

WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For The Week Ending SAT, September 18, 2004

By Dave Mears

(NOTE: The expression "ffd" at the end of a news item represents "for further details" and suggests a reference for further related information.)

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

(SUN) Amtrak debuted its revised and improved website. New features include fare information presented upfront in the booking process, the ability to query train status from the home page and an improved online reservation cancellation and refund process. The website may be found at <<http://www.amtrak.com/>><http://www.amtrak.com/>. (ffd: Amtrak)

(MON) The new Argentine Connection opened in Kansas City, KS. The new connection includes a flyover-type junction with 3 levels of rail traffic: the new bridge at top for Burlington Northern Santa Fe east-west traffic, Union Pacific's High Line bridge in the middle and BNSF's Santa Fe Junction at grade where its east-west and north-south lines cross. The connection, which extends approximately 2 miles between the Kansas City Terminal Railway in Kansas City, MO. and BNSF's Argentine Yard in Kansas City, KS., cost approximately \$60 million to construct. It was funded through bonds issued in Missouri and in Wyandotte County, KS., which will be repaid by KCT over a 20-year period. (ffd: BNSF Corp., Omaha World-Herald)

(TUE) CSX initiated a "quiet zone" on a 4-mile stretch of its line in Chicago, IL. and surrounding suburbs. In the zone and as a result of the installation of improved grade crossing protection devices, locomotive horns will not be sounded unless hazardous or emergency conditions occur. The zone, which is ultimately intended to lessen the number of horn blasts heard by residents on or near the line, was sponsored and funded by the State of Illinois and the Illinois Commerce Commission. (ffd: CSX Corp.)

(WED) The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum in Baltimore, MD. announced that it would reopen the weekend of November 13-14. The museum, which holds an extensive collection of locomotive, cars and related exhibits, has been closed since the snowfall of a February, 2003 blizzard collapsed the roof of its historic roundhouse building. (ffd: B&O Museum)

(THU) Hurricane Ivan made landfall near Mobile, AL., the most recent of several strong hurricanes to have made landfall on the Southeastern U.S. this hurricane season. Railroads in the area made extensive preparations, including CSX suspending service on its line between New Orleans, LA. and Tallahassee, FL. and Norfolk Southern suspending service on its line between Meridian, MS. and Birmingham, AL. Amtrak also suspended its passenger train services north and east out of New Orleans. Earlier in the week, CSX and Union Pacific jointly operated 2 special trains of diesel fuel and gasoline to destinations in Florida hard-hit by earlier Hurricane Frances. (ffd: CSX Corp., Norfolk Southern Corp., Progressive Railroading)

(THU) Washington, DC.'s Metro subway system announced that it would open the 3-mile extension of its Blue Line from Addison Road to Largo Town Center on December 18. Also to open, on November 20, is the new Red Line station at New York Avenue. These expansions are the first for the Washington Metro since the completion of the original 103-mile system in May, 2001. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(FRI) Mexico's Foreign Investment Commission advised that it would not authorize Kansas City Southern's intended acquisition of Grupo TMM's shares of Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana Railway. A spokesman for KCS and TMM called the FIC's decision "not in the spirit of the North American Free Trade Agreement," adding that they would seek reconsideration of the decision and remained confident that the acquisition would ultimately be approved. The Mexican FIC must approve transactions in which a foreign company becomes majority owner of a Mexican-based company. (ffd: Railway Age)

STATS:

(THU) For the week ending September 11, which included the Labor Day Holiday this year, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 7.5 percent from the previous year, down 15.4 percent in the East and down 1.1 percent in the West. Also for the week ending September 11, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 8.8 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 5.9 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 10.4 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was up 20.9 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 30.9 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through September 11, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 3.2 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic as up 9.4 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 8.5 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 0.1 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was up 1.2 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 3.7 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) The U.S. Surface Transportation Board granted approved CSX's earlier application to abandon its Beaver Creek Spur, totaling approximately 2 miles of line in and near Dunleary, KY. (ffd: STB)

(THU) Alliance Terminal Railroad filed to lease, from Burlington Northern Santa Fe, and operate approximately 13 miles of line between Haslet, TX. and Saginaw, TX. (ffd: STB)

PERSONNEL CHANGES AND ALIKE:

(THU) The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees elected Freddie Simpson President and Perry Geller Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Simpson and Mr. Geller's election makes permanent their earlier appointments as acting president and secretary-treasurer. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

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Weekly Rail Review is edited from public news sources and published weekly for 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,
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