

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For The Week Ending SAT, August 28, 2004

By Dave Mears

(EDITOR'S NOTE: As in the spring and summer last year, I again had to suspend publication of my "Weekly Rail Review" to attend to personal matters. I am again sorry that no advance or intermediate word of this could get to you. To those of you who have written me, I hope to have an opportunity in the near future to answer your inquiries. In the meantime, "Weekly Rail Review" resumes – my way of keeping in touch with the news of our business and with my acquaintances in it – and I thank you very much for your continued interest. Dave M.)

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

(MON) Union Pacific reopened its No. 7 tunnel on its main line between Eugene, OR. and Klamath Falls, OR. A fire had been burning in the timber-lined tunnel for several days, forcing UP freight trains to be detoured onto alternate routes and Amtrak service between the cities to be suspended, the latter with a bus connection substituted. A UP spokesman said that the fire appeared to have been started by a spark from a train or its exhaust. (ffd: The Oregonian)

(MON) New Jersey Transit opened its new Ramsey Route 17 station on its Bergen County commuter rail line. The station features a five-tier, 1,200-space parking deck, an elevated pedestrian walkway to the deck, heated shelters, restrooms and retail space. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(TUE) The officers of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees voted to submit its proposed merger with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters to the BMWWE's membership for ratification. A spokesman for the BMWWE's officers, who unanimously endorsed the merger proposal, said that ballots would be sent to BMWWE members in September. If approved, the BMWWE would become an autonomous division of the Teamsters, similar to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, which became part of the Teamsters in December, 2003. (ffd: RT&S)

(TUE) The Association of American Railroads confirmed that it would hold a Fall Peak Season Service Forum. An AAR spokesman said that the forum would allow railroads to present their plans for moving freight during the busy fall season. The presentations will be followed by a question-and-answer session. The spokesman added that the forum would be held Thursday, September 9 at the Kansas City Airport Marriott and feature U.S. Surface Transportation Board Chairman Roger Nober as the luncheon speaker. (ffd: AAR)

(WED) Amtrak's Palmetto train resumed its normal route, following restoration of the CSX line it travels between Jacksonville, FL. and Miami, FL. The line had been damaged 2 weeks prior by wind and water from Hurricane Charley. Amtrak's Silver Meteor and Silver Star, which had been operating over a CSX detour, also resumed their normal routes. (ffd: NARP)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe hosted a reception for truck drivers at its Alliance, TX. intermodal facility. The

facility, along with 11 other BNSF intermodal terminals, displayed welcoming banners with the words "We Love Truckers" and offered drivers snacks and related refreshments. "The 'We Love Truckers' event is our way of saying thanks to our trucking company partners and their drivers who, along with railroaders, are the backbone of ensuring that products...are delivered safety and efficiently," said BNSF AVP-Truckload Sales John Hickerson. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

(THU) New Jersey Transit confirmed that it would offer college students free travel on its buses, light rail and commuter trains the week of September 8 through 15. "Our hope is that once they become part of the workforce, students will already know the benefits of using public transportation for their daily commute," said NJT Executive Director George Warrington. In a related story, an NJT spokesman said that the agency was working with 7 universities to offer a 25 percent discount to students who buy monthly passes online. (ffd: NJ Transit, wire services)

(FRI) The documentary motion picture "Festival Express" opened at selected theaters nationwide. The movie was filmed during the summer of 1970, when a promoter rented a Canadian National passenger train to transport several top rock acts to a series of festival concerts across Canada. Additional to footage on and of the train, the film features performances by The Band and The Grateful Dead, as well as one of the last performances by Janis Joplin, who died shortly after filming was completed. (ffd: Philadelphia Inquirer)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending August 21, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 0.9 percent from the comparable week last year, up 0.8 percent in the East and up 1.0 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included metals up 16.0 percent, non-grain farm products up 7.9 percent and chemicals up 7.4 percent; notable traffic decreases included nonmetallic minerals down 34.5 percent, primary forest products down 11.1 percent and grain down 7.5 percent. Also for the week ending August 21, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 9.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 10.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 0.6 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 19.7 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 27.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through August 21, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 3.4 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 9.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 10.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was unchanged, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 0.5 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 1.6 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(THU) Canadian Pacific announced that it would shortly file to abandon its line between Nipawin, SK. and Choceland, SK., totaling approximately 29 miles in length. (ffd: Nipawin Journal)

(THU) Atlantic & Pacific Railroad agreed to grant Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad trackage rights over approximately 4 miles of line between Chase, KS. and Silica, KS. (ffd: STB)

(THU) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board approved Union Pacific's earlier request to lease, from Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and operate approximately 6 miles of line between Marion, AR. and Memphis, AR. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Honey Creek Railroad filed to abandon its entire line of railroad between Sulfur Springs, IN. and New Castle, IN., totaling approximately 6 miles. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) CSX and the New York & Eastern Railway jointly filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of line in the City of Poughkeepsie, NY. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Union Pacific and the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad jointly filed to abandon approximately 59 miles of line between Healy, KS. and McCracken, KS. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

(MON) Burlington Northern Santa Fe appointed Steve Goodall AVP-North Region Operations. Mr. Goodall was formerly AVP and Chief Engineer-South Region Operations, and will be succeeded in that position by Dave Freeman. (ffd: BNSF Corp.)

* * *

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,
Dave Mears
Cherry Hill, New Jersey, USA