

## WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2012

BY DAVE MEARS

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

(MON) The Surface Transportation Board noted its decision of the previous Friday ordering BNSF and Union Pacific to pay reparations totaling \$9,244,144 to the Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEP) for rate overcharges. In 2008, AEP filed a complaint challenging the reasonableness of the joint rates by BNSF and UP for unit train service from the Powder River Basin coal fields to AEP's Apache Generating Station near Cochise, AZ. In their decision, the STB found market dominance for this traffic, ordered BNSF and UP to reimburse AEP for their charges above market levels, and maintain rates for this traffic at 180 percent of its variable costs. (Ref: Railway Age)

(MON) Amtrak announced that it would create a new Emergency Management and Corporate Security Department. An Amtrak spokesman said that this new department would be responsible for emergency preparedness, continuity of operations and corporate security risk strategy, and be responsible for the emergency management-related functions that are presently performed by various other Amtrak departments. (Ref: Railway Age)

(MON) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration issued Safety Advisory No. 2012-02, which it said was "...to remind railroads and their employees of the importance of complying with restricted speed operating rules," which require trains to be prepared to stop per signal indication and within one-half of the range of vision. In issuing the advisory, the FRA noted that there have been six rear-end collisions in a recent twelve-month period that appear to be the result of the rear-approaching train not operating at the required restricted speed. (Ref: FRA)

(MON) BNSF launched a new interactive map that highlights events and activities along its 32,000-mile rail network. Included for two BNSF routes are "train's eye" videos in which high-definition cameras were attached to the outside of BNSF locomotives to capture the town and countryside along these routes. Link to the new interactive map at [map.friendsofbnsf.com](http://map.friendsofbnsf.com). (Ref: Lincoln Journal-Star)

(MON) The Chicago Transit Authority noted the completion of what it said was the first new EI station in 18 years. The new station, for Oakton, locates at Oakton Street and Skokie Boulevard on the CTA Yellow Line. (Ref: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority said that, by this fall, it will become the first transit system in the U.S. to allow riders to preorder and display their train tickets entirely through their smartphones. MBTA said that this will be enabled by a new mobile app their riders may download that will allow them to purchase and display MBTA commuter rail tickets, as well as to add dollar value to their standard "Charlie Card" transit passes. (Ref: PC World)

(TUE) Groundbreaking was held for a \$38 million project that will add a third main track to a congested segment of the BNSF main line between Commerce and Fullerton, CA. The line is used by Amtrak intercity trains, Metrolink commuter trains, and BNSF freight trains. (Ref: Railway Age)

(TUE) The New York City Transit Authority took delivery of the first of 28 new diesel locomotives for work train service on its subway system. Additional to its fleet of 6,300 subway cars, NYCTA maintains a fleet of 62 diesel locomotives to power work trains and pumping equipment into sections of track where third rail power has been turned off to facilitate construction, maintenance or repair. The new locomotives are being built by Wabtec subsidiary MotivePower. (Ref: Railway Age)

(TUE) Philadelphia commuter rail operator SEPTA announced that its Silverliner II and III series commuter rail cars would likely all be retired by the end of the month. The Silverliner II cars entered service in 1965 and the Silverliner III cars entered service in 1967. The retirements are being made possible by the delivery for SEPTA of new Silverliner V series cars. (Ref: The Weekly Press)

(WED) Amtrak released the third version of its ongoing Fleet Strategy Plan. The Plan sets as a goal – should the necessary financial resources and approvals be obtained – the ordering of 1,453 new locomotives, 784 new locomotives, and 52 new high-speed trainsets. In a related story, Amtrak notes that it presently has under order from Siemens 70 new electric locomotives, which are to be delivered starting in 2014, and 130 new single-level long-distance sleepers, diners, and baggage cars from CAF USA, which are to be delivered starting in 2013. (Ref: Amtrak, NARP, Progressive Railroading)

(WED) Norfolk Southern held groundbreaking ceremonies for its new intermodal terminal near the Charlotte, NC International Airport. To be known as the Charlotte Regional Intermodal Facility, the new terminal will be capable of 200,000 trailer and container lifts annually, and will replace NS's existing terminal in downtown Charlotte. (Ref: NS RR)

(THU) California's Peninsula Corridors Joint Powers Board, which oversees Caltrain commuter rail service between San Francisco, San Jose and Gilroy, approved a regional agreement to fully fund the electrification of this commuter rail line. A Board spokesman said that the agreement, which allows for the future use of the line for the California High-Speed Rail Project, will provide several hundreds of millions of dollars of high-speed rail funding for the line's electrification and related upgrades. The start of electrified service was forecast for as early as 2019. (Ref: Half Moon Bay Patch, Railway Track & Structures)

(THU) Norfolk Southern said that it would repaint a locomotive in the paint scheme of the Monongahela Railway, bringing to 20 the number of NS locomotives being repainted in schemes of NS predecessor railroads. The Monongahela was merged into Conrail in 1993, which in turn was co-acquired by NS in 1999. NS said that nine locomotives have been repainted so far, with the remaining 11 to be completed by this June, which will be Norfolk Southern's 30th anniversary month. (Ref: NS RR)

(FRI) A U.S. attorney told a judge in Federal District Court in New York, NY that ten more persons would be charged in the multi-year investigation of Long Island Rail Road workers falsely claimed disabling injuries so that they could retire and draw retiree disability benefits. The ten would bring to 21 the number charged to date, including seven retired railroad workers, two Long Island doctors, and an office manager for one of the doctors. A 2008 New York Times investigation revealed that nearly every one of the LIRR's career employees had upon retirement applied for and been granted disability benefits. (Ref: New York Times)

(FRI) Amtrak debuted its new Spring-Summer system timetable, which is effective with departures beginning May 7. Most schedule changes in the new timetable are minor and seasonal, with the exception of the "Sunset Limited" train now operating westbound from New Orleans, LA to Los Angeles, CA on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. It also reflects a change in eleven more Amtrak stations now reflected as "attended stations" that are served by hosts and volunteers that can assist passengers with informational needs. (Ref: Amtrak)

(FRI) The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority introduced a new smartphone app. The new app will allow riders to find nearby transit stops, plan transit trips, view maps, and receive transit and freeway service advisory information. (Ref: Ref: Railway Track & Structures)

STATS – CLASS 1 RAIL TRAFFIC:

(THU) The Association of American Railroads reported that, for the week ending April 28, 2012 and ranked with the comparable week last year:

- U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 283,080 units, down 4.1 percent
- Notable U.S. carload traffic increases included petroleum products up 51.9 percent, motor vehicles and equipment up 29.1 percent, and stone, sand and gravel up 24.2 percent; notable traffic decreases included grain down 18.0 percent, coal down 16.2 percent and waste and nonferrous scrap down 10.5 percent
- U.S. intermodal rail traffic totaled 242,365 units, up 5.5 percent
- Canadian carload rail traffic totaled 81,118 units, up 1.6 percent
- Canadian intermodal rail traffic totaled 53,477 units, up 9.6 percent
- Mexican carload rail traffic totaled 14,960 units, up 0.9 percent
- Mexican intermodal rail traffic totaled 10,131 units, up 31.5 percent

For the period January 1 through April 28, 2012 and ranked with the comparable period last year:

- U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 4,792,195 units, down 3.2 percent
- U.S. intermodal rail traffic totaled 3,875,396 units, up 2.8 percent
- Canadian carload rail traffic totaled 1,305,740 units, up 4.8 percent
- Canadian intermodal rail traffic totaled 844,203 units, up 7.9 percent
- Mexican carload rail traffic totaled 230,591 units, down 4.9 percent
- Mexican intermodal rail traffic totaled 150,915 units, up 23.3 percent

Note: Canadian traffic totals include that traffic on U.S. operations of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways.

#### EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(SAT) The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority began operation of its new Expo Line light rail service. The new light rail line operates between the Los Angeles downtown and the city's Westside. Stations on the line to Farmdale and Culver City are set to open at a later date. (Ref: LACMTA)

(TUE) RailAmerica announced that it had completed its earlier acquisition of Marquette Rail, which serves parts of Michigan. The acquisition brings to 45 the number of North American railroads owned and operated by RailAmerica, totaling approximately 7,500 miles of track in 28 states and three Canadian provinces. (Ref: wire services)

(FRI) BNSF Railway filed with the Surface Transportation Board to abandon approximately 18 miles of line between Grafton and Glasston, ND. (Ref: STB)

#### APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(MON) RailAmerica appointed Gary Lewis its new Senior Vice-President and Chief Commercial Officer. Mr. Lewis has been with RailAmerica since 2009, and was previously with Kinder Morgan Terminals and CSX. (Ref: RailAmerica)

(MON) Watco Companies announced the following appointments: Michael Testerman as Assistant Vice-President and Chief Mechanical Officer; Dan Martin as a Corporate Director of Locomotive Support; and Tracy Wright, also as a Corporate Director of Locomotive Support. (Ref: Railway Track & Structures)

///

Weekly Rail Review (WRR) is edited from public news sources and is distributed to those working in, or interested in, rail and transit. Anyone not already on my distribution list may send me an email to directly receive it, with my compliments.

Have A Railroad Safe Day,

Dave Mears