

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, March 30, 2002

By Dave Mears

(NOTE: The expression "ffd" at the end of a news item means "for further details" and usually represents what I believe to be the most helpful news resource if a reader wants more information on a particular item.)

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

(MON) New Jersey Transit opened 2 new escalators and 5 new stairways to and from the train platforms it uses in New York, NY.'s Pennsylvania Station. The new escalators and stairways are part of NJT's new \$125 million East End Concourse Project in the station, which is now approximately 80 percent complete. (ffd: NJT Corp.)

(MON) Network Rail, a new company backed by the British government, proposed paying \$710 million to acquire Railtrack, the owner/operator of Britain's rail infrastructure now in receivership. Under the proposal, Network Rail would also assume Railtrack's \$9.2 billion debt. A spokesman for Britain's rail oversight board, the Strategic Rail Authority, said that they would consider terms of the proposal over the next few months. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) The president of the Railway Association of Canada called for the Canadian government to increase aid to the Canadian rail industry. In prepared remarks, RAC President Bill Rowat said that "policy makers must consider rail and intermodal systems as integral to the transportation solutions for the future." (ffd: Financial Post of Canada)

(TUE) The Nebraska Court of Appeals upheld a lower court award of \$1.9 million to a Union Pacific engineer who slipped on ice and snow on a locomotive walkway in 1998. The appeals court said that the award to the engineer, who became disabled following the accident, was "certainly high", but still bore a "reasonable relationship to the elements of damages proved." (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) U.S. Customs agents at the border crossing in Laredo, TX. discovered a ton of marijuana hidden in a rail car bound for the U.S. The agents detected the marijuana hidden in 25 burlap sacks following an electronic scan of the car, a covered hopper, which revealed "unusual shapes" inside it. (ffd: Houston Chronicle)

(WED) CSX and 2 other U.S. companies were sued in U.S. District Court in Brooklyn, NY. to recover damages arising from the labors of slaves who helped build their predecessor companies. The lawsuit did not cite specific monetary damages, but estimated the current value of all slave labors before 1865 as \$1.4 trillion. In response to the suit, CSX issued a statement calling slavery "a tragic chapter in the nation's history", but added that "courtrooms were the wrong place to settle this issue." (ffd: wire services)

(WED) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration terminated a proposed rule

that would have placed a 20mph speed restriction on maintenance-of-way equipment not in compliance with FRA freight car safety standards. The FRA said that it was abandoning the proposed rule for several reasons, including its desire to "reevaluate and develop alternative approaches" to the involved issues. (FRA)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced that it was working to increase its shipments of liquid hazardous wastes. BNSF said that it had recently teamed with MHF Logistical Solutions to transport liquid hazmats, packaged in 55 gallon drums, in 60 foot boxcars owned by MHF and specially modified for this service. BNSF noted that 99.9 percent of packaged liquid hazardous waste is presently transported by truck. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(THU) A rail worker of Philadelphia, PA. commuter rail operator SEPTA was killed when his maintenance vehicle was struck by a CSX freight train. The accident occurred near SEPTA's Neshaminy, PA. station. (ffd: CRTS)

(THU) The Wall Street Journal reported on Norfolk Southern's new "Thoroughbred Operating Plan" for improving its operations. The paper noted that NS had worked with MultiModal Applied Systems, a computer software consulting firm, to identify inefficiencies that included circuitous routings and excess handlings at terminals. (ffd: Wall Street Journal)

(THU) Officials of the Illinois Commerce Commission said that they were examining the safety of "compromise" welds made by Union Pacific between different rail sizes on the line between Chicago, IL. and St. Louis, MO. An ICC spokesman said that the welds were being made as part of a program of improvements to the line in preparation for testing later this year of operation of Amtrak passenger trains on the line at speeds greater than 100mph. (ffd: Chicago Tribune)

(THU) VIA Rail Canada announced the continuation of a multi-million dollar renovation program backed by a major capital investment by the Canadian government. A VIA Rail spokesman said that the program included acquiring new locomotives and passenger cars, upgrading existing equipment, modernizing tracks and signals and upgrading 30 passenger stations. The spokesman added that VIA Rail had also significantly revamped and upgraded its website, viarail.com. (ffd: VIA Rail Canada)

(FRI) A new exhibit on the growth of mass transit and its effect on American cities opened at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. The exhibit, entitled "On Track: Transit and the American City", runs through October 27. (ffd: Philadelphia Inquirer)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending March 23, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 4.6 percent from the comparable week last year, down 4.1 percent in the East and down 5.1 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included non-grain farm products up 21.9 percent, lumber and wood products up 8.0 percent and grain mill products up 6.5 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 27.3 percent, coke down 26.9 percent and pulp and paper products down 13.3 percent. Also for the week ending March 23, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 0.2 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.9 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 10.4 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 0.4 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 82.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through March 23, U.S. carload rail traffic was down

3.5 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 0.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 5.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 2.4 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 5.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 6.9 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) CSX filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of line in Sidney, OH. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe filed to abandon approximately 10 miles of line between Beatrice, NE. and Wymore, NE. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe filed to abandon approximately 4 miles of line in Kalispell, MT. (ffd: STB)

(THU) RailAmerica announced the sale of the Georgia Southwestern Railroad, 102 miles of its track to the state of Georgia for \$5.4 million and the line's capital stock and locomotives to the Georgia Southwest Railroad for \$1.7 million. A RailAmerica spokesman said that the Georgia Southwest planned to continuing operating the GSWR for the state of Georgia. (ffd: RailAmerica Corp.)

(FRI) CSX filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of line in Chelsea, MA. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(MON) Burlington Northern Santa Fe appointed Bonnie Henn-Pritchard AVP-Systems Development. Ms. Henn-Pritchard was previously the managing director of information services for United Airlines. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(MON) Conrail Shared Assets, the Conrail remnant terminal company, announced the following appointments: Michael Rochford as AVP-Performance and Risk Management, Joseph Rogers as VP-Finance and Treasury, Timothy Tierney as AVP and Chief Engineer, John Garafolo as Superintendent-East Territory and Charles Grey as Superintendent-West Territory. (ffd: CSX Corp., NS Corp.)

(THU) Norfolk Southern appointed the following 3 Senior General Counsels: Joseph Dimino for corporate matters, James Squires for financial and other business matters and Blair Wimbush for litigation and operations matters. (ffd: NS Corp.)

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(CORRECTION: In last week's edition, I mentioned about the Western New York & Pennsylvania, 62 miles of line between Corry, PA. and Meadville, PA., and the Northwest Pennsylvania Rail Authority, but didn't mention how these statements related to one another! In fact, the WNY&P acquired the line segment from the NWPRA for its operations. Thanks to Larry DeYoung, WNY&P's VP-Public Affairs, for bringing this to my attention.)

Weekly Rail Recap 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 djmservices@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,
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