

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the week ending SAT, November 15, 2003

By Dave Mears

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Still running a little bit behind in gathering, assessing and summarizing the news this month, but should be up to date again shortly.)

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

(MON) CSX announced plans to abolish approximately 800 to 1,000 management positions, representing nearly 20 percent of its existing managerial workforce. A CSX spokesman said that the reductions would be effected over the next 2 quarters. The spokesman added that the reductions would allow CSX to streamline its management structure from 11 layers to no more than 8. Later in the week, CSX came under criticism for having announced the downsizing concurrent with it having committed to purchasing \$1 million in tickets for the 2005 Super Bowl, to be held in Jacksonville, FL., CSX's headquarters city. (ffd: wire services)

(MON) The Port Authority Trans Hudson subway announced that its turnstiles would soon accept the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority's MetroCard for fare payment. A PATH spokesman said that the MTA MetroCard would be able to be used at all PATH stations by mid-2004. (ffd: Railpace)

(MON) The nation of Israel announced plans to build a railway line between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. In announcing the plans, Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the new line would compete with the Suez Canal. Mr. Netanyahu added that, as trade between Europe, India and China is expected to increase dramatically in the next 2 decades, Israel should look to serve as a landbridge for goods between Europe and Asia. (ffd: Xinhua News Agency)

(TUE) Canadian National Railway CEO Hunter Harrison said that it was looking to pay more of its train and engine crews on a time basis rather than on a mileage basis. Mr. Harrison said that, if CN can negotiate its new labor contracts to pay by the hour instead of by distance, it can eventually reduce its t&e workforce by up to 35 percent. Mr. Harrison added that previously negotiated conversions by CN from time to mileage pay have included increased job security for affected employees. (ffd: Toronto Star)

(TUE) Kansas City Southern opened a new transloading facility in Richland, MS. A KCS spokesman said that the new facility, known as the Jackson Transload Center, locates approximately midway between Dallas, TX. and Atlanta, GA. and is expected to handle approximately 3,000 cars annually by 2006. (ffd: KCS Corp.)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe began use of its new Voice Train Reporting system. The new system allows field personnel, include train personnel, to report train arrivals, departures, pickups and setouts via radio or cell phone using voice recognition. A BNSF spokesman said that additional functionality will be added to the system later this year. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(WED) Conferees for the U.S. House and Senate approved a \$1.225 billion appropriation for Amtrak for the Fiscal Year 2004. The amount represents \$760 million for operations and \$465 million for capital, and also allows for deferral of the \$100 million loan from the U.S. Department of Transportation advanced to Amtrak during its mid-2002 budget crisis. Although the agreed-upon amount is less than the \$1.346 billion earlier approved by the Senate alone, Amtrak President David Gunn said that the final amount would allow continued operation of the existing Amtrak system. (ffd: NARP, wire services)

(WED) 2 dump trucks crashed into the side of a Norfolk Southern freight train in Wanatah, IN. The resulting collision caused the freight train to derail approximately 2 dozen doublestack rail cars and approximately 50 trailers. The driver of one of the dump trucks was also killed. A police spokesman said that early morning fog may have contributed to the drivers being unable to see the approaching train. (ffd: La Porte Herald-Argus)

(WED) The chairman of the British Government's rail oversight board, the Strategic Rail Authority, condemned the privatization of British Rail in the 1990s, calling it "hopeless." In a speech to a British economic organization, SRA Chairman Richard Bowker said that the way British Rail was split into different franchises "was not simply flawed. It was hopelessly broken." Mr. Bowker said that there had been too much expectation on private companies rebuilding the railways when they had "neither the background nor the balance sheet to do it." (ffd: London Evening Standard)

(THU) New Jersey Transit announced that it had set February 15, 2004 as the opening day of its new 35 mile light rail line between Trenton, NJ. and Camden, NJ. A NJ Transit spokesman said that the line, which will feature the first diesel-powered light rail cars currently operated in the U.S., will be known as NJT's River Line and that service will eventually be operated on 15 minute headways. (ffd: Railway Age)

(FRI) A plaque was dedicated at Amtrak's Bryan, OH. station marking the 37th year since a specially modified New York Central rail car established a U.S. rail speed record. The car, which had 2 jet engines mounted on its roof, reached 183mph on a test run over the NYC's line between Bryan and Butler, IN. Those present at the dedication included several former NYC employees who participated in the test run 37 years ago. (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

(SAT) 2 freight trains, one of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and the other of the Union Pacific, collided near Longview, WA. The collision, which occurred as one train was switching onto an adjacent track to clear for the other, injured 2 crew members

and derailed a total of 22 cars, 7 on the BNSF train and 15 on the UP train. The cause of the accident was still under investigation at press time. (ffd: wire services)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending November 8, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.1 percent from the comparable week last year, up 0.5 percent in the East and down 0.3 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included non-grain farm products up 83.8 percent, coke up 28.3 percent and stone, clay and glass products up 13.6 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 27.9 percent. Also for the week ending November 8, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 9.6 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 9.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.8 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's rail traffic was down 6.0 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 6.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through November 8, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.1 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 6.6 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 0.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.7 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 2.1 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 14.2 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) Great Western Railway of Colorado filed to abandon its Eaton Subdivision between Windsor, CO. and Eaton, CO., totaling approximately 12 miles. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe granted temporary trackage rights to Union Pacific's over BNSF's line between Dallas-Forest Ave., TX. and Houston-Belt Jct., TX. , totaling approximately 248 miles. The purpose of the trackage rights is facilitate UP's maintenance of its line. (ffd: STB)

(WED) R.J. Corman Railroad granted overhead trackage rights to CSX between Memphis Jct., KY. and Lewisburg, KY, totaling approximately 33 miles. Reciprocally, CSX granted overhead trackage rights to R.J. Corman Railroad between Winchester, KY. and Berea, KY., totaling approximately 35 miles. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Union Pacific filed to abandon a portion of its Milpitas Subdivision between Nilcs Junction, CA. and Fremont, CA., totaling approximately 6 miles. (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,
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