

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2009

BY DAVE MEARS

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

(NOTE: This week including the Thanksgiving Holiday and the day after.)

(MON) Amtrak said that it was preparing for its annual Thanksgiving rush. An Amtrak spokesman said that while it normally carries 74,000 passengers on an average Wednesday, it expects to carry 125,000 passengers on Wednesday this week, which is the day before Thanksgiving. Amtrak Northeast Corridor trains operated on a special Thanksgiving Holiday timetable this week. (ffd: Amtrak, NARP)

(MON) BNSF said that it was temporarily embargoing rail shipments of grain to Pacific Northwest destinations. A BNSF spokesman said that unusually wet weather had slowed the loading of grain aboard ships at Pacific Northwest ports, which in turn had led to a backlog of railcars waiting to be unloaded for export. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) The American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association announced that Railroad Day On Capitol Hill 2010 would be held next February 25, 2010. Now one of the rail industry's most important annual events, Railroad Day sees hundreds of railroaders, their suppliers and key others come to Washington to brief their elected representatives about the rail industry and its legislative needs. The event, which concludes with a gala Washington dinner, is sponsored by ASLRRA, the Association of American Railroads, and other rail advocacy organizations. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending November 21, 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 32.1 billion ton-miles, down 6.1 percent from the comparable period last year. U.S. carload rail traffic was down 6.8 percent, down 3.8 percent in the East and down 8.8 percent in the West. 6 of 19 commodity groups increased, including nonmetallic minerals up 26.5 percent, grain up 8.1 percent, and chemicals up 8.1 percent. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 4.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 7.3 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was up 1.3 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was up 9.7 percent.

For the period January 1 through November 21, 2009, U.S. rail volume grand totaled 1.32 trillion ton-miles, down 16.4 percent. Also for this period, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 17.3 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 15.6 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 20.0 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 15.4 percent, Mexican carload rail traffic was down 11.4 percent, and Mexican intermodal rail traffic was down 16.0 percent. (ffd: AAR)

(NOTE: Canadian traffic totals include those of the U.S. operations of Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National.)

EXPANSIONS, CONTRACTIONS AND ALIKE:

(MON) Canadian National filed to abandon approximately one-quarter mile of former Wisconsin Central line in Denmark, WI. (ffd: STB)

(MON) The Boise Valley Railroad began operations of its Wilder Branch between Wilder, ID and Caldwell, ID, and its Boise Cutoff between Nampa, ID and just southeast of Boise, ID, altogether totaling 36 miles. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Massachusetts Coastal announced that it had acquired from CSX the freight rail operating rights over the rail lines to New Bedford, MA and Fall River, MA. These lines are to be sold by CSX to the State of Massachusetts so that they may be rebuilt for future commuter rail service. Mass Coastal said that they would take over freight rail operations on these lines on or about May 14, 2010. (ffd: Massachusetts Coastal RR)

(WED) The Surface Transportation Board granted Union Pacific's earlier request to abandon approximately one mile of its North Fort Branch line in Tarrant County, TX. Concurrent with this decision, the Fort Worth & Dallas Belt Railroad and the Fort Worth & Western Railroad will also discontinue their service over this line segment. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) The Surface Transportation Board granted BNSF's earlier request to abandon approximately six miles of line between Post Falls, ID and Couer d'Alene, ID. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) U.S. Rail Corporation filed to lease, from Salem County, NJ, and operate approximately 18 miles of line between Swedesboro, NJ and Salem, NJ. (ffd: STB)

#### APPOINTMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES:

None of note this week.

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BE SAFE AND PROSPER,

Dave Mears

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