

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING SAT, SEPTEMBER 2, 2006

BY DAVE MEARS

(NOTE: Getting back on schedule, a little later than earlier intended, but still hoping to be back on schedule by the end of the week.)

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

(SUN) Norfolk Southern confirmed an on-duty employee fatality the previous Friday. Thomas Myers was killed while switching cars in NS's Calumet Yard in Chicago, IL. Mr. Myers had been with NS since March, 1999. (ffd: Chicago Tribune, wire services)

(SUN) St. Louis light rail operator MetroLink began service on its new Cross County Extension. The new line, totaling approximately 8 miles in length, extends MetroLink light rail service from the Forest Park-DeBaliviere Station to Shrewsbury, MO. The extension includes 9 new stations. (ffd: Progressive Railroading, RT&S)

(SUN) Nine Union Pacific locomotives derailed on the UP main line through San Timoteo Canyon in Riverside County, California. The engineer and conductor of the train, a light move of locomotives without cars, received minor injuries in the accident. A UP spokesman said that the locomotives derailed on a curve and that this may have been the result of excessive speed. The spokesman added that two of the locomotives were able to depart the accident site under their own power, two were towed, and that the remaining five would be loaded up. (ffd: Riverside Daily Bulletin)

(MON) California's Capitol Corridor intercity train services were increased effective this date. The number of weekday trains operating between Sacramento and Oakland was increased from 24 to 32, and the number of trains traveling as far south as San Jose was increased to 14. The service is funded and managed by California's Capitol Corridor Powers Authority and operated by Amtrak. (ffd: Sacramento Business Journal)

(MON) Philadelphia transit operator SEPTA resumed train service on its Market Street Elevated Line between 51st Street and 62nd Street. The line segment had been closed for 16 days for rebuilding work, which will continue, but with only some weekend closures of this line segment from now through the end of the year. The project to rebuild the "EI", which opened in 1907, includes reconstruction of 5 stations and replacement of over 2 miles of the existing elevated structure between Millbourne and 46th Street with a new single column bent structure, which a SEPTA spokesman said "will open up Market Street and significantly improve the flow of [vehicular] traffic." (ffd: SEPTA)

(TUE) Amtrak temporarily curtailed operation of some segments of its intercity train services south of Washington, DC. The curtailment affected trains in the path of Tropical Storm Ernesto. Amtrak resumed most of these services by the end of the week. (ffd: Amtrak)

(TUE) Siemens Transportation Systems announced that it had delivered its first diesel-powered, self-propelled passenger car for a U.S. customer. The Siemens diesel multiple unit (DMU) car will be used by California's North County Transit District for its forthcoming "Sprinter" commuter rail service, which will operate over approximately 22 miles of line between Oceanside and Escondido. A Siemens spokesman said that the DMU was manufactured in Germany and is part of what it calls its "Desiro" family of passenger rail equipment. (ffd: Siemens Corporation, Trains)

(WED) Union Pacific revised its earlier announced policy banning photography of trains from commuter rail stations on UP lines. The original policy, announced approximately two weeks earlier, contrasted with policies of Chicago commuter rail operator Metra and the opinions of some legal experts, with the latter suggesting that UP would be on "shaky legal ground" if it attempted to enforce the ban. A UP spokesman said that the new policy would permit photography from Metra station platforms, adding that UP police would reserve the right to question photographers exhibiting "suspicious behavior." (ffd: NBC5 News, wire services)

(THU) Nashville, TN officials announced that its "Music City Star" commuter rail service would start September 18. The service will operate 32 miles between Lebanon, TN and Nashville over the tracks of the Nashville & Eastern Railroad. Equipment used will include three F40 locomotives purchased from Amtrak and 11 gallery-style bi-level coaches acquired from Chicago commuter rail operator Metra, including four cab cars to lead in push-pull operations. (ffd: Trains)

(THU) The ABC show "PrimeTime" aired a report entitled "Toxic Trains." The report investigated the transportation of hazardous materials by rail and included interviews with survivors of the Graniteville, SC accident that occurred on Norfolk Southern in January, 2005, which resulted in a chlorine release that killed 9 persons. A spokesman for the Association of American Railroads criticized the report and its suggestion that hazardous material transport by rail was dangerous, noting that 99.9997 percent of all rail-shipped hazardous material arrived at destination without a release due to accident and that the rail hazmat accident rate has dropped by 89 percent since 1980 and by 50 percent since 1990. (ffd: AAR, ABC News)

(THU) The Florida Coalition of Rail Passengers called into question Amtrak's intention to resume operation of its "Sunset Limited" train between Orlando, FL and New Orleans, LA. Operation of the train has been suspended since Hurricane Katrina in September, 2005, however, the tracks over which it operates have been repaired and reopened for several months now. A coalition spokesman said that it had received a letter from Amtrak Chairman David Laney stating that "the relevance of 'Sunset Limited' service to the region is an open question." The spokesman added that it was mounting a grassroots campaign to resume operation of the train between these cities. The train still operates three times a week between New Orleans and Los Angeles, CA. (ffd: Trains)

(FRI) A rail labor coalition criticized a new website operated by the National Carriers' Conference, which is bargaining on behalf of the nation's railroads for a new national contract with rail labor. A coalition spokesman said that the new website, known as "Rail Labor Facts" and found at <<http://www.raillaborfacts.org/>>www.raillaborfacts.org, "distorts the facts and distorts the carriers' goal in this round of negotiations." The coalition's press release criticizing the website was tagged with the slogan, "The Nation's Railroads: They Use Us - Then Abuse Us!" (ffd: UTU)

(SAT) A South Shore Line commuter train, operated by the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District, collided at slow speed with a Chicago, South Shore & Sound Bend freight train near Beverly Shores, IN. A NICTD spokesman said that one person was injured in the accident. The spokesman added that the commuter train was waiting on a siding for the freight train to pass on the adjacent main track, but for some reason then hit the freight train. Commuter train service on the line was suspended through the afternoon while the accident site was cleared. (ffd: Chicago Tribune, Trains)

STATS – TRAFFIC:

(THU) For the week ending August 26, 2006, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 34.3 billion ton-miles, up 1.8 from the comparable week last year. U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.7 percent, down 3.0 percent in the East, but up 3.9 percent in the West. Notable traffic increases included metals and metal products up 14.4 percent, metallic ores up 11.5 percent, and coal up 6.0 percent; notable traffic decreases included coke down 18.3 percent, primary forest products down 17.8 percent, and motor vehicles and equipment down 12.6 percent. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.1 percent and, at 253,981 units handled, represented a new U.S. weekly record. Finally for the week, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 5.2 percent, Mexico's Kansas City Southern de Mexico's carload rail traffic was up 3.1 percent, and KCSM's intermodal rail traffic was down 1.6 percent.

For the period January 1 through August 26, 2006, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 1.13 trillion ton-miles, up 2.7 percent. Also for this period, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 1.5 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 6.4 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.4 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.0 percent, KCSM's carload rail traffic was down 4.8 percent, and KCSM's intermodal rail traffic was down 5.6 percent. (ffd: AAR)

MORE STATS – OPERATING PERFORMANCE:

Not reported this week.

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) Canadian National began construction of a new two mile connecting track in Ashland, WI from the Ashland Industrial Park to CN's ex-Wisconsin Central main line south of town. The new track will allow removal of the existing CN line along the Ashland waterfront fronting Lake Superior. (ffd: Ashland Daily Press)

(WED) Shortline and regional conglomerate Genesee & Wyoming announced that they had acquired the Chattahoochee & Gulf Railroad and the H&S Railroad from Gulf & Ohio Railways for \$6 million. The CHAT and the H&S will be operated as a contiguous railroad by G&W's newly formed Chattahoochee Bay Railroad. G&W also announced that they had

exercised an option to purchase, from Norfolk Southern, approximately 13 miles of line previously leased from NS that runs through Portsmouth, Chesapeake, and Suffolk, VA. G&W's Commonwealth Railway will own and continue to operate the line, which will soon serve APM Terminals's new \$450 million intermodal terminal currently under construction at Portsmouth and scheduled for completion in July, 2007. (ffd: G&W Corp., Progressive Railroading)

(THU) BNSF filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of line near Longmont, CO. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Keokuk Junction Railway, doing business as Peoria & Western Railway, filed to lease, from BNSF, approximately 42 miles of BNSF's former Yates City Subdivision between Vermont, IL and Farmington, IL, including the Dunfermline Industrial Track. (ffd: STB)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) Amtrak announced the appointment of Alexander Kummant as its new president. Mr. Kummant, who was most recently EVP for construction equipment supplier Komatsu America Corporation, was headlined in Amtrak's announcement of his appointment as a "veteran railway executive," but news reports later in the week indicated that his rail experience consisted of less than four years at Union Pacific. The position of Amtrak president has been unfilled since predecessor David Gunn was released by Amtrak's Board of Directors last November. (ffd: Amtrak, wire services)

(TUE) Kansas City Southern appointed David Reeves Associate General Counsel. Mr. Reeves was most recently with the firm of Baker & Miller of Washington, DC. (ffd: KCS Corp.)

(FRI) BNSF appointed Tom Packer AVP-Revenue Management, succeeding retiring Dave Lamott. Mr. Packer was most recently BNSF's General Director-Customer Billing. BNSF also appointed Mark Ude AVP-Corporate Real Estate Development, succeeding retiring Jim O'Neil. Mr. Ude was most recently General Director-Corporate Real Estate Development. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

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Weekly Rail Review is edited from public news sources and published weekly to those working in, or interested in, rail and transit. Send an e-mail to <<mailto:weeklyrailreview@aol.com>>weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears

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