

**NRHS**

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Warmer Weather means MORE Train Watching!



L: San Diego California Light Rail at the Downtown Station –Frank Wilke Photo

R: SP GP9 at Campo California, Frank Wilke standing on the locomotive, Frank Wilke Photo



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Meeting Notice:
Saturday May 13, 2023 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our May Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2023 meetings will held on the **2nd Saturday of the month.** (Planned Program: Jeff Wojciechowski of the Wisconsin Chapter: RR slides in Wisconsin and Minnesota)

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpen-teur Avenues at 4:15 pm May 13, 2023.

Zoom instructions: You simply click on the link below to join using your internet browser. If you join us via Zoom, please make sure your Zoom client is the latest version. Click on the icon In the upper right corner of the Zoom app and the click check for updates. The Zoom meeting will open at about 5:45 pm Saturday evening for chit-chat and Zoom troubleshooting. If you would like to test your Zoom client during the week before the meeting, please contact Dan Meyer at dan@meyer-family.net and arrangements will be made.

May Zoom Meeting Sign-on for the May 13 2023 meeting is noted here! Log in information for the May 13, 2023 Northstar Chapter NRHS Zoom meeting. The Zoom meeting will open around 5:30 pm Central Time and officially begin at 6:15 pm.

Meeting ID: 893 6665 3534
Passcode: 261265 //
Dial-in telephone if needed 507-473-4847

Northstar Chapter Officers & Staff

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Newsletter Editor	Richard Tubbesing Dawn Holmberg, Dan Meyer	Tubbesing32a@yahoo.com Dawn@dhholmberg.com	763-757-1304 763-784-8835

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



From the Editor: A BOD meeting was held in January. The BOD has decided to change the Chapter By-Laws. The BOD proposes for 2024 that chapter officers be reduced from 5 to 4 positions. The positions will be President, Treasurer, Secretary and National Representative. After posting in the newsletter, members will be able to vote on this change at the October 2023 meeting. Detailed write up can be viewed on our Chapter website. Also, for 2024, The BOD passed a resolution of Dues increase. Chapter regular membership will be \$30, Subscribers will be \$35 and if subscriber receives the paper copy (mailing) of the newsletter, an additional charge of \$5 will assessed. Proposed by-laws may be read by using the link here: <http://northstar-nrhs.org/bylaws/Proposed-Changes-By-Laws-Oct-2024.pdf>

Bulletin! Just Received
Obituary: Long time Member Robert Thurn's
Father Andrew Thurn has passed away on Sunday April 23 2023. Condolences go out from our chapter to the Robert Thurn family!

Meeting Minutes April 15th 2023 at Roseville Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order at 6:25 pm by President Dan Meyer. The motion was carried. The meeting had a quorum. Sixteen people were present. A motion to approve the March meeting minutes reported in the April Newsletter. The motion was carried. The Treasurer's report was given by Russ Isbrandt. The chapter checking account balances for the Chapter is a little less than last months and the calendar account is healthy. Membership showed thirty-five regular members, with four non-renewals, and fourteen subscribers with eight non-renewals. The library report was given by Russ Isbrandt. The correspondence papers from the Marv Mahre collection is being reviewed. An interesting letter was a submission by Marv Mahre of an article with photos on the Soo interlocking at Gloster. This is published in a this newsletter. Most of the time spent are photos being considered and reviewed for the 2024 calendar. The Calendar report was given by John Goodman. There have been about 60 photos selected of which the selection will be reduced to thirty. Included are photos for streetcars, Steam, Diesel, Minnesota Commercial photos. There is hope that we have the calendar done no later than August 1st of this year. Dawn Holmberg has not been able to review the photos but will be able to review them soon. Frank Wilke stated he has submitted photos of the San Diego Trolley. Richard Tubbesing stated he has received them and are in this newsletter. John Goodman stated that we still must review 45 slides from Jack Barbier that Dan Meyer has scanned.

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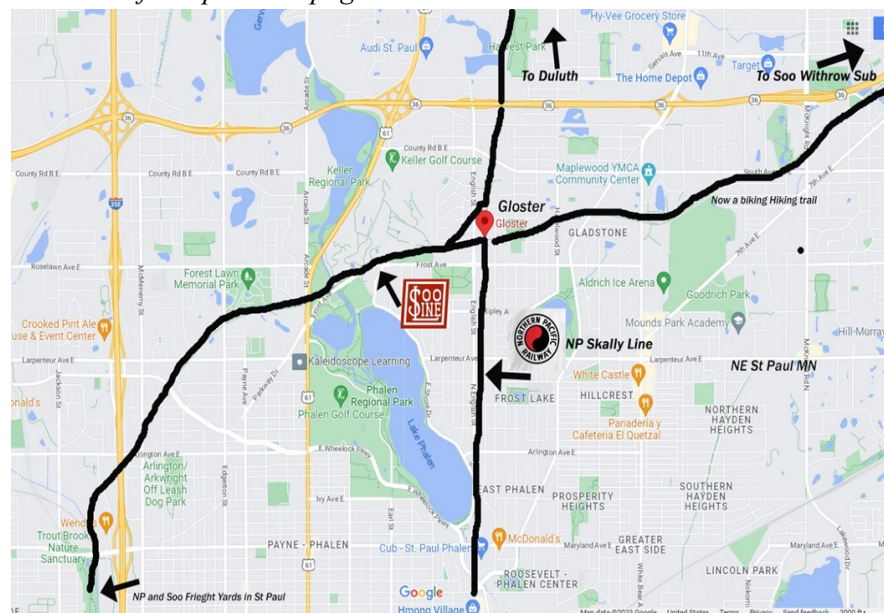
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John Goodman gave the Trip report. This year is the 50th Anniversary of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum and the Northshore Scenic Railroad. Director Ken Buehler says the Steam engine #332 might not run this year due to maintenance issues. It might run this fall for Fall Colors. The Two Harbors trip will be an all-Dome train featuring the Puget Sound and Silver Club. We can have one of the Dome's at an individual cost is \$85. The proposal is that we carpool up to Duluth for our August trip. John also spoke with Greg Vreeland of the Wisconsin and Great Northern Railroad. The Mark Twain Zephyr will not be ready this year. The trucks hopefully will be reinstalled this year. They have a recently received a GN Ranch car which will run on the 2:00 pm train. John gave the microphone to Dan Meyer to decide what our trip will be in August. Dan Meyer polled the audience, and it was unanimous that we do the Duluth Dome car trip in August. Richard Tubbesing was asked when the announcement would be in the newsletter. He stated that the July newsletter will have the brochure included in the newsletter. The next Trip issue is the annual Light rail trip. Since the Northstar commuter train does not run on weekends, the Light rail ride is the only option. John stated we need to consider that the June trip will be a ride on the Minnesota Streetcar Museum Excelsior trolley line. President Dan Meyer then stated we will do the Excelsior Streetcar ride. Russ Isbrandt stated that since the ride is a short ride, a tour of the car barn is included. Also, there is ample parking for riders at this location. John Goodman then stated that the Excelsior trolley ride will be our June 2023 Trip. Richard Tubbesing was asked when the announcement will be made in the newsletter. Russ Isbrandt stated that details are on the MSM web site. Richard Tubbesing stated that the Details and announcement will be in the May Issue of the newsletter due out about May first. John Goodman stated that our July picnic could be in Prescott Wisconsin instead of Maiden Rock Wisconsin. After talking to members, it was decided that our annual picnic in July will be at Maiden Rock Wisconsin. Mark Quam then stated that the St Paul Union depot will be hosting Train Day's on June 3rd and 4th 2023. Mark stated he will help man the All Aboard Minnesota table at this event and tables are available. It was noted that since we cannot sell items that we will decline getting a table. Mark stated that he can have our membership brochures at his table. Dan Meyer noted that we have to update the brochure and we will then get a few brochures out to Mark. Mark also stated that Train Day's is requesting from Amtrak that they bring up one of their new Siemens Charger Locomotive and a passenger car for display. Wayne Torseth asked if the steamboat will be running in conjunction with the Excelsior Streetcar line. It was stated that it might run if a dock can be found to load passengers. The newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. The newsletter will be published in May, July and then startup monthly in September. The Duluth trip brochure will be in the July Newsletter. Mark Quam then asked if there are any restrictions to the Number of seats for the Duluth Trip. John Goodman Stated that dome seats in the Puget Sound have twelve dome seats (at tables) and the Silver Club have twenty-four dome seats. John Goodman said that shouldn't be a problem depending on what dome car we ride. John also stated that the Two Harbors trips will have a new lounge car they just acquired. The Cheer committee was given by Dan Meyer. Dawn Holmberg stated she is recovering from surgery for a blockage that was fixed. John Cartwright is recovering from a broken wrist. John Goodman stated that earlier in the day, Cy Svobodny suffered a fall at a local train show. He is at home and recovering. Glen Holmberg reported that Bob Clarkson has a knee problem. John Goodman stated that member Dave Norman whereabouts is not known. It was reported that he was ambulated to an assisted care facility. A friend in Sommerset Wisconsin has a POA for Dave. John stated we will try and find out his current location. The web report was given by Dan Meyer. The web site is current with updates, as meeting video, newsletters and meeting notices are updated. Dan also posts meeting notices on Facebook. Dawn Holmberg gave the National Representative report. She stated that her activities have been curtailed due to surgery, but that most web site updates are complete. The Rail Camp notice has been removed from the web site. There is a conference in May 2023 in Sparks Nevada. The Program report was given by John Goodman. John attended a slide show by Greg Smith at the Twin City Model Railroad Museum. John suggested Greg should show this slide show to us in the future. Richard Tubbesing stated that we plan to have Greg Smith's slide show this fall. Richard Tubbesing also states Roger Libra has a C&TS DVD for tonight and that Jeff Wojciechowski will have a slide show next month of Contemporary Railroading in Minnesota, Wisconsin and other places and Jack Barbier will have a video program next fall. Specific dates will be determined. John Goodman stated we have a By-law revision. We have reduced the BOD to four officers, President, Treasurer, Secretary and National Representative. This is a result of having a very difficult time getting members to volunteer for any of our BOD Offices. Dan Meyer noted this change has been posted on our web site. This change will be in the next couple of newsletters and voted on by membership at our October 2023 meeting. Russ Isbrandt noted that in our last BOD meeting, we decided to raise the subscription rates for 2024. Those rates will be published in a near future newsletter. The meeting then was motioned for adjournment at 7:10 pm. Motion was carried. Announcements: Mark Quam gave a report on the Second Amtrak Train. Money has been approved, but appropriation and equipment availability is still a problem. Looks like this fall might be the startup of the 2nd train. The Eau-Claire to St Paul Train is still in the proposal stage with discussions among politicians and Railroad Bureaucracies in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Mark also stated that the Northern Lights Express between the Twin Cities and Duluth is basically shovel ready. Political processes in allocating money is ongoing. Thank you, Mark! The program this evening is a DVD by Train Magazine of the Cumbre and Toltec Railroad hosting two 1880's wood burning locomotives on their line a couple of years ago. This was provided by Roger Libra. Due to the late opening of the church for us, the two hour program was cut short at about 70 minutes. Members enjoyed the program. Respectfully submitted by Richard Tubbesing, Secretary.

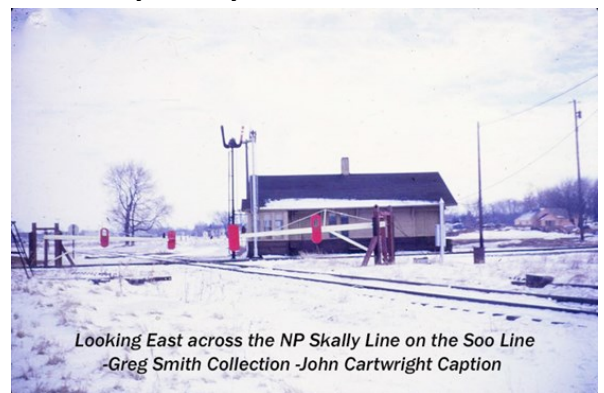
From the Marv Mahre Collection: Gloster MN (now all gone) Jct between the Soo Line and Northern Pacific Railroads. A proposed Article (letter) submitted to Railroad Magazine of the 2nd Shift tower Operator at Gloster around April 1957. Thanks to Russ Isbrandt for finding this historical document story!

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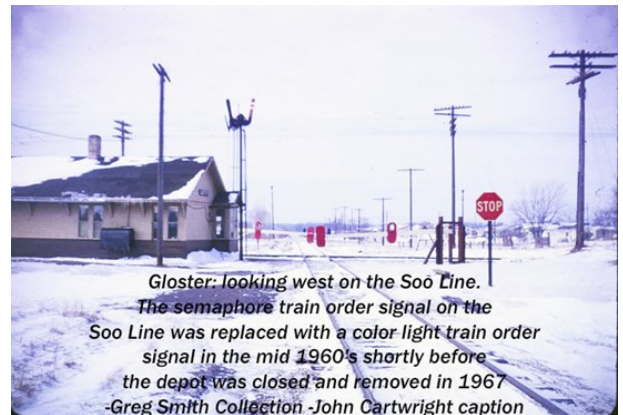
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Map of the Gloster Junction Location in St Paul MN. At that time, NP Freights from Duluth used the Soo Line leg to transfer to the Soo Track-age and eventually to the NP St Paul Freight yard. Milw Freights to Du-luth used the NP Skally line.



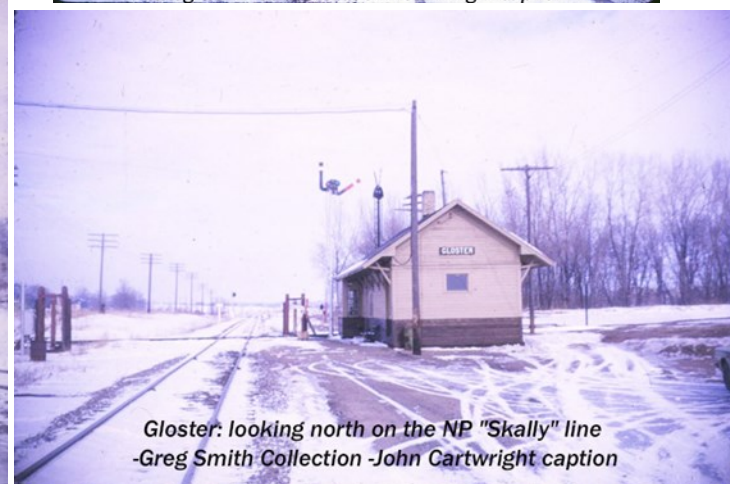
Looking East across the NP Skally Line on the Soo Line
-Greg Smith Collection -John Cartwright Caption



Gloster: looking west on the Soo Line.
The semaphore train order signal on the Soo Line was replaced with a color light train order signal in the mid 1960's shortly before the depot was closed and removed in 1967
-Greg Smith Collection -John Cartwright caption

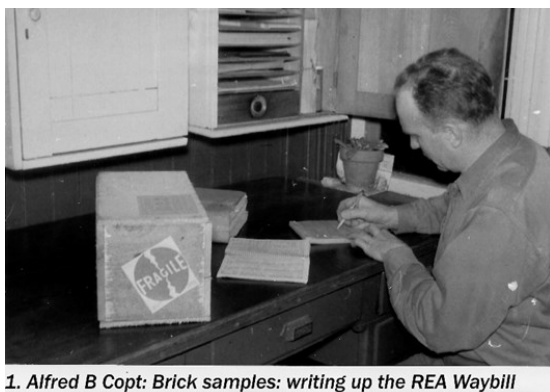


Gloster looking south on the NP "Skally" line across the Soo Line
-Greg Smith Collection -John Cartwright caption



Gloster: looking north on the NP "Skally" line
-Greg Smith Collection -John Cartwright caption

Photos by Marv Mahre of 2nd Trick operations at Gloster: April 1957



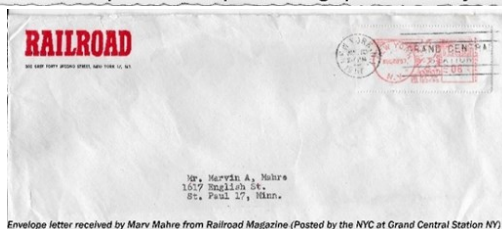
1. Alfred B Copt: Brick samples: writing up the REA Waybill



2. Hooping up train orders Soo Line #6 to Owen WI



3. Hooping orders to Soo #6 Conductor



Returned Envelope from Railroad Magazine
Of Letter sent to Railroad Magazine

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SECOND TRICK

When a small country railroad station has three assigned tricks (operators on duty twenty-four hours per day) it is a sure indication of a busy place for train operation as a single agent can usually handle the normal station business during the daytime. Such is the case at Gloster, Minnesota so I loaded my camera with film and brought along a good supply of flashbulbs and decided to find out what kept the second trick (4 P.M. to midnight) operator busy.

I met Mr. Alfred B. Copt, the operator on duty, who was most friendly and willing to explain the details of train operation before I settled back to watch the evenings work unfold. He pointed out that the station serves three railroads. The Soo Line and N.P. cross at this point with the CMStP&P having trackage rights over the N.P. In addition, there is a wye connection between the Soo Line and N.P. and all N.P. freights arriving from the North leave their own rails and use the Soo Line trackage into St. Paul which gives them a convenient entrance to the N.P.'s St. Paul freight yards. North-bound N.P. freights traverse this same route leaving the Soo Line rails and switching to their own at this point. The CMStP&P trains come out of St. Paul on N.P. trackage all the way. However, because of a steeper grade on this line they must use helper engines. These helpers are cut off and cross over to the Westbound track at Gloster to return to St. Paul. As the Soo Line is under manual block protection in this territory and both railroads use train order operation, I could see that this would be a busy night.

Our first visitor was a salesman from a brick supply firm who had several boxes of brick samples to ship out via Railway Express. After filling out the necessary forms (PHOTO #1) and attaching the necessary shipping labels, the shipment was ready to leave on Soo

-3-

a message which were again handed up to the crews as the train passed (PHOTO #8). After the train passed the helper engine crew came into the station to pick up a clearance to return to St. Paul.

At this point Al had a chance to take a break and chat a few moments before getting a call on the wire from Western Union advising that they were having trouble with dead or shorted telegraph wires somewhere beyond the station. For the next half hour Al was busy patching and crossing the wires (PHOTO #9) in the patch panel located at the station.

Soon the Soo Line dispatcher advised that a N.P. freight was coming. As this train left the Soo Line tracks at Gloster to run on their own line, the N.P. dispatcher issued the running orders from here on. To hand up these orders (PHOTO #10) the operators must walk over to the wye switch as this train actually did not pass in front of the depot.

After adding a few chunks of coal and emptying the ashes from the old depot stove (PHOTO #11), a N.P. passenger train arrived. After discharging a single passenger they were on their way to Duluth, Minnesota and reported by the Gloster station on time.

I now found that the evening was almost gone. At 11:50 P.M. the third trick operator arrived. He signed the transfer (PHOTO #12) which indicates that he takes responsibility for operations until relieved by the next operator, exchanged a bit of gossip and the latest railroad rumors and took over from operator Copt. At twelve midnight I departed with Al, fully aware of the duties of the second trick operator.

-2-

Line #6 due in about forty-five minutes.

Soon the telegraph instrument was clattering away with several messages for this train. These were neatly folded and tied in strings for delivery to both the engineer (PHOTO #2) and the conductor (PHOTO #3) as the train passed. Immediately after passing, operator Copt dropped the train order board to stop position (PHOTO #4) and "OS'd" (reported the train by) to the dispatcher. In manual block territory the train order board serves as the block signal.

After fifteen minutes the board was returned to the clear position. However, soon afterward the dispatcher's phone rang and the train order board had to be changed to the caution position to indicate that there were train orders for the next train which the operator was busy copying (PHOTO #5). There proved to be several train orders for the next Soo Line train due which was the Soo's "meat extra". This is their hotshot freight #24 which runs via Gloster as an extra every two weeks out of six making a special stop at St. Paul to pick up carloads of meat from the South St. Paul stockyards destined for Eastern points. These train orders were delivered to the crews on the freight train as it passed. After blocking and OS-ing this train as he did with the passenger train, the operator was kept busy on the wire sending a train list (PHOTO #6) which the conductor of the train threw off. This list was sent ahead to the larger yards where #24 would stop so that switching crews would know what cars were in the train and their destination.

As the next train due was a Milwaukee freight on the N.P. tracks, the manual gates had to be turned from the N.P. tracks to block the Soo Line tracks (PHOTO #7). These gates activate the automatic signals on the N.P. line and act as a block signal when across the Soo Line tracks. Now Al (as we were invited to call him when we first met) was busy with the N.P. dispatcher copying train orders and



4. Dropping the Train Order Board to Stop Position



5. Copying a train order for the next train

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next page:*

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More Photos by Marv Mahre of 2nd Trick operations



6. Telegraphing train list from the freight train



7. setting the Blocking gate on the Soo line



8. Hooping up orders to Milw Freight Train



10. April 1957 Hooping up orders to NP Freight going on the Soo Line



#11. Adding coal to the Depot Stove



12. 11:50 PM Third Trick Operator arrives

Chapter MSM Trolley Ride Saturday June 17, 2023 Meet at the Ticket booth at 11:30 PM 337 Water Street Excelsior MN

Schedule: Saturday's May 20 through September 16 • 10 AM to 4 PM

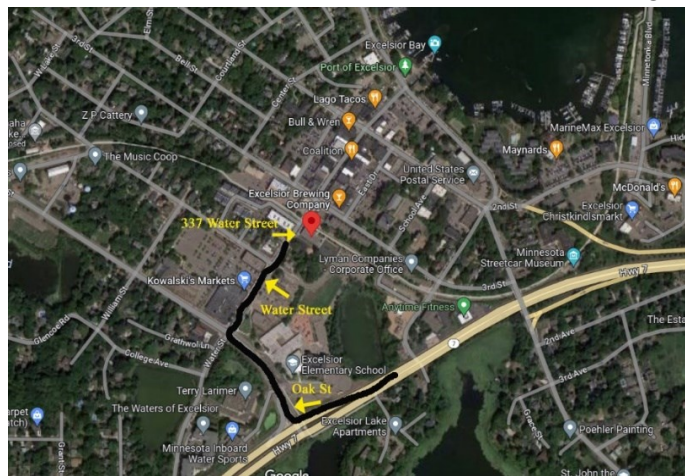
Fares: One ride: \$3 per person, children 3 and under ride free Day Pass: \$7 – ride all day!

Directions:

Highway 7 West from I494

Right Turn to Oak Street

Right Turn to Water Street



Excelsior Streetcar Line

Welcome to the Excelsior Streetcar Line! Relive the days when the streetcar carried Twin Citians to spend the day at the lake. Enjoy a trolley trip along a half-mile of track built on the former right-of-way of the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway. The car makes a stop at our car barn so passengers can view a photo gallery of hotels, trains, paddlewheel boats and landmarks from the 1800s and see work in progress on a streetcar restoration.

Location

The Excelsior Streetcar Line is located in downtown Excelsior on Water Street between Third and George Streets. Board at the Water Street Ticket Booth and Platform next to the Excelsior Library – 337 Water Street, Excelsior MN 55331. Excelsior has two free parking lots and limited on-street free parking.

CHOO CHOO! ALL ABOARD FOR TRAIN DAYS!

June 4th and 5th 2023

TRAIN DAYS FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- Kid activity area
- DJ and contests for families
- Craft kits and coloring kits
- Model trains
- Train equipment tours
- Bus tours
- Historic exhibit about the Steam Locomotive
- Oversized games (Chess, Checkers, Connect-Four, Jenga)



TRAIN DAYS 2023 EQUIPMENT

Great Northern Railway SD45 No. 400

General Motors Electro-Motive Division built Great Northern No. 400 in May 1966. It was the first production model (versus demonstrators used to sell the model to railroads) of the new six-axle SD45, which featured a 20-cylinder engine that developed 3,600 horsepower. EMD built 1,260 SD45s between 1965 and 1971. Great Northern eventually purchased 27 SD45s.

When No. 400 was delivered it received the moniker "Hustle Muscle" to symbolize the faster speeds and higher horsepower of the new locomotives. It continued to carry the name after Great Northern merged into Burlington Northern in 1970. In 1986 it was retired and donated in operating condition to the Great Northern Railway Historical Society (GNRHS). It is on long-term loan to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum by the GNRHS and is used in regular



TRAIN DAYS VIDEO MINISERIES FROM VIRTUAL TRAIN DAYS 2020

Join us online for a six-part video miniseries, highlighting memories of Union Depot, the history of trains, interviews with railroading experts and more!

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 1 | Memories of Union Depot |
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 2 | How the Steam Locomotive Changed History |
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 3 | Luxury Train Travel |
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 4 | The History of Railroading in Saint Paul |
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 5 | Q & A With Railroad Experts |
| Virtual Train Days – Episode 6 | Union Depot and Railroads Today |

This video miniseries will feature partners such as The Friends of the 261 and the Minnesota Transportation Museum to showcase interesting lessons and educational insights.

Here is a link to the St Paul Union Depot Web site:

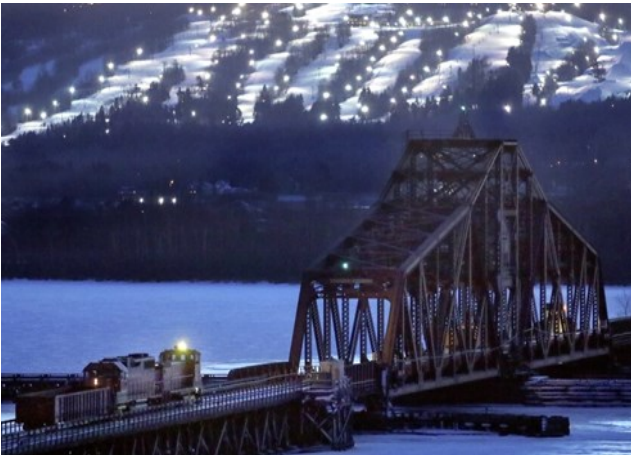
https://www.uniondepot.org/traindays/?_ga=2.245903044.1902334030.1682456288-1789458913.1682456288

August Trip to Duluth August 19th 2023

On Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 6:50 PM, John Goodman <jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com> wrote: Our upcoming August excursion for North Star chapter will be a dome car ride on the North Shore Scenic/ Lake Superior Railroad Museum from Duluth to Two Harbors and back on Saturday, August 19th. As in the past few years, our members will car pool on their own up to Duluth. We have done this in the past few years and it worked well. LSRM has said that this summer the Two Harbors train will be diesel only, and will no longer have coaches available on this train. It will be an all dome consist with dome seats selling for \$85.00 per person. (this does not include any type of meal at this price) The steam engine exDMIR #302 or D&NE #28 will not be available this summer for any trips on the LSRM. Schedule (as in the past years) shows leaving Duluth station at 10:00am and arriving Two Harbors at 12:00pm Noon. Train will return from Two Harbors at 2:00pm and reach Duluth station at 4:00pm. Duluth's LSRM has a new dome car :Puget Sound ex GN (short dome) and exCBQ Silver Club dome lounge. As we get closer to this August date we will be sending out a flyer to our members and subscribers. John Goodman Trip Chairman

Bills Contain Funding for Duluth-Twin Cities Passenger Rail

On Thursday, April 6, 2023, 9:12 AM Provided by Rick Krenske



Spirit Mountain shine beyond the Grassy Point railroad bridge in Duluth. The proposed Northern Lights Express passenger rail service would use the bridge on its route linking the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities. Steve Kuchera / 2017 file / Duluth News Tribune
By [Alex Derosier](#) April 05, 2023 at 5:28 PM

ST. PAUL — A long-sought passenger rail line between Duluth and the Twin Cities still appears closer than ever to reality this year, with both the House and Senate versions of a transportation budget including funding for the service. Advocates of the Northern Lights Express rail project, who have been pushing for years to restore Twin Cities-Duluth passenger rail travel, still say this year is the closest the state has come to funding the line. Estimates have placed the price tag of NLX at \$450 million — but Minnesota would only have to chip in 20% of the total, as the federal government would pay \$4 for every \$1 from the state. As Democratic-Farmer-Labor majority lawmakers prepare their major budget bills, both the Senate and House transportation packages, or omnibus bills, contain funding for NLX. But there's a key difference between the proposals: The House version calls for \$194 million to get the line started, whereas the Senate version calls for \$50 million.

A Senate DFL spokesman said there's a commitment in both chambers to get NLX funded, and while there's a discrepancy in funding now, it'll get hammered out later on in the session in a conference committee between the House and Senate. Supporters of NLX are enthusiastic this year about the odds for the proposed rail line now that the DFL controls all three branches of state government. For years, the proposal never gained any traction in the divided Legislature, where Republicans opposed restoring rail travel between the Twin Cities and Twin Ports. "We're optimistic," NLX Alliance spokesperson Jill Brown said in an email. "We've come close before. This is the year." If funding comes, advocates say service would begin in about three years. GOP lawmakers, including those along the route, question if the level of ridership and length of the trip would justify the expense. The Minnesota Department of Transportation estimates a trip on the NLX would take about 2½ hours and could possibly outperform drive times depending on weather and traffic. Transportation officials estimate up to 750,000 people will ride the train in the first year of service. NLX would use 152 miles of existing BNSF Railway track and connect Target Field in downtown Minneapolis to the St. Louis County Depot in Duluth. Stops are planned in Coon Rapids, Cambridge, Hinckley and Superior. Amtrak last operated a passenger rail route between the Twin Ports and the Twin Cities in the mid-1980s, and has agreed to run NLX if it moves forward. Sections of track would be built alongside the main route so the passenger trains could move out of the way as freight trains move through. Passenger trains would travel about 90 mph along the route. The Target Field stop in downtown Minneapolis would provide close access to public transit options to reach destinations across the Twin Cities, including light rail connections to downtown St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport. Supporters also say the route will provide access to the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis via light rail. Groups backing the passenger rail line already have a plan for the project which is "shovel-ready." BNSF has said it would not take an official stance on the project until funding is secured.

Minnesota Legislature Appears Ready to Fund Twin Cities-Duluth Passenger Train

By [Rick Krenske](#) April 10, 2023 provided by Rick Krenske

Both houses include 'Northern Lights Express' in transportation bills, although funding varies

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Funding to launch passenger rail service between the Twin Cities and Duluth, Minn., has been included in transportation bills in both houses of the Minnesota legislature, although the two versions provide substantially different levels of funding.

[The Duluth News Tribune reports](#) that the budget bills prepared by both houses, controlled by a majority of Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party legislators, include funding for the Northern Lights Express. The estimate for reviving the route, last operated by Amtrak in 1985, is \$450 million; the state would have to provide 20% of that total with the federal government providing the remaining 80%. The transportation bill in the state Senate currently provides \$50 million for the train — short of what is needed to unlock full federal funding — while the House version calls for \$194 million, which would make almost \$1 billion in total funds available. A DFL Party spokesman told the newspaper the party has a commitment to getting the train funded, and the difference will get ironed out later in a conference committee.

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Supporters of the project say they are optimistic that, with both houses of the legislature and the state's governorship all controlled by the same party, the train will finally receive funding. Republicans had opposed the train, questioning whether projected ridership and the expected 2½-hour travel time for the 152-mile trip were worth the expense. If the train is funded, it is expected to take about three years to launch.



Train Carrying Ethanol Derails in Minnesota, Forcing Evacuations

Thursday, March 30, 2023, 10:32 AM from Rick Krenske

A BNSF Railway train carrying ethanol and other products derailed and caught fire early Thursday, and some in Raymond, Minnesota, were forced to evacuate. (WCCO)

A Minnesota town outside of Minneapolis has been ordered to evacuate Thursday morning after a train carrying "a form of ethanol" and "a corn syrup liquid" [derailed and caught on fire](#), police say. Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway told FOX Business that its train came off the tracks near Raymond around 1 a.m. local time and no injuries were reported.

"Fire departments from Raymond and numerous area departments responded as several of the derailed tankers started on fire and were determined to be carrying a form of ethanol and others with a corn syrup liquid," the Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office said in a statement.

"An evacuation area of ½ mile was established around the crash site and law enforcement officers and other EMS assisted with that evacuation," the statement continued. "Residents were instructed to leave their homes and an emergency collection site for those with nowhere to go was established at the Central Minnesota Christian School building in nearby [Prinsburg, Minnesota.](#)"

A total of 22 train cars derailed, BNSF tells FOX Business. (KMSP / Fox News)

Police say the fire is still in the process of being contained Thursday morning and "no travel is advised to the city of Raymond."

Raymond has a population of around 780, according to census data.

BNSF said "Approximately 22 cars carrying mixed freight including ethanol and corn syrup are reported to be derailed."

"BNSF field personnel are responding to assess the derailment site and will be working closely with local first responders," it added, noting that the "main track is blocked and an estimated time for reopening the line is not available."

The cause of the derailment was not immediately clear.



Trains Running Again on Western Minnesota Rail line, Derailment Investigation Continues

Dan Gunderson April 3, 2023 12:24 PM provided by Rick Krenske

Trains are running again through Raymond, Minn., after a derailment caused an evacuation of the community last week.

[The Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office said](#) the tracks were repaired and returned to service, and the first train since the derailment passed through the area early Saturday.

Meanwhile, the National Transportation Safety Board still has a crew on the scene as it investigates the cause of the incident. A preliminary report on the derailment is expected in several weeks.

Nearly two dozen cars of a Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train derailed early Thursday morning and some caught fire.

The derailed cars were carrying corn syrup and ethanol, and concerns about a possible explosion prompted authorities to evacuate Raymond, a city of about 900 people about 90 miles west of the Twin Cities.

Residents were directed to a school in Prinsburg, about 5 miles away, and some went to the homes of friends and family in other communities.

Train cars piled up after a BNSF freight train derailed early Thursday in Raymond, Minn. Kerem Yücel | MPR News file

They were allowed to return home around midday Thursday, after authorities determined there was no risk to public safety.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency monitored the air near the derailment site for "particulate matter and volatile organic compounds," and [did not find any levels of concern](#).

BNSF Railway has a phone line — (866) 243-4784 — for claims from residents and businesses affected by the derailment.

The Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office said over the weekend crews continued to unload cargo from the derailed cars, and cleanup at the scene would continue for several days.

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The sheriff's office issued a statement thanking the dozens of agencies who responded to the scene on Thursday. [That list includes](#) 28 fire departments — some who responded from more than 40 miles away — along with other local, state and federal agencies and organizations.

"We are thankful for our local firefighters, EMS and law enforcement who drove toward the unknown without any hesitation to start fighting the fire and evacuating residents to keep them safe," [the sheriff's office posted](#). "We appreciate the attention our community has received from our local, state and federal officials. Regardless of politics when events like this affect our community we come together and do what needs to be done."

Minnesota Legislators Consider Rail Safety Legislation

By | April 1, 2023

Bill focuses on requiring railroads to provide information, training for emergency responders



Firefighters observe burning railcars after the BNSF derailment in Raymond, Minn., on March 30, 2023. Kandiyohi County Sheriff's Office via Facebook

ST. PAUL, Minn. — On Friday, the day after a derailment and fire involving hazardous materials in the south central part of the state, Minnesota legislators heard testimony on a rail safety bill in the state Senate Transportation Committee. Unlike recent legislation elsewhere, however, [SF 3187](#) focuses more on emergency preparedness than railroad regulation. [The Minneapolis Star Tribune reports](#) the bill was introduced as a reaction to the East Palestine, Ohio, derailment, but gained more local significance in the wake of Thursday's incident in Raymond, Minn. [see ["BNSF train transporting ethanol derails ...,"](#) *Trains News Wire*, March 30, 2023]. The bill requires railroads to contact local emergency officials with 15 minutes of an incident involving oil or hazardous materials and provide information about any substances released, and that a railroad representative must be available within one hour to advise the incident commander, "initiate railroad response actions as needed ... and must be authorized to deploy all necessary response resources of the railroad. The bill also calls for railroads to make hazardous-materials training available to emergency responders along routes where oil or other hazardous materials are carried, to hold meetings at least annually between with local emergency officials along such routes where oil or other hazardous materials are transmitted; and to hold exercises and submit response plans to deal with hazardous-material event.

Railroads and pipeline companies will be assessed \$4 million annually to pay for additional training and oversight. Railroads will be charged 70% that amount, proportionate to their number of route miles.

The bill, authored by state Sens. Robert Kupec (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, Moorhead), Scottt Dibble (DFL-Minneapolis) and Kari Dziedzic (DFL-Minneapolis) was introduced Thursday.

CPKC Unveils New Logo on First Day as a Merged System

By Bill Stephens | April 14, 2023 A final spike ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. today in Kansas City



Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern officially merged to form CPKC on April 14, 2023. CPKC

Canadian Pacific Kansas City, the first railroad to link Canada, the U.S., and Mexico, made its debut today and unveiled its new logo and [website](#).

Officials from Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern will celebrate the historic merger at a final spike ceremony scheduled for 10 a.m. today at Knoche Yard in Kansas City, Mo., the only location where the two railways' networks touch. "Today, we celebrate this historic combination creating a truly unique single-line rail network that begins a new chapter of railroad history in North America," CPKC CEO Keith Creel said in a statement.

"As we mark this once-in-a-lifetime occasion by driving the Final Spike in Kansas City, Missouri, where CP and KCS come together, we stand ready to bring new competition into the North American rail industry at a time when our supply chains have never needed it more." CPKC will also break ground today on a new yard office, the future location of its state-of-the-art U.S. operations center. "We stand ready to move the commerce of today and ready to compete hard to grow tomorrow," Creel added. "With the most relevant railroad network on the continent, we'll create value for all stakeholders, bringing new jobs, economic growth and environmental benefits to workers, customers and communities."

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The CPKC logo is a modification of the logo CP introduced in 2017, an updated version of the railway's heritage shield, beaver, and maple leaf. The CPKC logo replaces the words Canadian Pacific in the golden circle with the initials of the three railways that make up CPKC: KCS, CP, and KCSM. Bold red CPKC initials replace 1881, CP's founding date, in the gold ribbon at the bottom of the logo. And the 1881 now sits atop the maple leaf, the symbol of Canada.

As of early this morning, there is no word yet on a new locomotive livery.

While the separate railway websites – cpr.ca and kcsouthern.com – are still up, they prominently point viewers to the new cpkc.com website. The CPKC site includes a combined timeline outlining the history of both railways.

With its global headquarters in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, CPKC is the only railway connecting North America and boasts port access on coasts around the continent, from Vancouver to Atlantic Canada to the Gulf of Mexico to Lázaro Cárdenas on Mexico's Pacific coast. While remaining the smallest of six U.S. Class I railroads by revenue, CPKC has a much larger and more competitive network, operating approximately 20,000 miles of rail, and employing close to 20,000 people. Full integration of CP and KCS is expected to take place over the next three years.

CPKC filed articles of amendment changing the company's name to "Canadian Pacific Kansas City Limited," which became effective today. CPKC's common shares will remain listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange and New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol "CP" and are expected to begin trading under the new name on April 18.

CPKC also announced today the appointment of four new directors to the board of Canadian Pacific Railway Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CPKC, effective immediately.

"The addition of these members brings to the board a wide range of professional experience in transportation and logistics across the United States and Mexico," said Isabelle Courville, chair of the board of directors of CPKC. "We are delighted to welcome these new board members, and we look forward to their contributions and learning from their previous experience at Kansas City Southern."

Under the terms of the merger agreement, four Kansas City Southern directors join the board of the combined company. The four appointees are:

David Garza-Santos, a KCS director since 2016, is a business and community leader in Monterrey, N.L. Mexico, providing insight and leadership on the business and political environment across Mexico. He has been chairman and CEO of Maquinaria Diesel SA de CV (MADISA) since 1994.

Ambassador Antonio Garza (Ret.), a KCS director since 2010, is currently counsel to the law firm of White & Case in Mexico City. He brings strong diplomatic, legal and international business skills to the board developed through his experience as an attorney, and as U.S. ambassador to Mexico from 2002-2009.

Henry Maier, a KCS director since 2017, has spent his entire career working in various segments of the transportation industry. He served as president and CEO of FedEx Ground, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp., until his retirement in 2021.

Janet Kennedy, first appointed a KCS director in 2017, brings extensive executive leadership experience in business development, strategy, emerging technologies and technological transformation. She served as vice president, North America Regions, Google Cloud at Google, and previously held senior leadership positions at Ernst & Young and Microsoft Corp., including as president of Microsoft Canada.

These four directors will also be nominated for election to the board of CPKC at its Annual General Meeting scheduled for June 15.



Venture Business-class Cars Debut in Midwest: Trip Report

By Bob Johnston | April 13, 2023

Initial use on Carl Sandburg-Illinois Zephyr and other trains is for coach customers



Illinois Zephyr No. 380 from Quincy, Ill., glides past Metra's BNSF Chicago coach yard on April 7, 2023. The first Venture car behind the SC44 Charger is a business class/coach now being used for coach seating. It is coupled semi-permanently to a "1B" coach. Both cars have standard couplers on the opposite ends. The trailing Horizon cafe continues to accommodate up to 18 business class passengers, who are entitled to a free beverage from the cafe. Bob Johnston



The business-class seat in the foreground is 21 inches wide from armrest to armrest, compared to 18.3 inches for the coach seats in the background. The seat pitch (distance between seats) is 39 inches in business class, 36.7 inches in coach. Bob Johnston



Jenny Arbin and Kenny Washington were pleased to find the wider seats in the business class car. Arbin and Washington came to appreciate the firmer, wider seats and especially the big windows. Bob Johnston

First of two parts

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The semi-permanent coupling of the 1B coach on the left and the business class/coach on the right means they always operate in pairs. Bob Johnston



Ceiling mounted displays show the train's progress. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — After being delayed for several years by production setbacks and acceptance issues, the first of 17 state-owned Siemens Venture business-class cars are now hosting passengers on Midwest Amtrak routes.

They are not being advertised, however, and you only need a regular coach ticket to ride the cars. They feature three wider seats in a two-and-one configuration in each row, rather than the four two-by-two seats in a standard coach. Premium fares are not currently required because the Venture café cars, which are intended to provide business-class beverage amenities, won't be available for some time. And so, instead of being semi-permanently coupled to the café cars or "1B" Venture coaches, as eventually will be the case, they are currently paired only with the coaches. Keeping together these cars, with a standard coupler at one and the semi-permanent coupling at the other, ensures a seamless passage through the Ventures' wide vestibules.

Unaware that a premium-priced fare isn't required for the new cars, *Trains News Wire* demurred earlier this week when the lone conductor of Amtrak train No. 381, the *Carl Sandburg* for Quincy, Ill., offered business-class seating in the Horizon cafe. No thanks. "No problem," he said, "Just sit wherever you want."

Wider seats are appreciated

The Venture cars made initial runs more than a year ago [see "[First look: Siemens Venture coaches debut ...](#)," *News Wire*, Feb. 2, 2022]. After being withdrawn intermittently to fix post-production maladies, they have pulled assignments alongside Horizons and Amfleet I coaches and cafes on most Midwest routes.

Past experience with the Venture coaches' firm and narrow seating compared to the older equipment prompted a number of passengers, including Pat Young and Jenny Arbin, to walk through the first empty car, "to see if there was something more comfy up front," as Arbin puts it.

Settling into a single business-class seat, Young, a professor at Macomb's Western Illinois University, appreciates the additional cushion width and legroom, but thinks the seat seems "hard and unrelaxing and it doesn't recline that much. It feels like a commuter car and does not give me a luxury feel. I expect comfort if I'm going a longer distance," she adds. Finding the 110-volt socket for her laptop placed in a hard-to-reach position under the single seat's armrest, Young soon moves to a table in the car's coach seating section for the rest of the trip.

Arbin, traveling with her boyfriend to visit family in Princeton, Ill., initially has the same impression that the business class seats "are not as soft as those in the car we moved to when we took the train to New Buffalo (Mich.)." But quizzed later in the trip after looking out the big windows, getting snacks from the cafe, and relaxing in the wide seats, she admits, "This train is growing on me. We love taking Amtrak."

Luisa Andrade, returning from Plano, Ill., to Quincy University with fellow student Isaac Bourge, thinks the business-class cars' dual armrests are a plus. "I don't like sharing an armrest with someone I don't know," she says, having experienced that on previous Venture journeys. Both Andrade and Bourge are able to find comfortable positions in their wide seats and soon fall asleep.

Other impressions

One feature delaying Venture use on specific routes was a malfunctioning information display system, which shows route and "next stop" messages while delivering pre-recorded destination advisories over the public-address system. During this trip on the *Carl Sandburg* to Galesburg, Ill., it performed flawlessly; the conductor was also able to make clear announcements about delays waiting for other trains, a welcome change from the subpar scratchy audio on older equipment.

The only drawback is that the arrival time for the next station, when shown, is so small that it is extremely hard for many passengers to read. It also confusingly lists the departing station long after the train has left; arrival times are not announced.

Like the regular coaches, the Venture business class/coach ride is comparatively quiet and smooth through track crossovers and has great ventilation, good lighting, and large windows that make any trip more enjoyable. The extra-wide aisle to accommodate passengers with disabilities adds to the spacious ambience of this car, even if it contributes to the narrowness of coach seats.

Though patronage was light leaving Chicago on a Monday morning, the short train filled up substantially at the next two stations, LaGrange Road and Naperville. Those aboard cited comfort, convenience, lack of alternatives, and travel times "more than an hour faster than driving" as reasons they take the train.

— Updated at 3:20 p.m. CDT to clarify that business cars will be semi-permanently coupled to coaches, not just cafes.

More Midwest Venture Cars Enter Service; California Still Waits

By Bob Johnston | April 14, 2023

Second of two parts

CHICAGO — The introduction of Venture business/coach cars on some state-supported Amtrak routes in the Midwest reflects an increase in availability of the Siemens-built equipment, delayed by a variety of production and acceptance issues.

Meanwhile, there is still no firm date for the introduction of California's Venture equipment, although a spokesman for the state's Department of Transportation says it will come this summer.

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Northbound Amtrak Hiawatha No. 337 features a matched set of four Siemens Venture coaches — long awaited on the Chicago-Milwaukee route — at CP Morgan in downtown Chicago on April 7, 2023. As of the end of April, 43 Venture cars were in service in the Midwest. David Lassen



The business class/coach has 11 rows of two-and-one seating, plus two single business-class-width seats opposite a table. There is another business class seat next to a wheelchair space in the car's coach section. In addition to those 36 seats, there are 16 coach-width seats positioned at two tables, in separate rows, and against the end bulkhead. Bob Johnston



Wide doorways and a sealed vestibule with handle facilitate wheelchair-accessible and weather-free passage between the semi-permanently-coupled 3A and 1B Venture cars. Bob Johnston

Trains News Wire provided a firsthand look at the new Midwest business-class cars in Part One of this report [[“Venture business-class cars debut ...,”](#) April 13, 2023].

Three Venture business/coach and 40 straight coaches were fully accepted and available for service during the last week in March, Illinois Department of Transportation spokesman Scott Speegle tells News Wire.

“Another two business/coach and five coaches are in the queue to be fully accepted and ready to be put into revenue service in the coming weeks, and another six cars (four business/coach and two coaches) are being shipped to Chicago and will be arriving soon,” says Speegle. A café car continues to undergo climate testing in Canada; he says IDOT “hopes to begin introducing the new café cars in revenue service later this year.”

Midwest Venture cars now in service

Car type	Designation	No. series	Couplers
Coach	1A	4000	Standard both ends
Coach	1B	4100	Semi-permanent one end
Business/coach	3A	4200	Semi-permanent one end

Siemens and the California Department of Transportation said last fall that the first seven cars in the state's 49-car order for San Joaquin service had been accepted by Caltrans [see [“California, Siemens say first Venture cars are ready ...,”](#) News Wire, Oct. 5, 2022]. But the cars have yet to turn a wheel in service.

Responding to a News Wire question about the reasons for delivery delays, Siemens says in a statement, “It is up to our customers and their operators to determine when cars are deployed into passenger service. Siemens Mobility has implemented several design improvements which will benefit the operators and passengers since the initial IDOT cars entered service.” The carbuilder declined to elaborate on those improvements in a follow-up email.

Caltrans' Senior Media Officer Edward Barrera says *San Joaquin* deployment is now set for “Summer 2023.” The state plans on running intact trainsets with cab cars where all equipment is semi-permanently coupled, but California cab cars aren't expected until the first quarter of 2024. Business class isn't offered on *San Joaquins* and there will be no manned cafes either. “We will have vending machines and we are seeking a vending machine operator,” says Barrera.

In a lengthy explanation to *Trains News Wire*, he adds, “A number of factors go into the decision of when an operator is ready to put a railcar into service: testing, resolution of issues, ability to accept the vehicle, crew comfort with the vehicle operations, and maintenance agreements. Caltrans and [the Illinois Department of Transportation] have separate processes and timelines to meet our own operating needs. In California, some third-party operation/maintenance agreements need to be resolved; Venture railcars in the California fleet [also] had some open items remaining. Both — agreements and open items — are being worked out, and we are working to place cars in the revenue service in the near future.”

Brightline to Start Passenger-rail Service from South Florida to Orlando as Early as June

Railroad expecting to 'ultimately' run 32 trains a day after it opens its newest corridor from West Palm Beach to Orlando International Airport



Treasure Coast Newspapers

Lina Ruiz Provided by John Goodman

Brightline will extend full rail passenger service from West Palm Beach to Orlando International Airport as soon as June. The announcement came in a report to investors published this month.

The milestone — more than a decade in coming — will make Brightline the fastest train operating in Florida and one of the fastest in the country once it begins cutting through the Treasure and Space coasts at up to 110 mph and then accelerating to 125 mph along its new corridor west to Orlando.

Amtrak's Acela service in the Northeast, by comparison, reaches speeds up to 150 mph.

Brightline plans "ultimately" to run 32 trains a day between Miami and Orlando, Ben Porritt, its senior vice president of corporate affairs, said in an email.

Stuart bridge: Coast Guard OKs three-week closing of St. Lucie River bridge while Brightline makes repairs

Testing: Brightline to test 110 mph trains again starting Jan. 6 in Martin, St. Lucie counties

Settlement: Indian River County approves settlement with Brightline, ends lawsuit over safety improvements

Construction of the final segment of the \$4.5 billion project is more than 90% complete, Porritt said, but "there are a number of factors that will determine the exact date to launch service" such as a "rigorous certification process."

Reestablishing Henry Flagler's route

Establishing new passenger service through Stuart, Fort Pierce, Vero Beach and Melbourne — as well as smaller communities — will mark the culmination of an effort to bring back a passenger railroad to the train route built by Henry Flagler beginning in the late 1890s.

But when Florida East Coast Industries announced in 2012 it would add a second track to its corridor between Miami and Cocoa and lay new rails along the Beachline Expressway to Orlando, it drew praise in some corners and opposition in others. The Treasure Coast, in particular, was the center of efforts to block the railroad, initially known as All Aboard Florida.

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A main point of argument was the lack of stations between West Palm Beach and Orlando.

A decade of planning, resistance and safety concerns

The railroad's first major milestone came in January 2018 with inauguration of limited service between Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, and extension to Miami in May the same year.

But county governments on the Treasure Coast already had dug in, eventually spending more than \$9 million in legal fees, hoping to stave off expansion north.

Starting in 2015, Martin and Indian River counties filed lawsuits against Brightline that ended in separate settlements. In November 2018, Martin County settled its suit in exchange for the promise of an eventual Treasure Coast station, fencing and additional safety improvements, but not before spending \$4.1 million in legal fees. Indian River continued its own fight for another three years until settling in June 2021, receiving about \$31.6 million in safety improvements at its 32 rail crossings. But not until spending about \$5 million in legal fees.

"I don't think we lost in the long run," Indian River County Commission Chair Joe Earman said this week. "Since we got the safety upgrades, we got something for it."

Earman complimented Brightline on the quality of improvements it's made, but admitted he's still "not real happy" about the trains coming through the area.

"I'm hoping for the best-case scenario: We have no fatalities, we have no big huge traffic problems. They run smoothly, the cities and the counties run smoothly," Earman said. "That may be wishful thinking."

Earman and other Treasure Coast officials have emphasized their concerns about safety in light of at least 88 fatalities involving Brightline trains in South Florida. These deaths have been due to suicides and to motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists failing to heed safety warnings, officials have said. Most recently, two people were killed Feb. 8 in Delray Beach when their car stopped on a track while the crossing gates were down and it was hit by a Brightline train.

Stuart Mayor Troy McDonald believes such accidents will be inevitable when Brightline trains begin running through the Treasure Coast. "Sadly, based on their record in Palm Beach County, we're going to see traffic deaths on the Treasure Coast," McDonald said. "Safety's got to be priority one. If we're not here to protect our residents, what are we here for?"

Fort Pierce Mayor Linda Hudson plans to discuss with city commissioners in March ways that the city can prepare the community, such as adding warning signs near crossings and distributing information as it's released, she said.

"I'd like to learn from what happened down there to prevent it from happening here," Hudson said, referring to South Florida accidents. "I just want people to have a heightened awareness of something that's going much faster than they're used to."

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Work still to be done

Before the extension to Central Florida is rolled out, the privately-owned-and-operated company needs to complete renovation of the 98-year-old St. Lucie River railroad bridge in downtown Stuart and obtain final approvals from the Federal Railroad Administration. Brightline will close the bridge for renovations for three weeks beginning May 1 and plans to reopen it May 29 for normal operations, according to Brightline officials.

Federal Railroad Administration officials on Thursday told the USA Today Network-Florida the agency was unaware of a formal date for Brightline to initiate full service, "but we understand there is a goal to complete the project by summer 2023."

"An FRA team of multi-disciplined specialists and inspectors have been working with Brightline throughout development and construction to ensure compliance with FRA regulations as well as providing technical assistance and test monitoring," officials said in an email.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Lina Ruiz is TCPalm's watchdog reporter for Martin County. You can reach her at lina.ruiz@tcpalm.com, on Twitter @Lina_Ruiz48 or at 321-501-3845.

brightline® Celebrating a Milestone



Today we celebrated the unveiling of Brightline Orlando Station. The grand reveal of the station was met with glowing reviews as elected officials, dignitaries, and community leaders, including the tourism and hospitality sectors, stepped inside the first intercity passenger rail station of its kind, located in the heart of Orlando International airport.

The new 37,000+ sq. ft. space includes Mary Mary Bar, roomy lounges, MRKT PLACE grab-and-go, complimentary WiFi, charging stations, a BrightKids play area, and more. It's all designed to offer you an elevated travel experience and open up a whole new world of travel options. We're [#On-TrackToOrlando](#) and ready to connect millions of guests between Central and South Florida with high-speed, eco-friendly, hospitality-driven train travel.

Tickets to and from Orlando will go on sale this May for future dates, with SMART fares starting at \$79 and PREMIUM fares starting at \$149. SMART fare bundles for families of four will be available for less than \$199 one-way. We look forward to welcoming you aboard in Orlando.

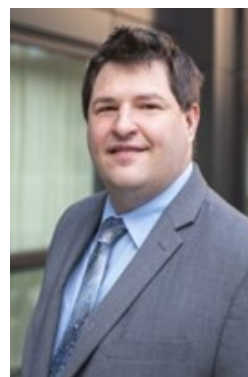
Railroad Freight Outlook Isn't Good for 2023, Analyst Says

By Bill Stephens | January 12, 2023

No growth seen for intermodal, carload, and coal volumes



A Chicago-bound intermodal train snakes through the bridge-construction shoofly on BNSF Railway in Western Springs, Ill., on April 27, 2021. Trains: David Lassen



Todd Tranausky, vice president of rail and intermodal at FTR Transportation Intelligence. FTR

Rail traffic is expected to have another tough year as intermodal, carload, and coal traffic will all struggle to show growth. That's the view of Todd Tranausky, vice president of rail and intermodal at freight forecasting firm FTR Transportation Intelligence. North American rail traffic was down 1.9% overall last year, according to the Association of American Railroads. International and domestic intermodal aren't likely to grow this year as imports are down, rail service hasn't fully recovered from the impact of ongoing crew shortages, and rates are not competitive with trucks, Tranausky said on a webcast today. Compared to its five-year volume average, intermodal traffic has slumped for most of the past 18 months, Tranausky noted. Congestion at labor uncertainty at West Coast ports has prompted shippers to seek alternatives on the East Coast and Gulf Coast, which are less friendly for intermodal moves because of the relatively short length of haul. *Continued on next page:*

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The congestion is gone at West Coast ports, but shippers are unlikely to shift volumes back until a new labor agreement is reached, Tranausky says. And the longer labor negotiations drag on the less likely it is that shippers will divert all of their volume back to the West Coast, he says.

Overall carload traffic is expected to be flat this year, Tranausky says, as a slowing economy will reduce freight demand. When coal, agriculture, and petroleum products are stripped out of the mix, however, the remaining carload segments may grow by 1% to 3%.

"It's not gangbusters growth," Tranausky says.

Coal traffic was up 3.3% last year as a surge in natural gas prices prompted utilities to burn cheaper coal. That trend won't continue, Tranausky says, because of the scheduled retirement of coal-fired power plants this year, which will permanently reduce the market for thermal coal.

A wildcard for railroad volume remains how quickly railroads can reach full train and engine crew staffing levels and return service to normal levels, Tranausky says.

The U.S. railroads are not yet back to pre-pandemic employment levels, Tranausky notes, and average train speeds were below their five-year average throughout 2022.

A bright spot was an improvement in average train speed in the fourth quarter. But Tranausky says a threat to continued improvement is the potential for engineers and conductors to pocket their back pay and bonuses from the new labor agreement and then quit. That would put railroads back into deeper crew deficits, which would hurt service and rail volume, Tranausky says.

U.S. Weekly Rail Traffic Continues Slide, Compared to 2022

By | April 13, 2023

Traffic for week ending April 8 is down 11.2% from same week a year ago

U.S. Rail Traffic¹ Week 14, 2023 – Ended April 8, 2023

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2022	Cumulative	Avg/wk ²	vs 2022
Total Carloads	225,669	-4.6%	3,219,161	229,940	-0.1%
Chemicals	31,525	-10.3%	450,701	32,193	-7.0%
Coal	62,070	-5.6%	930,122	66,437	1.2%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	16,040	-3.0%	237,161	16,940	2.7%
Forest Products	9,042	-6.7%	130,399	9,314	-6.4%
Grain	20,105	-17.1%	302,844	21,632	-7.7%
Metallic Ores and Metals	21,230	2.6%	289,114	20,651	1.9%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	14,331	7.3%	196,087	14,006	9.6%
Nonmetallic Minerals	32,123	0.7%	418,150	29,868	3.7%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	9,861	5.8%	144,940	10,353	11.8%
Other	9,342	-4.7%	119,643	8,546	-5.2%
Total Intermodal Units	225,667	-17.0%	3,249,230	232,088	-10.8%
Total Traffic	451,336	-11.2%	6,468,391	462,028	-5.8%

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

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

Association of American Railroads

WASHINGTON — U.S. rail traffic saw its largest weekly drop so far this year, measured against 2022 traffic, in the week ending April 8, according to [statistics from the Association of American Railroads](#).

Traffic for the week was 451,336 carloads and intermodal units, down 11.2% from the same week a year earlier. It is the first time this year that the decline from the corresponding week in 2022 has exceeded 10%. The overall figure included 225,669 carloads, down 4.6%, and 225,667 containers and trailers, down 17%.

Year-to-date totals, through 14 weeks of 2023, show carload traffic down 0.1% from 2022 and intermodal traffic down 10.8%, for an overall decrease of 5.8%. North American traffic for the week, for 12 reporting U.S., Canadian, and Mexican railroads, included 325,473 carloads, down 4% compared to the same week in 2022, and 293,300 intermodal units, down 19.4%. The combined total of 618,773 carloads and intermodal units represented a 12% drop. Overall North American traffic, through 14 weeks of 2023, is down 3.9% compared to the same period in 2022.

Labor Leaders Welcome FRA's Train Makeup Safety Advisory, While Railroads Emphasize Their Train-building Tools and Techniques

By Bill Stephens | April 11, 2023

AAR emphasizes ongoing safety trends, but says more can be done



An aerial view of cleanup work at the Norfolk Southern derailment in Springfield, Ohio, on March 5, 2023.
Sol Tucker

Rail labor leaders welcomed the safety advisory that the Federal Railroad Administration issued last week that encourages railroads to take steps to reduce the in-train forces that can cause long trains to derail. Railroads, meanwhile, said they were reviewing the advisory to make sure their operating practices are in line with the FRA's recommendations. "For years, rail workers and unions have been sounding the alarm about safety risks posed by longer and heavier trains, from rushed safety inspections and blocked road crossings to increased derailments," says Greg Regan, president of the Transportation Trades Division of the AFL-CIO. "We welcome the Federal Railroad Administration's safety advisory directing rail companies to address safety risks stemming from long trains and look forward to additional federal recommendations and best practices that can govern safer train lengths." The U.S. Class I railroads have increased train lengths since 2017. Mainline derailments have not increased since then, but the FRA said it had "noticed a rising trend in recent incidents where train build and makeup have been identified as a potential cause or contributing factor."

Train length and tonnage — when combined with the placement of loads, empties, and cars with cushioning devices — can cause slack to run in or out with enough force to cause derailments on grades, undulating terrain, or curves. "Think about going through undulating territory sort of like a Slinky. You're either trying to keep it stretched out or you're trying to keep it all bunched together to control the forces from going in and out because that's what causes derailments. And it causes train separations," said Mark Wallace, vice president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen union, told The Associated Press. "The way to prevent this stuff from happening is to control the train lengths." Jared Cassity, the alternate national legislative director for the SMART-TD union, says the FRA safety advisory was overdue. "Obviously we've had concerns for years about the growing length of the trains and the problems associated with them," he says. Train crews face pressure from management to have trains depart on time, regardless of whether the long trains are built properly, Cassity says. The 210-car Norfolk Southern train that derailed in Springfield, Ohio, last month, for example, had a "mind-boggling" amount of its tonnage on the rear end, Cassity says. "I don't know how anyone sends that train out of the yard," he says. Cassity says he's encouraged by the advisory and the focus railroads are now placing on how trains are built. But he says more stringent rules — rather than a safety advisory that lacks teeth — are required to solve the problem over the long term. The Association of American Railroads points out that rail safety trends have improved. "The last decade was the safest ever for railroading in this country, but there is still more work to be done. When building trains, railroads leverage advanced algorithms that account for numerous factors, many of which are noted in the FRA advisory, to place locomotives and blocks of freight cars within a train to maximize safety and effectiveness," an AAR spokeswoman said. "The industry is committed to productive conversations about how we continue to advance our shared goal of ensuring the safety of the trains that serve customers and communities across the nation."

The FRA safety advisory cited six derailments since May 2021 — three on Union Pacific, one on Kansas City Southern, and two on Norfolk Southern. All involved trains of 125 or more cars; featured distributed power units; far exceeded 4,000 trailing tons, the maximum weight threshold established by a 1992 AAR guide; and had an empty car as the first to derail. Other characteristics were shared in half or more of the incidents.

Norfolk Southern says it took action regarding train makeup last month, weeks before the FRA advisory was issued. "With safety and continuous improvement in mind, we introduced a number of operational changes in March that address the way trains are built with the goal of minimizing train incidents, including derailments, by managing potential in-train forces," NS spokesman Connor Spielmaker says. "Trains over certain lengths and weights, for example, require the use of distributed power units. We've also adjusted the positioning of lighter and heavier cars to further manage weight distribution in trains, as well as the positioning of cars equipped with cushioning devices to further manage slack." Union Pacific says its mainline derailments are down despite increased train length. "Union Pacific shares the same goals as our regulators, customers and the communities we serve — to safely deliver every carload. Even as train length has grown, mainline and siding derailments are down 13% since 2013 and 26% since 2019. As we reported in January, maximum train length was flat in 2022 at 9,329 feet. We constantly evaluate our processes and continue to work with government agencies and industry partners to further improve safety," spokeswoman Robynn Tysver says. "Technology is playing a pivotal role in helping us to reduce variability and risk. One example is an **advanced operating tool that calculates a train's forces in real time** and allows a 24/7 expert operating team to monitor and make changes to train makeup or train handling instructions prior to departure," she adds. "This technology-driven approach has reduced mainline derailments throughout 2022 and thus far in 2023. Additionally, **we are enhancing training programs** and re-emphasizing our safety culture through a joint effort with our union partners. We are also conducting root-cause analysis of incidents and engaging employees to help us identify action items to reduce the risk of injury or incident."

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CSX Transportation says its operating practices already follow the recommendations outlined in the FRA safety advisory. “CSX is committed to operating safely and constantly evaluates our operating rules to strengthen safe train handling practices,” spokeswoman Sheriee Bowman says. “We have reviewed the FRA’s recent safety advisory in detail and believe our current rules are in line with the agency’s recommended actions. We will continue to model and analyze train builds and work with the FRA and the industry to further enhance safe operations.”

BNSF says it was already focused on train makeup practices.

“As with all FRA safety advisories, BNSF takes this advisory seriously. Consistent with and even prior to the recommendation in the advisory, we have been focused on train makeup policies, practices and guidelines to ensure the safe movement of freight transportation,” spokeswoman Lena Kent says. “These train makeup practices have evolved considerably over the years, including technology advancements such as sophisticated modeling techniques and distributed power, the further development of air brake control valves and draft system design such as hydraulic end-of-car cushion units, and the advancement of training practices including the use of locomotive simulators.”

“As part of our train makeup process, BNSF evaluates new train builds through a computer simulated model over our most challenging territories to ensure in-train forces meet acceptable levels,” she adds. “Once the modeling achieves safe and acceptable levels, we then perform a supervised test run, collecting supervisor and crew feedback on how the train handled. We further collect locomotive event recorder data to analyze train performance and to ensure our distributed power placement is correct. Only when all aspects of the train operate at acceptable levels is that specific train build approved.”

Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and Kansas City Southern say they are continuing to review the FRA advisory.

“Safety is a core value at CN. We use technology to ensure the systematic safe makeup of our trains both at departure and during transit,” spokesman Jonathan Abecassis says. “We continue to examine the safety advisory to review what CN would need to change, if anything, in its approach to comply as our systems are already comprehensive, effective and current.”

Note: Updated at 9:17 a.m. Central Time on April 12 with comments from SMART-TD union.

25 Cars of Montana Rail Link Train Derail (updated) *By* | April 2, 2023

Some cars enter river; no injuries reported

ARADISE, Mont. — Another day, another derailment. Or so it seems.

Some 25 cars of a Montana Rail Link train derailed west of the town of Paradise, with some of the cars entering the Clark Fork River, [CNN reports](#). The derailment occurred about 9:20 a.m., with no injuries reported.

Photographs suggest the train was a mixed manifest freight; the [Missoulan newspaper reports](#) one derailed car contained hazardous material — butane — but none was released. The Missoulan website earlier showed a photo of men in a boat recovering beer spilled from a mechanical refrigerator car. Other than beer, the only other material known to have been spilled was some powered clay.

[KPAX-TV reports](#) the accident occurred near a popular resort, Quinn’s Hot Springs. The Sanders County Sheriff’s Office reports the derailment poses no hazard. The resort’s manager told the station that some guests have been evacuated from their cabins because of noise and potential risk, with the derailment posing “and inconvenience to the comfort and stay of [our] guests.”

The Missoulan reported some cars were derailed inside a tunnel, and said some of the rail roadbed appeared to have collapsed into the river. Montana Rail Link spokesman Andy Garland told the newspaper it was unclear how long it would take to clear the scene and reopen the route.

The derailment site is about 50 miles northwest of Missoula.

PTC Issues Cause Amtrak Cancellations and Delays *By* Bob Johnston | March 24, 2023

Server problems causing delays on many, but not all, routes



CHICAGO — Amtrak trains on some routes are experiencing cancellations or delays today (Friday, March 24) as a result of a nationwide server issue that is keeping the positive train control initialization process from taking place.

“It is a back-office issue, and we have been working with our [PTC] vendor to resolve it,” Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari tells *Trains News Wire*. Many, but not all, routes have been affected, including some Northeast Corridor trains.

Federal safety regulations require a separate PTC initialization to take place before engineers and conductors leave a terminal. This includes departures from intermediate crew-change stops. Communications failures periodically occur on specific routes, but not to the extent that appears to be happening now.

Trains can be individually cleared to operate at slower speeds without PTC initialization, but this procedure must be authorized by the dispatcher of an individual route.

Server issues were first reported on Thursday evening on an unnamed host railroad, according to the *Amtrak Alerts Twitter feed* but the problem surfaced again Friday and became more widespread.

Wolverine corridor train No. 353 approaches Three Oaks, Mich., on March 23, 2023. Today’s version of No. 353 is one of two delayed more than two hours by PTC server problems, which have led to cancellations on this and other routes. Bob Johnston

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In Michigan, two westbound morning trains operated into Chicago with minimal delays, but westbound Wolverine No. 353 and eastbound train No. 350 were stopped on either side of Battle Creek, Mich., for an extended period. This is where Canadian National controls about a mile of track over which the Amtrak trains operate. As a result, eastbound afternoon no. 352 and evening westbound no. 355 have been cancelled.

Two Chicago-Milwaukee *Hiawatha* midday round trips have also been annulled, as was the morning Chicago-Quincy, Ill., eastbound *Illinois Zephyr* and westbound *Carl Sandburg*.

PTC Problems - Update Now Canceled (past Amtrak Alerts)


Fri, From: "RAY BENSEN" <rayande@comcast.net> Mar 24, 2023 at 9:21 PM Sent by John Goodman

AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

Empire Builder Train 7/27 which departs Chicago (CHI) today 3/24 is now canceled in its entirety due to ongoing server issues. For further assistance please call or text 1-800-USA-RAIL.

PTC problems all day for Amtrak, not just the Builder. The problem is in the back office. Amtrak trains can't initialize PTC at the initial terminal. So far 5 hours late for the Builder.



Intermittent Communication Issues on the Nationwide Network are Causing Delays

March 24, 2023 03:45 PM

Intermittent communications issues on the nationwide network are causing train delays of 30 - 60 or more minutes in some areas. Some trains also can be running at reduced speeds. Updates will be provided as available.

You may change your reservation via the Amtrak app or Amtrak.com. If your trip has been canceled, cancellation fees will be waived. Follow @AmtrakAlerts on Twitter for real-time service information on Amtrak trains nationwide. You can also modify your trip if it has been delayed.



UP, Union Reach Agreement to Maintain Two-person Crews on Much of Railroad (updated) By March 24, 2023

Tentative deal covers area from Omaha to the Pacific Northwest, including territory where railroad had wanted to test ground-based 'expeditors'



Two Union Pacific crew members provide a roll-by inspection for an intermodal train near Wamsutter, Wyo., on Sept. 1, 2022. UP and the SMART-TD union have reached an agreement to maintain two-person crews on a large portion of the railroad. David Lassen

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific has reached an agreement with General Committee 953 of the SMART-TD union to maintain two-person crews, the railroad announced, confirming an earlier report [by the North Platte Telegraph](#).

[General Committee 953](#) covers workers in a 13-state area on the Union Pacific and four short lines, and in its current form includes UP's Eastern Division and Pacific Northwest territories, plus former Chicago & North Western lines.

[In a March 25 press release](#), the railroad writes that the agreement "makes no changes to the current conductor position staffing each train as part of a two-person crew, provides long-term job protection to current employees, and gives the railroad greater flexibility to deploy brake or switch persons to work either in or outside the yard." If ratified, the agreement ends UP's intent to redeploy conductors to ground-based positions in the region.

Luke Edington, national general chairman of SMART-TD (the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers-Transportation Division) informed members of the agreement on Friday in a letter shared with the North Platte Telegraph by a local union official. He said in the letter that the deal "preserves the conductor craft."

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Union Pacific had sought to test the use of ground-based conductors, which it called “expeditors,” in a four-phase testing program in the region. It would have begun in Nebraska, with subsequent phases in Colorado, the Pacific Northwest, and Kansas [see [“Union Pacific details plans to test feasibility ...,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Dec. 14, 2022]. The program had been on hold while the railroad and SMART-TD continued negotiations and mediation [see [“Union Pacific, rail labor remain in mediation ...,”](#) *News Wire*, Jan. 20, 2023].

Other aspects of the agreement include elimination of a requirement for brakemen or switchmen aboard local “through freight” trains if more than three switching events are needed on a run, and a signing bonus Edington called “greater than any received in past crew consist agreements.”

The railroad and union both said the new crew consist agreement would address “quality of life” issues for conductors through more predictable work schedules.

Beth Whited, UP executive vice president-sustainability and strategy, and chief human resources officer, said the agreement would allow for “predictable, scheduled shift work while giving us greater scheduling flexibility that will also improve customer service. We are working to finalize the contract details as quickly as possible.”

SMART-TD President Jeremy Ferguson said in the UP release, “Along with the scheduling enhancements, which were part of last year’s national agreements, we have an opportunity to positively impact our conductors by giving them fixed days off and greater certainty about their weekly assignments.”

The deal came just a day after Norfolk Southern and SMART-TD announced they had halted negotiations over a similar proposal for ground-based conductors [see [“Norfolk Southern and union end talks ...,”](#) *News Wire*, March 23, 2023] and also intended to focus on quality-of-life improvements such as more predictable scheduling.

— Revised March 25 at 6:40 p.m. with information from Union Pacific press release.

Genesee Valley Transportation Prepares for Move of PA

By David Lassen | March 20, 2023

Relocation could come in April, says company president, who also discusses plans for returning locomotive to operation



Doyle McCormack, left, and Genesee Valley Transportation President Michael D. Thomas shake hands on the agreement for GVT to acquire McCormack’s PA locomotive, announced on March 2, 2023. Brian McLernon Photography

BATAVIA, N.Y. — The move of a preserved Alco PA locomotive from Oregon to its new home at Genesee Valley Transportation’s shops in Scranton, Pa., is tentatively slated to begin in April, although exact plans have yet to be finalized, GVT President Michael D. Thomas says.

Thomas, speaking Sunday with *Trains News Wire*, said no concrete schedule is in place, but planning is well under way.

“We’ve been talking with BNSF and Norfolk Southern, and we have rates in place to move it,” he says. “And there are certainly things that have to be done in order to move the locomotive. We’ll have to stencil it, which we’ll do and we’ll do it well — we’re not going to take a spray can and spray it. And the tags have already been prepared for it.

“We will have somebody who will be following it from Portland all the way east,”

Thomas says. “So it’s just a matter of aligning the schedule of our person who’s going to follow it. ... It will move in regular freight. It moved to Spencer [for the Streamliners at Spencer celebration in 2014] without any issues. But we want to make sure we have a set of eyes on it at all times.

“I’m sure once it leaves the Oregon Rail Heritage Center, we’ll be able to follow it on Facebook.”

Thomas says GVT has a good idea what it will take to bring the locomotive up to operating condition.

“We know that the prime mover runs,” he says. “The electrical system should be okay. It needs a couple of modifications that need to be made because of the prime mover that was put in it.

“Of course, there will always be unexpected things, but our people have a tremendous amount of experience with Alco locomotives, and I’m very comfortable that our mechanical staff will be able to get it into good operating condition. It’s not going to be a month; it’s going to take some time to get it ready. But I have no doubt we’ll be able to do that.” Genesee Valley is, of course, known for the Alco-centric rosters of its railroads, the Delaware-Lackawanna; Mohawk, Adirondack & Northern; Lowville & Beaver River; Falls Road Railroad; and Depew, Lancaster & Western [see “More than Alcos,” *Trains Magazine*, December 2021].

Addressing a question widely asked by railfans, Thomas says any thought of changing the locomotive’s current Nickel Plate Road paint scheme is “a decision for another day.

“The locomotive is in beautiful condition. [Prior owner Doyle McCormack] did a beautiful job on the exterior, doing the body work and repainting it, and we have no plans at this point to do anything with the paint or any kind of body modifications, either. Right now, that’s a decision that’s so far down the road we haven’t even considered it.”

Thomas also said there are no immediate plans for GVT to run excursions that would give the general public a chance to ride behind the locomotive.

“Our plans are to use it for special excursions and special use in the Scranton, Pa., area, and in northeast Pennsylvania,” he says. “We haven’t reached out to anybody else about what we’ll do with it. But we’ll certainly use it for our executive trains and our customer, shipper specials on our Delaware-Lackawanna.

“We’ll be using it on special occasions. It’s really a special locomotive.”

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Genesee Valley announced it had acquired the PA, built for Santa Fe and later operated by Delaware & Hudson, from preservationist McCormack earlier this month [see [“Genesee Valley Transportation acquires PA ...,”](#) News Wire, March 2, 2023]. At the time, Thomas and Charlie Monte Verde, GVT’s vice president of strategic planning, said the company had long talked with McCormack about its interest in the diesel. Thomas said Sunday that the actual completion of the transaction happened in short order. “The stars aligned in the last month,” he said. “I was in San Francisco and I received a call from a colleague and friend who said, ‘You really should talk to Doyle,’ and I reached out to him while I was there. And we chatted, and he indicated that he was looking to find a home for it, and we were able to come to terms in a matter of two or three days. ... When we decided he was ready to sell, that’s when we talked, and it came together very quickly.”

Acquisition of the unit has personal meaning for Thomas.

“I grew up in New Jersey, and I rode behind the PAs when I was in high school,” he says. “I remember riding a triple-headed PA trip from Wilkes-Barre to Oneonta [N.Y.] and return. I got on the train at Cherry Street in Scranton, which is a piece of track that we now operate.

“If you would have told me in 1977 when I was riding this train that 40 years later, I’d have a PA and we’d be operating that piece of railroad, it would have been unfathomable.”

Union Pacific Announces Start of Transition of Chicago Commuter Rail Operations to Metra

By | March 30, 2023

Personnel, equipment maintenance, other aspects to move to commuter carrier, while UP retains dispatching; some issues unresolved



A Metra UP West line train meets two Union Pacific freights at La Fox, Ill., on Sept. 4, 2020. UP has announced the beginning of a transition of its commuter rail operations to

A Metra Union Pacific Northwest train arrives in Crystal Lake, Ill. David Lassen

CHICAGO — Union Pacific is working with commuter rail operator Metra to “safely and seamlessly transfer its commuter operation in Chicago, including the employees who perform the work,” [UP announced today](#) (Thursday, March 30), setting the stage for an exit from the commuter rail business long sought by the freight operator.

UP said Metra will take over services including train crew, mechanical, car cleaning, rolling stock maintenance, ticket sales, and some engineering services. Some management employees moved to Metra earlier this year, with union mechanical and transportation employees anticipated to begin to transfer in 2023. UP will continue to maintain and dispatch the three lines used by Metra: the Union Pacific West, Northwest, and North Lines.

Metra said in a statement to *Trains* News Wire that the two parties “have been working together on a safe, efficient transition of UP’s passenger operations to Metra. We agreed last fall to approach that transition on two separate tracks. Under one, we are addressing the complexities and logistics of the transfer of the relevant responsibilities for operating the service.

UP’s release today accurately summarizes that process and timeline. Under the second, financial negotiations are proceeding with legal and real estate teams. It is anticipated that those negotiations will be resolved after many of the logistical aspects of the transfer have been completed.” In an interview earlier in March for an upcoming *Trains* magazine feature, Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski said, “We’ve always said that we felt there’s no better people to operate those three lines than the people currently operating those lines. So we’re looking forward to welcoming [them] into Metra when the time comes.”

Metra and UP began discussions on changing the nature of operations in 2019, ahead of the end of a purchase-of-service contract covering Metra operations on three UP-owned former Chicago & North Western lines [see [“Metra, Union Pacific in talks that could change operating agreement,”](#) News Wire, Dec. 5, 2019].

But the two sides ultimately could not reach an agreement. The dispute went to court and the Surface Transportation Board, with the STB deferring action in 2020 pending a court resolution [see [“STB defers decision ...,”](#) News Wire, Aug. 7, 2020.] A federal judge ruled for UP in a case in which Metra asserted the freight railroad had a common-carrier obligation to continue the commuter operation, but Metra has appealed that decision [see [“Metra asks court to revisit ruling,”](#) News Wire, Oct. 26, 2021] and a decision is still pending.

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While Derwinski said “there are disagreements ... there’s some financials behind it and we’ll see what the courts say on some of that,” he also said the Metra-UP “relationship as a whole is good. We understand each other’s role in the region. The UP is constantly showing us that they value Metra’s position and the riders. They’ve said they’re never going to leave us hanging, and they’ve stood to their word.”

Greenbrier Express Sets Inaugural Run, Start of Regular Operations

By Alan Byer | April 13, 2023

First Cass-to-Durbin round trip sells out; regular runs start May 20



Durbin & Greenbrier Valley will run its inaugural Greenbrier Express on May 13, with regular operation beginning a week later. Walter Scriptunis

ELKINS, W.Va. — The inaugural run of Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad’s Greenbrier Express operation is set for Saturday, May 13, the railroad has announced. The initial run on the recently reopened, 15-mile Cass-to-Durbin remnant of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad’s Greenbrier Subdivision quickly sold out. Regular service will begin the following Saturday, May 20. Durbin & Greenbrier Valley CEO John Smith says plans for the inaugural run call for a 10 a.m. departure from Cass. The train will feature doubleheaded geared steam locomotives, lunch for everyone on board in Durbin, two photo run-bys, and a special gift for all passengers. Should any seats become available, ticket prices (which do not include taxes and fees) are \$109 for adults, \$107 for seniors, \$105 for active military and veterans, \$89 for children ages 4 to 11, and free for those 3 and under. More information is [available online](#) or by calling 304-636-9477 weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. The regularly scheduled Greenbrier Express trains will also depart Cass at 10 a.m. and will feature one of Cass Scenic Railroad’s geared steam locomotives. Lunch will be served in Durbin. The 30-mile round trip will take approximately 5 hours. Ticket prices range from \$59 for children ages 4-11 to \$79 for adults; with senior and military discounts; prices increase by \$10 beginning Sept. 13. For more information, visit [the Greenbrier Express page](#) of the Durbin & Greenbrier Valley website or call 304-636-9477 weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Tuesday Night: Hot Stove Presentation at the Railroad Museum

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Mon, 10 Apr 2023 13:46:47 PDT

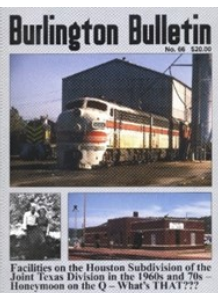


Come to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum for this presentation about the early days and the building of the museum over 50 years ago, tomorrow night. *Not in the area? Join us virtually, with a live-stream on Facebook or YouTube.*

The “Early Years” presentation will feature images and stories from the start of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum in the 70’s to the early 1990s. Included will be the Lake Superior & Mississippi’s formative years and the work of the Lake Superior Transportation Club, which pre-dates the museum. Photos of volunteers and staff who helped make the

Without the work of these early museum pioneers, the Lake Superior Railroad Museum would never be what USA Today voted the “BEST Transportation Museum in America.” Nor would today’s North Shore Scenic Railroad be the destination attraction it has become.

Photo show was Tuesday, April 11th in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum at 6:30pm. Admission was FREE for Lake Superior Railroad Museum and St. Louis County Historical Society members and their guests. Use the North Shore Scenic Lobby entrance.



Last Run of the Houston Zephyr

(please use your pdf viewer to zoom in to read the detail!)

-Denver to Houston on the C&S and FW&D subsidiaries of the CB&Q. The Texas Zephyr ran from Denver to Houston. Train #1 left Denver at 12:45 pm and arrived in Houston at 2:15 pm the next day. Train #2 left Houston at 8:30am and arrived at Denver 7:00 am the next morning. The Sam Houston Zephyr ran from Dallas to Houston. Train #7 left Dallas 5:15pm and arrived at Houston 9:30pm. Train #8 Left Houston at 3:00pm and arrived in Dallas at 7:45pm. Service included Chair cars and a grill coach. The Houston Zephyr consist included a dining car and sleeping car between Dallas and Denver and Chair cars.

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Number 55 25

Page 11 of the Burlington's 1947 public brochure gives the condensed schedule of the train between Denver and Houston. Comparing the lines on the itinerary to this brochure we can see that they took another Train No. 1, the Colorado & Southern's "Texas Special" between Denver and Colorado Springs. We can see that this train offered Pullman secondclass and made a four-day run to the Pullman resort for the Konkole. Upgrade to a section in car No. 15. Car 16 was listed as "Spectra, Drawing Room, Comptingroom," so either *Lariat* Crest or *Lariat* Marjorie was the car they rode. Interestingly, this page promotes "Colorful Colorado," a name of the "Worrier Spots" and suggests anyone interested in looking one of these trips to visit the Burlington Travel Bureau, at 547 N Jackson in Chicago. C6462, courtesy are Miller

The last passenger timetable issued that included the San Houston Zephyr. Trains Nos. 3 and 4 were discontinued on January December 15, 1946. Trains No. 1 and 2 were also discontinued. This left Trains No. 5 and 6, with 6 getting the lightweight artful the Texas Zephyr name. By September 15, 1947, all Burlington passenger trains to Texas were gone. — CO&O Rail Net collection

The map at right, while depicting incavage rights to Fort Worth, Dallas and Galveston as they existed prior to the Valley River incorporation, also shows all Southern Pacific-owned lines. TNSO for simplicity, though they did not fall under this line until 11 - BRKS Burlington Bulletin No. 12

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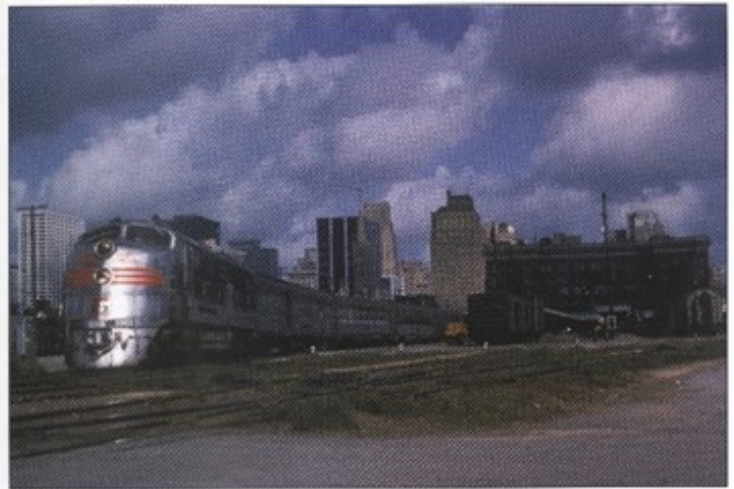
Here's an aerial photo of Houston's Union Station, platforms, and the nearby Houston Belt & Terminal freight house and train tracks from 1925. The station was located at the intersection of Texas and Crawford Streets. This view is looking west over the city near Capitol Avenue and Chervent Street. This historic building has been preserved and is now an entrance to the Houston Astros' Minute Maid ball park, which replaced all of the rackage (and more) seen here. — George Fuenquian Collection, University of Houston Libraries Special Collections



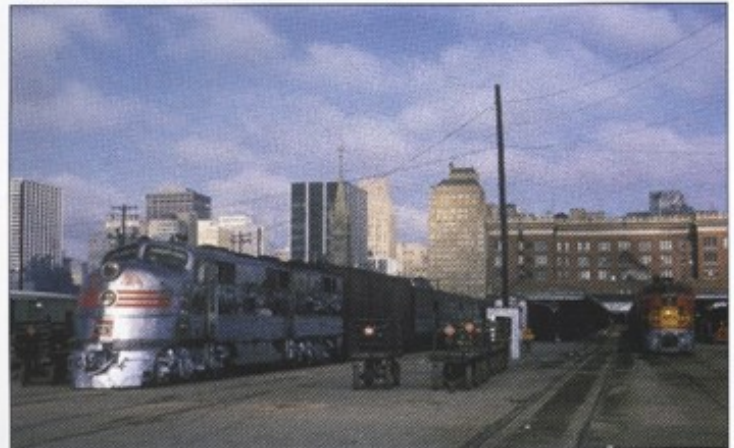
A later aerial view from February 27, 1938, shows more of the rackage into the station. Tower 112 located inside eye just off Texas Avenue where the freight house and train tracks merged. This view shows a second Houston Belt & Terminal yard with train tracks to the left of Texas Avenue. On page 25 is a ground-level view of the tower. — Photographer unknown, J. G. King collection

Number 55

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Colorado & Southern Engine No. 9955 departing Houston Union Station on June 20, 1964. — George Werner



C&S Engine No. 9954 at Houston Union Station on October 3, 1964, with a Pullman green express boxcar ahead of the stainless-steel baggage car. Three tracks to its right is a rough-looking 1940s-built Santa Fe Alco PA. — George Werner

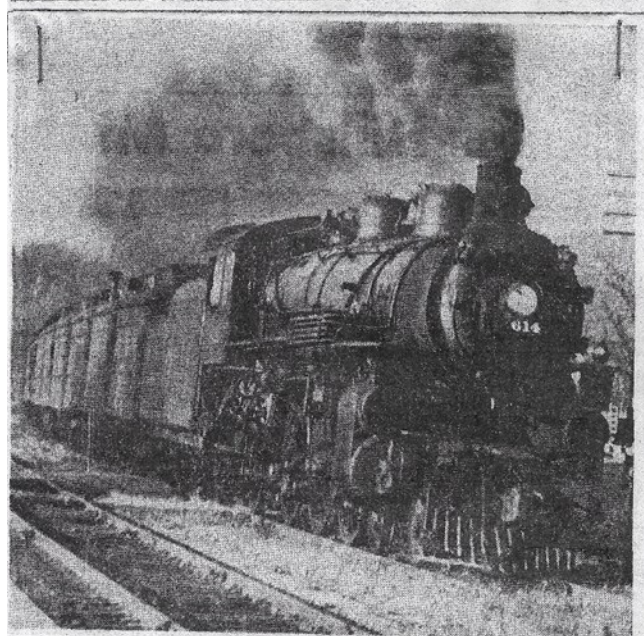
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Burlington Bulletin

From the Marv Mahre Collection C&NW Sounds of Steam Article Madison State Journal Feb 26 1961
(pardon the missing corner of the Article)

State Page Wisconsin State Journal

DIAL Alpine 6-3111 MADISON, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1961



North Western Railway's Engine 614 Is Heard on Recording
—Gustave Scharnke Photo

Sounds of Steam Train Captured

By MRS. BERT KING
(State Journal Correspondent)

BARABOO — Robert L. Prince, whose hobby is making records, recently produced a unique record of sounds made by the old steam engines in the Baraboo-Devil's Lake area.

Because they have been replaced by Diesel engines, Prince got the idea of preserving the sounds of the engines that pulled freight and passenger trains on the North Western Railway for so many years for an historical record of the steam power era.

Sent for Processing

The locale is Baraboo and Devil's Lake State park on the main line between Chicago and Minneapolis. The project was made possible by Harvey Miles, Belvidere, Ill., who spends his summers at the lake and made the original tape recordings in 1955, the last year steam locomotives were used on the line.

Prince had the tapes made into a long playing record by Cuca Records, Sauk City. It was then for final processing, the racket was the most

exacting part of the production. On it are pictures of several North Western engines including histories and explanations of sounds. The history and narration are by Francis W. DeSautelle and Robert L. King, Baraboo.

'Drumming' Action

Some of the sounds heard are the big Mikado pulling a heavy load of freight upgrade from Baraboo to Devil's lake and indicate the struggle to gain momentum.

Sometimes it took 20 to 30 minutes to pull the tonnage over the hill. The "drumming" action heard at times is an unusual circumstance and is due to wheels slipping on wet rails and fallen leaves. You relax when you hear the train pick up speed as it passes a crossing 3 miles south of Baraboo.

Another realistic sound is the passenger train pulled by one of the fast Pacifics as it approaches and leaves the Baraboo station.

Exchange Signals

The steam exhaust makes a deafening noise, but the train picks up speed rapidly and soon

makes rhythmic "stack music" as it thunders on its way.

On the double track near the lake it meets a north-bound passenger, and you hear the two engineers exchange whistle signals as they speed past each other.

It brings to mind a line from a poem, "Like ships that pass in the night and greet each other in passing." Soon you hear the final whistle and its resounding echoes as the train passes between 600-foot high bluffs, rounds the last bend, and moves out into open country.

The making of such a record is a worthwhile hobby for anyone, but it has been especially important to Prince.

Because of a serious illness five years ago when he was 13, he has been unable to continue his schooling. Making recordings has helped him over the long and gradual period of recovery.

He started the steam engine production about a year ago and previously made a record of pipe organ music in the Al Ringling theater, Baraboo.

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Join us in New Orleans! CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



National World War II Museum

The National WWII Museum tells the story of the American Experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means for our lives today.



Creole Queen Mississippi River Paddleboat Tour

View the French Quarter, the Port of New Orleans, and Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve and be entertained by a historian narrator with a detailed description of New Orleans landmarks, history, vessel information, and river lore.

Featured Speakers

Todd Stennis (left below) is the Director of Amtrak Government Affairs for an 11-state region that stretches from Texas to Florida. Hear his unique perspective on current and future Amtrak operations across the South.

Joe Szabo, President of the Historic Pullman Foundation and former FRA Administrator, will share the vision for infrastructure improvements and permanent private railcar displays at the Pullman National Park in Chicago.

CONVENTION SCHEDULE

May 2nd

6:00 – 9:00 p.m. Welcome Reception

May 3rd

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Meeting Sessions

8:00 a.m. – 8:15 a.m. Welcome

Tony Marchiando, President

8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Ask Amtrak

Stephen Robusto, Commercial Services, Amtrak

9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Break

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9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Convene General Membership Meeting <i>Election of Directors – Tom Lanahan, Secretary</i>
9:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Pullman National Park: A Vision for the Future <i>Joe Szabo, President, Historic Pullman Foundation</i>
10:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Mechanical Update <i>Rob Mangels, QMP</i>
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	The Chicago, Rock Island, & Pacific <i>Robert Riley, President & CEO</i>
11:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Announcements <i>Stephan Gerhardt, Convention Director</i>
12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Creole Queen Historic Mississippi River Paddleboat Tour
5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. May 4 th	Board meeting
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Meeting Sessions
8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	President's Remarks
8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Legislative Update <i>Ross Capon, VP Legislative Affairs, AAPRCO</i>
9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Break
9:15 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	General Membership Meeting
10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Amtrak Update <i>Todd Stennis, Director - Government Affairs South, Amtrak</i>
12:00 p.m.	Box Lunch
1:15 p.m.	Depart for WW II Museum
1:30 p.m.	World War II Museum Tour
6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Car Party



Washington Update by Ross Capon

From the OneRail Coalition's April newsletter: On May 17, the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA) will once again be hosting Railroad Day 2023 on Capitol Hill. The event is an opportunity for the freight rail industry to meet with lawmakers and staff to provide education around freight rail and raise awareness of the importance of freight rail to the national economy. Participants include Class I, II, and III railroads, labor rail representatives, state/local government representatives, and members from the supplier community. For more information about the event, click [here](#).

Rep. Tom Cole (OK), a senior Republican widely respected on both sides of the aisle, now chairs both the Rules Committee and the Appropriations Transportation/Housing&Urban Development (T-HUD) Subcommittee. Amtrak had some of his staffers on the *Heartland Flyer* recently, on a day when -- happy coincidence -- the train was sold out.

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Cole has four Amtrak stations in his district -- Norman, Purcell, Pauls Valley and Ardmore. His district also includes much of southern Oklahoma City (though not the Amtrak station).

With a possible debt ceiling crisis looming, and Speaker McCarthy having just a four-vote majority, it remains uncertain whether he can assemble a package that will command the needed 218 House votes. Cole is one of the people whose comments on this situation are worth noting. An April 3 NYT column by David Firestone quotes Cole as saying several House members will never vote for any debt ceiling increase, "even if we gave them everything they wanted."

Regarding the debt ceiling, Firestone also quoted Financial Services Committee Chair Patrick McHenry (R-NC), who is close to McCarthy: "I don't see how we get there. And this is a marked change from where I've been. I don't even see a path." Mr. McHenry said he had never been more pessimistic about reaching an agreement.

From another senior Republican appropriator, Rep. Steve Womack (AR) also on the T-HUD Subcommittee (quoted in an April 17 *Washington Post* report): "I saw this train wreck coming. This is going to be the ultimate test of leadership: How do you get competing priorities and different ideologies within the same political party to come to agree on matters of spending or for debt ceiling? How are you going to get those competing factions together at the table, agreeing to something you can get 218 votes on? And because it is a thin majority, it is going to test the leadership skills of Kevin McCarthy."

One tiny ray of hope is that McCarthy's "framework" letter to President Biden did not mention the mathematically impossible concept of achieving a balanced budget. As for Amtrak, it may be noteworthy that transportation is not on the short list of programs targeted for cuts so far in House Republican communications.

Should Congress fail to approve a lift in the debt ceiling by the target date (now considered June 5), Amtrak could function for some time on commercial revenues, but the worldwide economic upheaval that a debt ceiling crisis could trigger likely would reduce those revenues significantly.

Some Amtrak updates:

Capitol Limited is up to two sleepers but still only one coach.

The supply of Superliner coaches is partly constrained because 12 are devoted to the *Illini* service, related to the CN problem of trains not tripping the signals -- a problem which supposedly is close to being solved. Also of course some recent derailments have sidelined some cars.

The full complement of cars removed from service during COVID is planned to be returned to service by the end of FY 2024 (i.e., September 30, 2024).

Amtrak's New York-Montreal *Adirondack* resumed service in early April after a three-year hiatus. The schedule is 30 minutes slower because of low track speeds, primarily in Canada.

Tours of Norfolk & Western 611 Offered Trains Newswire [By](#) April 17, 2023 **Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania offering tours through May 14**



The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is offering tours of N&W No. 611 through mid-May. Dan Cupper

STRASBURG, Pa. — The Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Transportation, is offering specially designed tours of Norfolk & Western Class J 4-8-4 No. 611. The engine is currently stored at the Museum until it returns to its home base in Roanoke next month.

Now through May 14, the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania is offering 90-minute tours that discuss the history of No. 611, including how and why it was saved, an in-depth look at its restoration to operating condition, the impact it has on the railroading community and how it has become an ambassador of steam in partnership with various railroad museums and tourist railroads.

Also included is a tour of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania restoration shop. The 611 tour is offered Wednesday through Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. It is limited to 12 persons ages 12 and over. The cost per person per tour is \$25.00, in addition to regular Museum admission.

Visitors may call 717-687-8628, extension 3003, to book tickets or purchase them when they arrive at the admissions desk. Tour goers are advised to wear safe shoes and otherwise dress accordingly for the outdoor yard and restoration shop.

No. 611 was constructed by the Norfolk & Western at its Roanoke Shops in 1950, one of 14 Class J 4-8-4s built for passenger service. It is the sole surviving Class J. The locomotive is on exhibit at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania until May 14 in collaboration with its owner, the Virginia Museum of Transportation.



A Prestige class dome observation, built by Budd in 1955, trails the westbound Canadian north of Toronto on Sept. 14, 2022. Concerns over the structural integrity of aging stainless steel cars has since led to the addition of buffer cars at each end of all stainless steel consists. Bob Johnston



Dinner is about to be served as the Canadian glides through rural Ontario in October 2018. VIA's approach to long-distance dining is markedly different than Amtrak's recent path. Bob Johnston



Fishermen unload supplies from the Sudbury-White River Rail Diesel Car at Goldie, Ontario, on June 22, 2012. Such remote services offer equipment needs unique to VIA. Bob Johnston

MONTREAL — VIA Rail Canada has issued a formal request for information from potential manufacturers of locomotives and passenger cars who might be interested in re-equipping the company's long distance and regional remote passenger trains. VIA's appeal comes as Amtrak is evaluating responses received from a similar invitation [see [“Amtrak seeks carbuilder interest”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Jan. 19, 2022]. It also is taking place while the equipment the company assesses the structural integrity stainless steel cars built by Budd in the 1940s and 1950s — the cars VIA wants to replace [see [“VIA: Need for ‘in-depth’ inspections led to buffer car decision,”](#) *News Wire*, Oct. 19, 2022].

The Canadian operator's [“Long Distance, Regional, and Remote Fleet Renewal Project notice of market consultation,”](#) issued late Friday, Jan. 27, says VIA is looking to select “a supplier to design, manufacture, test, supply, deliver and commission cars and motive power and ancillary equipment (onboard and offboard) with a prescribed capacity of car types (seated coaches, sleeper, diners, multi-purpose, baggage) through an open competitive procurement process.” VIA will consult with prospective applicants “to solicit feedback on VIA Rail's proposed technical specifications, maintenance's scope of work, as well as commercial and contractual related terms.” This is “to reduce the eventual in-market time [and] ensure requirements clarity ... prior to commencement of a formal procurement process.” Parties must sign non-disclosure agreements, due by Feb. 17, before taking part.

A general informational session involving prospective applicants is to take place in March, and confidential meetings with individual carbuilders or consortia will begin in May. P1 Consulting was tapped as a “fairness monitor” to attend all meetings. The expedited timeline to gauge manufacturer interest and begin substantive discussions essentially acknowledges that any manufacturer involved has already responded to Amtrak's request for information.

Unique to VIA's network, as presently constituted, are remote services in four Canadian provinces. With the exception of the multi-day Winnipeg-Churchill, Manitoba, overnight train, these don't require a full complement of sleeping, lounge, and dining cars needed for the *Ocean* (Montreal-Halifax, Nova Scotia) or *Canadian* (Toronto-Vancouver, British Columbia). One remote route serving areas inaccessible by highways, the tri-weekly Sudbury-White River, Ontario, train, is currently operated with Budd-built Rail Diesel Cars. Another, between The Pas and Pukatawagan, Manitoba, utilizes VIA's only remaining non-stainless steel cars, ex-Canadian National holdovers, on a twice-weekly mixed train. Most manufacturing synergies consistent with Amtrak's equipment needs, however, involve replacing rolling stock on the *Ocean* and *Canadian*. New equipment investment has bypassed replacements for cars built more than 60 years ago that currently ply long distance and remote routes. Instead, VIA has bought equipment for the Quebec City-Windsor, Ontario, corridor: Bombardier's Light Rapid Comfortable in the 1980s, and 32 five-car Siemens Venture trainsets priced at C\$989 million (about \$750 million U.S.) now being delivered.

Whatever the manufacturer interest, this inquiry does give VIA management a tangible price tag with which to seek government funding necessary to maintain long-distance service. It comes as the company is poised to roll out new corridor trains but has been shut out of developing a separate passenger-only “High Frequency Rail” route between Quebec City and Toronto. That project has been usurped by Transport Canada, which has created a separate entity to potentially involve private investors [see [“Responding to inquiries, Transport Canada adjusts ...”](#) *News Wire*, Nov. 1, 2022].

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Transport Canada, as the transportation arm of Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party administration, also controls the passenger operator's priorities and funding. In the mid-1980s, VIA tested borrowed Amtrak Superliners after Bombardier bought the design rights to those cars from the defunct Pullman Standard. The tests in a harsh Canadian winter were successful, but the government of Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney not only passed on an investment which would have benefitted Bombardier, but slashed overall funding, precipitating VIA's severe 1990 downsizing. More than 30 years later as VIA again seeks to replace its aging cross-country fleet, the future of Canada's transcontinental passenger rail system hangs in the balance. "VIA: New trains, new challenges" (March 2023 *Trains Magazine*) provides an in-depth look at the new Siemens trainsets and the forces impacting Canada's passenger operator.

Grand Canyon Railway Sets 2023 Steam Dates

By | January 10, 2023 No. 4960 will pull trains to Grand Canyon



Grand Canyon Railway No. 4960, an ex-Burlington Route 2-8-2, is slated to pull trains to the canyon on 11 dates during 2023. Steve Glischinski

WILLIAMS, Ariz. – The Grand Canyon Railway has announced dates it will operate 2-8-2 No. 4960 in 2023. The railroad typically uses the former Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad locomotive to pull trains between Williams and Grand Canyon one Saturday a month, plus some additional dates.

The 2023 steam dates are:

February 18 for Presidents' Day.

March 4, April 1.

April 22 for Earth Day.

May 6, June 3, July 1, Aug. 5, Sept. 2.

Sept. 16 for Grand Canyon Railway Anniversary.

Oct. 7.

No. 4960 was built in 1923 by Baldwin for the Burlington Route. In the late 1950s it was selected to pull excursion trains along with 4-8-4 No. 5632, and operated until the end of the Burlington steam program in 1966. Purchased by Grand Canyon Railway in 1989, in 1996 it underwent an extensive rebuild and was converted to burn oil. Further modifications were made in 2009, when it was converted to run on recycled waste vegetable oil.

For more information visit the [Grand Canyon Railway and Hotel](#) website.

Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific Led Class I Railroad Growth in 2022

By Bill Stephens | January 5, 2023 The other four big systems saw their traffic decline last year



A Union Pacific merchandise train ascends California's Cajon Pass on the Palmdale Cutoff in September 2021. Bill Stephens

Union Pacific and Canadian Pacific were the only major Class I railroads to show volume growth in 2022.

UP took the crown among the top six systems, with its overall traffic up 2%. The increase was driven by a 5% gain in carload traffic, including a 9% jump in coal volume. UP's intermodal traffic was down 2% for the year.

CP's 1.7% growth was due almost entirely to an 11.5% gain in intermodal traffic. The only other commodities that were up on CP were potash and its metals, minerals and consumer products business segment.

Total North American rail volume was down 1.9% for 2022, according to the Association of American Railroads.

BNSF Railway was in the volume basement: Its traffic was off by 5.6% last year. Intermodal was down 8.5%, while carloads including coal were off by 2.2%. Coal volume was flat, at 0.13% above 2021 levels.

A 4.4% decline in intermodal traffic helped push Norfolk Southern into negative territory for the year.

Overall volume was down by 2.6% despite a 5.4% gain in coal traffic. NS's merchandise business declined 1.3%. Canadian National and CSX Transportation saw their volumes fall by less than 1%. CN's overall volume was down 0.5%, with intermodal off 5.8% and merchandise business down 0.2%. A 33.9% surge in coal volume drove a 15.3% increase in the railway's bulk traffic segment. CSX's volume declined 0.7%, with all three business segments in negative territory. Intermodal was down 0.4%, coal by 0.9%, and overall carloads including coal by 1%. CSX's tallies, however, did not include volume from Pan Am Railways, the New England regional that it acquired on June 1.

Classic Great Northern Railway Ranch Car Moves to Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad

By Steve Smedley | April 19, 2023 Car will be used on bed and breakfast, dinner trains



A low-boy semitractor-trailer turns off U.S. Highway 53 onto Dilly Lake Road outside Trego, Wis, on April 1, 2023 with Great Northern Railway ranch car White Pines Lake. The car, part of the Great Northern's Empire Builder, is one of six built in 1951. The Wisconsin Great Northern tourist line plans to use the car in their bed and breakfast train. Greg Vreeland photo The White Pines Lake is still outfitted with its original interior decorations. Greg Vreeland

REGO, Wis. – A former Great Northern Railway ranch car that was once part of the storied *Empire Builder* streamliner has been purchased and moved to the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad in Trego. The ranch car, No. 1244, named *White Pines Lake*, was purchased from a former conference center operation in Columbus, Ohio, in January 2023. It was recently trucked from Ohio to Northwest Wisconsin completing eight days of work as part of the move.

The car was one of six coffee shop lounge cars built by American Car & Foundry in 1951 for GN's newly branded "Mid-Century *Empire Builder*." Five of the cars survive today. The car sports an iconic interior from the streamliner era, based on a Montana ranch house.

The car is planned to improve the experience of first-class ticket holders on the overnight bed and breakfast and dinner trains operated out of Trego. Few alterations were made to the car during its operation as part of the conference center. "We made a thorough inspection of the car and realized it would fit into our business plan for the Bed & Breakfast Dinner train," said Wisconsin Great Northern President Greg Vreeland.

The car still retains its original Great Northern décor, including seating at the bar, art-deco style Great Northern interior lettering and several western paintings and wood artwork. Four original Great Northern decorative branding irons are part of the interior. Modern heating and air conditioning systems were installed beneath the car when it was at the conference center. WGN repaired and upgraded its electrical systems to 480-volt operation and have replaced a water tank and waste tank to make the car self-contained. One major modification was a large hole cut in the middle of one side to connect it to the conference center. That door will now be used to service the bar area of the ranch car.

Another ranch car, No. 1242 *Hidden Lake*, is currently under restoration at the Niles Canyon Railway in Sunol, Calif.

Restoration work continues on the *Mark Twain Zephyr* streamliner that WGN purchased in 2019. For more information go to spoonertrainride.com.

Canadian Government Approves Major West Coast container Terminal

By April 21, 2023

Roberts Bank Terminal 2 will add 2.4 TEUs of capacity to Delta, B.C., facility

DELTA, British Columbia — The Canadian government announced Thursday it has approved a C\$3.5 billion project to build a new West Coast container terminal, subject to some 370 legally binding conditions, [the Globe and Mail newspaper reports](#).

The Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project, which has been in development for more than a dozen years, involves the creation of an artificial island near Delta, about 18.6 miles south of Vancouver, B.C., and adjacent to the existing Roberts Bank Terminal, which includes a coal export facility and container terminal. Canadian Pacific, Canadian National, and BNSF Railway serve the existing facility via the Roberts Bank Causeway; that causeway will be widened to support more road and rail traffic.

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The Canadian government has approved the Roberts Bank Terminal 2 project, which will add 2.4 million TEUs of container capacity on Canada's West Coast. Port Metro Vancouver

The new facility is projected to take six years to build and will increase the facility's container capacity by 2.4 million 20-foot-equivalent units, or TEUs.

"The approval of this project was not taken lightly," said Transport Minister Omar Alghabara. "With strong measures, we will protect our ecosystem while increasing Canada's supply chain capacity to ensure Canadians receive affordable goods on time."

Robin Silvester, CEO of the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, said in [a press release](#) that the approval means his agency "can advance one of Canada's most important trade infrastructure projects to date, bolster our national supply-chain resilience, and deliver generational economic benefits for Canadians and Canadian businesses."

Reading & Northern Sets Dates for Iron Horse Rambles, Diesel Excursions

By | April 19, 2023

4-8-4 No. 2102 to lead Rambles



PORT CLINTON, Pa. – The [Reading & Northern Railroad](#) has set dates for its popular "Iron Horse Rambles" with former [Reading 4-8-4 No. 2102](#). Trips will operate from Reading Outer Station to Jim Thorpe, Pa. on July 1, Aug. 13, and Sept. 2. Tickets for the Rambles go on sale May 1 at 9:00 a.m. Seating options range from standard coach to lounge observation car with prices ranging from \$99.00 to \$210.00 depending on the accommodation. The 2023 season marks the second year of the Rambles and the return of No. 2102 to service after more than three decades of inactivity.

No. 2102 is one of four survivors out of a fleet of 30 T-1s that Reading built in 1945-47 for fast freight service. Using parts supplied by Baldwin, the Reading recycled the boilers and other parts of 30 1920s-built Class I-10sa 2-8-0 engines. Replaced by diesels in 1956, the T-1s were retired and scrapped except for those kept for the famous "Iron Horse Rambles" operated by Reading from 1959 to 1964. No. 2102 was acquired by Reading & Northern founder Andy Muller in 1986. Another T-1, No. 2100, is under restoration in Ohio.

In addition to steam-powered trains, R&N diesel powered excursions will begin operation out of Reading Outer Station April 29. While in past years trips operated to Jim Thorpe, beginning this year the railroad is offering trips to Pottsville, Pa. Pottsville trains will operate April 29, June 17, July 29, Aug. 19, and Sept. 16.

Reading to Jim Thorpe excursions begin May 6 and continue every Saturday and Sunday (plus holidays) through Sept. 30. Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs) will be utilized on the Jim Thorpe route. During the winter, work was performed on the RDCs including motors being replaced, and one RDC received a new transmission.

Reading & Northern No. 2102 approaches the former Jersey Central station in Jim Thorpe, Pa., before departing on the return leg to Reading, Pa., on Oct. 29., 2022. Dan Cupper

Volume 54 #5 Northstar Railway Historical Society May 2023
Canadian National Line in Michigan Becomes Landing Strip for Disabled Aircraft

[By Steve Smedley](#) | April 21, 2023



A small airplane made an emergency landing on CN tracks in Michigan on Thursday, April 20. Contributed photo

FLINT, Mich. — A single-engine aircraft made a forced landing on the double-track mainline of Canadian National Railway's Flint Subdivision Thursday morning, April 20.

The pilot, the plane's sole occupant, was uninjured in the landing near Linden and Bristol roads west of Flint. According to Michigan State Police, the railroad was contacted to immediately shut down traffic, and both the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating. The aircraft, a prop-driven Piper PA-28, had just taken off from Bishop International Airport when it developed engine problems and crash-landed on the tracks here. The pilot, the sole occupant onboard was uninjured.

The line is part of the former Grand Trunk Western Railroad.

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	Saturday May 13 2023 6:15—8:45 pm	Roseville Lutheran Church 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE -Guests are Welcome
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale	Saturday, May 13, 2023 from 9 am to 2 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1327 Cosgrove Street	\$7
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale	Saturday, September 16, 2023 from 9 am to 2 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1327 Cosgrove Street	\$7
Trains Day's	Saturday and Sunday June 3rd and 4th 2023 10 am—4 pm	St Paul Union Depot 214 4th Street East Saint Paul, MN 55101	Free

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