



NRHS

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Picnic July 13th Maiden Rock WI / Bus Trip to Trego Aug 10th



L: Member Frank Willke on ex SP GP9 at Campo CA –Frank Willke

R: Wendle Willke for President in 1940 – Frank Willke (relative of Wendle Willke!)

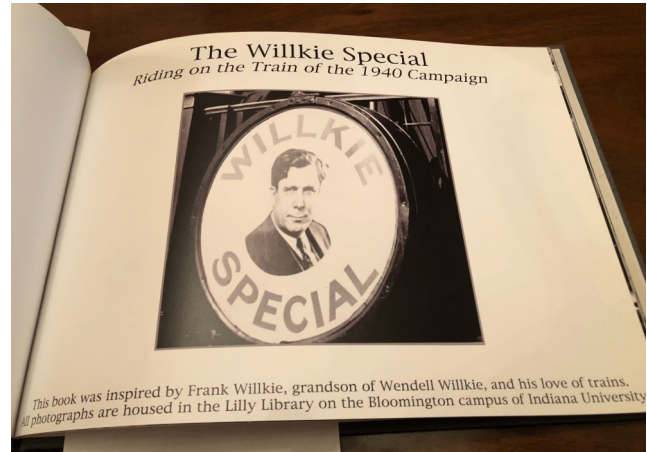


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Meeting Notice:

Saturday September 14th, 2024 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our September 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 Sept 14th, 2024.

Please join us in-person at Roseville Lutheran Church, Saturday Sept 14th 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 login information will be in the September 2024 Issue.

OBITUARY

Long time member Bill Dredge lost his sister Diane Dredge Simons in May 2024. A celebration of life will be held for her on July 13, 2014 in Eden Prairie MN. Our BOD sends condolences to Bill and his family.

Northstar Chapter Officers and Staff

President	Dan Meyer	dan@meyer-family.net	763-784-8835
Secretary	Richard Tubbesing	Tubbesing32A@yahoo.com	763-757-1304
National Director	Dawn Holmberg	dawn@dhholmberg.com	763-784-8835
Treasurer	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Program Director	John Goodman Richard Tubbesing	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Calendar Committee	John Goodman (chairman) Dawn Holmberg Jack Barbier John Cartwright	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com dawn@dhholmberg.com Jsbbllb@msn.com Stationman86@yahoo.com	612-839-0905 763-784-8835 651-481-8479
Trip Director	John Goodman	Jhgoodman2001@yahoo.com	612-839-0905
Chapter Librarian/Historian	John Cartwright	Stationman86@yahoo.com	651-481-8479
Web Master	Dan Meyer	dan@meyer-family.net	763-784-8835
Chapter Mailbox	Northstar Chapter NRHS	PO Box 120832	St Paul MN 55112
Library Database Administrator	Russ Isbrandt	rmisbrandt4036@comcast.net	651-426-1156
Newsletter Editor	Richard Tubbesing, Dan Meyer Dawn Holmberg	Tubbesing32a@yahoo.com Dawn@dhholmberg.com	763-757-1304 763-784-8835

From President Dan Meyer:

Our long-time Treasurer Russ Isbrandt has provided us with a notice tht he will resign at the end of this year. A Huge thanks goes out to Russ for his hears of service to the chapter as the treasurer. If you have ever planned how your household will spend its income and used a checkbook, you are fully qualified to be treasurer. If you are uncertain about your ability you will have plenty of assistance available from the Board of Directors to help you in this role. Please contact any member of the Board of directors and Volunteer today!.

From the Editor: Programs for future meetings are open. 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.

THANKS TO ALL ABOARD MINNESOTA for their work in seeing the 2nd Amtrak train to fruition. Kudo's go to our members Jack Barbier, Ed Johnson and Mark Quam for their work at ALL ABOARD MINNESOTA . See article on pages 5 and 6.

Reminder: Our annual picnic will be held at Maiden Rock Wisconsin Saturday July 13th 2024. It will held at the River park in Maiden Rock from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Please bring your own beverage and lunch.

Our August trip Saturday August 13th 2024 will be a bus trip to Trego WI to ride the Wisconsin Great Northern Pizza train. We have their lounge car for our exclusive use. See brochure with this newsletter for sign up and details. .

Next Issue out around September 1st 2024!

Meeting Minutes May 11th, 2024, Roseville Lutheran

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 April 2024 meeting in the May 2024 newsletter was floored. The motion was carried.

Trip Director Report. The Trip Director report was given by John Goodman. The first trip will be a ride on the new Amtrak train (The Borealus) on May 23 to LaCrosse and return. Train leaves at 11:50 and we will return at 6:30pm. We will have about an hour and 30-minute layover in LaCrosse. There is also a snack car on the train. The next trip is Saturday August 10th for a Bus Trip to Trego WI and ride the Wisconsin Great Northern railroad pizza Train. We have reserved their Ranch Car for 20 seats for our exclusive use. The Bus will cost is \$1835. The price for the bus trip will be subsidized by the chapter BOD. A poll was taken to see how many would take the trip. There were about 10 people attending that would go. The bus will leave from the Metro Transit Park and Ride on County Road C and I35W. The price for the bus trip will be \$85 It is hoped that we get at least 15 People for the trip to minimize the cost portion provided by the Chapter. There will be a brochure in the July Newsletter to pay and sign up for the trip to Trego. We are still going to ride the Northstar on Friday June 7th. The picnic will be held the second Saturday in July (July 13th) at Maiden Rock Wisconsin. 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.

Treasurer's Report. Russ Isbrandt gave the Treasurers Report. Chapter cash balance as of May 11th with the sum of Calendar and Chapter accounts is in good shape. Membership: There are 29 Regular renewals with 6 non-renewals, and there are 17 subscribers with 7 non-renewals.

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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 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 the rules have changed. We have been meeting at Dick Tubbesing's Apartment in Fridley Minnesota. We have a substantial drop in storage costs 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 we are in no position to receive any new donations. We have many items to get rid of (duplicates) in the storage facility.

Calendar Report. John Goodman stated that there is a small amount in our paypal account. The Calendar Report was given by Dawn Holmberg. We are progressing in selecting photographs. We have picked out 26 photos and some backups in the case some photo's do not meet the printer's requirements. We are going to be writing captions soon.

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.

National Representative Report. The National (NRHS) report was given by Dawn Holmberg. Dawn stated she and John Goodman attended the meeting at Cedar Rapids IA. The NRHS had a council and BOD Meeting. There was also an Advisory Council meeting. Also, there was a Best Practices meeting to primarily address growing the membership. It was decided that the convention will be held in Lansing Michigan next year. Steam trips is planned with #1225 and #1525. At the Conference, a bus trip to Cedar Rapids and a Visit to the Iowa Interstate RR shops in Iowa. They boarded the Iowa Interstate Business train for a trip to Silvis IL and visited the RRHMA shops. They saw two steam engines being restored, the Centennial Unit and work on Passenger cars. Dan Meyer stated that there are things at the Best Practices meeting we do to market our chapter and there are things we can do to improve our exposure. John Goodman stated that Steve Sandburg told him that #261 will not run on the TC&W this year and is scheduled to do a weekend at the SPUD North Pole Express in December. Dawn Holmberg stated that Steve Sandberg wants us working to promote his Silvis IL restoration efforts and is in need of hiring more workers.

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.

Cheer Committee. Dan stated that it was good to see Ed Johnson and present. Glen Holmberg stated he brought Dave Norman to the Flea market show today. He is using a walker and has trouble. This was undertaken as New Business.

Old Business to report. No Old Business to Report.

New Business Report. Dan Meyer stated that we need to have a Nominating Committee. Dan being president is on the committee and any Volunteers are need for the nominating committee. John Goodman and Ed Johnson volunteered to man the committee. Dan Meyer stated we are looking for a new Treasurer. We need a new one before the end of this year.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 was made. Motion was carried.

Announcements. Ed Johnson stated he has resigned All Aboard MN due to a change in the organization. John Goodman stated Jun 1st and 2nd is Train Day at St Paul Union Depot. Its that will be displayed is not known yet. When CP #2816 visited SPUD it was a well-attended event. #2816 will be return home via Winnipeg early July. John Goodman also stated the Kalmbach publishing has been sold to an organization in Tennessee. It is hoped that Trains Magazine will survive. Richard Tubbesing gave a **program report**. It is hopes that Ted Pope will have enough of his slides from his work in the Pacific Northwest sorted and digitized to present a program in September. October and November are open and John Goodman stated that Jack Barbier has excellent video to present. Greg Smith and Bob Ball are possibilities. Dan Meyer presented a slide program from the Wisconsin Chapter, NRHS.

Light Rail and Northstar Train Ride, Friday June 7th 2024 -Photos R Tubbesing

Our Train ride started at the Bloomington Metro Transit park and Ride, Blue Line ride to Minneapolis Target Field station, A ride on the Northstar line to Big Lake and Return, and back to Bloomington on the light Rail blue line.



Northbound Northstar Train arrives at Fridley MN Station

R: John Goodman



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John Cartwright and Wayne Torseth enjoy the Ride



Rick Kresnski, Bill Dredge



Frank Willke, Bill Dredge



Ed Johnson



Minnesota DOT Provides \$9.6 Million in Funding for 11 Freight Rail Projects

By Trains Staff | May 9, 2024

Infrastructure improvement funds go to short lines, shippers, one community

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The Minnesota Department of Transportation has awarded a total of \$9.6 million to 11 freight rail projects under the Minnesota Rail Service improvement program, the agency announced this week. Funding, approved during the 2023 legislative special session, supports economic development in regions across the state.

“Improving Minnesota’s rail service gives local businesses more opportunities to compete in our global and national economy,” Kelly Christenson, MnDOT freight and rail programs supervisor, said in [a press release](#). “The increased number of grant applications we received this year demonstrates the importance of improving the freight rail infrastructure across the state.”

The agency received 19 applications requesting a total of \$22.5 million.

Projects receiving funding, with locations and amount, are:

— Northern Country Co-op, Lansing: \$1.9 million to develop a unit train loading facility and install storage binds to hold product until it can be loaded onto a train.

— Minnesota Northern Railroad, Crookston: \$1.56 million to develop land for a new industrial park and innovation center, including construction of 2,478 feet of track, a turnout to the site, bin storage, and a grade crossing.

— Louisiana-Pacific Corp., Watkins: \$1.5 million to install new railcar offloading stations with outdoor bulk storage and material handling upgrades.

— Meadowlands Farmers Co-op, Echo: \$1.1 million to construct 2,150 feet of new siding track to transport fertilizer for a new agronomy center, to be built adjacent to the siding.

— American Crystal Sugar Co., Crookston: \$960,000 to expand a packaging warehouse to cover the adjacent rail spur, increasing the ability to access and load railcars.

— City of Little Falls: \$613,600 to rebuild and update a signal at an existing grade crossing, install ADA-compliant pedestrian crosswalks, and close an existing road crossing on a rail spur.

— Seven Rivers Intermodal Terminal, LLC, Winona: \$511,446 to add 2,440 feet of track and two switches to an existing terminal to increase yard capacity and inbound shipments for distribution.

— Progressive Rail Inc., Lakeville: \$468,137 to improve eight bridges on Progressive’s 97-mile rail system in the state.

— Sanimax USA, LLC, South St. Paul: \$400,000 to enhance its loading system to allow direct loading of materials into railcars, and installation of a system linking the truck loadout to the rail loading area.

— **Twin Cities & Western Railroad, near Cologne: \$328,424 to extend a stub track over a recently acquired parcel, creating a full siding with connections to the TC&W mainline, proving greater access and track capacity to support a large transload operation.**

— DeRock Capital Group, LLC, Hector: \$246,000 to add a switch, 350 feet of track, update two loading docks, and complete ground-work adjacent to a rail spur to increase transloading capabilities.

History's Future



2024 Walk Amongst the Giants

[More int RRHMA.com](http://MoreintRRHMA.com)

Come check out the latest on former ATSF #537 on your tour of RRHMA-Silvis June 29, 2024. ATSF #537 fresh out of the sand booth, will be on display during the Walk Amongst the Giants. Crew will be on hand to explain the process and answer questions about #537. *Editors note: unit is GE built B40-8W. It was the single, most powerful four-axle design General Electric cataloged. It was also the company's last. Built during the late 1980's. - Americian Rails.com*



Scene From the Past: Steam Locomotive Moves Ore Cars Donated by Canadian National

By Steve Glischinski | May 13, 2024

Minnesota museum uses DM&IR 2-8-0 to bring cars onto property



Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range No. 332 heads west north of Knife River, Minn., with eight DM&IR ore cars and a caboose in tow on May 12, 2024. Steve Glischinski



The 2-8-0 smokes it up arriving at Palmers siding to set out eight ore cars donated by CN to the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. Steve Glischinski

DULUTH, Minn. — It was a scene right out of the early 1950s: a Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range steam locomotive pulling a string of ore cars and a caboose on the line between Two Harbors, Minn., and Duluth. But the date wasn't 1952, but May 12, 2024, as the Lake Superior Railroad Museum's DM&IR 2-8-0 pulled eight ore cars donated to the museum by Canadian National to storage along the museum's North Shore Scenic Railroad.

CN is rapidly replacing its fleet of former Missabe Road ore cars built in the 1950s with new cars. The museum wanted to preserve some cars for historical purposes and possible photo charter use. CN agreed to donate two "mini-quad" sets to the museum — four cars permanently coupled together to help eliminate air leaks through hose couplings in the rugged Minnesota winter. The eight 70-ton cars were constructed 1952 and 1953 by Pullman-Standard.

Last week CN notified the museum that the donated cars were in Two Harbors and said, in effect, "come and get them." The museum's ex-DM&IR North Shore Scenic Railroad connects Duluth and Two Harbors, but rather than use a diesel to get the cars, LSRM Executive Director Ken Buehler, NSSR operations chief Scott Parker, and the steam crew headed by Scott Carney decided to send Missabe 2-8-0 No. 332 to retrieve the cars. No. 332 has received extensive work over the last few years, and more test runs were in order. On May 11, the museum celebrated National Train Day by having the 2-8-0 pull its "Duluth Zephyr" from the museum to Duluth's Lakeside neighborhood with DM&IR SD18 No. 193 running behind the train to pull it back to downtown Duluth.

The next day, May 12, under skies laden with smoke from Canadian wild fires and with No. 332 flying white flags symbolizing an extra run, it headed to Two Harbors as a "caboose hop," pulling DM&IR bay window caboose C-205. At Two Harbors, the engine was watered and wyeed, then picked up the eight ore cars. At Marbles siding outside Two Harbors, switching was done to place the caboose on the rear and the train headed to Palmers siding, with smoke-filled run-bys at Knife River and Palmers before the cars were set out for storage. No. 332 then headed back to Duluth with C-205 in tow. More trips are in the offing for No. 332. On June 8-9, the locomotive will pull a round trip each day to Palmers. The 2½-hour trip will include two of the museum's three dome cars. Because there are no turning facilities at Palmers, No. 332 will pull the train back to Duluth tender first.

Trips that run the length of the North Shore Scenic to allow passengers to take in fall colors will run Sept. 26-27. The round trip from Duluth to Two Harbors will offer passengers the chance to visit Two Harbors while the locomotive is turned and serviced before the return to Duluth. Dome car seating will also be offered on these trips. The final weekend of steam trips will close out the regular North Shore Scenic Railroad season on Oct. 26-27 with a repeat of the round trips to Palmers. American Locomotive Co.'s Pittsburgh Works built the locomotive in 1906 for the Duluth, Missabe & Northern as No. 332. It was operated by DM&N successor Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railway as No. 332 until 1955, when it was sold to short line Duluth & Northeastern of Cloquet, Minn., and renumbered 28. The locomotive remained in service on D&NE until 1964 and was donated to the museum in 1974. In 2019 it was restored to its DM&IR appearance and renumbered back to No. 332.

For more information go to <https://duluthtrains.com>.

Second Chicago-St. Paul Train Shows Value of Frequency, Capacity: Analysis

By Bob Johnston | May 22, 2024

Borealis' complement to Empire Builder delivers strong showing out of the gate

WINONA, Minn. — The first westbound trip of Amtrak's new *Borealis* wasn't flawless. A "technical problem" with a credit card reader delayed the café car's opening. A pesky lock on the platform wheelchair lift's enclosure at the Sturtevant, Wis., stop contributed to delay, as did the decision to open only one vestibule trap at downtown Milwaukee to let two Horizon carloads of passengers from Chicago vacate the only remaining seats on the train for the many travelers waiting to board there. Sure, with all the hoopla the initial run out of the Windy City was a sellout.

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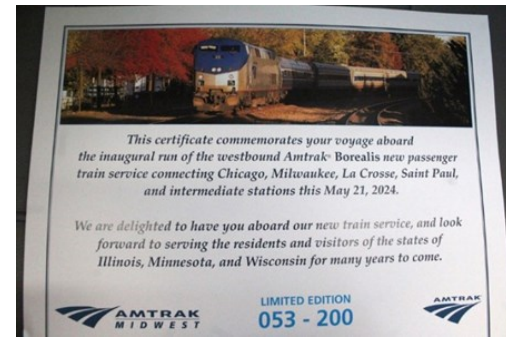
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The first westbound Borealis leaves Winona, Minn., on May 21, 2024, with both leading and trailing P42 locomotives powered. Infrastructure work here will include removing the concrete barriers adding powered switches and a second main track. CPKC did not require that work to be done before allowing the train to start. Bob Johnston



A crowd boards Tuesday's Borealis at Milwaukee. The station stop took 10 minutes, pushing the train from 10 to 17 minutes behind schedule. Bob Johnston



Only 200 certificates were printed; people traveling together got one until all were gone. Bob Johnston



Café car attendant Tatanisha Smothers was busy throughout the trip. Bob Johnston

But consider this: so many people have booked next Monday's westbound Borealis that the Chicago-St. Paul adult fare is \$145, compared to \$117 on the Empire Builder, now running with four Superliner coaches. Although that's a holiday, comparable or only slightly cheaper pricing on preceding days and well into June shows Amtrak's new entry is a welcome addition to the network. Clearly, demand for the train exists, even though [the schedules for the Borealis and the Builder](#) are only hours apart. And that demand is not just between the end points. A steady stream of passengers detrained or boarded at the many intermediate stops in Wisconsin and Minnesota. One community that will surely benefit is Wisconsin Dells, where summer boat rides and year-round water parks beckon. Operationally, the new round trip changes crews at Milwaukee instead of the Empire Builder's conductor and engineer swap at Winona. The train is assigned four 72-seat Horizon coaches plus an Amfleet I combination business class/café. The food service counter was always busy, though the attendant got help from a supervisor who kept track of food and beverage that would have to be restocked overnight at St. Paul. A thoughtful touch was 200 numbered "inaugural run" certificates passed out by a coach attendant assigned to the first trip. He didn't have enough. Most of the first-day events featuring public officials and supporters who fought tirelessly to get the train rolling took place beginning at St. Paul on Tuesday's eastbound run.

[see "[Amtrak Borealis makes debut](#)," *Trains News Wire*, May 21, 2024]. An additional set of ceremonies, also involving the eastbound train, drew Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers and state Department of Transportation Secretary Craig Thompson, among others, [in La Crosse, Wis.](#)

A second Amtrak round trip on this 411-mile corridor is long overdue. Like well-traveled city-pair combinations embedded on other "long-distance only" routes, such as the *Texas Eagle's* Dallas-Austin-San Antonio corridor, an additional frequency in each direction automatically increases the probability that departure times will coincide with travel plans.

For most of its 53-year existence, Amtrak actively sought Chicago-Twin Cities business. Until 1979 budget cuts began decimating national connectivity, the *North Coast Hiawatha* initially complemented the *Empire Builder* on a schedule quite similar to today's Borealis.

After the overnight *North Star* was dropped in 1981, the company continued to cultivate the market by adding a Chicago-Twin Cities "cut-off coach" to the *Empire Builder* during high-demand periods. Made possible because it could be switched at the company's previous Midway station where other servicing took place, the cutoff car not only preserved coach capacity for passengers traveling beyond St. Paul, but facilitated more affordable pricing for both local and long-distance passengers because they weren't competing for the same seats.

Amtrak mostly stopped assigning the extra coach after St. Paul Union Depot opened to trains again in 2014, although the *Builder* still passes through Midway. Capacity was further constricted because until this week, Amtrak dropped a second Seattle-section coach following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the train often sold out on the Chicago-St. Paul segment. Since pricing is driven by availability and the *Builder's* Portland section (shown as trains 27/28 on the website) was always assigned two coaches, fares between were invariably higher on the Seattle section.

That dynamic has now changed. To sustain the momentum, the big test will be getting the word out to a traveling public that has seldom been conditioned to "think train" as a possibility. Amtrak Government Affairs vice president Derrick James told a meeting of the Great River Rail Commission earlier this month, "At this time, Minnesota has not chosen to provide us [separate] funding for marketing." He added that Amtrak's digital efforts "are of a general nature to drive people to the Amtrak website." What else can be done to tell people about the new service? How about a route guide with a map? Perhaps it could have in-kind advertising support (to defray layout and printing costs) from businesses between Columbus, Wis., and Red Wing, Minn. who would also distribute it on their property and in their town

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Amtrak and online communities got the ball rolling on the first run by having the coach attendant pass out cloth bags containing brochures, trinkets, and stickers from St. Paul; Columbus, Portage and La Crosse, Wis.; and Winona, “The Miami of Minnesota.” Can this train serve as a template for future expansion? Not necessarily. Launching *Borealis* was an easier lift than starting a route from scratch, because stations and route-qualified Amtrak operating crews were already available. It’s also significant CPKC has been a willing host railroad that didn’t require construction of capacity improvements, primarily through Winona, as a condition for more service. But the *Borealis* does pose the question: might it be better to add frequencies that would improve utility of an existing route before developing a new one?

G&W’s Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Celebrates its 10th Anniversary

By Bill Stephens | June 6, 2024

Celebrations were held at the 743-mile railroad’s yards in Rapid City, Pierre, and Huron



G&W



Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern SD40-2 No. 3445 carries a 10th anniversary logo on its long hood. G&W



The RCP&E 10th anniversary logo features a map of South Dakota. G&W

RAPID CITY, S.D. — Genesee & Wyoming regional Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad commemorated its 10th anniversary with celebrations at the 743-mile railroad’s yards in Rapid City, Pierre, and Huron this week.

“When our crews started up operations in June 2014, they were facing a tremendous backlog of grain from the 2013 harvest and what looked to be a record-breaking wheat harvest for 2014 — one that exceeded the capacity of grain elevators across the entire state of South Dakota,” RCPE General Manager Ryan Englebright said. “But our employees rose to that initial test and set expectations — not only for South Dakota farmers but for a range of industries across the state — that RCPE could deliver safe and efficient freight-rail service.”

The railroad’s nearly 200 employees, 50 customers, and state and local government officials attended the ceremonies. The railroad has completed three of the past 10 years injury-free, which G&W said was a noteworthy accomplishment given RCPE’s annual volumes and the distances its crews travel.

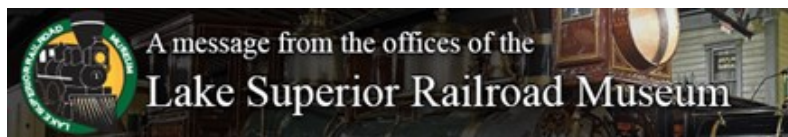
In its 2023 customer survey, RCPE was awarded an 8.9 out of 10 for its customer service. Customers have also invested billions of dollars to locate, expand, or relocate along RCPE’s line, which G&W official said was a testament to their confidence in the railroad’s ability to serve as a key transportation provider in their supply chain.

With support from South Dakota and the U.S. Department of Transportation, RCPE has invested more than \$100 million to upgrade infrastructure and equipment over the past decade. The railroad has replaced 100-year-old rail for the line east of Wall, S.D.; has upgraded hundreds of bridges and trestles; and has doubled capacity by building three additional sidings on the main line. In addition, nearly 70 employees were recognized for having been with RCPE since its first day of operation.

“We thank our employees, our customers, our partners at the state and federal level, and our community members for being a part of our story,” Englebright said. “With more investments for the long-term planned in the decade ahead, the future looks bright at RCPE.”

The RCPE — the largest of G&W’s 110 railroads — is former Chicago & North Western trackage that stretches from Colony, Wyo., to Mankato, Minn., with branches from Rapid City to Crawford, Neb., and from Wolsey to Aberdeen, S.D. The railroad interchanges with BNSF, Canadian Pacific Kansas City, and Union Pacific. Its commodity base includes agricultural products, aggregates, and energy products.

G&W acquired the western end of the former Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern in a \$210 million deal with Canadian Pacific. CP had acquired the DM&E in 2008 as part of a plan to build into the Powder River Basin coal fields. CP officially dropped its Powder River ambitions in 2012.



Copper Range Railroad History

- Learn the story of this Michigan railroad that connected with the Soo Line.
- View the Copper Range No. 200 on display in the museum.

June 19, 2024 - 5 pm to 7 pm
You're Invited to Celebrate
the Opening of our newest
summer exhibits!
 Light snacks and cash bar available.

Lloyd E. Borg's Depot Watercolors

- See 30 watercolor paintings of depots around Minnesota, some existing, some lost by a Minnesotan artist.

Dear friend of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum,
 We are pleased to announce our summer exhibitions for 2024:

Lloyd E. Borg's Depot Watercolors

Borg was a resident of Wayzata, Minnesota and took up watercolor painting at the age of 49. His intention was to capture disappearing American landscapes that were being forgotten as new technologies changed how Americans worked and traveled. One of his subjects was railroad depots in Minnesota that he painted on weekend trips with his wife in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

Copper Range Railroad Traveling History Exhibit

The Copper Range Railroad operated in the upper peninsula of Michigan. It primarily hauled copper from the Keweenaw peninsula, but also carried lumber and other materials from the remote areas to connect with larger railroads such as the Soo Line. This exhibit made by the Michigan Technological University and Copper Country Historical Society, shares the story of this railroad. On display in the museum, we have the Copper Range No. 200, the last diesel in operation in the copper industry on the upper peninsula.

These exhibitions will be on display until Labor Day. We will be hosting a **grand opening for these exhibits on Jun 19, 2024 from 5 pm to 7 pm**, with snacks and a cash bar available. This event is free and open to the public. We hope to see you there.

Best wishes,
Lake Superior Railroad Museum

— News from the Iron Range —

Ore Rail - Digest #553

Hill Annex Closing

From: [Dave Schauer](#) Date: Sat, 15 Jun 2024 15:47:24 PDT

Not unexpected, but sad to see in a way.

News release: Hill Annex Mine State Park permanently closed to allow mining to resume **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources June 13, 2024**

Hill Annex Mine State Park in Calumet has been deauthorized as a state park and is now closed. These actions are consistent with the historical expectation that mining would return to this site.

"Over its 60-year history, Hill Annex Mine produced 63 million tons of iron ore and was the sixth largest producer in the state. Then it served generations of visitors as a small state park and helped tell our mining history," said Ann Pierce, director of the DNR's Parks and Trails Division. "Now we are evaluating proposals to resume mining, which would contribute to local economies – and to Minnesota's public schools."

When open pit ore mining ceased in 1978, the Hill Annex Mine site became a visitor attraction operated by Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation. The legislation establishing Hill Annex Mine State Park was passed in 1988; the site was transferred to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 1991. The legislation establishing the park recognized the possibility that mining may be conducted on the property in the future.

The 625-acre Hill Annex Mine State Park operated on a surface lease on School Trust Lands. The stockpiles and inground minerals within the 625 acres of the previous state park are also School Trust. The surface stockpiles and tailings basins at the former park site are under lease, and the developer applied to the DNR in December 2023 for a scam mining (mining of stockpiles and tailing basins) permit. If permits are approved, scam mining could begin with site preparation in 2024 and operation in 2025. Resumption of mining at the site would benefit the local communities. It would also benefit K-12 public education throughout the state through the deposit of state mineral lease rental and royalty payments into the Permanent School Trust Fund.

State park Passport Club members will no longer need the Hill Annex Mine State Park stamp to complete their passports. Area residents and visitors have several other state parks and a state recreation area to enjoy. Within a 45-minute drive of the former Hill Annex Mine State Park are Scenic, Schoolcraft, and McCarthy Beach state parks, and the Iron Range Off-Highway Vehicle State Recreation Area is less than an hour away. Other DNR-managed recreational opportunities can be found on the [Recreation Compass](#)..

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The DNR, IRRR and community partners are discussing how to preserve artifacts in the former park's Clubhouse Museum so they can be enjoyed by the public at a new location. When any mining concludes and mineral leases are no longer in place, the site will be evaluated for potential future uses in collaboration with community partners.

<https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/news/2024/06/13/hill-annex-mine-state-park-permanently-closed-allow-mining-resume>

David Schauer Duluth, MN

Ore Rail - Digest #551

Re: First DRI-Grade from Keetac

On Friday, May 10, 2024 at 06:13:04 AM CDT, Dave Schauer <missabe@charter.net> wrote:

First Load of DR Grade Pellets Leaves Keetac

By **WDIO** Updated: May 9, 2024 - 10:27 AM Published: May 9, 2024 - 10:22 AM



U.S. Steel)

A milestone moment at Keetac on Tuesday this week. U.S. Steel shared that their team sent out the first shipment of DR grade pellets to customers. DR stands for direct reduced, and they have a higher iron content than traditional pellets. The train left on Tuesday. But not before following the Range tradition of having a red pine in the first full rail car. The red pine is the state tree for Minnesota, and a symbol of strength and durability of all Minnesotans. U.S. Steel invested \$150 million dollars into the DR grade pellet project.

https://www.wdio.com/mining-news/first-load-of-dr-grade-pellets-leave-keetac/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAR2euXHRFtT_B74ezg-2DXrBHIecc0QcJy6UUVlgqf_gVyhP-GvfeFrJMvdl_aem_ATT2h5VPJ0vKLtDXFnoJilKZ8KVuPb8hx9_5F8Nkfnw3wWMx5fkxekk2EID3Q4eAnky4msgq9PqG3LtWy4aQM

[cwl](https://www.wdio.com/mining-news/first-load-of-dr-grade-pellets-leave-keetac/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAR2euXHRFtT_B74ezg-2DXrBHIecc0QcJy6UUVlgqf_gVyhP-GvfeFrJMvdl_aem_ATT2h5VPJ0vKLtDXFnoJilKZ8KVuPb8hx9_5F8Nkfnw3wWMx5fkxekk2EID3Q4eAnky4msgq9PqG3LtWy4aQM)

David Schauer Duluth, MN



----- Amtrak News -----

Batory Nomination to Amtrak Board of Directors Potentially Changes its Dynamic: Analysis

By Bob Johnston | May 8, 2024

Need for geographical balance, railroad expertise finally addressed; one Republican vacancy remains



Ron Batory during his time as FRA Administrator. FRA



As seen from the last coach of its westbound counterpart, the eastbound Southwest Chief passes the east switch of the siding at Lamy, N.M., on Oct. 13, 2019. Amtrak's trial balloon for a plan to replace part of the Chief route with a bus bridge is the sort of incident board nominee Ron Batory will understand from his time at the Federal Railroad Ad-

WASHINGTON — President Biden's nomination last week of experienced railroad chief executive Ron Batory to Amtrak's board of directors checked a number of boxes. But his main contribution will likely be the perspective he gained during a stint as Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration that provided a ringside seat to Amtrak management's business practices and priorities. Now based in New Mexico, Batory and nominee Elaine Clegg from Boise, Idaho, are the current administration's first Amtrak board choices from west of the Mississippi River [see "Biden to nominate former FRA head Batory ...," *Trains News Wire*, May 2, 2024] They are also the only nominees to date from states served only by long-distance trains. Except for Normal, Ill., Mayor Chris Koos (whose office shares a building with the Amtrak station served by the Texas Eagle and Chicago-St. Louis Lincoln Service trains), all of the President's initial choices to replace long-expired terms of existing board members hailed

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from Northeast Corridor cities. Democrat nominee Koos, current Board Chairman Anthony Coscia of New Jersey, and Maryland Republican Joel Szabat were confirmed by the U.S. Senate earlier this year.

Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) vowed to block other nominees because the overall slate did not comply with requirements that Amtrak's state-supported, long-distance, and Northeast Corridor business lines have equal representation [see, "Amtrak board still lacks geographically diverse nominees," News Wire, Feb. 12, 2024]. The two lawmakers are among those who have questioned current management's focus on the Northeast Corridor at the expense of investment in national network capacity, frequencies, and amenities.

Democrat nominee Clegg and Republican Batory represent states served by the Empire Builder and Southwest Chief. The Senate must hold confirmation hearings for both, along with new hearings for prior nominees David Capozzi and Samuel Lathem. Those Democratic nominees are residents of Northeast Corridor states who would also represent the disabled community and organized labor, respectively. Koos and Coscia endured three such hearings before they were confirmed.

Odd person out for the eight voting board positions is now Philadelphia-area Democrat Robin Wiessmann. Since there can be no more than five members from one political party and the long-distance and Northeast Corridor business lines have sufficient representation, the remaining vacancy must be filled by a Republican from a state with a regional corridor.

With geographical and political requirements now clarified, Batory's potential impact on the reconstituted board looms large. Aside from Coscia, who was responsible for installing Amtrak's current leaders, only Batory has railroad — if not passenger rail — management experience.

Batory's term as FRA administrator (February 2018-January 2021) included the period in 2018 when Amtrak's then-CEO Richard Anderson and current CEO Stephen Gardner, then an executive vice president overseeing commercial functions, floated the idea of creating a Dodge City, Kan., to Albuquerque, N.M. bus bridge to avoid paying to maintain the Southwest Chief's route. The idea not only was withdrawn after a strong negative reaction but prompted changes in Amtrak's reauthorization that demanded more management accountability to the needs of national network constituents. It also saw positive train control waivers for the lightly traveled segment, in which Batory was likely involved.

Batory was also a non-voting Amtrak board member during his tenure at the FRA. That put him in a position to witness the exodus of institutional knowledge from the company, onboard service cutbacks, and the rise of bonus incentives based on factors that include cost reduction.

At the time, Amtrak management would have provided board members with the rationale to justify those actions, but they may not have had the inclination to challenge the moves. That is unlikely to be the case with Batory, who will at least know what questions to ask.

Whether Senate confirmation hearings will be held or the final Republican board slot will be advanced in an election year is uncertain. Both Koos and Obama Administration FRA administrator Sarah Feinberg were grilled in nomination hearings in 2020, but no action was taken.

Greg Regan, President of the AFL-CIO's Transportation Trades Department, issued a statement Monday claiming that Batory is "no friend to America's rail workers" because as a Trump appointee, "he attacked two-person crew laws in various states and approved a record amount of waivers allowing the rail industry to ignore federal safety requirements."

Labor's axe to grind may surface at hearings, but it pales against the contribution Batory could make regarding Amtrak governance.

'Trails and Rails' Programs on Amtrak Trains Return for 2024

By Bob Johnston | May 17, 2024 | Last updated on June 3, 2024

New agreement extends partnership for five years



Trails and Rails guide Stu Snyder from the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park speaks to National Park Service Director Charles Sams III (in the dark green shirt at left) aboard Amtrak's Coast Starlight in April 2024. The train hosts Trails and Rails programs on two segments. National Park Service



The "Lela-ladies" group from Elberton, Ga., headed to New Orleans, fully occupies one half of Crescent's cafe car on July 21, 2019. This is the only space on the train today where a Trails and Rails program can be conducted. Bob Johnston



National Park Service Director Charles Sams III, left, and New York Harbor NPS Trails and Rails host Elizabeth La Rochelle, right, sit at a Northeast Regional Amfleet cafe car table set up with brochures that lecturers pass out to passengers. Space is limited on trains that only have cafe cars. National Park Service

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Trails and Rails Amtrak routes 2024

<u>Trains</u>	<u>Train nos.</u>	<u>Origin / Return</u>	<u>Days of week</u>	<u>Months</u>	<u>Sponsoring National or Historic Park or Monument</u>
<i>Adirondack</i>					Roosevelt-Vanderbilt and New York Harbor
<i>Empire Service</i>	69 /238	New York City-Albany-Rensselaer, NY.	Sat	May-Nov	National Mall and Memorial
<i>Northeast Regional</i>	152/87	Washington, D.C. - New York	Sat	May-Dec	National Mall and Memorial
<i>Northeast Regional</i>	120/87	Washington, D.C. - New York	Sun	May-Dec	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
<i>Crescent</i>	19/20	Atlanta-Birmingham, Ala.	TBA*	Jun-Sep	Medger & Myrlie Evers Home
<i>City of New Orleans</i>	59/58	Jackson, Miss.-Hammond, La.	Wed	June-Aug	Lincoln Home
<i>Lincoln Service/Tex Eagle</i>	302/21	Springfield, Ill. - Chicago	Sat-Sun	June-Aug	Gateway Arch
<i>Lincoln Service</i>	302/301	St. Louis-Springfield, Ill.	Daily**	May-Oct	Gateway Arch
<i>Missouri River Runner</i>	311/318	St. Louis-Jefferson City, Mo.	Daily**	May-Oct	Okla City Nat'l Memorial
<i>Heartland Flyer</i>	821/822	Oklahoma City - Ft. Worth	Fri-Sat	May-Oct	Miss. Nat'l River & Rec. Area
<i>Empire Builder</i>	8/7	St. Paul-Columbus, Wis.	M-Thu	May-Aug	Klondike- Gold Rush
<i>Empire Builder</i>	8	Seattle-Wenatchee, Wash.	Sun/Thu	May-Sep	Klondike-Gold Rush
<i>Empire Builder</i>	7	Wenatchee-Seattle	Mon/Fri	May-Sep	Klondike-Gold Rush
<i>Coast Starlight</i>	11/14	Seattle-Portland, Ore.	Wed-Sun	May-Sep	Juan Batista de Anza Trail
<i>Coast Starlight</i>	11/14	San Jose- Paso Robles, Calif.	Sat	Jun-Sep	Juan Batista de Anza Trail
<i>Coast Starlight</i>	14/11	Santa Barbara-San Luis Obispo, Calif.	Sat	May Sep	

*Round trips may occur any day, depending on volunteer availability

** Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in September and October

WASHINGTON — National Park Service volunteers from national or historic parks and monuments along Amtrak routes are again be hosting informative programs aboard trains this summer and fall under the “Trails and Rails” program.

The table below shows the segments and days of the week where personnel discuss the historical significance of the route’s points of interest. On trains with a lecturer aboard, an initial announcement is made throughout the train inviting passengers to visit the Sight-seer Lounge or cafe car, where supporting literature is displayed for anyone wishing to participate. Several other train-wide announcements might be made passing significant points of interest, but their duration is limited to 45 seconds, according the service manual.

Route selection depends on the availability of volunteers to staff the sessions and whether schedules allow them to make manageable round trips. This year’s lineup is similar to the 2023 program, but two programs won’t be back: Cumberland, Md. to Washington D.C. on the *Capitol Limited* and the Westport-Saratoga Springs, N.Y. *Adirondack* segment. That Montreal-New York City train is suspended north of Saratoga Springs from May 20 to June 30 for trackwork [see, [“Adirondack to be cancelled in northern New York State ...,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, May 9, 2024].

Ideally, sessions hosted by a National Park Service volunteer are best held in a Sightseer lounge car where passengers can congregate freely, but the *Coast Starlight*, *City of New Orleans*, and the *Empire Builder*’s St. Paul-Columbus segment are the only listed trains which operate with those glass-topped cars. The *Empire Builder*’s Seattle section utilizes part of a Superliner diner, and the *Texas Eagle* has a “Cross Country Cafe” diner-snack bar with a few tables.

Heartland Flyer commentary is piped throughout the train’s Superliner coaches primarily between Pauls Valley and Ardmore, Okla., according to coordinator Matt Whitney. The volunteers that pass out descriptive materials and Junior Ranger books may include Marcie Doussette, who dresses in early-20th-century attire. Other trains with Trails and Rails programs utilize single level Amfleet or Horizon cafe cars with limited table space and seating.

The *Crescent* program’s situation is the most challenging, from both a schedule and space standpoint. Because the New York-New Orleans train’s Viewliner dining car was withdrawn in 2020, available space consists of half of an Amfleet II lounge car with limited seating and a window configuration that doesn’t line up with adjacent seats except at one table. In 2021, running times were lengthened. To allow for crew rest at New Orleans, the northbound train’s departure from the Crescent City was set back more than 2 hours. The combination of these factors means the northbound’s Atlanta arrival is now scheduled for 11 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m. (The current schedule [is available here](#).)

Mickey Goodson, program coordinator at Atlanta’s Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park, tells News Wire that on the old schedule, volunteers might ride all the way to New Orleans five or six times per week and return the next day. The new times mean a lengthy layover at Birmingham, very long days for volunteers, and darkness falling hours before the train from New Orleans enters Atlanta. As a result, assignments for this summer’s trips are still being finalized. He says interpretive programs on the Atlanta-Birmingham segment “have a strong history theme,” focusing on the role topography has played in determining how events took place.

National Park Services Volunteer Partnerships Coordinator Jim Miculka reports his organization renewed its agreement with Amtrak for the next five years last month, and 2025 will be the 25th anniversary of the formal, nationwide partnership

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“We recently had National Park Service Director Charles “Chuck” Sams III onboard the *Coast Starlight* and a Northeast Corridor train,” Miculka tells News Wire, adding, “It was great to have him experience the Trails and Rails program and meet the volunteers and staff that coordinate and present the programs.”

— Updated June 3 at 9:30 a.m. to correct date on table to 2024, add *Coast Starlight* segment between Seattle and Portland.

Amtrak’s Gardner, Coscia to Appear at House Subcommittee Hearing

By Trains Staff | June 9, 2024

Railroad, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials session set for June

WASHINGTON — Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner and board chair Anthony Coscia are scheduled to appear before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in a hearing this Wednesday, June 12.

The Railroad, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee will hold the hearing, “Amtrak and Intercity Passenger Rail Oversight: Promoting Performance, Safety and Accountability,” at 2 p.m. ET in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building. Also scheduled to appear is Julie White, deputy secretary for multimodal transportation at the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The hearing will be livestreamed. A link, and additional information as it becomes available, [will be available here](#).

House Bills Would Require Open Amtrak Meetings, Notification on Executive Bonuses

By Trains Staff | June 11, 2024

Legislation announced ahead of Wednesday hearing



Amtrak business/theater car American View trails the westbound California Zephyr leaving Chicago on Feb. 25, 2024. Two new bills in the U.S. House would require open Amtrak meetings and disclosure of executive bonuses. David Lassen

WASHINGTON — In advance of a scheduled Wednesday hearing on Amtrak, two members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure have announced bills regarding the passenger operators’ governance and executive bonuses.

U.S. Rep. Troy E. Nehls (R-Texas), chair of the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, has introduced [the Amtrak Transparency and Accountability for Passengers and Taxpayer Act](#). It would require the organization to operate under the same open-meeting requirements as federal agencies and other government-sponsored entities, and for the board chair to provide an annual briefing to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. “The American people deserve to have a say in how their taxpayer funds are used in government-sponsored-style entities such as Amtrak,” Nehls said in [a press release](#).

Rep. Marc Molinaro (R-N.Y.) announced plans to introduce [the Amtrak Executive Bonus Disclosure Act](#), which will require Amtrak to notify Congress when it plans to offer executive bonuses and to publicly disclose the awarding of such bonuses. The bill would require an explanation of the method used to determine bonuses for 11 positions specifically named, including CEO, president, and a number of executive vice president positions, as well as “any individual whose duties and responsibilities are substantially similar” to those 11 positions.

“Amtrak executives receive hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded bonuses without any public disclosure or explanation,” Molinaro said. “...My bill holds the executives accountable to the riders, hardworking employees, and the people footing the bill — the American taxpayers.”

The Railroad, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee is slated to hold its hearing, “Amtrak and Intercity Passenger Rail Oversight: Promoting Performance, Safety, and Accountability,” Wednesday at 2 p.m. Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner and board chair Anthony Coscia are scheduled to appear, along with Julie White, deputy secretary for multimodal transportation from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. A live stream of the hearing [will be available here](#).

Lawmakers Spar Over Amtrak Profitability and Transparency at House Rail Subcommittee Hearing

By Bob Johnston | June 12, 2024

Lawmakers also ask about status of Amtrak’s shift to the Miami Intermodal Airport station and the absence of the Adirondack north of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., due to summer track work

WASHINGTON — Aside from the revelation that Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner was granted \$620,000 in bonuses on top of a \$500,000 salary last year, very little new ground was covered at today’s House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee’s Rail Subcommittee hearing. The hearing, “Amtrak and Intercity Passenger Rail Oversight: Promoting Performance, Safety and Accountability,” was abruptly scheduled by Subcommittee Chairman Troy Nehls, R-Texas, to follow the introduction of legislation calling for more Amtrak transparency.

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A North Carolina Piedmont from Charlotte at right approaches Raleigh Union Station in July 2018. The track to the left leads to the now-abandoned S-Line, which hearing witness Julie White explained was being upgraded to a 110-mph sealed corridor route between Raleigh and Richmond, Va. Bob Johnston



Track at Miami International Airport Station on Feb. 2, 2018. Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner says the company is still looking for "the right deal" before moving from its current Hialeah terminal. Bob Johnston



The southbound Adirondack rolls into the now-shuttered Port Kent, N.Y. station on Sept. 22, 2016. U.S. Rep. Elise Stefanik has asked for transparency from Amtrak and CN regarding why the train has been cancelled through early September. Bob Johnston



Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner addresses the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Rail Subcommittee hearing on June 12, 2024. YouTube

[see, "[House bills would require open Amtrak meetings, notification on executive bonuses](#)," News Wire June 11, 2024]

Gardner offered [34 pages of written testimony](#) that primarily listed Amtrak's accomplishments.

Amtrak Board Chairman Anthony Coscia's [opening statement](#) and answers to questioning by panel members throughout the session claimed the bonuses and incentives "allowed us to rebuild our workforce and attract new employees with the expertise we needed." But his remarks dealt solely with attracting and keeping management talent at the executive level, claiming the pension program it replaced was "a very costly benefit program." Coscia did note that executive compensation details will be posted on Amtrak's website later this week.

The final witness was North Carolina Deputy Secretary of Multimodal Transportation Julie White. [Her testimony reminded lawmakers](#) that rail is the only transportation mode that does not have formula-based, consistent, and predictable source of funding. With seven North Carolina entrants in the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor ID program, she explained that state communities along corridors fortunate enough to be selected in Corridor ID Phase 2 will be expected to contribute to the 10% match to advance those projects. As expected, statements and questioning of witnesses by more than a half-dozen Republican subcommittee members primarily from rural districts with or without Amtrak long-distance service reflected their ideological opposition to passenger rail because it doesn't make a profit.

In response, Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., wondered why participants at non-rail hearings never dwell on how much money highways lose or whether airlines would be profitable if public funds didn't pay for airports, security, or air control systems. However, Moulton also complained that the sealed corridor S-Line rebuild North Carolina's White referenced that will cut an hour of travel time between Richmond, Va., and Raleigh, N.C., was "1920's technology" because maximum speeds would only be 110 mph. Subcommittee ranking member Frederica Wilson, D-Fla., who represents the Miami area, asked CEO Gardner why Amtrak had not yet moved its South Florida terminus from out-of-the-way Hialeah to the Miami Intermodal Airport station that has been ready for Amtrak trains for about eight years.

Gardner said Amtrak is "in active conversations" with the Florida Department of Transportation, the Miami-Dade Airport Authority, and Tri-Rail, to come up with "the right deal for Amtrak in terms of its tenancy." But he offered no insight as to when those negotiations would bear fruit.

Although she did not speak at Wednesday's hearing, Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., whose district includes the northern New York portion of the New York-Montreal *Adirondack* route, on Tuesday characterized the lack of transparency from Canadian National and Amtrak over the summer-long hiatus of the train north of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., as "completely unacceptable."

[The press release recounted](#) how the congresswoman on May 17 announced a "settlement payment to undertake trackwork on [Canadian National's] Rouses Point Subdivision for Amtrak's benefit," but did not reveal the cost or what the project entailed. The statement also failed to mention that any decisions on how the train is operated would involve New York State Department of Transportation's Rail Division, which has always deferred News Wire inquiries to Amtrak.

[A video of today's hearing](#) is available on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee website.

Amtrak Set to Break Ridership Record in 2024

By Trains Staff | June 14, 2024

Both ridership and revenue up in current fiscal year



WASHINGTON — Amtrak has announced it expects ridership to top 2019 — pre-COVID — levels this year and reach a new all-time record high even though it currently has less capacity. Ridership is reported 20% higher in the first 8 months of Amtrak's budget year that began Oct. 1, 2023. Ticket revenue is showing a 10% increase versus the same period in 2023, according to written [testimony by Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner](#) presented at a hearing of the U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials on June 12.

"We are on target to set a new all-time ridership record by exceeding the 32.3 million passengers," says Gardner. This would exceed the previous record set in 2019. From 2003 to the 2019 record, Amtrak saw a 45% passenger growth.

The lasting effects of the COVID pandemic still hamper Amtrak, according to Gardner. While the railroad's year-to-date revenue is higher than in 2019, it "has been impacted by the reduced business travel since the pandemic as virtual meetings have replaced many short-duration business trips," Gardner says. The increases come despite capacity challenges in a number of critical areas, including: Delays in starting service with new Siemens Venture cars for state partners on Midwestern and California routes. Delays with the new Alstom Acela trainsets on the Northeast Corridor due to continued testing.

Amtrak is on pace to set new all-time ridership records in the 2024 fiscal year. This despite diminished capacity and on-going challenges such as those being experienced with the next-generation Acela trainsets. The Alstom-built equipment continues testing before entering service on the Northeast Corridor. Early in the tests, a new trainset rolls past past position-light signals on the Harrisburg line at Wynnewood, Pa., in May 2021. Gary Panavage

Continued closures for extended periods of the Pacific Coast route in Southern California caused by increased erosion. Amtrak previously announced that it plans to double its ridership across the system by 2040. Additionally, plans call for 20% week-day service increases along the Northeast Corridor over the next year.

Amtrak Issues 2023 Sustainability Report

Progressive Rail News: Amtrak 6/14/2024

Amtrak yesterday released its fiscal-year (FY) [2023 Sustainability Report](#) detailing its actions toward achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2045.

In FY23 Amtrak, replaced more than a million gallons of fossil-fuel with renewable diesel, began integrating climate resilience and sustainability design measures into capital projects and finalized plans to host its first clean energy generation facility, according to an Amtrak news release.

"Passenger rail is widely recognized as one of the most sustainable modes of transportation, and we are taking steps to make rail even more attractive," said Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner. "The emissions reductions already met, and climate goals set forth in the annual report underline our commitment to providing customers safe and reliable travel while further reducing our already-low carbon footprint."

Highlights from the report include:

replacing more than 1.2 million gallons of fossil fuel with renewable diesel on California's state-supported Capitol Corridor, Pacific Surfliner and Amtrak San Joaquin's passenger trains, reducing GHG emissions by roughly 63%;

adding the first electric bus to Amtrak's national network of Thruway service on the Pacific Northwest's Cascades route, reducing annual GHG emissions by 109 metric tons; and

developing resilient design guidelines for capital and maintenance projects, making Amtrak climate-ready for changing conditions. The report can be downloaded [here](#).

BNSF --- BNSF News ---
RAILWAY

BNSF First Quarter Earnings Decline as Coal Volume Plunges, Intermodal Traffic Soars

By Bill Stephens | May 6, 2024

As operating ratio reaches 69.5%, BNSF aims to bring costs in line with demand, Berkshire Hathaway executive says

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway's first-quarter earnings and revenue declined despite a 7% increase in freight volume.

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A BNSF Railway coal train climbs Logan Hill in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming on Oct. 1, 2020. Bill Stephens

Quarterly operating income declined 7%, to \$1.72 billion, as revenue declined 6%, to \$5.66 billion, BNSF and its parent company, Berkshire Hathaway, reported on Saturday. The railway's operating ratio was 69.5%, up 1.1 points from a year ago.

The results were "primarily due to a 10% decrease in average revenue per car/unit resulting from lower fuel surcharge revenue and unfavorable business mix, partially offset by a 7% increase in unit volume," BNSF said in a regulatory filing. The unfavorable business mix was attributable to a 19% increase in consumer products traffic — which includes intermodal and automotive — and a 21% decline in coal volume due to a combination of high utility stockpiles and record low natural gas prices.

The railway's consumer products volume grew due to higher intermodal shipments that arose from an increase in West Coast imports as well as the addition of a new international intermodal customer. Automotive volume also was up due to higher vehicle production.

Agricultural products volume was up 3.7%, primarily due to higher grain exports and fertilizer shipments.

Industrial products carloads declined by 0.3% due to lower mineral and aggregate shipments, which was mostly offset by higher volumes of petroleum products, plastics, and taconite shipments.

Berkshire Hathaway Vice Chairman Greg Abel — who likely will succeed 93-year-old Chairman Warren Buffett — told investors at the company's annual meeting on Saturday that BNSF's financial results were disappointing last year and in the first quarter.

Overall freight volume is expected to be flat, Abel says, so the railway must bring its cost structure in line with demand in order to effectively compete with other railroads and trucks.

BNSF is "100% committed" to reducing costs through examining the way its yards, locomotives, and employees are used, Abel says.

BNSF Appeals Outcome of Montana Asbestos Trial

By Trains Staff | May 9, 2024

Start of another trial is delayed

MISSOULA, Mont. — BNSF Railway is appealing the results of a recent trial that found the railroad liable in the deaths of two people exposed to asbestos when mining materials were shipped from the town of Libby, Mont., delaying the start of a similar case, [Montana Public Radio reports](#). In April, a jury found the railroad contributed to the deaths of two people from mesothelioma, a lung cancer linked to asbestos exposure, and awarded \$4 million in compensatory damages to the estates of each of the two plaintiffs, who died in 2020 [see "[BNSF found liable](#)" *Trains News Wire*, April 25, 2024]. Because the railroad was found to have not acted intentionally or indifferently, no punitive damages were awarded. That result is being appealed to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which is based in San Francisco but also hears cases in Seattle; Portland, Ore.; or Pasadena, Calif. Because of the appeal, U.S. District Court Judge Dana Christiansen has agreed with a BNSF request to put on hold a similar asbestos case that was scheduled to go to trial this week in Missoula. More than 350 claims are active against BNSF related to alleged impacts of asbestos contamination, according to Montana Public Radio. The railroad declined to comment on the appeal, MPR reports.

BNSF and J.B. Hunt Say Quantum Intermodal Service is Delivering Growth

By Bill Stephens | May 21, 2024

The new service aimed at freight moving via the highway is running at 99% on-time performance



A westbound BNSF Railway stack train carrying J.B. Hunt containers departs Winslow, Ariz., on the morning of Aug. 11, 2022 as an eastbound rolls toward the crew change point

NEW YORK — The Quantum intermodal service that BNSF Railway and J.B. Hunt launched in November — specifically aimed at loads that have never touched rails before — is providing 99% door-to-door on-time performance and is gaining volume, executives said today. "This is true highway conversion. It's not intended to be a different service level for existing intermodal," Darren Field, J.B. Hunt's intermodal president, told an investor conference. "We are attacking the highway opportunities out there and have good reception and good success and really believe that over the long term we can grow the intermodal business using our Quantum product." BNSF and J.B. Hunt did not release specific growth figures for Quantum. The service is a day faster than traditional intermodal, shoots for 95% on-time performance, is built around each customer's specific transit-time needs, and offers flexible pricing. Plus, J.B. Hunt employees sit alongside their counterparts at BNSF headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas, to monitor Quantum loads and can take steps to expedite them if they fall behind schedule.

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BNSF and J.B. Hunt say they have proven the concept since beginning test loads last summer. “It’s one of the things that makes me optimistic about our intermodal future,” says Tom Williams, BNSF’s group vice president of consumer products. Across the industry, overall domestic intermodal volume has been in the doldrums for about a year due to abundant truck capacity and rock-bottom trucking rates.

J.B. Hunt’s volume was flat overall in the first quarter. But its Transcon volume — which includes any load originating or terminating in Washington, Oregon, California, or Arizona — was up 5%. Its Eastern volume — which includes the rest of Hunt’s intermodal business — was down 7% due to tougher competition, mostly from truckers but also rival intermodal companies.

“It’s just a big fistfight going on there,” Field says.

International intermodal volume off the West Coast has been strong for both BNSF and Union Pacific this year, partly because cargo owners have chosen to send more marine containers all the way to inland points rather than transload the freight into domestic containers.

BNSF believes this a blip in the long-term trend toward transloading more and more imported cargo, particularly freight that comes through the nation’s largest port complex at Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Transloading is the reason why BNSF has proposed its \$1.5 billion Barstow International Gateway project. The 4,500-acre complex will include a block-swap yard, support yard, and warehouses and transload centers where goods in international containers can be transferred to domestic boxes for the eastbound trip to inland markets via rail. The idea behind BIG is that it will ease congestion at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and eliminate the 80-mile dray moves for freight that’s currently trucked from the ports to the Inland Empire for transloading before being trucked to one of BNSF’s Southern California intermodal terminals.

BNSF currently expects BIG, which is in the permitting process, to open in late 2027 or early 2028, Williams says.

Williams was asked about comments that Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett made in his annual letter to shareholders about BNSF’s need to improve its profit margins and subsequent comments that Berkshire Vice Chairman Greg Abel made at the company’s annual shareholder meeting this month regarding the need for BNSF to bring its costs in line with demand. Does BNSF have more of a focus on profit margins now and if so, how will that affect intermodal?

In order to be successful with intermodal and carload freight, BNSF must be cost-competitive with other railroads and trucks, Williams says.

“We are not de-emphasizing intermodal,” he says, and the railway remains committed to maintaining its intermodal leadership.

Field and Williams spoke at the Wolfe 17th Annual Global Transportation & Industrials Conference.

nt. Bill Stephens

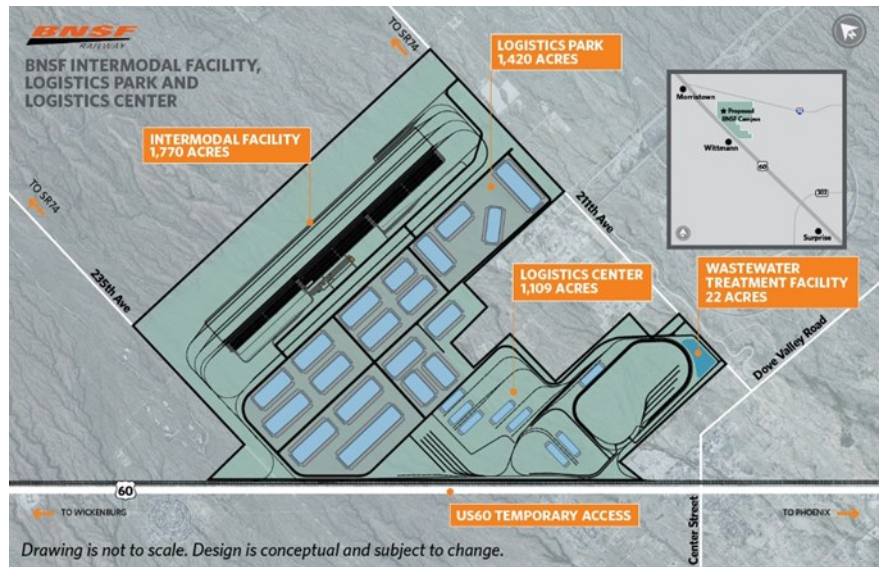
BNSF Officially Announces Plans for Intermodal and Carload Hub Near Phoenix

By Bill Stephens | June 19, 2024 | Last updated on June 20, 2024

The 4,321-acre facility planned for Wittmann, Ariz., will be the railroad’s first to include an intermodal terminal, warehouse and distribution facilities, and rail-served sites for carload and bulk commodity customers



Bound for Phoenix, BNSF Railway intermodal train ZWINPHX2-17U rolls through Arizona. Steve Glischinski



This rendering shows the conceptual design of the proposed BNSF Railway

This is the first time BNSF has combined a logistics park, which serves intermodal customers, and a logistics center, which are multi-commodity sites for carload and bulk customers.

BNSF currently operates logistics parks in Chicago, Kansas City, and Alliance, Texas. Its logistics centers include operations in Oklahoma City; Sweetwater and Cleveland, Texas; Hudson, Colo.; and Fontana, Calif.

“As BNSF and the customers we serve adapt to shifting marketplace needs, evolving supply chains, and significant technological advancements, we identified a need for additional rail capacity in the Phoenix metro area,” Jon Gabriel, vice president of service design, said in a statement. “Arizona is an important region to expand and advance our intermodal network capacity. This is a long-term investment and commitment to our customers and consumers in Arizona and beyond.”

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BNSF hopes to begin construction on the project next year and is eyeing an initial opening date in 2028.

Co-locating warehouse and distribution centers with the intermodal terminal significantly reduces the distance of dray moves for containers and trailers, BNSF says.

BNSF is evaluating whether, after the opening of the new facility, it will continue to use its current Phoenix intermodal terminal in Glendale, which is 10 rail miles from the center of Arizona's largest city. Wittmann is 36 rail miles from downtown Phoenix. The Glendale terminal has not yet reached capacity, the railroad says.

BNSF said it will be working closely with Maricopa County, neighboring municipalities, and regional stakeholders over the coming months as it aims to move the project through the review and permitting process.

The size of the new logistics hub will rival BNSF's proposed \$1.5 billion Barstow International Gateway in California. That facility, which will serve as a sorting and transloading hub for international containers, is 4,500 acres.

BNSF did not release a cost estimate for the Phoenix project.

Note: Story updated at 2:50 p.m. on June 19 with information on the status of current BNSF Phoenix intermodal terminal in Glendale, Ariz. Updated at 11:43 a.m. on June 20 to remove reference to Surprise, Ariz. Although BNSF has moved permitting to Maricopa County, instead of Surprise, Ariz., the project is still planned for the same location in Wittmann

BNSF Railway Adds Wind Screen on Bridge in Abo Canyon

By Bill Stephens | June 21, 2024

High winds can delay trains on the busy Southern Transcon



A BNSF Railway freight rolls onto the bridge at Milepost 874.2 of the Clovis Subdivision, which has been equipped with a wind fence. BNSF



A pair of BNSF Railway intermodal trains roll across bridges in Abo Canyon, including the bridge in the foreground that now features a wind screen. BNSF

FORT WORTH, Texas – BNSF Railway's engineering crews have added a 1,300-foot wind fence to block the pesky prevailing wind on a bridge in Abo Canyon on its Southern Transcon in New Mexico.

The Clovis Subdivision bridge, at milepost 874.2 near the west end of the canyon, experiences more severe winds due to the terrain, BNSF says. The bridge is oriented north-south, which exposes trains to the easterly wind.

"This project is a great example of how safety and service go hand in hand," says Craig Rasmussen, assistant vice president of engineering, services and structure. "The concentrated wind gusts at this location coming out of Abo Canyon have caused problems in the past. Installing the wind screen will help by lowering the wind impact against the side of trains, which will help keep trains safely flowing through the area."

High winds can prompt BNSF to temporarily halt traffic on its busiest route across the Southwest.

Abo Canyon is a pass through the Manzano Mountains in central New Mexico. BNSF opened a second track through the canyon in 2011 after completing a massive three-year construction project.



---- CPKC News ----

CPKC Debuts First Locomotive in New Livery

By Bill Stephens | May 13, 2024

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific Kansas City today unveiled the first locomotive to wear the railroad's new paint scheme. CPKC ES44AC No. 9375 made its debut in the video posted on the railway's social media channels. The locomotive will be on display in Union Station in Kansas City on Saturday, May 18, as part of CPKC's Final Spike Steam Tour with CP 4-6-4 No. 2816. Employees chose the new livery from five options last year. The livery is CP red, features the CPKC beaver and shield logo on the long hood, and ends with a splash of gold and black that begins at the radiator section of the locomotive.

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Canadian Pacific Kansas City ES44AC No. 9375 is the first to wear the merged railway's new locomotive livery. CPKC



Jeff Terry Photo



The first repainted CPKC units lead train M251 at Nahant, Iowa, on May 25, 2024. Jeremy J. Schrader

After making its public debut on May 18 at a Final Spike Steam Tour event in Kansas City, CPKC ES44AC No. 9375 — the first locomotive to wear the railroad's new paint scheme — is now in revenue service. Paired with sister ES44AC KCS No. 4805, also repainted into the new scheme, the locomotive was photographed leading Kansas City, Mo., to St. Paul, Minn., train 251 at Nahant, Iowa, on Saturday, May 25.

— Updated May 29 at 9 a.m. with corrected information

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific Kansas City today unveiled the first locomotive to wear the railroad's new paint scheme.

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News Photos: First CPKC locomotives Go to Work

By Trains Staff | May 28, 2024 | Last updated on May 29, 2024
After debut in Kansas City, first unit heads north in revenue service

CPKC Anticipates Continued Intermodal Growth Across its Network

By Bill Stephens | May 14, 2024

Cross-border intermodal will benefit from reefer business and CSX partnership, while CPKC-served ports are poised to grow, CEO

Keith



Canadian Pacific Kansas City CEO Keith Creel.

Canadian Pacific Kansas City expects to see continued international and cross-border intermodal growth across its network thanks to a combination of ample port capacity and the railway's ability to tap new markets, CEO Keith Creel says. On the international side, the ports of Vancouver, British Columbia; Saint John, New Brunswick; and Lazaro Cardenas, Mexico, each offer distinct advantages and have capacity expansion projects in the works as global trade patterns shift. "You put all three of those together with this tri-coastal network, I think that sets us up again for continued growth," Creel told an investor conference today. Vancouver container volume came roaring back this year after suffering a downturn in the wake of last summer's dockworker strike.

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

Saint John is seeing flat volume so far this year after a record 2023. But Creel says the port has a competitive advantage over Canadian National-served Halifax, Nova Scotia, because it's closer to the key markets of Montreal, Toronto, and Chicago. Lazaro Cardenas, meanwhile, has an automated terminal that's running at half capacity right now. Creel says CPKC and its steamship-line partners aim to make the port an alternative to Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif., for imports bound for Texas. Creel likens Lazaro to the CN-served Port of Prince Rupert, British Columbia, which has served as an alternative to the much larger Port of Vancouver. Just like Rupert will never replace Vancouver, Lazaro will never replace Los Angeles and Long Beach, he says. Service from Lazaro is ramping up now, Creel says, but CPKC expects to make a big splash in the next three years with the launch of a daily pair of 10,000-foot stack trains that will serve the port on Mexico's Pacific coast.

"It's going to take two to three years. It's going to take a little time to build it up," Creel says of the \$200 million opportunity. Once those trains are up and running, Creel expects it will take another two years for the railway to add a second train pair. "The potential is huge," Creel says. CPKC's international intermodal will benefit from the new Gemini alliance that links two of its largest customers, Hapag-Lloyd and Maersk, Creel says. The like-minded steamship lines will begin cooperating under the new agreement next year. Overall, domestic intermodal remains challenged due to ample truck capacity that has driven down rates and made it tough for rail to compete, Creel says. But CPKC's Mexico Midwest Express cross-border service continues to grow. Volume was up 10% in each of the past two months, Creel says. The service will get a boost from two unrelated events: the construction of an Americold refrigerated warehouse at CPKC's terminal in Kansas City and the anticipated regulatory approval of the CPKC and CSX acquisition and operation of Genesee & Wyoming short line Meridian & Bigbee, which will create a new intermodal route linking the U.S. Southeast with Texas and Mexico. Americold broke ground on its new facility last month. It will open next year and allow CPKC's customers to ship beef and pork produced around Kansas City to be exported to Mexico. Northbound, the service will carry Mexican-grown frozen vegetables to destinations in the Midwest as well as Toronto, Creel says. All of this volume moves by truck today. Schneider, which uses both CPKC and CSX, is excited about the new route that will allow it to launch intermodal service between the Southeast and Mexico, Creel says. CPKC expects the Surface Transportation Board to issue a decision on the Meridian & Bigbee deal in the next six weeks. Assuming STB approval, CPKC and CSX aim to launch service in late summer, Creel says. To ease a half-dozen bottlenecks on CPKC de Mexico, the railway has launched \$70 million (U.S.) worth of capacity expansion projects in Mexico that were not originally envisioned as part of the CP-KCS merger, Creel says. The new capacity will further improve train speeds and car velocity in Mexico, which had lagged after the merger, Creel notes. The projects, which will come online late this year and early in 2025, will unlock capacity. "It's truly the big growth engine," Creel says of Mexico. The CPKC merger has prompted the creation of new partnerships between other railroads, including the CN-Union Pacific-Ferromex Falcon Premium intermodal service, CN-Norfolk Southern intermodal service linking Canada with Kansas City and Atlanta, and BNSF/J.B. Hunt cross-border intermodal service with Ferromex. Now CPKC may get into the partnership act using the CP-UP Kingsgate British Columbia-Eastport, Idaho, gateway that has long carried agricultural traffic. "Today I look at it and I'm thinking 'Wait a second. What could we do uniquely selling merchandise service, chemical service out of the Edmonton corridor, going into the I-5 corridor?' Is our line with the right investment a competitive alternative to CN and BNSF? The answer is yes," Creel says. "The route is actually shorter. Now it requires investment, it requires two motivated companies. But the will and the opportunity is there and it makes good sense." Creel spoke at the RBC Capital Markets Canadian Industrials Conference.

CPKC Releases Return-trip Schedule for Final Spike Steam Tour

By Trains Staff | May 17, 2024, June 12th 2024



CPKC police officers provide crowd control during No. 2816's display in Franklin Park, Ill., on May 8, 2024. The return-trip schedule for the Final Spike Steam Tour has been released. Mark Llanuz

CALGARY, Alberta — CPKC has released the U.S. and Canadian return-trip schedule for Canadian Pacific Hudson No. 2816 and the Final Spike Steam Tour train, which will wrap up its southbound journey June 7 with The return trip will see the locomotive resume U.S. travel June 12 with a trip from Laredo to Kendleton, Texas; its final leg will be July 5 from Medicine Hat, Alberta, to Calgary.

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The northbound trip offers a more condensed schedule than the 33-day southbound from Calgary to the Mexican border, other than an extended stay (June 18-26) in Davenport, Iowa. It includes the previously announced June 30 display day in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The full schedule is below. display in Mexico City. The Steam Tour is currently in Kansas City, where it continues an extended stay with display this Saturday, May 18, at Kansas City Union Station. That display will also feature the first diesel painted in the new CPKC livery. The remainder of the southbound schedule [is available here](#).
Schedule revised May 28 2024...

FINAL SPIKE

STEAM TOUR

RETURN TRAVEL SCHEDULE

JUNE 13	Laredo, Texas to Kendleton, Texas
JUNE 15	Kendleton, Texas to Shreveport, La.
JUNE 24	Shreveport, La. to Heavener, Okla.
JUNE 25	Heavener, Okla. to Kansas City, Mo.
JUNE 27	Kansas City, Mo. to Davenport, Iowa
JULY 1	Davenport, Iowa to St. Paul, Minn.
JULY 3	St. Paul, Minn. to Thief River Falls, Minn.
JULY 4	Thief River Falls, Minn. to Winnipeg, Man.
JULY 6	Winnipeg, Man. • EVENT •
JULY 7	Winnipeg, Man. to Brandon, Man.
JULY 8	Brandon, Man. to Moose Jaw, Sask.
JULY 9	Moose Jaw, Sask. to Medicine Hat, Alta.
JULY 10	Medicine Hat, Alta. to Calgary, Alta.

cpkcr.com



SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



Canadian Pacific No. 2816 is assisted up Letts Hill just East of Letts, Iowa by FP9s No. 1401 and No. 4107 on its run from Nahant, Iowa, to Kansas City, Mo., on Saturday, May 11, 2024. The locomotive's revised return schedule has been released. Steve Smedley

The revised schedule includes a longer stay for the locomotive in Mexico, meaning the first leg of the return trip in the U.S. is now June 15 between Laredo and Kendleton, Texas. The only scheduled public display event will be July 6 in Winnipeg; the tour concludes July 10 with the locomotive's return to Calgary. The full schedule is at left.

Revised June 12 2024

CPR No. 2816 Returns to the U.S. After completing CPKC's Final Spike Steam Tour in Mexico (update)

By [Trains Staff](#) | June 12, 2024 | Last updated on June 13, 2024

Return schedule sees minor update for the trip from Laredo, Texas, to Shreveport, La.



Canadian Pacific No. 2816 departs rainy Rockford, Minn., to reach the Twin Cities as part of CPKC's Final Spike Steam Tour on May, 2, 2024. Lucas Iverson



Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 crosses the International Railway Bridge into Mexico at Laredo, Texas, on May 30, 2024. Dave Blazejewski

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News Photo(prev page): Mexico, Meet La Empresa *By Trains Staff* | May 30, 2024 **CP 2816 crosses the Rio Grande**
 LAREDO, Texas — The Final Spike Steam Tour has entered the third country on its itinerary. This morning, the train celebrating the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger crossed into Mexico, a historic moment underscoring the three-nation linkage created by the CPKC merger and marking the first trip into that country for CP 4-6-4 No. 2816. The locomotive is shown crossing the Rio Grande at the International Railway Bridge between Laredo and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico; in the foreground is the second bridge under construction at the site [see [“KCS breaks ground for second span of international bridge”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Nov. 1, 2022]. The train is working its way south to a June 7 display date in Mexico City; after some additional time in Mexico, it will return to the U.S. in mid-June and complete its journey in Calgary on July 10. A scheduled excursion with No. 2816 in Illinois planned for late June has now been cancelled [see [“Planned Illinois excursion”](#) *News Wire*, May 30, 2024].

LAREDO, Texas — With SD70ACU No. 7013 and two FP9 diesels at the head end, Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 pulled into Laredo on June 11 after recrossing the Rio Grande at the International Railway Bridge, reentering the United States. Roughly 2 weeks prior on May 30, *The Empress* led the three diesels and office car special in the opposite direction as it began traversing Mexico as part of CPKC’s Final Spike steam tour [See [“News photo: Mexico, meet La Empresa”](#) *News Wire*, May 30, 2024]. The 12-day round trip between Laredo and Mexico City — the final display stop on June 7 of the outbound transnational journey — has recently been the center of discussion due to its significant highs and tragic lows [see [“Woman struck, killed by CPKC steam tour train in Mexico,”](#) *News Wire*, June 4, 2024]. Whether or not the latter played into the decision for the diesel helpers to lead No. 2816 in the first leg of its return trip has yet to be confirmed by CPKC.

It has been recently reported that the train departed Laredo on the morning of June 13 with the steam locomotive at the head end again. The return schedule, available on the [CPKC website](#), was also updated later in the day with earlier departure and arrival dates in Kendleton, Texas, and Shreveport, La. The rest of the itinerary remains unchanged — including a public display stop on July 6 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and eventual return to No. 2816’s home of Calgary, Alberta, on July 10, completing the Final Spike



--- Union Pacific News---

Could UP’s Big Boy and CP 4-6-4 No. 2816 Appear Together Under Steam?

By Bill Stephens | May 2, 2024

Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena says he’d love to see it happen



Union Pacific Big Boy No. 4014 rounds a curve on the Yoder Subdivision between Egbert and Albin, Wyo., on June 7, the first day of the 2023 Home Run Express. Kevin Gilliam



CP 2816 and the Final Spike Steam Tour train are captured south of Pasqua, Saskatchewan, on April 29, 2024. CPKC has added a new stop to the tour in Winnipeg on June 30. Andrew Meinzer

CHICAGO — Imagine if the two Class I railroad steam stars of this year — Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 and Union Pacific Big Boy 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 — showed up at the same place at the same time and shared the same stage. It just might happen one day.

Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena on Wednesday told a shipper conference that he’d like to see both steam locomotives appear together. UP’s Big Boy is currently scheduled for a swing from the steam shop in Cheyenne, Wyo., to Northern California beginning June 30. Also planned: A trip to Chicago and Texas on dates this fall that have yet to be announced.

The 2816, meanwhile, on April 24 embarked on its barnstorming trip across the Canadian Pacific Kansas City network from Calgary, Alberta, to Mexico City in celebration of the one-year anniversary of the CP-Kansas City Southern merger. It’s scheduled to be back in Canada for a June 30 appearance in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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Vena emphasized the importance of the UP steam program in general and the Big Boy in particular. “It’s a great emblem of who we are and the history of what we’ve done. So for us it’s important to connect with our communities, connect with our customers, and connect with our employees,” Vena says. “And we will use that steam engine, we’ll have it out over the railroad this year. And hopefully at some point we’ll have it at the same place as CPKC. I’d love to have both of them together.” Vena spoke at the North American Rail Shippers annual conference.

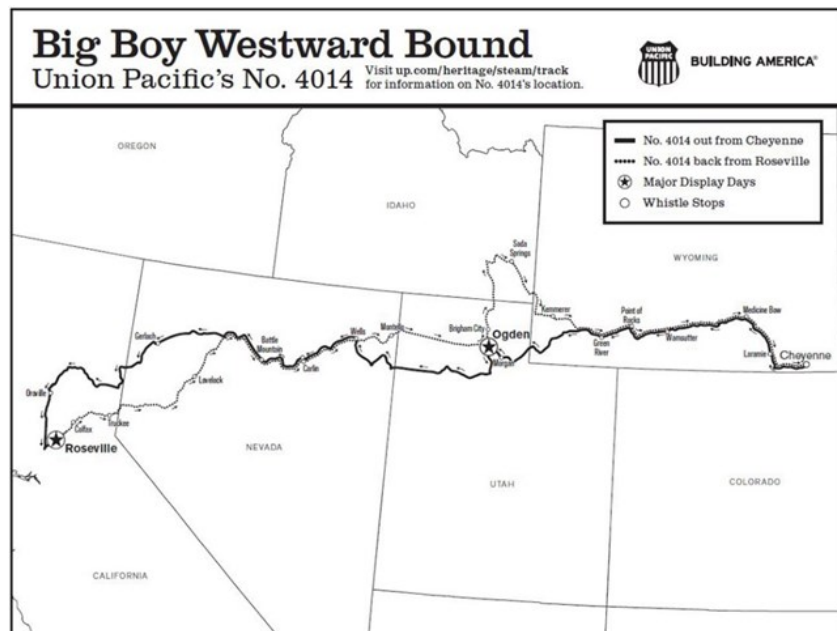
Union Pacific Releases Schedule for Big Boy ‘Westward Bound Tour’

By Trains Staff | May 9, 2024

Excursion set for July 14 from Roseville to Sparks, Nev.; 19 whistle stops planned



Big Boy No. 4014 wows the crowd at Jefferson, Texas, in November 2019. The schedule for the locomotive’s trip to California has been released. Jim Wrinn



CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Union Pacific has released the schedule for Big Boy No. 4014’s “Westward Bound Tour” to Roseville, Calif., and back, which begins June 30, and concludes July 26, and will include one excursion — July 14 from Roseville to Sparks, Nev.

The locomotive will be on display for two days in Roseville (July 12-13) and Ogden, Utah (July 20-21). It and its train are also scheduled for 19 “whistle stops,” generally of 15 to 30 minutes, in five states, as part of its tour.

Whistle-stop locations on the train’s outbound trip include Laramie, Wyo., on June 30; Wamsutter, Wyo., on July 1; Green River, Wyo., on July 3; Morgan, Utah, on July 4; Wells, Nev., on July 6; Carlin and Battle Mountain, Nev., on July 8; Gerlach, Nev., on July 9; and Oroville, Calif., on July 11.

Return-trip whistle stops will include Colfax and Truckee, Calif., during the excursion on July 14; Lovelock, Nev., on July 6; Carlin, Nev., on July 17; Montello, Nev., on July 19; Brigham City, Utah, and Soda Springs, Idaho, on July 22; Kemmerer, Wyo., on July 23; Point of Rocks, Wyo., on July 25, and Medicine Bow, Wyo., on July 26.

A full schedule with times is available at [the UP Steam website](https://www.up.com/heritage/steam/track).

Ticket information and other details on the Roseville-Sparks excursion, a fundraiser for the Union Pacific Museum, are not yet available, but will be posted at [the UP Train Tix web page](https://www.up.com/heritage/steam/track).

Big Boy’s ‘Heartland of America Tour’ to Begin Aug. 29

By Trains Staff | June 17, 2024

Ten-state tour to run for eight weeks



Union Pacific Railroad’s Big Boy No. 4014 blasts away from Huffman, Texas, on Aug. 18, 2021, on its run between Houston and Beaumont. The Big Boy will return to Houston as part of the “Heartland of America Tour,” set to begin Aug. 29. Steve Smedley

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — Union Pacific has announced plans for its second tour this year with Big Boy No. 4014, which will cover 10 states in eight weeks beginning Aug. 29.

The “Heartland of America Tour” will launch from Cheyenne on that date and also include Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas, concluding in late October.

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The initial announcement includes just three sets of display days: Sept. 8 in Rochelle, Ill., about 80 miles west of Chicago; Oct. 6 in Houston, and Oct. 10-11 in Fort Worth, Texas. The railroad says additional route details and times will be shared at a later date. UP also says additional whistle stops are being planned for the upcoming Westward Bound tour, which will see the Big Boy travel to Roseville, Calif., and return. An updated schedule for the trip slated to begin June 30 will be available later this week at [the schedule page](#) of the UP Steam website.

Union Pacific No. 4014 Can Now Run on its Own

By Trains Staff | May 24, 2024

New PTC system allows operation with diesel support



Ed Dickens, manager of Union Pacific's heritage operations, glances at the PTC screen mounted in the cab of Big Boy No. 4014. The screen is situated so both engineer and fireman can read it while the locomotive is in operation. The new system, recently installed, will allow operation without a trailing diesel locomotive. Bob Lettenberger

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — This week the Union Pacific made a short run with 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 to test the new PTC system installed on the locomotive. While Big Boy has operated with a LeaPTC system since 2021, says a UP statement, the new equipment permits operation without support of a diesel locomotive.

The original PTC system installed on the world's largest operating steam locomotive utilized the computer aboard the diesel locomotive. The new system, similar to that installed on CPKC No. 2816, is self-contained. Although the diesel locomotive is no longer needed for Big Boy to travel, it is not certain if the steam locomotive will be permitted to travel without such support. The diesel locomotive was also present for added braking capability.

Big Boy's new PTC equipment travels in a cabinet on the side of its tender.

When No. 4014 made its restored debut in 2019, it did not carry PTC equipment. The FRA granted a waiver for the locomotive to operate in PTC territory even without the system. Big Boy became the first mainline steam locomotive with PTC after a 2021 installation of the equipment.

Union Pacific Speeds Up Domestic Intermodal Service Linking Southern California and Chicago

By Bill Stephens | May 3, 2024

With the addition of a second pair of daily Z trains, UP has reduced transit time to a truck-competitive three days



A short Union Pacific intermodal train heads east across Sherman Hill on Aug. 31, 2022. David Lassen

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific has tightened its domestic intermodal schedules between the Los Angeles Basin and Chicago by two days, and now offers three-day transit time that is competitive with team driver truck service.

“In an effort to better serve our customers and simultaneously penetrate volume moving over the road, Union Pacific is pleased to share that we have implemented a new ‘Z’ train service pair between the Los Angeles Basin and the Chicago metroplex,” the railroad said in a May 1 customer announcement.

The new daily service links the City of Industry terminal in Southern California to Global 2 in Northlake, Ill. “We are delivering the service we sold to our customers — and we’re now able to do it faster,” CEO Jim Vena said in a statement today. “Our railroad offers 70-mph service, allowing us to compete for business, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions up to 75% for our customers.” Executives from Schneider National, one of UP’s truckload domestic intermodal customers, praised the faster service on the company’s earnings call yesterday.

“We’re really excited about the fact that we have an improvement in transit time on the largest corridor. So we’re going from a position where we were 24 hours behind the competing transit to now we’re 24 hours faster than the competing transit,” said James Filter, Schneider’s group president of transportation and logistics. “So we think we have an opportunity to continue to grow there. We feel really good about that.”

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Filter also praised capacity expansions that UP has made at the Inland Empire terminal in Fontana, Calif., which handles imported goods that have been transloaded into domestic containers. “There is nothing constricting us from growing that really important corridor,” Filter says.

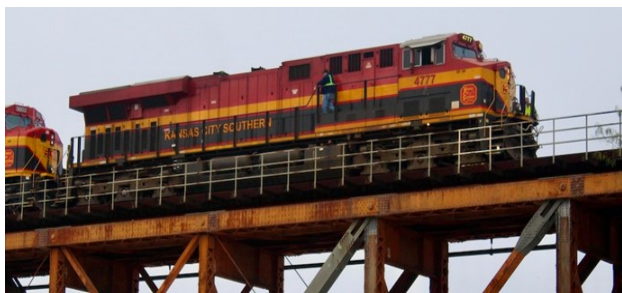
The new service from LATC includes faster steel wheel interchanges with CSX and Norfolk Southern for containers bound for destinations in the Ohio Valley and Northeast. In addition, the westbound service from Global 2 to the City of Industry and Inland Empire Intermodal Terminal now includes Z train service. “We are excited about this new product, which is part of our continuing effort to find new ways to meet our customers’ needs, while removing trucks off our nation’s highways and providing a consistent, reliable product,” said Kenny Rocker, UP’s executive vice president of marketing and sales.

In November, Vena told an investor conference that the railroad was considering routes where it can cut transit times to be more competitive with trucks and other railroads. Since becoming CEO in August 2023, Vena has touted UP’s ability to run premium traffic at 70 mph.

Union Pacific CEO Advocates Seamless Border Operations at Mexico Gateways

By Bill Stephens | May 8, 2024

Jim Vena says trains should operate the same way at the Mexican and Canadian rail border crossings



A northbound empty Kansas City Southern grain train swaps crews on the International Railway Bridge in Laredo, Texas, in November 2017. Bill Stephens

CHICAGO — Freight train operations across the U.S.-Mexican border should be as seamless as they are across the U.S.-Canadian border, Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena told a shipper group last week.

Cross-border trains entering the U.S. from Canada use Canadian crews to reach the nearest rail yard — and vice versa. “I never used to even think about the border when I worked at Canadian National Railways,” Vena told the North American Rail Shippers annual conference.

But it’s a different story at gateways to and from Mexico. In most cases, cross-border trains stop on bridges over the Rio Grande to swap crews. It’s a time-consuming process as crews must walk to and from their trains from their respective sides of the border. It’s also a security and safety risk as trains are strung out through border communities.

“In Mexico, we need to get over this issue of stopping at the border and changing crews on bridges,” Vena says.

Mexican crews should meet the same training standards as U.S. crews so that they can bring trains into the first yard in the U.S., and American crews should have the same ability to deliver trains into yards in Mexico, Vena says.

Doing so would improve fluidity at the single-track border crossings. “We should be able to build traffic in Mexico that’s coming northbound that comes onto our network with a Mexican crew that comes across the border,” Vena says. “Our crew gets on and we don’t stop.”

Canadian Pacific Kansas City, UP, and CPKC de Mexico use international crews to operate a handful of the two dozen trains that cross the border at Laredo, Texas, each day. It’s the busiest rail gateway to and from Mexico.

CPKC international Mexican train crew employees have an average of more than 20 years of experience, according to the Association of American Railroads, and are licensed by the Mexican government to operate trains. They’re also trained and tested on U.S. operating rules and regulations and are required to pass random drug tests, with CPKC de Mexico crews operating within the U.S. subject to Federal Railroad Administration drug and alcohol testing requirements for foreign crews.

The use of international crews at the Laredo border crossing has drawn opposition from rail labor, which views it as a threat to U.S. jobs as well as a safety risk.

But railroads say the introduction of international crews has not reduced hours, jobs, or compensation for U.S. rail workers. Using international crews has reduced train idle time by about a third at the Laredo border crossing, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.

Vena says he’s made 10 trips to Mexico since becoming CEO in August 2023. To work on improving border fluidity as well as keeping rail gateways open during migrant surges, Vena has met with government and customs officials, as well as executives at Ferromex, the Mexican railroad in which UP has a 26% stake.

“Hopefully sooner rather than later we’ll fix that so that we can move traffic fluidly across the border,” Vena says.

Considering the proxy contest at Norfolk Southern — where activist investor Ancora Holdings has questioned the railroad’s resiliency strategy — Vena was asked whether keeping a buffer of crews, locomotives, and freight cars clashes with the principles of the lean Precision Scheduled Railroading.

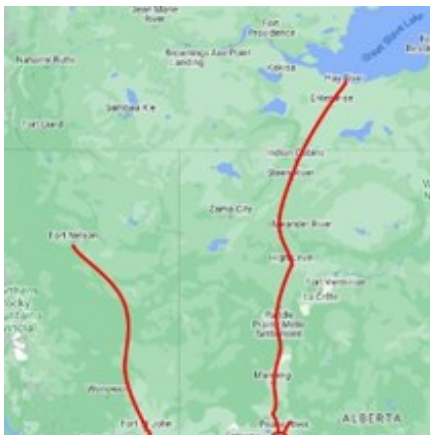
“We need to have a buffer of people, assets, and capacity to be able to handle the ups and downs that happen in the railroad business,” Vena says, noting that the number of cars customers release on weekends drops by 30% compared to weekday volumes.

The railroad also needs a buffer to meet unanticipated spikes in demand or to help operations recover from harsh weather or the impact of derailments.

“At the end of the day we need a certain amount of buffer. Now, having 1,500 excess locomotives, that’s a little bit too much of a buffer,” Vena says. “But having a couple hundred — and we have 500 right now ready to go — is a smart thing to do.”

CN Halts Operations on Lines in Northwestern Canada Because of Wildfires

By Trains Staff | May 14, 2024



MONTREAL — Canadian National Railway has had to suspend operations in portions of British Columbia and Alberta because of wildfires, [Reuters reports](#).

Affected are the railroad's northernmost route in British Columbia, the 250-mile Fort Nelson Subdivision between Fort St. John (approximately 175 miles northeast of Prince George) and Fort Nelson; and the Meander River Subdivision in Alberta, which runs for 193 miles north from High Level, Alberta, to Hay River, Northwest Territories. High Level is approximately 455 miles north of Edmonton.

Most of Fort Nelson (population 4,700) has been evacuated, with authorities calling residents who had remained in the region and urging them to leave, [the Canadian Press reports](#). The fire near Fort Nelson has grown to about 84 square kilometers (52 square miles) as of this morning. In Alberta, some 45 wildfires are currently active, according to the Wildfire Alberta website. For more history, see "By Train to Hay River" in the [Summer 2024 issue](#) of *Classic Trains*.

CN Expands Firefighting Fleet with Addition of Two Improved Train Sets

By Bill Stephens | May 30, 2024

Trident and Neptune join Poseidon in the railway's firefighting arsenal



L: Canadian National's Neptune fire fighting train features improvements over the proof-of-concept train, Poseidon. CN

R: Poseidon was CN's original fire-fighting train. CN



MONTREAL — Canadian National has beefed up its ability to battle wildfires with the addition of two new firefighting trains. The *Trident* and *Neptune* trains, unveiled yesterday, will join CN's original firefighting train, *Poseidon*, in combating fires along the railway's right of way, particularly in isolated areas.

"Our priority is to maintain the integrity of the supply chain so that we can continue to serve our customers and power the economy. By deploying these new firefighting railcars, we're not only reinforcing our commitment to securing the supply chain, but also helping to support the safety and security of our neighbors in communities along our network," Matthew McClaren, assistant vice president of safety, said in a statement.

Poseidon was CN's proof of concept and first firefighting car. It's built on a 66-foot bulkhead flatcar equipped with two 3,500-gallon tanks, three water pumps, fire hoses, and a diesel-electric generator. Two tank railcars, each with a capacity of nearly 21,000 gallons, are attached to either side of the flatcar. The railcar can spray various forms of fire prevention and suppression substances, including water, foam, and fire retardant.

CN has improved on the design with the new equipment. Key improvements on *Trident* and *Neptune* include additional 360-degree cameras placed at both ends for real-time visibility, a separate 20-foot container to hold pumps, hoses, and generators, as well as a 40-foot container with a built-in staircase and crow's nest. The crow's nest has two additional water canons and provides greater visibility for crews.

CN says it works closely with federal, provincial, and municipal wildfire management authorities, along with Indigenous communities, to deploy the firefighting equipment where it can be safely and effectively used in response to wildfires.

The 2023 wildfire season was the most destructive ever recorded in Canada, according to Natural Resources Canada. By Sept. 5, more than 6,132 fires had burned a 16.5 million hectares of land, or 40.7 million acres — an area larger than Greece and more than double the prior record from 1989.

Normally, an average of 2.5 million hectares of land (6.17 million acres) are burned in Canada every year. And unlike previous years, the fires in 2023 were widespread, from the West Coast to the Atlantic provinces, and the North. By mid-July, there were 29 mega-fires, each exceeding 100,000 hectares, or more than 247,000 acres.

--- PRESERVATION and Steam News ---

Santa Fe No. 2926 Celebrates its 'Escape The Gate' Anniversary

By Lucas Iverson | May 10, 2024

Visit to local brewery launches 4-8-4's 2024 operating season



Santa Fe No. 2926 makes its first run, post-restoration, to Albuquerque's Tractor Brewing on May 6, 2023. The 4-8-4 celebrates the first anniversary with a similar trip on May 4, 2024, titled the "Escape The Gate" Anniversary. Alex Gillman

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — On May 6, 2023, Santa Fe No. 2926 made the first movement under steam since restoration from its current site with a 1-mile round trip to Tractor Brewing Wells Park [See ["News photos: Santa Fe 2926 takes a short trip,"](#) *Trains* News Wire, May 8, 2023]. Celebrating the anniversary of that event led to a repeat trip this year on May 4. This launched the 4-8-4's 2024 schedule after a recent completion of the annual inspection by the Federal Railroad Administration, in addition to checking off the off-season punch list. Headlining the work over the winter was replacing the burner, according to Mathew Casford, chief of rail operations for New Mexico Steam Locomotive & Railroad Historical Society (which operates as New Mexico Heritage Rail), owner of the locomotive. "The original one had been pretty well damaged when [No. 2926] was living in the [Coronado] park and on display for the city," he says. "We were able to work out a deal with the Pueblo Railway Museum and get the burner out of sister No. 2912.

"It's now in the firebox of No. 2926 and works better."

The Pueblo group has been active in a number of parts exchanges involving Santa Fe No. 2912, a display engine, and other locomotives being restored to operation [See ["Extension of parts swap helps land water pump"](#) *News Wire*, Nov. 15, 2023].

The replacement burner roared to life as No. 2926 made its operating debut last Saturday. Titled "Escape The Gate," the anniversary celebration saw the monstrous 4-8-4 traverse the Sawmill Spur from its current home to the nearby brewery. The 11 a.m.-4 p.m. appearance coincided with a fundraiser for the continual maintenance and operating efforts by New Mexico Heritage Rail. Casford said the locomotive's first outing of the year went well: "All of the punch-list items we had from our last event have been taken care of, and now we have an entirely new list."

It's a list he feels confident will be fully checked off by the time of the next event, a June 26-27 return to Albuquerque's downtown Rail Yards as part of the [Santa Fe Railway Historical & Modeling Society](#)'s annual convention. The private appearance by No. 2926 will once again include a short ferry move along the former ATSF transcontinental main line.

Brief as they are in the interim, these operational opportunities are possible thanks to the relationships with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and Rail Runner Express commuter system while NMHR continues work on full positive train control compliance for longer outings with the locomotive. "Currently, we have everything set up so we can do multiple events down at the Rail Yards," Casford said.

Visit the [New Mexico Heritage Rail website](#) for more information.

Durango & Silverton Two-day Steam Photo Charter with 'Trains' Magazine set for October

By Trains Staff | May 17, 2024 | Last updated on June 14, 2024

Experience a legendary Colorado narrow-gauge line aboard a privately chartered steam-powered train. Includes multiple photo stops both days



*A southbound Durango & Silverton charter train is captured at The Needles on Oct. 17, 2023.
Carl Swanson*

DURANGO, Colo. — Join the editors of *Trains* Magazine this year aboard a private steam-powered two-day charter Oct. 18 and 19, on Colorado's Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. The train will operate from Silverton to Durango the first day, with multiple photo stops en route.

The train will overnight in Silverton, then return to Durango the following day, making additional photo stops. A night photo session using professional lighting equipment is planned, weather permitting.

The consist includes a steam locomotive (a K-28 is planned), five freight cars, three passenger coaches, and a caboose. A box lunch will be served aboard the train both days and is included in the fare. Guests are welcome to bring snacks and non-alcoholic beverages.

Guests are responsible for lodging and meals in Silverton.

This is a private charter. Tickets are [exclusively available here](#) from *Trains* Magazine.

\$800 is the Fare.

Continued on next page:

News Photos: Restored N&W Business Car Debuts

By [Trains Staff](#) | May 19, 2024

Car is featured at open house in East Chicago, Ind.



L: Norfolk & Western business car No. 300 glistens during its display at an open house on Saturday in East Chicago, Ind. Bruce Stahl

R A rare EMD Model 40 switcher shares a track with N&W business car No. 300 during display Saturday at Professional Locomotive Services. Bruce Stahl



EAST CHICAGO, Ind. — The Norfolk & Western Business Car 300 Preservation Society unveiled the restored car on Saturday with an open house at repair and maintenance firm Professional Locomotive Services. Along with tours of the car — built in 1917 and modernized in 1955 — and displays of PLS equipment, visitors were treated to free food (hot dogs and hamburgers), photographer Bruce Stahl reports.

More information on the car is available at [the Society's website](#). The group, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, also continues to seek donations to support its educational and operational efforts.

Archives Center Dedicated as Part of C&NW Historical Society Meeting, Museum's C&NW Days

By [Steve Smedley](#) | May 20, 2024 | Last updated on May 21, 2024



Chicago & North Western No. 1518, the original GP7 built as an EMD demonstrator, pulls a freight train as a caboose train waits in the background powered by CNW RSD5 No. 1689 at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Ill., during the museum's C&NW weekend and the meeting of the C&NW Historical Society. Steve Smedley



Illinois Railway Museum ran several trains powered by its collection of C&NW diesel power on Saturday, May 18. SD50 No. 7009 rolls into the station platform with a coach train as F7 No. 411 prepares to shove east with its commuter bilevel train. Steve Smedley

UNION, Ill. — Dedication of the Chicago & North Western Historical Society's Archives Research Center at the Illinois Railway Museum highlighted the society's 50th anniversary celebration during its three-day 2024 convention at Union and Crystal Lake, Ill.

The research center joins the replica 1950s street scene on the museum's Main Street, and replaces the society's storage building in Berwyn, Ill. Margery Piersen, the wife of Joe Piersen, rang a bronze bell Saturday morning as part of the dedication. Piersen was archives chairman for the historical society and staunch supporter of

building a new structure to house the society's extensive collection of C&NW and other associated railroads. Piersen passed away at age 74 in July 2014.

"I am very, very pleased and proud," Margery Piersen said. "It is very important to preserve history, along with being part of this dedication. Joe not only helped members do research, but he also helped people that were restoring a depot or former C&NW building with research and drawings."

The Piersen legacy will live on with the new state-of-the-art archives building, with several rooms filled with maps, blueprints, photographs and displays of uniforms worn by C&NW conductors and trainmen.

Newly elected Society president James Lewnard said, "It's wonderful. We've had some difficulties along the way, but we worked through them."

— Updated at 1:25 p.m. CT to correct date of death for Joe Piersen; updated at 1:40 p.m. with Margery Pierson photo

Pair of Berkshires Build on 2024's Must-see Big Steam

By Trains Staff | May 21, 2024

NKP No. 765 and PM No. 1225 scheduled for season debuts in late May and early June, respectively. -and
Steam Trips Planned for NKP No. #765 and #1525 and the Indiana Rail Experience

By Lucas Iverson | May 29, 2024

Additional off-season projects by Fort Wayne Railroad continue with headliners nearing completion



Nickel Plate Road No. 765 takes part in an excursion out of Angola, Ind. The 2-8-4 will make its 2024 debut there with excursions during the Memorial Day weekend. Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society



Pere Marquette No. 1225 rounds a curve near Carland, Mich., while pulling the North Pole Express on Nov. 18, 2023. The 2-8-4 will make its 2024 debut in June, starting with Hands on the Throttle. Steam Railroading Institute

FORT WAYNE, Ind., and OWOSSO, Mich. — Canadian Pacific 4-6-4 No. 2816 has been a recent showstopper during its epic CPKC Final Spike Steam Tour from Canada to the U.S. and Mexico. But with summer closing in, expect more locomotives to take center stage as part of [2024's must-see big steam](#), including a pair of Van Sweringen's 2-8-4 Berkshires. Nickel Plate Road No. 765 is returning to the Indiana Northeastern Railroad for its third year of the Indiana Rail Experience. The multi-year program of events and excursions is a partnership between the short line and the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society – the owner of the soon-to-be 80-year-old locomotive. No. 765 will debut this Memorial Day weekend with the May 24-26 *Indiana Ice Cream Train* and May 25 *Wine & Whiskey Train*, both out of Angola, Ind.

The remaining 2024 schedule for the 2-8-4 will include the following:

- June 14, 17, and Sept. 2: Throttle Time, Pleasant Lake, Ind.
- June 15: *Tri-State Scenic Excursion*, Edon, Ohio to Hillsdale, Mich.
- June 16: *Tri-State Scenic Excursion*, Edon to Jonesville, Mich.
- Aug. 1 and 2: Indiana Railcamp, Pleasant Lake
- Aug. 30-Sept. 1: Rolling Victory Weekend, Pleasant Lake
- Oct. 19 and 20: *Fall Color Train*, Pleasant Lake to Hillsdale

Visit the [Indiana Rail Experience website](#) for more information.

Meanwhile, in Michigan, sibling Pere Marquette No. 1225 will debut in early June for multiple weekends of summer events and excursions by the locomotive's owner, the Steam Railroading Institute. This will mark the first time since 2019 that the older Berkshire-type will operate for the public outside of its regular *North Pole Express* schedule during the Holiday season. A Hands on the Throttle operating experience with No. 1225 is set for June 7-9, 14, and 16 at the Owosso-based institute, along with a June 15 excursion to Ashley, Mich., dubbed the *Freedom Flyer – Vintage Baseball Train*. The remainder of the 2024 schedule for the Steam Railroading Institute, including the popular *North Pole Express*, is expected to be released soon. Visit [the Steam Railroading Institute website](#) for more information. Finishing touches are currently taking place on the society's two former Ringling Bros. circus cars recently acquired from the Everett Railroad. The fresh acquisitions are planned to debut on the *Tri-State Scenic* as first-class, open-window and open-air, table and parlor cars. "These cars will offer steam fans generously sized windows, open baggage doors, comfortable lounge-style seating, couches, and table seating," said Lynch, "but also be perfect for private events and other trips as well. "Both cars will feature their own bars, food service areas, and restrooms. The original elephant cage door has been kept inside the parlor car, and this area can be reserved for larger groups or private parties." One of the New York Central coaches from the *Empire State Express* is also halfway into its restoration with hopes for an August debut. Early in the year, NKP SD9 diesel No. 358 moved under power for the first time in 15 years, with break-in runs along the Indiana Northeastern. The results are reported to show continual troubleshooting in the electrical issues, minor repairs and adjustments to the traction motors, cables, brush holders and commutators, and overall general housekeeping. Additional shakedown and adjustments will continue throughout the rest of the year. The ex-NYC depot in Pleasant Lake, Ind. received minor cosmetic and structural work with a heavy exterior restoration ramp-up to begin in June. "We recently won a \$250,000 state tourism grant for improvements to the campus around the station and have \$120,000 raised for the station itself," said Lynch. "We'll be fundraising for this throughout 2024."

Visit the [Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society](#) and [Indiana Rail Experience](#) websites for more information.

Central Railroad of New Jersey No. 113 Debuts in 2024 Steam Season

By Lucas Iverson | May 22, 2024

Heavy 0-6-0 switcher headlines back-to-back Saturdays of night photo session and Minersville's Community Day excursion-

MINERSVILLE, Pa. — Mid-May marked the return of Central Railroad of New Jersey No. 113 for its 2024 operating season. Back-to-back Saturdays on May 11 and 18 saw the heavy 0-6-0 switcher in steam at its Minersville home for a night photo session and a series of excursions, respectively. Offseason work beforehand focused on general maintenance with no major rebuild projects on the docket, according to Robert E. Kimmel Jr., president of the Railway Restoration Project 113. Much like last October's night photo session [See "[CNJ No. 113 delights photographers...](#)" *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 25, 2023], the May 11 event — organized by Dak Dillon Photography and MPT Photography — was an opportunity for the non-profit organization to seize on by surveying the completed work. "The [sold out] night photo session worked out well because it was really a test for the following week when we get to operate it," Kimmel explained. That operation on May 18 highlighted six passenger excursions for Minersville's first Community Day celebration. Between No. 113's home base at the former Philadelphia & Reading Railroad station and Reading Anthracite's New St. Nicholas Breaker, the locomotive operated 40-minute round trips along the [Reading & Northern Railroad](#). Additional non-passenger runs before and afterwards were made for testing and to reset all the derails. While future events and excursions for No. 113 in 2024 have yet to be announced, Kimmel confirms work on one of the superheater units will be performed in preparation for the next scheduled operations. "That's what we're going to start on this weekend," he said. "Fix that up, reinstall it, and we'll be ready to go again."

More information and future announcements can be found on the [Railway Restoration Project 113's website](#).

Central Railroad of New Jersey No. 113 participates in a night photo session on Oct. 21, 2023, in Minersville, Pa. A repeat took place on May 11 as the 0-6-0 debuts in its 2024 steam season. Kevin Madore photo

Guest Whistle and Summer Launch Spotlights Grand Canyon No. 4960's May-June Excursions

By Lucas Iverson | June 3, 2024

Next steam trip for the 2-8-2 scheduled on July 6

WILLIAMS, Ariz. — Grand Canyon Railway [steam locomotive No. 4960](#) has transitioned to its regular, once-a-month schedule after a busy April of public and private excursions [see "[Grand Canyon No. 4960 concludes April operations...](#)" *Trains News Wire*, April 25, 2024]. The 2-8-2 was called on for two days of the "First Saturday" excursion in May and June, operating from Williams to the South Rim's national park.

A new wrinkle to the May 4 run was a guest whistle that echoed across the former Santa Fe branch. The five-chime in question belongs to Texas & New Orleans No. 982, a Baldwin-built 2-10-2 in Houston, under the care of the Texas Railway Preservation Association. The non-profit organization and Grand Canyon Railway collaborated to have No. 4960 carry the whistle during the trip and offer a ticket raffle for a chance to ride aboard the train.

Proceeds are expected to go into No. 982's grease and lubrication system, in addition to fabricating parts needed to complete running gear work for both a relocation and eventual return to operation, according to a May 7 post on the [TRPA Facebook page](#).

Grand Canyon Railway's 2-8-2 steam locomotive operates a National Model Railroad Association Pacific Southwest Region charter on June 10, 2023. A guest whistle and summer launch spotlights Grand Canyon No. 4960's May-June excursions in 2024. Carl Swanson

"We want to deeply thank the Grand Canyon Railway & Hotel and the team at Xanterra Travel Collection," the post said. "The dedication, attention to detail, and care for experience was truly something to learn from."

No. 4960 handled another large train on the June 1 "First Saturday" excursion, signaling the return of the busy summer season. Overall, the locomotive performed well on both days with no major issues to contend with before the next scheduled trip on July 6, according to chief mechanical officer Eric Hadder.

For more information, visit the [Grand Canyon Railway and Hotel website](#). The "Steam Saturdays" schedule is [available here](#).

Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad Receives Grant to Restore Track to Operation

By Trains Staff | June 7, 2024

Port of Tacoma provides \$50,000 for 5.5-mile expansion project



The Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad has received a grant from the Port of Tacoma that will allow it to nearly double its operable trackage. Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad

ELBE, Wash. — The Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad has received a \$50,000 grant from the Port of Tacoma Local Economic Development Investment Fund for track expansion and restoration between Elbe and New Reliance, Wash., the railroad has announced.

The 5.5-mile project will almost double the Mt. Rainier's operable mileage and move it closer to its goal of reaching Eatonville, roughly another 7 miles further north. [In a Facebook post](#), the railroad said it anticipated reopening the Elbe-New Reliance trackage next year, allowing it to offer longer train rides and more special events. It is the second straight year the railroad has received one of the Local Economic Development grants from the port, which annually offers \$250,000 in funding. [In 2023](#), it received a grant for ADA accessibility improvements. The Mt. Rainier Scenic resumed operation last fall after the Western Forest Industries Museum acquired the railroad from former owner American Heritage Railways in 2022. American Heritage had closed the railroad in 2020, citing ongoing losses heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic [see "[Mt. Rainier Scenic Railroad returns to operation](#)," *Trains News Wire*, Sept. 7, 2023]. The railroad is based in Elbe, about 45 miles south of Tacoma. For more information, visit [the Mt. Rainier Scenic website](#).

Friends of EBT Reaches \$1 Million in Donations Since 2020

By Dan Cupper | June 6, 2024 *Excerpts:*

Funds raised above goal will aid rebuilding dormant part of main line



L ;EBT's Robertsdale, Pa., station is owned and maintained by the Friends of the East Broad Top. The group also offers railbike and walking tours of the nearby coal-mine ruins. Dan Cupper R:EBT registers and ledgers, carefully shelved for a century and more in one of the vaults at the railroad's station and general office in Rockhill Furnace, Pa. A Friends project is helping preserve such materials. Dan Cupper



ROCKHILL FURNACE, Pa. — Already powering past its current-year fund-raising goal, the volunteer [Friends of the East Broad Top](#) group has hit another milestone, announcing this week that since the historic East Broad Top Railroad was reopened in 2020, the group has raised \$1 million in donations. The 33-mile-long narrow gauge EBT, a National Historic Landmark in central Pennsylvania, was closed as a coal-hauling line in 1956, revived in part as a steam tourist railroad in 1960, and closed again in 2011. The [EBT Foundation, Inc.](#), was organized in 2020 to buy most of the property and preserve, restore and interpret the line, resuming passenger service in 2021 and reactivating one of its six steam locomotives in 2023. Key to EBT's success is its solid partnership with the Friends (both are non-profit groups), which provides volunteer labor and cash to support track restoration, rolling-stock renovation, stabilization of buildings in the road's circa-1900 machine-shop complex, and an extensive archives program. The Friends also supplies docents and maintains and staffs a museum and depot 20 miles from here at Robertsdale, Pa., deep in the coal-mining country once served by the railroad. EBT intends to restore its main line to that point, which involves two tunnels, a horseshoe curve, and 2% grades. Within the last year, the railroad took initial steps toward that goal, kicking into high gear work by both Foundation employees and the Friends' track crew. In each of the last four years, the Friends group has exceeded its fund-raising goal. For 2024, the goal set last fall was \$220,000 and the sum now stands at \$284,159, according to Karen Bulman, the organization's fundraising treasurer. The Friends board decided to funnel all funds over the initial goal toward rebuilding the main line south, which has lain idle since 1956. of the three railroad-industry partners who organized the Foundation, Bennett Levin of Washington Crossing, Pa., hailed the \$1 million milestone as just the latest evidence of the Friends' longstanding commitment.

"The Friends list of the group's most important projects include spending:

— \$252,000 in Rockhill Furnace, the EBT's historic operating headquarters, including money spent on stabilization efforts, new roofing, new doors, and structural repairs, to prepare the boiler and machine shops, the car shop, the carpenter shop, and a storehouse for public tours, and to ready the coal tipple for coaling the steam locomotives.

— \$216,000 on the "March to Saltillo." Already nearly a mile of track has been reconstructed, with additional ties and other material on hand to continue the work.

— \$136,000 on the EBT Archives and Special Collections, a project to catalog, preserve, and digitize the railroad's vast

--- Other RR News ---

Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Heritage Locomotive Emerges from CSX's Waycross Paint Shop

By Bill Stephens | June 4, 2024

No. 1875 is the 15th heritage unit honoring CSX predecessor railroads



L: CSX's Pittsburgh & Lake Erie heritage locomotive basks in the sun outside the railroad's paint shop in Waycross, Ga. CSX

R: The distinctive P&LE logo adorns the rear of CSX No. 1875. CSX



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The CSX heritage locomotive fleet has grown to 15 with the addition of a locomotive honoring the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie. CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs released the first photos of the unit, No. 1875, on LinkedIn this afternoon.

“Another great job by our ONE CSX team in Waycross, GA. Founded in 1875 and headquartered in Pittsburgh, PA – the P&LE was know as the ‘Little Giant’ since it moved so much coal over a small area serving the steel mills in Pennsylvania over to Ohio. We love celebrating our 197-year history as ONE CSX team. Enjoy everyone,” Hinrichs wrote.

The P&LE locomotive joins 14 other railroads represented in the program, including Family Lines; Pere Marquette; Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac; Baltimore & Ohio; Chessie System; Seaboard System; Conrail; Chesapeake & Ohio; Louisville & Nashville; Atlantic Coast Line; New York Central; Monon; Western Maryland; and Seaboard Coast Line.

Wisconsin Governor Proposes Passenger Trains to NFL Draft

By Trains Staff | May 23, 2024

Green Bay will host event in 2025



Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers proposes passenger trains to the NFL

GREEN BAY, Wis. — Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers has proposed running special Amtrak trains to Green Bay during next year's NFL Draft. In the last few years, the draft announcements have become big business, drawing thousands of people to host cities. The 90th version of the NFL Draft will be held in Green Bay, home of the NFL's Green Bay Packers, April 24–26, 2025

Evers hinted at the possibility of using trains to move people to Green Bay for the draft, [telling NBC26](#): “I know our Department of Transportation is meeting with Amtrak and others, so it's our hope that that is absolutely going to happen.” He added that he hopes passenger train service to Green Bay can be made permanent.

The last passenger service to Green Bay, operated by the [Chicago & North Western](#), ended on April 30, 1971, the eve of Amtrak. Today, the only viable rail route to the city from Chicago and Milwaukee is a combination of former Soo Line/C&NW lines from a connection with CPKC at Duplainville, Wis., through Fond du Lac to Green Bay owned by [Canadian National](#). Service to Green Bay from Milwaukee or Chicago has long been discussed but has never gained any traction.

North American Rail Traffic
Week 23, 2024 – Ended June 8, 2024

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2023	Cumulative	Avg/wk ¹	vs 2023
Total Carloads	325,376	-2.6%	7,353,146	319,702	-3.8%
Chemicals	47,087	5.7%	1,082,614	47,070	3.8%
Coal	62,129	-15.3%	1,405,997	61,130	-17.2%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	26,369	7.8%	586,511	25,500	-0.9%
Forest Products	15,102	0.6%	347,390	15,104	-1.0%
Grain	30,749	10.0%	742,842	32,297	0.9%
Metallic Ores and Metals	38,576	-7.3%	937,386	40,756	-2.5%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	27,456	3.6%	565,110	24,570	2.3%
Nonmetallic Minerals	43,139	-8.0%	910,461	39,585	-5.8%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	21,834	7.6%	503,796	21,904	8.0%
Other	12,935	-4.7%	271,039	11,784	-0.6%
Total Intermodal Units	354,865	8.3%	7,774,218	338,009	8.1%
Total Traffic	680,241	2.8%	15,127,364	657,711	2.0%

¹ Average per week figures may not sum to totals as a result of independent rounding.

Intermodal Rally Boosts U.S. Rail Traffic

By Trains Staff | June 13, 2024

Carload volume declined, but intermodal was up sharply in the week ending June 8

WASHINGTON – Total U.S. weekly rail traffic for the week ending June 8 was up 4.1% compared with the same week last year thanks to a spike in intermodal volume.

Carloads declined 4.4% compared with the same week in 2023, while U.S. weekly intermodal volume was up 12.2%, the Association of American Railroads reported



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

Monday: 10am – 3pm
Friday: 10am – 3pm
Saturday: 10am – 2pm (Regular Operations)
10am – 5pm (March to October)

Adults \$10 (5 years and older)

Children 4 and under are FREE!

Railfan Events (Thanks to Rick Krenske, Bill Dredge, Perry's Hobbies)

Northstar Chapter NRHS Meeting	Saturday September 14th 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 September 14 2024 9 AM—2 PM	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Building 1372 Cosgrove Street Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$7
Centruy College Model Railroad Flea Market	Saturday November 23, 2024 9 AM—2 PM	Century College (West Campus) 3401 Century Ave N White Bear Lake MN 55110	\$6
Woodbury Model Railroad Flea Market	Date to be Announced 9 AM—2 PM	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury MN 55433	\$6
North Metro Model RR Club Flea Market	Date to be Announced 9 AM—2 PM	Coon Rapids VFW 1919 Coon Rapids Blvd Coon Rapids MN 55433	\$6
LaCrosse Rail Fair	Saturday July 13 2024 10 AM—4 PM	Copeland Park (1130 Copeland Park Dr) 300 Rose Street Lacrosse WI 54603	\$6

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

