

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2011

BY DAVE MEARS

(NOTE: I am once again restarting my Weekly Rail Review, which I had to suspend without notice in mid-2010 due to other work and personal priorities. I will endeavor to resume it for as long as I can.)

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

(MON) Boston commuter rail operator Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad and Chicago commuter rail operator Metra announced that they would begin testing quiet cars on select commuter lines. The quiet cars, which have proved popular on Amtrak and other U.S. commuter rail operators, require riders to silence sounds on pagers and laptop computers and to refrain from talking on their cell phones. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) Chicago's Chicago Transit Authority said that it would this month launch a pilot version of its new "Train Tracker" software through a dedicated website. A CTA spokesman said that riders using desktop computers or mobile devices will be able to obtain estimated arrival times for trains on all eight of its subway and elevated lines. (ffd: CTA, Progressive Railroading)

(MON) Organizers of Railroad Day On Capitol Hill, the day each year when railroaders, their allied shippers, and key others come to Washington to meet with their federal legislators, announced that it would be rescheduled from March 24 to July 14. The organizers said that this change was necessary due to Congress having recently changed when it would be in session this year. (ffd: RT&S)

(MON) The Association of American Railroads released the 2010 edition of its Railroad Facts book. The book contains more than 80 pages of facts and statistics for 2009, as well as historical data on critical aspects of the railroad business. Copies are available to the general public at \$20, with discounts applied for purchase of two or more, and may be order off the AAR website at <<http://www.aar.org>>www.aar.org. (ffd: AAR)

(TUE) The operators of the Atlantic City Express announced that they would suspend service until at least Memorial Day weekend. The trains had operated on weekends between New York and Atlantic City, and were subsidized by a consortium of casino operators. New Jersey Transit service on its Atlantic City line between Philadelphia and Atlantic City will continue. (ffd: Courier-Post)

(TUE) Amtrak announced that it would again hold its annual Amtrak TRAINSportation Video Contest. The contest, in which those entering create a train travel-themed video, is open to college students in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin. The deadline for entries is February 28. (ffd: Amtrak)

(WED) The Chicago Region Environmental And Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) program announced the start of work on five new projects. These projects include construction of a third main track on Union Pacific around Proviso Yard and the installation of a new traffic control system on the Indiana Harbor Belt between La Grange and Broadview, IL. The CREATE project is supported by a federal, state and rail industry funding. (ffd: Trains)

(WED) The U.S. House of Representatives approved a series of amendments to House rules that transit advocates said could make it easier to reduce federal transit funding. Previously, surface transportation legislation has included a guarantee that money included in the authorization bill is automatically appropriated at the annual levels specified in the legislation. The new rules eliminate a point of order meaning that an appropriations bill could be brought to the House floor with less money than was

approved in an authorization bill. (ffd: AASHTO, APTA)

(THU) The Surface Transportation Board proposed a new regulation that would empower it to give Amtrak emergency access to freight lines when an emergency renders an Amtrak train's normal route out of service. The regulation would also provide the STB with authority to indemnify the freight railroad against liability in case of an accident. Comments on the STB's proposal are due to the STB in early February. (ffd: STB, NARP)

STATS – CLASS 1 RAIL TRAFFIC – FULL YEAR 2010:

(THU) For the Full Year 2010, and comparing with the Full Year 2009, U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 14.8 million units, up 7.3 percent, and U.S. intermodal rail traffic totaled 11.3 million units, up 14.2 percent. The carload and intermodal traffic percentage increases in 2010 were the largest year-over-year increases since the Association of American Railroads began published these statistics in 1988; however, 2010 saw the second lowest total annual carloads on record behind 2009.

In 2010, the carload traffic types with the greatest percent increase over 2009 were metallic ores up 89.2 percent; metals and metal products up 44.9 percent; and chemicals up 9.6 percent. Coal accounted for 45.4 percent of all carload traffic, followed by chemicals accounting for 10.1 percent, and then grain accounting for 7.8 percent. (ffd: AAR)

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(SAT) Union Pacific sold the 23-mile line from Cordes to Coquille, OR, including rail yard facilities in North Bend and Coos Bay, OR, to the Port of Coos Bay. The line will be operated as the Coos Bay Rail Link. The Port of Coos Bay bought the 111-mile line from Cordes to Danebo, OR in 2009. (ffd: Coos Bay World, Progressive Railroading)

(SAT) Weyerhaeuser Corporation sold its six railroad operations to Patriot Rail. The railroads sold by Weyerhaeuser are the DeQueen & Eastern; the Texas, Oklahoma & Eastern; the Columbia & Cowlitz; the Patriot Woods; the Golden Triangle; and the Mississippi & Skuna Valley. (ffd: Longview Daily News)

(MON) Wood County, OH's Office of Economic Development has created a virtual tour of CSX's new intermodal terminal in North Baltimore, OH. The virtual tour may be viewed by linking to <<http://www.woodcounty.com/>>www.woodcounty.com.

(MON) The Wichita, Tillman & Jackson Railway filed to acquire 61 miles of line from the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. The line being acquired is known as the Western Branch and is between Burkburnett, TX and Altus, OK. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) The engineering and consulting firm of Hatch Mott MacDonald announced that it had acquired Gibson Engineers PC. Gibson Engineers locates in Fuquay-Varina, NC, and provides rail and highway design, and transportation planning services. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) Union Pacific announced that it would relocate its El Paso, TX yard and terminal to nearby Santa Teresa, NM. The new terminal in Santa Teresa, which will cost approximately \$400 million, will allow UP to move its facilities out of downtown El Paso. (ffd: Las Cruces Sun, Trains)

(FRI) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately one-half mile of its Kanawha Industrial Lead near Belmond, IA. (ffd: STB)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(SAT) Tom Judge, the longtime editor of Railway Track & Structures Magazine, announced his retirement effective December 31, 2010. Concurrent with Mr. Judge's retirement, the magazine appointed Mischa Wanek-Libman its new editor. (ffd: RT&S)

(SAT) Tom Kotnour passed away at age 85 in Mesa, AZ. Mr. Kotnour worked for the Great Northern and the Burlington Northern Railways until his retirement in 1981. After that, he helped with several short line startups, including serving as the president of the Red River Valley & Western Railway from 1987 to 1989. In 2002, Mr. Kotnour purchased the Minnesota Northern Railroad. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, Trains)

(MON) Florida East Coast Railway appointed Hussein Cumber its Executive Vice President-Corporate Development. Mr. Cumber was earlier a deputy chief of staff at the U.S. Department of Transportation. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) The Fort Worth & Western Railroad appointed Tom Schlosser its president and chief executive officer. Mr. Schlosser was earlier a senior vice-president with RailAmerica and has also served as the chair of the American Short Line & Regional Railroad Association. (ffd: RT&S)

(MON) Watco Companies announced the following appointments at its family of railroads: Darryl Thompson as general manager of the Mississippi Southern and Vicksburg Southern Railroads; Brad Hayes as general manager of the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad; Todd Johns as general manager of the Alabama Southern Railroad; and Chad Jasmin as general manager of the South Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad. (ffd: Watco Companies, Progressive Railroading)

(TUE) The Obama Administration nominated Ann Begeman to succeed Chip Nottingham as a commissioner of the Surface Transportation Board. Mr. Nottingham has announced his intention to leave the STB once his successor is confirmed. Also nominated was Thomas Beck to succeed Elizabeth Dougherty on the National Mediation Board. Ms. Dougherty has announced her intention to leave the NMB once her successor is confirmed. (ffd: NMB, STB, Progressive Railroading)

(WED) The engineering and consulting firm Parsons announced the appointment of Bill Crosbie as vice president of railroad programs and deputy sector manager in the rail and transit division of its transportation group. Mr. Crosbie was most recently the senior vice-president and chief operating officer at Amtrak. (ffd: Parsons)

(WED) Robert Lewis passed away at age 94 in Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL. Mr. Lewis was the longtime publisher of Railway Age Magazine, serving in that capability from 1956 until 1995. (ffd: Railway Age)

(THU) Jolene Molitoris resigned as director of the Ohio Department of Transportation, attendant with the change of Ohio's governorship. Ms. Molitoris had been the chief administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration in the late 1990s. (ffd: NARP)

(THU) James Boyd died. Initially a locomotive demonstrator for EMD, Mr. Boyd went on to work for Carstens Publications, where he served as the editor of Railfan & Railroad Magazine from the magazine's inception in 1974 until 1998. (ffd: Railroad Magazine)

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BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears