

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 2010

BY DAVE MEARS

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

(MON) The American Public Transportation Association and the International Union of Railways announced the scheduling of three regional seminars that they said would "provide U.S. decision makers with the information necessary to implement high-speed rail. An event spokesman said that the Federal Railroad Administration's Chief Administrator, Joe Szabo, and its Deputy Administrator, Karen Rae, would be the keynote speakers at these seminars. The seminars will be held February 8-9 in Washington, DC; February 9-11 in Chicago, IL; and February 11-13 in Los Angeles, CA. (ffd: Railway Age)

(TUE) New Jersey Transit announced the opening of its newly reconstructed station in South Amboy, NJ. The new station now includes a center-island, high-level platform that makes the station accessible to customers with disabilities, and climate-controlled waiting shelters. (ffd: New Brunswick Home News, NJ Transit)

(WED) New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced the opening of the new Atlantic Terminal Pavilion in Brooklyn, NY. The new \$108 million station, constructed on the site of the Long Island Rail Road's Atlantic Terminal, connects the LIRR, 10 subway lines, and five bus routes. The station serves approximately 25,000 LIRR riders and approximately 31,650 transit riders each weekday. (ffd: NYMTA, New York Times)

(THU) Severe winter weather, which included heavy snows and subzero temperatures, impacted rail operations in the Midwest U.S. BNSF told its customers this date that its service "is being impacted by extreme cold and winter weather conditions across [its] central and northern regions, which includes Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, and North and South Dakota. Amtrak canceled part of its "Empire Builder" service between St. Paul, MN and Seattle, WA, and part of its "California Zephyr" service between Chicago, IL and Denver, CO, several days this week. (ffd: Amtrak, Journal of Commerce)

(FRI) The Federal Railroad Administration released new structural standards for passenger cars. The new standards require stronger front-end frames on new passenger cars and some locomotives to help prevent them from collapsing or telescoping on impact. The standards applies to new equipment ordered after the FRA standards rule takes effect. (ffd: Bloomberg News, FRA)

(FRI) The Long Island Rail Road and the Metro North Railroad announced that they had both set new system on-time performance records in 2009. The LIRR achieved on-time performance of 95.2 percent and MNRR achieved on-time performance of 97.8 percent. Both railroads consider a train on time if it reaches its final destination within six minutes of the scheduled arrival time. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) Veolia Transportation announced that its Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad had received a two-year extension to operate commuter rail service serving the Greater Boston area. The extension was granted by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MBCR has operated Boston commuter rail services since July, 2003. (ffd: wire services)

(FRI) Union Pacific originated a notably long test train, totaling nine locomotives and 295 cars. The intermodal train originated this date in Dallas, TX and was bound for Long Beach, CA. The train totaled 3-1/2 miles in length. (ffd: Fort Worth Star-Telegram)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending January 2, 2010, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 25.5 billion ton-miles, down 1.2 percent. Also for the week, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.5 percent – up 6.8 percent in the East, but down 5.8 percent in the West – and U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 1.8 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 16.9 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 7.4 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was up 17.1 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was up 23.3 percent.

For the Full Year 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 1.49 trillion ton-miles, down 15.1 percent from the Full Year 2008. Also for the Full Year 2009, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 16.1 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 14.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 17.7 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 14.0 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was down 9.3 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was down 12.5 percent. (ffd: AAR)

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) The Surface Transportation Board granted the Alaska Railroad's earlier request to construct a new line from Eielson Air Force Base to Delta, AK and nearby Fort Greely. The new line is expected to cost approximately \$700 million. (ffd: Anchorage Daily News, wire services)

(TUE) Norfolk Southern filed to discontinue its freight rail service over approximately 14 miles of line between Baltimore, MD and Cockeysville, MD. The line is owned by the Maryland Transportation Administration, and light rail transit is operated over part of the line. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) The Reading & Northern acquired the Towanda Monroeton Shippers Lifeline Railroad, which runs between Towanda, PA and Monroeton, PA. Media reports indicated that the acquisition will allow for increased shipments of pipe and sand, such as will be used to drill natural gas fields. (ffd: Daily Review, Progressive Railroading)

(THU) CSX filed to discontinue service over approximately 63 miles of its Northern Region-Louisville Division-Hoosier Subdivision line between Bedford, IN and New Albany, IN. (ffd: STB)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(TUE) Continuing the practice of rotating its vice-chairmanship, the Surface Transportation Board announced that Frank Mulvey would now be its vice-chairman. Mr. Mulvey succeeds Chip Nottingham in this role. Dan Elliott continues as the STB chairman. (ffd: Journal of Commerce)

(TUE) The Intermodal Association of North America elected Stephen Branscum its 2010 chairman. Mr. Branscum is BNSF Group VP for consumer products. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, wire services)

(THU) The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad announced that Soni Honegger has resigned as the railroad's general manager. Mr. Honegger had held the position since August, 2008. (ffd: Rio Grande Sun)

(FRI) Amtrak announced that its board of directors had extended the one-year contract of its current president, Joe Boardman. An Amtrak spokesman said that Mr. Boardman's "one-year term [had been extended] for an unspecified period [until such time as more members are appointed to the Amtrak Board of Directors]." Mr. Boardman has been Amtrak's president since the resignation of Alex Kummant in November, 2008. (ffd: Amtrak, wire services)

(FRI) BNSF announced the appointment of Dean Wise as its new VP-Network Strategy. In his new position, Mr. Wise, who was most recently with Norbridge Consulting, will be responsible for haulage management, interline management, network strategy development, public-private partnerships, and short line business development. Mr. Wise succeeds Peter Rickershauser, who has announced his retirement effective April 30. (ffd: BNSF RR, CNN)

(FRI) Genesee Valley Transportation, which operates the Depew, Lancaster & Western, the Falls Road, the Mohawk, Adirondack, & Northern, and the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroads, announced the promotion of Gregory Cheshier from Director-Transportation to VP-Operations. GVT also announced the appointment of David Blount as its Director-Business Development. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

///

Weekly Rail Review (WRR) is edited from public news sources and distributed weekly to those working in, or interested in, rail and transit. **Recipients are welcome to forward it on, but if you do, please let me know to whom, so that I may note them in my total readership.** Anyone not already on my distribution list may send me an email to directly receive Weekly Rail Review, with my compliments.

BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears

Cherry Hill, NJ