

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For The week ending SAT, April 3, 2004

By Dave Mears

(EDITOR'S NOTE: I've been a little backed up lately getting these out, but should be back on schedule by tomorrow, April 27.)

(NOTE: The abbreviation "ffd" represents "for further details" and denotes a website or other news reference where further details of this news item may be found.)

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

(MON) The U.S. Federal Railroad Administration released its preliminary accident and injury statistics for U.S. railroads for 2003. For the year, on-duty employee fatalities were 19, compared with 20 the previous year; grade crossing fatalities were 325, an 8.96 percent decrease from 357 the previous year; and trespasser fatalities were 507, a 6.11 percent decrease from 540 the previous year. Also, the employee injury rate per 200,000 man-hours was 2.65, a 9.76 percent decrease from 2.94 the previous year. However, the train accident per million man-hours was 3.87, a 3.1 percent increase from 3.76 the previous year. (ffd: AAR)

(MON) A Union Pacific freight train derailed 40 cars into Soldier Creek, near Silver Lake, KS. The derailment also caused a bridge supporting the track to collapse. No injuries were reported in the derailment, the cause of which is still under investigation. A UP spokesman said that the railroad hoped to have a temporary bypass track around the derailment open by Wednesday. (ffd: Casper Star-Tribune)

(MON) U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta said that he would support an increase to the Bush Administration's proposed \$900 million FY2005 federal funding for Amtrak if Congress passed the Administration's controversial Amtrak reform plan. "If Congress passes the reform legislation, we will propose \$1.4 billion per year for 2006 through 2009," Mr. Mineta said. The plan would pass along much of the responsibility for funding rail passenger services to the states following a multiyear transition period. Mr. Mineta made his comments while touring CSX's Huntington, WV. locomotive shops, CSX's largest locomotive repair facility. (ffd: Huntington Herald-Dispatch)

(TUE) Canada marked the 50th anniversary of the opening of Toronto, ON.'s subway system. The celebration included various activities centered at Toronto Union Station. The subway, Canada's first, originally served 12 stations, but has since been expanded to serve a total of 69 stations. (ffd: Toronto Transit Commission)

(THU) The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security issued a warning of possible terrorist threats against buses and trains in major U.S. cities this summer. The FBI and DHS suggested that passenger rail and transit operators consider removing trash bins, improve lighting, increase law-enforcement presence and limit access points to their systems. (ffd: NARP, wire services)

(THU) The nation of South Korea began service on its new high-speed passenger rail line. The line operates from the capital city of Seoul to the cities of Busan in the southeast and Mokpo in the southwest. The line uses TGV-style trains to achieve speeds of up to 186mph, utilizing new high-speed tracks from Seoul through Daejeon and Daedgu and

existing but upgraded and electrified tracks to Busan and Mokpo. (ffd: NARP)

(FRI) The U.S. House of Representatives approved reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act. The House bill authorizes \$275 billion in transportation-related funding over a 6-year period and varies from the reauthorization bill earlier passed by the Senate, which authorizes 6-year funding to \$318 billion. The House and Senate bills will now be worked on by a House-Senate conference committee for resolution. The latest extension of the current TEA expires April 30. (ffd: Railway Age)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending March 27, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 3.1 percent from the comparable week last year, down 0.7 percent in the East and up 6.5 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included coke up 36.3 percent, waste and scrap materials up 15.8 percent and crushed stone, sand and gravel up 11.8 percent; notable traffic decreases included non-grain farm products down 20.6 percent and metals and metal products down 11.6 percent. Also for the week ending March 27, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 8.3 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 6.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 0.4 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 11.0 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 5.5 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through March 27, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 3.0 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 6.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 2.0 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 7.6 percent, and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 6.6 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) RailAmerica announced that it had agreed to sell its Australian railroad, Freight Australia, to Pacific National, an Australian rail freight logistics firm. A RailAmerica spokesman said that Pacific National had agreed to pay \$214 million for Freight Australia, which RailAmerica purchased in 1999 from the Victorian State Government for \$103 million. The spokesman added that the sale was attendant with RailAmerica's announced intentions to "reduce our debt and focus on growing our core North American rail business." (ffd: RailAmerica Corp.)

(WED) Union Pacific filed to discontinue service and trackage rights over 2 segments of the Paramount Industrial Lead, which is owned jointly by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Orange County Transportation Authority, and also locates in these two counties. The first line segment totals approximately 1 mile and the second totals approximately 10 miles. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

None of note this week.

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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,
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