

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, June 8, 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) Officials of Toronto, ON. commuter rail operator GO Transit pledged to try to continue operating trains despite a strike by mechanical personnel contracted to service its cars and locomotives. The strike began the previous Thursday after contractor Bombardier Transportation and representatives of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1587 broke off talks. (ffd: Toronto Star)

(MON) New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey ceremonially took delivery of the first of 200 new "Comet V" commuter rail cars for New Jersey Transit. The Governor said that, in addition to the 200 now being delivered, NJT would also take delivery of its first bi-level commuter rail cars in 2005, an order to eventually total 231 bi-levels. (ffd: Stamford Advocate)

(MON) Norfolk Southern opened a new bulk transfer terminal in Augusta, GA. The facility increases to 29 the number of NS bulk transfer terminals. The facility, to be operated by Quality Terminals Corp., has loading/unloading spots for 44 cars and includes separate tracks for cars containing food products. (ffd: NS Corp.)

(TUE) Economic Planning Associates released its forecast of new rail car production for 2002. EPA said that it expected a total of 18,100 new rail car deliveries this year, the lowest level since 1987. EPA added that it expected an improving economy and the need to replacement aging fleets to cause new rail car deliveries to rise to 29,700 in 2003. (ffd: EPA Inc.)

(TUE) CSX said that it would next month conduct a blitz-type maintenance project on its line between Troy, OH. and New River Jct., OH. The project will close the line between Monday, July 15 and Thursday, July 18 and involve over 500 maintenance-of-equipment workers. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

(WED) The Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona, PA. announced that it was \$750,000 in debt and needed to raise \$300,000 by this October to pay suppliers, taxes, utilities and employees. The museum, opened in 1998 with the assistance of \$10.1 million in federal and state grants, said that it drew 45,000 visitors last year, well below the 80,000 it expected. (ffd: wire services)

(WED) London, England's London Transport said that a record one million passenger an hour utilized the Underground (subway system) during Golden Jubilee celebrations in and around the city the previous Monday. London Transport also operated the Underground all night on Monday, marking only the third time in its history it operated all night long. (ffd: London Evening Standard)

(THU) In testimony before the U.S. House Railroad Subcommittee, National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Marion Blakely noted that train derailments of a level reportable to the Federal Railroad Administration had risen from 1,741 in 1997 to 2,206 in 2001. Ms. Blakely called for the FRA to undertake increased track inspections. In further testimony, FRA Administrator Allan Rutter noted that there were just 400 federal and 150 agency-trained state inspectors covering 230,000 miles of track, but said that the FRA would hire 12 more this year and next year. (ffd: wire services)

(THU) Kansas State University released a study noting that the Kansas's shortline railroads save the state at least \$50 million annually. The study said that the savings come from avoiding road repairs that would result from higher truck traffic if the shortlines were not available to shippers. (ffd: Topeka Capital Journal)

(FRI) Amtrak President David Gunn submitted an organizational restructuring plan to Amtrak's Board of Directors. The plan calls for consolidating Amtrak's 4 strategic business units - Northeast Corridor, Intercity, Amtrak West and Mail and Express - into a single entity headquartered in Washington, DC. Mr. Gunn added that he also wanted to reduce the current number of Amtrak department heads with vice-president in their title from 84 to 20. (ffd: wire services)

(FRI) VIA Rail Canada opened its new station in Kingston, ON. In dedicating the station, Canadian Transport Minister David

Collenette called it a "key component of VIA Rail service to the Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal triangle." (ffd: VIA Rail)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending June 1, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.4 percent from the comparable week last year, up 1.1 percent in the East, but down 1.5 percent in the West. Also for the week, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 9.4 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 0.1 percent and Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 6.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the month of May, 2002, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.8 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 9.4 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 0.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 11.9 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 14.9 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 28.9 percent, all when ranked with May, 2001.

For the period January through May 31, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, compared with the same period last year. Notable traffic increases included motor vehicles and equipment up 4.3 percent and crushed stone and gravel up 3.9 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 12.2 percent and coke down 21.0 percent. Also for the period January 1 through May 31, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 3.3 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 5.8 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 0.6 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 17.1 percent, all when ranked with that period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(THU) CSX filed to acquire approximately 2 miles of line in Augusta, GA. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe appointed Rick Lifo AVP-Claims. Mr. Lifo was previously BNSF's General Director-Western Region. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(FRI) Jim Weinstein resigned as SVP of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Strategic Business Unit. Industry analysts noted that the resignation of Mr. Weinstein, who had been on the job only a few months, anticipated the consolidation of Amtrak's SBUs (see above).

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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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