

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, October 5, 2002

By Dave Mears

(NOTE: On vacation this week (which included a very pleasant ride to and from Vermont on Amtrak's Vermonter) so a little late here, but should be back on schedule next week.)

(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):

(SUN) New Jersey Transit opened its extension of its Hudson-Bergen light rail line into Hoboken Terminal. The next day, NJT opened its new Montclair Connection, utilizing it to reroute Boonton Line trains to Hoboken via Newark's Broad Street Station. NJT also began using its new extension of electrification on the line west to Great Notch. (ffd: NARP, Progressive Railroading)

(SUN) A judge in Egypt acquitted 11 lower level railway employees of criminal culpability in the deaths of 360 persons aboard a passenger train operating from Cairo to Luxor last February. The employees had been charged with counts including that they allowed the train to continue underway while in flames. "Judges are sick and tired of cases where the underdogs are being brought for trial while the chiefs are left untouched," Egyptian Judge Saad Abdel Wahid said in his decision. (ffd: wire services)

(MON) A management lockout following failure to reach agreement with dock workers idled western U.S. ports. The next day, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific, whose shipments to and from these ports represent between 25 percent and 33 percent of these railroads' total intermodal volumes, embargoed all marine container traffic to these ports to help head off potential congestion there. Issues of contention between management and labor centered on accommodating new technologies that management said would make the ports more competitive. (ffd: JofC, wire services)

(MON) Rail equipment lessor CIT Rail Resources said that it had acquired 50 new EMD-built locomotives and 1,700 new railcars in the first half of 2002. A CIT spokesman said that these recent acquisitions increased to 500 the number of their locomotives and to 45,000 the number of their railcars serving customers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. (ffd: CIT Corp.)

(MON) The Association of American Railroads released its new Railroad Equipment Report. An AAR spokesman said that, for the first time, the report included detailed statistics of car and locomotive fleets of the U.S., Canada and Mexico. The report, for which there is a charge, may be ordered via the AAR website. (ffd: AAR)

(TUE) A U.S. General Accounting Office report stated that Amtrak, if liquidated, would likely be able to repay only a portion of its indebtedness. The report detailed that indebtedness to include \$3.8 billion secured by equipment and property, \$4.8 billion in unsecured liabilities and \$14.2 billion to the federal government on a 970 year promissory note. The report also calculated that liquidation would result in railroad unemployment taxes having to rise to 12.5 percent between 2002 and 2004. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) The Director for High-Speed Rail of the International Union of Railways forecasted that European high-speed passenger rail services would double by 2010. Dr. Ing Gunther Ellwanger noted that high-speed services in Europe have experienced passenger and service growth of approximately 12 percent annually between 1995 and 2001 and that high-speed rail now represents 40 percent of all German passenger rail traffic and 66 percent of all French passenger rail traffic. (ffd: International Railway Journal)

(WED) A week after Tropical Storm Isidore, New Orleans, LA. again closed its city floodgates in anticipation of storm surge flooding from Hurricane Lili. As with Isidore, freight railroads serving New Orleans suspended services in, through and out of the city and Amtrak turned its trains serving New Orleans at operationally convenient locations east, north and west of the city. The storm lessened somewhat prior to making landfall and railroads resumed most normal operations by late Thursday or early Friday. (ffd: CRTS, wire services)

(WED) Port Authority of New York and New Jersey officials announced that they had acquired a parcel of land in Union County, NJ. that will allow connection between the out-of-service rail freight line serving Staten Island, NY. and

Conrail-Shared Asset's Chemical Coast Line. A PANYNJ spokesman said that the connection should be complete and rail service resumed by 2004. The spokesman added that the line would then serve Staten Island's Howland Hook Marine Terminal, as well as other prospective rail customers in Staten Island. (ffd: PANYNJ)

(THU) Continuing forecasts by various railway and supplier industry representative organizations, a committee of the Railway Progress Institute forecasted that new freight car deliveries would total 14,573 in 2002, 21,639 in 2003 and 28,761 in 2004. The committee noted that the 2002 delivery total will be the 4th straight year of decline and the worst year for new freight car deliveries in the past 15 years. (ffd: AAR)

(THU) The U.S. Department of Transportation debuted Freight Analysis Framework, a new multi-modal database with accompanying analytical tools. A USDOT spokesman said that the new database includes economic forecasts through 2010 and 2020, translating data "into transportation demand to evaluate the effect of expected volumes on the transportation network, mode by mode." Additional information is available at the USDOT's Office of Freight Management and Operations's website, ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight. (ffd: USDOT)

(FRI) Network Rail, a quasi-public entity, formally took over ownership and operation of Britain's rail infrastructure from bankrupt Railtrack. Network Rail's new chief executive, John Armitt, told reporters that "we will see some improvements in the next 12 to 24 months. It's not an overnight thing." Network Rail's system includes 23,000 miles and 2,500 stations. (ffd: wire services)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending September 28, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.8 percent from the comparable week last year, down 1.3 percent in the East and down 0.3 percent in the West. Also for the week ending September 28, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 1.2 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 0.9 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 9.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the month of September, 2002, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 1.2 percent from September, 2001. Comparing with last September, notable traffic increases included metallic ores up 16.6 percent, motor vehicles and equipment up 7.6 percent, primary metal products up 8.3 percent and nonmetallic minerals up 10.3 percent; notable traffic decreases included grain down 8.1 percent, primary forest products down 16.3 percent and coal down 0.6 percent. Also for the month, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.0 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 14.8 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 54.5 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 48.8 percent, all when compared with September, 2001.

For the 3rd Qtr., 2002, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 1.8 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.7 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 2.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 15.1 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 21.3 percent, and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 28.0 percent, all when ranked the 3rd qtr. last year.

For the period January 1 through September 30, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.0 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.3 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 2.8 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 9.7 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 8.2 percent, and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 19.8 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe repurchased approximately 100 miles of line between Council Bluffs, IA. and Bayard, IA. The line had been sold in 1982 by BNSF predecessor Burlington Northern to a group of grain and grain processing shippers known as Shippers Consortium, Inc. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(TUE) The Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad filed to lease, from Union Pacific, and operate approximately 27 miles of line between Newton, KS. and McPherson, KS. (ffd: STB)

(WED) The Kiowa, Hardtner & Pacific Railroad filed to abandon its entire railroad, totaling approximately 9 miles in length, between Kiowa, KS. and Hardtner, KS. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board approved Union Pacific's bid to build an approximately 1 mile line to access Midwest Generation's Joliet, IL. generating station. The line will cross Canadian National-Illinois Central's right-of-way to access the facility; both CN-IC and UP will then serve the facility. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(MON) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced the following appointments: Mark Schulze to VP and Chief Sourcing Officer; Dave Stropes to AVP-Consumer Products Marketing; Paul Anderson to AVP-Financial Planning and Strategic Studies; Kathy Johnson to AVP-Manpower Training and Operating Practices; and George Smallwood to AVP-Crew Support. (ffd: BNSF 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,
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