

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, March 23, 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 if a reader wants more information on a particular item.)

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

(SUN) Floodwaters hampered rail operations in Eastern Kentucky, Western Virginia and neighboring Appalachian areas. CSX suspended operations on its Kingsport Subdivision between Erwin, TN. and Shelby, KY. and on its Cumberland Valley Subdivision between Corbin, KY. and Big Stone Gap, VA. Norfolk Southern suspended operations near its Carbo Yard and west to Tazewell, Lee, Dickinson and Buchanan Counties in Virginia. All affected CSX and NS lines were returned to service by midweek. (ffd: CSX, NS)

(MON) CSX launched a week-long maintenance blitz on its line between New Orleans, LA. and Flomaton, AL. CSX assigned more than 700 maintenance-of-way employees to the project and rerouted trains around the line segment being worked on, including Amtrak's Sunset Limited, which substituted bus service between New Orleans and Orlando, FL. Later in the week, the reroutes and substitutions were extended until April 1, when a bridge on the line caught fire near Rigolets, LA. (ffd: CSX, CRTS)

(MON) Amtrak and Caltrans added a sixth daily train between Sacramento, CA. and Bakersfield, CA. Amtrak and Caltrans also had trains on this route begin serving Lodi, CA., which locates between Sacramento and Stockton. (ffd: NARP)

(MON) Canadian National announced that it would ask shareholders at its annual meeting in Halifax, NS. to amend its bylaws to permit annual meetings in the United States. A CN spokesman noted that a large portion of its system is now located in the U.S. and that 60 percent of its shareholders are U.S. citizens or institutions. (ffd: National Post)

(TUE) The United Transportation Union and Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced a special agreement to improve employee safety programs. The agreement calls for the active participation of UTU members and BNSF management in developing new safety initiatives and establishes new disciplinary procedures stressing training and counseling instead of punitive discipline. (ffd: BNSF Corp., UTU)

(TUE) The California Transportation Commission appropriated \$4 million to construct a new Amtrak station in Oakland, CA. The new station will be located adjacent to Oakland's Coliseum Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station. (ffd: East Bay Business Times)

(WED) The nations of France and Italy began construction of a new rail tunnel through the Alps bordering their two countries. The new tunnel will total 32 miles in length and locate on a new line connecting Lyon, France with Turin,

Italy. (ffd: wire services)

(WED) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration issued final regulations relating to Safety Integration Plans (SIP) for future major rail mergers. The regulations also formalize FRA's role in reviewing SIPs and in monitoring their implementation. (ffd: USDOT)

(WED) A contracted construction superintendent was killed on the New York City subway system's Q Line. Michael Hamil, 38, was struck by a train while overseeing repairs to the line's Atlantic Avenue station in Brooklyn. (ffd: New York Post)

(THU) Norfolk Southern suffered an on duty employee fatality, the second in approximately one month's time. Charles Smith, 35, a locomotive engineer, had detrained from his engine on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Line in Claymont, DE. when he was struck by an Amtrak train operating on an adjacent track. Mr. Smith was also the local BofLE chairman. (ffd: Wilmington News Journal)

(THU) The states of Virginia and North Carolina announced selection of a Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor route for future funding and development. The route will run from Washington, DC. through Richmond and Petersburg on the current Amtrak route, then on the mostly abandoned ex-Seaboard line through South Hill and Henderson to Raleigh, and then from Raleigh through Greensboro to Charlotte on the current Amtrak route. (ffd: NARP)

(FRI) The U.S. Senate Budget Committee earmarked \$1.2 billion for Amtrak for FY2003. The proposed funding, which approximates Amtrak's request, will shortly be voted on by the Committee prior to further debate by the full Senate. (ffd: Amtrak)

(FRI) The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers filed suit in U.S. District Court against U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and FRA Administrator Allan Rutter. The suit alleges that Secretary Mineta and Administrator Rutter did not comply with the Federal Railroad Safety Act of 1970 in relation to locomotive remote control devices now being tested by several Class I railroads. (ffd: BofLE)

(FRI) The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a lower court finding that a Michigan law restricting the amount of time a train could block a grade crossing was pre-empted by federal law. The decision follows a similar ruling 2 weeks ago by the Washington State Supreme Court invalidating a Washington State law limiting blocking time and switching activities at grade crossings. (ffd: AAR)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending March 16, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 6.2 percent from the comparable week last year, down 6.0 percent in the East and down 6.4 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included grain mill products up 10.6 percent, crushed stone, sand and gravel up 9.9 percent and nonmetallic minerals up 9.4 percent; notable traffic decreases included coke down 30.4 percent, metallic ores down 13.5 percent and coal down 12.0 percent. Also for the week ending March 16, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 2.6 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 4.9 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 0.7 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 10.6 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 44.6 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through March 9, U.S. carload rail traffic was down

3.4 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 0.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 5.4 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 1.7 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 6.2 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 14.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) Northwest Pennsylvania Rail Authority, approximately 62 miles of line between Meadville, PA. and Corry, PA. (ffd: STB)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe filed to abandon approximately 4 miles of line in or near Kalispell, MT. (ffd: STB)

(THU) Burlington Northern Santa Fe filed to abandon approximately 10 miles of line between Beatrice, NE. and Wymore, NE. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(MON) Canadian National appointed Anita Ernesaks VP/E-Business. Ms. Ernesaks was previously CN's AVP/E-Business. (ffd: CN Corp.)

(THU) Burlington Northern Santa Fe appointed Matt Rose, 42, as Chairman, replacing Robert Krebs, who is retiring. Industry analysts have mentioned Mr. Krebs as a possible candidate to replace George Warrington as president of Amtrak. (ffd: BNSF Corp., industry sources)

(FRI) CSX appointed Steven Rand VP-Sales for CSX Intermodal and Pete Rutski as VP-Marketing and Pricing for CSX-Intermodal. (ffd: CSX 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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