



**NRHS**

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

# Northstar News

**Meeting Notice Change, due to Easter, it's the 3rd Saturday in April: 4/15/2023**



*L: TCRT PCC car at Hennepin & Nicollet Early 1950's, Barney Olsen Collection*

*R: TCRT Streetcar at the Selby Tunnel St Paul, Early 1950's Barney Olsen Collection*



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**Meeting Notice:**  
**Saturday April 15, 2023 6:15 pm** At Roseville Lutheran Church, our April Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2023 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month. (Except April) Planned Program **Roger Libra's C&TS RR DVD.**

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpen-teur Avenues at 4:15 pm April 15, 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](mailto:dan@meyer-family.net) and arrangements will be made.

**April Zoom Meeting Sign-on for the April 15 2023 meeting is noted here!** Log in information for the April 15, 2023 Northstar Chapter NRHS Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting will open around 5:30 pm Central Time and officially begin at 6:15 pm. To join the Zoom Meeting, Link:<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83141202878?pwd=cGNwcXMzQnZlUkc5Qm45NE9Mby9aUT09> or <https://tinyurl.com/4dn6z7uf> Meeting ID: 831 4120 2878 Passcode: 230415

Dial in audio-only: 1-507-473-4847 or 1-312-626-6799 Use the meeting ID and passcode listed above when prompted.

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Meeting Location: From the east or west take MN 36 to Lexington Avenue. Drive south on Lexington Avenue to Roselawn Avenue and turn right. The large lighted parking lot is on your right as you travel west on Roselawn. Use the lower entrance to the church and turn left through the commons area. We'll be in room 40, The Diamond Room. (1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113)



From the Editor:

**Membership renewals for 2023 are OVER Due!**  
**If you have not renewed, you will no longer receive the newsletter!**

**News Flash:**

On Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 9:25 AM, Frederick Krenske : NODAK: via AP News, VERBATIM: "A Canadian Pacific train derailed in rural North Dakota Sunday night and spilled hazardous materials. But local authorities and the railroad said there is no threat to public safety. There were no injuries and no fire associated with the derailment, which occurred in a rural area outside Wyndmere, a town of several hundred people about 60 miles (97 kilometers) southwest of Fargo. Four cars filled with liquid asphalt and two railcars filled with ethylene glycol spilled some of those chemicals in the derailment. A car carrying propylene was punctured and released some vapor. It wasn't immediately clear how much of the chemicals were released, but there are no waterways nearby and the chemical spills were contained at the site of the derailment."

**Meeting Minutes March 11 2023 at Roseville Lutheran Church**

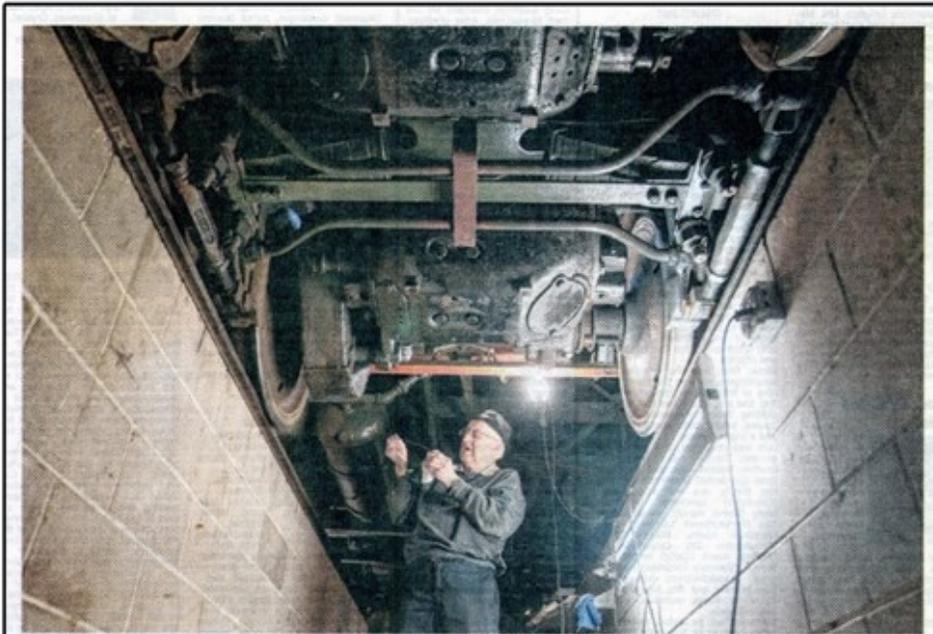
The meeting was called to order at about 6:20 pm by President Dan Meyer. A quorum was determined. There were about 23 members present, many by Zoom. There was no Old Business. A motion was made to approve the Meeting minutes in February as published in the Northstar News. The motion was carried and approved. The Treasurer's report was given by Dan Meyer in leu of the absence of Treasurer Russ Isbrandt. The Chapter cash position is similar to last months and in good shape. Membership was 35 regular members, 14 subscribers. There were 4 non renewals of regular membership and 8 non-renewal subscribers. Richard Tubbesing stated that a list of non-renewals be sent by Russ Isbrandt so those non-renewals will not receive the next newsletter. The Library Report was given by John Goodman. The library is in process of sorting out duplicate materials. Duplicate Material give-aways to members will be on going in the future. A consideration was made to have an open house to give-away materials to members and the public, and also sell some items as well. The BOD will determine if we will have an open-house. John also mentioned that we meet on Wednesdays from 10:00 pm to 3:00 pm with an hour for lunch at noon. Members can view various materials like books, timetables, video's and photos from our collection. The Calendar Report was given by Dawn Holmberg. We have about 40 calendars left. As of March, the calendar is at aa reduced price of \$10. (not including shipping)

*Continued on next page:*

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Will start reviewing photographs for the 2024 calendar. The Trip Director's report was given by John Goodman. We plan on a train ride at the Lake Superior Railway Museum in Duluth on the third Saturday in August. The Two Harbors trips are being run with their three dome cars and a lounge car at a premium price of \$85. Rental of car W24 is not available. Richard Tubbesing stated that details will be in the July Newsletter. Richard Tubbesing also stated that we will be doing our Light-rail train ride the third Saturday in June, and the chapter picnic will be the Third Saturday in July. Location of the Picnic was suggested by John Goodman to be Prescott, Wisconsin, However, The BOD will decide and have the members review the decision at a future meeting. The Newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. The newsletter costs between \$60 and \$70 a month. The newsletter will be published around the first of the month, with no newsletter in June and August.

The cheer committee was given by Dan Meyer. John Cartwright has fallen and has a broken wrist. The Web report was given by Dan Meyer. The web site is current and up to date. Richard Tubbesing stated that we need to upgrade the web site so Memberships can be renewed on-line. Also mentioned was in order to sell material from our Library, the Web site has to be updated purchases can be made on Ebay. The Problem is that we have to update the web site so if a order is made notification is current so the proper person can ship the material without delay's. The National Representative report was given by Dawn Holmberg. The NRHS has filled an open Board Position. There were updates to about 45 pages have been done on the NRHS web site. A BOD Conference will be held in Sparks NV in May. John Goodman gave a report on the NRHS Convention in Fort Lauderdale Florida September 1 thru September 6 2023. Activities include a ride on the Sugar Train, a Trip on the Bright line to Orlando and return, a visit to the Flagler Museum and the Gold Coast Railroad Museum. Richard Tubbesing gave the program report. The April program is to be determined. The May program will be photos and videos of contemporary railroading by Jeff Wojciechowski of the Wisconsin Chapter of the NRHS. Jack Barbier and Roger libra will give programs in the fall. There was no other old business. The meeting was motioned for adjournment at 6:50 pm. Motion was carried and approved. Mark Quam was asked to report on the Eau Claire to St Paul Train. A meeting was held by community leaders to discuss pro's and Con's. included officials were talking about trains to Madison as well as the Eau Claire trains. Bob Ball gave the program of his outstanding recent photos and a DVD program on Steam trains in the 1930's. The program was given a great hand by the audience. Respectfully submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing



**Volunteer Russ Isbrandt (Chapter Treasurer!) left, checked oil levels on a 1908 streetcars bearings Tuesday at the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's George Isaac's carbarn in Minneapolis. From the MSM Facebook page. Minneapolis Star and Tribune article March 21 2023!**

The interior of the 1908 streetcar is seen at left.. The museum will offer free guided tours of the carbarn May 13th and 14<sup>th</sup> along with a \$3 rides on the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.

**Trolley gets a spring tuneup**

Volunteer Russ Isbrandt, above, checked oil levels on a 1908 streetcar's bearings Tuesday at the Minnesota Streetcar Museum's George Isaacs Carbarn in Minneapolis. The interior of a 1908 streetcar is seen at right. The museum will offer free guided tours of the car barn May 13 and 14 along with \$3 rides on the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line.





*Snow covers Silver Bay, Minn. shown on Jan. 11, 2016. Cleveland-Cliffs says it is recalling some of the more than 400 workers it laid off last spring, idling one of the Iron Range's key mining and taconite production operations. Derek Montgomery for MPR News*

## Ore Rail - Digest #501

Good NSM News From: [Dave Schauer](#)

Date: Tue, 21 Feb 2023 07:48:31 PST

### Northshore Mining, Shut Down Since Last Spring, Poised to Restart

Cleveland-Cliffs says it is recalling some of the more than 400 workers it laid off last spring, idling one of the Iron Range's key mining and taconite production operations. "Cleveland-Cliffs is calling back some workers to Northshore Mining," company spokesperson Patricia Persico told MPR News in response to an inquiry about the operation. "We will provide more details when we decide when and at what capacity this operation will be brought back online." Northshore, which makes high quality DR-grade pellets for electric steel furnaces, was shut down last spring, idling most of the nearly 600 people that worked at the mine in Babbitt and the pellet facility on the Lake Superior shore in Silver Bay. The company said in July it was extending the shutdown, possibly into the second quarter of 2023.

Cleveland-Cliffs said at the time that steel producers were using more recycled steel in their furnaces and didn't need the pellets, although the company has also been haggling with Mesabi Trust over mining [royalty](#) payments in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The trust filed for arbitration back in October.

The layoffs have been a source of alarm on the Iron Range as well as in St. Paul, where lawmakers recently moved to extend unemployment benefits for the workers affected by the shutdown, many of whom had reached their 26-week unemployment benefit limit in November. A bill [signed](#) by Gov. Tim Walz late in January extended that for another 26 weeks and included retroactive benefits. The news was welcomed by officials on the Iron Range and across Minnesota.

"This is a win for Silver Bay, northeastern Minnesota and the state as a whole," Walz said in a statement released Monday afternoon.

"The North Shore mine and Babbitt and the plant in Silver Bay will be in fact reopening in April so the bridge that we provided them and an unemployment extension will reach to that date," said State Sen. Grant Hauschild, (DFL-Hermantown) at the Capitol on Monday. "I'm excited that this came to fruition."

U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar also welcomed the news, in a statement she released Monday.

"After meeting with miners impacted by the Silver Bay plant and Babbitt mine idling, working with local northern Minnesota legislators to push for the extension of state unemployment benefits, and most recently, meeting in Washington with Cleveland-Cliffs CEO Lourenco Goncalves about reopening, I'm glad mining operations will be reopening in Babbitt and Silver Bay and the miners will be returning to work."

Cleveland-Cliffs is the biggest supplier of flat-rolled steel on the continent — a key component in automotive production. It operates four mines in Minnesota, including Hibbing Taconite, United Taconite in Eveleth and the Minorca Mine in Virginia, as well as Northshore, formerly known as Reserve Mining.

[Northshore Mining, shut down since last spring, poised to restart | MPR News](#)

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

## Railfan Clubs Face the Digital Age

-Provided by Dan Meyer -An Article by Steve Glischinski published in the August 2008 Issue of Trains Magazine:

The article notes Americans "starting drop" in group participation—a decline that extends to churches, Charities, Neighborhood Associations, etc. "More of us are no longer members of social organizations. Noted: membership in NRHS, as the largest organized railfan group, is dropping quickly: at the same time the average age is increasing. Some (Bluewater Chapter comes to mind) have ceased to exist.

Glischinski opines that television, and the internet are two likely reasons. Instead of joining a club for get-togethers, online communities / You Tube / chat rooms / Flickr, etc etc, offer many ways to get and share information, pictures, videos, etc.

**"Clubs still appeal by offering exclusive services (railfan trips, tours of yards/shops, excursions, etc.)... i.e. stuff you can't do on the internet. "Attracting the next generation is essential to keeping organizations healthy... the groups that will be successful are the groups that will change and not alienate young people... Groups should welcome young people, be willing to accommodate them, and offer things they wouldn't get otherwise." "In the long term," NRHS then President Greg Molloy said, "the NRHS needs to evolve, modernize their operations, build their internet presence, and share ideas on what others are doing."**

**"an active rail group should ask questions that are more appealing and attractive to younger members... something that offers today's digital age the perfect antidote to browsing alone."**



*Travelers wait for the train Wednesday at the Amtrak Station in La Crosse, where the Empire Builder makes frequent stops as it provides service between Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. Peter Thomson photos, La Crosse Tribune*

## Amtrak Preparing to Add Second Passenger Train Service Between Chicago, Twin Cities

From: RAY BENSON <[rayande@comcast.net](mailto:rayande@comcast.net)> Provided by John Goodman  
 Sent: Monday, March 13, 2023 at 06:05:13 PM CDT  
 Lacrosse WI Tribune Harrison Tremarello March 12 2023

Hours long delays for eastbound Amtrak trains arriving at the La Crosse station are not uncommon, but Amtrak’s planned Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago intercity passenger service aims to offer more reliable scheduling. “This second train will be dedicated just between Chicago and St Paul. It will not go on beyond St. Paul, it will turn around and go back. So that is going to eliminate a lot of those delays already,” said Trista MatasCastillo, Ramsey County commissioner and chair of the Great River Rail Commission, a group of governmental officials advocating for the passenger rail project. Service is set to begin in 2024 or sooner, according to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation website. Amtrak spokesperson Marc Magliari confirmed riders should expect service to begin according to the state agency’s timeline.

The train will run from Chicago to the Twin Cities on existing tracks used by Amtrak’s Empire Builder and will replace and extend one of the seven Hiawatha services between Milwaukee and Chicago. “For tourism, for students, for businesses, there’s a huge benefit,” said Peter Fletcher, La Crosse Area Planning Committee executive director. “With the added service, two trains a day, there are opportunities to go down on one train and come back on another, so that opens up a lot of business opportunities.” The arrival of a second train from Twin Cities, Milwaukee and Chicago comes as ridership rebounds from the pandemic. In fiscal year 2019, between October 2018 and September 2019, there were over 970,000 boardings and exits on the Amtrak trains in Wisconsin and over 130,000 in Minnesota. Ridership in both states sank over the next two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Amtrak reported total ridership grew by 89% in fiscal year 2022 with overall ridership returning to 85% of pre-pandemic levels. While state-specific data is not available for fiscal year 2022, ridership on the Hiawatha route more than doubled and ridership on the Empire Builder route increased by over 37%. The Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago second train is expected to serve more than 124,000 riders in its first year of service. Only one passenger train runs in each direction from Chicago to St. Paul a day on the Empire Builder, which continues west to Seattle or Portland. Eastbound trains are often delayed before reaching St. Paul. According to Amtrak data for fiscal year 2021, 57% of Empire Builder riders arrived at their destination on time, compared to nearly 95% riders on the Hiawatha.

“The longer the route, the more opportunity there is for disruption at all the stops along the way. That’s a lot of rail to keep cleared, weather, floods, snow,” said MatasCastillo. “Right now passenger rail stops for freight, and they’re using the same track.”

### Track improvements

The second train project includes upgrading infrastructure between Winona and La Crosse that has caused increased conflicts with passenger and freight rail. “It’s not just passenger improvements here, it’s also freight improvements,” said MatasCastillo. Local government agencies in Wisconsin and Minnesota have been interested in expanded passenger rail service for over a decade, after then-Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker scrapped high speed rail plans. “The discussion changed from, ‘Well, this is what we have as far as our existing service, how can we improve it?’” said Fletcher. The Minnesota Department of Transportation in 2012 requested Amtrak to study the feasibility of adding a second train to run between Chicago, Milwaukee and the Twin Cities. The passenger rail operator issued a report in 2015 finding sufficient demand to expand operations.

In the following years, the state transportation departments and partner organizations needed to complete a variety of environmental, engineering and service studies while applying for federal grants and securing state funding. Railroad improvements in La Crosse, La Crescent and Winona total \$53 million, with a Federal Railroads Administration grant covering 60% of the cost and Amtrak committing \$5 million. Wisconsin and Minnesota provided over \$6 million and \$10 million respectively.

In Minnesota, it took us a couple of years to get the funding dollars allocated,” said MatasCastillo. “The \$10 million dollar match from Minnesota came into play, which gets us now moving to the next phases.”

The state governments of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois are in negotiations to split annual operations costs. An additional federal grant of \$12.6 million will fund 90% of operating costs in 2024 and 2025. “For the long-term operation of the service, the corridor improvements are going to make it run more efficiently in avoiding any delays,” said Fletcher. “Because of those improvements, the freight movement through this area will be better, safer.” Under an agreement with Amtrak and Canadian Pacific, which owns most the rail corridor, service could begin before construction starts in 2024.

“The opportunity for an early start is something that would be great if it could happen but we’ll wait and see. We know it’s certainly coming in the future,” said Fletcher.

# Minnesota Lawmakers ‘speechless’ After Scathing Legislative Audit Report on Southwest Light Rail Transit

The report by the Office of the Legislative Auditor found the Metropolitan Council committed itself to spending money it did not have, added or changed substantial work after the project was bid, and was not fully transparent.

By [Peter Callaghan](#) | Staff Writer [Thursday, March 16, 2023, 10:28 AM, Frederick Krenske](#)



The interior of the SouthWest Station being constructed in Eden Prairie as part of the Southwest Light Rail transit project. Metropolitan Council March 15, 2023



MinnPost photo by Peter Callaghan Audit project manager David Kirshner and Legislative Auditor Judy Randall shown at Wednesday’s hearing



MinnPost photo by Peter Callaghan Met Council Chair Charlie Zelle, left, said that much of the cost overruns and time delays were caused by the construction of the tunnel in the narrow Kenilworth Corridor. At right is Nick Thompson, deputy general manager of Metro Transit.

So much bad news has flowed from the Met Council and its Southwest light rail transit project that a harsh report from the state’s legislative auditor might be seen as just more of the same.

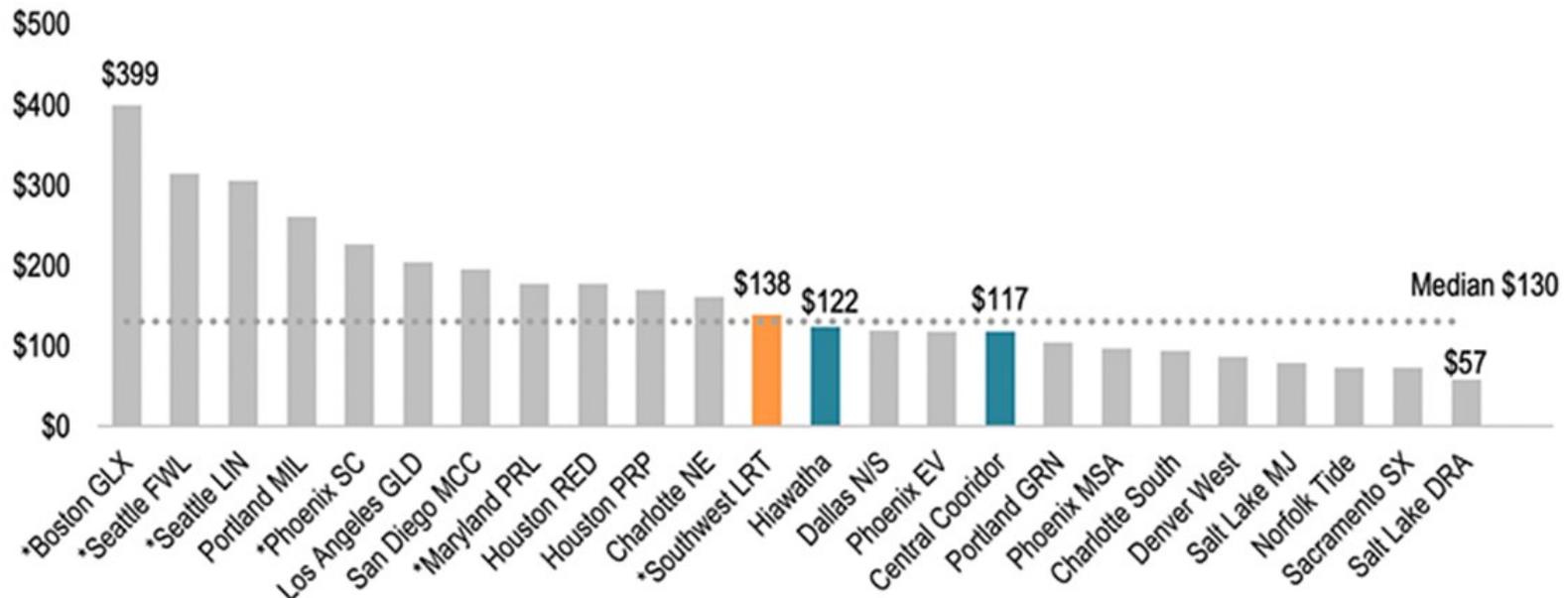
“Minnesota has a mismatch between the entities that fund the construction of light rail transit projects and the entities responsible for constructing them,” wrote the Office of the Legislative Auditor [in a special report](#) requested by the Legislature. “We also found that the Metropolitan Council obligated itself to spend money it did not have, added or changed substantial work after the project was bid, and was not fully transparent about the project’s increasing costs and delays.”

But while the report brought no new revelations, having it all in one place by an independent auditor was sobering for members of the joint Legislative Audit Commission. “It seems that nobody’s at fault, or everybody’s at fault,” said Rep. Rick Hansen, a South St. Paul DFLer who chairs the audit commission. “We have policies and we have processes and we have working groups, task forces, reports, warning signs and bells and whistles saying something’s wrong, and it still goes off the rails.

“We’re still stuck here in a corner where we can’t stop and we can’t continue,” he said. “I’m just kind of speechless. How do we get out of this box and how do we ever prevent this from happening again?”

The 14.5-mile project from Target Field to Eden Prairie was supposed to cost \$2 billion and carry its first passengers in 2023 when it was approved by the federal government in 2018. It is now set to open in 2027 and cost \$2.767 billion with the council not sure where all of the money is going to come from. Audit project manager David Kirshner described that 38% cost increase as “quite unusual” when compared to light rail projects across the U.S.

While the audit attempted to find the cause of the problems facing the project and suggest remedies, its recommendations, if adopted, would do little to change this project, leaving commission members frustrated. Said Minneapolis DFL Sen. Scott Dibble: “I’m not quite sure where to start, there’s so much here to unpack.”



As currently estimated, Southwest LRT project costs per mile of track are comparable to costs for similar projects in millions of adjusted dollars. Other members of the audit commission took turns bashing the council and the project. Republicans were able to reiterate complaints about using light rail as a mode of transit when buses are cheaper and more flexible. DFLers pointed to the OLA findings that the Met Council has not been transparent in communicating problems with budgets and timelines. Both suggested that the very structure of the appointed regional government needs reassessment. All could find sections of the audit to support their statements. For example, according to a presentation led by David Kirchner of the OLA:

“The structure of how the region builds big transit projects creates a mismatch between the entities that fund the construction and transit and the entities that are responsible for constructing them.” That is, the Met Council has relatively little money in the project, instead relying on the federal government, Hennepin County and earlier the now-defunct five-county Counties Transit Improvement Board. The federal share of \$929 million is capped and Hennepin County has balked at finding what remains of the \$500 million shortfall [identified a year ago](#).

“The Legislature should create a framework so the entity that is leading light rail construction has some of its own money at stake so if it goes over budget, it feels the pain, it’s penalized and if it comes in under budget it’s rewarded,” Kirchner told the commission.

Other key pieces of the report:

When it learned in early 2022 that it no longer had enough money to complete the project, the project was faced with that dilemma cited by Hansen — it didn’t have enough money to end the project, because that would require repaying federal funds and restoring the route to pre-construction conditions. And it didn’t have enough money to finish it, either.

The Met Council bid the project knowing there were significant pieces of the project not included and not yet estimated. When it added a \$90 million wall between its tracks and BNSF freight tracks, it did so as a change order rather than using a new bidding process.

The council did not hold its contractors accountable for repeated failures to provide an acceptable project schedule. But OLA also found that after the contractor blamed the Met Council for the delays, the Met Council eventually agreed.

The pre-construction engineering and analysis of underground conditions in the narrow — and troubled — Kenilworth Corridor where a shallow tunnel is being built did not identify soil conditions blamed on expensive changes and long delays.

The Met Council has not been transparent with the Legislature and the public about the project’s increasing costs and delays.

Wednesday’s report was the second of four planned by the legislative auditor. The first came out [in September](#) and laid out the history of the project — its design, politics, funding and timeline. The third that will focus on the Met Council’s oversight of contractors will come out in late April or early May, Legislative Auditor Judy Randall said. A financial audit will come out later in the year.

Met Council Chair Charlie Zelle, an appointee of Gov. Tim Walz, leads the 17-member appointed council and the agency staff. He said that much of the cost overruns and time delays were caused by the construction of the tunnel in the narrow Kenilworth Corridor. That tunnel was required to fit both light rail and freight rail in the same passageway and was a decision made in 2013. The [previous OLA report](#) described the technical and political factors that went into what was known as co-location.

“The large delay and cost overruns that we announced a year ago largely come in that Kenilworth Corridor, that colocation with freight rail on a narrow, 59-foot swath and not anticipating the risks of those soil conditions,” Zelle said. “That is probably the No. 1 thing that goes back a number of years before construction. This is hindsight. There’s no question.”

The size of the contingency fund, which was exhausted long ago, is set by the Federal Transit Administration based on a risk assessment that has since proven to have lacked all information needed. Going forward, Zelle said, the Met Council will do a better job of examining construction and budget risks on any new projects. But he took issue with accusations that the Met Council staff wasn’t transparent with the Legislature and the public. He said the staff is in frequent contact with the FTA and Hennepin County and has reported regularly to the Legislature and to the full Met Council. Zelle pointed to a chart in the audit that showed that the \$138 million cost per mile for SWLRT is near the \$130 million median price of other light rail projects around the nation. Another showed that while SWLRT’s cost overruns have only two peers — lines in Maryland and Virginia — both the existing Blue Line and Green Line came in at or under budget.

And he repeated his assertion that SWLRT has spurred construction along the route of multifamily housing and commercial buildings around planned stations. “We still believe in this project,” he said, adding, “I believe in the competency — which is borne out [in a MNDOT review](#) — of this team. I think they’re doing an excellent job given the hand that they were dealt.”

### **Elected Met Council?**

Dibble, the chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, used the presentation to make the case [for his bill](#) to require Met Council members to be elected by voters, not appointed by governors. The idea is also supported by House Transportation Committee chair Frank Hornstein, DFL-Minneapolis.

“The conversation that needs to be had ... is with the Legislature,” Dibble said. “We have an opportunity to do something about this.” The Met Council is acting as it is designed to act, he said, based on its lack of elected officials and the insularity it provides.

“It works as designed but not as the public wishes,” he said. “If it is not elected, come up with a better idea. We need reform, we need accountability, we need transparency. Full stop. Bottom line.”

Hornstein said he will hear a bill on how the Met Council is governed Thursday. He will amend the [bill](#) calling for immediate election of council members with a task force to examine how to do so. But he said it is not a way to put off the issue but to reconcile different ideas from different legislators as to how best to change the way the council is run.

Zelle said he wouldn’t comment on how the Met Council should be governed but said Walz is “open to that conversation.”

Did she say “subpoena?”

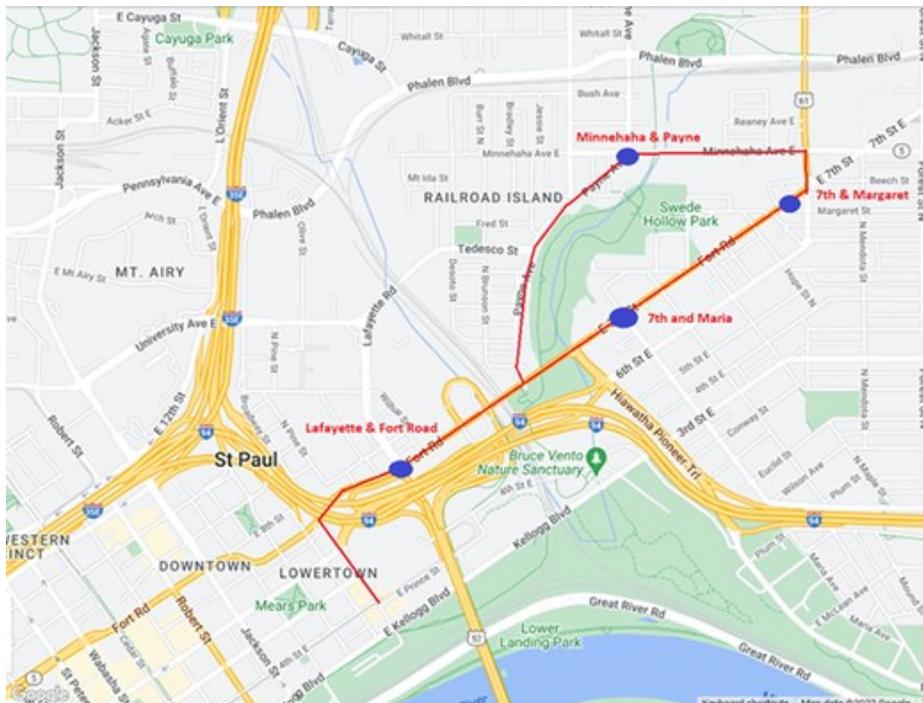
Randall was asked by Dibble about the level of cooperation from the Met Council, detailing his own struggles to get information.

“The Metropolitan Council was not as cooperative as most state agencies are when we come calling,” Randall said. “We did ask for a lot of information but with every request, the Metropolitan Council requested an extension on the deadline. We often had to make requests several times.

“Ultimately they provided most of what we requested, but it required a lot of back and forth, it required a lot of follow up,” she said. While her office had hoped to provide a more-complete report now, it decided to break the reporting into parts in order to get some information to the Legislature more quickly. She blamed that decision on the slowness in Met Council responses. “That being said, we did not issue a subpoena, and we have the ability to do that, but it did not rise to that level,” Randall said. Sen. Steve Drazkowski, R-Mazeppa, said he was shocked to hear the OLA “was inches” from issuing subpoenas. But Randall said after the meeting that she didn’t use that term, saying instead that it is a tool that the auditor can use to get information but that she hadn’t reached the point of preparing such a legal document. Sen. Mark Koran, R-North Branch, said the OLA is empowered as the sole performance auditor of the state and said agencies must be “extremely cooperative.” Of the Met Council, Koran said it is becoming less cooperative and less forthcoming. “I find it completely unacceptable that the legislative auditor has to delay because of these continued delays,” Koran said. “We cannot tolerate that.” Zelle said the OLA deserves transparency and cooperation but said “it is news to me” that they were close to issuing a subpoena for data.

## Metro News - Proposed Riverview Corridor Streetcar Project

Monday, March 13, 2023, 5:05 PM, from Frederick Krenske



The Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar project is a planned modern streetcar project through the West 7th neighborhood of St. Paul to Bloomington. Ramsey County, where St. Paul is located, is leading the efforts to build the streetcar route. The proposed route will connect downtown St. Paul with the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America in Bloomington. The project will be completed by 2032. The current plan for the Riverview Corridor is a significant step towards addressing the transit needs of current and future Bloomington, downtown and West 7th Street residents. It is a logical step in completing the rail infrastructure triangle, allowing rapid transportation between both downtowns, as well as the airport.

However, the Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar falls short of potential racial and economic equity goals it could achieve. As I've read and studied the streetcar route and proposal, I'm left wondering why similar transit investments aren't happening in other parts of St. Paul with higher concentrations of people of color, and lower-income residents.

To remedy these concerns, I propose adding four East Side stops to the corridor route to address the limited equity impacts of the current project.

*Adding additional stops is more expensive initially, but over time the additional stops will serve to amplify the positive benefits of the project.*

The new transit infrastructure will have many benefits and is an exciting step towards creating a better transit future for Minnesota. The population along the corridor route is expected to grow in the next 15 years. As the population increases, the streetcar will increase property values and spur transit oriented development. Vehicle emissions from commuting would be significantly reduced, lowering overall health care costs.

The project will increase access to jobs by making transportation throughout the corridor more efficient, and it would also improve access to community amenities by reducing transportation barriers. Adequate transportation would help people get to work faster and reduce their commute times. The project will require a significant number of workers to complete the construction. Additionally, significant capital would be injected into the local economy through funding and constructing the project.

However, the project fails to advance racial and economic equity, particularly for St. Paul residents. There are no plans to extend the route into the Eastside, which is far more diverse than the West 7th neighborhood. There are planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes for the East Side but buses don't have the same benefits that rail infrastructure has. Ramsey County and its partners still have an opportunity to make the proposed corridor much better, especially considering how far the project is from completion.

To improve the project, I would add four streetcar stops on the East Side. Adding additional stops is more expensive initially, but over time the additional stops will serve to amplify the positive benefits of the project. East 7th is significantly more diverse than West 7th, so potential equity and wealth building benefits would expand greatly.

The first new stop could be at the intersection of Lafayette and Fort roads. Having a stop there would allow the state employees of the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Industry, and others the ability to get to work without using a car or bus. It would also set a precedent for how the state is transporting its own employees to work.

The second new stop could be at Metropolitan State University. Connecting the university to the streetcar will make it easier for students to get to the university. Metro State's second campus located near Pierce Butler will be accessible by students connecting from the streetcar to the Green Line, instead of taking a bus. The streetcar would allow Dayton's bluff residents, particularly the older adults in housing complexes such as the Cambric, greater range of mobility.

The third stop, at 7th and Margaret Street, could connect the commercial corridor of East 7th to the downtown. A fourth stop could be at Minnehaha and Payne avenues. There are several proposed affordable housing developments near these two stops, particularly the Hamm's Brewery redevelopment. Connecting residents to a dedicated rail line would expand the positive impacts of the streetcar, as well as improve the access of residents of affordable housing to fast and reliable transportation.

Although the current proposed route will have significant economic and societal benefits, it could go further. If Ramsey County and its partners are serious about racial equity and the future of the transit system, they should add four East Side stops to the planned Riverview Corridor Modern Streetcar. It will have significant benefits for the region, reducing emissions, encouraging development, and building wealth. Considering the growing population, and the need to shift towards public transportation, I am excited to see the streetcar get built. Adding additional stops will only serve to amplify the already positive benefits of the streetcar.

## F unit Donated by Union Pacific Arrives at Iowa Heritage Railroad

By | March 14, 2023 Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 10:35 AM, Frederick Krenske

Boone & Scenic Valley has long-term goal of restoring former C&NW executive unit.



Crews from Boone & Scenic Valley and Union Pacific mark the donation of former Chicago & North Western F7 No. 401 to Boone & Scenic Valley on March 10, 2023. Shaking hands are Iowa Rail Historical Society board member Darin Jacobs and UP's Ed Dickens. Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad

BOONE, Iowa — A former Chicago & North Western F7 donated by Union Pacific has arrived at the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad, where it will eventually be restored to operation.

Locomotive No. 401, built in 1949 and stored in Cheyenne, Wyo., since the 1990s, saw service as one of C&NW's executive train units in the 1980s. It arrived in Boone on Friday, March 10. It had been awaiting delivery in Council Bluffs, Iowa, since December. It had been left there by the UP donation train en route to the Railroading Heritage of Midwest America in Silvis when that train was rerouted through Des Moines on Iowa Interstate [see "[Union Pacific 'hospital' train detoured ...](#)," *Trains News Wire*, Nov. 18, 2022].

No. 401 is pictured above with UP and Boone & Scenic Valley crews, and temporarily sporting the nose emblem that it featured during executive-train service. The Boone & Scenic Valley, operated by the Iowa Railroad Historical Society, is just north of Des Moines. It operates excursion trains, hosts Rail Explorers railbike tours, and does freight switching interchange with UP for service to the Boone Industrial Park. More information is available at [the railroad's website](#).

## Metro News - MTM To Repaint GN Engine

From: "Frederick Krenske" <[rick@usjet.net](mailto:rick@usjet.net)> Cc:

Sent: Sat, Feb 25, 2023 at 10:56 AM



The Minnesota Transportation Museum will repaint SDP40 No. 325, which operates at its Osceola & St. Croix Valley heritage railway, into Great Northern paint. MTM photo via Facebook

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota Transportation Museum will repaint its former Great Northern Railway SDP40 No. 325 into GN's simplified orange and green color scheme, the museum announced to members. A museum member has agreed to fund the over \$60,000 cost to have the engine repainted. MTM also has a large collection of GN passenger cars painted in the orange and green colors.

GN No. 325 was built by EMD in 1966, one of six SDP40s purchased for passenger service. Only 20 SDP40s were built between 1966 and 1970 for GN and National Railways of Mexico. The 3,000-hp units were essentially an SD40 with a steam generator added for passenger service. Transferred to freight service upon Amtrak's inception in 1971, No. 325 operated under various numbers for GN successor Burlington Northern and BNSF Railway until it was retired in 2008. BNSF donated the locomotive to the museum in 2009, and it has been a mainstay of MTM's heritage railway, the Osceola & St. Croix Valley, based in Osceola, Wis., since its donation. A few years ago an effort was made to repaint No. 325 in GN's Big Sky Blue colors. That effort only netted \$16,400. .

GN adopted the blue scheme in 1967 but the colors were short lived, as GN merged into Burlington Northern in March 1970, and the unit was repainted in BN green, which it still wears today. Great Northern adopted its Omaha Orange and Pullman Green colors in the 1940s with its first order of FT diesels. The most famous application of the scheme came in 1947 when new streamlined *Empire Builders* went into service between Chicago and Seattle/Portland. Subsequent orders for streamlined passenger equipment by GN all wore the colors, as did its diesels. In the early 1960s GN simplified the scheme on its diesels by eliminating some striping; it is this scheme No. 325 was delivered in and will wear after repainting. MTM said the locomotive will be repainted in time for it to pull trains on the Osceola & St. Croix Valley this summer. Trains operate from May to October. For train schedules go to [www.transportation.org](http://www.transportation.org).



CANADIAN  
PACIFIC  
RAILWAY



## Canadian Pacific Kansas City Eyes April 14 Start Date

By Bill Stephens | March 17, 2023 Metro News - CP/.KCS Start Date



CP names executive team for the merged railroad.

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific will waste no time officially combining with Kansas City Southern.

CP said today that it will create Canadian Pacific Kansas City on April 14, the earliest date CP could take control of KCS under the Surface Transportation Board’s approval of the \$31 billion merger.

“Under the leadership of the exceptional group of railroaders we announce today, CPKC will bring new options to rail customers while increasing safety, improving service and spurring new investment in our railroad network,” CP CEO Keith Creel said in a statement. “

“Together, all these benefits will create jobs and drive economic growth in North America.

Creel will be president and CEO of CPKC. The rest of the railroad’s executive leadership team was announced today and includes (Current KCS executives in *italics*):

- Nadeem Velani, executive vice-president and chief financial officer
- John Brooks, executive vice-president and chief marketing officer
- Mark Redd, executive vice-president and chief operating officer
- *John Orr, executive vice-president and chief transformation officer*
- James Clements, executive vice-president strategic planning & technology
- Jeff Ellis, executive vice-president chief legal officer and corporate secretary
- *Warren Erdman, executive advisor strategic projects*
- Laird Pitz, senior vice-president and chief risk officer
- Mike Foran, senior vice-president network & capacity management
- Chad Rolstad, vice-president of human resources and chief culture officer
- *Oscar Augusto Del Cueto Cuevas, KCS de Mexico president, general manager, and executive representative*
- KCS CEO Pat Ottensmeyer will stay on as an advisor through the end of the year, predominantly working on matters related to CPKC in Mexico.

“Our senior leadership team is eager to come together to write the next chapter of railroad history in North America,” Creel said.

“This experienced team will guide our work on a seamless integration for our customers, our employees and the North American supply chain.”



## KCS Working to Ease Congestion in Mexico as CP Merger Date Looms

By Bill Stephens | March 21, 2023

Surge in traffic and shortage of crews contributed to operational headaches in Mexico



Kansas City Southern de Mexico train leaves the yard and passes the station in Empalme Escobedo, midway between Mexico City and San Luis Potosí. Ian M. Contreras



A KCS de Mexico intermodal train makes its way through Comonfort, Mexico. Ian M. Contreras

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KANSAS CITY — Kansas City Southern de Mexico is battling congestion in key terminals thanks to a combination of stronger than expected traffic growth and a shortage of train crews.

The congestion, [which began in December](#), now threatens to gum up Kansas City Southern’s U.S. network less than four weeks before Canadian Pacific gains control of the railroad and creates Canadian Pacific Kansas City.

But KCS says the railroad is on the mend. “KCSM’s service metrics are steadily improving and are expected to be at normal fluidity within two to three weeks,” KCS spokeswoman Doniele Carlson says.

Rick Paterson, a Loop Capital Markets analyst who closely tracks railroad performance measures, says the most recent KCS data shows a decline in velocity for the week ending March 18. Although systemwide dwell was down, it was up at Laredo, Texas.

“It’s pretty indisputable at this point that KCS de Mexico has melted down, with all the headaches that entails: unhappy customers, defections to truck, strained relations with all stakeholders, including government, and the typical one-year timeframe for a full service recovery,” Paterson wrote in a note to clients on Friday. “This is what Canadian Pacific is going to face on April 14 when the deal closes and the two systems are legally combined. We’re sure CP has thousands of pages of integration plans for KCS, but restoring and stabilizing service at KCSM has no doubt jumped to the top of page one.”

Traffic on KCS de Mexico is up 8.8% so far this year, compared with a 2% decline in KCS volume in the U.S. Systemwide, train velocity is down 22% compared to a year ago, while terminal dwell is up 35% through March 10, Paterson notes.

The congestion in Mexico is affecting most major KCSM terminals, including Monterrey, San Luis Potosi, and those in the Mexico City area. Terminal dwell is high at both of KCS de Mexico’s border yards in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, where cars are spending an average of nearly 45 hours.

Dwell at Laredo, Texas, is 25 hours, a two-year high. Terminal dwell has risen for four straight weeks at the KCS hub of Shreveport, La., where cars spent 45 hours, on average. Paterson says that’s the highest in data going back to March 2017.

KCS de Mexico has taken numerous steps to ease the congestion. Among them:

- It has hired crews and has been negotiating with unions for more flexible work rules.

- Added 50 locomotives to the active fleet since Jan. 1.

- Sent high-ranking management to various trouble spots.

- Worked more closely with Ferrovial to reduce congestion at interchanges.

- Updated train schedules to ensure that Monterrey has the capacity to move traffic south more frequently.

- Established a “war room” with teams from different departments.

“We continue to work aggressively to resolve the situation and are optimistic that improvements will be notable in the coming weeks,” KCS said [in its latest service advisory](#), which was issued on Feb. 27.

CPKC is retaining key KCS operating executives. CPKC’s management team will include KCS’s current chief operating officer, the president of KCSM, and current CEO Pat Ottensmeyer will serve as an advisor through the end of the year. Meanwhile, Mark Redd, executive vice president of operations at CP, was once vice president of transportation at KCS. He will become CPKC’s operations chief.

## STB Chairman says Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger Will Improve Rail Safety

[By Bill Stephens](#) | March 16, 2023 Provided by Rick Krenske

Oberman says the board performed a thorough safety review before approving the merger



*A southbound Canadian Pacific oil train curves under the Government Bridge — used by Iowa Interstate as well as vehicle traffic — in Davenport, Iowa, on a stormy April 13, 2022. Trains: David Lassen*

WASHINGTON — With Norfolk Southern’s toxic train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, heightening public concern about rail safety, federal regulators went out of their way on Wednesday to explain that their approval of the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger would help keep trackside communities safe.

“We are well aware of the very real and legitimate public concern over rail safety that’s always been there but certainly has come to the fore as a result of the derailment in East Palestine,” Surface Transportation Board Chairman Martin J. Oberman said during a news conference yesterday.

The board heard from members of Congress, communities, and citizens who were concerned about the safety of moving hazardous materials by rail.

As part of its regulatory review, the STB must consider the safety aspects of a merger. “We were already well under way in reviewing, documenting, measuring the safety aspects of this transaction,” Oberman said. Railroads are the safest way to move hazardous materials, Oberman noted. He cited Bureau of Transportation Statistics that showed that last year 94% of all transportation-related hazardous materials incidents occurred on trucks versus just 1% on railroads.

“If you’re trying to make sure communities all over the country were safer, you would want — as we do — to move more of this material by train rather than by truck,” Oberman said. CP has the industry’s best train accident ratio, Oberman noted, and KCS is the second best. “If this merger results in the diversion not only of trucks but traffic from other railroads to CP, ultimately the country will benefit because the materials will be moving on a safer railroad,” Oberman said. CP, he noted, safely moved 60 million car miles of hazardous materials through Chicago between 2015 and 2019. There was not a single hazmat spill aside from a leak of 10 gallons of diesel fuel from a locomotive in a yard. “So rail is and can be extraordinarily safe,” he said.

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Chemicals are a necessary part of the economy and are used in plastics that are found everywhere, so it would be impractical to stop moving them around the country by rail, Oberman said.

“Nothing is without risk,” Oberman said. “When we walk out the door every morning and cross the street, there’s some risk. But we don’t stop walking across the street.”

It’s up to railroad safety officials to continually improve, with a goal of zero accidents and injuries, Oberman says.

Railroads are sharing safety tech, best practices

CP CEO Keith Creel, speaking to an investor conference on Thursday, said the industry is working closer than ever to improve safety in the wake of the Feb. 3 East Palestine accident, which was caused by a wheel bearing failure that occurred moments after a hotbox alarm was triggered.

“We can do better. The technology is there. Different railroads apply it in different ways. There is a best practice to be learned. And that is the approach we’ve taken,” Creel says. “We’ve brought our safety teams together, the operating chiefs together, with a mandate from the CEOs: Share all the technology, share all the knowledge, and let’s come up with an industry best practice when it comes to how we deploy hotbox detectors, the algorithms that we use, the acoustic wheel detectors.”

CP has pioneered cold wheel detection technology, Creel noted. The system can indicate if a car’s brakes are not applying properly when going downgrade. The railway’s wayside detectors measure wheel and bearing temperatures as well as dragging equipment. Canadian Pacific Kansas City will improve rail safety in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico, Creel says. “When you put these two railroads together, again applying the investment in people, process, and technology, you’re going to have a better, safer outcome not just for the United States of America, but all of North America.”

Safety starts with the right culture, Creel says.

“We have what’s called a culture of accountability,” Creel says. “Some in the past have called it fear and intimidation. It’s not fear and intimidation. This is a very unforgiving industry.”

A matter of a few inches can determine life or death when crews are switching cars in a yard, Creel noted.

“To get it right, people have to understand operating rules are there to protect them, our assets, and the communities where we operate,” Creel says.

## CPKC’s First New Trains Will Handle Cross-border Perishables Shipments

By Bill Stephens | March 16, 2023

Premium intermodal service will begin in late April or early May, linking Chicago with Texas and Mexico



Canadian Pacific CEO Keith Creel. CP



Four Kansas City Southern locomotives lead a northbound intermodal train across the Rio Grande and into the United States at Laredo, Texas, in 2017. KCS is building a second bridge that will double capacity at the border. Bill Stephens

NEW YORK — The first new Canadian Pacific Kansas City trains will be a pair of hotshots that link Chicago with Texas and Mexico City, hauling Midwestern meat southbound and Mexican-grown fruits and vegetables northbound.

CPKC can begin offering single-line service as early as April 14, the date that Canadian Pacific will gain control of Kansas City Southern thanks to yesterday’s regulatory approval of their merger. CP CEO Keith Creel says CP and KCS have been encouraged by the success of the interline premium service test trains they have run with refrigerated and frozen products between Mexico and Chicago.

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"We've had test moves in both. You can anticipate that the first train pair at the end of April, beginning of May will be running between Chicago and Mexico City. It's going to be train 181," Creel told an investor conference this morning. CPKC will offer the first cross-border intermodal service for perishables shipments, the railroads have said. Hundreds of trucks cross the border at Laredo, Texas, every day carrying refrigerated and frozen cargo. Trucks can spend two to three days at the border while their cargo is unloaded, inspected, and reloaded, Creel says. CPKC aims to create a smoother and faster border crossing for its premium trains. "We're on the verge of creating inland terminals with support of the Mexican regulator ... to allow those products, in this case beef or poultry, to be inspected inland and not stop at the border," Creel says. "It's transformational."

The transit time for CPKC trains running from Chicago to Mexico City will be five to six days. "A truck can't touch that," Creel says. "Truck-like reliable service is what you need to take trucks off the road, or to realize the potential to take trucks off road. You've got to be reliable," Creel says.

CPKC won't take its eye off the service ball when the railways begin to mesh their operations, Creel says. He pledged that the merger integration will go smoothly, unlike the megamergers of the 1990s. "Service is what we provide to our customers. It's doing what you say you're going to do," Creel says. "And if you don't have service you don't have a product to sell."

One of the benefits of having two years of regulatory review of the merger is that CP and KCS have had two years to plan combining the two companies, Creel says. CPKC will first focus on getting the right people in place, Creel says. The new CPKC executive team will be announced on Friday morning. After that, Creel says CPKC will make sure they integrate the two railroads into one company and that service is seamless. CPKC will celebrate the merger with an April 14 spike ceremony in Kansas City, the only point where the CP and KCS networks touch.

Creel defended Precision Scheduled Railroading, the low-cost operating model that has come under harsh criticism due to widespread layoffs and safety and service problems at the big U.S. railroads since 2017. "How you do it matters. I've been running a PSR railroad for 27 years," Creel says. The PSR fundamentals are about service, asset utilization, controlling costs, investing in safety, and developing people, he notes. "If you do that right it's the right way to run a business," Creel says. Creel spoke at the J.P. Morgan Industrials Conference.



### UP CEO Fritz to Step Down in 2023

"Progressive Railroading" <[dailynews@news.progressiverailroading.com](mailto:dailynews@news.progressiverailroading.com)>

Sent: Mon, Feb 27, 2023 at 11:46 AM Provided by John Goodman

Rail News: Union Pacific Railroad



Lance Fritz became UP's CEO in 2015. Photo –

Union Pacific Railroad's board yesterday announced it will replace Lance Fritz as CEO sometime this year.

The announcement follows pressure from UP shareholder Soroban Capital Partners LP to replace Fritz with a "seasoned executive who has a proven track record of railroad operating excellence," Soroban officials said in a press release.

Soroban cited UP's "significant underperformance" during Fritz's eight-year tenure as CEO. In a Feb. 26 letter to UP's board, Soroban cited UP's "total shareholder return as the worst" in the rail industry. "Among all S&P 500 companies, UP is rated by employees as the worst place to work and has the lowest employee CEO approval rating (ranked 500th out of 500 in both)," Soroban's letter stated.

"The company is not delivering on its commitment to customers, and the Surface Transportation Board has singled out UP as providing the worst service among the Class I railroads."

Soroban urged UP's board to consider hiring its former Chief Operating Officer Jim Vena as Fritz's successor. Vena joined UP as COO in 2019, following 40 years with CN. Vena left UP in June 2021.

UP officials said a board task force has been working with an outside consultant on UP's succession plan since November 2022. Fritz "has capably led our company during a time of significant challenge and change, positioning Union Pacific to deliver long-term sustainable value for shareholders and customers," said Michael McCarthy, the board's lead independent director, in a press release. Fritz said he will work with the board to identify the company's next CEO.

"Union Pacific has embarked on a transformative journey that will result in stronger, more consistent service for our customers, with enhanced earnings growth and value creation for our shareholders," said Fritz.

"Union Pacific has been my home for 22 years and I am confident that now is the right time for Union Pacific's next leader to take the helm."



## NTSB: 'Special Investigation' of NS

Railway Age Written by [William C. Vantuono, Editor-in-Chief](#) March 07, 2023 [Regulatory](#) provided by John Goodman



*National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy. NTSB photo*

The National Transportation Safety Board on March 7 said it would be conducting what it's calling a "special investigation of Norfolk Southern Railway's organization and safety culture."

"Given the number and significance of recent Norfolk Southern accidents, the NTSB also urges the company to take immediate action today to review and assess its safety practices, with the input of employees and others, and implement necessary changes to improve safety."

NTSB's announcement came one day after NS [announced a six-point plan to immediately enhance the safety of its operations](#). The initiatives are based on the NTSB's [preliminary findings on the East Palestine, Ohio, derailment](#). NTSB pointed to "five significant accidents involving Norfolk Southern":

"On [Dec. 8, 2021](#), an employee for National Salvage and Service Corporation assigned to work with a Norfolk Southern work team replacing track was killed when the operator of a spike machine reversed direction and struck the employee in Reed, Pennsylvania.

"On [Dec. 13, 2022](#), a Norfolk Southern trainee conductor was killed, and another conductor was injured, when the lead locomotive of a Norfolk Southern freight train struck a steel angle iron protruding from a gondola car on another Norfolk Southern freight train that was stopped on an adjacent track in Bessemer, Alabama.

"On [Feb. 3](#), a Norfolk Southern freight train carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. The derailment resulted in a significant fire and hazardous materials release.

"On March 4, a 2.55-mile-long Norfolk Southern freight train derailed near Springfield, Ohio.

"On March 7, a Norfolk Southern employee was killed during a movement in Cleveland, Ohio."

"As part of the special investigation, the NTSB will also review the Oct. 8, 2022, Norfolk Southern derailment in Sandusky, Ohio," the agency said. "The continued safe operations of Norfolk Southern [are] vital to the United States. The NTSB is concerned that several organizational factors may be involved in the accidents, including safety culture. The NTSB will conduct an in-depth investigation into the safety practices and culture of the company. At the same time, the company should not wait to improve safety and the NTSB urges it to do so immediately."

"Moving forward, we are going to rebuild our safety culture from the ground up," NS chief executive Alan Shaw said. "We are going to invest more in safety. This is not who we are, it is not acceptable, and it will not continue."

Shaw, who will be testifying at a Congressional hearing on March 9, commented on the March 7 accident in Cleveland:

"As has now been widely reported, one of our Norfolk Southern colleagues was fatally injured overnight in a tragic accident on the job. Louis Shuster, a conductor from Broadview Heights, Ohio, was struck by a dump truck as his train moved through a rail crossing at the Cleveland-Cliffs Cleveland Works facility.

"I went to Cleveland as soon as I heard the tragic news. At our Rockport Yard, I talked with several railroaders who worked with Lou, as he was known. They shared stories about an individual who was respected and liked by his colleagues. This is an awful day that leaves a hole in our company's spirit. We have reached out to Lou's family to offer our condolences. We will give them time to grieve, and we will be there with support for anything they need.

"The cause of the accident is not yet known, and we will of course cooperate fully with the National Transportation Safety Board. In some ways, the cause does not matter. I called together every member of our management team this afternoon to emphasize the urgency of finding new solutions. Tomorrow we will hold safety stand-down briefings reaching every employee across our network."

*Editor's Commentary: The March 9 hearing, called by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, is [in my opinion little more than a political stunt](#) that will accomplish next to nothing, as most such hearings do. "Alan Shaw told the Committee that he will appear voluntarily .... We continue to engage in discussions with Members of Congress and other committees about additional requests to testify, while balancing his commitments to the remediation process and the community," an NS spokesperson said.*

*"Alan will share what he knows about the incident. As the NTSB has noted, there are also industry-wide issues, and we would expect that other industry participants will also be involved in future hearings. The rail industry needs to learn as much as it can from East Palestine, as can the owners of the railcars." Actually, it's the politicians that could use an education in railroads, a subject they know little or nothing about. It's disconcerting that Alan Shaw and his colleagues have little choice but to waste their valuable time as sitting ducks in a political target practice session. – William C. Vantuono*

## AAPRCO NEWS BRIEFS

March 2023 Volume 11 Issue 3 Provided by John Goodman

**45th Annual Convention ~ May 3rd and 4th ~**

Hotel Block is Open!

**HYATT Regency New Orleans**  
601 Loyola Avenue  
New Orleans, Louisiana 70113  
504.561.1234



This four-star hotel in the heart of the Crescent City's downtown will host our Welcome Reception on the evening of May 2nd, as well as all our convention sessions. The hotel is just a ten-minute walk from Union Passenger Terminal where AAPRCO cars will be parked. Other nearby attractions include the historic French Quarter, Arts District, and the Mississippi Riverfront. **AAPRCO Room Rate - \$303.96 \$259/night, plus taxes and fees of \$44.96**

### Call for Nominations ~ Due March 15th ~

You are invited to nominate any member or yourself as Director to fill the positions for the following Directors whose terms expire this year at the Annual Convention:

Associate Director -- Thomas Lanahan  
Car Owner Non-Amtrak certified – Mike Kelly  
Car Owner Amtrak certified – Sherrie Conover, Tony Marchiando, Robert Menzies, and Keith White

You may only nominate someone in the same classification of membership as your own. The above Directors may run again, as there are no term limits. Both you and your nominee must be in good standing with dues having been paid for 2023.

#### **Nominations must be received no later than March 15, 2023.**

If you are nominating via email (preferred), please send a message to AAPRCO Secretary Tom Lanahan at [tjlanahan@aol.com](mailto:tjlanahan@aol.com). Be sure to include your name, your AAPRCO membership classification, and the name of the person you wish to nominate.

If you wish to mail your nomination(s) by U.S. Postal Service, please print or type your name, your membership classification, the name of the person you are nominating, and sign the paper. If you wish to nominate more than one person, please use a separate paper for each person. Mail your nomination(s) to:

*Tom Lanahan 1881 SW Palm City Road, Unit H-202 Stuart, FL 34994*

After nominations have been received, ballots will be prepared and sent to members by mail well before the Convention. Each nominee will be invited to prepare a statement of qualifications, etc., to include with mailed ballots. Voting can be done by postal mail or at the Convention (please bring your ballot with you). All voting is by secret written ballot. No write-in candidates are allowed. Ballots will be counted at the General Meeting during the Annual Convention. In the case of only incumbents having been nominated, no ballots will be distributed and the nominees will be declared reelected at the General Meeting during the Annual Convention.



### **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival**

*April 28 - May 7, 2023*

AAPRCO's convention dates correspond with Jazz Fest, the annual celebration of Louisiana's unique heritage and culture. In addition to regional cuisine and arts and crafts, thirteen stages offer a range of music including jazz, gospel, Cajun, zydeco, blues, R&B, rock, funk, African, Latin, Caribbean, folk, and more. music, along with regional cuisine, arts and crafts, parades and more. **For the 2023 music line up and to purchase tickets, visit [nojazzfest.com](http://nojazzfest.com).**

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## 2023 Membership Dues

Time's a wasting! We will soon scrub the membership rolls. Renew now to ensure you stay current on convention updates and all the latest news.



### Washington Report by Ross Capon

Transportation committee assignments for the first year of the 118th Congress have been set. I list appropriations first because our top priority is yet another year with PV-friendly report language. The authorization law runs through FY 2026 although opportunities could arise sooner.

#### Appropriations

The “big four” on Senate Appropriations:

Full committee: Patty Murray (D-WA), chair; Susan Collins (R-ME), ranking

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies: Brian Schatz (D-HI), Chair; Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), ranking

#### Subcommittee Democrats:

Patty Murray (WA); Richard Durbin (IL), Dianne Feinstein (CA), Jack Reed (RI), Christopher Coons (DE), Chris Murphy (CT), Joe Manchin (WV) and Chris Van Hollen (MD)

#### Subcommittee Republicans:

Susan Collins (ME), John Boozman (AR), Shelley Moore Capito (WV), Lindsey Graham (SC), John Hoeven (ND), John Kennedy (LA) and Jerry Moran (KS)

#### The “big four” on House Appropriations:

Full committee: Kay Granger (R-TX), chair; Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), ranking

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies: Tom Cole (R-OK), chair; Mike Quigley (D-IL), ranking

#### Other subcommittee Republicans (as I previously reported):

Mario Diaz-Balart (FL), Steve Womack (AR), John Rutherford (FL), Tony Gonzales (TX),

David Valadao (CA), Ben Cline (VA), Ryan Zinke (MT), and Juan Ciscomani (AZ); Kay Granger (TX), ex officio

#### Other subcommittee Democrats:

Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ), Norma Torres (CA), Pete Aguilar (CA), Adriano Espaillat (NY), and Jennifer Wexton (VA); Rosa DeLauro (CT) ex officio

#### Authorization

The big four on Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation:

Full committee: Maria Cantwell (D-WA), chair; Ted Cruz (R-TX), ranking

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Maritime, Freight, and Ports: Gary Peters (D-MI), chair; Todd Young (R-IN), ranking

#### Other subcommittee Democrats:

Amy Klobuchar (MN), Brian Schatz (HI), Ed Markey (MA), Tammy Baldwin (WI), Tammy Duckworth (IL), Raphael Warnock (GA) and Peter Welch (VT)

#### Other subcommittee Republicans:

John Thune (SD), Roger Wicker (MS), Deb Fischer (NE), Eric Schmitt (MO), Shelley Moore Capito (WV) and Ted Budd (NC)

The big four on House Transportation and Infrastructure:

Full committee: Sam Graves (R-MO), chair; Rick Larsen (D-WA), ranking

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials: Troy Nehls (R-TX), chair; Donald M. Payne Jr. (D-NJ), ranking

#### Other subcommittee Republicans:

Brian Babin (TX), Lance Gooden (TX), David Rouzer (NC), Tracey Mann (KS), Mike Bost (IL), Rudy Yakym (IN), Doug LaMalfa (CA), Tom Kean, Jr. (NJ), Bruce Westerman (AR), Brandon Williams (NY), Pete Stauber (MN), Marc Molinaro (NY), Tim Burchett (TN), John Duarte (CA), and Dusty Johnson (SD); Sam Graves, ex officio

#### Other subcommittee Democrats:

Federica S. Wilson (FL), Grace F. Napolitano (CA), Seth Moulton (MA), Steve Cohen (TN), Troy Carter (LA), Henry C. Johnson, Jr. (GA), Andre Carson (IN), Jared Huffman (CA), Mark DeSaulnier (CA), Jesus Garcia (IL), Marilyn Strickland (WA), Rob Menendez (NJ) and Valerie Foushee (NC); Rick Larsen, ex officio

*AARPCO news Continued on next page:*

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## Passenger Rail News

### NTSB opens public docket for 2021 Amtrak derailment in Montana

The [National Transportation Safety Board](#) yesterday opened the [public docket](#) for its ongoing investigation of the 2021 derailment of [Amtrak's](#) Empire Builder passenger train near Joplin, Montana.

The train was carrying 154 people [when it derailed](#) on Sept. 25, 2021, in a right-hand curve on the [BNSF Railway Co.](#) Hi Line Subdivision. As a result of the accident, three passengers died and 49 passengers and crew members were injured.

The investigation docket includes more than 3,100 pages of factual information, including reports on operations, mechanical, track and engineering, signal and train control, and crash-worthiness and survival factors. The docket also includes interview transcripts, photographs and other investigative materials.



Shown: NTSB investigators at the Amtrak Empire Builder train derailment site near Joplin, Montana, in September 2021. Photo – ntsb.gov

## AAPRCO Mid-Month Highlights March 2023

### Secretary's Report By Tom Lanahan Director Nominations

The nomination deadline for open seats on the board of directors has now closed. Thank you to everyone who nominated candidates and to all those who are willing to serve. There will be elections for both the Associates director position and for four Amtrak-Certified Car Owner director positions. Candidates are as follows:

Amtrak-Certified Car Owner Candidates (Four positions are open)

Sherrie Conover  
Bill Gray  
Robert Menzies  
Dale Parks  
Keith White

Associates Director Candidates (One position is open)

Tom Hartig  
Tom Lanahan

Ballots will be mailed in a few weeks and must be returned prior to the convention by a date to be included in the ballot package. To be eligible to vote, you must have paid your 2023 membership dues.



### Washington Update By Ross Capon

VP Government Affairs secretary

The President's budget is always labeled "dead on arrival" on Capitol Hill, but it is a starting point for discussions that will lead to the enacted appropriations levels. And it doesn't hurt for Amtrak and transit to be in strong positions. First, however, the big picture. The W.H. total spending request is \$6.9 trillion (including \$842B for Defense; \$28B for DOT) and a \$1.8T deficit. They claim \$2.9T deficit reduction over 10 years, heavily based on tax increases (including increase corporate tax rate to 28% from 21%) whose enactment is unlikely.

The White House wants a real 9-10% increase in non-defense discretionary spending (of which Amtrak is a part), whereas the House GOP wants a cut in the 20-25% range. Ergo, says Jeff Davis, Washington's leading expert on DOT budget issues, "look for at least one government shutdown later this year, possibly several, while they figure this out. A year-long CR [continuing resolution]" is also possible. Indeed, he notes that FY23 appropriations bills were crafted with extra care, since Congress knew that a CR was possible, meaning new appropriations provisions might either never be agreed to or never implemented.

The shutdown(s) could begin with the September 30 conclusion of FY23, or sooner in conjunction with a debt ceiling crisis. Of course, an unprecedented failure to set the debt ceiling at the level necessary to meet borrowing needs could jeopardize the full faith and credit of the United States by preventing the Treasury from paying the government's bills. This would make the issues in this memo look like very small potatoes.

However, about 80% of the funding requested for USDOT has already been provided by the IJIA (Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act of 2021 - Public Law No: 117-58, enacted 11/15/2021).

Washington Post and others show a decline in DOT funding (2.9% per Bloomberg Government) without taking IJIA funds into account.

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Could a sharply conservative Congress claw back any of this “guaranteed” funding? There could be talk about that but, thus far, Republicans don’t agree amongst themselves on what they actually want to cut and many (including those who opposed IIJA) have taken victory laps for projects they got in the law.

Beyond IIJA, the White House wants \$28.16 billion in new discretionary appropriations for DOT, plus \$3.35 billion in new contract authority for the Airport Improvement Program, from a new FAA reauthorization bill or extension. To show an \$882 million reduction in total appropriations vs. FY23, the W.H. proposes a number of changes that Congress will not accept, including saving \$2.6 billion by zeroing out all earmarked funding from the FY23 omnibus. The third largest among \$4.6 billion in spending increases would be \$648 million for Amtrak’s National Network.

Indeed, the W.H. proposes to re-prioritize Amtrak’s National Network farther ahead of the Northeast Corridor.

Dollars in Millions	FY23 Enacted	FY24 Request	Change
<b>Northeast Corridor</b>			
IIJA	1,200	1,200	
Regular Appropriation	1,260	1,227	
<b>Total NEC</b>	<b>2,460</b>	<b>2,427</b>	<b>-33</b>
<b>National Network</b>			
IIJA	3,200	3,200	
Regular Appropriation	1,193	1,841	
<b>Total NN</b>	<b>4,393</b>	<b>5,041</b>	<b>+648</b>

The W.H. also seeks funding for two grant programs not in the FY23 Act:

- \$250 million for grade crossing grants (plus the IIJA’s \$600m) with language that would allow more than 20% of a year’s grade crossing grants to go to a single state.
- \$50m for rail restoration/enhancement.

Davis says Amtrak will be the first thing House Republicans come for, so the National Network increase is doubtful... Republicans in general dislike operating subsidies, but for some reasons Senate Republicans are o.k. with that. A lot of Republicans have a big chip on their shoulders about operating grants, but there are never enough of them to kill Essential Air Services (W.H. request \$348M similar to FY22, FY23; plus \$154M mandatory from overflight fees) or Amtrak, but enough to stop them in the Republican conference.

One noteworthy comment regarding the Highway Trust Fund (HTF): Treasury and Congressional Budget Office HTF revenue projections are unusually far apart – CBO 5.9% or \$2.4B higher in FY24 and 8.3% or \$3.3B higher in FY28. For the six years FY23-28, CBO is almost \$16B higher.

As previously noted, the four top appropriators are women:

- House Appropriations Chair Kay Granger (R-TX)
- House Appropriations Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (D-CT)
- Senate Appropriations Chair Patty Murray (D-WA)
- Senate Appropriations Ranking Member Susan Collins (R-ME)

AAPRCO will be working again to get report language on the FY 24 DOT appropriations bills. It’s always good to thank your legislators for the language on the bills for the previous five years (FY19-23) and to ask for that tradition to be continued.

## Passenger Rail News Amtrak Restores Cascades Service

[Amtrak](#) has fully restored daily service to the Cascades route between Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia, for the first time since the service was suspended in 2020 due to the pandemic.



*Service between Portland and Vancouver has not been available since 2020 due to the pandemic. Seattle-Vancouver service was restored in September 2022. Photo – amtrak.com*

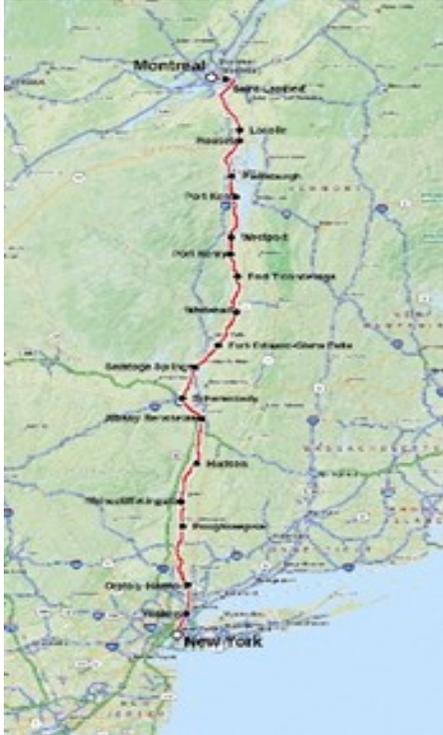
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“With more people now traveling, we are thrilled to double the daily roundtrips between Seattle and Vancouver,” said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner. “By adding staffing and equipment to the region, we can once again offer customers a direct connection between Portland and Canada.”

More trains will be added to the Portland-Seattle route later this year, said Ron Pate, Washington State Department of Transportation’s director of the rail, freight and ports division.

### Amtrak's Adirondack Line Will Resume Service on April 3<sup>rd</sup>



Amtrak has committed to fully reopening the Adirondack Line by April 3. The Adirondack Line runs from Albany to Montreal, including stops in Plattsburgh, Whitehall, Ticonderoga, Rensselaer, Port Henry, and Rouses Point. It has been closed since the onset of the pandemic.

Congresswoman Elise Stefanik ( R-NY) said, “Families throughout Upstate New York and the North Country rely on the Adirondack Line for transportation, and it serves a significant economic driver, connecting tourists and our Canadian neighbors, to our region...”

"The long-awaited resumption by Amtrak of the Adirondack rail service between Montreal and New York City not only reestablishes one of just three vital train links between the U.S. and Canada but restores Amtrak service to several North Country communities and represents another important step in normalizing cross border travel post pandemic," said Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce.

"The service, which had been growing before the COVID shut down in 2020, has been recognized as one of the world's most scenic train rides, used by Montrealers and New Yorkers as a travel option to reach either end or to access the Adirondacks. For Plattsburgh, it has been popular with area college students who live in the New York metro region. We thank Congresswoman Stefanik and Senator Gillibrand for their active advocacy and now look forward to working with Amtrak to help spread the word that the link is back. Onward and upward and on track!"



### Amtrak to Begin Construction Activities for B&P Tunnel Replacement

Amtrak announced on March 8th that it is ready to begin early construction activities tomorrow for the \$6 billion [B&P Tunnel Replacement Program](#) in West Baltimore and Halethorpe, Maryland. The work calls for replacing aging wood ties with new concrete ties, installing new rail and completing track drainage improvements. The upgrades will enable high-speed operations on all four tracks in the track segment, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The first phase of construction is expected to conclude in summer, with additional work related to the replacement of an existing turnout in Winans to be completed in a future construction phase.

The B&P is Amtrak’s oldest tunnel on the Northeast Corridor at nearly 150 years old. The 1.4-mile tunnel connects Baltimore to Washington, D.C., and has a number of age-related issues that cause excessive water infiltration, structure deterioration and rail service delays, Amtrak officials said.

*Early construction activities for the first phase of the \$6 billion project begin tomorrow and are expected to wrap up in early summer. Photo – amtrak.com*

The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s [Federal-State Partnership for the State of Good Repair Grant Program](#). In the future, the project also will be supported by funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Amtrak officials said.

Future work includes the construction of new bridges, rail systems and track; an ADA-accessible West Baltimore MARC commuter-rail station; and the new Frederick Douglass Tunnel, which will include two new high-capacity tubes for electrified passenger trains.

*End of AARPCO news:*

## Wheel Bearing Expert: To prevent Derailments, Railroads Should Equip Freight Cars with Sensors



*A hotbox and dragging equipment detector on the Union Pacific near East Bernard, Texas. A wheel bearing expert says on-car sensors, rather than lineside detectors, is the best way to find defects. Tom Kline*

*By Bill Stephens | March 6, 2023 Trains Magazine Email Newsletter*

Unlike wayside detectors, on board sensors can detect bearing defects months before they become a safety hazard

Installing sensors on freight cars is the only way to prevent another disastrous derailment like the Feb. 3 Norfolk Southern hazardous materials wreck in East Palestine, Ohio, a wheel bearing expert says.

Constantine Tarawneh, a mechanical engineering professor who heads the University Transportation Center for Railway Safety at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, says adding more wayside hotbox detectors won't be enough to eliminate derailments caused by wheel bearing failures.

“Temperature is just not the way to measure the condition of a rotating object. Period. It’s a good secondary measure, but not a primary measure. And so I don’t care how close you space them ... it’s not going to help,” Tarawneh said in an interview last week.

The Rail Safety Act of 2023, [which was filed last week in the Senate](#), would require railroads to place hotbox detectors every 10 miles. Today detectors are spaced an average of 25 miles apart, according to the Federal Railroad Administration.

There’s no question that hotbox detectors work. Train accident rates caused by axle and bearing-related factors have dropped 81% since 1980 and 59% since 1990 due to the use of hot bearing detectors, [according to the FRA](#).

But bearings can overheat quickly, the FRA says, and can burn off in as little as 1 to 3 minutes. Hotbox detectors failed to diagnose 124 severely defective bearings in the U.S. and Canada from 2010 to 2018, 117 of which resulted in derailments.

“The one in East Palestine caught everyone’s attention because of the hazardous materials,” Tarawneh says. “These are accidents waiting to happen. They might not happen that often, but they will continue to happen because we’re just taking a shot and hoping that these wayside detectors are effective.”

The shortcoming of both hotbox detectors and wayside acoustic detectors is that they are reactive and can only catch late-stage defects that pose an immediate safety threat, Tarawneh says.

A proactive solution, he says, would be to outfit rolling stock with accelerometers that can detect telltale vibrations in wheel bearings up to 50,000 miles before they become a safety hazard.

The research team at University Transportation Center for Railway Safety [has developed a battery-powered sensor module](#) that can measure the operating load, temperature, and vibration levels within a bearing. It wirelessly sends the data to a central computing unit for analysis. The system can warn railcar owners of defects thousands of miles in advance of a potential failure and provide an estimate of how long the bearing can safely remain in service.

The system has been tested in the center’s laboratory as well as on test track at the MxV Rail Transportation Technology Center in Colorado.

Some bearings can fail without getting hot enough to trigger a hotbox detector until a few minutes before a derailment, as was the case in East Palestine. On-board sensors would have flagged the problematic bearing several months beforehand, Tarawneh says.

Amsted Rail, which supports research at the University Transportation Center for Railway Safety, is among the companies that offer on-board sensor equipment.

RailPulse, the freight car telematics joint venture spearheaded by Norfolk Southern, is testing on-board sensors that track a car’s location, whether it’s empty or loaded, whether it’s experienced a significant impact event, whether the hatches or doors are open or closed, and whether the hand brakes are on or off.

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The initial pilot program – which involves NS and RailPulse members Union Pacific, short line holding companies Genesee & Wyoming, Watco, and Railroad Development Corp., and car manufacturers and leasing companies GATX, Greenbrier, and Trinity – is not testing wheel bearing monitors.

But RailPulse General Manager David Shannon says the goal is to ultimately monitor wheel bearing health. “We are very interested in it,” he says.

Taranweh says it might cost \$1,000 to retrofit a freight car with a wheel-bearing sensor system.

Byron Porter, the founder and CEO of telematics company Hum Rail, which licensed the rights to the University of Texas system, estimates that wheel bearing monitoring would cost between \$400 and \$500 per year for the 15-year life of its equipment. “That includes hardware, bearing condition, wheel kips (exactly like a wheel impact load detector system), truck hunting monitoring, impact detection, GPS, software and firmware updates, and data access, either through APIs or through our own website,” he says.

Around two-thirds of the 1.6 million freight cars in North America are owned by shippers or leasing companies.

“What I’ve been telling folks is there are three ways to look at the additional cost to outfit their own fleet,” Porter says. “A fraction of the total cost for a new build (0.5-2%). An insurance premium that keeps your name out of the headlines. Less than the East Palestine derailment is going to cost NS.”

It costs about \$200,000 to install a hotbox detector on a single track main line and \$350,000 on double iron. More than 6,000 hotbox detectors are currently in service. To double that figure to reduce spacing between detectors, it would cost between \$1.2 billion and \$2.1 billion.

Equipping the entire freight car fleet with wheel bearing monitors might cost \$1.6 billion or more. But the telematics system would also provide shippers with real-time car location, other car health data, and significantly reduce the number of trains that need to stop and set out cars while en route.

Taranweh says the industry should start by adding wheel bearing sensors to tank cars and other cars that carry hazardous materials. Outfitting the entire fleet would take years. “It might take a decade or even two decades. But we have to start somewhere,” he says.

The Biden administration has backed the Rail Safety Act, but the FRA has yet to take a formal position on all of the bill’s provisions, an agency spokesman says.

“Both wayside detectors and on-board sensors are expected to be discussed at length during an upcoming meeting of the Railroad Safety Advisory Committee that will be announced in the very near future,” FRA spokesman Warren Flatau says. “Otherwise, it’s a bit premature to opine on the views of one researcher about the virtues of one technology over another until such time that a more comprehensive examination is undertaken related to potential future regulatory activity.”

National Transportation Safety Board Chair Jennifer Homendy says the board’s investigation of the East Palestine derailment will include an analysis of wayside detection systems, how railroads use their data, and whether temperature thresholds should be set at a lower level.

The board also will look at alternatives to the traditional hotbox detector, including acoustic detectors and on-board sensor systems.

“We like redundancy at the NTSB so there’s more than one way to ensure safety,” Homendy said today in a webcast with The Washington Post. “We will look at all the technologies out there and make a recommendation.”

Some in the railroad industry are skeptical that on-board sensors can be rugged enough and reliable enough to be as effective as wayside detectors.



**Volume 7 \* Issue 2 \* February, 2023 FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Here we are finishing up the shortest month of the year, and to coincide with that, I will try to keep this report short as well. This time I would like to talk about two items, the first being our annual conferences. We are just back from one of the best-attended conferences ever. I attribute that to two factors, one being that people are anxious to get back to face-to-face meetings, and while we had a good turnout the previous year, this year was very gratifying, I think people now have a better understanding of what COVID is and how to avoid or deal with it.



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The second was that we had a strong sponsoring organization with a museum collection and a seminar program that every member wanted to experience if they could. Our sponsors had to overcome some challenges, such as the tent, but they made it work. Having been on the committees sponsoring two RPCA Conferences, I can assure you that everyone has curve balls that must be dealt with. Next year is no exception; when shortly after we voted to go to SAM Railroad at the Lake Blackshear Resort located at Georgia Veterans State Park in Cordele, GA, the main lodge building was condemned and must be rebuilt or replaced. Our Conference team has already reacted, developing alternative lodging to replace the lost rooms, and the banquet, meeting, and hospitality rooms are not in the structure that was condemned. The folks at SAM have a great program laid out for us.

For the following year, we have been offered Pueblo, CO once again, but this time organized by Visit Pueblo and the Pueblo Convention Center. This is a departure from our normal pattern of sponsorship by an RPCA Member Organization. These sponsors are aware that we had a good conference there previously, and are doing it purely for the income and to attract tourism to Pueblo, CO. Many organizations use professional planners or ask for bids from various Convention and Visitors Bureaus with excellent results. The only downside to this is that they are more costly than our conference model because everyone working on the project is paid.

So, to ensure the continued success of our annual conferences, I ask every member to support our conferences by both attending and considering sponsoring a conference through their own company or a member organization. Hosting RPCA is a great way to expose our members to what you have to offer, be it a business, excursion line, or museum collection. It should also make a little money for your organization.

I want to thank both folks at SAM and the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce and Convention Center for stepping up to host a conference. Who will be next? 2026 is available!

I will be very brief about the second item, which Burt Hermey will expound on elsewhere in this issue. There have been some recent cases where Amtrak has applied the change penalty for trip itinerary modification or cancellation to changes that resulted from a mechanical failure of the owner's car. We are trying to understand how common this is and how it has been applied. If you have been assessed such a charge, please contact Burt.

Brad Black

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## SAVE THE DATE

RPCA 2024 CONFERENCE JANUARY 11-14 2024  
 GEORGIA VETERANS STATE PARK  
 CORDELE GEORGIA



*SAM SHORTLINE EXCURSION RAILROAD*

*Planned events include excursions on the SAM Shortline, seminars, hands-on workshops, vendors, silent auction, membership meetings, banquet, and hospitality room.*

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*The cross-over participation in our January conference, pointed out by Keven Moore, is quite encouraging. This appeared in the NRHS newsletter*

## Two Organizations, Same Goals

By TONY WHITE, President NRHS  
(pictured with Cate Kratville Wrinn)

In January, I attended my first Rail Passenger Car Alliance (RPCA) conference. There were many NRHS members attending this four-day event, including Wisconsin Chapter member Cate Kratville-Wrinn. The RPCA is an alliance to promote the preservation and operation of historic rail equipment. To accomplish this, they have educational, operation, maintenance, restoration, and safety seminars by working with Amtrak and the FRA to ensure that the cars meet the standards established by the industry. However, like the NRHS, they believe that younger people need to have access to the unique nature of railroading. The younger generation is the future of all things related to trains. The NRHS premier program to attract youth is its RailCamp program. Over 600 youths have attended the program since its inception. Chapters and individual NRHS members donate so that teens may learn hands-on about railroading from professional railroaders and companies. Many of these youth remain members of the NRHS for years. Some come back to help with the RailCamp program. While I was speaking about the RailCamp program, baskets were passed around, and members at the banquet reached into their pockets and donated a record amount of money to RailCamp. The RPCA, through their members' donations, offers two scholarships yearly for one female and one male to attend one of the RailCamp programs. Check out the application for RailCamp on the NRHS website at nrhs.com



### Conference Call Feb.27, 2023

From RPCA: Brad Black	Burt Hermey	Mike Stickel
From Amtrak: Theresa Smith Jamal	Steve Robusto	Robert Ripperger

For FYE 2023, Amtrak reports 44 moves, 268 segments 137K route miles vs 2022, fewer route miles but similar segments and moves.

Amtrak reminded owners must use the current move request form on the website.

#### Other Business

Brad and Burt asked Amtrak about their interpretation of when penalty charges are applicable in the case of a PNR change due to en route bad order of a PV. See below for details.

In 2021, Amtrak issued a new "Conditions for Movement of Privately Owned Cars on Amtrak. This superseded the Tariff of 2007 and all the rate addenda that followed.

The 2007 document detailed penalty charges for what was widely interpreted as arbitrary Move Request changes made less than two weeks prior to first departure. Also, there was language waiving the charges when a car had to be substituted as a result of bad order of the originally scheduled car. Amtrak interpreted that to mean if a car was bad ordered and the PNR had to be amended as a result, penalties would not apply. Nor would parking if the bad ordered car was waiting to get into the shop.

The 2021 document, in addition to increasing the length of the penalty period to 30 days from 14 days, eliminated any language waiving penalties in the event of a bad order that requires a change to the PNR.

The penalty charge could range from a couple of hundred dollars to several thousand, depending on the number of miles involved in the segment(s) that require changing. Because of the nature of en-route bad orders, it's a near certainty that the penalty will be in the 25% bracket. In addition, extra parking days and any mechanical services performed by Amtrak will be charged to the owner/operator.

RPCA was recently made aware of one case of a 25% penalty charge being assessed for a PNR change on a bad ordered car; we are curious how many of our members have had the same experience, when it occurred, and what the resolution was. Please call or text me at (714) 264-9167, or email me at [cbhermey@pacbell.net](mailto:cbhermey@pacbell.net) if you have been assessed this charge for your bad-ordered car.

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## Carbon Monoxide



I have written a time or two about working in a space that is closed off with little or no fresh air supply. A sense of sorrow swept over me when I read the morning headlines out of New Mexico: “3 teenage boys found dead in garage”. My first reaction was that of drug involvement. This wouldn’t be the first story of teenage deaths related to drug dealing. Reading further into the article, it was noted that a propane heater was found in the same garage as the boys. Carbon Monoxide. That silent, odorless, colorless, tasteless gas had claimed more lives. We came back from Spencer charged up and ready to make the final additions to the Bedford.

Little did we know that Mother Nature had her own plans for cool temperatures and cold winds. It looks like we will be doing a lot of interior work until she changes her mind. That said, I will be double-checking the exhaust on the genset, as well as propping open an end door for an air supply. Carbon monoxide is not the only hazardous gas that can be found in a shop area. There are flammable gases, noxious gases, and others that can irritate the eyes and lungs. Nothing like stripping paint and inhaling those fumes for a couple of hours.

My family had a pickup camper when I was a teenager. It had a catalytic heater in it should it get cold enough that we needed heat. It was my mom who would make sure to have a window cracked open somewhere for a supply of fresh air. Thanks, Mom, for looking out for all of us. She was also good at having us wash our hands as well. How about it? Open a window and wash those hands while remembering Gary’s mom. Stay safe. **Gary**

## SAFETY Enclosed Spaces

Total miles run in 2022: 12,776  
 By RR:  
 On BNSF: 1,872  
 On CN: 7,088  
 On NS: 3,816  
 By State/Province:  
 In IL: 423  
 In IN: 699  
 In KY: 818  
 In MN: 176  
 In MT: 278  
 In ND: 96  
 In OH: 1,061  
 In SD: 308  
 In TN: 1,238  
 In WA: 361  
 In WI: 230  
 In SK: 7,088

We are still waiting for the next major Umler update next quarter. That could happen as early as March or as late as June. See if the change we requested and was approved made it in correctly.

Anyone who does NOT want their cars to move behind rear DP units, send us an email or call to let us know. Once the change is in the system, we will go into each car and add "Handle on Rear only, including AAR RP-2001" that has not informed us they don't want it.

Take care, and stay safe. **Pamm & Dan**

*RPCNB. These are only for railroads that Greenbrier provides data services for. Very interesting considering 2022 was not an auspicious excursion year. Lots of cars are moving to new owners.*

## Did you Know?

The beautiful post-war Wabash Chicago-St. Louis Blue Bird equipment was delivered to the Wabash by the Budd Company from November 1949 to January 1950. The consist was a baggage lunch counter lounge; three 54-seat dome coaches; a diner lounge; and a dome parlor observation car.

Parlor car business was so good on the new train that Wabash management decided to order an additional dome parlor car. That car was delivered by Pullman-Standard in July of 1952 and contained the famous “Blue Bird Room”, a large 11-seat day drawing-room under the dome that was designed for business meetings en route.



*The Wabash Blue Bird Pullman-Standard dome parlor car*

*Continued on next page:*

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But why was this car a smooth-side painted-steel car built by Pullman-Standard, instead of a matching mid-train stainless-steel dome parlor car built by Budd?

When a railroad desired to order new lightweight passenger cars, they would usually develop the basic specifications in-house, and then solicit bids from the three primary carbuilders of the day – American Car and Foundry, Budd, and Pullman-Standard. Information about this process that the railroads and carbuilders went through, and the bids submitted, is very hard to come by. But in the many passenger car books and magazine articles produced over the last 40 years or so, once in a while, there have been comments that give us some insight about that process.

It appears that with a few exceptions, railroad decisions about which carbuilder was awarded the contract to manufacture passenger cars were based on the lowest bid. Exceptions would be a railroad such as the Burlington, which was enamored with Budd Company passenger cars and their stainless steel construction, and thus almost always placed their orders with Budd, regardless of price. Once in a while - as was the case with the single Wabash dome parlor car order – a railroad desired to order a very small quantity of cars, in this case, just one car. The cost to design and the cost of materials for such an order would be very expensive compared to a multiple-car order. The Northern Pacific found this out some years later when they realized that they made a big mistake when ordering dome coaches and dome sleepers for the North Coast Limited from Budd, and did not order a protection dome coach and dome sleeper for that train. When they made the decision to order one of each from Budd in July of 1957 for late 1957 delivery (that's correct – roughly six months from order date to delivery!), the cost (also taking into account three years of inflation from 1954 to 1957) was almost 25% higher per car for the additional two dome cars compared to the price in 1954.

No doubt, the Wabash found out that ordering just one mid-train dome parlor from Budd was more than they were prepared to pay. But over at Pullman-Standard, the Missouri Pacific and the Texas & Pacific had an order placed in January of 1951 for five carbon-steel smooth-side flat-glass dome coaches for July of 1952 delivery. It was evidently proposed by P-S that the Wabash could tack their dome parlor car order to the end of the MP/T&P order and get the desired economies of scale. Even though it would be part of a small five-car order, it was still a much better price than just a single-car order. The Wabash well understood that this new car would not be a match to their beautiful Budd-built train, but the cost presumably outweighed the cosmetic advantages of a perfectly-matched trainset. They placed their order with P-S in February of 1951.

One might wonder why the Wabash did not tack on their one-car order to the large CB&Q order that was placed with Budd at roughly the same time. Those cars were ordered by the CB&Q in March of 1951 and delivered from June to December of 1952. There were two dome buffet lounge coach dormitory cars and two dome observation parlor cars that were very similar to the 1950 Wabash Blue Bird equipment, so one could assume that this would have been a viable option. Perhaps it was explored, and the cost was still too high compared to the P-S price.

It appears that Budd's delivery time for one Wabash dome parlor car as an add-on to the CB&Q order would likely have been January of 1953, so there was only about six months' difference in delivery time between the two builders. Enough to tip the scales in favor of Pullman Standard? Maybe. The answers hopefully still exist somewhere in some dusty files of a RR Historical Society. So, perhaps one day, we will find out for sure.

If anyone has comments or questions about this article, email Jon Clark at [domeliner@hotmail.com](mailto:domeliner@hotmail.com).

Jon Clark

## Just For Fun

### HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Albany, N.Y.

*Jan. 1, 1829*

**President Andrew Jackson**

Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

The Canal system of this country is being threatened by the spread of a new form of transportation known as "railroads." The federal government must preserve the canals for the following reasons:

1. If canal boats are supplanted by "railroads," serious unemployment will result. Captains, cooks, drivers, hostlers, repairmen, and lock tenders will be left without means of livelihood, not to mention the numerous farmers now employed in growing hay for the horses.
2. Boat builders would suffer, and towline, whip, and harness makers would be left destitute.
3. Canal boats are absolutely essential to the defense of the United States. In event of the expected trouble with England, the Erie Canal would be the only means by which we could ever move the supplies so vital to waging modern war.

For the above mentioned reasons, the government should create an InterstateCommerce Commission to protect the American people from the evils of "railroads" and to preserve the canals for posterity.

*Continued on next page:*

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As you may know, Mr. President, “railroad” carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by “engines,” which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to the crops, scaring the livestock, and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such break-neck speed.

Respectfully yours,  
 Martin Van Buren  
 Governor of New York

## RAILROAD NEWS

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



*Rail Station Stamp set*

### Museum and Excursion Trains

The U.S. Postal Service will hold a first-day-of-issue event for “Railroad Stations Forever,” a five-stamp series, at Cincinnati Union Terminal on Thursday, March 9, at 11 a.m. EST. The stamps depict Cincinnati Union Terminal, along with stations in Point of Rocks, Md.; Richmond, Va.; San Bernardino, Calif.; and Tamaqua, Pa;. A total of 30 million stamps have been printed.

The Railroaders Memorial Museum has acquired a former Pennsylvania Railroad baggage car for use in a planned exhibit train to accompany K4s No. 1361, currently undergoing restoration. The model B60b baggage car, built in the 1920s, was donated by Railway Excursion Management Co. The car had been in maintenance-of-way service at Amtrak’s Ivy City terminal in Washington, D.C., for decades.

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Historic Pullman Foundation is gearing up for its second Pullman Railroad Days, set for May 20-21 at Pullman National Historical Park. It will be the first such celebration since Pullman gained National Historical Park status at the beginning of the year. There will be displays of Pullman-built cars of different eras at the 111th Street/Pullman station on the Metra Electric line. Among the cars scheduled to appear this year are New York Central No. 3, built in 1923; observation car Royal Street, built in 1950, and Blue Ridge Club, also built in 1950. The weekend will also feature the foundation’s 50th-anniversary exhibit, marking the group’s work preserving, interpreting, and promoting Pullman’s history; a virtual-reality experience on advanced railroad technology, hosted by Norfolk Southern; guided tours of the Historical Park grounds; activities; food; and entertainment.

Tickets are now on sale from the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad for its 2023 Rail Heritage Photography Weekend, a two-day event in May limited to 70 attendees. The event set for May 6-7 will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Cass Scenic Railroad and will feature the railroad’s locomotives pulling vintage freight trains.

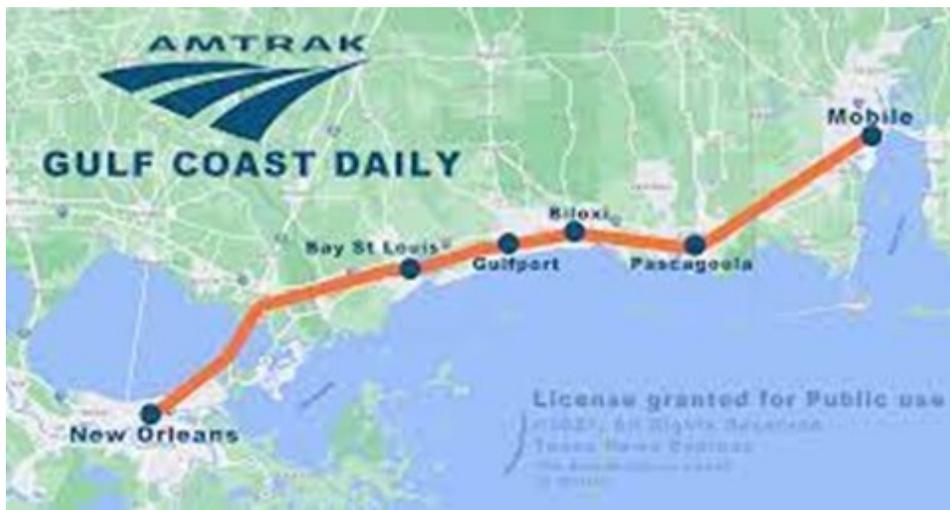
The Conrail Historical Society will open its \$150,000 museum and archive center, housed in a retired 86-foot hi-cube auto-parts boxcar, on April 1, the anniversary date of the railroad’s founding in 1976. A brief ceremony at noon that day will mark the culmination of several years of the society’s collaboration with Shippensburg University, the Cumberland Valley Rail Trail, Cumberland Area Economic Development Corp., and the Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau.

The last surviving EMD F7A of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle and the last SD9 purchased by Great Northern Railway are both moving to the Inland Northwest Rail Museum in eastern Washington. Five of the Alco cab units exist in some form but the former SP&S 804 is the only EMD cab. Built in January 1953, the engine was used on the Minnesota Zephyr excursion in the late 1990s. That folded in 2007 and the engine sat in Stillwater, Minn., until it was purchased for the Iowa Pacific Holdings-owned San Luis & Rio Grande and moved to Colorado in 2015. It was at risk of being sold to for scrap during the recent bankruptcy liquidation of SL&RG, but was rescued thanks to contributions by members of the SP&S Historical Society.

*Continued from previous page:*

The Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad has one more year to operate its 1919 Baldwin 4-6-2, Santa Fe No. 3415, before the locomotive is sidelined for two years to undergo its federally mandated 15-year inspection. The railroad, which believed the rebuild was due this year, discovered it had another year in the process of filing required papers with the Federal Railroad Administration. As a result, the 4-6-2 is now slated to operate 28 times this season, beginning Memorial Day weekend.

## Amtrak/Freight/Federal Agencies



Amtrak crews have begun qualification runs between New Orleans and Mobile, Ala., as the railroad prepares to restore regular passenger service along the Gulf Coast. The qualification runs are using Amtrak equipment and are the first time that the passenger railroad's equipment has regularly appeared on the line since Hurricane Katrina ended service there in 2005. Amtrak officials say the qualification runs will last for several months. A start date for the new Gulf Coast service has yet to be announced. Restoring service east of New Orleans has long been a goal for Amtrak but one the freight railroads there, Norfolk Southern and CSX, long fought against. However, late last year, the three railroads were able to broker a deal that will allow passenger trains to return this year.

Arizona Democrat and former U.S. Navy pilot and NASA astronaut Mark Kelly has assumed chairmanship of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure. EPW Committee Chairman Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Senior Republican Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia on Feb. 9 announced the appointment for the 118th Congress.

*-end of RPCA news*

## Metro News Quips...

**- Bonding Bill** Monday, March 6, 2023, 10:41 AM, Frederick Krenske <rick@usjet.net

**BONDING:** Via Star Tribune's **Jessie Van Berkel**, the fate of \$1.9 billion in state infrastructure spending could be decided today as the House holds a floor vote on two bonding bills. The first bill contains \$1.5 billion in borrowed money, and a three-fifths supermajority is needed to pass it — meaning all Democrats and 11 Republicans must be in agreement. The second bill is for \$400 million in cash, which only requires a simple majority. Because a bonding bill did not pass last year, GOP Rep. **Dean Urdahl** said it's likely that the \$1.5 billion construction bill will receive the Republican support it needs to ss. **URDAHL:** "There will be some people who are looking to leverage something, and they may vote no on the bill. But there likely are going to be more than enough [votes] to pass the bill from Republicans.

Wednesday, March 15, 2023, 3:35 PM, Frederick Krenske

**NORTHSTAR:** via the Star Tribune, **VERBATIM:** "A new study indicates that there are no easy fixes for the Northstar Commuter Rail line, a chronic underperformer before the pandemic as well as afterwards when thousands of Minnesotans began working remotely...Before the outbreak, the 40-mile Northstar line, which connects Minneapolis and Big Lake, mostly ferried suburban commuters to their jobs in downtown Minneapolis during morning and afternoon rush hours. But commuting patterns have likely changed forever due to COVID-19, leaving transit operators across the country trying to figure out what's next... The in-house study, which cost \$175,000, hasn't been released in full and doesn't make any recommendations. The council will continue to work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and other funders of Northstar to assess next steps and service scenarios, spokeswoman Bonnie Kollodge said." **READ:** <https://fluence-media.co/4069aNL>

**MORE:** via FOX 9, **VERBATIM:** "A busy transit center along Hennepin Avenue in the heart of Uptown Minneapolis will close its indoor waiting area temporarily due to challenges involved with 'property damage, litter, and other unwanted behaviors,' according to an announcement from Metro Transit. The indoor waiting area on the east side of the Uptown Transit Station will be temporarily closed beginning Thursday, March 16. The space will be reopened later in the year 'when contracted security officers are in place here and at five other locations,' the announcement said. On Wednesday the Metropolitan Council has a vote on its agenda for a proposed contract that would bring additional security to the Uptown location, as well as the Vertical Circulation Building/Central Station in downtown St. Paul, the Blue Line Lake Street/Midtown and Franklin Avenue stations, the Chicago-Lake Transit Center and the Brooklyn Center Transit Center." **READ:** <https://fluence-media.co/3TejSQj>

## Metro News - March 8 in Railroad History: Baraboo Airline Railroad

Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 10:29 AM, Frederick Krenske From: Joseph Lechner Date: Wed, 08 Mar 2023

The Baraboo Airline Railroad was incorporated in Wisconsin on this date in 1870. Its goal was to build from Madison WI to Winona MN.

An airline in the nineteenth century? Hardly. A road or a railway was called an "air line" if it followed the shortest, most direct possible route between two destinations. Similar in meaning to "bee line" or "as the crow flies".

For fun, I used Google Maps to plot a highway trip from Madison to Winona. I deviated from Google's recommended route via superhighways, and instead went through every town listed on the above schematic. Mind you, the resulting map shows existing 21st-century roads rather than 19th-century railroad tracks, but you get the general idea.

BARR acquired the Madison, Lodi & Baraboo Railroad in late 1870. Chicago and North Western acquired the BARR in 1871. This route became part of C&NW's original main line between Chicago and Minneapolis / St. Paul.

It wasn't a perfect "bee line" all the way. C&NW encountered hilly country between Kendall and Sparta, requiring three expensive tunnels.

The city of Baraboo WI (current population 12,500) prospered as a C&NW division point. By 1892, over 500 railroad employees were stationed there. Baraboo's importance declined after 1911 when C&NW opened a more direct route between Milwaukee and the Twin Cities.

Meanwhile, Baraboo also became famous in the 1880s as the headquarters of Ringling Brothers Circus and several other circuses. The former Ringling Brothers facility is currently owned by the Wisconsin Historical Foundation and is open to the public as Circus World Museum.

The former Baraboo Airline Railroad has another claim to fame: after C&NW abandoned this route in 1964, it became the first nationally-recognized "rails to trails" recreational path, the Elroy-Sparta Trail.

Adventurers can go through all three railway tunnels (headlights are required, and cyclists must "walk" their bikes). The tunnels have doors (originally installed by C&NW), which are closed during winter.

Tunnel #3 is the habitat of a threatened species, the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*).

Joseph Lechner

## January 01 in Railroad History: Ralph Budd

From: [Joseph Lechner](#) Date: Sun, 01 Jan 2023

On this date in 1932, **Ralph Budd** became president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

**MARK TWAIN Zephyr**

BURLINGTON'S NEWEST WONDER TRAIN

Built of Stainless Steel  
Streamlined—Diesel Powered  
Air Conditioned  
Articulated Trucks  
NO EXTRA FARE

North		South	
9:00 AM	Lv. Burlington	9:10 PM	Ar. St. Louis
11:43 AM	Ar. Hannibal	9:25 PM	Lv. Hannibal
12:18 PM	Lv. Quincy	2:47 PM	Ar. Keokuk
2:12 PM	Ar. Burlington	5:41 PM	Lv. Burlington
2:35 PM	Lv. Burlington	3:40 PM	Ar. Burlington



The United States was in the grip of the Great Depression, and train ridership was at a low ebb. Railroads sought to win back passengers with modern, streamlined equipment.

Ralph Budd worked closely with Philadelphia manufacturer Edward Gowen Budd (who, as it turns out, was a distant relative) to develop CB&Q's Diesel-powered, stainless-steel **Zephyrs**. At the dedication of CB&Q's **Mark Twain Zephyr**, Ralph Budd greets children dressed as Tom Sawyer, Becky Thatcher and Huckleberry Finn. *FreightWaves Classics* The **Pioneer Zephyr** made its inaugural run from Denver to Chicago on May 26, 1934, ushering in the streamliner era. The shiny little train shattered speed records and captured headlines by averaging 77.1 mph with a short burst of 112.5 mph. Soon, O gauge models of CB&Q's **Zephyr** and Boston & Maine's similar-looking **Flying Yankee** became best-sellers for American Flyer and Lionel. Ken Green OGR Forum -Joseph Lechner

Jordan Palmer Taylors Falls on the St Croix Provided by Greg Smith

[tosSdreopn8ai0\\_0hu801g1a1uM4M6P6rm0u3:gtcumga7f31\\_5i9m76m0](#)



Taylor's Falls, Minnesota. Rail service reached Taylor's Falls in November 1880, after blasting and bridging the last few miles through the stone bluffs of the St. Croix River Valley. Originally built as the Taylor's Falls and Lake Superior Railway, the branch ran from Wyoming to Taylor's Falls, and eventually the branch became part of the Northern Pacific and was accessed via their Skally Line. NP ended service with the final train on June 30, 1948, and the tracks were removed shortly after. The depot remained and has been renovated and restored, with a basement added as well and now used as a community center. Thought I would share a set of then and now photos, not certain the year of the then photo, it is from the Minnesota Historical Society Archives, current shot is mine from December 24, 2019.

## Ore Rail - Digest #506

### Mineral Leases

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Fri, 03 Mar 2023 13:02:22 PST

U.S. Steel interested in Nashwauk mineral leases (Business North)

United States Steel Corp. is interested in the state mineral leases formerly held by Mesabi Metallics near Nashwauk.

U.S. Steel, in a letter to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Lands and Minerals, said it wants to set up a meeting with DNR officials to discuss its interest in the leases and the process for awarding the leases.

“With U.S. Steel's Keetac mine being the closest production facility to the subject properties, the subject leases are of particular interest to the longevity of the Keetac facility,” U.S. Steel said in the letter.

Mineral leases on about 2,664 acres of state land near Nashwauk are up for lease.

The DNR in 2021 terminated Mesabi Metallics' leases on the land.

The DNR said Mesabi Metallics failed to meet terms of a 2020 Master Lease Agreement Amendment.

Mesabi Metallics challenged the termination in court, but two courts up held the termination and the Minnesota Supreme Court denied a Mesabi Metallics petition to review the two lower court rulings. Mesabi Metallics is seeking to complete construction of a taconite plant near Nashwauk.

The leases, near the site of the former Butler Taconite plant, hold some of the highest-quality ore remaining on Minnesota's Iron Range. Keetac, wholly-owned by U.S. Steel, is located in nearby Keewatin.

On the Iron Range, U.S. Steel also owns and operates Minntac Mine in Mountain Iron, North America's largest taconite plant. The taconite plants produce iron ore pellets, the raw material used to make steel in blast furnaces.

The mineral leases would support its valued iron ore assets, U.S. Steel said in a statement.

“We consistently seek out opportunities that will support our strategy, and our operations on the Iron Range are a core advantage for U.S. Steel,” the company said. “We continually evaluate properties that would promote the health of our mines, as we work toward our sustainability goals. We express interest in properties to ensure the future viability of our facilities to the local communities and the state of Minnesota.”

Iron ore and steelmaker Cleveland-Cliffs Inc. is also seeking the mineral leases. Hibbing Taconite Co., majority owned by Cleveland-Cliffs and minority owned by U.S. Steel, is running out of crude ore. Without new sources of crude ore, Cleveland-Cliffs said Hibbing Taconite would shut down but recent developments have the mine running into 2026.

The 2,664 acres contains 66 parcels of 40 acres each. Scranton Holding Company, a newly-formed scam mining company in Hibbing, is seeking surface or mineral rights on six of the parcels.

The DNR has not set a timetable for awarding the leases. It's still possible that other parties could express interest in the leases. A final decision on awarding the leases will be made by the State Executive Council. Royalties paid by leaseholders on state mineral leases benefit Minnesota schools, the University of Minnesota and local units of government.

Meanwhile, U.S. Steel continues construction on an approximate \$150 million DR-grade pellet system at Keetac. DR-grade pellets made in the system will supply the DR-grade pellet market and give U.S. Steel the flexibility to feed a potential future direct-reduced iron/hot-briquetted iron facility, according to the company. Pellet production at the system is expected to begin in 2024.

Dave Schauer Duluth, MN

## Twin Ports Rail - Digest #363

### Hibbtac Gets Mineral Leases

From: [Chuck Corwin](#) Date: Mon, 06 Mar 2023 18:19:52 PST

The Duluth News Tribune reported that Hibbtac will get mineral leases to extend production through 2026. The new leases will total 120 acres and another lease of 40 acres. It was reported that the new leases will add months and not years to the Hibbtac operation. 2025 is the expected end of taconite mining at Hibbtac. With the new leases Hibbtac will continue to operate through 2026.

These leases must be in the immediate area of Hibbtac. The article did not state exactly where they were located or which properties that they were. As in the past Hibbtac should publish in the local newspaper the new expanded mining areas.

I have noticed the last time, I was up at the tunnels NW of Kelly Lake, that there appeared to be only one shovel working on the very west end of the Hibbing Tac west end. Up until a short time ago there normally would be two shovels mining taconite. I have not seen any stripping activity going on in the west pit area. I think that it is area 5. Chuck Corwin Cohasset, Minn

## Brightline Report to Bondholders Sets Goal of Orlando Service in 2023's Second Quarter

By | February 15, 2023 Passenger operator must still complete construction, has yet to begin 125-mph testing



Two workman in Cocoa, Fla., inspect fencing above the underpass where Brightline's route to Orlando diverges from the Florida East Coast main line [foreground] and crosses under State Route 528, the Beachline Expressway. David Lassen

ORLANDO — Brightline is targeting the second quarter of 2023 for the start of service to Orlando, [the Orlando Business Journal reports](#), citing the company's monthly revenue and ridership report to bondholders.

Brightline spokeswoman Katie Mitzner says 90% of construction is now complete on the 170-mile extension from West Palm Beach to Orlando. The company had said it plans to start Orlando service this year, with the date still to be determined.

But the passenger operator still has a number of significant milestones to clear before the start of operation would be possible, most notably the start of 125-mph testing on the portion of the route between Cocoa, Fla., and Orlando International Airport. The Federal Railroad Administration is still accepting comment on plans for the test procedures on that segment through Feb. 21 [see "[Brightline update: PTC plans outlined ...](#)," *Trains News Wire*, Jan. 3, 2023].

Testing is also continuing on various portions of route between Cocoa and West Palm Beach where trains will operate at 110 mph, with testing in northern Palm Beach County at speeds up to 110 mph set to begin this Friday, Feb. 17.

A number of other factors could delay the launch of service. Among them: U.S. Rep. Brian Mast (R-Fla.), a vocal opponent of the Brightline expansion, has [sent the FRA a letter](#) asking that the agency pause all preparations for the Orlando service pending conclusion of a National Transportation Safety Board investigation into a Feb. 8 grade crossing accident that killed two people.



BNSF CEO Katie Farmer

## BNSF Plans in Barstow Represent Evolution of Intermodal Supply Chain, CEO says

Trains Newswire [By David Lassen](#) | January 19, 2023

**Barstow International Gateway will address port congestion, expand capacity**

"The concept is still unique to the industry," Farmer says, "that we would use an intermodal hub and acquire property adjacent to that facility, using the intermodal hub as our anchor, and co-locate our customers' terminals, distribution centers, and warehouses. of acres of property adjacent to it for distribution centers [and] warehousing capabilities, but we'll also have a block-swap yard adjacent to it. That will allow us to facilitate evacuating freight off the ports of LA and Long Beach."

When cargo was backing up at the San Pedro Bay ports, the railroads serving the port needed "precious geography" to build trains to go east, she says. The addition of the block-swap yard to the Barstow plan allow the railroad to quickly move freight out of the port along the Alameda Corridor rail line to Barstow. There, it be built into trains going east — "which will also allow us, with that capacity, to allow additional origin-destination opportunities," Farmer says — or can be handled by the new local distribution or warehouse facilities. Those facilities will also help address a dearth of available warehouse space in Southern California's Inland Empire region, where the current vacancy rate is less than 1%, she said.

While BNSF has run into permitting issues with past plans in Southern California — and has hardly been alone in that regard — Farmer believes this project faces a more favorable path forward.

"What I would say is a little bit different about this facility is where we're trying to build the facility," she says. "We have a lot of enthusiasm and support from the city of Barstow. ... We believe that the value of the facility, as well as what we've seen in terms of challenges for the supply chain over the last 2½ years, speaks to why we need this facility."

"We're working very hard to tell the story, to work with the state of California, and federal permitting, and to this point, we've had a good reception."

## Ore Rail - Digest #497 DM&IR F7 leasers

**1a. Leased F7's on the DMIR** From: [John Gornick](#) Date: Thu, 09 Feb 2023 09:53:29 PST Hi All, I know the DMIR leased F7's from both the BL&E and GN. I've looked at Frank King's books to see when the exact dates of these leases occurred and I can't figure it out exactly. Does anybody have the dates when these locomotives were on DMIR property? I'm modeling 1960 and would like to have a little variety in the diesels if possible. Thanks, John Gornick

**1b. Re: Leased F7's on the DMIR**

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Thu, 09 Feb 2023 10:52:15 PST The Bessemer Fs were returned in 1961. A memo I came across stated that the DM&IR originally planned to return the power after the 1959 shipping season as the SD18s of 1960 would satisfy their needs, but some of the Bessemer units ended up staying around into 1961. I believe the GN power was used in 1958-59 but not sure about 1960.



*Soo Line locomotive 1003 passes under the Union Pacific overpass near Randolph, Wisconsin, during a Trains Magazine charter in fall 2022. Carl Swanson*

**Name:** Soo Line locomotive 1003 **Builder:** American Locomotive Company (Alco) **Wheel arrangement:** 2-8-2 Mikado  
**Build date:** March 1913  
**Why it's important:** Built for the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad, commonly known as the Soo Line, the 1003 is both large (250 tons) and powerful (53,947 pounds starting tractive effort). A highly versatile locomotive design, it's capable of both freight and passenger service. Class L-1 locomotives like 1003 could operate across nearly all the Soo Line's network of

Built in 1913 it was retired after 46 years of service in 1959 and placed on display in Superior, Wisconsin. After a failed attempt at restoring the locomotive to steam in the 1970s, the partially disassembled locomotive was acquired by Wisconsin Railway Preservation Trust in 1993. It moved under steam in 1996 and operated its first excursion the following year. The big Mikado was thoroughly overhauled and its boiler recertified for a further 15 years in 2012. The century-old locomotive powers occasional excursions in the Upper Midwest. It's displayed at the Wisconsin Automotive Museum in Hartford, Wisconsin between runs.

**Railfan Events** (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	Saturday April 15 2023 6:15—8:45 pm	<a href="#">Roseville Lutheran Church</a> 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE -Guests are Welcome
Hennepin Overland Railway Historical Society. Model Railroad Open House	Saturdays and Sundays September 2022—April 2023 1:00 pm—4:00 pm	2501 38th Street Minneapolis MN 55406 (5 Blocks West of Hiawatha Ave)	\$10
Newport Model RR Train Flea Market	April 15 2023 9am—2pm	Woodbury High School, 2665 Woodlane Drive, Woodbury MN	\$6
Granite City Train Show	April 15 2023 9am—3pm	River's Edge Convention Center, Avenue South, St Cloud, MN	10 4th \$6

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