



NRHS

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Happy New Year ! Note Change: Next meeting Jan 21 2023



L: #261 North Pole Express Dec 4 2022 at SPUD from Mounds Park –Robert Thurn Photo

R: CP EB Manifest at University Junction Feb 7 2022 –R Tubbesing Photo



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Meeting Notice:

Saturday January 21, 2023 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our January Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2023 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month EXCEPT in January 2023.

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpenteur Avenues at 4:15 pm January 21, 2023..

Zoom instructions: You simply click on the link below to join using your internet browser. 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 open at about 5:45 pm Saturday evening for chit-chat and Zoom troubleshooting. If you would like to test your Zoom client during the week before the meeting, please contact Dan Meyer at dan@meyer-family.net and arrangements will be made.

January Zoom Meeting Sign-on for the January 21st 2023 meeting is noted here! Log in information for the January 21, 2023 Northstar Chapter NRHS Zoom meeting.

The Zoom meeting will open around 5:30 pm Central Time and officially begin at 6:15 pm.

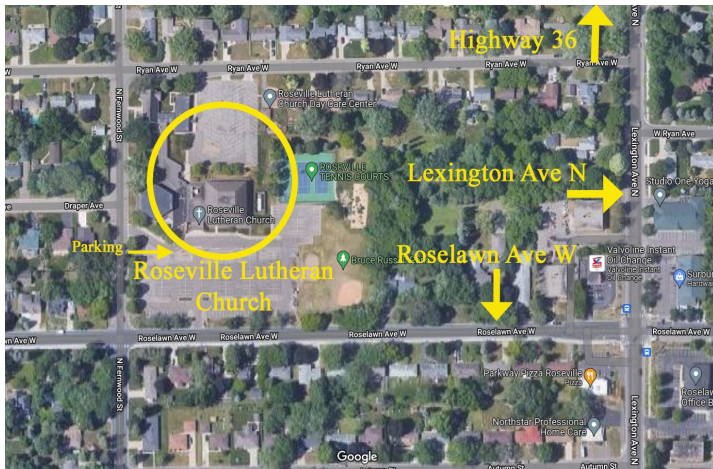
Join Zoom Meeting in the app: **Meeting ID: 863 4225 9893 Passcode: 272829**

Join Zoom Meeting with your browser: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86342259893?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86342259893?pwd=YkE2L2cwV0FNS0EvUUtjWFVadFFzUT09)
[pwd=YkE2L2cwV0FNS0EvUUtjWFVadFFzUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86342259893?pwd=YkE2L2cwV0FNS0EvUUtjWFVadFFzUT09)
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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. **(1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113)**



From the Editor:

Our Holiday Banquet at Mancini's Restaurant in St Paul on December 4 2022 was a great success. There were 34 members and friends present. We had great food and Aaron Isaacs gave a great presentation on the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. We look forward to our next holiday banquet at Mancini's in 2023. Thanks goes to Cy Svobodny for assistance in setting up our banquet with the Mancini's. See page 3.

Program for the January meeting will be Russ Isbrandt's film of Railroads he filmed in 1996 of his New England trip via the Cardinal and Northeast Corridor showing the Mt. Washington Cog Railway when they were still using steam.

Membership renewals for 2023 are Due!
Invoices have been sent. Please renew promptly!

Member Warren Krekelburg Hospitalized -from John Goodman

Not sure if you call him Warren, probably Jim. Anyway, he is still in the hospital. He may come home tomorrow. It will be a long recovery I think. he has had some issues to deal with since the surgery. Maybe when he is home, he can write his own message. Dianne (Warren's wife)

This is Dianne writing to you today. Wanted to let you know that Warren is in a bad way. He had open heart surgery on Tuesday. Since then, with an MRI it turns out he also had a stroke, probably during surgery. He is in Mercy hospital, probably until Christmas. Not sure what will happen after that. Maybe a need for a rehabilitation stay for therapy.

 Dianne

Our Chapter sends best wishes to Warren for a speedy recovery!

Northstar Railway Historical Society Holiday Banquet December 4 2022 Photos –Dawn Holmberg



*John Cartwright and wife Linda
Enjoying tasty Hors d'oeuvres*



The Many Attendees Enjoying the Evening Program given by Aaron Isaacs



*President John Goodman awarding NRHS 5 year Service awards
to Dave Baniwicz and Dawn Holmberg*



*Dawn Holmberg with NRHS 50 Year Service Awarded
to Russ Isbrandt*



*NRHS Service Award Achievements
to Russ Isbrandt and Dave Baniwicz with Dawn Holmberg*



*Minnesota Streetcar Museum President Aaron Isaacs
giving his Slide show Presentation*



DETOUR: Amtrak Prepares for Winter Weather in North Dakota

KX News Bismark ND by: Joe Rinaldi Posted: Nov 8, 2022 / 06:39 PM CST

Updated: Nov 8, 2022 / 06:39 PM CST Provided by John Goodman

NORTH DAKOTA (KXNET) — With the winter weather forecasted this week, Amtrak will be operating on a detour route for North Dakota on both Friday and Saturday. This is dealing with Westbound trains only.

Starting Friday, Amtrak westbound trains will be going from Fargo to Minot.

They will be skipping stops in Grand Forks, Devils Lake, and Rugby on Friday and Saturday.

Again, this is just for the upcoming winter weather and just for those two days on westbound trains.

So, when it comes to winter weather, how does Amtrak take you to where you need to go?

Amtrak operates a nationwide rail network serving more than 500 destinations in 46 states, the District of Columbia, and three Canadian provinces on more than 21,400 miles of routes. North Dakota is one of those destinations. But how does Amtrak prepare for the winter?

“Well, firstly, we’ve been putting shovels and salt bags and everything that everyone else would do in Greater North Dakota to get ready. I’m sure there are garages with shovels that have been freshened up and bags of salt and maybe even snowblowers,” said Public Relations Manager for Amtrak, Marc Magliari.

“So, that’s the basics, getting people off and on the trains. But our trains in North Dakota run on tracks owned by BNSF Railway Company, and we’re in hour-by-hour touch with BNSF every day. Certainly, right now we’ve been talking to them about this incoming winter storm and what it means. The first thing we do in severe weather like this with BNSF is to add a third locomotive onto each train just to be on the safe side. Two locomotives are certainly more than adequate to get us, up and over the Cascades and up and through the Rockies. Each locomotive has 4,200 horsepower. But we pick up a little extra horsepower and a little extra electric generation for the comfort systems in the winter. That’s the primary thing. We do stay in touch with the folks that own the tracks and also take preparations inside the train for getting people off and on the trains of platforms that might not always be plowed right away,” said Magliari.

“And are we gonna expect any delays over the next few months? Well, I mean, it’s like driving U.S. 2, right? You’re not gonna make normal time on U.S. 2 during winter, and just like the roadways, we’re not gonna make normal time on the railroad in the worst of the winter. And in fact, we can cancel. If things are just too dangerous to get people out and about, we will cancel. So, we recommend people staying in touch with us, certainly when they make the reservations to sign up for notifications and also follow our Twitter feed. If the highways close, we’re not gonna be running people out there if there’s no way to get emergency services to those people who have medical issues or the things to the train,” added Magliari.

So, how much traffic is Amtrak expecting this holiday season?

If you don’t make your reservation, certainly now for Thanksgiving or even now for the December holidays, you might not get your first choice of travel days.

So go to amtrak.com, download one of the apps, call 800-USA-Rail, or stop by the friendly folks in the Minot station and book your travel now.

Empire Builder Fights Weather, Congestion, Track Issues

By Bob Johnston | December 13, 2022

Coach passengers receive free meals on train experiencing long delay because of broken rail



Amtrak’s westbound Empire Builder rolls into Rugby, N.D., 7 hours late on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022. The train was delayed at Winona, Minn., the previous evening by a

— With winter storm warnings in effect across the northern plains from a windy, frigid blast that has already barreled through the Sierra Nevada and Colorado mountains, there is always the possibility that service on Amtrak’s long-distance network will be disrupted.

As was the case during a blizzard last month [“Westbound Empire Builder to miss ND stops,” *Trains News Wire*, Nov. 10, 2022 *News Wire*], BNSF Railway is implementing directional running in North Dakota between Fargo and Minot through this Thursday, Dec. 15. The eastbound *Builder* will continue to go with the freight flow and make stops at Rugby, Devils Lake, and Grand Forks, but passengers traveling west through those communities have been notified that the stations will be missed because trains are detouring via BNSF’s KO Subdivision.

“It’s BNSF’s call,” Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari tells *News Wire*, adding that no alternate transportation is being provided from Fargo or Minot due to expected treacherous conditions along blustery, two-lane U.S. Route 2.

Frigid weather was also likely responsible for a lengthy overnight delay for the westbound train that left Chicago on Friday, Dec. 9. It was stuck for more than 6 hours at Winona, Minn., while Canadian Pacific maintenance crews attended to a broken rail. Repairs were complicated because the break occurred at a highway crossing.

“We were supposed to leave St. Paul at 11:15 p.m., but they kept pushing the departure time back, so we sat on chairs in the depot all night until 6 a.m.,” Cheryl Gnerer explained in the Sightseer Lounge aboard the westbound train the next day. She was headed to Williston, N.D., to attend her sister’s surprise birthday party at Plentywood in eastern Montana. “No other way to get there; I’ve taken the trip many times and never had a delay like this before,” she added.

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Portland-bound coach passenger Arsham Dionysian prepares to eat a complimentary meal of beef stew and rice with a roll passed out to all passengers on the delayed westbound train Dec. 10. Bob Johnston

To help compensate for the disruption, Amtrak provided coach passengers with free food and non-alcoholic beverages all day: pastries at breakfast, sandwiches and chips at lunch, and beef stew over rice and a warm roll for dinner. Long-distance trains carry enough beef stew to feed all passengers for situations like this, or if a train becomes stranded for an extended period. University of North Dakota student Arsham Dionysian received enough early notification about the delay to get some sleep before heading to the station at Grand Forks for his trip to Los Angeles via the *Coast Starlight* at Portland, Ore.

Knowing the *Builder's* tardiness meant he would miss that connection, Amtrak switched Dionysian's *Starlight* reservation to the following day. "They called to tell me they were putting me up in a hotel room," he said.

The operating crew told some passengers that buses to Seattle and Portland might be substituted at Spokane so the equipment could make an on-time eastbound departure. This had happened the previous week when a westbound *Builder* was held at Minot for 6 hours until a BNSF freight derailment near Williston was cleared, but each section continued west.

Snows in the Cascades further delayed the train's Seattle arrival, so Sunday's eastbound *Builder* departed from the West Coast more than 5 hours late at 10:06 p.m. The delay ballooned to 7 hours at Williston, N.D., on Monday, but with recovery time in the schedule, shrunk to 5½ hours leaving St. Paul on Tuesday with a 9:30 p.m. arrival projected for Chicago instead of 4:45 p.m. Once again, connections are being missed.

Amtrak Cancels More Trains as Winter Storm Advances

By Bob Johnston | December 22, 2022 Provided by Rick Krense

Some routes will see no service through Christmas; western long-distance trains experience major delays



The eastbound *Empire Builder*, scheduled to arrive in Chicago on Tuesday, Dec. 20, makes its way through CP Morgan near Chicago Union station some 17 hours late on Wednesday, Dec. 21, behind BNSF power after all three Siemens Charger locomotives failed in rural Minnesota the previous day. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — As predictions of high winds and subzero temperatures move east, Amtrak has cancelled all service on some regional and long-distance routes while maintaining reduced service on others.

Amtrak had originally planned to maintain full service on Friday, Dec. 23, after projecting cancellations for Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday [see "Amtrak cancels *Empire Builder*, thins Midwest departures ...," *Trains News Wire*, Dec. 19, 2022]. [An advisory issued late Wednesday](#) now extends and modifies the earlier cancellations into Friday.

Also cancelled:

— The St. Louis-Kansas City, Mo., segment of *Lincoln Service* trains 318-319 to and from Chicago through Dec. 25, leaving no service on the route through Christmas.

— The eastbound *Pere Marquette* Dec. 22 and westbound from Grand Rapids on Dec. 23.

— *Illini-Saluki* Chicago-Carbondale, Ill., morning trains on Dec. 23.

— The *Capitol Limited* (Chicago-Washington, D.C.) and *Lake Shore Limited* (Chicago-New York/Boston) Dec. 22 and 23

— The *Cardinal* Friday Dec. 23, from New York, and Thursday and Saturday from Chicago. The Wednesday New York departure had already been cancelled.

— The *Southwest Chief* westbound from Chicago on Dec. 23. Tuesday's eastbound *Chief* from Los Angeles had been cancelled after a BNSF Railway freight derailment blocked the route west of Barstow, Calif.; Monday's westbound train terminated there Wednesday after being delayed 6 hours by mechanical issues leaving Chicago.

Empire Builder departures have now been cancelled through Friday, Dec. 23. Before the Tuesday and Wednesday cancellations, *Builders* leaving the West Coast suffered significant weather and mechanical delays. All three ALC42 Chargers leading Sunday's eastbound train broke down near Detroit Lakes, Minn., on Tuesday morning; the train's fourth locomotive, P42 no. 203, maintained head-end power during the all-day delay. A BNSF unit came to the rescue, pulling the train into Chicago 17 hours late Wednesday morning.

The eastbound *Builder* that departed Seattle and Portland, Ore., over 6 hours late on Monday after a weather-delayed inbound arrival was more than 21 hours late headed across Wisconsin on Thursday.

The *California Zephyr* has been plagued with Union Pacific freight congestion delays in Nevada all week. Two eastbound *Zephyrs* arrived into the Windy City on Wednesday, Dec. 21: The previous day's train at 11:48 a.m., almost 21 hours late, and Wednesday's arrival at 6:05 p.m. But that day's westbound *Zephyr* departed Chicago less than an hour and a half late. The Chicago-Emeryville, Calif., train has so far escaped Amtrak's cancellation list, though the train heading into the Midwest winter storm Thursday was running more than 6 hours behind schedule across Iowa.

Blizzard Traps Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Train South of Dalton

Snow removal efforts to free a stuck Burlington Northern-Santa Fe locomotive and railcars entered another night of work Saturday night south of Dalton.

By News Channel Nebraska Saturday, December 17th 2022, Updated: Tuesday, December 20th 2022, 10:59 AM MST



DALTON - Snow removal efforts to free a stuck Burlington Northern-Santa Fe locomotive and railcars entered another night of work Saturday night south of Dalton.

Two trains were parked when a blizzard struck the area on Tuesday, trapping one of the trains in drifting snow. Attempts to free the train with extra locomotives, and other railroad equipment, were unsuccessful.

Gusty winds created deep snow drifts and challenged crews who were trying to clear the tracks with a BNSF rotary snowplow from Alliance.

Several employees running excavators and skid steers were seen Saturday night along Highway 385 removing snow away from the train and tracks.

Roads in Cheyenne County, including Hwy. 385, had been closed since Tuesday before reopening on Saturday.

This is a developing story. Stay with News Channel Nebraska for the latest.

Photo Courtesy: Annie Reilly

Union Pacific Donation of Equipment Arrives at Silvis IL.

Photos by Jeff Terry November 19-November 20 2022



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RRHMA Receives \$25k Grant for Steam Engines

LOCAL NEWS by: Sharon Wren Posted: Dec 18, 2022 / 12:46 PM CST Updated: Dec 18, 2022 / 12:46 PM CST



The Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA) recently received a donation of \$25,000 from the Candelaria Fund. Thanks to matching grant opportunities, the donation was increased and the RRHMA actually received \$75,000. The donation will be used for the restoration of steam engines that were donated to the museum by Union Pacific a few weeks ago. The Union Pacific #3985, #5511 and #6936 were delivered to the Silvis railyards from Wyoming and are in the process of being restored to full working condition. The Candelaria Fund is a San Francisco based family foundation that makes grants in the areas of community cultural and historical organizations and economic opportunity projects to fight poverty, according to a post on the LinkedIn page of the foundation's president, Richard Tower. For more information on the museum and to track the progress of the steam engines' restoration, follow them on their [Facebook](#) page or visit their webpage [here](#).

Big Sky Group Helps Pursue Grant for Empire Builder Route

Trains Newswire By | November 11, 2022

Funds would aid improvements between Malta and Havre, Mont.



Amtrak's eastbound Empire Builder near Stanton Creek, Mont., on BNSF Railway's Hi Line Subdivision on April 3, 2016. Trains collection

MISSOULA, Mont. — The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority, the group seeking to return passenger service to southern Montana, has agreed to help BNSF Railway seek a federal grant for improvements on the route of the *Empire Builder*, the existing Amtrak service in the northern part of the state.

The Missoula Current reports that the \$15 million grant would go to infrastructure improvements on BNSF's Hi-Line between Malta and Havre, Mont.

Dave Strohmaier, president of the authority board, told the Current the railroad approached the organization "given that we've established ourselves as a statewide and national leader in passenger rail issues, to apply on their behalf for a grant that would enhance passenger rail passenger operations along the Hi-Line. ... It's a pretty big deal."

Strohmaier says the authority's involvement is needed because BNSF cannot pursue the grant on its own. And it will aid the relationship between the authority and BNSF, as well as freight and passenger rail operations in general.

The authority was formed to pursue restoration passenger service on the route of the *North Coast Hiawatha*, which last saw Amtrak service in 1978, but Strohmaier says strong *Empire Builder* service is beneficial to efforts to grow passenger service everywhere.



Illinois Railway Museum Acquires SD50 #7009

By Steve Smedley | November 2, 2022

Locomotive will be seventh C&NW diesel and 26th EMD in collection



The Illinois Railway Museum has acquired this former Chicago & North Western SD50, shown at Silvis, Ill., on Oct. 28, 2022. Erik Rasmussen Editor's comment: Member Gary Rumler operated this locomotive during his C&NW Career. This must make Gary a Happy Camper!

UNION, Ill. — Former Chicago & North Western Railway SD50 No. 7009 is headed to the Illinois Railway Museum after two benefactors provided the funds to purchase the locomotive from the dead line at National Railway Equipment in Silvis, Ill.

IRM says the locomotive is the first SD50 to be preserved by a museum.

The six-axle locomotive rolled off the Electro-Motive Division assembly line in LaGrange, Ill., in November 1985. It was one of 35 SD50s ordered by the CNW for use in the Powder River coal pool, followed by an order for 55 SD60s in 1986. These were the last EMD locomotives ordered by CNW prior to its merger with Union Pacific in 1995. Externally, the locomotives were identical except for the winterization hatch on the SD60 order. The SD50 gained a reputation for engine failures with its 3,500-hp 645F prime mover; the SD60 featured the new 16-cylinder EMD 710G3A, and a computer-controlled electrical system.

“The 7009 is a very significant acquisition for us,” said Jamie Koloanowski, IRM’s curator of diesel locomotives. “Not only is it representative of one of Chicago’s legendary railroads and built by Electro-Motive right here in Chicagoland, but it is also in remarkably original condition, not having been rebuilt with aftermarket upgrades. It even still wears its original C&NW paint applied at the factory. Its historic fabric is extremely complete.”

The museum said in a press release that the SD50’s acquisition comes as other locomotives of the model continue to operate in common-carrier service on a variety of regional and short line railroads. At IRM, 7009 will be the seventh C&NW locomotive and the 26th EMD locomotive in the Museum’s diesel collection, considered by many to be the most comprehensive in preservation.

Dave Allenson, a former Chicago & North Western engineer, weighed in on the 7000 series.

“Overall, I liked them,” he said. “They weren’t the greatest on coal trains; the GE’s were much better. They had the super series wheel-slip control, so they were able to give more adhesion than a SD40-2. The system allowed a certain amount of slippage; the wheels would just sing. And they had good dynamic brakes on them. ... The dynamics were great on them, but they were loud. The dynamic brake grid was relocated to right behind the cab.”

Wabtec’s FLXdrive Locomotives Win International Energy Award

By | December 13, 2022

Battery-electric locomotives cited for gaining support among customers



Wabtec’s FLXdrive battery-electric demonstrator departs BNSF’s Cicero Yard in April on its way back to the company’s Erie, Pa., factory. David Lassen

NEW YORK — Wabtec’s FLXdrive battery-electric locomotive project has been named “Commercial Technology of the Year” at the annual Platts Global Energy Award ceremony, held last week.

[In a Commodity Insights Magazine report](#), judges indicated they liked the fact that Wabtec “has engaged a lot of customers” and is “already generating revenue” from the project.

The company has orders for the battery-powered locomotive from Union Pacific [see [“Union Pacific orders 20 battery-electric ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Jan. 28, 2022], as well as Canadian National and Australian mining companies Rio Tinto, BHP, and Roy Hill. Kazakhstan’s national railway placed what is by far the largest order for FLXdrive locomotives to date when it ordered 150 switchers in September [see [“Wabtec signs deal ...”](#) *News Wire*, Sept. 20, 2022].



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

Issue #117 - December 2022

The holidays have arrived and trains are running. This year with more options than ever, with the [Christmas City Express](#), [Bentleyville Shuttle](#), [Julebyen Express](#), and the Christmas Tree Train (last weekend).

I hope you will enjoy this month's edition of *Trucksider*, and hope to see you soon,

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

JULEBYEN THIS WEEKEND December 3 - December 4



This weekend, December 3rd and 4th, climb aboard the train heading up the shore to Knife River to the recently restored depot, for the Julebyen Express. After arrival, explore the traditional Scandinavian Julebyen Christmas Festival. Enjoy Scandinavian foods, music and dancing, and fun shopping for artisan gifts inside dozens of colorful outdoor huts.



HUGE GIFT CERTIFICATE DEAL

The deal is 50% off Gift Certificates of \$100 value or more. Meaning a \$50 gift, gets you \$100 of benefit. It is more bang for your holiday shopping buck... and a perfect holiday gift, that gives your recipient something to look forward to next year. Take advantage of this limited-time deal today and save a few dollars in holiday shopping. At the same time, you are supporting the North Shore Scenic Railroad, a non-profit excursion line that supports the non-profit Lake Superior Railroad Museum.

[Get Gift Certificates Here and Save 50%!](#)

MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP IS A GREAT GIFT



Holiday shopping made easy. Consider a membership for that special someone who already has everything. Memberships start at \$40, and go up from there. Members of the museum enjoy FREE admission for a full year, plus free train tickets on the North Shore Scenic Railroad.

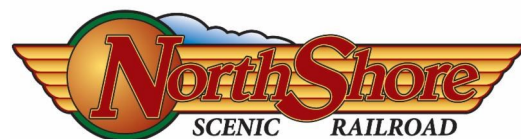
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"PUGET SOUND" JOINS THE FLEET



This past month, a new dome car joined the fleet of the North Shore Scenic Railroad. It is called the "Puget Sound" and comes as a donation to the railroad. Inside, there's several private state-rooms, a full kitchen, and of course a beautiful upstairs vista-dome lounge area.



AARPCO NEWS BRIEFS

December 2022 Volume 10 Issue 12 -Provided by John Goodman

Renew Your Membership for 2023

The magical season is upon us. Before your schedule fills with holiday cheer, take a moment to renew your membership for 2023.



There is one spot remaining for a Pullman-built car to participate in 2023 Pullman Railroad Days in Chicago. Participating cars arrive CUS on Wednesday, May 17. An evening reception will be held on CUS Track One on Thursday, May 18. AARPCO-member volunteers will provide docent-led public tours on Saturday and Sunday, May 20 and 21.

This event provides excellent exposure for the association. If you are interested in participating or have questions about the event, please contact execdirector@aarpc.com

Passenger Rail News



The Senate rejected proposed amendments that would have extended the cooling-off period and add paid sick days to the tentative agreements between railroads and their workers.

Photo – shutterstock.com



Demand for Amtrak service returned strongly in the second half of FY22, Amtrak officials said. Photo – amtrak.com

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Biden signs bill to prevent national rail shutdown

President Joe Biden this morning signed legislation to prevent a national rail strike and implement a tentative contract agreement between the nation's major freight railroads and their workers.

The U.S. Senate yesterday passed the legislation in an 80-15 vote. The Senate rejected an amendment to the bill that would have extended the "cooling-off period" that would have given four unions and railroads more time beyond a Dec. 8 deadline to continue negotiations. The Senate also rejected an amendment that called for adding seven days of paid sick leave for rail workers.

On Wednesday, the House passed the legislation to avert the rail strike, as well as a separate measure that called for paid sick leave. Paid sick leave was a key reason that members of four unions rejected ratification of the tentative agreement with the railroads. Members of eight other unions voted to ratify the agreements.

In a press conference yesterday, Biden said he would continue to address paid sick leave as a national issue.

Had Congress not acted on the rail-strike legislation, any one of the four unions could have called a strike after Dec. 8, which would have resulted in all 12 unions walking off the job.

"This legislation will implement tentative agreements for the four unions that had not previously ratified their agreements. We are pleased that the railroads and rail employees will be able to continue providing uninterrupted service to customers, communities and the public throughout the holiday season and beyond," [National Carriers' Conference Committee](#) officials said in a prepared statement. The committee represents the nation's freight railroads in collective bargaining.

The more than 100,000 employees in the bargaining round will now be covered by new collective bargaining agreements based on the recommendations of Presidential Emergency Board No. 250, which includes a 24% wage increase.

"The Senate acted with leadership and urgency with [yesterday's] vote to avert an economically devastating rail-work stoppage," said [Association of American Railroads](#) President and CEO Ian Jefferies in a press release. "As we close out this long, challenging process, none of the parties achieved everything they advocated for."

Congress acted swiftly after Biden earlier this week asked lawmakers to pass legislation to stop a national freight-rail shutdown.

"I want to thank Congressional leadership who supported the bill and the the overwhelming majority of Senators and Representatives in both parties who voted to avert a rail shutdown," Biden said in a prepared statement. "Congress' decisive action ensures that we will avoid the impending, devastating economic consequences for workers, families and communities across the country."

Amtrak: Ridership Soared 89% in FY22



The Gulf Coast region has been without Amtrak service since Hurricane Katrina destroyed rail infrastructure there in 2005. Photo – amtrak.com

Amtrak continued rebuilding its business and began a new era of intercity passenger-rail investment in fiscal-year 2022 by growing ridership by 89%, restoring and expanding service and launching major infrastructure projects, the railroad announced on November 30 in a [year-end summary](#).

"We worked hard to restore service and grow ridership in the face of lingering impacts from the pandemic, all while modernizing our assets to make train travel a better experience for customers," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner in a press release.

Demand for Amtrak service returned strongly in the second half of FY22, with overall ridership reaching about 85% of pre-COVID levels. Northeast Corridor, state-supported and long-distance ridership grew 110%, 85% and 56%, respectively, compared with FY21 ridership levels.

Based on current forecasts, Amtrak expects ridership and revenue to improve above 90% of pre-COVID levels by the end of FY23. The ridership increase helped Amtrak reduce its operating losses by \$145 million compared to anticipated FY22 levels, setting the stage for improved financial performance for train operations in the future, Amtrak officials said.

Preliminary results for FY22 (October 2021 through September 2022) include:

Ridership: Amtrak provided 22.9 million customer trips, including 7 million first trips by new customers;

Service updates: Amtrak added, restored or expanded 11 services in collaboration with state and federal partners, returning some service to nearly every route compared to pre-pandemic operations;

Added new employees: Amtrak hired more than 3,700 people — 3,000 skilled union workers and 700 management employees — to support service restoration and capacity expansion;

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Major projects: Amtrak advanced 10 major capital projects that will use federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding to modernize Amtrak's fleet and railroad infrastructure, including track, bridges and tunnels used by Amtrak trains and the railroad's regional commuter-rail partners;

Total capital spending: Amtrak invested \$2.3 billion in capital projects, including advancing new fleets of trains to operate in the Northeast, the Portal North Bridge in Kearny, New Jersey, and the B&P Tunnel Replacement program in Baltimore;

Total operating revenue: Amtrak logged total operating revenue of \$2.8 billion, a 47.8% increase over FY21. The railroad's adjusted operating loss was \$884.9 million, an 18.2% improvement over FY21; and

Safety: Amtrak continued advancing its safety management system and enhanced its safety culture.

Amtrak, CSX, NS, Port Settle Gulf Coast Dispute

[Amtrak](#), [CSX](#), [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) and the [Alabama State Port Authority](#) notified the [Surface Transportation Board](#) on November 22nd that they reached a settlement agreement over Amtrak's proposal to restore passenger-rail service along the Gulf Coast.

In response to the settlement notice, the STB granted the parties' request that it cancel an upcoming hearing and vote on the matter. The railroads and port authority plan to notify the board when the settlement terms have been met, STB officials said in a press release.

Details of the settlement are not being released due to their "confidential nature," the railroads and port authority officials said in a joint statement.

For months, the parties have been in mediation talks over Amtrak's plan to restore service on tracks owned by CSX and NS along the coast between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama. Amtrak trains haven't served the region since Hurricane Katrina damaged rail infrastructure there in 2005.

The Class Is and later the port authority objected to Amtrak's plan to restore service unless certain conditions are met. Amtrak then asked the STB to require the freight railroads to allow passenger trains to use the route.

The board held hearings on Amtrak's application earlier this year. Since then, the Class Is, port authority and Amtrak have been working with federal mediators to settle their differences.

The settlement will hasten the return of passenger-rail service along the coast, said STB Chairman Martin Oberman.

"The board appreciates the successful efforts of Amtrak, CSX, NS and the port to settle this important case. I particularly want to acknowledge the significant progress that has been made in achieving a settlement under the new leadership of CSX and NS, which I expect brought a fresh, constructive approach to resolving the matter," Oberman said.

Southern Rail Commission officials, who have been advocating for a return of Amtrak service along the Gulf Coast for many years, said the settlement is a positive sign for future passenger-rail service in the southern United States.

"I'm incredibly delighted by this settlement agreement, and we will continue to build on this momentum by working with all involved parties — especially the communities who have been waiting so long for passenger rail — to prepare for service to start," said SRC Chairman Knox Ross in a press release.

Amtrak Advances Susquehanna River Rail Bridge Project



A rendering of the completed project, which calls for the construction of two fixed bridges to replace the existing bridge. Photo – amtrak.com

[Amtrak](#), the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) and the [Maryland Department of Transportation-Maryland Transit Administration](#) (MDOT MTA) plan to award two contracts next year to advance the replacement of the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge.

The \$1.5 billion project calls for the construction of a pair of two-track fixed bridges that will replace the existing two-track movable bridge, along with 5 miles of additional realignment and construction, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The longest moveable bridge on the Northeast Corridor, the structure is used daily by more than 110 Amtrak, Maryland Area Regional Commuter and [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) trains.

In the coming months, Amtrak plans to issue several key solicitations, including construction manager at risk for the construction of the new bridges and a design-bid-build contract for enabling works.

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Amtrak is inviting firms interested in the program to attend an Industry Day in December to learn more about the project. Interested contractors should monitor [Amtrak's Procurement Portal](#) for further information about the event. The portal will offer additional solicitation information and submittal requirements. Attendance at Industry Day is not required to submit a proposal, but is highly encouraged, officials said.

The Susquehanna River Rail Bridge was identified on the recently released [Northeast Corridor Project Inventory list](#) issued by the FRA. The project is one of several major infrastructure projects that Amtrak's new Capital Delivery department is advancing.

"With the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we have the opportunity to update and replace more aging rail structures like the Susquehanna River Rail Bridge, and we look forward to working with states and entities to deliver the rail projects people across the country need and deserve," said FRA Administrator Amit Bose.

As a funding partner for the project, the MDOT MTA has committed \$3 million toward a design grant that was recently awarded. Amtrak and MDOT MTA are in discussions about jointly pursuing additional grant funding for the cost of construction under the Federal State Partnership Program.

"The bridge was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad at the turn of the 20th century, and while it was well constructed and remains safe, it is a significant bottleneck on the Northeast Corridor," said Laura Mason, Amtrak executive vice president of capital delivery. "Once complete, both new bridges will reduce trip time and improve reliability for passenger and freight trains that rely on this critical connection."

FRA Unveils Northeast Corridor Project Priorities



*FRA Administrator Amit Bose
Photo – railroads.dot.gov*

The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) on November 16th released its priorities for intercity passenger-rail service on the Northeast Corridor (NEC) between Boston and Washington, D.C.

The list will advance projects designed to improve and develop commuter and intercity passenger-rail service along the corridor. Specifically, the "[project inventory](#)" creates a project pipeline to assist [Amtrak](#), states and the public with long-term planning that will improve service.

The project inventory will guide up to \$24 billion in funding that FRA is investing in NEC intercity passenger-rail service through the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program, FRA officials said in a press release.

"These projects will deliver the modern infrastructure needed to improve the reliability and performance of train travel throughout the Northeast and establish a pipeline of critical future improvements projects. We appreciate Administrator Bose's and Secretary Buttigieg's leadership in developing this inventory and look forward to working with our partners to pursue future USDOT grants, including those provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to advance the projects listed in the inventory," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner in a prepared statement.

The first NEC project inventory consists of 68 projects divided into 15 major backlog projects and 53 capital renewal, stations and improvement projects. These projects will reverse a decades-long underinvestment in the country's infrastructure by replacing and rehabilitating vital rail assets while also planning for major rail station upgrades and expansions, FRA officials said.

Projects on the NEC must be on the NEC project inventory to be eligible for partnership program funding, for which FRA will issue a notice of funding opportunity before the end of the year, they said.

"These projects will deliver the modern infrastructure needed to improve the reliability and performance of train travel throughout the Northeast and establish a pipeline of critical future improvements projects. We appreciate Administrator Bose's and Secretary Buttigieg's leadership in developing this inventory and look forward to working with our partners to pursue future USDOT grants, including those provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to advance the projects listed in the inventory," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner in a prepared statement.

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AAPRCO
Mid-Month Highlights

December 2022
2023 Save the Date

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Grand Canyon Limited & 45th Annual Convention

May 1 - 5, 2023

Williams, Arizona

Host - Grand Canyon Railway

Pullman Railroad Days

May 20 - 21, 2023

Chicago, Illinois

Host - Metra

American Autumn Explorer III

October 2 - 6, 2023

Host - Vermont Railroad System

Schedule is subject to change.

Stay tuned to future news briefs for updated information



Washington Report

By Ross Capon

On December 7, the Senate Commerce Committee approved ten nominations, including the five Democratic nominees for the Amtrak Board (including renomination of Chairman Anthony Coscia) and the renomination of Robert Primus to the STB. Click [here](#) for the release and a link to the executive session.

Given the Senate's practice of confirming D and R nominees at the same time, and Senator Roger Wicker's (R-MS) explicit statement that he would withhold support on the floor until there are Republican nominees, it seems likely that the Administration will have to renominate these five plus Republican nominees next year.

So far, the Senate has received only one Republican nominee, Joel Szabat of Maryland, on September 12, and he has not received a hearing. Both parties have ignored the law's contemplation of geographical diversity, with only one nominee from outside the Northeast Corridor.

Click [here](#) for RPA's report, including this: "And while there was broad support among the Committee for the nominees, based on written and oral commitments by the nominees to support a long-distance network, there doesn't appear to be enough time left on the calendar to get the nominees across the finish line this Congress..."

"Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Chair of the Committee, opened the hearing by discussing the importance of the long-distance services to Washington State and Oregon, noting that all five nominees committed to her in writing to continue and enhance the National Network.

"Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS) finished the hearing by stating that he will also support the advancement of the Amtrak board nominees, but that his work with these individuals on the preservation of long-distance routes was 'just beginning.'

"I will hold them to their words of support expressed in their confirmation hearing,' said Sen. Moran. 'In this nation, it is important for support of passenger rail routes in regions like the Northeast Corridor. But it is equally important for the rural transportation alternatives to be maintained and enhanced. In Kansas we benefit currently from the Southwest Chief, and we continue to look to benefit further from the Heartland Flyer. For thousands of Kansans who live along these routes it's a very long drive, and the SW chief represents an important link for them to the rest of the country, and for bringing visitors from outside our state to contribute to the economic well-being of our state. I'm committed to ensuring the preservation of our nation's long-distance passenger rail service, and I look forward to the work ahead with each of the nominees, based on their commitment to me and to this Committee.'"

Cantwell also reviewed her earlier demand that Amtrak move expeditiously to restore service to pre-pandemic levels and said she had received commitments from all five nominees to hold Amtrak accountable for executing its service development and hiring plan.

Ed Von Nordeck, one of America's strongest passenger rail advocates, passed away December 6. Click [here](#) for my tribute. Click [here](#) for a nice Trains News Wire piece by Bob Johnston (non-subscribers get a limited number of free articles).

Passenger Rail News Charter Moves Increase in Fiscal Year 2022

Amtrak's office of Charters and Special Movements reports that charter moves have nearly recovered to pre-pandemic levels. The federal fiscal year 2021, which ran from October 1, 2020, to September 30, 2021, saw 119 moves for total mileage of 312,000. Fiscal 2022, which ended on September 30, 2022, recorded 163 moves for total mileage of 486,000. The 2022 totals represent a 37 percent increase in moves and a 55 percent increase in mileage.

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OIG: Amtrak should strengthen controls over high-security keys

[Amtrak](#) hasn't consistently implemented controls over the distribution, tracking and retrieval of its high-security keys, which contributes to security and safety risks, according to an Amtrak [Office of Inspector General \(OIG\) report](#) issued earlier this week.

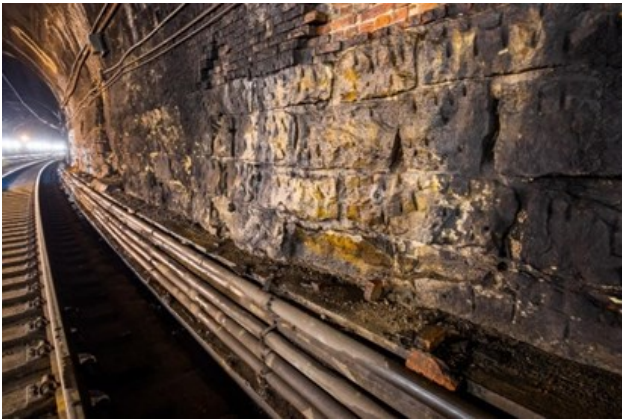
The high-security keys are physical keys used by Amtrak employees and contractors to access critical and sensitive infrastructure. In July, an OIG investigation found that a Florida-based employee tried to sell the keys online, which prompted the OIG's review. The state of Florida charged the individual for attempting the sale and for dealing in stolen property, OIG officials said in a press release.

Such high-security keys are broadly available to the public and can surface in online and brick-and-mortar marketplaces, contributing to security and safety risks, the OIG report states. Senior Amtrak officials told the OIG that the railroad has measures in place to largely mitigate serious risks. However, the availability of the keys could still enable "bad actors" to disrupt train operations, causing unnecessary delays and costs, OIG officials believe.

The OIG recommended that Amtrak consider assessing the cost and risks associated with implementing better controls over high-security keys in circulation, and implementing controls that are practical.

In addition, Amtrak management may want to help develop a policy that institutes new controls establishing a centralized mechanism for tracking high-security keys, the report states.

Amtrak to Pursue Delivery-partner Model for B&P Tunnel Replacement Project



The project will replace the 150-year-old B&P Tunnel (shown) with a new structure to be named the Frederick Douglass Tunnel. Photo – amtrak.com

[Amtrak](#) announced December 5th it will seek a delivery partner for the project to replace the 150-year-old [Baltimore & Potomac \(B&P\) Tunnel](#) in Baltimore.

Solicitation for the delivery partner is expected to launch in January 2023. In a delivery-partner model, the private partner takes substantial risk-sharing, impacting overall project outcomes, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

More than two dozen industry leaders responded to Amtrak's recent request for information for the project, which invited feedback on the use of the delivery-partner model.

The delivery-partner effort will complement the [construction manager at risk \(CMAR\)](#) for the B&P program's first phase — dubbed the "southern approach" — which is already in the request-for-proposal stage of procurement. The southern approach CMAR solicitation includes the new ADA-compliant West Baltimore MARC Station; all major excavation for the approach to the south portal for the new tunnel and bridge construction; and some utility and roadway work.

This CMAR procurement represents the first major project procurement since Amtrak was awarded more than \$20 billion in federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding, Amtrak officials said.

The B&P Tunnel replacement project will replace the existing tunnel with the new Frederick Douglass Tunnel. When completed, the new tunnel system will improve travel times for about 9 million passengers each year who rely on the Northeast Corridor for service, including Amtrak Acela, Northeast Regional and long-distance trains, as well as the MARC Penn Line.



MassDOT, Amtrak, CSX Seek CRISI Grant for Rail Corridor Projects

The [Massachusetts Department of Transportation](#) (MassDOT), in partnership with [Amtrak](#) and with support from [CSX](#), has applied for more than \$108 million through the federal [Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements](#) (CRISI) grant program.

If approved, the CRISI grant would fund rail corridor infrastructure projects between Springfield and Worcester that are planned as part of the state's "Connecting the Commonwealth: Early Actions for the Inland Route Project," MassDOT officials said in a press release.

The projects would improve a portion of the CSX-owned Boston-Albany Line to begin Amtrak service along the Inland Route, which would connect Boston, Worcester and Springfield to Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut, and New York City.

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"These improvements will allow for additional corridor capacity and decrease travel times between station destinations," said Massachusetts Transportation Secretary and CEO Jamey Tesler.

The CRISI-funded projects would advance the "long-awaited restoration of Inland Route service to western Massachusetts," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner.

END of AARPCO News



Volume 6 Issue 12 December, 2022

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thanksgiving is behind us with Christmas and New Year fast approaching, and the biggest question for most of us is, are we ready? With something scheduled every weekend, it's hard to get any Christmas shopping done. Nonstop Holiday trains keep us busy even past Christmas, with budgets relying on good ticket sales. Then we get through it all and exhale to catch our breath. No sooner are we done than it's time to pack up and head to Spencer. Each year has its challenges with pulling off a conference. However, Spencer has been through this before with RPCA. Conferences are nothing new to their group, and they're sure to put on a good show. Rail travel is taking a hit with Amtrak cutting service and accommodations in key markets based on staffing and equipment shortages. These service cuts now affect whole communities like Galesburg and many other locations. A potential rail strike could still occur, causing more issues with travelers. Perception is that rail travel is not convenient even when working correctly. At the same time, concerns about climate change are all over the news and, for many, in their backyards. "I want to cut my carbon footprint, but the train isn't fast enough, the schedule doesn't work, or Amtrak doesn't go near my destination," many would say. Our time is valuable, but the climate benefit of rail travel over flying isn't enough to get the general public on board. National rail travel is at an interesting crossroads. Amtrak is a good option for those concerned about the climate, but do they care enough to be inconvenienced? Much like our public discourse on several issues, we can't seem to agree if a National Rail service is a good value even if it's up to 90% cleaner. Our industry offers a unique perspective on National Rail travel. We demonstrate what it once was and could be again with significant investment by taxpayers. Even with all that investment, will it be enough to stop the next generations from flying even with the current climate concerns? Only time will tell, but in the meantime, we were green before green was cool (after dieselization). We even had battery-operated control systems on our railcars, with regeneration charging off the train's momentum. I don't think we want to go back to splicer drives, but we have an incredible story about being green yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Spencer. W. Roger Fuehring
President, RPCA Stay Safe

MEMBERSHIP NEWS



2023 | **RPCA**
CONFERENCE
SPENCER, NC

2023 Annual Conference January 12-15, 2023
N.C. Transportation Museum- Spencer, NC

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONFERENCE WILL BE:

A visit to the Aberdeen Carolina & Western headquarters and shop facility in Candor, NC.
The Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC, where volunteers have transformed the former Southern Railway depot and surrounding grounds into museum space.
Classroom and hands-on technical seminars including the yearly Amtrak and Federal Railroad Administration updates.
The annual banquet will feature guest speakers Davidson A. Ward and D. Shane Meador of FMW Solutions, LLC.

Extra fare activities will include:

- The visit to the Aberdeen Carolina & Western Railway shop and headquarters
- The Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum

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- an Amtrak trip to the NASCAR Hall of Fame
- a pizza and beer train to support the William Fuehring Fund for Future Leaders
- a Historic Salisbury tour with lunch at a local winery

All activity prices increase by \$10 on December 23, 2022.

The hotels we are using are next to each other. Links to book rooms with the proper code embedded are in the hotel section of the registration system.

There will be a \$20 fee for anyone paying the Conference registration by check.

Cancellation/Changes and Refunds: Fees for missed meals or events, late arrivals, and early departures will not be refunded. If a cancellation or change resulting in a refund is received in writing no later than December 22, 2022, fees will be refunded less a \$20.00 processing fee. All refunds will be processed after the conference. Substitutions are allowed at no charge.

FROM THE INSURANCE DESK

Our renewal process has started and we're optimistic that it will go smoothly with little or no increase in premiums. We still have a perfect record on liability claims. So far this year, we've had two claims on property, neither one resulting in a big loss. You have done a great job so far in this policy period minimizing risks.

Please remember to regularly check your equipment and watch out for security problems. If something does happen, it is critical that you report it immediately. Have you taken photos of your equipment this year to update records? Have you made any changes that would alter the value?

Happy holidays to everyone and look forward to seeing you in Spencer. Tom Johnson



RAILCAMP

RailCamp 2023 plans are moving forward. The NRHS has chosen dates for both camps. RailCamp East will be June 18-24 and RailCamp Northwest will be July 23-30. Once again, we will be housed at the University of Delaware-Wilmington for East and the University of Puget Sound-Tacoma for Northwest.

The cost for 2023 will be \$1,575.00. RPCA will once again sponsor and provide a full scholarship to both a male student through our Caldwell-Luebke RailCamp Scholarship Fund and a female student through our Stanlee E. Weller RailCamp Scholarship Fund.

The application will be on the NRHS website (<https://nrhs.com/programs/railcamp/>) in late December/early January. There will be no deposit due with the application.

The program is open to high school boys and girls who are currently freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors (class of 2023). Individuals who enter their freshman year in 2023 will also be eligible to participate. We will give preference to RPCA members and RPCA Organization families for our scholarships.

As we are seeing in our everyday lives, everything costs more now, including housing, food, transportation, and insurance. We understand that the events of the past couple of years have put strains on many budgets. Remember that no camper has ever been denied acceptance due to his/her ability to pay.

We once again thank you, our members, for your ongoing generous support of these Scholarship Funds, as well as our Insurance partners at United Shortline, HMBD Miller-Beuachamp, and CBIZ Borden Perlman Insurance for their ongoing support.

As in the past, all directors and counselors are volunteers, along with our business partners at Amtrak and the many host Organizations that we visit, are giving their time and expertise to make the RailCamp weeks the most memorable experience.

Should you have any questions, please let me know. Roy Wullich Treasurer

SAFETY

SEASON OF LIGHTS AND DECORATIONS

Wow! Hard to believe it is time to write another Christmas season safety article. The Christmas season is the season for lights. Many of us volunteer our time for numerous runs of the Holiday Express when we decorate our rolling stock with tinsel, banners, and, of course, lights. To see this equipment dressed up for the holiday runs is spectacular in and of itself.

It takes many hands to deck out this equipment, wiring up the lights, stringing the tinsel, and bunting. It also involves using ladders, hand tools, electrical cords and plugs, and other tricks of the trade that we have discovered over the years. Accordingly, the safety aspects of decorating the equipment take on many forms.

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Climbing a ladder in dry, clear weather is usually not associated with too many hazards. Climbing a ladder with snow and ice present changes everything. Not only does the ladder require a good, solid footing, but work boots need to be cleaned of snow or ice or any other slippery substance. Once on the ladder, stringing lights or tinsel with outstretched arms adds another safety dimension. Stay balanced on the ladder, and don't overreach.

I would guess that the use of electrical extension cords and strings of lights would almost be universal to holiday trains. A check to see if any of the electrical cords or lights are hanging low enough to snag something up is easily done. Duct tape has many uses, and taping down cords and lights is probably just one. Zip ties are handy as well. Cords and lights should not be strung where passengers could get tangled up and tripped. Duct tape might work in warmer weather, but what happens when it gets cold and wet? Will it hold up to the foot traffic of the Christmas season?

We all want a safe and cheerful Christmas season and recognizing the hazards and issues will go a long way. Wishing you and yours that SAFE and Merry Christmas,

RAILROAD NEWS

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

Museum and Excursion Trains

Strasburg Rail Road's ex-Norfolk & Western 4-8-0 475 is back in action less than a week after it collided with an excavator — damaging the front end of its smokebox. Locomotive 475 was running around its train at Paradise, Pa., and as the locomotive passed the train on the other track, the crew was waving to passengers and apparently did not see that the switch in front of them was misaligned. The locomotive went through a misaligned switch and right into a maintenance of way excavator. The bucket of the excavator punched a hole through the locomotive's smokebox. No one was injured during the collision.

The Old Santa Fe Association is sprucing up the Santa Fe 2-10-4 No. 5030, which has been on display in a Santa Fe park since 1959. Volunteers have cleared trash and weeds and set up a new fence around the 380, repaired some of the rust and corroded metal from the boiler, and given it a fresh coat of paint.



10-4 5011 Class locomotives built for Santa Fe by Baldwin in 1944. Designed to haul heavy freight at speeds approaching 70 mph, they also pulled passenger troop trains during the final years of WWII. No. 5030 is one of five preserved Santa Fe 2-10-4s.

Canadian Pacific has released a video of 4-6-4 No. 2816 being moved into its Calgary shop for an overhaul. According to CP, No. 2816 is "being prepped for a special cross-continental trip from Calgary to Mexico City to celebrate completion of the proposed CP-KCS merger, pending regulatory approval, and the connecting of a continent through the creation of CPKC." CP 1001, now in testing to become the world's first hydrogen-powered line haul freight locomotive, pulls the 1930-built 4-6-4 into the shop.

The Western Maryland Scenic Railroad has added former New York Central grill dining car No. 456 to its fleet. The car was part of the Chattanooga Choo-Choo hotel complex for over 50 years. The railroad will be relocating the diner to Cumberland, with Memorial Day 2023 as the target date to roll out the diner. No. 456 is one of 18 grill diners built for the New York Central in 1948 by Budd.

The Budd-built Puget Sound has been donated to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. The car will operate on the North Shore Scenic Railroad between Duluth and Two Harbors, Minn. It was built in 1955 and was originally part of the Great Northern's Empire Builder. Amtrak acquired the car in 1971, and it was sold into private ownership in 1993. Avalon rebuilt the car, reconfiguring the dome with table seating, lounge space, and a dumbwaiter to a galley on the lower level. In addition to the galley, the lower part of the car was converted into sleeping space. Renamed Puget Sound, the car traveled widely in charter service on Amtrak until it was donated to LSRM.

The Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society has acquired a Canadian Pacific Park-series dome-lounge-observation car built in 1954 for use in excursion service. While plans are for the car to undergo an extensive restoration, it will initially enter service as part of the society's Indiana Rail Experience program on the Indiana Northeastern Railroad. The car, Riding Mountain Park, was one of 18 built by the Budd Co. for CP's Canadian. Deemed surplus by VIA Rail Canada, it was sold in 2005 and has been in storage for more than 10 years at the Adrian & Blissfield Rail Road Co. in Blissfield, Miss. It largely retains its original interior and artwork.

Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad, operator of the Cass Scenic Railroad, has announced a series of special events: Rare steam winter excursions Dec. 2-4 and 9-11, 2022; The return of West Virginia Central Railroad excursions, powered by classic diesel locomotives, from Elkins to Tygart Junction and return, on Fridays and Saturdays from Jan. 13 to March 18, 2023. Cass Scenic Railroad has operated few winter excursions through the years. The trips planned for December will operate north from Cass along the Greenbrier River, will last for 70 to 90 minutes, and will cover all available former C&O Greenbrier Subdivision track between Cass and Durbin.

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The only operating Central Railroad of New Jersey steam locomotive — and one of only two survivors — will be leading leading “Santa Trains” in Pennsylvania. The excursions come just weeks before the locomotive, Jersey Central 0-6-0 113, will turn 100 years old. The Alco-built 113 has been under the care of the nonprofit Railway Restoration Project 113 since 1986 and is used occasionally to lead excursion trains on the Reading & Northern out of the former Philadelphia & Reading station in Minersville, Pa. The excursions are scheduled for December 10 and 11.



Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies

The parties involved in the long-running dispute over Amtrak’s effort to launch Gulf Coast passenger service say they have reached an agreement but, at least initially, are offering no details on the nature of that deal. In a joint statement, Amtrak, CSX Transportation, Norfolk Southern, and the Alabama State Port Authority said they have “collectively reached an agreement to support passenger and freight service in the Gulf Coast Corridor. ... Due to the confidential nature of the settlement agreement, the parties are not able to provide further comment on its terms at this time.” The four parties asked the STB to hold in abeyance further proceedings involving the case, canceling hearings set for Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, as well as a Dec. 7 conference to vote on a decision in the case.

The parties will provide the board with an update on the status of the agreement by June 30, 2023, if the agreement is not completed before then. The case has been viewed as having significance far beyond its route, as an STB ruling could set a precedent as Amtrak looks to expand corridor service elsewhere.

Amtrak has announced the suspension of two Midwest trains. No. 380, the morning Quincy to Chicago Illinois Zephyr, and No. 381, the morning Chicago to Quincy Carl Sandburg, have been canceled through Jan. 16, 2023. Bus service will be provided as an alternative to the trains during the cancellation period. The cancellations are due to the lack of qualified operating crews at the Quincy crew base. The afternoon counterparts — No. 382, the Carl Sandburg running Quincy to Chicago, and No. 383, the Illinois Zephyr from Chicago to Quincy — will continue to operate.

For the third time in a month, a railroad union has rejected a contract put forward by six of the seven Class I railroads — once again increasing the likelihood of a strike or lockout before the end of the year. Members of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers — a small group representing about 300 locomotive mechanics — did not take a deal negotiated by their leadership. Members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees also rejected agreements that had been hashed out back in September with the National Carriers Conference Committee, which represents the five U.S. Class Is plus Canadian National’s operations south of the border. Once that cooling period ends on December 4, labor could go on strike or management could lock employees out.

Norfolk Southern Chief Operating Officer Cindy Sanborn will retire at the end of the year and will be succeeded by Paul Duncan, who is currently senior vice president of transportation and network operations. As the first female chief operating officer of a Class I railroad in the United States, she was considered a trailblazer and an inspiration to many in the industry. Sanborn previously served as chief operating officer at CSX Transportation, where she worked for 30 years, and vice president of network planning at Union Pacific. She was named NS chief operating officer on Sept. 1, 2020.

R.J. Corman Railroad Co., has reached an agreement to purchase a 43-mile branch line and lease another 20-mile branch in North Carolina from Norfolk Southern. This will be the 19th railroad operated by Corman. The sale is subject to customary regulatory approvals. The newly created Raleigh & Fayetteville Railroad, LLC (RFCC) will operate between Raleigh and Fayetteville, N.C., on an original Norfolk Southern Railway line. Corman said it expects to take over operations in December 2022.

End of RPCA News!

Biden Calls on Congress to Head off Potential Rail Strike



OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — President Joe Biden on Monday asked Congress to intervene and block [a railroad strike](#) before next month’s deadline in the stalled contract talks, and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said lawmakers would take up legislation this week to impose the deal that unions agreed to in September. “Let me be clear: a rail shutdown would devastate our economy,” Biden said in a statement. “Without freight rail, many U.S. industries would shut down.” In a statement, Pelosi said: “We are reluctant to bypass the standard ratification process for the Tentative Agreement — but we must act to prevent a catastrophic nationwide rail strike, which would grind our economy to a halt.” Pelosi said the House would not change the terms of the September agreement, which would challenge the Senate to approve the House bill without changes.

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The September agreement that Biden and Pelosi are calling for is a slight improvement over what the board of arbitrators recommended in the summer. The September agreement added three unpaid days off a year for engineers and conductors to tend to medical appointments as long as they scheduled them at least 30 days in advance. The railroads also promised in September not to penalize workers who are hospitalized and to negotiate further with the unions after the contract is approved about improving the regular scheduling of days off.

Hundreds of business groups had been urging Congress and the president to step into the deadlocked contract talk and prevent a strike.

Both the unions and railroads have been lobbying Congress while contract talks continue. If Congress acts, it will end talks between the railroads and four rail unions that rejected their deals Biden helped broker before the original strike deadline in September.

Eight other unions have approved their five-year deals with the railroads and are in the process of getting back pay for their workers for the 24% raises that are retroactive to 2020.

If Congress does what Biden suggests and imposes terms similar to what was agreed on in September, that will end the union's push to add paid sick time. The four unions that have rejected their deals have been pressing for the railroads to add that benefit to help address workers' [quality of life concerns](#), but the railroads had refused to consider that.

Biden said that as a "a proud pro-labor president" he was reluctant to override the views of people who voted against the agreement. "But in this case — where the economic impact of a shutdown would hurt millions of other working people and families — I believe Congress must use its powers to adopt this deal."

Biden's remarks and Pelosi's statement came after a coalition of more than 400 business groups sent a letter to congressional leaders Monday urging them to step into the stalled talks because of fears about the devastating potential impact of a strike that could force many businesses to shut down if they can't get the rail deliveries they need. Commuter railroads and Amtrak would also be affected in a strike because many of them use tracks owned by the freight railroads.

The business groups led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers and National Retail Federation said even a short-term strike would have a tremendous impact and the economic pain would start to be felt even before the Dec. 9 strike deadline. They said the railroads would stop hauling hazardous chemicals, fertilizers and perishable goods up to a week beforehand to keep those products from being stranded somewhere along the tracks.

"A potential rail strike only adds to the headwinds facing the U.S. economy," the businesses wrote. "A rail stoppage would immediately lead to supply shortages and higher prices. The cessation of Amtrak and commuter rail services would disrupt up to 7 million travelers a day. Many businesses would see their sales disrupted right in the middle of the critical holiday shopping season."

A similar group of businesses sent another letter to Biden last month urging him to play a more active role in resolving the contract dispute.

On Monday, the Association of American Railroads trade group praised Biden's action.

"No one benefits from a rail work stoppage — not our customers, not rail employees and not the American economy," said AAR President and CEO Ian Jefferies. "Now is the appropriate time for Congress to pass legislation to implement the agreements already ratified by eight of the twelve unions."

Business groups that have been pushing for Congress to settle this contract dispute praised Biden's move.

"The Biden administration's endorsement of congressional intervention affirms what America's food, beverage, household and personal care manufacturers have been saying: Freight rail operations cannot shut down and imperil the availability and affordability of consumers' everyday essentials," said Tom Madrecki, vice president of supply chain for the Consumer Brands Association. "The consequences to consumers if a strike were to occur are too serious, especially amid continued supply chain challenges and disruptions."

Clark Ballew, a spokesman for the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, which represents track maintenance workers, said before Biden's announcement that the union was "headed to D.C. this week to meet with lawmakers on the Hill from both parties. We have instructed our members to contact their federal lawmakers in the House and Senate for several weeks now."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Neil Bradley said Biden was correct in advocating for the deal already reached. "Congress must do what it has done 18 times before: intervene against a national rail strike," Bradley said in a statement, and he called Congress enforcing the deal agreed to by railroads and union leaders the "only path to avoid crippling strike."

The railroads, which include Union Pacific, BNSF, Norfolk Southern, CSX and Kansas City Southern, wanted any deal to closely follow the [recommendations](#) a special board of arbitrators that Biden appointed made this summer that called for the 24% raises and \$5,000 in bonuses but didn't resolve workers' concerns about [demanding schedules](#) that make it hard to take a day off and other [working conditions](#). That's what Biden is calling on Congress to impose.

Metro News - Senate Votes On Railway Contract

December 1, 2022, 6:13 PM, Frederick Krenske

The Senate voted Thursday to enforce a contract negotiated between railway companies and twelve unions, avoiding a likely economy-crippling strike.

Railway workers from four out of the twelve major unions [refused](#) to ratify a contract negotiated by the White House and threatened to commence a strike on Dec. 9. A walkout would cause more than 765,000 Americans to lose their jobs and imperil the country's clean water supply, President Joe Biden [said](#) in a statement asking Congress to enforce the contract under the Railway Labor Act of 1926.

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The Senate voted 80-15 to enforce the contract [negotiated](#) by Labor Secretary Marty Walsh and Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. It includes a 24% raise over five years, but does not add paid sick leave. An amendment to include paid sick leave required 60 votes, and failed 52-43. The bill now goes to Biden for signature. **(RELATED: Sen. Marco Rubio Sides With Unions In Ongoing Railroad Dispute)**

The vote to add seven days of paid sick leave featured a fist bump between Republican Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Independent Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, both of whom supported the sick leave. The House passed sick leave along party lines as a separate resolution to prevent it from holding up the larger agreement.

“Congress should have sent everyone back to the negotiating table, but instead it told rail workers to suck it up and be grateful. If we had to get involved, we should have worked to meet the demands of the workers instead of appeasing labor leaders and companies. Because the truth is that the companies risked a nationwide shutdown of freight rail because they wouldn’t give their workers any paid sick days,” Republican Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, who voted against the final bill, said in a statement.

“America’s freight rail industry is critical to our economic success, and there is no doubt that it has been a financial success recently, paying out about \$200 billion in dividends and stock buybacks over the past 12 years. But financial success is not the sole measure of what is good for our nation.”

Proponents of Twin Cities-Duluth Passenger Rail Hope DFL Control Will Help Their Cause

By ALEX DEROSIER | aderosier@forumcomm.com | Forum News Service

December 4, 2022 at 5:19 a.m. -Provided by Rick Krenske



A mother and son walk to board Amtrak’s Empire Builder train at St. Paul’s Union Depot on July 16, 2015. (Holly Peterson / Pioneer Press)

Supporters of a proposed passenger rail line between Duluth and the Twin Cities are optimistic the project could soon receive the state funding needed to move forward after years of planning.

For years, the Northern Lights Express rail project has failed to gain traction in the Minnesota Legislature, largely due to GOP opposition. But after Democrats won a majority in the Senate in this year’s election and secured control of Minnesota government, the state is closer than ever to chipping in funds needed to unlock federal backing for the \$450 million project.

“I wouldn’t want to say that I am confident yet; I am very, very hopeful,” said Sen. Jen McEwen, DFL-Duluth. “There’s a lot of people who are eager to see passenger rail return to Duluth and connecting Duluth to the Twin Cities again, and it’s been such a long time coming.”

The Northern Lights Express, or NLX, would use 152 miles of existing BNSF Railway track and connect Target Field in downtown Minneapolis to the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth. Stops are planned in Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley and Superior.

Amtrak last operated a passenger rail route between the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities in the mid-1980s, and has agreed to run NLX if it moves forward.

Sections of track would be built alongside the main route so the passenger trains could move out of the way as freight trains move through. Passenger trains would travel about 90 mph along the route.

The Target Field stop in downtown Minneapolis would provide close access to public transit options to reach destinations across the Twin Cities, including light rail connections to downtown St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. McEwen pointed out that the route will also provide access to the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis via light rail.

Groups backing the passenger rail line already have a plan for the project which is “shovel-ready” McEwen said. BNSF said it would not take an official stance on the project until funding is secured.

The \$1 trillion infrastructure bill passed by Congress in 2021 opened the door for federal funding for the NLX project. But to gain access to that funding, Minnesota would have to chip in 20% off the price tag — more than \$80 million.

The DFL-controlled House passed a bill to provide \$85 million in funding earlier this year, but the Republican-controlled Senate sent a strong statement against NLX by passing an amendment blocking the state from spending on the project.

But Minnesota Democrats maintained their majority in the House this November and gained a one-seat majority over Republicans in the Senate, opening a possible path. Gov. Tim Walz also signaled support when he asked for \$16 million for the project in his \$2.7 billion bonding proposal earlier this year. The split Legislature failed to pass a bonding bill in 2022, and borrowing for public infrastructure projects is likely to be a priority during the 2023 session.

McEwen said groups including labor unions, businesses, colleges and universities, and citizen advocacy boards all back the project and will be a key part of getting funding for NLX passed.

Northern Lights Express Alliance, a coalition of groups pushing for the rail connection, said it is “optimistic” the project will get the 20% statewide funding needed to unlock federal dollars in 2023. The group’s chair, Andrew Johnson, a Minneapolis City Council member, pointed out that the state will get \$4 for every \$1 put toward the project, and urged members of the public to reach out to their senators and representatives to voice their support.

“Residents, seniors, students, veterans and business people who support transportation choices that are both environmentally sustainable and great for the economy can help by speaking to their legislators,” he said in a news release.

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Opponents of the NLX line are skeptical of demand for the service and Republican senators representing the districts along the proposed route have said their constituents are not interested in passenger rail.

Pine City Republican Sen. Jason Rarick told the Duluth News Tribune earlier in 2022 that he didn't see why anyone would use the train as it would typically take longer than traveling by highway.

"I don't see that the cost is going to be worth the usage," he said.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation estimates a trip on the NLX would take about 2½ hours and could possibly outperform drive times depending on weather and traffic.

Transportation officials estimate up to 750,000 people will ride the train in the first year of service at an estimated annual operating cost of \$18.9 million, \$12 million of which would be covered by rider fares. Tickets would be about \$30-\$35.



Lower Volume, Higher Costs Weigh on BNSF's Third-quarter Earnings

Trains Newswire By Bill Stephens | November 7, 2022

Volume fell in three out of the railway's four business groups



A BNSF intermodal train approaches Kansas City Union Station on May 8, 2022. David Lassen

OMAHA, Neb. — BNSF Railway's profits declined in the third quarter due to a combination of lower volume and higher operating expenses.

The railway's operating income fell 7.1%, to \$2.1 billion, on revenue of \$6.5 billion, a 16.8% increase, BNSF's parent company, Berkshire Hathaway, [reported on Saturday](#). Revenue rose due to higher fuel surcharge revenue and an increase in average revenue per carload and intermodal unit.

Expenses rose 32.8% as fuel prices shot up 80% and compensation and benefits rose 26.6%. BNSF's operating ratio rose 8.2 points to 67.7% in the quarter.

Overall volume was down 5% as consumer products, industrial products, and coal traffic all declined.

Consumer products volume, which includes intermodal and automotive traffic, fell 7.2%. "The volume decreases were primarily due to lower international intermodal shipments resulting from supply chain disruptions," Berkshire Hathaway reported.

Industrial products volume slumped 6.8%, driven by lower petroleum and building products shipments. Agricultural volume was up 4.2% thanks as domestic grain, renewable diesel and oil and feedstock shipments all rose. Coal volume declined 1.2% "primarily due to network challenges," Berkshire Hathaway reported.



Union Pacific Wants to Provide Rail Labor with Paid Sick Days, More Predictable Schedules

By Bill Stephens | December 14, 2022



Union Pacific crew members from a westbound manifest freight inspect an eastbound intermodal train as it passes near Wamsutter, Wyo., on Sept. 1, 2022. David Lassen

WASHINGTON — Union Pacific wants to address sick leave for its unionized employees and provide certainty regarding scheduled days off, CEO Lance Fritz told the Surface Transportation Board on Tuesday.

STB Member Robert Primus asked Fritz if he would be in favor of adding sick leave, something that rail labor is seeking through congressional action after failing to get paid sick days at the negotiating table in the latest round of contract negotiations.

Primus suggested that the costs of providing paid sick time would be outweighed by service benefits.

"We definitely want to address sick leave and certainty in time off in terms of scheduling ... There's a host of ways we can get there," Fritz replied. "There's economics that are available to make that happen. And we are committed to making that happen this coming year." UP also wants to reach agreements with labor about providing more workers with predictable schedules, Fritz says, as part of an effort to improve quality of life for workers and the railroad's ability to recruit and retain operating employees.

UP and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen are currently running a pilot program in Kansas that aims to make engineer schedules more predictable.

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The STB has no regulatory authority over employment levels at railroads. But the agency does have the ability to regulate service, which is related to staffing at railroads.

Primus asked Richard Edelman, a lawyer representing several rail unions including the SMART-TD union, what the current mood was among rank-and-file union members given the protracted contract negotiations that ended with Congress imposing Presidential Emergency Board recommendations on four unions that rejected tentative agreements with the railroads.

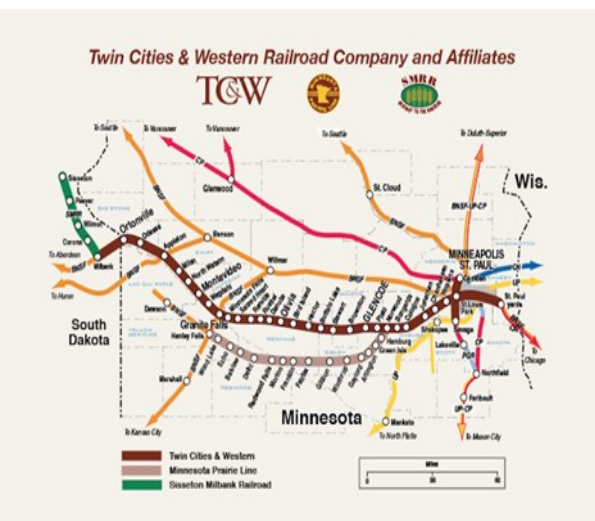
"I don't think there's any way of overstating the fury of the workforce at the way they have been treated in the last [few] years. I don't think you can even calculate the fury over the lack of personal time, the lack of sick time, the furloughs of their coworkers," he replied.

As a result, he says it's likely that experienced railroad employees will quit once they pocket back pay and one-time bonus payments they will receive soon as part of the new national contract.

Fritz and Edelman spoke at the STB's hearing on UP's increased use of embargoes to reduce congestion.

Small-Road Briefs: Boise Cascade/Palmetto Railways, Sisseton-Millbank Railroad (UPDATED)

Railway Age Written by **Carolina Worrell, Senior Editor** December 14, 2022 **Short Lines & Regionals**



Map of TC&W Railroad, which owns and operates the 37-mile Sisseton-Millbank Railroad in South Dakota.

Boise Cascade Company (Boise Cascade) expands South Carolina footprint with new Colleton County facility, increasing the company's distribution capacity with direct access to the Palmetto Railways Salkehatchie Subdivision rail line. Also, Governor Kristi Noem proposes \$6.25 million to fund the repair of South Dakota's Sisseton-Millbank Railroad.

Boise Cascade/Palmetto Railways Building materials manufacturer and distributor **Boise Cascade** announced Dec. 12 plans to expand its South Carolina operations with a new \$9 million facility in Colleton County that will create 30 new jobs and increase the company's distribution capacity with direct access to the **Palmetto Railways** Subdivision rail line, connecting Boise Cascade to the national freight rail network. The Fortune 500 company, whose existing South Carolina facility is located in Chester, S.C., serves residential and industrial construction retail yards, manufacturing wood products and distributing wholesale building materials across North America with more than 55 locations and 6,800 employees nationwide. The Colleton County facility, which will be located at 157 Risher Mountain Tower Road in Walterboro and marks Boise Cascade's first distribution location and second South Carolina facility, will expand the company's footprint in South Carolina and on the East Coast and better help serve customers in Myrtle Beach, Charleston, and Columbia, S.C., as well as Savannah, Ga., the Boise, Idaho-based company said.



Palmetto Railways President and CEO Patrick McCrory

We are excited to be planning a branch location in Colleton County," said Boise Cascade Building Materials Division Executive Vice President Jeff Strom. "This investment demonstrates our commitment to a terrific customer base in a growing market."

"Palmetto Railways appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with Boise Cascade, Colleton County and Southern Carolina Alliance to fulfill the rail infrastructure and logistics needs of another South Carolina business," said Palmetto Railways President and CEO Patrick McCrory. "We look forward to seeing the continued success and service of the Salkehatchie Subdivision line, a testament to the power of rail connections within South Carolina communities."

Additionally, Boise Cascade closed on the purchase of a 34-acre land parcel in Hondo, Tex., to build another distribution center. Located approximately 40 miles west of San Antonio, this property will be the company's third distribution center in the state, along with its two-door shops in Houston and Dallas.

The property, Boise Cascade says, is rail-served and will help customers in Austin, San Antonio, Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande Valley.

We are very excited to expand our footprint into these markets," said Boise Cascade Vice President of Operations Jim Wickham. "This will help us grow in these geographies and also provide deeper penetration in the local market for the facilities that are currently serving these areas, allowing us to be closer to our customers."

Sisseton-Millbank Railroad

According to a *Mitchell Republic* report, Gov. Kristi Noem has proposed \$6.25 million to fund South Dakota's share of replacing **Sisseton-Millbank Railroad's** 37 miles of track and upgrading the railroad to modern standards.

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Currently, according to the *Mitchell Republic* report, the track—some of which was built in the 1880s—is unable to support the weight of modern railroad cars, disqualifying it from doing business with newer rail-served firms, and averages about one derailment per year. The rail line, which is a subsidiary of the [Twin Cities & Western \(TC&W\) Railroad](#), mainly carries grain southeast from the elevator in Sisseton—in the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Lake Traverse Reservation—to Millbank, where it then takes a short trip on a [BNSF](#) line to connect with the TC&W Railroad toward Minneapolis-St. Paul. Agricultural products loaded on the 37-mile northeastern South Dakota corridor move between three and five miles per hour, taking approximately eight hours to complete a one-way trip. “The business is not sustainable at that pace,” says Mark Wegner, President of TC&W Railroad in Minnesota, which bought the Sisseton-Milbank Railroad just over a decade ago.

Assuming the state funding is matched with some \$24 million in a grant funding request pending approval from the federal government, Wegner says “a revitalization of the railroad would help stir economic development in a rural corner of the state that lads in indicators like personal income and population growth,” according to the *Mitchell Republic* report.

According to the *Mitchell Republic* report, “the project would use one-time state funds from the 2023 fiscal year surplus; if Legislature approves this emergency spending, the funds would be available as soon as a decision from the federal government arrives, which is expected during the spring or early summer of 2023.”

According to the grant proposal submitted to the federal government by the South Dakota Department of Transportation on behalf of the Sisseton-Millbank Railroad, and as reported by the *Mitchell Republic*, without any repairs, the line “will likely continue to move similar volumes as it is now until such time as the rail line goes out of service.”

Were that to happen, the *Mitchell Republic* reports, “the onus would fall on the Sisseton elevator or local farmers to truck their products to elevators in Minnesota, further increasing freight costs and lowering farmer income.”

“However, assuming the upgrades are complete and rail service is improved to modern standards and a speed of 25 miles per hour, the local economy could be poised for a boom,” according to the *Mitchell Republic* report.

According to the *Mitchell Republic* report, the project has an expected completion date of 2025 but “a speedy approval process and environmental study phase could mean a finished project in time for the 2024 harvest,” Wegner said.

Tags: [BNSF](#), [BNSF Railway](#), [Boise Cascade](#), [Breaking News](#), [Palmetto Railways](#), [Sisseton-Millbank Railroad](#), [TC&W Railroad](#), [Twin Cities & Western Railroad](#)



“FRA has received extensive interest from states, local leaders and the public for intercity passenger-rail service in their regions and communities,” said FRA Administrator Amit Bose. Photo – railroads.dot.gov

FRA Solicits Proposals to Identify New Passenger-rail Corridors

Progressive Railroading Rail News: Passenger Rail December 21 2022

-Provided by John Goodman

The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) yesterday put out a call for project proposals for intercity passenger-rail corridors as part of the new federal Corridor Identification and Development Program.

Created by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the corridor ID program will guide the development of new intercity passenger-rail services pegged to help bolster economic growth, FRA officials said in a press release.

The program is part of the Biden-Harris administration's effort to improve the nation's rail networks and “reverse decades of under-investment” in rail infrastructure, they said.

In May, the FRA began soliciting “expressions of interest” in the corridor ID program and received responses from states, transit agencies and stakeholders in every major region of the country.

Going forward, the FRA will use the corridor ID program as the primary means for guiding financial support and technical assistance toward projects that would establish new intercity passenger-rail corridors that improve existing services.

“[We have] received extensive interest from states, local leaders and the public for intercity passenger-rail service in their regions and communities, and the corridor ID program will allow the federal government to help with the long-term planning and delivery of new passenger rail projects nationwide,” said FRA Administrator Amit Bose.

Proposals are due March 20, 2023. The FRA's official notice can be read [here](#).



The railroad plans to incorporate its Aurora Winter Train into the anniversary celebration. Photo – Alaska Railroad Corp.

Alaska Railroad to Mark Golden Anniversary in 2023

Progressive Railways Rail News: December 21, 2022 Passenger Rail -Provided by John Goodman

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Next year, the [Alaska Railroad Corp.](#) (ARRC) will reach its 100th anniversary.

On July 15, 1923, President Warren G. Harding drove in a golden spike in Nenana, Alaska, to commemorate the completion of the railroad's 470-mile mainline.

ARRC plans to celebrate the milestone throughout 2023, particularly with its winter passenger-rail service and a new travel package. The railroad plans to debut a limited edition Centennial Special passenger-rail package next year. The 12-day package will include stops at a number of destinations and attractions along its historic mainline, including Fairbanks, Seward, Anchorage, the Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop, and Denali National Park and Preserve.

ARRC also will incorporate the Aurora Winter Train into the celebration. Operating now through mid-May 2023, the train connects passengers to Anchorage, Talkeetna, Fairbanks and other destinations. The service currently operates on weekends, with additional midweek departures to start in February.

Much of Alaska's development can be attributed to the railroad, which connected various communities and towns, and carried goods and passengers between the state's two largest cities, ARRC officials said in a press release.

"Many things have changed in the past 100 years. We've updated our equipment, the destinations have grown and ... technology has made a more sustainable travel experience possible," said Dale Wade, ARRC's vice president of marketing and customer service. "But over the past century one thing has remained constant: our unwavering dedication to our passengers and to Alaska."

[Contact Progressive Railroading editorial staff.](#)



Railway Post Office car turned upside down in this 1954 Boston & Maine train wreck outside the Nashua, New Hampshire train station

Following World War II the airline industry began taking a larger share of passenger travel business. Some mail was transferred to air service at an increased postage rate. (Who remembers Air Mail Stamps?)

However it was the new love affair American's had with the automobile and the new improved highway system that added the final blow to rail travel. Airplanes and trucks had taken up the slack left by the nation's still shrinking railway lines. Short and long-haul cargo trucks carried more and more mail as postal officials looked to save money while keeping the mail moving. The Post Office Department made an economic decision to stop sorting mail via rail and instead build regional "sectional centers" where mail was trucked in and sorted by machines. In September 1967 the Department began phasing out all railway post office routes.

The last RPO run in the United States ended at Washington DC on June 30, 1977.



November 22 in Railroad History: St. Louis RPO

From: [Sparky](#)

Date: Tue, 22 Nov 2022 02:55:56 PST On Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 10:22 AM, Frederick Krenske sent

In 1869, the Railway Mail Service (RMS) was officially inaugurated to handle the transportation and sorting of mail aboard trains.

On this date in 1875, the Pennsylvania Railroad inaugurated Railway Post Office service between Pittsburgh PA and St. Louis MO. Mail could now travel all the way from New York to St. Louis via PRR.

Early RMS was a quick and an efficient way to keep Americans in touch with each other, however it was not without hazards as outlined by this Smithsonian video clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FXE0wGCJz4&t=25s>

Revenue from carrying the mails helped make passenger trains profitable. However, being linked to passenger trains while a boon in the early days lead to the decline of the RMS. As passenger service decline and trains were eliminated the RMS had to consolidate routes often impacting service.

Model railroads had numerous cars to celebrate rail mail delivery but the most accurate rendition of how the true RMS and RPO worked was done by American Flyer's #718 Operating Mail Car. Watch this short video by to see the #718 in action: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnn4p1tAdqk>

The Oil Creek and Titusville Railroad operates a post office car and all mail posted there gets an official USPS OC&T postmark. In 2008, the TCA Kids Club offered a K Line Oil Creek and Titusville Operating Box Car with mail sack. That car included a letter of authenticity with USPS OC&T postmark on it.

For a brief article on the history of RPOs, with vintage photos, visit: <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/research-articles/the-railway-mail-service/history-of-the-service> Joseph Lechner (edited and updated 2022)

Escanaba & Lake Superior Railroad November 17 in Railroad History:

From: [Sparky](#) Date: Thu, 17 Nov 2022 02:49:45 PST provided by Rick Krenske [Thursday, November 17, 2022, 1:42 PM](#)

The Escanaba Lake Superior Railway was chartered on this date in 1898. Construction began at Wells in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Within two years, its rails had reached Channing, some sixty miles to the northwest, where it connected with the Milwaukee Road.

E&LS was reorganized as the Escanaba Lake Superior Railroad in 1900. At that time, Milwaukee Road entered into a trackage-rights agreement that allowed its ore trains to travel on E&LS rails to a dock at Escanaba. That arrangement continued until 1935. (Postcard circa 1909)

Construction continued northwest, eventually reaching Ontonagon on Lake Superior. E&LS also built several branch lines to serve timber operations.

One day in 1948, a Mr. Herman Mench approached the E&LS and asked, "How long will it take you to lay a track to our new plant?" E&LS General Manager George W. Brown replied, "We'll start tomorrow morning." He was as good as his word. The spur was completed before Mench had gotten his foundation laid.

Mr. Mench was the works manager for Harnischfeger Corporation, whose yellow-and-black power shovels and construction cranes traveled over E&LS rails until the Escanaba plant closed in 1983. Accurate 1/48 models of those machines rode on Lionel flat cars #6827 and #6828 from 1960 through 1963. Both cars are considered very desirable among postwar collectors today.



P & H Steam Shovel Car No. 6827 (A)



P & H Crane Car No. 6828 (A)

(tandem-associates.com)

E&LS lost a major source of revenue in 1969 due to a strike at Escanaba Paper Company. When the mill eventually reopened, it shipped *via* C&NW and Soo Line instead.

Hanna Mining Company (which owned E&LS since the 1960s) filed for abandonment in 1978. In October of that year, Hanna sold the railroad to John Larkin of Minneapolis. Since then, the privately-owned E&LS has acquired former Milwaukee Road and Soo Line trackage and operates in Northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

(Escanaba and Lake Superior Railroad 402 (EMD GP38) and 502 (EMD SD40-2) in Crivitz, Wisconsin, June, 2022 - Photo: Cr4410, via Wikimedia Commons)

The E&LS will occasionally run private excursion trips for its customers or leases passenger equipment from its inventory: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B7qludCWZPs>

Until 2011, it operated a 208-mile main line between Ontonagon MI and Green Bay WI. A 43-mile segment between Ontonagon and Sidnaw was abandoned after the Smurfit-Stone paper mill closed as a result the E&LS no longer reaches Lake Superior. Joseph Lechner (edited 2022)

Metro News - Ozzie And Harriet Lionel Train Episode

December 8, 2022, 10:04 AM, from Frederick Krenske

If you have a few minutes to spare, here is a link to the Lionel electric train episode.

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet The Electric Train 1955

From: [John](#) Date: Tue, 06 Dec 2022 07:53:08 PST

The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet, the 1955 Electric train show.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3arrIGkOPB8>

Metro News - December 8 In Railroad History: The NW5

December 8, 2022, 9:11 AM, Frederick Krenske

December 08 in railroad history: NW5

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Thu, 08 Dec 2022

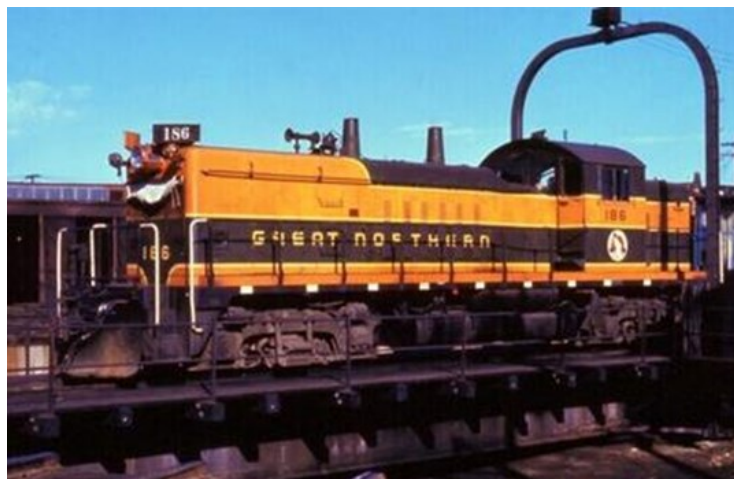
On this date in 1946, Electro-Motive Division introduced the NW5 road switcher.

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Jim Sands collection



Cody White collection

This 1000-hp road switcher rode on Blomberg two-axle trucks and was powered by a 12-cylinder 567 engine. It was a stretched version of the popular NW2 switcher, with enlarged fuel and water tanks and a steam generator for passenger service. The steam generator was housed in a high short hood behind the cab.

Railroad historians see the NW5 as EMD's answer to the ALCO RS1: a medium-power road engine for branchline service.

But railroads tended to view branch lines as unprofitable, and therefore they often used hand-me-down equipment rather than buying new locomotives. Only thirteen NW5s were sold: ten to the Great Northern, one to Southern Railway, and two for the Union Belt of Detroit.

GN's units served in Burlington Northern livery until they were retired in 1982.

SR #2100 ended up on the Massachusetts Central Railroad, a short line based at South Barre MA.

GN #192 is owned by the North Shore Scenic Railroad, a tourist line operated by the Lake Superior Railroad Museum at Duluth MN. One of the UBD units is displayed by the Florida Railroad Museum at Parrish FL.

Joseph Lechner

Southwest Light Rail Gets More Money From Hennepin County as Handling of Project Faces New Questions

Eric Rasmussen KSTP -Provided by Rick Krenske

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A platform for the unfinished Southwest Light Rail project in St. Louis Park (KSTP).

The Metropolitan Council and Hennepin County are moving forward with plans to commit an additional \$211 million to Southwest Light Rail, but it is still not enough to close a funding gap threatening the ability to complete the controversial project. Hennepin County commissioners voted 6 to 1 on Thursday to approve spending another \$100 million from next year's capital budget.

The county has now committed more than \$1 billion in taxpayer money to Southwest Light Rail which would extend the Green Line 14.5 miles to Eden Prairie. Earlier this year, managers of the project said the estimated total cost had risen to \$2.74 billion — the largest public works project in Minnesota history.

The extra money from Hennepin County is contingent on the Met Council making good on a plan to contribute an additional \$111 million — mostly from federal COVID relief money.

"I can't support voting for this measure," Anderson said. "With the state sitting on \$17 billion in surplus and not coming forward and being a full partner on this, I can't support that."

District 1 Commissioner Jeffrey Lunde cautioned that it is too late for Hennepin County to back out of the project now.

"Some people have said let it die... we should kill it I think that is fiscally, I'd say, stupid, idiotic, however you want to claim it," Lunde said. "If we killed it... somebody has to pay the FTA back a billion dollars. No one will pay Hennepin County back our billion dollars because I asked... and someone would have to clean up what was left behind."

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Supporters of Southwest Light Rail say the project has already generated billions of dollars in private investment around proposed stations on the line. They also cite changes that are expected to control costs going forward, but a recent move by the Met Council is inviting new criticism of the agency's handling of the project.

5 INVESTIGATES has learned the Met Council is soliciting bids to potentially replace the firm that has been providing independent cost estimates on proposed changes to Southwest Light Rail construction.

The firm, AECOM Technical Services, had frequently been at odds with project managers and suggested that Met Council was overpaying for some elements of construction.

The decision to seek a new firm to handle cost estimates has riled critics of Met Council, including State Senator Scott Dibble, (DFL) Minneapolis, who is the incoming chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

"What is anyone supposed to make of that?" Dibble told 5 INVESTIGATES in a recent interview. "The firm that they should be embracing because (of) information that would allow them to save money, to improve the quality of the construction, to avoid delay, the truth-teller is being treated as a hostile party."

Met Council says its existing contract with AECOM had expired and it wanted to open the job of cost estimating to bids from other contractors.

"The Council determined the cost estimating portion of AECOM's contract for the METRO Green Line Extension should be competitively procured," a spokesperson wrote in a statement to 5 INVESTIGATES. "AECOM is eligible to submit a proposal as part of the competitive procurement process."

Construction of Southwest Light Rail is currently expected to be complete in 2025 with service beginning in 2027.



MPCA Fines Canadian Pacific for St. Paul Diesel Spill

From: RAY BENSON <rayande@comcast.net> Provided by John Goodman

Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 10:28:11 AM CST

By [Katie Galioto](#) Star Tribune DECEMBER 20, 2022 — 3:31PM -Provided by John Goodman

The 2021 spill did not cause lasting environmental damage, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has fined Canadian Pacific Railway \$33,727 for a diesel fuel spill last year near St. Paul's Battle Creek.

In July 2021, [several hundred gallons of diesel leaked](#) into a stream from a punctured locomotive fuel tank in the company's rail yard in Pig's Eye Regional Park. An MPCA investigation concluded that "Canadian Pacific failed to take reasonable steps at its facility to prevent the diesel fuel spill from entering the stormwater system and affecting the environment," according to [a news release](#) from the agency.

MPCA spokesperson Stephen Mikkelsen said Tuesday that the surrounding area did not experience lasting impacts from the spill.

"This more falls under the 'potential for harm' category," he said.

According to the MPCA's release, Canadian Pacific did not have a complete spill and prevention response plan, did not have a schedule for preventative maintenance within its required stormwater pollution prevention plan, did not provide and document sufficient employee training and did not submit a complete and accurate industrial stormwater permit application.

The company will be required to correct those failures in addition to the fine.

Canadian Pacific spokesman Andy Cummings said in an email Tuesday that the company "worked collaboratively with MPCA and is pleased that we have reached a resolution that addresses the agency's concerns with this accident."

"We will be completing the corrective actions outlined in the agreement," Cummings wrote.

Tom Dimond, a former St. Paul City Council member who has advocated for environmental issues in the neighborhood, said though he appreciated Canadian Pacific's efforts to quickly clean up the spill, he has concerns that the company did not have safety measures to prevent the diesel from entering Battle Creek in the first place.

"The more they do to prevent the initial problem, the better we'll all be," Dimond said.

New Amtrak Cars In 2026

Train Journey's Rachel Chang December 16, 2022, 10:30 AM, Frederick Krenske

Amtrak Announced a Major Upgrade to Its Fleet, With Sleek New 'Amtrak Airo' Trains The new trains will have spacious interiors, ergonomic seats, and a revamped café car.

Train travel in the U.S. is about to get a major upgrade. On Thursday, Amtrak announced [Amtrak Airo](#), a new fleet of trains with more spacious interiors and modernized amenities that will start rolling out in 2026, marking the largest single upgrade to its corridor fleet in the company's 51-year history.

"We were inspired by [Moynihan Train Hall](#) to create modern trains with world-class amenities that will transform the customer experience," Amtrak President Roger Harris said at a press conference at the New York City station, which opened in 2021. "We created a harmonious design that works throughout the train from the exterior into the interior and to create a consistent, contemporary look and feel. On the interior, the trains will elevate the journey while maintaining some of the popular benefits of train travel."

Passengers will enjoy more room inside the train cars, as well as panoramic windows to take in the outdoor scenery. The "spacious seats" will also have "ergonomic details, plenty of legroom, and plenty of room for your personal devices," Harris said. There will be adjustable headrests, larger and sturdier tray tables, and new amenities like cupholders, tablet holders, and more table seating—that is, four seats facing one another sharing a table in the middle.



The new Amtrak Airo trains will feature more table seating, as well as bigger windows and ergonomic seats. Courtesy Amtrak

There will also be dedicated individual charging ports (both USB and power outlets), as well as free Wi-Fi. The [business class car](#) will offer the choice of double and single seats.

[Onboard dining](#) will also get a facelift with more "contemporary food service with a thoughtfully-designed cafe car," Harris said. In addition to more self-service options, attendants will also be on hand to serve them. Wayfinding signage will get a cleaner look, with a more easily-identifiable color-coded system, while the train cars will have enhanced lighting systems with high-tech customer information systems, as well as touchless restroom controls. ADA accessibility will be increased throughout the rail experience. While the Amtrak Airo fleet will continue to travel up to 125 miles per hour like the current trains, a new seamless transition between electric and diesel operations will reduce travel times on certain routes. The new trains will also be [more fuel efficient](#) with 90 percent less particulate emissions while using diesel operations, and will meet Tier 4 emission standards in a battery diesel hybrid configuration.

"This is really exciting since the battery will allow for zero-emission operations while the trains move through the tunnels here in New York City," Janet Ho of the New York State Department of Transportation said at the press conference. "Outside the city, the battery will be used to capture and store braking energy to provide acceleration boosts when exiting other stations."

Production on the first train cars—which will be made in the U.S.—has begun, and is being manufactured by Siemens in California. Amtrak Airo will first roll out on the Cascades services in Washington and Oregon and then be rolled out across the country—in a process that will take about five years—primarily servicing northeastern routes between Maine and North Carolina. Routes will include the [Northeast Regional](#), as well as other routes in and out of New York like the [Adirondack](#), [Empire Service](#), [Ethan Allen Express](#), [Keystone Service](#), [Maple Leaf](#), [Pennsylvanian](#), and [Vermont](#). Routes elsewhere in the country that will also get Amtrak Airo trains will include [Carolinian](#), [Downeaster](#), [New Haven/Springfield Service](#), [Palmetto](#), and [Virginia Services](#). "We're really excited that this can help revitalize the passenger experience not only in New York actually but across the nation," Ho said.

The news of Amtrak's standard short-haul fleet revitalization is an addition to its announcement that its upscale [Acela service](#) on the East Coast will debut [new trains in late 2023](#). Currently in production by French-based Alstom, the train's seats will have winged headrests for a better barrier between passengers, personal outlets and USB ports, and contactless storage options for luggage. The roomier restrooms will also have automated doors and contactless features.



Hours and Admission

Every Saturday (Except Christmas Eve) from November 5th, 2022 to February 25, 2023 from 3 to 7 pm. Admission is \$15 per guest, kids 4 and under are free. Tickets may be purchased in advance at: tcmrm.eventbrite.com or [at the door.](#)



Night Trains® season is a special Holidays tradition at the Twin City Model Railroad Museum. Night Trains runs November through February 2022 with additional bonus nights!

Advance tickets to our 2022-2023 Night Trains season **ON SALE NOW!** For more information about our upcoming Night Trains® season [click here.](#)

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	Saturday January 21 2023 6:15—8:45 pm	Roseville Lutheran Church 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE
Newport Model RR Train Flea Market	January 14, 2023 9:00 am—2:00 pm	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Dr	\$6
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Night Trains	Every Saturday (Except Christmas Eve) from November 5th, 2022 to February 25, 2023 from 3 to 7 pm	Twin City Model Railroad Museum - 668 Transfer Road - St Paul, Minnesota (one half block north of University Avenue)	\$15
Hennepin Overland Railway Historical Society. Model Railroad Open House	Saturdays and Sundays September 2022—April 2023 1:00 pm—4:00 pm	2501 38th Street Minneapolis MN 55406 (5 Blocks West of Hiawatha Ave)	\$10

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