WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW
For the Week Ending SAT, January 3, 2004
By Dave Mears

(From Your Editor: A Happy New Year to all WRR readers. And thank you for continued interest in Weekly Rail Review; my way of keeping up with the news of the rail and transit industries and with my acquaintances in them.)

THE WEEK'S TOP NEWS (in chronological order):

(SUN) A Reading & Northern Railroad freight train derailed in Pittston, PA. 27 cars derailed in the accident. No injuries were reported. The cause of the derailment was still under investigation at press time. (ffd: Railpace)

(WED) New York City marked the last day of use of transit tokens. The tokens, which were bought at booths and were used on the city's buses and subways for over 50 years, have been replaced by electronically encoded MetroCard fare cards, which were first used in 1994. The tokens were only good for bus fares on this final day of use, having been phased out for subway use in mid-2003. (ffd: New York Daily News)

(THU) The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was officially merged into the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. The merger followed a December 5 ratification vote by each union's membership. Effective this date, the BofLE is now known as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET). (ffd: BofLE)

(THU) Houston, TX. began revenue service on its new light rail line, known as Houston Metrorail. The line, totaling approximately 8 miles in length, runs from Main St., Houston south to suburban Reliant Park. (ffd: NARP)

(FRI) The U.S. Department of Energy released a study forecasting that coal will generate 52 percent of the nation's electricity by 2025, up from 50 percent currently. The study also forecast that total U.S. coal consumption would increase from 1.07 billion tons in 2002 to 1.57 billion tons in 2025, and production from 1.1 billion tons in 2002 to 1.54 billion tons in 2025. (ffd: USDOE)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending December 27, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 5.6 percent from the comparable week last year, up 4.3 percent in the East and up 6.3 percent in the West. Also for the week ending December 27, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 11.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 31.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 4.5 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 15.5 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 11.4 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through December 27, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.1 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 6.8 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 1.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 5.3 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 2.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 10.9 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) The City of Venice, IL. filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of railroad it owns, specifically, between Branch St. Yard in St. Louis, MO. and the Illinois State Line at Venice, IL. and, also, between Venice, IL. and McKinley Jct., IL. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) CSX filed to abandon approximately 33 miles of line, specifically, from LaCrosse, IN. to Wellsboro, IN. and from North Judson, IN. to Malden, IN. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board approved CSX's earlier filing to discontinue service over approximately 1 mile of its Second Creek Spur Line in Knoxville, TN. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Short line and regional rail conglomerate Railroad Development Corporation announced that it had completed purchase of the Iowa Interstate Railroad and the assets of Heartland Rail Corporation. The Iowa Interstate extends between Bureau, IL. and Council Bluffs, IA. (ffd: RDC Corp.)

(FRI) The Seminole Gulf Railway filed to abandon approximately 13 miles of its Venice Branch between Sarasota, FL. and Venice, FL. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

None of note this week.

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Weekly Rail Review is edited from public news sources and published weekly, usually on Sunday or Monday, to the rail and transit industries and those interested in them. Send an e-mail to weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,
Dave Mears
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