

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

(MON) Further the ongoing investigation related to the awarding of supplemental disability payments to nearly all Long Island Rail Road early retirees, a spokesman for the New York State attorney general's office said that they were subpoenaing the records of Marie Baran, the former head of the Long Island field office of the Railroad Retirement Board. Media reports indicated that Ms. Baran was alleged to have taken a \$2,000 fee per claimant for completing and expediting supplemental disability paperwork. Later in the week, New York congressional leaders called for a federal probe as to "...why the number of LIRR employees applying for [supplemental disability] benefits far exceeds what one would expect." (ffd: Newsday, Trains)

(MON) BNSF began installing a new interlocking at Keenbrook CA, marking the start of the final phase of its project to install a third main track on its line through California's famed Cajon Pass. The new track parallels one of the two main lines that have been in service on the pass since 1913, one at a 2.2 percent grade and the other at a 3.4 percent grade. The new main track is also 2.2 percent, and so provides for two such tracks on the lesser grade between Cajon and Summit. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(MON) Portland OR transit operator TriMet announced that the extension of its MAX Green Line light rail line would be partially powered by alternative energy sources. A TriMet spokesman said that the line would include 22 wind turbines mounted atop catenary structures, each of which will provide 275 watts of power. Also, solar panels mounted at the line's Jackson South Terminus station will generate more than 50 kilowatts of power through solar energy, enough to run the LED lighting at the site and also exterior lighting on site buildings. The line extension is scheduled to open in September, 2009. (ffd: Railway Age)

(TUE) The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency awarded Pacific Harbor Lines Railroad its SmartWay Environmental Excellence Award. PHL, which serves the Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach, was recognized for having completed this year the complete renewal of its locomotive fleet, such that all units now significantly reduce air pollutants. PHL was one of 27 SmartWay awards recently presented, and was the only one presented to a railroad. (ffd: wire services)

(WED) Memphis TN officials said that repairs to the sinkhole at the city's Central Station are nearly complete. The sinkhole, which was first detected last April, has necessitated running Amtrak's "City of New Orleans" train onto an alternate route through Memphis. Officials said that the sinkhole was caused by the structural failure of a late-1800s-era city culvert. (ffd: RT&S)

(WED) Canadian National said that it would acquire 232 new rapid-discharge ore cars and refurbish 500 existing ore cars. A CN spokesman said that the new and refurbished cars "...are part of a long-term plan to upgrade the fleet used to move pelletized iron ore produced in the Upper Midwest." CN hauls ore pellets from three mines in Northern Minnesota and one in Michigan primarily to Great Lakes ports. (ffd: CN Corp., Progressive Railroading)

(THU) The four largest U.S. railroads announced that they had reached agreement among themselves on interoperability standards for Positive Train Control (PTC) technology. The announcement follows a requirement for PTC on rail lines over which intercity and commuter passenger service is operated, and over which Toxic Inhalation Hazard (TIH) commodities are transported, by the end of 2015. Concurrent with the interoperability announcement, BNSF and Union Pacific announced that they planned to install PTC on lines in Southern California over which Metrolink commuter trains are run by the end of 2012. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, wire services)

(THU) The Association of American Railroads announced that it would begin including loading statistics from a second Mexican railroad, Ferromex, on their weekly rail traffic report press releases. The AAR reports already include loading statistics of the Kansas City Southern de Mexico, which is the former Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana Railroad. (Note: These are included below under "Big 7 Rail Traffic," and will be from now on.)

(FRI) Union Pacific announced that it had reached a tentative settlement with Dairyland Power Cooperative related to a Surface Transportation Board complaint filed by Dairyland against UP over fuel surcharges. Dairyland filed its STB complaint last March, the first specific customer request for damages after the STB in 2007 ordered railroads to change the way they set and applied fuel surcharges. Dairyland had complained that UP took its inbound coal shipments off negotiated contracts at the end of 2005 and put them under common carrier freight rates, to which such surcharges were then applied. (ffd: Traffic World)

(FRI) Amtrak announced that its Fiscal Year 2008 ridership increased to 28,716,407 riders, setting a record for the most passengers using Amtrak trains since it started operations in 1971. Amtrak's fiscal year ended September 30. An Amtrak spokesman said that its FY2008 ridership marked an 11.1 percent increase in ridership from the previous fiscal year and that "all Amtrak trains across the system saw increases in ridership." The spokesman added that FY2008 ticket revenue reached \$1.7 billion, a 14.2 percent increase from the previous fiscal year. (ffd: Amtrak)

STATS – "BIG 7" (AND SELECTED MEXICAN) RAIL TRAFFIC:

(NOTE: Canadian traffic includes that on the U.S. operations of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific.)

(THU) For the week ending October 4, 2008, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 35.7 billion ton-miles, up 0.8 percent from the comparable week last year. U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 336,457 units, down 1.6 percent in the East, up 0.9 percent, in the

West, and down 0.1 percent altogether. Notable traffic increases included coal up 7.7 percent; notable traffic decreases included motor vehicles and equipment down 27.8 percent and nonmetallic minerals down 13.5 percent. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 0.8 percent to total 244,828 units, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 5.7 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 1.3 percent, Mexico's Kansas City Southern de Mexico's carload rail traffic was down 16.1 percent and its intermodal rail traffic was up 0.1 percent, and Mexico's Ferromex's carload rail traffic was down 34.4 percent and its intermodal rail traffic was down 30.9 percent.

For the period January 1 through October 4, 2008 and ranked with the comparable period last year, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 1.35 trillion ton-miles, up 0.9 percent; U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.2 percent to total 13,013,645 units; U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 3.0 percent to total 8,991,459 units; Canadian carload rail traffic was down 4.4 percent; Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 4.0 percent; KCSM's carload rail traffic was down 5.7 percent and its intermodal rail traffic was up 8.2 percent; and Ferromex's carload rail traffic was up 1.0 percent and its intermodal rail traffic was down 1.3 percent. (ffd: AAR)

MORE STATS – "BIG 7" (EXCEPT CN) OPERATING PERFORMANCE:

(NOTE: Earlier this year, Kansas City Southern combined operating performance data for its domestic (Kansas City Southern) and Mexican (Kansas City Southern de Mexico) operations. As a result, correct comparative data for KCS for last year is not available at this time.)

(WED) For the week ending October 3, 2008 versus the comparable week last year (except for KCS), average total cars on line was as follows: BNSF, 227,929 cars versus 233,290 cars; Canadian Pacific, 84,567 cars versus 83,333 cars; CSX, 228,143 cars versus 218,384 cars; Kansas City Southern, 47,198 cars; Norfolk Southern, 198,154 cars versus 200,645 cars; and Union Pacific, 300,587 cars versus 311,968 cars.

Also for the week ending October 3, 2008 versus the comparable week last year (except for KCS), average train speed was as follows: BNSF, 24.3 mph versus 23.2 mph; Canadian Pacific Railway, 23.9 mph versus 20.9 mph; CSX, 19.5 mph versus 21.5 mph; Kansas City Southern, 26.0 mph; Norfolk Southern, 21.9 mph versus 21.8 mph; and Union Pacific, 24.1 mph versus 21.6 mph.

Finally for the week ending October 3, 2008 versus the comparable week last year (except for KCS), average terminal dwell time was as follows: BNSF, 22.8 hrs versus 23.9 hrs; Canadian Pacific Railway, 20.1 hrs versus 21.9 hrs; CSX, 24.0 hrs versus 21.2 hrs; Kansas City Southern, 16.9 hrs; Norfolk Southern, 20.5 hrs versus 21.1 hrs; and Union Pacific, 23.8 hrs versus 25.0 hrs. (ffd: AAR)

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(MON) The Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad filed to abandon approximately 28 miles of line between Orchard Park NY and Ashford NY. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) R.J.Corman-Pennsylvania Lines filed to abandon approximately 7 miles of Hillman Branch, between McGees PA and Hillman PA. (ffd: STB)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(MON) The Massachusetts Bay Commuter Railroad appointed Richard Davey its General Manager. Mr. Davey succeeds James O'Leary, who will continue to serve on MBCR's board. Mr. Davey was most recent MBCR's Deputy GM and General Counsel. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, wire services)

(TUE) Concurrent with the recent Surface Transportation Board approval of the acquisition of the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern railroads by the Canadian Pacific Railway, Kevin Schieffer resigned as the railroad's President & CEO. Mr. Schieffer had been the DM&E's president since 1996. A DM&E spokesman said that its COO, Ed Terbell, and CFO, Kurt Feaster, would manage day-to-day operations pending the railroad's absorption into CPR. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, RT&S)

(WED) Actor Michael Gross, currently on the soap opera, "The Young and the Restless," was appointed the official spokesperson of the B&O Railroad Museum. Mr. Gross, perhaps best known as the father of Actor Michael J. Fox's character on the "Family Ties" series of some years ago, is a lifelong rail enthusiast. He and his wife Elza are noted collectors of dining car china and silverware, and are part owners of the Santa Fe Southern Railroad. (ffd: B&O Railroad Museum)

(FRI) Indiana University Press announced the release of "Jervis Langdon and the Transportation Revolution." The book chronicles the life and work of Mr. Langdon, famed as a "doctor of sick railroads" and president of several of them during the mid-20th Century. Mr. Langdon died in 2004 at Age 99. The book is authored by H. Roger Grant, a noted author of railroad books and currently a professor of history at Clemson University. (ffd: Baltimore Sun)

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Weekly Rail Review (WRR) is edited from public news sources and published weekly to those working in, or interested in, rail and transit. Send an e-mail to <mailto:weeklyrailreview@aol.com>weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

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