



NRHS

Northstar News

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Next Meeting Saturday September 13th 2025 Roseville Lutheran Church



L: CGW 509 (4-6-0 Class E-7 built by BLW) with Train 25 in Rochester, MN July 24, 1948 -Walt Dunlap Photo (From Marty Bernard Facebook Photos)

R: CGW 855 2-10-4 seen in St Paul, MN May 23, 1940 -Walt Dunlap Photo (From Marty Bernard Facebook photos)



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Meeting Notice:

Saturday September 13th 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our Spetember Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2025 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month,

An informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpenteur Avenues at 4:15 pm September 13th 2025. Please join us in-person at Roseville Lutheran Church, Saturday September 13th 2025 at 6 pm. Doors open at 5:50pm. Our business meeting will begin at 6:15 followed by the program.

From the Editor: Next issue will be out around October 1st 2025.

October Meeting is Saturday October 11 2025. This meeting will be Unofficial since (due to absences) there will be NO Quorum. Program: Joe Frischman, historian of the M&NS, will present slides of the M&NS from his collection.

**If you cannot attend the meeting, here is the September Zoom meeting ID and Password:
Meeting ID: **842 8426 4506**
Passcode: **092025****

Note: Hennepin Overland Railway Historical Society "Model Trains on 38th St" Operating Schedule: Hours 1pm to 4pm
Sept 6,7,13,14,20,21,27,28; Oct 4,5,11,12,18,19,25,26; Nov 1,2,8,9,15,16,22,23,29,30; Dec 6,7,13,14,20,21,27,28; Jan 2026: 3,4,10,11,17,18,24,25,31; Feb 2026:1,7,8,14,15,21,22,28; Mar 2026: 1,7,8,14,15,21,22,28,29; April 2026:4,11,12,18,19,22,26. Fee \$5 Individual Family \$15 See Bill Dredge for more INFO Web site <https://hennepinoverland.org/>

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



It has been a busy summer for most of us. The NorthStar Chapter, NRHS has had quite a few activities. Among them, riding the NorthStar commuter line in May, June and July. Riding Metro Transit's light rail system in June. July was our Picnic in Red Wing. Some of our members participated in the NRHS National Convention in July - There is a short video reviewing the Convention available at <https://youtu.be/aIWzH-8M98U> .

August saw members experiencing a memorable trip riding the North Shore Scenic Railroad from Duluth to Two Harbors and back, and another ride on the Northstar Train to Big Lake. This service is ending in January, so come along with is and ride while you can. All of these activities have been great fun! Coming up in the fall are our regular 2nd Saturday evening meetings at Roseville Lutheran Church.

Among the topics to be discussed in September are upcoming activities and programs, elections, flea market sales, the library/storage locker and more. **September Program: Joe Fishbein's slides about railroading in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan will be exciting.** We look forward to seeing you at the meeting in September!

--Dan Meyer / President, Northstar Chapter NRHS

Northstar Picnic at the Red Wing Depot July 12th 2025

Text provided by John Goodman, Photos by Ross Hammond



Noted attendees: Bill Dredge, John Cartwright, John Chute, Jack Barbier, John Goodman, Jeff Napierala, Glen Holmberg, Russ Isbrandt, Martha Isbrandt, Nancy Rumler, Gary Rumler. Not pictured Ross Hammond

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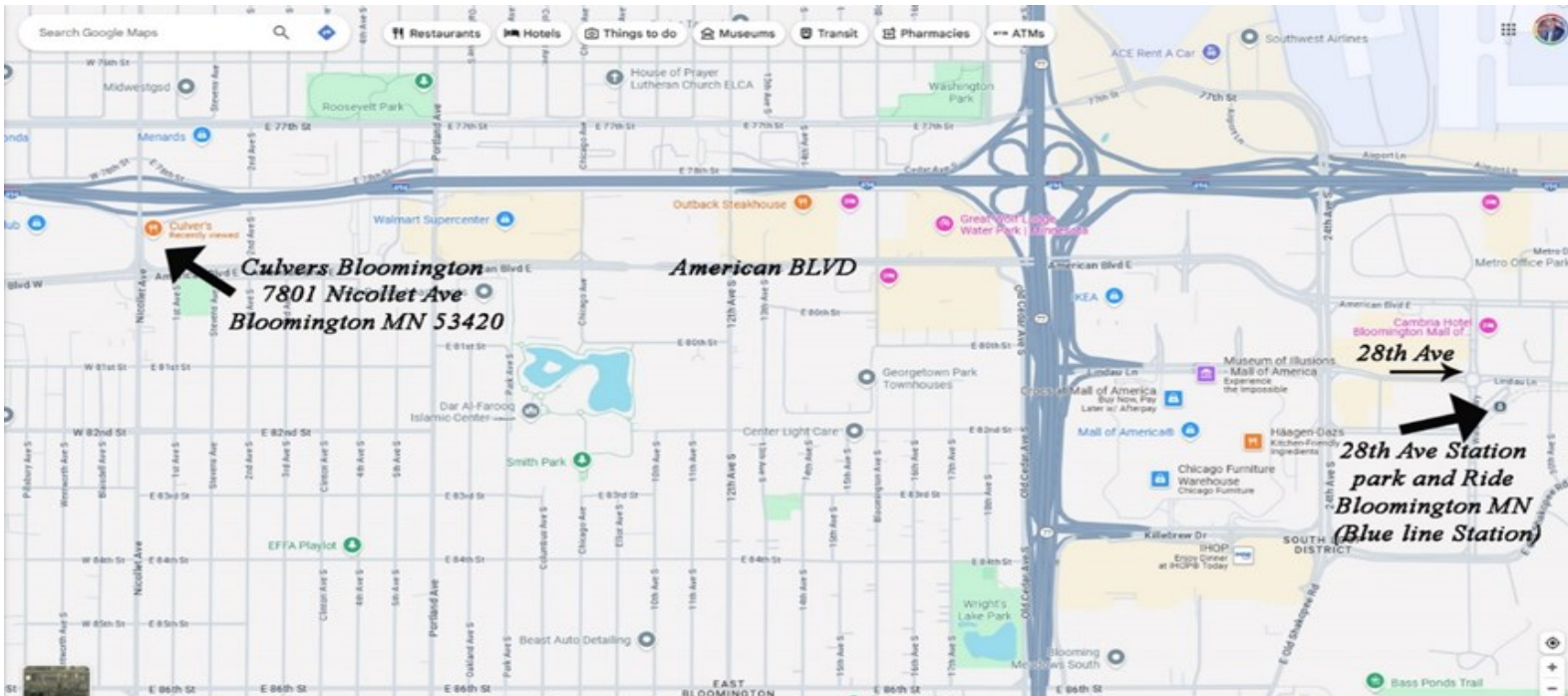
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photos by Ross Hammond

Amtrak Borealis EB arrives at Red Wing. (GE Power) - 12 people showed up for the picnic today. Ed Johnson showed up late in the day with his Grandson. This would make the total count at 14. We never got any CP freight trains, but we did get the on time train 1340. Amtrak 8 was so late that it probably went thru Red Wing close to supper time. No one was willing to stay that long. -John Goodman
 The Borealis had very unusual locomotives - the General Electric P32-8 BWH. The two were set up in push pull configuration. These 12 cylinder 3200 HP locos rare - Amtrak had only about 30. These are also smaller than the regular power - There are over 200 GE P40s and P42s at 4000 HP+ and over 200 Siemens ALC 42s and 44s at 4200HP+. They needed two of these to get the train to track speed and also for Hotel Power (lights and AC) which would take about 500HP. Again - a great outing! Thanks, Ross Hammond

**Chapter Monthly Lunch at Culvers: 1:00 PM 4th Wednesday of the month
 -next September 24th 2025, October 22nd 2025, and November 26th, 2025 (Weather Permitting.)
 Northstar still will be Running until the end of the Minnesota Vikings season.**



Directions to Culvers and Bloomington Park & ride;
 I494 (From East or West) to Nicollet Ave
 S on Nicollet Ave to **Culvers**.
 Meet at Culvers 1-2:30pm for lunch.
 Drive to 28th Ave **Park and Ride Station**
 E on American Blvd to 28th Ave South
 To Parking Ramp. (Free)

Schedule: Blue Line light Rail and Northstar
 -Leave 28th St Station on **Blue Line** 2:44pm
 -Arrive Target Field Mpls 3:20 PM
 -Depart on **Northstar** to Big Lake 3:38pm (Same train on return)
 -Return to Target Field on **Northstar** 5:37pm
 -Depart Target Field **Blue Line** 5:50pm
 -Arrive 28th St Station Bloomington 6:23pm

Metro News - Recent Grants for the MTM

From: Frederick Krenske <rick@usjet.net> Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 11:44:59 AM CDT

Subject: Metro News - Recent Grants for the MTM

A grant of \$292,500 has been awarded to the Minnesota Transportation Museum (MTM) in the second year of funding from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

This grant is specifically for preserving the historic Justus Ramsey Stone House and relocating it to the Jackson Street Roundhouse property, which is owned and operated by MTM.

The Minnesota Transportation Museum has also received other significant grants to support its mission of preserving railroad history. In fiscal year 2024, the museum was appropriated \$3,500,000 from the arts and cultural heritage fund through the Minnesota Historical Society for renovations and preservation of the Jackson Street Roundhouse. An additional \$1,000,000 from the same fund is planned for fiscal year 2026, also through the Minnesota Historical Society, for critical capital improvements such as roof replacement, masonry stabilization, and accessibility modifications.



2025 Harvest BBQ Express *October 4 & 5, 2025*

Step aboard our beautifully restored historic train for a one-of-a-kind rail journey through Minnesota's picturesque countryside.

Coach and 1st class tickets still available. [Buy Tickets Today!](#)

Travel back in time with the [Friends of the 261](#) as we follow the legendary route of the Olympian Hiawatha, which once connected Chicago to the Pacific Northwest via the Twin Cities. Sit back and relax as the scenic lakes and rolling hills of the Twin Cities' western suburbs unfold before you. Today, this storied route is operated by the Twin Cities & Western Railroad, proud host of our special train.



Union Pacific Is Said to Near Deal for Norfolk Southern

By [David Carnevali](#), [Ryan Gould](#), and [Kiel Porter](#) Provided by Rick Krenske

2025 at 1:00 PM CDT

-[Union Pacific Corp.](#) could reach an agreement to acquire [Norfolk Southern Corp.](#) and create a transcontinental rail behemoth as soon as early next week, people familiar with the matter said.

-The deal, which would be the largest deal ever in the rail industry, is likely to include both cash and stock, according to the people, who asked not to be identified discussing confidential information.

-Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern [announced](#) on Thursday that they were in advanced talks. Details of an agreement, including the timing and structure, could still change, the people said.

-Norfolk Southern is set to [report](#) second quarter earnings on July 29.

A representative for Union Pacific declined to comment, while a spokesperson for Norfolk Southern didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

-A merger would transform the North American rail market, marrying Union Pacific's network across the western US with Norfolk's East Coast routes. It would bring together two companies with a combined market value of roughly [\\$200 billion](#), and heap pressure on rivals including [CSX Corp.](#) and [Berkshire Hathaway Inc.](#)'s BNSF to pursue deals of their own to keep pace.

-Omaha, Nebraska-based Union Pacific's shares have fallen 2.8% since July 16, the day before the first media reports about merger talks, giving it a market value of roughly \$133 billion. Norfolk Southern has climbed about 8.5% during the same period, giving the Atlanta-based railroad a market capitalization of almost \$64 billion.

-Historically rail mergers have been difficult to consummate given the inhospitable regulatory environment. But there had been speculation that the industry was headed for another round of consolidation, fueled by the assumption that President Donald Trump's administration could take a more amenable view to major deals than previous governments.

"We've done a lot of homework to get us to this place," Union Pacific Chief Executive Officer Jim Vena told analysts after the talks were announced.

One of the current Trump administration's earliest moves was to elevate Patrick Fuchs to [chair](#) the Surface Transportation Board. Fuchs is seen as a proponent of industry consolidation.

News from the Minneapolis Tribune July-August 2025

Minneapolis Tribune July 29 2025 Provided by Leigh Neprude

UNION PACIFIC, NORFOLK SOUTHERN

Merger would create transcontinental railroad

By **Josh Funk**
Associated Press

Union Pacific wants to buy Norfolk Southern in a \$85 billion deal that would create the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S. and potentially triggering a final wave of rail mergers across the country.

The proposed merger, announced Tuesday, would marry Union Pacific's vast rail network in the West with Norfolk's rails that snake across the Eastern United States. The combined railroad would include more than 50,000 miles of track in 43 states with connections to major ports on both coasts.

The nation was first linked by rail in 1869, when a golden railroad spike was ceremoniously driven in Utah to sym-

bolize the connection of East and West Coasts. Yet no single corporate entity has controlled that coast-to-coast passage.

The two railroads argue a merger would streamline deliveries of raw materials and goods nationwide by eliminating delays when shipments are handed off between railroads.

Any deal would be closely scrutinized by antitrust regulators that have set a very high bar for railroad deals after previous consolidation in the industry led to massive backups and snarled traffic.

But Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena, who would lead the combined company, said the expanded railroad will more seamlessly get lumber from the Pacific Northwest, plastics from the Gulf and steel from Pittsburgh to their des-

tinations. And he promised to avoid past merger mistakes.

"It's great for America," Vena said. "We're going to be able to move products quicker, faster, more efficiently, better service, better for our customers in that we are going to be able to give them a product that allows them to win in the marketplace."

Broad impact

If the deal is approved, the two remaining major American railroads — BNSF and CSX — will face competitive pressure to merge as well.

The continent's two other major railroads — Canadian National and CPKC — may also get involved. The Canadian rails span all of that nation and cross parts of America. CPKC rails stretch south into Mexico.

Some of the benefits of the deal should trickle down to consumers if the railroads are able to streamline shipments because that will help keep costs down, said Edward Jones analyst Jeff Windau. But, he said, "there is that potential that there's going to be some service disruptions."

The American Chemistry Council said the major chemical makers it represents have serious concerns that the deal could reduce rail competition, but other shippers like Amazon and UPS may see benefits of potentially faster, more reliable delivery. They, along with unions and affected communities, will have a chance to weigh in before the U.S. Surface Transportation Board.

The nation's largest rail union, SMART-TD, quickly

opposed the merger over concerns of jeopardizing progress that Norfolk Southern has made in safety and labor relations since its disastrous 2023 derailment in East Palestine, Ohio. The union said that Union Pacific's record also is troubling on safety, and treatment of workers.

Chances for approval

There's speculation that this deal might win approval under President Donald Trump's pro-business administration, but the STB is currently evenly split between two Republicans and two Democrats. The board is led by a Republican, and Trump will appoint a fifth member before this deal will be considered.

Norfolk Southern CEO Mark George said the "stars are aligned" right now for

this deal with railroads that have a lot of connections, and the ongoing expansion of domestic manufacturing. "Then on top of that, you've got a political situation where the administration and the STB have both changed to maybe be a little more open minded to combinations that help the country grow," he said.

Union Pacific is offering \$20 billion cash and one share of its stock to complete the deal. Norfolk Southern shareholders would receive one UP share and \$88.82 in cash for each one of their shares as part of the deal that values NS at roughly \$320 per share. Norfolk Southern closed at just over \$260 a share earlier this month before the first reports emerged speculating about the deal that includes a \$2.5 billion breakup fee.



CHRISTA LAWLER • The Minnesota Star Tribune

The Depot, designed by prolific East Coast architecture firm Peabody and Stearns, opened in 1892 and in its heyday hosted seven railroads.

August 8th 2025 provided by Leigh Neprude Duluth's Depot will get its long-needed update

By **CHRISTA LAWLER**
The Minnesota Star Tribune

vice with a future that currently looks grim.

DULUTH - The historic St. Louis County Depot will finally get much-needed repairs, after the County Board unanimously agreed to issue \$19.5 million in bonds for other capital improvement in this region.

Work could begin as soon as November and end by December 2027.

The Depot, considered the "marquee project," needs \$16.5 million to replace crucial aging systems. County officials have been asking for money from the state for seven years — long enough that the total ask has doubled. The Depot received \$1.5 million in state bonds in 2020, used for upgrades to the building's shell. Other requests have gone unfulfilled.

"This project is literally shovel-ready," Tennis said in a presentation Tuesday in front of the Board of Commissioners.

The whole-building renovation includes replacing the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system and mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems. The updates are expected to improve air quality, lower the building's carbon footprint and provide a better environment for the artifacts some organizations have on site.

The Depot houses the Lake Superior Railroad Museum, North Shore Scenic Railroad, St. Louis County Historical Society, Minnesota Ballet, Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra, Lyric Opera of the North, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council and the Depot Foundation. All are expected to remain open, though some might have to temporarily move to a different part of the building, during the two years of construction.

The sale of bonds is expected to take place next month, according to St. Louis County officials.

Duluth-based Commissioner Ashley Grimm said she believes the board is making the right decision by issuing bonds.

"It's huge," said Mary Tennis, who was hired as the Depot's first executive director in 2019. "It's very meaningful. Not only is this something a lot of people have been working for for a long time, it's touching every corner of the building one way or another.

"I can confidently say that we have left no stone unturned," Grimm said. "We have begged and made cards and gave pitches and given tours ... We have pushed as hard as we could."

"You're going to see changes in the building."

The Depot, designed by prolific East Coast architecture firm Peabody and Stearns, opened in 1892 and in its heyday hosted seven railroads.

The Depot would have served as a hub for the Northern Lights Express, the passenger rail ser-

Rail travel waned in the middle of the next century and in the 1960s the building faced demolition. Instead it was purchased by the county and reimagined as an arts and cultural hub.

The Depot has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1971.

christa.lawler@startribune.com

Northstar Railroad Historical Society Duluth to Two Harbors Train Ride

August 7th 2025

14 members and guests rode the Two Harbors Train (Only runs to Two Harbors on Thursdays!) We left Duluth Depot close to on time at about 10am. We were anticipating having DM&IR Steam Engine #332 as power, but due to maintenance issues we had Diesel power.

They were GN SD45 #400 'Hustle Muscle' and Ex BNSF #1550 nee ex-GN SD unit. We rode in the former AT&SF dome car and had a beverage and snack on the trip to Two Harbors. We arrived in Two Harbors about noon for two hour layover for lunch. Two Harbors bus service was provided to passengers to town restaurants for lunch.

On the way back we had a beverage and cookie and arrived in Duluth about 4:30pm. Members who missed this trip missed a great trip and sunny weather. Thanks to LSRM Manager Ken Buehler for being a great host. Following Photos by Dawn Holmberg.



Group Photo Two Harbors



Dan and Roger Meyer



BNSF SD #1550



GN Hustle Muscle #400



Engines that powered our Train



Our Train in Two Harbors



Roger Libra, Dick Tubbesing, John Chute in the dome



Bill Dredge receives his 25 Year NRHS Membership Pin from Dawn Holmberg



Russ and Martha Isbrandt and John Cartwright

Blast from the past! Milwaukee Road Afternoon Hiawatha Consist 1956— Provided by Russ Isbrandt



Milw HI entering SPUD 1953 or 1955 -Justin Nelson (from Facebook)



Milw Hiawatha Tunnel City WI Circa 1950's -Chad Peterson Coll

Afternoon Hiawatha

- Express Baggage
- 6-8 Coaches
- 48 seat Diner
- Super Dome or Tap Lounge
- Valley Series Parlor Car
- Rapids Series "SKYTOP" Lounge

Below is Direct from the LaCrosse Division dispatcher's sheet, Sunday, January 29, 1956.

Train 2 Afternoon Hiawatha: 1117 Baggage (blt 1934)

- Eastbound
 - 423 Coach (blt 1937)
 - 414 Coach (blt 1936)
 - 543 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 486 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 489 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 482 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 510 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 512 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 509 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 497 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 494 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 58 Super Dome (blt 1952)
 - 122 Diner (blt 1948)
 - 191 Straight Parlor-Wisconsin Valley (blt 1948)
 - 189 Skytop Parlor-Priest Rapids

Train 3 Afternoon Hiawatha: 1320 Baggage (blt 1950)

- Westbound
 - 441 Coach (blt 1938)
 - 4400 Coach (blt 1934)
 - 541 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 484 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 496 Coach (blt 1947)
 - 513 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 503 Coach (blt 1948)
 - 59 Super Dome (blt 1952)
 - 121 Diner (blt 1948)
 - 190 Straight Parlor-Maple Valley (blt 1948)
 - 186 Skytop Parlor-Cedar Rapids (blt 1948)

METRO Blue Line Getting Renewed After 20 Years

From: Frederick Krenske <rick@usjet.net> Sent: Monday, August 11, 2025 at 06:32:37 PM CDT
Credit: Metro Transit- Laura Baenen

After two decades of service, the METRO Blue Line is making improvements as part of the 'Renew the Blue' initiative. Renew the Blue includes four distinct projects that will help preserve and protect this critical piece of our infrastructure investment, helping it remain safe, reliable, and affordable. These projects include Track & Signals, Lake St./Midtown Station renovation, Franklin Station renovation and Your Station, Renewed (which includes lighting and benches).

Around 180 million rides have been taken on the Blue Line since it opened between downtown Minneapolis and Bloomington, serving the international airport and Mall of America.

Phase 1 of Track and Signals will shut down the Blue Line beginning Monday, Sept. 22, for nearly two weeks. This marks the start of a three-year effort to modernize and extend the life of the line. During this phase, critical equipment in the Cedar-Riverside area will be replaced.

"It's essential to maintain the Blue Line in a state of good repair for years to come so our riders can rely on us for safe and dependable service," said Wyatt Jackson, a principal engineer who is leading the Track and Signals project for Metro Transit.

To allow for construction, buses will replace trains along the entire stretch of the Blue Line until Saturday, Oct. 4, when Blue Line service will resume.

Replacement buses operate on a similar schedule to trains and stop at or near stations. Metro Transit staff will be on hand to help direct customers. Replacement bus maps can be found at metrotransit.org/closure.

The METRO D Line, with service between Brooklyn Center and Mall of America in Bloomington, is another good alternative for those traveling to or from downtown Minneapolis.

Looking ahead to 2026

In the summer of 2026, Phase 2 of the Track and Signals project will undertake a complete upgrade of train signal equipment. The current equipment is over 20 years old and at the end of its useful life; new equipment will make the Blue Line more reliable.

To allow for construction, buses will again replace trains along the full length of the Blue Line. The current schedule calls for buses to replace Blue Line trains from June through August; exact dates will be shared closer to the start of construction.

A full renovation of the Lake Street/Midtown Station is scheduled to begin in 2026, with the station closed through fall 2027. The upgraded station will feature a new pedestrian ramp, wider stairways opening onto Lake Street, enhanced lighting and a transit service center.

The finishing touches

The final phase of the Track and Signals project will occur in 2027 and includes additional rail and signal work. Buses will replace Blue Line trains during the spring and summer. A renovation of the Franklin Avenue Station is also expected to begin in 2027. Like the Lake Street/Midtown Station project, the goal is to provide better station access and a more welcoming customer experience.

Stay informed

Riders are encouraged to learn more, follow progress, and find the information needed to plan trips in advance by visiting Metro Transit's website, metrotransit.org/renew-the-blue. Assistance is available in multiple languages by calling 612-373-3333.

Riders can also receive text and email alerts by signing up for Rider Alerts at metrotransit.org/alerts.

Blue Line service improvements ahead

Beginning Oct. 4, 2025, Blue Line trains will begin running every 12 minutes at 7 a.m., rather than mid-morning. The more frequent service is a result of successful train operator hiring efforts. Visit Metro Transit's website to review the [Blue Line schedule](#).

Southwest Light Rail Now 'over 85% complete' Met Council Update Says

By [Nick Longworth](#) Published July 25, 2025 8:21pm CDT [Metro Transit](#) [FOX 9](#) Provided by Rick Krenske

(FOX 9) - An update by the [Metropolitan Council](#) says the well over-budget and long-delayed [Southwest Light Rail Transit \(SWLRT\) project](#) is now over 85%" completed, as neighboring residents can expect construction to continue into nights and weekends.

SWLRT update

What we know:

The update says that with construction now over 85% complete, contracted work will continue extending into weekends and evening hours.

Dig deeper:

The Metropolitan Council is the regional policymaking body, planning agency, and provider of essential services for the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

Created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1967, the Council is the regional government authority for the 14.5-mile light rail line that will run from downtown Minneapolis to the suburban communities of Eden Prairie, Hopkins, Minnetonka, and St. Louis Park. A board of 16 members and a chair govern the Council – the governor appoints all.

SWLRT project

The backstory:

Before the Council began overseeing construction in 2019, it was estimated the SWLRT would cost \$2.003 billion in total, and the line would open in 2023. The Council now estimates that it will cost \$2.767 billion to complete and will open in 2027.

The Minneapolis to Eden Prairie line is now shorter than originally planned, and has one fewer station – a result of cost-cutting moves undertaken in the mid-2010s.

Continued on next page:

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According to a report released by the Office of the Legislative Auditor in March 2023, "despite knowing that project costs were increasing beyond its available funds, the Metropolitan Council developed no formal contingency plan for temporarily or permanently stopping project work, and no estimate of the costs it would incur by doing so."

It ultimately concluded that the Metropolitan Council had not held its contractor accountable for failures to provide an acceptable project schedule throughout the project's construction.

Meanwhile, there remain doubts over how it will be funded to completion.

"More than \$500 million of the project's estimated \$2.74 billion budget is currently unfunded, and the Metropolitan Council has not yet identified a funding source," auditors wrote at the time.

The Council is currently seeking "\$650 to \$750 million to complete the project," the report said, while noting that, "Minnesota's framework for developing light rail projects has created a mismatch between the entities that fund the construction of transit projects and the entities that are responsible for constructing them."

The Source: Information provided by the Metropolitan Council.

Light Rail Blue Line Extension Clears Critical Milestone, Announces Business Support

Thursday, August 14, 2025 at 10:33:58 AM CDT Provided by Ray Bensen Jr

The Blue Line light rail extension project reached an important milestone with federal environmental review approval.

Author: Felicity Dachel Published: 4:43 PM CDT August 13, 2025 Updated: 4:43 PM CDT August 13, 2025



MINNEAPOLIS — The Blue Line extension of the Light Rail is getting closer to becoming a reality, as a critical milestone for the project has been signed off on.

The environmental review has been approved by the Federal Transit Administration. This clears the way for the Metropolitan Council to put together the final design and start construction.

The Blue Line extension is a proposed 13.4-mile extension of the light rail, going from downtown Minneapolis through North Minneapolis, Robbinsdale, Crystal, and Brooklyn Park. It has been in the planning stages for a decade, and officials hope to get it up and running by 2030.

The Metropolitan Council announced there will be \$5 million in support to businesses impacted by the construction, including up to \$30,000 in rent assistance to eligible businesses. There will also be a Community Investment Fund to help people who live in the area of the new line with rent and housing cost assistance.

"This is the first time this type of support for residents and businesses impacted by construction has been included in a major project in Minnesota," said Hennepin County Board Chair Irene Fernando in a press release. "The Blue Line Extension will connect thousands of people to new opportunities to work, go to school, and access healthcare. It is a generational investment in communities where many people rely on transit to get where they need to go every day."

Last October, all the cities along the extension signed off on the design after debate and opposition within some of the communities along the route. [Click here](https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/light-rail-blue-line-extension-milestone/89-7bd1a675-7ac4-4257-872d-f60961999155) to learn more about the project. <https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/light-rail-blue-line-extension-milestone/89-7bd1a675-7ac4-4257-872d-f60961999155>

Northstar Train Collides with Truck "Stopped on the Tracks" in Coon Rapids, Metro Transit Says

By Stephen Swanson Updated on: August 22, 2025 / 1:08 PM CDT / CBS Minnesota



A Northstar Commuter Rail train hit a truck "stopped on the tracks" Friday morning in Coon Rapids, Minnesota, according to Metro Transit police, halting service in both directions.

It happened at about 7:12 a.m. near the intersection of 119th Avenue Northwest and Northdale Boulevard.

The driver of the truck was transported to an area hospital with undisclosed injuries.

"Northstar service in both directions is currently suspended and replaced with temporary bus service," officials said.

Riders were transferred to a replacement bus to continue on to Big Lake Station.

Police said the Minnesota State Patrol is assisting in the investigation.

Milestones - Kenilworth Tunnel Structural Completion

May 5 2025 -provided by Bob Ball and Dan Meyer

Youtube Link: <https://youtu.be/0C6tvL9VAew?si=ZVhF4ZuSRCReNaoS>



*Photos rendering from Youtube Screen prints
May 2, 2025*

The Metropolitan Council and the Green Line Extension Project staff are happy to announce a major project milestone in the structural completion of the Kenilworth Light Rail Tunnel in Minneapolis. The 2,870- foot tunnel stretches **from just east of West Lake Street to just south of the Cedar Lake Channel.**

--- Preservation, Museum and Steam News ---

Mid-Continent Announces Details on July 12 Return of No. 1385

By [Trains Staff](#) | July 6, 2025 Provided by Rick Kresnski

Homecoming ceremony set for 4:30 p.m.



C&NW No. 1385 eases into Port Washington, Wis., on one of its many trips in the 1980s. The locomotive is scheduled to be returned to the Mid-Continent Railway Museum on July 12, 2025. J. David Ingles; Brian M. Schmidt collection

NORTH FREEDOM, Wis. — The Mid-Continent Railway Museum’s re-scheduled “homecoming” ceremony for its Chicago & North Western Ten-Wheeler, No. 1385, will be held Saturday, July 12, at 4:30 p.m. at the museum in North Freedom. The starting time for the public event has been moved forward from what had previously been reported [see [“C&NW No. 1385’s return ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, June 18, 2025]. The event will see the locomotive, built by Alco in 1907, moved onto the museum grounds by the museum’s 1944 Alco S1 switcher, No. 7. A banner breakthrough, speeches by project leaders, and group photo are planned, along with a silent auction for a “No. 1385 Cab Experience,” providing the winner with a private tour of the locomotive, and a chance to fire it with coal and blow the whistle during a future test run. The locomotive, which will arrive by flat car, is scheduled to be lifted from the flatcar back onto the tracks and paired with its tender on July 14, beginning at 9 a.m.

The event was postponed from its original May date when the museum needed to find another heavy-haul trucking company to move the locomotive from its current location to the spot where it will be transloaded onto a flatcar for the move to North Freedom. The trucking and transload moves are on private property and are not open to the public.

Steam Titan Ross Rowland Dies at 85

By [Kevin P. Keefe](#) | July 20, 2025 | Last updated on August 1, 2025

Wall Street trader championed steam operations, played major role in Golden Spike special, American Freedom Train

SACKETS HARBOR N.Y. — As he approached his final days in recent weeks, Ross E. Rowland could look back secure in the knowledge that U.S. steam — indeed even the entire rail preservation scene— owes him a substantial debt. From his *Golden Spike* exhibition train of 1969 to the *American Freedom Train* of 1975-76 to his ACE 3000 project of 1985, Rowland compiled a singular record of high-profile steam operations.

Rowland, 85, died July 19 after a brief battle with cancer. He lived in Sackets Harbor, N.Y., where he moved several years ago from his longtime home in New Jersey.

Continued on next page:



Ross Rowland with C&O No. 614, one of the many locomotives with which he was associated. John B.

A successful Wall Street commodities trader by profession but a steam entrepreneur at heart, Rowland was associated with the operation of an unprecedented variety of large steam locomotives, including Nickel Plate 2-8-4 No. 759, three Canadian Pacific 4-6-2s, Reading 4-8-4s No. 2101 and 2102, and, most recently, Chesapeake & Ohio 4-8-4 No. 614. And all as a private operator, not a railroad official.

More than the individual locomotives, however, he's likely best remembered for his role as a showman, conceiving and staging steam operations on a national stage, most notably the *Golden Spike Centennial Limited* behind NKP 759 and his part in the *American Freedom Train*. The latter operated in the eastern U.S. behind Rowland's ex-Reading No. 2101 in the patriotic guise of *AFT* No. 1.

Dan Cupper, editor of *Railroad History*, the journal of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, credits Rowland with taking advantage of a unique moment in railroad history.

"When steam locomotives had become irrelevant, passenger trains were on life support, and American railroads were free-falling into bankruptcy at a rate not seen since the Great Depression, Rowland came along to brashly champion all three," says Cupper.

"Coming from a person not employed by the railroad industry, this was unprecedented." According to his Wikipedia entry, Rowland was born in Albany, N.Y., to a railroad family but grew up mostly in New Jersey. As a teenager, a friend got him involved in New York City's futures investment industry and by 1966 Rowland had formed his own firm, Floor Brokers Associates, Inc. He also later served on the board of directors of COMEX, a precious-metals investment firm.

Rowland's financial career seemed mostly to serve as a platform for his involvement in railroading. He formed the High Iron Co. in 1966 by operating steam excursions in the Northeast with various engines before landing a signature locomotive in 1967 with NKP No. 759, which High Iron leased from the Steamtown museum, then in Bellows Falls, Vt. The High Iron team moved the big Berkshire to the storied NKP roundhouse at Conneaut, Ohio, where it was fully restored.

Despite its brief association with High Iron — the 759 was returned to Steamtown by the mid-1970s — Rowland made headlines with the engine, running trips up and down the former New York Central along the Hudson River; conquering the Pennsylvania Railroad's Horseshoe Curve; participating in Amtrak's inauguration on April 30, 1971, by hauling Norfolk & Western's last run of the *Pocahontas* passenger train; and using the 2-8-4 in May 1969 to haul the *Golden Spike* exhibition special from Harmon, N.Y., to Kansas City, where the train was turned over to Union Pacific for a ceremony at Promontory, Utah.

The success of the *Golden Spike* operation served as a template for the creation of the *American Freedom Train*, a trainload of exhibits and artifacts from American history. For the *AFT*, Rowland acquired retired Reading 4-8-4 No. 2101, restored it quickly, and used it for the train's appearances east of Chicago. Operations in the west were handled by ex-Southern Pacific *Daylight* 4-8-4 No. 4449, under the direction of Doyle McCormack.

By all accounts, the *Freedom Train* project was a big success, luring millions to trackside. With its completion and No. 2101 in running condition, Rowland worked out a new arrangement with Chessie System in which the 4-8-4 would haul excursions beginning in 1977 as the *Chessie Steam Special*, covering much of the railroad's 20,000-mile network just ahead of Chessie's merger in 1980 with Seaboard System to form CSX Transportation.

When the 2101 was severely damaged in a roundhouse fire in Kentucky in March 1979, Chessie compensated Rowland in the form of Chesapeake & Ohio 614, built by Lima in 1948 for C&O passenger service and displayed after retirement at the B&O Museum in Baltimore. After a full restoration, Rowland and No. 614 staged another system tour as the *Chessie Safety Express*.

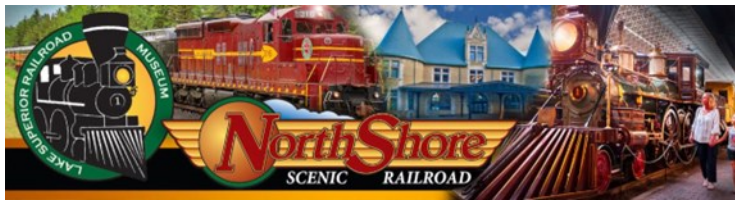
Rowland wasn't done. Still dedicated to steam as a viable technology, he formed American Coal Enterprises with the goal of designing and constructing a new locomotive called the ACE 3000, a purported answer to the energy crisis of the late 1970s. Although the project never got off the ground financially, Rowland did manage to run the 614 — numbered as 614-T — as a test bed for the ACE 3000 concept, pulling CSX coal trains in West Virginia in January and February 1985.

During the mid-1980s, Rowland served on Amtrak's board of directors. Rowland and the 614 resurfaced again in the late 1990s with a series of highly patronized excursions over New Jersey Transit from Hoboken, N.J., to Port Jervis, N.Y. Just before his death, Rowland celebrated the successful sale of the 614 to the rail preservation firm RJD America and its subsequent transfer to the Strasburg Rail Road for restoration.

A point of pride for Ross Rowland was his status as an honorary lifetime member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. His admirers will remember him as the archetypical hogger, leaning out the cab window of any number of steam locomotives, dressed in the full regalia of polka-dot cap, denim overalls, and leather gauntlets

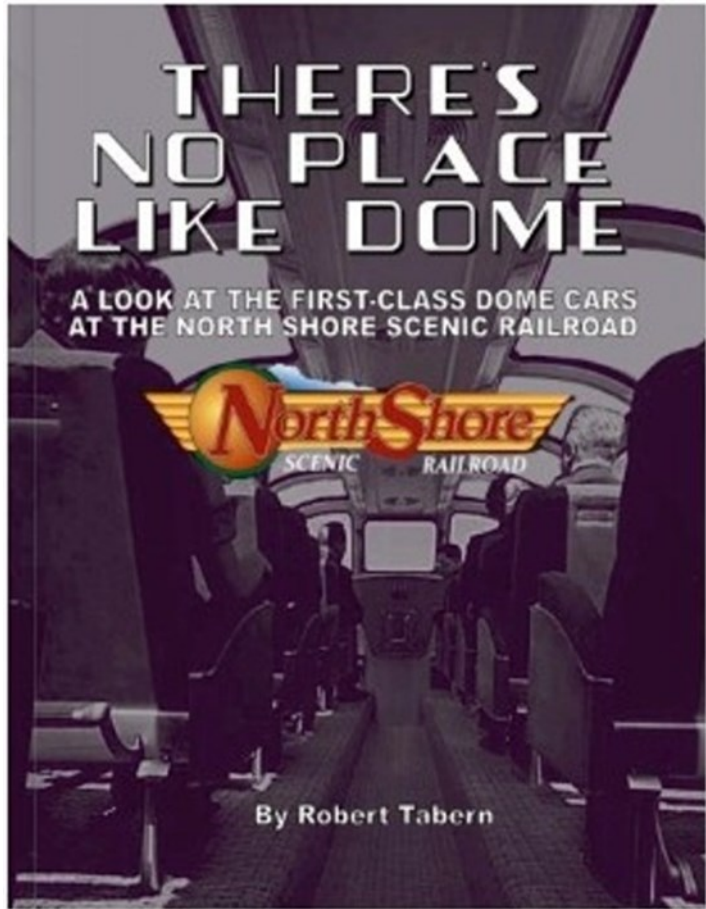
Information on Rowland's family, his survivors, and funeral arrangements will be included when they become available.

— Updated at 1:45 p.m. CT to correct builder of C&O No. 614.



Trackside

Monthly Newsletter
August 2025 | #126



Join us to celebrate the release of this new book, "There's No Place Like Dome." Written by railroad historian Robert Tabern, the 109-page book explores the history and development of dome cars, with a special focus on the NSSR's "Sky View," "Silver Club," and "Puget Sound." The book retails for \$20 and will soon be available in the railroad's gift shop.

To mark the occasion, the railroad will host a book launch party on Thursday, September 4, 2025, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Depot. Guests can meet Tabern, purchase an autographed copy, and step aboard all three dome cars, which will be open for free tours.

The evening will also feature live music from the Depot Jazz Band, the same group that plays on Saturdays in winter, making it a festive celebration for rail fans, music lovers, and history lovers alike. Following the launch, Tabern will join select train departures to sign books and share stories about dome car history. He will be aboard the 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 5 and return again on Oct. 3, as well.

Help to rescue the Great Northern Coaches



The Great Northern Coaches #1115 & #1116 are more than just comfy rides—they're rolling pieces of railroad history. But beneath the polished floors and shiny interiors, their brakes, wheels, and mechanical systems need some help. A new campaign has been launched for this rescue project, to get them back on the rails. Your support will help to restore these classic coaches so they stay safe, smooth, and ready for generations of passengers to enjoy.

[Learn more here](#)



Our museum is home to three historic dome cars—more than any other railroad in the region. A new book has been written about the history of these cars.



Its a Jazz show... just like we do in the winter... only in

Join us Thursday, September 4th in the railroad's courtyard/boarding area, or inside the museum if its crummy weather... for a Jazz show, and book launch of "There's No Place Like Dome" - a new book about the railroad's dome cars.

Continued on next page:

DULUTH's Port

Duluth's port, located at the western tip of Lake Superior, is the largest and farthest inland freshwater port in North America. It serves as a vital gateway for shipping goods between the heart of the continent and the rest of the world. Each year, millions of tons of cargo—ranging from iron ore and coal to grain and general freight—move through its massive docks and grain elevators. Its strategic location connects the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence Seaway to global markets, allowing goods from the Midwest to reach destinations across the Atlantic, and imports to flow deep into the United States and Canada. Rail connections have always been essential to the port's success, linking Duluth's waterfront directly to the nation's industrial and agricultural centers. Railroads move bulk commodities from mines, farms, and factories to waiting ships, and in turn, transport imported goods swiftly to inland markets. The upcoming edition of The Junction newsletter magazine for members of the Lake Superior Railroad Museum will be themed "Rail And Sail" and talk about all things train-to-boat and visa versa. [Interested in becoming a member? Learn more by clicking here.](#)



This charming 90-minute excursion takes you through scenic Duluth and into the woods, where you'll arrive at a magical pumpkin patch. Every ticketed passenger (ages 3 and up) can pick their own pumpkin to bring home—sweet autumn memories included. Departing from the historic Duluth Depot at 506 W. Michigan Street, each trip combines enchanting rail views with family-friendly harvest fun. Tickets are \$35 per person, while those looking for a cozier ride can opt for Domecar seats at \$55 (both price options include a pumpkin). Whether you're planning a festive outing with kids or just want to soak in the crisp fall air aboard a beautifully restored train, this event blends heritage, harvest, and heart all in one delightful journey. Pro tip: Bring a bag or tote to carry your pumpkin—grocery bags work perfectly.

[Get Tickets Here](#)



Railroading Heritage of Midwest America to Operate Fundraising Trips with World's Largest Diesel Locomotive



Step aboard a rare piece of living history as you ride in classic vintage streamliner coaches powered by the world's largest diesel locomotive, Union Pacific DDA40X #6936 on a scenic rail adventure across the heartland!

Railroading Heritage of Midwest America (RRHMA) in conjunction with the Iowa Interstate Railroad is proud to present RRHMA-Silvis's first organization fundraiser trip, "The Quad Cities Rocket."

Buy your tickets TODAY!

Midwest Rail Rangers Announce New Partnership with North Shore Scenic RR

EDITION #67 - MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025 Provided by Glen Holmberg



First, we wanted to announce the Midwest Rail Rangers have a new partner - the North Shore Scenic Railroad located in Duluth, Minnesota. The Midwest Rail Rangers have written a new book about the three historic dome cars owned by the railroad - Sky View, Silver Club, and Puget Sound. We will have our docents stationed in the dome cars answering questions and selling books on select future departures. To kick off the partnership, you are invited to a FREE launch event on Thursday, Sept. 4, 2025 from 5:00 to 7:00PM. Tours of all three dome cars will be provided, meet Midwest Rail Rangers volunteers, listening to a jazz band, and get food which will be available for purchase, along with the book. We are excited to partner with the best tourist railroad in the Northwoods for many years to come. One down and three to go... We are excited to team up with the Illinois Railway Museum for the third year in a row aboard the Nebraska Zephyr. If you missed our appearance on Saturday, Aug. 9, come out on either Saturday, Aug. 30, Sunday, Aug. 31, or Saturday, Sept. 20 and enjoy learning more about this historic train. Our brand new book called "The Zephyr Story" will be available, along with our Nebraska Zephyr book and DVDs on the restoration of the Mark Twain Zephyr train. Michael Pace, Secretary

We have a lot of exciting things to share with you!

A portion of the proceeds from the book and DVD sales go directly to IRM's Nebraska Zephyr fund. For the first time in three years, we will be presenting a program aboard a private rail excursion. Join Midwest Rail Rangers volunteers on Saturday, Oct. 4, 2025, on the Friends of the 261 Heartland BBQ Express train between Chanhassen and Brownston, Minnesota. A limited number of collector route guidebooks will be made available, with a portion of the proceeds from the book going towards the upcoming 261 steam locomotive renovation. And finally, we have our Fall 2025 dates for South Shore programs through the Indiana Dunes. Join us on: Oct. 25, Nov. 15, or Dec. 13.

Sincerely,
The 2025 Midwest Rail Rangers Board of Directors
Robert Tabern, President



The Midwest Rail Rangers and the North Shore Scenic Railroad in Duluth, Minnesota, have a new partnership in place to share in the history of their historic dome cars -- Sky View, Silver Club, and Puget Sound

UPCOMING PROGRAM DATES

- Thursday, September 4, 2025 5:00PM-7:00PM
- Friday, September 5, 2025 11:00AM-4:00PM
- Friday, October 3, 2025 11:00AM-4:00PM
- Sunday, October 5, 2025 1:30PM-4:00PM

DOME CAR PROGRAMS AT THE NORTH SHORE SCENIC RAILROAD

The Midwest Rail Rangers have a partnership with the North Shore Scenic Railroad in Duluth, Minnesota.

During the summer and fall months, on select dates, our interpretive guides share the history of the tourist railroad's three first class dome cars. Our guides ride along and answer any questions passengers might have about Sky View, Silver Club, and Puget Sound.

We also sell our exclusive book aboard the domes located at the North Shore Scenic Railroad during appearances. Unsigned copies of the Midwest Rail Rangers dome car book will be available at all other times in the gift

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UPCOMING PROGRAM DATES:

FRIENDS OF THE 261

Saturday, October 4, 2025 Chanhassen - Brownston, MN

Tickets available at www.261.com Check out the Midwest Rail Rangers' Online Store!!!

<https://www.MidwestRails.com>

Autumn: A Great Time for Railroad Adventure

By Brian Solomon | August 5, 2025

Days with cool air and sunny skies or days when a gentle rain glosses colored foliage are ideal for enjoying railroading



On October 21, 1993, Rusty trees and an overgrown cemetery make for a very autumnal setting on CSX's former Baltimore & Ohio at Grave Yard Curve near Terra Alta, West Virginia. CSX westward freight No. R317 is descending the famed Cranberry Grade. Brian Solomon



The Cranberry Grade on CSX's Mountain Subdivision is one of the steepest double track lines in the East and famous for brilliant autumn foliage. Eastward freight R316 climbs toward Terra Alta, West Virginia on October 21, 1993. Brian Solomon



In October 2024, Reading & Northern's newly christened Anthracite Voyager rolls along at Molino, Pa., on an excursion returning from Jim Thorpe destined for Reading Outer Station. This autumn Reading & Northern is offering numerous autumn excursions on its lines in eastern Pennsylvania. Brian Solomon

Autumn is a great time for railroad adventure. Give me days with cool air and sunny skies or days when a gentle rain glosses colored foliage. Decades ago, I'd embark on week-long trips in the Fall to explore my favorite railroads. I'd arrange my itinerary to make the most of the autumn foliage, carefully planning my travels based on where and when foliage was likely near its radiant peak.

I'd start with trips to Vermont at the end of September and early October, where I'd photograph the Central Vermont Railway (later New England Central) and Green Mountain Railroad — aiming to catch its vintage Rutland RS-1 working fall excursions. As the season progressed, I'd work my way down through the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts, photographing Conrail on the old Boston & Albany — where blue diesels contrasted nicely against rusty leaves. Late October was reserved for the former Baltimore & Ohio, where I spent time on CSX's Mountain Subdivision observing trains ascending the legendary Cranberry Grade, where a hidden-in-the-forest graveyard seemed made-to-order for the season. Exploring the West, I photographed trains crossing Tennessee Pass on Southern Pacific's Rio Grande lines, where brilliant aspens caught the sun at an elevation of 10,000 feet. In 1995-96, SP was working its most modern power on unit coal and iron ore trains: brand new GE AC4400CWs, leading and with mid-train and rear-end DPUs. Following Union Pacific trains through California's Feather River Canyon was always a pleasure in the autumn. Here, rock walls towered above trains slowly snaking along the canyon floor, where occasional brown or yellow trees mimicked the Armour Yellow of UP's locomotives **Fall train ride roundup**

Planning a fall getaway Autumn 2025 has lots to offer: Whether that's photographing freight trains on your favorite mountain grades against a backdrop of colored leaves, going for a cross-country trip on Amtrak, or taking advantage of autumn-themed excursions operated by various heritage railroads East and West. Here's a sampling of seasonal train excursions. Consider Vermont Rail System's [Champlain Valley Dinner Train](#) that boards at the Burlington, Vt., Amtrak station in the evening Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays Sept. 14 through Nov. 1. In the Upper Midwest, Wisconsin's East Troy Electric is running its weekend [Harvest Fest](#) between the Elegant Farmer Station and East Troy. In eastern Pennsylvania, Reading & Northern plans for a variety of autumn excursions centered on traveling to the historic town of Jim Thorpe for a several hour layover; on September weekends, trains from Reading Outer Station depart at 9am; on October weekends trips from Pottsville to Jim Thorpe depart at 8:30am.

September and October weekend trips from Pittston Junction departing at 8:45am. These are all day journeys and return to their point of origin in the evening. R&N has a great variety of rolling stock on offer. On September 13, the railroad is running a special for the Mountain Top Rotary Club led by 4-8-4 No. 2102 that is scheduled between the Penobscot station and Jim Thorpe and will pass through the Lehigh Gorge. All tickets for this trip require advance purchase. Check [R&N's website](#) for these and other autumn special trip. If you are looking for just a short trip at Jim Thorpe, consider a spin on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railway's 45-minute [Autumn Leaf](#) trip. These trains depart on the hour from the former Central Railroad of New Jersey station near the center of town. Here's something to consider (I'm thinking about it!): in July the Virginia Scenic Railroad announced that it has a season of planned *Shenandoah Valley Limited* trips running behind Virginia Museum of Transportation's former Norfolk & Western J-class 4-8-4 No. 611.

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This beautifully restored streamlined steam locomotive dressed in glossy black with accents of Tuscan and gold paint is well suited for autumnal trips on the Buckingham Branch Railroad. Tickets will be available for purchase by the general public in mid-August via Virginia Scenic Railway's [website](#). Seating options include Coach, Premium Coach, First Class, and Dome Classes. The trains are advertised to run from Victoria Station in Goshen, Va.

Speaking of Victoria Stations, if you are up for an elegant, super-posh once-in-a-lifetime railroad trip (and money isn't a problem) nip over across the pond to the United Kingdom this autumn and take a ride Belmond's luxury heritage excursions using the British Pullman train that departs from London's Victoria Station. [Belmond's Moving Murder Mystery](#) is scheduled for 10:55 departure from Victoria on October 1st. Prices start at £535 (\$723) per person, however couples may book a private compartment (2 adults) for £1070 (\$1,496). If that's a little too steep, consider the slightly more economical the [Great Pullman Sunday Lunch](#) that departs Victoria at 11am on Sunday October 5. The fare is just £485 (\$615).

If you just want to take a train ride and don't want to pay for elegant extravagance, you can take a return trip aboard the [Gatwick Express](#) to and from Victoria to Gatwick Airport for just £32.80 (\$44). that provided an accent against evergreens that dotted the canyon walls.

News photo: Soo Line No. 1003 Makes 2025 Debut With NRHS Event

By [Lucas Iverson](#) | August 25, 2025

November Santa Train in Hartford schedule for 2-8-2's next public operations



Soo Line 2-8-2 No. 1003 performs a photo runby in Rubicon, Wis., to cap off an all-day Summer run on Aug. 23, 2025. Lucas Iverson

HARTFORD, Wis. — The 2025 debut of [Soo Line 2-8-2 No. 1003](#) on Saturday, Aug. 23, marked its first summer run since a 2022 trip to Chicago for a Metra family days event [see “News photos: Soo Line No. 1003 makes road trip ...,” [Trains.com](#), Aug. 8, 2022].

The 1913-built Mikado made a non-passenger round trip from Hartford to Burnett, Wis., to replenish coal and commemorate the 75th anniversary of [the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society](#).

The chapter provided financial support for the operation, partnering with the locomotive's operator, [Steam Locomotive Heritage Association](#), and the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. Highlights of the day included photo runbys, a group photo with chapter members, switching coil cars in Horicon, and impressive trackside crowds in Burnett. No. 1003's next public appearance will be the annual Hartford Santa Train on Nov. 8.

News Photo: Caboose, Remnant of Fillmore & Western, Heads to New Home

By [David Lassen](#) | August 18, 2025 | Last updated on August 25, 2025

Private owner in San Diego acquires former ATSF caboose



A former Santa Fe caboose is lifted onto a trailer for its move from Fillmore, Calif., to San Diego. Sierra Northern Railroad

FILLMORE, Calif. — A former Santa Fe caboose, one of the last pieces of equipment owned by the defunct tourist line Fillmore & Western that was still on successor Sierra Northern Railroad in Fillmore, was moved last week to a new private owner in San Diego. The caboose, Santa Fe No. 999091, was built by American Car & Foundry in 1930 and was re-built in 1966.

Fillmore & Western — known for its use for filming by Hollywood productions, as well as tourist trains — on a 13-mile stretch of the former Southern Pacific branch line between Montalvo and Piru, Calif., shut down in June 2021, when its owners announced their retirement.

The Sierra Northern took over operations on the Ventura County-owned line later that year [see “[Sierra Northern to operate](#)” [Trains.com](#), Dec. 16, 2021].

Genesee Valley Transportation Unveils Repainted RS3, Announces PA Plans

By Trains Staff | June 23, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

No. 4068 receives D&H 'lightning stripe' scheme; PA to make first runs July 11-12



Genesee Valley Transportation and the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad have repainted RS3 into Delaware & Hudson's blue and gray paint scheme. The company has also announced dates for the first excursion with its restored PA locomotive. Sam Scanella

SCRANTON, Pa. — Genesee Valley Transportation and the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad has unveiled former Delaware & Hudson RS3 No. 4068, repainted into the D&H “lightning stripe” scheme at the company’s Von Storch shops in Scranton, Pa. The GVT has also announced that restoration of its PA locomotive, No. 190, has been completed and will make its inaugural trips July 11-12. Those invitation-only trips will be the first use of the former Santa Fe and Delaware & Hudson Alco since it was wrecked in service in Mexico. The locomotive was repatriated through the efforts of preservationist Doyle McCormack, who did extensive restoration work before GVT acquired the locomotive in 2023 [see “Genesee Valley Transportation acquires ...,” *Trains News Wire*, March 2, 2023]. The RS3 had previously been painted in the earlier D&H freight scheme. It was repainted, the company says, to commemorate the rich railroad history of northeast Pennsylvania and the influence of the D&H on the industrial development of the region. The new scheme is a tribute to the former D&H Penn Division, a portion of which is owned by the Pennsylvania Northeast Regional Rail Authority and is operated by the Delaware-Lackawanna. The company said it will announce future public excursions with the PA later this summer.

Lake State Railway Unveils Locomotive Honoring Pere Marquette Railway

By Trains Staff | August 22, 2025

Newly acquired SD70M wears paint scheme designed by company railroaders



Lake State Railway's new “Spirit of Pere Marquette” locomotive, a newly acquired SD70M honoring the railroad that became part of the Chesapeake & Ohio. Lake State Railway

SAGINAW, Mich. — Lake State Railway on Thursday (Aug. 21, 2025) unveiled a new heritage locomotive honoring the predecessor Pere Marquette Railway.

Lake State Supervisor of Yard Operations Travis Vongrey, a second-generation railroader with the company, developed the concept and design for the “Spirit of Pere Marquette,” newly acquired SD70M No. 6437, one of eight such locomotives on the roster.

Chris Rund assisted in researching colors and the final design and layout of the paint scheme.

“The Pere Marquette legacy lives on as our team of talented railroaders continue to connect Michigan industry with North America, just as the PM did a century ago,” Lake State CEO Mike Stickel told *Trains.com*. “Travis did a fantastic job capturing the Pere Marquette legacy with this paint scheme.”

The Pere Marquette operated from 1900 to 1947, when it was absorbed into the Chesapeake & Ohio, serving six states (Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, and — by ferry — Wisconsin), as well as the province of Ontario; a short history of the railroad from *Classic Trains* [is available here](#).

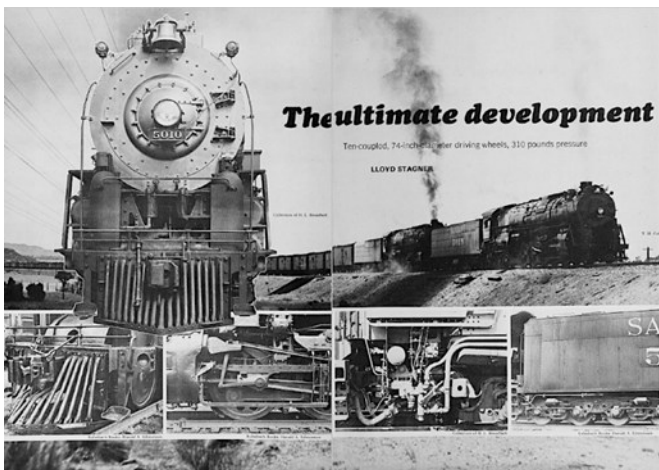
The Pere Marquette is remembered throughout Michigan, Lake State notes, through Amtrak’s Chicago-Grand Rapids train bearing the railroad name; [a 30-mile trail](#) along part of its former right-of-way; and Pere Marquette No. 1225, the Lima 2-8-4 locomotive built for the railroad in 1941 and now operated by the [Steam Railroading Institute](#) of Owosso, Mich.

The 375-mile Lake State Railway operates on former Pere Marquette trackage between Plymouth, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland, Mich.; the railroad says the locomotive honors the railroad’s role in building “the industrial might of Michigan, and we are grateful for all of the railroaders who have worked in our yards, locomotive and car shops, and on the main lines since the 1800s.

50 Years Ago in Trains: Tribute to Santa Fe's 2-10-4s

By Carl Swanson | August 11, 2025

The issue feature just one article, a 38-page tribute to Santa Fe's 2-10-4s



The entire feature section of the August 1975 issue of *Trains Magazine* was devoted to one 38-page article on Santa Fe's 2-10-4s.

In introducing the issue-length article on Santa Fe's 2-10-4s dominating the August 1975 issue of *Trains Magazine*, Editor David P. Morgan wrote: "We broke our word. We promised you after our single-subject issues in 1972 on L&Ns "Big Emma" 2-8-4 and Electro-Motive's 50th anniversary that *Trains* would not publish any more all-steam or all-diesel editions. So here we are in 1975 thrusting an August issue on you that is exclusively devoted to Santa Fe's 2-10-4's, No mix of content, no 'Photo Section,' no frontispiece, no quiz, just AT&SF Texas types. We could have serialized Lloyd Stagner's manuscript; but after the arrival of [Santa Fe] President John Reed's letter of high praise for the 5001 and 5011 classes, the die was cast. Look long at the smokebox face atop this column. We ask you, isn't that worth an entire issue of the magazine, promise or no promise? Especially in a year in which many of us find little to be of good cheer about. Thus our decision to give to a 2-10-4 all of *Trains*, the magazine of rail-roading."



---AMTRAK News---



**Amtrak Daily News Brief - July 29, 2025
(Selected articles (2))
Provided by John Goodman**

Amtrak Sends First 'Airo' Train to Pueblo for Testing



The new Airo trainsets will begin operating on the Amtrak Cascades route in 2026. Photo – Amtrak

Amtrak last week shared photos of the first new Amtrak Airo trainset, which is being shipped from Siemens Mobility Inc.'s Sacramento plant to Pueblo, Colorado, for testing.

The trainset is the first of 83 new trainsets that will replace 40- to 50-year-old passenger rail cars and locomotives. The first Airo is set to launch in 2026 on the Amtrak Cascades route, which runs from Vancouver, British Columbia, through Washington and Oregon, Amtrak officials said in a press release.

The new passenger cars will feature modern seating, restrooms and food service. The new trains will operate at speeds up to 125 miles per hour, Amtrak officials said.

Taking Amtrak to New Orleans or Mobile? Walkable Downtowns Are Not Far Away

TRAVEL & TOURISM By Mary Perez July 28, 2025 8:21 AM

The long-awaited return of Amtrak to South Mississippi moved forward Tuesday, July 1, 2025, with the announcement of the schedule and fares. By Hannah Ruhoff | Sun Herald.

Amtrak's new Mardi Gras Service rolls Aug. 18 between New Orleans and Mobile, bringing passengers to the attractions, shops and restaurants in cities along Mississippi's Gulf Coast. The return of passenger trains also brings an opportunity for South Mississippi residents to experience riding the rails to adventure in New Orleans and Mobile.

Passengers will be able to hop aboard the train at Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis and ride to a Saints' football game in New Orleans instead of fighting traffic on I-10 and paying for parking.

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Continued from previous page:



The Amtrak station in New Orleans is in the heart of the downtown and connects to the streetcars to take passengers throughout the city to Saenger Theatre, attractions, dining and fun. Courtesy of New Orleans & Company

“There is so much to do within walking distance,” said Ashley Rains, senior public relations and communications manager for Visit Mobile. The district has more than 50 restaurants, “all of which are locally owned, a lot of them are chef-owned,” she said. She ticks off more things passengers can walk to: Multiple art galleries and shops, the hands-on Exploreum Science Center, the history museum, Mobile Carnival Museum and the National Maritime Museum of the Gulf. The USS Alabama and submarines on the causeway are a 10 minute Uber ride away and MOB City Rides have friendly golf cart shuttles throughout the downtown for \$5 per person, per ride. The Amtrak platform is only about 400 yards from the cruise terminal, Rains said, so Coast residents will have the option of riding the train to Mobile and leaving their vehicle at home while they are on a cruise. Hotels and bed and breakfast inns are within walking distance for those who want an overnight getaway during Mardi Gras or stroll beneath the lights across Dauphin Street. Visit Mobile already promotes a VIP Attractions Pass that lets visitors get a discount on several attractions. Rains said Mobile is planning for Amtrak excursions, “We have several partners that are working on doing promotions, just like we do when we have our cruise ship in town,” she said. Among the favorite activities for adults in Mobile, according to Trip Advisor, are down food tours, ghost tours and scavenger hunts. Go west to NOLA Amtrak’s New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal is at 1001 Loyola Ave., north of U.S. 90, in the heart of downtown. It’s very close to the Caesar Superdome for Saints’ games and the Smoothie King Center for concerts and events, said Schulz. She has ideas for families who ride over on Amtrak, along with older and adventurous passengers who can beat the traffic on the interstate and get a safe ride back to the Coast. At the station, passengers can connect to Amtrak trains heading nationwide, to buses or the local streetcar line. The streetcar picks up at Loyola/ Union Passenger Terminal and provides an air-conditioned ride from the terminal to Canal Street and the French Quarter. “Everything in New Orleans is pretty compact,” Schulz said. “The French Quarter is nearby, the hotels, the restaurants. The train will let you out in the middle of the central business district, so it’s a short walk to most places,” she said, or a quicker Uber or taxi ride. The National World War II Museum is a 10-minute walk she estimates. The station is at the foot of the Garden District, not far from St Charles Avenue and all the beautiful homes. For families, the city’s Audubon Zoo is a world class experience. “Our aquarium underwent millions of dollars of renovations and that reopened recently,” she said. Audubon Park is beautiful, she said, as is City Park, which is not downtown but just a 10-minute Uber or streetcar ride to its sculpture garden and Celebration in the Oaks Christmas light display. Trip Advisor lists Preservation Hall music venue, ghost tours, cemetery tours and shopping on Magazine Street among the favorite activities in New Orleans. The return of Amtrak is a real opportunity for New Orleans and all the cities along the Mardi Gras Line, she said. “It’s great for leisure, for business, for meetings and conventions, for sports fans, and also for those international travelers who are really interested in seeing this part of the country, and this gives them an easy way to do that,” she said. “There’s a lot of interest from the international audience. We were just at a trade show, meeting with international journalists and with international tour operators,” she said. “When they come to the US, they typically stay longer and spend more money. So we’re actually actively working with Amtrak and the other cities along the Coast to make sure that we can bring in the international customers and media and have them start or stop in New Orleans and then make stops along the way.”

How to book a ride The first day trains were quickly booked. Amtrak will run two trains a day both east and west with the schedule and map posted here. New Orleans has in-person ticket sales at the station, but many of the other cities have boarding platforms and no ticket windows. Amtrak provides these guidelines for buying tickets:

Purchase tickets: Online at amtrak.com, by phone at 1-800-USA-RAIL or on the Amtrak App. Amtrak accepts credit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Pay Pal, rewards points and gift cards. Amtrak announces schedule, fares for Gulf Coast service Prices: Adult coach fares end-to-end from New Orleans to Mobile start at \$15 each way, with lower fares for shorter distances. Discounts: Everyday discounts are offered for children ages 2-12, students, seniors, veterans, military personnel and families, and groups. Children ages 2-12 ride half-price every day and infants under age 2 are free. Food and seating: Coach and business class seating is available and there are no middle seats. Food service is available with local cuisine. Free WiFi is available.

Or they can take the kids to Mobile to explore old Fort Conde and the USS Alabama battleship, and oldest US submarine on public display. “We’ve been working on this for years and years, and we’re so excited,” said Kelly Schulz, senior vice president of communications and PR for New Orleans & Company and Visit New Orleans. The return of Amtrak coincides with the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated New Orleans and the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2005. “So to be able to say we’ve had this for the first time since then is pretty powerful,” she said. The name Mardi Gras Line automatically connects Mobile, New Orleans and the four stops in South Mississippi — Pascagoula, Biloxi, Gulfport and Bay St. Louis — where the traditions of Carnival are a beloved custom. “Our goal is to have some of that festive Mardi Gras feeling on every trip, sharing the culture of the Gulf Coast region while connecting with the rest of the Amtrak network,” said Amtrak President Roger Harris. All aboard to Mobile Residents of South Mississippi may be more familiar with the fun that awaits in New Orleans than all the reasons to visit Mobile. The new train platform is at 101 South Water Street, between the Mobile Convention Center and the National Maritime Museum of the Gulf, in the walkable downtown entertainment district.

Amtrak NextGen Acela Debut Set for Aug. 28

By Bob Johnston | August 7, 2025

Tickets on sale “soon;” departure specifics still to be revealed



The first five Amtrak's NextGen Acela trains will make their debut in revenue service on Aug. 28. Amtrak



An Acela power car under construction at Alstom's Hornell, N.Y., factory on June 12, 2019. Bob Johnston



Seven Next Generation Acela trainsets and an HHP-8 locomotive converted to a cab car are spotted at Amtrak's Philadelphia coach yard on June 25, 2025. Keith Fender

Amtrak signed a contract with Alstom to build the new fleet in 2016. Trains visited Alstom's Hornell, N.Y., facility in June 2019, while the first trainsets were under construction.

Testing at the MxV Rail's Pueblo, Colo., test track was followed by what has become more than four years of Northeast Corridor testing to confirm that the trainsets will meet contractual performance specifications.

Most recently, test trains have been operating several times per week as No. 887 westbound to Washington and No. 888 eastbound to Boston.

“To date, Alstom and Amtrak have successfully conducted more than 1,000 test runs, clocked over 225,000 miles of testing on the Northeast Corridor, and initiated training for more than 3,000 Amtrak personnel to operate, service, and maintain the new trains,” Abrams says.

But neither Amtrak nor Alstom have explained what issues needed to be addressed or what modifications have been made as a result of the tests.

Booking on NextGen Acela Trains Now Possible

By Trains Staff | August 19, 2025 | Last updated on August 20, 2025

Amtrak lists trains to feature new equipment, adds “NextGen” icon on ticketing site

NEW YORK — Amtrak is now offering tickets on Northeast Corridor trains that will debut the long-delayed NextGen Acela trainsets, and has announced which trains will feature the equipment, as well as highlighting those trains with a “NextGen” icon on the booking portion of its website and app.

The company announced that addition to its booking process in a [press release](#) today (Aug. 19, 2025), and also informed regular customers by email. It said these trains are scheduled to initially feature the new equipment:

Weekdays: Trains 2153, 2154, 2170, and 2173

Saturdays: Trains 2250 and 2251

Sundays: Trains 2248, 2258, 2259, and 2271

The new Acelas are scheduled to debut on Aug. 28; Amtrak had previously announced that date but had not indicated which trains would feature the new equipment [see “Amtrak NextGen Acela debut ...,” *Trains.com*, Aug. 7, 2025]. Amtrak cautions in a disclaimer that substitution of trains might be necessary “from time to time,” and that such substitutions are permitted without notice under its terms and conditions.

Amtrak ordered 28 trainsets of the new Acela equipment from Alstom in 2016, and were originally projected to enter service in 2021. A series of delays — some attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, others related to testing issues, and others that remain unexplained — have steadily pushed back the debut and forced Amtrak to extend use of the original Acela equipment beyond its intended lifespan.

Private Company AmeriStarRail Proposes Cross-Country Auto Train Service with Amtrak

By David Lassen | July 1, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

'Transcontinental Chief' would cover New York-LA route in less than 72 hours, offer drive-on service for truckers



Amtrak's westbound Southwest Chief prepares to stop in Fullerton, Calif., on the morning of Jan. 18, 2024. Private company AmeriStarRail is proposing to replace the train with a cross-country Auto



WILMINGTON, Del. — AmeriStarRail, which for some time has been proposing privately owned and operated passenger service on the Northeast Corridor, has gone in a new direction with its latest proposal — literally and figuratively. The company is now proposing a long-distance train that would offer coast-to-coast service in less than 72 hours between New York and Los Angeles — not just for passengers, but for truck drivers and their tractor-trailers. And it has asked Amtrak to partner in the effort, in a June 30, 2025, letter from AmeriStar Chief Operating Officer Scott Spencer to Amtrak President Roger Harris. The “Transcontinental Chief” would include drive-aboard service for truckers, allowing them to make use of Amtrak coach, sleepers, and dining cars as they continue to travel during their federally mandated rest periods. The train would also offer Auto Train service for passenger cars and vehicles, including charter buses. The service would also include a Harrisburg, Pa.-Washington, D.C., section. AmeriStarRail says that the train would replace existing *Southwest Chief* and *Pennsylvanian* service. It would use existing TTX flatcars and auto carriers, along with Amtrak locomotives and passenger cars. Because of this, and because it would be on a route that is mostly double track, the company says the operation could begin as soon as May 10, 2026, in time for events marking the 250th anniversary of American independence. It notes that is subject to agreements with the host railroads on its proposed route: BNSF, Norfolk Southern, and NJ Transit. ASR says in its letter to Harris that its “proprietary operating techniques will help prevent the chronic train delays and service disruptions of Amtrak’s previous inefficient operation of lengthy trains for mail and express services.”

The company also says it plans to complete plans for bilevel trainsets by Oct. 1, 2025, “with features and amenities to ensure that Amtrak passengers will have the finest trains available for travel across America.” Spencer’s letter concludes, “*The Transcontinental Chief* will be a great opportunity for Amtrak to team up with the private sector to confront the challenges of its money losing long distance trains and create opportunities to usher in a profitable Golden Age of rail travel for passengers and truckers, with the ingenuity of free enterprise, as we celebrate our great nation’s 250th birthday next year. “We look forward to putting together a mutually beneficial, privately funded proposal for *The Transcontinental Chief* for Amtrak to consider.” Drive-on trains for truckers with sleeping car accommodations have existed in Europe for some time, although they are exclusively for intermodal, not a mixed freight and passenger operation. RAlpin, the company operating such trains through Switzerland is preparing to shut down this year in light of the completion of new rail tunnels [see “[Drive-on piggyback service ...](#),” *Trains News Wire*, May 6, 2025].



An RAlpin “Rolling Highway” train pauses in Spiez, Switzerland, for a crew change on Sept. 16, 2024. Note the sleeping car immediately behind the locomotive. AmeriStarRail is proposing similar service for trucks as part of its “Transcontinental Chief” plan. David Lassen

Amtrak declined to comment on the proposal, which AmeriStarRail said it had also sent to President Donald Trump, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, members of Congress, and the Federal Railroad Administration. More on AmeriStarRail is available at [its website](#). — *Updated July 2 at 8:57 a.m. with Amtrak declining to comment.*

Storm Aftermath Leads to Amtrak Delays on Northeast Corridor

By David Lassen | July 15, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Transit agencies recovering after overnight flood disruptions

NEW YORK — Amtrak is cautioning passengers that Northeast Corridor operations may experience delays this morning (July 15, 2025) because of heavy rain overnight, while area transit agencies are also recovering from the storm.

An [Amtrak customer advisory](#) says overnight weather impacts have led to some trainsets arriving later than usual, which may lead to delays while equipment is prepared. On Monday, Keystone Service between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pa., was disrupted by flooding [see [“Flooding hits ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, July 14, 2025]; the [Amtrak NEC social media feed](#) also shows weather-related operations issues affected several other locations later on Monday.

New York’s MTA reported overnight shutdowns of some subway lines in Manhattan because of station flooding, as well as a suspension of Staten Island Rail service. but currently shows no issues on the subway or commuter rail system. NJ Transit is also [reporting delays](#) on its North Jersey Coast Line “due to earlier weather-related overhead wire issues near Hazlet.

[WNYW-TV reports](#) rainfall of up to 5 inches in some New York and New Jersey locations — with 2.64 inches falling in Central Park — and more than 3 inches at some Connecticut locations.

Zephyr, Builder Routes Playing Catch-up; More Equipment Challenges

By Bob Johnston | August 10, 2025

Amtrak cancellations follow line blockages, locomotive failures



Three P42 locomotives lead the westbound California Zephyr through Hinsdale, Ill., on Aug. 9, 2025. The train would later suffer a four-hour delay in eastern Nebraska due to high winds and flash flood warnings. The following day’s Zephyrs were cancelled from both Chicago and Emeryville, Calif., with equipment out of position after a power line blocked tracks for 14 hours that day. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — *California Zephyr* passengers across the entire Chicago-Emeryville, Calif., route are suffering the lingering effects of downed power lines early Saturday (Aug. 9) on BNSF Railway tracks between Lincoln and Hastings, Nebraska. Elsewhere, the lack of available cars and locomotives continued to trigger lengthy delays and cancellations.

Zephyrs chase each other west, one round trip cancelled. In Nebraska, both eastbound and westbound *Zephyrs* languished for 14 hours into late Saturday afternoon. The eastbound train eventually made its Windy City entrance at 5:43 a.m., Sunday, while its similarly-delayed westbound counterpart wound up departing Grand Junction, Colo., at 2:56 p.m. Sunday, more than 22 hours late.

The train that had left Chicago Saturday afternoon was delayed four hours by high wind and flash flood warnings in the same area of Nebraska early Sunday, so it climbed Colorado’s Front Range after lunch. With trainsets and operating crews out of position, Amtrak cancelled both Chicago and Emeryville, Calif., *Zephyr* departures today (August 10).

Empire Builder’s nocturnal turn he nasty weather sweeping east deluged southeastern Wisconsin with up to 14 inches of rain, causing flooding in downtown Wauwatosa and affecting the *Empire Builder* and *Borealis* today. [See “Flooding closes CPKC main line ...” *Trains.com*, Aug. 10, 2025].

But an ill-fated *Empire Builder* round trip earlier in the week racked up monumental delays when the westbound train that left Chicago on August 7 began losing time — lots of it: six hours between St. Paul and Minot, N.D. It was seven hours late into Spokane, Wash.

Rather than turn the train and bus passengers between Spokane and its western destinations to keep the eastbound departure on time, it was allowed to proceed west, where it lost an additional three hours, arriving in Seattle just before 10 p.m. Saturday night. As a result, the eastbound train departed Seattle at 3:36 a.m., 10 hours and 41 minutes late. It had lost another hour approaching Whitefish, Mont., this evening.

More episodes

The *Southwest Chief*’s departure from Los Angeles nearly four hours late at 9:04 p.m. on Saturday night has been attributed on Amtrak’s train status app to “a mechanical assessment performed on the HVAC system prior to departure,” although the westbound *Chief* arrived less than two hours late that morning into L.A.

Among regional trains suffering extensive and cancellations for various explained and unexplained reasons:

- Sunday’s eastbound *Pennsylvanian*, which was stopped for almost three hours at Altoona, Pa.

•

— The eastbound *Illinois Zephyr*, sidelined for the same amount of time by an active shooter reported by police near BNSF Railway tracks in Aurora, Ill. Its Chicago-Quincy, Ill., route has been reduced to one rail round-trip since last Tuesday, Aug. 5, when buses began substituting for the *Carl Sandburg* due to lack of enough serviceable equipment. *Sandburg* trains are set to resume next Thursday, August 14.

— On Tuesday, the Charger locomotive of Seattle-Eugene, Ore., *Amtrak Cascades* train no. 507 failed near Albany, Ore.; buses were called. Buses also substituted for the following day’s morning departure to Seattle, no. 504, and a venerable P42 now handles power chores on the Amfleet set that was waylaid.

Amtrak's Borealis Reaches 250,000-rider Mark

By [Trains Staff](#) | July 15, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Milestone comes on July 4 weekend, little more than 13 months after launch



P32-8 No. 519 leads the Chicago-bound Borealis as it rolls through the Lake Forest, Ill., Metra station on June 6, 2025. The train has passed the 250,000-

CHICAGO — Amtrak's *Borealis* reached the 250,000-passenger milestone during the July 4th holiday weekend, the passenger operator has announced.

The train, funded by the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, launched in May 2024. It continues to exceed initial passenger estimates, carrying more than 18,500 passengers in its first month and reaching 100,000 riders in just 22 weeks [see "[Amtrak's Borealis hits 100,000-passenger mark ...](#)," *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 25, 2024]. The 250,000-rider figure came shortly after the train completed its 13th month of operation, meaning it is averaging more than 19,000 riders per month.

"Some of these guests have never before used Amtrak," the company's president, Roger Harris, said in a [press release](#). "Now all of them can enjoy the benefits of train travel while avoiding the long drive on Interstate 94."

Minnesota Transportation Commissioner Nancy Daubenberger said, "We remain pleased and encouraged by the early success of the *Borealis* and look forward to its continued growth," while Wisconsin Transportation Secretary Kristina Boardman said, "The *Borealis* continues to be a success story in Wisconsin and our partner states." Said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gia Biagi,

"As a co-sponsor of the service, we view a quarter of a million riders as proof that our investments in regional transit make a real difference in the lives of people all across the Midwest."

The *Borealis* was launched after a more than 10-year effort led by Minnesota supporters including the Great River Rail Commission and All Aboard Minnesota. Its debut was accelerated thanks to an agreement between Amtrak and CPKC, host railroad for much of the trip, under which CPKC allowed service to begin ahead of the completion of capital improvements as part of Amtrak's support for the Canadian Pacific-Kansas City Southern merger [see "[Amtrak Borealis makes debut](#)," *News Wire*, May 21, 2024]. The train currently offers one-class service between Chicago and the Twin Cities, serving 11 intermediate stops. More information, including schedules, is available at [the Amtrak website](#).

Enjoy insights of a *Borealis* journey, in the [Trains.com video](#), "[Amtrak Borealis routes into the Upper Midwest](#)"

Amtrak Overall On-time Performance Remains Below FRA Standard

By [Trains Staff](#) | August 6, 2025

State-supported segment narrowly misses 80% mark; Floridian is worst-performing long-distance train



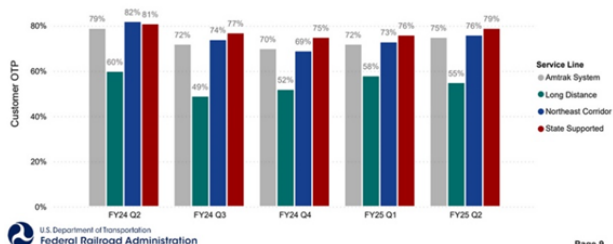
The eastbound Floridian changes crews in Pittsburgh on May 16, 2025. The train recorded Amtrak's worst on-time performance during the second quarter of 2025. Bob

Among individual trains and routes, the *Floridian*, with a 33% on-time rate, was the worst-performing long-distance train; Richmond/Newport News/Norfolk trains fared worst among Northeast Corridor services, at 78%, and the daily combined *Lincoln Service/Missouri River Runner* route had lowest on-time rate among state-supported trains at 51%.

Two State-supported routes achieved 90% on-time performance: California's Capitol Corridor and the *Illini/Saluki* between Chicago and Carbondale, Ill. Among long-distance trains, the New York-Atlanta-New Orleans *Crescent* fared best at 75%. Four long-distance trains recorded on-time rates of less than 50%; another five of the 14 routes were at 50 to 59%.

Host-railroad figures show Union Pacific with the most delay minutes per 10,000 train-miles, about 1,100, while CPKC recorded the least, just over 600. The customer on-time performance measures the percentage of all customers who arrive at their destination no later than 15 minutes after their scheduled arrival time; the minimum standard for acceptable performance set by the FRA is 80% in two consecutive quarters.

Figure 3. Customer OTP by Service Line

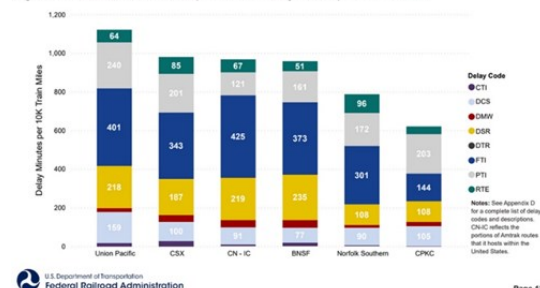


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L: No Amtrak service line has achieved 80% on-time performance over the last four quarters. FRA

R: Union Pacific had the most and CPKC the least delay minutes per 10,000 train-miles in the second quarter. FRA

Figure 5. FY 2025 Q2 Class I Host Responsible Train Delay Minutes per 10K Train Miles



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Justice Department and Norfolk Southern Near Settlement Deal in Amtrak Crescent Case

By Bill Stephens | July 14, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Federal judge OK's government request for more time to nail down final details of settlement in principle in passenger train right of preference case

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department and Norfolk Southern have reached a settlement in principle regarding the railroad's handling of Amtrak's Crescent. Government lawyers disclosed the agreement in a court filing last week, which requested additional time to finalize the settlement. U.S. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson approved the parties' request for a 60-day extension. The Justice Department hauled NS to federal court a year ago, contending that NS regularly failed to give the Crescent preference over freight trains as required by law, leading to delays that harm and inconvenience passengers, impede passenger rail transportation, and negatively affect Amtrak's financial performance. [see "Justice Department sues ...," Trains News Wire, July 30, 2024]

The case was the first right of preference suit filed against a host railroad since 1979, when operational problems on Southern Pacific led to frequent delays to Amtrak's Sunset Limited. Amtrak trains were granted the right of preference in 1973. When asking for a dismissal of the case in January, NS argued that the government was taking an "extreme" interpretation of passenger train right of preference.



The southbound Crescent leaves Meridian, Miss., for New Orleans. Bob Johnston

NS said the Justice Department "complaint depends on the idea that freight railroads must totally clear their tracks for approaching Amtrak trains, the same way D.C.-area commuters must clear the road for the President's motorcade—even if the result is a massive traffic jam.

"But 'preference' for passenger trains has never worked that way. Not in the decades before Congress codified it, and not in the half-century since," NS argued.

The New York-New Orleans Crescent operates on NS-owned or managed track between Alexandria, Va., and New Orleans. In 2023, 57% of Crescent passengers arrived on time, which was well below the 80% threshold required under federal standards. But Crescent passengers had plenty of company: Six long-distance trains – the Silver Meteor (CSX), Empire Builder (BNSF, CPKC), Silver Star (CSX, NS), Sunset Limited (BNSF, UP), Southwest Chief (BNSF), and California Zephyr (BNSF, UP) – had worse on-time performance in 2023, according to Amtrak data. And all 15 of Amtrak's long-distance trains that operate on the Class I railroads failed to meet federal on-time performance standards in 2023.

The Justice Department on Aug. 2, 2024 acknowledged a Trains freedom of information request for documents that might shed light on why it singled out Norfolk Southern. But it has yet to produce any documents, including a copy of a letter that Amtrak sent to the attorney general seeking enforcement action. At the time, Amtrak declined to provide a copy of the letter and referred questions to the Justice Department.

Texas Transportation Council Gives Final Approval to Funding Rescue for Heartland Flyer

By Trains Staff | August 21, 2025

North Texas organization to provide \$3.5 to keep train running for a year

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Texas Transportation Commission has approved last month's decision by a regional governmental to provide \$3.5 million to keep Amtrak's *Heartland Flyer* operating for at least another year.

The Regional Transportation Council of the North Central Texas Council of Governments in July voted to provide the funding, filling a funding gap created when the Texas Legislature failed to provide money for the train in its two-year state budget [see "[Local Texas group to fund Heartland Flyer ...](#)," Trains.com, July 10, 2025]. The train, which has operated since 1999, has been jointly funded by the Texas and Oklahoma departments of transportation. The five-member Texas Transportation Commission had the final say in the funding because of its role overseeing public transportation in the state.

Michael Morris, director of transportation for the North Texas Council of Governments, said in a press release that the interim funding — intended to give the legislature a year to address the funding shortfall created by the budget — "will help secure the future of the *Heartland Flyer*, which serves as a vital link for both commuters and leisure travelers between Fort Worth and Oklahoma City." Amtrak Executive Vice President Jennifer Mitchell said the company will work with "the commission, TxDOT, NCTCOG and other interested parties in Texas for a longer-term state funding solution."

It is the second time the Regional Transportation Council has helped keep the *Heartland Flyer* running. The council approved up to \$100,000 in January to address a potential funding shortfall in the 2024-25 fiscal year.



The Heartland Flyer prepares to leave Oklahoma City on July 20, 2023. Final approval has been given to a plan by the North Central Texas Council of Governments to provide \$3.5 million to keep the train running. Bob Johnston

Amtrak, Union Pacific Reach Settlement in Sunset Limited Case (updated)

By David Lassen | July 31, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025



The Sunset Limited makes its stop in Houston on June 9, 2021. Amtrak and Union Pacific have reached a settlement in their dispute over UP's handling of the train, which has been before the Surface Transportation Board since December 2022. Bob Johnston

WASHINGTON — Amtrak and Union Pacific have reached a settlement in their dispute over performance of the *Sunset Limited* and have asked the Surface Transportation Board to end its investigation into the train's handling.

An Amtrak filing on Thursday, July 31, asks that the STB case — the first of its kind regarding host-railroad handling of a passenger train — be terminated, and says that all parties to the investigation except Canadian Pacific Kansas City have consented to the move.

The filing offers few details on the settlement, saying only that that “Union Pacific has made commitments regarding the *Sunset Limited's* customer on-time performance and has further agreed to consequences if it does not meet those commitments.” It also said UP personnel who deal with Amtrak will receive “continuous education and training ... to understand their responsibilities to Amtrak under federal law,” and that the two sides have agreed on a process to certify a schedule for the train.

“Amtrak therefore believes that the parties have achieved an outcome ... fully consistent with the purposes of an investigation” under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, the filing says.

A joint statement from Amtrak and UP on Friday, Aug., 1, reflects much of the same wording as the STB filing: “Amtrak and Union Pacific are pleased with a settlement regarding customer on-time performance for Amtrak’s *Sunset Limited* Service. As a result, Amtrak requested the Surface Transportation Board (STB) close its investigation. Union Pacific is committed to improving customer on-time performance for the *Sunset Limited*, as well as continuous training and education for employees with responsibilities to Amtrak under federal law. Amtrak and Union Pacific express their gratitude to the STB for its time and attention to this matter.” Amtrak asked the STB to investigate what it called the “abysmal” on-time performance of the *Sunset* in December 2022, saying many of the delays of a train that had quarterly on-time performance rates as low as 7% over the previous year were “attributable to UP corporate decisions, operational practices, or failures that result in systemic violations of Amtrak preference rights.” [See **“Amtrak asks federal regulators to investigate ...”** *Trains News Wire*, Dec. 9, 2022.]

It was the first such case ever brought under a provision of the PRIAA, requiring the STB to develop its approach to handling the case, which it did in a July 2023 decision [see **“STB announces investigation ...”** July 11, 2023]. That decision laid out a two-stage process, with the first determining if a host railroad had failed to provide Amtrak with operating preference, and the second dealing with damages and other potential actions.” Two years later, that investigation was still in its first stage, as “the parties engaged in party-led discovery and multiple rounds of briefing addressing various questions posed by the board,” as the Amtrak filing notes. In its request to dismiss, Amtrak thanks the board and its staff for their work on the case and says it appreciates “the good faith efforts of all parties, including Union Pacific, to examine the underlying performance issues on the *Sunset Limited* and to work collaboratively on solutions to drive sustained improvements.” While Amtrak’s initial filing focused on Union Pacific, the STB included all parties that served as host railroads for the *Sunset*, no matter how briefly. That led to the involvement of BNSF Railway, Canadian National, CPKC, LA’s Metrolink, and the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad.

CPKC, **in a letter** filed with the STB on Friday, Aug. 1, informed the board that its decision not to join other parties in agreeing to Amtrak’s request stemmed from the fact the details of the settlement between Amtrak and Union Pacific would not be disclosed. “While not opposing the proposed dismissal,” CPKC attorney David Meyer wrote, “CPKC wished to avoid any implication that its consent constituted assent to the undisclosed terms of Amtrak’s confidential arrangements with Union Pacific.”

— Updated Aug. 1 at 6:05 p.m. CT with CPKC filing; updated Aug. 2 at 11:51 a.m. CT with Amtrak/UP statement.

Rail Passengers Association Expresses Concern Over UP-NS Merger Plans

By David Lassen | July 29, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Merger partners, major hosts for Amtrak, have been subject of regulatory, legal action over passenger service



L: An Amtrak Lincoln Service train waits for Union Pacific freight train MBNAS (Manifest-Bloomington-Alton Southern) near Elkhart, Ill., in June 2013. Amtrak has not commented on the proposed UP-Norfolk Southern merger, but the Rail Passengers Association has expressed concern. Steve Smedley R: A Union Pacific freight train and outbound Metra UP West commuter train meet at La Fox, Ill., on May 4, 2023. STB merger proceedings could be a new venue for Metra to address its ongoing fight with UP. David Lassen



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WASHINGTON — The Rail Passengers Association said today it will be “actively involved in protecting the rights of passengers” as the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger is considered by the Surface Transportation Board.

Amtrak had no comment on the merger announcement. Neither did commuter rail operator Metra, which has been involved in a lengthy legal and regulatory fight with UP over Metra operations on three Union Pacific routes in the Chicago area.

Rail Passengers Association CEO Jim Mathews said in a statement that passengers and shippers have “good reason to treat this news with skepticism.

“The past decade has seen Class I railroads steadily losing market share to trucking in pursuit of shareholder dividends,” Mathews said. “While that’s been good for Wall Street, it’s meant worse rail service for passengers and shippers in the rest of the country.” Mathews noted the companies involved are both currently involved in federal cases involving passenger operations, with UP before the Surface Transportation Board as part of an investigation of operation of Amtrak’s *Sunset Limited*, and NS sued by the Department of Justice over handling of the *Crescent*. (The latter case is near a settlement, according to a recent court filing.)

“The onus is on these companies to prove that this merger won’t simply exacerbate these problems — and we believe that is a very high bar to clear,” Mathews said.

The Federal Railroad Administration’s [first-quarter 2025 report](#) on passenger performance — the most recent available — shows Union Pacific with the highest number of delay minutes per 10,000 train-miles, while NS ranks fifth among the six Class I railroads. Amtrak’s [2024 host railroad report card](#) gave Norfolk Southern a grade of B-plus and Union Pacific a B-minus, while noting UP was “most improved.”

UP is a host railroad for all or part of 10 Amtrak routes: the long-distance *Sunset Limited*, *Texas Eagle*, *Coast Starlight*, and *California Zephyr*, and the state-supported Capitol Corridor, *Pacific Surfliner*, and *San Joaquins* in California; *Missouri River Runner*; *Lincoln Service*; and *Amtrak Cascades*. The railroad also is host to the Rocky Mountaineer cruise train in Colorado and Utah. NS is host to at least part of the long-distance *Crescent*, *Lake Shore Limited*, *Cardinal*, and *Floridian*, and state-supported routes including the *Pere Marquette*, *Piedmont*, *Blue Water*, *Wolverine*, *Pennsylvanian*, and *Carolinian*.

The merger proceedings could provide a venue for Amtrak to seek concessions as part of an STB decision or in exchange for merger support. The latter was the passenger operator’s course of action in the merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern. It supported that merger in exchange for the new company’s commitment to passenger projects including a New Orleans-Baton Rouge passenger train and a Meridian, Miss.-Dallas section of the *Crescent* [see [“Amtrak, Southern Rail Commission welcome news ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, March 15, 2023].

Similarly, Metra — which has objected to new contract terms imposed by Union Pacific for the commuter operator’s use of UP lines — could play a role in the STB approval process. It opposed the CPKC merger on the grounds it could have a negative effect on two Metra lines. The STB ultimately imposed a seven-year oversight period for that merger, and included a dispute resolution mechanism for issues regarding freight train interference for Metra trains. Metra had sought additional concessions, however [see [“Metra, Chicago suburbs see few concerns addressed ...”](#) *News Wire*, March 22, 2023]. It sued over the STB decision, although that suit was subsequently dropped.

Missouri Congressman Reintroduces Bill to Remove Amtrak Right of Preference

By David Lassen | July 28, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. Eric Burlison (R-Mo.) has reintroduced legislation that would strip Amtrak of its statutory right of operating preference on host freight railroads. It is at least the third time such legislation has been introduced, including the second by Burlison.

The “Freights First Act” would eliminate the right of preference within 50 miles of a port or rail yard — which would likely cover a significant portion of Amtrak’s route mileage. “When freight is forced to wait for passenger trains near critical infrastructure, our entire economy suffers,” Burlison said in [a press release](#).

Burlison — who represents a district with no Amtrak service — previously introduced a version of the bill in June 2023 [see [“Republicans push bill to limit Amtrak’s right of preference: Analysis,”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 31, 2023]. That legislation, [H.R. 3893](#), [died in committee](#), as did a slightly different version [introduced in 2022](#) by Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.)

While the right of preference currently exists, Amtrak has frequently expressed frustrations that some railroads do not handle its trains accordingly. The company went to the Surface Transportation Board to request an investigation into handling of the *Sunset Limited* in 2022, the first use of a procedure created as part of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 [see [“Amtrak asks federal regulators ...”](#) *Trains News Wire*, Dec. 9, 2022]. That process is continuing. It also apparently urged the Justice Department to take action on the issue, resulting in a lawsuit over Norfolk Southern’s handling of the *Crescent* that is near a settlement, according to a recent court filing. [see [“Justice Department and Norfolk Southern near settlement ...”](#) *News Wire*, July 14, 2024].

The preference issue was addressed in detail in an article, “Passage interference,” in the May 2025 issue of *Trains Magazine*.

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In Canada, VIA Rail does not have the right of preference, leaving the matter to be settled between VIA and freight operators. Frequent freight delays have led VIA to lengthen the schedule for its flagship train, the Toronto-Vancouver *Canadian*, to 96 hours — 26 more than when it was introduced as a Canadian Pacific train in 1955 [see [“VIA’s Canadian turns 70 ...”](#) News Wire, April 23, 2025]. Current VIA CEO Mario Pélouin has sought rules establishing such preference [see [“VIA Rail Canada CEO calls for ‘passenger bill of rights’ ...”](#) News Wire, Oct. 23, 2023]; a bill introduced in Parliament in 2023 to establish VIA preference failed to advance.



CSX and BNSF Team Up on Florida National Guard’s Biggest Rail Deployment Since World War II

By Trains Staff | July 16, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

The railroads moved more than 1,200 pieces of military equipment from Georgia to California

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — CSX and BNSF Railway recently completed the Florida National Guard’s largest rail deployment since World War II.

CSX originated 10 unit trains that carried 1,265 military vehicles, containers, and systems that were loaded at Fort Stewart, Ga., and transported to Birmingham, Ala., for interchange with BNSF, which then operated the trains to Fort Irwin, Calif.

The large-scale operation required close coordination between CSX and more than 179 Army personnel and marked the Florida National Guard’s first major rail deployment since 2008.

“This move was a testament to the power of teamwork,” Dan Labyak, CSX senior director of military clearance, said in a statement. The equipment moved on 10 trains using four different types of specialized railcars, a solution developed by CSX’s Network Operations team to accommodate a wide variety of military gear. The CSX Government Waybill team helped translate the Army’s commercial bills of lading into documents compatible with CSX systems.

The project involved multiple departments across the railroad. CSX’s military operations team worked with transportation personnel to secure sufficient laydown areas, serving yards, and track capacity to handle the surge move. Mechanical crews inspected equipment, and CSX Police helped implement security protocols.

In addition to handling the operational logistics, CSX provided tailored pricing options to accommodate the Army’s readiness requirements and possible scenario changes.

BNSF Aims to Grow Carload Traffic With Service Upgrades

By Bill Stephens | July 22, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

BNSF’s carload push involves a faster merchandise network, more local service, and deeper short line ties



A BNSF Railway local heads west on the Southern Transcon at West Defiance, N.M., just west of Gallup, in August 2022. Bill Stephens

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway carries more intermodal, coal, and grain traffic than any other railroad. And now it’s looking to boost its relatively small carload network through a combination of improved service, more frequent customer switching, and tighter partnerships with its top short line connections.

“We know intermodal’s a big part of the growth future. We’ve developed the ag shuttle network on the bulk side, and we certainly like our bulk network,” BNSF Chief Marketing Officer Tom Williams said in a recent interview. “I don’t want it to be lost that we care very much about that single-car merchandise network, too.”

Over the past year [BNSF has taken steps to improve the efficiency of its merchandise network](#), starting with pushing down terminal dwell at its hump yards and emphasizing on-time train departures.

Those efforts paid off: BNSF posted all-time best terminal dwell figures in May. For the second quarter, terminal dwell was 21.9 hours, a 17% improvement compared to the second quarter of 2024.

And — bucking the long-term industry trend — BNSF has increased service frequency for 225 of its merchandise customers. A carload facility that received three days of service per week, for example, might now see a BNSF local on its spurs five days a week. Some five-day-per-week customers, meanwhile, went to daily service.

“And that, in total, equates to about 21,000 additional annualized service days per year,” Williams says. The hope is that the more frequent local service will lead to volume growth once the industrial economy rebounds.

The railway’s Short Line Select program, rolled out last fall to improve interchange performance, has cut dwell nearly in half on participating short lines. Volume on the Short Line Select railroads is up around 5% this year, compared to flat volumes on other short line connections as well as the balance of BNSF’s merchandise business.

“The whole name of the game of what we’ve been doing in the merchandise network is improving the velocity,” Williams says.

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The combination of more efficient terminals and more frequent local service helps cars spin faster from origin to destination and return. Car-miles per day are up 25% compared to a year ago, which shaves two days off the transit time for a car that moves 1,000 miles.

What this means is that customers can move the same amount of freight using fewer cars — or put their suddenly surplus cars to work hauling more freight. “It’s good for us, it’s good for the customers,” Williams says. “We’ve reduced the inventory year over year by 20%.”

Amid these operational improvements, BNSF last month introduced a new First Mile/Last Mile group that includes the 13 people from its Shortline Development and Industrial Products Business Development teams.

Their focus is on understanding the needs of BNSF’s merchandise customers. “This isn’t about us going to the customer and telling them this is our network and ... you fit it or you don’t,” Williams says.

Rather, BNSF wants to collaborate with its carload customers, learn how rail fits into their supply chains, and how local service tweaks could better fit their needs and lead to growth, he explains.

Short Line Select, meanwhile, aims to tighten the commercial relationship with top connecting railroads. Participating lines include Genesee & Wyoming’s Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway, Burlington Junction Railway, Genesee & Wyoming’s Portland & Western Railway, TNW Corporation’s Texas Northwestern Railroad and Red River Valley & Western, and Watco’s Timber Rock Railroad.

“One-third of our carload freight originates or terminates on a short line,” says Mark Ganaway, who leads BNSF’s shortline team. “That’s a significant portion of our business. We needed a way to move from transactional relationships to strategic partnerships.”

Last year BNSF handled 2.43 million merchandise carloads, a figure that does not include coal or grain.

“Interchanging more than 260,000 carloads per year, G&W and BNSF have an outstanding partnership. Having two G&W railroads — Alabama & Gulf Coast Railway in the east and Portland & Western Railroad in the west — participate in the BNSF Shortline Select program is a natural step in the evolution of our relationship,” says Kimberly Thompson, a vice president of sales and marketing at G&W. “BNSF’s program taps into the strengths of both a Class I and a short line to broaden both of our market reach and drive more traffic to rail as a safer and more sustainable alternative to trucking.”

BNSF is adding shortline transload locations to its Premier Transload Program directory. It’s also expanding its Certified Sites to include locations on short lines. The sites are rail-served properties that are ready for development. Among them: A site in the Mobile Gateway Park on the AGR in Alabama and a site on the Portland & Western that’s 45 miles north of Portland and will emphasize import/export containerized traffic.

The next step in BNSF’s merchandise growth efforts will be improving the suite of technology tools that customers use to interact with the railroad, Williams says. Traditionally, BNSF has purchased off-the-shelf technology applications. Now it’s building an in-house tech team that will develop BNSF-specific systems.

Customers should see improvements rolled out over the next six to 18 months, Williams says.

Coal and Efficiency Gains Power BNSF’s Second Quarter Profit Growth

By Bill Stephens | August 4, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

The railway’s operating ratio improved 3.4 points, to 64.8%



A BNSF Railway coal train tackles Walker Hill in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming in October 2020. Bill Stephens

OMAHA, Neb. — BNSF Railway’s profits surged in the second quarter thanks to a combination of efficiency gains, lower costs, and higher coal volumes.

The railway’s pre-tax earnings increased 11.5%, to \$1.8 billion, as revenue increased 0.15%, to \$5.7 billion, corporate parent Berkshire Hathaway said on Saturday. Operating expenses declined 4.7% as fuel costs decreased 15.1%. The railway’s operating ratio was 64.8%, a 3.4-point improvement compared to last year’s second quarter.

Overall volume for the quarter was up 1.4% but revenue per unit declined by 1.4% due to lower fuel surcharge revenue and unfavorable business mix, which was partially offset by pricing gains.

Revenue in the railway’s Consumer Products segment, which includes intermodal and automotive traffic, declined 7.1% despite a 0.6% increase in volume. “The volume increases were primarily due to higher intermodal shipments from higher West Coast imports and an increase in automotive vehicle volume,” Berkshire said.

Industrial Products revenue declined just 0.8% despite a 3.6% drop in volume. The volume decline was largely due to lower construction and petroleum products shipments.

Agricultural and Energy Products revenue increased 3.5% on a 0.57% increase in volume. “The volume increases were primarily due to slightly higher grain exports, partially offset by lower domestic grain, feed and renewable fuel volumes,” Berkshire said.

Coal revenue grew 17.8% as volume rose 13.7% as higher natural gas prices made coal more competitive as a utility fuel.

BNSF Passes Halfway Mark With New Missouri River Bridge in North Dakota

By Trains Staff | August 8, 2025

The span will replace a 140-year old bridge built by Northern Pacific



L: BNSF is building a new bridge across the Missouri River in Bismarck, N.D. BNSF

R: Work is progressing to form the deck for three of the BNSF bridge's 12 spans over the Missouri River in North Dakota. BNSF



An artist's rendering of the completed bridge spanning the Missouri River. BNSF

BISMARCK, N.D. — BNSF Railway has passed the halfway point in construction of its new bridge across the Missouri River in the Bismarck-Mandan, N.D., area on its former Northern Pacific Jamestown Subdivision.

The 1,554-foot-long single-track bridge is being built adjacent to the 140-year-old NP bridge that it will replace. The bridge will have generous clearances and features four main structural steel spans with precast concrete girder approaches. The bridge's piers will be able to accommodate a second track if necessary.

Construction began in 2023 and is expected to be completed next year. Work on the new BNSF bridge this summer has involved constructing cofferdams for Piers 5 and 6. Additional work includes erecting the spans for the bridge's superstructure. By year's end, nine of the 12 new spans should be complete.

The old bridge will be removed after the new bridge is placed into service.

BNSF Sets All-time Low Terminal Dwell Record

By Trains Staff | August 6, 2025

July was the best month for processing cars at major terminals

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF set an all-time monthly record for terminal dwell in July, with cars spending an average of 21 hours in its major yards.

Terminals that set new marks for low dwell include Barstow, Calif.; Belen, N.M.; Northtown, Minn.; and Pasco, Wash.

BNSF's intermodal and automotive terminal in Pearland, Texas, which serves the Houston area, achieved 100% on-time performance.

"Our teams are getting it done! They've risen to the challenge this year to push our service to new levels of efficiency," Matt Garland, BNSF's chief transportation officer, said in a LinkedIn post today. BNSF began looking at ways to unclog its yards early last year, an effort that was accelerated last July after the railroad brought in veteran operations guru Ed Harris, a consultant who has served as chief operating officer at three Class I railroads.

The yard efficiency initiative puts an emphasis on having all departments — from field operations and service design to the Network Operations Center and continuous improvement team — rigorously adhere to terminal processes, including departing on time.

The railway also has more tightly integrated the four computer systems that play a role in yard productivity.



Yard power sits near the tower at BNSF Railway's Northtown Yard in Minneapolis. BNSF

BNSF Officially Opens Salt Lake City Intermodal Terminal

By [Trains Staff](#) | August 1, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025



BNSF Railway Chief Marketing Officer Tom Williams addresses the crowd at the grand opening ceremony of the railway's new Salt Lake City intermodal terminal. BNSF

SALT LAKE CITY — BNSF Railway, Patriot Rail, and the Utah Inland Port Authority held a grand opening ceremony on Thursday for the Class I railroad's new intermodal facility in Salt Lake City. Utah Gov. Spencer Cox, legislative leaders, and public-private partners gathered to celebrate the milestone with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "This new facility is an exciting opportunity to improve our capacity and efficiency as the industry's intermodal leader, providing more flexible, competitive options for our customers," BNSF Chief Marketing Officer Tom Williams said in a statement. "We are grateful for Patriot Rail and UIPA's partnership, as this new facility will strengthen our supply chains from the West Coast to Utah and beyond." The service handles international containers for Mediterranean Shipping Co. and CMA CGM, linking the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach with Salt Lake City. The trains run over Union Pacific trackage rights from Northern California to Salt Lake City. The 43-acre site, located 5 miles from Salt Lake City International Airport, supports BNSF's new intermodal service between California and Salt

"This partnership reflects our shared commitment to smart, scalable infrastructure," said Patriot Rail CEO Brandy Christian. "By working together with BNSF and UIPA, we've delivered a project that not only meets the demands of today's economy but also positions Utah for long-term success in the global logistics arena."

"This is a game changer for Utah's economy," said Abby Osborne, board chair for the Utah Inland Port Authority and chief of staff for the Utah House of Representatives. "By increasing intermodal capacity and introducing new competition, we're unlocking more opportunity for Utah manufacturers, shippers, and communities. This expansion supports our broader vision to make Utah a national leader in resilient, efficient, and forward-thinking logistics."

Report: Goldman Sachs Advising BNSF on Potential Merger (updated)

By [Bill Stephens](#) | July 21, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

The news comes on the heels of last week's reports on merger talks involving Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern



BNSF Railway hotshot Z-WSPSBD3-04 rolls west through the Rose Hill, Kan., crossovers on Dec. 5, 2024, at what used to be the west end of Rose Hill siding. Keel Middleton

BNSF Railway has not engaged with investment bankers about a possible railroad merger, Berkshire Hathaway Chairman and CEO Warren Buffett told CNBC today.

Yesterday Semafor and Reuters reported, citing people familiar with the matter, that BNSF had hired Goldman Sachs to advise the railroad about mergers.

But Buffett said neither he nor Greg Abel, the Berkshire executive who oversees the railroad, has spoken with Goldman Sachs or any other investment bank. And Buffett said the company would not seek advice from bankers because they are predisposed in favor of making deals.

Speculation about a potential merger involving two of the big U.S. Class I railroads has been building for the past few months, and multiple news media outlets reported last week that Union

In May a BNSF spokesman told *Trains* that the railroad doesn't see a catalyst for a transcontinental merger.

"For a merger to happen in today's environment, our customers, policymakers, and the communities we serve would need to indicate that they want to see additional mergers," the railroad said. "We view it as unlikely as we aren't hearing from our customers or the other constituencies that they want to see further consolidation in the industry at this point in time."

Buffett: Berkshire Will Not Bid for CSX or Norfolk Southern

By [Bill Stephens](#) | August 25, 2025



CSX, BNSF, and Pan Am Railways power lead a Pan Am Southern unit grain train en route to Ayer, Mass., on Pan Am's freight main in former B&M territory, at Wendell, Mass., on Aug. 16, 2017. Scott A. Hartley

OMAHA, Neb. — BNSF Railway wants to date CSX — but has no interest in getting married.

Five days after Union Pacific announced its \$85 billion deal to acquire Norfolk Southern, Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett and CEO designate Greg Abel told CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs that they would not bid for the Eastern railroad. Rather, Buffett told CNBC in an interview today, Berkshire believes that its BNSF Railway should forge closer ties with CSX to gain growth synergies without the expense and regulatory risk of a merger.

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CSX stock fell 5% after the cable network's report. Wall Street analysts and industry observers have expected that BNSF would seek to acquire CSX as a competitive response to the UP-NS merger. Buffett and Abel met with Hinrichs on Aug. 3 in Omaha, Berkshire's hometown. The Omaha-based UP and NS on July 29 announced their deal to create the first U.S. transcontinental railroad. BNSF and CSX on Friday said that [they would launch more interline intermodal service](#) linking California and the Southwest with points on CSX in the Southeast. The railroads also will offer international intermodal service connecting Kansas City with the ports of New York/New Jersey and Virginia. Earlier this year — amid merger talk from UP CEO Jim Vena — BNSF said it did not see the catalyst for a megamerger involving Class I railroads. "For a merger to happen in today's environment, our customers, policy-makers, and the communities we serve would need to indicate that they want to see additional mergers," BNSF spokesman Zak Andersen said in May. "We view it as unlikely as we aren't hearing from our customers or the other constituencies that they want to see further consolidation in the industry at this point in time." Until Buffett's remarks today, neither BNSF nor Berkshire had commented on the UP-NS deal. The UP-NS merger will be the first to be judged under the Surface Transportation Board's tougher 2001 review rules, which require the combining Class I railroads to enhance competition and be in the public interest.

The railroads expect to file their merger application by the end of January, although Vena says he would like to see it filed by early November. Independent rail analyst Anthony B. Hatch says it's conceivable that this is not Berkshire Hathaway's last word on mergers. BNSF and CSX could seek to win concessions as part of the UP-NS merger review process, he says. If the STB approves the deal, BNSF and CSX could then turn around and argue that they need to merge, too, Hatch says. *Note: Updated at 3:09 p.m. Central with comment from Anthony B. Hatch*



---Union Pacific News---

Union Pacific Is Said to Near Deal for Norfolk Southern

By [David Carnevali](#), [Ryan Gould](#), and [Kiel Porter](#) Provided by Rick Krenske

July 26, 2025 at 1:00 PM CDT

- [Union Pacific Corp.](#) could reach an agreement to acquire [Norfolk Southern Corp.](#) and create a transcontinental rail behemoth as soon as early next week, people familiar with the matter said.
- The deal, which would be the largest deal ever in the rail industry, is likely to include both cash and stock, according to the people, who asked not to be identified discussing confidential information.
- Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern [announced](#) on Thursday that they were in advanced talks. Details of an agreement, including the timing and structure, could still change, the people said.
- Norfolk Southern is set to [report](#) second quarter earnings on July 29.
- A representative for Union Pacific declined to comment, while a spokesperson for Norfolk Southern didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.
- A merger would transform the North American rail market, marrying Union Pacific's network across the western US with Norfolk's East Coast routes. It would bring together two companies with a combined market value of roughly [\\$200 billion](#), and heap pressure on rivals including [CSX Corp.](#) and [Berkshire Hathaway Inc.](#)'s BNSF to pursue deals of their own to keep pace.
- Omaha, Nebraska-based Union Pacific's shares have fallen 2.8% since July 16, the day before the first media reports about merger talks, giving it a market value of roughly \$133 billion. Norfolk Southern has climbed about 8.5% during the same period, giving the Atlanta-based railroad a market capitalization of almost \$64 billion.
- Historically rail mergers have been difficult to consummate given the inhospitable regulatory environment. But there had been speculation that the industry was headed for another round of consolidation, fueled by the assumption that President Donald Trump's administration could take a more amenable view to major deals than previous governments.

"We've done a lot of homework to get us to this place," Union Pacific Chief Executive Officer Jim Vena told analysts after the talks were announced. One of the current Trump administration's earliest moves was to elevate Patrick Fuchs to [chair](#) the Surface Transportation Board. Fuchs is seen as a proponent of industry consolidation.

Union Pacific Posts Record Financial Results

By Bill Stephens | July 24, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025



A Union Pacific coal train grinds its way up Logan Hill in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming in Oc-

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific reported record second quarter financial results this morning as surging coal volumes led the railroad's traffic gains.

"We are delivering on our strategy and our results demonstrate our commitment to leading the industry as we set new standards for safety, service, and operational excellence," CEO Jim Vena told investors and analysts on the railroad's Thursday morning earnings call.

The railroad's operating income increased 5%, to \$2.5 billion, as revenue grew 2%, to \$6.2 billion. Earnings per share rose 15%, to \$3.15. The operating ratio was 59%, a 1-point improvement from a year ago.

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Overall volume increased 4%, with growth across all three of the railroad’s business segments. Intermodal was up 1%, industrial products 3%, and bulk 11%, driven by a 31% increase in coal volumes. Favorable natural gas prices and the start of service to the Sam Seymour Power Plant in La Grange, Texas, propelled the spike in coal volume, says Kenny Rocker, executive vice president of marketing and sales. BNSF previously held the power plant coal contract. UP’s key operational and service metrics all improved for the quarter. Velocity, measured by car miles per day, increased 10% to 221 thanks to lower dwell and higher average train speeds. Train length was up 2%, locomotive productivity 5%, and workforce productivity by 9% to a new record. The railroad’s injury and accident rates dropped for the quarter, although UP did not release precise figures. Intermodal trip-plan compliance rose 5 points to 88%, while merchandise trip-plan compliance improved 10 points, to 74%. “Our agility was once again on full display as we effectively handled a 30% surge in coal and renewable shipments, all while providing the service we sold our customers,” says Eric Gehringer, executive vice president of operations. “Ultimately, it’s another proof statement highlighting our robust and reliable service product, which is imperative as we strive to grow with our existing customers and unlock new markets.” UP affirmed its financial outlook for the year despite ongoing economic uncertainty surrounding tariffs and trade policy and the strength of consumer spending. “We expect coal volumes to significantly exceed last year’s levels,” Rocker says. The railroad also has a positive outlook on its industrial products business, due in part to new and expanded facilities coming on line on the Gulf Coast. Intermodal volumes are expected to be weaker than last year’s second half, when the railroad saw a tariff-driven surge in international volume from West Coast ports. Softer vehicle sales, meanwhile, will hurt automotive volume.

Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern Reach \$85 billion Merger Deal

By Bill Stephens | July 29, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

The Union Pacific Transcontinental Railroad would be the first in the U.S. to stretch from coast to coast



L: A Union Pacific train with UP and Norfolk Southern power crosses UP’s diamond with NS at Momence, Ill., on April 10, 2022. David Lassen R: Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena, left, and Norfolk Southern CEO Mark George shake hands in UP’s Omaha, Neb., headquarters after signing their historic deal to create the first U.S. transcontinental railroad. UP



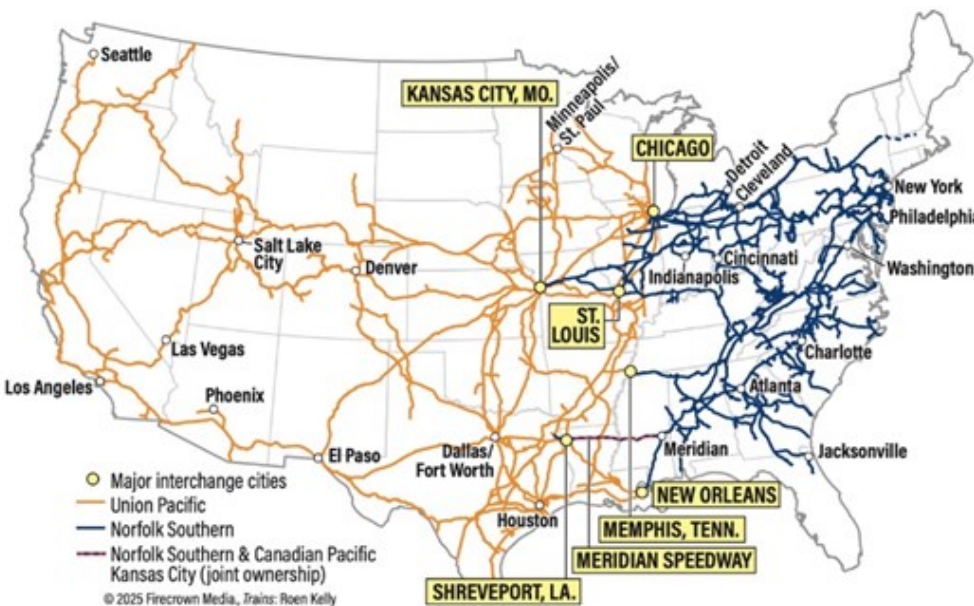
Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern today announced an \$85 billion deal to tie their networks together and create the first U.S. transcontinental railroad.

The merged company — which will be called Union Pacific — will transform the U.S. supply chain and economy, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and preserve all union jobs, the railroads said.

UP will acquire NS in a stock and cash transaction that values NS at \$320 per share, a 25% premium. The combined company would have an enterprise value of more than \$250 billion. The railroads said the merger would create \$2.75 billion in annual synergies within three years, through a combination of \$1.75 billion in revenue growth and \$1 billion in cost savings.

“Railroads have been an integral part of building America since the Industrial Revolution, and this transaction is the next step in advancing the industry,” UP CEO Jim Vena said.

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The combined UP-NS system will cover more than 52,000 miles and touch 43

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“Imagine seamlessly hauling steel from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Colton, Calif., and moving tomato paste from Heron, Calif., to Fremont, Ohio. Lumber from the Pacific Northwest, plastics from the Gulf Coast, copper from Arizona and Utah, and soda ash from Wyoming. Right now, tens of thousands of railroaders are moving almost everything we use. You name it, and at some point, the railroad hauled it.”

The railroad will stretch 52,215 route miles, with track winding through 43 states from the East Coast to the West Coast and serving around 100 ports. The combined company will deliver faster, more comprehensive freight service to U.S. shippers by eliminating interchange delays, opening new routes, expanding intermodal services, and reducing distance and transit time on key rail corridors, the railroads said. The merged railroad will shift freight to rail, reducing congestion and wear and tear on taxpayer funded highways, they added.

“Norfolk Southern, like Union Pacific, is a railroad integral to the U.S. economy, with a storied 200-year legacy of serving customers across 22 states in the eastern half of the nation,” NS CEO Mark George said in a statement. “Our safety, network, and financial performance is among the best we’ve had as a company, as is our customer satisfaction. And it is from this position of strength that we embark on this transformational combination. We are confident that the power of Norfolk Southern’s franchise, diversified solutions, high-quality customers and partners, as well as skilled employees, will contribute meaningfully to America’s first transcontinental railroad, and to igniting rail’s ability to deliver for the whole American economy today and into the future. Union Pacific is a true partner that shares our belief in rail’s ability to deliver for all stakeholders simultaneously, and we are excited for our future together.”

Vena, who will be CEO of the combined railroad, invoked President Abraham Lincoln, who created the Union Pacific in 1862 with the signing of The Pacific Railroad Act.

“This combination is transformational, enhancing the best freight transportation system in the world – it’s a win for the American economy, it’s a win for our customers, and it’s a win for our people,” Vena said. “It builds on President Abraham Lincoln’s vision of a transcontinental railroad from nearly 165 years ago and advances our Safety, Service and Operational Excellence Strategy. I am confident this historic transaction will enhance competition to benefit customers, communities, and employees while delivering shareholder value.”

Creating the transcontinental version of Union Pacific is overwhelmingly in the public interest, the railroads said, and will enhance competition, consistent with the test that will be applied in the review of the transaction by the Surface Transportation Board.

The companies expect to file their application with the STB within six months, in which the companies will describe how the combined rail network will provide safer, faster, and more reliable service and increased competition.

The board of directors of both Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern unanimously approved the transaction, which is subject to STB review and approval within its statutory timeline, customary closing conditions, and shareholder approval.

The companies are targeting closing the transaction by early 2027. The deal includes a \$2.5 billion reverse termination fee.

They do not plan to use a voting trust, a common maneuver in prior rail mergers that allows the shareholders of the target railroad to cash out while the deal is under regulatory review. The STB rejected a voting trust in Canadian National’s ill-fated attempt to acquire Kansas City Southern under the board’s tougher 2001 merger review rules.

The combined company will be headquartered in Omaha, Neb., which has long been UP’s home base. The NS headquarters in Atlanta will remain a core location over the long-term, with a focus on technology, operations, and innovation, among other priorities, the railroads said.

Trains News Wire will update this story throughout the day. The railroads created a website, UP-NStranscontinental.com, to tout their deal.

— Updated at Aug. 1 at 12:25 p.m. CT with corrected system map.

CEOs say Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern Merger Will Spur Traffic Growth

By Bill Stephens | July 29, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Eliminating interchange should make rail a more attractive option for

OMAHA, Neb. — Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern executives touted their proposed merger as a way to return to volume growth after losing market share to the highway since rail traffic peaked in 2006.

“We can only go so far independently, and let’s face it, this industry has faced contraction over the last couple decades in terms of volume growth,” NS CEO Mark George told investors and analysts on a conference call this morning. “We’ve been losing share to truck — and this is one way to reverse that trend.”

The historic combination — which would create the first transcontinental railroad in the U.S. — would unleash growth by eliminating problematic interchanges, speeding and simplifying service, and enabling the railroad to tap the so-called watershed markets along the Mississippi River. UP and NS envision reeling in \$1.75 billion in growth-related revenue by the third year of their merger.

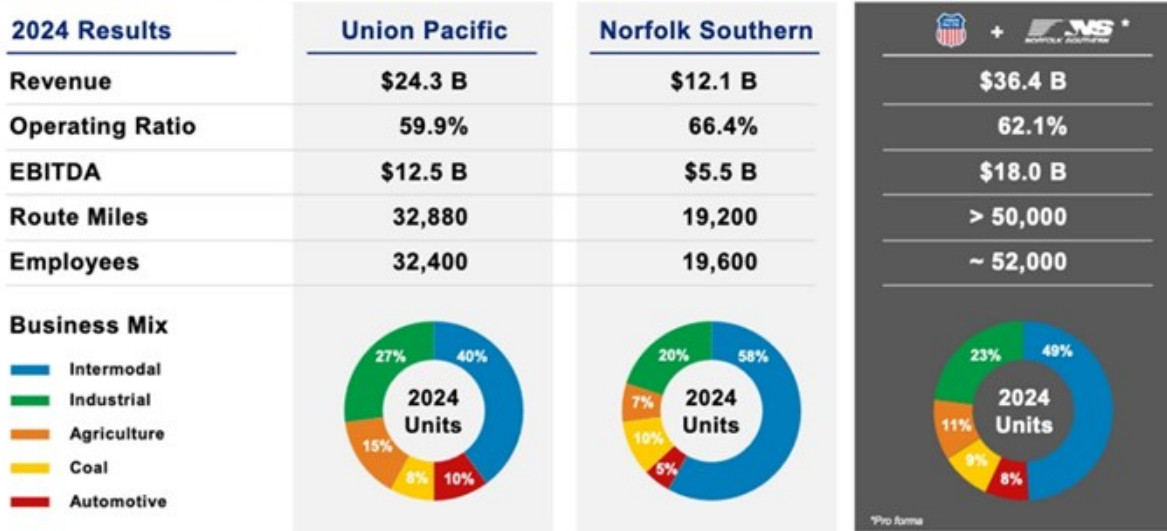
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Union Pacific ES44AC No. 7819 and Norfolk Southern Dash 9-40C No. 8767 bring a westbound UP manifest freight through River Forest, Ill., on March 7, 2015. David Lassen

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Transformative Scale With Balanced Financial and Business Profile



Intermodal traffic will make up 49% of the business for the combined railroads. Union Pacific/Norfolk Southern

Creation of New Single-Line Routes Provides Greater Efficiency and Benefits All Stakeholders

Single Line Service & New Markets



Major Ports & International Gateways



The merger will open up new traffic in the country's "watershed" mid-section, the railroads say. Union Pacific/Norfolk Southern

1-2 day faster cross-country solution, making rail more competitive with truck

Unlocks Mississippi River "Watershed" options

Connects U.S manufacturing to the world

UP and NS currently exchange about 1 million shipments per year and are each other's largest interchange partners. Single-line service will reduce strain on gateways such as Chicago and Memphis, end inefficient crosstown rubber-tire intermodal interchanges, and allow customers to receive rate quotes and bills from one railroad rather than two.

"In the future, those million carloads will immediately see a 24- to 48-hour improvement in their transit time," Vena says. "That combination of faster service and greater market reach is powerful, making our transcontinental railroad an attractive choice for both current and future customers."

The transcontinental system's traffic opportunities include providing seamless service from coast to coast — and most places in between — for intermodal, finished vehicles, food and beverage, chemicals, and steel shipments.

For intermodal and carload, the merger would open up service in the nation's midsection that's currently not well-served by rail due to the short hauls for the eastern or western carrier, or both.

"With our interchange with UP today, 95% of our interchange is over 2,000 miles, meaning only 5% is under 2,000 miles. We see an enormous opportunity to grow in lanes where we would be in that 1,000-mile or 1,500-mile range," George says of intermodal.

"So that's just one example, and that kind of touches upon the entire watershed story."

Railroads are not competitive on short-haul moves in the watershed, an underserved area that stretches from Wisconsin and Minnesota to eastern Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

"When you're going from west of it to east, or east to west, rail is never even contemplated because it's just too much hassle, too much extended time, and frankly, too much cost," George says. "So these are the areas where we see tremendous growth."

Single-line service through the watershed on a combined UP-NS system would enable the railroad to compete for traffic moving between Houston and Charlotte, N.C., and Dallas and Columbus, Ohio, for example.

"There's an awful lot of opportunity here where there's virtually no rail moves. It's all truck moves, and those are big markets," George says, adding that revenue growth from truck conversion likely would exceed the railroads' \$1.75 billion estimate.

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A merger also would allow the railroads to eliminate intermediate handlings for carloads.

“We will remove touch points, and every time there’s a touch point, you add 24 to 36 hours, even at the best, while you’re switching the rail car. That’s gone,” Vena says. “On top of that, at the interchange points, where we used to stop and hand off, those are removed. So every customer that today, when we are finally approved ... we’re going to cut a day or two off of every transit time.” And that, he says, will reduce costs for customers, who can reduce the size of their car fleets due to faster cycle times. It also will mean a more fluid railroad. For new through trains, Chicago will become just another crew change point on the map. But Vena says it’s unlikely that there will be massive swings of volume away from Chicago, a chronic chokepoint where 25% of rail traffic originates, terminates, or passes through.

“We don’t see a huge amount of business changing from Chicago to go to Memphis or go to New Orleans because the out of route miles just don’t add up,” Vena says.

The transcontinental UP also will be able to repatriate international intermodal traffic that Canadian ports, particularly at Vancouver and Prince Rupert, British Columbia, have lured away from U.S. ports over the past two decades, Vena says.

The approval process: Executives also expressed confidence that their deal could gain regulatory approval. The UP-NS combination will be the first judged under the Surface Transportation Board’s 2001 merger review rules. The rules require a merger of Class I railroads to enhance competition — not merely preserve it — and to be in the public interest. Vena said that if the STB systematically reviews the deal while asking if a transcontinental railroad is better for customers and the country, they will approve it.

“We’re very confident of that, or we wouldn’t have taken the step,” he says. Only 20 customers are currently jointly served by UP and NS where their networks overlap in the Midwest. “We intend to provide a competitive alternative,” Vena says, noting that specifics will be included in the merger application. The railroads also structured their deal without the use of a voting trust. Rail mergers have typically involved placing the railroad being acquired into a voting trust in order to maintain the railroad’s independence and to allow its stockholders to cash out while the merger is under regulatory review. The STB in 2021 rejected Canadian National’s request to put Kansas City Southern in a voting trust, saying it wasn’t in the public interest. The decision scuttled the proposed CN-KCS merger and led to the Canadian Pacific-KCS combination, which was judged under the less restrictive old merger review rules due to an exemption granted to KCS, by far the smallest of the Class I railroads.

UP and NS are not taking that chance.

“We actually believe that a voting trust would complicate and potentially delay the transaction,” UP Chief Financial Officer Jennifer Hamann says. “So we want to go to the STB with a fully developed merger application that allows us to really lay out the fundamentals of this merger and provide all the necessary details that supports our position that this will not only enhance competition, but is absolutely in the public interest.” Plus, without a voting trust UP won’t have to fund the deal until it gains STB approval, which is estimated for 2027 based on the STB’s statutory guidelines.

Promises of smooth integration

Railroad mergers in the modern era have had one thing in common: Service problems that occur while meshing operations and information technology systems. UP’s operational decisions in Houston after the 1996 acquisition of Southern Pacific created a massive traffic logjam in 1997 and 1998. On the heels of that, information technology problems led to immediate service problems on Norfolk Southern after the 1999 split of Conrail with CSX, which later stumbled with its own service issues. “A transaction of this size and scope won’t be easy to execute. We understand that,” Vena says. The railroad will maintain an adequate buffer of locomotives, train crews, and other resources in order to be able to better respond to service issues, he says. “We’re very aware of what led to the merger moratorium back in the 2000, 2001 time frame, and it was just a bunch of bad integrations,” George says. “And we are committed to make sure that doesn’t happen in this case.” The two-year review process will allow sufficient time for planning, George says, particularly on information technology systems. CPKC’s problematic computer cutover in May in former KCS territory in the U.S. produced congestion, missed switches, and delays that CPKC has now mostly mopped up. Last year UP had a smooth cutover to its new cloud-based NetControl computer system, which processes everything from rail car inventory and scheduling to waybill processing and train, locomotive, and terminal management. “It was a non-event,” Vena says. “It was like nobody knew it actually happened.”

Much of the \$2 billion the railroads have earmarked for increased capital spending will go toward information technology investments.

Merger synergies of \$2.75 billion

Assuming shareholders approve the deal, UP will acquire NS in a stock and cash transaction that values NS at \$320 per share, a 25% premium. The combined company would have an enterprise value of more than \$250 billion. The railroads said the merger would create \$2.75 billion in annual synergies, split between \$1.75 billion in revenue growth and \$1 billion in cost and productivity savings.

UP will finance \$20 billion of the deal through a combination of cash on hand and new debt. Both railroads will stop their share buyback programs through 2028 but will maintain dividend payments.

Shipper and labor opposition

The railroads pledged to preserve union jobs, which are the vast majority of the combined system’s 52,000-strong workforce. “All of our union employees who have a job today will have jobs tomorrow in our merged company,” Vena says. “And a company that is growing its business and spurring economic development creates even more jobs.” Nonetheless, the SMART-TD union that represents conductors said it would oppose the merger [see “Union says it will oppose ...,” *Trains News Wire*, July 29, 2025].

Yesterday shipper associations told News Wire that they would oppose further consolidation in the rail industry.

How will the railroads handle objections from shippers and rail labor? “We’ll handle them one by one, but I think as people start to come to understand what we’re putting forward, they’re going to see the benefits,” George says.

That applies to labor because the company would add jobs as it gains new traffic, he says.



Trade Disputes Hit CN Volumes and Prompt Railway to Reduce Outlook

By Bill Stephens | July 22, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Cost-cutting enabled CN to boost profits and earnings for the quarter despite traffic and revenue declines



A Canadian National merchandise train, which originated in Canada, heads south on the former Elgin, Joliet & Eastern past JB Tower at the junction with the Union Pacific main line in West Chicago, Ill. Bill Stephens

MONTREAL — Canadian National lowered its outlook for the year — and pulled its longer-term guidance today — in response to ongoing trade- and tariff-related economic uncertainty.

CN delivered the news while releasing its second-quarter financial results, which included higher operating income despite lower revenue and flat volume.

“A few months ago, trade deals seemed imminent. And instead there is an increasing uncertainty around the tariff and trade environment, particularly in Canada,” CEO Tracy Robinson told investors and analysts on the railway’s earnings call.

The current and threatened U.S. tariffs on Canada include a 35% tariff on various Canadian goods set to take effect on Aug. 1, alongside existing tariffs of 25% on certain imports and 50% on steel and aluminum.

The trade disputes, along with softening economic conditions, have had a negative impact on CN’s forest products, metals, international intermodal, and automotive traffic. Overall for the quarter, volume was down 1% based

Strong bulk volumes — including grain and potash — and domestic intermodal growth were unable to offset declines in international intermodal and merchandise volume, says Janet Drysdale, interim chief commercial officer. Although grain and fertilizer revenue was up 12%, revenue declined in intermodal, automotive, and every merchandise segment.

As volume softened, CN took steps to reduce costs, including furloughing train crews and storing locomotives. “This team has proactively and progressively adjusted the operating plan resources throughout the quarter, maintaining good tensions between costs and network fluidity and performance,” Robinson says.

As a result, operating income increased 5%, to \$1.2 billion, as revenue declined 1%, to \$3.13 billion. Earnings per share rose 7%, to \$1.37. The railway’s operating ratio improved 2.3 points, to 61.7%. CN trimmed its \$2.5 billion capital budget by \$36.7 million. CN now expects to deliver earnings per share growth of between 5% and 9%, down from previous guidance of 10% to 15% growth. And the railway withdrew its 2024-2026 outlook, which was drawn up prior to trade disputes that have weighed on the railway’s merchandise and intermodal volumes. Further complicating CN’s financial outlook: Unfavorable exchange rates that have a negative impact on earnings per share. Nonetheless, CN still expects several growth projects in Western Canada to come online as expected over the next couple of years. Derek Taylor, CN’s chief field operations officer, says CN ratched down costs as merchandise volume declined. At the end of the quarter, 560 train and engine crew members were on furlough, 200 locomotives were parked, and 4,000 additional freight cars were stored.

The railway continued to run well, with car-miles per day, through dwell, and local service all improving over last year’s second quarter.

CN Seeks to End Lease on Ex-BC Rail Route North of Vancouver

By Bob Johnston | July 22, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025



BC Rail’s Cariboo Prospector RDC passenger service is viewed from the cab of the Whistler Northwind tourist train at Lime, B.C., on July 2, 2001. All BCR passenger service was discontinued Oct. 31, 2002, and the province-owned line was leased to CN the following year. CN now wants to end its



An early iteration of Rocky Mountaineer’s “Rainforest to Gold Rush” service from Jasper, Alberta, to North Vancouver, B.C., hugs Seton Lake south of Lillooet, B.C., on May 18, 2007. The rugged topography makes this perhaps the most scenic of Rocky Mountaineer’s Canadian offerings. CN has announced intentions to end its lease of the route. Bob Johnston

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BC Rail's luxury Whistler Northwind tourist train poses for the photographer on a 250-foot bridge at Chasm, B.C. on July 2, 2001. The trestle and bridge are on a portion of the leased route north of Vancouver, B.C., that Canadian National seeks to abandon. Bob Johnston

SQUAMISH, British Columbia — Canadian National Railway has announced its intention to abandon operations on 214 miles of former BC Rail tracks north of Squamish that it began leasing from the province of British Columbia in 2003. The scenic route through the province's interior from North Vancouver to a connection with CN's Prince Rupert line at Prince George, B.C., hosts seasonal Rocky Mountaineer "Rainforest to Gold Rush" excursions to and from Jasper, Alta. A 20-mile segment south of Lillooet, B.C., is also utilized by a First Nations organization that operates twice-daily railbus service.

As first [reported by the Squamish Chief](#), CN issued a three-year plan to the provincial government earlier this month in which the company outlines its intention to "decommission" tracks it leases from just north of Squamish, about 39 miles from North Vancouver, to a point south of Exeter, B.C., in the 100 Mile House area of British Columbia's Cariboo Region. It would retain lease rights north another 206 miles to Prince George and beyond. The railroad has not been operating through freights regularly over the route for several years.

Regulations require the railroad within a year to "publicly advertise the availability of the line or any operating in it for sale, lease, or other transfer for continued operations." At this early stage, it is unclear whether any operator will step up to take over operations or track maintenance, although the *Chief* reached out to a member of Parliament who called the discontinuance "an exciting development" for possible passenger rail expansion

A British Columbia assembly member told the news outlet that the July 2026 date "gives us a one-year window to build a business case [for taking over the route], secure support from all levels of government, and make an offer to acquire the lease via an operating entity." But if no deal can be reached, others suggest the right-of-way could be turned into a trail.

Rocky Mountaineer's three-day North Vancouver-Jasper "[Rainforest to Gold Rush](#)" weekly excursions in each direction will thus continue to operate through 2026. However, spokeswoman Nicole Ford says, "we are determining what this means for our longer term operations in the region." The spring-through-fall trips offering both SilverLeaf and GoldLeaf service classes leave Jasper on Tuesdays and North Vancouver on Wednesdays, making overnight stops at Whistler and Quesnel, B.C.

Tracks from Squamish to Quesnel were completed in 1921 by the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, and later extended south to North Vancouver and up to Prince George by the 1950s, when passenger service utilizing Budd RDCs began over the entire route. Renamed BC Rail, the province-owned, passenger-friendly management parlayed legacy equipment acquired from VIA into the *Pacific Starlight Dinner Train* out of North Vancouver, *Royal Hudson* steam trips from Squamish, and introduced luxury *Whistler Northwind* journeys in 2001 between North Vancouver and Prince George. with refurbished heritage lounge cars and single-level Colorado Railcar domes once used on the defunct *Florida Fun Train*.

After BC Rail passenger service ended in October 2002, a railcar shuttle between the division point at Lillooet and Seton Portage was maintained through the Seton Lake tunnel to give area residents a shortcut in place of an hour-long highway trip. Today, a converted school bus plies a route for [the Tsalalh Seton Train](#) that calls at schools and grocery stores on Lillooet streets before lowering flanged wheels to run on tracks to Seton Portage, where it terminates off-rail at a restaurant and pub.

The scheduled service operates [two round trips daily](#), but a recently posted Facebook advisory reminds passengers that the schedule is different on Thursdays when there is a schedule conflict with the Rocky Mountaineer. News Wire has reached out to the shuttle operator for comment on CN's plans, but has not received a response..



---- CPKC News ----

CPKC Reports Mixed Progress on Service Recovery

By Bill Stephens | July 11, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

Chemical shippers in former Kansas City Southern territory say they're still feeling the effects of a May 3 computer system cut-over that caused delays and congestion

WASHINGTON — Canadian Pacific Kansas City's local service in former Kansas City Southern territory continues to improve after a troublesome May 3 computer system cutover, but merchandise train on-time performance declined last week and dwell remains stubbornly high at yards in Louisiana and Iowa.

[CPKC told federal regulators this week](#) that it still expects service to return to normal levels by the second half of July.

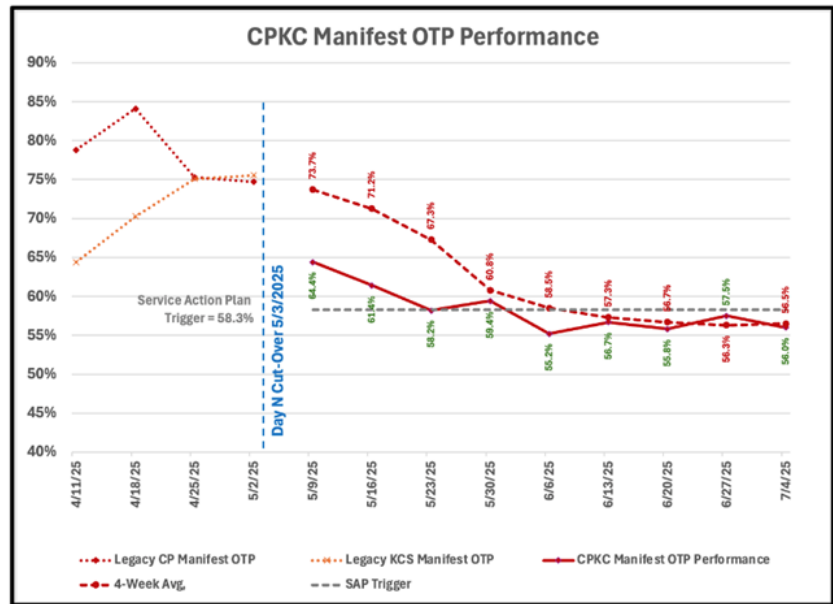
"Overall, CPKC's ability to meet the needs of its customers on the legacy-KCS network has shown broad improvement. CPKC has made strong progress towards consistent [first and last mile] performance ... enabled by greater familiarity on the part of field operations personnel and customers with the new CPKC systems and processes rolled out for the May 3 transition," the railway said in its weekly update to the Surface Transportation Board. "As a further manifestation of these improvements, the volume of calls and emails into CPKC's customer support centers has trended steadily down towards normal levels."

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Kansas City Southern ET44AC No. 5022 leads a train into East St. Louis, Ill., on April 2, 2019. Chris Guss



CPKC's merchandise on-time performance continues to lag.

Local service performance reached 91% last week, up significantly from the May 23 low point of 66.3%. CPKC said the usual traffic lull during the Fourth of July holiday week helped relieve pressure on its system in former KCS territory. “With the holiday now behind us CPKC anticipates building momentum in the yard inventory (dwell), corridor fluidity, and train speed improvements that will drive improvement in Manifest OTP performance,” the railway said. Boosting manifest on-time performance from the current 56% is a priority, CPKC said. Manifest train on-time performance was around 75% prior to the information technology system cutover. Chemical shippers are still feeling the impact of CPKC service delays. “CPKC is working with their customers. So they are at least responding and working to resolve the issues,” says Jeffrey Sloan, the senior director of regulatory affairs for the American Chemistry Council, the trade group representing petrochemical companies. “But it’s putting a lot of extra burden on the shippers to make sure things are right.” The CPKC delays have prompted some chemical producers to keep their customer commitments by diverting shipments to trucks or sourcing products from plants on other railroads. In either case, the options are limited and diverting loads adds cost. “This is not a blip. This has been a pretty significant problem for a large swath of companies that had business on the legacy KCS lines,” Sloan says. ACC members are hopeful — but not confident — that CPKC operations will return to normal by the end of the month, Sloan says. Senior CPKC operating officials remain stationed at former KCS yards, including Shreveport and New Orleans, La.; Beaumont and Port Arthur, Texas; and Jackson, Miss. Dwell at Shreveport – the key hub on the former KCS network – was 59.7 hours last week, while cars averaged 52.4 hours at New Orleans. Both figures are well above the normal range. Regulators last month required CPKC to file a service action plan in response to the congestion, delays, and missed switches that mounted in Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi after the CP operating system replaced the old KCS system.

CPKC Takes Second-Quarter Volume Crown
 By Bill Stephens | July 7, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025
 Union Pacific comes in second with 31% growth in coal traffic



freshly painted CPKC AC4400CWM No. 8101 leads a stack train across the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal in East Chicago, Ind., on March 8, 2025. Bruce Stahl

Canadian Pacific Kansas City was the fastest-growing railroad in the second quarter, with its overall volume up 6%. CPKC’s industry-leading growth was due to double-digit increases in intermodal (14%), grain (16%), and coal (10%). Union Pacific ranked No. 2 for the quarter, with its volume up 4% overall, led by a 31% increase in coal traffic and a 16% bump in grain volume. Norfolk Southern came in third, with 3% growth for the quarter. NS’s gains were propelled by 4% growth in merchandise traffic and a 13% gain in coal volume. BNSF Railway saw a 1.6% gain for the quarter. Coal volume was up 12%, leading all major traffic groups for the quarter. CSX eked out a 0.5% volume gain, with intermodal up 2%, coal up 3.3%, and merchandise down 2%. CN’s overall volume declined 1% for the quarter despite a 26% increase in grain traffic.

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CN’s merchandise traffic sagged 4%, while its coal volume was flat, and intermodal was up 1%. Union Pacific (1%) and Norfolk Southern (4%) were the only Class I railroads to show growth in merchandise traffic. With the exception of CPKC, intermodal growth was anemic: CSX and UP up 2%, CN and NS up 1%, and BNSF up 0.4%. Four of the six systems also saw their coal traffic grow by double-digits during the quarter. Overall, North American rail volume was up 3% for the quarter, with intermodal up 2%, merchandise down 1%, and coal and grain both up 6%.

CPKC Reports Merger-Related Growth Figures

By Bill Stephens | July 17, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

The railway also told regulators that traffic indirectly related to the 2023 merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern grew significantly, too

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED TRANSACTION-RELATED TRAFFIC GROWTH



A CPKC train crosses the Patrick J. Ottensmeyer International Railway Bridge on Feb. 6, 2025. CPKC

CORRIDOR	TRUCK-TO-RAIL TRAFFIC ³	RAIL-TO-RAIL		NEW “GROWTH” TRAFFIC	TOTALS
		EXTENDED HAUL TRAFFIC	NEW SINGLE LINE TRAFFIC		
Southbound: CP Network to KCS Network	2,443	16,720	4,561	6,488	30,212
Northbound: KCS Network to CP Network	2,588	14,947	5,881	3,410	26,826
TOTALS	5,031	31,667	10,442	9,898	57,038

CPKC’s July 2025 report to federal regulators breaks down merger-related growth. CPKC via STB

WASHINGTON — Canadian Pacific Kansas City’s merger-related traffic grew 18.8% during the six-month period covered in its latest report to federal regulators.

The July 15 report, which is required as part of the STB’s ongoing monitoring of the merger, covers the period from Nov. 1, 2024, through April 30 and compares traffic levels to the railway’s previous six months. Over the latest period, CPKC added 57,038 carloads and containers, up from 48,030 in the May through October 2024 period.

CPKC also touted traffic growth that it attributes indirectly to the 2023 merger of Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern. “CPKC has found that the expanded network reach resulting from the combination continues to lead customers to view CPKC as a more attractive transportation service provider for an array of shipments that include those occurring entirely within the boundaries of either the pre-Transaction CP or KCS network,” the railway said. “In the aggregate, CPKC estimates that gains such as these that are indirectly attributable to the Transaction have driven significant additional growth for CPKC — approximately 51,000 carloads and 159,000 intermodal units during the Reporting Period.”

The merger also continues to drive increased competition among railroads, particularly for cross-border traffic moving between the U.S. and Mexico, CPKC said.

“CPKC has observed substantial volumes of intermodal traffic handled by intermodal intermediaries working with UP and BNSF shifting to the Eagle Pass gateway (and movement via Ferromex within Mexico) by virtue of the new services that these railroads developed in response to the CP/KCS combination,” CPKC said.

CPKC operates the largest rail gateway between the U.S. and Mexico, with its two Patrick J. Ottensmeyer International Bridges spanning the Rio Grande between Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

The CPKC corridor to experience the largest growth by far was its route linking KCS points in Mexico with origins and destinations on the former CP network in the Midwest and Canada. In all, CPKC says this corridor handled 39,795 loads that were diverted from truck, came from extended hauls, represented new single-line traffic, or were the result of overall growth during the six months covered by the report.

“CPKC’s ability to attract new traffic in this corridor has benefitted from CPKC’s single-system service design initiatives, including CPKC’s MMX service, deeper run-through blocking, and disciplined attention to service reliability in this corridor (including within Mexico), coupled with the broader market reach enabled by the Transaction,” CPKC said.

New traffic in this corridor included liquified petroleum gas moving from Western Canada to Mexico, wheat shipments from Minnesota and North Dakota to Mexico, and growth in intermodal traffic on the railway’s flagship Mexico Midwest Express trains 180/181.

CPKC's Creel Warns of Issues from UP-NS 'endgame' Merger (updated)

By Bill Stephens | July 30, 2025 | Last updated on August 6, 2025

CPKC CEO says his railroad "will be a loud voice in the room;" CN offers more measured response, while BNSF and CSX remain mum



Freshly painted CPKC AC4400CWM No. 8101 leads a stack train across the Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal in East Chicago, Ind., on March 8, 2025. Bruce Stahl

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific Kansas City CEO Keith Creel today teed off on the proposed merger of Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern, raising a host of questions and concerns about the \$85 billion deal that would reshape the railroad industry.

Creel, speaking on CPKC's earnings call, issued a series of warnings about the transcontinental deal, including the potential for a nationwide rail service meltdown if UP and NS were to bungle the integration.

Creel knows the complexities firsthand: CPKC's problematic May 3 computer cutover in former Kansas City Southern territory in the U.S. caused nearly three months of congestion, missed switches, and delays for customers in Louisiana, east Texas, and Mississippi. The impact of similar issues on a combined UP-NS system that stretches from coast to coast would be enormous.

"A network that big, if it gets sick, it's not isolated to a particular geographic region of the nation," Creel says. "The entire nation's going to get sick. That's the magnitude of this."

UP CEO Jim Vena said yesterday that the railroad understands the challenges of meshing operations, noting that UP had a flawless cutover to its new cloud-based operating system last year. But Creel says it's one thing to replace your own computer system and quite another to extend it to another railroad.

The specter of service problems — which have accompanied every megamerger in the modern era — already has concerned rail customers, some of whom have contacted CPKC about potential options.

"I guarantee there's some customers out there ... sitting on the edge of their seats, looking at their existing supply chains, trying to hedge their bets, thinking, 'What's at risk?'" he says.

Shippers have not forgotten the widespread service failures in 2021 and 2022 that were caused by crew shortages on the big four U.S. railroads. "Those customers experienced a lot of pain and suffering ... They'd be irresponsible not to start looking at alternatives," Creel says.

Creel successfully navigated the regulatory review process during the CP-KCS merger that won Surface Transportation Board approval in 2023 and says a transcontinental combination faces significantly higher hurdles.

The CP-KCS merger was judged under the board's older, merger-friendly rules. The UP-NS deal faces the more stringent rules released in 2001 after the megamergers of the 1990s, which included Burlington Northern and Santa Fe, Union Pacific and Southern Pacific, and the CSX-NS split of Conrail.

The 2001 rules — which require railroads to show their merger would enhance competition, be in the public interest, and address downstream impacts such as additional mergers — ensure the STB's review won't just be about the UP acquisition of NS.

It will, Creel says, be about the future of the North American rail network.

"This does not just affect UP and NS. UP and NS both know this, the regulator knows this, we all know this," Creel says. "This ... could well and might likely trigger additional industry consolidation — an endgame scenario."

Considering the likelihood that a UP-NS combination would provoke a second transcon merger involving BNSF and CSX, Creel says the UP-NS deal cannot be judged in isolation. The UP-NS merger application, he says, must address a fundamental redrawing of the railroad map.

"They're speaking to the entire industry. They're speaking to every customer that ships on any rail network in North America, and it is a North American rail network," Creel says. "So the gravity of this is not to be taken lightly."

The key question, Creel says, is whether having a transcontinental duopoly, with two go-everywhere systems in the U.S., is in the public interest.

Creel says the STB will give the merger a diligent, fact-based review under the untested 2001 rules. "Rest assured, the STB will want to get this one right," he says.

To enhance competition, UP and NS will have to agree to concessions that would open up sole-served customer locations to a second railroad, Creel says. And that means CPKC would seek unfettered access to UP's crown jewel: Its lock on petrochemical traffic on the Gulf Coast as well as locations in Kansas City and St. Louis.

The access would enhance competition and allow CPKC to take traffic to Canada or Mexico, other points on its system in the U.S., or to interchange partners. "The strength of this network we put together allows us to compete and win in any of these scenarios," Creel says.

Creel questioned the need for a transcontinental merger, arguing that railroads have not done enough to develop interline commercial partnerships or better coordinate interchange operations by building more run-through trains. "Have they exhausted all those opportunities? I know we haven't," Creel says. CPKC will actively participate in the review process to protect its own interests, the interests of its customers, and to ensure that the facts are known, Creel says. "Rest assured, we will be a loud voice in the room," he says.

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But he would not rule out the possibility that CPKC would consider a merger. It's among the options the railway would have to review as part of its obligation to maximize shareholder value, Creel says.

"We won't be confined by the traditional, so maybe expect the unexpected — who knows?" he says.

Union Pacific, in a statement on Thursday morning, defended its record and the proposed merger.

"Union Pacific stands on its record, and it is clear. The Union Pacific–Norfolk Southern merger, when approved, will benefit America, supporting reindustrialization and moving products more efficiently across the U.S. It's a win for customers who will benefit from end-to-end service and employees as we grow with customers and expand the workforce. We have a history of implementing technology changes, such as Net Control across our 32,000-mile network, without issue. Union Pacific looks forward to the transaction being approved once everything has been reviewed," spokeswoman Kristen South said in an email.

CPKC rival CN, meanwhile, remains focused on interline partnerships while keeping a close eye on merger developments.

"CN is closely monitoring the ongoing discussions about possible transcontinental rail mergers. Our focus remains on delivering consistent performance for our customers, pursuing strategic growth opportunities, and creating long-term value for our shareholders," spokeswoman Ashley Michnowski says. "CN believes this can be achieved through greater collaboration between railways, connecting key markets with critical resources."

BNSF and CSX representatives declined to comment on the UP-NS merger.

CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs, speaking on the railroad's earnings call last week, prior to the UP and NS announcement, said CSX would have to consider all of its options.

Note: Updated at 10:45 a.m. Central on July 31 with comment from Union Pacific.

Flooding Closes CPKC Main Line in Wisconsin (updated)

By David Lassen | August 10, 2025 | Last updated on August 11, 2025

Amtrak trains being held or delayed after one-



Crews work to clear debris at the CPKC bridge over the Menomonee River in Wauwatosa, Wis., where the tracks are under water after the river overflowed its banks. David Lassen

WAUWATOSA, Wis. — CPKC's main line across Wisconsin has reopened after being closed Saturday night by torrential rains, disrupting freight and Amtrak operations.

Locations near Milwaukee reported as much as 14.5 inches of rain between Saturday evening and 2 p.m. on Sunday, [according to WISN-TV](#). Wauwatosa, Wis., just west of Milwaukee, reported 7.15 inches; there, the Menomonee River overflowed its banks, with water flowing across the CPKC main line. As of 3 p.m. Sunday, crews were working to clear debris where the rail line crosses the river in downtown Wauwatosa, where water was still at the height of the bridge.

The line was reopened late Sunday night.

The eastbound *Empire Builder*, which had been held for several hours Sunday at the Duplainville crossing with Canadian National in Pewaukee, Wis., was eventually terminated there, with passengers bused the remainder of the route and the train deadheaded into Chicago. The westbound *Builder* departed Milwaukee at 12:02 a.m. today (Aug. 11) after being held for more than seven hours, then suffered another delay in Columbus, Wis., for recrewing after its crew reached its hours-of-service limit.

As of 8 a.m., it had just left Wisconsin Dells, Wis., some 13 hours, 17 minutes late.

Sunday's *Borealis* trains were also disrupted. The eastbound train was terminated in Pewaukee, with passengers bused to Milwaukee and Chicago, while the westbound train used a bus bridge to get passengers from Milwaukee to Pewaukee, where the earlier eastbound train was turned. That train ended up arriving in Minneapolis-St. Paul at 1:24 a.m. today, 6 hours, 28 minutes late.

— Updated at 7:50 p.m. CT with later information on status of Amtrak trains; updated Aug. 11 at 87:40 a.m. CT with line reopened and revised Amtrak information.

STB Backs CPKC in Grain Export Dispute with Union Pacific

By Bill Stephens | July 7, 2025 | Last updated on August 1, 2025

WASHINGTON — Canadian Pacific Kansas City can send Midwestern grain to export at the ports of Houston and Galveston via haulage rights over Union Pacific south of Beaumont, Texas, [the Surface Transportation Board said today](#).

Union Pacific in 2023 had sought to block CPKC's use of Kansas City Southern's so-called South End haulage rights, which were granted to preserve competition as part of UP's 1988 acquisition of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railway.

KCS had only sporadically used the haulage rights. The 2023 CP-KCS merger, however, prompted shipper interest in using CPKC single-line service from the Upper Midwest to reach export markets via Houston and Galveston.

When UP sought to block CPKC grain shipments from North Dakota to the Gulf Coast ports, CPKC on Aug. 1, 2023 asked federal regulators to enforce the haulage rights it says the Interstate Commerce Commission made part of its approval of the UP-MKT merger [see ["CPKC asks regulators ..."](#) *Trains News Wire*, Aug. 3, 2023].

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Canadian Pacific and Kansas City Southern locomotives lead a Canadian Pacific Kansas City grain train. CPKC

The haulage and trackage rights agreement preserved the pre-merger options shippers had to send grain from the Midwest to the Gulf Coast via Kansas City and the independent Katy.

But UP contended that neither grain originated on CPKC locations north or east of Kansas City nor Class I traffic interchanged to CPKC at Kansas City are covered under the South End agreements. This includes interchange between CP and KCS at Kansas City, UP argued.

“The Board’s ruling today underscores our commitment to competition within the rail industry,” STB Chairman Patrick Fuchs said in a statement. “By enforcing this merger condition and affirming the continued use of these haulage rights, the Board preserves routing options for agricultural shippers, helping support a strong supply chain and market access for American exports.”

The STB’s decision upheld the haulage rights that were privately negotiated and then made a condition of the UP-MKT merger.

The board also determined that the term “interchange” in the 1988 agreement includes the exchange of traffic between rail carriers under common control, and therefore that KCSR can continue to move traffic originating on CP and other carriers that are now part of the CPKC corporate family.

Although the board’s decision was unanimous, board member Robert Primus issued a separate, dissenting opinion. Primus said he agreed that the 1988 UP-KCS term sheet regarding the South End haulage and trackage rights should be enforced, but he disagreed with the board’s rationale regarding shipments originating on the former CP in North Dakota.

“During the Board’s consideration of the merger, CP and KCSR did themselves no favors by arguing that the merger would eliminate their Kansas City interchange and result in ‘single-line service,’ a position now seemingly at odds with the outcome KCSR desires in this case,” Primus wrote.

CPKC Oil Train Derails in Wisconsin (updated)

By Trains Staff | August 15, 2025

Official says incident poses ‘no immediate danger;’ Amtrak service disrupted



Approximately 22 cars of a 96-car CPKC unit crude oil train derailed near Reeseville, Wis., on Aug. 15, 2025. Dodge County Sheriff’s Office

LOWELL, Wis. — Approximately 30 cars of a CPKC unit train of crude oil derailed today (Friday, Aug. 15, 2025) near the town of Lowell, with some oil believed to be leaking from the derailed tank cars, according to the Dodge County Sheriff’s Office.

The derailment has led to service disruptions for Amtrak’s *Empire Builder* in both directions, as well as the eastbound *Borealis*.

The sheriff’s office received a report of the derailment at 2:05 p.m. No injuries were reported. The sheriff’s office also reports the incident poses no immediate danger to the public; and no evacuation will be required, as there is only one residence in the vicinity of the derailment with its occupants chosen to leave voluntarily.

The Clyman/Lowell/Reeseville Fire Department, sheriff’s office, and CPKC have secured the scene and are beginning plans to clean up. The derailment is about a mile west of the town of Reeseville.

CPKC, in [a statement to WISN-TV](#), said the “initial assessment indicates at least one car is leaking product. CPKC crews, including hazardous materials experts and environmental teams have responded to the site. Additional personnel, including senior operating officials, and equipment are responding to the scene to conduct a full assessment and begin a clean-up this evening.”

According to Amtrak’s website, the eastbound *Empire Builder* and *Borealis* due through the area this afternoon were to be combined at La Crosse, Wis., and rerouted, via BNSF Railway to Chicago.

The westbound *Builder* will also be rerouted, according to an Amtrak spokesman. The company is seeking chartered buses to serve the missed stops between La Crosse and Chicago.

The derailment location is on CPKC’s Watertown Subdivision, about 54 miles west of Milwaukee.

— Updated at 5:46 p.m. CT with additional Amtrak information and CPKC statement.

How Would UP+NS and BNSF+CSX Transcontinental Systems Compare?

By Bill Stephens | August 8, 2025

BNSF+CSX would generate more revenue and traffic, but UP+NS would be more profitable and efficient



CSX, BNSF, and Pan Am Railways power lead a Pan Am Southern unit grain train en route to Ayer, Mass., on Pan Am's freight main in former B&M territory, at Wendell, Mass., on Aug. 16, 2017. (Scott A. Hartley)

AT A GLANCE: Union Pacific + Norfolk Southern			
2024	Union Pacific	Norfolk Southern	Combined
Route Miles	32,880	19,335	52,215
Annual Revenue	\$24.25 billion	\$12.12 billion	\$36.37 billion
Operating Income	\$9.7 billion	\$4.0 billion	\$13.7 billion
Operating Ratio	60%	66.40%	—
Market Capitalization	\$133.6 billion	\$63 billion	\$196.6 billion
Annual Volume	8.28 million loads	7.05 million loads	15.33 million
Intermodal Volume	3.83 million	4.10 million	7.93 million
Carload Volume	3.81 million	2.26 million	6.07 million
Coal Volume	633,517	684,800	1.32 million
Employees	32,439	19,584	52,023
Locomotives	6,106	3,195	9,301

Source: Investor presentations and STB Form R-1 for 2024

AT A GLANCE: BNSF + CSX			
2024	BNSF	CSX	Combined
Route Miles	32,897	19,701	52,598
Annual Revenue	\$23.35 billion	\$14.54 billion	\$37.89 billion
Operating Income	\$7.46 billion	\$5.24 billion	\$12.88 billion
Operating Ratio	68%	63.9%	66.4%
Market Capitalization	NA	\$67.1B	NA
Annual Volume	9.58 million	6.27 million	15.85 million
Intermodal Volume	5.3 million	2.89 million	8.19 million
Carload Volume	3.01 million	2.64 million	5.65 million
Coal Volume	1.2 million	736,000	1.93 million
Employees	36,500	23,536	60,036
Locomotives	7,536	3,514	11,050

Source: Financial reports and STB Form R-1 for 2024

AT A GLANCE: UP + NS vs. BNSF + CSX		
2024	UP + NS	BNSF + CSX
Route Miles	52,215	52,598
Annual Revenue	\$36.37 billion	\$37.89 billion
Operating Income	\$13.7 billion	\$12.88 billion
Operating Ratio	62.1%	\$66.4%
Market Capitalization	\$196.6 billion	NA
Annual Volume	15.33 million	15.85 million
Intermodal Volume	7.93 million	8.19 million
Carload Volume	6.07 million	5.65 million
Coal Volume	1.32 million	1.93 million
Employees	52,023	60,036
Locomotives	9,301	11,050

Source: Financial reports and STB Form R-1 for 2024

Analysts widely expect that BNSF Railway and CSX will seek to merge in the wake of last month's announcement that rivals Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern would combine in an \$85 billion deal to create the first U.S. transcontinental railroad.

"The question around BNSF remains not if but when they will announce a deal to merge with CSX," Bascome Majors, an analyst with Susquehanna Financial Group, wrote in a note to clients.

BNSF's corporate parent, Berkshire Hathaway, is sitting on a nearly \$350 billion cash stockpile. CSX, meanwhile, reportedly has engaged Goldman Sachs to advise it on merger matters. Both railroads have declined to comment. And there's no telling when the other merger shoe might drop.

But if the Surface Transportation Board ultimately approves UP+NS and BNSF+CSX — an outcome that is far from certain — it would create two relatively balanced coast-to-coast systems.

How would the two transcontinental railroads compare? Measured by route miles, the systems are essentially tied at just over 52,000 miles. BNSF+CSX would be ever so slightly larger, with 0.7% more route miles.

BNSF+CSX would have 4% more revenue, based on 2024 financial results. But UP+NS would be more profitable, generating 6% higher operating income and producing a 4.3-point lower operating ratio.

BNSF+CSX also would handle more volume, including intermodal and coal traffic. UP+NS would have a larger carload network.

But the volume difference, based on 2024 data, is not huge: BNSF+CSX would hold a 3% edge over UP+NS.

BNSF+CSX also would have more employees and a larger locomotive fleet, based on 2024 data reported to the STB. Geographically, the transcontinental tie-ups would still have the same holes in their maps as the current systems — unless regulators condition approval upon plans to fill the gaps in each network.

UP+NS would be absent from the Dakotas and have just a small presence in Montana, Florida, and New England. BNSF+CSX would still have to rely on BNSF's sparingly used trackage rights over UP in the Central Corridor that links Denver with Northern California, as well as the direct UP routes linking Houston with Memphis and St. Louis.

Railfan Events

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	<i>Saturday September 13th 2025 6:15pm—8:45pm</i>	Roseville Lutheran Church 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE -Guests are Welcome
Twin City Model Railroad Museum Hobby Show and Sale	<i>Saturday, September 13th, 2025 from 9:00am to 2:00pm</i>	MN State Fairgrounds – Education Bldg. 1327 Cosgrove Street Falcon Heights, MN 55108	\$7 Kids under 8 Free
<i>Friends of #261 Harvest BBQ Espress on the TCW</i>	<i>Saturday and Sunday October 4 & 5 2025</i>	<i>See 261.com for available Tickets and departure location and time</i>	<i>See 261.com</i>
Newport Railroad Club Flea Market	Saturday October 2025 <u><i>Date not announced yet</i></u>	Woodbury High School 2665 Woodlane Drive Woodbury, MN	\$7
Great Train Show	<u><i>Estimated Dates:</i></u> Saturday –Sunday Oct 25 th and Oct 26 th , 2025	Canterbury Park Expo Center 1100 Canterbury Rd. Shakopee, MN	\$29 for both days \$15 per day
Century College Model RR Flea Market	<i>Saturday Nov 22^d, 2025 9:00am - 2:00pm</i>	Century College West Campus 3401 Century Ave N White Bear Lake MN 55110	\$7
North Metro Model RR Club Railroad Flea Market & Open House	<u><i>Date not announced yet!</i></u> Tentative: Saturday Dec 2025? 9:00am—2:00pm	Coon Rapids VFW Building 1919 Coon Rapids Blvd Coon Rapids MN 55433	\$5

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