

## WEEKLY RAIL REVIEW

For the week ending SAT, September 27, 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):

(SUN) Area rail service resumed after a side collision between a Burlington Northern Santa Fe freight train and a Union Pacific freight train the previous Friday near Ostrander, WA. The accident derailed 6 cars of the BNSF train and 20 cars of the UP train. No injuries were reported in the accident, the cause of which is still under investigation. (ffd: Seattle Times)

(SUN) Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov signed a decree creating the quasi-public Russian Railways Co., to be known in the English language by its Russian acronym RZD. The new company will take over most of the assets and functions of the nation's Railway Ministry, including 87,000 kilometers of track. The company will be headed by former Railways Minister Gennady Fadeyev, who stated that his first goal would be improved coordination of railway services. (ffd: Moscow Times)

(MON) The head of operations of Canadian Pacific Railway called for the world's railways to adopt a uniform international system for planning and executing railway operations. Speaking at an international conference on railway operations in Calgary, AB., CPR SVP-Operations Neal Foot urged railroads to shift away from tonnage-based operations and toward fully integrated and scheduled operations. "By building a coordinated, integrated and scheduled freight railway system, we as an industry will enhance rail's already inherent qualities of speed, safety, energy and labor efficiency," Mr. Foot said.

(MON) California's Caltrain announced a new fare structure and proof-of-payment system for its commuter rail service south out of San Francisco, CA. The new fare structure includes 6 13-mile fare zones and validation of tickets for 4 hours from the time of sale. Also under the new fare structure, Caltrain will no longer sell tickets onboard trains. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(MON) Canadian Transport Minister David Collenette called "obscene" a recently publicized Canadian National Railway internal memo instructing employees to refer to the company only by the initials "CN." Mr. Collenette, a longtime supporter of improved rail passenger and freight services in Canada, went on to call CN "a great Canadian institution, one of the best railways in North America (that) shouldn't apologize for being Canadian." A CN spokesman referred to the controversy as a "tempest in a teapot". (ffd: Canadian Press)

(MON) The New York City Transit Authority announced that it would retire the 88 remaining "Redbird" subway cars still in service by the end of next month. Once retired, the cars will be cleaned, stripped and dumped in the Atlantic Ocean to create artificial reefs for fish, as have approximately 1,100 other "Redbirds." The cars were built in the early 1960's for the subway system's IRT lines. (ffd: New York Daily News)

(MON) The Railway Supply Institute opened its recently relocated offices at 50 F St. in Northwest Washington, DC. RSI's relocation places it in the same building as the Association of American Railroads and the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association, the latter having moved to 50 F St. earlier this year. (ffd: AAR)

(TUE) The Transportation Communications Union said that it would not participate in the proposed October 3 Amtrak work stoppage called for the previous week by 6 other rail unions to protest the U.S. Congress's underfunding of Amtrak. The TCU represents approximately one-half of Amtrak's unionized employees. Amtrak had earlier said that it would file for an injunction against the proposed work stoppage. (ffd: NARP, wire services)

(TUE) The U.S. Western Governors Association released a statement of support for Amtrak and for improved U.S. passenger rail services. The statement said that "the (state) governors strongly urge the federal government to stabilize intercity passenger rail in the short term, work with the states to determine the structure of the system for the long term, and provide funding and leadership for the future of national intercity passenger rail (service)." (ffd: NARP)

(TUE) A spokesman for New Jersey Transit declined to specify a date for the start of revenue service on the new light rail line between Trenton, NJ. and Camden, NJ. The spokesman, Lynn Bowersox, cited the need for additional testing of signals and training of operators as one reason for the delay. The 34 mile line was originally scheduled for opening in 2002. (ffd: Courier-Post)

(WED) Burlington Northern Santa Fe incurred an on-duty employee fatality. Todd Mohler, Age 35 with 2 years' BNSF service, was killed while switching cars in BNSF's Calway Yard in Fresno, CA. A BNSF spokesman said that the accident is under investigation. (ffd: Fresno Bee)

(WED) Atlanta, GA. was designated the nation's first-ever "Freight Rail Smart Zone". The designation, made by Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue and by representatives of the Association of American Railroads, CSX, Norfolk Southern and the City of Atlanta, recognized Atlanta for its role as a vital U.S. freight rail hub. The designation went on to note that over 2 million freight cars annually pass through Atlanta and that both CSX and Norfolk Southern have recently opened state-of-the-art intermodal rail facilities in the Atlanta area. (ffd: AAR)

(WED) Groundbreaking was held for a new rail station adjacent to Oakland, CA.'s Oakland Coliseum. The new station, which is expected to be completed by next spring, will be used by Amtrak Capitol Corridor trains and include a direct link to the Bay Area Rapid Transit subway system. (ffd: NARP)

(WED) New York City officials unveiled plans for the redevelopment of the former New York Central West Side elevated rail line in Manhattan. The plans call for the line to be renovated as a public space and to be the centerpiece of new residential and commercial development surrounding it. The line, which is 1.6 miles in length and runs from Gansevoort Street to 34th Street, was last used for rail freight service in the early 1980's. (ffd: New York Times)

(WED) Union Pacific Railroad was cited by Working Mother Magazine as one of the nation's 100 best employers for working mothers. The magazine noted that UP offered several programs for working parents and was also currently constructing a 20,000 square foot child care facility as part of its new headquarters building. A UP spokesman noted that this was the second time the company had been so recognized in the past 3 years. (ffd: UP Corp.)

(THU) The Association of American Railroads's Network Efficiency Management Committee approved new timelines under which all railroads, including regionals and shortlines, must meet minimum event reporting standards. The new timelines call for all railroads to, by January 1, 2004, report car release, actual placement and interchange receipt and delivery events within 24 hours. The committee also said that it would issue new timeliness standards later this year that all railroads would need to meet by January 1, 2005. (ffd: Progressive Railroading)

(THU) In an unusual public promotion for a freight railroad, regional and shortline conglomerate RailAmerica distributed whistles to the first 10,000 fans through the gates at the Florida Marlins major league baseball game held this date. The whistles, which imitate a train whistle sound, had RailAmerica's logo on one side and the Marlins's logo on the other. The promotion was coordinated with the scheduled appearance of Marlins pitcher Dontrelle Willis, whose nickname is "D Train". (ffd: Miami Herald)

(FRI) The U.S. Congress temporarily extended funding for the Transportation Equity Act, commonly known as TEA-21, until February 29, 2004. The extended funding, which will be on a pro rated basis, continues funding from the original act that was set to expire on September 30. During the extension, Congress will debate a 6-year reauthorization of the act. (ffd: Railway Age)

(FRI) Norfolk Southern announced a special voluntary separation program for its management employees. The buyout, which is similar to one offered by NS approximately 3 years ago, offers 3 weeks salary for each year of service and continued health insurance for one year beyond separation. In announcing the program, NS SVP-Administration Jim Hixon said that the program "is designed to achieve a reduction in overall staff...to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of NS's non-agreement workforce." (ffd: NS Corp.)

#### STATS:

(THU) For the week ending September 20, U.S. carload rail traffic was up 1.7 percent from the comparable week last year, down 1.0 percent in the East - which suffered some rail service curtailments related to Hurricane Isabel - and up 3.9 percent in the West. This week this year versus this week last year, notable traffic increases included coke up 35.0 percent, grain up 23.7 percent and waste and scrap up 8.8 percent; notable traffic decreases included metals down 11.7 percent and metallic ores down 9.6 percent. Also for the week ending September 20, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was down 1.5 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was up 1.7 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was down 3.5 percent, Mexico's Transportacion Ferroviaria Mexicana's carload rail traffic was down 17.1 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was down 10.3 percent, all when ranked with the comparable week last year.

For the period January 1 through September 20, U.S. carload rail traffic was down 0.3 percent, U.S. intermodal rail traffic was up 5.0 percent, Canadian carload rail traffic was down 1.3 percent, Canadian intermodal rail traffic was up 7.5 percent, TFM's carload rail traffic was down 0.8 percent and TFM's intermodal rail traffic was up 20.0 percent, all when ranked with the comparable period last year. (ffd: AAR)

#### ACQUISITIONS, ABANDONMENTS AND ALIKE:

(MON) CSX filed to abandon approximately 17 miles of line between Black Creek, AL. and West Jefferson, AL. (ffd: STB)

(WED) Norfolk Southern filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of line between Bluestone, WV. and Pocahontas, VA. (ffd: STB)

(THU) Burlington Northern Santa Fe granted trackage rights to Union Pacific over the following lines: 1) the Dalhart Subdivision between Dalhart, TX. and Texline, TX. and the Twin Peaks Subdivision between Texline, TX. and Trinidad, CO., both totaling approximately 171 miles 2) the Pikes Peak Subdivision between Bragdon, CO. and Pueblo, CO., totaling approximately 13 miles 3) the Spanish Peaks Subdivision between Pueblo Jct., CO. and Southern Jct., CO., totaling approximately 6 miles. The purpose of these trackage rights is to allow BNSF and UP to implement directional running over lines between Pueblo, CO. and Amarillo, TX. (ffd: STB)

(THU) CSX filed to abandon approximately 24 miles of line between Waresboro, GA. and Atkinson, GA. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) East Tennessee Railway filed to lease, from CSX, and operate approximately 5 miles of CSX's Johnson City Lead and Carnegie Spur lines in Washington County, TN. (ffd: STB)

(FRI) Union Pacific filed to abandon approximately 2 miles of its Creamery Spur line in Tempe, AZ. (ffd: STB)

CHANGING PEOPLE AND PLACES:

(THU) New York State's Metropolitan Transportation Authority appointed James Dermody President of the Long Island Rail Road. Mr. Dermody is a 45 year veteran of the LIRR, having started as an agent/operator at LIRR's Mastic, NY. station. Mr. Dermody had been LIRR's acting president since the retirement of Ken Bauer last March and was previously LIRR's Chief Transportation Officer. (ffd: Newsday)

(FRI) Robert DeMarco was elected president of Railway System Suppliers, Inc., the trade association representing suppliers in the railway signaling and communications field. Mr. DeMarco is a SVP with Simmons-Boardman Publishing Co., the publisher of Railway Age, Railway Track and Structures, and International Railway Journal. (ffd: Railway Age)

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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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