

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 26, 2009

BY DAVE MEARS

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

(MON) A Washington, DC Metrorail subway train rear-ended another stopped ahead of it. The accident, which happened on the system's Red Line near the Fort Totten station, killed nine persons and injured 80 others. Tests later in the week suggested a possible failure of the line's traffic control system, as a test of that system failed to detect the presence of an idled test train representative of the stopped train. Also, the operator of the rear-ending train, who was among those killed in the crash, was determined to have applied the emergency brake before impact. Metrorail service over parts of the Red Line near where the accident occurred was suspended through Wednesday, and MARC Brunswick Line commuter rail service, which operates on CSX tracks alongside the Red Line through the Fort Totten neighborhood, was suspended through Tuesday. (ffd: NARP, Washington Post, wire services)

(MON) The Nashville Regional Transportation Authority announced that their oversight board had approved sufficient funding to continue "Music City Star" commuter rail trains for another two years. The trains operate between downtown Nashville, TN and suburban Lebanon, over the tracks of the Nashville & Eastern Railroad. (ffd: Trains)

(MON) Aligning with federal recommendation that states working to develop corridor passenger rail services form alliances, Missouri Governor Jay Nixon and Illinois Governor Pat Quinn pledged to share resources, expertise and information related to a planned high-speed rail corridor between St. Louis and Chicago. Gov. Quinn went on to call the federal government's new commitment to high-speed passenger rail "the opportunity of the century." (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) The U.S. Government Accountability Office criticized the federal high-speed rail development initiative. A GAO spokesman said that the Federal Railroad Administration does not have an adequate plan for managing \$8 billion in dedicated high-speed rail funding and that "...in our view, it is more of a vision than a strategic plan." U.S. Deputy Transportation Secretary John Porcari responded that the agency's plan had been "carefully thought out." (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) The U.S. Department of Transportation announced another round of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants for transportation projects. Included in the grants were \$46.6 million to Chicago commuter rail operator Metra, for projects including bridge rehabilitation, and \$25.8 million to state-owned Alaska Railroad, for projects including installation of a positive train control system. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(TUE) Dallas Area Rapid Transit announced that their oversight board had approved that the final section of DART's new Orange light rail line be routed to serve Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. Plans call for that final section to be completed by December, 2013. DART's website called the Orange Line "a key component of a regional [light rail] expansion that will lead to the doubling of DART's rail network to more than 90 miles by 2013." (ffd: Railway Age)

(WED) The Alabama & Tennessee River Railroad suffered an on-duty employee fatality. Dustin Moles, Age 33 and an employee of the railroad since 2005, was killed when the train he was switching derailed. In the accident, Mr. Moles was crushed between a derailed tank car and a pile of scrap metal. The accident occurred in Albertville, AL. (ffd: Gadsen Times)

(WED) President Obama signed a supplemental appropriations bill that included a provision allowing some stimulus package financing for transit operating expenses. The bill allows public transit agencies to use up to 10 percent of their American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to cover operating costs of "equipment and facilities used in public

transportation.” In a related story, the American Public Transportation Association says that the bill’s language allows public transit agencies to amend previously submitted applications to redirect AAR funds toward operating needs. (ffd: APTA, Railway Age)

(WED) The New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority approved an agreement to sell the rights to rename a New York City subway station for \$4 million. The arrangement calls for the subway’s Atlantic Avenue-Pacific Street station near downtown Brooklyn to be renamed “Barclays Center” after the new sports arena scheduled to open there in 2012. The agreement calls for the developer to pay NYMTA \$200,000 a year for 20 years for the renaming rights. (ffd: Trains)

(FRI) The oversight board of Southern California’s Metrolink commuter rail system voted unanimously to consider operating trains with its own employees, instead of using those of a contractor. The decision begins a year-or-more transition from the current contractor, Metrolink, which has said that it no longer wants to be the Metrolink operator and whose oversight of train crews has been criticized in the wake of the September, 2008 accident in Chatsworth, CA in which 25 Metrolink passengers were killed. The board has said that it would also consider proposals by Amtrak to operate Metrolink trains. (ffd: Los Angeles Times)

(FRI) Illinois’s Knox College announced that it had launched “Railroads in the Midwest,” an online digital collective of early railroad documents and images. The collection, organized and digitized by the College’s Seymour Library, includes high-quality scans of 19th Century photographs and PDFs of railroad annual reports. The collection may be accessed at <[http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/index\\_knx\\_rail.php?CISOROOT=/knx\\_rail](http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/index_knx_rail.php?CISOROOT=/knx_rail)>[http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/index\\_knx\\_rail.php?CISOROOT=/knx\\_rail](http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm4/index_knx_rail.php?CISOROOT=/knx_rail) or by typing “Railroads in the Midwest Knox collection” into Google. (ffd: Galesburg Register-Mail)

#### STATS:

(THU) For the week ending July 20, 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 27.7 billion ton-miles, down 16.6 percent from the comparable week last year. U.S. carload rail traffic was down 17.7 percent, down 25.2 percent in the East and down 11.9 percent in the West. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 17.8 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 23.7 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 18.2 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was down 8.1 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was down 19.6 percent.

For the period January 1 through July 20, 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 671.0 billion ton-miles, down 18.3 percent from the comparable period last year. Also for this period, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 19.4 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 16.9 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 24.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 15.3 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was 14.2 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was down 20.9 percent. (ffd: AAR)

(NOTE: Canadian rail traffic totals include those of the U.S. operations of Canadian National and Canadian Pacific.)

#### EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(THU) The Raritan Central Railway announced that it was working with real estate developer IDI to operate rail service to a proposed 500-acre industrial park in West Memphis, AR. The proposed industrial park would include 16 industrial buildings, ten of which would be rail serviced and two of which would be designed to add rail capabilities in the future. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(TUE) Harold "Hal" Carstens, the president and former publisher of Carstens Publications, passed away in Newton, NJ at Age 84. Mr. Carstens founded Creative Crafts, The Miniature, and Railfan magazines, and eventually merged Railroad and Railfan into today's Railfan & Railroad magazine. (ffd: Trains)

(FRI) Marcella Szel, the SVP-Sales & Marketing of Canadian Pacific Railway, announced her retirement effective June 30. In succession of Ms. Szel, Ray Foot will assume responsibility for all CPR sales as Group VP-Sales and Bob Milloy will assume marketing responsibility as Group VP-Yield & Marketing. (ffd: AAR)

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BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears

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