

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, August 17, 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):

(MON) The federal government committed \$4.6 billion to building a transportation hub at New York City's World Trade Center site. The new hub will link Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) train service with New York City subway service and include a pedestrian concourse to Hudson River ferry services. The funding will come from the \$21.8 billion pledged by the Bush Administration and the U.S. Congress to help New York City's economic recovery from the September, 2001 World Trade Center attack. (ffd: wire services)

(MON) The American Public Transportation Association reported the first quarterly ridership decline on U.S. mass transit systems in several years. The APTA said that, in the first quarter this year versus the first quarter last year, total commuter rail ridership decreased 2.39 percent and total subway/elevated "heavy rail" ridership decreased 3.17 percent. An APTA spokesman attributed the decline to job losses accompanying the recession. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) Representatives of the transportation ministries of African governments met at a special conference in Johannesburg, South Africa. At the conference, entitled "Africa Rail 2002," the representatives agreed to, over time, try to link the rail systems of individual countries, which are largely unconnected. "It is important that railway owners and operators should collaborate and cooperate to promote the rail mode," said South African Transport Minister Abdullah Omar. (ffd: Xinhua News)

(TUE) Amtrak removed from service its 18 Acela Express trainsets manufactured by Bombardier after detecting cracks in the brackets holding yaw dampening assemblies, which help retard sway. An Amtrak spokesman cautioned that the brackets could potentially break, drop the assemblies and cause a derailment. Amtrak restored some of the trainsets to service on Wednesday, but removed them from service again on Thursday, along with 15 electric locomotives also manufactured by Bombardier, after additional bracket cracks were detected. Later in the week, Amtrak returned some of the trainsets and locomotives to service after Bombardier furnished improved brackets. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced the formation of a logistics subsidiary, BNSF Logistics. The new subsidiary stems from BNSF's acquisition of Clicklogistics Inc. of Springdale, AR., which will provide its management infrastructure and initial customer base. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(WED) The National Mediation Board dismissed an application by the United Transportation Union to create a single craft of train and engine employees on Kansas City Southern. In its ruling, the NMB noted that less than 4 percent of KCS employees work in both train and engine service. The decision was hailed as a victory by Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers President Don Hahs, whose union has been fighting UTU craft consolidation efforts related to use of locomotive remote control technology. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(WED) Canadian National halted its abandonment of the former Canadian Southern line between Attercliffe, ON. and St. Thomas, ON. CN said it took the action at the request of Canadian Transport Minister David Collenette, in order to give several municipalities along the line time to put together a plan to acquire and operate the line. (ffd: Hamilton Spectator)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe announced that it would outsource its computer operations to IBM Global Services effective September 1. A BNSF spokesman said that the outsourcing of its mainframe, midrange and desktop computing environments would also include outsourcing the operation of existing BNSF data centers in Topeka, KS. and Fort Worth, TX. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(WED) New Jersey Transit announced that, for the time being, it was shelving plans to operate commuter rail service on the New York, Susquehanna & Western. A NJ Transit spokesman said that the plan, which would have operated service on 22 miles of NYS&W line through Morris, Passaic, Bergen and Sussex Counties in New Jersey, was being curtailed due to its estimated \$100 million startup costs, as well as the failure to reach agreement with NYS&W's parent company related to

commuter rail operation. (ffd: Railpace)

(FRI) Canadian National announced that it would begin painting its web site address, www.cn.ca, on CN locomotives. "We're starting with locomotives," said CN VP-Commercial Development Cliff Carson, "and we hope to expand the strategy to include all equipment where the CN logo is shown." (ffd: CN Corp.)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending August 10, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 2.9 percent, up 2.0 percent in the East and up 3.6 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included non-grain farm products up 25.7 percent, metallic ores up 25.5 percent, metals and metal products up 16.6 percent and nonmetallic minerals up 10.7 percent; notable traffic decreases included primary forest products down 11.2 percent and coke down 8.7 percent. Also for the week ending August 10, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 8.1 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 9.4 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 1.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 61.9 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through August 10, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.4 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 4.9 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.4 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 8.3 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 1.7 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 7.8 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) CSX filed to abandon 1 mile of line in Memphis, TN. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(MON) CSX appointed Ganson Evans VP-Sales, Marketing and E-Business. Mr. Evans most recently headed sales and marketing for CSX Intermodal. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

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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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