

## WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the week ending SAT, September 20, 2003

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 Central Georgia Railroad confirmed having incurred an on-duty employee fatality the previous Friday. Thomas Boyd, Age 45, was killed while switching cars near the SP Newsprint plant in Laurens County, GA. A spokesman for the Central Georgia said that the circumstances of the accident were still under investigation. (ffd: Dublin Courier Herald)

(MON) The U.S. Attorneys Office in Houston, TX. indicted United Transportation Union President Byron Boyd, UTU Special Assistant to the President John Rookard, former UTU President Charles Little and former UTU Director of Insurance Ralph Dennis. The four were charged with conspiring to violate federal mail fraud and wire fraud statutes, and commercial state bribery statutes, by using their positions to solicit and collect cash payments and other things of value from attorneys doing business with the UTU over a 7 year period beginning in 1995. Following release of the indictments, Mr. Boyd issued a statement declaring the charges "unfounded", adding that he had "every intention to pursue this matter to a final and full conclusion that completely exonerates (him)." (ffd: USDOJ, UTU)

(MON) Kansas City Southern announced that it had begun discussions with Grupo TMM to resolve their dispute related to KCS's bid to buy TMM's 41 percent interest in Mexican railroad Transportation Ferroviaria Mexicana, which KCS already owns a 39 percent interest in. The move follows TMM's rejection last month of KCS's offer last April to buy the Mexican railroad for between \$400 million and \$580 million. KCS had earlier announced interest in combining with TFM and the Texas-Mexican Railway to form a new railroad, tentatively named "Nafta Rail", linking Kansas City in the U.S. with Mexico City in Mexico. (ffd: Kansas City Business Journal)

(MON) The Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees announced that their leadership had voted to pursue merger discussions with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In a prepared statement, the BMWWE noted that its discussions follow the planned merger between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Teamsters, which is now pending BLE membership approval later this year. The statement noted that the "resources of the three unions would significantly improve their power to negotiate wages, benefits and working conditions." (ffd: IBT)

(TUE) The Long Island Rail Road and the Metro North Railroad announced that they would begin removing pay phones installed several years ago in cars of their commuter rail car fleets. A spokesman for the LIRR's and MNRR's parent, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said that the pay phones were being removed as a result of their having fallen into disuse due to the widespread ownership and use of personal cell phones. (ffd: WCBS Radio)

(TUE) BNSF Logistics, a subsidiary of Burlington Northern Santa Fe, announced that it would acquire MRS Company of Godfrey, IL. MRS was launched in 1985 by Michael Solomon, who will now become VP-Marketing and Sales of BNSF Logistics. A spokesman said that MRS would continue to operate as a unit of BNSF Logistics, the latter based in Springdale, AR. (ffd: Dallas Business Journal)

(TUE) The New York Transit Museum reopened to the public. The museum, which is operated by the New York City Transit Authority and showcases both historic and contemporary exhibits related to the city's bus and subway services, had been closed for the past 2 years for renovation. The museum is located in a subway station abandoned years ago at Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn. (ffd: New York Times)

(TUE) British Prime Minister Tony Blair presided at a ceremonial opening of the first half of Britain's new high-speed rail line for Channel Tunnel trains. This first portion of the line, operating between the Tunnel near Dover and County Kent and totaling 46 miles in length, will start service on September 28. The remaining portion, from County Kent and to include tunneling under the suburbs and city of London to a terminus at St. Pancras Station, remains under construction and is projected to open in 2007. (ffd: Agence France-Presse)

(WED) 6 unions representing Amtrak workers announced plans for a 1 day work stoppage on October 3 to protest the U.S. Congress's failure so far to approve Amtrak's FY2004 appropriations request of \$1.812 billion. A spokesman for the unions said that they also wanted to use the occasion to call the public's attention to Amtrak's "chronic underfunding." However, a spokesman for Amtrak said that it would seek an injunction against the planned stoppage. (ffd: NARP)

(THU) Railroads made emergency preparations as Hurricane Isabel came ashore near Cape Hatteras, NC. as a Category 2 hurricane. Norfolk Southern held trains normally scheduled to move into eastern Virginia and North Carolina and curtailed operations in storm-affected areas. CSX halted operations on and removed locomotives from all CSX lines east of its Richmond, VA. to Jacksonville, FL. main lines. Related to CSX's actions, Amtrak suspended service between the Northeast and Florida. Amtrak also operated reduced service on its Northeast Corridor Line and suspended Keystone service west of Philadelphia, PA. due to many downed trees on its Harrisburg Line. Washington, DC.'s Metro suspended bus and subway service on Thursday and commuter rail operators MARC and VRE suspended service on Thursday and Friday. (ffd: NARP, wire services)

(THU) Australian public officials presided at a ceremony marking the linking of the newly constructed rail line between the cities of Darwin and Alice Springs with the existing rail line between Alice Springs and Adelaide. When completed later this year, the lines will form a north-south transcontinental rail route across Australia. The new line is expected to open for freight service next January and for passenger service next February. (ffd: Australian Broadcasting Corporation)

#### STATS:

(MON) For the week ending September 13, U.S. carload rail traffic was unchanged from the comparable week last year, up 0.1 percent in the East, but down 0.1 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included coke up 40.2 percent, clay and glass products up 10.8 percent and pulp and paper products up 6.1 percent; notable traffic decreases included metallic ores down 18.5 percent and non-grain farm products down 10.8 percent. Also for the week ending September 13, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 3.1 percent, totaling 206,943 units, a new weekly U.S. record. Also for the week, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.2 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 1.5 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 9.4 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 0.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through September 13, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.3 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.2 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.4 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 7.8 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 0.3 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 21.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

#### ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) Pursuant to an earlier agreement between them, Union Pacific granted Burlington Northern Santa Fe trackage rights on UP's Corpus Christi Subdivision for the purpose of accessing the new Toyota plant near San Antonio, TX. (ffd: STB)

(MON) The SWKR Railroad filed to abandon approximately 20 miles of line between Curtis, AZ. and Charleston, AZ. (ffd: STB)

(THU) The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority announced the acquisition, from CSX, of approximately 2 miles of line in East Braintree, MA. The line segment will be used for the eventual extension of Greenbush commuter rail line service to the Massachusetts communities of Weymouth, Hingham, Cohasset and Scituate. (ffd: RT&S)

#### CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(MON) The Bush Administration nominated Robert Crandall, Louis Thompson and Floyd Hall to fill vacancies on the Amtrak Board of Directors. Mr. Crandall is a former chairman and CEO of American Airlines. Mr. Thompson was employed with the U.S. Department of Transportation and involved with railroad matters there from the late 1960's through 1986, and is most recently with the World Bank. Mr. Hall is from a merchandising career and is also a prominent Republican Party fundraiser. (ffd: NARP)

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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 [weeklyrailreview@aol.com](mailto:weeklyrailreview@aol.com) to receive it, with my compliments.

HAVE A SAFE AND PROSPEROUS WEEK,  
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