

## WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, June 15, 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):

(MON) Arizona signed into law its FY2003 budget. Included in the budget is a transfer of \$650,000 in state highway funds for the purchase of the 78 mile Union Pacific line between Phoenix, AZ. and Welton, AZ., which was used by Amtrak to reach Phoenix until downgraded by the UP in the mid-1990's. The purchase allows for preservation of the line for eventual restoration of passenger service to/from Phoenix. (ffd: El Simon's Amtrak Digest)

(MON) A spokesman for the Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen said that its membership had turned down a proposed merger with the Sheet Metal Workers International Union. The spokesman said that the vote, which concluded June 6, appeared to be 41 percent for and 59 percent against the merger. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) In a speech at Canadian Pacific Railway's Regional and Short Line Conference, Canadian Transport Minister David Collenette said that rail infrastructure improvements would be eligible for assistance under the \$2 billion Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund. "I look forward to hearing more about short line priorities," Mr. Collenette said. The minister, who is Canada's equivalent of the U.S.'s Secretary of Transportation, went on to describe himself as a "lifelong rail buff." (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) In what industry analysts noted was an early test of "open access," the Canadian Transportation Agency denied a shipper's request that shortline operator OmniTraxCanada be granted access to the shipper over Canadian National lines. The CTA said that the shipper, Naber Seed and Grain, had legitimate grievances against CN service, but that use of CN tracks by an OmniTraxCanada shortline was not a remedy. The CTA instead ordered 11 operational changes to alleviate service problems experienced by Naber. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(TUE) The Railroad Retirement Board noted that changes late last year to railroad retirement laws have prompted a surge in train and engine crew hiring across the industry. An RRB spokesman said that more than 6,000 railroad workers had applied for retirement through April, 2002, compared with 6,165 in all of last year. Commenting on the RRB report, AAR Spokesman Tom White further noted that over half of all U.S. rail workers are 45 or older. (ffd: Atlanta Journal Constitution)

(TUE) The state of Oklahoma announced that it had signed a contract with Amtrak to continue operation of the "Heartland Flyer" through 2004. The train operates daily between Oklahoma City, OK. and Fort Worth, TX. (ffd: The Oklahoman)

(WED) Metro Magazine released its list of the top 50 rail and transit improvement commitments for 2002. Topping the list was New York, NY.'s Metropolitan Transportation Authority with \$10.2 billion in designated projects, followed by Washington, DC.'s WMATA with \$3.8 billion in designated projects. (ffd: Metro Magazine)

(FRI) In a speech at Washington, DC.'s National Press Club, United Transportation Union International President Byron Boyd said that the UTU had been asked by the rail industry to support repeal of the 4.3 cents per gallon federal tax on diesel fuel. Mr. Boyd said that the UTU would consider such support, but in return for greater rail industry support for preserving and expanding the U.S. intercity passenger rail network and, also, for legislation scrapping availability policies that require train and engine crews be available for work 30 days each month. (ffd: Traffic World)

(FRI) Philadelphia, PA. commuter rail operator SEPTA began soliciting bids for 104 new cars for its commuter rail fleet. In response to local demand, the new cars will feature both 3+2 and 2+2 seating configurations, the latter featuring wider seats. (ffd: SEPTA)

## STATS:

(THU) For the week ending June 8, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.1 percent from the comparable week last year, down 2.6 percent in the East, but up 2.5 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic

increases included nonmetallic minerals up 27.5 percent, metallic ores up 19.9 percent, grain up 11.7 percent and non-grain farm products up 11.6 percent; notable traffic decreases included coke down 14.8 percent and coal down 6.6 percent. Also for the week ending June 8, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 8.3 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.4 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 14.2 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 13.5 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 2.7 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through June 8, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 3.0 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 3.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.2 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 3.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 4.7 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) The Long Island Rail Road filed to discontinue service over approximately 2 miles of line in Garden City, NY. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(FRI) Dallas Area Rapid Transit appointed Kathryn Waters VP-Commuter Rail Service. Ms. Waters was most recently Chief Operating Officer of Maryland commuter rail operator MARC. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

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(NOTE: 2 corrections to WRR for the week ending May 25: Concerning the purchase of approximately 62 miles of the defunct Northern and Pacific Railroad, Union County and Wallowa County are in Oregon, not Washington State; thanks to Bill Lyman for this update. Concerning the appointment of Ron Russ at Kansas City Southern, Mr. Russ is now their Chief Financial Officer, not their Chief Operating Officer; thanks to Kathleen Kessler for this update.)

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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