

In this issue, Mike Detmers details his experiences as a dispatcher working out of Spring Hill Tower in Terre Haute, IN. In this shot by Scott Withrow, Soo Line #204 passes the tower a couple of years ago.



DANVILLE JUNCTION CHAPTER

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1013

DANVILLE IL 61834-1013

"THE DANVILLE FLYER"

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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 \$12.00 for Chapter membership in addition to \$17.00 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 Conrail, in Danville, IL, with lunch beginning at 1:00 PM Central Time followed by meeting and program.

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Volume 30

June / July 1998

Number 6

Coming Events

September 20, 1998

Next monthly meeting will be in September, remember, no meetings this summer.

July 4, 1998

Watseka, Illinois - Gooseberry Festival and C&EI HS museum room open to the public. The museum is open the first Saturday of each month, June through October.

July 8-12, 1997

Syracuse, NY - NRHS National Convention - Members Randy Rippey and Rick Schroeder will be attending. This will probably be the September program.

August 15/16 & 22/23, 1998

Thomas the Tank Engine will be at the Monticello Railway Museum, The normal train will operate to Monticello with "Thomas" operating only around the museum area.

August 9, 1998

Great American Train Show, DuPage County Fairgrounds.

September 19 & 20, 1998

Railroad Days - Monticello Railway Museum, special trains each day along with motor car rides.

October 3, 1998

C&EI Historical Society meeting, Watseka, Illinois. Details later.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Sunday, September 20, 1998. Remember, no meetings this summer.

We could use more help at Rossville this summer. We have been lacking volunteers on almost each weekend. At the same time, the heat has kept visitors away this year, first all rain and then heat. Come up some Saturday or Sunday, only takes 4 hours of your time, not much out of a month.



Tongue River Rail- road tries again

Tongue River Railroad Co. has not given up on its attempt to construct a shortcut northeastward from the Lower Powder River Basin coal mines in southern Montana and northern Wyoming to the BNSF (former Northern Pacific) main line to move low-sulfur coal eastward.

The firm in late April filed its third application for permission to build tracks through rugged rangeland along the Wyoming-Montana border. Backers of the project say their route will shave 130 to 160 miles off shipments to utilities in the northern Midwest.

Tongue River's current effort seeks Surface Transportation Board approval to build a 17-mile line instead of a 29-mile one, approved earlier by the STB as an alternative to the company's original proposal to build near a reservoir and wildlife area. STB said it feared environmental damage from construction near the Tongue River Reservoir. The railroad needs regulatory clearance for that route before it can build the other 100-plus miles of track between Miles City and Decker, Mont.

Backers of the project say their plans are economically justified by the growing use of Powder River Basin coal and stricter emissions laws required in two years under amendments to the Clean Air Act. Opponents include ranchers, railroad employees, American Indians, and environmental groups. Two BNSF executives filed statements in support of the Tongue River project.

(Editor. My employer, URS Greiner, is involved in this project with a contractor for a design/build project. They are working to get the cost under \$350 million at this time and plan to begin design around September. We may get bridge and track design for our office.)

Illinois Coal: not dead yet

For those of us "coal train" fans, the closure of many Southern Illinois and Indiana rail-served coal mines has made things rather bleak in the Illinois Basin. Now there's word of a brand new coal mine about to be established near Taylorville, Ill. This is particularly significant since it will be rail-served by Norfolk Southern's already busy Brooklyn District.

Diversified Energy Nears Mine Deal

Diversified Energy of Knoxville, Tenn. is close to leasing or buying the mineral rights for a mine near Taylorville in Christian County, Ill. Norfolk Southern (NS) subsidiary Pocahontas Land Corp. now owns the land. Primarily a coal brokerage, Diversified believes that developing the mine represents a new opportunity. With coal reserves estimated at 300 million tons, the company puts the mine's life expectancy at 30 years. Scheduled to be up and running in perhaps two years, the underground mine will be served by NS and will produce roughly 4 million tons/year, estimated a coal company source.

No current coal quality data exists, he said, so the coal will be reanalyzed once a deal is finalized.

*From Erik Coleman, IC News Columnist
RailNews Magazine, ecoleman@interaccess.com*

RailTex acquires two Indiana lines, links 900 miles of its system

Short line conglomerate RailTex has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire for \$14.1 million the stock of Central Properties (CPI), a privately held company which owns two railroads in Ohio and Indiana. The Central Railroad of Indianapolis operates 73 miles in north central Indiana: a 17-mile north-south line between Kokomo and Tipton, and a 56-mile east-west line from Marion through Kokomo to Frankfort. The Central Railroad of Indiana owns and operates 81 miles between Shelbyville, Ind., and Cincinnati, Ohio, a generation ago part of New York Central's "James Whitcomb Riley" route (later PC and Conrail). Central of Indiana also has overhead rights over 96 miles to link Shelbyville and Frankfort, allowing the two roads to connect. The two railroads generated 18,000 carloads in 1997, primarily from farm products, chemicals, and non-metallic minerals.

have a good traffic base and have posted solid operating results. In addition, the Central of Indiana is physically positioned between two of our core properties—the Indiana Southern and the Indiana & Ohio Railroad System—and provides a strategic extension of the IORY system from Cincinnati to the Ohio River and up toward Indianapolis."

The acquisition of CPI will create a 900-mile RailTex network in central Indiana and western Ohio, and RailTex anticipates that it will realize significant operating and marketing synergies through the sharing of resources among the four railroads, including management, motive power, and other administrative and operating functions. RailTex expects to close this transaction prior to the end of the second quarter.

Via Internet - TRAINS On-Line 5/6

"This acquisition fits perfectly into RailTex's acquisition strategy," said RailTex CEO Bruce Flohr. "The [two lines]

BNSF announces employee special train's itinerary

As many as 15,000 Burlington Northern Santa Fe employees and their families are expected to experience travel from a by-gone era as the second annual BNSF Employee Appreciation Special departs August 8 from Minneapolis for a 24-day excursion. The month-long series, traversing nine states in the northeastern part of the system, will end September 7 at Topeka (Kans.) Railroad Days.

The train will be pulled by North Star Rail's Milwaukee Road 4-8-4 steam locomotive No. 261, on lease from the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay, Wis., and include eight BNSF passenger cars: Glacier View, Fox River, Flathead River, Bay View, Colorado River, Rio Grande River, Powder River, and Skagit River. Last year's train was scheduled to be pulled by the St. Louis Steam Train Association's Frisco 4-8-2 No. 1522, but she came up lame while en route to begin the tour, and BNSF substituted new diesels instead.

Below is a list of dates and locations for the rides, to be available only for BNSF employees and their families. Tickets will not be available until early June, limited to four per family on a first-come basis. There will be no reserved seating aboard the train, and the train is not handicapped-accessible.

AUGUST:

- 8 - Minneapolis - St. Paul (2 round trips)
- 9 - Minneapolis - St. Paul (2 RT's)
- 10 - Minneapolis - Superior, Wis.
- 11 - Duluth - Superior (2 RT's)
- 12 - Brainerd - Staples, Minn.
- 13 - Fargo - Grand Forks, N.Dak. (RT)
- 14 - Fargo - New Rockford; New Rockford - Minot
- 15 - Minot - Williston
- 16 - Glendive - Forsyth, Mont.
- 17 - Forsyth - Glendive

18 - Glendive - Dickinson, N.Dak.; Dickinson - Mandan

19 - Mandan - Jamestown

21 - Willmar, Minn. - Milbank, S.Dak.; Milbank - Aberdeen

23 - Aberdeen - Milbank; Milbank - Willmar

24 - Willmar - Minneapolis

27 - Minneapolis - LaCrosse, Wis.

28 - LaCrosse - Savanna, Ill.; Savanna - Cicero

29 - Cicero - Downers Grove (3 RT's)

30 - Willow Springs - Joliet (3 RT's)

SEPTEMBER

1 - Willow Springs - Chillicothe, Ill.; Chillicothe - Fort Madison, Iowa

3 - Kansas City - Topeka, Kans.

5 - Topeka - Emporia (RT)

6 - Topeka - Kansas City (RT)

7 - Topeka - Emporia (RT); Topeka - Kansas City

Amtrak wins STB approval on express service

Amtrak's burgeoning express service won a federal stamp of approval May 29 when the Surface Transportation Board ordered that Union Pacific must permit the passenger railroad to ship express over UP lines. The rift between the two companies erupted a year ago when UP objected to Amtrak's plan to resurrect its Chicago-Portland "Pioneer" as an express train, as well as add express to the "Texas Eagle" and "Sunset Limited."

The STB's order allows Amtrak to continue to solicit a broad range of express business for trains operating over any of its host freight railroads. The only major restriction is on express-only trains, which the STB says must be limited to the Northeast Corridor. The agency also said it would intervene on a case-by-case basis when railroads claim that a particular express service "could pose operational

difficulties."

In challenging Amtrak, Union Pacific and other freight carriers argued for various limitations on express traffic, including restricting it to relatively small packages, requiring that trains have at least as many passenger cars as express cars, prohibiting the use of other railroads to reach shipper sidings, and prohibiting the use of third-party consolidators or carriers such as UPS. Amtrak's express service, the railroads said, should be "incidental" to its passenger service.

But the STB rejected this historical definition of express. Instead, said the agency, express "should be defined more flexibly as premium transportation service at premium rates—expedited, regularly scheduled train service provided at prices which are generally higher than freight service."

Via Internet - TRAINS On-Line, 5/28

Latta Laments: Tales of the CTH&SE

By Mike Dettmers

For the week of May 25 1998

Ode to Spring Hill

This past week has been tolerable, even (I dare say) somewhat pleasant. The usual stupidity has been reduced to a shell of its former self so to speak. There were a few days there where it was like the days of old and it was actually sort of fun to be in the "Big Seat" moving the nation's freight and in general just kinda watching trains. My big "Closet in the Sky" can be a real good place to get pictures of CSX trains, as well as Soo trains. I came in one afternoon after my shift to give the second trick guy a hard time and, mainly, to Xerox some documents. As I was losing an argument with the Xerox machine, I happened to notice that unlike all of the other windows which are painted shut, the main peanut gallery facing the CSX is indeed capable of opening! So I indulge my curiosity and sure enough they open rather nicely. And the proximity of these windows leaves the shooter out of the operator's way and

affords some rather beautiful shots, especially for southbound trains past afternoon. To the best of my recollection there are no wires of any kind in the way for the shots! This is just too good to be true. So before this tower goes by the wayside I think it would only be fitting to shoot a ton of Kodachrome as a parting gesture.

I have been told that the foundation for the new building is done and the framing is underway. Also, the signal crews will begin their chore of automating the plant at Spring Hill. I have never been in the position I am finding myself, in that this tower with its rich history and storied past will be gone in a matter of months. I had the opportunity to talk to some of the older heads last time I was in Minneapolis and I asked them what it was like.

To a person, they all said it was sad and eerie all at the same time. It is hard to think that after 100 years or more that this tower, having been through storms and accidents and all of the rest, would succumb to the pressures of economics. I feel very fortunate to have worked two towers in my time so far, B-17 in Bensenville and this one in Spring Hill. I guess to someone who has never worked a tower, they are messy and dirty pieces of insignificant architecture. And I would suppose that if I didn't have this appreciation of the railroad and its history, I might feel the same way.

But once you have worked in a tower, they become sort of like a second home. You spend the bulk of your time there alone, your only link to the outside world being your radio and block line or telephone. These towers take on a special charm once you have spent some time in them. They are utilitarian to a tee, but the operators tend to give them a personality to make them just a little more palatable. And these personality upgrades are what endear the tower to the operators. Tonight I am taking in the personality charms of this tower. It is a relatively small place, with a few windows and those annoying fluorescent lights. The walls are done up in a 1970's wood grained paneling which has a certain amount of gaudiness but makes this tower unique. The interlocking machine is very old and constructed from cast and forged steel. It is so old that the "pistol grips" are rubbed smooth from all of the

years of operation. In the lower level of this tower one is struck by the dichotomy between old and new. The massive timbers that support the interlocking machine look like something out of a medieval castle. They appear to be true 6 x 18's at about 20 feet long and coated in creosote. They are spaced about 36" on center and are yellow pine or perhaps oak. Over the years people have taken chalk and added their mark so to speak: "KKS, 1945", "Derailment 3-16-1952", and so on. Also over the years, "modern" upgrades have been added. These include a toilet, central air conditioning and heating, and modern electrical upgrades. Then, in very recent years, still more upgrades have been added in the form of computer servers and CDRC II central control unit. So you have 1890's timbers next to 1990's computer racks.

The "Death Chamber" is likewise an assortment of hand me downs and upgrades from over the years. Storage racks from the 1940's next to Nokia computer monitors from 1996. And I guess it is this particular blend that makes Spring Hill what it is. Of course, towers also have a unique smell of their own as well. This particular tower has the immediate odor of oil, tar, and cigarette smoke from years past. The air tends to be on the stale side, although if the air is kept on this is minimized. There is also the smell, very slight albeit, of burnt dinner emanating from the microwave. And of course no tower would be complete without its resident refrigerator. This pygmy stands about waist high and is stocked full of science experiments gone awry. The actual age of these medical wonders cannot accurately be determined.

When the question is raised as to the ownership and age of a particular item, it's blank stares and shoulder shrugging. Not exactly comforting. There are also items in drawers and on shelves that have no purpose and, even scarier yet, no possible use in the last 3 or 4 decades. Lever parts that are long since obsolete. References to levers that haven't been there since the Truman era. All of this in my tower. Over the years the constant pounding of trains has thrown the tower out of square, and when doors are replaced or storm windows added, they have to be specially cut to conform to the now out of square open-

ings. It's hard to comprehend the forces that can shake a tower some 50 feet away to the point that monitors and shelves shake. There are 3 walls full of bulletins of every conceivable type. The other day I was going through them and found the dispatchers seniority roster....from 1973! I guess someone really wanted that one! I found about 1000 manila letter envelopes from about 1980, all with Milwaukee Road insignias! There was even a Milwaukee Road system phone book from 1980! Very neat, to say the least. But again I am brought back to the impending doom for this tower. By August it could be history, and all of this could be gone.

Union Pacific **Update, Thursday,** **May 7**

UP coal train planners are hard at work on four strategies to boost coal tonnage. The goal is to restore customers' stockpiles needed for summer air-conditioning and to keep pace with their increased needs for low-sulfur coal.

The four strategies include managing train size, train sets, locomotive supply, and cycle time. Each contributes to total coal tonnage delivered to customers within any time frame.

To ensure each empty coal train arrives at Powder River Basin, Colorado or Utah mines with a full trainload of cars, UP employees will be re-energizing North Platte Terminal's spare-car yard management process. In addition, one extra car will be added to each train daily. The one extra car per train would generate about 1.5 additional train sets per week.

UP has 229 unit train sets for coal operations. To run all the coal sets at peak capacity, 674 AC locomotives, the preferred power that provides high adhesion and high reliability, are needed for the heavy-haul loads. Locomotive management is working to have 100 percent of the required units in coal service by May 15.

To achieve mine-to-plant-to-mine cycles at 85 percent of optimum cycle time, UP is

working on several factors to boost operating performance. Five teams of experienced train dispatchers have been established to expedite coal train cycles. Other tactics include reducing slow orders, adding line capacity and reducing dwell time at various locations.

Via UP Home Page

NS Conductor Boots Baby Out of Train's Path

The incident is not unique in modern railroading, but it had a happy ending and shined the spotlight on yet another danger that railroading entails-easy access to the right of way for children.

The drama took place May 12 on the south side of Lafayette, Ind., where a 96-car Norfolk Southern freight was rolling through town at 25 mph en route from Decatur, Ill., to Bellevue, Ohio, in the charge of conductor Robert Mohr and engineer Rod Lindley.

About the same time, less than a block from the tracks, 19-month-old Emily Marshall wandered away from her mother, Tila Jo Marshall, as the mother was working in the yard. Emily was on the NS track as Mohr spotted her, not realizing at first it was a child. Lindley blew the horn, but Mohr realized it was a baby and, as Lindley put the brakes into emergency (knowing the train couldn't stop in time anyway), Mohr bolted from his seat and out the cab door along the locomotive's walkway. He climbed down the front steps. Just ahead, Emily rolled off the rail but was still close to it on the ballast when the train, by now slowed to about 10 mph, neared her. Mohr extended his leg and kicked her away, down the ballast. He jumped off the moving train, grabbed her up, and headed for the street, yelling for a neighbor to call an ambulance.

Emily was taken to St. Elizabeth Medical Center by paramedics, and though severely frightened, wound up with only four cuts requiring 20 stitches. Said Mohr, of Denver, Ind., "I didn't give it a thought. I had to do something. I just went out and

held onto the grabirons and tried to give a good kick toward her. I tried to keep her on the side of the tracks. Anybody would have done the same thing, I think.... I don't feel like any hero."

Via Trains, and other sources

Construction Projects

The rain has finally quit, maybe, and projects are underway. This summer is worse than last year for construction work. Actually better - we have more work, and more is better when it comes to profits (as Quark would say).

Conrail

Big blue is drawing to a close, sometime in 1998 or early 1999 depending upon who you talk to, and our work for the carrier has increased. The bulk of the work is in Ohio. I guess the state has been saving money for several years and decided to build roads and bridges this year. We have been adding about 1 per week with 2 new projects in Cleveland added to the 3 already underway, 2 in Ravenna added to the one finishing up, 2 in Youngstown, 1 in Ashtabula, 1 in Rush Run, one in Mingo Junction, 1 in Columbus and one starting (big underpass projects). 6 more are on the books for letting this summer. Conrail will expand the intermodal yard at Rose Lake this summer and we will furnish an inspector for them. The pipe work is busy in all states.

We got the call in late June for a survey of Haley Interlocking. CR and CSX will realign tracks and eliminate Haley Tower. A #20 turnout will be placed in the westbound CR main for CSX. About 1/2 mile west a crossover from WB to EB main will be installed, then a No. 20 to CSX. The new control point will be about 4500 feet long.

CSX

Work was slow, only the project at Lafayette, until I got the phone call about 3 weeks ago that they need help on bridges. We will be doing the rehab design for a 1400 foot long, 109 foot high trestle at

Osgood, Indiana and we are designing the replacement of two thru-plate girder bridges in Bellevue, KY, across the river from Cincinnati. Always nice when they call and give you a contract.

NS

The Toledo job is going slow but the bridge was bid in June so work will pickup in August. Three jobs will be coming on line in Cleveland this summer and we have a new one near Normal on I-74. Lafayette is about to see the Route 52 project finished and the roadway under the new Route 25 bridges opened the 15th of June. New projects started this summer are in Van Loon, Indiana (EJ&E crossing) and one at New Waverly, Indiana will start in late June.

We "bid" on the new Triple Crown facility in Mitchell, Illinois but lost out to a firm in the St. Louis area. Project is to be completed by January 1. We also "bid" on the relocation at Erie, PA - NS will move over to the Conrail corridor on a 5-mile relocation project. As of this writing (6/28) we have been shortlisted with another firm and hope to get notice soon we will have the project.

The siding projects continue. We are doing the staking but not the inspection. Sloan is complete, the railroad is building track and installing turnouts. Might be ready by the middle of July for service.. As of June 28, Sidney had stone in place and was to be staked for trackwork, Catlin was graded and placing stone, bridges are nearly done; Marshfield has grading about 50% with all signal bases set; Attica is cleared and 20% grading done. Weather has caused problems on these projects.

I recently made a trip to Alexandria, VA for a presentation on a tunnel project for Woodward-Clyde's Gaithersburg, MD office. The tunnels are under CSX and I will be involved if they get the project. A recent trip to the BNSF in Kansas City may open work with that railroad.

The railroad business is looking up. As the NS Division Engineer - "Hard to believe we are expanding the system".

Rick

Cleveland Mayor, NS Reach Agree- ment on Neighbor- hood Mitigation

Cleveland Mayor Michael R. White on June 1 was joined by David R. Goode, chairman, president and CEO of Norfolk Southern Corporation, to announce that the parties have reached an agreement relative to the Conrail transaction.

Under the terms of the agreement, Norfolk Southern will build and fund the \$27 million "Cloggsville Connection" to address the core issue of train frequencies in the residential neighborhoods of Cleveland and the west shore suburbs. The plan was filed with the Surface

Transportation Board on April 16. Additionally, Norfolk Southern will provide \$10 million at the rate of \$2 million a year for five years to a "Community Impact Fund," which the city will use for neighborhood programs to mitigate noise, safety and environmental impacts.

In a City of Cleveland press release, Goode noted, "Norfolk Southern has been a part of Cleveland's landscape since the 1880s. We look forward to playing an even more beneficial role in the economic life of the community through our planned operation of part of Conrail's routes and assets." In the press release, Mayor White said, "This agreement is the result of many months of hard work and negotiations between the City and Norfolk Southern and speaks volumes about the tenacity of our citizens to stand up for their rights. This also speaks volumes about the commitment of Norfolk Southern, particularly Chairman Goode. In addition to being a good train company, it is clear that Norfolk Southern also wants to be a good corporate citizen. We applaud Norfolk Southern and Mr. Goode for their responsiveness to the concerns of the community and willingness to take measures to protect our residents and preserve the quality of life in our city."

Mayor White also noted that, "We have said from the beginning that we are not

opposed to the Conrail transaction, but we believed certain issues involving train frequencies, safety, noise and other environmental justice concerns needed to be addressed and mitigated. We negotiated with NS in good faith to resolve those issues and we are pleased that as a result, many City neighborhoods will benefit from major mitigation measures to be undertaken by NS."

Following is the full text of Goode's comments at a press conference in Cleveland today:

"On behalf of Norfolk Southern, it's a pleasure to join you today as we make note of an agreement that will help usher in an era of growth and opportunity for Cleveland and for rail transportation. In many ways, your city and the railroad have grown together. Norfolk Southern has been a part of this city's landscape since 1881, when one of our predecessor lines ran its first train from Cleveland to Chicago. As your city has grown through the century, Norfolk Southern has been there with you. Today, the Cleveland area is an epicenter of commerce, and we look forward to playing an even more beneficial role in the economic life of your community through our planned operation of part of Conrail's routes and assets. The win-win resolution that we commemorate today is an example of what can be accomplished when we work together for the benefit of the public, the railroad and the shipping community. This agreement demonstrates that with determination and good-faith effort we can work through difficult issues and find solutions that meet all our needs. Norfolk Southern is proud of the role we have played in achieving this result.

"With as long a heritage as Norfolk Southern and Cleveland have had together, we will have an even greater future. As the restructuring of the eastern rail system drives the nation's economy forward, Cleveland and the Buckeye state also will prosper, and that is good news for us all. I pledge to you that Norfolk Southern will be a good friend and a dependable, safe business partner to Cleveland and to Ohio. This will be true not just for tomorrow, but I hope for another

hundred years as well. Let's hope that as the future unfolds, our successors will look back and say, together, Norfolk Southern and Cleveland did the right things, for the right reasons."

Norfolk Southern Corporation <http://www.nscorp.com>

Railfanning Northern Indiana

By Bruce Bird

Myself and four others from the Champaign and Bloomington area (Steve Hankel, Walt Baselt, Brian Falasz and Brian Huang) spent last weekend up in Northern Indiana railfanning Conrail's Chicago line between Hammond and Elkhart. What follows is a synopsis of our weekend.

We drove up Thursday night and along the way stopped at Iroquois Jct. to see what the KB&S was up to. As usual, Alco heaven awaited with 5 units sitting outside the engine house. Apparently the KB&S wants to keep as many units indoors as possible as a new 2 track engine house was under construction, located just to the west of the existing structure. It's a pole barn type building with what looks like room for 4 locos when completed.

Early Friday morning dawned cloudy, rainy, and cold. We headed up north to the Hammond/Whiting station on the lakefront and proceeded to shiver in the damp breeze directly off of the lake. After one measly train we began our trek east and stopped at Ogden Dunes and Burns Harbor. Between those 2 spots we landed several CR, Amtrak, and a South Shore electric as well as a roadswitcher. We then headed for Porter, the junction point where the Amtrak Michigan line and the Pere Marquette diverge and the



Porter branch merges. Despite continued cloudy skies we were inundated with trains for the next 1 1/2 hours. We managed to catch at least one train on every line that radiates out of Porter. As we were shooting we noticed that the clouds were retreating south and the sun would be joining us shortly.

We picked up and started east again and found many good photo spots between Porter and LaPorte. The sun arrived about 11 AM and for the rest of the weekend we had great lighting. The highlight for the rest of the day was a pair of Wisconsin Central SD45s on the ELCW. We were all surprised at the amount of steel traffic on the line - gons and coil cars were everywhere. They were about as prevalent as grain trains are to us around here.

We spent Saturday catching CR and SouthShore trains between LaPorte and Elkhart. The east end of the CSSSB is very rural and has some great photo locations - Hudson Lake was the best. We also visited the National New York Central museum across from the Amtrak depot in Elkhart. It was a much better museum than I imagined it would be. Their inside displays were top-notch and their external displays of equipment and buildings was decent as well. They are located on the south side of the tracks at the east throat of the yard and despite being fenced in they have constructed a viewing platform that gets you up above the fence. It is a worthwhile visit.

We noticed 3 cars during the trip that had been relettered and renumbered for the NYC! From what we were able to ascertain the cars that are going to the CSX will be redone in this way while those going to the NS will retain their CR reporting marks. Somewhere the Commodore is smiling - his railroad has technically survived to the 1990s!

BTW, NIRT is acronymese for Northern Indiana Rail Trip. We're already planning the SIRT for this fall.

STB approves Conrail breakup, adds some conditions

Calling it the most pro-competitive merger in railroad history, the Surface Transportation Board on June 8, as expected, approved the \$10.2 billion acquisition of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern.

In contrast to the ornate room where the old Interstate Commerce Commission ruled on mergers, the Conrail decision was unveiled in small, spartan surroundings in STB's nondescript digs on K Street in Washington. But the import of the decision was hardly modest.

"This carefully crafted, privately negotiated deal injects competition into the entire East like no merger... has ever done," said STB Chairman Linda J. Morgan. "It creates two strong competitors in the East that will provide improved rail service opportunities throughout the Northeast and South. More specifically... it will bring competition to many areas that had lost options through the creation of Conrail."

The Board did, however, impose several conditions to enhance competition and ensure a smooth takeover. As expected, deals the two railroads negotiated with shippers, other railroads, and state and local governments were made part of the conditions. But the board went further, extending its oversight of the merger process to five years from three. It opened New York City a bit, ordering CSX to negotiate agreements with Canadian Pacific for haulage or trackage rights between Selkirk (Albany), N.Y., and Queens, and with Providence & Worcester between New Haven, Conn., and Queens. It also ordered CSX to study improving cross-harbor float operations and cooperate in a city study for a cross harbor freight tunnel.

As part of an "early warning system" developed in the wake of the Union Pacific-Southern Pacific service meltdown, CSX

and NS must give the STB detailed weekly operational reports covering everything from on-time performance to car inventory. "We feel we've added competition without restructuring the deal," Morgan said. Board Vice Chairman Gus Owen, echoing comments he made in approving the UP-SP merger, said the board will be an active watchdog and will not hesitate to reexamine the merger.

The STB also approved specific conditions, including route transfers and other steps in western New York that were meant to expand sale-related private agreements to increase competition in the Buffalo and Rochester, N.Y.,

area. The board will also monitoring Chicago area car switching to assure that CSX does not control all terminal railroad operations in that area, specifically watching performance on the Indiana Harbor Belt. CSX is also required to negotiate with Illinois Central to resolve a dispatching dispute in Memphis.

In Massachusetts, New England Central receives new trackage rights between Palmer and Springfield, Mass., and in Ohio, the Wheeling & Lake Erie, the state's largest regional, gets trackage rights to Toledo to connect with the Ann Arbor Railroad and other lines. Indianapolis Power & Light gained a new rail connection to Norfolk Southern and Indiana Southern, a regional carrier that the company sought as a competitive alternative to CSX.

CSX and NS CEO's were pleased with the vote. "It's a great day for the railroad industry," said John W. Snow, CSX chairman. His NS counterpart, David R. Goode, said "for a nation that depends on safe, efficient, reliable rail transportation service, June 8 will be remembered as a watershed day."

But Snow was not pleased with the conditions, which, he says, impact CSX more than NS. "In some cases the agency went further than I would have hoped," Snow said, citing the board's efforts to improve access to New York City. "Since we're simply stepping into the shoes of Conrail east of the Hudson, no one is worse off," Snow said.

"We feel we've added competition without restructuring the deal,"

The board's strict operational monitoring plan apparently did not faze either CEO. "All along we were going to do a substantial amount of internal monitoring," Goode said.

The vote came days after a flurry of agreements CSX and NS reached with merger opponents and other parties—most notably Cleveland and its suburbs.

On June 4, the second day of oral arguments before the STB, CSX and Cleveland Mayor Michael R. White struck a deal over train routings and noise abatement just 15 minutes before he was to address the board. CSX agreed to divert 12 trains from the Cleveland Short Line to the Lakefront Line, fill 40 percent of new jobs at the Collinwood intermodal facility with Cleveland residents, and establish a \$10.7 million community impacts fund ("Cleveland: Center of Controversy," July 1998 *TRAINS*). On June 1 and 2, NS announced deals with Cleveland and its suburbs. NS will fund the Clogville connection in the city to link its ex-Nickel Plate and the New York Central, enabling NS to divert some traffic away from Cleveland's western suburbs. NS also will fund a \$10 million community impacts fund in Cleveland.

In the week before the vote, Indianapolis linked a deal with CSX that enhances competition there; NS agreed with New York State officials to continue service on Conrail's Olean Secondary, the former Erie main line (Southern Tier) west of Hornell. And in mid-May, Amtrak threw its support behind the breakup after CSX and NS agreed to support STB oversight of Amtrak on-time performance on affected lines for three years. CSX and NS also agreed to cooperate with Amtrak's bid to bring publicly funded high-speed passenger service to Amtrak's Chicago-Detroit and New York-Buffalo routes. In exchange, Amtrak gave its blessing for CSX and NS to expand freight service over the Northeast Corridor — including the first Newark-Washington through freights in more than a decade. In a separate deal, NS will allow Amtrak to haul express business over its routes and the parties will study a joint venture for future express business.

Big questions remain, including when it's going to happen. The STB's written decision is due July 23, with the merger to take effect one month later. But up in the air is the so-called "Day 1" when the railroads begin to operate their portions of Conrail.

Whatever the startup date, it won't come until labor agreements are signed, computer systems are on line, and both companies are confident of safe and smooth transition. The railroads agree that they will pull the plug on Conrail simultaneously. "There will be one Day 1, and it will be as soon as possible," said Snow, noting that no specific date has been set.

Bill Stephens, TRAINS On-Line, 6/18/98

(DJC Editor: We understand from unofficial sources that CSX would like to wait until next year while NS wants to wait no longer than November 1 to takeover Conrail. Cash and coordination seem to be the reason for waiting. Also, we understand that not as many employees will go to the carriers as thought. Out of one department in Philadelphia only 4 out of 53 offered jobs at NS will go).

Canadian National to use WC to Chicago

Eschewing its current route via BNSF's former Burlington Northern route from Duluth-Superior through Minneapolis-St. Paul to Chicago, Canadian National has signed a long-anticipated deal with mega-regional Wisconsin Central to handle by haulage rights CN's carload and bulk commodity trains on its route through the Badger State. WC already provides such service for CN intermodal trains between Superior and Chicago.

The new agreement is for not less than 20 years, and is renewable; August 1 is a possible startup date. The deal, linking CN's Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific with other CN properties in Chicago, helps strengthen CN's U.S. network, coming on the heels of not only CN's acquisition of Illinois Central but a three-way traffic

agreement with Kansas City Southern.

It's been said in some quarters that BNSF wouldn't mind losing the CN trains as its own train frequency has increased, and CN was thought to be less than thrilled with timekeeping; their agreement dates to 1992. Two areas on the BNSF route tended to become congested, slowing train operation: Superior-Minneapolis, which is single track, and getting into Chicago, which could well remain a problem on WC, or any route, as overall rail traffic increases. WC is single-track and mostly CTC, and the agreement calls for accelerated running times, includes a performance-based fee structure, and provides for WC to make capacity improvements in the Superior-Chicago corridor, some of which WC already had under way.

There had been speculation that CN might choose to stick with BNSF for some trains, since CN, with its recent Illinois Central purchase, now owns an alternate route between East Dubuque, Ill., and Chicago. CN will soon file an application with the Surface Transportation Board of the U.S. Department of Transportation to merge CN and IC.

Mexico's TFM orders locomotives from GE and GM

General Electric's GE Transportation Systems division and General Motors Locomotive Group have each received an order from Mexico's TFM, the Kansas City Southern-Texas Mexican railway affiliate, for 75 A.C.-propulsion units. The GE's will be 4400 h.p. AC4400CW's, 50 to be delivered starting right away, with completion of the order in 1999. They will be built at Erie, Pa., and maintained by GEC Alstholm at San Luis Potosi.

EMD is supplying TFM with 75 SD70MAC's under a subcontract arrangement with Bombardier, in which the units will be delivered in kit form to Bombardier's Concarril plant in Mexico for assembly. These units, whose delivery will start at

year-end, will be maintained by MPI de Mexico at MPI's San Luis Potosi shops.

An interesting note is that part of the GE order will be paid for with a trade-in allowance on 22 E60 electric locomotives from the former National of Mexico mainline electrification, which took years to begin service and then suffered a wreck in which several locomotives were destroyed. GE diesels are prevalent in Mexico, but KCS and TM maintain all-EMD fleets in the U.S.

Wheel Report

HOME PAGE FEATURE - The Danville Commercial-News recently featured an article about our home page. Member, and page creator Doug Nipper, along with member Bob McQuown were quoted in the article. The home page has helped us increase visitors at the museum and answer general inquiries. Hopefully many of the "on-line junkies" in the Danville area will read the article and check us out along with the other groups listed. Unfortunately, the newspaper did not list our Internet address. Surfers can find us through the MRM and NRHS listed in the article.

GM strike is affecting the four major railroads. As of June 19 the railroads said that they were starting to feel the pinch of lost traffic. NS serves three plants that are shut down and the UP serves four. Inbound and outbound loads are stopped. This will affect train crews as well as income for the rail carriers.

WATSEKA MUSEUM to be open on July 4. The C&EI Historical Society will have their portion of the Watseka depot open on July 4. This is also the annual Gooseberry Festival, a regular City of Watseka event. In the afternoon the historical society will have a board meeting to discuss events planned for this fall and next year. On October 3 the historical society will have a fall meeting for members. Next spring, the annual meeting will be held in Danville on April 18. Put these dates on your calendar.

Well, I thought the signal gang was done after the Electrocode was cut over, and it

looked like the old C&EI signals at RA Jct. would survive. Not so, I have spotted the new 3 over 3 signal just south of the Poland Rd. viaduct. It's quite a bit taller than the old cast iron signal. Didn't see if the northbound signals were being changed as well, but one can assume so. Doug

CN POWER on the IC? Tuesday's southbound GLCE had several CN units trailing. My heart skipped a beat when I noticed they were various 2100's (HR616) and 3500's (M420W) all the Bombardier-built "pseudo-Alcos". Alas, they were D.I.T., probably on their way to NRE in Mt. Vernon or VMV in Paducah. *From Eric Coleman*

Norfolk Southern Heritage

The first use of railroads to carry troops in a direct assault upon an enemy post occurred during the Civil War on a segment of what was to be the Southern Railway, an NS predecessor line. On April 17, 1861, within a few hours of Virginia's secession from the Union, state troops began to board a special train under orders to attack the U.S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va. (now W. Va.). Departing from Richmond, the train made several stops before depositing the troops in Strasburg, Va. From there they completed their march on foot, only to find that Federal troops had burned the arsenal and most of its contents a few hours prior to their arrival.

Conrail Heritage

In an effort to make passenger travel pleasurable, the Hudson River Railroad, a Conrail predecessor line, created in 1853 a parlor car suitable for daytime travel, but with added comforts and luxuries. The car was divided into carpeted staterooms containing a sofa and chairs, a small center table, and a mirror. Though at the time this new concept in railroading had yet to gain in popularity, the Hudson River Railroad's parlor car would inspire the designs and practices of later car manufacturers like the Wagner Palace-Car Co., and the Pullman Palace-Car Co.

Amtrak wants to extend Pennsylvanian to Chicago

Amtrak's new system timetable, effective May 17, extends the New York-Pittsburgh "Pennsylvanian" to Cleveland, Toledo, and Chicago, but at a date yet to be determined as Amtrak negotiates with Conrail on scheduling details. The timetable note cautions that the segment east of Pittsburgh will likely see a rescheduling if the extension takes place.

Driving the extension is increased express service, which has lengthened the other train on the route east of Pittsburgh, the New York-Chicago "Three Rivers," which operates west of the Steel City over CSX rather than Conrail. However, with the "Pennsylvanian's" Cleveland routing, passengers probably also will benefit, as Amtrak and the Postal Service would like the train to provide daylight service in each direction between Toledo, Cleveland, and Pennsylvania points.

Express business helps Amtrak's bottom line, of course, but has a downside for passengers. Schedules have been lengthened to provide time for express loading and unloading at stations, and several long-distance trains stop in the yard outside Chicago Union Station after departure for 20 minutes for a switcher to add the express cars.

Freight railroads are wary of Amtrak's increasing express business, and Union Pacific has challenged its legality, claiming that Amtrak's cargo service plans exceed its statutory right to haul "express" over freight-railroad tracks. Amtrak counters that the cargo its service targets now moves by truck. The two sides' arguments are before the Surface Transportation Board, which hasn't set a date for a ruling. *(Ed - as noted in this issue, the STB approved the express service)*

Via TRAINS On-Line 5/28

Due to workload, convention trip and other personal buisness we will not have a July/August issue of the FLYER. The next issue will be September. Your old editor, and the printing crew, needs a rest. Rick, Doug and Allen