

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, August 31, 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) The U.S. Transportation Security Administration continued to progress plans for development of a mandatory identification card for selected U.S. transportation workers. A spokesman for the agency said that the card would be required for transportation workers in both the public and private sectors with access "to secure areas of the U.S. transportation system." The cards would include biometric identification, such as that gleaned from eyes, voice, palms, or fingerprints. (ffd: Boston Globe)

(TUE) At a press conference in New York City, Charles Gargano, the head of New York State's Pennsylvania Station Redevelopment Corporation, said that the project to convert the Farley Post Office Building into the new Pennsylvania Station was "back on track." Mr. Gargano noted that the project had been delayed by prolonged negotiations with the U.S. Postal Service over portions of the building they would continue to use. Mr. Gargano added that he expects to conclude an agreement with USPS "in the very near future" that would allow conversion work to proceed. (ffd: New York Times)

(TUE) Officials held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Harrisburg, PA. Airport rail station to be built on Amtrak's Keystone Corridor Line. The station, which will also replace the current Middletown, PA. stop, is expected to open by Summer, 2004. (ffd: NARP)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe hosted a symposium for representatives from over 40 trucking companies to better acquaint them with BNSF intermodal rail services. BNSF Group Vice President Steve Branscum said that the symposium was held to show how the railroad's intermodal operations could benefit trucking companies and included in its agenda a comprehensive tour of BNSF's Alliance, TX. intermodal terminal. "Our goal was to educate these motor carriers that BNSF can offer them, speed, savings and solutions," Mr. Branscum said. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(WED) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board said that it was revising its regulations concerning rail cost recovery to reflect changes made by the ICC Termination Act of 1995. The STB also said that it was removing procedures for publication of separate rates for distinct services, because it said the statutory basis for these regulations was eliminated by the Act. Further information on these changes may be found on the STB's website at www.dot.stb.gov. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Deutsche Bahn, Germany's state railway system, said that it would take approximately 2- years to fully restore its railway infrastructure damaged by recent severe flooding in eastern and southern Germany. A Deutsche Bahn spokesman said that more than 250 miles of track, 94 bridges and 200 stations were badly damaged by the flooding. The spokesman added that the first priority would be rebuild infrastructure in the Leipzig-Dresden-Chemnitz "triangle." (ffd: Deutsche Welle)

(THU) The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers retracted its claim made earlier in the week that a UTU-represented train crew member had been killed where a locomotive remote control device had been in service. The change followed a statement from the Federal Railroad Administration confirming the on-duty death of H. Michael Lowe, who was crushed between cars August 8 on a switching railroad serving a Cleveland, OH. steel plant, but noting that the remote control device was not in use there at the time of the accident. (ffd: Trains Magazine, UTU News)

(FRI) Amtrak announced that it would have 7 Acela Express trainsets in service for the Labor Day weekend, down from the earlier daily norm of 15. The high-speed trainsets have been intermittently out of service following discovery of cracks in the brackets anchoring the assemblies that retard train sway. An Amtrak spokesman said that other Amtrak locomotives and cars would substitute for trainsets out of service. The spokesman added that Amtrak is continuing to work with the trainset manufacturer, Bombardier, to inspect and repair bracket and related cracks on the 18 trainsets acquired by Amtrak. (ffd: CNN)

(FRI) North and South Korea agreed to repair and reconnect the rail line separating their countries through Korea's demilitarized zone. Spokesmen for the 2 governments said that work would begin September 18 and was expected to be

complete by year's end. The spokesmen added that a major challenge for the project would be to clear thousands of land mines along the rail line route through the zone. (ffd: wire services)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending August 24, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.2 percent from the comparable week last year, up 2.9 percent in the East, but down 2.6 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included metallic ores up 22.5 percent, waste and scrap materials up 8.2 percent and pulp and paper products up 8.2 percent; notable traffic decreases included primary forest products down 16.5 percent and coal down 5.2 percent. Also for the week ending August 24, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.4 percent (the highest level of weekly growth since October 20, 2000), Canadian carload rail traffic was up 3.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 19.2 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 10.9 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 21.7 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through August 24, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.2 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.0 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 8.9 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 1.0 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 6.2 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(WED) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board granted preliminary approval for Burlington Northern Santa Fe to build a new line serving the Bayport, TX. chemical plant complex. The new line, totaling approximately 13 miles in length, will run between Bayport and a connection with the Union Pacific, at which BNSF has trackage rights. (ffd: STB)

(THU) CSX granted trackage rights to the Central Michigan Railway over approximately 4 miles of CSX line in and near Saginaw, MI. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) CSX filed to abandon approximately 6 miles of its Hamilton Industrial Track between Holland, MI. and Hamilton, MI. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(TUE) Canadian regional railroad BC Rail appointed Bob Phillips Acting President, succeeding Mark Mudie, who resigned the previous week. (ffd: Vancouver Sun)

(THU) Attendant with a recent reorganization of its Customer Service Department, Kansas City Southern Railway appointed Marcus Burns General Director-Data Quality, Darin Selby Assistant Director-Rail Operations-Transcontinental Division and Shreveport Terminal, Mike Bryant Assistant Director-Rail Operations-Midcontinental Division and Kansas City Terminal, and Jennifer Fussell Assistant Director-Customer Service. (ffd: KCS Inc.)

(FRI) CSX appointed David Hemphill Director-Industrial Development-South Carolina. Mr. Hemphill was most recently deputy county administrator of Jasper County, SC. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

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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,
Dave Mears
Cherry Hill, New Jersey, USA