

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the Week Ending SAT, January 10, 2004

By Dave Mears

(Editor's Note: It appears that many readers, especially those whose last names begin with letters A through L, may not have received the last several editions of "Weekly Rail Review." I am currently cross-referencing my master email mailing list with backup copies to restore any missing names.)

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

(TUE) The Association of American Railroads announced the release of their publication, "2003 Edition of Railroad Facts." This pocket-sized reference booklet contains notable rail statistics and graphics ending with the year 2002, including some data from as far back as 1929. Copies of this publication may be purchased from the AAR for \$15 each for persons not with AAR-member railroads and \$10 each for persons with AAR-member railroads; quantity discounts are available. (ffd: AAR)

(WED) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration announced a \$233 million loan to the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad. The loan will be administered under the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program. The DM&E is planning to build several hundred miles of new line and rehabilitate several hundred miles of existing line to access the Powder River Basin coal fields. (ffd: USDOT)

(WED) GATX Rail announced that they had purchased and will lease back 1,176 high-capacity, covered hopper cars suitable for transporting plastic pellets. A GATX spokesman said that the cars will be deployed under a long-term lease arrangement to Equistar Chemicals of Houston, TX. (ffd: GATX Corp.)

(THU) The U.S. Department of Transportation acknowledged a proposed internal restructuring plan whereby the Office of Pipeline Safety would be merged into the "structurally and operationally similar" Federal Railroad Administration, which would then become the Federal Railroad and Pipeline Administration. Relatedly, USDOT's Research and Special Programs Administration would be reorganized and redesignated as the Research and Innovative Technology Administration. Although elements of the proposed reorganization would be accomplished administratively, some changes would need to be authorized by the U.S. Congress. (ffd: Railway Age)

(FRI) Minnesota's Northstar Corridor Development Authority announced that it had scaled back its proposed commuter rail service for the Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, region. The original proposal called a commuter rail line 82 miles between St. Cloud and Minneapolis, while the scaled back proposal calls for a 40-mile line between Big Lake and Minneapolis. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty announced that he now favors the line, after having opposed it for several years as a state legislator. (ffd: NARP)

(SAT) The Long Island Rail Road and the Metro North Railroad instituted a maximum \$2.50 fare for weekend train trips between stations entirely within in New York City. A spokesman for the railroads' parent Metropolitan Transportation Authority said that the new fare plan is part of a 6-month pilot program and responds to criticism of inequitable fares for LIRR and MNRN train trips entirely within the city. (ffd: New York Daily News)

(SAT) A museum devoted to the works of famed photographer O. Winston Link opened in the former Norfolk & Western passenger station in Roanoke, VA. The station, which was rebuilt in 1947 from plans designed by the famed industrial designer Raymond Loewy, was donated to the City of Roanoke in 1997. The station also houses the Roanoke Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau. (ffd: The Charlottesville Hook)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending January 3, 2004, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 2.9 percent from the comparable week in 2003. Also for the week ending January 3, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 10.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 13.4 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 4.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week in 2003.

For the Full Year 2003, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.1 percent and U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 6.8 percent from Full Year 2002. At 9.94 million units, intermodal rail traffic for 2003 set a new U.S. record. Also for the Full Year 2003, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 1.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 5.3 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 2.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 10.9 percent, all when ranked with Full Year 2002. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(THU) Shared Assets, the Conrail remnant terminal company, filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of the Sayreville Running Track in North Brunswick, NJ. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Burlington Northern Santa Fe filed to abandon approximately 60 miles of line between Pawnee, NE. and Endicott, NE. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) CSX filed to abandon approximately 15 miles of line between Rowlesburg, WV. and Albright, WV. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Norfolk Southern filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of line in Coatesville, PA. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of its Columbia Tap Industrial Lead in Houston, TX. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe appointed John Hickerson AVP-Truckload Marketing. Mr. Hickerson was previously President of Roadway Next Day Corporation of Akron, OH. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(WED) Canadian National appointed Paul Waite VP-IMX (Intermodal Excellence). Mr. Wait was previously CN's AVP-Domestic Marketing. (ffd: CN Corp.)

(THU) Railway Age Magazine named Robert Ritchie 2004 Railroader of the Year. Mr. Ritchie is President and CEO of Canadian Pacific Railway. A Railway Age spokesman commented, "While 2003 wasn't a stellar year for the railway industry as a whole...there were a few bright spots. One of the brightest was the performance of the Rob Ritchie-led CPR." (ffd: Railway Age)

(FRI) Regional and short line conglomerate RailAmerica appointed M. Scott Linn SVP-North American Rail Group-Eastern Corridor. Mr. Linn was previously RailAmerica's VP-Engineering. (ffd: RailAmerica Corp.)

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Weekly Rail Review 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 weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,
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