have them cover specific territories on set shifts while working from pickup trucks or sport utility vehicles.

Jeremy Ferguson, president of the SMART-TD union, declined to comment on the one-person crew proposal. But he, too, says labor-management relations are at a low point.

Operational changes, including the industry's focus on running longer trains, have had a negative impact on train crews. "It's gotten worse," Ferguson says. "They're being asked to do more with less."

Because railroads are moving their tonnage on fewer but longer trains, it means crews spend more time at their away-from-home terminals. Long trains, which take longer to run across the railroad and force shorter trains into passing sidings, bog down the railroad due to a higher rate of unplanned re-crews. "They have to dogcatch, and it snowballs from there," Ferguson says. "It's not good for customer service or for employees."

Pierce says the use of longer trains has "dramatically changed the whole operation." Road crews spend hours building their trains, only to run afoul of federal hours of service regulations out on the main line well short of destination terminals. "You're just burning through these crews," he says. "The impact to the supply chain is phenomenal right now." Ferguson credits Foote for taking the first steps toward improving relations with labor. "They're taking all the right steps to start to make culture change," he says.

CSX has softened its discipline policies, plans to improve its attendance policy beginning in January, and offered attendance bonuses for crews to stay marked up, Ferguson says. Also a plus: CSX has boosted training pay for new conductors.

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Picketers stand outside the Kansas City hotel where the North American Rail Shippers conference included addresses by three Class I CEOs. (Trains: David Lassen)

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But Ferguson emphasizes that there's a long way to go, particularly since railroads are earning record profits while engineers and conductors have not received raises since 2019. "The greed is running rampant," Ferguson says. "They don't want to share one penny of that profit with the employees."

And while CSX says it's aiming to improve labor relations, other railroads are headed in the opposite direction, labor leaders say. Ferguson says BNSF Railway is at the bottom of the Class I railroad barrel due to its Hi-Viz attendance policy that restricts crews' ability to take time off. The railroad announced changes to that policy on Friday, but union officials said the adjustments were insufficient [see "[BNSF modifies controversial train crew attendance policy](#)," News Wire, May 16, 2022].

Pierce says labor leaders have tried to explain to the railroads "how much their employees literally hate them." The railroads have not gotten the message, so unions have picketed outside the Union Pacific shareholder meeting, the annual meeting of BNSF parent Berkshire Hathaway, and other sites.

"Clearly labor relations are strained in the railroad industry, given the protracted state of the ongoing national negotiations and the recent protest at the North American Rail Shippers Association conference," says Todd Tranausky, vice president of rail and intermodal at freight forecasting firm FTR Transportation Intelligence. "But there is always tension between labor and management in any industry when large changes driven by automation are on the horizon, so it should not come as a surprise."

He adds: "The rail carrier focus on one-person crews in recent years represents a major change in how trains have operated since the reduction from five-person crews, so it's natural that rail labor might not welcome a significant change in how the industry operates." Ending national rail bargaining or the Rail Labor Act, as Foote suggested, would create other issues, Tranausky says.

"While it would give individual carriers more autonomy to craft property-specific terms, it would also create additional strike and disruption risk. One of the main benefits provided by the RLA is that it severely limits the risk of supply chain disruptions from work stoppages. At a time when shippers have suffered through 18 months of service issues without the added disruption of a work stoppage, the benefit of supply chain certainty the RLA provides seems productive to preserve," Tranausky says

Railroads Report On-time Performance to Federal Regulators for First Time

By Bill Stephens Trains Newswire| May 20, 2022

AAR critical of Surface Transportation Board's temporary reporting requirements



Norfolk Southern loaded grain train 46J is southbound passing Good Yard in Normal, Illinois, on the Blooming-

WASHINGTON – The Class I railroads submitted their first batch of expanded performance metrics to federal regulators this week, including a snapshot of on-time performance data. The board on May 6 ordered the railroads to report the data beginning this week in response to shipper complaints and testimony delivered during two days of hearings last month on widespread rail-service problems at the big four U.S. Class I systems, BNSF Railway, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and Union Pacific. The intermodal on-time performance data showed BNSF and UP struggling in the West, while CSX and NS were both running well in the East. On-time performance for manifest – or carload – traffic at the big four U.S. systems ranged from a low of 48% at NS to a high of 69% at CSX. The STB asked the railroads to provide data on how many carloads and intermodal trains arrived at their destinations within 24 hours of their original arrival estimates. The railroads' internal trip-plan compliance figures are much tighter than what they are reporting to the board.

Class I On-Time Performance

Railroad	BNSF	UP	CSX	NS	CN	CP	KCS
Manifest	54%	63%	69%	48%	75%	60%	69%
Grain Unit	53%	65%	92%	NA	91%	60%	82%
Coal Unit	69%	87%	95%	NA	96%	NA	100%
Automotive Unit	65%	NA	NA	NA	100%	100%	82%
Crude Oil Unit	53%	80%	100%	NA	20%	40%	91%
Ethanol Unit	30%	61%	72%	NA	100%	88%	NA
Intermodal	65%	68%	98%	91%	100%	95%	91%

On-time performance is defined as the weekly percentage of carloads and intermodal trains that arrived at their destinations within 24 hours of the railroads' original arrival estimate for the week ending May 13, 2022. NA means information was not submitted to the Surface Transportation Board. Due to differences in the ways the railroads calculate their data, it may not be possible to directly compare railroads.

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The railroads have said that crew shortages are the culprit for erratic service and congestion on their networks. The shortages have been compounded by not having locomotives in the right places at the right times as well as the need to recrew trains that have to stop en route when their crews reach the maximum number of hours they may work.

BNSF and UP had the highest recrew rates last week, at 12% and 10%, respectively, of their daily road trains. The BNSF recrew rate in California was 20%, while UP's in Southern California was 21%. BNSF also was recrewed at high levels in Texas, where 24% of trains on the Red River subdivision required a second crew. When BNSF is operating well, a typical recrew rate would be around 5%.

In the East, CSX and NS fared better. CSX reported a 1% overall recrew rate, while NS said 4% of its trains were recrewed last week.

UP told the board that it has not embargoed any shippers' traffic as a way to reduce congestion on its network. UP had warned shippers last month that it would begin metering traffic as a way to reduce the number of cars in the system. Instead, the railroad says it's working with shippers so that voluntary agreements can be reached.

The Class I railroads also reported local service metrics to the STB for the first time. Shipper organizations have long sought such first- and last-mile performance data. The STB is considering adopting a rule that would require the railroads to permanently provide local service data.

The board is temporarily requiring the railroads to report the percentage of scheduled spots and pulls that were fulfilled, both systemwide and on a divisional basis. Systemwide totals reported for last week were 91% for UP; 88% for BNSF; 83% for CSX; and 74% for NS.

The Association of American Railroads pushed back against the expanded performance data requirements.

"There is no explanation by the Board of how specific pieces of requested information will assist it in monitoring the current service challenges. Nor is there any explanation why the Board's current robust service reporting rules are insufficient for its purposes. Without notice and comment, there has been no opportunity for stakeholders to help tailor the data to be collected to the needs of the Board given the current circumstances in the United States. Nor could stakeholders ensure that the Board was ordering publication of information that would be useful to it and not confusing or misleading to the public," J. Frederick Miller Jr., an AAR lawyer, wrote to the board in a letter dated May 18.

The railroads "appreciate the urgency of service problems being experienced by many customers and respect the Board's efforts to respond and assist," Miller wrote. But he urged the board to follow its rulemaking processes if it decides to make the temporary reporting metrics permanent.

Canadian National "cautioned against drawing conclusions across railroads based on these data submissions" because of differences in the way each Class I collects and calculates its operational metrics.

That was apparent in the railroads' average daily train start data, where CSX appears to use a different methodology than the other Class I systems.

Class I Average Road Train Starts Per Day

Railroad	BNSF	UP	CSX	NS	CN	CP	KCS
Automotive Unit	17	5	NA	7	4	0	11
Coal Unit	71	40	98	16	7	2	34
Crude Oil Unit	4	1	1	1	2	0	16
Ethanol Unit	5	4	18	2	1	2	0
Grain Unit	42	18	28	4	6	2	33
Intermodal	87	60	181	68	12	3	59
Manifest	182	219	380	131	50	14	162
Other Unit	20	27	13	6	28	1	23
TOTAL	427	374	718	235	110	24	338

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The Class I railroads reported to the STB their average number of road train starts per day, broken down by train type, for the week ending May 13, 2022. The figures for Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Kansas City Southern reflect only their U.S. operations. KCS said its tally was incorrect and that it would submit new data to the STB. CSX calculates its train starts differently.

Source: Class I railroad reports to the STB.

In CSX's case, it reported the total number of crew starts for road trains per day rather than the daily average number of road train starts. The two are different: Road train starts includes only trains that depart their originating terminals on a particular day; crew starts would include those originating trains as well as crew changes for trains already en route.

The board had requested the daily train start tally in order to provide perspective on trains held per day information that the railroads already reported weekly.

Kansas City Southern's daily train start figures also seemed significantly higher than warranted when compared to its traffic volume and the averages reported by the other, much larger Class I systems. KCS says its train start data was incorrect and will be resubmitted.

AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

May 2022 Volume 10 Issue 5 –Provided by John Goodman

The Sugarland Limited ~ Photo Scrapbook ~



The Sugarland Limited special train operated in South Central Florida, April 23rd through 29th, between Miami and Clewiston. Over 100 fortunate AAPRCO members enjoyed the timeless lure of steam power, tours of sugar processing facilities, multiple photo run-by opportunities, open platform riding, and rare mileage through the unique scenery of sugarcane country. Photo by Richard Rafalski



Amtrak special No. 968 departs Miami with a nine car, all PV consist. Shown passing Boca Raton, the special train travels north on the former Seaboard Air Line to Sebring where it switches onto the South Central Florida Express. photo by James Mungovan



The Sugarland Limited pulls out of Sebring on April 23rd under steam power of SCFE locomotive No 148. Photo by Richard Rafalski



Photo by Richard Rafalski

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The Sugarland Limited arrives in Clewiston bathed in the glow of the setting sun. Photo by Roger Schmorrr



The Sugarland consist crosses the Miami Canal Bridge near the Okeelanta sugar mill on April 25th. Photo by Roger Schmorrr

Washington Update by Ross Capon



President Biden on April 29 announced his intention to nominate five individuals to the Amtrak board of directors:

David Capozzi, of Gaithersburg, Maryland, who worked 28 years for the U.S. Access Board, including as executive director 2008-2020;

Anthony Coscia, of New Jersey (incumbent board chair);

Christopher Koos, mayor of Normal, Illinois;

Samuel Lathem, of Delaware, president of the Delaware State AFL-CIO; and

Robin Wiessmann, Executive Director and CEO, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency

Click [here](#) to see the White House release with bios.

The Eno Foundation's Jeff Davis wrote that, "if the last few years are any indication, the only way the nominations will move to the Senate floor is if paired with future Republican nominees..." The Senate likely would not confirm an all-Democratic slate of any size just as it refused to confirm the all-Republican slate presented by the Trump Administration until mid-2020.

Trump, on May 21, 2020, finally nominated two Democrats (including Mayor Koos). The Senate never acted, in part because Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) wanted assurances that the nominees were supportive of long-distance trains. He explained at a September 16, 2020, Commerce Committee hearing that he and fellow Committee members Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Tom Udall (D-NM) "generally have operated jointly" on this issue. Moran indicated satisfaction with Mayor Koos's response to their questions, but said he wanted to "hear more" from Sarah Feinberg – then the other D nominee – and another nominee, former Rep. Rokita (R-IN), "has not responded to our requests at all. So, I'm simply announcing to those nominees, and perhaps to Amtrak and the DOT, that while I'm voting today to report them to the floor, I will place a hold on Ms. Feinberg and a hold on Mr. Rokita until I receive satisfaction that they are supporters of the Southwest Chief and supporters of long-distance passenger service."

The new infrastructure law was crafted with an eye to assuring that the nation and not just the Northeast Corridor would be well represented on the board. Besides Amtrak's CEO as a non-voting member, the Amtrak Board includes the Secretary of Transportation or his representative and "8 individuals appointed by the President of the United States, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, with general business and financial experience, experience or qualifications in transportation, freight and passenger rail transportation, travel, hospitality, cruise line, or passenger air transportation businesses, or representatives of employees or users of passenger rail transportation or a State government, at least 1 of whom shall be an individual with a disability (as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102)) who has a demonstrated history of, or experience with, accessibility, mobility, and inclusive transportation in passenger rail or commuter rail."

The new law maintains the requirement that no more than five of the eight Presidential nominees can be members of the same political party, and adds residency requirements:

- * Two residing in or near a location served by a regularly scheduled NEC train – 4 of the 5 announced nominees qualify;

- * Four in or near regions geographically distributed outside of the NEC of whom

- (a) 2 reside in states served by a long-distance route, and

- (b) 2 reside in states served by a State-supported route.

[Koos could qualify for either category since Illinois has both long-distance and state-supported trains but could not qualify for both.]

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* Two can reside either in or near an NEC location or in a state served by long-distance or state-supported route. Presumably these two could be drawn from any of the five.

Thus, all three nominees not yet announced (assuming there are any) must be from outside the Northeast Corridor. If Capozzi is a Democrat, all three must be Republicans; if he is a Republican, two must be Republicans. When the White House submits these five nominations to the Senate, it will be clear which existing board member is contemplated to be supplanted by a new nominee and which existing board members will continue. (Coscia, the current chair, presumably would “replace” himself..)

Capozzi has the issue knowledge the law contemplates, having devoted his professional life to it. He was “a member of the legal team and lobbying captain for the disability community that helped craft” the Americans with Disabilities Act. In that capacity, it is likely that he opposed the Dingell-Lent substitute (to the Americans with Disabilities Act HR 2273).

Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) chaired the powerful Committee on Energy and Commerce which then had Amtrak jurisdiction, and Rep. Norman Lent (R-NY) was the committee’s top Republican. Dingell believed that if Amtrak had to comply with ADA on stations, it would break their budget, and so withheld his support for ADA until Rep. Steny Hoyer (the prime sponsor of ADA) accommodated some of Amtrak’s concerns, including giving Amtrak 20 years to meet its station requirements. That was in 1990.

One reason the disability community is skeptical of what others view as “practical” exceptions to ADA principles is that today -- 32 years later -- many “existing stations” remain ADA non-compliant. [Dingell-Lent did require “all *new* stations used in Amtrak or commuter rail systems be constructed accessible to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs.”] This history may complicate efforts to let Amtrak sell rooms in trans-dorm sleepers to the public to enhance revenues on long-distance trains.

Of particular interest to the private car owners, a summary of Dingell-Lent summary includes this: “Private Rail Transportation Providers: Provides an exception for historical and antiquated rail cars and stations served exclusively by such cars to the extent that compliance with accessibility requirements would significantly alter the historic or antiquated character of such cars or stations.”

Reactions: The nominations announcement came a week after the Rail Passengers Association had called on the President to make nominations, thus an RPA news release included this from President & CEO Jim Mathews: “America’s passengers asked President Biden to make the Amtrak Board a top priority, and he did... We applaud the White House for taking these concerns seriously, and we look forward to working closely with these nominees to understand their vision for Amtrak’s future.” Click [here](#) for the full RPA release.

SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson said in a statement that Biden “continues to prioritize the concerns of labor as he and the DOT pursue an unprecedented and historic transformation of the nation’s passenger-rail network. ... We hope for a swift confirmation process for the nominees so that Amtrak can expand its service thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and provide robust employment opportunities well into the future.” (SMART-TD = International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers -- Transportation Division.)

The re-nomination of Anthony Coscia, on the board since 2010 and chair since 2013, can be viewed as an endorsement of current leadership. Some rail passenger advocates, remembering the near-death experience of long-distance trains in 2018 under President Richard Anderson, and concerned about limited capacity (and in some cases frequency) of long-distance trains today, are unhappy with the nominations, including their geographic concentration on the south end of the Northeast Corridor.

Friday up/Sunday return New York-Pittsfield service: From Amtrak’s news release: “Amtrak, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), are announcing pilot seasonal passenger rail service to operate this year and in 2023 to be known as the Berkshire Flyer, with a route between New York City and Pittsfield, MA. **The service will be initiated on July 8** and will operate on weekends through the summer months with a similar schedule next year. The Berkshire Flyer will include a Friday afternoon departure from New York’s Penn Station to Pittsfield, MA, via Albany-Rensselaer, NY. A return trip will be provided on Sunday afternoons. Each train will make several station stops.” Click [here](#) for the full release.

Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) becomes the 4th (of 10) Republicans to retire who voted to impeach Trump. “He was accompanied by his close friend, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), on the House floor while delivering his speech, as he pointed to his next chapter with his family. ‘Debbie was my first call,’ said Upton. ‘She didn’t answer.’ ‘I didn’t want to get the news,’ she replied.” For *Politico*’s report, click [here](#).

Inflation v. infrastructure. The Eno Foundation’s Jeff Davis noted that “If sustained highway cost inflation averages any higher than 7% per year, then **inflation will have eaten the entire IJA spending increase.**” Click [here](#) for blog post by RPA’s Jim Mathews including that quote and running under the headline, “The Next Threat to Trains: A Tiny Virus and A Huge Land War.”

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AAPRCO Passenger Rail News

Amtrak's National Network Locomotives Get New Look



The No. 309 Charger locomotive will travel from California to Delaware before entering service. Photo – Amtrak/Mike Armstrong

Amtrak locomotives operating on its National Network will receive a new paint scheme over the next few years.

The first Amtrak locomotive — Locomotive No. 309, a Charger — to sport the new look is traveling from California to Delaware on the California Zephyr and Capitol Limited lines. It will go through an acceptance process at Amtrak's Wilmington, Delaware, facility before entering service, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The locomotive is the 10th of [75 ALC-42 units](#) being delivered through 2025 from Siemens Mobility's rail manufacturing hub in Sacramento, California.

The paint scheme features the mainstay "Amtrak Blue" with "Amtrak Red" and midnight blue separated by white arcs. It also draws directly from the "rails over the horizon" theme found in the intercity passenger railroad's [Travelmark logo](#).

The design is a departure from Amtrak's predominantly silver locomotives, which will help make repairs more efficient, Amtrak officials. This is the seventh standard exterior design of Amtrak locomotives in the railroad's 50-year history.

Governor Edwards Inspects Proposed Amtrak Route Connecting Baton Rouge, New Orleans



Gov. John Bel Edwards, left, and Louisiana DOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson joined rail executives and federal officials on an inspection route between the cities April 20. Photo – Amtrak/Tom Davidenko

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards joined state and federal officials and rail executives on April 20th for a ride along a proposed [Amtrak](#) route that would connect Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

[Canadian Pacific's](#) acquisition of [Kansas City Southern](#) — if approved by the [Surface Transportation Board](#) — would provide an opportunity to introduce the first-ever Amtrak service between the two cities, Edwards said in a press release.

"An Amtrak line connecting Louisiana's capital to the largest metropolitan area in the state will have immense economic benefits for both cities and the parishes in between," said Edwards.

The tour group included Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development Secretary Shawn Wilson and executives from Amtrak, KCS and CP, [Southern Rail Commission](#) (SRC) officials said in a press release.

The officials inspected rail infrastructure on the proposed route, which involves 80 miles of track owned by KCS and [CN](#). The route would lead to Union Passenger Terminal in downtown New Orleans, which is served by other Amtrak trains. The group rode on a KCS inspection train.

The inspection is a necessary step for establishing passenger-rail service there, SRC officials said. The Federal Railroad Administration's \$33 billion in competitive federal grants for intercity rail could help pay for the new route, though a grant would require a 20% local match. A study from 2014 found that the necessary upgrades could cost \$300 million, which is \$364 million in 2022 dollars.

Amtrak Improves Mississippi Station's Accessibility



The \$5.4 million project included a new concrete platform, a renovated waiting room, drinking fountains and new bench seating. Photo – Amtrak

[Amtrak](#) announced the completion of the Greenwood, Mississippi, station upgrades that make the facility compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The \$5.4 million project included a new concrete platform, a renovated waiting room, drinking fountains and new bench seating. The station also now has two ramped connections from the parking lot that helps riders with mobility devices.

Amtrak also worked with the city of Greenwood to redesign the sidewalk along Carrollton Avenue to create better pedestrian access.

To date, Amtrak has completed 168 ADA-related projects as part of its ADA Stations Program, with 20 stations brought into compliance in fiscal-year 2021 for \$85 million. Another 41 stations are targeted for completion in FY2022 at an estimated cost of \$125 million.

More: AARPCO NEWS BRIEFS

June 2022 Volume 10 Issue 6 -Provided by John Goodman



Washington Update by Ross Capon

Work to improve Amtrak's downgraded *Texas Eagle*. Bob Johnston's article for *Trains News Wire*, posted today, is headlined "'Texas Eagle' show Amtrak failure to capitalize on advantages of rail travel: Special report; Grass-roots organization seeks to restore Sightseer Lounge, other amenities cut by management: Special report." The organization is TEMPO (Texas Eagle Marketing and Performance Organization), whose "members include representatives and elected officials from cities along the route, rail advocacy groups in Texas and Arkansas, Amtrak's Marketing Department, and employees (both management and union) responsible for operation of the *Texas Eagle*" (per the web site – click [here](#) for it).

TEMPO helped save the *Texas Eagle* when it was on Amtrak's chopping block in 1997. Besides restoration of the Sightseer Lounge, TEMPO also focusses on the absence of meals for coach passengers and the requirement that sleeping-car passengers eat their meals in their rooms. Johnston says Amtrak has adopted the shortcomings of air, bus and car travel – which don't "offer walk-around space and amenities." Indeed, his article opens with this quote from a *Texas Eagle* on-board announcement: "You must buy food to sit in the café car; if you don't buy food and we see you sitting in the café, we will ask you to return to your seat."

In a May 26 article, Johnston said "there is very little fare manipulation for long-distance coaches or sleeping cars...a result of management's shortsighted decision to save costs by sidelining equipment and refrain from hiring enough personnel to maintain and staff these trains...anyone attempting to book a reservation usually encounters either coach or sleeper sellouts or only elevated 'flexible' coach fares offered on days immediately before departure...The overnights' diminished capacity has led to a 35% increase in per-passenger revenue January-April 2022, compared to the same months in 2019. The figure for state-supported routes is flat and average Northeast Corridor pricing per rider is down 12%."

The definitive report on intercity bus trends, often with information useful to understanding Amtrak's market, is published annually by the Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University in Chicago. Click [here](#) for the February 24, 2022 report, *Routes to Recovery: 2022 Outlook for the Intercity Bus Industry in the United States*. Click **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** for their January 6, 2022, policy brief: *The Intercity Bus Bounceback: The 4th Quarter 2021 Brings Optimism to a Struggling Sector*.

In an April presentation, Joseph Schwieterman said that, by November 2021, traffic had reached 70% of pre-pandemic levels except in California and the Northeast, but traffic levels were far less for commuter and tour services – one indication that prospects are greater for Amtrak's long-distance routes than for some other services. Also of note:

With the elimination of previous restrictions against "bus-only" travel on Amtrak's California Thruway services, bus-only tickets now can be sold in California and on some Nevada routes.

There are Amtrak bus connections between Albany and various Vermont points including the Rutland and Burlington transit centers and Burlington Airport.

In an April Chaddick presentation, THE JET Founder and CEO Chad Scarborough said his "most direct competition" is Amtrak Regional – "we average 3:45 [NYC-WAS] Amtrak 3:30." He said the price point on Amtrak Thursday through Monday is above THE JET's. On THE JET buses, passengers must have seat reservations; the capacity is just 14 passengers and there are two crew members. THE JET (click [here](#) for web site) claims "motion-canceling technology" and the "most advanced passenger seat in the world." Average ticket price as of April: \$120.



The agreement would establish terms under which Amtrak will pay incentives to CN or the Class I will incur penalties based on the performance of Amtrak trains on CN track, according to a May 27 filing with the STB.

Photo – amtrak.com

AARPCO Passenger Rail News

Amtrak Seeks New Operating Agreement with CN

Amtrak has asked the [Surface Transportation Board](#) to establish the terms and conditions of a new operating agreement in which Amtrak trains will have access to [CN](#) rail lines and property.

The agreement would establish terms under which Amtrak will pay incentives to CN or the Class I will incur penalties based on the performance of Amtrak trains on its track, according to a May 27 filing with the STB.

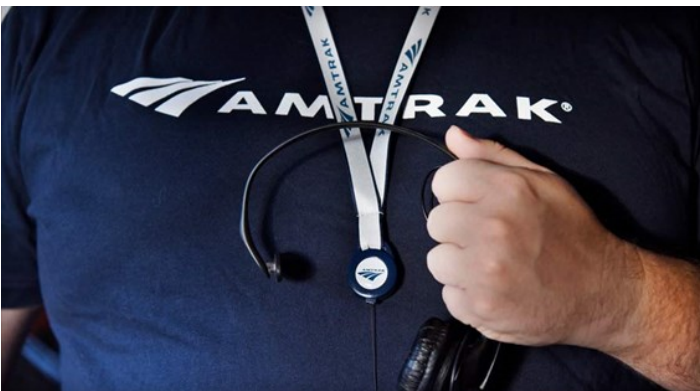
In August 2019, the STB directed Amtrak and CN to partake in board-sponsored mediation in reaching an agreement, but that effort was unsuccessful. Since that decision, however, the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) issued a final rule that established a "customer on-time performance" metric that assesses the performance of Amtrak trains based on the percentage of Amtrak passengers that arrive on time at their destination stations.

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The FRA also established other metrics to measure the extent to which host freight railroads have delayed Amtrak's trains.

Amtrak's proposed agreement now incorporates those new rules and calls for CN to receive less in incentives as its own host-responsible delays for an Amtrak route increase. This proposal would ensure that the Class I has an incentive to minimize delays that affect Amtrak trains.



The apprenticeship pilot will be offered to a mix of new hires and existing employees with diverse backgrounds.

Photo – Wild As Light / Shutterstock.com

Amtrak Launches New Apprenticeship Pilot Program

[Amtrak](#) is offering a new apprenticeship pilot program to help participants learn skills on the job and develop a professional career path, the railroad announced last month.

The program will be offered to a mix of new hires and existing employees with diverse backgrounds. Students will begin in the classroom and move to hands-on work in a specific trade, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

"With a focus on safety and Amtrak values, the apprenticeship program offers an opportunity for employees to develop new skills and expand their career," said Amtrak Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer Qiana Spain.

Regardless of their specializations, all apprentices will take core courses in safety, environmental awareness, personal protective equipment and other areas before meeting their mentors and moving into combined classroom and hands-on instruction, then branching off into craft-specific training.

After three years of training, students take a final exam and become full mechanics. This program creates a talent pipeline for existing and new employees and provides a career track for personal and professional advancement at Amtrak.

"Apprenticeship and effective training programs, just like this one, are proven ways to grow workforces, attract and retain the right talent and help working people expand their skillsets," said John Feltz, director of the [Transport Workers Union Rail Division](#).

The apprenticeship program will be paid for with funds from the federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#).

Amtrak's goal is to "connect talented people to Amtrak career opportunities," officials said. So far this year, Amtrak has hired more than 1,500 new employees

More:

AAPRCO
Mid-Month Highlights

June 2022 Washington Update by Ross Capon



Congressional Committee FY 2023 action: The House and Senate Appropriations Transportation/Housing Subcommittees each held hearings reviewing President Biden's DOT budget request for FY 2023. Click [here](#) for the 90-minute video of the April 28 Senate subcommittee hearing, and [here](#) for the House subcommittee's May 10 hearing [about 2½ hours (starts at the 2-minute mark)] and the May 25 "Member Day" hearing (just 15 minutes!) in which individual Representatives can tout programs in which they have a particular interest.

House Subcommittee Chairman David Price's (D-NC) opening remarks included this, after he noted the budget's strong commitment to passenger rail: "The area I represent in North Carolina offers a good example of what investments can mean. Now, I don't aspire to be Mr. S Line; I don't think I can match Amtrak Joe. But I must say that getting this S Line corridor from Raleigh to Richmond developed will be an enormous step, a key step, in completing development of the Southeast Passenger Rail Corridor. The States of North Carolina and Virginia with generous help from CRISI are well on their way to getting this done, and the resources in the IJA and in this budget will let us get it done here, and get it done elsewhere. It'll replicate this success in corridors ideally suited to passenger rail travel across the country."

The next step is for subcommittee mark-ups in which the actual appropriations bills are amended and approved. The House subcommittee mark-up is scheduled for Thursday June 23 at 4:00 PM. Typically, report language (such as for private cars and charter trains) is not made public until after the full committee has acted, which often occurs within a week of the subcommittee mark-up.

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Click [here](#) for the House Appropriations Committee's June 8 release ("updated June 9") listing all subcommittee mark-ups, running from June 15 to 30.

National Railroad Strike? *Railway Age* yesterday published an article, "NMB [National Mediation Board] Starts Clock Toward Rail Shutdown," by Frank Wilner, perhaps the national authority on such matters. Click [here](#) for the full story.

Some excerpts: Noting that mediation only began in March, Wilner said "this NMB release from mediation is thus one of the shortest, if not the shortest, on record...Also unprecedented is a release from mediation in an election year, setting up a possible nationwide rail shutdown just weeks prior to November congressional elections...Speculation is that rail labor seeks to throw the dispute before Congress while traditionally labor-friendly Democrats still control the House and Senate..."

"In 1991, a rail union – in a non-election year – played its political card before a Democratic-controlled congress and lost badly. The late Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA)...voted with the majority against labor's interests, calling his vote 'good for business, good for the economy and good for the nation.' In the House, all Democrats on the House Railroad Subcommittee voted against labor interests, with the carrier-friendly bill passing on the House floor, 400-5...There has not been a national rail shutdown, flowing from failed wage, benefits and work rules negotiations, since..."

"While the decision by the White House to name a PEB [Presidential Emergency Board] is voluntary under the Railway Labor Act, it is fully expected that a PEB will be named. If not, labor may strike or carriers may lock out, precipitating the national rail shutdown. The nation's rail network is so interdependent that even a selective strike against one Class I railroad almost certainly will bring down the others—operationally or in sympathy..."

Typically, Congress will resolve the dispute, in all probability using "the PEB recommendations to craft back-to-work legislation... [But] a single senator...may launch a filibuster that extends the rail shutdown. As former arbitrator and Democrat Robert O. Harris said in 1991, when rail labor took both a PEB and a congressional punch to the gut, 'Welcome to the oldest established craps game in Washington. Like the suckers in *Guys and Dolls*, you are risking your futures on the roll of the dice [when you fail to make a voluntary agreement].'"...

Denver-Moab Luxury Train Trip Report. Click [here](#) for an interesting report about a ride on Rocky Mountaineer's newest route, under the headline "I took a \$1,500 luxury train from Colorado to Utah. Here are 5 of the best parts about the trip and 6 things I thought were disappointing." Spoiler alert: She concludes, "While a few aspects of the trip felt disappointing, the best parts of the Rocky Mountaineer easily outweighed the worst parts. Sure, I wish I had more meal options or hours in Glenwood Springs, but the diverse landscapes, impressive windows, and friendly travelers are what left a lasting impression." The writer's enthusiasm for the wrap-around windows should encourage Amtrak to rethink its strange approach to the *Texas Eagle* – and any other Superliner long-distance train that is running without a Sightseer Lounge.

Southwest Chief capacity limits: After daily service resumed, the second sleeper was replaced with a transition dorm, so per-train capacity was sharply reduced, so 10 sleepers per week (2 sleepers on 5 trains) dropped to seven plus (1+ sleeper on 7 trains).



The infrastructure project calls for replacing 40 track switches throughout New York and the northern and southern Mid-Atlantic regions; and updating up to 25 miles of track in the southern Mid-

Amtrak Advances Summer Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Work

Amtrak this summer will make \$55 million worth of infrastructure improvements between Washington, D.C., and New York as part of a larger effort to bring the corridor into a state of good repair.

The railroad has hired 500 new employees to complete the projects, and will continue to hire additional workers.

The projects are designed to reduce the likelihood of lengthy train delays and significantly improve ride quality. Train schedules have been adjusted to account for the work and to avoid conflicts with other commuter agencies, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

"Amtrak continues to prioritize updating our infrastructure to improve service reliability on the Northeast Corridor," said Executive Vice President of Capital Delivery Laura Mason.

For each project, Amtrak's production team will work at night and heavy production will occur on weekend nights to minimize the impact on riders.

Specifically, the project calls for replacing 40 track switches throughout New York and the northern and southern Mid-Atlantic regions; and updating up to 25 miles of track in the southern Mid-Atlantic.

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Ashland Station in Virginia was upgraded to be in compliance with the ADA. Photo – Amtrak

Amtrak Upgrades Virginia Station, Launches Bus Service in Pennsylvania

Amtrak has completed accessibility upgrades at Ashland Station in Ashland, Virginia.

The station received two new brick platforms outfitted with two mobile lifts and an accompanying canopy. The mobile lifts on each platform will help riders with luggage, strollers or mobility devices. The upgrades are part of the ADA Stations Program, which aims to update Amtrak stations across the country to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Amtrak officials said in a press release

Amtrak worked with the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) and the [Virginia Passenger Rail Authority](#) to advance the project.

To date, Amtrak has completed 162 ADA-related projects, with 16 stations brought into compliance over the past fiscal year for \$58 million. Another 41 stations are planned for upgrades this fiscal year, totaling \$126 million.

Meanwhile, Amtrak this week launched a new bus service with two daily round-trips connecting Reading and Pottstown, Pennsylvania, to the railroad's network via Philadelphia. [Krapf Coaches](#) operates the service under an agreement with Amtrak. The bus service is provided in partnership with [South Central Transit Authority](#) in Reading and [Pottstown Area Economic Development](#).



STB Orders Mediation in Amtrak Gulf Coast Case

The [Surface Transportation Board](#) on June 10th [ordered board-sponsored mediation](#) in the case involving [Amtrak's](#) application to relaunch passenger-rail service on [CSX](#) and [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) tracks in the Gulf Coast.

The board also modified a protective order in the case to allow certain Amtrak personnel access to certain "highly confidential" materials.

The board is allowing certain in-house Amtrak personnel access to materials produced in connection with the 2020 and 2021 rail traffic controller (RTC) studies so that it can fully respond to evidentiary issues raised by the board in the recent hearing. The STB specifically invited the parties to present additional RTC modeling evidence, and without such access, Amtrak would be at a significant disadvantage, STB officials said in a press release.

In addition, the board's decision extended the deadline for filing supplemental evidence by 30 days, until July 13.

"Amtrak appreciates the board's continued efforts to instill transparency into this process and will work to meet the board's new deadline," Amtrak officials said in a written statement. "We will also work with the mediator the board appoints and continue our preparations for beginning this service along the Gulf Coast as soon as possible."

In March 2021, Amtrak asked the STB to order CSX and NS to allow Amtrak trains to travel over the Class Is' track between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama. Amtrak has not offered service along the Gulf Coast since Hurricane Katrina struck the area in 2005.

CSX and NS oppose Amtrak service in the area until certain conditions are met. A multiday hearing on the matter was held in April and May.

"All parties should have the opportunity to fully respond to the evidentiary issues raised at the hearing," said STB Chairman Martin Oberman in the press release. "It is also the board's intent to have a full and complete record in such an important matter that affects the public interest."



Each year, Chicago Union Station hosts nearly 20,000 trains and serves more than 3.3 million riders.

Amtrak Seeks Federal Grant for Chicago Union Station Project; Speeds Up Acela Trains

Amtrak is applying for a federal grant to help fund Chicago Union Station upgrades as part of a larger series of projects aimed at improving routes into and out of Chicago.

"The project would create new ways of accessing Chicago and Union Station in a more reliable, time-efficient manner," according to Amtrak's grant application.

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Each year, Chicago Union Station hosts nearly 20,000 trains and serves more than 3.3 million riders.

If funded, the project's estimated investment would total \$850 million. In addition to Amtrak and the federal government, funding partners would include the Chicago Department of Transportation (DOT), Cook County, Illinois DOT, Michigan DOT and Metra.

"This is huge news, with implications far beyond Chicago," [High-Speed Rail Alliance](#) leaders said in a June 13 blog post, noting that the proposal calls for things the alliance has supported for some time.

"The upgrades, if funded, would improve train travel not only in the city, but across America," they said.

Station improvements, according to the alliance, would include:

- removing walls and other barriers in the station concourse to improve traffic flow;
- new express escalators from the concourse to street level to reduce crowding;
- widening the BNSF Railway Co. line platforms to reduce overcrowding on the platforms during rush hours;
- rebuilding the former mail platforms to allow through-running and level boarding; and
- improving ventilation to remove diesel exhaust from platform areas.

Moreover, Amtrak is proposing a group of projects to make use of the St. Charles Air Line, which is a half-mile stretch of track south of the station.

"Through-running at Union Station and improvements to the St. Charles Air Line open up a variety of new routing options," alliance leaders wrote.

The blog post can be read [here](#), and Amtrak's grant document [here](#).

Meanwhile, Amtrak announced yesterday it is increasing Acela train speed in New Jersey, as recent infrastructure improvements along a 16-mile segment of track between New Brunswick and South Brunswick can accommodate speeds of up to 150 mph.

The project is part of the New Jersey High-Speed Rail Improvement program and a \$450 million investment by the U.S. Department of Transportation. It is the first of many speed upgrades anticipated in the Northeast Corridor that lays the framework for future trip-time reduction and improves service reliability, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The recently completed improvements included installation of new signal power cables, new catenary supports and wire renewal, installation of high-speed turnouts and renewed power substations. An additional 8 miles of catenary between South Brunswick and Trenton, New Jersey, are also being upgraded, with completion and speed increases expected in 2024, Amtrak officials said.

Railroading Heritage of Midwest America Announces Double Matching Grant

Trains Newswire [By](#) May 12, 2022 Up to \$7 million needed to restore two Union Pacific steam locomotives



The main Silvis shop building, where restoration work will be performed on UP Challenger No. 3985 and other equipment donated to Railroading Heritage of Midwest America. (Erik Rasmussen)

MINNEAPOLIS – Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA) has announced a Double Matching Grant program to aid in the restoration of its two recently acquired Union Pacific steam locomotives, Challenger No. 3985 and 2-10-2 No. 5511.

Under the program announced this week, all donations to RRHMA's Steam Restoration Fund will be matched with \$2 for every dollar donated, through matching funds provided by two longtime donors. Matching grants will be made up to \$500,000, potentially bringing \$1.5 million into the fund. RRHMA says it expects to spend up to \$7 million for the restoration of the two locomotives.

Challenger 4-6-6-4 No. 3985 last ran in 2010 and was officially retired from service by Union Pacific in 2020. RRHMA said it will restore the famous locomotive first, then begin work on No. 5511.

The 2-10-2 has been out of service since the mid-1950s but is in excellent condition, thanks to being stored indoors in the roundhouse in Cheyenne, Wyo. No. 5511 is one of the few remaining examples of a steam locomotive with innovative Young valve gear.



Amtrak Invites Press to Inspect New-generation Acela

By Dan Cupper *Trains Newswire* | May 24, 2022
Reporters tour train at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station



Amtrak displayed a next-generation Acela trainset for media members on Monday at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station. (Dan Cupper)



First class is marked by red design accents, although they may appear more orange in this lighting. (Dan Cupper)



Business class is distinguished by four-across seating, as well as blue design accents. (Dan Cupper)



The self-serve section of the Acela café car. (Dan Cupper)

PHILADELPHIA — Amtrak opened a second-generation Acela high-speed trainset for press inspection Monday at 30th Street Station, giving a look at the interiors of the first-class, business-class, and café cars that will make up 28 160-mph trainsets projected to enter service between Boston, New York, and Washington late next year.

Parked at an underground boarding platform on Track 9, a shiny white-and-blue Acela trainset contrasted sharply with the 47-year-old stainless-steel Amfleet cars making up a Philadelphia-Harrisburg, Pa., *Keystone Service* train on the next track.

The new trains will consist of 11-unit sets, made up of 2 power cars, a first-class car, a café car, and 7 business-class cars, one of which will be a designated quiet car. They are being built by French manufacturer Alstom at its plant in Hornell, N.Y.

Offering 380 seats each, the 28 trainsets will replace the current version of Acela — 20 eight-unit trainsets with 304 seats, dating from 1999-2000.

Noah Heulitt, project director for Alstom, said the new trainsets are lighter than the existing Acelas, reducing axle loadings from 23 tons to 17 tons and dropping total unloaded weight from 585 tons to 499.1 tons. As a result, he said, the combined power-car rating dropped from 6,169 hp in each existing Acela set to 4,758 hp for the new version.

Even with the lighter weight, Heulitt said, the cars meet the Federal Railroad Administration's buff-loading crashworthiness test requirement of 800,000 pounds. Fifteen of the 28 sets are in "some phase of production," he said.

Seven weeks ago, Amtrak distributed photos previewing the same interior features [See "Amtrak releases images of interiors for new Acelas," *Trains News Wire*, May 1, 2022].

Michelle Tortolani, Amtrak assistant vice president for the New Acela Program, highlighted new features as she led clusters of reporters through the interior. Among them:

- Recycled leather is used on all seats.
- Pitch (distance between seats) in First Class is 37 inches, compared to 34 inches at present. Business-class pitch is 33 inches.
- Red upholstery accents indicate first-class seating, while blue accents indicate business class.
- The first-class galley is located in a business-class car adjacent to the first-class car.
- Standard business-class cars all have four sets of folding tables to accommodate meetings of traveling foursomes.

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— Overhead racks will be open with clear guards, somewhat mimicking Amtrak Amfleet and Horizon Fleet practice, rather than air-line-style enclosed bins as used on current Acelas. This, Tortolani said, promotes a lighter appearance and tends to help passengers avoid leaving personal items behind.

— The café car has no seating. One end provides patrons with access to a self-serve pantry in a cafeteria-style flow, while the other offers an as-yet-unnamed standee area about 14 feet long with narrow tables on which to place coffee cups or food items being consumed.

— All toilet areas – one per car – are roomy and wheelchair accessible. Each is equipped with a circular pocket door rather than a traditional hinged style that is difficult for physically challenged passengers to open.

— A change in the power-car cab environment replaces the current two seats with a single centered seat, behind which are two training/observer seats.

After FRA certification for high speeds, Tortolani said, the trainsets are expected to enter service in the fall of 2023. This represents a second delay from the original schedule [see “Amtrak explains latest delay for new Acela deployment,” *Trains News Wire*, April 8, 2022.] A trainset has already tested at 165 mph [See “Acela testing on north end of Northeast Corridor,” *News Wire*, April 8, 2021]. The branding of some service features also appears to be fluid. One business-class car displayed a logo reading “Acela Class,” but Alstom communications manager Cliff Cole said that that term has been dropped from final consideration.



An inbound Metra UP Northwest train departs Palatine, Ill., in April 2019. Metra is adjusting its weekday schedule on the line; it is also one of seven Metra routes to have full Saturday service restored. (Trains: David Lassen)

Metra Restores Full Saturday Service on Seven Lines, Adjusts UP Northwest Schedule

Trains Newswire *By* | May 27, 2022

Changes on Northwest line reflect ridership data, customer comments

CHICAGO — Commuter rail operator Metra will restore Saturday schedules to pre-pandemic levels on seven lines as of this Saturday, May 29, and has also announced it will revise its weekday schedule on the Union Pacific Northwest line.

The new schedules will be introduced on the BNSF, Milwaukee North, Milwaukee West, Rock Island, Union Pacific North, Union Pacific Northwest, and Union Pacific West lines. Schedules [are posted here on Metra's website](#). “The Memorial Day weekend is the official start of the summer season, and with many events and festivals returning to Chicago, it’s the perfect time to welcome back our customers,” Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski said in [a press release](#).

The adjustments on the UP Northwest are effective Tuesday, May 31. A total of 18 trains are affected; details [are available here](#) and the updated schedule [is available here](#).

Metra introduced a pilot schedule for the Northwest line on April 25 [see “[Metra sets major expansion of UP Northwest schedule](#),” *Trains News Wire*, April 8, 2022]. The revisions reflect preliminary ridership data and customer comments, and the agency says it will continue to monitor feedback and adjust schedules.

“We expect to further revise the UP Northwest schedule in the near future,” Derwinski said, “and are especially focused on opportunities to add more express service as our riders have requested.”



CN Train Derails in Saskatchewan (updated)

Trains Newswire *By* | May 27, 2022

Derailment follows collision with road grader, killing driver

EDGELEY, Saskatchewan — A Canadian National train derailed after striking a road grader near the community of Edgeley on Thursday afternoon, [CKRM radio reports](#).

[The CBC reports](#) the driver of the vehicle, a 57-year-old man from the rural municipality of Lajord, Sask., was pronounced dead at the scene.

[Global News reports](#) officers from three detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were on the scene. The RCMP first reported the derailment at about 1:30 p.m., and said initial reports indicated some fuel may have leaked from the derailed cars.

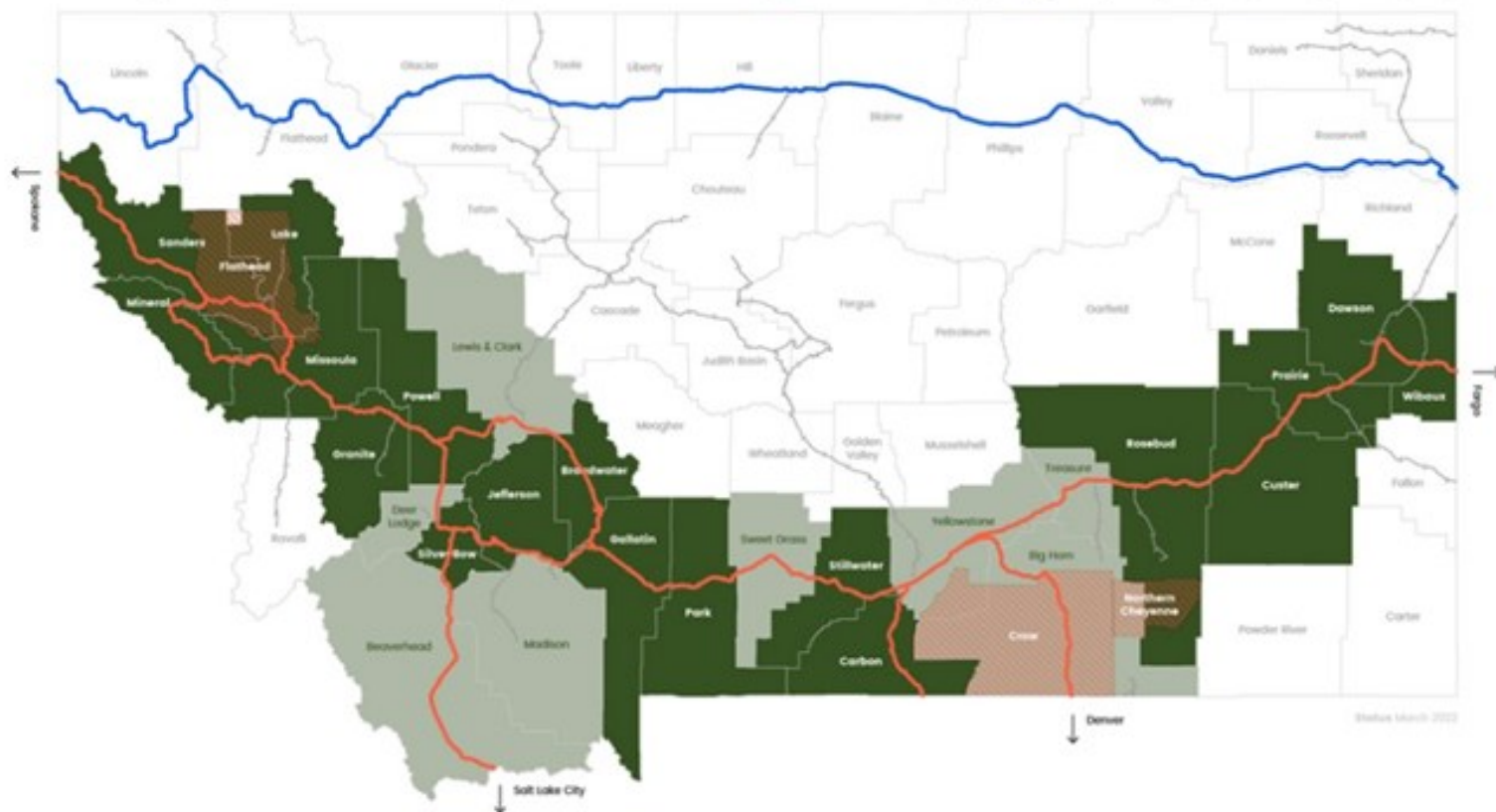
A statement from CN said 18 cars had derailed, and confirmed a small spill of an unknown substance.

Edgeley, a hamlet of 41 people, is about 30 miles northeast of Regina.

— *Updated at 7:40 a.m. CDT with additional information.*

Trains Newswire By | May 16, 2022

Existing Rail Empire Builder New Service Proposed +++ Other Rail Lines Tribal Nation Participating County Participating County Non-Participating



The railroad joins Amtrak and a representative of three Native American tribes as ex officio members. Jim Tylick, BNSF's assistant vice president of passenger operations, will serve as the railroad's representative. Seventeen counties now have representatives on the authority's board. More information is available at [the authority website](#)

SHORPY



Soo Line Station: 1910 provided by Chuck Lavallee

Duluth, Minnesota. "Up the incline from Superior Street." Competing for our attention with the Duluth Incline Railway is the trainyard fronted by Soo Line Station, and that 325-foot tower on the horizon. Built in 1910 by the Radio Wireless Telegraph Company, it blew over in a gale the following year. 8x10 inch dry plate glass negative, Detroit Publishing Company. [Read Comments](#) | [Buy Fine-Art Print](#)

A SECOND TRAIN TO **CHICAGO!**



Photo by Benjamin Dziechciowski

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Red Wing		8:54 AM	12:35 PM	Milwaukee		11:54 AM	3:52 PM
Winona		10:11 AM	1:39 PM	Wisconsin Dells		1:44 PM	5:49 PM
La Crosse		10:47 AM	2:17 PM	La Crosse		3:07 PM	7:11 PM
Wisconsin Dells		12:08 PM	3:36 PM	Winona		3:42 PM	7:47 PM
Milwaukee		2:07 PM	5:40 PM	Red Wing		4:44 PM	8:49 PM
Chicago	Ar	3:55 PM	7:14 PM	St. Paul Union Depot	Ar	5:39 PM	10:03 PM

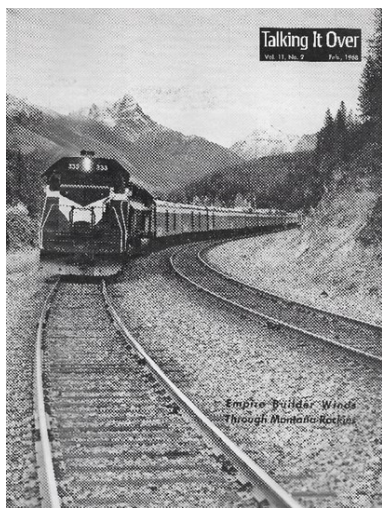
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*The late
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Mike Mackner
was mentioned
in the Great
Northern
Magazine
in 1968*

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Trainfest® <small>America's Largest Operating Model Railroad Show.</small>	November 12-13, 2022 9am—5pm	Wisconsin State Fair Park in Milwaukee, WI	Pricing to be announced
Northstar Railway Historical Society Picnic	Saturday July 16th 2022 11:00 AM	Maiden Rock Wisconsin	Bring your own lunch & beverage
Northstar Railway Historical Society Train Ride	Saturday August 20th 2022 12:00 Noon	Wisconsin Great Northern RR Trego Wisconsin	Sign up sheet included in this newsletter.

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