



NRHS

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Light Rail Northstar Train Ride Friday June 7 2024



L: CP #2816 last visit to Twin Cities Excursion at Dakota MN in 2007 –R Tubbesing

R: SW Light Rail Tunnel work Kennelwirth Area –Dana Alexon



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Meeting Notice:

Saturday May 11th, 2024 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our May Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2024 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month

Program: To Be Determined

Informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpen-teur Avenues at 4:15 pm May 11th, 2024.

Please join us in-person at Roseville Lutheran Church, Saturday May 11th 2024 at 6 pm. Doors open at 5:50pm. Our business meeting will begin at 6:15 followed by the program.

If you are unable to join us in person, the Zoom Meeting log-in information are here:

Topic: Northstar Chapter, NRHS April Meeting

Time: May11th 2024 17:30 Central Time

Time: May 11, 2024 17:45 Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting click on following link

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87606321810?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87606321810?pwd=L3ZqSTZUS1N4MDJxcVVRSWI1c0VtUT09)

[pwd=L3ZqSTZUS1N4MDJxcVVRSWI1c0VtUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87606321810?pwd=L3ZqSTZUS1N4MDJxcVVRSWI1c0VtUT09)

Or sign on with:

Meeting ID: 876 0632 1810

Passcode: 679114---

Dial by your location

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

• +1 507 473 4847 US

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



From the Editor: Programs for future meetings are open. May 2024 are open and Fall of 2024 (September, October and November). Contact either John Goodman or Richard Tubbesing at the above E-mails to schedule and show your program.

We are in dire need of a Treasurer.

Editor Note: : Light rail trip is scheduled for FRIDAY June 7th 2024. See Schedule in this issue. (see page 4)

NEXT Issue out around July 1st 2024!

Meeting Minutes April 13th, 2024, Roseville Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order at 6:15 pm by President Dan Meyer. There were about 25 members and Guests present. A quorum was determined. A motion to members by President Dan Meyer to approve the meeting minutes from March 2024 meeting in the April 2024 newsletter was floored. The motion was carried.

Treasurer's Report. Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers Report. The Chapter cash balance as of April 10th with the sum of Calendar and Chapter accounts is in good shape. Membership: There are 29 Regular renewals and there are 14 subscribers. Dan Meyer stated that week are looking for a replacement for Treasurer. He stated if you have handled your personal finances, you are qualified, and please step up if you are interested.

Library Report. The library report was reported by John Goodman. Again, our remaining library contents are in temperature-controlled storage facility, and we really miss having a library building to meet. The Calendar committee has been meeting at Dick Tubbesing's Apartment in Fridley Minnesota. We have a substantial drop in storage cost from over \$500 a month to \$183 a month for the Storage Facility. Dan Meyer stated there will be an increase in the monthly storage cost and will have to sign a new contract. John stated that we are prohibited from meeting there as the rental contract states. The Calendar committee could have met at the storage facility as Dan had fixed up the computer for use. We have new management at the storage facility and rules have changed. John Stated we have people who will donate Railroad collections but are in no position to receive any new donations. We have many items to get rid of (duplicates) in the storage facility.

Calendar Report. The Calendar Report was given by John Goodman. We are progressing in selecting photographs meeting at Dick Tubbesing's apartment great room. Dick Tubbesing stated we are working on reserving the 'great room' at his apartment.

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The Manager is undergoing chemo and is difficult to get ahold of but there should be no problem getting the room for next Wednesday Afternoon. John stated that Dawn Holmberg has moved some money in our Paypal account to the calendar account. Dawn Holmberg stated we have an order in our mailbox that was dated Dec 21st. We are sending a partial refund to the person who ordered the calendar.

Trip Director Report. The Trip Director report was given by John Goodman. John has contacted the Wisconsin Great Northern railroad about our trip. We have reserved their Ranch Car for 20 seats for our exclusive use. The price for the bus trip would be about \$100. (\$60 for the Bus, and \$40 for the Train ride based on twenty participants). Russ Isbrandt made a motion to subsidize the bus trip to \$100 per person based on 20 people. John Goodman seconded the motion. Dan Meyer stated the bus will board at the Metro Transit station on I35W and County Road C in Roseville. Mark Quam stated he will be going from Eau Claire WI and would drive to Trego. In That case, John Goodman and Russ Stated that the Fare for Mark or anyone would not take the bus the fare would be \$60. John Goodman stated in his discussions with Greg Vreeland of the Wisconsin Great Northern that the Mark Twain Zephyr will not be ready to run this year. However, he will conduct tours of the Mark Twain Zephyr. The light rail ride and Northstar ride in June can be done on weekdays. Dick Tubbesing stated that to ride the Northstar from Minneapolis to Big Lake and return you have to take the first Train to leave in the afternoon from Target Field. Russ Isbrandt will create a schedule on Friday June 7th 2024 from the Bloomington Metro station and send it to Richard Tubbesing for publishing in the next Newsletter. John Goodman stated that you use to buy a ticket that would include both the Light Rail ride and the Northstar Train. Dan Meyer stated that our scheduled ride will start from the Bloomington Metro Station. Anyone who wants to ride can board at any intermediate station according to our schedule. July 13th is the picnic at Maiden Rock WI on the which is the 2nd Saturday in July. WI. John Goodman stated that we will schedule the Holiday Banquet at Mancini's on the second Sunday in December, December 8th, 2024.

Meetings Dawn Holmberg was asked about monthly meetings in the fall, She has not confirmed reservations for the fall. Richard Tubbesing suggested that we meet on the third Saturday of the month. A poll was taken. It was determined that we remain on the 2nd Saturday of the month and Dawn will proceed to make room reservations with Roseville Lutheran Church on the 2nd Saturday of the month for the Fall meetings. This was undertaken as New Business.

Newsletter Report. The newsletter report was given by Richard Tubbesing. Richard Tubbesing stated that there will be newsletters in May and July. The May issue will have a detailed schedule for our light rail and Northstar trip. The July issue will have official signup for the Trego Pizza Train trip. The newsletter costs from 65 to 70 dollars. Richard Tubbesing made a request to chapter members that the newsletter would like to have stories and photos submitted for the newsletter by members and friends

National Representative Report. The National (NRHS) report was given by Dawn Holmberg. Dawn stated that the meeting room at Roseville Lutheran Church has been reserved for the rest of 2024. There is a BOD and Advisory council meeting the first week of May in Cedar Rapids IA. At the Conference there will be reports from all the committees and there will be a best practices roundtable. The roundtable will give the opportunity for chapters on recruiting and retaining members. Dawn stated that the roundtable will be interesting on how chapters recruit and retain members. The monthly newsletter will be issued in April. Dawn stated that she and John Goodman will be creating the NRHS convention booklet this month. Dan Meyer stated that the BOD meeting will be on Zoom which members can view.

Web Report The web report was given by Dan Meyer. There was nothing new to report. The new Web Server is working fine. Dan stated he puts the current newsletter on our website which anyone can view. Dan will post information on the summer activities and holiday party on the web site. Dan stated we are also on Facebook, and you can garner information on our chapter there. Dan stated he found some history of the GN RR through Robbinsdale MN. Richard Tubbesing stated that info will be in the next newsletter.

Cheer Committee. Dan stated that Ed Johnson sent him an email to Dan Meyer that he is in the hospital with vertigo problems. Dan reported that Dawn Holmberg is dealing with hip problems. Dan Meyer asked Glen Holmberg to report on member Dave Norman. Glen stated that he has moved to a new facility and can be visited. Richard Tubbesing requested that Glen send him the new address, so the newsletter has Dave's correct address. Glen stated his new residence is Augustana Home at 1020 17th Ave Room 332 Minneapolis MN. Dave does not have a cell phone and you need someone to let you in for visits. Mark Quam stated that Ed Johnson who was on the All Aboard Minnesota BOD, has resigned due to his health problems.

Program Report. Richard Tubbesing gave the program report. Mike Yuhas will give a slide program from his collection. Richard Tubbesing solicited members to Volunteer a program of their trips and Railfanning to one of our meetings soon. April meeting probably will be a video by Jack Barbier on a Steam Triple header. May 2024 is still open. Dan Meyer asked Greg Smith about his new slide acquisition. He has sent them out for processing and are mostly Black and White. Greg was Asked if he could do the program in May 2024. That might be a program for the May meeting.

There was No Old Business to report.

New Business Report. It was tabled by Richard Tubbesing to move month meetings to the 3rd Saturday of the month. A poll was taken, and the majority of the members indicated that we keep our meetings on the 2nd Saturday of the month. Dawn Holmberg stated that she would have to check with the Church to move meetings to the third Saturday and check which weekend Easter falls on next year. Dan Meyer stated that we always welcome guests and bring a friend to the meeting if you can.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 was made. Motion was carried.

Announcements

-Mark Quam was asked on the status of the 2nd Amtrak Train to Chicago

Mark stated he attended the Spring meeting of Association of Rail Passenger Trains at Wisconsin Dells. Madison Wisconsin has received a grant for the study of a new rail Passenger Station.

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Chris Ott of the High-Speed Rail Alliance gave an update of connections from Chicago to the Twin Cities. James Tilly of the Florida Brightline gave an update of the Florida train. Scott Rogers of the West Wisconsin Rail Coalition (Eau Claire Service) gave a report. The Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition group also gave a report. The Chippawa – St Croix rail coalition (Eau Claire to the Twin Cities) gave a report. Amtrak, WiscDOT, MnDOT, and Illinois DOT all share Costs of the second Amtrak Train from Chicago to the Twin Cities. Also, it was pointed out that costs can be shared with other commissions. Also pointed out is that Regional Rail Corridors require a 10% match of funding any corridor trains for Federal Funding. All First Phase study of rail passenger corridors a fully funded by Federal Grants. Extended Amtrak service to Green Bay and four Wisconsin Corridors got a Federal Grant for study, most likely in 2026. Jack Barbier was asked about the start of Amtrak 2nd train service to Chicago. Jack stated that Amtrak has equipment problems with the new Venture Cars.

John Goodman gave a report of the coming of CP #2816. It will be in St Paul May 3rd, 2024. Richard Tubbesing surmised that the two days the train is allocated for movement from Minot to St Paul the second day (May 2nd) will be from Glenwood to St Paul. The Train could be housed in St Paul at the #261 shops or CP's St Paul Yard.

Jack Barbier then gave an excellent video program of “Triple Header Steam in the valley” in 1998. Respectfully Submitted Richard Tubbesing Secretary



Obituary

The Passing of Carl Jensen, 1936-2024 NRHS

By Ken Miller, Roanoke Chapter, NRHS

Usually, I have very little trouble writing. But today, I am frustrated. It is always difficult to lose someone, especially someone you have known for close to 50 years. I learned of the passing of Carl Jensen on Monday, March 25, just a few hours ago, and many memories came floating back.

Light Rail, Northstar Train Ride FRIDAY June 7th 2024 (From the Metro Transit website)

For Boarding on Intermediate stations & times, please go to Metro Transit Web site.

Step	Departure Time	Arrival time	Fare	Senior Fare
Blue Line Metro Transit Board Bloomington 20 th St Station	2:28 pm Or 2:43 pm		\$2.00	\$1.00
Blue Line Metro Transit Arrive Target Field Minneapolis		3:06 PM Or 3:21 PM		
Northstar Train Board Target Station	3:38 pm		\$6.25	\$2.00
Northstar Arrive at Big Lake Mn		4:30 pm		
Northstar Depart Big Lake	4:45 pm		\$6.25	\$2.00
Northstar Arrive Target Field		5:37 pm		
Blue Line Metro Transit Light Rail Board Target Field	5:49 pm Or 6:04 pm		\$2.00	\$1.00
Blue Line Metro Transit Arrive 20 th St Station Bloomington MN		6:25 pm Or 6:40 pm		
Head for home				

Robbinsdale Historical Society Facebook: Provided by Dan Meyer April 2024

Rails Through Robbinsdale

Most of us spent a fair amount of time along the railroad tracks when we were kids, but Dave Vos has pictures! Here are a few scenes along the rails through Robbinsdale and Crystal in the middle of the last century, captioned with Dave's commentary.

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Eastbound extra at 40-1/2 Ave in Robbinsdale. 1952? Notice the dust – he's movin'!!



Great Northern local train switching in Robbinsdale. 40-1/2 Ave.



At 40-1/2 Ave. looking south.



The Soo Line Railroad trestle over the channel between Upper and Lower Twin Lake. About 1952.



L: This was the NEW safety barrier which blocked 40-1/2 Ave. at the rail-road tracks. The former barrier was a piece of telephone pole buried in the ground with a yellow stop sign bolted to it. It worked.....no one ever went through either one!



From 40-1/2 Ave. looking south. Train has just crossed 40th Ave. This area along the tracks was planted with vegetable gardens during the second world war, with the blessing of the railroad.



The Interlocking tower which protected the crossing of the Great Northern and Soo Line railroads in Crystal, Minn. This view is looking west and the buildings in the background are on West Broadway. The photo was taken from the edge of the road where U.S. Highway 52 crossed the Soo Line tracks. (Now Highway 81 or Bottineau Boulevard!)

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Looking west on the Soo Line tracks from near the Highway bridge.



Robbinsdale, looking north at 40-1/2 Ave.



A train pulled into the siding to meet another train. The signal arm being down indicated that the station agent had orders governing the further operation of this train. The man on the platform is probably the train's conductor, who had come over to pick up those orders. The train is blocking Rockford Road which would indicate that the other train must have been nearby. If not, they would have to split the train and pull ahead to clear the crossing. (Little known history lesson.....)



Looking north from 40-1/2 Ave. toward Noble Ave. crossing. Scars on the ties are from the recent change in the location of the track switch. Before World War II, the siding track joined the main line on the far side of Noble Ave. Late in the war the switch was moved to the south side of Noble and joined the main line where the scars are located. There were two more moves and a change in the angle of the switch before they were done. The final switch ended up located nearly at the 40th Ave. road crossing!



Great Northern Railway crossing of Rockford Road – Robbinsdale, Minn. In the early 50's the train stations roof eaves were cut back about three feet on the front and back. The platform was changed to poured concrete from Fir timbers. There were some huge slivers to be had if you weren't careful.



East bound train at 40-1/2 Ave. in Robbinsdale. (geographical southbound)



CPKC Releases Travel Schedule for Tour by No. 2816

By Trains Staff | April 17, 2024

FINAL SPIKE STEAM TOUR TRAVEL SCHEDULE

APRIL 24	Calgary, Alta. • EVENT •
APRIL 26	Calgary, Alta. to Medicine Hat, Alta.
APRIL 27	Medicine Hat, Alta. to Moose Jaw, Sask.
APRIL 28	Moose Jaw, Sask. • EVENT •
APRIL 29	Moose Jaw, Sask. to Minot, N.D.
APRIL 30	Minot, N.D. • EVENT •
MAY 1	Minot, N.D. to Glenwood, Minn.
MAY 2	Glenwood, Minn. to St. Paul, Minn.
MAY 3	St. Paul, Minn. • EVENT •
MAY 5	St. Paul, Minn. to Portage, Wis.
MAY 6	Portage, Wis. to Bensenville, Ill.
MAY 8	Franklin Park, Ill. • EVENT •
MAY 9	Bensenville, Ill. to Nahant, Iowa
MAY 10	Davenport, Iowa • EVENT •
MAY 11	Nahant, Iowa to Kansas City, Mo.
MAY 18	Kansas City, Mo. • EVENT •
MAY 21	Kansas City, Mo. to Heavener, Okla.
MAY 22	Heavener, Okla. to Shreveport, La.
MAY 24	Shreveport, La. • EVENT •
MAY 25	Shreveport, La. to Kendleton, Texas
MAY 27	Kendleton, Texas to Laredo, Texas
MAY 28	Laredo, Texas • EVENT •

cpkcr.com



CALGARY — CPKC has filled in many of the blanks on the upcoming Last Spike Steam Tour, releasing a schedule with travel days and intermediate stops for the Canadian and U.S. portions of the three-nation tour of 4-6-4 No. 2816, shown above.

Locations and times for the “Event” days on the schedule were released last month [see [“CPKC announces times, locations for Steam Tour”](#), *Trains News Wire*, March 27, 2024].

CPKC CEO Keith Creel had vowed to send the 1930 product of the Montreal Locomotive Works, known as the “Empress,” on a tour of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico if the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger was approved. Initially expected last year, the event became a one-year celebration of the merger as overhaul and subsequent break-in of the locomotive was held last spring and summer. “We are excited to share this extraordinary experience with communities across our network as we mark the one-year anniversary of our CPKC journey,” Creel said in January when the schedule was first announced. More information is available at [the CPKC website](#).

BNSF, CPKC Say They Won’t Pay New Minnesota Safety Fee

By Trains Staff | March 30, 2024

L: Firefighters observe burning railcars after the BNSF derailment in Raymond, Minn., on March 30, 2023. BNSF and CPKC have said they will not pay a new safety fee stemming from legislation introduced as a result of this incident. Kandiyohi County Sheriff’s Office via Facebook

ST. PAUL, Minn. — BNSF Railway and CPKC, the two largest railroads in Minnesota, do not plan to make payments of approximately \$1 million to the state required by a law passed last year, saying the state legislation is “pre-empted by federal law.”

KSTP-TV reports the two railroads notified the Minnesota Department of Public Safety of the decision in letters sent last month.

The fees were established by [the final version of a bill](#) introduced the day after a derailment and fire in Raymond, Minn. [see [“Minnesota legislators consider rail safety legislation,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, April 1, 2023].

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It requires the state to assess fees, based on route-miles in the state, to all railroads to pay for six rail safety inspector positions. It also requires railroads to offer safety training to fire departments and local emergency management organizations and sets a 15-minute limit for railroads to notify first responders of incidents involving hazardous materials, among other provisions. As part of a broader [transportation finance and policy bill](#), it passed the state's House 69-58, the Senate 34-32, and was signed by Gov. Tim Walz last May.

State Sen. Scott Dibble (Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, Minneapolis) told the station the railroads' decision was "like a bolt out of the blue and a complete shock." The railroads, asked to comment, referred the station to the Minnesota Regional Railroads Association, which KSTP says responded with a lengthy statement that noted railroads already train first responders, that rail incidents in the state are down 46%, and that the fee is unfair because the state does not collect similar assessments from other modes of transportation handling hazardous materials.

Dibble dismissed the claim that the legislation is illegal, saying "the railroads are always resisting any efforts we make toward public safety improvements ... by citing federal preemption. They're almost always wrong, and I'm sure they're wrong in this case, as well." He said the state may have to file a lawsuit if the railroads refuse to pay.

Wisconsin Great Northern Acquires Steam Locomotive (updated)

By Steve Glischinski and Steve Smedley | April 15, 2024

Former Duluth & Northeastern 2-8-0 has been displayed in Minnesota



Duluth & Northeastern 2-8-0 No. 27 will be moved from its current display in Barnum, Minn., to the Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad. Jeff Terry

Concerns over deterioration of the locomotive led the Carlton County (Minn.) Fair Association to offer the locomotive to anyone who would pay to move it. Jeff Terry



L; DNE No. 27 is winched out of its display shed by a heavy-duty tow truck on Monday, April 15. David Schauer

Above: No. 27 and its caboose are moved clear of the shed. The locomotive will now be prepared for move by truck to Trego, Wis. David Schauer

TREGO, Wis. – The Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad has added a steam locomotive to its expanding roster. Former Duluth & Northeastern 2-8-0 No. 27 will be moved from its display site at the Carlton County Fairgrounds in Barnum, Minn., where it has been displayed since 1968.

Wisconsin Great Northern, known for its ongoing restoration of the *Mark Twain Zephyr*, acquired the locomotive from Carlton County, which wanted to dispose of the Consolidation, as it was deteriorating and the county could no longer afford its upkeep. It offered the locomotive free of charge to any party that would pay for moving it, but said it might scrap the 2-8-0 if it could not find a new home. WGN stepped in.

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"I had heard a grapevine rumor that the locomotive was in danger of being scrapped because it had been offered to museums in the area and they were not able to take on the process of moving the locomotive," WGN President Greg Vreeland said in a phone interview with *Trains News Wire*. "I called the president of the Carlton County Fair Association board and he told me indeed they were looking for it to be removed one way or another.

The important part at this point, and job No. 1, is securing and moving the locomotive. After we complete our current project, the *Mark Twain Zephyr*, we will then thoroughly examine No. 27, with an option to restore her to operation."

No. 27 was built by Alco-Pittsburg for the Duluth, Missabe & Northern Railway in June 1907 as No. 348. It became Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway No. 348 in the 1937 merger of the Duluth, Missabe & Northern and the Spirit Lake Transfer Railway. DM&IR sold the engine in 1955 to short line Duluth & Northeastern of Cloquet, Minn., where it was renumbered 27. D&NE was well known to steam fans as one of the last short line railroads in the United States operating steam locomotives, not converting to diesel operation until 1964. After dieselization, No. 27 was stored in Cloquet until it was donated to Carlton County. No. 348/27 is a sister locomotive to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum's operational DM&IR 2-8-0 No. 332, formerly D&NE No. 28, which operates on the North Shore Scenic Railroad out of Duluth, Minn.

"It is a significant addition to our collection in that the WGN is home to five ex- Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railroad heavy-weight passenger cars," Vreeland said.

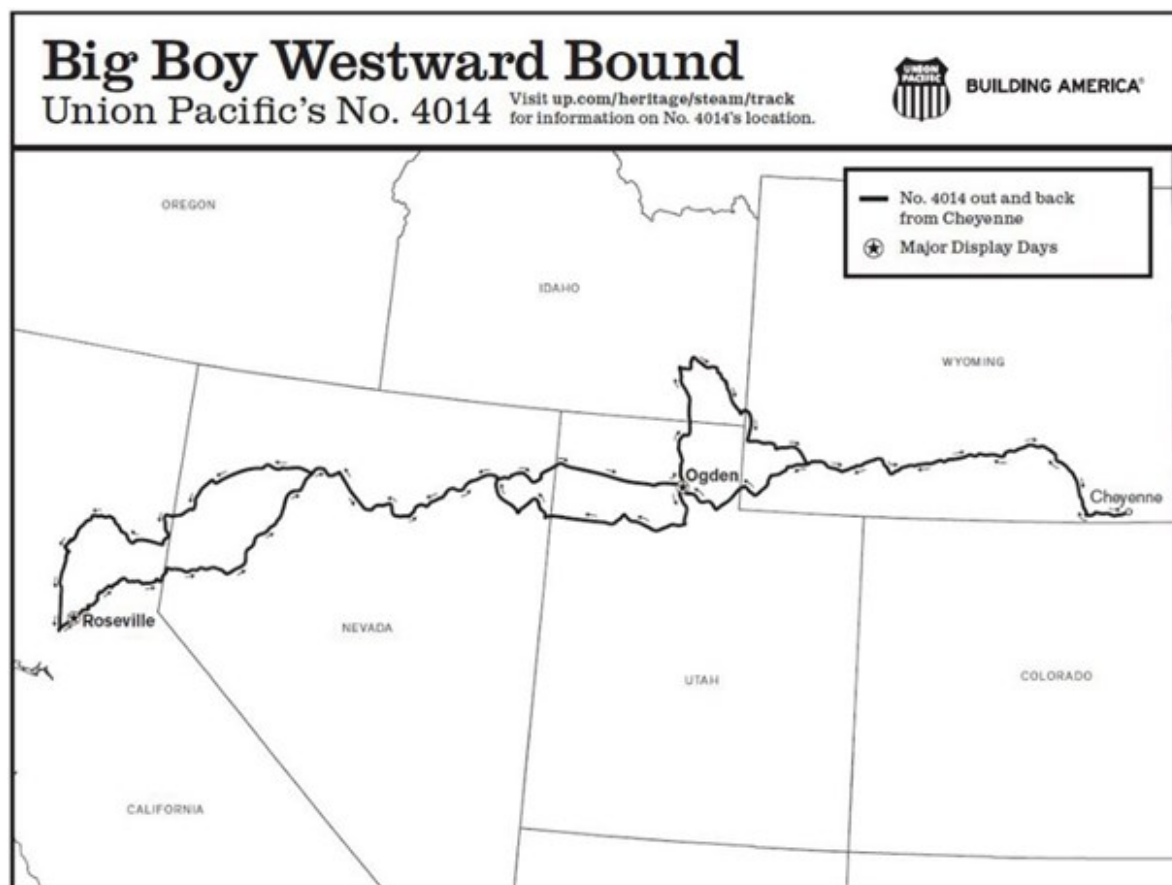
WGN crews moved the locomotive today (April 15) from its current storage shed onto three track panels, where it will be prepared for trucking to the Wisconsin Great Northern. Once on that track, the cab and boiler will be removed and loaded onto a heavy-duty tractor-trailer rig; the running gear will be a second load and the tender will be a third. Barnum, roughly midway between Hinckley and Duluth, Minn., is about 87 miles by the most direct road route from WGN's headquarters in Trego.

Included in the acquisition is a World War II Northern Pacific caboose, converted to a bay window caboose from a wooden boxcar. — Updated at 12:40 p.m. CT to add paragraph on locomotive's history; updated at 7:52 p.m. with photos of locomotive being removed from shed.



Big Boy's 'Westward Bound Tour' to Begin June 30

By Trains Staff | April 10, 2024



CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Evolving plans for this year's tour by Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 now call for the locomotive to make what the railroad is calling its "Westward Bound Tour" beginning Sunday, June 30, traveling to Roseville, Calif., and returning to its home base in Cheyenne by the end of July. At this point, just two sets of dates for public displays are set: July 12-13 in Roseville, and July 20-21 in Ogden, Utah. Other route details will be announced as the tour approaches. Initial plans had called for the trip to include visits to Portland, Ore., and Boise, Idaho, but the railroad says in [its latest update](#) that "we determined that the network capacity on our northern corridor could not accommodate Big Boy No. 4014 along with anticipated demand on a single track."

The tour will feature a fundraising excursion to benefit the Union Pacific Railroad Museum in Council Bluffs, Iowa; the location for that trip is also yet to be announced, with details and tickets to come at [the UP Train Tix website](#). The railroad says this is the first of two public tours planned, with a second this fall to visit Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Illinois, and other states. Details on that tour are also still to come

Waterloo, Iowa, Receives Federal Funds for Possible Rail Yard Relocation

By [Trains Staff](#) | March 13, 2024 CN yard would be moved from center of town to outskirts



The Canadian National yard in Waterloo, Iowa. Google Earth

WATERLOO, Iowa — The city of Waterloo has received a \$750,000 grant to begin preparations for possible relocation Canadian National Railway's yard from downtown Waterloo to outside of town, along with other rail projects to improve safety, traffic flow, and pedestrian access. The project will be funded from the Department of Transportation's Neighborhood Access and Equity Program, part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The current location causes traffic issues, sees pedestrians climbing through railcars, and may be impacting property values and air quality, according to [a statement from U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley](#) (R-Iowa), who announced the grant. "Relocating the CN Rail yard in Waterloo is a step toward enhancing safety, boosting economic development and alleviating related environmental and health concerns. The IIJA resources announced today will help set this project in motion," Grassley said. "The bipartisan infrastructure law continues to support vital improvements across Iowa, and I'm glad to see Iowans' hard-earned tax dollars return to communities in our state."



—AMTRAK News—

Superliner Shortage Limits Illinois Eclipse Viewing Ridership Potential

By [Bob Johnston](#) | April 5, 2024

Some seats became available Thursday; Amtrak continues to look for opportunities to add more



Southbound Saluki No. 391 crosses County Road 3300N north of Rantoul, Ill., on July 10, 2023, en route to Carbondale, Ill. The train carries non-revenue axle count Superliners to ensure proper shunting of signals and highway crossing warning devices. A round trip to the April 8 solar eclipse at Carbondale, Ill., has been sold out because of a shortage of coaches. Bob Johnston



Ray Lang, currently Amtrak's vice president of state-supported services, passes out Carbondale eclipse information aboard the southbound Saluki on Aug. 21, 2017. At the time, Canadian National allowed Amfleet and Horizon equipment to be assigned; all of this train's coaches and cafe cars carried passengers. CN has since required seven Superliners. Bob Johnston

CARBONDALE, Ill. — For a few hours Thursday, travelers along Illinois' Chicago-Carbondale Amtrak corridor could book a daytime round trip to next Monday's solar eclipse "path of totality," thereby avoiding monumental traffic jams along parallel highways that occurred during a similar event in August 2017. But that window of opportunity closed when seats that briefly became available were snapped up on one of the trains. The culprit: not enough road-ready Superliner coaches assigned to capture what seems to be insatiable travel demand for a truly unique event.

Southbound morning Saluki (train no. 391) from Chicago and afternoon northbound Illini (no. 392) from Carbondale, Ill., had been booked solid for weeks, with seats only sporadically becoming available for sale through cancellations. As normally scheduled, the southbound train would have arrived only minutes before 1:59 p.m., when the sun will first be fully obscured by the moon for more than four minutes.

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The *Saluki* still had seats available in mid-March when Amtrak finalized an earlier Chicago departure with host railroad Canadian National [see “[Amtrak modifies April 8 schedules ...](#),” News Wire, March 22, 2024]. The northbound *Illini*, already sold out by then, also had its schedule pushed back several hours to allow passengers plenty of time to return to the train from major group eclipse gatherings in the area.

Superliner necessity

All Amtrak trains operating over CN’s Chicago-Carbondale route must be assigned at least seven Superliners if maximum 79-mph track speeds are to be maintained, according to a host railroad “axle count” requirement that has been in effect in various iterations for almost two decades. This is to ensure track circuits that trigger signals and highway warning devices are properly shunted by train’s wheels. A two-part *Trains* News Wire investigation of the problem [see “[Seeking answers on loss of shunt ...](#),” News Wire, Sept. 6, 2023] found the parties are working on a solution that won’t require use of heavy Superliner equipment on a stretch of track south of Champaign, Ill., but final report recommendations have yet to be issued.

Several wreck-damage incidents, and the fact that Amtrak management has not returned all Superliners to service that it chose to sideline as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have left the company short on long-distance train capacity systemwide.

There are not enough full Superliner coaches or coach baggage cars to assign to the daytime *Illini* and *Saluki* round trips, so these trains routinely draw no more than four coaches in revenue service. Their consists are generally augmented with three Superliners of any available type just to satisfy the axle count requirements. Thus, sleeping cars, transition sleepers, dining cars, and Sightseer lounge cars are all pressed into non-revenue service.

Amtrak Chooses Contractor for Unified Operations Center in Wilmington

By [Trains Staff](#) | April 6, 2024 | Last updated on April 9, 2024



Amtrak has named the contractor for the project to create its United Operations Center in Wilmington, Del. Tevebaugh Architecture

WILMINGTON, Del. — Wohlsen Construction Co. has been awarded the contract for Amtrak’s Unified Operations Center project in Wilmington, Del., the company announced on Friday.

The project, expected to cost more than \$53 million, will build a 24-hour operations center for national operations, including fleet and onboard crew assignments and coordination of the response to service disruptions. A data center will also support system resiliency. The facility will also include the dispatching center for Amtrak’s Mid-Atlantic Division, which oversees all train movements in the Washington-Philadelphia-Harrisburg corridor.

The facility will be at the 164,789-square-foot Renaissance Centre in downtown Wilmington. It will allow relocation of the current Consolidated National Operating Center and Wilmington Dispatching Office from a flood-vulnerable location next to the Christina River.

“One of our primary goals for the Renaissance Centre building is to create a new Amtrak Unified Operations Center to serve our nationwide rail network, which will drive enhanced reliability, efficiency, safety and customer service,” Gery Williams, Amtrak executive vice president, service delivery & operations, said in [a press release](#)

“The new UOC is part of Amtrak’s transformation from legacy systems and practices to a modern, sustainable control center capable of supporting Amtrak’s long-term strategy to double ridership by 2040.” The facility is expected to be completed by 2027. The Unified Operations Center project has not been without controversy. Amtrak’s Office of Inspector General said in a 2022 report that the passenger operator would see few of the cost savings and staff consolidation benefits it had anticipated because it failed to verify its plans [see “[Report says Amtrak will see few projected benefits ...](#),” *Trains* News Wire, May 16, 2022].

— Updated April 9 at 11:30 a.m. CT to correct name of facility to “Unified” in headline and some references in article

Parts Issues Leads to Amtrak Midwest Cancellations (second update)

By [David Lassen](#) | April 13, 2024

Parts shortage cited for cancellation of four trains Friday, four on Saturday



L ; Northbound Amtrak Hiawatha No. 337 features a matched set of four Siemens Venture coaches departs Chicago on April 7, 2023. The Hiawatha route was among those affected by weekend cancellations. David Lassen

CHICAGO — Amtrak has cancelled a series of state-supported trains in the Midwest on Friday and today (Saturday, April 13) because of issues involving parts for its Siemens Venture equipment.

Responding to an inquiry from *Trains* News Wire, Amtrak’s Beth Toll wrote in an email, “A supply chain backlog from key vendors has delayed replacement parts needed to support required routine maintenance inspections.

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Customers are being notified of some cancellations in the Amtrak Midwest network and substitute transportation by chartered buses is being provided as available. Refunds are also being made without penalty.” A Siemens spokesperson said in an emailed statement, “We are aware of the situation and are working closely with Amtrak to resolve the supply chain backlog to best support routine maintenance inspections and help Amtrak resume normal service.”

The parts in question are expected to arrive in Chicago on Tuesday.

According to the [Amtrak Alerts feed](#) on X (formerly Twitter), these trains have been cancelled:

On Friday:

— Train 302, the 6:35 a.m. St. Louis-Chicago *Lincoln Service*

— Train 364, the 4 p.m. Chicago-Port Huron *Blue Water*

— Train 383, the 5:55 p.m. Chicago-Quincy *Illinois Zephyr*

— Train 305, the 5:20 p.m. Chicago-St. Louis *Lincoln Service*

Today:

— Train 380, the 6:12 a.m. Quincy-Chicago *Illinois Zephyr*

— Train 330, the 6:15 a.m. Milwaukee-Chicago *Hiawatha*

— Train 365, the 6:20 a.m. Chicago-Port Huron *Blue Water*

— Train 300, the 9 a.m. Chicago-St. Louis *Lincoln Service*

Bus substitutions were provided in most cases, although in the case of Friday’s No. 302, the bus transportation was only provided between Bloomington-Normal and Chicago. It is unknown if additional cancellations will be necessary.

Southbound train No. 21, the *Texas Eagle*, also is not operating today between Chicago and St. Louis, but Amtrak Alerts attributes that to a “vehicle incident” that also led to the northbound train’s cancellation on Thursday. No. 21 will originate in St. Louis.

The Venture equipment made its debut in Midwest service on Feb. 1, 2022. The 88-car order dates from 2017, when the Illinois Department of Transportation and California’s Caltrans chose Siemens as the replacement when Nippon Sharyo was unable to fulfill its 2012 contract for bilevel equipment [see [“Expensive questions surface ...,”](#) News Wire, Nov. 17, 2017]. Supply-chain, testing, and manufacturing issues delayed the order, which is not yet complete. As of a year ago, roughly half the cars were in service

[see [“More Midwest Venture cars enter service ...,”](#) News Wire, April 14, 2023]; none of the cafe cars have yet been delivered.

The parts-related cancellations come little more than a month after Amtrak’s Office of Inspector General issued a report detailing issues with the company’s parts management, and how it affects operations [see [“Amtrak Inspector General report shows how parts shortages impact service,”](#) News Wire, Feb. 27, 2024].

— Updated at 5:05 p.m. with Amtrak response and additional inquiry; updated at 8:05 p.m. with Siemens statement and background information on Venture equipment.

Washington State DOT Outlines Possibilities for Expansion of Amtrak Cascades Service

By David Lassen | April 14, 2024

Comments sought through April 18 on Preliminary Service Development Plan



An Amtrak Cascades train approaches the Chambers Bay bridge in Steilacoom, Wash., on June 26, 2018, prior to the shift to the inland Point Defiance Bypass. A Washington State Department of Transportation report on expansion of Cascades service includes options for up to 16 daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, Ore. David Lassen

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A public comment period concludes April 18 on Washington State Department of Transportation proposals to increase *Amtrak Cascades* service over the next 20 years to as many as 16 daily round trips between Seattle and Portland, and six between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia.

The 46-page [Preliminary Service Development Plan](#) for the *Cascades* offers five different scenarios to increase service from the baseline of two Seattle-Vancouver and six Seattle-Portland round trips. Variants include the number of daily trains; bus service between Bellingham, Wash., and Vancouver for some trips; some limited-stop or express trains; and infrastructure upgrades that would allow top speeds of 90 mph.

The options carry projected annual ridership by 2045 ranging from 1.3 million (the baseline option) to 3.2 million (the maximum service, with 90-mph operation): “Limited trips” refers to trains making intermediate stops only in Tacoma and Vancouver, Wash.; “Express trips” would be nonstop between Seattle and Portland or Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. Washington State Department of Transportation

The report notes that the 16-trip option between Seattle and Portland would best meet projected demand, but that “a better understanding of the capital investments and operating expenses” is needed. It also explains the Bellingham-Vancouver bus service is a consideration “without support from Canadian partners” for infrastructure improvements. WSDOT will map out a full Service Development Plan to address these and other questions using the \$500,000 grant from the Federal Railroad Administration awarded under the FRA’s Corridor Identification and Development Program in December [see [“Full list of passenger routes in FRA Corridor program ...,”](#) Trains News Wire, Dec. 8, 2023].

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The report identifies a total of 18 potential infrastructure improvements, not including those in Canada, that would be required for full expansion of service. Five are north of Seattle and 13 between Seattle and Portland. They include extension of double or triple track at seven locations and addition or extension of sidings at seven others. At least 12 would be necessary for even the most modest expansion plan. The report offers no cost estimates for these projects, noting no engineering analysis for them has been performed. It also notes the various options would require six to 11 additional trainsets.

Additional information on the development of the plan, and a link to comment forms, are available at [this page on the WSDOT website](#).

Resourceful Amtrak Crew Opens Lounge for Sold-out Train's Customers: Analysis

By Bob Johnston | April 10, 2024

Eclipse round trip underscores value of on-board space



More than 300 passengers leave the Saluki at Carbondale, Ill., on Monday, when ridership was swelled by those traveling to observe the solar eclipse from the path of totality. Bob Johnston



After the inbound train was wye'd north of the station, Saluki/Illini equipment backs past a Carbondale park where eclipse viewers are beginning to congregate. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — More than 430 passengers rode at least a portion of Amtrak's southbound *Saluki* and northbound *Illini* between the Chicago and Carbondale, Ill., on Monday. Many were taking advantage of a schedule change which made it possible for customers to witness a rare four minutes of totality in the southern Illinois city during the April 8 solar eclipse [see "[Amtrak modifies April 8 schedules ...](#)," *Trains News Wire*, March 22, 2024].

Far from everyone aboard the sold-out trains was on a one-day excursion. That's because these trains comprise one of three round trips (including the *City of New Orleans*) providing daily mobility through central Illinois. Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari tells *News Wire* that Monday's morning southbound *Saluki* No. 391 reached its maximum passenger count of 313 passengers leaving Champaign, Ill., while the late afternoon northbound *Illini* hit its peak load of 325 pulling out of Effingham, Ill. The difference between those numbers and the "total carried" figures of 432 and 437, respectively, reveals that more than 100 seats on each train changed occupants during the trips.

This is typical of most Amtrak intercity trains, both regional and long distance. The more capacity a train can offer, the greater the opportunity to accept extra travelers whose trips may not synch with when others vacate seats or sleeping-car space. Each of the April 8 departures was intermittently sold out for weeks in advance, even before Amtrak made its schedule adjustment. Some passengers interviewed on each train could only book one way because it was either sold out in the other direction, or the southbound run's schedule had not been revised when they made travel plans. More people could have been accommodated if Amtrak had been able to provide additional coaches [see "[Superliner shortage limits Illinois eclipse viewing ...](#)," *News Wire*, April 5, 2024].

Host railroad Canadian National requires seven Superliners to be assigned on the route [see "[Seeking answers on loss of shunt ...](#)," *News Wire* Sept. 6, 2023]. Of those, four coaches are generally sufficient to handle regular patronage. The other three are "axle-count" Superliner. They are often cars that are not suitable for revenue service for a variety of reasons (for example, inoperable air conditioning), and, since they are not occupied, can be of any available car type.

Monday's *Saluki/Illini* Superliner consist looked like this:

- Two accessible coaches with lower-level seating.
- One coach-baggage: the lower level compartment accommodates roll-on-bicycles; there is no checked baggage.
- One coach-café: half of upper level is business class; café is on lower level
- One coach-café: normally carried unoccupied as "axle count" car
- One Sightseer Lounge: unoccupied axle count car
- One transition sleeping car: unoccupied axle count car

Management did open up the axle-count coach-café for sale the previous week and seats were quickly sold. Additional onboard service staff and supervision was on hand in the active coach-café to handle the expected crowds, and serving began shortly after depar-

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With so many passengers on the train, lines quickly formed in the downstairs hall back to the bathrooms and stairwell when the morning train left Chicago, but the efficient attendants kept service moving and made announcements encouraging travelers to “come on down” when there was a lull.

Any Superliner equipment can be tapped for axle count duty and those cars are always closed to revenue passengers, as they were on the southbound *Saluki*. Conductors set up shop in the Sightseer lounge, but discussion by employees overheard in the working café noted that the car hadn’t been cleaned. The ordeal of shifting food and beverage stock for the northbound trip was out of the question, but someone suggested that the Sightseer lounge could be cleaned along with the coaches during the Carbondale layover. Its designated axle-count status would also have to be reversed.

Sure enough, the Sightseer lounge interior — if not the grime-caked exterior — was spotless as passengers boarded the afternoon northbound run. Although the “employees only” sign had been switched from the lounge communicating door to the transition sleeper’s inside door, conductors never announced the car’s availability.

What they did do, however, was direct passengers traveling in groups of two or more boarding at stops after Carbondale to “keep walking” to the front of the train, knowing that finding two seats together would otherwise be difficult. The result: the Sightseer filled up with travelers who would otherwise have been separated.

On long-distance trains, Amtrak coach attendants and conductors generally work off manifest information to block coach seats so that everyone can sit together. That would have been a challenge, but not impossible, here, with hundreds of passengers boarding at the train’s origination point and no assigned coach attendants.

The big takeaway, though, is that the Sightseer lounge is a valuable asset that can add “only on a train” enjoyment to the travel experience, not just in the safety valve role it played on April 8. Anyone could see that on the faces and behavior of happy travelers. Every table and nearly every seat was filled following stops at Du Quoin, Centralia, and Effingham. Conductors stayed in the lower level and food service wasn’t offered; so what? It was the lounge space that mattered. The coach-café four cars back continued to do brisk business.

Two long-distance trains with Sightseer lounges prior to 2021, the *Texas Eagle* and *Capitol Limited*, no longer have them. The Superliner fleet has, of course, been thinned by wreck damage resulting from subsequent *Empire Builder* and *Southwest Chief* derailments, and Amtrak has cited manpower shortages in its maintenance ranks for car-shortage issues. But that Sightseer Lounge No. 33008 has been commoditized as an axle-count car — along with the fact seven lounges are not available for daily operation on the *Eagle* and *Capitol* — indicates Amtrak leadership fails to appreciate the value of the cars and has not prioritized returning them to service.

On the *Eagle*, one part the Sightseer Lounge played, as orchestrated by the volunteer *Texas Eagle* Marketing and Performance Organization and now-retired Amtrak employee Griff Hubbard, was transporting elementary school groups between intermediate stops. That promotional value has since been squandered, while others aboard have lost the convivial environment enjoyed by Chicago-St. Louis and Texas corridor passengers.

Monday’s *Saluki/Illini* round trip reveals no management mechanism in place to recognize the contribution a Sightseer Lounge can make to passenger enjoyment on trains sold out well in advance. Fortunately, employees delivering the service stepped in to make that happen.

— Updated at 5:35 p.m. CT to correct caption information on second photo.

Amtrak Seeks Information on Zero-emissions Replacements for Diesel Fleet

By Trains Staff | April 17, 2024

Move is first step in pursuing alternative-propulsion locomotives

WASHINGTON — Amtrak on Tuesday announced it has released a Request for Information seeking information on zero-emission technologies for the company’s rail fleet as a step toward eliminating its current diesel locomotive fleet.

“Finding the cleanest technologies to carry customers across our vast network will be transformative as we deliver a new era of rail,” Amtrak President Roger Harris said in [a press release](#). “We are excited to take this important step toward providing safe and reliable service with a smaller impact on the environment.”

Amtrak’s procurement website says the company is seeking “vendor information in relation to the industry options for Zero-Emissions locomotive and trainset-compatible technologies. This includes battery, hydrogen, and overhead contact systems to replace the current convention diesel fleet used on Amtrak’s National Network in both revenue and non-revenue service.” Responses are due by July 31. The company says results of the RFI “will inform Amtrak’s future decisions to procure the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly fleet for deployment across Amtrak’s network.”

In 2022, the company announced its goal of Net Zero emissions by 2045 [see [“Amtrak sets goal of net zero”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Sept. 23, 2022]. That came just after the state of California announced it had ordered hydrogen-fuel cell trainsets that were initially presented as being for use in Amtrak California service, which would represent the first alternative power-source equipment for any Amtrak operation [see [“Stadler unveils first hydrogen train for U.S.”](#) *News Wire*, Sept. 21, 2022]. A subsequent addition to that order indicates the equipment is intended for the planned [Valley Rail](#) service, which covers both the Altamont Corridor Express commuter service and Amtrak’s *San Joaquins* [see [“California orders six more”](#) *News Wire*, Feb. 15, 2024].

Amtrak, NJ Transit Northeast Corridor Service Snarled by Catenary Issues (updated)

By David Lassen | April 15, 2024



The portion of the Northeast Corridor (in red) affected by Monday evening's catenary issues. NJ Transit



A New York-bound Amtrak Northeast Regional train passes an NJ Transit train at Elizabeth, N.J., in August 2019. Amtrak and NJ Transit operations on the Northeast Corridor have been disrupted on Monday, April 15, by catenary issues. David Lassen

NEW YORK — Amtrak passengers are facing long delays and cancellations on part of the Northeast Corridor this evening (Monday, April 15), and NJ Transit operations on the NEC are suspended, because of catenary issues near New Brunswick, N.J. Amtrak first reported the problem at 6:33 p.m. ET on its [Amtrak NEC Alerts feed on X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and slightly more than a half-hour later offered an update saying all trains between New York and New Brunswick will face 3-hour delays because of congestion resulting from those power issues. As of 8:45 p.m. ET, [the passenger operator had announced](#) cancellation of some trains between New York and Philadelphia, with other trains originating or terminating in Philadelphia or Trenton. NJ Transit, meanwhile, had suspended service between Penn Station and Trenton because of the wire issues, which it places near Metuchen. NJ Transit rail tickets are being cross-honored by PATH at Newark Penn Station and 33rd Street, and by NJ Transit and private-carrier bus services. As of 7:30 p.m. ET, service had resumed, but was subject to delays of up to 2 hours. For Amtrak, the area involved covers 31.4 miles and five stations: Penn Station, Newark, Newark Liberty Airport, Metropark, and New Brunswick. For NJ Transit, the outage covers 56.7 miles and some 15 stations, as shown below.

— Updated at 8:25 p.m. CT with Amtrak cancellations, NJ Transit resumption of service.

Amtrak Inspector General Report Highlights Role of Data Analysis to Prevent Procurement Fraud

By Trains Staff | April 18, 2024

Follow-up to earlier report considers best practices for company to avoid issues during record infrastructure spending



Amtrak crews work in one of the bores of the North River Tunnel between New York and New Jersey in 2022. In a new report, Amtrak's Office of Inspector General addresses how data analysis can help prevent fraud in large-scale contracts and procurements. Amtrak

WASHINGTON — Data analysis can help Amtrak avoid fraud in the procurement process as it deals with historic amounts of funding for infrastructure projects, Amtrak's Office of Inspector General says in a new report. The report issued Wednesday, April 17, is a follow-up to one last year that identified procurement and contracts as one of four areas in which the company is at highest risk of fraud [see ["Amtrak Inspector General warns of fraud risk" Trains News Wire, May 19, 2023](#)]. The latest report notes that the Office of Inspector General has investigated 110 fraud-related cases between 2017 and September 2023, helping recover \$269 million in restitution, forfeitures, and other areas. The office has also issued 25 audit reports identifying areas of vulnerability in that time.

The new report also says that best practices indicate organizations collect data in a format that helps recognize potential fraud, such as patterns of winning and losing by the same group of bidders; a single entity creating multiple identities to create the appearance of competition; or sudden increases in spending or high numbers of change orders by a vendor. The report includes appendixes detailing forms of contract and procurement fraud, and ways data can identify them. The full report [is available here](#).



--- BNSF News ---

Progressive Railroading Magazine -Rail News: BNSF Railway Union Pacific Railroad Class Is' Big Capex Spend Still a Trend in 2024 By Jeff Stagl, Managing Editor February 2024



BNSF has budgeted nearly \$2.9 billion this year for infrastructure maintenance. Work includes replacing 365 miles of rail and about 2.8 million ties. Photo – BNSF Railway Co.

Despite lingering economic, regulatory and political uncertainty in the rail industry, the Class Is aren't holding back on capital spending in 2024. In January, the large roads announced their capital expenditure (capex) plans for the year, and many of their budgets remain fairly robust.

BNSF Railway Co. has set a 2024 capex budget of \$3.92 billion, just a slight drop from 2023's \$3.96 billion. The Class I is allocating \$2.88 billion to maintain its core network, nearly \$600 million for expansion and efficiency projects, and \$400 million for equipment acquisitions.

"We continue to invest in our network to ensure we run our railroad as safely and efficiently as possible, while building upon the strong service our customers expect," said BNSF President and CEO Katie Farmer in a press release.

Maintenance projects pegged in 2024 include replacing 365 miles of rail and about 2.8 million ties, and surfacing and/or undercutting nearly 13,000 miles of track.

Among this year's expansion and efficiency projects, BNSF plans to complete two multiyear projects aimed at increasing capacity throughout its Southern Transcon corridor, including the addition of several segments of new track in eastern Kansas and terminal/fueling improvements near Belen, New Mexico.

The railroad also expects to continue multiyear intermodal facility expansion projects in Chicago, complete a multiyear track efficiency improvement project in San Bernardino, California, and continue property acquisitions and development activities for its \$1.5 billion, master-planned Barstow International Gateway complex in Southern California.

Moreover, BNSF anticipates the opening of Logistics Center North Houston in Cleveland, Texas, in the fourth quarter. The Class I's logistics centers are BNSF-owned industrial parks that offer direct rail service in underserved, yet attractive end-user markets, including Hudson, Colorado; Fontana, California; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Sweetwater, Texas.

Recently, the first train departed from a private intermodal facility at Logistics Center Hudson in Colorado. The facility was developed through a collaboration between BNSF, U.S. Rail and Logistics and ConGlobal.

Earmarks for more rail, equipment

Meanwhile, Union Pacific Railroad has budgeted \$3.4 billion for 2024 capex compared with \$3.7 billion in 2023 and \$3.4 billion in 2022. This year's spending plan includes \$1.9 billion for rail infrastructure replacement work, \$600 million for locomotive modernizations and freight-car acquisitions, \$600 million for capacity and commercial facilities, and \$300 million for technology and security projects.

In terms of capacity, UP plans to pursue projects that expand its intermodal footprint, including work at new or expanded facilities in Southern California (the Lance M. Fritz Inland Empire Intermodal Terminal), Kansas City and Phoenix.

At CSX, the 2024 capex budget is pegged at about \$2.5 billion versus \$2.3 billion in 2023. Dollars will be devoted to capacity expansion, growth-related projects, equipment additions, ongoing improvements to former Pan Am Railways infrastructure, and a new Meridian and Bigbee Railroad interchange with Canadian Pacific Kansas City in Mississippi.

"We expect an increase in our capital spending as we invest in safety infrastructure, locomotive rebuilds, upgrades to our portion of the New Alabama Interchange with CPKC and other specific high-return investments, including technology investments," said CSX President and CEO Joe Hinrichs during the Class I's fourth-quarter earnings conference on Jan. 24.

Conversely, Norfolk Southern Railway announced its 2024 capex would be flat at \$2.3 billion. In addition, its purchase of the Cincinnati Southern Railway from the city of Cincinnati for \$1.65 billion would flow through capex.

For CN — which didn't divulge any details about its capex plan — the 2024 budget is CA\$3.5 billion compared with CA\$3.1 billion in 2023. Canadian Pacific Kansas City's budget this year is CA\$2.75 billion.

Email questions or comments to jeff.stagl@tradepress.com.

BNSF Highlights Customer Investments in 2023

By Trains Staff | April 2, 2024

On-line customers spent more than \$4.1 billion on new, expanded facilities

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF customers made more than \$4.1 billion in investments in 2023, the railroad reports, with BNSF projects from these and other rail-served customers supporting creation of more than 4,200 jobs. The figures are the largest the railroad's customers and local economic development organizations have made in new or expanded facilities in five years.

"We take pride in collaborating with our customers to create customizable rail development solutions that meet their unique needs and enhance and improve their supply chains," Chris Danos, assistant vice president, economic development, said in [a press release](#).

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Cenovus acquired a refinery in Superior, Wis., on Jan. 1, 2021, and reopened it in 2023 after rebuilding, a project that involved more than 2,200 contractors plus Cenovus staff. The rebuilt facility produces and ships asphalt, vacuum gas oil, light cycle oil, and LPG products. It employs approximately 350 people, has an annual payroll of more than \$29.9 million in annual payroll, pays more than \$2.2 million in property taxes, and generates \$48 million in annual spending with contractors and vendors to support operations. ADM and Marathon Petroleum Corp. opened Green Bison, a soybean processing plant in Spiritwood, N.D., with an investment of approximately \$350 million to address increased demand for renewable diesel fuel. It will produce approximately 600 million pounds of refined soybean oil annually, enough for about 75 million gallons of renewable diesel. The facility features more than 22,000 feet of new track and can ship 14,000 carloads of outbound soy meal and vegetable oil annually. It created 75 new jobs.

BNSF Train Derails in Oklahoma (updated)

By [Trains Staff](#) | April 14, 2024 | Last updated on April 15, 2024

No injuries reported; cars involved carried ties



WYANDOTTE, Okla. — An estimated 20 cars of a BNSF Railway train derailed Saturday (April 13) in Wyandotte, blocking the railroad's main line on the Cherokee Subdivision, the route between Springfield, Mo., and Tulsa, Okla.

[KOAM-TV reports](#) the derailment occurred about 7:40 p.m. and blocks Main Street and East 153rd Road in Wyandotte, a community of 488 people just 6 miles from the Missouri state line in the northeast corner of Oklahoma. No injuries were reported. The cars involved were carrying cross-ties.

[A BNSF customer advisory](#) reports the line was reopened to traffic at 11:20 p.m. on Sunday, April 14.

— Updated April 15 at 7:05 a.m. CT with line reopening.

About 20 cars of a BNSF train derailed Saturday, April 13, in Wyandotte, Okla. [KOAM-TV via Facebook](#)



--- Union Pacific News---

UP Honors Train Dispatchers for 'Exceptional Safety Focus'

Railway Age April 22, 2024 [Class I](#) Written by [Union Pacific, Corporate Communications](#)



Union Pacific's Shawn Harrison, train dispatcher, has earned 20 consecutive annual safety awards. He is one of 14 railroaders who's achieved this honor. (Caption and Photograph Courtesy of UP)



UP's Harriman Dispatching Center in Omaha, Neb.—the railroad's primary dispatching hub. The railroad also maintains centers in Spring, Texas, and San Bernardino, Calif. (Caption

[Union Pacific](#) (UP) train dispatchers are the railroad's protectors, coordinating the safe movement of trains, engineering equipment and employees across more than 32,000 track miles covering 23 states.

In recognition of their critical role, the railroad annually honors excellence in safe train dispatching with the Guardian Award. For their efforts in 2023, nearly 300 dispatchers across three locations—Omaha, Neb.; San Bernardino, Calif.; and Spring, Tex.—joined the ranks of Guardian Award recipients.

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Among them was Train Dispatcher Shawn Harrison of Omaha's Harriman Dispatching Center, who marked an important career milestone: He's one of only 14 train dispatchers in the railroad's history to receive a Guardian Award for 20 consecutive years.

"Every day is different—employees of all crafts must stand together with a hyper-focused attention to detail," Harrison said. "Careful listening and asking the right questions help put the pieces together to keep everyone safe."

For almost 18 years, Harrison has been assigned to one of the nation's busiest rail hubs: Chicago. His territory extends from southern Chicago through rural Illinois to St. Louis, Mo.

"I value the relationships I've built," Harrison said. "I've worked with some really great Transportation train crews and Engineering teams for a long time."

As a third generation UP railroader, going home safe is a strong motivator for Harrison. His father, R. Lou Harrison, served a 15-year career in cities across Nebraska, and his grandfather, Horton Harrison, worked as a crew caller in Hastings, Neb., before retiring with 30 years of service.

This article first appeared in the Inside Track section of the UP website.

Tags: [Free](#), [Opinion](#), [Union Pacific](#)

Class I Briefs: UP, CPKC

Railway Age Written by [Carolina Worrell](#), Senior Editor April 19, 2024 [Class I](#)



STG Logistics photo

Union Pacific (UP) extends its long-running partnership with STG Logistics. Also, the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen Division (BRC-TCU) secures a sick leave agreement with Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC).

UP

Transportation and logistics solutions provider [STG Logistics](#) on April 17 announced an extended, long-term partnership with UP, building upon three decades of STG and the Class I railroad working together "to deliver goods and products to consumers, while ensuring continuity and excellence within the nation's supply chain."

"We are extremely excited about this partnership," said STG Senior Vice President of Operations Tyler Holtgreven. "This new contract will help STG with our growth trajectory while continuing a relationship that reflects our values and our vision for the future of intermodal."

"We are proud of the long and successful history we share with STG Logistics," said UP Senior Vice President—Marketing and Sales Kari Kirchhoefer. "Our partnership is a reflection of our mutual commitment to providing safe, reliable and environmentally responsible service to our customers."

"Moving freight by rail offers a variety of benefits, including reduced carbon emissions, making it an environmentally responsible option," STG Logistics stated in a release. "Rail transportation also offers cost-effective solutions for long-distance freight hauling, leading to economic efficiency and sustainability for customers."

CPKC

[BRC-TCU](#) recently announced that a sick leave agreement has been reached with CPKC. This agreement, the union says, is in line with agreements reached with other Class I carriers and provides for four paid sick days, as well as the ability to convert three additional days of personal leave into sick leave.

"It took a while, but we got there," said BRC General President Don Grissom. "I want to thank those involved in the negotiations, as well as the Biden Administration for continuing to put pressure on the railroads to deliver this commonsense workplace benefit." This latest agreement, the union says, will cover BRC members working under the Soo line, KCS, D&H, Mid-South, South Rail and Tex-Mex collective bargaining agreements.

"I'm proud of our Carmen leadership for staying in the fight to get our members sick leave," said TCU National President Artie Maratea. "CPKC did the right thing for our members, and hopefully BRC's success will cascade to other railroad crafts in their respective fights. With this agreement the BRC is the first union to negotiate paid sick leave agreements with every Class 1 railroad following the last round of national negotiations. This is a great accomplishment and I am proud of their work."

Tags: [BRC-TCU](#), [Breaking News](#), [Brotherhood of Railway Carmen](#), [CPKC](#), [STG Logistics](#), [Union Pacific](#)

UP Enhances Training Programs to Help Boost Safety

Progressive Rail News: Union Pacific Railroad 3/21/2024

[Union Pacific Railroad](#) posted progress in improving safety last year. The Class I had no work-related fatalities, registered a decline in serious injuries and experienced 26% fewer serious derailments in 2023 compared with 2022 figures.

But UP continues to seek and implement ways to reach a goal of world-class safety, according to an [Inside Track item](#) posted on the Class I's website. For example, to help cultivate a safety-focused mindset within employee teams, UP recently implemented new policies and enhanced training for craft professionals across its 23-state network.

One such enhanced training program was launched in January. The training involves sessions that include face-to-face coaching and engagement between workers and local operating leaders who emphasize the importance of embracing safety as a core value. Since the launch, more than 3,300 transportation craft professionals have attended the sessions.

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More than 3,300 transportation craft professionals have attended the sessions since UP introduced a new training approach in January. Photo – Union Pacific Railroad

“Safety isn’t just about what the railroad’s doing; it’s about what an individual is doing and what’s on their mind. We all have things going on at home, but when we’re at work, we can’t be distracted,” Kary Cluck, a superintendent of train operations for UP, said in the article.

Session participants focus on UP’s “Go Home Safe” choices and related critical operating rules, including five for mechanical, six for engineering and 12 for train, engine and yard employees.

Cluck recently led a class for 10 craft professionals in Sparks, Nevada, that focused on risk identification and making better choices to prevent serious incidents and injuries.

“We don’t want anybody to get hurt. It’s about getting everybody on the same page with our expectations for safety,” said Cluck.

UP Amps Up Use of Technology to Prevent Derailments

Rail News: Union Pacific Railroad 1/31/2024



UP is responsible for maintaining a 32,000-mile network, and plans to invest \$3.4 billion to continue enhancing the network and equipment in 2024. Photo – up.com

When Union Pacific Railroad Executive Vice President-Operations Eric Gehringer started working at the Class I, there was no such thing as positive train control, a system designed to automatically stop a train before certain incidents occur.

"The technological advances I’ve seen within our industry are reflected in the numbers — serious derailments on Union Pacific’s network declined 26% in 2023 compared with 2019, while average maximum train length grew. And, over the past 10 years, track-related derailments declined 28%," Gehringer wrote in a UP’s blog, "*Inside Track*."

He included a quote by National Transportation Safety Board Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy, who said, "We need to keep in mind rail transportation is not only cleaner and more fuel efficient than transportation on our roadways. It’s also far, far safer."

UP is responsible for maintaining a 32,000-mile network, and plans to invest \$3.4 billion to continue enhancing the network and equipment in 2024.

As part of that investment, UP has more than 7,000 wayside detection devices that monitor the condition of freight cars and locomotives in real time, and the company plans to add more, according to Gehringer.

Detectors are placed across UP’s network using algorithms that consider a number of factors, such as traffic density. They generate 16 million data points per day, and if a potential issue is detected, the train crew and dispatchers are alerted. Timely response helps UP address potential risk and keeps trains on track to their destination, the blog states.

Regulators End Probe of Union Pacific’s Use of Embargoes, but Slam Railroad’s ‘Delay and Obfuscation’

By Bill Stephens | April 17, 2024



L: A Union Pacific local switches the Blommer Chocolate factory in Chicago while another UP engine moves Metra cars on the lead to the Ogilvie Transportation Center. Mark Llanuza

WASHINGTON — The Surface Transportation Board today closed the book on its investigation of Union Pacific’s record use of congestion-related embargoes in 2022 – but not before scolding the railroad for failing to comply with board orders and requests for information.

“UP’s conduct in this regard bordered on the contumacious and cannot be viewed as acceptable conduct by a railroad subject to the Board’s statutory authority,” [the STB said in its decision](#). “Contumacious” is defined as “stubbornly disobedient,” [according to Merriam Webster](#).

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The STB cited UP's initial "insufficient response" to a request for information in advance of a two-day hearing that was scheduled for December 2022. During the hearing, UP executives referred to embargo-related documents that they should have previously provided to the board, the STB said. In addition, the board said UP provided an "incomplete" response to a May 2023 order that sought information about the railroad's hiring plans and detailed employment statistics broken down by operating division. UP produced the documents the board sought, but not until filings the railroad made in November 2023 — more than five months after a May deadline.

"While UP ultimately attempted to address its previous failures to fully respond to the Board's information requirements in this proceeding, the Board cannot condone UP's repeated and extended failure to provide the Board with information in a timely and responsive manner when requested. Rarely has a rail carrier engaged in such delay and obfuscation in response to the Board's requests for information," the STB said.

Union Pacific defended its embargo-related responses.

"Union Pacific responded to the STB's inquiries with thousands of documents and through many meetings and touchpoints," the railroad said in a statement today. "The STB's ruling is a positive step forward and our service performance indicators have improved significantly over the past year. As a common carrier, embargoes are an important tool to maintain fluidity for all customers."

With UP running short of train crews in 2022, the railroad issued more than 1,000 embargoes in response to congestion, compared with just 27 in 2017 — the year before it adopted a lean Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model.

After the December 2022 hearing, UP said it would stop issuing congestion-related embargoes under its pipeline management system. UP also pledged to improve customer visibility into the car pipeline, provide customers with more time to resolve congestion issues; provide an expiration date for embargoes; launch a proactive customer engagement plan; and increase its spot and pull threshold before issuing an embargo.

"These changes, along with an increase in its workforce and improved service, dropped the use of congestion embargoes precipitously, from 1,081 in 2022 to 181 in 2023. This represents a more than 80% reduction in UP's use of congestion embargoes from the previous year. UP's effort to drastically reduce its use of congestion embargoes is a positive and welcome step," the STB said. "In light of that dramatic reduction, we conclude that this proceeding has served a useful purpose and can be closed."

But the STB also warned UP that it will continue to monitor UP's use of congestion-related embargoes.

"We do note, however, that even after the significant reduction in UP's congestion embargoes from 2022 to 2023, the 181 congestion embargoes issued by UP in 2023 still exceeded the number issued by all the other Class I railroads combined," the board said.

"The Board therefore expects UP, notwithstanding the closure of this proceeding, to continue to work to reduce and minimize its use of congestion embargoes going forward. The Board intends to monitor UP's progress in this regard."

UP Intermodal Train Derails in Nebraska

By Trains Staff | April 15, 2024 | Last updated on April 16, 2024

Precautionary evacuation follows Sunday incident in Chappell

CHAPPELL, Neb. — Approximately 30 cars of a Union Pacific intermodal train derailed Sunday in the town of Chappell, leading to the short-term evacuation of a few residents as a precautionary measure and closing U.S. Route 30 for about two hours.

[KNOP-TV reports](#) the incident was reported about 5:30 p.m., and that an evacuation of the west side of Chappell was lifted about 7:30 p.m., according to the Chappell Volunteer Fire Department.

[News Channel Nebraska reports](#) there were no injuries. It quotes Nebraska State Patrol spokesman Cody Thomas as saying the evacuation was precautionary because the contents of the train were unknown.

Chappell (population 844 as of the 2020 census) is approximately 30 miles east of Sidney, Neb., and 94 miles west of North Platte on UP's Sidney Subdivision. Images from [the North Platte Post](#) show wreckage from the derailment fully blocking the double-track main line. UP reported the number of derailed cars in a statement to the Post, and said the cause is under investigation.

— Updated at 8:35 p.m. CT with revised number of cars involved.



CN to Acquire, Test First Plug-in Diesel-battery Hybrid Locomotive in British Columbia

By David Lassen | April 5, 2024

Progress Rail to build EMD unit, funded in part by province

MONTREAL — Canadian National will purchase a plug-in, hybrid diesel-battery mainline locomotive from Progress Rail, the companies announced today. The first-of-its kind unit for North America will be evaluated on CN's main line in British Columbia, starting in Prince George and the northern part of the province, to increase the railroad and rail industry's knowledge on battery technology and different forms of alternative locomotive technologies. The province of British Columbia is collaborating on the program, awarding approximately C\$3.2 million under the Clean BC Go Electric Commercial Vehicle Pilots Program.

"CN is committed to supporting the transition to a net-zero economy and proud of the progress we've made so far on our decarbonization journey," Patrick Whitehead, CN executive vice president and chief network operating officer, said in [a press release](#).

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Canadian National will purchase plug-in diesel-battery hybrid locomotive from Progress Rail, which delivered two hybrids to Brazil's Rumo



CN has also ordered a Wabtec FLXdrive locomotive for use in Pennsylvania. The FLXdrive demonstrator is shown. David Lassen

"We know rail is part of the climate solution and we are determined to do our part by setting ambitious science-based targets. Today's announcement is another milestone on moving forward towards a more sustainable future."

While the unit will be the first in North America, Progress Rail delivered two EMD GT38H locomotives, its first diesel-battery hybrids, to Brazil's largest rail operator, Rumo, last fall [see ["Progress Rail delivers hybrid locomotives ...,"](#) *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 6, 2023], after adding the technology to its offerings at the InnoTrans trade fair in 2022 [see ["Progress Rail to offer diesel-battery hybrid locomotives,"](#) *News Wire*, Sept. 21, 2022].

"We are committed to developing innovative technologies that save fuel and reduce greenhouse gas emissions," said Jack Zhang, Progress Rail executive vice president of locomotive, as part of the CN announcement. "Our EMD hybrid locomotive is a versatile solution that fits various customer applications, providing increased performance and a lower carbon footprint."

CN has previously ordered a Wabtec FLXDrive battery-electric locomotive for use on its Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad in Pennsylvania [see ["CN to purchase Wabtec battery-electric ...,"](#) *News Wire*, Nov. 4, 2021]; CPKC and other passenger operators are experimenting with hydrogen fuel-cell technology.

In another emission-reduction move, CPKC also said this week that it has now been running 10 AC4400 locomotives based in Golden, B.C., at least in part on biodiesel

CN Modernizes DM&IR Fleet with Acquisition of 600 New Iron Ore Jennies

By *Trains Staff* | April 3, 2024

Using materials from U.S. Steel, Freight Car America is building the cars in Mexico



CN is upgrading its iron ore fleet with the acquisition of 600 new jennies. CN

MONTREAL — Canadian National is acquiring 600 new iron ore jennies for its former Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway operation in Minnesota.

Freight Car America is building the cars in Mexico using materials from U.S. Steel, the onetime owner of DM&IR. CN transports iron ore pellets mined by U. S. Steel to the company's mills through a network that includes the railway, docks, and Great Lakes vessels. "By transporting iron ore pellets mined by U. S. Steel through our extensive rail network, docks, and vessels to U. S. Steel mills, we facilitate the safe movement of raw materials. These, in turn, can be utilized in the production of many things the economy needs, including our iron ore jennies. This integration exemplifies our commitment to powering the economy,"

," Helen Quirke, CN's vice president of supply chain and business development, said in a statement.

"The next generation of ore jennies has arrived, and we are pleased that not only were U.S. Steel materials used in making them, but we are implementing them at our Minnesota Ore Operations facilities,"

James Jarvi, U.S. Steel's director of logistics, pellet movement, technology and sustainability, said in a statement. "Steel that's mined, melted, and made in America starts with iron ore, and the ability to move it from the mine to the mill quickly and efficiently. This partnership will help U.S. Steel make that possible."

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---- CPKC News ----

From the Editor - Upping the Track Upkeep Ante; Plus: CPKC, at Long Last

Progressive Rail News: Canadian Pacific April 2023 By Pat Foran, Editor

Many North American freight and passenger railroads expect to complete more maintenance-of-way work this year, and more than half of the roads that responded to our annual MOW Spending Report survey will spend more on that work in 2023, as Managing Editor Jeff Stagl reports in our print edition this month.

Based on our exclusive survey and other available information, the 22nd annual MOW Spending Report breaks down the spending plans of nearly five dozen freight and passenger roads.

With few exceptions, the big(ger) spenders' increases were modest. Higher material (among other) costs continue to put a damper on things in every industry. But rail, particularly the Class I contingent, can't afford to cut back on track upkeep. Capacity spending? Yes. Some years. But I can't foresee major roads spending less on track maintenance. Given the heightened-bordering-on-intense interest in rail the past couple of months, I think some may well spend even more this year than they expected to when they crafted their '23 budgets.

The spending report data will be available online in May in the form of two ebooks: 2023 MOW Spending: Freight Rail Infrastructure Investments and 2023 MOW Spending: Transit Rail Infrastructure Investments. We'll post the requisite links at progressiverailroading.com as soon as the ebooks are available.

CPKC: At long last, the whole new ballgame

Nearly two years to the day they announced their urge to merge, Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern on March 15 received the Surface Transportation Board's blessing to combine.

Congrats to CP leader Keith Creel (he'll be president and CEO of CPKC) and KCS leader Pat Ottensmeyer (he'll serve as an adviser to Creel through the rest of the year). It feels like a zillion years since I talked with Keith and Pat on Sunday morning, March 21, 2021, about how CPKC would create the first rail network connecting the United States, Mexico and Canada. Keith reiterated what rail map readers already knew: CPKC is "the only possible combination — the only one — that has no overlap," he said in a piece published on RailPrime, our digital subscription offering dedicated to all things freight transportation.

Congrats, too, to the STB, as my colleague Tony Hatch wrote in a March 21 message to his clients, for approving the deal with minor conditions and displaying an "ability to look beyond the shouting about rails these days." Yep, and yep.

As former CN CEO JJ Ruest put it in a classy LinkedIn post after sharing a Wall Street Journal story about the approved merger deal: "Well done by the CP team. The combination makes for a great continental supply chain franchise." In April 2021, the then-Ruest-led CN made a bold attempt to merge with KCS a month after KCS agreed to merge with CP.

I look forward to talking with Keith, Pat and the CPKC team as they aim to take this whole new ballgame of a supply-chain franchise (and, uniquely, the North American rail industry) to the next level.

CPKC Finishes 2023 with 'Strong' 4Q Results (Updated)

Railway Age Written by [Carolina Worrell, Senior Editor](#) February 01, 2024 [Class I](#)



CPKC photo

HIGHLIGHTS

- Strong Q4 results to cap historic year
- New customer solutions driving increased synergies
- Network performing well
- Continued leadership in safety
- Steadily built momentum through 2023
- Well-positioned to deliver differentiated growth in 2024

Q4	2023
Revenues \$3.8 billion +53%	Revenues \$12.6 billion +42%
Combined Total Revenues ⁽¹⁾ \$3.8 billion +4%	Combined Total Revenues ⁽¹⁾ \$13.9 billion +5%
Operating Ratio 61.8% +200 bps	Operating Ratio 65.0% +280 bps
Core Adjusted Combined Operating Ratio ^{(1),(2)} 58.7% +220 bps	Core Adjusted Combined Operating Ratio ^{(1),(2)} 62.0% +30 bps
Diluted EPS \$1.30 +39%	Diluted EPS \$4.21 +12%
Core Adjusted Combined Diluted EPS ^{(1),(2)} \$1.18 +4%	Core Adjusted Combined Diluted EPS ^{(1),(2)} \$3.84 +2%

Among CPKC's other fourth-quarter 2023 highlights:

"I am proud of how our team of incredible railroaders finished this transformational year with a strong fourth quarter, allowing CPKC to deliver volume growth and best-in-class earnings growth in 2023," reported CPKC President and CEO Keith Creel at the railroad's Jan. 30 fourth-quarter and full-year 2023 earnings presentation. [CPKC](#), named one of Alberta Province's Top 80 Employers for the fifth consecutive year, reported revenues of \$3.8 billion in fourth-quarter 2024; diluted earnings per share (EPS) decreased to \$1.10 from \$1.36 in 4Q22; and core adjusted combined diluted EPS increased to \$1.18 from \$ Reported operating ratio (OR) increased by 200 basis points to 61.8% from 59.8% in 4Q22.

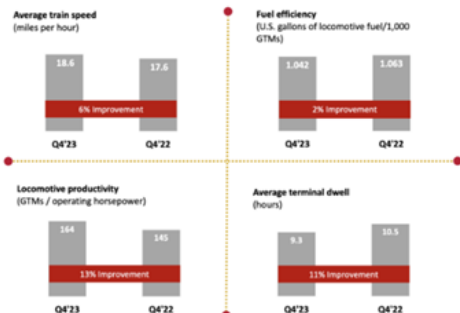
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OPERATING PERFORMANCE – Q4

VS. CPKC COMBINED⁽¹⁾ Q4 2022

- Finished 2023 with industry-best FRA Train Accident Frequency
- Building on CP's legacy of 17 consecutive years of industry leadership
- Strong network performance
- Gains across key operating and efficiency metrics
- Investing in safety and capacity to support growth



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – Q4

(in millions, except percentages and per share data)

	2023	2022	Change	FX Adjusted Change ⁽²⁾
Total revenues, as reported	\$ 3,776	\$ 2,462	53%	
Combined total revenues ⁽¹⁾	3,776	3,639	4%	3%
Total operating expenses, as reported	2,334	1,473	58%	
Combined total operating expenses ⁽¹⁾	2,334	2,326	—%	(1%)
Operating income, as reported	\$ 1,442	\$ 989	46%	
Core adjusted combined operating income ⁽²⁾	1,560	1,424	10%	
Net income attributable to controlling shareholders, as reported	\$ 1,023	\$ 1,271	(20%)	
Core adjusted combined income ⁽²⁾	1,103	1,066	3%	
Diluted earnings per share, as reported	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.36	(19%)	
Core adjusted combined diluted earnings per share ⁽²⁾	1.18	1.14	4%	
Weighted average number of diluted shares outstanding	933.8	933.2	—%	
Operating ratio, as reported	61.8%	59.8%	200 bps	
Core adjusted combined operating ratio ⁽²⁾	58.7%	60.9%	(220) bps	

diluted earnings per share (EPS) decreased to \$1.10 from \$1.36 in 4Q22; and core adjusted combined diluted EPS increased to \$1.18 from \$1.14 in 4Q22. Reported operating ratio (OR) increased by 200 basis points to 61.8% from 59.8% in 4Q22.

- Core adjusted combined OR2 decreased 220 basis points to 58.7% from 60.9% in 4Q22.
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)-reportable train accident frequency declined 23% to 1.08 from 1.40 in 4Q22 on a combined basis.

- FRA-reportable personal injury frequency declined 15% to 1.10 from 1.29 in 4Q22 on a combined basis 1.14 in 4Q22.

“Since our historic combination in April 2023, our united CPKC team has steadily built momentum, bringing new competition to supply chains and creating more value for our customers, while remaining focused on service and safety,” Creel added.

- Reported OR increased by 280 basis points to 65.0% from 62.2% in 2022.
- Core adjusted combined OR2 increased 30 basis points to 62.0% from 61.7% in 2022.
- Reported diluted EPS increased to \$4.21 from \$3.77 in 2022.
- Core adjusted combined diluted EPS2 increased 2% to \$3.84 from \$3.77 in 2022.
- FRA-reportable train accident frequency declined 32% to 0.99 from 1.45 in 2022 on a combined basis.
- FRA-reportable personal injury frequency declined 12% to 1.14 from 1.30 in 2022 on a combined basis.

In 2023, CPKC says it led the industry with the lowest FRA-reportable train accident frequency among Class I railroads, “building on Canadian Pacific’s (CP) legacy of 17 consecutive years of industry leadership.”

Full-year 2024 guidance:

- CPKC expects core adjusted combined diluted EPS2 to grow double digits versus 2023 core adjusted combined diluted EPS2 of \$3.84.
- Capital expenditures of \$2.75 billion.
- Other components of net periodic benefit recovery will increase by approximately \$23 million from \$327 million in 2023.

“Looking forward to 2024, we are confident that our unique synergy opportunities, along with improving macro-economic conditions, can overcome a weak Canadian grain crop and position us for another strong performance this year, our first full year as a combined company,” said Creel. “We stand ready to deliver on our commitments to our customers and our shareholders with long term sustainable growth.”

Passenger Rail Hosting in Mexico?

At the earnings call, Creel said he’s not concerned with the Nov. 20 decree from Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) the nation’s freight railroads are obligated to host long-distance passenger trains, which largely disappeared following privatization in the late 1990s. CPKC’s prime Nuevo Laredo-Monterrey-San Luis Potisi-Mexico City main line (formerly Kansas City Southern de México) is among those routes. In the decree, AMLO said that “preference will be given to public passenger rail service, and freight rail transport will be respected, according to the terms of the corresponding concession.”

“I have zero expectation and belief that Mexico’s ambition and intent to integrate and initiate passenger rail service in concert with freight rail service will impact our ability to hit our synergies or any of the targets of our multi-year guidance,” said Creel, who noted that he has met twice with AMLO (who leaves office this year) and reached an agreement with the Mexican government to carry out a study whose completion is expected in May. “He committed to me that he’s aligned exactly with what my expectations are. He does not want to jeopardize any of that.” Creel added that CPKC is willing to host passenger trains “with the right infrastructure and right investment.”

DOWNLOAD CPKC’s 4Q23 EARNINGS REVIEW PRESENTATION BELOW:

[CPKC-Q4-2023-Presentation-vF](#)

Fiery CPKC Train Rolls Through London, Ontario

By Trains Staff | April 22, 2024

Bizarre fire aboard moving train being investigated by Transportation Safety Board

The [Canadian Transportation Safety Board](#) is investigating a bizarre fire aboard a [Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway](#) freight train in a London, Ontario residential neighborhood around 10:49 p.m., April 21, according to reports from numerous news agencies and the [London Fire Department](#)

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Five gondola cars carrying discarded railroad ties caught fire Sunday night, April 21. The train rolled through part of London, Ontario before stopping in a residential neighborhood. Damage was limited to the five railcars and a nearby office building. The fire is being treated as arson. London Fire Department



The London Fire Department brought the railcar blaze under control in about 90 minutes. Other than the creosote from the ties, no hazardous materials were involved in the incident. London Fire Department

Witnesses reported seeing the CPKC train moving through the city as flames shot out of five gondola cars. It was discovered that the cars were carrying used railroad ties, which were heading for disposal. The train stopped in a residential area along Waterloo and Pall Mall streets adjacent to a multi-story office building. CPKC crews uncoupled the locomotives and cars behind the burning gondolas, giving the London Fire Department better access, says Colin Shewall, fire department platoon chief. At one point, 28 fire fighters with 10 trucks were battling the blaze, which took about 90 minutes to bring under control.

Shewall did not indicate how the fire started, but stated it was being treated as an arson incident. The railway ties had been picked up from outside London, in the Strathroy area, says Shewell. Somewhere between Strathroy and London is where the fire began. There were no injuries and no reports of hazardous materials being involved beyond the creosote in the ties. Damage to the railcars is estimated at \$25,000. The office building sustained more than \$10,000 in damages.

Carmen's Union Announces Sick-leave Agreement with CPKC

By Trains Staff | April 16, 2024

Union now has agreements with all Class I railroads

WASHINGTON — The Brotherhood of Railway Carmen has reached a sick-leave agreement with Canadian Pacific Kansas City, the union announced today. The union becomes the first with a sick-leave agreement with every Class I railroad.

In line with other agreements with Class I railroads, the agreement provides for four days of paid sick leave and the ability to convert three additional days of personal leave into sick leave.

"It took a while, but we got there," BRC General President Don Grissom said in [a press release](#). "I want to thank those involved in the negotiations, as well as the Biden Administration, for continuing to put pressure on the railroads to deliver this commonsense workplace benefit."

The agreement covers union members working under the Soo Line, KCS, D&H, Mid South, South Rail, and Tex-Mex collective bargaining agreements.

The BRC is a division of the Transportation Communications Union.

"CPKC did the right thing for our members, and hopefully, BRC's success will cascade to other railroad crafts in their respective fights," said Artie Maratea, TCU/International Association of Machinists national president."



Teamsters Canada Calls for Strike Authorization Vote by CN and CPKC Train Crews (updated)

By Bill Stephens | April 1, 2024 | Last updated on April 2, 2024

Labor and management remain far apart on a new contract deal for engineers and conductors in Canada



L; After bringing a Vancouver-bound stack train into Boston Bar, British Columbia, a Canadian National train crew member heads for the nearby bunk house in September 2023. Bill Stephens

The union representing Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Kansas City engineers and conductors in Canada has authorized a strike vote as labor and management remain far apart on new contracts.

Leaders of the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference told their members on Thursday that a strike vote will be held from April 8 to May 1. If the rank and file vote to authorize a strike, the earliest a walkout or lockout could occur on CN and CPKC in Canada is May 22.

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After being unable to reach agreements during negotiations that began last fall, labor and management since March 1 have been negotiating with the help of federal conciliators. Also still negotiating: CPKC rail traffic controllers who are represented by TCRC in Canada.

Both CN and CPKC have proposed abolishing the traditional mileage-based pay system for train and engine crews and replacing it with an hourly wage. Both railways also say they want to create predictable work schedules for train crews, including scheduled days off, that would meet tighter [Transport Canada Duty and Rest Period Rules](#) that went into effect last year.

“During the conciliation period, the parties will continue meeting to reach a negotiated agreement, and it remains our goal to work towards a negotiated agreement that is good for our employees, customers, and the economy,” [CN said in an update last week](#). “We value our relationship with unions representing CN employees and will continue to negotiate in good faith with the TCRC union leaders. Additionally, CN remains committed to modernizing the contract to ensure employees are satisfied – both with financial compensation and with work-life balance.”

CN says its hourly wage proposal would boost engineer pay by an average of 15.5% while including guaranteed minimum annual earnings. Train crew schedules would include either two or three consecutive days off.

CPKC has offered similar options for renewed contracts:

Option 1: “The first delivers significant pay increases and improved work-life balance with scheduled, predictable days off through a dramatically simplified system. The offer presents a progressive, modern time-based pay model that delivers improved benefits for employees.”

Option 2: “With the exception of our proposal amending the held away from home provision for train crews, the second option offers competitive wage increases that are consistent with recent settlements and maintains the status quo for work rules within the new Transport Canada regulatory framework for rest.”

CPKC says the proposals recognize the needs of an evolving workforce, the railway’s customers, and Canada’s supply chains. “If redundant and archaic work rules are dissolved, employees would benefit from a modern agreement that enables higher wages and predictable, scheduled time off, while fully complying with new regulatory requirements for rest,” CPKC says.

“After years of disruption caused by a pandemic, natural disasters, other labour disruptions and political events both in Canada and around the world, the North American supply chains we collectively serve require stability and predictability,” CPKC says.

“Canada’s supply chains simply cannot tolerate endless uncertainty from stalled collective bargaining.”

The TCRC says the CN and CPKC hourly rate proposals would mean a pay cut for half of their membership, strip away “every quality of life provision attained through years of fighting,” and make seniority redundant by eliminating the distinction between road and yard crews.

The union also says that the railways aim to strip collective agreements of what it calls “safety-critical rest provisions.”

“The specific articles are meant to help ensure workers are rested enough to operate a train. The science on crew fatigue is settled and the threat is real. Our union will not bargain with Canadian lives,” TCRC spokesman Christopher Monette says.

“Claims by CN and CPKC that the companies are proposing predicable work schedules are also inaccurate,” he adds. “Instead, both CN and CPKC have proposed 12-hour calling windows, during which workers could be phoned up at any time and expected to go operate a train for another 12 hours. This could easily become dangerous if a person who woke up at 7 a.m. is called for a 12-hour shift at 5 p.m.”

In an update to members last week, TCRC said no progress has been made on contract talks. The union also claimed CN and CPKC are negotiating in bad faith, in violation of Canadian labor laws.

More talks are scheduled this month.

TCRC’s contract with the railways expired at the end of 2023 but remains in force until new deals can be reached and ratified. The union represents 6,000 CN engineers and conductors and 3,200 CPKC engineers and conductors.

A strike would halt the shipment of \$1 billion worth of goods in Canada per day, according to RailState, a company that monitors freight trends across Canada using a network of sensors located near CN and CPKC main lines.

“After a complete shutdown or even more minor disruption, rail customers cannot rely on the railroads to expand capacity to make up for shipments that were missed during a shutdown,” [RailState said in a report last month](#). “There is no extra service coming in to save the day.”

RailState advised rail customers to ship early, find alternative routes, or shift to trucking in order to avoid disruption from a potential strike.

Note: Updated at noon Central time on April 2 with additional comments from TCRC.

CPKC Derailment Closes Louisiana Highway

By Trains Staff | April 1, 2024

Friday derailment involved auto racks

TAYLOR, La. — A major Louisiana highway remains closed following the derailment of a CPKC train on Friday, [KSLA-TV reports](#). Approximately 29 cars of a train derailed near the unincorporated community of Taylor about 7:30 a.m. Friday, closing U.S. Route 80 between Oscar Kilpatrick Road and Martin Pond Road in the community of Ada, according to the Bienville Parish Sheriff. As of Sunday, a spokeswoman for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development told the station the road remains closed.

“Apparently, the train was hauling new vehicles, and those all have to be cleaned up and moved as part of the operations,” LaDOTD’s Erin Buchanan said. “It may be a few more days before U.S. 80 can be reopened.”

The derailment site is about 40 miles east of Shreveport, La., on CPKC’s Vicksburg subdivision.

--- Other RR News ---

Class I Railroads Tout Their Green Gred in Honor of Earth Day

By Trains Staff | April 22, 2024

CSX salutes customers who shifted freight to rail, Norfolk Southern offers customers individualized emissions reports, and BNSF says Tier 4 locomotives are a part of its effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions



A BNSF Railway Tier 4 locomotive leads a grain train along the Flathead River in Montana. BNSF

CSX today announced the winners of its third annual CSX Customer Environmental Excellence Awards, which salute shippers who convert a portion of their freight from truck to rail.

“Sustainability is a shared priority between CSX and our customers. Helping them reduce emissions by converting from trucks to rail is an important part of our strategy,” CSX Chief Commercial Officer Kevin Boone said in a statement. “The winners of this year’s awards achieved the highest annual emissions savings totals among all CSX customers, reflecting their commitment to environmental citizenship.”

The customers include Amazon, General Motors, Heidelberg Materials North America, Nissan North America, Tropicana, and WestRock.

To assist customers in making informed decisions about switching to rail transportation, CSX provides an advanced carbon calculator. This tool enables companies to calculate emissions savings for their shipments and gain insights into optimizing supply chain sustainability.

Customers who choose rail over truck transportation can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% to 80%. A typical CSX freight train can carry the equivalent of 280 truckloads and is three to four times more fuel-efficient than highway transportation. CSX in 2020 became the first U.S. railroad to align with the Science Based Targets initiative, setting a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions intensity by 37.3% by 2030, using 2014 as a baseline.

Norfolk Southern, meanwhile, today said its customers could access their 2023 Rail Emissions Report, which provides shippers customers with comprehensive data on the positive environmental impact of shipping by rail, including total carbon dioxide emissions, fuel consumption, and train miles traveled.

More than 25% of NS customers have announced goals for carbon reduction, and the Rail Emissions Report provides customers with visibility into the full lifecycle and carbon footprint of moving a shipment across the NS system. The insights are helping customers make informed decisions about transporting their goods and to develop strategies to both reduce their emissions and meet decarbonization goals, NS says.

BNSF says Tier 4 locomotives play an important role in its commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030 from a baseline year of 2018.

“Wabtec’s Tier 4 locomotives are a compelling sustainable solution for BNSF,” BNSF Vice President of Environmental John Lovenburg said in a statement. “The locomotives reduce operating costs with higher reliability, more tractive effort and improved fuel efficiency. Better fuel efficiency also reduces greenhouse gas emissions.”

For nine years, BNSF has purchased Tier 4 locomotives from Wabtec. Tier 4s, the latest of the Evolution Series locomotives, are designed to reduce criteria pollutant emissions by 70% over standard locomotives.

BNSF now rosters 352 Tier 4 units with another eight to be delivered in May, and roughly 65% of its fleet is Tier 3 or better.

The Latest CSX Heritage Locomotive: Western Maryland

By Bill Stephens | April 4, 2024

The Western Maryland unit is the 12th heritage locomotive to emerge from the CSX paint shop in Waycross, GA



CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs released photos of the railroad’s Western Maryland heritage locomotive on April 4, 2024, after it emerged from the paint shop in Waycross, Ga. CSX

CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs today released the first photos of the railroad’s Western Maryland heritage locomotive.

The unit, No. 1852 in honor of the Western Maryland’s founding year, was rolled out of the paint shop in Waycross, Ga., and into the sun. It includes the railroad’s fireball logo.

“Here is the latest Heritage Locomotive from our talented ONE CSX team in Waycross, Ga.,” Hinrichs wrote on LinkedIn. “The Western Maryland Railroad was started in 1852 in Baltimore, Maryland, and eventually became part of the Chessie System which then became CSX. Great history of coal and freight service in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Enjoy.”

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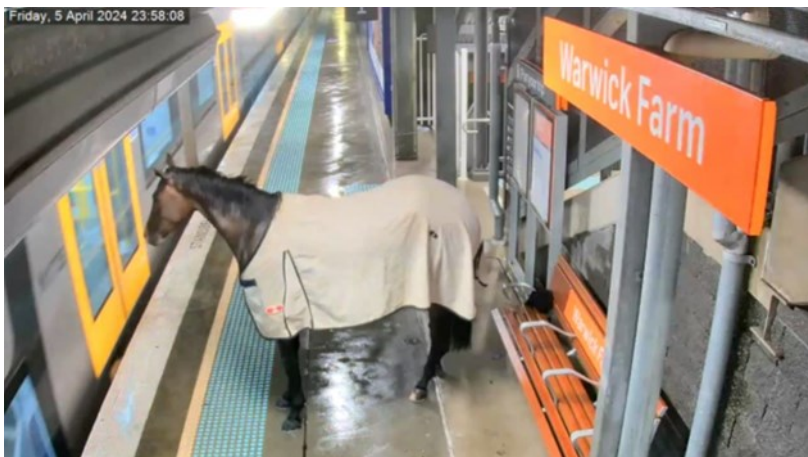
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The CSX heritage fleet has now grown to a dozen units representing predecessor lines. Among them: Family Lines; Richmond, Fredricksburg & Potomac; Baltimore & Ohio; Chessie System; Seaboard System; Conrail; Chesapeake & Ohio; Louisville & Nashville; Atlantic Coast Line; New York Central; and Monon.

Startled Passengers Share Train Platform with Horse in Australia

By Trains Staff | April 10, 2024

Escapee from nearby racehorse stable recovered safely



An escaped horse stands on a platform in suburban Sydney, Australia. Transport for New South Wales

SYDNEY, Australia — Well, that's a horse of a different color. Passengers at a Sydney commuter train station were startled last Friday night to discover they suddenly were sharing the platform with an escaped horse from a nearby stable, which — showing good horse sense — properly remained behind the yellow safety line as a train pulled in at the Warwick Farm station. The train operator, aware of the animal, did not open the train doors, preventing it from boarding.

[7 News reports](#) the animal spent a half-hour pacing the station platform before being reunited with its owner, accomplished horse racing trainer Annabel Neasham, who said the stable pony had been let out during a break-in by an intruder at the Warwick Farms stable. "(Our) horse is back at home, none the wiser, not even a scratch on him," she told the network. Stable hand Keith Morrison said he still wanted to know how the horse found its way up the stairs and onto the platform.

Police are still searching for the person responsible for the break-in.

Surveillance video of the horse on the platform — showing startled passengers giving way to the horse — was originally shared by New South Wales Premier Chris Minns, who noted, "Didn't realise I needed to say but — horses aren't allowed on our trains, sorry folks." It was re-shared by Sydney Trains with the message, "The chances of a horse boarding your train are low, but never zero."

Commuter Rail Officials Address Topics Including Amtrak Access, Liability Insurance at House Hearing

By Bob Johnston | April 17, 2024

CEOs also raise concerns about federal funding, hotbox detector mandates



A westbound South Bend-Dune Park South Shore Line shuttle stops on newly completed double track at the line's historic Beverly Shores, Ind., station on March 27, 2024. Amtrak has expressed interest in switching its trains to the route, and Northern Indiana Commuter Transit District president Mike Noland is concerned the South Shore may not be fairly compensated because Amtrak has a statutory right to use it at incremental cost. He wants federal regulators to get involved. Bob Johnston



An afternoon Metrolink Antelope Valley Line train departs Palmdale, Calif., in May 2015. The agency has achieved a 27% ridership increase on the route by adding off-peak service. Bob Johnston

WASHINGTON — Five commuter rail leaders alerted members of Congress to long-festering issues at a hearing on Capitol Hill today (Wednesday, April 17).

It is unclear if the lawmakers are prepared to champion changes suggested by witnesses during the session by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Railroads' Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, "Commuter rail industry challenges and solutions."

South Shore head seeks STB oversight in Amtrak negotiations

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Mike Noland, president of the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, the agency overseeing the South Shore Line, voiced concerns about Amtrak's statutory right to pay only incremental costs to access commuter rail infrastructure. He wants the Surface Transportation Board's involvement to ensure "good faith negotiations between Amtrak and commuter rail systems when either party seeks trackage rights, and a forum to adjudicate disputes over access and compensation."

Noland said Amtrak has been exploring the possibility of bypassing Norfolk Southern's freight-congested Chicago Line for trains operating east of Chicago in favor of the South Shore's \$650 million, soon-to-open double track route to Michigan City, Ind. He said Amtrak has "vigorously defended" its statutory authority over commuter railroads, adding, "We suggest that the STB be empowered with the authority to review and determine terms of any agreement between Amtrak and a commuter rail agency that remain in dispute."

Liability mandate

Noland, also chairman of the industry group the Commuter Rail Coalition, also delved into the complex problem all carriers face in complying with a requirement imposed by third-party contractors to acquire excess liability insurance within 30 days after a new federal liability cap is announced.

The liability cap rose \$26 million to \$323 million on March 27, 2021, "and every commuter railroad in the country raced to acquire the coverage in the excess liability market," explained Nolan. He expects the cap to rise about \$70 million when next adjusted for inflation in 2026.

Noland's [15 pages of written testimony](#) detail why commuter railroads have difficulty acquiring the insurance. He notes that not only are there very few U.S. insurers, but the London and Bermuda-based insurance carriers who still participate must be "layered" in an insurance "tower" because none of the companies will insure the full amount. He says all but one of 35 slots on NICTD's insurance tower are filled by foreign-based insurers.

"If one considers that 32 commuter railroads *each* will be competing for additional coverage to meet the 2026 cap, it will be difficult — if not impossible — for all commuter railroads to obtain the coverage by the current 30-day deadline," Noland asserts. He wants Congress to change the implementation requirement to one year.

Additional concerns and opportunities

The witnesses took turns raising other issues. Among them:

— Operators can't qualify for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement (CRISI) project funding. [Denver RTD CEO Debra Johnson pointed out](#) the Federal Railroad Administration program specifically excludes commuter rail investments.

"There is no specific program in existence at the USDOT, either within the FRA or Federal Transit Administration, that is specifically focused on commuter rail projects," Johnson says.

Commuter rail does receive a slice of formula grants from the Highway Trust Fund, however. U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) noted that with longer commutes, intercity passenger rail should also have access to the same annual operating funds that commuter rail and transit receive. Instead, Amtrak's survival is dependent on annual appropriations.

— Johnson and David Dech, executive director of Florida's Tri-Rail, questioned provisions of bipartisan safety legislation now moving through the U.S. Senate that require commuter carriers to bear the cost of hotbox detector installation and other safety requirements that benefit only freight rail.

[NJ Transit CEO Kevin Corbett said](#) there are five PTC system variations, which amount to "an unfunded mandate for commuter carriers." He did acknowledge that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has helped reduce the backlog of historical underinvestment.

"The Portal Bridge project is 50% complete and on time for completion in 2026," Corbett says.

— The industry is experimenting with new service patterns to match demand. Darren Kettle, CEO of LA-area operator Metrolink, [told the lawmakers](#) his agency recently boosted ridership on the Antelope Valley Line by 27% when it increased off-peak frequencies. He also mentioned the pressing need to begin expanding infrastructure for Los Angeles' 2028 Olympics and the partnership with Brightline West's high-speed rail Las Vegas venture, which will connect with Metrolink at Rancho Cucamonga, Calif. The next U.S. Olympics is being touted as a "car-free" event.

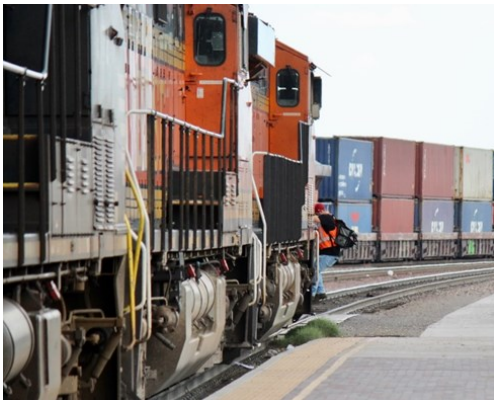
A video of today's 2-hour proceeding [is available here](#).

Comments+

Class I Railroads Should Thank FRA for Two-person Crew Rule: Analysis

By Bill Stephens | April 12, 2024

Service would suffer if railroads pulled conductors from the locomotive cab



L: A crewman climbs down from an eastbound intermodal train that has just arrived for a crew change at Needles, Calif., on Aug. 9, 2022. The train, Q-LACATG6 would roll out of town 10 minutes later. Bill Stephens

The industry would never admit it, but the Federal Railroad Administration has given the Class I railroads a gift in the form of its proposed two-person train crew rule.

Debate over the controversial rule has been framed almost entirely in safety terms. Having two people in the locomotive cab, the rule's advocates say, is vital for the safety of the public, communities, and crew members, particularly in an era of ever-longer freight trains.

Yet it seems to me that if the SMART-TD union were ever to agree to taking conductors out of the cab — something the Class I railroads sought during the last round of national contract negotiations — it would quickly cause chaos out on main lines.

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We don't know whether two-person crews are safer than one-person crews, or vice versa. There's just no conclusive data either way. What we do know is that today's massive freight trains tend to pull knuckles and encounter brake issues more frequently than shorter trains. This is simply due to the law of averages. The more cars you put in a train, the more troublemakers you're likely to get in a consist that might stretch 15,000 feet. Today when a freight train goes into emergency, the crew generally has no idea why. So the conductor hits the ground and walks the train to find the culprit. Then he or she has to fix the problem before walking back to the head end. It's a process that can take hours. Railroads want to create ground-based conductor positions, which would leave engineers alone in the cab. Putting conductors in pickup trucks, assigning them a territory, and having them respond to problems out on the main line may sound good to penny-pinching railroad executives — at least on paper. But out in the real world your mileage may vary. Murphy's Law being what it is, it wouldn't take long for an engineer-only train to encounter a knuckle or brake-related problem on single track in the most isolated, godforsaken, hard to reach area on a subdivision. Engineers can't leave the cab. With no conductor to walk the train, and help from a ground-based conductor miles and even hours away, delays would mount. First to the waylaid train, then to the trains behind it and to oncoming traffic. Before long, the delays would cascade across the whole subdivision. And then the railroad grinds to a halt. Although the scenario's a bit better on a double-track main line, a disabled train eventually creates a single-track bottleneck, which also creates congestion and delays. Umpteen million dollars' worth of freight is stuck — and won't arrive on time — all because the railroad wants to save a buck or two on crew costs. It's almost guaranteed that at least some of the delayed trains will require unplanned recrews, which only increases costs. And the late arrivals could be the last straw for some shippers, who would give up on rail and shift their freight to trucks. If this sounds shortsighted, that's because it is. There may or may not be a safety case to make for two-person crews. But there sure is a railroad business case for keeping two people in the cab: It's called service, which is the only thing that railroads sell to their customers. Until rail equipment becomes far more reliable, and failures on the line of road become extremely rare, engineer-only operation is a fool's errand. You can reach Bill Stephens at bybillstephens@gmail.com and follow him on [LinkedIn](#) and X [@bybillstephens](#)

Reading & Northern Lines up Special Excursions From Reading for 2024 Season

By Trains Staff | April 3, 2024

Pottsville, Tamaqua, Minersville set as destinations



*A Reading & Northern train awaits action at the railroad's Reading Outer Station.
Scott A. Hartley*

PORT CLINTON, Pa. — Reading & Northern's primary passenger excursion routes may lead to Jim Thorpe, Pa., but the company is also offering trips this year to destinations including Pottsville, Tamaqua, and Minersville from its Reading Outer Station.

Pottsville excursions are set for April 13, May 11, June 8, Aug. 17, and Sept. 14. Those trips will offer more than five hours in Pottsville, with opportunities to tour the Yuengling Brewery, the Jerry's Classic Cars & Collectibles Museum, or Schuylkill County Historical Society Museum. Excursions also coincide with an outdoor farmer's market at the Pottsville station. More information on those trips [is available here](#).

That page also has information on a May 18 excursion to Minersville for the first Minersville Community Day, which will feature excursions by CNJ 0-6-0 No. 113 [see ["Project 113 sets trips ..."](#), *Trains News Wire*, March 22, 2024], and trips to Tamaqua Summerfest on Father's Day, June 16, and Tamaqua Railfest on Aug. 24.

Abilene & Smoky Valley Becomes Kansas' State Heritage Railroad

By Trains Staff | April 19, 2024 Rail News: Short Lines & Regionals 3/19/2024

A&SV's Santa Fe Pacific No. 3415 named state steam locomotive



Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad's Santa Fe 4-6-2 No. 3415 is now the official state steam locomotive of Kansas. Kevin Gilliam

ABILENE, Kan. — Kansas now has an official state heritage railroad and a state steam locomotive. [House Bill 2481](#), which bestows the railroad honor on the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad and the locomotive distinction on the railroad's Santa Fe Pacific No. 3415, was one of seven bills signed into law on Thursday, April 18, by Gov. Laura Kelly.

"This is indeed an honor," Abilene & Smoky Valley President and General Manager Ross Boelling said in [a press release](#) after the bill was passed by the state House and Senate on April 3. "Our organization was founded three decades ago on the idea of preserving the legacy of railroads as builders of our state. It's great to make our mission an official Kansas tradition. More importantly, this designation is a great recognition of our volunteers and the tens of thousands of hours they have dedicated to the A&SV." While the official status will be used as a focus in grant writing, Boelling said the A&SV will immediately begin branding itself as "the Kansas heritage railroad." A logo has been designed that incorporates an image of the 4-6-2 built by Baldwin in 1919 with the railroad's new slogan.

The designations grew out of separate bills introduced by Rep. Scott Hill (R-Abilene) in January; they were eventually combined into a single bill and bundled with other transportation-related legislation. The final bill also designates several memorial highways and bridges within the state.

New display, Event Space Opens at Railroaders Memorial Museum By [Dan Cupper](#) | April 18, 2024
Luther G. Smith Memorial Yard honors railroader who founded Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund



Excerpts: ALTOONA, Pa. — Officials of the [North American Railway Foundation](#) dedicated an outdoor display and event venue — the Luther G. Smith Memorial Yard — here today (Thursday, April 18) at the Railroaders Memorial Museum. The public space is bracketed by the museum's Master Mechanics Building and Norfolk Southern's Pittsburgh Line. Costing \$1.9 million, the project accomplished several goals, including cleaning up, regrading, and reorganizing the nearly 1-acre area at the museum's entrance, installing sidewalks and lights, and moving several pieces of rolling stock indoors to prepare them for restoration. Behind it was a desire to establish a tribute to Smith (1870-1938), a Pennsylvania Railroad engineer who started the nonprofit Brotherhood's Relief & Compensation Fund, the parent organization to the foundation. After his own union rebuffed his proposals, Smith in 1912 set up an independent voluntary mutual reserve fund to supply income insurance to railroaders who were "held out of service" (suspended) as discipline for a rule violation. BRCF started with about 100 members on the PRR Middle Division (Altoona-Harrisburg) and now has 20,000 members across the U.S. and Canada.



**668 Transfer Road
 Suite 8
 Saint Paul, MN**

Monday: 10am – 3pm
 Friday: 10am – 3pm
 Saturday: 10am – 2pm (Regular Operations) Adults \$10 (5 years and older)
 10am – 5pm (March to October)

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Meeting	Saturday May 11th 2024 6:15—8:45 pm	Roseville Lutheran Church Roselawn Ave Roseville MN	Free—guests are welcome
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale	Saturday, May 11, 2024 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1372 Cosgrove Street Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$7

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