

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the week ending SAT, February 28, 2004

By Dave Mears

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

(SUN) Canadian National obtained a court injunction limited picketing at its intermodal terminals. Approximately 5,000 CN workers represented by the Canadian Auto Workers Union went on strike against CN the previous Friday. A union spokesman said that CN and the union were "...still far from a deal..." and a CN spokesman said that the railroad, which was using managers to fill in for striking workers, was "...doing pretty well in terms of keeping our freight schedules to plan." (ffd: The Canadian Press, wire services)

(SUN) The New York City subways resumed using 4 tracks across the Manhattan Bridge linking Manhattan with Brooklyn. The subways had not used all 4 tracks since 1986, when the bridge's structural deficiencies, now corrected, began limiting their use. Concurrent with the resumption, several subway route changes were implemented, which a NYCTA spokesman called "the most extensive in decades." The changes included the "D" replacing the "W" in Brooklyn and the "N" running over the Manhattan Bridge to stations on Broadway. (ffd: New York Times, NYCTA)

(MON) Amtrak reported that it had fixed many of the mechanical problems that had earlier plagued its Acela Express trainsets. To encourage Acela travel, Amtrak earlier announced a special incentive whereby customers who participate in Amtrak's frequent traveler program gain 1 free Acela roundtrip ticket for every 2 Acela roundtrips that they purchase. (ffd: wire services)

(WED) U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta announced a \$28.8 million federal grant for the South Florida Transportation Authority's Double Track Corridor Improvement Project. The funding will go toward double-tracking and related improvements for SFTA's commuter rail service north out of Miami, FL., construction of which is already underway. Mr. Mineta made the announcement while inspecting the reconstruction of the Delray Beach, FL. rail station. (ffd: USDOT)

(WED) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration announced that it would work to speed up and simplify Railroad Rehabilitation and Infrastructure Financing (RRIF) loan applications and processing. The RRIF loan program has been criticized in the past for being too cumbersome. An FRA spokesman said that program improvements would include a new online application form and credit risk calculator, the assigning of one FRA official to handle an application from start to finish, and enabling the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association to act as an applicant's agent. (ffd: ASLRRA)

(THU) Trinity Industries announced that it had received an order from Burlington Northern Santa Fe for 6,000 new, high-capacity covered hopper cars. A Trinity spokesman said that they would begin building the cars in the third quarter of this year and that the entire order would be delivered over the next 4 years. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) 2 New York City subway supervisors were shot and killed at the system's Coney Island subway yard. A police spokesman identified the suspect in the shootings as Darryl Dinkins, Age 39. Mr. Dinkins had been a subway car cleaner at the yard until last November, when he was reportedly fired for insubordination. (ffd: wire services)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending February 21, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 8.6 percent from the comparable week last year, up 14.2 percent in the East and up 4.6 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included coke up 32.8 percent, waste and scrap materials up 18.7 percent and nonmetallic minerals up 13.6 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 6.1 percent. Also for the week ending February 21, U.S. intermodal traffic was up 3.5 percent, Canadian carload traffic was up 7.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 1.1 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 11.1 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 6.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through February 21, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 2.0 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 3.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 0.3 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 10.1 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 12.9 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) The Western New York & Pennsylvania Railroad announced that it would grant trackage rights to Norfolk Southern allowing NS to overhead its trains over the WNY&P between Hornell, NY. and Meadville, PA. (ffd: Hornell Evening Tribune)

(FRI) Kershaw Sunnyside Ranches filed an adverse abandonment petition to bring about the abandonment of approximately 1 mile of the Yakima Interurban Line Association's Naches Line in Yakima County, WA. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

(THU) Trinity Rail Express, which operates commuter rail services between Dallas, TX. and Ft. Worth, TX., appointed Peter Sklannik Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Sklannik was last with Virginia Railway Express. (ffd: Railway Age)

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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 <<mailto:weeklyrailreview@aol.com>>weeklyrailreview@aol.com to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,
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