

FIRST CLASS MAIL

“THE DANVILLE FLYER”

DANVILLE IL 61834-1013

P.O. BOX 1013

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER



After the last meeting members visited the O Gauge layout of Secretary Al McCoy. Al recently constructed the new layout in the basement of his recently acquired home. Members had a great time, even your Editor and Treasurer had a slight derailment when the Editor's train rear-ended Allen's stopped train. So much for command control.

# DANVILLE FLYER

*A PUBLICATION OF THE DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, INC. NRHS*

The *DANVILLE FLYER* is published monthly by the DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER of the NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY for its members and other interested persons.

The DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER, NRHS, is a not-for-profit corporation organized to preserve the history of railroading in Eastern Illinois and Western Indiana and operates a museum located in the former Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad depot on East Benton Street in Rossville, Illinois. The museum is open weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day and features many railroad displays plus a large operating HO model railroad.

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading. Dues per year are \$17.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$20.00 for NRHS membership. Meetings are held on the third (3rd) Sunday of each month (except June, July, August and December) at the Pizza Inn Restaurant, Gilbert Street (Illinois Route 1) and Williams Street, next to CSX, in Danville, IL, with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

## OFFICERS FOR 2003 - Our 35th Year

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EDITOR: Richard M. Schroeder, rmschroeder@att.net PUBLISHERS: Allen Cooke & Doug Nipper

1819 Coventry Dr.

Cooke Business Products, Inc.

Champaign, IL 61822-5239

John Cooke Sr., Honorary Member

MEMBER: Association of Illinois Museums and Historical Societies

Visit our Chapter WWW Home Page On-Line - <http://www.prairienet.org/djc-nrhs/>

Volume 35

January 2003

Number 1

### *January 19, 2003*

**Danville, IL - Regular monthly meeting beginning at 1:00 PM at the Pizza Inn, Williams Street and Gilbert Street (Route 1), next to the CSX mainline to Hillary.**

### *January 18 & 19, 2003*

Indianapolis, IN - Great American Train Show - Indiana State Fairgrounds, 11 AM to 5 PM (EST), admission \$7.

### *January 26, 2003*

Noblesville, IN NMRA Midwestern Meet and Train Show, Hamilton Co. 4-H Center, 2003 Pleasant St, 10 AM to 4 PM, admission \$3.

### *Every Sunday in January*

Elmhurst, IL - Elmhurst Model Railroad Club, 111 E. First St., 1 to 4 PM, Free.

### *March 29 & 30, 2003*

Urbana, IL - Annual Train Show and Swap Session, Lincoln Square Mall, 10 AM to 6 PM on Saturday; 11 AM to 5 PM on Sunday. Admission Free.

### *Operating Sessions*

**See Page 3 for a list of operating sessions at Rossville, the Grafton, Davis and Mt. Storm Railroad and the Danville and Western Railroad. Note changes in some dates for the sessions.**

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be January 19, 2003. We enter our 35th year of existence this month. For those of us that started the chapter it seems like only yesterday we formed the first chapter in Illinois, moved from Catlin to Rossville and developed the fine museum we have today. We are pleased to have so many members, both close and far away, and look forward to another 35 years (some of us at least) of continued railroad history in this part of Illiana country..

Your editor wishes to apologize for listing the wrong date of the annual dinner last month. The first page listed December 8 and the article about the dinner listed December 1, the actual date. Hopefully you had picked the right date but I did not find out until it was too late to change. If you missed the dinner you missed a good



program, if I say so myself. This spring and summer if everything falls into place, CSX will add the third track in Blue Island and I will present a program on that project.

As noted in previous issues, Atlas Corporation will be bringing out C&EI GP-7's sometime early this year. The notice has been released and numbers 204 and 206 will be produced along with an unnumbered unit. The C&EI Historical Society has notified members that the unit is available through the society and anyone in the Chapter that is interested please contact Rick Schroeder or Bob McQuown.

The program this month will be a video, "The North Coast Limited Crossing Stampede Pass" from Allen Cooke.

## Galesburg Railroad Days liability concerns aired by BNSF

Burlington Northern Santa Fe, which has been a major sponsor of the annual Railroad Days festival in Galesburg, Ill., is asking the city to shoulder some of the liability burden for the event.

That concerns the organizers of the festival, who fear that they may have to scale back the event that draws about 50,000 people each year.

"For the first time in 26 years, it is no longer business as usual," Railroad Days Council Chairman Jamie Bjorkland told the Peoria (Ill.) Journal-Star. "We could continue to call it Almost Railroad Days or Railroad Days Sorta."

BNSF has offered to continue moving historic equipment to Galesburg for free, to provide display space for the exhibits, and to operate excursions in conjunction with Railroad Days, BNSF spokesman Steve Forsberg told TRAINS. But in order for BNSF to maintain that level of involvement, the city will have to take on some of the liability for the event, he said.

"The issue we raised with the community

is that we don't think we can continue to bear as much of the liability that we feel we're exposed to at this event," Forsberg said. "What we're looking for the city to do is play a more prominent role in that area."

The September 11 terrorist attacks, and subsequent warnings about terrorists targeting transportation and railroads, prompted BNSF to review liability issues in general, Forsberg said.

"We're willing to continue to play the same role that we have," he said. "I don't think we're willing to do so by bearing all of the liability associated with those activities."

Bjorkland said he understands BNSF's position. "It's a sign of the times," he told the newspaper. "We've had an excellent relationship with the railroad. There are no bad feelings with the railroad."

Railroad Days is held on the fourth weekend of June.

*Via Trains On-Line 11-21-02*

*Editor: URS is one of 5 firms that submitted on a Galesburg proposal to relocate the former Santa Fe line around the downtown area. Galesburg has obtained a state grant to prepare a feasibility study for the relocation of the double-track mainline of the BNSF. Three routes are to be determined and the cost and feasibility of each route. We should find out sometime in January if we were accepted for the project. The study is to be complete by the end of July. Rick*

The officers of the  
Danville Junction  
Chapter wish you  
and your family a  
Happy New Year

## Operating Sessions 2002/2003

*Grafton, Davis and Mt.  
Storm*  
*309 E. Dale St. Rossville*

Operates from 12:30 to 4 PM,

**Saturday, December 28**

Saturday, January 25, 2003

Saturday, February 22, 2003

*Chicago, Illinois and  
Eastern - Rossville  
Museum*

Operates Saturdays from 1:00 to 4 PM

**Saturday, January 4, 2003**

Saturday, February 1, 2003

Saturday, March 1, 2003

*Danville and Western  
Railroad*  
*1819 Coventry Dr.  
Champaign*

Operates Sundays from 1:00 to 4 PM

**Sunday, January 12, 2003**

Sunday, February 9, 2003

Please contact the owner of the railroad, Bill at 748-6445 or Rick, at 359-2868, if you intend to markup on the board for operation on one of these days. Refreshments will be served at all facilities. Come and join the fun at any of the above model railroads.

*Note the openhouse of the Elmhurst Model Railroad club in Elmhurst listed in the Coming Events column. If interested in visiting on a Sunday let us know at the next meeting.*

## NS aims to create shortcut in Pennsylvania

It's not often that a railroad can shave more than 100 miles off an existing route by building about 5 miles of new track. But that's just what Norfolk Southern is proposing to do in western Pennsylvania, where a new 5 1/4-mile line would create a shortcut by linking the NS Conemaugh Line with NS's isolated Shelocta Secondary.

The driving force behind the \$30 million project is coal and the roundabout route it must take from the Monongahela coal fields of southwestern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia to the Reliant Energy Keystone Generating Plant in Shelocta, Pa., a small place just northwest of the city of Indiana, Pa., and about 50 miles by the most direct highway route northeast from Pittsburgh.

The project in late November received a favorable preliminary environmental review from the Surface Transportation Board, and while public comment has not yet been received by the Board, it is likely to approve the project. NS says the new route will make operations more efficient, increase capacity, and enable it to snare some coal traffic that now moves to the power plant by truck.

Currently, NS sends about five loaded coal trains a week to the plant on what it calls the Northern Route, which goes a roundabout way through the mountains: northeast from the Pittsburgh area, then east, then southwest to Shelocta, which is on a branch that presently dead-ends beyond there, 5 miles short of the Conemaugh Line. (The Conemaugh, a former Pennsylvania Railroad route, is a secondary main line, an alternate to NS's former PRR east-west main between the Pittsburgh and [Pa.] areas.)

The coal loads begin their trip at Shire Oaks Yard in Elrama, Pa., on NS's Mon Line along the Monongahela River south of Pittsburgh, and make their way up through Pittsburgh to Freeport Junction, Pa., on the Conemaugh Line. From there

they move by trackage rights on two of the Genesee & Wyoming family's short lines, first the Pittsburgh & Shawmut northeast to West Mosgrove, Pa., where they must climb up to gain the Buffalo & Pittsburgh's high Allegheny River bridge. From there they proceed east on the B&P to Riker Yard near Punxsutawney, Pa., then use B&P's Riker Running Track to nearby Cloe, Pa., where they gain a former B&O branch, still owned by CSX, and head southwest to Creekside, Pa. From Creekside on southwest to the Keystone plant, the ex-B&O line is owned by NS as the Shelocta Secondary, inherited from Conrail.

For the coal loads and then the empties, it's a round trip of 443 miles. NS's new proposed so-called Southern Route, which would be made possible by construction of the new 5 1/4-mile connection, would trim that to a 341-mile round trip. NS labels the proposed new link the Saltsburg Connection. It would diverge northeast from the Conemaugh Line at Saltsburg, gaining the Shelocta Secondary at Clarksburg. The track exists from Clarksburg to Shelocta, 11 miles, but is out of service and would be rebuilt. NS tabs the total cost of the project at \$30 million, \$20 million of which would be for the Saltsburg Connection, plus the rehabilitation of the 11-mile segment and a new connection to the Keystone plant's spur.

After the Saltsburg Connection is built, the trains would follow their existing route on the Conemaugh Line to Freeport but continue east on the Conemaugh to Saltsburg.

The new route would do more than simply knock miles off the trip. NS hauls 2.3 million tons of coal a year to the Keystone plant, but the plant receives about half its coal by truck — 2.2 million tons of central Pennsylvania coal a year. NS figures it can snag at least some of that truck-hauled coal by building the connection.

The present Northern Route is curvy and has a ruling grade of 1.83%. Coal trains are limited to 100 cars and require 4 six-axle locomotives with self-steering trucks, or 8 four-axle units. The proposed Southern Route, with grades not exceeding 1%, will be able to handle 130-car trains with just

3 six-axle units, NS says.

That means NS could haul 2.3 million tons a year to the plant using just 164 130-car unit trains on the Southern Route, vs. 213 100-car trains on the Northern Route. The existing route is also operating at capacity, NS says, hindering its ability to send more coal to the plant. But the new route could handle seven longer trains a week, NS says. Once the STB approves the project, it would take about 18 months for NS to complete construction and open the route, NS spokesman Rudy Husband said.

The project essentially will reverse the traffic flow on the Shelocta Secondary, which was built by the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh to haul coal from area mines northward to the Great Lakes at Buffalo and Rochester.

CSX inherited former BR&P lines through BR&P successor Baltimore & Ohio, and spun off the route to Genesee & Wyoming's Buffalo & Pittsburgh as part of a lease and purchase transaction in 1988. B&P stopped serving the Ridge and Indiana Subdivisions — which includes the route from Cloe to Shelocta and Clarksburg — in 1994.

A year later, Conrail purchased the Ridge Sub and leased the connecting portion of the Indiana Sub from CSX (for whom it was also isolated) so CR could haul coal to the Keystone plant. All the Conrail lines in this region went to NS in the 1999 Conrail split, which created the isolated 30-mile route NS operates today between Cloe and Shelocta and must access by trackage rights.

[Via Trains On-Line 11-22-02](#)

*Editor: This is the design project we have been working on for the last 3 years. Originally NS wanted to complete the design and start construction within one year but environmental, geological, historical and other permitting has extended the project this long. In addition, the acquisition of right of way played a major part in the process. In some locations NS had to acquire an entire farm just to get the strip they needed for roadbed.*

*The alignment will follow along the east side of Black Leg Creek and on the adjacent hillsides, crossing the creek at Clarksburg. Three bridge structures are required and about 1 million yards of material will be moved. At the present time we are preparing final plans and hopefully NS will be showing the project to contractors this next spring.*

## **Sleeping crew caused fatal CN Michigan collision, NTSB says**

The head-on collision of two Canadian National trains last year in Michigan, which killed two crewmen, was caused when the surviving crewmen fell asleep and missed a stop signal, the National Transportation Safety Board concluded on November 19.

Prior to the November 15, 2001, crash 25 miles northwest of Detroit at Andersonville on the Holly Subdivision of CN's Grand Trunk Western, engineer Allen Yash and conductor Jesse Enriquez both had been diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea, a rare disorder that causes afflicted people to momentarily stop breathing while sleeping. The condition also makes people feel extremely fatigued and may make them nod off during the day. The diagnosis was made by their private physicians and was not reported to CN officials, the NTSB said.

The two men fell asleep around 6 a.m. while in charge of train 533 on its southward return leg of a turn from Detroit to Durand, Mich., and back to connect with mainline intermodal trains. The train had 94 cars behind GTW GP38s 4922 and 4913 and was supposed to hold at Andersonville siding for northward train 243 to pass. Train 243, bound from Flat Rock, Mich., south of Detroit, to Flint, east of Durand, had 89 cars of multilevel autoracks and general merchandise behind GTW SD40 5915 and GP38 4031

Instead of stopping, train 533 ran through the end of the siding and was moving at 13 mph when it collided with train 243, which was traveling about 25 mph, the NTSB said.

The crew of the 243 – engineer Thomas Landris and conductor Gary Chase – was killed. Yash and Enriquez were both critically injured. Neither has returned to work, and the CN disciplinary process regarding the case is nearing a conclusion, the railroad said.

The NTSB recommended that the Federal Railroad Administration develop a standard medical form to ask whether railroaders suffered from sleep conditions. The board also urged FRA require that employees with incapacitating medical conditions notify the railroad and stop working in safety-sensitive positions until they are successfully treated.

The NTSB also recommended that CN require formal fatigue awareness training for its workers.

“We'll take the NTSB recommendations under advisement,” said CN spokesman Jack Burke, who noted that CN leads industry efforts to provide predictable schedules for train crews.

*Via Trains On-Line 11-20-02*

## **Union Pacific Plans Elmhurst Signal Upgrade**

Omaha, NE, Dec. 2, 2002 – Union Pacific Railroad plans a major signal upgrade in Elmhurst that will reduce the need to stop or park freight trains in the western suburbs of Chicago. The new system will allow freight trains to leave or arrive simultaneously at Union Pacific's major freight switching yard in Melrose Park.

The work temporarily will impact operations in Elmhurst from December 6 to December 12 as passing trains will be slowed to 20 miles per hour. Trains also will sound their horns while passing through the work zone.

The Federal Railroad Workers Safety Act requires that every train sound its horn when approaching employees working on railroad property. The result will be that every train passing through Elmhurst will

have to sound its horn until the project is finished.

To expedite the project, work will take place 24 hours a day with 40 people working each shift.

The project will involve seven crossings in Elmhurst east of West Avenue. Poplar Street will be closed and at times the signal warning times at the Myrtle, Maple, Cottage Hill, York, Kenilworth and Haven crossings could be reduced.

Union Pacific Corporation is one of America's leading transportation companies. Its principal operating company, Union Pacific Railroad, is the largest railroad in North America, covering 23 states across the western two-thirds of the United States. A strong focus on quality and a strategically advantageous route structure enable the company to serve customers in critical and fast growing markets. It is a leading carrier of low-sulfur coal used in electrical power generation and has broad coverage of the large chemical-producing areas along the Gulf Coast. With competitive long-haul routes between all major West Coast ports and eastern gateways, and as the only railroad to serve all six gateways to Mexico, Union Pacific has the premier rail franchise in North America. The Corporation's trucking operations include Overnite Corporation, which owns its less-than-truckload carriers Overnite Transportation and Motor Cargo.

### **Early Issue?**

DUE TO OPERATING SESSIONS AT BILL'S, THE ROSSVILLE MUSEUM AND RICK'S LAYOUTS YOUR EDITOR DECIDED, WITH HELP FROM DOUG AND ALLEN, TO PRODUCE THE JANUARY ISSUE LATE IN DECEMBER. NOW WE ARE LIKE THE MAGAZINES, GETTING THE NEXT ISSUE OUT THE PREVIOUS MONTH. IMPRESSED? I KNOW YOU ARE.

WITH THE ANNUAL DINNER EARLY THIS MONTH, WORK SCHEDULE AND THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SEASON A SHORTER TIME AFTER THANKSGIVING, PRODUCING A DECEMBER ISSUE JUST DID NOT FIT THE EDITOR'S SCHEDULE. PLEASE NOTE THE NEXT MEETING AND BE SURE TO ATTEND.

## Norfolk Southern Announces Planned 2003 Capital Spending

NORFOLK, VA - Norfolk Southern Corporation plans to spend \$798 million for capital improvements in 2003.

“We are continuing our solid commitment to safety and service during challenging economic times with spending levels designed to keep our system strong and our service steadily improving,” said David R. Goode, chairman, president and chief executive officer. “At the same time, we are improving the utilization of the assets we already have, which will allow us to handle increased levels of business in the future.”

The anticipated spending includes \$499 million for roadway projects and \$246 million for equipment. In roadway improvements, the largest expenditure will be \$383 million for rail, crosstie, ballast and bridge programs. In addition, there is \$29 million provided for communications, signal and electrical projects and \$20 million for environmental projects and public improvements such as grade crossing separations and crossing signal upgrades.

Other roadway projects include \$36 million for marketing and industrial development initiatives, including increasing track capacity and access to coal receivers and vehicle production and distribution facilities, and continuing investments in intermodal infrastructure.

Equipment spending includes \$183 million to purchase 100 six-axle locomotives, upgrade existing locomotives and certify and rebuild multi-level automobile racks. Equipment spending also includes \$47 million for projects related to computers and information technology, including allocations for additional security and backup systems.

*Via Norfolk Southern 12-10-02*

## Welcome to the December Locomotion.

In early November another ex CSX GP38 went to the Iowa Interstate. It was LLPX 2039 wearing Chessie paint that was pretty clean. It has frame #7274-28. The blue card shows it as being the ex-CSX 2119.

This past week, another IC SD40-2 emerged in CN paint. The 6117 now wears the orange and black scheme with the URL to CN's website. I spotted this unit all fresh and clean on 2 December 02. It has ten-inch “IC” letters on the cab. The 6114 has also received the CN treatment but with the smaller six-inch “IC”, again with the inconsistencies in lettering.

I had mentioned the 6108 last time. I finally had the chance to run it late last month. It was repainted and rewired and released for service 8 November 02. This unit has a six-inch “IC” on the cab sides below the road number. In compliance with the new EPA emissions rules for locomotives, this unit has received EPA certification. CN has contracted with GE to perform these mandatory certifications.

The decal applied to the sides of the units tested state; “EPA Certified ABT 40 CFR Part 92 Subpart D by GE” This unit was serviced at Alstom.

The former KCS units slowly continue to get renumbered and lettered. A correction, the 6633 became the GTW 5950 on 28 February 02, not the 6631. The 6631 became the GTW 5948 on 19 May 02; 6627 became the GTW 5944 8 November 02; 6637 became the GTW 5954 7 June 02.

As the new Dash 9's have been placed into service, the GCFX 6000 series Alstom SD40-3's have been cascaded down to the Wisconsin Central to replace retired SD45's. As part of CN's latest round of “cost effective” measures, it appears that both the Stevens Point and North Fond du Lac locomotive shops on the Wisconsin Central Division will be downgraded to running repair facilities. The heavy repair work will be transferred to Woodcrest. Gee, I wonder if I was the only one who saw this coming (sic). Some 30 or so employees will be offered transfers to Woodcrest.

As Indiana Harbor Belt begins to acquire former SP/SSW GP40-2's, the SW1500's dating back the mid 1960's are being sent for major rebuilding. Four of them were delivered to the CNIC this week. My guess is they are going to NRE at Paducah for the work. The 9200, 9214, 9217 and 9219 hit CNIC property at Highlawn 4 December 02 for transit. The stacks were capped on all of them.

As the SW1500's are returned they will bump the ancient NW2's, SW7's and 9's out of yard and industry service and these units will be retired. The NW2's date back to 1946. They have pulled zillions of tons of freight in their day, but are simply worn out. IHB received all of their return on investment in these units probably long before I was born in 1956. I would hope IHB is considering donating a few of these units to museums and perhaps one of them to the railroad park being developed in Hammond, IHB's hometown.

And now a few comments on the latest order of Dash 9-44C's received by CN. I finally got to run a couple of them 4 December 02. Right off the bat I noticed they are noisier in the cabs even when the engines are in idle. You can hear more engine noise than the previous orders. They also vibrate more than the units of the previous orders. It is quite noticeable. Even my Conductor commented on the noise and vibration. They do have

*“I believe in management by walking around. You have to understand the physical and human reality of these places. Given all of the uncertainty surrounding Amtrak, it's incumbent on me to give employees access.”*

—Amtrak President David L. Gunn, quoted in the Times-Picayune newspaper of New Orleans, regarding his trips around the Amtrak system. Gunn was in New Orleans earlier this week while connecting from the Sunset Limited to the Crescent, and spent time listening to Amtrak workers at New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal.

the large high back seats, which are very comfortable.

I did notice the absence of air conditioning. I'm certain the reasoning behind this is the fact they were purchased for "Canadian" use. Never mind the fact they will see extensive use in the US. This fact did not surprise me. The armrests used on the Engineer and Fireman's side windows have been cheapened up. They are smaller and thinner than the previous versions used.

They did run well, although only being tested with a 91-car train weighing in at just over 6600 tons. A baby train by CN standards, almost not worth running. And they did have that "new car" smell to them yet. The numerals on the number boards are slightly different. While I cannot begin to guess the style of the font, they are certainly different in appearance than that of previous orders, more reminiscent of the style UP used in the 70's. Oh yes, on this very chilly Chicago day (in the high teens and low twenties), these units did provide plenty of warmth with good heat.

*Permission by Northwest Indiana, Tuch*

## Existing trains to carry Blue Streak banner between Oakland and Northeast

The California-Northeast Blue Streak intermodal service Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern will launch in December will use existing trains that link Oakland and Lathrop, Calif., with Harrisburg, Pa., and northern New Jersey.

On UP, trains Z OACS and ZCSOA will carry the Blue Streak name beginning December 10, said UP spokesman John Bromley. Their counterparts on NS will be 20Q and 21Q between Chicago and Harrisburg, and 20R and 21R between Harrisburg and the Erail terminal in New Jersey, said NS spokeswoman Susan Terpay.

The Blue Streak traffic will be single-stacked container because of clearance restrictions on the former Southern Pacific route over Donner Pass in the Sierra Nevada, Bromley said.

UP revived the Blue Streak name last year for joint UP-NS trains linking Los Angeles and points in the Southeast, including Atlanta and Miami. Blue Streak service offers three different service levels, including the guaranteed "SuperFlyer." Historically, the Blue Streak name was applied to freight trains to southern California from St. Louis and Memphis on UP predecessor Southern Pacific and its subsidiary, Cotton Belt.

*Via Trains On-Line 11-22-02*

## Wheel Report

**AVON YARD** - The turbo-equipped switcher (1237 MP15T) has been replaced with of all things SW1001 1122. This is an ex RDG/CR unit. One interesting point is that the unit was repainted at NS/Altoona under contract into the CSX YN2 paint. Altoona apparently did not have the switcher size CSX lettering so the road size lettering was used. Those letters look awfully big on this little switcher. On Conrail this unit spent most of its days in the Philadelphia area where its small size and tight clearance cab were put to good use.

That RIP job gets some awful interesting units. The last U23B on CSXT 3305, the turbo switcher MP15T 1237, and now SW1001 1122. Makes you wonder if someone isn't a rail fan. *Via Illiana*

**KBSR** - According to Bob Garner, general manager of KBS, they are still searching for a locomotive to replace the retired C-420 #315. He said that among the people they have talked with is a dealer/broker in Alco locomotives, but nothing has been decided yet. So acquiring another Alco is a possibility, but not a certainty. In the meantime,



Mid-America lease unit #1501 has been restored to service and will be used until a permanent replacement is purchased.

I asked him about operations. He said that movements are authorized by a work order that is established as a result of a meeting of all relevant personnel, usually at 7 AM. They sort through their pickup and setout information and determine from that where trains will run for the day. The work order thus established is good for that day. A new work order is required for each day the RR operates.

He confirmed that all sidings have expected status. He also said that nearly all of the time only one train operates on a given route (e.g. Iroquois Jct to Lafayette, or to Danville, etc.). However, occasionally two trains will work the same route, and when that happens, the movements are coordinated from the Iroquois Jct office, and train crews are required to keep in contact with one another via phone or, where possible, radio. *Via Illiana - Bill Gustason*

## Norfolk Southern to close two humps

Norfolk Southern will consolidate hump operations at one major yard and eliminate hump classification at another next week as it continues to refine its Thoroughbred Operating Plan.

Conway Yard, the sprawling former Pennsylvania Railroad facility west of Pittsburgh, will lose its distinction as being one of the few remaining U.S. railroad yards with two humps when NS shuts down the eastbound hump. Classification by humping cars there will be consolidated on the westbound hump effective December 17, according to NS spokesman Rudy Husband.

On the same day, hump operations will cease at Sevier Yard east of Knoxville, Tenn., according to NS spokeswoman Susan Terpay. Sevier will remain open as a flat-switching facility that will serve some of the 20 to 30 trains that pass through Knoxville daily, she said.

Conway, which can classify 6000 cars a day, has enough capacity to handle existing traffic using just one hump, Husband said. No track reconfigurations are planned, and the westbound hump will process both eastbound and westbound traffic. The yard handles between 40 and 50 trains per day.

All yards across the NS system are processing fewer cars as a result of the Thoroughbred Operating Plan the railroad adopted last year and fully implemented in February 2002.

The plan has worked remarkably well. NS's performance measures—such as train speed, on-time performance, and terminal dwell time—are at record positive levels. About three-quarters of NS's merchandise customers have seen transit time improvements of 10% to 30%, and NS has vaulted from last place to second among U.S. rail carriers in a recent shipper survey.

A key goal of the Thoroughbred Operating Plan is to reduce intermediate handling of freight cars, which slashes transit times, improves on-time performance, and boosts efficiency.

Before TOP was implemented, for example, Sevier was classifying 1400 to 1500 cars daily, Terpay said. That's down to 1000 now and will fall to just 500 after blocking changes are made to several trains next week that will allow 500 or so cars a day to bypass the yard.

Sixteen or so workers will lose their jobs at Sevier, though some will be eligible to transfer elsewhere on the NS system, Terpay said. At Conway, 10 carmen and five yardmasters will lose their jobs when the eastbound hump shuts down, Husband said, and about a dozen engineers and conductors assigned to the hump job will migrate to open road positions. About 500 NS employees are based at Conway.

Conway, a 568-acre facility with 181 miles of track that was the biggest yard on Conrail, is the only two-hump yard on NS. The PRR first built a yard on the site a century ago, and gradually expanded the facility over the years. Conway underwent a \$34 million renovation in 1956 that essentially transformed it into the yard

that's there today.

Union Pacific's Bailey Yard in North Platte, Nebr., the world's largest and busiest, has eastbound and westbound humps. Burlington Northern Santa Fe's Argentine Yard in Kansas City, Kans., lost one of its humps in a major reconfiguration project in the late 1990's.

*Trains On-Line 12-13*

## **Joint FRA test train derails**

A joint Amtrak-CSX-Federal Railroad Administration test train – run to address derailment concerns that CSX has with Amtrak's 1400-series Mail Handling Cars (MHCs) – derailed east of Rochester, N.Y., on Saturday, December 14, at 9:55 a.m. No one was injured. The train, designated by CSX as P975-14, was running from Erie, Pa., to Albany, N.Y., on CSX's Water Level Route main line to test the tracking characteristics of the 1400-series MHC boxcars.

CSX continues to investigate the cause of the derailment, railroad spokesman Dan Murphy said. But sources familiar with the incident said a failure of a 115-foot-long piece of rail was to blame for the wreck, in which all nine cars of the train went off the track at Lyons, N.Y., 34 miles east of Rochester.

In April 2002, CSX restricted the 1400-series cars to 60 mph, down from the 79 mph Amtrak equipment is generally permitted on CSX track, after an MHC in the consist of the Lake Shore Limited derailed, and then rerailed itself, in upstate New York. CSX suspected that the MHC was responsible for that derailment.

Amtrak insisted, however, that track conditions contributed to that derailment, and that the mail car played no role in the incident. No other railroad has placed restrictions on Amtrak's MHCs.

In response to the speed restriction, Amtrak pulled the 1400-series cars off its long-distance trains that operate on CSX, with the

exception of the Capitol Limited. Since then, Amtrak has tried to convince CSX that the cars can operate safely at 79 mph. The test train, which carried officials from Amtrak, CSX, and the FRA, was a part of the process.

The train, powered by a pair of Amtrak P42s, included a baggage car, a 1500-series MHC, an FRA test car, a 1400-series MHC, a crew car, a café car, and three coaches. With the exception of the last coach, which was leaning and fouled the adjacent track, all the equipment derailed upright and in line.

The FRA has been working with Amtrak and CSX to resolve the issue, FRA spokesman Warren Flatau said. The FRA has been concerned about possible placement and ballasting issues regarding the MHC's on the Lake Shore Limited, he said. The equipment, however, played no role in the Saturday test train derailment, he added.

The derailment delayed CSX freight trains and Amtrak's Empire Corridor service. Amtrak train 281, bound for Niagara Falls from New York City, was terminated at Albany. Its passengers boarded the Lake Shore Limited at Albany, then were bused from Buffalo to Niagara Falls. Other Empire Corridor trains were delayed by as much as 3 hours while the track was cleared.

One main track was reopened for traffic Saturday afternoon; the second track was restored at 5:30 p.m. Sunday

*Via Trains On-Line 12-16-02*

**Al "picks up the pieces" after the "boys" have a slight wreck on the mainline.**

