



NRHS

Publishers of the Minnesota Rail Calendar

Northstar News

Next Meeting Saturday February 14th 2026 Roseville Lutheran Church

Happy Valentines Day!



*L: CNW
Freight Cedar
Lake Yard
1980's
-Bob Ball
Photo*

Message from the President Jack Barbier;.....

A big HELLO to all members, readers, and fellow rail historians. I will be using this space monthly to share some thoughts, provide information, and hopefully inspire! As we begin rolling into 2026, we note that the country will be celebrating its 250 years of existence, a major milestone which will likely see a multitude of colorful commemorative diesel paint schemes, an array of operating steam locomotives, and a transcontinental Big Boy journey. Lots to look forward to ! Closer to home, I'm hoping to bring together more talented photographers to give you outstanding monthly meeting presentations. "History," to my mind, is everything that happened "yesterday or before." And we must recognize that many railfans consider modern day railroad operations to be just as worthy of attention as stuff that happened 80 years ago — let's welcome their energy and skills!

Speaking of energy and skills, my main goal for 2026 is to attract more members to our Chapter... especially younger folks. With that in mind, let's all make it each our personal goal to recruit at least one new member. I know it can be done — there are hundreds, if not thousands of enthusiasts around that are potential members. Many have outstanding photographic and/or I.T. skills we will need to flourish in the coming years.

So let's make it a game. For each new dues-paying member you recruit, inform Treasurer John Chute. He will put your name in the "hat" (or twice is your new member is age 40 or younger)! At the end of the year, we'll have a drawing, with the winner receiving an Amtrak travel voucher worth \$150! So—the more members you recruit, the better your chances!

(note, I will exempt myself from the sweepstakes).

I would also like to re-jigger our monthly meeting format to allow more time for things like reports from attendees on recent RR-related activities and sightings, etc. Call it "the grapevine." And if you take a train trip anywhere, consider submitting a write-up for publication in this newsletter. Everybody loves a good train travel story!

Finally, don't be surprised if you receive a phone call or email from me. I plan to reach out to everyone in the coming weeks—to learn more about your interests, your views and suggestions on Chapter activities. We want your membership to have value! Finally, note that I will not be able to Chair our upcoming February meeting due to out-of-town travel, but will be back in March. Watch the newsletter for more details for that month's program.

Now — let's highball ! Jack Barbier

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



From the Editor: Next issue will be out around March 1st 2026.

Also note, Invoices for 2026 dues have been sent out, please renew promptly!

Last run of the Northstar Commuter train was Jan 4th 2026. Sadly, this train service is now gone.

Watch for a Newsletter Special Edition that will reflect on the sixteen years of Northstar Commuter Service.

Meeting Notice:

Saturday February 14th 2026 6:15 pm At Roseville Lutheran Church, our September Meeting also will be a ZOOM meeting. Note: in 2026 meetings will held on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

Program: Photos from the Extensive inventory of RR Photos photographed by Dawn Holmberg. don't miss it, Dawn has a degree in photojournalism from the U of M and is a prolific photographer!

An informal Dinner at Keys Restaurant -Lexington and Larpentour Avenues will be at 4:15 pm February 14th, 2026. Please join us in-person at Roseville Lutheran Church, Saturday February 14th, 2026 at 6 pm.

Due to Church Policy, Doors open at 5:30pm and will close at 6:00pm. If you are late, you must call one of our officers cell phone to come and let you in.

Our business meeting will begin at 6:15 followed by the program. If you are unable to join us in person, the Zoom Meeting login information are here:

NRHS February 14th 2026 Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 813 0843 0632 Passcode: 272802

Time: Feb 14, 2026 6:00 pm Central Time (US and Canada)
Or Join Zoom Meeting here --> <https://tinyurl.com/8m2sa9us>

Dial-in, audio only 507 473 4847

Meeting Minutes January 10th 2026, Roseville Lutheran Church

The meeting was called to order at about 6:20 pm by President Jack Barbier. President Barbier outlined safety procedures at the Church. Dan Meyer explained the pathway to an alternate exit in the church. There were about 20 members and Guests present. A quorum was determined. (3 of 4 directors and 20% of membership) A motion to members by President Jack Barbier to approve the meeting minutes in the December 2025 Newsletter from the November 2025 meeting was floored. The motion by two members was voiced and the membership approval of the minutes was carried.

Meeting Summary (Edited Zoom Translation)

Quick recap

The meeting began with administrative updates including visa status, financial reports, and membership renewal forms, followed by discussions about summer plans and calendar sales. The board reviewed various committee reports and updates, including website maintenance, member activities, and plans for creating commemorative materials. The conversation ended with a comprehensive presentation by Bob Rivard about the history of the Sioux Line and Twin Cities rail operations, followed by Dan sharing numerous historical photographs and personal experiences documenting rail operations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

Next steps

Frank Willkie: Provide update on his Australia visa status tomorrow.

John Chute: Distribute membership renewal forms and encourage members to renew, with checks preferred. Dawn Holmberg: Calendar Report: Deliver calendar sales tax figures and deposit to John (the treasurer) tomorrow.

Dawn Holmberg: NRHS Report: Update national organization that Jack is now president and update chapter page.

Russ Isbrandt (and proposed disposition committee): Begin process of inventorying and downsizing the storage library, including identifying items for disposal or sale (e.g., projectors, timetables, brochures), and establish/solicit members for a disposition committee.

Greg Smith and Dawn Holmberg: Report on the passing of longtime member Cy Svobodny: Coordinate to ensure Cy's railodiana/photo collection is not discarded, and work with Char (Cy's wife) as needed regarding estate disposition.

Russ Isbrandt: will Consider chairing the disposition committee for managing storage/library downsizing and sales (awaiting final confirmation from Russ).

Greg Smith: He will Present the April program via Zoom if unable to attend in person.

Frank Willkie: Proposed to send train photos from Australia to Jack or Dan for possible future program content.

From President Jack Barbier: To All members: Each member to recruit at least one new member over the next year (per president's goal).

Dan Meyer Former President: Reach out to other local groups, photographers, and modelers to recruit new members.

From President Jack Barbier: Organize a sweepstakes for member recruitment, with drawing at year end.

From President Jack Barbier: Collect and compile photos from members for possible commemorative Northstar newsletter/DVD: members to send JPEGs to Dan or Jack.

From President Jack Barbier: Report monthly on progress of storage/library downsizing and disposition to membership.

Request of Rick Krenske Send out information about Cy's memorial service when available.

Request from Dan Meyer (Web Master) Notify Dan about Zoom link issue for future meeting access.

Summary Meeting Minutes and Membership Updates

The meeting began with Frank announcing that his Australian visa had not been approved yet, which could impact his travel plans in 10 days. Dan Meyer provided a pre-meeting safety briefing and led the discussion on old business, including the approval of the November 2020 meeting minutes. John Chute, the new treasurer, reported the current account balance is below last years amount. He will also assisting the mailing of membership renewal forms. He also emphasized the use of checks over cash for better record-keeping of dues renewals.

Summer Plans and Chapter Updates

John Goodman gave the Trip Report. The board discussed summer plans, with North Freedom hoping to have the 1385 running and Boone and Scenic as an alternative. Dawn Holmberg gave the calendar report. The calendar was sold out, with \$3,000 donated to the chapter account from the Calendar Account. The April meeting was moved back a week to April 18th due to scheduling conflicts. Dawn Holmberg gave a NRHS report updates that included the Rail Camp application form being available and that Heritage grants applications are wrapping up at the end of January. Richard Tubbesing gave the Newsletter Report. He stated that the January newsletter cost was about \$72, and there was an apology for a date mistake in the newsletter. Dan Meyer gave the web report and mentioned server maintenance and keeping the website and Facebook page up to date. The cheer committee reported on member updates, including Dave Norman's move and John Goodman and Greg Smith cited the passing of Cy Svobodny last Monday. Jack Barbier noted that the board discussed the need to inventory and downsize the storage library, with plans to review collections and potentially sell some items to raise revenue.

Railway Chapter Programs and Initiatives

The meeting discussed several key topics, including the establishment of a disposition committee to handle excess rail equipment, with Russ potentially chairing it. Upcoming programs were reviewed, with Dawn planning an exciting program featuring 1968 content, and Jim George scheduled for May. Frank inquired about sharing train photos from Australia, which was welcomed by Dan Meyer. The group also discussed creating a commemorative newsletter and DVD about the Northstar train, with Ed and Richard Tubbesing offering to lead this project. Jack Barbier announced his goal to double the chapter's membership over the next year, encouraging members to recruit new members and offering incentives for successful recruitment.

Motion to close the meeting at 6:50pm was made by President Jack Barbier. The motion was carried.

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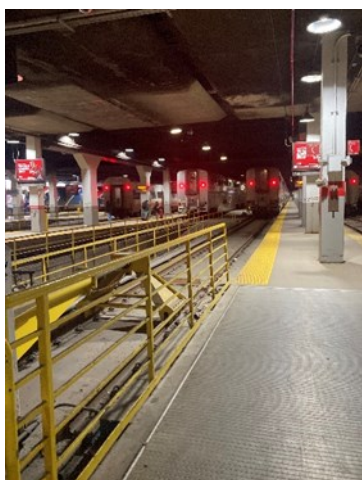
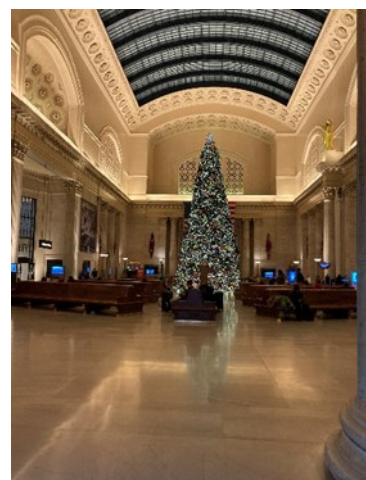
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Program: Soo Line Rail History Overview

Bob Rivard, a Twin Cities native and experienced model railroader, presented a comprehensive overview of his extensive collection of photographs and videos documenting the history of the Soo Line and other rail operations in the area. He shared numerous images capturing the distinctive sounds and operations of various locomotives, including the Fairbank-Morris engines, and highlighted the frugal practices of the Soo Line, such as their inability to couple locomotives nose-to-nose. Rivard also discussed the evolution of rail operations in the Twin Cities, noting the decline in train traffic and the transition of tracks from the Soo Line to other railroads.

Respectfully Submitted by Secretary Richard Tubbesing

Amtrak to Chicago Jan 24 2026



I traveled by Amtrak two weeks ago to Chicago to meet up with my colleague Charlie from medical school. Trip down to Chicago was on Thursday, January 8 and I returned home to St Paul on Saturday, January 10. I thought I would send you some pictures from that trip which include the beautiful tall artificial Christmas tree in the main waiting area at Chicago Union Station. As well as a view of three trains that we're ready to depart southbound from the station of which the middle of the three trains which is a super liner was the Texas eagle ready to depart, and the right of the three a super liner was the California zephyr that would depart a little bit later. Final two pictures were of the Empire builder with one passenger, getting ready to board her Portland sleeping car with help of a red cap and then a front looking view toward the front of the train from my sleeping car area with another Amtrak train featuring adventure coach car on the left side of the picture. And hope you're all doing well and hope to see you folks at our February meeting.

Thank you Member Dr Brent Williams



Trackside Monthly Newsletter

January 2026 | #131

Hot Stove Nights in the Museum

Borrowing a term from off-season baseball, Hot Stove Nights in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum are about getting together to talk trains not trades. The idea is to come in, be warm, enjoy some libations, and a free presentation about our favorite subjects.

Thursday, February 5th (NEXT WEEK)

This is the final night of the Union Pacific Railroad's traveling exhibit on the creation of the UP's Sun Valley Ski Area and the invention of the first ski hill chairlift. Executive Director Ken Buehler and local historian Tony Dierckins will present. Tony's talk is on Duluth's historic ski hills and jumps.

Thursday, March 19th

This is the official opening of a new display from the Lake States Railway Historical Association featuring railroad photos from the 1960's and 70's taken by Clint Jones in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. LSRHA Director Paul Swanson will



Wednesday, April 8th

Tony Dierckins returns with a presentation on the "Twin Ports' Rail-to-Sail Connection."

Programs are FREE and start at 5:00pm with a social hour, snacks and complimentary beverages. Programs begin at 6:00pm.

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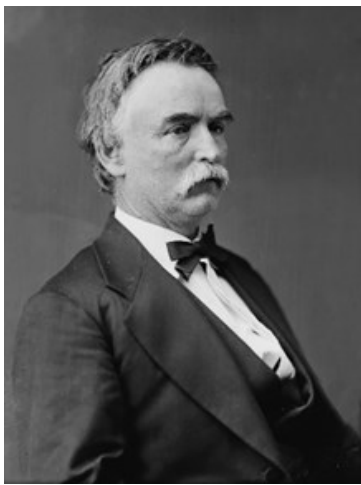
ORANGE CONE CONSTRUCTION ZONE *By:* Ken Buehler



Starting in a few weeks the St. Louis County Depot will be undergoing a huge renovation. The \$19.5 million-dollar project includes new HVAC, electrical, plumbing and structural upgrades.

While the North Shore Scenic Railroad lobby and museum offices and archives will be involved, the gallery/museum will be open as usual. We'll keep you informed as the work gets underway including some exciting news about the SEACREST model train exhibit that will be installed over the two years this project is underway.

This Day In History *By:* Ken Buehler



Today is the anniversary of the best and worst publicity Duluth ever received. On January 27, 1871, Kentucky Congressman Proctor Knott lambasted the city with his tongue in cheek speech "The Glories of Duluth." Duluth received national attention and the city of Proctor was named in his honor.

Knott was speaking against federal funding of the St. Croix and Lake Superior Railway because *if you work it hard enough it all comes back to the railroad.*



January 31 @ 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
 February 7 @ 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Lake Superior Railroad Museum

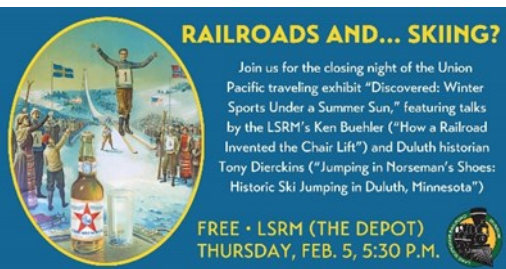
Saturdays all winter long... The familiar strains of Duke Ellington's Take the A Train, means it's time for Jazz at the Depot starting at 3:00pm, EVERY SATURDAY in the Lake Superior Railroad Museum. Shows are each Saturday through the end of April. The Railroad Museum welcomes the Trackside Depot Jazz Band, with three hours of [...]

Discovered!: Winter Sports Under a Summer Sun, The Railroad and Sun Valley

January 7 - February 8 *Lake Superior Railroad Museum*

Sun Valley, America's first winter destination resort, appeared near the end of the Great Depression. As the number of vacationers increased, railroads hoped to boost declining ticket sales by encouraging travel to exotic locations accessible only by rail. Discovered!: Winter Sports Under a Summer Sun, The Railroad and Sun Valley highlights the impact of the [...]

- 5:00pm – Social Time with snacks, coffee and soft drinks
- 6:00pm – Ken Buehler on the creation of Sun Valley and the invention of the chairlift
- 6:30pm – Tony Dierckins presents ***Jumping in Norseman's Shoes: Historic Ski Jumping in Duluth, MN*** Please enter through Northshore Scenic ticket office doors on track level at the back of the St. Louis County Depot.



Continued on next page:

The Lake Superior Railroad Museum & Train Ticket Office are open daily from 10am-5pm.

**Train excursions will resume starting in May, 2026.
Schedules and tickets will go on sale in early February.**

All aboard for train excursions on the North Shore Scenic Railroad! Train excursions will resume operations in May, and schedules and tickets will be posted here in early February. Until then, the museum remains open daily with Jazz shows each Saturday from 3-6pm.

Volunteer Train Crew Training Class February 28 @ 8:00 am - March 22 @ 8:00 am

Experience in railroading and railroad knowledge are not required to join the crew. We provide class room and hands-on training to ensure all volunteers have the skills and ability to work on a safe and enjoyable railroad.

To find out more call 218-733-7531 or email liam.hoffmann@duluthtrains.com to join the Volunteer Crew.

2026 weekend classroom schedule: Feb 28th, March 1st, 7th, 8th, 21st, 22nd (2026), 8 am to 4 pm

[Click here to register now](#)

Prerequisite Requirements:

No prior experience in railroading or transportation is necessary to volunteer as a crew member on the North Shore Scenic Railroad. Certification is a commitment that requires classroom and on-the-job training which the railroad provides.

Volunteers Crewmember Requirements:

- must be at least 18 years of age
- have a willingness to work as part of a team
- have a safety minded attitude
- be willing to follow company policies, state statutes, and federal regulations
- submit to and pass a pre-employment drug screening as well as random tests while operating as a crew member for drug and alcohol use
- pass medical, hearing, and vision testing
- submit state and federal driver's records for review
- submit to criminal background check
- pass written and practical tests

The administrative side of these requirements, as well as testing, will be addressed and completed during training.

Railroad crew training (Brakeman, Conductor, Engineer) are offered in February through April each year. See information below for more training details.

Path to Certification

Students are required to attend 48 hours of classroom and hands-on training spread over three different weekends in February and March. Students then take written exams before proceeding to "on the job" (OJT) training. OJT training consists of a minimum of 100 hours over the course of our operating season. The first portion of OJT training is in a controlled environment with instructors. The remainder of OJT takes place with NSSR crew members on actual scheduled passenger trains. New volunteers are expected to complete the 100 hours of OJT within a year. How fast you accumulate hours is based on your availability.

When students feel confident, and management feels they are ready, a check ride takes place allowing students to demonstrate knowledge and the ability to work safely as part of the NSSR team. A successful check ride allows the newly certified member to sign up as a conductor or brakeman on scheduled trains. If a crew member's eventual goal is to be a locomotive engineer and operate the train, this course is the first step in that direction.

How do I sign up?

[Click here for more info or to register for the training classes.](#) An email will be sent confirming your registration in the class. During the first session, learning and testing materials will be provided. Students are encouraged to bring a large 3-ring binder as the material given out will be punched for binder use.

I want to volunteer, but I'm looking for something else:

If you don't think this train crew class sounds right for you, but you'd still like to volunteer for the North Shore Scenic Railroad or Lake Superior Railroad Museum, please reach out to us at liam.hoffmann@duluthtrains.com. We are always looking for volunteers in our maintenance shop, museum, and archive library. No prior experience is required for these positions. We are always looking for individuals with skills in woodworking, welding, metal fabrication, data storage, and archive work, etc. We encourage you to apply.

Mid-Century Railway Museum's 2025 season is now concluded. Thank you all for a great year. While the museum is closed to the public now until May 2026, our administrative office is open year-round to assist with questions, group bookings, etc. Look for our 2026 train ride schedule to be released in January.



#1385 in service, September 12, 1992. Bill Buhrmaster photo

\$300,000 needed to complete Restoration for #1385. Donate to Mid-Century Railway Historical Society, Inc. Your donation will support the restoration and operation of Mid-Century's C&NW 1385 steam locomotive.



Boone and Scenic Railroad: Next Train: Valentine Dinner Train
February 6, 7, 13, and 14

Tickets now on sale. Full season begins Saturday, May 23, 2026.

Memorial Day Weekend through October 31, with trains operating, museum and gift shop open Thursday through Sunday.

Steam Locomotive Profile: 2-6-6-4

By Neil Carlson | December 9, 2025



One of Seaboard Air Line's high-speed, twin smokestack 2-6-6-4s – the largest steam engines on the railroad's roster – charges out of Raleigh, N.C., with a freight in 1941. Homer R. Hill



Norfolk & Western Class A No. 1239 couples onto a train at Roanoke, Va., in 1950. W. A. Akin, Jr.

During the latter half of the 1920s the single expansion articulated locomotive had evolved into a very capable machine. It could lug a heavy train over mountain grades, and in flat terrain it could run at the same speed as a 2-8-2.

But railroad locomotive superintendents grappled with an unanswered question. Could a simple articulated be designed for *high-speed* heavy freight service? Would an engine with 69 or 70-inch drivers be able to handle a big train over a sawtooth profile at track speeds? Baltimore & Ohio was the first to attempt to answer these questions. In 1931, the railroad took delivery of two 2-6-6-2s from Baldwin equipped with 70-inch driving wheels.

Early testing on the Cumberland Division showed the locomotives could handle a larger train than one of the railroad's 2-10-2s, and develop more horsepower. During these initial tests, train speeds did not exceed 35 mph. But further operation at higher speeds revealed a serious flaw: the front engine became unstable and started hunting. Armed with that knowledge, B&O put the two engines to work – but not in fast freight service. The Great Depression slowed locomotive development temporarily, and it was not until 1935 that another fast-freight articulated was introduced. That year, Seaboard Air Line took delivery of five Baldwin 2-6-6-4s with 69-inch drivers and a tractive force of 82,300 lbs. The locomotives did not experience any front engine instability problems, and they cruised along at 60 mph or better. The 2-6-6-4's four-wheel trailing truck was needed to support a large, deep firebox that was placed behind the rear driving wheels. This big firebox was critical to producing the high combustion rates required for a modern high-horsepower steam locomotive. Seaboard was very satisfied with the locomotives and ordered another five in 1937.

After World War II, the railroad rapidly dieselized, and in 1947 sold its 2-6-6-4s to the B&O, where they (and B&O's twin 2-6-6-2s) operated until 1953. While Seaboard's engines were the first successful high-speed articulateds, they were not the first 2-6-6-4s. That distinction belonged to the Pittsburgh & West Virginia, which received three from Baldwin in 1934. They were equipped with 63-inch drivers and were designed for heavy freight service in the mountains between Pittsburgh and Connellsville, Pa. Their tractive effort of 82,000 lbs. was equivalent to that of a 2-10-2, and the engines developed even greater horsepower. P&WV took delivery of another four engines in 1937. The fleet lasted until the early 1950s. The final 2-6-6-4s belonged to the Norfolk & Western. In 1935, the railroad needed a new fast freight engine to replace its overworked fleet of 4-8-2s. N&W's design bureau developed the Class A 2-6-6-4. The first, No. 1200, was constructed at the company's Roanoke Shops and began a series of trials in May 1936. Testing showed the locomotive was capable of 6,300 drawbar horsepower at 45 mph. The locomotive was also very stable – even at speeds in excess of 70 mph. A sister engine, No. 1201, came out of the shop in June. Roanoke built more Class As in 1937 and during World War II. By the time the last was delivered in 1950, a total of 43 had been built. They were the most powerful and heaviest of the 2-6-6-4s. N&W used them as main-line freight haulers, operating from Ohio to the Virginia tidewater until 1959. In all, sixty 2-6-6-4s were built. The last to operate was N&W No. 1218, which was rebuilt for excursion service in 1987 and ran until 1994. N&W's Class A garnered a host of accolades, and in the opinion of many, it was the finest steam freight locomotive ever built.

---Preservation, Shortline, Museum & Locomotive News ---

Sioux City Railroad Museum Receives \$1.93 Million for Flood Recovery

By [Trains Staff](#) | January 23, 2026

National Park Service disaster grant will aid in ongoing repairs to 2024 damage



Flood waters fill the roundhouse of the Sioux City Railroad Museum on Monday, June 24, 2024. The museum has received a \$1.93 million grant to help in its ongoing recovery efforts. Sioux City Railroad Museum

SIOUX CITY, Iowa — The Sioux City Railroad Museum has been awarded a \$1.93 million grant from the National Park Service to aid in the museum’s continuing recovery from major flood damage in June 2024.

The money is in the form of an NPS [Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund Disaster Grant](#) for recovery efforts and mitigation of the threat of future disasters.

“We are extremely blessed to have this opportunity,” said TJ Obermeyer, the museum’s executive director, at a Thursday, Jan. 22, ceremony announcing the grant, [as reported by KTIV-TV](#). “... And to have the National Park Service recognize what we are doing here, and also what they share in our vision of what we can be here.”

More than \$1 million of the grant will be directed to restoration of Great Northern 4-6-2 No. 1355, which the museum and the American Heartland Railroad Society plan to restore to operation [see [“Sioux City museum announces joint effort ...”](#) Trains.com, July 5, 2024]. Other funds will go toward restoration of a diesel locomotive, the museum’s roundhouse and turntable, and other tracks at the facility.

The museum estimates it suffered more than \$3.2 million in losses from the 2024 flood [see [“Iowa railroad museum shut down ...”](#) June 24, 2024]. It reopened on a limited basis the following March.

North Carolina Railroad Museum Granted \$280,000 for Exhibits

By [Bob Lettenberger](#) | January 16, 2026

Railroad history and STEM activities to highlight new interactive exhibits



Volunteer Marco Zarate works on renovations in a 1918 Pullman baggage car at the North Carolina Railroad Museum. The museum has received a \$280,216 federal grant to construct new exhibits, which will engage patrons with additional hands-on activities. The baggage car will be part of an exhibit detailing the roles of passenger and freight trains. NCRM

NEW HILL, N.C. — [The North Carolina Railroad Museum](#), home of the New Hope Valley Railway, was recently awarded \$280,216 in federal grants to support interactive exhibit development. The new exhibits will illustrate North Carolina’s railroad history and its role in transportation innovation. The Institute of Museum and Library Services grants will support the creation of 40 interactive exhibits over the next three years. The funds cover approximately 50% of the total estimated development and installation costs, with the balance coming from donors, sponsors, and volunteer efforts. “We’re grateful to receive these very competitive federal grants but our museum will need support from our friends and greater community to complete the exhibits on schedule and preserve railroad history for all to enjoy,” says Jim Jatko, volunteer chairman of NCRM’s fundraising committee. “Every dollar raised is effectively doubled, thanks to these grants.” Since 2020, the IMLS has made grants to 36 public and private museums in North Carolina. The new exhibits, featuring interactive technology, will be installed in seven railcars and locomotives already in the NCRM collection. Created using the principles of Universal Design for Accessible Learning, these exhibits will be fully accessible and double the museum’s current indoor exhibition space. The state-of-the-art interactive, self-guided learning experiences will include: *Voices from a Golden Age – Learning from Our Technological Heritage* Based around a 1918 Pullman baggage car, a 1968 Nickel Plate caboose, and a 1968 Duke Energy nuclear escort caboose, the exhibit will explore the roles of passenger and freight trains and how each contributed to transportation development. Intertwined will be stories about civil rights, the Pullman porters, and how the railroads moved unusual freight. The exhibit space will feature hands-on pre-K STEM activities and a quiet space to read a railroad book.

Locomotion — *The Power to Move, a STEM exhibit*

Combining indoor and outdoor elements, Locomotion will provide a hands-on exploration of railroad power, including a look at hybrid power systems — first pioneered by railroads in the 1930s. Based around three diesel locomotives dating to the early 1940s and a 1956 iced-refrigerator car, the exhibit will offer touchable diesel-electric components. Patrons will also be able to explore the physics of motion and various railcar parts.

The museum, which is an all-volunteer organization, is located 30 minutes southwest of Raleigh. For more information about the museum or to contribute in support of this matching grant, please visit its [website](#).

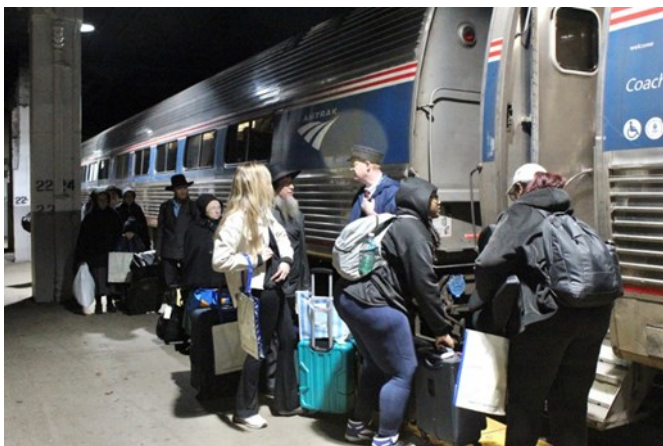
----AMTRAK News-----



Minor Amtrak Derailment at Chicago Union Station Leads to Metra Delays

By David Lassen | January 26, 2026

Sunday night incident still impacting BNSF, SouthWest Service



Passengers board Amtrak’s *Floridian* at Chicago Union Station on Nov. 10, 2024. A minor derailment at a station platform has led to delays for some Metra service. Bob Johnston

CHICAGO — A minor Amtrak derailment Sunday night is continuing to lead to delays for some Metra service into and out of Chicago Union Station today (Monday, Jan. 26).

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said the derailment occurred about 10 p.m. Sunday at the station platform as train No. 382, the *Carl Sandburg* from Quincy, Ill., arrived. There were no injuries and “everyone got off the train and went home,” he said. The incident was not a factor in Amtrak train cancellations today.

Metra reported the incident on its social media channels before 6 a.m. today, informing passengers of potential delays arriving and departing from Union Station because the derailment was blocking access to some platforms. As of 4:20 p.m., Metra said BNSF Line trains were still operating up to 20 minutes behind schedule because of the incident. South-West Service trains are also affected.

Track repairs at the station are in progress and are expected to last a few days, [WBBM-TV reports](#).

Amtrak Weather Cancellations Continue

By David Lassen | January 26, 2026

Most morning Northeast Corridor trains canceled



Northeast Regional train No. 161 rolls through Bristol, Pa., during a storm on Jan. 7, 2017. Weather cancellations are continuing on the Northeast Corridor. Gary Pancavage

NEW YORK — Amtrak is not offering an overview on service cancellations for today (Monday, Jan. 26) in the wake of the weekend’s winter storm on its website or social media, but here is the initial information gathered by Trains.com as of 7:45 a.m. CT.

The train status feature of Amtrak’s website shows these cancellations on the Northeast Corridor:

From Boston: Acelas 2153, 2155, 2159, and 2163; Northeast Regionals 171 and 173. Trains leaving after 1 p.m. are currently listed as operating and on time.

From Washington: Acelas 2104, 2170; Northeast Regionals 170, 130, 172, 112, 182, 94, 148, 176, 196, and 66.

From New York to Boston: Acelas 2192, 2150; Northeast Regionals 66 and 190. From New York to Washington: Acelas 2107 and 2109; Northeast Regionals 181, 113, 183, 141, 185, 95, 119, 125, 93, 97, and 129

Keystone service: The first four departures from Harrisburg (trains 642, 600, 644, and 646) have been canceled, with plans to operate trains scheduled for after 10 a.m. Harrisburg-bound trains 605, 607, and 641 are also cancelled.

These cancellations are listed on the [Amtrak NEC](#) and [Amtrak Alerts](#) social media feeds:

- Empire Service trains 235, 238
- Acela No. 2124.

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- *Lincoln Service* trains 300, and train 302 between Bloomington/Normal and Chicago.
- *Wolverine* No. 353
- Both directions of the *City of New Orleans* (trains 58 and 59).

Amtrak also reported as of noon ET that trains traveling between Baltimore and Wilmington, Del., were subject to delay because of a tree in the overhead wires.

Long-distance cancellations out of New York include the *Palmetto*, *Carolinian*, and *Crescent*.

Trains.com will provide more information as it becomes available; travelers should check the Amtrak website, social media feeds, or app for updates.

— Updated at 12:45 p.m. CT with additional cancellations as reported on Amtrak social media. To report news or errors, contact trainsnewswire@firecrown.com

Equipment Issues Spur Extended Capitol Corridor Cancellations

By David Lassen | January 26, 2026

Five weekday Sacramento-Oakland trains, two on weekends canceled through Feb. 27



A *Capitol Corridor* train stops at the Martinez, Calif., station. *Capitol Corridor* service has canceled five weekday trains and two weekend trains through Feb. 27 because of locomotive issues. Amtrak

OAKLAND, Calif. — Amtrak’s *Capitol Corridor* service will cancel seven trains for a month beginning today (Jan. 26) because of ongoing equipment issues, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority has announced.

Canceled through Feb. 27 are five weekday trains and two on weekends:

On weekdays: Sacramento-Oakland trains 531, an 8:53 a.m. departure, and 537, a 10:53 a.m. departure; Oakland-Sacramento trains 520, a 5:28 a.m. departure, 526, an 8:58 a.m. departure, and 534, a 1:58 p.m. departure.

On weekends, Sacramento-Oakland train 737, an 11:53 a.m. departure, and Oakland-Sacramento 736, a 2:58 p.m. departure. These trains will run on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 8.

The temporary schedule reflecting these changes [is available here](#). In [a message to riders](#), Capitol Corridor Managing Director Rob Padgett says the cancellations stem from “limited locomotive availability” in the fleet shared with the San Joaquin Valley’s *Gold Runner* service. The *Gold Runners* previously announced cancellation of one round trip through March 5 because of equipment issues [[see “Gold Runners cancel ...”](#) Trains.com, Jan. 7, 2026].

“Under normal conditions, we rely on additional standby locomotives to fill in when mechanical issues occur,” Padgett writes. “In recent weeks, those standby locomotives have not been available, which has made it more difficult to recover quickly from mechanical problems and has led to an increase in cancellations.” The authority is pursuing short-term lease of additional locomotives, and is working to return sidelined equipment to service, he says, while Caltrans is moving forward with an overhaul program for the operation’s older locomotives.

The *Capitol Corridor* and *Gold Runner* operations began experiencing extended equipment-related cancellations in September, which led to maintenance for locomotives and cars being taken over by Herzog Transit Services subsidiary Transit America [[see “Maintenance responsibilities shift ...”](#) Trains.com, Sept. 29, 2025].

VIA, Amtrak Schedules Hobbled by Dearth of Standby Equipment

By Bob Johnston | January 22, 2026

Damaged Ocean trainset not set to return until next week

Although frigid winter weather has played a major role in disrupting service recently on VIA Rail Canada and Amtrak long distance routes, both operators’ lack of readily available reserve passenger cars and locomotives has clearly exacerbated the situation. VIA stretched thin.

A significant setback occurred last week when VIA’s venerable Vancouver, B.C.-bound *Canadian* was delayed 11 hours at Winnipeg, Manitoba. It had arrived from Toronto more than six hours late, but a safety inspection revealed that wheels on a *Manor*-class sleeping car needed to be replaced. No spare sleeper was available, so the consist was split while the car was switched to the wheel shop at the Fort Rouge maintenance facility for a changeout. The train departed from Winnipeg 17 hours, 12 minutes behind schedule. Sources tell *Trains* that additional sleeper wheel problems were discovered after that *Canadian* arrived at Vancouver, where equipment can be substituted. Though constantly sold out in all seasons, in winter the train operates with a reduced 12-car consist.

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Running almost a day late on Jan. 18, 2026, after a 17-hour delay leaving Winnipeg, Manitoba, the westbound Canadian passes milepost 5 on Canadian National's Ashcroft Subdivision west of Kamloops, B.C. Russ Grycan

Unfortunately, enough extra 70-year-old rolling stock isn't available on the other end of the route. Wednesday's westbound *Canadian* was rescheduled to depart Toronto at 7:55 p.m. instead of 9:55 a.m., because eastbound No. 2 was held for seven hours near Oba, Ontario, "behind a disabled freight train with mechanical issues," according to a VIA advisory. The train arrived more than 10 hours late at 12:40 a.m. Wednesday morning, apparently not enough time for available maintenance personnel to prepare the *Canadian* for its next trip.

Meanwhile, the Montreal-Halifax *Ocean* is operating only twice a week because a trainset of Budd and Renaissance equipment was damaged in a collision with two trucks on Jan. 12 [see "[VIA Ocean hits ...](#)," *Trains.com*, Jan. 12, 2026]. That means there has been no service on the route for up to four days in each direction. According to VIA's ticketing website, tri-weekly frequencies are not set to return until Wednesday, Jan. 28, from Montreal and Friday, Jan. 30, from Halifax.

Amtrak terminal delays. As *Trains* has reported [["Winter weather forecast..."](#), Jan. 21, 2026], forecasts of sub-zero temperatures coupled with ice storms have prompted Amtrak to cancel a number of long-distance trains today through Saturday. However, clearly contributing to the decision is the fact that for the last three days, Amtrak has lacked equipment to get many trains out of Chicago close to on time, if at all.

A sampling of recent departure delays:

- Wednesday's *Texas Eagle* departed on time but reversed back to Union Station after a four-hour delay "due to ongoing unresolved mechanical assessments of the locomotive."
- Wednesday's westbound *Borealis* departed more than two hours late due to "mechanical crews servicing the trainset." The train is canceled the next two days.
- The *Southwest Chief* departed two hours, 35 minutes late Wednesday. On Jan. 19, the train left two hours late, but lost another three hours between Galesburg, Ill., and LaPlata, Mo., due to "a mechanical assessment with the locomotive." It departed Kansas City, Mo., five hours late at 3:42 a.m.
- The *Cardinal* left Chicago Tuesday at 9:15 p.m., more than three hours late, after "performing an engine swap and equipment adjustments." The trainset had arrived the previous day from New York.
- The *Floridian*, scheduled out of Union Station at 6:40 p.m., departed Monday at 8:02 p.m. and Tuesday at 9:18 p.m. In advisories to passengers, delays were attributed "equipment servicing and an engine swap."
- The *Empire Builder* departed almost four hours late at 6:58 p.m. Tuesday with delays also attributed to "equipment servicing and an engine swap."

An Amtrak spokesman told *Trains.com* that no additional detail on the issues was available.

There were below-freezing conditions the last few days in the Windy City, but the frequent inability to get trains out close to their scheduled departures appears to indicate a significant shortage of shop manpower and/or serviceable equipment. The upcoming cancellations of the *Builder*, *Borealis*, *Eagle*, and *City of New Orleans* may provide an opportunity to regroup.

Amtrak Offers \$250 USA Rail Pass, Regional Bargains

By [Bob Johnston](#) | January 16, 2026

Downeaster, Surfliner offering January sales



The westbound *Southwest Chief* arrives at Las Vegas, N.M., on Oct. 13, 2019. The La Castenada Hotel is located adjacent to the platform. Bob Johnston



Downeaster No. 691 bound for Brunswick, Maine, approaches the Freeport, Maine, station on May 12, 2025. Bob Johnston

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WASHINGTON — Through Tuesday, Jan. 20, Amtrak’s USA Rail Pass, normally \$499, is being sold for \$250. The pass, [on sale here](#), permits passengers to ride up to 10 trains in coach over a 30-day period, regardless of trip length, so this is an especially good deal for anyone looking to make multiple stopovers traveling long distances. Discounted pass sales have been offered this time of the year previously, but the rate has never been cut nearly 50%.

Restrictions and travel tips

Not all trip segments need to be booked up front, but the pass is only valid for a 30-day period up to 120 days after purchase. This means the last segment must begin the week before Memorial Day if a passenger waits until mid-April to begin travel.

Once the pass is obtained, each segment can be booked directly using its confirmation, by going to “My Trip” on www.amtrak.com or by looking up the reservation on the Amtrak mobile app.

After the initial departure, itineraries can be changed as long as the revision occurs before the next ticketed train leaves, and either “sale” or “value” fares are offered at the time. Thus, options could be limited if the desired train is close to sellout and offers only the higher-priced “flexible” fares, so waiting until the last minute to book might be a problem leaving major terminals on long-distance trains with constricted coach capacity.

On the other hand, travelers should have no problem breaking up a multi-day trip mid-route, such as at Las Vegas, N.M., riding the *Southwest Chief* or Tucson, Ariz., on the *Sunset Limited*. A significant advantage of the pass is that intermediate stop stays can be lengthened or shortened, as long as all travel can be completed within 30 days.

The USA Rail Pass is good in coach on all trains except Acela, *Auto Train*, the Toronto-Niagara Falls, N.Y., portion of the *Maple Leaf*, or 7000-series Thruway buses. No upgrades to sleeping car accommodations or business class are allowed.

There are no blackout dates, but passholders can’t book more than two round trips or four one-way journeys over any part of the same route. The \$250 fare is being promoted as celebrating the country’s 250th anniversary, but only \$499 passes will be in effect through the summer months.

Regional deals

Several state-supported routes are also offering significant discounts for a limited time. Through Jan. 28, travelers on the Boston-Brunswick, Maine, *Downeaster* can buy \$26 round-trip or \$13 one-way fares using promo code V530 for tickets bought at least three days in advance. Coach tickets are good on all trains except four southbound runs: the first morning train from Brunswick on weekdays (No. 680), the second morning train weekends (No. 692), and the early afternoon departure (Nos. 686 weekdays and 696 weekends).

On the West Coast, *Pacific Surfliner* passengers using code V526 at checkout will get a 20% discount for trips beginning Jan. 26 through March 13, 2026. A 13th Los Angeles-San Diego round-trip launches on Jan. 26 [see [“Pacific Surfliner adds ...”](#) Trains.com, Jan. 13, 2026], but the discount applies to all *Surfliner* trains over the entire 351-mile route south of San Luis Obispo, Calif.

The new round trip fills gaps in the current “memory” schedule, which offers departures at the same time each hour. The added trains leave San Diego at 7:01 a.m. and Los Angeles at 7:10 p.m.

Train Service Resumes on Coast Line

By [Trains Staff](#) | January 13, 2026

Route had been closed north of Santa Barbara since Jan. 6 washout



GAVIOTA, Calif. — Train service has resumed on Union Pacific’s Coast Line north of Santa Barbara following a week-long closure because of a washout.

Southbound Pacific Surfliner No. 774 left San Luis Obispo as scheduled at 6:11 a.m. local time today (Jan. 13), the first of two daily Surfliner round trips between San Luis Obispo and Goleta, Calif., that have been cancelled since the Jan. 6 washout at Gaviota that saw a heavy-equipment operator injured [see [“Worker injured, tracks closed ...”](#) Trains.com, Jan. 6, 2026]. The Surfliner website had indicated Union Pacific was expected to complete repairs by today; as of 8:35 a.m. CT, its website was still carrying a notification of the closure.

A southbound Pacific Surfliner skirts the beach north of Carpinteria, Calif., in 2013. Surfliner service north of Goleta, Calif., is resuming after a track closure because of a washout. Bob Johnston

The *Coast Starlight*, which has been cancelled between Los Angeles and Emeryville, Calif., during the washout, is also scheduled to resume today, according to Amtrak’s website

Amtrak’s Mardi Gras Service Gains Capacity for Namesake Season

By [Bob Johnston](#) | January 9, 2026

Some New Orleans-Mobile corridor trains get an additional coach to accommodate crowds

NEW ORLEANS — Amtrak is adding a coach to one of the two *Mardi Gras Service* trainsets beginning today (Friday, Jan. 9) to accommodate anticipated additional demand sparked by the Carnival season along the Gulf Coast. Three coaches are being assigned to morning train No. 23 out of Mobile, Ala., and evening No. 26 from New Orleans every day through Feb. 23. The other round trip will continue to carry only two Amfleet coaches.

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New Orleans-bound Mardi Gras Service train No. 23 prepares to board passengers at Biloxi, Miss., on Nov. 5, 2025. This train and evening counterpart No. 26 will be getting an extra coach through Mardi Gras season. Bob Johnston

Cafe car lead service attendant Enrique George converses with passengers aboard No. 26, a train that is getting an extra coach. Higher fares were set for service during Mardi Gras prior to the deci-

Both New Orleans and Mobile, Ala., are known for dozens of day and evening parades plus seasonal ball celebrations in the run-up to Fat Tuesday on Feb. 17. Mississippi communities along the Gulf Coast between the two cities also participate. Biloxi, Miss., for instance, has hundreds of rooms to offer in its multiple casino hotels.

Single-level coaches have been stretched thin ever since Amtrak sidelined Horizon equipment last March after extensive corrosion was discovered during overhauls. An extra coach added during New Orleans Saints home game weekends helped boost patronage.

The decision grew out of a request made by the Southern Rail Commission at its December board meeting, David Clark, CEO of tourism group Visit Mobile, said [on the group's website](#).

"In seeing the absolute success of the *Mardi Gras Service* and considering Amtrak's decision to add a car during the New Orleans Saints home games, it simply made sense for the commissioners to send this request on behalf of all Mardi Gras revelers," Clark said. "This route is currently earning the highest ratings in customer satisfaction of any of Amtrak's lines in the entire United States, and we are thrilled to share the Mardi Gras spirit with even more people."

What to charge?

Without historical booking data to use as a guide, other than ticket purchases since the train's August launch, Amtrak's pricing strategy going into Mardi Gras season has been based on two-coach consists.

Without the added capacity, New Orleans-Mobile adult coach fares for all trains start at \$24 Monday-Thursday and \$30 Friday through Sunday; prices rise as seats are sold. Weekend costs have been jumping to the \$46-\$57-\$71 range, depending upon demand, with occasional sellouts more than a week in advance.

However, beginning Feb. 12 and continuing through Feb. 23, Amtrak has set coach prices for all trains in the highest "bucket," \$71. It isn't clear whether this will be revisited now that an additional coach has been added to one of the daily round trips, or if another car might augment the other trainset if demand warrants.

Southern Rail Commission Chairman Knox Ross tells *Trains*, "If you can make service more affordable by adding additional capacity, that increases the economic impact because more people are likely to ride."

The commission, with members from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, worked with political leaders and civic organizations to support local financial matches that helped launch the *Mardi Gras Service*. It is advised on operating and marketing strategy, but does not make those decisions.

Mardi Gras Service merchandise

Meanwhile, the SRC announced Thursday that Amtrak is selling *Mardi Gras*-branded caps, t-shirts, and accessories on a pre-order basis through Fat Tuesday, Feb. 17. Ross says the group's Baton Rouge, La., publicity firm, Emergent Method, worked with Amtrak promotion specialist Matt Donnelly to decide designs and what merchandise to offer.

The merchandise, [available here](#), will only be sold through Feb. 17, when production will begin. Customers can expect delivery two to three weeks after that date and shipping is included in the price. "These are more than just Mardi Gras keepsakes, they're a cool, wearable nod to a train that keeps the party rolling year-round," says the sales pitch.

Weather-related Issues Lead to Cancellations for Coast Starlight, Empire Builder

By Trains Staff | January 7, 2026

Sunset Limited canceled out of New Orleans because of late eastbound train

CHICAGO — Amtrak is dealing with several days of operating issues for a number of long-distance services, with the *Coast Starlight*, *Empire Builder*, and *Sunset Limited* all experiencing disruptions, most of them weather-related.

Some of California's *Pacific Surfliner* service also continues to be canceled because of weather-related issues.

In California, the northbound *Coast Starlight* scheduled to depart Los Angeles this morning has been canceled between L.A. and Emeryville, while the Tuesday, Jan. 6, southbound departure from Seattle has been canceled today (Jan. 7) between Emeryville and Los Angeles. This follows a washout in the Santa Barbara area on Tuesday [see ["Worker injured, tracks closed ..."](#) *Trains.com*, Jan. 6, 2026]. Both *Surfliner* round trips between Goleta and San Luis Obispo, Calif., have been cancelled today, and northbound morning train No. 761 is also cancelled on Thursday, according to the Amtrak website.

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The northbound Coast Starlight passes through Chatsworth, Calif., in 2020. Starlight service has been halted between Los Angeles and Emeryville by a washout in the Sacramento area. David Lassen

Further north, *Empire Builder* service has been halted west of Spokane, Wash., for both the Seattle and Portland, Ore., sections because of what Amtrak is calling “severe weather conditions.” Tuesday’s eastbound departures from both Seattle and Portland were canceled, while the westbound *Builder* that left Chicago on Monday were canceled today beyond Spokane. As of noon Central time, the Amtrak website still shows today’s eastbound departures from Portland and Seattle as operating. Finally, Amtrak says the westbound *Sunset Limited* scheduled to depart New Orleans today has been canceled between New Orleans and San Antonio, Texas, because of equipment unavailability. The eastbound train was canceled east of San Antonio on Tuesday after arriving in San Antonio at 1:10 p.m., some 8 hours, 10 minutes late. The train had required the addition of a freight locomotive to complete the trip into San Antonio after locomotive problems that were first reported in El Paso, leading to a multi-hour delay during that station stop. Those problems also led the connecting northbound *Texas Eagle* to depart San Antonio some 7 hours, 17 minutes late on Tuesday; the train was 7 hours, 54 minutes late today at its most recent stop in Poplar Bluff, Mo. Amtrak currently estimates its arrival in Chicago at 8:05 p.m., some 6 hours, 16 minutes late.

Trains’ Top Stories of 2025, No. 2: NextGen Acelas Debut

By Bob Johnston | December 30, 2025

August introduction sees evidence overdue trainsets are still a work in progress



Acela train No. 2154 rounds a curve at East Haven, Conn., on Oct. 16, 2025. Scott A. Hartley



A New York TV crew prepares to record the departure of the Boston-bound NextGen inaugural run from New Haven, Conn., on Aug. 27, 2025. Bob Johnston



Business class seating, as seen on the Aug. 27 inaugural run. Selecting a table seat ensures optimal window placement. note the limited luggage rack clearance. Bob Johnston

Nine years after Amtrak inked a \$2.45 billion contract with Alstom, builder of France’s TGV, to build 28 trainsets in the U.S., the new equipment debuted on Aug. 27 with a media trip from Washington Union Station to Boston’s South Station. Beginning the next day, the five Next Generation trainsets that had been accepted began appearing on two Acela Sunday-through-Friday schedules each way and one Saturday round trip.

As 2025 ends, Amtrak’s ticketing website shows that only one more NextGen round trip had been added. At least initially in 2026, the third round trip of new equipment has been shelved.

The long gestation

Trains first observed construction and assembly in June 2019 at Alstom’s Hornell, N.Y., facility, part of the same ex-Erie Railroad factory where Morrison-Knudsen and successor Amerail built 50 Viewliner I sleeping cars in the mid-1990s. Carolyn Decker, then the project manager, said the next-generation trains would be known as “Acela 21,” for the year of their expected debut. That was later changed to “Acela 2” and finally [NextGen](#). In 2024, Amtrak officials suggested the new trainsets’ first revenue runs would occur in spring 2025, which came and went.

Why the successive delays?

The Acela replacements’ top operating speed of 160 mph is faster on straightaways than the legacy equipment’s 150 mph, although they have few opportunities to achieve that velocity, aside from short stretches in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, as well as the “New Jersey Raceway” between Trenton and New Brunswick. Each generation of equipment utilizes different active-tilt mechanisms designed to counteract centrifugal forces when entering and leaving curves as fast as possible. Sources not connected with Amtrak or Alstom tell *Trains* that contractually, the specifications called for a trainset that would deliver shorter trip times by taking curves at up to 9 inches of underbalance, or tilt. The idea was to round the Northeast Corridor’s serpentine tracks faster than legacy Acelas, whose current certified maximum is 4.5 inches of tilt.

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Amtrak has reported that various NextGen trainsets have undergone more than 1,000 tests. This presumably includes runs at the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, Colo., dating from 2019, and years of subsequent performance and crew qualification trips on the Northeast Corridor. This testing was necessary because under actual NEC operating conditions, the trainsets did not replicate what Alstom's dynamic computer modeling had shown. Federal Railroad Administration regulations require that actual performance must come within 10% of what the model predicts, and that wasn't happening.

When tests revealed that the NextGens' rear power car was not performing to stability specifications, various adjustments to dampers, couplers, and braking software were attempted, followed by retesting. This process, as well as correcting engineering and manufacturing component defects, is what delayed initial implementation for so long. It is also why their debut continued to be pushed back until the right combination of fixes enabled the trainsets to reliably achieve 5 inches of underbalance, and why Acela schedules were not altered when the new trains entered service.

Rolling out additional trainsets requires extensive retrofitting to incorporate power car modifications as well as addressing issues discovered once revenue service began. Among these were station dwell delays caused by malfunctioning door mechanisms and inoperative onboard information displays. There was also one instance in October where a power car fault at New Haven resulted in a speed reduction to 50 mph until technicians were able to correct it.

Chris Jagodzinski, Amtrak vice president of customer and coach operations, said at a Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts webinar in November that the NextGens "will be able to go faster eventually but we slow them down on some of the curves until we finish some paperwork for the FRA." He says 7 inches of underbalance is being targeted.

Every new vehicle, most much less complicated than the Acelas, goes through a shakedown period. But now Northeast Corridor travelers can finally experience modern replacements for the 20 legacy trainsets that initiated Amtrak's premium high-speed brand in 2000.

The nine-car articulated trainsets can accommodate 386 passengers, compared with 304 on the original Acelas. Revised FRA crash-worthiness standards oriented to protecting passenger compartment occupants permits a lighter-weight design, though the Alstom's Avelia Liberty configuration is still bracketed by power cars at each end rather than employing an electric multiple-unit design. The NextGens have slightly firmer seats with built-in reading lights, headrest "wings" to permit more privacy, and power and USB ports between them. Cup holders and sturdier tray tables make juggling beverages and laptops easier, but seatbacks don't recline; instead, lower cushions slide forward. Eliminating overhead bins in favor of traditional racks creates a more spacious interior than legacy Acelas provide, although their shallower depth can't accommodate bulky luggage and end-aisle baggage towers are also relatively skimpy.

A mid-train cafe offers self-service "grab and go" items along with counter service, but there is no seating in the car. Rolling carts also deliver fresh snacks and beverages to Business-class passengers, while complimentary at-seat meals and drinks are served in First Class.

Amtrak's Jagodzinski says post-launch improvements on the way include P.A. system upgrades and retrofitting USB-C and -D ports in place of the type-A ports which were state-of-the-art when construction began. Because complaints have surfaced that some seats aren't adjacent to windows, there are plans to show where this occurs on Amtrak's ticketing website. As for the door malfunctions that have largely subsided, he says software changes are eliminating those problems and it will be easier for crews to troubleshoot any issues.

Amtrak plans to decommission the original Acelas as their four-year brake rebuild dates come due. The company now has a fleet of worthy successors ready to take their place.

Passenger in 2025: Patronage Jumps Despite Challenges

By [Bob Johnston](#) | December 24, 2025

Amtrak equipment shortages, maintenance issues continue



Amtrak's Borealis operates with a Superliner trainset on Feb. 15, 2025. Superliners became the train's standard equipment in March when Horizon cars were pulled from service because of corrosion issues. David Lassen

Ridership and Revenue Up

For the 12 months ending Sept. 30, Amtrak boarded almost 34.5 million passengers, a 5% increase from 2024. The fact that ticket revenue jumped 11% reflects a yield-management pricing strategy, in which fares are raised as available capacity for coach seats and sleeping car accommodations diminishes through purchases. But it is also a testament to continued strong demand for passenger rail across Amtrak's three operating segments.

More *Northeast Regional* frequencies fueled systemwide growth, while scheduled *Acela* departures were reduced on the Boston-Washington corridor as more of the 20 original 25-year-old trainsets were withdrawn. Help began to arrive as their long-delayed replacements debuted. **Horizon fallout** However, Amtrak's ability to satisfy demand nationwide took a big hit the last week in March when the entire Horizon passenger car fleet was withdrawn from service. "We discovered corrosion in several Horizon railcars and, while working with the manufacturer, decided to remove the equipment from service after learning of additional areas of concern from intensive inspections of multiple cars," Amtrak said then. The 61 coaches and nine café/business class cars still active from the 1990 Bombardier order had been the mainstay of the Pacific Northwest's *Cascades*, Maine's *Downeasters*, and the Chicago-Milwaukee-St. Paul *Borealis* and *Hiawatha* corridor services.

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Horizon coaches and cafés are sidelined at Amtrak's Chicago coach yard on March 26, 2025. Bob Johnston

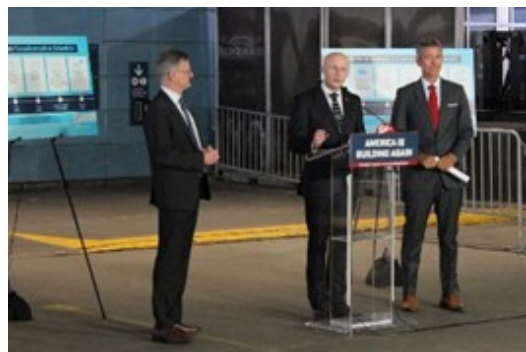
Trains on those routes were temporarily cancelled. Bus substitutions prevailed while Amtrak scrambled to partially fill the void with Amfleet replacements made available by reducing consists of Northeast Corridor trains. Regional routes faced numerous sellouts during high-demand periods throughout the year, and NEC pricing reached new highs by Thanksgiving. Amtrak president Roger Harris did say at the company's public board meeting in December that work underway at an Alstom facility in upstate New York would return some Horizons to active duty in 2026.

Capacity and Maintenance Challenges

Meanwhile, Superliners were tapped for the *Borealis* following the end of Colorado's seasonal *Winter Park Express*, and refurbished Sightseer lounges returned to the *Texas Eagle*. The *Eagle* also gained a through coach and sleeping car on days when it connected with the *Sunset Limited*. Elsewhere, other Superliner-equipped long-distance trains began receiving cars that had been sidelined by management's decision to pause overhauls in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, *Coast Starlight*, *Sunset Limited*, and *Empire Builder* coach capacity remained below 2019 levels.

Without sufficient standby rolling stock, a theme throughout 2025 continued to be late departures and mechanical failures en route, often soon after trains left their originating stations. *Builder* and *Southwest Chief* departures were cancelled throughout the year when equipment from severely delayed inbound trains was unavailable to cover the next assignment. There were also numerous instances of en-route equipment failures stranding passengers, particularly involving Siemens ALC42 long-distance and SC44 regional Charger locomotives. Head-end power electrical short circuits, both within and between cars, also became an issue toward the end of the year.

Government Intervention



Amtrak's Andy Byford speaks about New York Penn Station renovation plans at an Aug. 27, 2025, event. He is flanked by Deputy Secretary of Transportation Steven Bradbury (left) and U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. Bob Johnston

Other disruptions and delays occurred on the Northeast Corridor, exacerbated by work that closed one of four East River Tunnels beginning in April. Elimination of several *Empire Service* round trips and higher fares on remaining trains prompted New York Gov. Kathy Hochul to get a commitment from Amtrak to cap New York-Albany/Rensselaer fares at \$99, restore frequencies, and allow one Metro-North round trip to the state capital from New York's Grand Central Terminal in 2026.

Also on the political front, in March Amtrak CEO Stephen Gardner resigned under Trump administration pressure. The administration later shifted Penn Station renovation responsibilities from New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority to the Federal Railroad Administration and Amtrak; former New York City Transit "Train Daddy" Andy Byford was designated to lead Amtrak's involvement. He had previously been exploring resuscitation of the Dallas-Houston Texas Central high-speed project until Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy shut that effort down.

The administration also said it was rescinding a previously awarded \$4 billion federal grant to the California High Speed Rail Authority, although that decision is currently tied up in the courts. The authority had announced at a January board meeting that it would be selecting a track contractor and a trainset manufacturer in 2025, but by December only a request for proposals for track construction had been issued.

Starts, Saves, and Adjustments



A Miami-bound Brightline train speeds east from Orlando International Airport on May 19, 2025. Additional coaches were added and frequencies to Orlando reduced in a fall schedule adjustment. Bob Johnston

Brightline West also sought to begin constructing its Las Vegas, Nev., to Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., high speed route. At year's end, though, site preparation for a Las Vegas station was the only evidence of construction along the I-15 right-of-way since *Trains* had followed the route in January. In Florida, financing headwinds, coupled with the arrival of more coaches, prompted a significant restructuring of Brightline schedules and train lengths. The changes attempted to lure back South Florida commuters with increased frequencies, while offering more premium seating for long-distance riders. Noteworthy among Amtrak's state-supported services:

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The North Central Texas Council of Governments stepped in to fund a year’s worth of operating support for the Oklahoma City-Fort Worth *Heartland Flyer* after the Texas legislature balked at providing its share. And after more than a decade of effort by the Southern Rail Commission, Mardi Gras Service began with two daily round trips between New Orleans and Mobile, Ala.
 — To report news or errors, contact trainsnewswire@firecrown.com

Previous Trains.com coverage:

- [Amtrak sets ridership record in 2025 as capacity constraints continue: Analysis, Nov. 16, 2025](#)
- [Amtrak sidelines Horizon car fleet, leading to widespread cancellations, March 26](#)
- [Capacity crunch the main topic at Amtrak public board meeting: Analysis, Dec. 4](#)
- [Texas Eagle lounge car set to return; other long-distance trains to gain capacity, Feb. 25](#)
- [Storm cancellations, maintenance failures continue to plague Amtrak: Analysis, Jan. 12](#)
- [Amtrak hit by simultaneous Northeast Corridor stoppages, March 1](#)
- [Four Amtrak Cascades cancelled today; systemwide mechanical issues continue, Aug. 3](#)
- [Amtrak mechanical issues hobble departing Chicago trains, Dec. 9](#)
- [Amtrak CEO Gardner resigns, March 19](#)
- [Trump to axe California high-speed rail funding, May 7](#)
- [California high speed rail targets spring for trainset decision: ‘committed and aggressive’ on continuing construction, Jan. 24](#)
- [California high speed project request proposals for track construction, Nov. 28](#)
- [Following the route of Brightline West, Feb. 4](#)
- [Brightline West construction should start within two months, Feb. 10](#)
- [Brightline remarkets \\$985 million of debt at higher coupon rate, Aug. 13](#)
- [Brightline revamps schedules, pricing, and train length, Sept. 30](#)
- [Local Texas group to fund Heartland Flyer for a year, July 10](#)

Washington Flooding Spurs Cascades, Empire Builder Cancellations

By Trains Staff | December 11, 2025

Rail service halted on Seattle-Vancouver, Seattle-Spokane routes



The westbound Empire Builder kicks up snow as it passes through Lake Forest, Ill., on Nov. 30, 2025. Builder operations, and those of the Amtrak Cascades, have been disrupted by flooding in Washington state. David Lassen

SEATTLE — Flooding in parts of Washington state have disrupted the Seattle section of Amtrak’s *Empire Builder*, as well as *Amtrak Cascades* service. Both *Cascades* round trips between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, have been canceled today and tomorrow (Dec. 11-12) “due to the anticipated flooding of the Skagit River through Mount Vernon,” Amtrak said on its Amtrak Alerts website. No substitute transportation will be offered. Wednesday afternoon’s Seattle-Vancouver section of train No. 518 was also canceled. The *Empire Builder* scheduled to depart Seattle on Wednesday evening instead originated in Spokane, Wash., with buses operating between Seattle and Spokane. That train ended up departing from Spokane at 6:27 a.m. today, more than five hours late, and as of 1:30 p.m. CT was more than six hours behind schedule when it departed Libby, Mont. Westbound train No. 7 was also replaced by buses for the Spokane-Seattle portion of its trip; bus substitutions are also planned for No. 8 today and tomorrow, according to Amtrak’s website and social media posts. The Portland section of the *Builder* continues to operate. Flooding led Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson to declare a state of emergency on Wednesday, Dec. 10. Today, officials have called for evacuations in Skagit County, north of Seattle, with [ABC News reporting](#) up to 100,000 people could be facing evacuation orders. The Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skagit, and Cedar rivers have reached or may reach record high-water levels.

Amtrak’s Union Workers to Receive \$900 Bonus

By David Lassen | December 11, 2025 | Last updated on December 16, 2025

Company’s senior executives to forego 50% of bonus money; executive bonus system to be restructured

WASHINGTON — More than 18,000 union workers at Amtrak will receive \$900 holiday bonuses to mark the company’s record year of ridership and revenue, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has announced. The worker bonuses announced today (Dec. 11) come as Amtrak executives have agreed to forgo 50% of the bonuses that would have been paid out under their existing bonus structure, at the urging of the Trump administration, according to a Department of Transportation press release. Amtrak’s board of directors has also taken action to eliminate long-term bonuses for senior executives and to distribute those bonus funds to the union workers. “We are truly in the golden age of travel,” Duffy said in [a press release](#). “... my department is working every day to enhance the travel experience for the American people. We rely on our incredible workforce, including our unionized workers at Amtrak, to make it all possible.” Leaders of the two largest rail unions applauded the move.

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“This long-overdue recognition of the employees who keep the railroad moving is a step in the right direction,” said Mark Wallace, national president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen. Said Jeremy Ferguson, president of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers-Transportation Division, “SMART-TD appreciates Amtrak’s decision to prioritize the men and women who keep our passenger rail system running every day. Providing frontline employees with a meaningful bonus is an important acknowledgement of their dedication and service, especially during holiday season.”

In a separate press release, John Samuelson, president of the Transport Workers Union, also celebrated the move.

“Frontline workers make Amtrak run every day, not railroad executives,” Samuelson said. “This bonus acknowledges that fact and, for the first time in years, restructures the Amtrak budget to direct resources to workers on the line instead of into executives’ pockets.” Samuelson called it a “major victory” following what the union said was “years of pressure” to address executive bonuses. Amtrak said in a Dec. 16 email to Trains.com that it had nothing to add to the original release.

Amtrak workers stand by to help passengers board the Texas Eagle at Texarkana, Ark., in September 2024. More than 18,000 unionized Amtrak workers are set to receive a \$900 bonus this holiday season. Bob Johnston

Amtrak’s executive bonus structure has been a long-running source of controversy. In fiscal 2023, 13 top managers received a total of \$2.98 million in bonuses [see [“Amtrak defends management bonuses ...”](#) Trains.com, June 20, 2024]. The bonus structure has also been a target in congressional hearings [see [“House Republicans ask Amtrak to explain ...”](#) Nov. 3, 2022], as well as with legislation that would require full disclosure of bonus payments and the criteria for those bonuses [see [“Bill requiring disclosure ...”](#) Jan. 14, 2025].

U.S. Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee, noted in [a press release](#) that the committee has advanced legislation to make the executive bonuses public. “I commend the Administration for working with Amtrak’s leadership to redirect much of that bonus funding to the thousands of Amtrak employees this holiday season,” Graves said.

— Updated Dec. 12 at 8:10 a.m. CT with comment from Transport Workers Union; updated at 12:14 p.m. with link to original press release, not previously available on DOT website, and comment from U.S. Rep. Graves. Updated Dec. 16 with Amtrak response.



---BNSF News-----

BNSF Announces \$3.6 Billion Capital Plan for 2026

By [Trains Staff](#) | January 26, 2026

System maintenance to account for majority of spending



A BNSF intermodal train slows for maintenance work in Hinsdale, Ill., on June 13, 2021. BNSF will spend \$2.8 billion on system maintenance as part of its 2026 capital plan. David Lassen

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway will spend \$3.6 billion under its 2026 capital plan, the railroad announced today (Jan. 26), with the majority — \$2.8 billion — ticketed for infrastructure maintenance.

“Our 2026 capital plan focuses on strengthening and modernizing our network so we can continue to meet our customers’ evolving needs,” CEO Katie Farmer said in [a press release](#). “We prioritize investing with the future in mind, improving efficiency, adding capacity, and ensuring our railroad is always ready to support growth while delivering the dependable, resilient service our customers count on.”

The maintenance program includes plans to replace 400 miles of rail and more than 2.5 million ties, along with approximately 13,000 miles of track surfacing.

The plan also calls for \$358 million for expansion and efficiency projects. That figure includes completion of property acquisitions and development work for the \$1.5 billion, 4,500-acre [Barstow International Gateway](#) project, as well as the \$3.2 billion [Logistics Park Phoenix](#).

The latter project faces some development hurdles after officials in Maricopa County, Ariz., turned down a requested zoning change last fall [see [“Arizona county decision ...”](#) Trains.com, Nov. 5, 2025]. Other projects on tap include yard expansions in Galesburg, Ill, and Winslow, Ariz.

CSX, BNSF Detail Preparations for Major Winter Storm (updated)

By David Lassen | January 22, 2026

Norfolk Southern also advises customers impacts from cold, snow



A westbound BNSF intermodal train kicks up snow in Lisle, Ill., on Feb. 17, 2021. The railroad has advised customers of steps it is taking to address a major winter storm. David Lassen

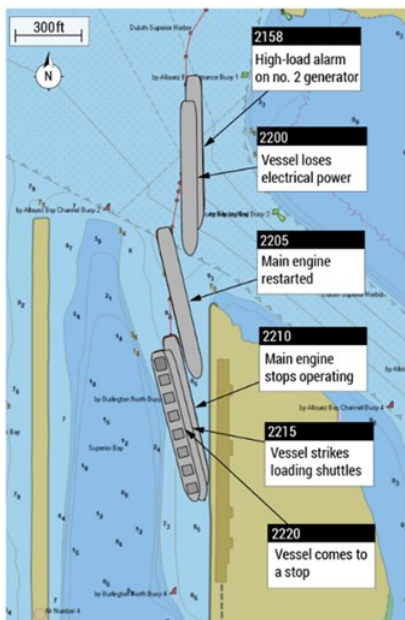
CSX and BNSF Railway today outlined plans to deal with the operational challenges from a major winter storm that could affect large portions of both companies' rail networks. Norfolk Southern also issued a customer advisory in which it said it was preparing for the storm, which is beginning to hit some areas today (Thursday, Jan. 22) and will continue to move eastward through the weekend. Responding to a question on CSX's quarterly earnings call, Chief Operating Officer Mike Cory said the railroad was expecting ice across its network from Nashville, Tenn., through Georgia, and snow farther north. As part of its preparations, CSX plans to have "senior coverage right around the clock in all of our key areas, including our network center," Cory said. "We've gone over everything from snow clearing to tree clearing, generators, everything that we need in each location, each facility that we see the storm coming through," Cory said. "... Assets right now are going to be the most crucial thing we protect. At the same time, we expect to see power outages, highway closures, so I do not see us coming out of this probably for a few days. If we get it Sunday, we're looking at midweek to recover.

"But I'm very confident, especially with the condition that we're in, that we will come through this with no issues. This is not going to lead us into four months of trouble like it did the year before." BNSF, in a customer advisory posted today, said it will adjust train lengths and use distributed power where appropriate to maintain train air pressure; has activated its winter action plans and positioned snow-removal equipment across its network; and will have rapid-response teams standing by around the clock. Those teams include engineering teams to address snow and track conditions and mechanical teams for locomotive and railcar issues. The company has passenger railcars to available to transport crews and support operations in areas where highway conditions could be an issue. **Norfolk Southern's advisory**, issued Wednesday, said no terminal or gate closures were planned for intermodal facilities, but that it would continue to monitor and adapt to conditions through the weekend. The NS advisory says widespread snowfall of 3 to 6 inches is forecast from the southern plains through the Tennessee Valley, southern Appalachians, Virginia, and Mid-Atlantic regions, with localized snowfall of 6 to 12 inches. BNSF reports snow accumulations of 8 to 15 inches are possible from central Oklahoma to western Kentucky, along with sleet and freezing rain. Northern areas will see wind chills well below zero. Other railroads may have issued similar advisories, but place customer information in password-protected portions of their websites.

Electrical Issues Led Ship to Strike BNSF Taconite Loading Facility, NTSB Says

By David Lassen | January 20, 2026

Final report on 2024 incident in Superior, Wis., says crew, company failed to adequately address earlier problems



The sequence of events leading to the Algoma Discovery's collision with BNSF's Allouez Taconite Loading Facility. NTSB diagram using National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Electronic Navigation Chart USSDLHCG as viewed on MadeSmart automatic identification system.



The BNSF Allouez Taconite Loading Facility in September 2024, about two months after it was damaged when hit by a ship. Google Earth

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WASHINGTON — Loss of electrical power and propulsion because of generator issues, and a failure to fully address earlier electrical problems, led a ship to collide with a BNSF taconite loading facility, the National Transportation Safety Board said in [its final report](#) on the July 24, 2024, incident in Superior, Wis.

The collision damaged five of the loading shuttles at the Allouez Taconite Facility, with damage estimated at \$950,000 while the bulk-load cargo vessel *Algoma Discovery* sustained some \$130,000 in damage. No one was injured.

The ship had been experiencing electrical problems en route to Superior, but the chief engineer was able to restore all three of the ship’s generators to operation while the *Algoma Discovery* was at anchor off Superior waiting to load. But while en route to the dock, the ship lost all generator power after engaging its bow thruster; the main engine was quickly restarted, but shut down again five minutes later. Two anchors were deployed, but the ship still struck the dock at a speed of about 0.9 knots.

The NTSB determined the probable cause of the accident was the chief engineer and operating company not sufficiently evaluating and repairing the previously online generator problem. The report says such electrical components should be tested to full capacity, or as close to full capacity as possible, to ensure they can meet demand during maneuvering. If the problem cannot be completely resolved, alternate measures such as the use of tugboats should be considered.

BNSF Set Safety Records in 2025

By Trains Staff | January 15, 2026

Both the employee injury and train accident rates improved in what was the railroad’s safest year ever



Westbound BNSF intermodal trains pause for crew changes in Needles, Calif., in August 2022 as a crewman heads toward his train. Bill Stephens

FORT WORTH, Texas — BNSF Railway had its safest year ever in 2025. The railroad’s employee personal injury rate improved by 10% compared to the old record set in 2023. Rail equipment incidents improved 13%, which BNSF said enabled it to continue to lead the industry.

“I am so proud of what our teams were able to accomplish in 2025, marking significant progress toward our ultimate safety vision of operating a railroad free of accident and injury,” CEO Katie Farmer said in a statement.

“This milestone is proof our entire team remains united and dedicated to prioritizing safety. We are deeply grateful to every person who played a role in reaching this accomplishment, especially our team who is out there every day delivering for our customers.” BNSF Vice President of Safety Chad Sundem said cooperation helped drive the safety improvements. “I believe our results are a direct reflection of strong collaboration between labor and management, and a shared belief that safety is a value and guides every decision we make,” he explained. “I am proud of our teammates and grateful for the trust, discipline, and teamwork that made this historic year possible.”



— UP News —



Union Pacific Steam Club Update No. 42 - Jan. 8, 2026 Union Pacific Steam



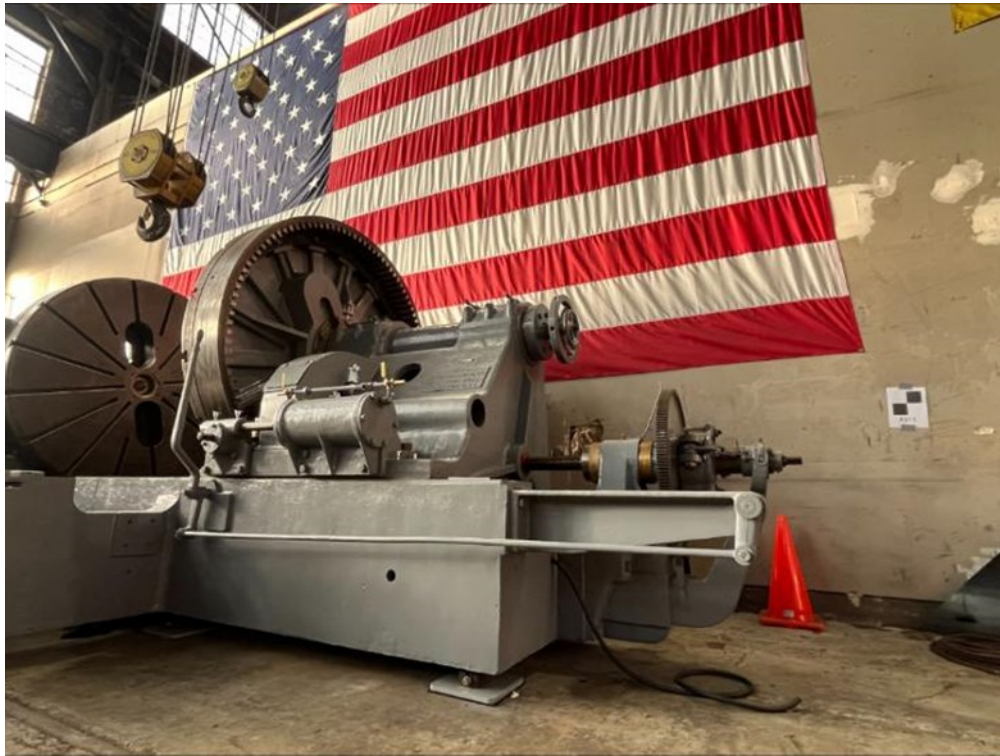
The Big Boy No. 4014, the world’s largest operating steam locomotive, and No. 844, the fastest steam locomotive, connect people from all walks of life through history and innovation.

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Union Pacific Steam Club Update No. 42 - Jan. 8, 2026 We know everyone is super excited to learn more about the 2026 Steam Tour. The steam crew is hard at work planning as we pursue what is possible. Stay tuned for updates; as always, Steam Club members will be the FIRST to know when we have more information to share! 2026 Steam Merch is On Its Way! New [2026 steam souvenirs](#) are now available to pre-order from [UnionPacificStore.com](#), with new products anticipated to be available for shipping in the coming days. Place your orders now to be ready when the Big Boy heads out to celebrate America's 250th birthday!

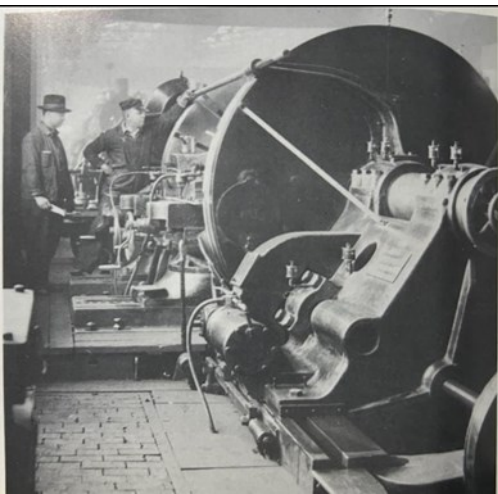
And don't forget to order your copy of the [official 2026 Union Pacific calendar](#) as well!



The BIG 90

Check out the Niles 90-inch wheel lathe that our Union Pacific steam crew has been rebuilding at the Cheyenne Steam Shop. Intended to ensure that [No. 844 "The Living Legend"](#) and [Big Boy No. 4014](#) can receive in-house maintenance, this massive piece of history represents the heart and soul of railroading. Union Pacific is proud of the hard work our Steam program does to keep our legacy running strong now and into the future.

Please enjoy these before-and-after photos showcasing the hard work and dedication that goes into preserving these iconic machines



Remember Safety First!

At railroad crossings, ALWAYS expect a train on any track, at any time, in either direction. ALWAYS stay at least **25 feet back**. Remember, **NO TRESPASSING!**

That's all for now. Stay safe everyone – 25 feet back from all railroad tracks! Always!

Union Pacific Steam Club

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Union Pacific will join the nation in celebrating 250 years of American independence and innovation this year with its first-ever coast-to-coast steam tour led by the legendary [Big Boy No. 4014](#). The first leg of the tour starts Sunday, March 29, with the Big Boy and several historical passenger cars from Union Pacific’s Heritage Fleet traveling west to California from Cheyenne, Wyoming, the steam locomotive’s homebase. The first leg of the tour ends Friday, April 24, in Cheyenne.

Two major public display days are set:

Friday and Saturday, April 10-11: Roseville, California

Saturday and Sunday, April 18-19: Ogden, Utah

A daily schedule with additional stops along with a map of the route will be released closer to the tour’s launch. The eastern leg of the tour, anticipated to start in late spring, is still being finalized and will be announced soon.

There will NOT be any passenger excursions offered on the western leg of the tour.

Big Boy No. 4014, the world’s largest operating steam locomotive, will be joined by two commemorative locomotives, including the railroad’s newest locomotive: No. 1776 – America250. This new commemorative locomotive pays tribute to the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of this nation. The locomotive will feature the emblem of the America250 Semi-centennial Commission, the national nonpartisan organization established by Congress to lead the nation’s 250th anniversary. More information about No. 1776 will be announced soon.

“We are proud to honor our nation’s great history and legacy of innovation with our heritage locomotives. For the first time, we will share the Big Boy with communities on the East Coast, operating it from ocean to ocean,” said CEO Jim Vena. “America has never been afraid to dream about what’s possible – and neither is Union Pacific as we carry the grain that feeds families, the steel that builds cities and the household goods that stock store shelves.”

Union Pacific is proud that our efforts to create America’s first transcontinental railroad are making a coast-to-coast Big Boy tour possible. Our [combination with Norfolk Southern](#) will strengthen America’s competitiveness, enhance safety, safeguard union jobs and deliver exceptional service.

Keep Safety Top of Mind

Stay back at least 25 feet from all railroad tracks. This includes drones.

Railroad tracks, trestles, yards and right of way are private property - do not trespass.

Never assume tracks are abandoned or inactive - ALWAYS expect a train.

Be a safe and considerate driver - do not pace the train.

Be Aware of the Environment: While we strive to provide access to all guests, Big Boy is positioned in a working rail environment with uneven walking surfaces that may create difficulty for accessibility.

[Read more safety tips](#)

Union Pacific Steam Club

To be notified when news about Union Pacific's legendary steam program (including future steam excursions by Living Legend No. 844 and Big Boy No. 4014) becomes available, join the Official Union Pacific Steam Club at <http://UP.com/SteamClub>! Steam club members always get notified first when news about Union Pacific's steam program is released!

Union Pacific CEO Tells Customers They Will Benefit From Merger

By [David Lassen](#) | January 15, 2026

Jim Vena says other railroads fear competing against a transcontinental Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern system

SCHAUMBURG, Ill. — You could say that Jim Vena’s latest salvo in the war of words over the proposed Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger was downright Shakespearean.



Which is to say that the Union Pacific CEO thinks the other Class I railroads doth protest too much. “If your competitor was doing something stupid, what would you do?” Vena said during an entertaining but often digressive talk today (Jan. 15) to open the second day of the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers winter meeting. “I know what I would do and hopefully you’re all the same ... You would shut up and let them do it. Because at the end of the day they’re going to screw up and you’re going to have a better place in the marketplace and win more business.

Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena makes a point while speaking at the Midwest Association of Rail Shippers winter meeting in Schaumburg, Ill., on Jan. 15, 2026. David Lassen

“The reason the railroads are so up in arms is they have a new competitor. They have a competitor that’s going to be faster, going to be able to move products seamlessly in a better way, and that competitor is going to drive them to compete at a higher level. ... So bottom line is you would only complain, and complain as hard as they are without true facts, if you thought that your competitors have something that’s going to give them an upper hand.”

Vena’s MARS appearance came the day after CEOs Keith Creel of CPKC and Katie Farmer of BNSF took aim at the merger on a number of fronts. That apparently left enough of a mark that UP felt compelled to issue a press release as Vena spoke, saying the company “set the record straight” at the meeting. Vena sprinkled responses to some of their contentions throughout his talk:

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- “I’ve heard people talk about we haven’t been able to grow as an industry. I don’t like talking about the rest of them. They can worry about their own freaking business. I’ll tell you this much. In 2025, we grew 100,000 carloads more just with the railroad that we have.”
- “I’ve heard them say that, Union Pacific has increased prices 17% over the last five or 10 years. Well, against inflation running at 30%, son of a gun. I called our chief marketing officer and said, what the hell are you doing? You need to increase prices more than that.”
- On other railroads’ filings with the Surface Transportation Board arguing the merger application is incomplete: “We’ve put in exactly what the STB asked us to put in, and that’s real important for us. And listen, if they want more information on something, we’ll give it to them. Some of the things that the lawyers try to find that they want us to give are things that are not necessary. It’s like the piece of paper that talks about what our limits are if we want to walk away from the deal. What the hell does that have to do with it? If it’s competitive, it’s competitive.” [CN, CPKC, and CSX all said this was grounds for the STB to reject the application as incomplete; see “[Competing railroads say ...](#),” Trains.com, Dec. 30, 2025].
- He also explained why the railroad believes it can convert 2 million truckloads of traffic to rail.
- “Fifty percent of our business at Union Pacific is premium business. ... That is absolutely truck competitive. We compete against trucks for that 50% of the business every day. And we think and our experts that put in over 5,000 pages of information in our application — plus 2,000 pages of people that supported us — they think the opportunity is there for us to grow that business.”

Mostly, though, he touted the benefits he said the merger will bring. It will decrease the number of touches to move a car, he said. As an example, he used a shipment moving from North Platte, Neb., to Conway, Pa., which would no longer require switching by UP in Chicago or NS in Elkhart, Ind.

“There are 10,000 movements a day that we can absolutely do it this way, let alone what we’re going to grow,” he said. “That’s what we’re offering our customers. And I don’t know about all of you. If I’m a customer and you can get your product to market quicker, you can carry less inventory, you can have less ownership in cars or the amount of money that you spend on rail cars. You get to have one bill. You get to deal with one railroad. You get to deal with one customer service center We think that that’s a win for you.”

And, he said, such movements will have financial benefits. Because of merger-related operational efficiencies, UP’s cost structure will go down and, as a result, “we’re going to have an opportunity to not price as much.”

Ultimately, he boiled down UP’s case for the merger to a quick summary near the end of his talk.

“We needed to have the railroad running financially, operationally at the right level, which we’ve done. We are the most efficient railroad in North America. That’s fact. We have the highest level of service of anybody in the industry. That’s fact. We have the capability to be able to open marketplaces for customers that they don’t have today, because we’re going to make it less complicated. That’s fact. And we want to compete against the world, and have our customers ... win in the marketplace.

“You win, we win. That’s what it’s all about.”

Analysts Express Some Skepticism About UP-NS Merger Claims

By Bill Stephens | January 9, 2026

Timing of volume growth, traffic mix, and application details are questioned during Thursday webcast



An eastbound Union Pacific intermodal train and a westbound coal empty meet at Elmhurst, Ill., on Dec. 21, 2025. David Lassen

Industry analysts speaking at a RailTrends webcast on Thursday (Jan. 8, 2026) were skeptical about some of the claims Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern make in their merger application, including its central theme that the \$85 billion combination is fundamentally about volume growth. Independent analyst Rick Paterson noted that UP and NS volumes have been flat over the past decade, a period when truck tonnage increased 13% and the U.S. economy grew 26%.

And yet the railroads are projecting an 11% volume increase within three years of the merger, he says, with 77% of the growth expected to come from intermodal. Paterson questioned the growth forecast for both intermodal and carload and bulk business. “Intermodal, I’m a little bit more skeptical about for two reasons. No. 1, part of the rationale for a bump in intermodal volume seems to be an expectation built into this analysis that these two railroads will reduce price to customers,” he says. “And that’s simply not in these companies’ natures, and it’s not what the shareholders ... expect or want, right?”

Of the 11% volume growth, only 2.5% is expected to come from carload business. That’s underwhelming, “and arguably too low,” Paterson says. Union Pacific is “the King of Carload” because it boasts the

Paterson also questioned the anticipated pace of growth, with 40% of it expected to come to the combined railroad in 2027, followed by 30% of the growth coming in both 2028 and 2029, assuming the merger is approved and reviewed on schedule.

The reason? The potential for operational disruptions related to the cutover of UP’s NetControl technology system onto the NS network. UP officials, citing a smooth cutover to NetControl on the railroad in 2024, say they’re confident the process can go without a hitch on NS, too.

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Paterson says shippers may not have that same confidence. “Customers may be reluctant to give UP and NS more business ahead of the NetControl cutover in 2028 and 2029,” he explains, which would blow a hole in the growth forecast. Farrukh Bezar, a former strategy and marketing executive at CSX and Canadian National who is a consultant and managing partner at Lynwood Partners, says an end-to-end merger like UP-NS has always made sense. There’s no question about the potential for volume growth, he says, particularly in the watershed area where the eastern and western railroads currently interchange. The watershed — the vast swath of the American heartland that’s within 250 miles of the Mississippi River — has been underserved because of interchange friction and challenges over how railroads split revenue when moves in and out of the watershed are a short haul for one or both railroads. The expanded UP would be able to offer single-line service from coast to coast. “I think it’s doable the way UP and NS have laid it out. A lot needs to fall in place for it to happen. So I would say I’m moderately skeptical,” Bezar says. The volume is there, he says, it’s just a question of timing when and if UP can convert it to rail. From a shipper perspective, the merger is not “one size fits all,” Bezar says. UP and NS intermodal customers Hub Group and Knight Swift could have a “super clean” transition, he says, while others like Schneider and J.B. Hunt — who post-merger would still use different railroads in the east and west — will have to contemplate switching carriers. David Woodruff, a former CN government affairs executive who is a consultant at Rubicon Strategy, says that for UP and NS the review process is all about momentum. “The most potent force in American politics still really is a sense of inevitability,” he says. “Momentum is a tool to get you to inevitability. But really, in today’s divided country, ... it’s often not about how do you convince 51% of the people that it’s a good thing, but really how do you convince 51% of the people that it’s going to happen. So over the next course of the next year, with this application now filed and the process going forward, it is an inevitability game.” All politics is certainly local, he says, so members of Congress will be looking at the merger from the standpoint of how it might affect the mill on Main Street. The White House has yet to fully weigh in on the merger, the way it has with the Netflix-Warner Brothers combination. President Donald Trump has said he will be in the middle of that deal, citing concerns over market dominance, Woodruff says. The Surface Transportation Board has sole authority over railroad mergers, independent analyst Anthony B. Hatch points out. And because it’s an independent agency, he says political influence from the White House or Congress is irrelevant, especially since several labor unions have backed the UP-NS deal in exchange for job protection. It’s unclear, Hatch says, whether the STB in the coming days will accept the merger application as complete or reject it as incomplete. Hatch says he and many others believe the application failed to fully address how the merger will enhance competition, how it’s in the public interest, and how its benefits cannot be achieved by other means, such as interline partnerships. A decision that the application is incomplete, Hatch says, would only mean a delay in the merger review process as UP and NS would aim to quickly provide the STB with the information it wants. The analysts spoke at “Reflections on the STB Application: A Virtual Salon,” a RailTrends event sponsored by Hatch and trade publication *Progressive Railroading*.

Trucking Firm Countersues Union Pacific, Blames Crew and Crossing Design for Fatal Texas Crash

By Bill Stephens | December 8, 2025

The engineer and conductor were killed in the December 2024 collision between a UP Z-train and a piece of heavy equipment on a semi-truck at a grade crossing in Pecos, Texas



The National Transportation Safety Board preliminary report on the Dec. 18, 2024 fatal grade crossing collision in Pecos, Texas, included this image of the derailment scene. City of Pecos photo via NTSB

The lead locomotive was heavily damaged in the Dec. 18, 2024 grade crossing collision in Pecos, Texas. Boss Heavy Haul countersuit

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PECOS, Texas — The heavy haul trucking company whose rig was stopped on a grade crossing and struck by a Union Pacific Z-train a year ago, killing the train crew, has filed a lawsuit against the railroad.

The countersuit, filed last week by Boss Heavy Haul and Optimized Process Designs in Reeves County District Court in Pecos, blames UP and the train crew for the Dec. 18 collision.

“Union Pacific is responsible for the disastrous December 2024 train crash at the Cedar Street grade crossing in downtown Pecos ... that underlies this action. Among other wrongful conduct, Union Pacific recklessly maintained the Crossing as a dangerous ‘humped crossing’ with steep inclines, while knowing that the Crossing daily experiences heavy industrial traffic and was the site of a 2019 crash between a Union Pacific train and a truck-trailer,” [the countersuit claims](#). “And in the moments leading up to the December 2024 crash, the Union Pacific train crew inexplicably failed to take any measures to stop or slow the train until it was only one-quarter of a mile away from the Crossing, even though the crew had a clear view from over a mile away of a specific and individualized hazard: BOSS’s oversized load that was over 15 feet in height and flanked by a police escort and two pilot cars with flashing emergency lights.”

The load, a demethanizer tower used in the oil and gas industry, was being transported from Houston to Mentone, Texas, a town in the Permian Basin oil patch 23 miles north of Pecos. The tower was 12 feet wide, 116 feet long, and weighed 91,000 pounds, according to the National Transportation Safety Board’s preliminary report.

The truck was stopped on the crossing for one minute before train ZAILA-18, a Shreveport, La.-Los Angeles hotshot, struck the 2015 Peterbilt truck-tractor in combination with a 2016 Scheuerle hydraulic platform semitrailer that was carrying an oversized load, the NTSB said.

Engineer Clay Burt and conductor Phillip Araujo were killed in the wreck. A review of one of the locomotive data recorders showed the train had been moving at 68 mph before the crew initiated an emergency brake application shortly before the collision. The train was moving at 64 mph when it collided with the truck. The maximum authorized track speed in the area is 70 mph.

“At Union Pacific, we take both safety and federal regulations seriously. The speed of our train, along with the timing of the crossing signal, was in full compliance with federal regulations. The crossing, which handles a high volume of truck traffic daily without incident, was also safe,” railroad spokeswoman Kristen South said in an email. “The tragic incident that claimed the lives of two Union Pacific employees could have been prevented if the trucking company had taken the necessary precautions to coordinate the route and the movement of its oversized load and notified Union Pacific in advance. They also should have planned and scouted the route and the attributes of the particular crossing prior to the trip to determine if its oversized load could safely negotiate the crossing.”

The trucking company said that neither the truck driver nor the police escort or front and rear pilot drivers saw or heard any indication of an approaching train when the truck proceeded slowly through the crossing to avoid getting hung up on the hump, according to the countersuit.

The suit alleges that the UP crew was negligent when it failed “to stop or slow down,” and claims that positive train control data logs “appear to demonstrate that the train was provided a ‘restricted proceed’ signal during the 73 seconds leading up to the accident, beginning when the train was approximately 1.5 miles away from the crossing.”

A restricted proceed indication would have required the crew to not exceed 20 mph while being able to stop within one-half the range of vision.

The grade crossing, the countersuit says, lacks signage warning of low ground clearance despite the presence of gouge marks from vehicles that had struck the inclined pavement.

The trucking company also argues that the crew would have survived if they had taken refuge in the nose of their GE C45AH locomotive.

“Post-accident analysis of the nose found that it was intact, including the collision posts installed to help maintain its structure in the event of a collision,” the trucking company alleges. “This analysis is confirmed by the following picture of the nose after the Collision, which demonstrates that it absorbed the impact of the Collision remarkably well, whereas the locomotive’s cab (where the engineer and conductor remained) was entirely destroyed.”

The trucking company also alleges that UP took no action to alter the crossing after a 2019 collision between a train and a tractor-trailer.

The NTSB said its investigation is focused on “site modeling, accident data analysis, highway railroad grade crossing safety, locomotive cab survivability and crashworthiness, and carrier requirements for traversing grade crossings while transporting oversized loads.”



---- CN News ---

Court Ruling Certifies Class-action Suit Against CN, CP for 2021 Lytton, B.C., Fire

By Trains Staff | December 5, 2025

Plaintiffs argue train caused fire that killed two, destroyed town; TSB of Canada previously found no evidence blaze was

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — A British Columbia Supreme Court justice has certified a class-action lawsuit against Canadian National and Canadian Pacific (now CPKC) over the 2021 wildfire that destroyed the community of Lytton, B.C., saying in a ruling this week that there is “some basis in fact” to support allegation that railroad operations caused the fire.

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A frame from a forward-facing video camera shows the view from a CP coal train as it passed mile 98.14 on CN's Ashcroft Subdivision, the possible starting point of the fire that devastated Lytton, B.C., in June 2021. The Transportation Safety Board of Canada said it found no evidence a train caused the fire, but a judge has certified a class-action suit against CN and CP. Canadian Pacific image via TSB

[The Dec. 2 ruling](#) by Justice Ward Branch notes that the certification “is not a determination of the merits, where greater evidentiary precision is necessary.” It comes after another proposed class-action suit was denied certification in 2023 [see [“Court turns down class-action suit ...”](#) Trains.com, Aug. 11, 2023] and a Transportation Safety Board of Canada investigation that did not find “any evidence to link railway operations to the fire” [see [“TSB finds no evidence ...”](#) Trains.com, Oct. 14, 2021].

The June 30, 2021, fire killed two people and took more than two months to contain, consuming more than 800 square kilometers (about 309 square miles, or more than 197,000 acres). Plaintiffs in the suit contend sparks from a passing train caused the fire, which came during a heat wave that saw a Canadian record temperature of 49.6 degrees Celsius (121 degrees Fahrenheit) the day before.

A lawyer for the plaintiffs [told the CBC](#) the matter is slated to go to trial in May 2027. The ruling means his clients will now have access to documents from the two railroads regarding events on the day of the fire.

CN spokeswoman Ashley Michnowski [told Global News](#) that the railroad is disappointed with the decision and is considering its options. Noting that certification does not require a full assessment of evidence, she said, “Multiple expert agencies have considered the evidence and found no connection between the fire and railway operations. We are confident that, at trial, the Court will be able to consider all the factual elements already reviewed by these agencies to come to the same conclusion.”



----- CPKC News -----

CPKC Profits Rise Despite Flat Volume, Economic and Trade Headwinds

By [Bill Stephens](#) | January 29, 2026

The railway expects to see continued traffic growth this year



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

CALGARY, Alberta — Canadian Pacific Kansas City on Wednesday reported higher fourth-quarter profits despite flat volume.

“Our story is about continuing to do what we do best: Controlling what we can control, and executing our PSR model, which remains key to setting CPKC apart and allows us to shine in times of uncertainty,” CEO Keith Creel said on the railway’s earnings call, referring to the Precision Scheduled Railroading operating model. “We saw that in the results in the last quarter. We’ll continue to see that in 2026.”

For the quarter, operating income grew 3%, to \$1.19 billion U.S., as revenue increased 1%, to \$2.89 billion U.S. Earnings per share, adjusted for the impact of one-time items, increased 3%, to 98 U.S. cents.

Quarterly expenses were flat. The railway’s 58.9% operating ratio set a quarterly record for CPKC and was a 0.8-point improvement compared to the fourth quarter of 2024.

Fourth-quarter volume was flat on the basis of revenue ton-miles but up 1% when measured by carloads and intermodal containers. On a carload basis, coal and intermodal were the only business segments to see growth. Grain and potash carloads were flat, while CPKC’s remaining business segments declined.

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Chief Marketing Officer John Brooks says that U.S. tariffs continue to weigh on CPKC’s Canadian forest products traffic as well as cross-border steel shipments to the U.S. The railway is counting on bumper grain crops in Canada and the U.S. to boost volumes this year.

The railway’s Mexico Midwest Express flagship intermodal service, which links Chicago with points in Mexico, continues to grow, with volume up 40% year over year in the fourth quarter, Brooks says.

CPKC and CSX will launch dedicated intermodal trains connecting Mexico and Dallas with Atlanta, Charlotte, N.C., and Jacksonville, Fla. “The SMX train pairs will formally launch in the coming months and will offer the fastest, most reliable service product in these lanes,” Brooks says.

Brooks says CPKC is in talks with one domestic intermodal customer who plans on using the service for up to 80,000 loads per year, which translates into 219 containers per day.

The service will use the CPKC-CSX interchange at Myrtlewood, Ala., on the former Meridian & Bigbee short line that is now a link between the two Class I systems.

“Over the past two years, this franchise has outperformed the industry in revenue growth, outperformed the industry in earnings growth,” Creel says. “We’ve got an exciting setup to continue to generate industry leading performance in 2026 as well.”

CPKC expects revenue ton-mile growth of around 5% this year, along with earnings per share growth of 10% or higher. The railway plans to spend \$1.96 billion U.S. on capital projects in 2026.

Chief Operating Officer Mark Redd says the railway will continue to add centralized traffic control and additional and extended passing sidings on its north-south corridor between Shreveport, La., and Chicago.

CPKC’s key operational metrics all improved for the quarter, with car miles per day increasing 7%, to 136. “The network is performing at record levels,” Redd says.

The railway also improved its safety metrics in 2025, with personal injury rate down 3% and the train accident rate down 16%, which executives said once again leads the industry in North America.

For the full year, CPKC’s revenue ton-miles were up 4%, while volume grew 3% when measured by carloads and containers. CPKC’s 2025 operating income increased 8%, to \$4.13 billion U.S., while revenue grew 4%, to \$11.12 billion U.S. Earnings per share increased 13%, to \$3.33 U.S.

The 2025 operating ratio was 62.8%, an improvement of 1.6 points compared to 2024.

Sixteen U.S. Unions Ratify Agreements with CPKC

By David Lassen | January 16, 2026

New five-year deals cover about 700 workers in 11 states



An eastbound CPKC intermodal train kicks up snow as it passes through Brookfield, Wis., on Nov. 30, 2025. David Lassen

CALGARY, Alberta — A total of 16 tentative bargaining agreements covering Canadian Pacific Kansas City workers with various U.S. unions in recent weeks have all been ratified, the railroad announced on Thursday (Jan. 15).

The five-year agreements cover approximately 700 railroaders in 11 states. “We are very pleased to see all these agreements ratified and thank our union leaders across the United States who have worked with us at the bargaining table to reach agreements that benefit hundreds of our railroaders,” CPKC CEO Keith Creel said in [a press release](#).

“With these agreements reached at the bargaining table and now ratified, we remain focused on serving our customers as we safely and efficiently move American business and contribute to economic growth.”

The ratified agreements include:

- One with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, representing approximately 300 engineers on the former Soo Line in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin [see [“BLET ratifies contracts ...”](#) Trains.com, Dec. 12, 2025].
- Five with the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, covering 231 workers on the Delaware & Hudson, Soo Line, Kansas City Southern, MidSouth, SouthRail, and TexMex properties.

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- Five with the Transportation Communications Union and American Railway and Airway Supervisors Association, representing approximately 108 clerks, maintenance workers, and mechanical and engineering supervisors workers on the Delaware & Hudson, Soo Line, and Kansas City Southern.
- Two with the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers representing 26 hostlers and laborers on the Soo Line and Kansas City Southern.
- An agreement with the Soo Line Locomotive and Car Foreman’s Association representing 19 mechanical foremen.
- An agreement with the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Blacksmiths representing three Kansas City Southern boilermakers.
- An agreement with the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers-Mechanical Division representing one sheet metal worker at Kansas City Southern.
- Agreements reached in December with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers representing 76 electricians on the Soo Line and Kansas City Southern remain subject to ratification.

CPKC Holiday Train Sets Fundraising Record

By Trains Staff | December 26, 2025

Annual tour raises more than \$2 million, collects more than 175,000 pounds of food



The CPKC Holiday Train raised a record amount of money in 2025. CPKC

CALGARY, Alberta — The CPKC Holiday Train raised more than Ca\$2 million and collected more than 175,000 pounds of food for food banks during its 2025 operating season, which concluded Dec. 21.

“Year after year, the CPKC Holiday Train proves that generosity and community spirit know no bounds,” CPKC CEO Keith Creel said in a press release. “Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who came out to see a show, donated to this great cause, and made the season a true celebration of giving. The incredible support we receive reminds us of what is possible when we come together with kindness and purpose.”

This year’s tour by the two Holiday Train trainsets included 194 live music performances in six provinces and 13 states. Since 1999, the Holiday Train has raised more than \$28.3 million and collected more than 5.6 million pounds of food.

--- Other Railroad News ---

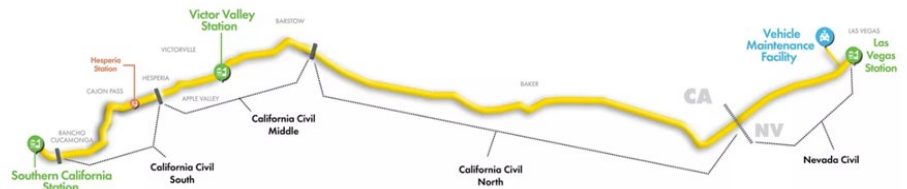
Brightline West Now Aims for Completion in Late 2029

By David Lassen | January 19, 2026

Target date moved back for second time since 2024 groundbreaking



Brightline West held its groundbreaking ceremony in Las Vegas in April 2024. The company’s revised estimate calls for completion of the project in late 2029. David Lassen



Brightline West construction will be divided into four zones. Brightline West

LAS VEGAS — The completion date for the Brightline West high-speed rail project has been pushed back again, this time to late 2029. The company [informed KVVU-TV](#) of that date last week, but not did elaborate on reasons for the new estimate. It did say the project is in the “civil construction” phase, preparing the route along Interstate 15.

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Brightline West will connect Las Vegas to Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., with a 218-mile route built mostly along the right-of-way of I-15. [On its website](#), the company says construction has been divided into four segments, three in California and one in Nevada; the project will also include four stations and a maintenance facility in Sloan, Nev. At groundbreaking ceremonies in April 2024, officials said the project would be done in time for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, which begin in mid-July of that year [see [“Brightline West groundbreaking ...,”](#) Trains.com, April 22, 2025]. The company revised the target date to December 2028 in documents related to a bond offering last January [see [“Brightline West now expecting ...,”](#) Jan. 26, 2025].

Increasing construction costs led Brightline West to apply a \$6 billion loan from the federal government last year [see [“Brightline West seeks ...,”](#) Oct. 6, 2025]. At that time, the cost of the project was estimated to have risen from \$16 billion to \$21.5 billion

Initial Report on Cause of Fatal Mexican Derailment Due this Week

By Trains Staff | January 25, 2026

Interoceanic Train to remain shut down until route’s safety is certified



VERACRUZ, Mexico — The initial report on the cause of December’s fatal Interoceanic Train is expected this week, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said at a press conference on Friday, Jan. 23.

The passenger operation across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec remains shut down following the Dec. 28 derailment that killed 14 passengers [see [“At least 13 dead ...,”](#) Trains.com, Dec. 29, 2025].

The federal attorney general’s office, which is conducting the investigation, informed Sheinbaum it will have its first report this week, she said.

[El Universal reports](#) Sheinbaum said service will not resume until the safety of the rail line is certified, a process proposed by the Railway Transport Regulatory Agency that could include an international review.

The scene of the Interoceanic Train derailment. The first report on the cause of the accident is expected this week. Secretariat of the Navy, Mexico

But that process must await the “ruling and investigations” on the cause of the derailment.

International certification, Sheinbaum said, could provide recommendations to improve the route “and at the same time give certainty to the population that the line is safe.”

VIA Passengers Stranded Overnight on Corridor Trains (updated)

By Trains Staff | December 11, 2025 | Last updated on December 12, 2025

‘Serious mechanical issues’ lead Toronto-Ottawa passengers to arrive more than 12 hours late

BROCKVILLE, Ontario — Cascading delays following a mechanical issue with one train led to VIA Rail Canada passengers being stuck on Ottawa-Toronto trains overnight before finally being transferred to another train, arriving at their destination more than 12 hours late.

The problems that began Tuesday night continued into Wednesday, with some trains arriving more than five hours late, although it is unknown if those delays are related to the Wednesday issues.

As reported [by the CBC](#), the issues began with train No. 669 from Montreal to Toronto, which experienced a mechanical failure, according to VIA. After that 6:09 p.m. departure from Montreal broke down, some 127 passengers were transferred to another train and arrived in Toronto after a delay of more than eight hours.

That breakdown then disrupted two Toronto-Ottawa trains, No. 48 (a 5:38 p.m. departure) and No. 54 (a 6:38 p.m. departure). VIA informed customers that the trains were held near Brockville “due to serious mechanical issues” that engineers were unable to resolve. After initially attempting to obtain buses, the company eventually transferred some 168 passengers to today’s train No. 50, a 6:32 a.m. departure from Toronto, which arrived in Ottawa at 11:59 a.m. Nos. 48 and 54 had been due in Ottawa at 10:13 p.m. and 11:11 p.m., respectively, on Wednesday.

“Our priority is the safety of our passengers,” VIA spokesman Karl Helou told the CBC, “so we preferred to keep [them] on a train where there was heat, where they received food, beverages, blankets.” Helou called the service problem “is absolutely unacceptable,” and said the company will do its due diligence in reviewing the incident.

Speaking Friday (Dec. 12) at a press conference on Canada’s high-speed rail project, Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon said he was “not happy at all” with VIA’s response, “and we will continue to discuss with the folks at VIA Rail how they deal with these situations.

“We have a public transportation disystem that operates in a Canadian winter, and there are going to be issues. ... But it’s how you deal with those issues when they arise that preoccupies me, and I want to make sure that VIA is on a path of continuous improvement. And I want to certainly express my regret to all of those who might have been aboard that train.”

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Problems on Thursday included Ottawa-Toronto trains 641 (scheduled to depart at 4:13 am.) and 41 (a scheduled 5:21 a.m. departure), which both departed late and operated together from their first stop after departure, Fallowfield, Ont. They arrived in Toronto at 2:27 p.m., five hours, 40 minutes late and four hours, 26 minutes late, respectively. As of 4:50 p.m. CT, five other VIA corridor trains are shown as operating one hour, 17 minutes late to four hours, 2 minutes late.

The ongoing delays led to train No. 78, a 5:40 p.m. departure from Windsor, Ont., for Toronto, being replaced by a bus because of the late arrival of the incoming trainset. Business-class passengers will receive a partial refund, while those who choose not to travel by bus were able to receive a full refund or exchange for another train with no service charge.

— Updated at 6:35 p.m. CT with substitution of bus service for one train; updated at Dec. 12 at 9:55 a.m. CT with comments from Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon. Greg Gormick contributed information to this report.

Engineer and Trackworker Unions to Oppose UP-NS Merger

By Bill Stephens | December 17, 2025

The two Teamsters unions — the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division — represent more than half of the combined Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern craft workforce



Two Union Pacific crew members provide a roll-by inspection for an intermodal train near Wamsutter, Wyo., on Sept. 1, 2022. David Lassen



Union Pacific track crews lift one of the rails on the third main track on Myles Hill on the Powder River Subdivision west of Lusk, Wyo., in October 2020. Bill Stephens

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division will oppose the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger despite UP’s promises of lifetime job protection.

“This debt-ridden tie-up won’t make rail more competitive with trucks as merger proponents claim,” BLET National President Mark Wallace said in a statement on Wednesday (Dec. 17). “We believe this transcontinental railroad will make shipping by rail less attractive as the merged carrier passes off rail lines that serve small towns, factories, and farms to short line railroads while running miles-long slow-moving trains on the main line. For rail customers it will be a choice between ‘hell or the highway.’”

The two Teamsters unions — which represent 53% of the combined UP and NS craft workforce — are the largest to come out against the \$85 billion merger. The Transportation Workers Union, which represents carmen across Norfolk Southern’s northern tier, signaled its opposition to the deal when it was announced on July 29.

The BLET and BMWED also raised safety concerns about UP’s acquisition of NS, and urged federal regulators to closely examine UP’s safety record. Norfolk Southern, the unions noted, has improved safety since the disastrous February 2023 hazardous materials derailment in East Palestine, Ohio.

“UP continues to cut corners and oppose needed reforms,” the unions claimed. NS, they said, has been experimenting with the Federal Railroad Administration’s [Confidential Close Call Reporting System](#) that allows railroaders to anonymously report safety incidents, while UP has merely offered “lip service” to the program.

UP CEO Jim Vena said last month that the railroad will have the lowest personal injury rate in the U.S. this year. UP’s train accident rate won’t lead the industry, he says, but it has improved by more than 20% compared to 2024.

The unions also claimed that UP’s use of long trains, which has reduced the number of train crews the railroad needs, poses a safety risk. Long manifest trains are more likely to derail than their shorter counterparts due to excessive in-train forces — and the number of wrecks related to train makeup and handling issues has increased sharply since U.S. railroads adopted Precision Scheduled Railroading operating models that rely on ever-longer trains, according to a National Academies of Sciences report issued last year. [See [“Study: Derailment risk rises ...”](#) *Trains.com*, May 29, 2024].

But UP says its proprietary Precision Train Builder software, which instructs yard crews on how to best distribute loads, empties, freight car types, and locomotives through a train consist, makes long trains safe to operate.

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“Nobody else has that. We built it. It’s the best in the industry, and I measure that not by my opinion, but the results on mainline derailments associated with train handling,” Eric Gehringer, UP’s executive vice president of operations, said last month. “We’ve seen those go to nearly zero over the four-year period that we’ve had that tool. That’s a tool that we can bring to the NS ... and put that on their railroad.”

The BLET and BMWED said that UP’s job-protection offer was an “empty promise” because it gives UP control over who is protected, who is left out, and when commitments can be changed or taken away.

“We don’t believe anything Vena says about how workers would be treated in the Supersized Union Pacific,” BMWED President Tony Cardwell said in a statement. “The agreements reached with some other unions related to job protections post-merger have loopholes big enough to traverse freight trains through. We refuse to accept the same terms in return for our unions’ support for the merger.”

The unions said that agreements other labor organizations reached with UP don’t protect seniority and would allow workers to be transferred to other locations or be demoted. Those deals also don’t address what would happen to workers in the event UP spins off routes to short lines.

“We’ve been around the track before with railroad mergers,” Wallace said. “Mergers can be messy and the very act of merging two railroad cultures creates safety risks. UP can do better. BLET and BMWED were open-minded to the merger when first announced. We reached out to Jim Vena on day one. We have met with Vena and others on his team over the past five months. The UP CEO has failed to convince us that he has the best interests of customers, workers and the communities served by rail on his agenda. As a result, it’s now our job, with the full backing of the Teamsters union, to convince the STB that this merger should be rejected.”

The BLET and BMWED decision opens a split among rail unions.

Five unions have reached formal job-protection agreements with UP and said they will support the end-to-end merger that will create a railroad with 52,000 employees. They include SMART-TD — the largest rail union overall, which represents conductors, brakemen, and switchmen — and the Brotherhood of Railway Carmen, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, the National Conference of Firemen and Oilers, and United Supervisors Council of America, which represents yard controllers on UP.

Some unions remain on the fence.

The International Association of Machinists this week said that it remains in discussions with UP, alongside the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the SMART-Mechanical union.

“But given their track record with our members and the ongoing contract violations we continue to confront, there is a long way to go before the Machinists Union District 19 would consider endorsing this merger,” IAM District 19 President Reece Murtagh wrote in a Dec. 16 update to members.

UP and NS have said that since the merger will lead to traffic growth, they can offer lifetime job protection to unionized employees. The Surface Transportation Board will include labor concerns as part of its review of the railroads’ merger application.

“The growth opportunities created by this end-to-end merger enabled Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern to make a pledge that is unprecedented in railroad history: Every employee with a union job at the time of the merger will continue to have one,” UP spokeswoman Robynn Tysver says. “We’ve formalized this jobs-for-life agreement with five unions, including SMART-TD, the nation’s largest rail labor organization, and we look forward to filing our application with the STB this week.”

Intermodal Traffic Continues to Hold Down Overall U.S. Rail Volume

By Trains Staff | December 11, 2025

Weekly U.S. figure below 2024 levels for ninth straight week

U.S. Rail Traffic¹
Week 49, 2025 – Ended December 6, 2025

	This Week		Year-To-Date		
	Cars	vs 2024	Cumulative	Avg/wk ²	vs 2024
Total Carloads	228,823	1.7%	10,889,132	222,227	1.8%
Chemicals	32,548	-3.1%	1,606,700	32,790	1.2%
Coal	61,026	5.4%	2,860,628	58,380	3.5%
Farm Products excl. Grain, and Food	17,495	-1.3%	828,448	16,907	1.0%
Forest Products	8,017	-4.2%	397,773	8,118	-1.3%
Grain	25,098	8.4%	1,057,324	21,578	5.4%
Metallic Ores and Metals	19,706	-3.0%	966,589	19,726	-1.0%
Motor Vehicles and Parts	15,115	0.4%	748,265	15,271	0.5%
Nonmetallic Minerals	29,330	4.1%	1,478,040	30,164	1.9%
Petroleum and Petroleum Products	11,591	0.9%	507,652	10,360	-1.6%
Other	8,897	-4.2%	437,713	8,933	2.2%
Total Intermodal Units	280,176	-5.4%	13,277,231	270,964	1.8%
Total Traffic	508,999	-2.3%	24,166,363	493,191	1.8%

¹ Excludes U.S. operations of CPKC, CN and GMXT.

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

Association of American Railroads

WASHINGTON — Falling intermodal traffic has again led to a drop in weekly U.S. rail volume compared to 2024.

For the week ending Dec. 6, according to [statistics from the Association of American Railroads](#), the overall volume of 508,999 carloads and intermodal units was down 2.3% from the same week a year ago. That overall figure included 228,823 carloads, up 1.7%, and 280,176 containers and trailers, down 5.4%.

It is the ninth consecutive week that total traffic has been down compared to the corresponding week a year earlier. The last time the overall figure was above 2024 levels was in the week ending Oct. 4 [see [“U.S. weekly rail traffic again shows gains,”](#) Trains.com, Oct. 9, 2025].

Through 49 weeks of 2025, total U.S. traffic was 24,166,363 carloads and intermodal units, an increase of 1.8% over the same period a year ago.

The 10,889,132 carloads in that overall figure represent a 1.8% gain, while the 13,277,231 intermodal units are also a 1.8% increase. North American volume for the week, as reported by nine U.S., Canadian, and Mexican railroads, was 697,896 carloads and intermodal units, a decline of 1.2%. The 335,803 carloads were a gain of 1.9% over the same week in 2024, while the 362,093 intermodal units were down 4%. The year-to-date total of 33,276,063 carloads and intermodal units is up 1.7% over the first 49 weeks of 2024. In Canada, weekly traffic included 94,333 carloads, up 2.5%, and 67,966 intermodal units, down 1.8%.

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For the year to date, the cumulative volume of 7,943,671 carloads and intermodal units is up 2.3% from the first 49 weeks of 2024. The week's traffic in Mexico included 12,647 carloads, up 2.3%, and 13,931 intermodal units, up 18.4%. For the year, the total volume of 1,166,029 carloads and intermodal units is down 5% from the first 49 weeks of 2024.

MSU Professor: UP-NS Merger Can't Turn Back the Clock on Carload Decline

By Bill Stephens | October 28, 2025

Jason Miller says a transcontinental Union Pacific–Norfolk Southern system may streamline service and boost efficiency — but long-term structural shifts in freight demand, not railroad strategy, will determine whether intermodal growth follows



Norfolk Southern SD70ACe No. 1059 rolls through Union Pacific signal work in Elmhurst, Ill., on Aug. 23, 2025, while a UP train waits departure from Proviso Yard. David Lassen

EAST LANSING, Mich. — The Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger is unlikely to revive carload traffic — and it's an open question whether it can unlock intermodal growth because of broader economic trends that are beyond railroads' control, a Michigan State University supply chain management professor said during a webcast today.

UP says its proposed \$85 billion acquisition of NS will improve service, create faster transit times, and lead to volume growth by eliminating interchange friction. The railroads also say that new single-line service will enable them to effectively tap the growth potential of the so-called watershed area in the country's midsection. In all, they project \$2 billion in net synergies.

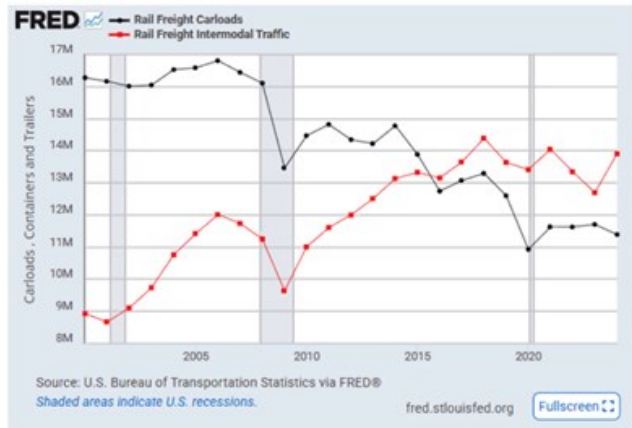
But Jason Miller, the Eli Broad Endowed Professor of Supply Chain Management at MSU, questioned whether even a transcontinental railroad can reverse the declining fortunes of carload traffic.



Jason Miller. MSU

October 28, 2025 BROAD COLLEGE of BUSINESS

Railroad: Changing Cargo Mix

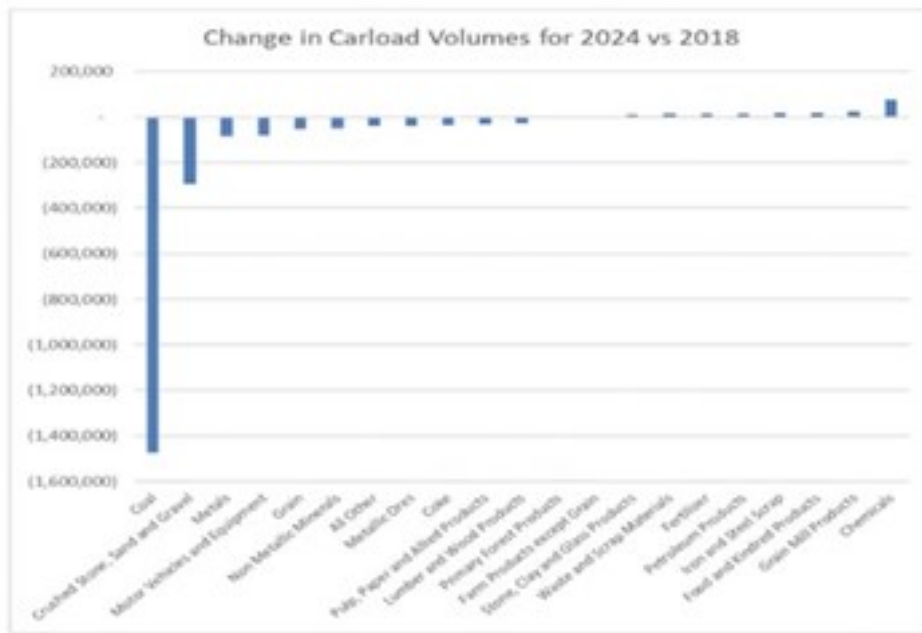


This chart, from the St. Louis Fed, shows the diverging trends in intermodal (red) and carload traffic (black). Jason Miller/MSU

Rail traffic peaked in 2006, when railroads originated around 17 million carloads. Since then the long-term decline of coal — which remains the top carload commodity by volume — has dragged down overall volume. Comparing 2024 and 2018 carload volume shows that the decline is not just a coal phenomenon. Chemicals, the second-largest carload segment, has grown. It has not been enough, however, to offset the decline in 11 commodity segments, including major categories such as sand and gravel, metals, finished vehicles, grain, metallic ores, and petroleum products. “We have passed peak carload. We will not get to 17 million car loads a year. That number is long gone. We can essentially forever forget about that,” Miller says. Chopping a day or two off transit times through a transcontinental merger will not be enough of an incentive to lure shippers back to carload, he says. “This is the brutal reality the Class I’s face,” he says. Intermodal has grown over the past 25 years. But Miller says that growth has been tied to two factors: The surge in containerized imports and years when trucking supply was tight. Three recent intermodal peak years — 2018, 2021, and 2024 — show this dynamic at work, Miller says. In 2017-18, truckload rates rose amid historically tight capacity. In 2018, imports grew in order to beat 2019 U.S. tariff deadlines. In late 2020 and 2021, volume surged as consumers, unable to spend on services during the pandemic, splurged on imported goods. And the 2024 spike in volume was again driven by retailers pulling forward imports to avoid tariffs. Uncertainty over U.S. trade policy, the extent to which manufacturing returns to the U.S., and the potential for consumers to adjust their spending habits due to tariffs all might shape intermodal volumes in the coming years, Miller says.

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Railroad: Carload Composition Change 2024 vs 2018



Source: https://legtransport.wv.gov/Rail/Rail-Carloadings-to-Traffic/about_data

Most carload categories have lost volume since 2018. St. Louis Fed/Jason Miller/MSU



The ebb and flow of trade and international intermodal volume will make it challenging for UP-NS to dramatically increase their intermodal traffic, Miller contends. Another trend running against the railroads is that more imported cargo bound for destinations in the Eastern U.S. is landing at East Coast ports, making the freight more likely to move in relatively short hauls via truck. Although the direction of intermodal traffic is unclear, Miller says one thing’s for certain: UP and NS will be a “super Class I railroad.” “This would truly be a unique entity ... The scope of the connectivity across the United States with a UP-NS is just something that we have never seen before,” Miller says.

A transcontinental UP would have a dominant market share of 40% or greater in the majority of commodities that railroads haul, from containers and autos to chemicals and sand and gravel, Miller says.

Miller spoke on Tuesday afternoon during a webcast, “Railroads Reimagined: The Proposed UP-NS Merger & Its Supply Chain Implications.”

Market Share by Commodity

Commodity	BNSF	CN	CP-KCS	CSX	UP-NS
Containers	34.2%	2.0%	1.5%	17.0%	45.2%
Coal	40.5%	1.9%	0.0%	18.7%	38.9%
Chemicals	19.1%	7.5%	5.5%	13.8%	54.1%
Grain	43.9%	4.6%	11.2%	6.9%	33.3%
Crushed Stone, Sand and Gravel	17.0%	9.3%	7.8%	20.8%	45.2%
Motor Vehicles and Equipment	15.0%	9.2%	0.8%	27.7%	47.3%
Metallic Ores	16.2%	74.3%	0.6%	4.8%	4.0%
Petroleum Products	38.2%	4.8%	8.8%	11.8%	36.4%
Grain Mill Products	30.1%	7.6%	5.6%	9.8%	46.9%
Trailers	45.2%	0.0%	0.2%	13.3%	41.3%
Metals	12.8%	1.3%	4.6%	25.2%	56.2%
Stone, Clay and Glass Products	25.3%	4.2%	2.2%	22.7%	45.6%
Food and Kindred Products	37.6%	4.8%	3.4%	8.4%	45.9%
Pulp, Paper and Allied Products	8.3%	11.3%	14.0%	31.9%	34.6%
All Other	26.7%	7.4%	5.2%	11.2%	49.5%
Fertilizer	22.9%	8.2%	3.5%	28.7%	36.8%
Iron and Steel Scrap	20.5%	2.7%	4.0%	23.8%	49.1%
Waste and Scrap Materials	8.5%	4.7%	3.0%	47.1%	36.7%
Coke	11.6%	17.3%	15.9%	23.5%	31.7%
Lumber and Wood Products	27.2%	3.8%	6.6%	12.0%	50.4%
Non Metallic Minerals	13.7%	0.2%	0.6%	47.6%	38.0%
Primary Forest Products	3.9%	3.9%	0.4%	46.5%	45.3%
Farm Products except Grain	58.2%	1.0%	5.4%	4.4%	30.9%

A combined Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern would dominate most segments of rail traffic. Jason Miller/MSU





Rock Island History Remembered

By George Drury | May 6, 2024

Chartered in 1847, the Rock Island was the largest U.S. railroad to be liquidated



The Twin Star Rocket pounds across the diamonds of the Wabash and Burlington at Birmingham, Mo., on July 14, 1963. The train operated between the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. and Houston, Texas. Frank Tatnall photo



Rock Island had a fleet of 85 Northern (4-8-4s), largest in the country. Here, No. 5058 leads a west-bound freight near Lawrence, Kan., in January 1952. Robert P. Olmsted Collection, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming



Rock Island's early EMD Geeps were delivered in an eye-catching red-and-black scheme with "Route of the Rockets" lettering on the long hood. Here GP7 No. 1287 works at St. Paul in 1961. J. David Ingles photo

Rock Island history is a mighty good history.

In 1847 the Rock Island & La Salle Rail Road was chartered to build between Rock Island, Ill., on the Mississippi River, and La Salle, where connections would be made with the Illinois & Michigan Canal to Chicago. Contractor Henry Farnam persuaded the organizers to extend the railroad all the way to Chicago to connect with other railroads. The charter was so amended, and the railroad was renamed the Chicago & Rock Island. Construction began in 1851. The first train ran from Chicago to Joliet, 40 miles, on Oct. 10, 1852. Its power was a 4-4-0 named *Rocket*.

The line was opened to Rock Island on Feb. 22, 1854, and the contractors turned the line over to the corporation in July of that year. By then the railroad had an agreement with the Northern Indiana Railroad (later part of the New York Central) for joint terminal facilities in Chicago, and a branch from Bureau, Ill., south to Peoria was nearly complete (it opened in November 1854).

Beyond the Mississippi

The Mississippi & Missouri Railroad was chartered in Iowa to build a railroad from -Davenport, across the Mississippi River from Rock Island, to Council Bluffs, with branches south through Muscatine and north through Cedar Rapids. Money to finance construction of the Mississippi & Missouri was hard to come by. Both Iowa City, then the state capital, and Muscatine wanted the railroad first. Iowa City offered a bonus if a train arrived by midnight, Dec. 31, 1855. Muscatine got its railroad first, on Nov. 20, 1855, but (if we are to believe contemporary accounts) a frozen locomotive was pushed over hastily laid and barely spiked rails into Iowa City as church bells rang in the New Year, securing the bonus and providing a perfect scenario for a multitude of grade-B novels and movies.

A bridge across the Mississippi was necessary to connect the Chicago & Rock Island and Mississippi & Missouri railroads. The Mississippi had not yet been spanned, and the immediate reaction to the proposed railroad bridge was that it would be a hazard to navigation. However, the bridge was built, and it was officially opened on April 21, 1856. On the evening of May 6, the steamboat *Effie Afton*, which usually plied the New Orleans-Louisville run, cleared the open draw span then veered aside, turned around, rammed one of the piers, and suddenly and suspiciously burst into flames. The case of the bridge soon became one of railroad advocates versus steamboat advocates. The latter felt that even a single bridge would set an unfortunate precedent and soon there would be bridges every 40 or 50 miles along the length of the river. The railroad's case, argued by [Abraham Lincoln](#), went one way and then the other in successive courts, but in 1866 the U. S. Supreme Court held for the railroad. Several other railroads immediately applied to bridge the Mississippi at other locations. The Mississippi & Missouri, far behind its construction schedule, was sold to the newly incorporated Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific on July 9, 1866. On Aug. 20 that company consolidated with the Chicago & Rock Island to form a successor Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. The line reached Des Moines a year later and arrived at Council Bluffs on May 11, 1869 — one day after the completion of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads from Council Bluffs to the West Coast. The Rock Island was not the first railroad into Council Bluffs; the Cedar Rapids & Missouri (later part of the Chicago & North Western) had reached there more than two years earlier and established ties with the Union Pacific.

To Missouri, Kansas, and beyond

In the 1870s the road extended its Muscatine line southwest across Iowa and northwestern Missouri to Leavenworth, Kansas, and later negotiated trackage rights over the Hannibal & St. Joseph from Cameron, Mo., to Kansas City.

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The 1880s saw some corporate simplification, the acquisition of the Keokuk & Des Moines and the St. Joseph & Iowa, and control of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern, which had a line from Burlington, Iowa, through Cedar Rapids and Cedar Falls to Plymouth, near Mason City, with a branch through Iowa Falls and Estherville to Watertown, South Dakota. The BCR&N later acquired lines west out of Davenport and Clinton, Iowa, and lines to Decorah, Iowa, Worthington, Minn., and Sioux Falls, S.D.

On Dec. 5, 1883, the Rock Island made a tripartite agreement with Union Pacific and the Milwaukee Road for interchange of business at Omaha. The Chicago & North Western, which had been UP's preferred connection, quickly became a party to the agreement, as did the Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific (a predecessor of the Wabash). The Burlington & Missouri River in Nebraska (part of the Burlington) protested the agreement.

Union Pacific suddenly found itself in financial difficulties, and Rock Island decided to build its own extensions west rather than rely on interchange traffic with UP. Two years later the Chicago, Kansas & Nebraska Railroad was chartered to build from St. Joseph and Atchison southwest across Kansas to Wichita, and another railroad of the same name was incorporated in Nebraska to build from the southeast tip of the state to Kearney. The two companies merged and were leased to the St. Joseph & Iowa Railroad, a subsidiary of the Rock Island. A charter was approved for the extension of the southwest line from Wichita to Galveston, Texas, and from Liberal, Kans., to El Paso. By the end of 1887 rails reached to Caldwell, on the southern border of Kansas, and in February 1888 they reached Liberal. A year later the Rock Island had built west across northern Kansas and Colorado to Colorado Springs. RI made arrangements to use Denver & Rio Grande track north to Denver and south to Pueblo; in 1889 RI began using Union Pacific tracks from Limon, Colo. to Denver.

Rock Island's Chicago-Colorado route via St. Joseph was circuitous. To assemble a route through Omaha, RI constructed a line from Omaha to Lincoln and in 1890 traded the trackage rights from McPherson to Hutchinson, Kans. to Union Pacific for trackage rights on UP between Lincoln and Beatrice and use of UP's Missouri River bridge between Council Bluffs and Omaha. RI began Chicago-Colorado service via Omaha on August 16, 1891, and later built its own line west of Lincoln. Also in 1891 Rock Island acquired the property of the Chicago, Kansas & Nebraska. Subsidiary Chicago, Rock Island & Texas reached Fort Worth in 1893.

The Reid-Moore era of Rock Island history

In 1901 control of the Rock Island was taken over by the Reid-Moore syndicate: Daniel G. Reed, William H. Moore, his brother James H. Moore, and William Leeds, men who had put together the National Biscuit, Diamond Match, and American Can companies. The road continued to burgeon. It acquired the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad, a line from Memphis, Tenn., through Little Rock, Ark., and Oklahoma City to Elk City in western Oklahoma, and the 70-mile St. Louis, Kansas City & Colorado Railroad (which the Santa Fe at one point had considered acquiring for an entrance to St. Louis). Expansion continued:

1902 — lease of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern for 999 years, and extension of the southwestern line from Liberal to Santa Rosa, New Mexico, to connect with the El Paso & Northeastern, a Southern Pacific predecessor (the new track included the second-longest stretch of straight track in the U. S., nearly 72 miles between Guymon, Okla., and Dalhart, Tex.)

1903 — Chicago, Rock Island & Gulf completed a line between Fort Worth and Dallas

1904 — the Choctaw line was extended west to Amarillo, Tex., and the Kansas City-St. Louis line was opened

1905 — the road began assembling and constructing a line south from Little Rock to Eunice, Louisiana, with the intent of reaching New Orleans

1906 — RI acquired a half interest in the -Trinity & Brazos Valley Railway (Dallas-Houston-Galveston, later the Burlington-Rock Island Railroad) from the Colorado & Southern.

At the same time the controlling syndicate, which now included B. F. Yoakum, was busy acquiring control of the Chicago & Alton, the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, the Toledo, St. Louis & Western, and the St. Louis-San Francisco through holding companies and exchanges of stock. By 1909, though, the interest due on SLSF bonds far exceeded the dividends received on SLSF stock — none. B. F. Yoakum bought Rock Island's Frisco stock at a considerable loss to the Rock Island.

Financial difficulty

Rock Island created a Twin Cities-Kansas City route in 1913 by leasing the St. Paul & Kansas City Short Line Railroad and building a line between Allerton and Carlisle, Iowa, a few miles south of Des Moines. In 1914 red ink caused by debt interest appeared on Rock Island's ledgers, and on April 20, 1915, the road entered receivership. On June 22, 1917, the road was out of receivership and back in the hands of its stockholders. Shortly afterward the United States Railroad Administration took over management for the duration of World War I.

New management took over in the 1920s and placed considerable emphasis on paying of stock dividends to the detriment of maintaining the property. Edward N. Brown, chairman of the board of the Frisco, began to buy Rock Island stock with the thought of using dividends to bolster the Frisco's situation. Soon Brown was chairman of Rock Island's executive committee.

In 1927 Rock Island declared a stock dividend of 5%; in 1928, 6%; and in 1929, 7% — even though Rock Island's annual interest on its debt was nearly \$14 million. In 1930 Brown began to secretly acquire Frisco stock for the Rock Island. Revenues dropped as the depression deepened. Then Rock Island's territory was struck with wheat crop failures and dust storms. The Rock Island declared bankruptcy on June 7, 1933.

Edward M. Durham, vice-president of Missouri Pacific, took over as chief executive officer in December 1935. He brought in John D. Farrington, general manager of the Fort Worth & Denver, as operating officer in May 1936. Farrington started a scrap drive to finance a rail relay program and purchased ten diesel switchers and six diesel-powered *Rocket* streamliners. His program included line relocations between Davenport and Kansas City and a new bridge over the Cimarron River just east of Liberal, Kan. The road turned a profit in 1941. Durham retired in July 1942, and Farrington took over as CEO. The Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad emerged from a long and acrimonious reorganization on Jan. 1, 1948. Farrington was still leading the company and pursuing a program of dieselization, line improvement, and industrial development.

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Rock Island rolled on through the 1950s and into the 1960s doing decently although surrounded by stronger railroads. Its freight traffic was largely agricultural. Its passenger trains for the most part would take you anywhere the Burlington or the Santa Fe could, but not as quickly nor with quite as much style.

The fight over the Rock Island

In 1964 Ben Heineman, chairman of the Chicago & North Western, proposed merging the C&NW, the Rock Island, and the Milwaukee Road into an Upper Midwest system and selling the lines south of Kansas City to Santa Fe. Union Pacific made a counterproposal: merger, which would put the UP into Chicago. That year, 1964, was Rock Island's last year of profitability.

The proposal turned into the longest, most complicated merger case ever handled by the Interstate Commerce Commission. The other railroads west of Chicago protested one aspect or another of the merger, petitioned for inclusion, or asked for a piece of the Rock Island. In 1970 the Milwaukee Road, which had fallen on hard times, entered the case, asking for inclusion in Union Pacific or Southern Pacific. In 1973 the ICC proposed restructuring the railroads of the West into four systems: Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Burlington Northern, and Santa Fe. The railroads involved in the merger case other than the two principals petitioned the ICC to dismiss the case and start over.

The ICC finally approved the merger on Nov. 8, 1974, with several conditions: Southern Pacific would be allowed to purchase the Kansas City-Tucumcari line (that had been part of the UP merger proposal from the beginning); the Omaha-Colorado Springs line would be sold to the Denver & Rio Grande Western; and Santa Fe would be permitted to buy the Choctaw Route (Memphis-Amarillo) only if it would absorb the bankrupt and decrepit Missouri-Kansas-Texas. Union Pacific said it would have to re-evaluate the merger, since the Rock Island of 1974 wasn't the Rock Island of 1964. Rock Island filed for bankruptcy on March 17, 1975, and on Aug. 4 of that year UP withdrew its merger offer. The ICC dismissed the case on July 10, 1976.

Slow death of Rock Island history

By then the Rock Island was in terrible shape. A new management headed by John W. Ingram did its best, introducing a new image of sky-blue and white and appointing [John W. Barriger III](#), then 76 years old, as Senior Traveling Freight Agent (Barriger's own title) and consultant.

Rock Island's clerks walked off their jobs on Aug. 28, 1979, over a pay dispute, and United Transportation Union members followed the next day. President Jimmy Carter issued an order Sept. 20 creating an emergency board to settle the dispute. The UTU members then returned to their jobs, but members of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks stayed off. On Sept. 26 the Kansas City Terminal was ordered by the ICC to operate the railroad. KCT's owners plus Denver & Rio Grande Western and Southern Pacific began operating the Rock Island. On March 2, 1980, the ICC refused to extend its directed service order, and the Rock Island ceased operation March 31, 1980.

The railroad industry had never before seen an abandonment of the magnitude of Rock Island. Other railroads had been abandoned in their entirety, but they were roads like the New York, Ontario & Western (541 miles, 1957; it had always been sickly and shouldn't have been built), Fort Smith & Western (250 miles, 1939; it didn't go anywhere and shouldn't have been built), and the Colorado Midland (338 miles, 1918; it had steep grades and shouldn't have been built — and 1918 was ancient history anyway).

The 7,000-mile Rock Island connected big cities like Chicago, Denver, Minneapolis, Houston, and Kansas City. It had no major operating handicaps, like mountains. It had long routes, so it wasn't another Reading or Central of New Jersey. Industry reaction to the abandonment ranged from "Someone has to take it over and run it" to "Can I have the Kansas City-Minneapolis line?"

When the dust settled it turned out that what was abandoned was the operating company and financial structure, not the physical plant. Rock Island's sky-blue freight cars showed up with reporting marks like C&NW and BM underneath the slogan "The Rock," and the fixed plant of the railroad was parceled out to other railroads, including Southern Pacific, Cotton Belt, Burlington Northern, Chessie System, and Missouri Pacific. Other lines became regional railroads, including Iowa Interstate and Kyle.

A Nostalgic Train Ride Through Portugal

BBC Katie Wright 29 July 2025 Link provided by Janet Wallin

The country's only remaining narrow-gauge railway line plays host to heritage trains, offering travellers a chance to travel through the stunning Vouga Valley in a period locomotive.



Modern apartment blocks outside the train's open windows yield to ivy-covered trees, then pastel-hued farmhouses dotted among lush green fields. The refreshing scent of eucalyptus replaces the faint diesel fug in the carriage – resplendent with hardwood benches and drop sash windows – and the conductor sounds the air horn at the townspeople waving from their terraces, gardens and balconies, thrilled to spot us.

Why such an enthusiastic welcome? Because this isn't just any train. This is the [Vouga Historical Train](#), a vintage locomotive that runs through the verdant Vouga Valley on Portugal's only remaining narrow-gauge railway. Comprised of a navy-blue 1964 Basque Railway diesel locomotive and five early 20th-Century carriages, "the Vouginha" – as it is affectionately known by locals – is a beloved summer visitor, trundling along a twisting 46km stretch from Aveiro to Macinhata do Vouga and back as part of a six-hour excursion that also includes a visit to the artsy city of Águeda.

We're gathering speed as we rumble east from Portugal's coastal city of Aveiro.

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The Vouga Valley Historical train returns each summer to take travellers on a unique journey (Credit: Katie Wright)

Each summer, locals and travellers alike can climb aboard for a unique railway journey into the past. Constructed between 1907 and 1914, the Vouga line originally consisted of three branches, extending 96km north to the city of Espinho and 140km east to Viseu, with the town of Sernada do Vouga acting as a central hub. "This series [CP 9000] of locomotives were working in the mines of Spain, then Portugal bought three or four of them," says driver Pedro Cabelo, who has worked for national rail firm Comboios de Portugal since 2008. "The Vouga line was originally for people to travel between the cities in the interior land." At 668mm narrower than standard Iberian-gauge railways, the metre-wide tracks that twist and turn through the valley's famous forests and bridges were cheaper and better suited to the winding routes when they were first laid, but eventually became economically unviable due to maintenance costs and limited capacity.

Passenger services declined and ceased entirely by 1990.

But starting in 2009, sections of the track were converted into ecotrains for cycling, running and hiking, culminating with the 2023 unveiling of the Ecopista do Val do Vouga, a path/trail that completed the 80km route between the towns of Sernada and Viseu, incorporating oak and pine forests, historic stations, atmospheric tunnels and beautiful bridges.

The Vouga Historical Train debuted in summer 2017 and was an instant hit, running at full capacity during the first season. The tourism initiative was meant to launch with a steam train, but two weeks before the inaugural journey, a deadly wildfire swept through nearby Pedrógão Grande, caused in part by sparks from electrical discharges from high-voltage lines and spread by extreme summer heat. Comboios Portugal didn't want to risk having a coal-fired train on the track, so a diesel train was drafted in for the summer series, with the steam locomotive unveiled in November for the festive edition



Conductor Pedro Cabelo dons steam-era attire to drive the train (Credit: Katie Wright)

All aboard

Arriving 45 minutes before my train is due to depart, I find the platform already buzzing. Conductor Cabelo – dressed in a navy uniform and red neckerchief, a nod to steam-era attire – is showing passengers how he drives the train from his perch high up in the locomotive, and families are posing for photos alongside the wooden carriages. I board along with around 200 eager passengers, marvelling at the splendidly restored heritage train. It consists of two Portuguese carriages from 1908 and 1913, a Belgian carriage from 1908, a German carriage from 1925 and an Italian carriage, all of which once ran on narrow-gauge lines and have since been restored by Comboios de Portugal. Three of the colourful wooden carriages – painted in glossy red, hunter green and royal blue, with mint green interiors and varnished dark wood seats – feature tail verandas open-air platforms that allowed passengers to enjoy the breeze during their journey.

I find a spot on one of them to take in the sweeping views of farmland and the Serra do Arestal mountains in the distance. We break occasionally at rural stations so the train's engineer can check the temperature of the wheels to make sure they're not overheating. **A living history** Our first proper stop is the parish of Macinhata do Vouga, where a 10-piece folk band in regional dress greets us with a jaunty tune. Spanning three generations of the same family, the singers and musicians brandish accordions and ukuleles, while percussion comes courtesy of drums, a triangle and a pair of pinecones rhythmically scraped against each other.

As we descend for a two-hour break, each passenger is handed a *pastel de Águeda* – a traditional golden-brown pastry stuffed with almond-flavoured filling – and taken on a 30-minute guided tour of the Macinhata do Vouga Railway Museum, located in the station's former coach house. "All of the locomotives we have here in Macinhata are German," says Bernadette Silva, a volunteer guide who leads our group around the museum. "After the First World War, Germany had a debt to Portugal [that they couldn't pay], so [dictator António de Oliveira] Salazar told them, 'If you don't have money to pay, you pay me with machines.'"

Another carriage, she points out, only has first- and third-class seating, because Salazar – who was prime minister for most of the nearly 50-year right-wing dictatorship that ended in 1974 – is believed to have abolished second-class trains in the 1940s to "simplify" the system, which eventually evolved into the first and second-class structure that remains in place today. Infirmary and mail trains show how patients and post were once transported, while a curious ceramic statue reveals an ingenious system of platform signage used in the past. "This is our naughty boy," Silva says at the end of the tour, gesturing to the large figurine of a smiling boy in a blue shirt and no shorts, cheekily poised to urinate. "This same naughty boy was seen at a lot of stations of the Vouga valley, but the colour of his shirt was different in each station." She explained that some people in the rural communities didn't know how to read at the time, so when they "looked out of the window and saw the naughty boy, they knew where they were by the colour of his shirt. It was simple, but it worked!"

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At Macinhata do Vouga, a generational folk band awaits to greet passengers (Credit: Katie Wright)



The train consists of wooden carriages built in Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Germany in the early 20th Century (Credit: Katie Wright)

Our second and final two-hour stop is in Águeda, where the railway sleepers are painted in rainbow shades and an equally colourful mural on the station wall hints at the city's artistic cache. Launched in 2006, the AgitÁgueda Art Festival was designed to regenerate the area and "colour the city" throughout July with urban artworks, installations and performances. In 2012, hundreds of umbrellas were suspended above the city centre as part of the Umbrella Sky Project, and the installation went viral, inspiring copycat streets all over the world. Now, more than 5,000 umbrellas hang above Águeda every year from July to September. Wandering through the bustling pedestrianised area, I see that this year's colour palette includes blue and green opaque umbrellas and clear plastic ones with yellow flower motifs that bathe the streets in a warm wash of colour.

Back on the train, golden hour has descended on the Vouga Valley and puffy white clouds pepper the early evening sky as we begin the journey back to Aveiro, cheered on once more by rural residents along the way. After this summer series has concluded, the diesel locomotive is set to come back next year. Judging by the enthusiasm of visitors and locals alike, the much-loved Voughina will be welcomed whenever it returns.

The Baltic Express: Central Europe's New Hop-on Hop-off Train

BBC Tristan Rutherford 24 February 2025 Link provided by Janet Wallin



Look up to spot soaring domes and Romanesque statues in the Art Nouveau section of Prague's Nádraží Hlavní station (Credit: Alamy)



Passengers can hop on and off the Baltic Express to explore towns and cities along the route (Credit: České dráhy)



Leszno is a beautiful medieval city in western Poland that's

The Baltic Express bursts out of the Czech capital on a crisp winter morning. As the sky lightens, medieval Prague is streamed through the train's windows like a Netflix trailer. From armchair seats in private compartments, a city of Rococo castles and wide boulevards appears: the "Paris of the East", mostly unscathed by Nazi occupation in the 1940s or socialist planning in the 70s. Moments later the train hums through a timeless Czech countryside. Onion-domed churches and frozen fishing lakes scroll past as the train sprints north. *Continued on next page:*

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The recently launched route from Prague to Gdynia on Poland's Baltic coast operates four times daily, and takes travellers directly into Central Europe's most vibrant and less-touristed cities that were previously tricky to get to. It will entice international travellers who want to combine a city break with a rural experience, followed by a holiday on the beach. The term "Baltic Express" is an ambitious misnomer. Think of this new 878km connection not as one of the speedy plane-killer routes trending in recent years – like London to Amsterdam or Istanbul to Ankara – custom-built to compete with budget airlines. Instead, the eight-hour trip promises a scenic history tour through overlapping empires via some of the Czech Republic and Poland's most buzzing cities, including Gdansk and Poznan. Best of all, this highly affordable and experiential journey allows passengers to hop-on and hop-off wherever they choose. My own journey started in Prague's Hlavní Nádraží station. From outside, the terminus looks like a cathedral to train travel with twin cupolas rising from its roof like Roman temples. The station was built in 1871 when the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which ruled Central Europe, laid train tracks around the empire as a way of weaving all trade and security through the empire's capital of Vienna. Inside the station, Nádraží Hlavní's main departure hall was decorated when the Czech Republic was under Soviet domination and is a socialist rainbow of primary colours. Yet unbeknown to most passengers, one floor above sits an original waiting room styled in Art Nouveau, while a soaring dome in this higher level overlooks Romanesque statues and polished brass rails. In 2024, the fancy Foyer Café opened in an adjoining salon, serving Czech riesling and viennoiserie pastries high above the hoi polloi. It's a fine way to start a continental meander. After just one hour aboard the Baltic Express, I make my first hop-off stop at Pardubice. The 100,000-person city exudes Czech charm. The old town square is Prague-esque, with church steeples shaped like space rockets and townhouses coloured every shade of pastel. Pardubice's Austro-Hungarian townhouses are as fancily familiar as in every empire city: Sarajevo, Brno, Lviv. Yet I can count that day's tourists on one hand. Ironically, statues in Pardubice commemorate the birthplace of Czech aviator Jan Kašpar. In 1911, Kašpar flew south from Pardubice to Prague, following the railway tracks now used by the Baltic Express. The mechanical efficiency of aviation has competed with the romanticism of rail ever since. I rejoin the Baltic Express an hour before sunset. The topography rises towards the Polish border in an undulating green sheen. First oak woods, feral deer and icy streams. Then pine forests, hunting lodges and deep snows as the train climbs into the quickening night. As Europe has become borderless, only a choral chirp from passengers' cellular networks welcomes our train to Poland. I share my seating cabin with a woman named Marta Kortas who works in Gdansk's data analytics industry. "The train has made a new connection for me because I have friends in Prague and southern Poland," she tells me. The region of rural Silesia flashes past in the dark, where passengers can get off for thermal springs and salt mines. Kortas lived here during Covid lockdown. "I even dreamt I could move back and use the train to commute to my office a few days per month. Direct connections between Prague, Wroclaw and Poznan makes that dream much easier." Around 20:00, I alight, alongside Polish business commuters, to spend the night in Wroclaw, Poland's historical third city. For nearly a century before 1945, Wroclaw was the German-speaking city of Breslau, and its Teutonic-Gothic train station was designed by a Prussian architect. After World War Two, however, Poland's borders shifted west and the train station formerly known as Breslau Hauptbahnhof was renamed Wroclaw Główny – although direct services still run to Berlin on tracks laid by the German Empire more than a century ago. I wake up to Wroclaw's whirling snow and reboard the Baltic Express for the third time, strolling along the length of the eight-carriage train to gauge the passenger make-up. There are bike racks and bench tables, a dining car and coffee bar, occupied by everyone from Polish grannies to Czech work-from-homers. It's the mix anticipated by Jan Hrabáček of Czech national rail operator České Dráhy, whom I speak to en route. "We already have a connection from Prague to Budapest and Warsaw," says Hrabáček, who helped develop the Baltic Express route. "So the idea of the Czech and Polish transport ministers was to connect the quickest possible route from Prague and Wroclaw to the sea." Tourism, not business, will be the key summer driver: Czechs used to drive south to Croatia for holidays, says Hrabáček, but now it's expensive. "Czech people 'found' Poland as a destination because the beaches are great and the weather has become warmer." The joy of the Baltic Express is that it affords a few hours in destinations one might otherwise overlook, like the Polish spa town of Kłodzko or the medieval city of Leszno. I make my penultimate pitstop in Poznan, a Polish cultural capital that has an old town square as pretty as any imagined in a Disney fairytale. I start in the square's Military Museum, where rakish Napoleonic tunics and dashing air force costumes – Polish soldiers knew how to dress – tell of a darker story. Poland has only enjoyed 50 years of independence in the last two centuries due to Austro-Hungarian, Nazi and Soviet occupiers, which makes the safeguarding of the country's culture during difficult times even more impressive. For example, the interiors of the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help look like a darkly atmospheric Vatican with a ceiling as kaleidoscopically intricate as a Fabergé egg. I learn that the Nazis turned the basilica into a warehouse before it was restored after World War Two. Meanwhile, Poznan's magnificent brick brewery, Stary Browar, a city in itself, was mothballed during the Soviet era. It has been reborn as a cultural space and shopping hub near the train station. At lunchtime, I embark on my final leg towards Gdansk. As a board the train, a conductor I met the day before gives me a nod of welcome. The Baltic Express is starting to feel like home. The cosiest space is the dining car. A chef grills fresh *goląbki* (pork-stuffed cabbage leaves), her assistant spoons out pumpkin barley with kale and the waiter decants bottles of *Lomża* beer. The train catering company WARS holds a special place in Polish hearts, having catered on international rail routes from Irkutsk to Istanbul since 1948. It's a long way from a British Rail sandwich. A fellow diner is marketing consultant Karolina Paszkiewicz.



One of the last stops on the route, Gdansk is packed with history (Credit: Getty Images)

"The trains Poland had 10 years ago were slow and cold," she recalls. The train to Gdansk, where Paszkiewicz's clients are based, used to take nine hours from her hometown of Wroclaw. "Today it's four and half," smiles Paszkiewicz, as she munches on a Polish apple pie. "After you've eaten and opened your laptop, it's time to get off." We're nearly at the end of the line. Outside, the landscape freezes and flattens. A whirl of sea-gulls intimates that we're descending towards the sea. The natural port of Gdansk has been Poland's window on the world for seven centuries. As a member of the Hanseatic trading league, the port city exported goods around the Baltic Sea between Hamburg, Riga, Bergen and Bremen. Visible from our slowing train are handsome wharf houses where beeswax, amber and furs could be winched up from passing ships. In Gdansk, history is inescapable. The train terminal is a mirror of Colmar station in France's Alsace region, both designed by German architects when Imperial Germany governed these parts. Finally, the European Solidarity Centre highlights Gdansk's shipworkers' role in helping to bring down Soviet communism decades later.

What makes the Baltic Express special is its sense of interconnectedness. It's a Czech-Polish train, travelling on tracks laid by Austrians and Germans that offers the freedom to eat, sleep and explore en route. Experiential train travel has a new destination.

Railfan Events –also thanks to Rick Krenske

Northstar Chapter NRHS Monthly Meeting	<i>Saturday February 14th 2026</i> <u>6:15pm—8:45pm</u>	Roseville Lutheran Church Diamond room 1215 Roselawn Ave W Roseville MN 55113	FREE -Guests are Welcome
Granite City Train Show	February 28th, 2026 <u>9am to 3pm</u>	River's Edge Convention Center, 10 4th Avenue South Saint Cloud, Minnesota 56301	\$6
Greater Upper Midwest Train show: Century College Model RR Flea Market	<u>April 11th 2026</u>	Century College West Campus 3401 Century Ave N White Bear Lake MN 55110	\$7
Lakes & Pines TCA Train Show and Swap Meet	<u>March 8th 2026 12:15pm</u>	John P Murzyn Hall 530 Mill Street NE Columbia Heights MN 55421	
45th Annual La Crosse & Three Rivers Model Railroad Show.	March 14th 2026 <u>9am—5pm</u> March 15th 2026 <u>10am -3pm</u>	The Omni Center 255 Riders Club Road Onalaska/ La Crosse, Wisconsin 54650	\$8 one day \$12 both days
Randolph Railroad Days at Randolph High School.	March 28th 2026 <u>9am—3pm</u> March 29th 2026 <u>10am—2pm</u>	Randolph Minnesota High School and Museum <i>29110 Davisson Ave</i> <i>Randolph, MN 55016</i>	\$7 per day

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