



NRHS

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

September is still Summer, but FALL is rapidly Approaching



*L: BN Empire Builder with 'Q' E-units
Fargo ND
April 1971*



*R: BN Empire Builder with NP F-Units
Fargo ND
April 1971*

*Both Photos
John Goodman*

Table of Contents

Chapter Officers, Meeting Notice, Editor Column	Pages 1, 2
Chapter Picnic Maiden Rock WI	Pages 2, 3
Lake Superior & Mississippi Train is Back	Page 3
Chapter Duluth Train Ride	Page 4
SWLRT News	Pages 4, 5
Metro Transit Report	Page 5
Light Rail Blue Line Extension News	Pages 6, 7
NKP #765 Fall Excursions	Page 7
SWLRT Fires Back at Audit	Page 8
MTM Photo Charter	Page 9
Silvis Shop work Progress	Page 9
All Aboard Minnesota News	Pages 10, 11
Amtrak News Stories (5)	Pages 11,12,13,14,15,16
Brightline News Stories (2)	Pages 16, 17
CPKC News Stories (9)	Pages 17,18,19,20,21,22
BNSF News Stories (7)	Pages 23,24,25,26
UP News Stories (6)	Pages 26,27,28,29,30
CN News Stories (3)	Pages 30,31,32
The Ferry Badger Stops Operation , NRHS convention link	Page 32
CSX New Heritage Locomotive	Page 33
Seminole Gulf Hurricane Recovery	Page 33
C&TS Fall Trips	Page 33
Hennepin Overland Model RR Schedule	Page 34
Railfan Events	Page 34

Meeting Notice:

Saturday September 9th 2023 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our September Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2023 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month. (Sept Planned Program: Bob Ball Slides from his collection)

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpen-
teur Avenues at 4:15 pm September 9, 2023.

September Zoom Meeting Sign-on for the September 9th 2023 meeting is noted here! Log in information for the September 9, 2023 Northstar Chapter Please join us in-person at Roseville Lutheran Church, Saturday September 9th at 6 pm. Our business meeting will begin at 6:15 followed by the program. If you are unable to join us in-person, join the meeting via Zoom at this link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81146391551?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81146391551?pwd=aFdUd3QydG1pbXhFdXhRUGR2U0RrUT09)

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81146391551?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81146391551?pwd=aFdUd3QydG1pbXhFdXhRUGR2U0RrUT09)
or <https://tinyurl.com/2p9x5s2x>

The Zoom Meeting ID is: 811 4639 1551 and the passcode is: 246802

Please allow extra time to log in. There have been updates to the Zoom application software over the summer and they may take a few minutes to install. If you are unsure if your equipment and Zoom application are working properly, point your internet browser to <http://zoom.us/test> and follow the prompts. If you are having trouble with your Zoom application that you are unable to resolve, you may dial into the meeting, audio-only, from any telephone. Dial 507-473-4847 and follow the prompts.

Northstar Chapter Officers & Staff

President	Dan Meyer	dan@mever-family.net	763-784-8835
Secretary	Richard Tubbesing	Tubbesing32A@yahoo.com	763-757-1304
National Director	Dawn Holmberg	dawn@dhholmberg.com	763-784-8835
Treasurer	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Vice President	Bill Dredge	williamdredge@yahoo.com	952-937-1313
Program Chairman	John Goodman, Richard Tubbesing	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Calendar Committee	John Goodman (Chairman) Dawn Holmberg Jack Barbier John Cartwright	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com dawn@dhholmberg.com Jsbbib@msn.com Stationman86@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Trip Director	John Goodman	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Chapter Librarian/Historian	John Cartwright	Stationman86@yahoo.com	651-481-8479
Webmaster	Dan Meyer	dan@mever-family.net	873-784-8835
Chapter Mailbox	Northstar Chapter NRHS	PO Box 120832	St Paul MN 55112
Library Data Base Administrator	Russ Isbrandt	Rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Newsletter Editor	Richard Tubbesing Dawn Holmberg, Dan Meyer	Tubbesing32a@yahoo.com Dawn@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: 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. Members will be able to vote on this change at the September 9th 2023 meeting. These changes were reviewed at our May 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 be assessed. Proposed by-laws can be read by using the link here: <http://northstar-nrhs.org/bylaws/Proposed-Changes-By-Laws-Oct-2024.pdf>

Programs for the October and November Meetings are open.
Contact either Jphn Goodman or Richard Tubbesing at the above E-mails to schedule and show your program.

Northstar Chapter Picnic at Maiden Rock Wisconsin July 15th 2023 BNSF Action Maiden Rock WI.



A well attended picnic on a smokey hazy day was held at the Riverside Park in Maiden Rock WI. Eight BNSF trains Passed by during our stay. All Photos by Dawn Holmberg!



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L to R: The Picnic shelter, Group Photo, and members having lunch at the park shelter. Right Photo members John Chute, Cy Svobodny, Kevin Waldo, Glen Holmberg and John Goodman.



Left to right: 1. Members Bill Dredge, Dan Meyer, Dick Tubbesing, Jack Barbier, Wayne Torseth, Dee Smith Lundeen, Chuck Lundeen. 2. Members Dee Smith Lundeen, Chuck Lundeen, Martha Isbrandt, Russ Isbrandt 3. Ed Johnson and Jack Barbier discuss things (Maybe Trains?).



Three Photos: Russ Isbrandt, Wayne Torseth and Keven Waldo Observe passing trains.

Ride the Duluth River Train in 2023!

LSMR in the News (Click here) **We have been working hard** (Click here) IT'S BACK...



...out of service for three years due to COVID and remediation of pollutants...the Lake Superior & Mississippi RR [LS&M], which runs next to the largest fresh water estuary in the world, has been rebuilt and is back in business.

Today's [August 1, 2023] MINNESOTA LIVE on KSTP-Ch5 aired a segment that the LS&M is back in business and offering service on Saturday and Sundays and will operate for this season until mid-

When our family last rode the railroad about four years ago, we found the fare reasonable and the run along the river, with water lapping the roadbed, to be entertaining and reasonably priced. {Veterans and Active Military ride free on Sundays.} Link to their website follows: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwinr6LN1LuAAxVnHTQIHdIDvoQFnoECCsQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lsmrr.org%2F&usg=AOvVaw0AZ6L145MKkK6fqgbc0ZC&opi=89978449> *****Tom*****

Chapter Duluth Train Ride -Duluth to Two Harbors August 18th 2023

15 people signed up with 13 people attending and two No-Shows... Person set his Alarm incorrectly! Dome seating was a tad cramped. Seats in the 'Silver Chair' were difficult to get into and out of, especially since the chair arm rests did not raise up to provide more room to get in the seat and sit down, especially for us older folks. It was a fun trip despite this problem and the weather was hazy but clear and comfortable temperatures! We had a light cheese snack with beverage on the way up and a beverage of choice and cookie on the return trip. Lunch was at any place of choice in Two Harbors during the two hour layover. Shuttle service was provided by the city of Two Harbors. Many thanks to John Goodman for organizing this trip. Photo's by Dawn Holmberg



L to R: 1. View from the dome leaving Duluth 2. Glen Holmberg and John Goodman. 3. Dee Smith Lundeen and husband Chuck and Wayne Torseth.



L to R: 4. Russ Isbrandt and wife Martha 5. Train on curve 6. BNSF SD10 #1550 (a chopped nose refurb of a BN SD-9) and our train at Two Harbors during the layover.



7. Group picture at the Duluth Station 8. Train on Fitgers Curve heading to Two Harbors.

Latest SWLRT News Tuesday, July 25, 2023, 10:14 AM, Frederick Krenske

SWLRT: via **KSTP**, **VERBATIM:** "One of the state's top watchdogs is defending her critical evaluation of the still-unfinished Southwest Light Rail project which is now expected to cost taxpayers \$2.75 billion. Emails obtained by 5 INVESTIGATES reveal a combative exchange of words between the Office of the Legislative Auditor and the contractors constructing the controversial light rail line which is well over budget and years behind schedule. In June, Legislative Auditor **Judy Randall** released a report that criticized the Metropolitan Council for failing to reign in cost overruns. ... **Dennis Behnke**, CEO of Lunda Construction, responded to that criticism with a 12-page letter to Randall earlier this month which called out the Office of the Legislative Auditor for a 'lack of experience and qualifications' involving large construction projects. ... Randall rejected criticisms of her office's lack of experience with 'design and engineering issues.' 'OLA focused its work on its area of expertise: oversight, transparency, and accountability for publicly funded programs,' Randall wrote. ... The results of an additional financial audit of Southwest Light Rail are still expected later. Emails reveal heated exchange between auditor and contractor over critical Southwest Light Rail report

Eric Rasmussen KSTP this year.” READ/WATCH:<https://fluence-media.co/3Kee6uK> July 24, 2023 - 7:06 PM

One of the state’s top watchdogs is defending her critical evaluation of the still-unfinished [Southwest Light Rail](#) project which is now expected to cost taxpayers \$2.75 billion.

Emails obtained by 5 INVESTIGATES reveal a combative exchange of words between the Office of the Legislative Auditor and the contractors constructing the controversial light rail line which is well over budget and years behind schedule.

In June, Legislative Auditor Judy Randall [released a report](#) that criticized the Metropolitan Council for failing to reign in cost overruns and not enforcing the terms of its contract with construction firm Lunda/C.S. McCrossan Joint Venture (LMJV).

Dennis Behnke, CEO of Lunda Construction, responded to that criticism with a 12-page letter to Randall earlier this month which called out the Office of the Legislative Auditor for a “lack of experience and qualifications” involving large construction projects and called the conclusions of the auditor’s report “unfounded and unjustified.” Randall fired back on Friday in an email obtained by 5 INVESTIGATES.

“The Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) welcomes feedback on its work that is constructive and respectful,” Randall wrote. “Your letter was neither.”

In the same email, Randall rejected criticisms of her office’s lack of experience with “design and engineering issues.”

“OLA focused its work on its area of expertise: oversight, transparency, and accountability for publicly funded programs,” Randall wrote.

State lawmakers [called for a review of Southwest Light Rail](#) last year as the largest project in Minnesota history saw costs continue to rise and delays push back the expected opening of the rail line to 2027.

The results of an additional financial audit of Southwest Light Rail are still expected later this year.

Former Minnesota Transportation Commissioner El Tinklenberg described the problems as “massive mismanagement.”

“It’s hard to imagine a project that is more than 50% over budget and nearly a decade late,” Tinklenberg said.

He added that the back-and-forth between Randall and the head of the contractor can be seen as both sides defending their reputations.

“Lunda is trying to protect itself in terms of the quality of its construction and the OLA is trying to protect itself in terms of its ability to carry out these kinds of audits and this kind of review,” Tinklenberg said. “It’s the taxpayers who end up holding the bag.”

Behnke declined an interview request from 5 INVESTIGATES but shared his latest response in a letter sent to Randall on Monday.

“If the OLA is concerned with accountability regarding how public funds are spent, then the OLA must evaluate and account for how much time and public money was lost due to design ‘issues,’” Behnke wrote.

Randall declined to publicly discuss her email to Behnke, which was also sent to eight state lawmakers.

“OLA is routinely asked to assess government oversight, transparency, and accountability in state-funded programs,” Randall said.

“In light of OLA’s well-known expertise in these areas, I stand by the findings and recommendations as presented in the report.”

Metro Transit Touts 140k Mural Amid Rising Crime on System

Provided by Dan Meyer [Thursday, July 20, 2023](#)

Metro Transit’s 40-point plan to deter the violent crime and vagrancy plaguing the Twin Cities’ light rail and bus lines continues to flounder a year into the highly publicized security operation. A new quarterly report on the transit system’s crime rate will be released soon. But so far, serious crime on metro light rail and bus lines has increased by two-thirds year over year, from 817 crimes in 2022 to 1,352 crimes through March of this year.

A recently posted public safety fact sheet detailing the woeful results of the attempt to recruit more police and security personnel goes a long way toward explaining why.

-107 full-time police officers (out of 171 authorized)

-41 part-time officers (out of 80 authorized)

-15 Community Service Officers (out of 70 authorized)

-22,643 calls for service in Q1 2023, (+9% compared to Q1 2022)

The beleaguered agency, however, hasn’t found any difficulty recruiting personnel for the ninth action item in the 40-point plan.

Here’s the way Metro Transit puts it. *Continue investment in public art at facilities to deter vandalism and create a more inclusive, welcoming experience.* A local artist answered the call for the latest taxpayer-funded public art to go on duty in the effort to enhance public safety and confidence.

The \$140,000 taxpayer-funded mural was unveiled at a hub in south Minneapolis that the [Star Tribune](#) notes has been the site of recent violence.

Metro Transit is turning to murals in an effort to make its bus and light-rail stations more welcoming.

The latest installation is at the I-35W and Lake Street Transit Station in south Minneapolis, a busy hub that’s been plagued by graffiti and where [two people were wounded](#) in a shooting this spring. Police data also show there have been two robberies near the station this year.

Metro Transit officials insist it works. Not necessarily to reduce crime but rather graffiti.

Metro Transit employees collectively spent more than 500 hours in the past year removing graffiti from transit property, but taggers have largely left murals alone, said Mark Granlund, the agency’s public art administrator.

He pointed to walls at the Lake Street/Midtown light-rail and bus station, which he said became “like the neighborhood bulletin board for tagging” after the murder of George Floyd. Metro Transit put up a mural about a year and a half ago in that space, and it’s been tagged only once since, Granlund said. A nearby utility shack repainted two years ago hasn’t been tagged, he said.

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At this point the agency probably has to take a win, however it comes. But the riding public won't be so easily impressed, judging from the reaction of Strib readers to Metro Transit's priorities.

-Rather than murals, how about more police for that would be the station transformation everyone wants. Murals....that's funny. Only in Minneapolis.

-\$140,000? For a mural in a bus station?

-Only Metro transit and Minneapolis could come up with such a foolish idea.

-How about we stop criminals at their stations. That is the transformation people really need.

Nevertheless, Metro Transit has already zeroed in on the next target to clean up in the agency's relentless public art safety campaign.

Next year, Metro Transit plans to place a mural on the elevator towers at the Blue Line's Franklin Avenue Station to cover and help deter graffiti there, said spokeswoman Laura Baenen. The agency in August is launching a pilot to test graffiti-resistant wallpaper for bathrooms and other indoor spaces where tagging is common.

<https://www.americanexperiment.org/metro-transit-touts-140k-mural-amid-rising-crime-on-system/>

Suburbanites Split over Blue Line Extension

by **H. Jiahong Pan** [July 13, 2023](#) Provided by Rick Krenske



Photo by Chris Juhn Starlite Transit Center in Brooklyn Park.



Photo by Chris Juhn West Broadway and Oak Grove Pkwy by the Target North campus in Brooklyn Park.

For the past year, some Northsiders have fought the Metropolitan Council's plans to build an extension of the Blue Line light rail through their neighborhood. In trying to turn the project away, they cite the negative impact on generational wealth and their properties, as well being a magnet for drug users and the unhoused. Some argue that routing the project out of the North Side will better serve those who live in the suburbs and want to visit downtown Minneapolis.

Indeed, some suburbanites welcome the Blue Line extension. Many believe it will be good for their communities and great for the region, particularly for those who can't or don't drive and live in an area underserved by public transit.

But suburban transit riders who might benefit from the extension have little idea about what is happening with the project. "I guess [light rail through the Northside] would be convenient," said Dashan Bell as he rode a Route 721 bus home from work in North Minneapolis one afternoon. Bell added he was unaware that Metro Transit and the Met Council were planning such a line.

Planners at Hennepin County and the Met Council have deliberated since 1988 whether to build some form of fast, high-capacity transit to connect downtown Minneapolis with the northwestern suburbs. The goal is to serve the fast-growing number of jobs and residents, and to address the traffic congestion that comes with it.

After evaluating bus and light rail options, as well as deciding to extend the line as far as either Maple Grove Transit Station or Target North Campus in Brooklyn Park, Hennepin County decided the Met Council should build a light rail to the Target North Campus, citing the potential to serve more diverse low-income households—about 60 percent of residents who would be served are people of color—as well as providing access to a community college, a library, and Target's planned office park on a 300-acre site, 88 acres of which were completed in 2016.

For the light rail to get there, project planners decided to use Olson Memorial Highway from Target Field Station to Theodore Wirth Park, then north on Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) right-of-way through the park, serving the cities of Golden Valley, Robbinsdale and Crystal along the way. At 71st Avenue in Brooklyn Park, the line would operate on West Broadway Avenue due north to the Target North Campus. The alignment was estimated to cost \$1.5 billion to build. However, the alignment proved unworkable since BNSF was unwilling to negotiate use of its right-of-way access with Hennepin County and the Met Council, which resulted in project planners deciding to change the alignment. The alignment north of 71st Avenue in Brooklyn Park remains the same. But south of 71st Avenue, planners want to run the line down the middle of Bottineau Boulevard, also known as County Highway 81. The boulevard turns into West Broadway Avenue in North Minneapolis.

The new alignment does not yet have a cost estimate. They plan to develop an estimate once the alignment is finalized. A Met Council spokesperson said they spent over \$141 million to plan the extension between 2014 and February of this year. In May, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$50 million to plan out the project.

Some believe the investment is worth it. Brooklyn Park Mayor Hollies Winston sees the Blue Line extension project as potentially able to unify the city, parts of which are not served by regular route buses that run all day. "If you look at northern Brooklyn Park, in many cases we have a ton of businesses that are doing quite well. It's sometimes very difficult for people in southern Brooklyn Park to get those opportunities," said Winston at a June meeting of the project corridor management committee. So this will give us the ability to connect the east, the west, but also the north and the south, all the various parts of Brooklyn Park, so that it's not seen as two cities within one city."

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Victoria Kepa, who runs a nonprofit in Brooklyn Park that increases literacy among West African families, children and youth, agrees. “You can go [on light rail] from Brooklyn Park all the way to the Mall of America and stop along the way. You would be able to take a bus if you wanted to, if you have a job along those lines,” said Kepa. “[And] if you were to go downtown, and you have a park-and-ride, where you can drop off your car, get on a train, go downtown, do your job, come back and pick up your car, so that you can then be able to do other things. I mean, I think that’s huge.”

Kepa, who also serves on the Blue Line Anti-Displacement Committee, is concerned for those who live along and beyond the light rail corridor who may be displaced as property owners may increase their rents when the light rail extension comes in. “We want to make sure that the people who are already there continue to remain there,” said Kepa. The committee decided on recommendations in May to require rent control, which restricts how much rent can increase per year, as well as relocation assistance, basic income, first dibs for tenants to buy the buildings they live in, as well as first-time homeowner assistance.

However, some business owners are more worried about near-term construction impacts. One of them is Angela M (last name withheld by request) who has run Prime Scrubs and Medical Supply at Brooklyn Boulevard and West Broadway Avenue in Brooklyn Park for 14 years. “I don’t go to places where they are doing construction. I don’t want to drive over where roads are closed because I don’t want to go through that hassle. The exact same thing will happen to us,” says Angela at her store one June morning. She opposes the project, saying each project has its positives and negatives.

Angela said what can help her business stay afloat during construction is monetary assistance. “When business goes down, I still have to pay rent and utilities.” The anti-displacement recommendations include having the Met Council create a fund to make businesses whole if they lose revenue during construction.

Meanwhile, transit riders remain in the dark about plans to bring the light rail to Brooklyn Park. Despite this, most of them were receptive to the light rail coming through the suburbs and were indifferent about whether or not it should go through North Minneapolis.

One person who did not want to give their name but grew up in the Crystal area and works fast food jobs said bringing light rail to Brooklyn Park would be a good idea and supports it running through North Minneapolis. “Transportation rules the nation. We have to commute. We have to travel,” he said as he rode home from work on a Route 705 bus.

“I think [light rail serving the] Northside is a great idea. There are more people using public transit [in North Minneapolis] compared to New Hope and Crystal, and it might take some of the load off of the bus routes.”

Meanwhile, Shirley Miller, who has been commuting to her job in downtown Minneapolis from Brooklyn Park every day for the last 35 years, is worried about light rail going through North Minneapolis. She wants the extension to bypass the North Side and talks about a route she sometimes takes, the 724, that used to run express into downtown Minneapolis before the agency cut back on the route to Brooklyn Center Transit Center when they launched the D line in December.

“I like the 724, because I can get on here [in Brooklyn Park], get on the highway [at Dowling] and bypass all the riff raff [rowdy high school students], for the lack of a better word,” said Miller, who is Black. “Anything that bypasses this area, from downtown to 30th, that would be perfect in a perfect world.”

Nickel Plate Road No. 765 to Power Fall Color Trains in Indiana and Michigan

[By](#) | July 21, 2023 Tickets on sale for first October excursions of the Indiana Rail Experience



Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 No. 765 is scheduled to power the first Fall Color Trains of the Indiana Rail Experience in October. Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society

STEUBEN COUNTY, Ind. — Tickets have been released for the Fall Color Trains, scheduled to operate in Northeast Indiana and Southeast Michigan this October. Nickel Plate Road steam locomotive No. 765 of the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society will serve as the main motive power for these all-day, round-trip excursions on the Indiana Northeastern Railroad under the Indiana Rail Experience banner.

“Our company [Indiana Northeastern] has spent the last three decades reinvesting in the line and developing industry in the region, and we’re looking forward to welcoming passengers to enjoy it this fall,” said Andrew Hershman, the railroad’s marketing and sales manager.

October 7 and 8 will see No. 765 lead the *Indiana Fall Color Train* from Pleasant Lake, Ind., to Hillsdale, Mich., and return. On Oct. 14 and 15, the *Michigan Fall Color Train* will depart Hillsdale to Angola, Ind. Due to limited turning facilities at the southern end of the line, the Oct. 14-15 excursions will operate with the 1944-built 2-8-4 in one direction and a historic diesel locomotive in the other, according to the Indiana Rail Experience website.

Accommodations will feature vintage passenger cars, first-class tickets, a private car, and a layover in historic downtowns Hillsdale and Angola.

The Indiana Rail Experience, a partnership between FWRHS and Indiana Northeastern since 2022, has seen an [extended 2023 schedule](#) of 30-plus operating days with both steam- and diesel-powered excursions. According to the society, a series of Christmas trains are planned in November and December.

Visit the [Indiana Rail Experience website](#) for more information and to purchase tickets.

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Southwest LRT Builder Fires Back on Audit

By [Janet Moore](#) Star Tribune JULY 11, 2023 — 3:22PM PROVIDED BY RICK KRENSKE

Contractor says watchdog agency's recommendations would have resulted in more delays, costs.



RICHARD TSONG-TAATARII, STAR TRIBUNE FILE Construction work continued on the Southwest light rail project in Hopkins in May.

The contractor building the \$2.7 billion Southwest light rail line claims the state watchdog agency probing the troubled project has ignored critical issues with its design that have led to millions in cost overruns and years of delay. The head of Lunda/C.S. McCrossan Joint Venture (LMJV), which is building Southwest, further charged that the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) lacks the necessary expertise to criticize or offer a legal opinion on the way the 14.5-mile line has been constructed. Had the Metropolitan Council, which is overseeing the Southwest project, followed recommendations recently shared by the Legislative Auditor, the opening of the line would have been "pushed out further by years," cost "significantly more" and perhaps faced "very bad litigation," according to a July 10 letter written to Legislative Auditor Judy Randall by Dennis Behnke, CEO of Wisconsin-based Lunda Construction Company. As it stands now, the Southwest line connecting downtown Minneapolis with Eden Prairie — an extension of the Green Line — isn't expected to begin service until 2027, although about 75% has already been built. Randall declined to comment on the letter Tuesday, but says she stands by the [OLA's work](#) which demonstrates the agency's "expertise in government oversight, transparency, and accountability, and reflects the commitment to accuracy and good government."

Southwest's woes have brought at the Capitol, and [investigations](#) by the Legislative Auditor have attempted to pinpoint what went awry with the project.

Last month, OLA released a review claiming the Met Council failed to effectively enforce the main contract with LMJV for overseeing construction of the line. LMJV was [awarded](#) a \$799 million bid in 2018 to build Southwest.

But in a statement to the Star Tribune, Behnke said the construction firm "was given a poorly prepared set of plans to construct the largest public project in Minnesota history that was subject to an unprecedented level of continual change."

LMJV doesn't attribute design issues to any particular part of the project, which is enormously complicated with 16 stations, 29 bridges and two light rail tunnels. Instead, the 11-page letter to Randall says that the overall blueprint for the project was "of poor quality," incomplete, and "contained major elements that were not fully developed or thought out."

Behnke noted that LMJV was not responsible for any scheduling delays or additional costs.

A group of consultants led by Architecture, Engineering, Construction, Operations, and Management (AECOM), a publicly traded Texas-based infrastructure consulting firm, is responsible for the Southwest's overall design and engineering work. AECOM could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

The Met Council has attributed most of Southwest's issues to squeezing a tunnel in Minneapolis' narrow Kenilworth corridor, the addition of a station in Eden Prairie as well as a \$93 million crash wall separating light rail and freight trains along the route's northern stretch.

As of last month, the project reported some 1,017 change orders, which are prompted when there's a deviation from the original design, according to the Met Council. While that's not unusual for a project of Southwest's size, the recent Legislative Auditor's report recommended that the Met Council tighten its practices for managing big construction projects, particularly those regarding change orders. Last year, the council reached an agreement with LMJV to resolve outstanding change orders and set a timeline to complete the job — "without litigation," Behnke said. The two also collaborated to [minimize the impact](#) of the Kenilworth tunnel on the Cedar Isles condominium complex, he added.

This week's letter appears to reinforce LMJV's [growing frustration](#) with the Legislative Auditor's [review](#), claiming it "fails to appreciate the difficulty of building a \$800 million project in less than four years while the plans are continually changing."

Likewise, Met Council Chair Charlie Zelle responded last month that the report's recommendations are not aligned with federal "guidance or construction law, are not appropriate for a project of this size and complexity, and in some instances could have contributed to additional delay." The council declined to comment on LMJV's letter Tuesday.

At a hearing of the Legislative Audit Commission last month, Randall defended her agency's work.

"Are we experts in transit construction? No. Are we engineers? No. We don't claim to be," Randall said. "But what we are experts on is protecting the taxpayers' dollars."

A final report on the Southwest project's financial practices is expected later this year.

Transportation reporter **Janet Moore** covers trains, planes, automobiles, buses, bikes and pedestrians. Moore has been with the Star Tribune for 21 years, previously covering business news, including the retail, medical device and commercial real estate industries.

Trains Photo Charter at Osceola in September



Attached is a photo by Douglas Hildebrandt of the 325 taken yesterday.

Of course the GN logos will be added and the MNTX lettering blocked out. And yes, the white on the frame is correct for GN.

I'm coming out of "retirement" sort of — this September. I'm helping Trains Magazine on a photo charter on the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway on Sept. 11 and 12. This is an event I think you will be interested in, since it will be the first photo charter using the Minnesota Transportation Museum's Great Northern SDP40 No. 325.

Recall we used this unit on charters before, but it was still in BN green. Now it is in as-built GN Omaha orange and Pullman green. It was professionally painted at Albia, Iowa by RELCO and just returned to the Twin Cities last night. But that's not all. MTM has really been going to town on their passenger car fleet, and has repainted just about all their streamlined GN cars to match No. 325. So if all goes well, the charter will have 325 pulling a five-car GN streamliner in fresh paint!

Monday, Sept. 11

GN streamliner charter out of Osceola. That evening, a night photo session with GN 325 and Soo Line GP7 559, which is in classic Soo maroon and gold.

Tuesday Sept. 12

Two trains: a heavyweight train pulled by Soo 559, with just repainted NP triple combine 1102 and two Rock Island "Al Capone" coaches — which were also repainted. The same day, following behind the Soo train, a Burlington Northern freight, pulled by BN SD9 6234 a couple of freight cars and a BN caboose - That 70s Show! So you get two for one on each run-by. Technically this is not my charter. The prices and ticketing are being handled by Trains. You can get on board by following this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trains-magazine-photo-charter-minnesota-transportation-museum-osceola-wi-tickets-676836806107?aff=oddtcreator>

Hope to see you on board in September! —
Steve Glischinski Shoreview, MN

Silvis Shop Continues Work on Several Projects

By Steve Glischinski and Justin Young | July 11, 2023 provided by Rick Krenke Challenger, 2-10-2, Big Boy tender all see progress.



Work is progressing on Challenger No. 3985 and 2-10-2 No. 5511 at Railroading Heritage of Midwest America's shops in

SILVIS, Ill. – Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA) continues to make progress on several projects at its former Rock Island shop in Silvis. The group is planning to return to service former Union Pacific Challenger No. 3985, 2-10-2 No. 5511, and "Centennial" DDA40X diesel No. 6936.

National Railway Equipment, which shares the Silvis shop complex with RRHMA, has been working on No. 6936, making any repairs necessary to bring it back to operating condition. It is one of a class of 47 Centennials built for UP between 1969 and 1971, the largest diesel locomotives ever built in terms of size. They were named Centennials since their debut coincided with the Golden Spike Centennial in 1969. When repaired, No. 6936 will be the only operating Centennial of 13 preserved by UP. Work continues on Union Pacific No. 5511, the sole surviving UP 2-10-2. The fire brick has been removed to facilitate an upcoming inspection of the firebox. Safety valves have been removed and are on their way for rebuilding, and the dynamo (used to generate electricity for headlights and lighting on the locomotive) has also been removed. No. 5511 was built by Baldwin in 1923 and last ran in the early 1950s.

Challenger 4-6-6-4 No. 3985 has had its safety valves been removed and sent out for rebuild. Lube lines are in the process of being removed in order to have new ones made. Cylinder and valve heads have been removed for cleaning and inspection; the majority of the valve gear has been removed for the rear engine. Inspection of stay bolts and the firebox continues, along with cleaning and scrubbing on the rest of the engine and frame. The front flue sheet is being prepped for removal and replacement. The inside of the cab is having items removed it as well, in preparation for rebuilding. No. 3985 was built by American Locomotive Co. in 1943 and last operated in 2010 as part of UP's steam program. RRHMA has been contracted by Union Pacific to rebuild Big Boy No. 4014's original tender, converting it from coal to oil. No. 4014 currently uses No. 3985's tender, which will be moved to Silvis once 4014's tender rebuild is complete. Recently brand new wheels sets for the tender arrived at Silvis, but much work needs to be done to the tender before they can be installed.

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RRHMA was recently hired by CPKC to repaint former Kansas City Southern business *Veracruz*. RRHMA crews sanded out old lettering, repaired damaged exterior paneling, and then primed, painted, and lettered the car in CPKC colors of Auburn Night Mist to match other cars in the former Canadian Pacific fleet. The car retains KCS lettering on the letterboard.



Thursday, August 24, 2023, 9:12 AM

In this issue:

Many developments for passenger rail!

2nd Twin Cities to Chicago Train Update

St. Paul to Fargo corridor passenger rail study

Let's Celebrate - AAMN 10th Anniversary event

Please - renew your membership! We need your support!

1. Federal Railroad Administration Long Distance Study, and Corridor ID Program:

1. The FRA held its second stakeholder meeting in July 2023 for a progress report on the long-distance passenger rail study. As part of that study, the FRA is encouraging all stakeholders (All Aboard Minnesota is a non-profit stakeholder representing Amtrak passengers) to reach out to their audiences to provide input to the study. We sent out an email to our members and friends in early August asking them to provide input directly to the FRA. Many of you reported back that you did just that! Thank you!

That email along with the FRA study progress report and materials is posted on the [All Aboard Minnesota website in the news section](#). The third stakeholder meeting will be in January of 2024, where the FRA will reveal what routes will be included in the report to Congress, due in the summer of 2024. We will definitely keep you posted on these developments.

In October 2023, the FRA will reveal the first round of new and expanded state passenger rail corridors it has selected around the country. The FRA will provide \$500,000 for each corridor it selects and will work with state DOT's. It is our understanding that MnDOT selected the Northern Lights Express - Twin Cities to Duluth corridor in its initial application to update the final design and engineering study.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission will hold its annual meeting in late Sept. in which eight Mid-west state DOT's will report on their passenger rail corridor initiatives. As we did last year, AAMN members will attend, and we will report on what we learn.

Between the FRA long distance study, the Corridor ID program, and the new trains for Minnesota such as the 2nd train to Chicago and the Northern Lights Express service between the Twin Cities and Duluth, there are a lot of developments now and in the future to be watching for. We will certainly keep you posted.

2. 2nd Twin Cities to Chicago train update:

Talk has surfaced that the 2nd Twin Cities to Chicago train could begin service as early as next month, but All Aboard Minnesota received information recently that the operating agreements between the states have not yet been signed. We also learned that the 2nd train will be an extension of a Hiawatha train (between Chicago and Milwaukee) and will be comprised of legacy Horizon equipment. The schedule will be close to what we have previously published, with an eastbound departure from St. Paul at around 11:30am, and a westbound departure from Chicago of approximately 10:30am. Running times will be around seven- and one-half hours. Of course, anything can change and once we know for sure when service begins, we will send out an alert, along with postings on Facebook and our site. Stay Tuned!!

[Here is the 2nd train schedule as we believe right now](#)

3. St. Paul to Fargo/Moorhead passenger rail corridor study update:

In a recent meeting with MnDOT, All Aboard Minnesota learned that the study will be in two phases:

A. The first study will be an analysis of the Northstar Commuter Rail service, being commissioned now and scheduled to be presented to the Minnesota legislature in February 2024.

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B. The second phase of the study will be an analysis of the entire St. Paul to Fargo corridor, and as we understand it a recommendation how to serve this corridor. The study will be commissioned in early 2024 and will be presented to the Minnesota legislature in early 2025. All Aboard Minnesota has long advocated for daytime passenger service in this corridor, currently served by the Empire Builder, and strongly believes the corridor could support more frequencies. This could be impacted by the FRA long distance study if the report recommends restoration of the North Coast Hiawatha, which as of right now, seems fairly likely.

4. Save the date and Let's Celebrate!

2023 officially marks 10 years for All Aboard Minnesota as a 501 (C) (3) organization! A celebration event is planned for **Saturday November 18** during the lunch hour, and we will provide a light lunch and an exciting program! It will be free for all of our members and friends. We will send out an invite to all of our members and friends in late September containing all the details.

We could not have achieved this milestone without your generosity, activism and support. We are very grateful to all of our members, friends, colleagues, and partner organizations. ***We hope to see you there, stay tuned!***

5. Please - renew your membership!

We have sent several membership renewal mailings during the past months, but many of you have not responded. We truly value and appreciate your membership and we hope you renew. If your membership has expired in 2021, and 2022, and you do not renew by the end of October, we will delete your name from our rosters unfortunately.

You can easily check your membership status online: [Check your membership online](#) or simply contact us at: allaboardminnesota@gmail.com. We are happy to help.

For those of you who have renewed, thank you! And a sincere welcome to the new members that have joined us recently, we are grateful to have you with us!

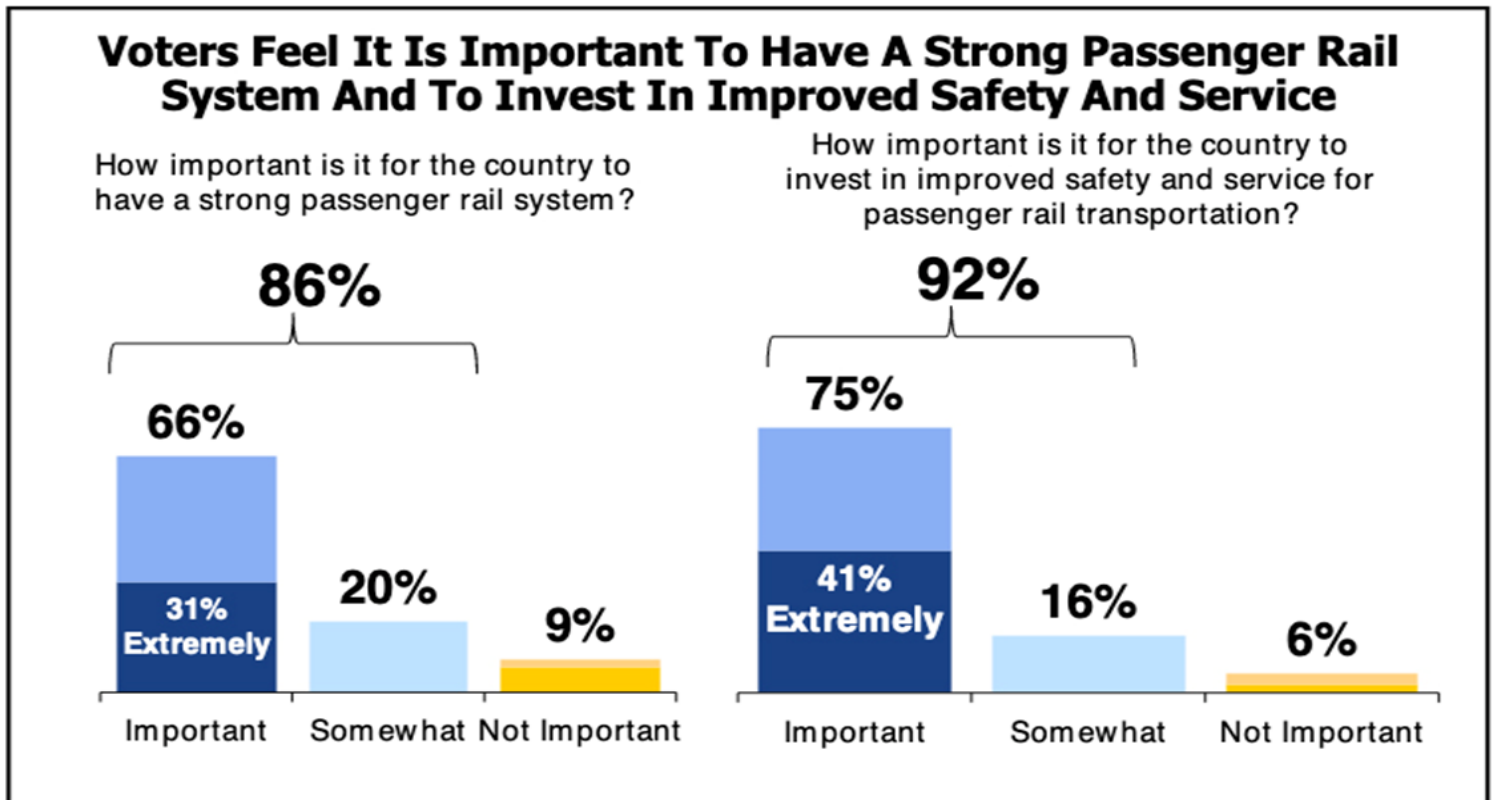
www.allaboardminnesota.org



-----AMTRAK News-----

Amtrak Releases Survey Showing Support for Passenger Rail

[By](#) | August 8, 2023 Maj



Priority of those polled support infrastructure investments, want more local service The Mellman Group

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WASHINGTON — A survey commissioned by Amtrak has found strong support for spending on passenger rail service and infrastructure, with most of those responding calling for more passenger spending in their own states. The poll conducted by the Mellman Group surveyed 1,000 registered voters. Among its results: 92% support investment in passenger rail safety and service improvements, including 41% who consider it extremely important; 86% believe in the importance of a strong American passenger rail system, including 31% who rate it extremely important; 83% support passenger rail investments included in the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act, including 58% who strongly support those investments; And 81% want their state to invest in bringing more passenger rail service to their local area, including 50% who strongly support the idea. The summary of the survey, [available here](#), indicates these majorities exist across key demographics including age, gender, geography, and race. “These survey results confirm Amtrak is on the right path with our commitment to deliver a new era of rail for America,” Amtrak President Roger Harris said in [a press release](#).

Southwest Chief, Texas Eagle Compared: Lounge Space, Dining Options Make a Difference — Analysis

[By Bob Johnston](#) | August 4, 2023 Onboard crews generally handle sold-out trains with professionalism



The eastbound Texas Eagle prepares to stop at Marshall, Texas, on July 21, 2023. The train has one sleeping car, two coaches (one a coach-baggage with no lower-level seating) and a Cross Country café diner-lounge. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — As *Trains News Wire* has been reporting, a dearth of serviceable Superliners on Amtrak’s long-distance trains has limited mobility options in a year that has seen a significant surge in travel demand. Sellouts in coaches and sleeping cars for at least one segment of a route have been the rule, not the exception. A significant factor affecting the quality of a recent journey on the *Southwest Chief* and *Texas Eagle* was the ability to deliver a passenger train’s inherent advantage over air and auto travel: space that doesn’t confine travelers to scrunched, seat-belted purgatory. Here’s a look at some of the contrasts.

Southwest Chief Sightseer Lounge invaluable; dining car open to all

From a logistical standpoint, riding from Chicago to a rendezvous with an overnight bus at Newton, Kan., [see “Heartland Flyer’s challenging connections ...,” *News Wire*, July 31, 2023] is logical in coach, even when \$492 roomettes are available (which they weren’t on July 19, 2023). Two transition sleepers with lower vestibules, coupled back to back, subbed for a second standard sleeping car at the end of the train, symptomatic of Amtrak’s equipment shortage. This Chief also featured a Superliner dining car, Sightseer Lounge, and three coaches.



Aiden Rothenbuhter (left) attacks Amtrak’s signature flatiron steak while Alex Heuchan samples the pan fried Chicken breast in the Southwest Chief’s dining car. The scouts are traveling coach to the Philmont Scout Ranch; the Chief is one of the Amtrak trains that makes dining-car meals available to coach passengers. Bob Johnston



The Southwest Chief’s Sightseer Lounge is busy as the train heads west across Illinois on July 19, 2023. Such communal space is one of the key attractions of long-distance train travel. Bob Johnston

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"We have a sold-out train, so if you are traveling together, please sit together," announced a conductor, but Los Angeles-based coach attendants Amanda and Calli had already grouped single travelers with each other and families together at boarding by assigning seats in the destination-appropriate car. Groups included three scout troops headed to Raton, N.M., for the Philmont Scout Ranch and nine members of an Amish family traveling from upstate New York to Topeka, Kan. Seat checks displayed in the third, "shorts" coach out of Chicago showed passengers destined for Newton, Topeka, Lawrence, and Hutchinson in Kansas; Kingman, Ariz.; La Plata, Mo.; and Raton (one of the scout troops). Passengers for Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and Kansas City, Mo., were given space in the other two cars.

A Superliner coach seat's pitch of about 50 inches (airlines typically average 32 inches) provides legroom to stretch out compared to state-supported or Northeast Corridor trains or even single-level Amfleet II long-distance coaches in the East. At night, this allows enough room to pull out a folding leg rest from under the seat. Packing a pillow increases overnight comfort.

Though Superliner coaches are comparatively roomy, there is no substitute for spaciousness in the Sightseer Lounge that invites camaraderie not possible anywhere else on the train or other travel modes. With sun streaming overhead as trees and landscape rush by ceiling-to-table windows, the car acts as a welcome gathering place away from the regimentation of seats.

The same can be said for the Chief's dining car. Coach customers are invited to walk there after meals-included sleeper passengers are given their choice of seatings. The flat \$45 pay-in-advance pricing at dinner may be steep by historical standards, but Alexis, the lead service attendant, is quick to note while taking payment that the cost with alcoholic beverage included is on par with Los Angeles and Chicago restaurants (breakfast is \$20, lunch \$25, and all kids' meals are \$20). The tab didn't deter two scouts from an Indianapolis suburb. Though not joined at dinner by their compatriots, they devoured the flat iron steak and pan-roasted chicken breast entrees and lauded the cocoanut shrimp appetizer.

Texas Eagle Overcrowded Without an Escape



A third Superliner coach added at St. Louis receives the Eagle's Chicago-bound passengers on July 22. With little room to roam, most will remain sequestered in the car during the trip. Passengers for intermediate destinations were given the remaining seats in the train's other two coaches. Bob Johnston

Four other Superliner-equipped long-distance trains operating west of Chicago that offer traditional dining car meals, the *California Zephyr*, *Empire Builder*, *Sunset Limited*, and *Coast Starlight*, also have Sightseer Lounges. The *City of New Orleans* usually sports a Sightseer but sleeping car passengers are served "flexible" meals; coach passengers are kept out of the diner, if the train has one.

The *Texas Eagle* used to offer a separate dining car and lounge, two sleeping cars, and a transition sleeper. Amtrak management, however, reduced it three years ago (the pandemic, you know) to one sleeping car, one standard coach and one baggage coach between San Antonio and St. Louis, along with a "Cross Country Cafe" combination diner-lounge. A third coach operates between Chicago and St. Louis, since the *Eagle* augments *Lincoln Service* offerings.

The current arrangement is completely inadequate. Even with the extra St. Louis-Chicago coach, *Trains News Wire* observed that the train leaving Marshall, Texas, on July 21 had been sold out for more than a week in advance on the Bloomington-Normal, Ill.-Chicago segment, choking off potential demand for many long-distance trips. This is not unusual. There were enough Chicago-bound passengers at St. Louis to completely fill the extra coach.

But the biggest drawback is the constant crush of passengers attempting to frequent the cafe car. For more than an hour both at dinner and breakfast, the line stretched most of the way through the adjacent coach while Megan, the lead service attendant, completed transactions and secured the food. She did get some preparation assistance from the diner's "chef," who otherwise solely served sleeper passengers meals in a bowl. Despite the never-ending crush, Megan maintained a patient, unflappable demeanor and passengers in the line respected the challenge she faced. Approaching Chicago, a fellow crew member announced that this was Megan's first solo trip following training. Bravo!

Space was available for seating in the "diner" section of the Cross Country Cafe, but people purchasing meals and drinks after standing in line were not allowed to sit there, and passengers were warned that they had to return to coach seats after eating if they did manage to find space in the small cafe section.

This *Texas Eagle* downgrading is reversible if management has the will to devote enough resources to restore a Sightseer lounge and more capacity to the train. It serves more large intermediate population centers than the *Southwest Chief* or any other western over-nighter except perhaps the *Coast Starlight*. Until that happens, Amtrak is leaving revenue and passenger comfort on the table.

NTSB Says Track Conditions Caused Fatal 2021 Empire Builder Derailment (updated)

[By](#) | July 27, 2023 **Safety agency calls for autonomous track geometry equipment on all trains**

WASHINGTON — Track conditions led to the fatal derailment of Amtrak's *Empire Builder* in Joplin, Mont., in September 2021, the National Transportation Safety Board said in its final accident report released today (July 27) Three passengers were killed and 49 other people were injured in the derailment of the westbound train on BNSF's Hi Line 50 miles west of Havre, Mont., about 3:56 p.m. on Sept. 25, 2021.

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Track conditions led to the fatal Sept. 25, 2021, derailment of the Empire Builder, the NTSB has concluded. Billings Gazette via NTSB



A still from the Empire Builder's in-cab camera shows a track defect that played a part in the train's derailment. NTSB

"This tragedy is a powerful reminder that there's no substitute for robust track inspection practices, which can prevent derailments by identifying track conditions that may deteriorate over time," NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy said in a press release accompanying release of the report. "I implore track owners, who are responsible for the safety of their routes, to ensure inspectors have the time, support, and resources needed to do their work, which is essential to rail safety."

Among the report's recommendations is a call for all trains to be equipped with autonomous track geometry systems to detect defects. [In its report summary](#), the NTSB says factors including worn rail, vertical track deflection (the up-and-down movement of track as a train passes) at a four-bolt rail joint, subgrade instability, and track misalignment led to the derailment. It also said that, had a locomotive equipped with automated track geometry inspection traveled the route earlier in the day, the "deteriorating track condition" could have been identified, giving BNSF the opportunity to address the problem.

The track misalignment — a kink in a curve the train hit at 81.5 mph — was one of the key items revealed when the NTSB released the accident document earlier this year [see ["Empire Builder encounter track defect ..."](#) *Trains News Wire*, Feb. 22, 2023].

Specifically, investigators found that a wheel-climb derailment occurred through a combination of worn rail allowing the wheel flange to make contact with the joint bar at the point of the rail joint; the vertical track deflection that caused the train to rock and sway; a track misalignment in the curve of 2 to 4 inches; and the subgrade instability which contributed to track movement.

The board also said the fact some windows did not stay in place when the Superliner cars rolled over contributed to the severity of injuries, and renewed a call for performance standards for window retention systems to prevent passenger ejections. Investigators also found the cars' compartmentalization did not adequately protect passengers from injury.

The call for autonomous track geometry systems on all trains is just one of the new recommendations from the board. Others call on the Federal Railroad Administration to set a limit for maximum acceptable rail wear; to establish requirements among railroads in which predetermined alerts from track inspection systems would require an immediate slow order until a walking inspection is performed and repairs are completed, if needed; and to expand an existing regulation on welded rail to all welded rail joints. Other recommendations call on BNSF to address and repair the subgrade instability at the derailment site.

Along with reiterating its call for window-retention standards, the NTSB also called on the FRA to study causes of passenger injuries in derailments and consider potential mitigating measures such as seat belts.

Amtrak said in a statement that it "appreciates the opportunity to participate in the investigation and we will review the recommendations. Amtrak will continue to work with all stakeholders to improve rail safety for the traveling public."

The full report [is available here](#), and the accident do

Amtrak Capacity Challenges Continue, but Some Routes See Improvement

By Bob Johnston | July 5, 2023 Website reservation changes provide less information on sleeping car availability



The Capitol Limited arrives into Chicago on July 4, 2023, with two revenue Superliners — one coach and one sleeping car — that bracket a diner-lounge. Bob Johnston



On Monday, July 3, the Chicago-bound Cardinal approaches Dyer, Ind., with two Sightseer Lounge cars fresh from Beech Grove leading the tri-weekly's short consist of two coaches, a cafe, one sleeper, and one baggage-dorm. James L. Burd

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Roomette No. 8 on car 9211 (right foreground) now has a clean window after a stop at the high level-platform at Raleigh, N.C. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — Passenger rail continues to be left out of travel discussions, in part because Amtrak lacks equipment to handle everyday cross-country demand, not to mention potential traffic surges triggered by holidays flights grounded by bad weather. Meanwhile, revisions to Amtrak's reservation system make it harder for travelers seeking sleeping car rooms to make informed decisions on how to get the best fare. Here's an update on capacity and other issues facing those considering long-distance travel.

Capacity changes, timekeeping challenges

There has been improvement on some routes since post-Memorial Day *Trains* News Wire reports [see "[Amtrak continues to provide mobility in uneven fashion](#)," June 1, 2023, and "[Overcoming Amtrak's equipment shortage](#) ...," June 2, 2023]. A third Viewliner sleeper has recently been added to the New York section of the *Lake Shore Limited* (diverted from the New York-Miami *Silver Meteor*, as in years past). But the New York/Boston-Chicago train still runs with only five coaches west of Albany-Rensselaer, N.Y., compared to six in pre-COVID-19 pandemic years. The result is continued sellouts out of New York.

Curiously, the *Capitol Limited* has lost one of two Superliner sleeping cars since Memorial Day and still operates with only one Superliner coach. This means east-west connectivity is virtually non-existent, when also taking into account the makeup of the triweekly *Cardinal*: two Amfleet II coaches, one Viewliner sleeper, and a handful of roomettes sold in the train's baggage-dorm. On News Wire's recent journey from Florida [see "[Dining experience worthy of Viewliners](#) ...," News Wire, July 5, 2023], Amtrak travel through Washington, D.C., wasn't possible, making a United Airlines flight from Reagan National Airport the fallback choice.

In the West, Amtrak is still missing one of four *Coast Starlight* equipment sets following a highway grade crossing collision last week [see "[Coast Starlight derails](#) ...," News Wire, June 28, 2023], resulting in the train's continued cancellation south of Emeryville, Calif., through at least July 8. *Pacific Surfliner* service between Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo resumed June 30. The *Southwest Chief* has gained a third Superliner coach and been spotted with additional sleeping cars, though the *Chief*, *California Zephyr*, and *Empire Builder* continue to suffer significant delays between Chicago and the West Coast.

The *Builder's* latest setback involved a July 4 detour over its pre-Amtrak Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (now BNSF Railway) route between Chicago and La Crosse, Wis., to get around a freight derailment [see "[CPKC train derails](#) ...," News Wire, July 4, 2023]. As of today (Wednesday, July 5), both eastbound and westbound trains encountered substantial delays waiting for clear track through the wreck site. An equally route-disruptive incident occurred July 2 when unspecified mechanical issues inflicted an 8-hour delay at Chicago on the westbound departure. It short-turned at Spokane (passengers were bused to and from Seattle and Portland, Ore.) but the eastbound train was still running 4 hours late today.

Sleeping car sellouts difficult to discern

Amtrak recently altered its fare display on www.amtrak.com to show rates for the different sleeping car accommodations, but in so doing removed the customer's ability to discern how many rooms might be available. Fares for each type were previously accompanied by an "at this price" qualifier. This served a similar function to the sellout percentages offered for coach tickets on all routes with reserved seating.

Demand usually varies by day and city pair. With accommodations extremely limited, Amtrak tends to keep prices high according to the historical demand, or booking curve, for each train on a specific date. Previously, if a fare was in an upper "bucket," or level, and there were "4 available at this price," there was a good chance inventory managers or algorithm-driven programs might reduce the fare if fewer travelers purchased the space as the departure date approaches.

This is exactly what happened on the News Wire trip June 22 from Orlando, Fla., to Alexandria, Va. A roomette was originally booked with 25,063 Amtrak Guest Reward points — \$706 in cash — on June 8. But on June 16, the fare dropped to \$508 with the notation, "1 room available at this price."

A quick call to Amtrak's reservation number netted a refund of 7,029 points and a room switch from No. 5 in car 9210 to No. 8 in 9211. The change was especially good news, because even-numbered Viewliner roomettes are always on the left side, meaning a dirty window could be washed at Raleigh, the lone station with a high-level platform south of Baltimore. After the points purchase, the Orlando-Alexandria fare quoted to other prospective travelers rose one level to \$607.

It is still possible to know if you are getting a "deal" by checking adjacent dates (as shown by the difference between a comparison at noon today of \$508 Orlando-Alexandria price on July 7 versus \$798 on July 9), but gauging a sense of urgency to act is now missing — and clearly existed for both those prices. By 6 p.m., the fare on July 7 had risen to \$706, and roomettes on July 9 were sold out. This the latest example of Amtrak deciding passengers don't need some form of information — joining onboard maps, route guides, and printable grid timetables.

Amtrak Begins Process to Upgrade Maintenance Facilities at Seattle, Three Northeast Corridor Sites [By](#) | July 17, 2023 **Passenger operator publishes Requests for Qualifications**

WASHINGTON — Amtrak has published Requests for Qualifications for maintenance facilities in Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Seattle, part of a program build or upgrade more than 20 sites nationally for new trainsets.

Two requests are currently active. One is for Seattle, where Amtrak is hoping to gain permission to close a street, which would a significant expansion of capacity [see [“Amtrak, BNSF seek closure of Seattle street ...,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, June 21, 2023]. The other is for facilities at Southampton Yard in Boston, Sunnyside Yard in New York, and Ivy City Yard in Washington.

“These new facilities and modifications at existing rail yards will help modernize our maintenance practices and ensure a seamless transition from Amtrak’s aging fleet to modern, state-of-the-art equipment,” Laura Mason, Amtrak executive vice president, capital delivery, said in [a press release](#).

----- BRIGHTLINE NEWS -----

Coast Guard Revises Stuart Bridge Directive, Addressing Brightline Issues

[By Bob Johnston](#) | August 11, 2023 **New plan specifies certain “bridge open” periods, removes twice-hourly requirement**



A northbound Florida East Coast freight heads across the single track St. Lucie River drawbridge at Stuart, Fla., on January 12, 2017. The U.S. Coast Guard has published new rules governing the opening of the bridge. Bob Johnston



A Brightline qualification run approaches the company's Orlando International Airport on a double-track segment June 22, 2023. Schedules devised to avoid meets on the single-track portions of the 125 mph Orlando-Cocoa route would have been disrupted by the Coast Guard's previous plan for the Stuart bridge. Bob Johnston

STUART, Fla. — The U.S. Coast Guard has issued new rules for a Florida East Coast Railway drawbridge, removing a requirement to open the bridge for up to 15 minutes twice each daylight hour and striking a compromise between boating and rail traffic. The change is crucial for the planned start of Brightline passenger service between South Florida and Orlando in September. The revised “temporary deviation,” effective Aug. 15, strikes the current rule requiring opening the single-track bridge across the Okeechobee Waterway of the St. Lucie River at Stuart to marine traffic at 15 and 45 minutes past each hour, and remaining open for up to 15 minutes. That plan gave boaters priority without regard to movement of long FEC freights or the schedules of 16 daily Brightline passenger round trips set to begin crossing the bridge next month [see [“Coast Guard bridge plan ignores practices elsewhere ...,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, June 18, 2023].

The new arrangement accounts for the twice-hourly passage of Brightline trains, whose crossing times at Stuart are driven in part by the need to avoid conflicts on the 125-mph, single-track segment between the FEC main line at Cocoa, Fla., and a point where double tracks begin east of the Orlando International Airport. The rest of the route south of Cocoa to West Palm Beach was double-tracked and equipped with positive train control for 110-mph top speeds over the last four years.

A long-term solution at Stuart is likely to involve a second rail bridge to eliminate the short single-track segment. “The new temporary deviation is the result of several parties working together for the good of the region and the good of the state,” FEC and Brightline said in a joint statement to News Wire. “Ultimately, the revision will allow mariners to have more than equal access to the waterway while allowing for successful movement of passenger and freight trains. We’re already working with federal, state and local partners to accelerate the schedule for a new bridge.”

The new conditions, [published in the Federal Register today](#) (Friday, Aug. 11), maintain predictability by providing a 10-minute period for boaters at the top of each hour between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. An additional 5 minutes of navigational time is added at 8:55 a.m. Monday through Sunday and at 9:55 a.m., 10:55 a.m., 12:55 p.m., and 4:55 p.m. weekends. The bridge will normally be open if there is no rail activity. But it may close for trains and remain closed for as long as 50 consecutive minutes as long as it can raise for the specified windows. Overnight, between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., the closure maximum increases to 1 hour.

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Personnel making dispatching decisions at DispatchCo, the independent company owned jointly by FEC and Brightline, need to be able to expedite passenger trains across the single track at Stuart to maintain schedules while adjusting freight operations so the long, slower freights don't converge either when passenger trains are due or when the bridge is scheduled to be open. The new order mandates no more than a 5-minute delay for bridge openings if a train is approaching at a scheduled opening time. Additionally, a bridge tender must be stationed at the bridge from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily to provide estimated times of openings and closures; a mobile app and telephone line is required to furnish the same information 24 hours a day. The new deviation order is in effect Aug. 15 to Dec. 17. It is considered temporary because it will be used to determine the long-term bridge operating rules. As in previous periods, the Coast Guard is encouraging public comments at <https://www.regulations.gov>. Commenters type USCG-2022-0222, in the search box and click "Search," look for this document in the "Search Results" column, click on it, then click on the Comment option.

Brightline Delays New Miami-Orlando Ticket Sales to Sept. 15

[By Bob Johnston](#) | August 7, 2023 Revenue service debut could now come any time after Labor Day weekend



A qualification run leaves Brightline's Orlando International Airport station on June 22, 2023, the day after the company announced completion of all construction. Bob Johnston

ORLANDO — Brightline is no longer selling tickets for Sept. 1-14 trips between West Palm Beach and Orlando, but that doesn't necessarily mean the first day of revenue service will be Sept. 15.

Responding to a *Trains News Wire* inquiry, Brightline issued the following statement late today (Monday, Aug. 7):

"We're working through the final stages of certification and crew testing, but it is apparent that we won't hit our opening weekend as planned (Sept 1-5). Knowing it's a holiday weekend, we want to give guests as much time as possible to adjust their travel plans. We have already started engaging with them and will refund their tickets and provide a premium credit 'on us.' We hope they will rebook and enjoy the inaugural Brightline experience. We look forward to announcing an initial revenue service date as soon as possible."

Inventory for the 16 daily round trips in early September was removed from the company's website on Friday. Although an official launch date has never been disclosed, tickets had been on sale for trips beginning Sept. 1 since mid-May, when schedules were also first published [see "Brightline tickets now on sale for Miami-Orlando service," *News Wire* May 17, 2023].

Since then, crew qualification runs, testing of positive train control, and calibrating highway crossing starts at speeds up to 110 mph have continued on recently completed east-west and north-south corridors [see, "Brightline celebrates completion of Orlando route construction," *News Wire* June 21, 2023].

The Federal Railroad Administration requires that a sequential series of tests be completed before it certifies that revenue service can begin. So even though Brightline started selling tickets in May for trips beginning in September, the company never established a revenue service launch date — and still hasn't.

Some testing had to be postponed for a variety of reasons. In June, the U.S. Coast Guard unilaterally withdrew an existing agreement for operation of Florida East Coast's single-track St. Lucie River drawbridge at Stuart, Fla., that introduced a conflict with proposed passenger schedules [see "Coast Guard to impose twice-hourly bridge openings on Brightline route," *News Wire* June 9, 2023]. Negotiations between Brightline, FEC, the FRA, Coast Guard, and marine interests are continuing, and 110-mph testing and community safety outreach continues this week in a 41-mile stretch south of Cocoa [see "Brightline testing set ...," *News Wire*, July 26, 2023]. Tickets are now on sale for trips departing Orlando from Sept. 15, 2023, to March 9, 2024. Patrons who booked seats in early September are receiving emails advising them of the cancellations and full refunds. They are being gifted premium-class credits for future use, "equivalent to the party size originally purchased;" a 35% discount on an Avis car rental if the passenger still needs to travel on a cancelled date; and will be notified "ahead of everyone else" when the first day of revenue service is announced.

Individual questions are being answered [at Brightline's "Help Center."](#)

-----CPKC NEWS-----



KANSAS CITY — Canadian Pacific Kansas City unveiled its new locomotive livery today after tallying the results of employee voting on [five potential designs](#).

The winning choice — selected by 40% of the more than 5,327 employees who participated in the online survey — was option one. In a separate vote of shareholders at the railway's investor day today, 40% also chose the same livery, CEO Keith Creel says.

The livery is CP red, features the CPKC beaver and shield logo on the long hood, and ends with a splash of gold and black that begins at the radiator section of the locomotive.

CP 4-6-4 No. 2816 to Embark on Canada-U.S.-Mexico Tour in 2024

The historic locomotive will depart Calgary, Alberta, on the one-year anniversary of the CPKC merger



Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 makes a test run in Calgary, Alberta. CPKC



Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 will set out from Calgary to Mexico City on April 14, 2024. CPKC

CALGARY, Alberta – Mark your calendars for April 2024. That’s when Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 will embark on a celebratory tour of the Canadian Pacific Kansas City system from Calgary to Mexico City.

The Final Spike Steam Tour will depart Calgary on April 14, the one-year anniversary of the merger of CP and Kansas City Southern.

Along the way the 2816 and CPKC business train will be on display in Moose Jaw, Sask.; Minot, N.D.; St. Paul, Minn.; Bensenville, Ill.; Davenport, Iowa; Kansas City, Mo.; Shreveport, La.; Laredo, Texas; and Mexico City.

A full, detailed schedule will be released early next year. Dubbed the Empress, the 2816 was built by Montreal Locomotive Works in 1930. CP acquired the 2816 in 1998 and returned the locomotive to service in 2001 after an extensive overhaul that included converting it to burn oil. It’s been in storage since 2012.

CPKC had initially planned for the 2816 trip to run this summer, and the locomotive has been running main line tests this month after a successful stationary steam test last month.

[More information is available on CPKC’s website.](#)

CP No. 2816 Continues Break-in Runs

[By](#) | August 10, 2023 Preparations continue for three-nation trip in 2024

CALGARY — Canadian Pacific No. 2816 has now been run for about 700 miles since returning to operation, CPKC’s Jonathan J. Morris, manager, operating practices-steam, says in a post on [the locomotive’s Facebook page](#), and is “running like the wind.” The locomotive was returned to steam June 18 and made its first short run June 29, beginning preparations for the planned trip next year to celebrate the first anniversary of the CPKC merger [see [“CP 4-6-4 No. 2816 to embark on Canada-U.S.-Mexico tour ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, July 18, 2023].

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The 1930 product of the Montreal Locomotive Works has traveled as far afield as Lethbridge, Alberta, about 115 miles south of Calgary, and has operated up to 250 miles in a day, that occurring on Monday, Aug. 7. Doyle McCormack and Bill Stetler, who rebuilt the locomotive's boiler and were otherwise involved in its original restoration completed in 2001, were on hand for the recent test runs, Morris said

CP Reeseville Train Derailment Jul. 4, 2023 Provided by John Goodman



REESEVILLE, Wis. (WKOW) — Authorities in Dodge Co. are responding to a train derailment in Reeseville.

Dodge County Sheriff Dale Schmidt said in a Facebook post the train derailed near the village of Reeseville. He said it's a Canadian Pacific train, and 25 to 30 cars derailed. None of the cars have hazardous materials, and there's no threat to the community as a result of the derailment.

Schmidt said because of the derailment, Main Street is closed to traffic. He warns it may be a long term closure.

A Reeseville business owner told 27 News the train derailed near their property on Main Street between Commerce Drive and Jackson Street.

REESEVILLE, Wis. -- Emergency crews are responding to a train derailment near Reeseville in Dodge County Tuesday afternoon. The incident happened around 1:55 p.m. The Dodge County Sheriff's Office said the Canadian Pacific train had roughly 25 to 30 cars derail with no hazardous material involved.

The railroad crossing at Main Street in Reeseville is closed while crews respond to the incident. Drivers should take an alternate route. There is no threat to the community, the sheriff's office said. Canadian Pacific did not immediately respond to a request for information.

News 3 Now has a crew headed to the scene; this report will be updated as more information becomes available.

[Dodge Co. Sheriff: 25 to 30 train cars derailed near Reeseville | News | wkow.com](#)

Authorities Provide More Details on Reeseville Train Derailment

By [Abigail Leavins](#) Published: Jul. 4, 2023 at 3:51 PM CDT

REESEVILLE, Wis. (WMTV) - A train derailed Tuesday around 2 p.m. near the Village of Reeseville, according to the Dodge County Sheriff's Office.

The derailment resulted in the Canadian Pacific train having 29 cars off the track.

The Reeseville road crossing was closed to traffic on County Highway G/Main St. Officials estimated it would take 3 to 6 hours to clear the roads.

Roads reopened earlier than expected, according to the sheriff's office around 7 p.m. They said cleanup will continue and the public should stay off the railroad tracks.

Authorities responded to the crash, and they say there were no injuries. The train was mostly carrying grain, and there were no hazardous materials.

"When you think of train derailments, we've got a blessing here today in that everything is minimal, other than a lot of property damage," Dodge County Sheriff Dale J. Schmidt said.

Schmidt also said he was thankful for the first responders who were able to respond to the scene immediately. He expressed gratitude for their effort on a hot day, and a holiday.

Lucas Worth, a Reeseville resident was surprised and frustrated that this would happen in a small, peaceful town like Reeseville on Independence Day.

"It's the 4th of July and nobody expected this to happen," Worth said. "A day like today is supposed to be with your family." Worth said he has never seen anything like this.

"You never really know what can happen," Worth said. "But in this town, definitely not. This is probably the wildest thing I've ever seen in a little town like this. I've lived in plenty of small towns in my life. This is pretty crazy"

The Dodge County Sheriff's office said in a press conference at 5 p.m. that they are working with the DNR to see if there is any impact to the environment. They have not seen any impacts at this point.

The sheriff's office had asked the public to stay clear of the area.

"We are asking the public to stay out of Reeseville," Sheriff Schmidt said. "Allow the residents to get around, there are some backstreets that they can get around. But if you're not from Reeseville, stay out of the village for today."

The cause of the train derailment is still under investigation.

[Click here](#) to download the NBC15 News app or our NBC15 First Alert weather app.

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Amtrak Delay's From: "RAY BENSEN" <rayande@comcast.net>

Cc:

Sent: Tue, Jul 4, 2023 at 4:10 PM

Subject: Train derailment reported near Reeseville; 25-30 cars off tracks, sheriff's office says 8(2) and 7(4)
CPKC freight derailment near Columbus, Wisconsin
AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

As of 3:34 pm CT, Empire Builder Train 8 & 28, which departed Seattle (SEA)/Portland (PDX) on 7/2, is stopped east of La Crosse (LSE) due to a freight train interference. Updates to follow.

AmtrakAlerts

✓@AmtrakAlerts

As of 3:17 pm CT, Empire Builder Train 7 & Train 27, which is scheduled to depart Chicago (CHI) on 7/4, are currently delayed departing Chicago due to a disabled freight train on the tracks. Lengthy delays are anticipated. Updates to follow.

CPKC Issues Annual Grain Service Outlook

By | August 2, 2023 Railroad warns BC port strikes could have impact on grain movements



CPKC has issued its annual Grain Service Outlook Report. David Lassen

CALGARY — Recovery from British Columbia's port strikes could last into 2024, potentially impacting grain movements, CPKC said this week in issuing 2023-24 Grain Service Outlook Report.

The annual report outlines plans to handle Canada's grain harvest for export.

"As we look toward the upcoming 2023-2024 crop year, CPKC is once again well prepared to move Canada's grain crop to market, just as we have throughout our 142-year history," CPKC CEO Keith Creel said [in a statement](#) accompanying release of the report. "We have the capacity and the team to deliver for our grain customers and the Canadian economy during the upcoming crop year."

The railroad has completed purchase of more than 5,900 higher-capacity grain hoppers, costing more than \$500 million, as part of its efforts to handle grain traffic. CPKC says completion of the merger will provide Canadian grain shippers with access to new markets in Mexico, as well as new options for shipping grain for export.

The full grain service report [is available here](#).

CPKC-CSX Deal over Meridian & Bigbee Shortcut Finally Realizes Mike Haverty's Vision:

Analysis By Bill Stephens | July 10, 2023 The onetime KCS CEO sought to tie CSX and KCS together via Meridian, Miss



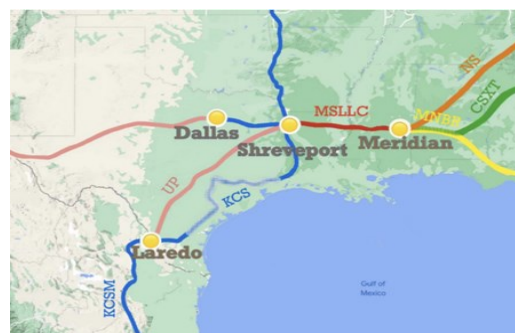
Kansas City Southern container train I-ATDA2 rolls through Meehan, Miss., on the Meridian Speedway on April 22, 2022. Dylan Jones



CPKC and CSX Transportation will acquire Genesee & Wyoming's Meridian & Bigbee to create a new corridor linking the Southeast with Texas and Mexico. G&W



Former Kansas City Southern CEO Mike Haverty visited the Panama Canal Railway in June 2023. Mike Haverty



The Meridian & Bigbee acquisition will allow CSX and CPKC to interchange directly in Alabama. CSX and CPKC

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The CPKC-CSX direct interchange via Meridian comes with some competitive wrinkles.

First, the deal does not make Norfolk Southern happy. The Meridian-Shreveport, La., route is part of the NS-KCS Meridian Speedway joint venture that dates to 2006. NS gained a 30% interest in the KCS line in exchange for investing \$300 million in capital improvements. Under the joint venture, NS has the exclusive right to interchange certain types of intermodal traffic with KCS, and now CPKC, at Meridian. The exclusivity agreement covers NS intermodal traffic moving between the Southeast and Dallas, as well as transcontinental intermodal traffic between the Southeast and West Coast via Shreveport or Dallas/Fort Worth.

[CSX unsuccessfully sought to blow up the exclusivity arrangement](#) during regulatory review of the CP-KCS merger. But thanks to the new agreement with CPKC, CSX will be able to route intermodal traffic between the Southeast and CPKC terminals in Kenedon, Texas, outside Houston; Laredo, Texas; and in Mexico. The service will be new competition for NS.

Second, CSX currently hands its Mexico-bound traffic to Union Pacific at New Orleans. UP then hauls it to CPKC de Mexico at the Laredo gateway. Count on CSX cutting out the UP middleman and diverting this traffic to the faster and presumably far more predictable CPKC route via Meridian.

Finally, during the CP-KCS merger hearings all of the other Class I railroads raised concerns that CPKC would crimp their existing KCS and CP interchanges as part of an effort to unfairly divert traffic to the new combined CP-KCS network. Ironically, here's CPKC creating a new gateway with CSX.

Creel says CPKC is interested in growing with both Norfolk Southern and CSX via the Meridian Speedway. And a CPKC spokesman says the railway will honor its agreement to continue handling NS intermodal traffic over the Speedway.

"This is a BIG deal," Haverty says of the three-railroad agreement. "This is exactly what I proposed to [CSX CEO] John Snow well over 20 years ago. I told him we could both buy this line and it would give CSX access to the Meridian line, the shortest, fastest and safest rail route between the Southeast and Southwest U.S."

The railroads held meetings but nothing came of them.

"Why didn't such a logical concept become reality back then? Because the two dominant railroads in the East were afraid to do anything with KCS that would clearly upset the two dominant railroads in the West," Haverty says. "The big boys in the West both wanted KCS to disappear and did not want the big boys in the East doing business with us."

The first issue to cause friction was the NS-BNSF interline intermodal service between Atlanta and Alliance, Texas, just outside Fort Worth. NS, concerned that its Southwest and West Coast intermodal traffic might stub at Meridian, in 2000 entered a haulage agreement with KCS to move this intermodal traffic from Meridian to Alliance. This agreement really ticked off Union Pacific, Haverty says. But BNSF wasn't happy, either, he says, because the haulage deal shortened its length of haul and therefore its revenue on Southeast intermodal traffic. The 2006 NS-KCS Meridian Speedway agreement prompted BNSF to divert its Atlanta intermodal business to CSX via the circuitous route through Springfield, Mo., and Memphis, with interchange at Birmingham, Ala. As a result, NS and UP then teamed up for transcontinental interline intermodal service over the Speedway via Shreveport.

Today's CPKC-CSX deal is good for both railroads — as well as the railroad industry — because it will produce volume growth, says Haverty, who is pleased to see things finally come full circle under Creel.

"Keith Creel is a phenomenal railroad leader," Haverty says. "Keith has accomplished many things in a short period of time that I couldn't get done during my 20-year career at KCS. He is the most innovative and operating-oriented CEO in the U.S. rail industry, in my opinion."

You can reach Bill Stephens at bybillstephens@gmail.com and follow him on LinkedIn and Twitter @bybillstephens

The history of the KCS Meridian route bears this out.

As Traffic Declines, CPKC has Challenging Quarter as a Combined System

[By Bill Stephens](#) | July 27, 2023 **Executives remained optimistic about the railway's growth potential from single-line service linking Canada, the U.S., and Mexico**

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific Kansas City had a challenging first quarter as a combined system as demand softened and costs rose while the railway was carrying extra train crews in anticipation of merger-related growth later this year.

"No doubt a challenging quarter as we dealt with a softer demand environment," CEO Keith Creel said on the railway's earnings call today.

On a combined basis, CPKC's operating income grew 9%, to \$944 million, as revenue grew 2%, to \$3.3 billion. Earnings per share declined 13%, to 83 cents. The operating ratio increased 9.7 points to 70.3%, but was 64.6% when adjusted for the impact of one-time items.

Combined volume declined 2% when measured by carloads but declined 5% when measured by revenue ton-miles. Canadian Pacific gained control of Kansas City Southern on April 14, but the combined results treat the merger as if it happened on Jan. 1, 2022, to provide a baseline for comparison purposes this year.

CPKC can't grow without having the resources in place to do so, and having a higher headcount was one of the factors that drove up expenses in the quarter. "This is a long game," Creel says. "It's not about the first quarter of a combined company. It's about ensuring that we're prepared to grow."

CPKC's volume was hurt by softer grain shipments; lower potash exports due to a mechanical failure at Canpotex's terminal in Portland, Ore., that likely won't be fixed until the end of the year; lower crude and plastics traffic; and lower domestic intermodal volumes.

CPKC's international intermodal volumes set a second-quarter record. But the lengthy dockworkers strike in Western Canada will dent volumes in the third quarter, and it will take weeks for the railway to work off the traffic backlog from the port of Vancouver.

CPKC Asks Regulators to Force Union Pacific to Honor Trackage Rights Agreement Covering Grain Shipments to Houston and Galveston

By Bill Stephens | August 3, 2023 UP contends CPKC trains are not subject to trackage rights agreement dating to its acquisition of the Katy



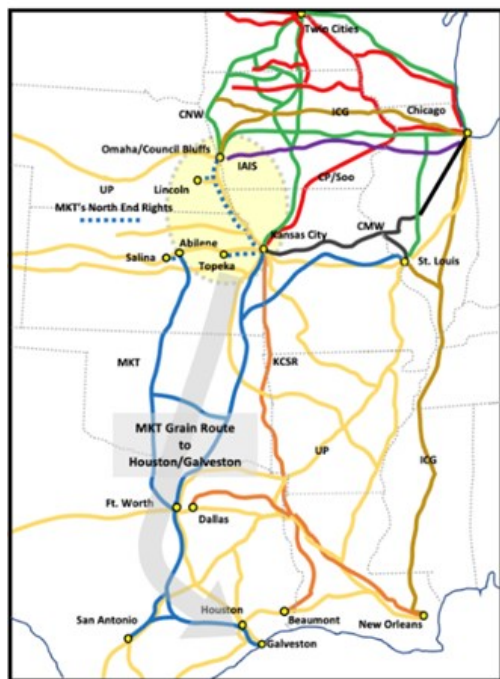
A pair Kansas City Southern locomotives leads a loaded grain train just north of Dequincy, La., on April 29, 2008. Chris Guss

WASHINGTON — Canadian Pacific Kansas City has asked federal regulators to prevent Union Pacific from blocking the movement of its grain trains to the ports of Houston and Galveston via trackage rights on UP via Beaumont, Texas.

The Interstate Commerce Commission granted Kansas City Southern “South End” rights over UP as part of its approval of UP’s 1988 acquisition of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. The haulage and trackage rights agreement preserved the pre-merger options shippers had to send grain from the Upper Midwest to the Gulf Coast via Kansas City and the independent Katy. KCS only sporadically used the rights over the past 35 years. After obtaining the concession to operate in Mexico in 1996, KCS concentrated on cross-border grain movements it could originate and that maximized the railway’s length of haul.

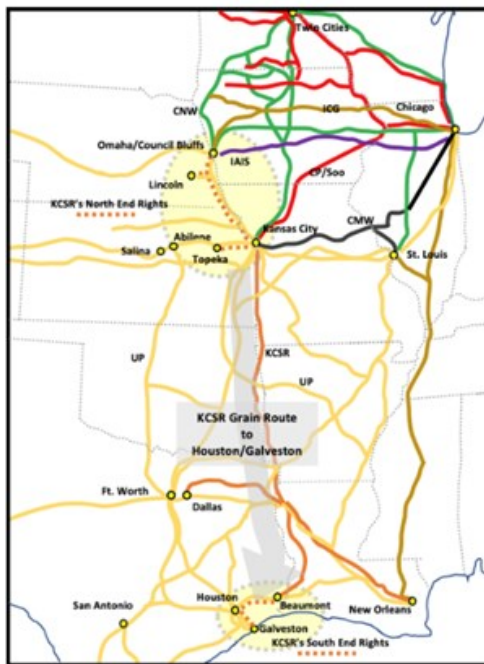
But now the CP-KCS merger has prompted shipper interest in using CPKC’s single-line service from the Upper Midwest to reach export markets via Houston and Galveston, [CPKC says in a regulatory filing this week](#).

MKT NETWORK AND GRAIN ACCESS PRIOR TO UP ACQUISITION
[NOT ALL LINES SHOWN]



This map shows the Katy’s grain route from Kansas City to Houston and Galveston prior to Union Pacific’s acquisition of the MKT. CPKC

MAP DEPICTING KCSR RIGHTS GRANTED BY TERM SHEET
KCSR REPLACES MKT GRAIN ROUTE TO BEAUMONT/GALVESTON
[NOT ALL LINES SHOWN]



This map shows Kansas City Southern’s South End rights over Union Pacific to reach Houston and Galveston via Beaumont. CPKC

“UP has not reacted well to this development,” CPKC said in its filing. “When a major grain shipper directed a trainload of wheat to Houston via a CP-KCSR routing, UP objected, asserting that the CP/KCS transaction extinguished KCSR’s ability to use its haulage rights between Beaumont and Galveston/Houston.”

So CPKC, through KCS, this week asked the Surface Transportation Board “to correct UP’s error and reassure shippers that they can continue to explore and potentially choose the option of CP-KCSR routings to Houston and Galveston for the movement of grain from the Upper Midwest to the Gulf.” CPKC has asked the board for an expedited decision by Aug. 31 so that grain shippers can make plans for the fall harvest season. At the time of UP’s acquisition, the Katy connected at Kansas City with Burlington Northern, Chicago & North Western, Soo Line (now part of CPKC), and the Chicago, Missouri & Western. KCS, through its South End rights, inherited the Katy’s ability to haul grain received at Kansas City to Houston and Galveston.\

But UP, in a May 2 email to CPKC, said neither grain originated on CPKC locations north or east of Kansas City nor Class I traffic interchanged to CPKC at Kansas City are covered under the South End agreements. This includes interchange between CP and CPKC at Kansas City, UP contends.

On May 26, UP demanded that the railroads go to arbitration over the terms of the South End agreement. “UP is not obligated to move trains that CPKC originates in North Dakota under the Term Sheet,” UP wrote.

UP wanted two questions settled through arbitration: Is traffic CPKC originates in North Dakota covered under the South End agreement, and “in what amount has UP been damaged by CPKC’s improper delivery of trains originating in North Dakota to UP at Beaumont in violation of the Term Sheet?”



No Injuries Reported in BNSF Derailment in Minnesota

Trains Newswire By | August 4, 2023 Provided by Rick Krenke Thirteen auto racks involved ; Empire Builder affected

PERHAM, Minn. — No injuries were reported when a BNSF Railway train carrying mixed freight derailed at approximately 12 a.m. today (Aug. 4) near Perham, Minn. No hazardous material was involved.

BNSF did not respond to a question regarding the number of cars involved; [KEYC-TV reports](#) 13 railcars, most of them empty auto racks, derailed. The Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office initially reported two grade crossings were closed as a result of the incident, but the railroad says those have reopened.

The accident site is approximately 5 miles northwest of Perham in Gorman Township, Minn., on the railroad's Staples Subdivision. It is about 160 miles northwest of Minneapolis, and about 60 miles southeast of Fargo, N.D.

Amtrak's *Empire Builder* was affected by the derailment, with the Amtrak Alerts social media feed reporting that passengers on the [eastbound](#) and [westbound](#) trains passing through the area this morning were provided with alternate transportation between Detroit Lakes and Staples, Minn. Eastbound No. 8 is currently shown on Amtrak's app as due in Chicago at 11:12 p.m., about 6 1/2 hours late, while westbound No. 7 is currently shown as due at Fargo, N.D., at 2:42 p.m., more than 10 hours late.

BNSF Donates Locomotive to Railroading Heritage of Midwest America

By Steve Glischinski | June 14, 2023 Former Santa Fe B40-8W will be based in Silvis, Illinois.



BNSF Railway has donated B40-8W No. 537, built as part of Santa Fe's "Super Fleet" of Warbonnet-painted diesels, to Railroading Heritage of Midwest America. RRHMA



The interior of No. 537. The locomotive is in good condition and can be returned to operation with minimal work. RRHMA

SILVIS, Ill. — BNSF Railway has donated former Santa Fe B40-8W No. 537 to the non-profit Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA). The unit was delivered to the RRHMA shop in Silvis this week.

No. 537 was constructed by General Electric for Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe in October 1990 as part of its "Super Fleet" of new EMD and GE diesels painted in Santa Fe's famous Warbonnet passenger diesel paint scheme revived by Mike Haverty, the railroad's then-president. AT&SF was the only railroad to order the B40-8W. No. 537 is the first of the type to be preserved, although the model is still operated by four short lines in addition to BNSF.

No. 537 was put into service hauling high speed intermodal trains on Santa Fe's Transcon main line between Chicago and California. The unit was later downgraded to local service, and then stored pending disposition. BNSF's corporate communications team approved the donation, and was assisted by now-retired BNSF Director of Fleet Planning Richard Knutson.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the return to service of RRHMA's first steam locomotive, Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 No. 261. "Over the last 30 years we've dealt with many railroads, but we have always had a special relationship with BNSF," said Steve Sandberg, president and chief operating officer of RRHMA. "They have always been supportive of our organization, and allowed us to operate 261 throughout the Midwest. In 1998 they trusted us to use 261 to pull their Employee Appreciation Special for over 5,200 miles." Sandberg said BNSF continues to support community outreach efforts and special events. "Each year BNSF is a sponsor of the North Pole Express at Union Depot in St. Paul using No. 261, and supports Train Days at the depot each June by moving equipment in and out. BNSF recognizes the importance of having good relationships with communities and the public, and we are grateful for their continuing support."

An inspection by National Railway Equipment (NRE) which shares the Silvis shop with RRHMA, indicates the unit is in good condition and can be returned to service with minimal work. Sandberg said the organization is considering a variety of uses for No. 537. It might be used as a PTC host engine to operate behind No. 261 on main line trips.

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However, its primary function will be at Silvis for use in community outreach, education, and safety programs at the Silvis complex. With Silvis' location in Illinois, and Santa Fe being based in the state, Sandberg said it's an appropriate addition to the RRHMA collection. In the long term, the group is considering returning the unit to the famous Warbonnet red-and-silver colors it wore when built.

For more information go to [the RRHMA website](#).

BNSF Hydrogen Test Locomotive Donated to Oklahoma Railway Museum

[By](#) | August 8, 2023 Unit built at BNSF's Topeka, Kansas, shops to be used as shove platform on museum trains



BNSF's HH20B hydrogen locomotive test unit, No. 1205, in Los Angeles in 2010. The locomotive has been donated to the Oklahoma Railway Museum. David Lustig



No. 1205 during its conversion to hydrogen power at BNSF's shops in Topeka, Kan., on Dec. 9, 2008. David Lustig

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — The Oklahoma Railway Museum has taken delivery of a historic alternative fuel testbed locomotive, donated by BNSF Railway after use as a hydrogen fuel cell switcher in Southern California. Built as Canadian Pacific GP9 No. 8637 in 1957, the unit was rebuilt by CP in the mid-1980s and utilized in regular service until 2006, when the unit was converted to a “Green Goat,” an early form of battery-electric switcher. In 2007, the unit was acquired by BNSF and rebuilt into a hydrogen fuel cell unit at BNSF's Topeka, Kan., locomotive shop facility as part of a public-private partnership between Vehicle Projects Inc., Ballard Fuel Systems, and the U.S. Department

Unveiled on June 29, 2009, the unit was moved to Pueblo, Colo., for extensive testing at the AAR-managed Transportation Technology Center to entering service at BNSF's Hobart Yard in Los Angeles [see [“BNSF's first hydrogen locomotive.”](#) Trains.com, July 16, 2023]. After several years of operation and data collection at Hobart Yard, the unit was retired in 2014, and recently donated to ORM by BNSF. The test unit set the stage for future developments in alternative energy technology at BNSF, which is also planning a mainline hydrogen fuel cell locomotive demonstration with Progress Rail and Chevron in 2024.

“We're thrilled to add this unique BNSF locomotive to our museum roster,” said ORM Trainmaster Greg Hall. “BNSF 1205 is in great shape, and we'll convert it to a shove platform for use on our trains. We plan to tell the story of BNSF's efforts to achieve reduced locomotive emissions through the development of technologies that could eventually replace fossil fuel use. We truly appreciate BNSF's generosity.”

Jeanelle Davis, executive director of public affairs for BNSF Railway, said, “The development and use of the BNSF 1205 is just one example of our ongoing efforts to move our nation's freight while reducing our carbon footprint, despite already being the most environmentally friendly mode of land transportation. This locomotive has provided valuable insights and helped to set the stage for further development of alternative fuel technologies at the railroad, and we are glad we could find a home for the BNSF 1205 at the Oklahoma Railroad Museum. The ORM is a great community partner, and we value the relationship between the museum and BNSF.”

Created in 1997, ORM operates several miles of former Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad mainline near downtown Oklahoma City. Through train rides, historic equipment and artifacts on display, special activities such as Polar Express trains, interpretive displays and hosting community events, ORM's focus is on education about the region's rich railroad heritage dating to the 1880s. Testbed equipment such as BNSF 1205 joins historic rolling stock and locomotives that allow guests to experience examples of railroading over time and the continuing evolution of technology at our nation's railroads. More information is available at [the museum website](#).

BNSF Completes Double-tracking Project at Sandpoint, Idaho

[By Bruce Kelly](#) | August 7, 2023 Both bridges now in use across Lake Pend Oreille, other work also finished

SANDPOINT, Idaho — Thanks to an all-day work window on Aug. 6, 2023, the final track segments have been put into place to complete BNSF Railway's 2-mile double-tracking project at the east end of its busy “Funnel” between Spokane, Wash., and Sandpoint. Completion of the new 4,873-foot bridge across Lake Pend Oreille in November 2022 — a project that began in 2019 — was followed by reconstruction of the adjacent Northern Pacific bridge dating to 1904 [see “Work in progress to upgrade BNSF's old Sandpoint bridge,” Trains News Wire, May 23, 2023].

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On Aug. 7, the day after the cutover completing BNSF's double-track project around Sandpoint, Idaho, a short intermodal train off Montana Rail Link heads west on the new bridge across Lake Pend Oreille, while a short manifest holds on the rebuilt ex-NP bridge for a signal to cross over to head east on BNSF. Bruce Kelly



During the Aug. 6 track realignment work, a work train waits alongside Lake Pend Oreille for the call to back up and dump ballast. Bruce Kelly

That laid the foundation for putting a second main into service between Sandpoint Junction — where BNSF and Montana Rail Link converge — and the previous end of double track at East Algoma.

Adding the second main also required construction of a pair of smaller bridges in Sandpoint, one over Sand Creek and the other over Bridge Street. At the ex-NP Sandpoint depot, served by Amtrak's Empire Builder, addition of the second track required removal of most of the existing platform and relocation of a small structure which stores a wheelchair lift.

BNSF and MRL no longer make physical connection at what used to be Sandpoint Junction, just north (railroad east) of the depot. Instead, there's now a control point with dual crossovers located just northwest of the two big bridges, adjacent to where Sand Creek empties into Lake Pend Oreille. During the Aug. 6 window, which suspended all train traffic on BNSF through Sandpoint, several high-priority BNSF trains were rerouted over Union Pacific between there and Spokane.

"The completion of this bridge is a big win for our customers and the community, especially before the start of the fall harvest season," John Cech, vice president of engineering for BNSF, said in [a press release](#). "This milestone is thanks to many team members spanning across multiple departments who collaborated to help improve the consistency of our service. This bridge will be critical moving forward to address our long-term growth and will allow us to meet customer expectations for the next century or more."

More information on the project [is available here](#).

BNSF Earnings Decline as Quarterly Volume Falls 11%

By Bill Stephens | August 7, 2023 The railroad saw traffic fall in all four business groups



GE ES44C4 No. 6743 leads a northbound BNSF train through Gunter, Texas, on June 26, 2023. Lance Lassen

OMAHA, Neb. — BNSF Railway's second-quarter earnings slumped 24% as volume and average revenue per car both declined, the railroad's corporate parent, Berkshire Hathaway, said on Saturday.

BNSF's operating income fell 24%, to \$1.6 billion, as revenue declined 11.6%, to \$5.7 billion. The railway's operating ratio increased five points, to 68.2%.

Overall volume was down 11.1% for the quarter, with all four of the railroad's business segments reporting declines.

Consumer products volume — which includes intermodal and automotive — declined 16.1%, partly due to the impact of the loss of the Schneider intermodal contract to Union Pacific. "The volume decreases were primarily due to lower intermodal shipments resulting from lower west coast imports, the loss of an intermodal customer and competition from lower spot rates in the trucking market which has impacted our domestic intermodal

These decreases were partially offset by an increase in automotive volume from higher vehicle production," Berkshire said. Industrial products volume declined 3.3%. "The volume declines were primarily due to lower demand for chemicals, plastics and lumber, as well as lower shipments of petroleum products resulting from refinery outages," Berkshire reported.

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Agricultural products shipments declined 8.3% due to lower grain exports.

Coal volume was down by 3.5% for the quarter due to “moderating demand attributable to lower natural gas prices and weather-related impacts,” Berkshire said.

11 Cars of BNSF Train Derail in Montana

[By](#) | July 22, 2023 **One car of hazardous materials involved, but no spill reported**

HAVRE, Mont. — Eleven cars of a 25-car BNSF intermodal train derailed Friday afternoon about 8 miles east of Havre, blocking the railroad’s Northern Transcon route.

The derailment occurred at 4:39 p.m., [the Havre Daily News reports](#), quoting a BNSF spokeswoman. Hill County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator Amanda Frickel said one car was carrying a hazardous material — paint thinner — but no leaks were reported. No injuries were reported.

[The Amtrak Alerts Twitter feed](#) indicates the westbound *Empire Builder* had passed through the area shortly before the derailment, as it arrived at Havre at 4:15 p.m., then was delayed for more than four hours “due to mechanical issues.” The eastbound train had already passed through the area. [The Amtrak website](#) currently shows today’s eastbound and westbound trains scheduled to operate normally

High Winds Derail BNSF Train in Oklahoma

[By](#) | July 21, 2023 **29 cars of stack train blown over as winds exceed 80 mph**



FAIRMONT, Okla. — High winds are being blamed for the derailment of a BNSF train today (July 21) near the town of Fairmont.

BNSF said 29 cars derailed while the train was stopped because of high winds, according to the Associated Press. The railroad said no one was injured and no hazardous materials were involved.

The train was blown over about 4 a.m., Mike Hognsberg, Enid and Garfield County Emergency Management director, told the Enid News & Eagle. Fairmont is about 10 miles east of Enid on BNSF’s Avarad Subdivision, and is about 60 miles north of Oklahoma City. Winds may have reached 90 mph at the time; winds of 84 mph were recorded at Vance Air Force Base near Enid.

A screen shot from [KFOR-TV video posted on Twitter](#) shows the overturned container well cars of a BNSF train near Fairmont, Okla.

Photos on the newspapers’s website show a long string of double-stack container cars that had been blown onto their side. The intersection of Fairmont and Southgate roads is expected to be blocked for a few days while the derailment is cleaned up.



-----UP News-----

Union Pacific Celebrates Employee-Focused Programs with New Locomotive

Written by [Union Pacific, Corporate Communications](#) Friday, July 21, 2023, 9:42 PM, Frederick Krenske



The new locomotive is outfitted with emblems highlighting five of the railroad's employee-focused programs.

Thousands of Union Pacific employees go above and beyond each year to support their fellow team members, without ever expecting a thank you. Now, in the ultimate expression of gratitude, a new locomotive celebrating their efforts has hit the rails.

The locomotive highlights five of the railroad’s unique, employee-focused programs that wouldn’t be possible without the support of its team, including the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** and **Friend to Friend Network**. EAP provides 24/7 confidential support to all employees and their families facing problems relating to mental health, substance abuse, work-life balance and workplace challenges. In 2022, Union Pacific opened 3,600 Employee Assistance cases for employees and their dependents.

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The **Friend to Friend Network**, a nonprofit run by Union Pacific employee-volunteers and retirees, provides financial aid to railroaders and their families impacted by health or home-related hardships. Last year, the network directed more than \$842,400 in aid to 1,400 Union Pacific families – using funds donated directly by their peers.

“The locomotive is a great way to raise awareness about the resources available to our employees when life throws us curve balls,” said **Dana Swanson**, senior director-System Locomotive Facility. “We all need help and support at times.”

Outfitted with reflective, eye-catching emblems, the locomotive went into service earlier this year on Union Pacific’s 23-state network. Craft professionals at Jenks Locomotive Shop in North Little Rock, Arkansas, did the work, making sure the new design did not compromise the integrity of Union Pacific’s branded paint design.

Other programs highlighted include:

Operation RedBlock – Trained peer mentors help co-workers understand underlying issues leading to substance abuse, educate them on related rules and regulations, and prevent them from coming to work under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Peer Support – Through Union Pacific’s Peer Support networks, trained employees offer confidential advice and guidance to their colleagues. This strengthens bonds and builds a sense of community, providing support from those with an inherent understanding of the rail industry.

Union Pacific Employee Clubs – These **family-oriented clubs** provide employees and retirees the opportunity to participate in community service and charity activities.

“The more we keep these programs out in front of our team, the more they’re reminded of the resources Union Pacific offers,” said Track Supervisor **Robert Manlove**, who serves as an Operation RedBlock and Peer Support system coordinator.

Analysis: At Union Pacific, Vena the CEO will be Different than Vena the COO

[By Bill Stephens](#) | August 9, 2023 With cost-cutting in the rear-view mirror, the focus will be on service and growth



Jim Vena becomes Union Pacific's CEO on Aug. 14. Union Pacific



A Union Pacific merchandise train rounds Tehachapi Loop in California in September 2019. Bill Stephens

TCI's No. 1 goal was for CN to provide efficient, low cost, safe, and reliable service. That, in turn, would lead to volume growth from existing customers and open up new markets, which would produce additional growth.

Vena outlined this strategy himself during UP's 2019 third quarter earnings call, when he was the railroad's chief operating officer. “We want to be where we have a very efficient railroad, we are able to open up new markets, we’re able to beat the competition — which is other railroads and truck — and bring more product in without dropping our price,” Vena said.

People close to Vena say he believes the operating ratio should be an outcome, not a goal. This is a big deal. UP is out of step as the last railroad with an operating-ratio target. Perhaps Vena will bury UP's 55% O.R. goal once and for all.

Back in 2019 UP hired Vena to accelerate its transition to a Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model. During his two-year tenure as chief operating officer, Vena gained a reputation as a master cost-cutter. Many at UP believe he went too far, too fast.

This much is clear: By the time Vena left UP at the end of December 2020, the number of people on the payroll had declined 21%, the company enjoyed \$1.4 billion in efficiency gains, and the railroad's service had improved to an all-time best based on its trip-plan compliance figures.

But UP, like the other big three U.S. railroads, was running too lean and quickly found itself short of crews in 2021. Service suffered, shippers were up in arms, and regulators scrutinized UP's performance and its skyrocketing use of embargoes. The railroad has finally dug itself out of that hole and service has largely returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Naturally, UP's labor unions view Vena's selection as CEO [as a giant step backwards](#). And inside UP's headquarters, some fear a return to what they view as a slash-and-burn mentality. Vena will have to reach out to labor and win over the skeptics.

But resetting UP's operations and cutting costs were precisely what Vena was brought in to do in 2019. You can bet that Vena the CEO will be different than Vena the COO.

For one thing, there's not much left to cut, which means that UP needs to bring on more volume in order to propel earnings growth. UP has already started down the growth path: Its traffic was up 2% last year while rival BNSF Railway's volume declined 5.6%.

UP's running well ahead of BNSF this year, too.

For another, consider the case of Keith Creel, the last chief operating officer who was promoted to CEO. When Creel took the reins at Canadian Pacific in 2017, many in the industry thought he would be Hunter Harrison 2.0.

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Creel defied expectations by making CP the most entrepreneurial and fastest-growing Class I railroad. CP opened new transload centers and auto ramps, forged tighter partnerships with its short line connections, won international intermodal business from CN, and grew its domestic intermodal business, too. CP also bought back part of its historic shortcut to Atlantic Canada with the Central Maine & Quebec acquisition, which has brought huge growth to the port of Saint John, New Brunswick. And of course Creel's CP won the battle for Kansas City Southern.

The result? Since 2017 CP's volume is up 6%, revenue by 36%, and operating income 32%. People close to Vena expect him to deliver similar results at UP.

Over the same 2017-2022 period, UP's volume declined 5%, revenue was up 17%, and operating income grew 24%. Imagine how much better UP's results would have been had volume been in positive territory.

UP is an enigma. For years its executives have touted the fact that UP has the best network in North America. Yet for most of the past decade-plus UP has lost share to BNSF and has been in the volume basement as the slowest-growing Class I railroad. In fact, UP's volume was essentially flat from 2013 to 2022.

There are two interrelated reasons for this. First, that O.R. target has been part of UP's focus on profit margins rather than handling more freight. Second, due to bouts with crew and/or locomotive shortages, UP could never maintain consistent service levels during Lance Fritz's 8½ years at the helm, even as it made volume growth a goal over the past two years.

Meanwhile, UP's board was asleep at the switch. [Only upon Vena's appointment as CEO last month](#) did it create a new committee to monitor safety and service. Wasn't that part of the board's oversight job all along?

Some at UP headquarters welcome Vena's return and believe that he can provide the leadership and discipline necessary to fully unleash UP's potential. Let's hope so. It would be a win not only for Omaha but for the entire industry given the amount of traffic that UP originates and interchanges with the other systems. Says one person close to Vena: "Jim is not a cost-cutter. He is a cost and asset manager, who takes the view that service, safety, and employee engagement are all foundational to growth – and only the growing will thrive."

You can reach Bill Stephens at bybillstephens@gmail.com and follow him on [LinkedIn](#) and Twitter [@bybillstephens](#)

Moffat Tunnel Lease Could Become Part of Fight over Uinta Basin Railway

By | July 30, 2023 **Opponents of oil-train traffic see opportunity in lease set to expire in January 2025**



Union Pacific diesels approach the east portal of Colorado's Moffat Tunnel. UP's lease on the tunnel, which expires in 2025, is the subject of scrutiny from opponents of more oil-train traffic on the route.

Charlie Conway

DENVER — Colorado opponents of the oil-train traffic expected to be generated by the Uinta Basin Railway may attempt to use Union Pacific's soon-to-expire lease on the Moffat Tunnel as leverage in their effort to fight the Utah project, [the website Colorado Newline reports](#).

The 99-year lease UP inherited in its merger with Southern Pacific — under which the railroad pays \$12,000 a year for use of the state-owned tunnel — expires on Jan. 6, 2025. Kate McIntire, a regional manager for the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, told Colorado Newline she has been tasked with “developing our list of concerns, potential opportunities, roles, responsibilities, and ways stakeholders would like to ensure they’re involved in the negotiation.”

McIntire said concerns about the potential rail traffic from the Uinta Basin project, which could send up to 350,000 barrels of oil per day over the Moffat Tunnel line, have already been voiced by several cities and counties, as well as by Denver Water, which uses the original 1922 Moffat Tunnel bore for water movement. Those comments, she said, “were addressed more directly to Union Pacific.”

She also said she expect to hear more from communities and counties along the UP line between Denver and Grand Junction, saying, “... we’re really early in a complex process with legal considerations, roles, responsibilities, and potential opportunities that may or may not be tied to the lease,” McIntire said. “But we’re definitely aware of those concerns, and we’ll continue to do everything we can to ensure stakeholders are engaged.”

Eagle County, Colo., Attorney Bryan Treu told Colorado Newline in an email that “Anything the state can do to get off the sidelines and participate [in opposition to the project] would be appreciated. We would encourage the state to use all tools at its disposal, including any Moffat Tunnel lease negotiations, to protect every Colorado community along the rail corridor that will be forced to face very real risks of derailment, spills, water contamination and fires.” Eagle County is one of the parties to the legal action challenging the Surface Transportation Board’s approval of the Uinta Basin project [see [“Colorado county plans to challenge approval ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Feb. 2, 2022].

Ted Zukowski, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, another party in the suit over the STB decision, told the news site, “It’s crazy that Union Pacific pays Colorado far less rent for the Moffat Tunnel than the median price of a studio apartment in Denver. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for [Gov. Jared Polis] to protect Colorado communities, our water, our rivers, and our public lands from hazardous materials spills from trains that travel through the Moffat Tunnel.”

Union Pacific spokeswoman Robynn Tysver confirmed in an email to Colorado Newline that negotiations over the tunnel lease are underway, and noted the railroad’s common-carrier status: “Union Pacific is required by federal law to transport hazardous commodities that Americans use daily, including crude oil, fertilizer and chlorine, and 99.9% of the hazardous material shipped by rail reaches its destination safely.”

Hub Group Expands Intermodal Cross-border Auto Parts Service on Union Pacific

[By](#) | July 28, 2023 The move increases competition with Canadian Pacific Kansas City's single-line service to and from Mexico



Mid-train distributed power is sandwiched by Hub Group containers as a Union Pacific stack train passes through La Fox, Ill., in May 2021. David Lassen

OAK BROOK, Ill. — Hub Group is expanding its intermodal service to include inbound parts moves to all auto assembly plants in North America, with a focus on cross-border shipments to and from Mexico.

“We are extremely excited about the growth opportunity we have unlocked with our partner, Union Pacific, in the north-south corridor between Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, utilizing the Falcon Premium service product,” Hub Group CEO Phillip Yeager said in a statement on Thursday. “Hub Group continues to expand our capabilities and deliver service, integrity, and innovation to our customers’ supply chains.”

Hub Group will operate utilizing its intermodal expertise and fleet of nearly 50,000 GPS-enabled intermodal 53-foot containers, while leveraging northbound and southbound service including Union Pacific’s Falcon Premium and Eagle Premium services.

Hub Group said the railroad’s new Falcon Premium service provides the fastest transit times from the U.S. and Mexico border to Chicago and Detroit – and the most direct routing entirely by rail between Canada and Mexico.

“We are excited that Hub Group, a long-standing Union Pacific partner, will leverage their growing fleet with our improved premium service product to now serve all of North America’s automotive production facilities,” Kenny Rocker, UP’s executive vice president of marketing and sales, said in a statement.

A Hub spokesman did not immediately return a voicemail seeking information on how many additional plants will be served with the new service.

Hub’s move comes as rival Schneider National shifted its north-south cross-border traffic from UP to Canadian Pacific Kansas City’s new single-line service, Mexico Midwest Express, in May. CPKC says its MMX service offers the fastest transit times between Mexico and Chicago.

Court Rules Union Pacific is Not Obligated to Continue Service for Metra

[By](#) | July 28, 2023 Ruling comes as planning for transition of operations on three lines is underway



Metra UP West line trains meet at the Elmhurst, Ill., station on July 15, 2023. David Lassen

CHICAGO — A U.S. appeals court has ruled Union Pacific does not have a common-carrier obligation to continue operating commuter trains for Metra, likely hastening the transition of operations on three commuter lines from UP to Metra operation.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled on Wednesday that “Union Pacific is not bound by any contractual promise to keep providing rail services to Metra for the indefinite future,” the suburban [Daily Herald newspaper reports](#).

Union Pacific announced earlier this year that the process of transitioning service on Metra’s UP West, Northwest, and North lines had begun, with Metra saying the process had begun while negotiations on some areas continued [see [“Union Pacific announces start of transition ...”](#) Trains News Wire, March 30, 2023]. And Metra CEO/Executive Director Jim Derwinski had previously told Trains that some managers involved in the service had already moved from UP to Metra.

The court case dates to 2019 [see [“UP sues Metra ...”](#) News Wire, Dec. 21, 2019].

Throughout the dispute, the two sides have stressed that service would continue uninterrupted while the issue was resolved. Metra spokesman Michael Gillis told the *Daily Herald* on Thursday that the commuter agency “hoped to begin taking over some operations by the end of the year.” Metra had no specific comments on the court ruling or a possible appeal. UP spokeswoman Kristen South said the railroad is “pleased with the court’s decision, and we continue to work with Metra to execute a smooth transfer of services.”

UP said previously that plans for the transfer will see train crews, mechanical, cleaning, ticket sales, rolling stock maintenance, and some engineering services move to Metra, while UP will continue to maintain and dispatch the three routes. [According to May 2023 figures](#), the UP Northwest, North, and West lines are the second, third, and fifth most-used lines in the Metra system, accounting for just over 1 million riders that month.

Union Pacific Lowers Volume Forecast as Traffic and Earnings Decline for Second Quarter

By Bill Stephens | July 26, 2023 Operations improve as hiring bolsters train crew ranks



An eastbound Union Pacific freight train climbs away from Rock River, Wyo., in September 2022. David Lassen

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific today lowered its volume outlook for the year as soft demand across its bulk, industrial, and premium business segments led to lower second quarter revenue and profits.

As recently as June, UP expected its volume this year to exceed the level of industrial production, which at the time was forecast to be negative 0.7%. But now UP says volume this year likely will be below the forecast rate of industrial production growth of 0.1%.

The railroad also withdrew its operating ratio guidance and says the key metric is likely to rise this year due to inflation, lower volume, and labor expenses. UP also will pause share repurchases for the remainder of the year.

For the quarter, UP's operating income declined 12%, to \$2.2 billion, as revenue fell 5%, to \$6 billion. Earnings per share decreased 12%, to \$2.57. The operating ratio rose 2.8 points to 63%. Overall traffic volume was down 2% for the quarter. Industrial products volume increased 1%, bulk declined 1%, and premium business — which includes intermodal and automotive — declined 4%.

Automotive traffic was up 11% thanks to increased production, but intermodal volume was off by 7% as imports fell and consumers continued to shift their spending toward services rather than goods.

"It's hard to say when the economy will begin to recover in certain sectors, but our diverse portfolio allows us to see positive momentum in many of our commodities," says Kenny Rocker, UP's executive vice president of marketing and sales. "The team remains focused on winning new business and has a strong pipeline of opportunities with a great track record for closing deals.

UP has a positive outlook for automotive, biofuels, and construction-related commodities such as aggregates.

The railroad's operations improved during the quarter as train crew employment levels increased and the network became more fluid, with average train speed up and terminal dwell down. Freight car velocity, measured by car miles per day, rose 8% to 202 miles.

"The bottom line is the actions we've taken to strengthen our crew resources are improving the railroad," CEO Lance Fritz says.

Intermodal trip plan compliance rose to 79% from 62% a year ago and from 72% in the first quarter. Manifest and auto trip plan compliance was 64%, an 8-point improvement versus last year and a 3-point improvement over the first quarter.

UP said its safety performance improved during the first half of the year, with derailments down 9% and personal injuries down by 4%. The railroad did not release separate figures for the second quarter.



CN News

CN Moves Retired GE Units in 'Funeral Train'

By | July 31, 2023 Eighteen units head to scrapper



WELLAND, Ontario — A Canadian National "funeral train" of 18 Dash 8 locomotives, part of an auction and sale in June 2023, arrived in Welland, Ont., on July 29, concluding a trip from Iowa. The locomotives will be handed off to the GIO Rail Trillium operation, which will deliver them to SLM Recycling of Welland. Two years ago, K&K Recycling scrapped more than 30 Dash 8s at a different site in Welland. Number boards, horns and bells had largely been removed before the locomotives were shipped east. Included in the move were CN Nos. 2180, 2444, 2434, 2431, 2432, 2036, 2402, 2037, 2005, 2003, 2008, 2424, 2019, and 2038; British Columbia Railway Nos. 4620, 4619, and 4623; and Illinois Central No. 2462. — *Stephen C. Host*

A Canadian National "funeral train" of Dash 8 locomotives bound for scrapping arrives in Welland, Ont., on July 29, 2023. Stephen C. Host

LPG Cars Involved, But No Leaks Reported, in CN Derailment in Minnesota

By | July 18, 2023 *Nine cars derail in rural area*

FIELD TOWNSHIP, Minn. — Two carloads of liquefied petroleum gas were among those involved in a derailment of nine cars of a Canadian National train in rural northern Minnesota on Monday, July 17, according to a press release from the St. Louis County Sheriff's Office.

As reported by KRFO radio, the derailment occurred about 8:20 p.m. Five of the cars overturned and four remained upright; no leaks or spills were reported involving the hazardous materials or other cargo.

The derailment site is approximately 6 miles north of Cook, Minn., on CN's Rainy Subdivision and about 80 miles north of Duluth. The Sheriff's Office describes the site as a rural, non-residential area and says the derailment poses no danger to the public.

Twin Ports Rail - Digest #370

CN Railway Family Day Passenger Special - EJ&E Heritage

From: [Shawn Christie](#)

-Thanks Shawn!

Date: Sun, 30 Jul 2023 15:23:42 PDT Snap shots from Shawn Christie

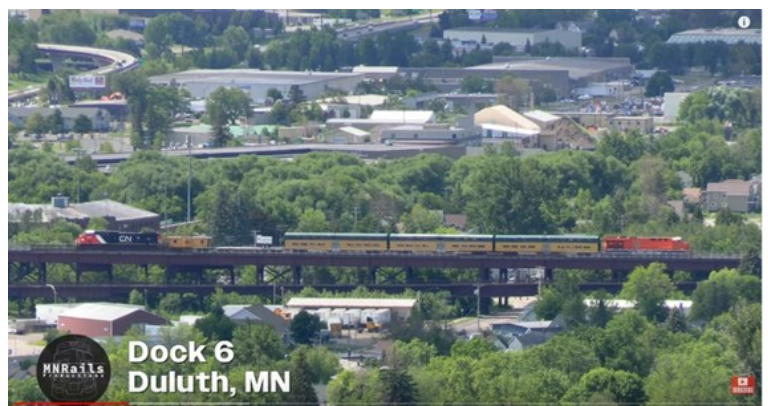
Saturday's Canadian National Railway Family Day passenger special extra out of Proctor. Powered by the EJE Heritage locomotive CN 3023 on the north end and CN 3317 facing south. Between 10am and 3pm the passenger special made multiple trips up and down Proctor Hill to the approach on dock 6. Full video on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/458Ois2>



Photos of train on Proctor Hill



EJ&E Heritage Unit



EJ&E Heritage Unit leads at Kirkus Street

Ore Rail - Digest #524

Still going From: [Todd Mavec](#) Date: Fri, 21 Jul 2023 13:37:11 PDT



Was a nice surprise to see this leading an empty, U790, up from Two Harbors yesterday.

RailPictures.Net Photo: DMIR 409 Canadian National Railway EMD SD40-3 at Biwabik, Minnesota by Todd M.



And the same train, U791 coming off the east loadout,

RailPictures.Net Photo: CN 2029 Canadian National Railway GE C40-8 (Dash 8-40C) at Mountain Iron, Minnesota by Todd M. Thanks, Todd M. Eveleth, MN

S.S. Badger Season Ended by Loading-ramp Failure

By August 2, 2023 **Repairs to take months; sailings scheduled through October are canceled**



The S.S. Badger takes on cars and passengers at Ludington, Mich., in August 2020. A counterweight failure with the Ludington loading ramp has ended the ship's 2023 season prematurely.

LUDINGTON, Mich. — Loading-ramp damage has brought an early end to the 2023 season for Lake Michigan car ferry *S.S. Badger*. “We have made the difficult, and unfortunately unavoidable, decision to suspend our daily crossings for the remainder of the season,” Mark W. Barker, President of Interlake Maritime Services, parent company of the Lake Michigan Carferry, said in a message posted Tuesday [on the Badger's website](#). “This is not how we hoped our 70th season would end but we are fully committed to making the extensive repairs — and doing it the right way — so that we will be back better and stronger in 2024 to serve our loyal passengers and port communities.” *Badger* service has been suspended since a failure of the counterweight system on the *Badger's* ramp in Ludington on July 21 [see [“S.S. Badger, last Great Lakes car ferry, sidelined ...,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, July 23, 2023]. Tuesday's announcement says that after divers, contractors, and an engineering firm were brought in, “it became clear that the necessary repairs were extensive and would take months to clear the collapsed structure and erect a new one.” The company said it will work to keep as much of its seasonal staff employed as possible, both in Ludington and through work with other Interlake companies.

The *Badger* is able to carry 600 passengers and up to 180 vehicles. Its 2023 season, which began May 18, had been scheduled to run through Oct. 9. Those holding reservations will receive full refunds.

The ship, built in 1953 for the Chesapeake & Ohio, is the last remnant of the Great Lakes fleet of railroad car ferries, the last coal-powered passenger ship on the Great Lakes, and a designated National Historic Landmark. It is a significant part of the summer economies in both Ludington and Manitowoc, Wis., because of the passenger traffic it generates.



The 2023 National Convention will be located in Fort Lauderdale/Deerfield Beach Florida. The dates are Friday, September 1st through Wednesday, September 6th, 2023. Time is fleeting! Visit <https://nrhs.com/convention/> for information.

CSX's Fifth Heritage Unit, Chesapeake & Ohio No. 1869, Makes its Debut (updated)

[By](#) | August 10, 2023 The locomotive wears the classic C&O passenger scheme.



CSX's new C&O heritage unit inside the Waycross, Ga., shop. CSX



CSX Transportation's Chesapeake & Ohio heritage locomotive No. 1869 outside the Waycross, Ga., paint shop. Screenshot

WAYCROSS, Ga. — CSX Transportation took the wraps off its fifth heritage locomotive today, No. 1869 that wears the classic Chesapeake & Ohio passenger scheme, complete with script lettering and the “C&O For Progress” logo. The locomotive joins units that celebrate the history of the Baltimore & Ohio, Seaboard System, Chessie System, and Conrail. CSX showed off the locomotive in a video released on its social media channels. On Friday, Aug. 11, it released a photo of the locomotive still inside the Waycross shop.

— *Updated Aug. 11 at 9:40 a.m. CDT with additional image.*

Seminole Gulf Railway Gradually Being Restored after Severe Hurricane Damage

[By](#) | August 10, 2023 Repairs for Florida short line could reach \$15 million



The Seminole Gulf Railway has gradually repaired damage like this, sustained during Hurricane Ian in October 2022. Sol Tucker

FORT MYERS, Fla. — The Seminole Gulf Railway, which sustained major damage last October from Hurricane Ian, has gradually reopened its damaged right-of-way and should have operations fully restored by the end of the year, [WBBH-TV reports](#).

Six bridges were destroyed along the railroad's route south from Arcadia, Fla., where it interchanges with CSX, through Fort Myers [see [“Seminole Gulf Railway faces lengthy closure ...”](#) *Trains* News Wire, Oct. 5, 2022]. And “several miles of track were washed away,” Robert Fay, the railroad's executive vice president, told the TV station.

A bridge over the Peace River has been rebuilt, restoring railroad access. But the bridge over the Caloosahatchee River, which runs through the middle of Fort Myers, was so severely damaged that divers have been needed to help with repairs to the bridge pilings.

Cumbres & Toltec Seeing High Demand for Fall-Colors Trips

[By](#) | August 2, 2023 Some September dates nearing sellouts

CHAMA, N.M. — Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad excursions this fall are selling quickly, the railroad reports, with some September dates almost sold out in all ticket classes and Parlor class seating available for only three dates in the entire month. “Autumn is always a popular time to ride the Cumbres & Toltec,” Scott Gibbs, C&TSRR commissioner, said in a press release. “And this year, advance sales are surging. Anticipation is high that this will be an especially colorful fall season due to the ample rain we had. If you want to ride with us, book now.” Fall colors along the route can be spectacular because of the aspen trees in both states, and the Cumbres & Toltec's altitude range of 7,863 to 10,015 feet means colors change at varying times along the route, one reason the fall trips are so popular. Trips depart from Chama or Antonito, Colo., and along with regular full- and half-day rides, special events on the schedule include a geology train, two photo charters, and six days of operations with visiting Galloping Goose No. 5. More information and booking is available at the Cumbres & Toltec website.



Hennepin Overland Proposed Schedule 2023-2024 Provided by Bill Dredge

Times: 1:00pm – 4:00pm Trains after Dark(6:00pm-9:00pm) Adult Fare \$10

September 2, 3 ,9, 10, 16, 17, 23 ,24 October 1, 7, 8, 15, 21, 22, 28, 29 November 4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25, 26(black Friday) December 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23(trains after dark), 24, 30, 31	February 3, 4, 10(Trains after dark), 11, 17, 18, 24, 25 March 2, 3, 9(Trains after dark), 10, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 (Closed March 31-Easter Sunday) April 6, 7, 13(Trains after dark), 14, 20, 21, 27, 28(Pot luck)
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Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	Saturday September 9 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, September 16, 2023 from 9 am to 2 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1327 Cosgrove Street Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$7
Newport Railroad Club Flea Market	Saturday October 14 2023 9:00am—2:00pm	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury, MN	\$7
Great Train Show (Tentative)	Saturday –Sunday October 28th and October 29th 2023 10:00am—4:00pm	Canterbury Park 1100 Canterbury Rd, Shakopee, MN	\$10 for both days
Windy City Excursion #261 Private Cars	Friday October 6 –Sunday Oc- tober 8 2023	St Paul to Chicago on Amtrak Empire Builder	See 261.com For fares

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

