

WEEKLY RAIL RECAP

For the week ending SAT, September 14, 2002

By Dave Mears

(NOTE: This edition a little late, see explanatory note below.)

(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) A passenger train in India derailed while crossing a bridge near Fafiganj, approximately 420 miles southeast of New Delhi. The accident killed at least 118 persons, with the death toll expected to rise as more bodies were recovered. Investigators were still determining the cause of the accident at press time. (ffd: wire services)

(TUE) Countering a proposal for open access, the Canadian Transportation Agency denied an application by Ferroequus Railway to unilaterally operate its trains on Canadian National's line between Camrose, AB. and Port of Prince Rupert, BC. The application had been filed on FE's behalf by the Canadian Wheat Board, which sought increased rail competition to haul grain from Western Canada farms. (ffd: BofLE News)

(TUE) The Association of Regional Railways of Canada, Canada's equivalent of the U.S.'s ASLRRRA, announced that it had established a new confidential membership category to enable regional, shortline and commuter railroads to join their association anonymously. An ARRC spokesman said that the new category had been created "for railroads that might be concerned about how their relationship with Canada's 2 Class 1 railroads [Canadian National and Canadian Pacific) would be affected if they were to become association members." (ffd: Progressive Railroadng)

(WED) Rail and transit organizations throughout the U.S. commemorated the one year anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Amtrak marked the occasion by sounding all locomotive horns for a moment before 8:46AM, the time when the first plane hit the World Trade Center's North Tower, and then observing a minute of silence on board all trains and in its stations and offices. Also marking the occasion was Boston's MA.'s Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which halted all its buses, subway trains and streetcars for a moment of remembrance and reflection. (ffd: wire services)

(WED) Canada's Transport Minister David Collenette announced to that he would continue working to provide better passenger rail services for Canada. Following up the Canadian government's announcement that it would work to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, Mr. Collenette said: "With population growth and congestion, Via Rail Canada has a very good potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by getting cars off the highway. Plus, people want an alternative to Air Canada." Mr. Collenette noted that train travel has become even more important since the September 11 terrorist attacks, after which Via Rail Canada saw growth of more than 70 percent on some services. (ffd: BofLE News)

(THU) Marking the growing importance of trash shipments by rail, CSX was named 23rd overall among the top 100 waste carriers of all modes by Waste News Magazine. The magazine also named CSX highest of all rail carriers. The annual list ranks according to all revenue generated from waste hauling, disposal and transfer. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

(THU) San Francisco, CA.'s Bay Area Rapid Transit subway system marked its 30th anniversary. The system, which was originally 72 miles with 33 stations, is now 95 miles with 39 stations and will shortly expand to 103 miles with 43 stations, attendant with the coming opening of its extension serving San Francisco International Airport. Those on hand for anniversary ceremonies included 6 year old Stephany Ann Marie Ehler, the only baby ever born - inadvertently of course - on a BART train. (ffd: Railway Track and Structures)

(FRI) Amtrak announced that the partial cancellation of its Acela Express services last month had caused it to lose approximately \$9 million in ticket revenue, representing approximately 76,000 passengers. Amtrak took the trainsets out of service following detection of cracks in yaw dampening assemblies in their undercarriages. Amtrak and trainset manufacturer Bombardier have since repaired and restored to service 12 of 15 trainsets. (ffd: wire services)

(SAT) The American Shortline and Regional Railroad Association announced that the first RRIF fund check had been delivered, the recipient being the Mount Hood Railroad in Oregon. A Mount Hood spokesman said that the \$1,005,216 check would be used for track improvements that would allow 286K capacity freight cars to operate on their line. The

Federal Railroad Administration has approved 2 other loans from the fund, which was created by the U.S. government several years ago to help prosper rail infrastructure improvements. (ffd: ASLRRRA)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending September 7, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 4.3 percent from the comparable week last year, up 4.4 percent in the East and up 4.2 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included metallic ores up 22.2 percent, nonmetallic minerals up 16.6 percent, waste and scrap material up 10.9 percent and coal up 4.5 percent; notable traffic decreases included coke down 17.9 percent and primary forest products down 15.3 percent. Also for the week ending September 7, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 7.6 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 4.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 26.1 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 65.4 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 5.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through September 7, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 1.1 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.2 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 3.1 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 9.5 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 1.3 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 5.8 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

None of note this week.

PERSONNEL CHANGES:

None of note this week.

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(CORRECTION: In WRR for the week ending September 7 and re mention of the special Amtrak train carrying U.S. senators and congressman to a special joint session in New York City, I reported that "historians noted that the special session marked only the second time in U.S. history that Congress has held session outside Washington, DC." Larry Kaufman - who I am honored to have as a WRR reader, as he is one of the most literate observers of the railroad industry today - wrote to question if this was truly the case. Since the week ending September 14 was a comparatively slow news week (see above!) and because it is a personal goal of mine to both have and promote a comprehensive knowledge of U.S. history, I decided to take some time to research this. Sure enough, Larry was right; Congress met in regular session in New York City for 2 years, from the start of constitutional government until 1790, after which it moved to Philadelphia. It stayed in Philadelphia until 1800, after which it moved to Washington, DC. So the recent special session in New York City marked not its second session elsewhere than Washington, but rather its first session in New York City since 1790. By the way, the New York Times recently mused, as a measure of how far we've come, that the hot issue of the day in Manhattan that year was "Should the Constitution include, as its first 10 amendments, a Bill of Rights?" whereas it is now "Should smoking be banned in all restaurants and bars?")

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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