

**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Winter Woes, more snow



L: NP #328 at St Louis Park, August 1985 – Photographer unknown

R 1983 special by MTM's NP #328 by Division St in St Paul –Tom Dethmers



Table of Contents

Chapter Officers, Meeting Notice, Editor Column	Pages 1, 2
January 21 2023 Meeting minutes	Pages 2, 3
Twin City to Duluth Passenger Rail	Pages 3, 4
UP 3985 work begins	Page 4
Amtrak Weather Cancellations	Page 5
Empire Builder Setbacks	Page 5, 6
Amtrak Chargers Struggle	Page 7
LSRM, NSSR Newsletter	Page 8, 9
AARPCO Newsletter Briefs	Pages 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
RPCA News	Pages 18, 19, 20, 21
CP Derailment in Canada	Page 21
BNSF RR News	Pages 22, 23
TSA Issues Cyber Security Directive to Railroads	Page 23
UP RR News	Pages 24, 25, 26
CP RR News	Pages 26, 27
USDOT Publishes 5 year R&D Plan	Page 27
Green Bay Museum Plans	Page 28
Minnesota RR like Depot	Page 28
Railroad Performance Week 2	Page 29
Railroad Outlook 2023	Page 29
Isaac Walton Inn sold	Page 30
Railfan Events	Page 30

Meeting Notice:

Saturday February 11, 2023 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our February Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2023 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpen-teur Avenues at 4:15 pm February 11, 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.

February Zoom Meeting Sign-on for the February 11 2023 meeting is noted here! Log in-information for the February 11, 2023 Northstar Chapter NRHS Zoom meeting.

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

) Here is the Zoom meeting info:

Meeting ID: 872 2788 7659 Passcode: 809810 <https://tinyurl.com/bddyu38h> -or- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87227887659?pwd=TIJTZEVWZ212QnZCMkpjYUxpMnhuZz09>

Northstar Chapter Officers & Staff

President	Dan Meyer	dan@mever-family.net	763-784-8835
Secretary	Richard Tubbesing	Tubbesing32A@yahoo.com	763-757-1304
National Director	Dawn Holmberg	dawn@dholmberg.com	763-784-8835
Treasurer	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Vice President	Bill Dredge	williamdredge@yahoo.com	952-937-1313
Program Chairman	John Goodman, Richard Tubbesing	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Calendar Committee	John Goodman (Chairman) Dawn Holmberg Jack Barbier John Cartwright	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com dawn@dholmberg.com Jsbbib@msn.com Stationman86@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Trip Director	John Goodman	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Chapter Librarian/Historian	John Cartwright	Stationman86@yahoo.com	651-481-8479
Webmaster	Dan Meyer	dan@mever-family.net	873-784-8835
Chapter Mailbox	Northstar Chapter NRHS	PO Box 120832	St Paul MN 55112
Library Data Base Administrator	Russ Isbrandt	Rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Newsletter Editor	Richard Tubbesing Dawn Holmberg, Dan Meyer	Tubbesing32a@yahoo.com Dawn@dholmberg.com	763-757-1304 763-784-8835

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:

Tentative Program for the February meeting will be Roger Libra's DVD of the Cumbres and Toltec RR.

Membership renewals for 2023 are OVER Due!
Please renew promptly!
If you have not renewed, this will be your last newsletter!

Briefly, Other News: WP&Y resumes service to Canada, Reading and Northern RR sets records for passengers and Freight, Universal in Orlando advances sunshine corridor Vision, UP route thru Feather River Canyon was closed by Derailment in mid January. Amtrak seeks car builder interest in new long distance fleet, Fort Wayne Historical Society (home of NKP #765) obtains a CP Dome Observation car!, In November, San Luis & Rio Grande RR sold to Private Owner.

Meeting Minutes January 21 2023 At Roseville Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order by President Dan Meyer at 6:23 pm. There were about 20 people attending. We have a quorum. President Goodman made a motion to approve the minutes of November 2022 meeting in the December 2022 Newsletter. The motion was carried with the motion by John Goodman seconded by Ed Johnson. The motion was approved. Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers report. Both the Chapter and the Calendar Accounts are in good position. Sales tax for the calendar still needs to be paid. We have 30 regular members with 9 non-renewals, 12 Subscribers with 10 non-renewals. Dawn Holmberg reported that we have 170 dollars in the paypal account. Dawn Holmberg was sick and unable to give the calendar report. President Meyer stated that we have sold 90% of the calendars and we have about 40 calendars left. John Goodman gave the library report. We have contacted the widow of Marty Swan and will obtain Marty's railroad collection. John Goodman and Russ Isbrandt will visit Marty's widow to assess the amount of his donation. Marty's wife was sworn to secrecy by Marty about his collection before his death. John Goodman gave the trip report. The Mark Twain Zephyr will not be ready for operation this year. There is a good chance that we will make a trip to Duluth. That will be decided at a future BOD meeting. The possibility of visiting the Boone and Scenic railroad is an option, but due to the high prices of charter busses this possibility is not feasible.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

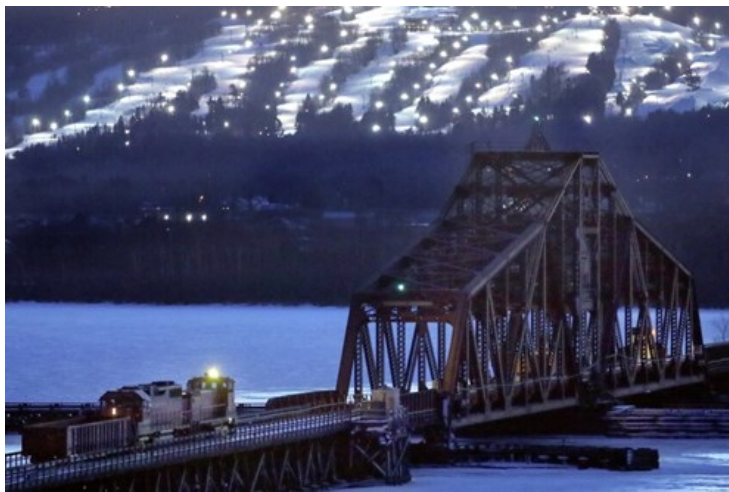
Richard Tubbesing gave the newsletter and program report. The meetings for February to May will be held on the Second Saturday of the month and noted in the newsletter. Program for tonight will be a video of Russ Isbrandt's Amtrak Trip to New England in 1996. Programs for future meetings will be a Cumbres & Toltec video by Roger Libra, a railroad photo show by Joe Fishbein, a M&NS slide show by Joe Frischman and a Vintage RR DVD found by Joe in future meetings. The schedule will be worked out and in the newsletter. Frank Wilke will be riding the rails in San Diego and volunteered to show photos from his exploits. President Meyer stated that photos by Frank can be put in the newsletter and to contact Richard Tubbesing in order to do this. There was no Cheer Committee report. However, Richard Tubbesing stated that Warren Kreckelburg is on the mend. The web report was given by President Dan Meyer. The web site and server have been updated. Photos need to be updated and chapter activity photos can be sent to Dan Meyer for update on our website. Our Chapter activities have been updated on Facebook. Dawn was unable to give a NRHS report. John Goodman stated the NRHS Convention for 2023 will be held in Fort Lauderdale Florida September 1 to September 6 2023. Transportation to near the convention hotel is available via Amtrak. Lots of fun activities are planned. There was no Old Business. President Meyer stated that new business will be to have a BOD meeting when Dawn recovers from her illness and will be held at the library in the near future. President Meyer made to motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm. Motion was seconded made by Frank Wilke. Motion was carried. Announcements: A baseball cap was found at the holiday banquet and are looking for the owner. The program was Russ Isbrandt's trip on Amtrak to New England. It was a great program and thanks to Russ Isbrandt for providing video of this trip. Respectfully submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing

Twin Cities-Duluth Passenger Rail Backers Propose \$99M to Kick-start Line

On Tuesday, January 24, 2023, 9:13 AM, from Frederick Krenske

The Northern Lights Express, or NLX, would connect downtown Minneapolis to the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth.

Stops are planned in Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley and Superior, Wisc.



The lights of Spirit Mountain shine beyond the Grassy Point railroad bridge in March 2017. The proposed Northern Lights Express passenger rail service would use the bridge on its route linking the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities Steve Kuchera / File / Duluth News Tribune



Grant Hauschild

Courtesy of Amanda J. Cane



The Northern Lights Express is a proposed, 155-mile high-speed passenger train to run along existing lines from Duluth to Superior and on to Minneapolis.

ST. PAUL — Minnesota legislators have started to work on securing funding for a long-anticipated passenger rail line between Duluth and the Twin Cities, with bills in the House and Senate calling for \$99 million from the state general fund to start the service. If Gov. Tim Walz signed off on that legislation, it would unlock \$396 million in matching federal funding for the Northern Lights Express rail service, which advocates say has its best shot yet this year with the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party in control of state government and a \$17.6 billion surplus. It would be the first passenger rail connection between Duluth and the Twin Cities since the mid-1980s.

"I'm feeling really hopeful," said Sen. Grant Hauschild, DFL-Hermantown, who was elected last fall to represent northeast Minnesota's Arrowhead region. "This has always gotten tied up usually by one or two votes in the past, and now we control the chamber and my seat was really kind of a critical one in that regard."

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, Wis.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Republican opposition has prevented the project from moving forward in the past. GOP lawmakers, including those along the route, have questioned if the level of ridership and length of the trip would justify the expense. 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. Earlier estimates placed the price tag for the line, which would be run by Amtrak, at \$450 million. The current proposals in the Legislature would cover the cost of a \$495 million project. If the state approves funding, the NLX Alliance, a coalition of interested groups along the route, says it expects the route to begin operating in about three years.

Much work lies ahead in the coming months for Minnesota lawmakers piecing together the state's budget and borrowing bills. Hauschild, who is co-sponsoring the bill authored by Sen. Jen McEwen, DFL-Duluth, said his fellow NLX backers are keeping their options open for how the state will pay for the project.

One route is to pay for the route through a public works borrowing bill, or bonding bill, but that would require a three-fifths supermajority. But after years of GOP opposition and a slim DFL majority in the Senate, Democrats may not view that option as viable. "You are talking Republican votes needed for the bonding side of things," Hauschild said. "And as we know in the past, this has been held up so, we'll see what the appetite is."

Gov. Tim Walz also signaled support when he asked for \$16 million for the project in his \$2.7 billion bonding proposal last year. He's set to release complete details of his bonding and budget priorities this week.

Supporters of the NLX are enthusiastic this year about the odds for the proposed rail line now that the DFL controls all three branches of state government.

"In all of my years in elected office, I've never seen so much enthusiasm among legislators for a bill," Minneapolis City Councilman Andrew Johnson, chair of the NLX Alliance, said in a news release on the funding bills.

If funding is approved, 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.

Hauschild and McEwen, the bill's main authors, have said the route will provide vital access for veterans in northern Minnesota who need access to services at the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis.



Inside the former Rock Island Railroad Silvis, Ill. shops, Railroading Heritage of Midwest America crews begin the process of restoring Union Pacific Challenger No 3985 to operation. This week the locomotive has been stripped of its appliances and the cab lifted off the unit. RRHMA

Work Begins on Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985

By Steve Glischinski | January 6, 2023

Crews stripping parts, lifting cab off locomotive

SILVIS, Ill. – Railroading Heritage of Midwest America crews have taken the first steps toward returning Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985 to operation this week by stripping parts off the 4-6-6-4. Today crews lifted the cab off the locomotive.

"RRHMA crews have been making good progress all week stripping down [No.] 3985," says Steve Sandberg, president and COO of RRHMA. It's the first step in the process that will eventually result in No. 3985 returning to operation. The locomotive last operated for UP in 2010 and was stored at Cheyenne, Wyo., until last year as UP shifted its steam program's focus to the restoration and operation of Big Boy No. 4014.

In addition to No. 3985, the Milwaukee Road turntable from Bensenville, Ill., donated by Canadian Pacific is being moved to the Silvis sandblasting booth where it will be cleaned and painted, Sandberg says. A local steelworkers union has offered to repair steel on the turntable as part of a training program for new steelworkers, Sandberg added.

When the turntable is finished a pit will have to be dug out on the footprint of the original Rock Island turntable, which was removed decades ago.

In April 2022, RRHMA and Union Pacific jointly announced an agreement through which the railroad would donate Challenger No. 3985, 2-10-2 No. 5511, DDA40X No. 6936, and other equipment from UP's Heritage Fleet to RRHMA. The equipment was moved by UP to Silvis in November 2022. RRHMA plans to restore both steam locomotives to operating condition. [see ["Top 10 stories of 2022: No. 7, Railroading Heritage of Midwest America makes its mark in Silvis,"](#) "News Wire," Trains.com, Dec. 27, 2022]

RRHMA is still seeking donations through a double matching grant program. Any donation will be matched twice by other donors. For example, a \$100 donation will result in a \$300 donation through the matching program. Donation can be made by visiting the [RRHMA website](#).



Weather cancellations impact Amtrak: The northbound Coast Starlight pauses at Eugene, Ore., in sunnier times on June 16, 2021. The train has been canceled due to harsh conditions north of Sacramento, Calif., through the Jan. 8 and possibly longer. The route between Eugene and Seattle is unaffected, but Amtrak is not running a truncated Starlight between those points. Two photos, Bob Johnston



Weather cancellations impact Amtrak: The first westbound Empire Builder to leave Chicago for the West Coast since Dec. 19 accelerates past Metra's Mayfair (Ill.) station on Dec. 30, 2022. Amtrak operated round-trips to St. Paul, Minn. the previous two days.

Weather Cancellations Impact Amtrak and its Western Network

Trains Newswire By [Bob Johnston](#) | January 6, 2023

Coast Starlight canceled north of Sacramento; Empire Builder didn't run for 8 days west of Twin Cities over the holidays

CHICAGO — The well-publicized snows that buried Buffalo, N.Y., and resulted in a lengthy cancellation of the New York/Boston-Chicago *Lake Shore Limited* haven't been this winter's only disruptor of **Amtrak's** national network. Extreme weather since late December has also been responsible for two significant Amtrak long-distance train cancellations in the west. Flooding truncates *Starlight*

The latest weather casualty is Amtrak's Los Angeles-Seattle *Coast Starlight*, which has officially been canceled in both directions north of Sacramento, Calif., through Sunday, Jan. 8. However, as of midday Friday, the reservation system is showing "sold-out" through next Wednesday, Jan. 11. Amtrak typically blocks new long-distance train sales to facilitate rebooking passengers displaced by earlier cancellations, or if it is likely a train might be canceled for an extended period.

Successive waves of rain have caused serious flooding north of Sacramento during the past week. The northbound train leaving Los Angeles on Dec. 31 made it as far as the California capital, then spent the next 24 hours there, reportedly waiting for a rested, qualified crew off of its southbound counterpart. That train had been held at Chico, Calif., six hours for clear track. Both trains detoured via Roseville, Calif., to escape flooding on the regular route. New Year's Day *Starlights* were then canceled in both directions, as were trains departing Los Angeles and Seattle on Wednesday, Jan. 4. Beginning the next day, they only operated south of Sacramento. Although Seattle-Eugene, Ore., Cascades corridor trains have been operating with some weather and mechanical delays, Amtrak is not running a stub *Coast Starlight* to provide its usual daily round-trip on that corridor.

Snow, extreme cold hamper *Builder*

Empire Builder canceled for more than a week. The company did begin operating a truncated *Empire Builder* between Chicago and St. Paul, Minn., for two days before full service was restored on the train's 2,200-mile route to and from Seattle/Portland, Ore., on Dec. 30.

With sub-zero temperatures and blizzard conditions threatening, Amtrak began canceling the *Builder* on Dec. 20 and 21 after all three Siemens ALC42 locomotives leading the eastbound train departing the West Coast on Dec. 18 completely shut down near Detroit Lakes, Minn. [see "[Amtrak cancels more trains as winter storm advances](#)," "News Wire," Dec. 22, 2022].

Although the snow would subside, extreme cold temperatures continued across Northern Plains to Chicago. Amtrak would announce a series of subsequent cancellations — in most cases a day or two before each departure, through the Christmas holiday weekend and beyond. Westbound trains did depart Chicago for St. Paul, on Dec. 28 and 29, returning back to Chicago the following day.

The trains provide a vital mobility link from Washington State to Wisconsin between communities that have few public transportation options. *Trains News Wire* asked Amtrak and [BNSF Railway](#) for explanations of why each day's *Builder* was canceled during the period, as well as the reason for the multiple ALC42 locomotive failures.

Though the operator and host railroad declined to reveal specifics, both have provided statements outlining the decision process. BNSF spokeswoman Lena Kent, says her company, "provided daily updates to Amtrak's operating team regarding network conditions, forecast, and outlook so Amtrak could make informed annulment decisions for train nos. 7 and 8. Extreme low temperatures [minus-30s], elevated avalanche risk [rapid warm up and rain in Glacier National Park], and a flooding event on the Lakeside Subdivision [between Spokane and Pasco, Wash.] were contributing factors during the annulment period."

Regarding issues with the Siemens power, Kent tells News Wire, "While BNSF and Amtrak operating teams have been in discussion regarding ALC42 locomotives, BNSF has not implemented any ALC42 specific restrictions."

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari adds, "We work closely with BNSF to assess conditions on the route. In this case, after operating trains with many hours of delay and facing very severe conditions, we made the decision to cancel round-trips. These decisions are not made lightly, and we did so with an abundance of caution."

What's Triggering Empire Builder Service Setbacks?

Railway Age Written by [Bruce E. Kelly](#), Contributing Editor January 13, 2023 [Intercity](#)

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:



Amtrak's recent winter meltdown was not the first time the passenger railroad faced widespread delays during the holiday travel season. On Dec. 31, 2021, Train No. 8 was some nine hours late when it passed Hauser Jct., Idaho, where the temperature was only 10 degrees Fahrenheit. That's mild compared with the sub-zero weather the Empire Builder routinely faces on the northern plains. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)



Train No. 7 arrives Minot, N.D., only 13 minutes behind schedule on July 31, 2022. However, it would depart nearly two hours late because of the previous night's No. 8 arriving late and its crew needing the required rest before reporting for duty on No. 7. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)



Fifteen hours behind schedule, Train 7 arrives Sandpoint, Idaho, on Nov. 12, 2022. A late arrival of Train 8 at Minot, N.D., delayed the crew rest for Train 7's departure, and motive power issues forced the addition of a BNSF locomotive on the head end. Having a freight unit on the point limited the train's max speed to 60 mph instead of the normal 79 mph, making the late train even later. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)



Three Siemens Mobility-built ALC-42s led Train No. 7 into Spokane, Wash., nearly six hours late on Dec. 19, 2022. The diesel-electric locomotives broke down multiple times during the trek through sub-zero winter conditions across North Dakota and Montana. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)



Snow visible inside an ALC-42 in Spokane, Wash., in December 2022 is "not a problem," according to manufacturer Siemens Mobility. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)



The eastbound Empire Builder departs Spokane, Wash., more than nine hours late on Jan. 2, 2023, with a Siemens Mobility ALC-42 and GE P42DC for power. (Photo and Caption by Bruce Kelly)

A "perfect storm" of troubles took their toll on Amtrak Train 7, the westbound Empire Builder, which departed Chicago—on time—on Dec. 17, 2022. Snowfall and temperatures as low as -20 degrees Fahrenheit settled in along much of the BNSF Northern Corridor—aka, the Hi Line—that carries the Empire Builder across North Dakota and Montana. Halfway into its trip to Seattle and Portland, Train 7 had fallen some two hours behind schedule by the afternoon of Dec. 18. And when it reached Sandpoint, Idaho, the next morning, it was nearly seven hours behind schedule.

Contributing significantly to Train 7's loss of time were the breakdowns of one or more of its three Siemens Mobility-built ALC-42s ("Amtrak Long-Distance Charger, 4,200 HP" diesel-electric locomotives). One of those incidents occurred shortly after the train crossed the Continental Divide at Marias Pass in northwestern Montana. While on a descending grade, the train lost all electrical power due to locomotive failure just a few miles east of Essex, Mont., coming to an abrupt stop inside one of the snowsheds that protect the route from avalanches. Close to another hour was lost before No. 7 reached its next stop.

By the time Train 7 arrived in Seattle and Train 27 (which splits off at Spokane, Wash.) arrived in Portland on Dec. 19, Amtrak was already announcing plans to cancel departures of the Empire Builder on Dec. 20 and 21 "due to delayed operations for the past few days and forecasted severe weather." That service suspension was then extended through the Christmas weekend in the wake of ice storms hitting the Pacific Northwest; flash floods compromising BNSF track near Connell, Wash.; and severe cold and high winds from Montana eastward.

The combination of a holiday weekend and widespread weather shut-downs ultimately led to personnel shortages that delayed the re-start of full Empire Builder service until Dec. 30. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari told Railway Age, "Crew turns were disrupted by huge delays on previous days, mostly Train and Engine crews."

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Riding the first run of Train 8 after Amtrak resumed its Empire Builder was a Siemens technician who had been flown from New Orleans to Seattle for the purpose of monitoring the performance of the ALC-42s and providing assistance in the event of a malfunction.

Empire Builder's ALC-42s

With long-distance modifications (larger fuel tank, enhanced Head End Power generator, and more) that set them apart from the Siemens Chargers built for intercity passenger and commuter rail service in the U.S. and Canada, the ALC-42s have been problematic since their debut on the *Empire Builder*. In fact, the first in-service run of Chargers on Train 7 in February 2022 encountered enough technical setbacks when preparing to depart Chicago that an older GE-built P42DC was repositioned to lead the train.

Those setbacks were said to include locomotive connectivity issues relating to Positive Train Control (PTC). While often coinciding with the presence of Siemens Chargers, PTC failures on the *Empire Builder* have also occurred when other power is involved. Referring back to that first Charger trip out of Chicago in February 2022, Amtrak's Marc Magliari said, "The initial run was reconfigured because of a back-office server PTC issue, not the units themselves. PTC communication/initialization delays are not unique to a particular series of locomotives."

Extreme cold has been the most common factor in breakdowns of ALC-42s on the *Empire Builder*. *Railway Age* reached out to Amtrak for comment on its new Chargers, and to find out if Siemens was apprised of the problem and working on a solution. In response, Kara Evanko, Vice President and Head of Communications at Siemens Mobility North America, provided the following details:

"Over the course of the past couple of weeks, Siemens Mobility has been working closely with Amtrak to identify the root cause of a number of isolated incidents of ALC-42 power loss occurring when under very specific and unusually extreme circumstances where the locomotive experiences drastic changes in temperature. As a result, we've identified both a software solution and an additional hardware improvement that will eliminate the issue experienced. The software update has been implemented to the entire fleet, greatly reducing the potential for incidents. The hardware modification will be completed as quickly as possible. The phenomenon was not encountered on other Charger locomotives, which have different power arrangements than the long-distance ALC-42 locomotives. Given that the ALC-42 is a new addition to the Amtrak fleet, Siemens is providing Amtrak with additional support and training regarding the operation and maintenance of the locomotives, to help eliminate downtime and optimize operations."

Other Empire Builder Delay Triggers

Even when extreme winter conditions are not to blame, additional factors can delay Amtrak's *Empire Builders*, making late trains even later. The failure of one locomotive in an Amtrak consist, for example, can result in host railroad BNSF placing one of its freight locomotives on the head end to keep the train and its passengers moving. Unfortunately, having a freight unit on the point limits the *Empire Builder* to the Northern Corridor's maximum authorized freight speed of 60 mph, instead of the 79 mph normally allowed for Amtrak. That drop in speed can accumulate into hours of lost time over the remainder of the trip.

Once an Amtrak train falls far enough behind schedule on a busy freight route like the Northern Corridor, it loses what is known as its "slot," which is the normal time frame that a host carrier has arranged to accommodate passenger movements through its busy schedule of freight traffic. An *Empire Builder* that's fallen several hours out of its slot may face greater interference from freight trains whose on-duty times, positioning and dispatching are arranged based on the normal Amtrak schedule.

Crew rest and availability is one of the lesser-known causes of delay for the *Empire Builder*, and is felt acutely at Minot, N.D. East-bound Train 8 is scheduled to arrive in Minot at 10:08 p.m. Its inbound engineer and conductor, who have been with the train since Shelby, Mont., are normally the only crew available to take charge of the following morning's Train 7, scheduled to depart Minot at 9:51 a.m. That's an incredibly tight turn considering the crew's mandatory 8-hour rest period. Whenever No. 8 arrives in Minot more than a few hours late, the passengers and onboard personnel of the next day's No. 7 will likely sit motionless at the depot for hours until the rested crew comes on duty. To help combat such delays, "[w]e have driven and flown crews across the Hi-Line from time to time and will do so when possible, between the St. Cloud [Minn.] and Shelby [Mont.] crew bases," according to Amtrak.

While [Amtrak's order for 125 ALC-42s](#) represents a significant investment in America's long-distance passenger service, there will continue to be operational struggles for trains like the *Empire Builder* to overcome. Those who view Amtrak's long-distance trains as a government-subsidized land cruise catering to vacationers and retirees fail to recognize the vital transportation that the *Empire Builder* provides to rural communities across more than a thousand miles of the northern U.S.—communities where air and bus service are virtually non-existent, and where Amtrak may be the only viable option for long-distance travel, particularly in winter.

ags: [Amtrak](#), [Metrolink](#), [Opinion](#), [Siemens](#), [Siemens Mobility](#)

Amtrak's New Long-Distance Chargers Continue to Struggle

By Justin Franz This article was posted on: January 18, 2023 Provided by John Goodman, Jack Barbier

CHICAGO — Nearly a year after they made their main line debut, Amtrak's new Siemens Mobility ALC-42 "Chargers" are still having teething issues, especially in cold weather. This winter, the *Empire Builder* connecting Chicago with Portland and Seattle has been plagued by delays and even cancelations. [Some of the delays have been caused by weather and freight train interference](#), but perhaps the biggest issue has been with the ALC-42 locomotives, which have been running on the route since last February. Issues with the locomotives losing power have resulted in hours of delays for passengers across the route. In some instances, BNSF Railway has even had to provide freight locomotives to get the train over the road. Kara Evanko, a spokesperson for Siemens Mobility, has said the units have lost power during "unusually extreme circumstances where the locomotive experiences drastic changes in temperature." Siemens officials say that hardware and software issues are impacting the locomotives, but both are being addressed. New software is being installed and hardware — specifically a pipe — is being replaced. Siemens officials didn't comment on what exactly the pipe in question did or why it needed to be replaced. However, they tell *Railfan & Railroad* that the work is happening on the locomotives that are already on Amtrak property and that it does not require them to go back to Siemens. This isn't the first time that cold and snow have challenged Siemens products. The SC-44 locomotives used on Amtrak's Midwest service have also had issues in winter, but when Amtrak announced it was purchasing Chargers for long-distance services, officials said those problems would be addressed. Presently, a number of ALC-42s are in service on the *Empire Builder*, usually paired up with P42 locomotives that they will eventually replace. Amtrak expects to acquire 125 ALC-42 locomotives as part of its current order.



News from the North Shore Scenic Railroad & Lake Superior Railroad Museum
Issue #119 - January 2023



Happy New Year! It is the start of the 50th Anniversary Year for the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. The theme for the year is "The Golden 50" with all kinds of upcoming events and specials on the horizon. More details coming soon. I hope you will enjoy this month's edition of *Trackside*, and hope to see you soon,

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

TRAIN TICKETS ON SALE JANUARY 16



The coming season of train excursions will start with a limited schedule in April and May, and as usual, become a daily operation in the summer and fall. The trains of the North Shore Scenic Railroad are scheduled, and all tickets will go on sale at midnight, January 16th, 2023. Some highlights of enhancements for the coming year: Two Harbors Turn excursions will become "All First Class" trains, utilizing some of the best coaches in the fleet to make up the consist, including TWO dome cars on each trip. And the Pizza Train will become the "Pizza Party Express" with some enhancements to the narration and tour program. There are still no steam excursions scheduled for 2023, and the Day Out With Thomas is still to be scheduled, but more details on that coming soon.

TALK LIKE A RAILROADER



Every industry has its own slang. When railroading was a new industry, everything had to be originated as needed. The terms the railroaders used soon became part of the common vernacular.

Ever get **"Side Tracked?"** – A parallel track at the side of the mainline where one train would wait while another one passed.

How about the old **"Run Around?"** – What trains sometimes did on the siding was to run the engine around the train from one end to the other.

"You Can Hear a Pin Drop" – The old link-and-pin coupler system dropped a metal "pin" between a link connecting two cars. On a quiet day in the train yard you could hear that sound.

"Milk Run" – Reference today to any slow trip that has a lot of stops. Farmers would milk in the morning and leave the fresh milk in cans along the track for a slow moving train to stop frequently and pick it up.

"Make the Grade" – Refers to successfully making it up a grade or an inclined stretch of track.

What phrases can you think of that originated on the railroad?



JAZZ IN THE MUSEUM EVERY SATURDAY

Every Saturday starting January 7th, Jazz is back in the museum from 3pm to 6pm. It is a great winter event with the music of; Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Glen Miller, Thelonious Monk, The King of Swing Benny Goodman and all the other greats from the past and modern jazz eras will be featured.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Group leader Randy Lee provides interesting, musical commentary and Museum Executive Director Ken Buehler will share a bit of train history...because if you work it hard enough, it all comes back to the railroad!
Visit the museum any Saturday from 3-6pm. Admission is FREE for members, and for everyone else \$6 for adults and \$3 for kids, starting at 2:30pm.

There is also be gourmet hot dogs, hot Roundhouse Chili, a selection of chips, snacks and fresh popped popcorn available for sale to enjoy the tunes.

Thank you for your ongoing support and interest. This newsletter is brought to you by:



This Newsletter and the Northstar Railway Historical Society BOD send its Congratulations to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum and the NorthShore Scenic Railroad on a great 50 years. Best Wishes for a great 2023 for your Outstanding Operation! We encourage our members to visit this great Museum and Railroad at least once this year to enjoy the celebration of 50 years!

AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

January 2023 Volume 11 Issue 1

The AAPRCO office has a new mailing address.

American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners
64 South Prairie Street
Suite 216
Galesburg, Illinois 61401
Our phone number and email remain the same. 706.326.6262

Grand Canyon Limited ~ 45th Annual Convention ~ April 30th - May 5th, 2023

Itinerary

Friday, April 28th

Cars arrive in Albuquerque.

Sunday, April 30th

The AAPRCO special departs Albuquerque at 9:00 a.m. under Amtrak power. Passing Winslow and Flagstaff, the train arrives in Williams Junction at 1:00 p.m. After picking up a BNSF pilot, we head to the Grand Canyon Railway Hotel where passengers detrain at 2:00 p.m.

Monday, May 1st

Guests experience the splendor of the Grand Canyon, traveling to the South Rim via steam power and equipment of the Grand Canyon Railway. Luncheon is served at the El Tovar Hotel, a limestone-and-pine landmark on the canyon rim dating from 1905. The hotel features an art-filled lounge and a gift shop. The rustic-chic restaurant serves upscale, Southwest-inspired American fare and offers seasonal outdoor seating.

Tuesday, May 2nd, & Wednesday, May 3rd

The association's 45th annual meeting convenes, featuring guest speakers; updates on legislative, mechanical, and Amtrak operational issues; and an evening of comradery at our signature car party event.

Thursday, May 4th

The Grand Canyon Limited departs Williams at 9:00 a.m., arriving in Albuquerque at 2:00 p.m.

Friday, May 5th

Cars depart in Amtrak service. *Schedule is subject to change.*

Continued on next page:



Host Railroad - Grand Canyon Railway



El Tovar Hotel

Continued from previous page:



Washington Report by Ross Capon

Memorial Service for Ed Von Nordeck

The service will be Thursday, January 6, at 10:15 am Pacific Time, in Riverside, California.

Click [here](https://www.akesfamilyfuneralhome.com/obituary/EDMUND-VONNORDECK) for the Zoom link and more information <https://www.akesfamilyfuneralhome.com/obituary/EDMUND-VONNORDECK>

Many breathed a sigh of relief that Congress agreed on a FY 2023 omnibus appropriations bill. This assures funding through September 30. It resulted from bipartisan work in the Senate, especially by the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee – Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Richard Shelby (R-AL) – both of whom were retiring and were particularly interested in getting their work approved. House Republicans generally blasted the omnibus.

For private cars and many other subjects, House and Senate report language is similar, though not identical. Rather than meld small differences into a single product, appropriators create a “Joint Explanatory Statement” (JES). The FY 2023 version says,

“Unless otherwise noted, the language set forth in House Report 117-402 carries the same weight as language included in this JES and should be complied with unless specifically addressed to the contrary in this JES. While some language is repeated for emphasis, it is not intended to negate the language referred to above unless expressly provided herein. In cases where the House has directed the submission of a report, such report is to be submitted to both the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.”

Here is the “private cars and charter trains” language (which should be familiar!) in House Report 117-402. To find it on-line, click [here](#) and go to computer page 83 (numbered page 78).

Private cars and charter trains. —In fiscal year 2018, Amtrak issued new guidelines for private cars on Amtrak trains and charter trains operated by Amtrak. The Committee continues to direct Amtrak to review and evaluate the locations and trains that may be eligible for private car moves, update the guidelines for private cars on Amtrak if additional locations or trains meet Amtrak’s criteria, and notify private car owners of these changes. In addition, the Committee directs Amtrak to continue to brief the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations on the effects of these guidelines on private cars and charter trains and how Amtrak could achieve its goals without negatively impacting private car and charter train operations. Amtrak is directed to include an updated report on private car and charter train policies in its fiscal year 2024 budget justification. The report should include the amounts and percentages by which revenues and usage declined for private cars and charter trains. For charter trains, such information should be provided as separate figures for Amtrak-owned and privately-owned charter trains. The Committee acknowledges that certain information may be commercially sensitive and cannot be made public. Therefore, the Committee directs Amtrak to provide such information through briefings to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

Here is the Senate report language. To find it on-line, click [here](#) and go to page 66.

Charter Trains and Private Cars. —The Committee continues to applaud Amtrak’s efforts to make itself financially more sustainable through a business-like approach to its operations. Amtrak is directed to once again report on the impact of its policies to charter trains and private trains in the fiscal year 2024 budget request, and to include the amounts and percentages by which revenues and usage declined, including separate figures for charter trains run with Amtrak-owned and with privately-owned cars. Amtrak should also continue to update the list of eligible locations for private car moves and continue to evaluate such locations going forward. Amtrak should continue to strive to improve public outreach and offer its stakeholders an opportunity to comment on policies that affect services prior to finalizing any such decisions.

The JES apparently does not reference private-car language, but I show below some other rail items that may be of interest (bolding mine). For the full rail portion of the JES click [here](#) and go to pages 42-48. (Federal Transit Administration begins on p. 49.)

Intercity passenger rail competition. - The agreement modifies the direction in House Report 117-402 to allow for competitive bidding procedures at the option of eligible applicants.

CONSOLIDATED RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The bill provides \$535,000,000 for consolidated rail infrastructure and safety improvements [CRISI] grants as authorized under 49 U.S.C. 22907, to remain available until expended. Of this amount, not less than \$150,000,000 is for projects eligible under 49 U.S.C. 22907(c)(2) that support the development of new intercity passenger rail service routes including alignments for existing routes;

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

not less than \$25,000,000 is for projects eligible under 49 U.S.C. 22907(c)(11);
\$5,000,000 is for preconstruction planning activities and capital costs related to the deployment of magnetic levitation transportation projects;
\$30,426,000 is for the purposes and amounts specified in the table entitled "Community Project Funding/Congressionally Directed Spending" included in this joint explanatory statement; and
not less than \$5,000,000 is for workforce development and training activities eligible under 49 U.S.C. 22907(c)(13) ...

ADA accessibility at Amtrak stations. - The agreement modifies the direction in House Report 117-402, and directs Amtrak to submit an updated report to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations no later than July 28, 2023, detailing the ADA stations program plan and timeline to make the remaining 292 stations ADA compliant and accessible.

Station agents.-The agreement directs Amtrak to either provide a station agent in each Amtrak station that had a ticket agent position eliminated in fiscal year 2018 or, with respect to any given station on that list, to instead reach an agreement with the labor organization representing employees at such station to provide a station agent in a different station...

Section 157 expresses the sense of Congress that long-distance passenger rail routes and services should be sustained to ensure connectivity throughout the national network.

Debt Ceiling Fight Looms: Congress still must approve an increase in the debt ceiling sometime early in 2023. Republicans have "promised to win Biden's signature on some of their priorities in exchange for a vote to increase the borrowing limit before a default on US payments as soon as July. Their demands could include large spending cuts -- including to Social Security and Medicare... — or policies such as stricter immigration controls. Biden has vowed that he won't yield. The result may well be a crisis. The last time Republicans and the president engaged in such political brinkmanship, in 2011, the prospect of a default on the nation's debt caused huge volatility in the stock market. Standard & Poor's for the first time ever downgraded the US credit rating. Consumer confidence plummeted." Click [here](#) for the full December 7 Bloomberg article (written while there was still hope that Democrats would address the debt ceiling in the lame-duck session).



Stephen Gardner (third from the left) joined federal and Vermont state and municipal officials to mark the extension of daily Amtrak Ethan Allen Express service from Rutland to Burlington, Vermont.

Passenger Rail News

Flush with new funding opportunities, Amtrak preps for growth by Julie Sneider, Senior Associate Editor Progressive Railroading

In 2021, [Amtrak](#) executives spent most of the railroad's 50th anniversary year promoting a 15-year strategy for expansion that would connect dozens of cities — up to 160 communities — to new Amtrak service.

Dubbed "[Amtrak Connects US](#)," the plan hung in the balance until President Joe Biden in November 2021 signed the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA), the \$1.2 trillion, five-year surface transportation reauthorization legislation. The law calls for \$66 billion in funding for rail that could help pave the way for new intercity routes.

Today, Amtrak — flush with new federal funding opportunities — is juggling multiple priorities, including preparing to offer service in new rail corridors; upgrading aging assets; recovering ridership lost during the pandemic; addressing customer service problems; and recruiting and retaining enough workers to run the trains now and into the future.

"All these things take time," says Amtrak President Roger Harris, who was promoted to his post in June after serving as the railroad's chief commercial officer since April 2019. "Having the money released [through the IIJA] is probably the biggest piece of work ahead of us."

Since late last year, Amtrak officials have been working on securing billions in grant funds, including those that could help pay for intercity passenger-rail expansion through the new Corridor Identification and Development Program, which was created under the IIJA. The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) has begun the process that will eventually identify and establish new rail corridors through which Amtrak could expand rail service. Since mid-May, the FRA has been collecting "expressions of interest" from states, regions, local governments and other entities that want to be considered for future passenger-rail service.

Before Dec. 31, the FRA will publish a notice seeking formal proposals for the Corridor ID program. After evaluating those proposals, the FRA will help develop selected corridors and prioritize those projects for federal funding, an FRA spokesman said in an email.

Amtrak is being consulted as the process advances, according to Harris.

"We are actively engaged with the FRA, so they solicit our input and advice on a lot of these programs," he says. "We also work with the states and other local entities who are the sponsors of the expressions of interest. But at the end of the day, it's really up to the

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

On the horizon: Gulf Coast service

One corridor where Amtrak already plans to start offering service is along the Gulf Coast between New Orleans and Mobile, Alabama. Amtrak trains haven't operated there since Hurricane Katrina roared through in 2005. The Southern Rail Commission and other backers of restoring Amtrak service say it would help attract new business and economic development in the Gulf Coast region. Currently, Amtrak plans to run two trains daily between the cities.

But opposition from [CSX](#), [Norfolk Southern Railway](#) and the [Alabama State Port Authority](#) has delayed Amtrak's plan. The Class I, which own the track that Amtrak trains would use, have said the passenger service would interfere with freight trains using the line.

The [Surface Transportation Board](#) was brought in to resolve the dispute, but before it could rule on the matter, Amtrak, the freight railroads and the port authority announced on Nov. 22 a [settlement agreement](#). Although details weren't revealed, STB Chairman Martin Oberman said the agreement will hasten the start of passenger-rail service along the coast.

Prior to the settlement announcement, Harris said: "We would like to begin serving the Gulf Coast market as soon as possible in this fiscal year," which began Oct. 1.

While Amtrak executives keep their eyes on potential new routes, they're also focused on improving existing business, including rebuilding ridership to pre-pandemic levels.

In general, demand for Amtrak service remains strongest in the Northeast. However, commuter ridership has been slower to return, as employers continue to offer hybrid or flexible work schedules. Ridership for commuting or business purposes is at about 60% of pre-COVID levels, Harris says.

At the same time, Amtrak officials have noticed an uptick in new rail travelers.

"For at least a year now, we've seen about a third of our ridership is new customers, or people who we haven't known before in any of our data in history," Harris says. "Those demographic trends have helped reinforce our business, so it's incumbent on us to work with our state partners to develop proposals on how the growth of those state corridor programs can help reinforce that lifestyle change. I think it's a healthy trend in terms of sustainability and growth."

Offering sales on ticket prices and special travel packages, as well as restoring train routes suspended due to the pandemic, helped Amtrak start to get ridership back on track. Through the first nine months of fiscal-year 2022, the railroad logged total ridership of 16.7 million, up from 7 million during the same period in FY2021. Ridership in the Northeast Corridor rose to 6.5 million from 2.4 million; on long-distance routes, ridership climbed to 2.6 million from 1.4 million; and on state-sponsored routes, ridership grew to 7.7 million from 3.2 million during the period.

[Editor's note: On Nov. 29, Amtrak announced it provided 22.9 million customer trips, including 7 million first trips by new riders, from Oct. 1, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2022.]

In response to changing travel patterns, Amtrak is re-examining its train schedules based on demand. As part of that effort, it also has changed its ticket management system to be "far more responsive to what's going on now and last week, and not last year," Harris says.

Hiring is ongoing

Amtrak's pandemic recovery also depends on recruiting and retaining a workforce big enough to handle existing and future service. Early in the pandemic, Amtrak stopped hiring staff and furloughed some employees after ridership plunged more than 95%. Once ridership started to recover, Amtrak launched a hiring campaign for train crew, mechanics, onboard service staff and some management positions.

Over the past 12 months, the railroad has recruited 3,700 new workers in part by offering competitive wages and hiring bonuses. At the same time, Amtrak — like other employers — has continued to experience the so-called "Great Resignation," with employees retiring or moving on for other reasons.

"We have an ongoing need for employees," says Harris. "Another big employment area that we've been recruiting for is track maintenance because we have a lot of money coming out of the IIJA that will go toward track work and improvement projects. We're working very hard to upgrade the state of good repair on the Northeast Corridor ... so our track crew engineering team is hiring on a very big scale."

Still, the workforce ramp-up period takes longer in rail than in other industries due to federally required training requirements. And while many new hires are needed just to maintain existing service, the challenge of quickly increasing the workforce is taking time. As a result, Amtrak has had to temporarily suspend service on several lines due to ongoing staff shortages.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Moreover, the staff shortage is hurting Amtrak's efforts to improve service from the passenger perspective, according to [Rail Passengers Association](#) President and CEO Jim Mathews.

"They really need more people to provide the customer service that passengers expect and they are not able to hire people quickly enough to do that," Mathews says.

As an example, he cited Amtrak's customer-service debacle on the Wolverine route in early October, when a locomotive mechanical problem snowballed into a nightmarish 13-hour delay for riders traveling between Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Chicago.

"We heard stories all summer long about disrupted trips and passengers being treated poorly, and this [Wolverine case] is a sad continuation of that trend," says Mathews.

An apology to unhappy riders

For Amtrak's part, Harris acknowledged that the railroad didn't handle the Wolverine situation well. In a letter to Wolverine passengers, he expressed a "heartfelt apology" and offered ticket refunds, reimbursement of passenger expenses incurred while getting to their final destinations, and a \$100 credit toward future travel. Since then, Amtrak also revised its procedures for responding to service disruptions with better decision-making and customer communication.

The need for better customer service will intensify as demand for new service grows, Mathews believes. But exactly when and where Amtrak will add to its network will depend on another factor: political and financial support from states that would share in the cost for that service.

"You have to have local and state support to be considered for passenger-rail service," Mathews explains. "For example, there are communities in Arizona that are championing at the bit for Amtrak to come in. The demographics and the economics there scream out for it, but Arizona as a state hasn't supported it."

Although the Corridor ID program will be the primary mechanism through which the FRA will support intercity passenger-rail corridor development, the IIJA also created the Interstate Rail Compact Grant Program, which will provide financial assistance to states that set up interstate rail compacts to advance passenger-rail service. It also requires the FRA to conduct a study of Amtrak long-distance service along discontinued routes or those with nondaily long-distance service.

Passenger-rail advocates in some parts of the country already are far along in lining up the support they need to make their case for new Amtrak service. Among them are the [Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority](#) in southern Montana and the [Front Range Passenger Rail District](#) in Colorado.

Building a case for passenger rail

Front Range district officials hope to establish a passenger-rail line along the Interstate-25 corridor between Pueblo and Fort Collins, then connect it with Amtrak's Southwest Chief route and potentially into Wyoming and New Mexico. In June, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signed a law to provide nearly \$9 million in funding for the route's planning and development. The district's board held its first meeting this summer; nonvoting members include representatives of Amtrak, [Union Pacific Railroad](#) and [BNSF Railway Co.](#)

Although the district is new, it succeeds the Front Range Passenger Rail Commission that spent years securing bipartisan political support for the proposed route along the I-25 corridor, according to Front Range District Chairman Jim Souby. District officials are among those that have expressed interest to the FRA in becoming a new rail corridor.

Meanwhile, the Big Sky authority was officially established in 2020, but people associated with it have been working on restoring a long-distance Amtrak route through the greater Northwest after part of its North Coast Limited/Hiawatha line from Chicago to Seattle was cancelled in 1979. Ending that connection severed access to passenger-rail service to the largest cities in Montana and North Dakota, as well as smaller towns in between, says David Strohmaier, the authority's chairman.

If restored, the new Big Sky line would cover southern Montana as part of a larger route from Chicago, running through the Twin Cities and across southern North Dakota into Montana.

The authority is pursuing its plan through both the FRA's upcoming study of long-distance routes, as well as through the Corridor ID program. To advance their proposal, Big Sky officials sought the support of Amtrak, BNSF (whose freight-rail track would host the new passenger-rail service), state transportation officials, county and local governments, and three Tribal Nations.

To that end, Strohmaier hopes Big Sky can serve as a model for other communities hoping to attract Amtrak trains to their towns. "We've made more progress in the last two years than we have in the first 40, and I think passenger-rail service is finally within our grasp," Strohmaier says.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:



*Late last month, Amtrak unveiled renderings of the Airo trainsets.
Photo – media.amtrak.com*

OIG: Amtrak Should Improve Stakeholder Input on Major Capital Programs

Amtrak did not validate trainset and maintenance facility designs with its own personnel early in its \$7.3 billion Intercity Trainset program — now called Airo — resulting in costly redesigns and schedule delays, according to an Amtrak [Office of Inspector General report](#) released in late December.

Amtrak in June 2021 contracted with Siemens Mobility in Sacramento, California, to purchase up to 83 new trainsets. Amtrak [unveiled renderings](#) of Airo earlier this month and plans to use funds from the federal Infrastructure Improvement and Jobs Act to pay for the trainsets.

According to the OIG report, Amtrak experienced early challenges with stakeholder engagement in its trainset acquisition and maintenance facility modification work.

In one example, Amtrak waited until three months after signing the Intercity Trainset contract with Siemens before its food and beverage personnel reviewed the design of the planned food service car. They found that the car's initial design lacked the food storage space to accommodate longer trips and required additional space for customers to stand and move through the galley car.

As a result, Amtrak ordered redesigns for the cafe car, which increased costs by \$42.5 million and will delay the delivery of the first trainsets by five-and-a-half months, the report states.

In addition, the railroad did not engage with key personnel at the maintenance facilities that will accommodate the new trainsets as it developed their designs. For example, in February, program officials visited the Seattle maintenance facility to verify the preliminary design, but onsite personnel identified a design element that would have negatively affected maintenance and commuter train operations in the yard, which resulted in another design change. Amtrak paused all maintenance facility design activities in spring to host stakeholder workshops at each of the 21 facilities it planned to modify as part of the Intercity Trainset program.

Any additional design changes resulting from the workshops could delay construction by 10 to 13 months, the report states.

Although Amtrak has identified these challenges and is addressing them, the report notes that the railroad has not established controls to avoid challenges with stakeholder engagement on future capital programs. To address its findings, the OIG recommended Amtrak ensure program personnel identify and engage all relevant stakeholders to specify requirements early and modify those requirements as program needs and assumptions evolve.

Amtrak Airo trains will operate across the country, including on the following routes: Northeast Regional, Empire Service, Virginia Services, Keystone Service, Downeaster, Cascades, Maple Leaf, New Haven/Springfield Service, Palmetto, Carolinian, Pennsylvanian, Vermonter, Ethan Allen Express and Adirondack.

The trains will be faster and more fuel efficient, operating at speeds up to 125 mph and producing 90% less particulate emissions in diesel operations, according to Amtrak.



AFRA Solicits Proposals to Identify New Passenger-rail Corridors

The [Federal Railroad Administration](#) on December 20th 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.

Continued on next page:



Siemens is manufacturing the new trainsets for the Amtrak Cascades service. Photo – Washington State Department of Transportation

Amtrak Cascades Train Renderings Unveiled

Renderings of the [Amtrak](#) Cascades trains that will transport riders in the Pacific Northwest beginning in 2026 were unveiled last month.

The trains will sport the traditional Amtrak Cascades evergreen and mocha color scheme, as well as graphics of Mt. Hood and Mt. Rainier on each car, Washington State Department of Transportation officials said in a press release.

When operational, the trains will operate along the Interstate-5 corridor between Seattle and Portland, Oregon.

"The branding of our new trains is unique to the Amtrak Cascades corridor, distinguishing them from others in the Amtrak fleet. Their arrival will herald a new generation of train travel in the Pacific Northwest," said Ron Pate, director of the WSDOT Rail, Freight and Ports Division.

Manufactured at Siemens Mobility in Sacramento, California, the trains are funded as a part of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which awarded funding to Amtrak for the procurement. The Amtrak Cascades trains will be the first delivered by Siemens, with equipment for routes in the eastern United States to follow.

The new trains will arrive in Seattle over a period of several months, entering into service once they have been thoroughly inspected, tested and approved, WSDOT officials said.

Amtrak Cascades is a partnership between WSDOT and the [Oregon Department of Transportation](#), which sponsor the service operated under contract by Amtrak. It serves 18 stations between Eugene, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia.



Amtrak Asks STB to Investigate UP's Impact on Sunset Limited OTP

[Amtrak](#) is asking the [Surface Transportation Board](#) to investigate why host railroad practices — primarily at [Union Pacific Railroad](#) — are contributing to substandard on-time performance (OTP) of its Sunset Limited trains in the southwestern United States.

In a complaint filed last month, Amtrak asks the STB to investigate UP steps, policies and strategies that impact Sunset Limited trains' OTP, which Amtrak describes as "abysmal." The national intercity passenger railroad is also seeking damages and relief from UP as a result of its practices.

The Sunset Limited is a long-distance passenger-rail service that runs three times weekly between New Orleans and Los Angeles. Sunset Limited trains travel over UP track for most of the route.

Amtrak identifies the Sunset Limited as its "worst-performing" route in terms of on-time arrival. Amtrak wants the board to investigate whether and how certain UP corporate strategies and objectives drive substandard service on the route.

For example, Amtrak asked the board to look into how UP dispatchers are trained, directed and paid; how UP dispatching algorithms are programmed; how UP trains and dispatching centers are staffed; how UP seeks to ensure that Amtrak's statutory right to preference is effectuated; and how UP has reconciled its decision to implement precision scheduled railroading (PSR) with its obligations to host intercity passenger trains over the UP network.

Amtrak wants the STB to make recommendations to improve OTP on the Sunset Limited, as well as identify steps UP and other host railroads must take to prevent delay of Sunset Limited and other Amtrak trains traveling on host railroad networks.

Amtrak is seeking an investigation and relief under federal law that requires host railroads to give preference to Amtrak trains over freight traffic on the hosts' networks. In 2020, the [Federal Railroad Administration](#) set metrics and standards to ensure that at least 80% of all riders on an Amtrak train arrive at their destination no more than 15 minutes after their scheduled arrival time.

AARPCO Mid-Month Highlights January 2023 #2



Washington Report By Ross Capon

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK) is the new chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing & Urban Development, and Related Agencies (T-HUD). He also will chair the powerful Rules Committee. He is a veteran legislator highly regarded on both sides of the aisle. In 2018, Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA), then Rules Committee chairman said, "Congressman Cole is a valued colleague and a friend. We have worked together in Congress on issues like the authorization for the use of military force and side-by-side in the Rules Committee for years now. He's a fierce defender of his ideas who cares deeply about this institution." Also in 2018, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) was asked in a C-Span interview "who is your favorite House Republican to work with?" Schiff replied: "Tom Cole. Strong on policy. Strong on politics. If we had more like him, the House would be a lot more productive. There are several other Republicans I could say nice things about..." [at which point the interviewer indicated they had run out of time]. When the Anschutz Corporation was running private cars and lobbying with us against Amtrak's then-new harsh-PV policies, I was part of a small April 2018 meeting with Cole in his office. He chuckled in response to my comment that, when Amtrak referred to "fully allocated marginal profits," they meant "we couldn't charge enough to make the business go away on its own." He also commented, "Amtrak needs friends."

Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) likely will be the T-HUD subcommittee's ranking member. He has been the subcommittee's vice chair and became more visible last year when David Price was dealing with the death of his wife.



U.S. Rep. Sam Graves (left) is the new chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen is the committee's ranking member. Photo – Graves' and Larsen's congressional websites

Passenger Rail News 2

U.S. Rep. Graves to chair House T&I Committee

U.S. Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) has been named chair of the [House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee](#) (T&I) for the 118th Congress.

Graves has served as the committee's ranking Republican member for the past four years.

"It's now one of the greatest honors of my life to be chosen by my colleagues to chair what I believe is one of the most important and effective committees in Congress. America cannot prosper without a safe and efficient transportation network that meets the economic needs of our diverse states and communities," said Graves in a press release.

T&I will have a "full agenda" over the next two years, including oversight of the Biden administration's implementation of the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) "and its policies that have exacerbated many of the economic crises facing our nation," Graves said.

Congress passed the IIJA in November 2021.

"We also have an important legislative agenda ahead, including looking at packages to help alleviate ongoing energy and supply-chain problems," he added.

U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) is the committee's ranking Democrat.



Cooking on the Rails: What it Takes to Create a Gourmet Menu on a Train

by Laura Itzkowitz for The Points Guy September 28, 2022

Far from the prepackaged sandwiches and bags of potato chips you can expect to find on most trains, luxury trains serve decadent multicourse meals with fine wines. In fact, a big part of the experience aboard these kinds of trains is dressing up for dinner in the dining car, where the tables are adorned with white linens and servers present gourmet dishes on fine china.

But as you can imagine, cooking and serving a gourmet meal on a moving train presents its fair share of challenges. We spoke with Maryke Reuvers, the chef who designed the menus for [Rovos Rail](#) (a luxury train that runs multiday journeys in southern [Africa](#)) to get the scoop on what it's really like.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Designing the menus

The Vos family, which runs Rovos Rail, reached out to Cape Town-based chef Maryke Reuvers in 2018 to update the menus, train their chefs and implement new systems in the train's food department.

After graduating from culinary school in 2002, Reuvers cooked at hotels, restaurants, wedding venues, on a cruise ship, on movie sets and at the private villas and penthouses of wealthy clients. She has done food styling for commercials, TV series and movies, and has helped manage large events catering to thousands of people. Her work has brought her all over the world, from Argentina to the wilderness of Russia above the Arctic Circle.

"I do not get bored with the variety of things I am involved with and love all the challenges each project brings," Reuvers told TPG.

When designing the menus for Rovos Rail, Reuvers tries to find a balance between authentic South African cuisine and more international dishes.

"Many different nationalities are traveling aboard Rovos Rail, and we do want to give the guests a little bit of a taste of South Africa with certain journeys by incorporating dishes with venison or the traditional 'bobotie' or 'milk tart,'" she said. "But we also cannot stick to South African cuisine the whole time, as we do get a lot of South Africans on the train, and they want something a little more exotic as they are already very familiar with the South African favorites."

She also needs to make sure guests' dietary needs are considered. On the Durban safari journey, for example, the standard menu might feature aromatic prawns in coconut cream with basmati rice, while the vegetarian version of that dish is a chickpea and coconut curry with quinoa and toasted coconut shavings.

Sourcing and storing ingredients

Each of Rovos Rail's trains can accommodate up to 72 passengers in a single seating, so the chefs need to be able to prepare four-course meals for dozens of guests.

"The kitchen carriage is normally in the middle of the train so guests don't have to walk the entire length of the train to get to the dining room," Reuvers explained. "It is definitely not a large space, and the assistants and the chefs all need to be able to work together in this narrow area."

The kitchen is equipped with undercounter fridges on one side and a stove and counter space on the other. Additionally, there are a large sink, a walk-in fridge and shelves all along the walls for storing pots and pans plus dry goods.

Before each trip, Reuvers and the team create a packing list based on the number of guests who booked the journey and the menus. All ingredients then get delivered to the main kitchens in Pretoria, South Africa — the departure city for the trains.

"They do not have time to source ingredients while on a journey, so we make sure they have everything they need on the train to complete an outbound as well as the return leg of the trip," Reuvers said. "If they do end up needing something — it might be some fresh salad leaves or fresh berries — then someone will quickly go out to get what is needed. In the main cities or towns, we have established suppliers and then we can arrange with them in time if we know of certain items that need topping up to be delivered as the train passes through."

The challenges of cooking on a train

Ever notice that on luxury trains, the presentation is nice but not too complicated? That's because a sudden movement can ruin the way the dish looks.

"Plating dishes is challenging, and you cannot build towers or have runny sauces as the plates need to be carried by someone while the train is moving to the tables and need to look good when you put them down in front of the guests. Towers can fall, and runny sauces can look bad," Reuvers said.

Train chefs also avoid keeping pots of boiling water or vats of hot oil on the stove for long periods of time to avoid accidents. And if something in the kitchen breaks and the maintenance team can't fix it, the chefs just have to improvise and do their best until the train returns to the station.

One of the biggest differences between cooking on a train rather than in a hotel is that everything needs to be much more streamlined to account for the lack of space.

"On the train, you are not able to prepare your mise en place as you would in a hotel," Reuvers said. "The only time you have for prep is the few hours before the next meal, as they do not have the space in that train kitchen to prepare ahead. So each meal is prepared from scratch just after the last meal is finished."

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Bottom line

You may not realize it, but that decadent meal you're enjoying aboard Rovos Rail or any other luxury train took a whole lot of planning and organization ahead of time. Odds are there was some improvising by the chefs, too.

The teams working on these trains have to deal with tight spaces, the motion of the train and a lack of fresh ingredients readily available while traveling. They have to plan ahead for guests' dietary needs and might have to think on their toes if some of their equipment breaks along the way. Yet despite all these challenges, the rewards are great.

For Reuvers, working aboard Rovos Rail is the chance to travel to beautiful places in South Africa, as well as up to Victoria Falls, Tanzania and even across the continent to Angola.

"It feels good being able to make something happen in the middle of nowhere, especially when something has not gone according to plan," she said.



Volume 7 Issue 1 January, 2023

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Okay, the Christmas trains are over, and it's time to reset for next year. Spencer is a few weeks out, and it's time to reconnect. It's the fellowship of the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of railroad rust buckets, siding queens, tourist wagons, first-class brass, and business cars. Along with the iron on the head end that pulls our dreams down the track.

Spencer will be exciting as there is so much to see. I'm looking forward to showing my wife around, as she could not attend the last time we went to Spencer. It will be bittersweet this year as I choose not to run for the board seat that I've held since 2012. The following are excerpts from the article I wrote for the next magazine that won't make it to you before we see each other in Spencer.

My time as president sometimes feels short and, at other times, very long. If memory serves me correctly, I've been your president for six years by the time we get back to Spencer. It was more of a blessing to me than one can imagine. I am blessed to serve in the same position as my Father and Henry Weller. Those are number one and two as they relate to role models in the industry for me. When I became president, I followed Roy and Brad, who both took us to the next level. We at RPCA are fortunate to have their leadership and expertise still on our board.....



Papaw enjoying a train ride with his two youngest grandchildren on our private car. W. Roger Fuehring President, RPCA

In January of 2023, I will serve in my last board meeting in Spencer. The timing is not what I expected, but we live in a changing world that requires more attention to detail in my role as a Chief Mechanical Officer at Lake State Railway. I continue working with the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association. I serve on the mechanical and environmental committees. I'm currently the go-between with EPA compliance and those two committees. Starting this spring, we are working on emission testing for alternate emission reduction methods for small railroads through an FRA grant with ASLRRRA, Michigan Tech University, and Chicago South Shore & South Bend Railroad. We are trying to find ways to bring smaller railroads into the fold of the new push for environmental responsibility without bringing financial hardship to small railroads' limited resources. In addition, my duties on those committees see us working on new goals set forth for ESG standards that we see are becoming the norm within our industry. Other goals are to make the SmartWay EPA reporting tool better adapted to reporting actual railroad emissions at all levels, including idle time reductions and switching service, which is difficult to measure.

Time at home with my wife and family, especially the grandkids, is more critical than ever. With growing responsibilities within the railroad industry, I cannot bring the attention to RPCA it deserves.

It wasn't an easy decision, but I have taken the organization through some tough times, and it's time to turn those responsibilities over to someone else. I've genuinely enjoyed serving all of you, and I look forward to many years of continued success and growth of RPCA.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

We've always strived to serve all industry segments equally and avoid putting all our eggs in one basket. That direction appears to have been a good business plan that sustained the organization during some interesting times.

As times slow down one day, I hope to reengage if the opportunity arises, but only time will tell.

See you in Spencer, my Friends,

Board of Directors election

Nominations for the RPCA Board of Directors seats are closed, and ballots have been mailed to all active members. They were mailed on 12/15, so if you haven't received one, please contact Chris Lockwood at membershiprpca@gmail.com ASAP. Chris will be leaving for the Annual Conference on 1/11, so if you are not going to attend the Conference, please be sure your ballot is mailed in time for him to get it in the mail by 1/11. He'll make a final sweep of the PO Box on the morning of the 11th.

If you are going to attend the Conference, you're welcome to bring your ballot with you and deposit it in the box we will have for that purpose. If you are at the conference and need a ballot, we will be able to accommodate that as well.

This year's election promises to be an exciting one. Six people are vying for four seats. Of those four seats, one incumbent has chosen not to run, so there will be at least one new person on the board.

See you in Spencer!

Burt Hermey, Vice President
cbhermey@pacbell.net

Air Brake Certification/Re-Cert Class

Space is available for the two-day class to be held January 30-31 at the Tennessee Central Railroad Museum, Nashville, TN. Class fees are \$1,600 for new certification and \$350 for re-certification. For more information contact: Timothy Bebout at tsbebout@tcry.org or via phone at (615) 636-0421.

THE INSURANCE DESK

United Shortline Insurance Services/HUB and its RPCA agent partners McRail/CBiz, HMBD/HUB, Assured Partners are pleased to bring you our 2023-2024 Insurance Renewal Program to be effective February 21, 2023. The Liability Program rates scored a very modest 2% increase overall and a similar small increase on the Inland Marine policy.

GOING DIGITAL! In an effort to ease the processing on all parties, we created an online Portal last year, which allowed for data input and application creation. The results were so promising that this year the Portal is improved allowing each member to access their own historical application through the portal as well as payment to bind the coverage. Your agents will be contacting you directly with detailed instructions, and we will be available at the RPCA conference for questions.

One of the large differences this year will be a reduced number of Liability options---1/2, 2/4, and 5/10—very few members selected the mid-levels of 3/6 and 4/8, and in an effort to simplify the rating structure the carrier suggested we streamline the offerings. Once again, AMTRAK limits are capped at 2/4—however, for higher limits needed for multicar arranged excursions or special trains, your agent will be able to refer you to Rail Excursion Management, LLC Mr. Adam Auxier to acquire limits above your existing 2/4 limits through the RPCA program.

2 plus decades of successful and safe operations along with welcoming our AAPRCO sister organization members as participants have secured the RPCA Program for years to come. Thanks to the Insurance Committee at the RPCA—Tom Johnson and Ken Bitten for their support and assistance as the “voice of the members” to the insurance market.

RAILCAMP Looking for Campers!!

As mentioned last month, RailCamp 2023 plans continue to move forward. 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.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

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 early January. There is 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. Remember, that no camper has ever been denied acceptance due to his/her ability to pay.

As always, 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. We will do our annual collection at the Conference Banquet. If you cannot attend, please feel free to mail in a contribution. And once again we thank those of you who included a donation with your membership renewal! Should you have any questions, please let me know.

Roy Wullich
Treasurer

SAFETY -RISK TOLERANCE

Happy and Safe New Year to everyone! Many of the tasks and jobs we do involve some degree of risk. I wrote a few months back about my tolerance for cutting away some steel inside our car to carve out a shower and toilet. Thank goodness I found someone else to do that job for me.

I suppose there are about three components to risk tolerance. The first would be to identify the risk involved, while the second might be looking for means to mitigate that risk, and lastly, coming to grips with the possible outcome. This is where the tolerance part comes in. Let me give you an example of an event that was filmed over the holiday season. While I am not a huge fan of YouTube, I do like to check it out from time to time.

Everyone loves a parade, especially a Christmas parade with Santa Claus., lights and music, and the sounds and feel of the holiday season. A fellow by the handle of "Jaw Tooth" filmed an interesting situation in La Grange, KY as it was holding its annual Christmas Parade with hundreds of onlookers lining the street. Santa Claus brings up the rear of the parade on a fire truck, and the crowd goes wild. But the excitement has just begun! Did I mention that there is a set of railroad tracks down this same street? Yep, and three blocks behind Santa Claus is a Class I freight train hauling 396 axles of auto racks. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMwOCfMj5ag>

Really, a freighter street running with auto racks and onlookers packed a mere 5 feet from the train at night. Yes, there were many safety personnel on the ground escorting the train for crowd control and watching over the street intersections. Needless to say, I was freaking out and beside myself when I saw this. My first reaction was to ask why these racks needed to be moved on this particular night. Is this what precision scheduled railroading is all about? I could go on and on, but let's just say that this event was beyond my risk tolerance. Your risk tolerance may find nothing out of the ordinary with the video. There is risk in almost everything we do while working on or moving our cars. Identifying and evaluating the best way to mitigate that risk is vital to keeping everyone safe. We each have differing amounts of risk tolerance. What is your tolerance?

Let's mitigate one risk affecting all of those nasty viruses this winter by Washing Our Hands! Hope to see all of you in Spencer.
Gary

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders have approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) funding bill of \$21.2 billion for public transit and \$16.6 billion for passenger and freight rail. The bill includes an increase for passenger and freight rail of \$69 million from the FY 2022 enacted level, and provides \$2.5 billion for Amtrak grants (\$1.2 billion for National Network grants and \$1.3 billion for the Northeast Corridor), \$560 million for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) grants, and \$100 million for Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail grants. Five Presidential nominees to the Amtrak Board of Directors—one a renomination—and one re-nominee to the Surface Transportation Board (STB) were recommended for Senate confirmation by the Senate Commerce Committee meeting in Executive Session. All six are Democrats—Robert M. Primus, Anthony R. Coscia, David M. Capozzi, Christopher Koos, Rev. Samuel E. Lathem and Robin L. Wiessmann. The nominees who were not Senate-confirmed before adjournment are expected to be renominated by President Biden after the 118th Congress convenes in January.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

RAILROAD NEWS

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



The Canadian Pacific Holiday train raised more than C\$1.3 million and collected at least 121,000 pounds of food for local food banks during its 2022 season. The Holiday Train resumed its cross-continent tour this year after two years of virtual concerts during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now raised more than \$22.4 million and collected 5.15 million pounds of food since the program began in 1999.

Kansas City Southern raised more than \$215,000 from its 2022 Holiday Express train. , KCS officials said in a press release. Nearly 48,000 people visited train stops during the train's three-week run between Shreveport, Louisiana, and Kansas City.



Amtrak has released renderings of the new "Airo" trains that will eventually replace Amfleet cars and older diesel locomotives on state-supported routes from coast to coast. The new trains will be built by Siemens Mobility and are expected to be put into service starting in 2026. They are to enter service on the Cascades route between Eugene, Ore., and Vancouver, B.C., before being sent to other lines.

Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies

Amtrak has posted the Gulf Coast Grant Application for Public Viewing. The grant application itself runs 54 PDF pages. According to the Cover Sheet, the Federal Funding Requested Under the Notice of Funding Opportunity, is \$178,535,333, while the Proposed Non-Federal Match would be \$44,608,834 for a Total Project Cost of \$223,044,167. The opening sentence of the "Project Summary" shows that the parties have settled their differences and are now working together to get the grant that would pay for 80% of the costs. The document shows the Project will be a series of infrastructure improvements in the rail corridor from the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal to the Port of Mobile that will support the introduction of intercity passenger rail, where passenger rail service has not operated since Hurricane Katrina in 2005 while maintaining freight service reliability along the Gulf Coast Corridor.

New York Air Brake's DB-60 II brake control valve with Brake Cylinder Maintaining (BCM) has received unconditional approval from the Association of American Railroads for the BCM feature, becoming the only supplier granted full approval for the technology. BCM is a patented feature that improves braking performance by replenishing air pressure when a leak occurs in the brake cylinder, allowing freight cars to stay in service longer by maintaining brake cylinder pressure.

Independent North Carolina short line Aberdeen Carolina & Western will acquire the 104 miles of track it has leased from Norfolk Southern since 1989. The Piedmont Subdivision runs from milepost 282.63 in Gulf, N.C., to milepost 386.91 in Charlotte. The AC&W also owns and operates a 34.5-mile line, the Sandhills Division, that runs between Aberdeen and Star, N.C., junction with the Piedmont Subdivision.

R.J. Corman Railroad Co. has acquired a 43-mile branch line and leased another 20-mile branch in North Carolina from NS. The newly created Raleigh & Fayetteville Railroad will operate between Raleigh and Fayetteville, N.C., on an original Norfolk Southern Railway line. The original NS was merged into Southern Railway in 1974.

Amtrak alleges in a filing with the STB that the Sunset Limited was, on average, four hours late per trip last year because of poor dispatching and freight train interference from Union Pacific. The railroad called on the federal regulator to investigate UP for decisions that made the New Orleans to Los Angeles passenger train the worst-performing long-distance route on the network. Amtrak accuses UP of violating the law by not giving the passenger train the right-of-way over freight. UP defended itself, noting that the Sunset Route was an especially busy corridor between Texas and the Pacific Coast.



TSB to Investigate Canadian Pacific Derailment in Saskatchewan By| January 17, 2023 Monday accident involves 47 cars of containers

CHAPLIN, Saskatchewan — The Transportation Safety Board of Canada is sending a team of investigators to examine a Canadian Pacific derailment that occurred early Monday morning in Chaplin, Sask., [Global News reports](#). The derailment, shortly after midnight, involved 47 railcars and 95 containers, according to preliminary information. No hazardous materials were involved, [CTV News reports](#); neither report mentioned any injuries. Chaplin is approximately 90 miles west of Regina, Sask



News

BNSF's Katie Farmer Named Railway Age's 2023 Railroader of the Year

Railway Age Written by [William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief](#) December 07, 2022 [News](#)



An empty grain train crosses Lake Pend Oreille into Sandpoint, Idaho, on December 4, 2022, using BNSF's new bridge just two weeks after it entered service. Bruce Kelly photo.

Railway Age's 2023 Railroader of the Year Award, the 60th annual, goes to a groundbreaking North American rail industry leader: BNSF President and Chief Executive Officer Katie M. Farmer.

"Katie Farmer permanently changed the industry for the better by becoming the first woman chief executive of a Class I railroad," said *Railway Age* Editor-in-Chief William C. Vantuono. "She took the throttle of North America's largest railroad, in terms of both route-miles and revenue, during unprecedented times, in the midst of a global pandemic. She has continued to press forward during a challenging, post-pandemic period, dealing with global supply chain and service problems as well as a difficult labor market, focusing on building a better BNSF. Katie knows her railroad inside and out. She's held leadership positions in every major function of the company, overseeing a 32,500-route-mile network that spans 28 states and touches three Canadian provinces. She has been working with her team to shape the legacy of BNSF, which has seen industry-leading growth. In late 2020, when she was named as the railroad's next chief executive, she told *Railway Age* how proud she was of the men and women of BNSF—railroaders who 'know how to do hard'—and looks forward to continuing BNSF's success."

"It is humbling to be included among a group of individuals who have accomplished so much for freight and passenger rail and have contributed to the success of today's North American freight rail industry," said Farmer. "I am honored to be named the 2023 Railroader of the Year. However, I view this as affirmation that BNSF is an industry leader, thanks to the men and women who I have worked alongside for more than 30 years. BNSF isn't great because of the work of one person. BNSF is great because of the hard work and commitment day in and day out of 35,000 people who deliver on our promise to our customers."

Katie Farmer was appointed BNSF President and CEO in January 2021. She has been with BNSF for more than 30 years, previously serving as Executive Vice President Operations since September 2018, where she oversaw the entire Operations organization.

Farmer received a bachelor's and master's degree from Texas Christian University.

Upon graduation, she began her career with BNSF predecessor Burlington Northern in 1992 as a management trainee in Fort Worth, Tex., following an internship in the Engineering department between her Junior and Senior years in college.

Farmer is the 9th person from BNSF or one of its predecessor railroads named Railroader of the Year in the award's six-decade history: Louis W. Menk, Northern Pacific (1967); John S. Reed, Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe (1970); Lawrence Cena, AT&SF (1981); Darius W. Gaskins, Jr., Burlington Northern (1988); Robert D. Krebs, AT&SF, and Gerald Grinstein, BN (1996); Matthew K. Rose, BNSF (2010); and her immediate predecessor, Carl R. Ice, BNSF (2016).

Railway Age's Railroader of the Year Award



Katie Farmer CEO BNSF Railway (BNSF) on Jan. 19 announced its \$3.96 billion 2023 capital plan, of which \$2.85 billion will be devoted to maintaining the Class I's core network and related assets.

BNSF: \$2.85B to Maintain Core Network and Related Assets

Written by [Carolina Worrell, Senior Editor](#)
[Contact Progressive Railroading editorial staff.](#) January 19, 2023

BNSF's capital investments, the railroad says, "play a key role in its ability to operate a safe and reliable network while supporting the anticipated needs of its customers."

Investing in BNSF's existing infrastructure, the Class I adds, "ensures the railroad is in top condition, which results in less unscheduled service outages that can slow down the rail network and reduce capacity."

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Maintenance projects that are part of the \$2.85 billion include replacing and upgrading rail and track infrastructure, such as ballast and rail ties, and maintaining rolling stock. According to BNSF, the projects will consist of nearly 14,000 miles of track surfacing and/or undercutting work and the replacement of 346 miles of rail and approximately 2.8 million rail ties.

According to [BNSF](#), \$402 million of this year's capital plan is for equipment acquisitions and more than \$700 million will be for expansion and efficiency projects, adding to the nearly \$2.5 billion invested in expansion projects over the past five years. This year's expansion plans, the railroad says, "support the growth of BNSF Intermodal and Automotive, Agricultural and Industrial Products customers."

On its Southern Transcon route, between the West Coast and Midwest, BNSF says it will support traffic growth by beginning the construction of a second bridge over the Missouri River at Sibley, Miss., completing double track for one of the last segments of single track along the Southern Transcon. The plan, which continues projects that add several segments of new track in eastern Kansas and southern Calif., will also begin a multi-year terminal and fueling project near Belen, N.Mex. All four projects, BNSF says, will increase capacity throughout the corridor.

Also, in the south, BNSF will complete a second main track expansion in Fort Worth. And in the Pacific Northwest, BNSF will begin a multi-year project to add double track near Spokane, Wash., including over the Spokane River and by constructing a siding near Pasco, Wash. BNSF will continue multi-year intermodal facility expansion projects in Chicago (Cicero) and Stockton, Calif. Also, in California, BNSF will continue its track efficiency improvement projects in San Bernardino, along with property acquisitions in the Barstow area, "enabling future rail facility and infrastructure development" for the Barstow International Gateway Project.

"Our capital plan reflects our growth mindset and commitment to having the capacity and equipment we need to support our customers," said BNSF President and CEO Katie Farmer. "Continued investment in our network through our capital plans helps ensure we run a safe, efficient and growing railroad that provides customers with the service they expect from BNSF."

Tehachapi Pass Line Reopened after BNSF Derailment

Trains Newswire [By](#) | January 22, 2023

No injuries reported; line shut down for less than 19 hours

MARCEL, Calif. — The Union Pacific main line over Tehachapi pass reopened late Saturday following the derailment of a BNSF train earlier in the day, [BNSF reports](#) in a customer notification on its website.

The derailment occurred about 2:03 a.m. local time at Marcel, just upgrade from the Tehachapi Loop. The line was reopened at 10:45 p.m.

No information on the number of cars involved was reported, but [the Bakersfield Californian website](#) shows photos of container cars strewn on a hillside and says some cars went down a 100-foot embankment. There were no injuries, the Californian reports.

End of BNSF News



TSA Issues Cybersecurity Directive for Railroads

Progressive Rail News: Passenger Rail November 2022

By Julie Sneider, Senior Associate Editor

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration last month rolled out a new cybersecurity directive for designated passenger and freight railroads.

The goal of the "Enhancing Rail Cybersecurity" directive issued Oct. 18 is to strengthen cybersecurity requirements and focus on performance-based measures to achieve critical outcomes,

Photo – Shutterstock

TSA officials said in a press release. The directive was developed with extensive input from the rail industry and federal partners, including the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Railroad Administration.

Railroads are required to establish and implement a TSA-approved cybersecurity implementation plan that describes the specific measures being used to meet the directive's outcomes. They must establish a cybersecurity assessment program to test and regularly audit their cybersecurity measures, then identify and resolve any vulnerabilities.

"The nation's railroads have a long track record of forward-looking efforts to secure their network against cyber threats and have worked hard over the past year to build additional resilience," said TSA Administrator David Pekoske in a press release. "This directive, which is focused on performance-based measures, will further these efforts to protect critical transportation infrastructure from attack."

The directive calls on the TSA-specified passenger and freight railroads to take steps to prevent disruption to, and degradation of, their infrastructure to boost cybersecurity. The steps include:

- developing network segmentation in policies and controls to ensure an operational technology system can continue to operate safely if the information technology system has been compromised (or vice versa);
- creating access control measures to secure and prevent unauthorized access to critical cyber systems;
- creating continuous monitoring and detection procedures to detect threats and correct anomalies that affect cyber system operations; and
- applying security patches and updates to operating systems, applications, drivers and firmware on cyber systems in a timely manner using a risk-based methodology.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

A history of collaboration

The new TSA requirements institutionalize and build on existing and effective industry practices that have helped keep the nation's rail network secure, and will help prevent cyber-related service disruptions, said [Association of American Railroads](#) President and CEO Ian Jefferies in a press release. Through the AAR's Rail Information Security Committee, railroads since 1999 have coordinated and shared cybersecurity information with each other to address cyber threats and improve network security. "The industry has been a leader at bringing the right people and information together to address evolving cyber threats," said Jefferies. "Collaboration between railroads and government partners on these issues has a long, productive history that will continue to maintain and advance the smart, effective solutions to keep our network safe and freight moving. We appreciate the administration's efforts on these important issues."



BUILDING AMERICA® News

UP Named to Dow Jones Sustainability Index

Progressive Rail News: December 21 2022 Union Pacific Railroad -provided by John Goodman

[Union Pacific Railroad](#) was named to the [Dow Jones Sustainability Index](#) (DJSI) North America for the first time.

The DJSI benchmarks corporate sustainability performance based on an assessment of comprehensive governance, economic, environmental and social criteria, UP officials said in a press release.

"We are committed to further reducing our carbon footprint, working hand in hand with our customers and communities to ensure a shared sustainable future," said Beth Whited, UP's executive vice president of sustainability and strategy, and chief human resource officer.



The DJSI benchmarks corporate sustainability performance based on multiple criteria. Photo – Union Pacific Railroad

UP was recognized for its environmental sustainability efforts, which involve a short-term target to reduce absolute Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by 26% by 2030 (from a 2021 baseline). The Class I also agreed to a \$1 billion locomotive modernization program earlier this year that will modernize 600 locomotives, reducing carbon emissions by about 350 tons per locomotive per year, UP officials said.

Union Pacific Invented the Ski Chairlift?

[Commentary](#) Railway Age Written by [Union Pacific](#), [Corporate Communications](#) January 17, 2023 [Class I](#)

You expect innovation from a name like Union Pacific, although with the company's rich history, you may be surprised how far its achievements in technology and engineering reach. Take for example the ski chairlift, spotlighted in the Union Pacific Museum's newest exhibit, "Discovered!: Winter Sports Under a Summer Sun: The Railroad and Sun Valley."

In 1936, in hopes of boosting passenger travel on its rails, Union Pacific built a ski resort in Ketchum, Idaho, called Sun Valley Resort. In those days, skiers relied on tricky rope-tows to access the top of a mountain. During the resort's planning stages, Union Pacific's Chairman of the Board, Averell Harriman, thought the destination could lure more visitors by offering a safer, faster way to get skiers up the slopes. He asked the railroad's mechanical engineers to develop something new. Union Pacific's James Curran, an Omaha-based Engineering Department employee, had previously worked for Paxton Vierling Steel in the Gulf ports. There he watched pulley systems hook bunches of bananas and haul them to the dock. Curran figured hauling bananas and hauling skiers was not all that different – limit bruising and try not to drop them.

Curran had only a few months to engineer, build, test and install his idea for a completely new kind of ski lift that used chairs. He built a prototype in the back of a pickup truck and mounted a pair of skis onto roller skates. Testing on Omaha streets, a co-worker would slowly drive the truck alongside Curran until the chair met the back of his knees. Curran would roll forward on the skates until he settled gently into the seat.

Continued on next page:



The new chairlift in operation on the slopes, Sun Valley, Idaho, 1937.



The prototype of the first chairlift tested on the streets of Omaha, Nebraska.

Continued from previous page:

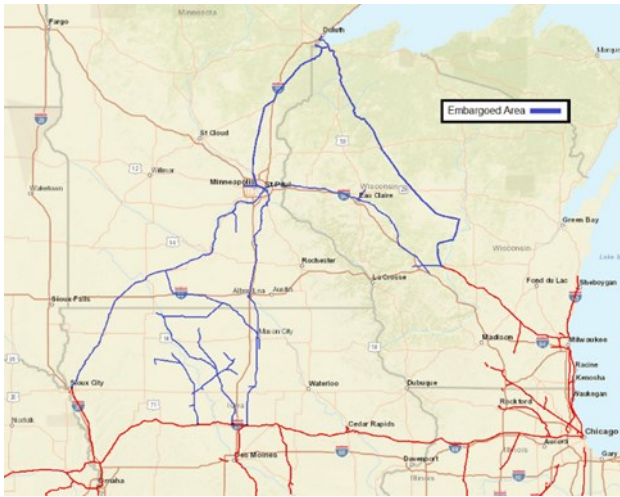
After trying it himself, Harriman declared it a success.

When the Sun Valley Resort opened in December 1936, Life Magazine featured the remarkable new ski chairlift – it quickly became an iconic image of Sun Valley, and the technology spread across the globe.

The [Union Pacific Museum](#), located in Council Bluffs, Iowa, houses archives of Union Pacific's destination operations from Sun Valley to the [western National Parks](#). These include original records, blueprints, films and images that can't be found anywhere else.

Learn more about how and why Union Pacific opened a ski resort by visiting the museum's newest exhibit, open now through August.

Inspired by this history? You can be part of the Union Pacific Railroad Museum story: [Join today as a patron or volunteer!](#)



Regulators Urged to Order Union Pacific to Drop Embargo Covering Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin (updated)

Trains Newswire By Bill Stephens | January 19, 2023

Eight members of Congress asked the Surface Transportation Board to convene a meeting between the railroad and shippers in their states

WASHINGTON – Members of Congress from Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have asked federal regulators to order Union Pacific to lift a weather-related embargo on rail traffic in their states before it has “devastating effects” on shippers. UP imposed [the 14-day embargo on Dec. 29](#) and on [Jan. 11 extended it another 14 days](#), saying ongoing snow, ice, and Arctic temperatures were impeding operations in the three states.

The railroad had to contend with snow drifts as high as 15 feet that blocked tracks in Iowa and Minnesota in December. And [in a Jan. 18 customer advisory](#) UP said it was bracing for a storm that was expected to drop an additional 12 to 24 inches of snow across Nebraska, northern Iowa, southern Minnesota, and Wisconsin and whip up strong winds in Nebraska and Iowa.

Customers are allowed to request permits for shipments in the affected areas. “Union Pacific will continue to carefully review and consider customer circumstances while issuing permits during this recovery period.”

Union Pacific has embargoed traffic on lines shaded in blue in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin on account of harsh winter weather. Union Pacific

Permits will continue to be issued, as needed, to protect critical supply chains,” [the railroad said last week](#).

But eight representatives were critical of the railroad's response to winter weather.

“The delays resulting from Union Pacific's embargo and subsequent inadequate service for their customers is unacceptable. Current and forecasted weather conditions in the upper Midwest are not abnormal for this time of year, and similar conditions in the past have not significantly disrupted rail service,” the representatives wrote [in a Jan. 13 letter](#) to the Surface Transportation Board. The representatives urged the STB to hold a meeting with UP and affected shippers, direct the railroad to lift the embargo, and restore service as quickly as possible.

“We must ensure our farmers, biofuel producers, and manufacturers can rely on critical rail transportation for their products, in turn ensuring Americans may continue to rely on safe and affordable domestic food and fuel supply,” they wrote.

STB Chairman Martin J. Oberman told the representatives on Wednesday that the board is “deeply aware of UP's service shortfalls,” noting that the board held a hearing in December on UP's increased use of embargoes as well as an April hearing on widespread service problems on UP, BNSF Railway, CSX Transportation, and Norfolk Southern.

“I can assure you that I share your concerns and will continue to hold UP accountable with respect to its plans to lift not only the current embargo, but to address its general use of embargoes to manage its operations,” [Oberman wrote](#).

None of the other Class I railroads operating in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin – which include BNSF Railway, Canadian National, and Canadian Pacific – have issued similar blanket embargoes in the area, according to the Association of American Railroads embargo system. The only non-UP embargo in the three states was issued by BNSF on Nov. 17 to alleviate congestion at its auto ramp in St. Paul, Minn. The embargo was updated on Dec. 21 to include extreme weather conditions.

“Embargoes are a high priority for us to deal with this year,” Oberman said on Thursday at the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers conference. “I think one of my priorities is going to be to hire a meteorologist to come to work for the board, to sort out for us the difference between the snow that falls on the UP tracks in Minnesota and the snow that falls on CP's, and BN's, and everybody else's tracks. Because I'm convinced it's different snow.”

UP says winter weather delays began to mount in December.

“Union Pacific has experienced significant weather delays since December due to severe winter storms and arctic temperatures in the Midwest. Although incremental progress has been made in reducing congestion across the region, we are seeing longer than anticipated recovery due to the magnitude of weather impacts. We will continue to issue permits for customers during this recovery period to protect critical supply chains,” a railroad spokeswoman says. “Union Pacific is committed to restoring the fluidity of our network and we are working closely with members of Congress and the Surface Transportation Board to address their concerns.” At a hearing in Washington last month, Union Pacific's increasing reliance on embargoes to clear congestion came under fire from shippers, labor unions, and members of the STB.

Continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

Regulators in November ordered UP to explain why it has significantly increased its use of embargoes. With UP running short of train crews, the railroad has issued more than 1,000 embargoes so far this year in response to congestion, compared with just 27 in 2017 – the year before it adopted a Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model.

After the hearing, UP said it would stop issuing congestion-related embargoes under its pipeline management system. UP continues to issue embargoes related to congested customer facilities and weather, however, according to the AAR embargo system.

Note: Story updated at 2:34 p.m. Central Time to include statement from Union Pacific.

Trains Senior Editor David Lassen contributed to this report.



A Union Pacific train heads west out of downtown Chicago through Metra's Kedzie station. David Lassen

Union Pacific Reports Record Revenue and Profits for 2022

Trains Newswire [By Bill Stephens](#) | January 24, 2023

UP is the first Class I railroad to report financial results for the fourth quarter and full year

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific generated record revenue and profits last year despite the impact of crew shortages that snarled operations, hurt service, and limited traffic growth.

“The fourth quarter and 2022 overall were challenging for Union Pacific and our employees. The lengthy labor negotiations tested our workforce, while customers felt the impact of our service issues,” CEO Lance Fritz told investors and analysts on the railroad’s Tuesday morning earnings call.

Fritz acknowledged that 2022 didn’t meet expectations, but said the railroad is on the mend, pointing to UP’s rebound from recent winter storms and a trend of velocity improvements that began in the summer.

“We are building resiliency into the network through hiring efforts, shifting critical resources, and better operations,” Fritz says. Due to economic uncertainty, the railroad’s outlook for 2023 is fuzzy. UP expects volume to be ahead of the rate of industrial production, which the railroad currently expects to decline by 0.5%.

UP forecasts that its operating ratio will improve this year as service improves. For the year, UP’s operating income rose 6%, to \$9.9 billion, as revenue grew 14%, to \$24.9 billion. Overall traffic volume was up 2%. Earnings per share surged 13%, to \$11.21. UP’s full year operating ratio was 60.1%, a 2.9-point increase.

For the fourth quarter, operating income declined 1%, to \$2.4 billion, as revenue grew 8%, to \$6.1 billion. Earnings per share of \$2.67 was up a penny from a year ago. UP’s operating ratio rose 3.6 points, to 61%, as costs rose due to higher fuel prices, inflation, and inefficient operations.

UP’s volume increased 1% for the quarter. Bulk shipments were down 3%, with declines in grain, fertilizer, and food and refrigerated shipments. Industrial products volume was flat. Premium traffic, which includes intermodal and automotive shipments, was up 3% thanks to 2% growth in intermodal and a 9% rise in auto traffic.

The railroad’s key quarterly operations metrics reflected the impact of crew shortages and harsh weather. Car velocity, measured by car-miles per day, was down 3% compared to a year ago. Intermodal trip plan compliance dropped 5 points to 73%, while manifest and automotive trip plan compliance was flat at 58%.

UP’s safety performance was mixed last year. The personal injury rate improved by 18% to its lowest level in five years, but derailments were up 8%.

The railroad’s capital plan calls for spending \$3.6 billion this year, up 6% from a year ago.



(Photograph Courtesy of CP via Twitter)



**CANADIAN
PACIFIC
RAILWAY**

News

CP, Unifor Reach Tentative Collective Agreement

Railway Age Written by [Marybeth Luczak](#), [Executive Editor](#) January 13, 2023
Class I

Canadian Pacific (CP) on Jan 13 reported reaching a tentative collective agreement with Unifor on a new contract for Canada-based mechanical employees.

The previous collective agreement with Unifor—Canada’s largest private-sector union, which represents some 1,200 CP employees responsible for maintaining railcars and locomotives at 18 locations from British Columbia to Quebec—expired Dec. 31, 2022. Negotiations have been ongoing since September 2022.

“We thank Unifor for working collaboratively with us throughout this process,” said CP President and CEO Keith Creel, who noted that the tentative agreement “is a testament to the hard work, collaboration and commitment of both sides.”

CP said details will not be released publicly until the agreement has been ratified.

CP News Continued on next page:



A Canadian Pacific train with Kansas City Southern locomotives is westbound at Orrs Lake, Ontario, on Feb. 3, 2021. Brandon Muir

Environmental Review Holding up Final Decision on Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern Merger (updated)

Trains Newswire by Bill Stephens | January 19, 2023

Surface Transportation Board can't issue final verdict on merger until 30 days after environmental impact statement is published

A Canadian Pacific train with Kansas City Southern locomotives is westbound at Orrs Lake, Ontario, on Feb. 3, 2021. Brandon Muir
WASHINGTON — The Surface Transportation Board's final decision on the proposed Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger has been delayed and likely won't come until late February at the earliest.

Today was the statutory deadline for the board to issue its decision on the first merger of Class I railroads in more than two decades.

But the board's final environmental impact statement has not yet been completed.

And under federal law the board can't issue a final decision on the merger until 30 days after the environmental impact statement has been published in the Federal Register.

STB Chairman Martin J. Oberman was asked at a shipper conference today whether a decision would come soon.

"I can't answer that question. All I can tell you is I think the merger statutory deadline ... is January 19th. But like a lot in railroads, there's another statute that tells us exactly the opposite, and that is that we cannot vote on a decision until at least 30 days after the environmental impact statement has been published in the Federal Register. So those are the legal limits and requirements," he told the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers.

The board is working as quickly as it can, he said.

"All I can tell you is it is undergoing high-intensity work by everybody, including the board members, where we are moving as rapidly as this institution is capable of moving," Oberman says.

An agency spokeswoman says the environmental impact statement is nearing completion.

CP Chief Marketing Officer John Brooks told an investor conference today that he was "very optimistic" that the STB would approve the merger and that CP would be in control of KCS by March 31. The expectation is that the final environmental impact statement will be completed on Feb. 3. If the board votes to approve the merger, the decision would become effective 30 days later.

The [draft environmental statement](#), released in August, found that the CP-KCS merger would cause few if any adverse environmental impacts aside from increased train noise in some locations.

The draft EIS also said the merger would have little effect on rail safety or emergency response times in communities that would see increased train traffic.

But the draft recommended that the railroad work with affected communities for grade crossing mitigation projects where appropriate. Also recommended: Making the railroads' commitments on environmental matters part of any conditions the STB may impose in the event the merger is approved. *Trains Senior Editor David Lassen contributed to this report.*

Note: Updated at 4:45 p.m. Central Time to include comment from CP Chief Marketing Officer John Brooks.

End of CP News



USDOT Publishes Five-year R&D Strategic Plan

Progressive Rail News: Federal Legislation & Regulation 1/16/2023

The [U.S. Department of Transportation](#) last week announced the release of its *Research, Development and Technology Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2026*.

The plan will guide more than \$5 billion in research funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by Congress in November 2021, USDOT officials said in a press release.

"In this time of rapid change and experimentation, research must drive the learning necessary for the public sector to keep pace with technological advancement and to adapt to evolving socio-economic needs," said Robert Hampshire, USDOT's deputy assistant secretary for research and technology and chief science officer.

To develop the plan, department officials used input from a wide range of stakeholders, including from within the department as well as from state, local, tribal and educational institutions; research labs; organized labor; and the private and nonprofit sectors.

In addition, the plan calls for the federal government to address "grand challenges" that aim to achieve zero fatalities related to transportation, resilient supply chains, equitable mobility for all, net-zero greenhouse-gas emissions and intelligent infrastructure.



National Railroad Museum Submits Expansion Plans

[By](#) | January 3, 2023 provided by Rick Krenske New building would expand indoor museum space.

ASHWAUBENON, Wis. – The [National Railroad Museum](#) has submitted a plan to the Village of Ashwaubenon for a \$15 million expansion project that would include a new building for exhibits and a plaza along the Fox River, Green Bay's Fox 11 News reported. The museum would expand its current Lenfestey Center by 32,040 square feet. The project would also include a 36-stall parking lot and other improvements. Sketches submitted to the village show what appears to be four rows of tracks inside, with the building including outdoor patio space facing the river.

"The timeline is dependent on funding, but we hope to break ground in a few years," Museum CEO Jacqueline Frank told FOX 11. Frank says this is the first phase of an overall master plan for updating the site. Discussion of the expansion plans began in 2016 when initial designs were released. Frank says the overall project is "years down the line."

The [Lenfestey Center](#), a 25,000 square foot facility, is the Museum's main rolling stock exhibition venue.

Museum (Green Bay, Wis.) plans to expand its current indoor exhibit facilities by 32,000 square feet. The new facility will house additional rolling stock exhibits and increase climate-controlled space available for educational programming and events. National Railroad Museum

The climate-controlled facility is home to such notable pieces as Union Pacific No. 4017, one of two museum-based Big Boys exhibited indoors, London & North Eastern Railway locomotive No. 60008, *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, and cars from Eisenhower's World War II command train. This facility was opened in July 2001.

Founded in 1956 by community volunteers, the National Railroad Museum is one of the oldest and largest institutions dedicated to preserving and interpreting United States railroad history. In 1958, a joint resolution of Congress recognized the Museum as the country's National Railroad Museum. Among the museum displays are a Chesapeake & Ohio Kanawha 2-8-4 No. 2736, Santa Fe 2-10-4 No. 5017, a General Motors *Aerotrain*, and Pennsylvania Railroad GG1 electric No. 4890.

(This is the museum where Milwaukee Road #261 came from.)



Minnesota City Builds "Railroad Depot" Water Pump Station

[By](#) | January 10, 2023

Pumping station is along former Minneapolis & St. Louis right of way

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. – It's been decades since the last Chicago & North Western freight train rumbled through [Eden Prairie](#) on former Minneapolis & St. Louis tracks, and even longer since the M&StL depot stood along the right-of-way. Yet if you look along that right-of-way today, there's a new "station" – a replica of a train depot that also has a functional purpose.

It serves as the pump station and holds mechanical equipment associated with a new water reservoir that the city of Eden Prairie has constructed nearby to keep up with Eden Prairie's population and demand for drinking water and fire service. The "depot" includes a platform and a short piece of track.

This year will come another addition – a replica water tank. The Eden Prairie City Council has a \$92,000 contract with [International Tank and Pipe Company](#) to design and prepare for construction a 10-foot-tall wooden water tank that will complete the replica project, the Eden Prairie Local News reported. Under the contract, materials for the tank will arrive in May, and then installed at the site. The original depot also had a water tank.

Is it a train station? Or, is it a municipal water pump station disguised as a train depot? To honor its railroad heritage, Eden Prairie, Minn., had a replica of its old Minneapolis & St. Louis station constructed. Inside, however, are not the trappings of a regular railroad depot. The building houses a new water pumping station for the city. Oertel Architects

During the planning for the reservoir, city officials decided to give the pump station a design that borrows from the former railroad depot and water tank that once stood a couple of hundred yards away, and use it to educate residents about Eden Prairie's railroad history. Contractors used modern-day fiber-cement and metal building materials to approximate the wooden siding and shingles that composed the historic depot. "We thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice to recreate some of the history of this land?'" Director of Public Works Robert Ellis told the Local News.

Other additions remaining in the project include interpretive signage to describe Eden Prairie's railroad history.

Eden Prairie was once on the main line of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway, which was based in Minneapolis. Freight trains operated from Cedar Lake Yard in Minneapolis through Hopkins and Eden Prairie down steep Chaska Hill, crossed the Minnesota River, and headed south toward Iowa and into Peoria, Ill. The railroad touted itself as "The Peoria Gateway" encouraging shippers to use M&StL avoiding Chicago rail congestion. Chicago & North Western purchased M&StL in November 1960; the line through Eden Prairie was abandoned in 1991.

Intermodal a Drag on North American Rail Traffic Totals in Week 2

Progressive Railroading News Rail News: Rail Industry Trends
1/19/2023



U.S. railroads logged a combined 4.2% increase in carloads and a 7% decrease in intermodal volume for the week ending Jan. 14 compared with volumes in the same week in 2022, according to [Association of American Railroads](#) data.

Total U.S. traffic for the week was 486,000 carloads and intermodal units, a 1.7% decrease. The number of carloads climbed to 244,171 units; the number of containers and trailers fell to 241,829.

Seven of the 10 carload commodity groups that AAR tracks each week posted increases. They included grain, nonmetallic minerals, and motor vehicles and parts. Commodity groups that posted decreases were chemicals, forest products and miscellaneous carloads.

Canadian railroads posted 84,028 carloads for the week, up 23%, and 62,980 intermodal units, down 2%. Mexican railroads logged 22,792 carloads, down 3.9%, and 15,045 intermodal units, down 6.6%.

For the first two weeks of 2023 compared with the same period in 2022:

- U.S. rail traffic totaled 902,489 carloads and intermodal units, down 3.5%;
- Canadian rail traffic totaled 273,546 carloads, containers and trailers, up 9.6%;
- Mexican rail traffic totaled 71,530 carloads and intermodal units, up 0.5%; and
- North American rail volume totaled 1,247,565 carloads and intermodal units, down 0.7%.

[Contact Progressive Railroading editorial staff.](#)

From the Editor — Outlook 2023: Here Comes the Sun?

Progressive Rail News: Rail Industry Trends December 2022



By [Pat Foran](#), Editor

It's been rough sledding in Rail Country the past three years. For all the reasons you know. But more than a few rail execs believe brighter days are ahead. Last month, some rail leaders were pinching (in tone, at least) phrases from George Harrison's song "Here Comes the Sun." They told us that even though it "seems like years since it's been clear," they weren't expecting a "long, cold lonely winter," but instead were anticipating "sun, sun, sun, here it comes," as Managing Editor Jeff Stagl reports in the preface to our annual Outlook coverage.

Other observers were less than sanguine about the sun coming up anytime soon. At our annual RailTrends® summit, held Nov. 15-16 in New York City, intermodal expert Larry Gross said market share recovery for intermodal had run out of steam. In a Nov. 29 video conversation with Senior Associate Editor Julie Sneider posted on RailPrime, our digital subscription offering, FTR Transportation Intelligence's Todd Tranausky said he didn't see carload traffic growth in 2023. And more than a few industry analysts expect work-life balance issues to present rail workforce challenges for the foreseeable future.

It'd be so much easier for rail execs to default to the noncommittal "cautious optimism" language they tend to offer up this time of year, so their confidence about the year ahead feels genuine. That said, I don't hear the Harrison song when I listen to some of them talk. Between the lines, I hear this snippet of dialogue from "The Wizard of Oz," courtesy of the Scarecrow: "Of course, I don't know, but I think it'll get darker before it gets lighter." Here's hoping I'm mishearing things, and that the sun's on its way.

CN gets back (to basics) with Harris

On Nov. 16, CN President and CEO Tracy Robinson told the RailTrends audience she and her team were "trying to restore the legendary focus on service at CN," and that priority No. 1 was "getting back to basics with scheduled operations."

Turns out part of "getting back" meant luring scheduled railroading expert (and former CN-er) Ed Harris out of retirement.

On Nov. 28, CN appointed Harris executive vice president and chief operating officer, succeeding Rob Reilly. Harris, who came out of retirement to serve as CSX's EVP of operations in 2018 before retiring in August 2020, had been working with CN's operations leadership team since April. He spent 38 years at Illinois Central Railroad and CN and was EVP of operations when he first retired in 2007. Harris also served as Canadian Pacific's COO from 2010 to 2012.

I last spoke with Ed just after he'd retired from CSX. "It was a great way to end my Class I career — again," he said. "Who knows what's down the road?" Welcome back to the front, Ed.

Izaak Walton Inn Essex Montana Sold

ESSEX, Mont. — The Izaak Walton Inn, the trackside property along BNSF main line adjacent to Glacier National Park that is a longtime railfan destination, is under new ownership. [The Daily Inter Lake reports](#) that Brian Kelly, who has owned the property since 2006, has sold it to Loge Camps, a hotel marketed toward outdoors adventure clientele. The hotel, with its rental cabins including cabooses and an F45 locomotive on a 100-acre property, sold for \$13.5 million. Gavin Burns, Loge Camps' vice president for business development, told the newspaper the company will update rooms and update the hotel's café but that most of the property will not be changed: "We're not developers. We're remodelers," he said. "The property has so much character and great history." The hotel dates to 1939, when it was built by the Great Northern Railway to provide lodging for railroad workers. It was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	Saturday February 11th 2023 6:15—8:45 pm	Roseville Lutheran Church 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE
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	2501 38th Street Minneapolis MN 55406 (5 Blocks West of Hiawatha Ave)	\$10

Northstar News
8310 University Ave NE APT: #420
Fridley MN 55432
Address Correction Requested

