

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, November 9, 2002

By Dave Mears

(NOTE: Playing catch-up here again, thanks to all for their patience.)

(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) CSX announced that it was planning a \$6 million expansion of its Williams St. intermodal rail terminal in Buffalo, NY. CSX spokesman John Casellini said that it would seek a total of \$3 million in state funding for the project, New York State already having committed \$1 million of that amount. Mr. Casellini added that Williams St. was the fastest growing CSX intermodal terminal in its Northeastern U.S. region, having experienced a 21 percent growth in business in the last 12 months. (ffd: Buffalo News)

(TUE) Voters around the country decided the fate of several regional transportation initiatives. In Miami-Dade County, FL., voters approved a half cent sales tax increase to expand mass transit, including commuter rail. In Seattle, WA., voters approved \$1.75 billion to expand Seattle's famed monorail, opened on the occasion of the 1962 Seattle World's Fair, from West Seattle to Ballard, totaling 14 miles. However in Cincinnati-Hamilton County, OH., voters rejected a half cent sales tax increase to build a light rail system and expand bus transit. (ffd: NARP, wire services)

(TUE) Canadian Pacific Railway CEO Robert Ritchie said that expanded rail freight and passenger use could do much to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. Relating to Canada's effort to comply with terms of the Kyoto Protocol, Mr. Ritchie noted that the "environmental benefits of rail are too significant to ignore." Mr. Ritchie made his remarks to the Calgary, AB. Chamber of Commerce. (ffd: CPR Corp.)

(TUE) In a presentation to investors and analysts, Canadian National CEO Paul Tellier noted that CN will this year see more revenue from rail operations within the U.S. than it will from rail operations within Canada. Noting CN's recent acquisition of the Wisconsin Central and its earlier acquisition of the Illinois Central, Mr. Tellier said that 26 percent of CN's revenue this year would come from within U.S. borders and 24 percent from within Canadian borders, while 32 percent would come from business between the 2 countries and 18 percent from business to and from seaports. (ffd: CN Corp.)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced that it had completed installation of "Idaho shield" warning devices at 150 grade crossings in New Mexico. A BNSF spokesman said that the devices were placed at crossings equipped with only crossbuck warning signs. The devices, which are placed under the crossbucks, warn motorists in both directions by reflecting light from approaching trains and oncoming vehicles back in the vision of motorists. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(WED) CSX suffered an on-duty employee fatality, but which did not occur while engaging in train operations. A CSX conductor was killed while being transported in a jitney, which collided with another vehicle near the entrance to CSX's North Bergen intermodal terminal. The crash also seriously injured a CSX engineer also riding in the jitney. (ffd: CRTS)

(WED) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board announced that it had concluded the 3rd year of its 5 year general oversight of the co-takeover of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern. In a prepared statement, the STB said that service problems earlier in the takeover haven't recurred, imposed conditions are working as intended and that there are no competitive or market dominance problems. The STB statement went on to refer to the Conrail takeover as "perhaps the most complicated railroad merger transaction in American history" and that "certain parties still have concerns about its future course." (ffd: STB)

(WED) The Detroit, MI. city council adopted a resolution banning the use of remotely controlled locomotives within city limits. The resolution further called for the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration to adopt comprehensive regulations governing the use of remote control technology. (ffd: BofLE)

(WED) Britain's rail oversight board, the Strategic Rail Authority, awarded the Stagecoach consortium a 7 year franchise to operate Southwest England rail passenger services. An SRA spokesman said that the 7 year franchise length would replace earlier franchise awards totaling 20 years. The spokesman added that the SRA would act to revoke franchises for

unsatisfactory performance and that this and future franchise awards would ensure that all of the major London rail stations were served by only one franchise. (ffd: The Guardian)

(THU) In a prepared statement, the United Transportation Union criticized U.S. railroads for the number of hours and days train employees are required to work without adequate rest. In the statement, UTU President Byron Boyd said that the situation "violates the right to a safe work place, endangers the public health and puts railroad assets in jeopardy." Adding to Mr. Boyd's statement, a UTU spokesman said that the carriers did not adequately forecast the accelerated pace of retirements resulting from railroad retirement reform and that they have had "substantial difficulty retaining potential hires once the recruits learn that it is not uncommon to work a month or longer without a day off and to be on call 24 hours a day." (ffd: Traffic World, UTU)

(THU) The Association of American Railroads and the National Grain and Feed Association announced agreement on continuing indefinitely their agreed upon rail arbitration rules. Under the agreement, NGFA member companies agree to accept arbitration for specific classes of rail disputes. An AAR spokesman said that the rules are believed to be the oldest industry-based arbitration system in North America, having been conducted for more than a century. (ffd: AAR)

(THU) The New York State Department of Transportation accepted the first of the rebuilt Rohr turbotrains for service on Amtrak's Empire Service Corridor between New York, NY. and Niagara Falls, NY. An NYDOT spokesman said that a total of 7 turbotrains are to be rebuilt by SuperSteel Schenectady Corp. of Glenville, NY. for a total cost of \$98.5 million. The turbotrains originally entered service in the 1970s. (ffd: Albany Business Review)

(FRI) New York State's Metropolitan Transportation Authority announced that a projected \$663 million budget gap was forcing consideration of hiking the New York City base bus and subway base fare from \$1.50 to \$2. The \$1.50 base fare has been in place since November, 1995. An MTA spokesman said that the organization was also considering some bus, subway and commuter rail service reductions to help close the gap. (ffd: New York Post, wire services)

(FRI) In an effort to discourage graffiti artists and vandals, Australia's Queensland Rail has begun playing classical music over the loudspeakers at several railway stations into the late night. A Queensland Rail spokesman said that the music appeared to "deter young people from hanging about and getting into mischief" and that the program would likely be expanded. The spokesman added that residents near the stations had "often put in requests to hear their favorite concertos." (ffd: The Sunday Mail)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending November 2, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 4.7 percent from the comparable week last year, down 5.2 percent in the East and down 4.3 percent in the West. Also for the week ending November 2, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.4 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 4.1 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 11.4 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the month of October, 2002, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.6 percent from October, 2001. Notable traffic increases included metallic ores up 15.6 percent, motor vehicles and equipment up 6.0 percent and primary metal products up 8.3 percent; notable traffic decreases include coal down 3.9 percent, grain down 10.5 percent and crushed stone, sand and gravel down 6.8 percent. Also for the month, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 5.1 percent (effects of the work stoppage at West Coast ports), Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 13.6 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Mexicana Ferroviaria's carload rail traffic was up 49.9 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 96.9 percent, all when compared with October last year.

The period January 1 through October 31, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.0 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 4.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 2.7 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 10.2 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) CSX filed to abandon approximately 3 miles of line between Painesville, OH. and Grand River, OH. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) Union Pacific and California's Valley Transportation Authority announced that UP had agreed to sell 15 miles of line through East San Jose, CA. for future mass transit use. Under the agreement, UP will retain the rights to run freight trains along the corridor, but on a separate set of tracks to be built concurrent with the line's conversion for mass transit. (San Jose Mercury News)

(WED) Norfolk Southern granted CSX trackage rights on approximately 2 miles of its Lima Running Track in Lima, OH. (ffd: STB)

(THU) The Connotton Valley Railey filed to lease, from the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railway, approximately 11 miles of line between Cleveland, OH. and Glenwillow, OH. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) R.J. Corman Railroad filed to abandon approximately 4 miles of its Walden Running Track and approximately 1 mile of

its JD Running Track in Erie County, NY. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

None of note this week.

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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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