

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, September 7, 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 should a reader wants more information on a particular item.)

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

(SUN) Vancouver, BC. began operation of its new Millennium SkyTrain light rail line. The new line operates between the suburban town of New Westminster and East Vancouver, totals approximately 12 miles in length and serves 11 stations. (ffd: Vancouver Province)

(MON) CSX suffered an on-duty employee fatality. Conductor Jerry Duncan, Age 52, was killed when he was run over by boxcars he was switching. The accident occurred in Madisonville, IN. near Evansville. (ffd: wire services)

(MON) Canadian Pacific Railway announced that it had been designated a "low risk carrier" by Canada's Customs and Revenue Agency. A CPR spokesman said that the designation will allow shippers, who are themselves also approved as low risk by the agency, to "have their goods enter Canada as if the border did not exist" when routing to CPR Canada destinations. (ffd: CPR Corp.)

(MON) Continuing direction toward increased government re-involvement with its national rail network, Britain's Strategic Rail Authority announced that it would take control of the \$2.25 billion, multiyear project to rebuild rail infrastructure on lines southeast out of London, England. An SRA spokesman said that the move was being done "to ensure completion of the project as early as possible." Later in the week, SRA announced that it was limiting the franchise of Anglo-French consortium GoVia to operate "south central England" passenger rail services to 7 years, instead of the 20 year franchise originally planned. (ffd: The Guardian)

(TUE) Following up earlier announced intentions, a lawsuit was filed in U.S. district court in New Orleans, LA. seeking reparations from CSX for its predecessor companies having profited from slave labor prior to 1865. Prior to filing, the lawsuit was expanded to also seek reparations from 3 other railroads, Canadian National-Illinois Central, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific. A CN spokesman called the suit "wholly without merit" and said that "CN will defend itself vigorously." (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) Norfolk Southern debuted "NS Focus," a videotaped news program for all levels of NS employees. An NS spokesman said that the program would be viewed at regular company meetings and "is designed to offer employees the latest updates on the railroad's business initiatives and other issues of interest." (ffd: NS Corp.)

(TUE) The west African nation of Nigeria approved a 25 year plan to improve its state railway system. A government spokesman said that the plan includes rehabilitation or replacement of all locomotives, building new rail lines such that all major Nigerian cities will be linked and constructing a high-speed passenger rail service between Abuja and Lagos, Nigeria's capital. (ffd: Johannesburg Business Day)

(WED) Canadian National opened its new intermodal terminal in Montreal, PQ. The new terminal is situated on approximately 230 acres of CN's Taschereau Yard and includes room for future expansion. The terminal features 9 lift cranes and cost \$47 million total to construct. (ffd: CN Corp.)

(THU) Canadian National CEO Paul Tellier criticized efforts of the transportation department of the western Canadian province of Alberta to explore open access of Canadian rail lines. Calling such efforts harmful to the Canadian rail industry, Mr. Tellier went on to refer to any government-mandated open access as "regulatory poaching." "Rail access agreements must be driven by commercial pacts with negotiated rates reflecting fixed costs, variable costs and a host railway's lost opportunities," Mr. Tellier said. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(THU) Burlington Northern Santa Fe opened its new automotive terminal near Joliet, IL. The new terminal is part of BNSF's new 400 acre Logistics Park facility, which will also include new intermodal and transloading terminals still being completed. Attendant with the opening of the Logistics Park automotive terminal, BNSF will close its existing Naperville, IL. automotive terminal effective September 15. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(THU) Amtrak operated a special passenger train carrying members of the U.S. Congress, their staff and spouses to a special congressional session in New York City. A government spokesman said that the special session was scheduled to demonstrate solidarity with New York City on the eve of the one year anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attack on the city. Historians noted that the special session marked only the second time in U.S. history that Congress has held session outside Washington, DC. (ffd: wire services)

(FRI) Massachusetts's Department of Environmental Affairs approved state plans to extend the current commuter rail line between Boston, MA. and Stoughton, MA. further south to Bedford and Fall River. The planned extension would include rebuilding 14 miles of abandoned railroad between Stoughton and Taunton, where it would then join an existing freight line to Bedford and Fall River. Start of work on the extension, which is projected to cost \$669 million, is not expected to begin for another 2 years. (ffd: Brockton Enterprise)

(FRI) Intermodal carrier Maersk Sealand marked the third week of operation of its new Pier 400 intermodal terminal at the Port of Los Angeles, CA. The new terminal encompasses 484 acres and includes 12 loading tracks on dock. A Maersk Sealand spokesman referred to the facility as "the largest proprietary intermodal terminal in the world." (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(FRI) Metro North Commuter Railroad awarded Bombardier Corporation a \$322 million contract to build 180 Class M-7 electrical multiple unit commuter rail cars. A Metro North spokesman said that the cars would be used to replace its remaining Class M-1 cars, which started service in the early 1970's. (ffd: BofLE News)

(SAT) Union Pacific debuted a new public outreach video entitled "Adolescents and Sleep." A UP spokesman said that the 10 minute video is intended to demonstrate to young people the consequences of fatigue and the value of sleep. The video continues UP's campaign against fatigue that it began following several train collisions in the last several years that were linked to fatigued train crews. (ffd: UP Corp.)

(SAT) Via Rail Canada began operation of a special train chartered by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to celebrate CBC's 50th anniversary. The train, whose locomotive has been repainted in the CBC logo and whose cars feature exhibits of CBC programming history, will travel across Canada and back through October 5, stopping in major cities along its route. (ffd: AAR)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending August 31, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.1 from the comparable week last year, up 2.0 percent in the East, but down 1.7 percent in the West. Also for the week ending August 31, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 8.3 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.5 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 14.8 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the month of August, 2002, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 1.5 percent, compared with August, 2001. Notable traffic increases included metallic ores up 17.5 percent, metals and metal products up 11.0 percent, waste and scrap materials up 7.9 percent and chemicals up 3.6 percent; notable traffic decreases included coal down 0.8 percent, grain down 4.6 percent and primary forest products down 12.3 percent. Also for the month of August, 2002, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 8.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was unchanged, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 15.6 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 34.0 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 18.4 percent, all when ranked with August last year.

For the period January 1 through August 31, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.2 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 9.1 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 3.9 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 16.5 percent, all when ranked with the same period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced that they it would lease, to the Timber Rock Railroad for their operation, approximately 100 miles of line between Kirbyville, TX. and Tenaha, TX. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(TUE) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board granted preliminary approval for the Alamo North Texas Railroad to construct a new line between Alamo North's Chico, TX. quarry and a connection with the Union Pacific approximately 2 miles away. Both Alamo North Texas Railroad and Alamo North are subsidiaries of Martin Marietta Materials Southwest Corp. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Chicago, Central & Pacific Railroad filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of its Marion-Louisa Industrial Lead Track between Cedar Rapids, IA. and Marion, IA. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

(WED) Kansas City Southern appointed Ronald Poulsen VP and Chief Engineer. Mr. Poulsen, who was most recently with Amtrak, replaces Jerry Heavin, who was recently promoted to KCS SVP-Operations. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Philadelphia, PA.'s Delaware River Port Authority appointed Cheryl Spicer Assistant GM of its PATCO High-Speed Line operating between Philadelphia and Lindenwold, NJ. Ms. Spicer is a former AGM of Philadelphia rail and transit operator SEPTA. (ffd: Philadelphia Inquirer)

(THU) The U.S. Senate Commerce Committee interviewed Roger Nober for the chairmanship of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board. Mr. Nober, most recently with the office of U.S. Deputy Transportation Secretary Michael Jackson, has been nominated to replace Linda Morgan as chairman, although Ms. Morgan will continue as an STB commissioner. Also interviewed by the committee was David Laney to fill the vacancy on the Amtrak Board of Directors last held by current U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson. (ffd: UTU News)

(THU) Washington, DC.'s transit operator WMATA announced that its Assistant General Manager, Fred Goodine, had been designated a "Certified Safety and Security Director" by the World Safety Organization. A WMATA spokesman said that Mr. Goodine is the first U.S. transit professional to receive this certification by the WSO. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) Amtrak announced the appointment of Deno Bokas as Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Bokas, who has been with Amtrak since 1995, replaces Arlene Friner, who left Amtrak earlier this summer. Amtrak also announced the appointment of David Hughes as Chief Engineer. Mr. Hughes was earlier Chief Engineer of the Boston & Maine and most recently a domestic and international rail consultant. (ffd: Amtrak)

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(CORRECTION: In last week's edition, I mentioned CSX's new Director-Industrial Development-South Carolina as David Hemphill. In fact, the new director is Christopher Phillips; Mr. Hemphill is Mr. Phillip's boss and made his appointment. Thanks here to the sharp eyes of several WRR readers with CSX who alerted to this.)

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