

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, June 1, 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):

(SUN) Accident investigators in Mozambique provided additional details of the train collision the prior week that killed approximately 200 persons. Investigators said that train, which had a section of freight cars ahead of the passenger cars, incurred partial brake failure and that the train's driver opted to first take the freight section down a grade, wedging stones against the wheels of the lead passenger car to keep the passenger section in place. The stones gave way and the passenger section ran away and into the freight section ahead. (ffd: wire services)

(MON) A Canadian National/Grand Trunk Western train derailed 35 cars near Potterville, MI. Include among the derailed cars were 4 carrying liquid propane, which prompted the precautionary evacuation of most of Potterville's 2,200 residents. The residents were allowed to return to their homes on Friday, following the propane being burned off. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) 2 Burlington Northern Santa Fe trains collided head-on near Clarendon, TX. The resulting crash killed 1 crewperson and injured 3 others. 4 locomotives and 25 cars were derailed. BNSF cleared the wreck and opened the line on Wednesday. The cause of the accident was still being determined at press time. (ffd: WFAA TV, BofLE)

(TUE) The U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approved an amendment to the emergency defense bill providing \$55 million in immediate funding to Amtrak for the following purposes: \$12 million for security, \$23 million for equipment overhauls and \$20 million for equipment wreck repairs. The full Senate is expected to debate the bill after Congress reconvenes June 3. (ffd: NARP)

(TUE) Kansas City Southern said that they would begin applying reflector strips to the side sills of all KCS locomotives. A KCS spokesman said that the strips would improve the ability of motorists to see locomotives ahead of them at highway-rail grade crossings. (ffd: KCS Corp.)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe suffered an on-duty employee fatality, its second in as many days. Thomas Durst, a rail grinder operator, was killed near Sedalia, CO. when he was struck by a runaway freight car. The car, which separated from a BNSF work train, traveled 32 miles before it went upgrade and was brought to a halt near Denver. (ffd: KUSA TV)

(WED) The State of Delaware announced that it would fund repair of Norfolk Southern's Shellpot Bridge on NS's Wilmington, DE. freight bypass line.

Under the repair agreement, the state will fund the \$13.5 million bridge repair cost and NS will pay a "bridge toll" of \$35 per car for the first 5,000 cars annually crossing the bridge, with lower per car charges for higher car volumes. The bridge has been out of service since the early 1990's. (ffd: NS Corp., Philadelphia Inquirer)

(WED) Union Pacific held a belated groundbreaking ceremony for its new Chicago, IL. area intermodal terminal now under construction in Rochelle, IL. The new terminal, tentatively known as "UP Global III," will be the UP's third large intermodal facility in the Chicago area and is expected to open on or about July, 2003. (ffd: UP Corp.)

(THU) The Mayor of London, England announced that 2 new light rail lines would be built through the city, the first through central London since London "trams" were discontinued in the early 1950's. A spokesman for the mayor said that one line, to run between the neighborhoods of Shepherds Bush and Uxbridge, will open by 2009 and that the other, to run between Kings Cross Station and Brixton, will open by 2011. (ffd: Environmental News Network)

(FRI) Canadian Pacific announced that they would construct an automated facility to re-spray coal trains with dust suppressant. A CP spokesman said that the facility, the first of its kind in North America to be fully automated, would be located at a station on CP's line between southeast British Columbia coal mines and the port of Vancouver, BC. (ffd: CPR Corp.)

(SAT) Equipment lessor Trailer Train put a new pricing plan for doublestack cars into effect. Under the plan, participating railroads may use TTX doublestack cars free of charge if they exceed a certain threshold percentage of use. (ffd: Progressive Railroad)

#### STATS:

(THU) For the week ending May 25, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.3 percent from the comparable week last year, up 0.1 percent in the East but down 0.7 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included nonmetallic minerals up 13.8 percent, non-grain farm non-grain farm products up 10.5 percent, grain up 7.6 percent and chemicals up 7.5 percent; notable traffic decreases included coke down 10.3 percent, lumber and wood products down 7.7 percent and coal down 6.3 percent. Also for the week ending May 25, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 2.0 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 16.4 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 11.3 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through May 25, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 3.3 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 3.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 5.8 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 4.4 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 4.1 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year. (ffd: AAR)

#### ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(TUE) RailWorld announced that it had signed an agreement to purchase the bankrupt Bangor & Aroostook Railroad System. The system, totaling 745 miles of line in Maine, New Brunswick and Quebec, will be held by Rail World as the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway. (ffd: JofC)

(THU) Tri-City Railroad Company filed to lease and operate approximately 2 miles of line at the port of Olympia, WA. (ffd: STB)

(THU) Canadian National/Illinois Central filed a new trackage rights agreement to operate over New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Commission's approximately 5 miles of line in New Orleans, LA. The agreement replaces a 1947 agreement between IC and NO. (ffd: STB)

(THU) CSX filed to abandon approximately 4 miles of line between Fitchburg, MA. and Leominster, MA. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) RailAmerica announced that it had sold its 107 mile Texas New Mexico Railroad for \$2.25 million to Permian Basin Railways, a wholly owned subsidiary of Iowa Pacific Holdings. RailAmerica also announced that it would lease its 108 mile West Texas & Lubbock Railroad to Permian Basin Railways. (ffd: RailAmerica Corp.)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(WED) Alistair Darling was named Britain's Minister of Transport by British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Mr. Darling replaces Stephen Byers, who had drawn severe criticism for his handling of British railway problems. (ffd: wire services)

(THU) U.S. Secretary of Transportation Normal Mineta appointed retired Coast Guard Commandant James Loy to the newly created post of Deputy Under Secretary for Transportation Security. Admiral Loy will also function as Chief Operating Officer of the new U.S. Transportation Security Administration. (ffd: USDOT)

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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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