

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the week ending SAT, November 22, 2003

By Dave Mears

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

(MON) The Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority and its striking mechanics agreed to arbitration of remaining contract issues. The agreement ended a 5 week strike that halted Los Angeles transit services; Metrolink commuter rail services were unaffected. An LA MTA spokesman said that all normal bus and subway services would be in operation again by Friday. (ffd: NARP)

(MON) A survey of trucking and intermodal executives reported that intermodal rail traffic is expected to increase in 2004. The survey noted that changes in truck capacity, increases in truck rates and new truck hours of service regulations were expected to further widen the price gap between all-truck movement and intermodal movement, making intermodal more attractive, including for shorter hauls. The survey noted that J.B. Hunt Corp. had recently announced plans to use intermodal for some trips of between 500 and 1,000 miles. (ffd: AAR, Transport Topics)

(MON) The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority issued new rules for street performers playing music in MBTA subway stations. The new regulations ban nearly all nonacoustic instruments, as well as saxophones, trumpets and horns. An MBTA spokesman said the new regulations were put in place because these louder musical instruments and their amplification had been drowning out station informational messages. (ffd: Boston Globe)

(THU) Canadian Pacific Railway announced a "major renewal of its transcontinental intermodal fleet," beginning in January, 2004. A CPR spokesman said that this would include acquiring 5,500 new doublestack cars, extending many rail sidings and having terminals build longer intermodal trains. The spokesman added that, past these improvements, CPR intermodal trains will be able to carry 28 percent more containers, but with 16 percent fewer train starts. (ffd: Canadian Press)

(FRI) Union Pacific and General Motors's Electro-Motive Division announced that UP had ordered 175 new Class SD70M locomotives from EMD. An EMD spokesman said that the order is the largest between the 2 companies since UP ordered 1,000 new locomotives from EMD in 1999. The spokesman added that deliveries would start in the second quarter next year. (ffd: GM Corp., UP Corp.)

(FRI) The U.S. Senate tabled further action on a comprehensive energy bill. The tabling means that the 4.3 cents per gallon tax on railroad diesel fuel will continue. The bill was also to have established a public-private partnership to improve locomotive fuel efficiency and reauthorized a statute providing liability production for transporting nuclear waste. A Senate spokesman said that debate on the bill may resume early next year. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(SAT) CSX operated its annual "Santa Special" train between Shelby, KY. and Kingsport, TN. The train, which was first operated by CSX predecessor Clinchfield Railroad 61 years ago, distributes gifts to needling children in communities between the 2 cities. A CSX spokesman said that more than 15 tons of gifts were distributed at 15 designated stops along the train's 110 mile route. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

(SAT) The Smithsonian Institution's opened its new "America On the Move" exhibition at its National Museum of American History in Washington, DC. The exhibit covers 26,000 square feet of museum space and marks the first major renovation to the Smithsonian's transportation collection since the museum's opening in 1964. Among many other features, the exhibit includes a 40-foot slab of Route 66 and a simulated ride aboard a 1950s-era Chicago elevated train. (ffd: wire services)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending November 15, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.6 percent from the comparable week last year, up 0.7 percent in the East and up 0.4 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included coke up 36.1 percent, non-grain farm products up 16.4 percent and grain up 11.4 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 20.6 percent and coal down 3.0 percent. Also for the week ending November 15, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 10.2 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 10.0 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 0.6 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 14.2 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 14.8 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through November 15, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.1 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 6.7 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 0.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.5 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 2.3 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 13.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) Canadian Pacific Railway announced the sale of its Waterloo Spur line, between Madison, WI. and Watertown, WI. and totaling approximately 33 miles, to the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad. WSOR had leased this line from CPR since 1998 and recently exercised an option to purchase it. Later in the week, WSOR granted CPR continued trackage rights over the line. (ffd: RT&S)

(TUE) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately 9 miles of its Marietta Industrial Lead line between Marysville, KS. and Marietta, KS. (ffd: STB)

(WED) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board approved the sale of approximately 17 miles of the CSX line between Creekside, PA. and Homer City, PA. to the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad. (ffd: STB)

(WED) The Port Royal Railroad ceased operation. The railroad, which operated between the port of Port Royal, SC. and Yemassee, SC., was owned by the South Carolina Ports Authority and operated by the South Carolina Department of Commerce's Public Railways Division. (ffd: Beaufort Gazette)

(THU) CSX granted Golden Isles Terminal Railroad trackage rights over approximately 1 mile of CSX line in and near CSX's Savannah, GA. yard. The purpose of the trackage rights is to permit GIT to access portions of that yard. (ffd: STB)

(THU) M&B Railroad filed to acquire, from CSX, and operate 2 CSX line segments as follows: 1) approximately 31 miles of line between Burkeville, AL. and Western Jct., AL. 2) approximately 64 miles of line between Western Jct., AL. and Myrtlewood, AL. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) CSX filed to abandon 2 segments of its Wabash Subdivision line between LaCrosse, IN. and Wellsboro, IN. and between North Judson, IN. and Malden, IN., totaling approximately 33 miles. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately 1 mile of its Columbia Tap Industrial Lead in Houston, TX. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately 14 miles of line between Castroville, CA. and Seaside, CA. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

(MON) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced the following Mechanical Department appointments: Tom Moschetti as AVP & Chief Mechanical Officer-North; Warren Cross as AVP & Chief Mechanical Officer-Central; B.J. Ryan as AVP & Chief Mechanical Officer-South. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(MON) Canadian Pacific Railway announced that EVP & COO Ed Dodge would retire effective March, 2004, after 35 years CPR service. CPR also announced that Fred Green would have been appointed EVP-Operations & Marketing effective January 1, 2004. (ffd: CP Corp.)

(MON) Norfolk Southern announced that 4 senior executives - SVP-Planning James McClellan, SVP-Coal Marketing J.W. "Bill" Fox, SVP & CIO Steve Renken and VP-Real Estate Richard Parker - had elected to take their recent management buyout and would leave NS by year's end. (ffd: Railway Age)

(MON) RailAmerica announced that it had appointed Rodney "Joe" Conklin as its EVP & COO. Mr. Conklin was previously RailAmerica's SVP-Eastern Corridor-North American Rail Group. Mr. Conklin replaces Gary Spiegel, who recently resigned from RailAmerica. (ffd: RailAmerica Corp.)

(MON) Union Pacific appointed Thomas Jacobi VP-Western Region. Mr. Jacobi was most recently UP's VP-Premium Operations and replaces Jeffrey Verhaal, who recently retired from UP. (ffd: UP Corp.)

(WED) Canadian National announced that Keith Heller had been appointed CEO of Britain's English, Welsh & Scottish Railroad, which provides rail freight service for Britain's Network Rail. CN owns a 40 percent interest in the EW&S. Mr. Heller was most recently CN's SVP-Eastern Canada Region. CN also announced that Mr. Heller would be succeeded by Keith Creel, CN's current SVP-Western Canada Region. Succeeding Mr. Creel will be Peter Marshall, currently a CN VP-Operations. (ffd: CN Corp.)

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Weekly Rail Review 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 weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,
Dave Mears
Cherry Hill, New Jersey, USA