

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2011

BY DAVE MEARS

(NOTE: My personal computing capability now resumed, I am continuing to issue WRR until it is current. Thanks for the kind comments many of you have sent me as I catch up.)

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

(SUN) Amtrak celebrated its 40th anniversary. In marking the anniversary, Amtrak noted "several ways the public can join in on the celebration," including special fare promotions, an anniversary website at www.amtrak40th.com, and its operation of the Amtrak Exhibit Train, which was scheduled to begin a year-long tour of the Amtrak system on May 7. (ffd: Amtrak)

(MON) Canadian National and Canadian Pacific announced their participation in Rail Safety Week in Canada, scheduled for May 2 through 8. Related to this, CN said that it would launch a new initiative entitled, "See It? Report It! You Could Save A Life," that would urge the public to call CN Police when they witness unsafe behavior on railroad property. (ffd: Railway Age)

(TUE) Flooding caused by northern snowmelts continued its surge southward on the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Flooding rendered line segments out of service on the BNSF in Missouri and on the Canadian Pacific in Iowa, as well as on the Canadian National-Illinois Central near Cairo, IL and Memphis, TN. (ffd: Trains)

(WED) CSX announced a 3-for-1 stock split. In making the announcement, a CSX spokesman noted that, from 2006 through 2010, it has invested nearly \$8.3 billion in its business, raised its dividend nearly 300 percent, and repurchased \$5.6 billion in shares. (ffd: CSX RR)

(WED) Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) and Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) introduced House and Senate versions of the Safe Highways and Infrastructure Preservation Act. If passed by Congress and signed into law, the legislation would continue a ban on trucks weighing more than 80,000 pounds or being longer than 53 feet. The bills counter other legislation currently before Congress that would allow states to increase truck weights to 97,000 and 99,000 pounds. (ffd: Railway Age, The Hill)

(THU) Amtrak said that its new system timetable, for the spring and summer of 2011, would take effect on May 9. Amtrak said that the timetable included minor changes to Empire Service trains serving New York State and Keystone Service trains serving Pennsylvania. (ffd: Amtrak)

(FRI) The U.S. Department of Homeland Security related that documents captured on the occasion of the previous weekend's killing of Osama bin Laden indicated that the al-Qaeda terrorist organization considered attacking U.S. rail lines. The February, 2010 documents contemplated "tipping a train by tampering with the rails so that the train would fall off the track at either a valley or a bridge." USDHS said that it was recommending to federal, state and local authorities that they be on the lookout for missing railroad spikes or packages left on or near train tracks. (ffd: USDHS, wire services)

(FRI) In a speech to the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, BNSF CEO Matt Rose suggested that the U.S. look to the

marketplace in formulating a coordinated national transportation policy. "The marketplace says integrate rail and truck and invest on that basis," said Mr. Rose. He suggested that federal transportation funding, from sources such as the Harbor Maintenance tax and the Highway Trust Fund, can help to relieve transportation bottlenecks and improve the efficiency of freight transportation if the money is spent under a national transportation policy that responds to the demands of the marketplace. (ffd: Journal of Commerce)

STATS – CLASS 1 RAIL TRAFFIC:

(THU) The Association of American Railroads reported that, for the week ending April 30, 2011 and ranked with the comparable week last year:

- U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 295,347 units, relatively unchanged
- Notable U.S. carload traffic increases included metallic ores up 22.1 percent; notable traffic decreases included primary forest products down 23.5 percent
- U.S. intermodal rail traffic totaled 229,677 units, up 7.8 percent
- Canadian carload rail traffic totaled 79,712 units, up 5.4 percent
- Canadian intermodal rail traffic totaled 48,883 units, up 3.1 percent
- Mexican carload rail traffic totaled 14,751 units, up 15.1 percent
- Mexican intermodal rail traffic totaled 7,705 units, up 38.0 percent

For the period January 1 through April 30, 2011 and ranked with the comparable period last year:

- U.S. carload rail traffic totaled 4,951,226 units, up 3.8 percent
- U.S. intermodal rail traffic totaled 3,770,745 units, up 8.8 percent
- Canadian carload rail traffic totaled 1,242,289 units, up 0.8 percent
- Canadian intermodal rail traffic totaled 778,921 units, up 3.6 percent
- Mexican carload rail traffic totaled 246,113 units, up 8.0 percent
- Mexican intermodal rail traffic totaled 120,596 units, up 10.5 percent

Note: Canadian traffic totals include that traffic on U.S. operations of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways.

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(THU) The Federal Railroad Administration approved the resumption of freight rail service over California's Northwestern Pacific Railroad between Lombard and Windsor, CA. The FRA ordered the line out of service due to track conditions in 1998. The line is owned by the North Coast Rail Authority, which has spent more than \$60 million since 2007 to improve the line's infrastructure. (ffd: Railway Track & Structures)

APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

(WED) Richard Steinheimer died in Sacramento, CA at Age 81. Mr. Steinheimer was long regarded as one of the world's finest railroad photographers and was particularly noted for his photography of railroading in the Western U.S. (ffd: Trains)

(THU) The Association of American Railroads named Richard Spatafore as the winner of this year's John Chafee Environmental Excellence Award. Mr. Spatafore is a division engineer for CSX and was recognized for accomplishments that included CSX's "No Spike Left Behind" recycling program. (ffd: AAR, Progressive Railroading)

(THU) Shortline holding company Rio Grande Pacific appointed Robert Bach as its president. Mr. Bach was most recently a partner at the Minneapolis, MN law firm of Felhaber Larson Fenlon and Vogt. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) The National Association of Railroad Passengers named Vukan Vuchic the winner of their first-ever Academic Award. Dr. Vuchic, a professor of transportation engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, was recognized by NARP for accomplishments that included providing "valuable insight into planning and design of urban transportation systems and the [promoting of] the importance of all types of rail services." (ffd: NARP)

EDITOR'S NOTES:

-In case it is helpful to anyone who may not have received the last edition sent due to it possibly having been caught in or deleted by a spam filter, please know that it was sent June 14 for the week ending April 29.

-The expression "ffd" stands for "for further details" and denotes a news periodical, website, etc. that may have more information.

-I always appreciate any readers who send on Weekly Rail Review to let me know to whom they forward it, so that I may learn more about my total readership. Thank you to those of you who have so advised! All names, email addresses, etc. sent me are kept confidential and are never used for any other purpose.

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BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears

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